CHILDREN UP TO SCHOOL AGE AND BEYOND
'Education is an atmosphere, a discipline, a life'
By E. KITCHING
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PART III.

Breadth and Balance in Education and the Parents' Union School.

In continuing the education of boys and girls after the first six years of preparation, the programmes term by term of the Parents' Union School deal with the education of children and young people from the age of six to eighteen. Children who have learned to work independently use their various powers freely in the assimilation of knowledge; but as the claims of schooling become more and more exigeant and more complicated, the need of continued definite training as well as schooling becomes more urgent, lest early promise should lose its bloom. To this end, *Ourselves*[10] was written, a book which can be put into the hands of boys and girls; but, long before this, it is of use to parents in showing how a child may be prepared gradually to 'weigh his own estate' and to learn the management of it. The two parts of *Ourselves* deal with Self-knowledge and Self-direction, and young people are shewn the 'Way of the Will' and the 'Way of the Reason.'

'I do not think the Israelites learned anything, because they took too much for granted,' wrote a little girl of ten. She had been narrating the story of the giving of the manna, and was asked what lessons the Israelites probably learned from it.
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How easy it is to take things for granted, to assume that what has happened will be repeated and that what has gone on for years is the best that can be done in the circumstances; to avoid the trouble of considering the 'whence' or 'whither'; to forget that 'manna' left over loses its power and that it must be gathered fresh every day! It does not mean that because our particular 'manna' has lost its power a substitute must be found, but it does mean that 'manna' must not be taken for granted, that there must be a daily renewed effort to gather it, if it is to have vitalising power. It is a parable for all conditions of life that only 'manna' gathered by effort can renew life, whether it be physical, moral, intellectual or spiritual. But the effort must be directed towards a reality, not to substitutes or side-issues.

We substitute our own ideas of manna. We take for granted, perhaps, that it is merely the edible moss which in times of war-famine has been used to feed the troops; we name it glibly, and say that it can still be found; but 'the gift without the giver is bare,' and the fact is a poor substitute for the sacrament in a parable, with its divine relationships. All that is implied in 'a child is a person' is coming to its own slowly, and we are beginning to realise that education is one as a child is one, and that we must start at foundations, at the beginning, and must have an end in view; but it must be a vision and not an immediate commodity, for the fruits of the Spirit are of almost invisible growth from an invisible source. Instead of considering 'for of such is the Kingdom,' we set a child in the midst and put forth *our* ideas of the way he should grow,

and then many side-issues scramble for a place because we have lost our vision. We talk about Universal Brotherhood, and we cry for peace as if it were merely absence of war. We talk about Citizenship, and a book was once issued to show how citizenship could be introduced into every subject in the curriculum! We over-stress the social and economic aspects of History, and the physical and political aspects of Geography, and behold! the wonder of the revelation in man and in nature is no more. The Board of Education gave a word of wisdom in saying that the emphasis in educational practice should be transferred from the needs of the subject to those of the child. It is well to remember also that the effort called forth in a child is sometimes resistance, not to ideas which touch his relationships, however profound they may be—these find a ready response in his mind—but to side-issues which are really stones for bread, because they are utilitarian in origin and mere information.

Do we lack the seeing eye, the hearing ear, the understanding mind, which might result if we pondered upon the 'manna' which is divinely sent into the world whenever a little child is born? If we have these qualities, we may get a glimpse into his mind, some knowledge of his possibilities, his powers, his
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tendencies, bad and good, and we may be worthy to help him to fullness of life instead of 'hindering,' 'offending,' 'despising' him, even unconsciously, in our want of thought.

