

AFTER FIFTY YEARS.

SOME NOTES AND QUERIES.

By E. KITCHING.

Under the title 'Watchman, what of the night?' a long and interesting letter reached Ambleside some months ago, and the burden of it was, 'What of the night? Is all well with our work? How far are we living up to the ideals of our Founder? How far are we taking the letter for the spirit of her work? Are we working on the best methods? If not, can we improve those methods?'

The letter dealt almost entirely with the work of the Parents' Union School, and in so far as was limited in its appeal and narrowed in its issues, but it led to further correspondence, and to three meetings at which various aspects of the question above were put forward. It has been thought that a brief consideration of the work, with special regard to the P.U.S., and to some of the 'shades' of night which still need a crusade to disperse them, may be of use, together with some reference to shades which are already passing.

But first must come the watchman's answer (*Isaiah xxi*): 'And the watchman said, "The morning cometh and also the night; if ye will enquire, enquire ye, return, come."' Let us therefore enquire, but to do so we must return, come. Then we

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shall know that the morning cometh as well as the night, and that we must prepare for the morning if we would avoid the shades of the night.

Miss Mason was always constructive in her thought and work and therefore kept her face turned to the morning light. Her conviction of the dawning of the morning was so sure that the shades of the falling night did not dim her vision.

She set before us ideals (not untried), principles (gathered from experience), a Method, a way of life, a preparation for the morning, a philosophy which by its recognition of the whole nature of man, his powers, his needs, his failures, should make 'a liberal education' possible for all.

This is the morning which began to dawn in her time and is still the morning towards which an increasing number of pilgrims are wending their way, many of them her immediate disciples.

Miss Mason believed that in the future her philosophy would become the foundation of a university of living thought and practice for an increasing gathering of parents and others (the P.N.E.U.), with a blessed company of children (the P.U.S.), and a band of disciples (from the House of Education) who should consecrate their lives 'for the children's sake' and become fully trained teachers of her Method. She had a vision of continual progress in thinking, being and doing for every person towards fulness of life, a vision not only written down as a counsel for others but one which she had made first of all her personal experience.

Miss Mason did not start the Parents' Union School or her Training College till she was

fifty years of age, and then only after thirty years of thought and experience as a trained teacher (a) in working with children of all ages, from infants up to and including preparation of girls for public examinations; (b) as Vice-Principal of a Training College for Teachers; and (c) in the study of philosophical thought and educational methods and in correspondence and converse with the leaders of thought of the day. Until her death at eighty-one, she continued to live

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amongst young people and in daily contact with children. Much of the light which Miss Mason saw is now generally recognised; much is still only visible to a few. In a feeble visibility the shades of night loom like spectres, and again the cry goes out, 'What of the night?' and the answer is still 'If ye will enquire, enquire ye, return, come.'

Though each part of her work is governed by the same principles, we are in the present enquiry dealing principally with the work of the P.U.S. At the end of her long life Miss Mason summarised the theory and practice of her teaching in 'An Essay towards a Philosophy of Education.' She set forth the principles of her Method, indicating lines on which they could be carried out, but she left no system—no crystallized formulae—she drew no hard and fast lines. Her teaching was of the spirit, not of the letter, and therefore she used to say that in proportion as work needs organisation it loses life. Therefore the work of the College and of the Parents' Union School is still kept in line with the principles contained in Miss Mason's educational philosophy—a chain of thought upon which any necessary organisation depends and which acts as a constant inspiration as well as a corrective to neat and tidy plans, hasty changes, ephemeral fashions in thoughts, in books and in things.

Miss Mason defined the scope of psychology and gave us a test by which a sound system of psychology may be recognised.

'Alas, psychologies are many, and educational denominations are bitterly opposed to one another. We must feel our way to some test by which we can discern a working psychology for our own age; for, like all science, psychology is progressive ... We, who practise education, should at any rate attempt to know what are the requirements of a sound system of psychology.' *'It must be adequate, covering the whole nature of man and his relations with all that is other than himself. It must be necessary; that is, no other equally adequate psychology should present itself. And it must touch at all points the living thought of the age; that is, it must not be a by-issue to be discussed by specialists at their leisure, but the intelligent man in the street should feel its movement to be in step with the two or three great ideas by which the world is just now being educated ...*

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We venture to claim that our work is unified and vitalised by a comprehensive theory of education and a sound basis of psychology.¹

The much used and much abused *word* psychology [sic] is responsible for some of the confused thinking on the training of children. It is used to cover a multitude of sins, and it

consorts with language that is not understood by those who have most to do with children. Happily one or two recent books on education show that an effort is being made to cast off technical terms and to approach parents and teachers in their everyday speech. For example:—

‘A psychologist has said, “If I had my own way, I would abolish fear from the world,” so serious does he think the effect of fear on the child. ... And yet, I hardly think that I want to abolish fear from the world.

