

A Great Inheritance.

BY E. KITCHING.

"The P.U.S. is a spiritual organism" and "in the last resort," as Plato said of the State, "has to teach only one thing, the nature of good."

WE are greatly privileged in being allowed to assemble in this wonderful old city, under the shade of its mighty Cathedral, and within the walls of one of England's historic schools, and to receive such generous hospitality, and as we think of the scenes that have taken place here, it is indeed appropriate to "praise famous men, the Lord *hath* wrought great glory by them."

But we meet specially to-day in a spirit of gratitude and thanksgiving for the work of Miss Charlotte M. Mason, and it is an honour to be asked to say something about her Parents' Union School, which has now passed its centenary programme.

In 1910, Miss Mason spent a week-end here. We drove round the city, and she went into the Cathedral in her bath-chair; she even used her carrying-chair so that she might see the Black Prince's Tomb and go into the Crypt, for she never would miss seeing anything that she could possibly manage. As we drove back to the Hotel, she said: "What a wonderful place this would be for a Gathering for our dear P.U.S. children. I wish it could be arranged." And to-day, her wish is being fulfilled.

In thinking about education our thoughts naturally
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turn in Canterbury to the Renaissance, for there was at that time a great Archbishop of Canterbury, and we are told that few men realised so thoroughly as did Archbishop Warham "the new conception of an intellectual and moral equality, before which the old social distinctions of the world were to pass away." We are blessed to-day in having another great Statesman Archbishop, also wise in counsel and learned in understanding, under whose auspices we meet this week.

M. Taine wrote of the Renaissance: "For the first time men opened their eyes and saw," and T. H. Green adds after quoting this: "The human mind seemed to gather a new energy at the sight of the vast fields opened before it in this New Birth of the World."

Miss Mason believed that the world was again in the throes of a New Birth, and though she knew she could not live to see this Renaissance in her life-time, it was coming so near that she could sing a "Nunc Dimittis" before she passed on.

There are many influences at work towards a Renaissance to-day, and we are to consider the part that Miss Mason has played in putting before us once again "a new conception of an intellectual and moral equality." It is a wonderful conception, so wonderful that it is perhaps a little difficult to realise what is happening.

A lady said to me once: "No, I'm not going to the P.N.E.U. Conference. I know all that will be said, and I want something fresh." As we meet year after year to tell of Miss Mason's work, and to hear of the Propaganda work done by the P.N.E.U., it may occur to some of us that there is a sameness of outlook, nay, even of phraseology, in the mouths of the speakers, and to an outsider, this may seem dull. He may feel like the little boy, whose mother was reproving him for disobedience for the second or third time, and who said: "Oh, Mother, I've heard that

before! Can't you tell me something fresh?"

But we live in an age of artificial excitement, the result partly of the war; and children who frequent the cinema are losing their sense of the heroic and of wonder, in the unnatural thrills of the drama. Have we too, perhaps, become a little lethargic, a little weary of the demands made

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upon us in a post-war world, which we find sometimes a little dull, rather poverty-stricken, and aimless? Our minds are apt to become stale, and then we remember those words of wisdom, which Miss Mason loved:—"Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind."

So much is written in these days about mass production, mass movements, herd instinct, universal brotherhood, that it is sometimes difficult to see the trees for the wood, and as Wordsworth tells us in the following lines, we need to look in steadiness at the parts, as well as feel the whole, lest we weary,—

"But though the picture weary out the eye
By nature an unmanageable sight,
It is not wholly so to him who looks
In steadiness, who hath among the least things
An undersense of greatness; sees the parts
As parts, but with a feeling of the whole."
(*The Prelude*).

So we must remember that every child is a person, that every adult is a person.

In turning to the Renaissance we are at once in touch with the living thought of individual minds, and Seebohm, in his "Oxford Reformers," shows how three distinguished men of learning, Erasmus, Colet and More, all connected with Canterbury, strove to free the world from the trammels of the schoolmen, and bring knowledge within the reach of every man.

"They would go to the books themselves, and read them in their original languages, and, if possible, in the earliest copies, so that no mistakes of copyists or blunders of translators might blind their eyes to the facts as they were. They would study the geography and natural history of Palestine, that they might the more correctly and vividly realise in their mind's eye the events as they happened. And they would do all this, not that they might make themselves irrefragable doctors—rivals of Scotus and Aquinas—but that they might catch the Spirit of Him whom they were trying to know for themselves, and that they might place the same knowledge within the reach of all—Turks and Saracens, learned and unlearned, rich and poor—by the translation of these books into the vulgar tongue of each."

Colet too devoted his wealth to the foundation of St. Paul's School, where 153 children, without restriction as to nation or country were to receive a sound Christian education. Later, Archbishop Cranmer, in drawing up the Institutes for the King's School, Canterbury, insisted that the

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scholarships won should be open alike to the gentleman's son, and the poor man's child.

In the words of Dean Colet, Miss Mason spent her life "That the children may prosper in good life and good literature," and she has left us a great inheritance of theory and practice, which is already being shared by English-speaking peoples of all classes in all parts of the world. There never were more devoted parents and teachers than there are to-day, and as for the children, is not each one "the hope of all the world" in the eyes of those who know him best, and even they are only dimly aware of the power pent up in the mind of a child. Shall we not gather new energy at the thought of this power, to which it is our business to give scope, for it is the recognition of this power that constitutes Miss Mason's message, and we wait at her feet for inspiration. And when we are with the children either in thought or in fact something fresh never fails.