There never was a time when children and their needs were so much considered, their education, their training for the future, their food, their clothes, their surroundings. Beautiful nursery schools care for them from babyhood, private schools and preparatory schools are housed often in beautiful country houses, thousands are spent upon finely-equipped State schools. Teachers are highly qualified, often trained as well in the most efficient methods. The Board of Education issues reports which contain wise counsel, and teachers' conferences protest against various forms of academic pressure. The Heads of many schools seek the co-operation of parents, and various societies gather parents and teachers together in conference. What more can be done? Surely all this makes for progress in all directions! Perhaps it does, and gratitude is due to those who concern themselves in these matters; but does it sometimes happen that the manna itself is lost sight of in the discussions about it?

We contribute towards 'old age,' which is now pensioned; to unemployment, which is doled; to sickness, against which we 'insure.' We pay rates for State education, school fees for the special education we choose for our children. We attend conferences, discuss problems, do our duty more or less in our 'state of life.' Surely we have contributed our quota, and may we not therefore take it for granted that all is well? Even the stress of life for many of us bids us answer 'yes.'

But in gathering 'manna' there are lessons to be learned. Do we watch the slowly-moving process of 'here a little, there a little' by which God is revealing Himself in ways not obvious to those who take too much for granted? We still accept second-hand opinions, and leave issues to those 'more qualified to judge than we are.' It is easy to see the dangers of totalitarian states and dictators, but not so easy to recognise the number of smaller totalitarian states in which we bow the knee. In matters educational we cannot take for granted that schooling is entirely safe in the hands of specialists. Their work, for the most part, is carried on again in a number of totalitarian states having little in common with each other, whether it be in the stages of a child's schooling, or in the subjects in which he is to be instructed. For

instance, some years ago a line was drawn at eleven plus, a psychological break, it was said, in a child's educational course. Immediately it was concluded that school books, for the most part, were written on wrong lines, and that it was necessary to have books graded in print, language, ideas, year by year as a child proceeded psychologically. Already a protest has been made, and two well-known authorities have said that this division is an economic rather than a psychological one. But the mischief was done; the output of books on such lines is
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not easily stemmed, and a generation of children may pass out of the schools less well-equipped for life than they might have been. Our great-grandmothers learned history from great biographies, geography from books of travel; they read 'literature' without notes or criticism; and they knew what they were talking about to the end of their days, for they lived in a *state* of knowledge as regards those subjects. There were no books about books in those days, and readers had leisure to assimilate what they read, even if it was in a limited circle.

To-day the history teacher has taken a degree in history. With a world of information at her disposal, and centuries of newly-discovered history to cope with, and the new demands made by social and economic aspects, she is compelled to shut herself up to the aspect of her subject that is needed for examination purposes and to collect and to sort and to compress as she can for her pupils. The geography teacher, the science teacher, the mathematics teacher is in much the same position. The teachers of literature and citizenship again plough lonely furrows, and the flowers which should be making gay the pastures of history are shown, so to speak, in book 'film reels,' labelled, for example, 'The Dramatists of the Sixteenth Century,' 'The Poets of the Nineteenth Century,' 'Short Lives of the Great Biologists,' or 'Stories from Great Novels,' 'Scenes from Great Dramatists'; while the aids to the reading and writing of English remind one of the centipede who lay distracted in a ditch forgetting how to run!

There are voices crying in the wilderness for better things. Many die away for want of someone to listen among those who do not take too much for granted; more than this, they need some rallying standard by which they may value their own position. In spite of all the signs of progress in recent years, we seem to drift further away from a unifying idea which should direct the 'whence' and 'whither' of our educational efforts. Attempts at securing some kind of unity are continually frustrated by some short-sighted utilitarian issue.

What if there were unities, not of time, place and action, as in a play, but of realities which could govern and direct our devious ways towards education for life, not for a living? Our outlook to-day is too much on the lines of,—the school is the unit *of* the nation, the teacher is the unit *of* the school, the subject is the unit *for* the teacher; and all for the benefit of the child, who *must be saved* from the disadvantages of his home, from unqualified teaching, and *for* the subject which is to bring him his livelihood! This is a severe statement, too severe perhaps to be true of any actual schooling, but it indicates an outlook which causes many of the charges that are brought against it at a time when schools are almost without exception happy places, and where the children are cared for by devoted teachers.
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Here are one or two definite charges which it is hoped are exceptional:—

(*a*) John (7) learns, as well as the usual subjects, Algebra and Geometry, Latin and French. The British History set for a term was from the Landing of the Romans to the abdication of Edward VIII, and on this an examination paper of 14 questions was set.