In the first place, there is an element of fear in carefulness, and we could not do without carefulness. Even the child, when he is building his brick tower, must be careful. There must be just a dash of fear of toppling the whole thing over, or he will not get his bricks in line. More than a dash of fear will make him uncertain of himself: he will not get things right if he is too much afraid of making a mistake, any more than a singer, who is anxious to avoid a wrong note, will pick up a tune. The main thought must be the right pattern, or the right tune, and not the mistake; but neither bricklayer nor singer must be reckless. Carefulness has its place. ...

Carefulness, with its dash of fear, does not drive a child’s thought back on himself. There is nothing personal about it. He is not afraid of being smacked for waking baby, for instance; he is just being careful of baby. The care over his bricklaying makes him lose himself in his job; care of his mother’s china, and of the family in general, turn his thoughts outwards to mother and baby; it is next door to politeness and consideration for others. This carefulness, with its element of fear, is the beginning of wisdom.’²

We have been told that in these quick-living days we have rather lost our sense of perspective with regard to new ideas. In the old days a new idea was allowed perhaps twenty-five years to establish itself, and there was much profit in this slow

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establishment. In these days, ideas come and go so quickly that they have no time to be mature, and they come to birth, dance and die rather like May-flies. Perhaps it is well to bear this in mind in considering Miss Mason’s use of the word ‘age’ which is qualified by the term ‘living thought,’ that is, thought which has had time to mature.

Let us follow Miss Mason’s method with regard to ‘Tom’ and ‘Mary,’ for whom she sought to provide a liberal education. She offered first of all to parents a common working basis of thought and practice which should enable them to realise something of what Tom and Mary were by inheritance and by possibilities, showing that the parents’ chief work lay in the presentation of ideas and the formation of good habits, so that Tom and Mary might live at their best physically, mentally, morally, and spiritually, fulfilling their due relationships to the world of nature, to man and to God.

She found from experience that Tom and Mary needed at least 5½ to 6 years of quiet growing time, during which period, in their voyage of discovery in their new life, they worked harder than they would ever work in their lives again. She believed that parents were the rightful guardians of their children, but that they needed help and advice in their profession as inspirers of their children and guardians of their early years. She showed how Tom’s education and Mary’s began at home, the most important period of their lives, as members of a family.

Without his family the child is a waif, deprived of his most important relationship, the relationship by which he is most truly made aware of God and of his fellows. As a member of a family his earliest experiences of love, joy, hope and other fruits of the Spirit come through the loving care of those around him, and he learns from the guiding hand of loving authority of the fulness and of the discipline of life and the comfort of forgiveness. In the first four volumes of her educational thought and practice Miss Mason puts into the hands of parents and teachers all that should go to the execution of their high office in bringing children to the gradual knowledge of 'I am, I can, I ought, I will,' and in the fifth volume she puts that knowledge into the hands of the boy or girl who is old enough to study it.

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The mother (or teacher) in giving their first lessons to Tom and Mary should know how to introduce them to history and to geography, for example; but she must also know that Mary may have to be rescued from warning signs of a sullen temper, that John must not be allowed 'always to go one better' in his statements, that David's nervous fears must be overcome; and she must realise that children are engulfed by wild waves of jealousy, anger, cruelty, dark thoughts of all kinds, so that a temporary rescue may be achieved and that children may then have definite help against the next assault. She may not shut her eyes to these things in her joy at the evidences of love, pity, sympathy, hope, faith, and other gentle thoughts which are also constantly shewn by children. In her teaching about the way of the will for example, Miss Mason shows that obstinacy may not be mistaken for strong will, that the thoughts of a younger child must be changed, and that an older child may be taught to change his thoughts and so release his will from the paralyzing power of 'I want.'

In dealing with difficult children, Miss Mason bade us never forget that a child is a person and that no one is made up of *one* fault. The wise mother is quick to see that Tom or Mary must be rescued at once from a slough of temptation. She cannot wait to ask advice or to trace the cause of the fall at the crucial moment, but she must throw out a rope at once—'Tom, come here; I want to show you something,' or 'I want you to take a message for me.' Tom (often—not always!) forgets his grievance or his anger and unconsciously seizes the rope of rescue with all his powers. The mother takes time to think over the reasons for Tom's fall, and later on takes an opportunity (or makes one) to put before Tom a picture of his danger, his temptation, and the way of escape—not in his own strength alone. There will always be difficult children, but many of them are made so by the lack of suitable education.

