Some Impressions of the Ambleside Method.

I.

BY THE HEADMASTER OF A COUNCIL SCHOOL.[1]

THE scheme has been in operation in the school for over two years, and the change in interest is most marked. From Form I. onwards pupils feel that the school is a joy and a delight. There is a surprising keenness in the work, and the boys have become very alert. The characters in the books are clothed with such a reality as to make them a part of the life of the children. The battle between the Greeks and Trojans has been fought over again with sticks made from orange boxes, the boys agreeing among themselves who should be Hector, Agamemnon and Ulysses. The home-life has become awakened by new and strange names. At first parents thought that someone at school was qualifying for a place in an asylum. Now they are interested in the narrations of their children and find somewhere among the disused things of the home that there are copies of Scott or Dickens which belonged to their great-grandfathers. These now occupy an honourable place and are daily read.

This new interest is revealed in the quality, quantity and sentence-construction of written composition. While there still remains the spelling difficulty, children now see the need for words and their correct spelling. During the last two years spelling has much improved, and the vocabulary of the average child has greatly increased. The quality of the composition has become vastly higher. In fact when comparisons are made with the work of children of the same age two years ago, the change is hardly credible. The following written exercises show what has been done after a year's work with the methods. They are given as written. A boy, age 7.

> *St. Alban.*—One day a man fled to Alban's house and he asked Alban to hide him as quickly as he could. 'What evil have you done?' said Alban. 'No evil,' said he, 'but I am a Christian.' The next day Alban was talking to Amphibalus when a servant came and said the soldiers were at the gate. Then Amphibalus said 'Amen.' 'Do not be afraid,' said
>
> [p 6]
>
> Alban, 'my servants will take you through a secret passage. Take off your cape.' Amphibalus did as he was told. Then Alban put on the cape and waited for the Romans. When the Romans saw who he was they took him to the Governor.

A boy, age 8.

> *Coronation of Arthur*.—Then with her two sons came Bellicent and King Leodogran asked if she knew about Arthur. She said 'O king, I will tell thee,' and she began her story of the coronation. As Arthur sat on the throne and the knights knelt to be knighted, he gave them such strict laws that some had pale faces, other had flushed faces. The sword was put down in front of him. He looked at it and on one side it said 'Take me,' on the other it said 'Cast me away,' and Arthur's face was sad; but Merlin said 'Take it, the time to cast it away is long.' So Arthur took it. Beside the throne was Merlin, and near him was the Lady of the Lake, who was clothed in white samite, while incense curled about her. She lived down in the deep, and whatever storms were upon

the water she was calm, and she could walk on the water like our Lord. They heard the sound of holy hymns from out of the deep. Coming from a window behind the throne, which had on it the Crucifixion, were three coloured rays, flame, vert, and azure, which showed three queens. They were tall and stood in silence ready to help him at his need.

A boy, age 9.

Scrooge.—While Scrooge was sitting in front of the fire taking his gruel he glanced at the tiles on which were pictures of the scriptures. But instead of seeing the real pictures he saw Marley's face. He got up and after walking up and down the room several times said 'Humbug.' He looked at a big bell which began to ring, and so did every bell in the house. They all stopped at once. Then he heard a clanking noise over the wine casks. He then remembered that ghosts pulled chains and began to feel rather frightened. All at once the cellar door flew open with a booming sound. Then it came into Scrooge's room and stood in front of him. Scrooge said, 'What do you want with me?' 'Much,' said the ghost. The ghost was transparent, so that Scrooge could see the two buttons on the back of his coat. He wore the same tights, the same waistcoat, and the same everything. Scrooge said 'Can you sit down?' The ghost said 'I can,' and did so.

Boy, age 12.

Excalibur.—'Excalibur' was the name of King Arthur's sword. He found it one fine summer's day when walking by a lake. An arm rose up from out the bosom of the lake clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful. He rowed across and took it and wore it like a king.

The hilt was set in diamonds of extraordinary value, costly pearls, and myriads of topaz-lights and jacinth work of the subtlest jewellery. Arthur gazed so long that both his eyes were dazzled with the bright lights. On one side were the words 'Take me,' and on the other 'Cast me away.' He did not know what to do, but Merlin, the old magician, said 'The time to cast away is far from now', so Arthur kept it and used it well.

The scene next comes to where the king is lying smitten thro' the helm in a ruined chapel, a broken chancel with a broken cross. The king is very

[p 7]

sick, and thinks his wound has taken cold and that he will die before help comes.

The time had come to throw the sword away.

King Arthur said to Sir Bedivere, 'Take my brand Excalibur, which was my pride, and throw it into the middle mere, watch what thou see'st and lightly bring me word.'

Sir Bedivere went. He paused and looked at the sword and thought it would be better to leave 'Excalibur' concealed there among the many knotted water-flags that grew beside the mere. So lightly Sir Bedivere went to the king.

The king drawing thicker breath said 'What hast thou seen, or what hast heard?' And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere, 'I heard the ripple washing in the reeds, and the wild water lapping on the crag.' 'Ah! unknightly traitor-hearted, Authority forgets a dying king, go again I bid thee.' Sir Bedivere went a second time counting the dewy

pebbles as he went. Again as he took the sword its richness overpowered him, and he hid it a second time. Would it not be better to keep the sword that it might be put in some great monarch's treasure-house and be shown at a joust of arms by some old man saying 'This is King Arthur's sword Excalibur wrought by the lonely Maiden of the Lake, nine years she wrought it sitting in the deeps upon the hidden bases of the hills.' So back he went to the king. 'Hast thou performed my command? what hast thou seen, or what hast heard?' To this the traitor-hearted Bedivere replied 'I heard the long ripple washing on the crag, and the wild water lapping in the reeds.' King Arthur mad with rage said 'Go again, and if thou spare to fling Excalibur a third time, I will arise and slay thee with mine own hand, for a man may fail in duty twice and yet the third time may prosper, Get thee hence.'

Down the rocks and ridges leapt Sir Bedivere, leaping among the bulrush beds, he clutched the sword, and strongly wheeled and threw it. The great brand made lightnings in the splendour of the moon, and ere it dipped the surface an arm rose up clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful, and brandished it three times and drew it under. And lightly went Sir Bedivere to the king. 'Ah,' said the king, 'I see by thine eyes what thou hast done, tell me what thou hast seen, or what hast heard.' Sir Bedivere told his story, and at the king's request carried him to the edge of the mere.

There is the greatest hope of the changes which will follow from these methods. The self-activity of the child finds an outlet in 'doing things' for himself; the learning by the scholars and not the teaching by the teachers gives confidence and self-reliance; the interest in the doings of men and women will act as a sure antidote against boredom and listlessness; the training to see a motive in action will lead to the weighing of newspaper talk and the deeds of men. A child leaving school with such a mass of experience will be loath to take his opinions from second-hand sources. The cultivation of an appreciation for pictures, music and poetry will give a distinct tone to the afterlife. The proper use of books and the reading habit will fit a
[p 8]
child, either to continue a higher education or to become an intelligent and skilful craftsman. This liberal education has its foundation in the religious, moral and spiritual ideas of the great minds of the past and present. The child is an individual waiting for the real experiences of life; the State is an aggregation of individuals each of whom gives something to the qualities of that State, and every British-born child comes into the world with potentialities which should make for the welfare of the British Empire. To transform these possibilities into real qualities is the first and last duty of all who have the care of the future citizens of our glorious Empire. As the individual helps to give character to the State, so education prepares the individual to fulfil the obligations of service, humanity and religion.