(*b*) Tom (9) gives three hours a day to Latin, and on one occasion six chapters of History were set for his evening preparation.

(*c*) Mary (8) was given 15 long division sums for homework.

The usual reason given for homework is that children must have some independent work to do, but the Commission that sat upon this subject reported that homework was usually given with a view to extra work for public examination requirements.

The children's joy in many schools is concerned with games and companionship. Joy in lessons is not even considered 'good form'!

There are 'Unities,' *born*, not *made*, which might govern and direct our thoughts and actions in staging the play for the education of every man. The *family* is the unit *of* the nation, the *child* is the unit *for* education, the *mind* is the unit *to* which each subject in the curriculum should contribute its quota towards that *state* of knowledge in which a child should live. In these days the family has receded into the background; the child has become the centre of organised attention, not for his natural possibilities, but with a view to fitting his mind into the various cogs of the educational machine. These three unities are the foundation of the Method which Charlotte Mason finely wrought after twenty-five years' experience of children and young people (at home and in schools of various kinds as well as in a training college), before she started her work at Ambleside—a Method which has been in use for over fifty years since.

When the Parents' Union School was devised in 1891, one of the aims was to raise the standard of home education and to introduce some of the advantages of school education. It would seem now as if the tables were turned, and as if the present need in educational thought were to go back to these Unities, to ponder, instead of taking for granted, the natural atmosphere for a child, who is endowed with great possibilities for good and for ill, and who possesses a mind with all its powers ready for action. What of the family, the cradle of the child, the nursery for his natural preparation for the joys and the discipline of life? Who but his parents should give him his first knowledge of life, his gradually increasing acquaintance with the fruits of the Spirit, and the ideas which shall initiate the habits of a good life? Who should teach the growing boy the
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nature of self-knowledge and self-control which shall make him a responsible person, able in his turn to act with the same deputed authority which his parents exercised—an authority that comes of knowledge and not from hearsay?

It rests with those who stand *in loco parentis*, including all teachers, to take a parent's view, a family view of education, a broad view of the nature and possibilities of every child, and a long view of his education, to see to it that he has a generous supply of varied ideas, that his mind may grow, and of opportunity, that he may duly exercise his powers, both of mind and of body, so that he may enter into that state of knowledge which brings in its train humility, joy, and growth.

On this stage, the drama of life must be played by each living soul; and here is a standard which should rally and test our efforts in the way of true education. 'I could never have carried on my school so happily, nor helped my children's parents in their difficulties, if it had not been for my knowledge of children, gained first in private teaching,' said a wise Headmistress. It is in the home schoolroom above all that the teacher has the opportunity of

learning to know children all round, for she works with a group of children of different ages, with varying needs in the way of training, and varying approach to knowledge. In a school the teacher can only have a group which more or less approximates in age and to a certain extent in attainments. She is concerned chiefly with class management and with the one or two subjects which she does not have to leave in the hands of specialists. She has to learn as much as she can of her children from a limited point of view and in the press of work can only visualise a child's needs in a limited area. It is true that teachers in boarding schools have wider scope than this, but in these schools there are also age and Form limitations. The specialist teacher is tempted to consider her children chiefly from the point of view of one or perhaps two subjects in which she has much to give them, and she is tempted to deal with her subject without much regard to the many other subjects which must also struggle for a living. There are few Heads of schools who are not distracted by this struggle and, unless the Head has some wise and convincing views upon the curriculum as a whole, the children will also be involved in the struggle. Again, children are handicapped in fulfilling the demands made first by the preparatory school; then in the preparatory school *for* the public school; and then again *for* the university, even for the ordinary course, while the struggle is intensified by the additional efforts required for places and scholarships.