We know a little of the long years of preparation for her life-work, years in which Miss Mason was gathering that vast store of knowledge about children, which enabled her to speak with authority; for it was not so much that she knew *about* children,—she *knew* children: a very different thing. The vision of the children that came to her as a child of eight has already been told in the "In Memoriam" volume, and it had become a reality far beyond her dreams before she passed away. I have had the privilege of talking with an old friend of Miss Mason's who had known her since she was eighteen, and I have seen a letter describing her happiness with the children of two, and upwards, who came to the first Infant School ever established in England, of which Miss Mason became the first Head Mistress in 1861. Later, she succeeded in establishing a pioneer Church High School for older middle-class girls. Then, while doing this, she was, as she tells us in her last book, learning at even closer quarters from the children of an intimate friend, with whom she spent much of her time. Later, as a lecturer in a Training College for teachers, she saw much of young women, so that her experience of all ages and of all classes led her to the conclusion that "a child is a person," and that "persons matter more than things."

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Miss Mason's philosophy and methods are very fully set forth in her books, but the books are written with such apparent simplicity that, as a friend once said to me, there is a danger of sliding along the top of the words without touching the profound thought below. It is good, therefore, to confer together, so that our diggings below the surface may be mutually helpful.

But first you will, perhaps, allow me to mention some thoughts that have come back to me in working at the P.U.S. papers, thoughts which Miss Mason used to reveal as she considered the work term by term.

In turning over the children's examination papers, she would say: "This is from a very satisfactory book," or, "That book must go as soon as possible." "The dear child has seen that; look at this answer." "Next time, remember, we must consider how to give some indication in the programme as to the way so and so must be taught." "I have set that question to show that there are many ways of treating that subject," or, "to indicate how that subject might be taken." It is difficult for anyone who was not present to realise how she gleaned from the children's answers material which modified the new programmes in countless little ways, sometimes so slight that only an intimate study of the pages would reveal it. But she would see by the turn of an answer that some child had failed to get what she should have done out of the

work, and a word or two on the new programme, or a different form of question in the next examination, would indicate for the teacher the line that Miss Mason thought should be taken.

Miss Mason estimated the work of the teacher as well as that of the children from the examination papers. "That teacher has been expressing her own opinions too much, and she has been expecting the children to live up to her ideas on the matter instead of letting them take as much as they are able from the book or the picture or the musician." "That teacher has been cramming and revising; the children have lost their individual touch." "That work is too perfect; it looks like memorising." "These children have had the opportunity of getting all they could out of the work."

Miss Mason's idea of the teacher's work is beautifully expressed in the following lines by Wordsworth:—

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"Behold the parent hen amid her brood,
Though fledged and feathered, and well pleased to part
And straggle from her presence, still a brood,
And she herself from the maternal bond
Still undischarged; yet doth she little more
Than move with them in tenderness and love,
A centre to the circle which they make,
And now and then alike from need of theirs
And call of her own natural appetites,
She scratches, ransacks up the earth for food,
Which they partake at pleasure."

The teacher too is a person in need of mental food, and it is as the teacher shares a common banquet of living food with the child that the limitations of environment, of class, of the dominating personality on the teacher's part, and of inanition on the part of the child, cease to exist. The following note came from a Head Mistress last week: "We enjoy the work immensely. ... It has been new to us and the children revel in their beautiful books. A new world seems to have been opened up for them, and indeed for the teachers too."

Another teacher writes, "... I have been quietly working on P.N.E.U. lines for nearly two years and carefully watching the results. I have no hesitation in saying that the scheme gives what it claims to give, a liberal education. More than that, it has given here that enthusiasm for learning, that desire to know more—the enthusiasm and the desire which I have hitherto found a great difficulty in arousing. There is a joy in the atmosphere which has been commented on by more than one visitor ... and I, for one, would not like to go back to the routine of the past. There's a freshness about it all that cannot be measured."

But the food must be living; it must be, as Wordsworth tells us,

"Knowledge rightly honoured with that name,
Knowledge not purchased by the loss of power."

It has been said that culture is what remains when we have forgotten all that we know,

and if the teacher sets store by information, or acquires knowledge that he may know, instead of that he may grow thereby, he has purchased it by the loss of power, which will be only too evident in the children who will follow in his steps. Who could ever

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forget Wordsworth's picture of the little prig, "who must live knowing he grows wiser every day, or else not live at all!"

The following extract from a letter which reached me a few days ago was written by a mother about her two daughters, who are at one of our large well-known public schools: "The teacher gives a history lecture. Then she reads from the *Expansion of Europe* what she has lectured on. Then they read the same thing at 'prep.', and next lesson they get 10 questions on it. By that time they are both thoroughly bored, and all the life is taken out of the subject. X says: 'I'll not learn nearly as much here as I did at home!' And Y says 'nobody at school seems to have read anything, and when they come across names like Oberon and Titania they ask who it is, and immediately forget.' Y thinks success at school depends entirely upon memory. 'If I had been here since about the 3rd form I would be much further up, but I wouldn't know so many things like Shakespeare and the gods of ancient Rome and Greece'." "I am sad about it," says the mother, "because intellectually they are feeling starved."