II.

BY THE HEADMASTER OF ANOTHER COUNCIL SCHOOL.

Yes. Our children have had oral lessons and voyages imaginary, and contour lessons, and worse still commercial geography, and date books, and pleasant extracts in reading books that you could read in three months, and whose thoroughfares you traversed backwards or forwards for the remaining nine months till you were bored stiff.

But you say, What is this extra reading that Miss Mason gives? Let me give you a list of what my kiddies in smoke-grimed Leeds have read in the Autumn term.

We read a section of Arnold Forster's English History, the contemporary section of French History, roughly speaking, from the Napoleonic Wars to the beginning of the Crimean War. We read some of *The Antiquary* of Scott, the 2nd Canto of Byron's *Childe Harold*, *The Ancient Mariner*, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, selections from Burns, Goldsmith, Wordsworth, Cowper and Shelley. We learned something of the Painters,—Turner, Gainsborough, Romney and others, and contemplated copies of their works. We looked upon the history of our country, not only on the political and social side, but also saw it as it was reflected in the painters and writers of the time. We watched the unfolding flower and growing seed in the Nature Books of Stopes and saw it actually in the growing plant. We read the delightful nature stories of Bees, etc., in *The Fairyland of Science*.

[p 9]

We turned to the unchanging East and saw, as through a glass darkly, the land of the Pharaohs, portrayed in the Book of the British Museum, marched and fought again with Alexander in the pages of Plutarch, learned to know the meaning and purpose of our own lives in Miss Mason's book, *Ourselves*, began to grasp the faith and trust that underlies all true citizenship in Arnold Forster's *Laws of Every Day Life*, and last, but not least, wandered in the Forest of Arden in the company of Rosalind, Orlando, Touchstone, the melancholy Jacques, under the guidance of one William Shakespeare . …

But there are certain things we did find out. First, as I have already hinted, a limiting of our view as to the value of the oral lesson, an enhancing as to the value of letting the child come face to face with the best writers on a subject. Second, the discovery that the pupil had greater powers of mind than we (optimists always) had given him credit for, that the child thought not specially in single words, but more frequently in whole blocks, that the quicker children had almost uncanny powers of "sensing" a passage, that they took a whole picture in a sort of stride and passed on.

We found that ideas were being garnered and vocabularies were enlarging. We found that pupils were discovering harmonies between ideas really similar, belonging to different circumstances, and better still, collision between one kind of experience and another—that hard but most certain way of knowledge—that mental upset between different analyses, to be harmonised by some truth deeper still, that was waiting for the seeker before peace could again reign.

Then comes the question: Did the children attend? Now, there is the secret of the method. All the lessons call for what Professor James calls exteriorization. The Professor says somewhere: "If a man have knowledge and cannot exteriorized it, then he really hasn't got it" A somewhat Hibernian remark, but true. Therefore each lesson calls for exteriorization and this helps towards concentration in the hearer. Two ways of exteriorization come to mind:—

1. The written. Twenty minutes reading and ten composition (and you get more in that ten than you used to get in thirty in the old composition lesson).
2. Oral. Narration of the meaning of the part read, and here you get a rapid improvement in the pupil's power

[p 10]

of expressing himself as well as in verbal memory. One boy (gifted with verbal memory), after hearing the soliloquy, The Seven Ages of Man, read once, stood out and gave it very nearly verbatim. It was very remarkable.

It is something if by this scheme one has been enabled to let in the light and air of a gentler and cleaner life and open pathways of joy along roads otherwise choked or barred by ignorance or upbringing, or worse.

"Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But chiefly reverence in us dwell."

III.

BY A DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION.

Miss Mason's aim is to educate a child to fulfil all the duties of a citizen, to comprehend and appreciate what is great and good, and to form character in conformity with the principles of religion and morality. The child is looked upon as a living, active, enquiring being, rather than a blank sheet of paper. All the potentialities of greatness are present, and the object of education is to transform these into realities.

Nature Study occupies an important place in the method, and offers unlimited material for observation, comparison and contrast. Men, books and things are the educational *media*. I need not elaborate this. The methods are fully dealt with in the P.N.E.U. pamphlets, and in *Home Education* and *School Education*, by Miss Mason.

The more practical aims seem to us to be:—

1. To help the child to carry forward youthful ardour and a desire for knowledge.
2. To maintain a keen interest all through school life, as a preparation for larger and wider interests.
3. To foster habits of concentration, continuous effort and self-reliance.
4. To enable the child to talk and write naturally and easily on what has been read or observed.
5. To cultivate a love for and sympathy with what is finest in both nature and the arts.

In order to touch the child at many points, a wide curriculum is provided. From the beginning good literature is read to

[p 11]

the children, and narration by the scholars follows each reading. Food for thought is thus given and a vocabulary supplied for the expression of ideas. When narration becomes easy and free, the child is ready for written composition. An excellent preparation is thus given for individual study in higher Forms. When individual study begins, the reproduction is mostly written. Here there is no suggestive questioning by the teacher nor can there be any shirking by the pupils. Each member of a class must reveal himself. At first the reproduction closely follows the book, which is natural; later the work becomes more original and individual. The study of an author provides ample materials for exercises in composition. Nature study is first taken from real things. The child sees and handles while the teacher guides and suggests. The teacher next reads a description from a standard work, and in most cases this is amplified by the pupils reading from a well written primer or text book. Thus the child seems to be able at a much earlier stage than usual to fit together his own philosophy of nature and life. History and

Geography are approached through well written books read to the children in sections, and reproduced by them orally. Citizenship is based on Plutarch's *Lives*, an admirable preparation for the study of *The Rights and Duties of a Citizen* and the *Laws of Everyday Life*, by Arnold Forster. To develop some appreciation of Art, six pictures are studied each term, and in the higher forms this is linked with the drawing lessons. A well-known artist friend of mine is of opinion that all this is wrong, but his story is too long to tell you here. Music has a place in the curriculum, and with older pupils some attempts are made to cultivate musical appreciation by playing selections from some great master after a simple talk on the life and aspirations of the composer. On the principles of my artist friend this also should be all wrong. Handwork takes an important place. The scenes depicted in various books are used for original expression work in drawing. In the higher forms, Elementary Science affords many opportunities for the making of simple apparatus, and the school garden forms an important adjunct to the work of each programme. Both boys and girls take some Hygiene and Physiology in Form IV. …

When these difficulties had been understood and grappled with, both teachers and scholars took on a new alertness. …