As soon as parents need the help and co-operation of a teacher, such co-operation should be sought on the basis of the thought Miss Mason supplies as to the nature and possibilities of the child as a person. This is more or less an easy task for

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the teacher who lives with the family, but not so easy when Tom and Mary go to school. A headmistress confessed the other day that she was parent-shy, and did not think that John's father and mother would discuss him with her. On the other hand, some parents are teacher-shy and have a natural reserve about discussing their children with anyone. There are still, alas, parents who prefer to put their responsibilities into the hands of a highly qualified trained teacher, and to limit their own responsibilities to paying the salary or the school bill. But happily there are everywhere signs that a common meeting-ground is being welcomed between

parents and teachers, on the basis of Miss Mason's philosophy—a meeting-ground where it is a relief to many parents to find that the qualities of other children are much the same as those of their own children, both good and bad; and that though circumstances differ there are principles of conduct which may be followed, and spiritual forces waiting to be released in every child, which may overcome not only the handicaps of circumstances, but those which want of foresight has laid upon many children.

Progress is the cry of the age, but, as Archbishop Temple has told us in his Belden Noble Lectures for 1935,³ the primary condition for making progress is that you know which way to go. It is quite right, he says, that we should be open to new arguments, and if we can be shown to have taken the wrong direction we should be ready to start again; but we should recognise that if, having decided to walk ten miles north one day, and then, lest we should be accused of stagnant minds, ten miles east the next, and, lest again we should be supposed to be enamoured of an old tradition, ten miles south the next, and, lest again we should be considered hopelessly obscurantist, ten miles west the next, at the end we should have walked forty miles and should be exactly where we started! Now Miss Mason puts before us a method which is a way to an end, and the steps of her progress in that way follow a natural order in recognising the nature of the needs of a child as a person. If it were not for the fact that we are each of us every day finding in the children

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themselves corrections to a compass which is out of gear in this somewhat distracted world, we should be in sad case. But in contact with children who show themselves as persons for better or for worse, and with parents who have accepted Miss Mason's teaching that in the family lies the hope of the nation, and indeed of the world, we have a vision of the end. Such parents 'for the children's sake' act as rulers, as trainers of their children in the treatment of defects of character, as inspirers in religion and as teachers of morals. The way to this vision is still helping to make a better world, in spite of philosophers who would have us believe that 'we must look forward neither to a collapse of morality, nor to a return to the traditional morality, but to a new morality' which, so far as one can see, offers experiment without sense of direction or any vision of a final goal. But 'where there is no vision the people perish.'

And what was the vision that Miss Mason put before us? She has told us that from her earliest years, even as a lonely little girl at the age of eight, when she first remembered watching groups of children on their way to school, her one desire was that she might be with them, and, later, that she might have a school of her own and help them to build a better world, and no more fitting words could be found as a tribute upon her tombstone than that 'she believed that children are dear in the sight of our Heavenly Father and that they are a precious national possession.' This was the vision that guided her life.

But we must narrow our considerations and deal briefly with what is offered to children in the P.U.S., a continuous course of education for twelve years from 6 to 18; in doing so brief reference will be made later to certain shades which hinder the work. Perhaps it may be well to say at the outset that the P.U.S. was not intended to be a cast-iron system, and we must put away any ideas of the swaddling-clothes of a scheme or a system which prescribes one way,

and one only, of entry into the fields of knowledge. A method founded upon principles, a way towards fulness of life, can bring some help and guidance to many who are not prepared to accept each one of the all-embracing principles of Miss Mason's philosophy, but it is [p 724]

necessary to realise that a patch taken from a complete garment and placed upon another of a different material cannot be the same as the garment originally planned, and may even be destructive.

The curriculum of the P.U.S. is, as Miss Mason said, suggested in the very nature of things—our title deeds—a wide programme founded upon the educational rights of man, physical, mental, moral and spiritual. The programme in each Form for each term provides a little library of books under thirty-two headings, books for the children to use and to keep, as well as books for the help of the teacher. These little libraries are checked every term, for books go out of print, and substitutes must be found among the new books which appear, and watch must be kept for the new and better book and for revised editions of the books in use. The programmes provide a twelve years' course of knowledge in the various subjects of study from 6 to 18, and due balance must be given to the time spent upon each subject, and books must be found which provide knowledge, not merely information. A new book may mean reorganisation of the course for two or three Forms, and changes cannot be lightly made when, according to the examiners' reports, good work is offered by children on the existing books. The libraries provided may be divided into (a) a small number of books (permanent, not text-books) which are used for the scholar's own study, in which definite pages are set each term; (b) permanent (and optional) reference books; (c) optional books for teachers who need help in teaching some of the subjects; and (d) extra reading for children who have time to do more work.