Wordsworth says of such teaching that the children are like

"... a stalled ox debarred
From touch of growing grass, that may not taste
A flower till it have yielded up its sweets
A prelibation to the mower's scythe."

Another illustration of the mower's scythe also reached me a day or two ago, in the entry form for a little boy of seven to the P.U.S. I quote an extract from the examination papers that were sent: "*What happened when the Israelites became short of food, and had not enough bread to eat?*" "It rained bread."

"Were they allowed to gather the manna every day?" "No."

"If they were lazy and gathered a lot for another day, except when they were told to do so, what happened?" "It all went bad."

"What else did the people grumble about?" "About water."

"What did God tell Moses to do?" "Strike the rock."

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"Later, when Moses was told to strike the rock, what was Moses like?" "Nasty, cross."

What a contrast to the pages of vivid English that children of seven in the P.U.S. would dictate on the same subjects! We are still at the mercy of that fetish of training the mind, of the dictum that it does not matter what a child learns, but how he learns it. It is rather like giving lessons in swimming on a chair, the water, which is the chief factor, left out of account. In attempting to train the mind, we ignore the fact that the mind is already able to do its own business. Although "method" is still spelt in capitals for most teachers, it is interesting that Coleridge, who introduced the word in connection with education, is much more concerned with what is to be learned than how it is to be learned; and it is difficult to see why we should lay so much stress on learning how to learn, or how to think, when we learn each by doing it.

Again, Miss Mason would often say: "The P.U.S. is a spiritual organism. Its balance is so delicate that it is easily upset. We must not lay too much stress on that subject."

Here we come to the question of books, and to the task of examining these Miss Mason devoted a great part of her time, for she was always revising the books in use in the light of the examination papers and the College Criticism Lessons, and considering the scores of books that came for review or for possible use in the P.U.S. term by term. As I turn over the pages of the books Miss Mason chose, I am more than ever impressed by the question of balance, and the way in which Miss Mason met it with the books she chose. It has been said that a master of style is shown in what he omits quite as much as by what he includes, and a matter of the balance of thought is shown in much the same way. We are too much at the mercy of the Zeitgeist. It is true that children must be prepared for it, but let us remember that they need the balance which the Zeitgeist will not give. The Labour movement of the last fifty years has brought social questions upon us with a flood, and we are in danger of looking at everything from the social standpoint. History, geography, education, mathematics, science, must, it is said, be brought to this common denominator, and we

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are apt to forget that "balance" rejects a common denominator. History is a many-sided jewel, of which the brightest gleam is that of personality, individual effort, the man who has a vision and is able to make it visible to others. To treat history entirely from the utilitarian standpoint, or entirely from the social standpoint is to reduce it to one or other point of view from which to judge every event. The Zeitgeist may be said to be the point of view most popular in any given age, a point of view which banishes one artist, one novelist, one school of thought, and sets up another as the supreme teacher. Dickens, for example, is coming to his own again, after a partial eclipse; Mendelssohn is entirely out of fashion. "These Old Masters are not on probation," said the Italian curator to some American visitors, and there is a common foundation of knowledge which is not on probation, and which is the right of everyone. Miss Mason, however, did think it well that after having secured this common foundation for children, young people should be safeguarded against the time at 17 or 18, when with the enthusiasm of youth opinions of all kinds are caught up without much question. There are children who will, no doubt, in adoring imitation of some elder brother who is feeling it rather "swanky" to be sceptical, decline, as did a small boy of nearly six, to "believe" the Old Testament stories. Perhaps it is better that the grown-up should not show too much interest or anxiety about such disbelief. Children of six have years of learning before them. The difficult time comes when the boy or girl is feeling independent, and is yet strangely dependent on, and sensitive to, his environment, his home, his companions, and all the casual reading that comes his way. If unaccustomed ideas are presented suddenly, he, or she, may succumb without a fight. I once saw a seismograph at Heidelberg—a huge centner of concrete poised upon a tiny metal point. Any movement of the earth anywhere influenced this delicate poise, and was recorded by a needle attached to the cylinder. The mind needs to be balanced as is this cylinder if it is to record the delicate movings of the spirit, but its stability depends upon knowledge, much knowledge, which will enable it to right itself from the least shock.

Miss Mason often chose books that took different points

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of view of the same matter, so that the children should grow up feeling that the shield may

have a silver as well as a gold side, and not waste their time tilting, as did Don Quixote. The historical points of view taken by Arnold-Forster, Gardiner, Green, are all different, while Mowat himself kow-tows to the Zeitgeist, and gives, for example, 50 pages on social questions, which Gardiner sums up in perhaps 10.

The choice of books is full of difficulties, because, as Wordsworth tells us, there are those

“... who have the skill
To manage books and things, and make them act
On infant minds as surely as the sun
Deals with a flower; the helpers of our time,
The guides and wardens of our faculties,
Sages, who in their prescience would control
All accidents, and to the very road
Which they have fashioned would confine us down
Like engines; when will they in their presumption learn
That in the unreasoning progress of the world
A wiser spirit is at work for us?”