We find that the careful selection of books in each subject

[p 12]

makes the work more definite. The subject matter is ready to hand and the function of the teacher is to read it to the pupils in a natural, sympathetic and realistic way. The teacher becomes a medium conveying the thoughts expressed in the printed page. There is no explanation before reading; children are given an opportunity to interpret ideas for themselves. When uncommon words occur, they are written on the black-board before the reading begins. If any point has not been understood then explanations are given. We find marked improvements in all the phases of school life. The power of attention is much stronger. Children discuss with each other persons, scenes and incidents read to them, a practice which overflows into the homes. The older members of a family tell the younger ones about their new knowledge. Powers of general observation have improved. Conversational readiness becomes a characteristic. A quarter of a century of these methods with all the children of England and the strong silent Englishman should be a rare bird! Written exercises show a marked advance on previous work. …

We have noted that children obviously make far greater efforts than before. Learning seems to have become easy, although the pace is decidedly quicker. Greater demands are made upon the resources and watchfulness of the teacher. …

The books chosen for general reading are thoroughly appreciated and enjoyed. Children enter into the spirit of the books and display a real insight into motives; humour is enjoyed; pathos brings tears and treachery, indignation and disgust. So great is the interest in these books that children frequently purchase books for their own use. Copies have been purchased, varying in number from fifty to one hundred in a school of, *David Copperfield*, *Old Curiosity Shop*, *Christmas Carol*, *King Lear*, *Twelfth Night*, *Coriolanus*, *As You Like It*, Tennyson's *Poems*, *Pilgrim's Progress*. So begin private libraries!

IV.

BY ANOTHER SCHOOLMASTER.

When we were teaching classes in the mass we had little opportunity, but now with our classes working privately in small sections, we can help a backward reader, discuss the portion of a book which any child is studying, and in many ways exert our influence on those children who require it. I place this advan-
[p 13]
tage as one of the great ones of P.N.E.U. methods—personal contact with the individual.

I should like now to say a few words concerning the advantages which have accrued from eighteen months' usage of P.N.E.U. methods. Many, I won't say all, for that would be an ideal almost too much to expect, but many children have cultivated a taste for good literature and surely, if a child has learnt to appreciate the value of good books, the teaching has not been in vain. I have known children choose copies of some of the books as presents from parents, etc. I have known them borrow the books from school to make up lost ground. I have observed the interest shown in the P.U.S. lessons, and these are signs of what I have just stated. The children have secured greater freedom of expression. Compositions are less hackneyed and the quality has improved in such a manner as to be almost incredible without actually seeing the books. Term examinations prove that the knowledge gained is not here to-day and gone to-morrow. The field of information is very comprehensive as a perusal of the study books will show.

V.

BY A SCHOOLMISTRESS.

Examination weeks.—We took the Examination Tests as far as we had gone in the work. All the girls turned up in fine form and we scarcely had an absentee that week. I have known of girls attending well before a School Treat or a Concert came off—but of girls attending a whole week for an examination I had never heard—or thought possible. However it is quite true.

The tests were worked and the girls did as well as they possibly could. I never realised that there was so much in the girls, and the papers show that what was really in came out. I was quite surprised at the results, though many a girl went through a heart searching performance to answer the questions. It did them a world of good; they found out that if they had been inattentive or absent, it was no good—they simply could not work the papers and so lost marks and their position in class. It was quite a study to the elder girls. It was a hard week, but the girls really liked the examination.

Of all the work this term we found the History—from Arnold Forster's *History of England*—the most difficult. This scheme requires in the teachers an absolute enthusiasm for the work, and they must have in some form or other a love of books.
[p 14]

I should now like to summarise what appear to me the chief advantages of the scheme. First—from the teacher's view.

The work is so interesting that teachers, young and old, love to be in school amongst their work. The young teacher learns and gains knowledge as she teaches, and it is a heaven-sent boon to a teacher who has been many years teaching "Drudgery," and we have all felt the latter at times.

No single lesson is monotonous. Something fresh in every lesson.

Children are more at ease with their teacher, and are not afraid to speak out. It brings out all the individuality in the child and the teacher.

The teachers say that they would not like to go back to the old scheme for all the world; they are heart and soul in love with the new work.

From the child's point of view:—

Children learn to study by themselves.

They hear and read the very best carefully chosen books, and children who read from the very best books must express their thoughts in good English.

They are kept interested, and their enthusiasm in school is unbounded.

Their lives are full of joy, the joy of learning (and the little ones love to learn), the joy of coming to school, the joy of real living.

They enter school with love and leave it with regret on going to work—not like the boy who watched the clock all the morning, and when the teacher asked him if he had to go on an important errand, said, "No sir," but when 12 o'clock struck he jumped up and said with a glad ring in his voice, "I'm off, I am fourteen years of age to-day," and rushed out of the school. What a tragedy lay in those few words!

VI.

BY ANOTHER SCHOOLMISTRESS.

Most briefly speaking, it may be summed up in the words that the actual attention rather than memory is brought into play. Now this is done through the medium of narration and composition. A passage or passages from some good book, a whole story, even, is read to the children, and they either narrate what

[p 15]

they have heard on the conclusion of the reading, or write a composition on it. This is a very different thing from learning by heart. Whereas memorizing can become a purely mechanical repetition of words till they have been imprinted on the brain, and involving no actual understanding of the meaning thereof, narration, or the writing out of a subject, which has been but once read to the children, must call for close attention on their part.

Speaking of our customary method of education at an educational meeting, Dr. Napier said that in spite of the improvements in teaching, apparatus and text-books, the boys who left school to-day were little superior to those of thirty or forty years ago. Too much attention was given to teaching: too little to making the children learn: and the sloppiness of natural opinion was greatly encouraged by the lack of intellectual discipline and training. If children were taught to learn, to think and to suffer in order to get knowledge, then when they grew up they would appreciate the value of forming opinions and the solemn necessity of having no opinions till they knew the facts.

But to return to the scheme we are now considering. It might be suggested at the outset that this narrating or writing of a subject after one reading is too difficult for children. It has now been proved by those who have tried the method that it is not so. Also the fact must always be borne in mind that a little difficulty stimulates, and we ought no more to hesitate in giving intellectual food to children after they have passed the first stages of babyhood, than we would hesitate to give meat to a growing child. . . . .

Many books must be used and a great deal of reading done, and as there is so much to read time only allows it to be read once.

Besides the permanent books, different Classical Plays and Poems every three months, also some good standard novel and various other books are used. Reproductions of six pictures by some famous artist are used each term, these only cost 2s. the set and are of the greatest educational value.

Reading Miss Mason's scheme in conjunction with a mental review of one's own childhood, one realizes almost instinctively its practical worth. One knows so well the lasting impression, or memory rather, of any story which one has either heard or read, and repeated to some younger brother or sister, a totally
[p 16]
different memory from that obtained by mere learning by heart from the written page, which, as already said, can often be nothing but a parrot-like repetition, with no real understanding of the matter in hand.

Of course, by Miss Mason's method, word for word repetition is frequently obtained, but it is not mechanical learning; it is a gradual training of the mind to a quick understanding, and, *through* the understanding, to a memorizing of the subject.

Those who have ever themselves attempted to memorize a sermon or lecture in order to repeat it to some friend, will easily understand and appreciate the method Miss Mason suggests. They will know how, from at first being able to repeat nothing but the salient facts, gradually the memory will learn to assimilate not only the salient facts but also the details, and even the very words in which they were embodied. The sermon or lecture is, in fact, reconstructed in the mind, at first merely in part, eventually as a complete whole. Ordinary listening would never have obtained this result. It was obtained through the stimulus of the prospective narration.