What if it were possible to bring the curriculum back to this test of the real unities and the child's need for fullness of life, instead of limiting it to a standard to which only six per cent. of all the children in the British Isles attain, that is, for university preparation? Here we are up against another series of
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totalitarian states, for the preparatory school takes cognisance only of boys of a certain class and a certain age range, the public schools chiefly of a certain class and another age range, the university of a now varying class and another age range; the only point of contact being a certain amount of academic requirement.

Each of these states is self-contained and offers no long vision of education as a whole. The home schoolroom does offer this wide vision. The teacher of history is also the teacher of literature, geography and citizenship, even if she gets outside help in some subjects. Moreover, she is intimately concerned with the whole upbringing of the children. It is a distinct loss that the word 'teacher' is now so limited in meaning. We need some word with a broader meaning, equivalent to the Greek *paidagogos*, which included leading, guiding, training, teaching. Ascham's use of 'scholemaster' had a broader meaning, with a vision of one concerned with education, and not merely schooling. The educator is one who nourishes, guides, and trains those in his charge. What considerations therefore must be pondered by teachers and all *in loco parentis*? They fall under the various headings of (1) the provision of a natural, not artificial, atmosphere, in which (2) the habits of the good life may be initiated and fostered, and in which again natural, not artificial, opportunity is given for the full scope of a child's natural powers—and of these how little some of us know! (3) For the exercise of these powers a child requires knowledge and experience, knowledge in due abundance and variety, not limited by the personal views of his parents, knowledge in three kinds, which will meet his due relationships, that is, to the world around him, to man, and to God.

Again, a child may not be deprived of any of his natural relationships for any cause whatsoever. The argument of a personal bias against religion in the teacher places a heavy

burden on a child, who will set out on a lonely journey by himself, uncharted, without rudder or compass. The argument that his teacher knows nothing of the natural world outside the textbook and the laboratory should be a disqualification, but this is one of the things that is taken for granted as inevitable. The argument that none of the family are musical is no excuse in these days of wireless and gramophones. The argument that his teacher 'left off' geography, or history, or science at school at, say, twelve, in order to specialise for a School Certificate or other examination—such gaps are again taken for granted as inevitable. Education cannot be carried out in the one or two subjects in which the teacher has specialised; and, until we distinguish between education and scholarship, the distinction of scholars will be bought at the heavy price of the prostitution of education for the many. …
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In a novel, *Doctor, Here's Your Hat*, its author, Dr. Jerger, fears 'that the family doctor is doomed to disappear beneath the advancing waves of specialisation.' Indeed, a small boy was not long ago left at school with the addresses of five specialists, one of whom was to be summoned at once on the slightest sign of trouble. A teacher should be the man or woman of *general* qualifications, with some knowledge of human nature and a love and understanding of children, one who realises that all the relationships of life are a child's due. Such a teacher is nearer the real unities in general outlook. The specialist has his part to play when boys and girls reach the age of 16 or 17, and have secured some of that physical, mental, moral and spiritual stability which can stand the strain of special preparation for going out into the world. His boys loved 'Mr. Chips' for his humanity, not for his scholarship, which they took for granted.

Finally, we must narrow our considerations to the main object of this paper, which is a plea (*a*) for a long view of education, and (*b*) a wide view, and (*c*) for certain, not generally recognised, principles both of theory and in practice. Much of our practice has been generally recognised as having definite educational value, no longer to be classed as 'extras.' Nature Study (out of doors), Nature Note Books, Handicrafts, Music Appreciation, Picture Study, the *reading* (not scholastic study) of Shakespeare's Plays, European and General History, and Century Books found a place in the P.U.S. programmes fifty years ago, long before they were given a place in the curricula of schools other than P.N.E.U. But even these subjects are usually patches on the curriculum and no essential part of a method founded upon definite principles. The data, or the axioms, or the 'manna,' as you will, of the Method, are the family and its life, the child and his possibilities, and the nature and the working of mind.