Great writers who have first-hand knowledge, do not ‘manage’ books or attempt to confine us down to one aspect of a subject, an aspect which may be perhaps useful in supplying a mental or a moral need but is not ‘daily bread.’ The utilitarian aspect in “making books” is too much with us. Scores of books about books or containing extracts from books pour from the press every day. Again, a book should not be encyclopaedic. I remember many years ago being much attracted to a book on “*The Acts*” that came out. It contained illustrations—a glossary—notes—a commentary—political geography—physical geography; but Miss Mason said ‘no,’ one book must not cover everything,—the child will think that is all there is to be said, as the writer meant he should!—and that’s the danger. We must distinguish between information that children and teachers can get for themselves, and first-hand knowledge by which their minds will grow. A teacher was one day trying to whitewash Pyrrhus, in endeavouring to show that history was set as an example of life and instruction in manners. But was there ever a more careful study of a managing man who used every situation for his own advancement or who better illustrated our Lord’s comment: “For the children of this world are wiser than the children of

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light!” The comment on Pyrrhus made by one of the pupils was: “Well, anyway, he did not care what people thought about him!”

Again, Miss Mason did not hesitate to let children know that there are men of science who are so dazzled by the splendour of the cosmos, or the wonder of the world reflected in a dew-drop, that their eyes are blinded, and they cannot see that “my Father made them all.” She felt that P.U.S. children should be so grounded in their faith by the daily Bible lesson that different points of view would not disturb them.

And the children are only too ready to catch our habit of managing things for them. X, who (last week) had done her Scripture IIB examination, and told the story of the feeding of the

five thousand very well, was heard afterwards telling the story to her baby sister of four: "And the lad said 'We have five barley loaves and two little sausages'." "*Why did you say sausages?*" said her Mother. "You knew it was fish!" "Of course I did, Mother, but you know Baby doesn't like fish, so if I had said 'fishes' she wouldn't have listened to the story."

One question that comes sometimes before us is that of Geography. I had a letter from a Headmaster of an Elementary School, saying that he did not think he could join if he must use the Ambleside Geography books, and Miss Pennethorne occasionally sends me such complaints. On the other hand, I have another letter in which the books are commended because they narrate so well, though a wish is expressed that the print and illustrations could be clearer. I should like to refer to the able paper on Geography with special reference to the Ambleside Books, by Mr. Smith of the Uplands School, which was read at the Gloucester Teachers' Conference in 1912. May I quote one sentence? "The main criticism comes from those disciples of the new Geography School, who rank Geography with Mathematics and Science as a subject to be taught almost wholly by deductive and inductive processes of thought. Research by geographers has certainly resulted in a quasi-scientific presentation of the subject being possible... Personally, I have a suspicion that the interest in the scientific presentation is present really in the teacher. By a piece of thought

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projection it is found in the child." It is best to say at present that the use of the Ambleside Books is optional: the books are under revision. But these are minor details, and in the meantime the atlases supply what is needed for maps and for commercial geography, and the European Geography has been brought up to date by an excellent pamphlet. A keen member of a geographical society told me recently that she had been obliged to return to the Ambleside Books in preparing a girl for an examination, because she could find nothing else to take their place. Again, most new schools are reduced to one book for geography, so the writers of the new books attempt to cover every aspect of geography—even science in general—in one set of books. P.U.S. children get so much scientific geography out of other books written by such men as Geikie, Lapworth, and Mort, that they are able to have one set of books devoted to the sort of geography that will feed the mind. The serious question about books is the general change of front with regard to geography which has crept in with the scientific spirit, and from this point of view the Ambleside Books are wholly condemned. We are always very glad to consider any other books that follow Miss Mason's principles in the teaching of geography. I have three shelves full of recent geographies, and as it happens that one or other of these same geographies is recommended in place of the Ambleside Books, I wish there were time to ask you to hear some extracts.

The modern teaching of geography demands the common denominator of a social aspect; therefore geography must deal with man, his needs, his power of turning things to his own advantage. Therefore modern geography must be social, economical, political, regional, historical. Having classified geography under these heads, the influence of the *Zeitgeist* puts economical geography first, and all the rest come in a rather poor second, and there is little joy of adventure, little scope for my Lord Imagination, but instead rather dry speculations as to climate, temperature, and,—to quote an example of another sort of question,—“What would have happened if the capital of Italy had been at Milan instead of Rome?”

The books are usually efficient, full of information,

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correct, up-to-date, fairly well illustrated, well printed, but—and a very big but—there is nothing to warm a child's imagination. The following extracts are taken from a very highly recommended series of Geographies. The descriptions are not inviting. This is all that is said about Peking:

“Peking consists of two square-walled towns—the Tartar city and the Chinese city—the whole being surrounded by a wall and moat. It is on a dreary, sandy plain, and suffers from dust-laden winds in the winter; its strategic position, commanding passes and routes into Mongolia and Manchuria, is excellent, and it is within reach of supplies of good coal.”