The P.U.S. grants a Leaving Certificate to girls who have reached a certain standard of work in Form V, and a Form VI Reading Certificate to girls in their 18th year who have written certain essays as the result of still more independent reading for two terms. It is also arranged that the necessary ground for the Cambridge School Certificate can be covered by girls who have done two years' steady work in Form V. The work in mathematics for the Common Entrance is covered by the programmes up to and including Form IV, but no attempt is made to cover [p 725]

the necessary classics or mathematics for scholarship examinations, as these vary for every school. The Public Schools entrance requirements for girls also vary with the school.

It has been found necessary to make some provision for children under school age who are, alas, only children, and who for various causes are deprived of the happy nursery life which comes to a child in a family, with its natural provision of games and occupations. Many mothers are grateful for the Playroom Leaflet, which provides suitable occupations for a pre-school year. The leaflet is issued in the hope that it may prevent the sending of children to school too early either for the sake of companionship, or because they are unmanageable at home!

The programmes of the Parents' Union School cannot be carried out satisfactorily except in the light of the principles (see the Synopsis⁴) which underlie the practice. Nor can the programmes be used as book lists from which selections may be made in order to add a patch to other curricula, with any hope of satisfactory results.

One or two points of remembrance given us by Miss Mason may also throw light upon the P.U.S. work. Remember, the programmes must never become stereotyped: they must be fresh each term, not prepared even two terms ahead. Remember, the books must be suitable for the children to work with—a little library for each child with one or two English classics added term by term; they are not designed for the oral teaching of the teacher. Remember, the test of the books is what the children make of them: the teacher's part is to secure the child's co-operation in their proper use. Remember, the purpose of a book is the provision of knowledge (not information), food for thought on which the mind shall grow and develop (*educāre* means to feed, to nourish). Remember, knowledge must have its fitting garment, a literary presentation, necessary for the passing of knowledge from mind to mind. In the use of narration, remember the difference between *mind* memory and *word* memory. The latter is a mechanical operation, an invaluable adjunct in acquiring in-

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formation. The former, mind memory, is the storehouse of a living organism which will only set to work upon suitable food of sufficient variety and quality. Remember, the examination questions must be set to find out what a child does know, not what he does not know. Remember, the P.U.S. examiners must be men who will examine the whole of a child's work, in whatever Form he or she may be. Only with this condition can his progress be duly tested, for here his work as a whole is set against the work of hundreds of other children in the same Form doing the same work, and his report upon a common standard can be estimated. The examination of the work of boys and girls by specialists is of another calibre altogether, necessary, no doubt, for scholarship and entrance work; but in this latter case each boy or girl stands or falls in relation to each subject, not in relation to his work as a whole. Remember, finally, the P.U.S. curriculum must provide each term for the needs of a child's whole nature—physical, mental, moral, spiritual—both in books and in things, towards a liberal education for all.⁵

Before passing on to some of the 'shades' which hinder the progress of Miss Mason's work, it may be well to mention a few of her practices which have now passed into general use in teaching children, if in varying degrees of vitality. Century Books, Nature Note Books, the teaching of handicrafts (other than sewing and knitting, etc.), scouting, music appreciation, picture study—none of these are distinctive features of the P.U.S. programmes any longer though their initial use was due to Miss Mason—but the practice of them differs in that they are usually adjuncts by way of correlation to a usual school curriculum and not part of a unifying method, as in the P.U.S.

It may not be out of place here to note also some of the changes made by the organisers of public instruction, which are already modifying 'schooling' towards a nearer approach to a liberal education for all. In 1905 the Board of Education made

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it possible for Heads of Council Schools to adopt methods of education which seemed to them good, provided they could still satisfy the requirements of their Inspectors. This permission led to the adoption of Miss Mason's method by some hundreds of Head Teachers in Council Schools, chiefly under the leadership of Mr. H. W. Household, formerly Secretary for Education for Gloucestershire, who foresaw fuller life for children in this work. From year to year special leaflets issued by the Board have widened the curricula of the State schools. During the War, for example, attention was drawn to the fact that children were still learning only English, not even British, history, and a leaflet was issued giving European history a necessary place, on account of the World War. Other special leaflets have drawn attention to the necessity for the teaching of physical drill, crafts, domestic science and other vocational subjects.