The doctrine is still prevalent that mind must first be trained, and, even if a wider curriculum is advocated, it is that mind may be trained in more directions. But mind is, so to speak, a spiritual organism which must be nourished, not in order that it may *know* but that it may *grow*, and in growing use all its powers. The brain is the physical organ which registers invisible impressions and which assists the mind in confirming habits of thought and of conduct. Mind, being spiritual, feeds upon ideas presented in fitting guise; it is not stirred into action by questioning from without, for 'the mind can know nothing but what it can produce in answer to a question put by the mind to itself.' A small boy, writing an unusually long letter to his
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father in Africa, was heard to say to himself each time he had written a paragraph, 'what next?' and then 'what next?' till he had written quite a long description of a happy day. Children (and adults) accustomed to narration upon sufficient and suitable material after *one supreme act of*

attention work in this way. It must be remembered that *mind* work and *memory* work are two different things. Mind work is assimilated and not forgotten. Memory work is necessary for tables, formulae, rules, grammatical terms, but these things are not easily assimilated and therefore need frequent revision. Livingstone made a long trek to measure one of Africa's great rivers, but, when he got there, found he had forgotten the trigonometrical ratio by which he had intended to work out its width. In learning poetry by heart the ideas are assimilated by the mind and the memory of the words is helped thereby.

Mind does not function under the taking down or learning up of notes, *questioning*, or any effort to *remember* what has been heard or read. It responds to an idea and reproduces according to its kind, and it is possible to see from a child's face and manner whether he is putting forth mind work or trying to remember. Questions are admissible occasionally, but they must contain an idea that sets the mind at work and does not merely ask for information. Children enjoy examinations set to find out what they know and giving them scope for a page or more on each answer. An examination paper in which not less than fifteen questions are set in each subject and in which the answers require less than half a dozen words (such papers are not uncommon) only sets the memory to work.

It is not too much to say that upon this aspect of mind depends the whole of a child's curriculum and the value, or not, of the teacher's work. It acts as a dividing line between profitable and unprofitable work. Where mind and its powers and due relationships are recognised, the spirit is touched to fine issues, and education becomes a unity depending upon every bodily and spiritual activity. But where the dominant factor is narrowed to technical language and to training for some utilitarian purpose, there are at once set in motion the wheels of a machine which must have supplies of specially prepared fuel, a sufficient stock for combustion which will, it is hoped, send the machine along to a definite station.

The provision for children may be food or fuel, sustenance or stimulant. For nourishment there is knowledge set forth in books with a melody of words and harmony of thought, or with the beautiful precision of the wonder of science, which is the outcome of the *state* of knowledge in which the writer lived—knowledge gained from much pondering upon the subject in hand and drawn from wide relationships in other fields of knowledge. Such knowledge knows no nonage but the mind, and appeals alike to young and old.
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For stimulant we have well-selected, compiled, assorted, compressed information which depends for its attraction upon 'the look of print, paper, illustrations, etc.' It is easy to deal with, for it is taken in tabloid form; little mental effort is required, for 'all that is necessary to be taken is given.' And the charge brought against this is, 'he hates lessons, and says he will never open another book when he leaves school.'

The sustenance of ideas entails work, *i.e.* assimilation, and, like food for the body, it must be plentiful and include variety and 'roughage' if mastication and digestion are to be attracted to work. And each individual must work upon this for himself. According to his ability he will secure one idea here, another there, from the provision, one child more, one child less, but always each according to his powers; and then follows growth—growth that brings light into the eyes of both the child and his teacher.