The chapter on African exploration consists only of such details as the following, and the directions for the use of the plane-table:

“Armies of red ants would attack the fort. ... Better a flogging with nettles than these biting and venomous thousands climbing up the limbs and body, burying themselves in the hair of the head, and their shiny, horny mandibles into the flesh, creating painful pustules with every bite. Every living thing seems disturbed at their coming. Men are screaming, bellowing with pain, dancing and writhing.”

This is a quotation from Livingstone, but is just an illustration of how misleading quotations may be without the wealth of other matter with which Livingstone fills his books of travel. Of the English Lake District, we are told in another series: “A man's outlook on nature has a value to-day in the tourist centres [sic] of our northern lakes, and also, but to a less extent, in our Yorkshire dales.” Again, “Near to Fray Bentos there are large corrals with long lanes bordered with posts, leading to the slaughtering yards,” and the process of the killing of the animals, and the various stages leading to “Leibig's Extract” follow. Again, I find that No. 1 of another series (that for children of 12) on England and Scotland gives the greater part of the space to comparative temperature charts, contour lines, and geological strata. For the rest, ports and towns occupy a second place. The counties of England, as such, have no existence; there is no mention of them; they are not even famous for the names of the manufacturing towns they contain. What child after doing the Ambleside Book III would ever forget the pictures that crowd up as the word “Hampshire” passes through his mind, or “Kent”? No,

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we must go back to first principles in deciding about a book, and a book that gives itself up to information when pictures in living English are possible, is not for us. Statistics, products, climate, contour lines, have their place, but the Geography lesson should make its first claim on a child's imagination, and fill it with wholesome pictures. I received a short time ago a letter from someone in high office, who wrote: “I do believe those in authority are realising that geography has ‘lost itself’ lately in barren wastes of science, and that soon things may take a turn for the better in this subject.”

In the matter of illustrations we must again see what Miss Mason says. She considered that in the early stages a tray of sand for definitions and much outdoor observation were better

than pictures. Later, she thought that literary descriptions together with the child's imagination were more productive than illustrations. One set of recent geographies publishes special volumes for the scholar with illustrations only, with notes for the teacher in other volumes. Another series, excellently printed and illustrated comes from America, and one picture shows the washing hanging out to dry in New York, and the question is: "Describe the work of a wash-day—how are the articles belonging to different families kept separate?" Another chapter is entitled "Furry Friends," and one illustration is of "a sorting shed piled with skins ready for scraping" and the next is entitled "Scraping bits of flesh from the skins," followed by a picture of a musk-rat in his natural home, etc. And the chapter is not a plea against wearing furs, for there is a full description of how to catch the musk-rat. The next book gives a chapter to "Dining from Home," and we are told at some length, with pictures, how people can dine on a train or in a restaurant, and the question is: "Give several reasons why city people do not eat at home." The extracts quoted and the pictures referred to are not exceptional in these Geographies. Some may even appeal to an unhealthy imagination, but there is nothing to feed the mind with wholesome food. The books which do not contain such details are mere summaries of information, tabulated facts of Physical Geography. But as always, the children themselves give us the key to the situation. The following lines

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were written by a little boy of nine, who had never seen a mountain or a cataract, but his mind had dwelt upon them in the beautiful words he had read:

MOUNTAIN MOSS.

"I live on the mountain high
You will see me
As you pass by.
By the river do I lie,
Under the clouds of the deep blue sky,
But the fairest that ever was seen,
Is my mountain, mountain Queen.
She never wears a crown
As the tumbling cataracts come down,
Though they may,
I shall never roam
From my peaceful mountain home.
On the mountains do I lie,
Those cataracts will never die;
Though I may not,
They will live for ever after,
Coming tumbling down
In happiness and laughter."

—W. F. (9).

The question of science books comes next. It was said to me recently that Miss Mason

taught science from books only. I asked the speaker if she had studied the programmes carefully, and she was surprised on reading them closely to find that quite as much out-door work as she had any thought of expecting, was set. Again we have to remember that Miss Mason teaches that the first thing is to give a child first-hand acquaintance with all he can see around him; next, such a knowledge of scientific *principles* as shall stand him in good stead. The Zeitgeist is again brought up against us here. "Books that do not give the latest ideas on science are of no use to me," wrote one Headmaster, but I must say that a little correspondence changed his views on the matter. This judgment was pronounced on the books in Forms I and II, and I think we should always invite teachers to ask for specimen programmes of the *whole* school, and to look at the books set throughout the school. The books in IV and V take up the latest scientific thought; till then, Miss Mason thought it best to lay a foundation of principles. The children will never be without some ideas on what present day science is doing while most "Daddies" are

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making or talking about wireless apparatus, and while every children's newspaper is full of scientific tit-bits, it is not necessary for lesson-time to be given to them.

I venture to quote some remarks from an able Headmistress of a P.U.S. School: "I have in my school a mistress, a graduate, and a specialist in geography and nature-study, and she is always pointing out to me that in these two subjects knowledge is always advancing, and facts are being set forth in more easily grasped and attractive ways. I am appending a list of books drawn up by this mistress ... Of course there may be better and more modern books ... I only give these because criticism, when only destructive and not constructive, is so useless." The books on the list had all been considered and rejected by Miss Mason, with one exception. Special objection in this list is taken to Miss Buckley's books. Curiously enough, two days after I had answered this letter, a new Biology came for review from New York. The book was for teachers and students, and each chapter had a bibliography added. Miss Buckley's books were strongly recommended in two of them.

