

II.

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THOSE of us who have had practical experience of P.U. Methods will have heard without any surprise of the remarkable success achieved by Miss Hare. We are astonished rather that those methods are not in more general use in our Secondary Schools; for though the P.U. proceeds from triumph to triumph in the Home, the Preparatory Schools, and the Elementary Schools, yet in the Secondary Schools—or I should say in the recognised Secondary Schools for boys, for this is the only type of school for which I am in any way competent to speak—it has as yet gained no firm foothold. Perhaps there has not been much missionary effort in this direction. All of these schools too, except six are under public control, and it may be more difficult to make new departures in state schools than in those under private management. Moreover we must remember that the curriculum in a boys' Secondary School is to a great extent dominated by the School Certificate Exam. which it is now almost compulsory for the Upper forms to attempt. This is not the time to discuss the vexed question of examinations, but it would be foolish not to face plain facts, and we cannot deny that there are great practical difficulties in combining preparation for the examination and P.N.E.U. work; I strongly suspect that these difficulties deter some Heads of schools from joining the P.U.

At Harlow we solve the difficulty by a compromise. We work the *full* P.U. programmes in the lower half of the school only. I introduced Miss Mason's methods a few years ago, after being converted by a day spent in one of Mr. Household's wonderful Gloucestershire schools. If I may digress a moment, I should like to advise any new enquirers into the real meaning of the P.N.E.U. also to spend a day in one of Mr. Household's schools; they will see and hear things there which will be an absolute revelation. The experiment at Harlow has been a great success. It has completely transformed the school. In fact, when I compare the school as it is now, with what it was before, I don't know which feeling predominates in my mind, shame at the [p 554]

recollection of the wretched dry husks I was so long content to put before my unfortunate younger pupils, or gratitude to the P.U. for showing me the better way.

Nor must you think that the improvement is confined to the Lower School. For in truth the beneficial spirit of Miss Mason inspires the whole work of the College. It affects the Staff; for no teacher, from the Head of the School downwards can come into daily touch with P.U. work without having his whole attitude to education profoundly modified. It affects the methods of teaching; for we apply Miss Mason's principle of the vital importance of reproduction to much of the work of the Upper School. I may mention especially that I have applied a modification of this process to the teaching of modern languages with gratifying results; and now, though I know on the highest authority that the standard of modern languages in Secondary Schools is so deplorably low, that even in good schools 100% of the candidates are often rejected at the School Certificate Examination in these subjects, we have no difficulty in passing any average candidate after a course of two lessons a week for four years in French and three years in German. Finally, and most important of all, there is the effect

of the P.N.E.U. work on the senior pupils themselves. I believe that the boys who have had a preliminary training on P.U. lines are, on the average, more intelligent and capable than those who have not enjoyed this advantage. And I think I can show good ground for my opinion. For the last two years, the boys in the upper classes are for the first time those who have done P.N.E.U. work in the lower school. And for the last two years the examination results have been immeasurably superior to anything we have done before. I can hardly quote these results in detail,¹ lest it should be thought that I was trying to convert [p 555]

this occasion into an advertisement for the school. It must suffice to say that in each of the two years the public honours gained were six or seven times more than the average of previous years. The actual particulars I should be glad to show to anybody who wished to know them. Of course it is open to anyone to say that all this is merely a coincidence. It may be, but I can't believe it myself. It proves however one thing most conclusively. If any Head Master is hesitating to join the P.U. lest he may jeopardise his examination results, he can put this fear aside once and for all with perfect safety.

I believe I have a minute left of the time allotted, so may I add a word about the supply of male teachers. It is undoubtedly a great drawback that there are no teachers to be found already trained in P.U. principles. Now the P.U. is a very remarkable society. It is remarkable too in this respect, viz., that unlike most educational societies it has a nice fat balance in hand. May I, in all humility suggest to the Council that they should employ part of this balance in training male teachers in P.U. principles, either by arranging holiday courses or by establishing a male counterpart of the House of Education. (Cheers). Then with a supply of teachers assured, I believe that the P.U. would ultimately play the same prominent part in our Secondary Schools as it already does in the elementary and preparatory schools of the country.

¹ The results referred to were as follows:—

School Certificate. Oxford Senior Local. 1st Class Honours 2; 2nd do. 6; 3rd do. 4.

London Matriculation. Passed direct 3; Passed by exemption 6.

Oxford Responsions. Exempted by School Certificate 12.

Cambridge Previous. Exempted by School Certificate 10.

Scholarships. Highgate School (open) £66 per annum. King's School, Canterbury, £25 per annum.