But what of handicapped children? A P.N.E.U. member once said, 'We always seem to consider the abnormal and difficult children in conference discussions. It is rather a relief to get

home to a family of normal children.' Perhaps we are apt to forget any public expression of thanks for the hundreds of normal, happy and healthy homes where the parents are well and wisely educating their children, and where the children are growing up for the most part unnoticed, because they are neither unduly naughty nor physically or mentally handicapped. But in the P.U.S. we are fortunate in having the co-operation of hundreds of parents, and also of teachers, who think and care about education and who *do not lose sight of the children who are handicapped*. In all the P.U.S. papers that are sent out from Ambleside, as well as in the many letters that are written, we bear in mind that education *in* the family *by* the family is the most important part of a child's preparation for life. I use the term 'family' because the family ideal is the most comprehensive one, and my colleagues and I have daily reminders through the post and in our visitors of that big invisible family of the P.U.S., a family made up of many families, of parents and children and teachers, in playrooms, schoolrooms and schools, of all sorts and conditions in all parts of the world.

PART IV

A definite Chart and Compass: Principles and Means to an End.

In carrying out the P.U.S. work the ever-varying changes in modern life, the stress laid now on this aspect of education and now on that, would make any sort of progressive work in the P.U.S. impossible if we had not a definite chart and compass in
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our Method. Happily there is always a 'Jennifer' of 2½, for example, with us. She is a perennial source of joy and inspiration, with her dancing feet, her all-embracing smiles, her knowledge of how to manage Daddy, sometimes even Mummy, her wisdom in accepting the inevitable, her intuition as to what is going on, her powers of love, of choice, of decision, her generous, considerate ways, her strong rebukes to the hasty and her own sad lapses, when 'everything seems to go wrong.' Tom follows, perhaps somewhat behind in his rather slower appreciation of life, but with his powers no less sure, varied, and all-embracing. What will Tom and Jennifer be at 18? How best can their inheritance be preserved? How best may they be guided to self-knowledge and self-control? How best may the parents lay before them the knowledge that shall meet their growing needs and help to give them the experience which they lack? Both Jennifer and Tom have their special joys in helping Mummy and Daddy; and there is no parent who does not hope that both may find a lifelong joy in being of service to their generation. Alas! to think that they might reach the age of eighteen or nineteen to say, with the despairing young man in *Punch*, 'All very fine for you, Dad; you just *try* living in 1939!'

Some of us recall the old picture in *Punch* where Eric, aged four, says, 'Come here, Dora, I wants you,' and Dora, aged three, replies, 'Thank you, Eric, but I wants myself'; but unless we make full provision both for Dora and for Eric, we may find them at eighteen both stranded like the young man in *Punch* and quite unfit for the community life which they must enter upon as good citizens. So we are bound to keep before us the ideal of family life and its needs, complicated as they are in these days by the additional handicaps an only child has to meet, and the difficulties of parents on whom the stress of modern life falls heavily. Moreover, the family is the first introduction to community life.

Unfortunately, we live in these days under the domination of a number of half-truths. There is the old 'die-hard' psychology of the training of the mind, and there are the utilitarian aspects of the subjects in the curriculum, either as a royal road to the abstract virtue most in demand, or as a means of livelihood. Again, we use the old tag, 'mens sana in corpore sano,' as a plea for putting health first, whereas the poet Juvenal's prayer, written at a time of national decadence, was that the *mind* in a healthy body might be healthy. If we quote 'Train up a child in the way he should go' we assume that it is *our* way for him, not *his* way (as the marginal reading gives), the way for which God has endowed him.

But the children help us. Tom has no patience with fairy tales 'which are not true,' but delights in Richard Coeur-de-Lion. Mary cannot bear sad stories, and begs that she may tell another story instead. Anything alive receives a warm welcome
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from John, but, as 'Pet Marjorie' said, 'the most devilish thing is 8x8, and 7x7 is what nature itself cannot endure.' A map is Philip's delight, and a hammer and nails are dear to the heart of Bob.