I need not touch upon Nature Study—a most important subject—as a special evening is to be given to this.

Another question is that of Mathematics. The amount and kind expected in this subject varies very much and all we can do is to keep an even tenor as far as possible so that the children shall get the necessary discipline without being too much at the mercy of the Zeitgeist. So-called "Practical Geometry" is now more or less discredited. Both at teacher's Conferences and in the educational papers the popularity of this recently fashionable subject is waning. One able teacher I know considers that such practical work as is desired can be covered in a lesson or two and that as soon as a child is ready for Geometry it is far better to make the plunge without hesitating. The method and point of view in Practical Geometry is so entirely different that a child has to start afresh in any case when he begins Geometry. Again, some schools prefer a child to start Algebra first, some Geometry, so it seems well to let children of 11–12 in IIA have the offer of either, making up the subject omitted when they reach Form III. The teaching of Arithmetic leaves much to be desired and chil-

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dren are still allowed to lose their sense of number by labouring at each possible step of a sum that could be done in one mental process, and on the other hand, are still allowed to set down

answers without the necessary steps in a long sum which ensure that at the end the child knows whether the figure represents apples or men, or hours. But we are to have the benefit of papers from Miss Gardner and Miss Wiseman on this subject.

I have been asked if we give children scope for original composition, or if we only expect them to reproduce what has been read in books. May I read the following, written by a little girl of 10½, in her P.U.S. examination paper? A rainbow was one of four or five subjects set for composition.

COMPOSITION.

"A STORY ABOUT A RAINBOW."

By M. W.

Once upon a time there was a little stream in Sussex. It was a very pretty little stream, with minnows and stickle backs as well as water weed and insects. Now curiously enough, at a certain spot along this stream where it was more wild and pretty than ever, the stream often met his great friend the Rainbow. This Rainbow was a curious fellow, for though the stream loved him dearly, he could never touch him; all that he ever got out of him was that he could see his lovely colours reflected in his own waters, and he could kind of feel his soft warm light as it fell on him. One day the little stream was just going by the wild spot where he so often met his friend. He was lingering through the weeds, for he was feeling lazy. All at once (it was April at the time) it began to drizzle; it would not last long, for it was a lovely day. When all of a sudden he saw his dear friend the Rainbow. He thought how lucky this was, for he had wanted to see the rainbow. "Oh, my dear," he gurgled, "I wanted to see you. Hope you're quite well." "Yes, thank you," replied the Rainbow. "What was it you wanted me for?" "Well now, it's a question; I have been feeling very bored of late, so will you tell me all that you have seen and done since I last saw you?"—"Very well. Listen. When I last saw you I was not here long, for it was not sunny. As soon as I left you I went up the oak tree just here; it was very pretty, and you remember it was dark, so I lighted up all the leaves. I found lots of little birds there roosting, but not so many as usual, for some have made nests. On and on I went, up in the clouds, which were beautiful, little fluffy ones and big sheltering ones, and ones you could lie on; in fact I even caught sight of a little cloud fairy. She was dressed in snow-white, with a band of snow flakes round her head, with golden hair and dark grey eyes. I stroked her; she looked up and said: "Oh, you beautiful Rainbow, take me down to mother Earth with you, it is so lonely here!" so I answered, "I cannot wait, little snow cloud; abide here till I come again." "Farewell," she answered, "know

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that I am little Snow Crystal." I went on, and thought about her for a very long time. Till at last, for want of nothing to do I curved downwards again. I soon touched a tall elm tree, and slid down into a meadow, brimful of daisies and buttercups. When I touched earth, I found myself near a large stone, so I peeped under, and there was the cosiest

little nest you ever saw, with five little mice inside, and a mother and father busy just a little way off. Oh! but I must go now, goodbye!" "Stay a little more," said the stream. "I cannot," answered the rainbow, "I must keep my word and go to little Snow Crystal." So away he sped, on and on till he came to the clouds, and there, with her legs dangling, sat little Snow Crystal. "Quick," cried the Rainbow, "slide down!" so she jumped on and slid down to the stream. They still live together, only Snow Crystal has taken to the water. Then Rainbow went on, till he had gone round the earth, and he joined together in the tall oak tree by the stream. When all of a sudden, the sun burst forth, and the Rain stopped. "Oh! I am dying," cried the Rainbow. "Give my love to the stream, little birds," he said faintly, and then he melted away.

Children who read many books on many subjects have material at hand when they are given a choice of subjects for composition, and as Wordsworth tells us,

"... Visionary power
Attends the motions of the viewless winds,
Embodied in the mystery of words."