Now for 1938 the Cambridge School Certificate authorities have arranged that British and European history shall be taken in one paper, while during the last six years they have added music, art, crafts and housewifery to the subjects which may contribute towards a School Certificate. The gradual inclusion of these subjects offers a wider list of 'options,' and the Examining Board in the English section have departed from the old academic standards which required criticism of the texts rather than a knowledge of them; in science, mathematics and languages the academic standards have not been altered. But many important subjects have been made optional, with the consequence that it is possible for 'Tom' and 'Mary' to take a School Certificate with or without University exemption, and to go to college greatly handicapped through having done 'no history, or no geography, or no mathematics, or no Scripture' since the age of 11 or 12, and having had 'no time' to read more than the two or three set books under literature instead of taking the General Literature paper. We cannot, however, be too grateful for the changes which leave children a direct approach to literature instead of an approach along the avenues of notes and textual criticism. Moreover, resolutions passed by the Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Associations at various Conferences are already warring against what is called 'the Matricu-

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lation fetish.' They would confine the Matriculation to boys and girls going to the University, granting a School Leaving Certificate to those passing on to other training.

Only 10 per cent. of all the children in the British Isles go on to a University, and the curriculum for the 90 per cent. is still governed by School Certificate requirements. It is arranged in the P.U.S. that the Cambridge School Certificate Examination should be taken at 17, so that it may be possible to avoid serious omissions, such as History, and to take a general 'English Literature' instead of the two or three books set for more critical study. The subject of examinations has been much discussed in the Press lately, and Dr. James Drever spoke at the British Association meeting on the aims of the London matriculation and the Scottish leaving certificate examinations. Dealing with matriculation, he pointed out that the fact that it was the qualifying examination for admission to university studies largely determined its nature and scope. The reaction of the secondary school to this was wholly unfortunate. In place of giving an education appropriate to the needs of the community, it tended to concentrate on preparation for university studies.

'Under any circumstances,' Professor Drever went on, 'this would be an evil.

Under present circumstances it is little short of a disaster. In Scotland this evil is probably more serious than in England. Secondary education is free in Scotland, and the number of children entering on a secondary course is higher than in any country except the United States. Less than a third of these children are intellectually fitted or capable of university work, and less than one-sixth ultimately find their way to the university.'

The Secretary to the Education Committees of the National Union of Teachers writes:—

'The Board of Education has drawn timely attention in its recent pamphlet on examinations to the difficulties of assessing fairly the claims of elementary school candidates for 'free' or 'special' places in secondary schools. Teachers will cordially support the Board's view that the child's future should not be determined by his performance on one particular day. Most of them agree that the school record should play a greater part in the process of selection.'

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The P.U.S. examinations are set to find out what children know. They are not competitive, but simply a record of the term's work, and the children enjoy them.⁶

Now let us go on to consider some other 'shades' which dim the light of Miss Mason's teaching and hinder the work not only of the P.U.S. but of all schools and classes where those in authority are trying to equip their children for life. Perhaps of all the shades that affect Miss Mason's teaching, vagueness may come first. To quote a recent example: 'I hear you have a sort of Mothers' Union that works on Montessori lines, and the children do what lessons they like.'

Next perhaps follows the confusion of thought that exists in accepting 'education' and 'schooling' as synonymous terms. Education is everyone's business, but unfortunately it figures as a heading for various kinds of administration which only belong to schooling, and columns headed 'education' and dealing with teachers' salaries, free places, time-tables, examinations, the size of classes, have much to do in persuading the man in the street that education is no concern of his.

But even supposing that education is accepted as the concern of every man, people are inclined sometimes to forget that education should cover the whole nature of a child, his needs, his rights, physical, mental, moral, spiritual. How often we hear it said: 'No, Mary does not learn music; she has no ear for it'; 'I do not wish Tom to have Bible lessons lest it should bias him later on'; 'I have let Joan give up arithmetic, as she has no head for figures'; 'No, I do not think it necessary to give my children any moral training; they are really born good, and they will grow out of their naughtiness'; 'Henry will be knocked into shape when he goes to school, and I think children should have a good time at home.'

There are few words upon which people differ more than upon discipline and how to secure it. It is not 'being knocked into shape' at school. It is the attitude of mind of the disciple,
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to which all true education should contribute—the provision of knowledge, the acceptance of authority, the training in self-knowledge and self-control. Discipline may be artificially secured

in the joy of community life, by games, by team-work, by stimulants of various kinds, *e.g.* places, marks, prizes, the magnetic personality of the teacher, even school entertainments which are good in themselves but if overstressed exhaust time and vitality which should be given to the daily work. Miss Mason taught that education secures her rightful discipline in a generous provision of knowledge of books and of things, but she adds 'some moral control is necessary to secure the act of attention.' The power of stimulants is not lasting, and only leads to the gradual weakening of the good qualities of Tom and Mary as persons. We are told that parents ask for marks and that the children love prizes, but many wise Heads of schools are now setting forth a better way and teaching both Tom and Mary that discipline comes by way of self-control—not in repression but in change of thought. Miss Mason's teaching that the love of knowledge acts as a powerful discipline is still only accepted by a few.