There are difficulties to face—hide-bound traditions, blindness of heart, and fears for the future, which even yet hinder parents in that greatest of all adventures, the bringing up of children. 'Bringing up' is the right word, and it is to consider education in this sense that we would take counsel together. How often is it taken to mean 'schooling' only! Then Tom enters upon that vicious circle, which no one has the courage to break, in intensive preparation first for his preparatory school, then for the public school and then for the university. Committees, conferences, educational reports, all acknowledge the attendant evils. Even a distinguished University Professor made a protest: 'On behalf of my fellow mediocrities I plead with you to remember the claims of the ninety-and-nine when preparing your one lone sinner for a senior scholarship!'

In the Parents' Union School the claim of the ninety-and-nine comes first, and the programmes deal with the provision of knowledge as a means of growth—physically, mentally, morally, spiritually—which, coming to young people under the direction of the teaching power of the Spirit of God, should carry them on towards their vocation in some form of useful and happy service.

The background of the detailed work in the programmes and examination papers is contained in the sections dealing with 'The Curriculum' in *Home Education, School Education* and *An Essay towards a Philosophy of Education*.

To those who desire a 'refresher' course this 'Essay' is suggested. It was written by Charlotte Mason at the age of nearly 80, at the end of sixty years of active experience with children and young people. The Index is so arranged that it forms a synopsis of the text under each important heading, such as mind, knowledge, character, will, etc., and each clause of the Short Synopsis of her philosophy is dealt with in a separate chapter. The volume is moreover a summary of the theory and the practice of her method, and there are chapters dealing with the work in home schoolrooms, private schools and the schools of the State.

The word 'philosophy' has lost much of its meaning to-day, the modern conception of a philosopher being a specialist interested in certain branches of abstract thought. 'We must remember,' says Sir R. W. Livingstone, 'the literal meaning of the word, "love of wisdom," and envisage the sort of person whom Plato had in mind when he said that the philosopher was "a

man ready and eager to taste *every* kind of knowledge, who addresses himself to its pursuit joyfully and with an insatiable appetite," and that "the mood of the philosopher is wonder;
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there is no other source of philosophy than this." There are no restrictions on the appetite of the "philosopher" for knowledge; science, history, metaphysics, every branch of study, fascinate him, excite his curiosity, awake his "wonder," and stir him to press on, by their means but beyond them, to something higher still than knowledge—wisdom.'[11]

Next in importance to the *programmes* come the children's examinations and the Examiners' reports. Our Examiners are University men of long experience in P.U.S. examinations; they are in close touch with modern social conditions, and are a great source of strength in maintaining the standard of work. They report upon each pupil's work in detail as well as on the work as a whole. It falls to me and to my colleagues to go through the work of many hundreds of children twice a year, in the light of the Examiners' reports, and to make notes for use in preparing the *always fresh* programmes and examination papers for the next term. We have to ask ourselves the following:—

(1) Have the questions set tested the powers of the children fairly and happily?

(2) Has such and such a new book justified itself by the work done upon it?

(3) What answers have called forth the examiners' criticisms?

(4) Did the cause lie in the question, or in the wrong use of the book by the teacher?

(5) What help can be given to secure the right use?

(6) What notes (in addition to those of the Examiner) must be sent by letter in cases where there is any special weakness or evident misunderstanding of both principles and method on the part of the teacher in regard to the carrying out of the work and the training of the pupil? For example, the examinations must, according to our Regulations, 'afford moral training to the pupils, and should be conducted with absolute probity. Worry and excitement should be discouraged. Order, quiet and cheerfulness should be maintained.'

Furthermore, the examinations form a very close link with our members at home and overseas. The papers are often sent with letters asking for advice and help in the training of the children, as well as on a number of points which have appeared in working the examination. The parents' and teachers' reports on the term's work are also illuminating. And, again, the children help us.