Now, it is very certain that if children are taught to concentrate, or to have their attention attractively caught, their actual powers of memory are, as a whole, considerably greater than those of an older person. …

We have found it to be a scheme which educates in the best sense of the word. By it the child is encouraged to work out his own line of thought, instead of following—or not following—one particular line worked out by the teacher in order to arrive at a certain fact or idea. The child does more work, while the teacher does less; and surely this is of the very essence of education, the end towards which education should be directed. The scheme gives scope for originality, and therefore each child's nature becomes, in a measure, the natural result of its own originality. Hitherto there has been little real chance of calling forth the latent individuality of the children. It was impossible that it should be so, when the set portions of work, whatever practical use they might be in themselves, were merely perfectly learned and memorized. It was almost impossible to judge how much the child had really understood, how much the child *had made its own*, how much it had actually stored up in the treasure house of the brain.

There is no question but that, when children have been
[p 17]
taught really to appreciate good literature, they still retain their taste for it on leaving school.

Good literature and good language are practically synonymous terms. Through the reading, and, above all, the narrating of good literature, the children's vocabulary is greatly enlarged. Naturally a number of the words are entirely new and unfamiliar to them, but then so were all words unfamiliar in their infancy; it simply means adding to the store they already possess, and it is surprising how soon they begin to use these new and complex words, at first only when narrating, but later in their compositions, and even in their own conversations.

The powers of reasoning are greatly developed by this method. The mind, having plenty to feed upon, grows in intellect and activity. Questions are looked at from many points of view, and a clearer and broader outlook on life is the result. . .

The scheme places the best, and the best only, before the children, whose thoughts and ideas, being turned always towards the light, grow in intelligence as naturally as a plant grows towards the sun. They become more intellectual, and the whole tone of the school is gradually raised. We have noticed this fact particularly among our children after six months' training.

Recently one of the clergy made especial comment on the reasoning and intellectual powers of the elder girls. Having given them a lesson on the Sermon on the Mount, dealing with its deeper aspects, he was exceedingly surprised and pleased to find how thoroughly the girls had grasped his instruction and reasoned out the underlying and deeper meaning. He felt fully convinced that this development of their reasoning powers was the result of the new method of training which we had been adopting during the last six months.

In every case we find the interest of the children aroused, and they are invariably on the alert. This is particularly noticeable in the youngest children, those of six, seven and eight years of age. . . . .

Other books which they thoroughly enjoy are, "The Age of Fable" by Thomas Bulfinch, and "Stories from Troy and Greece" by Andrew Lang; but perhaps the favourite of all is "Bleak House." Possibly this is on account of the evident pleasure in comparing and contrasting the different persons in the novel. They are undoubtedly quick in discovering the characteristics of each, in recognizing and being attracted by what is noble and

[p 18]

good, and in promptly denouncing all meanness and hypocrisy.

Of course this is exactly what we teachers want. If our girls will only be drawn to make heroes and heroines of the right kind of fiction people, they will naturally be led to a desire to imitate them, and they will, as naturally, learn to despise the meaner characters. They will, in fact, half unconsciously make friends of the best fiction people,—not forgetting also those who have lived in fact,—and those mind-friendships will imperceptibly lead them on towards the goal of true womanhood.

Attendance.—The attendance has undoubtedly improved, for although quite good before it is much better in this way, the elder girls very seldom stay away at odd times to help in different ways; they are evidently keen to be at school and "where there is a will there is a way."

VII.

(i)

From the Report on the P.N.E.U. Experiment in Gloucestershire.

BY H. W. HOUSEHOLD.

(*Secretary for Education, Gloucestershire.)*

It was in November, 1916, that Miss Mason's method and its achievements first became known to us. By the following March five Schools in the County had embarked upon the course.

By 1918 twenty-six schools were working under the scheme. To each of these Schools a circular letter was addressed.

County Education Office,
Shire Hall, Gloucester,
4th January, 1919.

Dear Sir (or Madam),

Now that Miss Mason's Scheme has been working for some time in more than a score of Schools, I am anxious to be able to tell the Education Committee what measure of success is attending it. Owing to the War conditions I have not been able to visit the Schools as I should have liked to do, but even if I had visited them I should not have felt able—nor should I have been the proper person—to estimate the results of the Scheme.

You and your staff, and perhaps some of your children, can do it with much surer touch; and I should be very grateful if each School would let me have reports and memoranda from any of those who are teaching or are being taught, who feel that they have anything that they would like to say, no matter how trifling it may seem. I shall make it my business to digest the heap of material which I hope will flow in upon me, and in return I may be able to give back something to the Schools.

Needless to say, I want to know just what you are all *really* thinking. If you do not accept Miss Mason's aims, or like her methods, or approve her

[p 19]

choice of books, I should like to know it. If you are in complete sympathy then I should like to have illustrations of the results that are being attained.

In the December number of the "Parents' Review," there is a most suggestive article on Education and Kultur by E.K.—initials behind which is no doubt concealed the name of Miss Kitching, Miss Mason's friend and Secretary—which will point lines of thought and help to weigh up achievement.

I hope that nobody will make a burden of what I ask. Much or little, I shall be grateful for what you send. It may be that in some cases the moment has not come for saying anything. It will come later. Where it has come there will be things to say, and those are the things that I should like to hear.

In any report that I may frame on your material it would probably be the general wish that individual Schools should remain anonymous.

I am, yours truly,
(signed) H. W. HOUSEHOLD,
Secretary.

The admirable reports which have been sent in are too long to be printed in full. In summarising their contents it has seemed best to take in sequence the various points brought out by the many writers, and to illustrate the argument by extracts. The extracts have sometimes been shortened by the omission (always indicated) of a few words or sentences, but

nothing material has been left out in any passage quoted. The compiler has studied to present every point of view and line of argument with fairness.

Perhaps it was rather early to ask for such reports. The Schools had been working under almost every possible disadvantage. Many were understaffed; the influenza epidemic had played havoc with the attendance and the work; books came late from the publishers, and in many cases did not come at all. There was much to discourage, and little to hearten, save the cheering light which at times shone through the clouds of difficulty from the far horizon, where a new sun was rising with promise of a cloudless noon. Eleven of the Schools have marked its rising, and await with a sure confidence the vision of its meridian glory. The teachers of three, "lost leaders" of whom better things were hoped, have fallen by the way, stumbling on rocks of their own imagining, and have sought leave to go back again to the old familiar darkness. They have gone. They could not see the light, and said stoutly it was not there. Three have not felt able to send in any report but their success can hardly be doubted. Of the rest most have beheld elusive gleams, and press forward bravely and hopefully, though not without mistake and trials and disappointments.

[p 20]

The difficulties encountered are real. That they are often a result of misunderstanding, and so self-created, rather adds to than diminishes their power to obstruct. Let us look at them through the eyes of those who have found them sometimes very dragons in their path.