Another subject that has come up is that of art. Someone asks for the old pictures again. We do repeat many of the artists but at rather long intervals and the answer to this question came to me recently, when I heard two Ambleside students discussing "Picture Talk." One had been brought up in the P.U.S. and could boast of 200 pictures. "Oh, you lucky beggar," said the other, who had no P.U.S. antecedents, and the tone was quite sufficient to justify Miss Mason's practice of not too frequent repetition. Again, it has been asked how far we expect children to appreciate the Old Masters? We do not expect children to appreciate what they are not ready for, nor do we attempt to influence them by our own opinions. The pictures are shown with sympathetic interest on the part of the teacher, and they make their own way gradually. At first the children get a little, next time a little more, and we must leave them to take what they are able, knowing that we may not forestall their growing love for, and knowledge of, great works, by starting, as it were, at the other end. Miss Mason knew that a child must grow into knowledge gradually, and that we

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must not anticipate by creating an atmosphere of enthusiasm, one in which we may breathe freely, but which would be a strain on a child, who so eagerly tries to live up to his elders. We must bear in mind that both in art, as in science, the latest thought is on probation, and the children will see and hear examples of both; it is not the teacher's business to provide what is still 'on probation.' A much read daily paper has told us that "Cubism is altogether out of date" and that "we are to be freed from the dreary, drab monotony of the Cézanne imitators," and so the pendulum has already begun to swing away from that extreme.

Let us always keep *all* the Forms and *all* the books in our minds, when we are asked questions about the school work, and make the details of the letterpress on the Programme our own as well. The school cannot be judged by one book or one subject. Every book and every subject has a niche to fill. It cannot stand alone, nor can it be omitted from the Programme without weakening the whole "organism." And finally, we must not let the Zeitgeist have the

last word, or we shall be dropping now one subject, now another, according to the apparent need of the moment, not realising that sooner or later we shall have to make good our omissions. The Board of Education became aware in 1915 that there was no European History taught in the schools, and quickly issued an important paper for official use (No. 869) on Modern European History for Secondary Schools. They also realised in 1924 that few schools were teaching Colonial History, and they appointed an able Director, who issued a manifesto with notes of lessons, to remedy this defect in view of the Wembley Exhibition. The P.U.S. children, thanks to the wisdom and foresight of Miss Mason, had no need for sudden changes in their programmes, for these subjects were all provided for, and always had been. Again, we are told that it will soon be possible to take the School Certificate Examination without even Arithmetic. We cannot afford to drop so important a part of a child's educational discipline as Mathematics and hope that teachers will see to it that even if a scholar cannot take the considerable amount of Geometry and Algebra required for examination standard, he still does some work in those subjects.

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Another question comes sometimes in letters. Why learn so many languages? I often wonder if the question would be so frequent if the reason were not immediately disclosed about this, as about other subjects, such as drawing and music, namely: "My governess cannot teach them!" Of course we must bow to such exigencies but we must still face the question, why did Miss Mason think it well to set so many? She did not expect children to specialise, but she did expect that each child should have the chance of making acquaintance with as many subjects as possible, knowing that by a process of natural selection, he would follow up those for which he showed most aptitude later on, when the time came to specialise. Now in modern language work, Miss Mason put the training of the ear in new vocables as the important matter. The grammar of a language can be worked up, but no amount of accurate grammar will enable us to make headway in speaking a language. We must catch the rhythm, and our ear must be trained to the sound. A man who has had much experience in African languages told me that he owed his power of speaking to the fact that he spent two years alone with natives, and had caught their dialects by ear. It did not, he said, matter how many mistakes you made grammatically, provided you could run off a sentence in the tone and with the rhythm of a native. Then, and only then, would they bestow upon you the compliment: "You are one of us," the highest compliment a native would pay. The intelligent reading aloud of any English Classic depends upon some slight knowledge of the rhythm of several languages, and it is better, for general use, to have some acquaintance with several languages, than an exhaustive knowledge of one. This slight knowledge will stand in good stead always, while we can extend our special knowledge to some one language or more as opportunity offers. Colet himself says: "Be to them your own self also speaking unto the pure Latin and leave the rules."

Another question that comes up from time to time is of the length of time allowed for the examination. Home schoolrooms should easily cover the work set in a week. Schools are allowed to take longer, as it is sometimes difficult to get enough writers for the little ones. But there are

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one or two points about the examinations which Miss Mason thought important. She intended the examination to be an opportunity to train children in some ways that do not always occur in

the term's work. Then they narrate what they have read, and if they have been accustomed to narrate to a given time, they will find it easy in the examination to write briefly what is asked for, not 'all they know' about a subject. The powers of discrimination, choice, the writing of a résumé, a summary, a brief sketch of character, the giving of the salient points of a social question briefly, are all necessary, and our examiners would welcome some regard for these points on the part of some teachers, who think it "such a pity not to let a child take as long as he likes to write, or dictate, as much as he likes!" Another point to be remembered as regards day-schools: the programme covers all-day work, including holiday and evening, and Sunday reading, hobbies, out-of-door work, games and exercises. Those who work for short morning hours, and get no help in the work at home, cannot expect to cover nearly all the programme; nor, and this is very important, can those children who have not the necessary books.

We must never forget that we have a great inheritance to offer to the world, a philosophy, and, what is not an ordinary addition, a practical method of applying it. We had a visitor once, who came to see if what she had heard was really true about the P.U.S. She was an able teacher of much experience, and she had doubts on many points. After much talk, and constant reference to the programmes, she said: "To tell you the honest truth, I was in doubt about the P.N.E.U. I wondered what it was, whether it was a social or a political movement, or what axe it had to grind. But I see there is none, and that there is no thought but that of carrying on Miss Mason's work for the children's sake, and I should like to help."