There is, happily, also a revolt from the idea that discipline is secured by certain kinds of tradition. A great Headmaster, speaking of his work in one of the great schools of England, said that he found that the work of the day boys reached a higher standard than that of the boarders, and that he considered it was due to the fact that the boys had a change from school life to home life every day, with all the various interests that both kinds of life brought, and that these proved to be a better preparation for life than living altogether in school under one tradition. Nothing can make up to a child for the natural inheritance of family life, the close contact with his parents and the varied thought and activities which family life brings.

The 'shade' of 'gaps' dogs the steps of Tom's master, and there is no fool-proof way of avoiding them that is not either Scylla or Charybdis. A letter in the Press the other day offered sympathy to a schoolmaster who had taught a Form III in the same school for twenty years, using no doubt the same text-

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books over and over again with children of the same average age. The work may be fresh to the children, but what a narrow cell for a master, and how can he avoid the confined atmosphere either for himself or the children? The Head of another school wrote of the necessity for keeping to one period of history for each Form throughout the school in order to avoid gaps for the boys who moved up each year; and one teacher, having taught the same short period of history to boys of nine for four years, gave up the post in sheer boredom. There is the further problem of the boys who did not move up and had to do the same work over again. 'Gaps' when the school work is done by the oral teaching of the teacher are serious, but where children have their own books, considerable books, to read they are able to and do 'read up' gaps missed for illness or a change of Form. For the children who cannot read it is always within the power of the teacher to bridge a gap orally, though it is found by experience in schools where children are really interested in their work that they often do it for each other.

Schliemann rang up the curtain on a 'new' period of two thousand years of history. Sir Leonard Woolley is daily revealing historical secrets. Eddington and Jeans and Einstein have transformed the avenues of approach to Science, and we are all stirred to fresh efforts in resorting our old knowledge and gaining fresh. In like manner children to whom most things are new 'grip where they alight' and are continually putting a new bit of knowledge into its right place in the 'century books' of their minds.

Do we sometimes forget that the living touch of fresh knowledge has creative power of

more value than our efforts to 'keep things tidy'; that 'safety first' is not a creative idea? However necessary in some walks of life, it must not be allowed to become a habit of mind in all its ways.

Again, by looking at the programmes of the P.U.S. and in the bookshelves, it is possible for teachers to see something of the scope of the whole course and to realise by a study of individual programmes each term that each is a whole, and that, without any form of stereotyped correlation, books for reading enlarge the borders of the work set in History, Geography,
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Citizenship, etc. Unless teachers have some regard to the general pattern of a child's education, it is difficult for them to estimate the particular portion of the web or the woof with which they are themselves concerned. By getting some insight into the fields of knowledge from which a child has come into the Form, and towards which he is going, they are able to avoid, for example, the rather paralysing influence upon Tom's mind if his teacher assumes that he knows nothing about the subject in hand.

We have emphasised the principle that the mind, like the body, must be suitably fed that it may grow and each will then exercise its own powers, but at this point the analogy ceases. The body, a physical organ, must be gradually trained in its own uses. The brain, part of the body, is also trained in its own uses. Both the brain and the body unduly used suffer from fatigue. Mind, being spiritual, knows no fatigue, and neither a play way, nor environment, nor information ordered in evolutionary sequence is the way to mind. It is not a receptacle, therefore Tom does not grow upon oral teaching or information; it functions for its own nourishment upon ideas, therefore Tom must have scope in books, not text-books, in which knowledge passes from the mind of a great writer to Tom's mind. Potency, not property, is the characteristic of mind, therefore our business is to give Tom the knowledge he lacks and has the power to deal with; we may not attempt to train his reason, cultivate his judgment, by directing his appreciation or pointing the moral. All this Tom will do for himself with *suitable* books and things.

The idea that Tom's powers of mind must first be trained brings various shades in its train. One is that his books must follow an evolutionary sequence proper to each mental age in matter and manner of presentation, and to this end scores of quartettes of junior and senior histories, scientific and geographical readers are published, each series written sometimes by one writer, sometimes by two or three. Each covers one period for one average age. So instead of finding his way about a volume of five hundred to six hundred pages of history in
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which he knows where to find what he wants, Tom is confined to a reader of a hundred pages, say, a text-book which wins no respect. But the book in any subject which Tom might find his father reading *is* worthy of consideration!

There is no evolutionary order for the baby, who investigates all that presents itself to him in his environment, not specially prepared, and both Tom and Mary make their daily contact with their surroundings not in any evolutionary order but just as things happen to exist in their environment. So Mary, or Tom, entering the schoolroom, sits down at once to books

and things set according to the natural relationships which they should form.

These remarks do not apply to disciplinary subjects such as Mathematics, Grammar and Languages. In these there must be steady progress right through the books without omissions.