Some—among them one of the fallen—feared the terminal examinations. They remembered the annual nightmare of their early teaching days, and said that examinations must lead to cramming. They would not believe that these examinations do not; that revision is not attempted; that the fulness of the syllabus makes it, and is intended to make it, quite impossible; that (greatest of all joys) it is found to be unnecessary. "The old idea of constant revision is rendered impossible," says the Head Master of N. "If I interpret Miss Mason correctly (and he does) she discountenances this repetition as unnecessary and harmful, and certainly I have long since discovered that time spent in going over, again and again, work already done is generally wearisome and unprofitable."

Some lack confidence in the children whom they teach. "The Scheme," they say "was never intended for the child in the Elementary School. It was intended for children working at home."

Or, as another, an assistant, writes, "The Scheme would be a most excellent one if used in Secondary Schools, or in Institutions, where the aim is to turn out *students*, thoroughly well-learned in the things of ancient days. … Practically all our pupils have to become *workers* at an early age. … It is folly to waste the short and precious school-days in so much book learning, when the child's chief need is a practical knowledge of how to meet the difficulties of everyday life. Students are seldom practical people, and the British Empire of the future needs workers rather than bookworms."

Alas! alas! that any teacher should so write. Must not the workers be thinkers too? Must they not learn the great lessons of the ages—the experience of the past with its successes and its failures, the wisdom of the wise and the folly of the foolish—if they are to steer the ship of state by safe ways to the harbour of well-being and contentment, and not end disastrously upon the rocks?

The British Museum and Plutarch's *Lives*, says another, "are difficult for younger children. The scenes and lives of people
[p 21]
that approach more nearly to their own time would seem to be of a more practical value. … The average person knows nothing of these people and can be expected to care little about unearthing the dim and distant past."

The same note occurs in other reports. Sometimes it sounds more harshly still. "It is utterly immaterial to me," says one, "what the Babylonians wore, or what the Assyrians built. … History should deal chiefly with the past century." Shall we not think with pity of what those who write thus have themselves missed somewhere in the days of their youth? Imagination—the gracious influence that does all the gilding of our life, and is also the very source of the great conceptions that lead to material success and social well-being—imagination in them has atrophied and come to nought.

"The study of Plutarch's *Lives*," says another, "seems suitable only for riper minds. If the Lives as a whole were studied the scholars might get an idea of the foundation of the Roman and Grecian Empires." But he has missed the whole purpose of the study, which is by no means to give them "an idea of the foundation of the Roman and Grecian Empires," but something very different. Old Montaigne[2] shall tell him what it is.

"He (the teacher) shall by the help of Histories inform himself of the worthiest minds that were in the best ages. It is a frivolous study if a man list, but of invaluable worth to such as can make use of it. … What profit shall he not reap touching this point, reading the lives of our Plutarch? Always conditioned the master bethink himself whereto his charge tendeth, and that he imprint not so much in his scholar's mind the date of the ruin of Carthage, as the manners of Hannibal and Scipio, nor so much where Marcellus died, as because he was unworthy of his devoir he died there; that he teach him not so much to know Histories, as to judge of them. … To some kind of men it is a mere grammatical study, but to others a perfect anatomy of Philosophy, by means whereof the secretest part of our nature is searched into."

It is all plain enough to those whose eyes are open. Let us hear another teacher, the Head Master of Q. There is no disguising that the children find Plutarch difficult, but they are
[p 22]
meant to find him difficult. The joy comes when the difficulties are mastered, and they are being mastered at Q.

"Among the subjects new to teachers and scholars," we are told, "the study of 'Citizenship' through Plutarch's *Lives* seems to have presented difficulty. In some instances this is due to the difficult sentences of the translation. … This difficulty has been overcome to a certain extent by greater acquaintance with the style of the writing; but more so, however, by a recognition of two things. First, that to explain the meaning of the words destroys interest in the story and annoys the child. Second, that in many instances it is unnecessary. Although a child's dictionary knowledge of the meaning of words is lacking, it does not follow that the meaning of a sentence or paragraph is unknown to him. … Neither is the correct employment of the words beyond him in writing or narrating.

"The further example of this power to grasp the meaning of a writer without being able to define the words in detail, was afforded by 'The Talisman.' In two forms the teachers set out with the purpose of taking it chapter by chapter, dwelling on the explanation of the meaning of

words. The result was disappointing. Mechanical progress was slow and laboured. Interest in the *story* was killed. Written tests showed little grasp of the story, and in spite of such careful digging in the sentences the gold remained hidden. I suggested letting the children read silently—testing by narration—and then written tests; and then only in those parts where the incident and description were likely to appeal. Only such explanation was given as was asked for by the children, or which was likely to bring into greater clearness some necessary point. The results were much better. The children imagined the characters and pictured the incidents for themselves. The Third Crusade, its incidents and actors, became something more than a chapter in Arnold Forster's History. Written tests showed that the author had been followed, and in reproducing his story the children reproduced his words."

"The children very much appreciated the story of Romulus and Remus," says an uncertified assistant in the same School, "and seem to have set out with the determination to enjoy the life story of Lycurgus. It is this book—Plutarch's *Lives*—and the History of Rome which are the subjects of interesting compositions." For this young teacher (she is only 21) has
[p 23]
found that "Narration has greatly improved their English. The children have a larger vocabulary. They have a clearer way of expressing themselves, and are not afraid of speaking in front of the other scholars. … Then again there are so many subjects for Compositions and the Compositions have certainly improved; they are not as scrappy as they used to be. The subjects of their essays are more interesting."

The Head Master of N. remarks that "the benefits on the whole are undeniable, and in some individual instances quite surprising. We have found that some boys, who formerly were inattentive and forgetful, have become interested, industrious and intelligent in their outlook. I would give first place to the increased interest taken by the classes in their lessons. To secure this and its consequent attention is an achievement, and the best proof of the mental training afforded."

"It is wonderful," says the Head Mistress of C., "how the expression in written work has improved, and what quantities will be written . . . . and what an amount of information is gathered and remembered, and long remembered too."

There is the answer to that examination bogey. Let the teachers and the children lay it. There is no need of other words than theirs.

An Assistant who teaches the eight-year-olds in M. writes, "Miss Mason's Scheme is at present one of great surprises. We did not take any examination at the end of the Summer Term, and many sighs were uttered and great dread felt when we heard we were taking the Christmas Examination. The feelings of utter helplessness and chaos grew worse as the dreaded Monday morning came. There was no relief when the questions came, many of which were on the first lessons of the term. The teacher stood before the class and gave out the first examination, a history question on the very first story told in the last week of August.

"For a moment or two there was a blank. Then one by one the children pulled themselves together, and gathered up from the backs of their memories with most wonderful results. Hardly a tiny detail was missing by the time they had finished. After the first plunge the teacher breathed, and each examination was waited for with greater and greater serenity."

The teacher of the seven-year-olds in the same school says:—"Several times during the term I felt very doubtful of the

[p 24]
success of the Scheme, as often the work seemed far beyond the capacity of the children, but the examination proved that my doubts were groundless. They attacked the examination well, and one of the most striking results was the way the children corrected their own English when they knew I was writing down their exact answers."

"We did not think that they could do it" is the note of many reports.

The children themselves like the examinations. "In spite of all the drawbacks of the last term the children would have been keenly disappointed if the examination had not been held," writes the Head Master of G. In some schools it was noted that the attendance was exceptionally good during the examination week. Nobody would willingly miss the papers.