Mary (7) is obviously working well and happily, for 'she begged to finish her examination in bed, though she had a cold.' Her answers are good and full of interest in her work, and she
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very candidly says, in describing a picture, 'some people think this picture beautiful, but I do not.' From Mary at 7 there is a long gap to another Mary at 17, who finds for herself in Dr. Bridges' *Testament of Beauty* answers to questions which have only dimly stirred in her mind till then.

There is no space here to go into the close connection between the work of the P.U.S. and the Charlotte Mason Training College with its Practising School. Here there is a daily give and take which adds much to the vitality of the P.U.S.

In the twelve years at our disposal for work in continuous programmes, we are able to take a broad and a long view of the ground it is possible to cover. I hope to deal with this part of the work in a later paper. It is sufficient here to say that though we do not attempt to cover scholarship work of any kind, we do consider the needs of the School Certificate taken in Form V at 16 or 17. Of the work in Form VI (17–18) a Headmistress writes:—

> 'I feel one of the joys of the Sixth Form is that there the girls can go on with the subjects they are most keenly interested in—subjects they have been longing to have time for—and freedom of choice is one of its characteristics.
>
> They have *time* to read in detail, round a subject, or round a period; *time* to discuss and argue and find out—the fruiting period—growing from all the past "taking in" of knowledge and narrating it. In the Sixth Form girls who have taken the School Certificate, and done well, learn how little they know—what fields of knowledge there are of which they know nothing, not even of their existence. Girls who failed in the School Certificate, or did not take it, find that the advanced work is absorbingly interesting and that they are not such "duds" as they thought. It is a continual source of wonder to me to see how the girls "grow" in the Sixth.
>
> No girl ought ever to be allowed to leave school from the Fifth Form; she has spent a year on examination subjects studied in an examination manner, and must have training again in the reading of knowledge, in the spirit of friendliness and pleasure.'

The essays sent in by these girls justify all the Headmistress says.

The best P.U.S. work comes from home schoolrooms both at home and overseas (though very good work comes from schools where the work is carried out with understanding), partly because the provision of books is larger, and partly because individual children show more signs of growth upon a *whole* programme than upon parts of it. Also, the progress of individual children can be steadily watched, and this holds good in the cases where schools send up the papers of every pupil. In home schoolrooms children are entered in the Parents' Union
[p 68]
School after a full introduction through the answers to preliminary questions, and the answers to these questions form a valuable adjunct in carrying on the work of the P.U.S., for they reveal much of the home life and up-bringing of each child, and indicate not only that there are hundreds of children being well and happily brought up, but that there are also many children handicapped both as regards home life and home training.

Children are sent into the world *themselves*, with all their powers, but they lack knowledge and experience. We may not 'hinder' or 'offend,' but into the experience of life we must train them, for they cannot be left either to drift uncharted and rudderless, or to the shock of rude awakenings. The knowledge to which they are *called* must not be bounded by our personal inclinations and sometimes limited ideas of the knowledge due to a child.

We hear occasionally of teachers and parents who think there must be something psychologically wrong with their children, and that they 'had better be taken to a doctor,' because they are inattentive, or nervous, or fidgety, or unable to work alone, or need constant explanation and knowledge *prepared* in various ways. In many cases no doctor is at all necessary, but only some understanding of what the children are and what they need.

'Mind alone is educable.' 'Knowledge is a *state* not a *store*.' 'Training belongs to the senses and muscles.' Indeed, the nature of mind and its working is still hardly considered in the education of children. And in the very nature of the Family lies the secret for Tom and Mary of a direct approach to God, to a knowledge of His works and to the understanding of man. In these three sorts of knowledge, of God, of man, and of the Universe, comes the truth that shall make them free.

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[10] *Ourselves*. (P.N.E.U. Office, 7/6.)

[11] *Portrait of Socrates*, Introduction, p. iii (Dent. 6/-).