In all other subjects continuity is secured by the use of books which last for some years. Tom and Mary, being accustomed to handle books from the first, get the habit of books and knowing where to find what they want to know.

But there are children who are 'book shy,' and whose minds are set on 'things'? Even such children will be less shy with books that do not look like lesson books!

Again, there is no beginning of a school year in the P.U.S. The work goes round in a cycle. Children join the school every day in the year and the cycle arrangement ensures that if they spend the right amount of time in a form the work will be covered. Most of our older girls take the Cambridge School Certificate in December, so that the summer term may be kept for examinations in music, and drawing, school plays, etc. But there is also provision for those who wish to take the examination in July.

A means of securing continuity in an increasing number of schools is by the appointment of specialists in all subjects. In the higher Forms for advanced subjects specialists are necessary, and specialists will always be necessary in a great age of scientific and historical discovery. It is still sometimes the prac-

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tice of Inspectors to judge the work of a school by the academic status of the teacher and the amount of knowledge he can produce in teaching. But in view of the ever-widening fields of knowledge, specialist teachers are compelled to study more and more about less and less in order to pass qualifying examinations, and their powers of dealing with younger boys and girls are often in inverse proportion to their intensive knowledge of their subjects. Moreover, the powers of Tom and of Mary are estimated by such teachers as each reacts or does not react to the one subject in question; and Tom, who is slow at figures, has no chance of revealing his really bright and clear mind to the mathematics master, while Mary, whose parents are always travelling abroad, becomes dull and inert over 'regional studies' at too early an age. A highly qualified specialist has little time to give to the many and various claims of education as a whole. He has no time to visualise a boy's whole programme or to consider the equally important claims of other specialists, and it is only the Headmaster, whose business it is to get to know Tom as he really is, who has to face the almost impossible task of setting bounds to the claims upon Tom's time-table even when his subjects are reduced to the minimum for examination purposes. Again, the specialist claims the right of isolation from such an educational crusade as the P.U.S. which proclaims 'a full life' but 'nothing in excess' for the child as a person, and he tries to satisfy his desire to help Tom by showing the utmost that can be obtained in the way of scholarship and training from a narrow curriculum conducted on the most scientific principles. For this he naturally prefers his own books and methods in securing the maximum speed in the minimum time; but unless he is a man of many human interests and wide reading he has only rare chances of seeing Tom's eyes light up with pleasure at the knowledge he puts before him; and even, in a large class, his particular subject may only appeal to a limited number. Moreover, such a teacher keeps adding to his already intensive knowledge

from many sources and is apt to be somewhat impatient of the elementary introduction to the subject which only one book may offer, whereas Tom himself will profit more by his independent study of one book to begin with than from the
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more exhaustive supply of information which his teacher has gathered from many sources and is obliged to impart by oral instruction. And though Tom and Mary will respond intelligently from time to time to a teacher's *tour de force*, they do not grow upon this form of stimulant.

The Headmaster of Clifton, in a chapter on 'Education for Citizenship,' writes:—

'Then there is the specialist master. I believe it was a bad day for English education when a schoolmaster was first labelled "specialist." Of course schools must have masters who are experts in different subjects: of course these experts must be mainly concerned with teaching one subject—Mathematics or Modern Languages or Science, or whatever it may be. But there seems to me to have grown up in England a specialist or departmental mentality which forgets that the boy is more important than the subject, and that a boy's mind is not a collection of unconnected compartments. The one-room theory of the teacher's brain and the many-room theory of the boy's brain are equally mischievous. I think it would be a good thing if "specialist" teachers more often did some teaching of other subjects—a little English, say, or elementary Latin; but it is urgent that they should take more interest in and show more sympathy towards other subjects, and in their teaching of their own subjects, usually so admirable within certain limits, should be more willing to wander from a rather narrow path.'

A word must be added about children who have been handicapped by illness or by bad teaching, and there are many so handicapped. For them special provision must be made in the disciplinary subjects such as mathematics and languages. There are also other children who enter the P.U.S. at twelve or thirteen years of age, who come fresh to Ancient and European History, Nature Study, Art of various kinds, and who lack the background which those possess who have passed through Forms I and II. Such children generally attack the fresh work with avidity, and normal children are usually intellectually equal to the right work for their ages in all literary subjects, so that progress is not difficult if they are given the chance of working

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with books. It cannot be expected, though, that they will normally be ready for public examination work without stress, and even then only by the omission of all but the minimum of necessary subjects. There is also something to be said about P.U.S. children who do no work on Saturdays. Most school terms last eleven or twelve weeks: the P.U.S. programmes are set on a basis of ten, so there is always at least another week for the work set. Again, the time for leisure reading varies greatly. Enough must be set for children who are accustomed to read and to be read to; other children must read what is possible.