Marking examination papers in large numbers is a trying task, but "marking the papers written by the scholars this term was exceedingly interesting work," says an Assistant in W., whose class must number nearly fifty children. But let us go back to the doubtful ones again. Their hesitations and objections are really very useful and may enable us to help them. Their identity is hidden and the pen, like the surgeon's knife, may have a kindly purpose, when by probing it brings harmful growths to light.

"I think that a far better selection of reading books might be made," says one of those who have abandoned the scheme; "Children of 12 and 13 do not enjoy a Scott or Shakespeare. They find them too difficult." Let us see what others have to say of Scott and Shakespeare.

"*The Talisman* is very hard-worded, but it is ever so interesting," says a girl of twelve in M.

Shakespeare has proved himself a triumphant and wholly glorious success in many of the Schools. "We were sorry the play of *King John* did not come in time for us to be able to read it—we simply enjoyed *Macbeth*," says another girl of twelve in M.

"There always seems joy when Shakespeare is announced," says the Head Mistress of C., and she adds that "many girls have bought a complete copy of Shakespeare's Works."

The writer has himself seen and felt the joy of the children in acting some of the great scenes from the plays, scenes which in one case that he recalls (it was at D.) they had not touched for more than three months. By their own desire they had
[p 25]
harked back to the work of the previous term. Of course to get this spirit and this success needs good teaching. "In beginning this Scheme in a school," writes the Head Mistress of A., "the teacher must live in her class. She must pass in and out among the girls while they are reading and see that nothing is passed over that is not understood; read the context with the child, take the hard word out, and the child will herself find out the meaning of it by seeing its use in the sentence. I find now that there is no need to go to the girls, they come out to me." Elsewhere she says, "I find Miss Mason's scheme just what we needed. The variety of subjects, which are so cleverly arranged that they blend into one whole, charms the children. They love to read and they love to be read to. … I find too that the children are beginning to appreciate language. I was reading to them one day one of the old Norse legends; the whole class of over thirty girls was wrapped in attention, when one of them remarked in a pause in the reading, 'Isn't that like poetry?'"

An Uncertificated Assistant in G. who takes Form IA. says "The work is undoubtedly extremely interesting both for teacher and for scholar. It adds an entirely new outlook to the

average child in the Elementary School … It makes even small children realise that there are thousands of good books which they had never heard of, and it makes them wish that they *could* read them. …

"The improvement in the children's vocabulary is already marked, and quite little children are slowly acquiring the habit of distinguishing between synonyms because they are so constantly hearing the correct words applied in the different meanings. They also use these words for themselves when writing down their stories and lessons. They are beginning to appreciate beauty of prose and verse. The memory is strengthened considerably."

The Head Master of the same School refers to the influence of the Scheme upon the tone of the School (which is always high). "During the nine months Miss Mason's Scheme has been worked," he says "there is an added delightful stimulus, which I had hardly thought possible among children who already loved their work."

Perhaps then we may dismiss the objection of one of the faint-hearted that "the books are written in a language far above that which the vocabulary of the children will allow them to read with moderate comfort," remarking only that the aim must

always be ahead of the achievement, and that the ability of the children to enjoy and profit by the books is far greater than he thinks. The Assistant Mistress, who teaches Form IB., in M., puts the first point quite plainly. "The choice of books for Standard I. is good," she says, "they are sufficiently beyond the children to be of real educational value." And where some of the books are felt to be difficult (perhaps too difficult) it is recognised that "when the lower forms have had more practice in the working of the Scheme, no doubt our older forms will be able to grasp these. We cannot expect our girls to grasp the Scheme in its entirety at once." It should be added that the Head Mistress of C., who writes thus, is delighted with the results that have been achieved.

Some teachers do not understand the value of the delightful books on Natural History, and think that they either supplant the natural study of Nature or leave no time for it. The children know better. Child after child writes to say how much they have enjoyed reading about the stars. That shows what the books are doing. The unbeliever who writes, "More would surely be gained by watching the development of frog spawn to tadpole and frog, than from reading so many pages from a book on the subject at a season when the spawn cannot be obtained," may really take heart. The child will look for the frog spawn, if that has caught his interest, when the time comes round—mercifully not as a member of a class under direction, but as a happy, curious, little soul following up by himself many a quest inspired by the delightful pages. We do not, need not, cannot read about every thing just (and only just) at the moment when it reveals itself. The appeal made to the children by the study of *Plant Life*, *The Fairyland of Science*, *Life and Her Children, The Sciences*, and other books, the interest which they excite and the activity of mind which they set up, are noticed by several teachers.

A valuable appreciation of the method and its results was received from the Head Master of Q., who has already been quoted at some length. The following passages are interesting and suggestive.

"The subjects seem to be many; yet nearly one half, comprising considerably more than half the bulk of work set in the programmes, is but one subject—Reading.

"Every educated person is indebted for the best part of his powers to Reading. From the very outset of his educational
[p 27]
adventures a child is being trained in the use of this power to read for pleasure and information. Incidentally the attitude of us teachers towards the subject is corrected. The technique of reading had the chief place; and while the reading lesson offered the opportunity to secure clearness of speech, yet that achievement is of less value to the individual than his power to read with purpose. In spite of the appearance on our time-tables of so many reading lessons, whatever fluency and accuracy of vocal interpretation we secured was not accompanied by the more important mental interpretation. … Under the scheme Reading throughout has improved, as it is bound to do. And the child in narrating gives better modulation of voice than was ever before secured when it was sought for as a thing apart. …

"It is clear that the intellectual interest of the child is aroused, and that teacher and pupils alike have greater pleasure in their common task. It is a common task. Both are engaged in a study of the same subject from the same books. The teacher is no longer to be regarded as the fountain of all knowledge. … The spirit of self-help is engendered. The habit of doing for oneself is required from the beginning; and it is evident that if a child is educated on these lines from the age of seven to fourteen it will have the habit of mind which will enable it to achieve rich results in the informative period of its development from fourteen years onward.

"This power of self-preparation is already noticeable, and, naturally, in a greater degree in Form IV. And when Continuation Schools are established, such children, trained in this way, should be able to pass into these schools and derive the greatest possible amount of benefit from their continued training.

"A further hope! When children have gone from Elementary to Secondary Schools, it has been observed that they have not readily adjusted themselves to new conditions. This is due, no doubt, in great part to the fact that they are unable to study when left to themselves. The habit of relying on the teacher is strong with them, and when required to delve for themselves they are unable to do so. Although provided with the tools of the student, they know not how to use them. The hope is that this reproach on elementary training will be removed.

"Among those results which are clearly due to P.U.S. methods is the increased power of concentration; and I think
[p 28]
Miss Mason's claim that narration secures concentration may be conceded. Written tests show this. When a lesson was tested by what the books on 'School Methods' called 'rapid, vigorous questioning,' the written tests, even when immediately following, were disappointing. Narration shows the grasp a child has of its reading, and at the same time strengthens its grasp. Its confidence in its possession is confirmed, so that it is not afraid to write or speak afterwards for fear of being wrong. It knows how much it has at its command. …

"There appear to me to be two errors into which we may fall in connection with narration. The first lies in the preparation. This preparation is done either by the teacher reading the selected part, or by the child reading it—aloud or silently. Assuming the teacher's reading to be good, that method seems to give better results. Modulation, emphasis, gesture, even attitude of body, help in interpretation. The child's mind can concentrate on what is read. The mechanical difficulty of reading is removed, and there is no break in the flow of thought.

