

A summary of Miss Mason's philosophy is given in the annexed Synopsis. The chief points may be stated as follows, and the whole work of the Parent's Union School and of the College with its practising School is based upon them.

The Child is a Person with all the powers of mind & body that he will ever have; he lacks only knowledge & experience.

Therefore,

- (a) there is no such thing as the child-mind.
- (b) the child's powers must all be used, for he has
 - (1) a natural aptitude for knowledge.
 - (2) an unlimited power of attention.

As a corollary to this, in order that his mind may grow, it must be fed.

Miss Mason's work was to show that these ends were not served by

- (1) an education limited to the three R's, plus
 - (a) vocational training for the worker's child.
 - or (b) social accomplishments for the child of the rich.

and that they were hindered by

- (2) oral teaching on the part of the teacher.
- (3) the use of text-books (except in the case of Mathematics & Grammar) which

imparted information only.

For she taught that every child, being a person, is entitled by birthright to a liberal education, & that a liberal education means that

- (1) the mind must be fed with ideas & not information,
- & (2) these ideas must touch upon all that concerns the nature of child or man.

Therefore, Miss Mason said,

Education is the Science of Relations,—the relation of child or man to God, to himself & his fellow men, & to the natural world around him.

Consequently, a liberal education must be devised to cover all these relationships.

The possibilities of Miss Mason's work lay in her discovery of the nature of the mind.

Hitherto the mind has been considered

- (1) as a sac to hold ideas, or
- (2) as a part of a child's nature which could only be examined by means of intelligence tests, so-called "child-study", etc.

Whereas Miss Mason taught that mind is, so to speak, a spiritual organism, which, like the body, feeds upon suitable food & starves upon unsuitable, that

- (1) it feeds in order to grow, (not to know).
- (2) it can only feed upon vital food, not food that has been prepared or pre-digested, any more than can the body.
- (3) a literary form & first-hand knowledge is the only banquet upon which mind can grow.

The accompanying programmes of the Parents' Union School & the prospectus of the College & prospectus of the Practising School, ("Fairfield"), Ambleside, show in detail how all the subjects are covered, both in the School & College.

The work is done by independent study from the very first, & does result in the ability of both children & students amongst other things to grasp the sense of any passage of varying length, according to age, a page at six years old to six or seven pages at a later age, after a single reading.