A few words must also be added upon the difficult subject of the provision of books for Tom and Mary. In the early days of the P.U.S. books were few and choice was limited happily to classics and the work of scholars and writers in touch with the great men of science of the day.

Now a large number of the books which pour forth from the press are written by teachers whose experience has been gained in the oral teaching in which they have been trained and who try to be a *via media* between the child and knowledge. The living book written by a man whose mind has dwelt for years with knowledge—not information—passes knowledge on like a torch from mind to mind, and to such books Tom and Mary turn with attention and pleasure, getting what they are able to take at first and going back for more as they get older. Outside the classics such books are hard to come by, and it is a matter of experience that a search through five hundred books may produce half a dozen or less that are of the kind that are of use in carrying out the P.U.S. method. Books written to serve some utilitarian or moral purpose are suspect even unconsciously to children who have been brought up on literature and who get a wealth of ideas and indirect moral instruction at the hands of great poets and historians.

Many modern text-books are written and compressed so as to cover as much ground as possible, *e.g.* Ancient, Foreign and English History in 150 pages. There is little time for the consideration or the leisure which knowledge and literary presentation bring, and it is only upon books (not text-books or com-

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pilations) in which knowledge is set forth in leisurely and literary fashion that Tom and Mary can get what they need. And until that happy day comes when Tom and Mary are allowed to show what they can do when their minds are well fed, the ability of children will still be tested in various ways in which the majority cannot and do not shine.

The testing of Tom's mind only by (a) a purely disciplinary subject, or (b) by requiring critical judgment or (c) 'original' work, puts a premium upon (a) memory work, (b) an amount of knowledge which young people are only gradually approaching—children's minds must be fed and trained to appreciation for years before creative criticism is possible; moreover a critical attitude of mind is sometimes a sign of ignorance, though in children it is often a petition for knowledge—and (c) original work which is only achieved by the greatest minds. Both Tom and Mary are quite equal to creative work if composition, as Miss Mason says, is made not an adjunct but an integral part of education in every subject. The use of narration in the P.U.S. is a means by which such composition is achieved, and only those who have had the opportunity of turning over hundreds of children's answers in the examinations of the P.U.S. can get evidence of the very varying forms of narration upon the same question in the truly creative work which children can do if they are at home with books.

But narration, too, has its shade. It is treated very often as an effort of memory which should work upon any material. To be creative it must be mind work, and a teacher who allows children to narrate bare facts from Malory or Plutarch or Shakespeare (or from history or poetry or Scripture) is allowing them to miss one of the chief parts of their inheritance. The teacher herself should take part in the reading, and read so that the fitly chosen words of a great writer are given due honour, and see to it that the children catch the spirit of the telling in beautiful prose or verse in various ways. To this end passages of beautiful prose, as well as of verse, should be learned by heart.

This is the sort of literary and scientific continuity which keeps teacher and scholar alive, which gives the satisfaction in tracing cause and effect, of seeing the far-reaching influence of

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great men in the policy of nations, of catching the spirit of the times in the fitting words of a

creative writer.

But education is of the spirit, and she must be approached with due reverence if the children are to catch the spirit of humility which does not attempt to 'know all' about anything, but which lives and grows upon knowledge touched with emotion. '(He) shall pray for the children to prosper in good life and good literature'—Dean Colet's prayer—appears at the head of each P.U.S. programme, the inspiring idea for all to whom the nurture and admonition of children comes as a vocation.

And what of the future? Circumstances, we say, alter cases—the things that stand round are different for each individual, they change with age, with time and place; even the aspect of a certain truth may bear the coloured lights of fantasy. But if we are satisfied that we have an adequate educational philosophy we must either use it to guide our practice or seek another. To adopt a practice without reference to its habitat in thought is rather like whirling a prayer-wheel and hoping for the best.

Our gratitude is great to those who realise that Miss Mason's principles illuminate practice, and whose work with children testifies to the truth of these principles.

¹ *Parents and Children*.

² From *The Right Way with Children*. By E. Smith, M.B., B.S. (S.C.M., 3/6).

³ See notice under Books, January *P.R.*, 1937.

⁴ Each clause of the Synopsis is dealt with in detail in 'The Essay towards a Philosophy of Education.'

⁵ It is interesting in passing to note that Miss Mason first used the words 'a liberal education' in drawing up the plans for what was then known as a Middle School which she started in 1866.

⁶ A pamphlet by one of the P.U.S. Examiners dealing fully with the matter will be sent on application to the Director, P.U.S.

⁷ *Education for Citizenship*, by N. Whatley, Headmaster of Clifton. From *The Headmaster Speaks* (Kegan Paul, 7/6).