But the object is to train in the habit of purposeful reading. To do that with hope of success, there should be an increasing amount of silent preparation, not only as the scholar progresses from form to form, but also from term to term in its forms. …

"The second danger springs from the fear in the teacher's mind that the prescribed amount of work will not be done each term. This fear tempts one to overdo the personal method of reading, and to rely too much on the best children. Those with weaker powers of understanding do not receive chances (of narrating) in sufficient number either to develop greater powers or to give them confidence and encouragement. More than that, if not continually called upon to take a share, equivalent to their powers, in narrating, the lazy habit of mind, springing from and fostered by reliance on other minds, will grow with them. . .

"Composition, oral and written, is undoubtedly improved. Narration secures better oral composition, and the improvement in the written work follows. … The children write at greater length, and acquaintance with good models is seen in the fuller language and better construction. … Finally, the interest in reading is greater. Children borrow the books for evening reading.[3] In two cases the parent (mother) wished to read, and it may be so in other instances, without a definite

[p 29]

request for their use being made. The 'atmosphere' surrounding the work of the school is different. It is freer; and the freer conditions are not felt by the staff only. Whatever may be the ultimate judgment on the methods and work of the P.U.S., none of us would go back within the narrower limits of the old system with anything but an ill grace."

The Head Master of R. has sent some interesting notes. "The most pleasing of all," he says, "has been the eagerness among the older scholars to narrate, a thing I could never get them to do previously, and, greatly to my astonishment, scholars I thought to be almost hopeless are in many cases the most exact and fluent narrators. Because of the oral work the scholars have enlarged their vocabularies, can express their ideas more exactly, and exercise a greater amount of intelligence in answering problems and questions based upon the work studied.

"The work under Miss Mason's Scheme is going to cause our scholars to think clearly and reason logically. When they leave school they are going to read for themselves, think for themselves, and act for themselves. In this way they will make intelligent citizens. The greatest benefit which I think the scheme will confer upon our pupils is this: they will read sufficient (and will read it intelligently) to make them want to read more, and next to character the greatest benefit a school can confer on a scholar, is to make that scholar love good books, and give him the power to read those books intelligently. The school of the past has not done this. Some children have loved books in spite of the drudgery of school readers, but whilst most children could read fluently, few understood and could retain the subject matter."

"On one point only in the scheme," says the same master, "am I a little fearful. … In the summer term the book set for Standard V. children, 10–13 years of age, was Lytton's *Harold*. This book fitted in beautifully with the period of history set for study (1066–1189) but few children enjoyed it because, except for about three places, it was not really interesting to the majority of the class. Children generally learn to break the shell of the nut to get the kernel, very slowly. To read dozens of pages of description tires them. They want to get on with the story. I want to get my scholars not only to read books but to love them." Well, his doubt is put

on record. The experience of others will be his too. The younger children as they come up the school *will* love these books. Skill and devotion such as his are not going to fail.
[p 30]

"The children do much more work for themselves," says the Head Mistress of C. An uncertificated Assistant in her school who takes form IB. has also written a most useful report. "Interest," she says, "grows more and more as each term commences. . . . . There is scarcely a child who cannot narrate some of the lesson, though at first it is given in rather a disjointed and disconnected way, which in time gives place in most cases to a very complete story.

"Their spelling too, has greatly improved. Whereas in years gone by nothing much was expected of Standards I. and II., now quite difficult words are accurately written.

"The children also have lost much of their old shyness when talking to strangers.

"The written work has improved wonderfully. The little girls have plenty to write about now and are not at a loss as to what to say; rather the reverse, they have to stop because the time is up. . . . .

"For their Nature Study we read *The Wood I Know* and Mrs. Fisher's *Eyes and No Eyes* series, *Birds of the Air*, *Insect Life* and *Plant Life in Field and Garden.* It is wonderful how the children have brightened up and really observe. They come for this lesson now eager to tell what they have noticed on their way to and from school, or when out for a walk, and most of them are anxious for information about something or other they have discovered during the week. …

"*The Child's Garden of Verse* the girls have become quite familiar with and know many of the poems by heart. The fact that many of the children now possess a copy of their own, having chosen it for a Christmas present, speaks for itself.

"Pictures I think all children naturally love, but in these there is fascination in bringing out the detail. The little ones constantly bring pictures which have a connection with those studied as well as with their other lessons.

"Naturally the 'Book of Fairy Tales' is the favourite. I really believe every child would rather forego a half holiday than lose the tale. They are allowed in turn to take home a spare copy. No child ever forgets when it is her turn for the book, it is carried home with great rejoicings."

This teacher has certainly gone to the very heart of the subject.

"Picture Study," says the Head Master of H., who on some
[p 31]
points still has doubts, "is most acceptable. It is rare to see a picture without a child studying it during playtimes and before and after School. We find that the children *do* notice detail; they do exercise their powers of imagination; and they *do* attempt sound, logical reasoning." He thinks that Shakespeare and Scott are too difficult for Standards III. and IV., and "Interesting and valuable though it is (he doubts) the practicability of including so many branches or aspects of Nature Study." The sun has risen above the horizon, but it is not yet high noon. The fuller light will come, but he is a sound and cautious teacher, and he will not say that he sees when he does not.

In the mining district there are difficulties. "Many of the children," says the Head Mistress of Z., "come from homes where the Forest dialect is more often spoken than English.

These need a rather liberal and repeated explanation of unusual words or phrases. . . . . Necessarily our progress is slow."

The Head Master of Y. has the same difficulty. "The parents, brothers and sisters," he says, "although not illiterate, possess but a dreadfully limited vocabulary; indeed most of their conversation is carried on in the Forest vernacular, which does not lend itself in the least to poetic expression, or pretty flights of imagination, neither does it assist in the interpretation of even comparatively easy English. Our children cannot comprehend the meaning of any but the simplest words. Consequently we have to paraphrase liberally. … which does not appear to coincide with Miss Mason's ideas. When the stories are thus simplified. … they are thoroughly enjoyed, and as a rule very well memorised. . . . .

"Picture Study is producing good results in training the observation."

This is all to the good, but he still has doubts. "There appears," he says, "to be little that is really new in the Scheme," which means that the sun has not yet broken through the clouds, and he thinks that "the usual disabilities under which elementary teachers work—larger classes, extreme diversities of intellect, and the apathetic attitude of many of the parents towards education," demand a large allowance.

One must not be afraid of crudeness or of many blunders in the first efforts at written expression. "The chief objection some teachers seem to have about the method," says the Head Mistress of B., "is that the child's work is not perfect, they

like to see a little done and done perfectly, and thus they would sacrifice everything for accuracy and show. … I feel convinced that no teacher will welcome the method until she is satisfied to accept imperfect work (but the child's best) and be content to get gradual improvement."