Questions there will always be, but if we continually keep in touch with Miss Mason's thought by constant reading of all her books, we shall have a sheaf of principles at command by which we can test the value of this or that criticism, this or that book.

Also we must remember that Miss Mason includes *things* as well as *books*. The following extract is from her

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educational manifesto in *School Education* (page 214) "Children can be most fitly educated on *Things and Books*.

THINGS, e.g.:

- (i) Natural obstacles for physical contention, climbing, swimming, walking, etc.
- (ii) Material to work in—wood, leather, clay, etc.
- (iii) Natural objects *in situ*—birds, plants, streams, stones, etc.
- (iv) Objects of Art.
- (v) Scientific Apparatus, etc.

The value of this education by *Things* is receiving wide recognition but intellectual education to be derived from *Books* is still for the most part to seek."

Our beloved work is growing, and already there are signs of developments which Miss Mason had much at heart, though she did not live to see them begun. In one county two Intermediate Schools are already doing excellent work. These schools receive the best of the children from the Elementary Schools chosen by examination after the very best have passed on with scholarships to the Secondary Schools. A day Continuation School in Somerset with 1½ hours a week for English sent in at Christmas some excellent work. The Headmistress is bravely

facing great odds, inspired to the work by an address from Mr. Household. The Gloucestershire Schools now number more than half the schools in the county; and Mr. Household is nursing an interesting development with regard to pupil teachers. To schools which are far from Pupil Teacher Centres, he recommended that the work of Forms IV and V should be taken: and he writes: "It looks as though all rural Pupil Teachers taught in P.N.E.U. Schools would before long be following the programmes for Forms IV and V for most, if not all, of the necessary subjects." Seventeen Elementary Schools, mostly in Gloucestershire, but also from Leicestershire, sent in work including Form IV last Christmas, and two Schools in Gloucestershire sent in work from every form from I to V. One swallow does not make a summer; but the one swallow would not come unless there were a summer coming, so I venture to add the following letter from a Gloucestershire Headmaster:

"News reached us yesterday that X had been successful at the 1924 Preliminary Examination for the Teacher's Certificate. Needless to say, I am very pleased with her success, and all the more

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pleased, because I decided to keep her on P.N.E.U. lines throughout; I think that her success proves the value of the 'Method.' She has worked all along without the advantages of access to a Secondary School, without which very few candidates to-day offer themselves for examination."

An Ambleside student wrote not long ago from Kenya Colony: "The Director for Education is recommending all private Schools and families to join the P.U.S., and perhaps later schools may join." One of our special P.U.S. Schools, manned by students, is doing a piece of valuable work in proving that girls can qualify on the P.U.S. work for the Cambridge School Certificate without cram or fuss and gain the Certificate in 8 or 9 subjects with some distinctions. Another girl in the P.U.S. working alone on Programme V. (with help in Italian and Arithmetic) has also gained the Certificate. Another Ambleside student Headmistress wrote of three girls who had left her:

"The three girls who left Form III to go to three well-known schools were placed unusually high in their schools. One of them is, during her first term, top of a class of 28 girls, another is second, and the third has been up for 'honours' (¾ marks) every week except her first. The Head told her mother that such a thing has scarcely been experienced with a new girl in the school before."

The Ambleside Headmistress of a third P.U.S. School writes of another piece of work which would have been very dear to Miss Mason's heart:

"I know these backward girls let us down badly, but when I see how they develop on P.U.S. work, I can't refuse them; indeed, I have just taken another older girl, who cannot get on at a large public school, because I know what the P.U.S. will do for her."

We have much to thank God for, and take courage. And now we have Miss Mason's last book with its accompanying pamphlet. It is a very considerable volume, but Miss Mason felt it necessary to leave, not a sketch of her work, which could be lightly read, but a detailed survey for reference in the years to come, so that there might be found,—

“Every record undefaced,
Added by successive years,—
The harvestings of truth's stray ears
Singly gleaned, and in one sheaf
Bound together for belief.”

This precious sheaf will refresh our minds with a survey
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of Miss Mason's philosophy, and bring to remembrance the “words” which came to many of us with a new lease of life when we took up the work of the P.N.E.U. Someone said to me that she thought of all the people she had ever met, Miss Mason had discovered the art of living. Another wrote: “Miss Mason made it her first and greatest effort to live a life. That is just where most of us fail, and so ‘never once possess our souls before we die.’” Now, patience is the condition of possessing our souls; and humility and patience are the two thoughts that have been uppermost in our minds during Holy Week. I think too, they are thoughts that those who lived with her specially connected with Miss Mason, as she taught us of Our Lord, and as she lived her life. Only those who lived close to her knew the extent of her humility and of her patience. Her conviction that her work was God-given, her knowledge that it had been given to her to do, was the ground of her humility, for she had no need or desire to think of herself. She could wait cheerfully, with no thought of what she would have liked to have done, when opposition, or lack of means, faced her; she would never “manage” persons, or events, or things. She had the most wonderful power of accepting, as from God, whatever was sent to help her. The Psalmist tells us that “When I made haste, I said ‘I am cast out of the sight of Thine eyes,’” and Miss Mason never “made haste,” and so was always able to live her life in the presence of The King whose service was her daily delight.