This is quite true of course, and we have here the error which is especially characteristic of the elementary School, with its numbing experience of "payment by results." Like most errors it is a weed of luxuriant growth, very difficult to eradicate when once established. "The Suggestions for the consideration of Teachers," issued by the Board of Education, still battle with it. "The teaching of composition, like that of any other subject," says Paragraph 25, "consists, not in shielding a child from every danger of mistake, but in enabling him gradually to correct his errors for himself."

One delightful consequence of the method still remains to be noticed. "It is surprising," says the teacher of Form IB., in M., "how the children will link up one subject with another, and it is usually a sensible connection. … The children have done it before, but it seems to me that by Miss Mason's Scheme they are helped more efficiently." The teacher of Form III. in the same School also brings out this feature. "The girls," she says, "are certainly learning to connect and apply the information which they get from the books, and have at times expressed surprise that one book throws light on the subject matter of a different book. Here are the beginnings of an appreciation of wide reading which broadens one's outlook on life."

"Their curiosity and interest is always aroused when they read in one book a name or a fact which is connected with something which they have read in another book, and as the books chosen deal with the same period in history, this often happens," is how the teacher of Form IIA. in Q. puts the same fact, which, of course has provoked comment in several other schools.

The joy of recognition is great. The supply of books in the Elementary School is usually so meagre that it is almost unknown to the children. Under its thrilling stimulating influence the mind grows fast.

Some of us had guessed perhaps what the children think of the books we usually give them. Let a girl of twelve in M. tell us what she thinks of the new and the old.
[p 33]

"They (the new books) are the most interesting books," she says, "I have ever read in school. Ever so many grown-up people would like the chance of having these books to read." It has been said, with justice, that "it is not well to teach our democracy to read unless we also teach it to think."

We may succeed in teaching it to read on the worse than parsimonious allowance of half-a-crown per child per year for books, but we shall certainly never teach it to think for the money. By our niggardliness we make it impossible really to educate. "At last," says the teacher of Form III. in M.—"At last we have what we have always wanted—books and more books." Of course they cost money. The Scheme cannot be worked cheaply. Perhaps one day the Board of Education may think fit to investigate the expenditure upon books, and fix some minimum sum per child below which it shall not fall. But the books must be chosen wisely or much of their value is lost. Miss Mason does for the teachers what very many teachers are as yet unable to do for themselves. Her method is simple like most great methods, but simple as it is we have all missed it, every syllabus-maker of us. Learned and unlearned must share the same reproach. . . . .

The teaching tradition was founded when there were no printed books. It dates from the days of manuscripts, and it was powerfully reinforced a hundred years ago by the great pioneers of elementary education, who could afford no books, or next to none, for their large classes. Even within the memory of many men and women, who are still teaching, three books a year (little text-books of poor quality), were the meagre allowance of the child in the elementary school. The teacher had to talk; there was no other way. With great skill the Training College equipped him for the task. It is proud of what it did, and so is he. And they are rightly proud; but they ought not to have had to do it, and now that it no longer need be done, now that books can be provided (they cost more, of course, than the elementary school, even in these days, has been used to spend) there should be an end of "chalk and talk."

The popular estimate of the teacher has been very irritating, but it has not been wholly unjust. In the general eye he is an autocrat, slightly severe, rather inclined to repress inconvenient initiative, to set one pace which all must keep. His foible is omniscience; his word is law. Children (and, very often,
[p 34]
adults) must listen to him with respect and above all in silence. It is for him to fill the stage; they are but the crowd. That, with just a touch of caricature, describes, not unfairly, what the long tradition of oral teaching has made him. Miss Mason's teachers leave the stage to the child and the book. They are but the prompters in the wings. They speak when they are needed. It is the child who is all-important. Joyfully (and there is a new joy in their faces) they serve him, and by serving learn the last secret of their art.

(ii)

In a previous article[4] the leading principles that underlie Miss Mason's methods were set forth; for the most part in her own words. The passages quoted were taken from one of her most recent pamphlets, "A Liberal Education in Secondary Schools." Nothing could be clearer or more suggestive than they are. But difficulties arise when the first attempt is made to apply new principles to working conditions, and few teachers who were not already familiar with Miss Mason's work would find it possible to adopt her methods without further explanation. There are quite a number of difficulties, some real, some imaginary, that have to be faced and overcome. Fortunately, if one is faithful to Miss Mason's principles, they are soon overcome. The writer has had many opportunities of seeing and hearing what they are. He is only an administrator now, but once he was a teacher, and his fellow teachers of to-day are kind to him and tell him many things, that without their help he would never learn. Some part of what he has learnt from them about the working of Miss Mason's methods he will try to pass on to others.

At the outset there was some uneasiness about the examination that comes at the end of every term. The record of examinations in the primary school is not a good one. Those who remember what they once were, want no more. Examinations they say, must lead to cramming. These examinations, however, do not. They cannot if the method is followed faithfully. The child reads the book once ("a second reading," you will remember, "would be fatal"), narrates what he has read in whole or part on the instant, and again in an examination paper months later. No revision is attempted: it is unnecessary,

[p 35]

and the syllabus is so full that there is no time for it. So cramming is impossible. "But," some will say, "my children could never work an examination paper under such conditions." Let them try.

The children themselves like the examinations. They always like doing difficult things that they discover to be within their power. Even the seven-year olds take their share, dictating their answers for the most part, either to their teacher or to some older scholar who has been sent in to help.

The same papers are worked all over the world by children in schools of many types, from many kinds of homes. There is a bond between all these children, a very real bond that works for good. Children born and bred under the most diverse conditions have common interests, the interests that arise from common studies, common tastes. They are reading the same books, learning the same poetry, acting the same plays, studying the same pictures. When they meet in after-life, the tiresome class barriers that only exist where there are no common interests, will vanish. Those who have been Miss Mason's children will be able to talk to one another about all that they have in common, as boys or girls, who have been through any other famous school.

"Reading the same books!" says someone. "How can that be? Surely we can choose our own books?" No, Miss Mason chooses them. If she did not, the examinations would be impossible, the essential interweaving of the subjects would be imperilled, the bond of union between all the schools and all the children would be dissolved. There comes down each term a printed programme for each class, with its lists of books and the amounts to be read. Those programmes are the fruit of a life's study. They have been carefully worked out, and experimented with. Each item has its relation to the rest. They are the suggestions which a

great teacher offers to her fellows. However strange it may seem, they are welcomed. After all we are not so unaccustomed to having books prescribed for our use. Are there not syllabuses and examinations well known to all of us, that at one time or another, as pupil or teacher, we have followed without protest, though perhaps protest would not have been wholly undeserved? Let us take heart.

It is not possible to print in full a programme for a term, but let us glance at some of the books which Form II. A and B (Standards IV. and III.) used during the autumn term.
[p 36]

For English History they were reading Arnold Forster's *History of England*, pp. 326–396 (1547–1603). The contemporary French History was being studied in Mrs. Creighton's *First History of France*, pp. 157–189. At the same time the class were reading *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and Scott's *Kenilworth*, and were learning Macaulay's *Armada*. The two histories, of course, are always in the programme: the other books change term by term to suit the period that is being studied.

For Geography they were reading Book III., pp. 83–122, of *The Ambleside Geography Books* (chapters on some of the English counties), and some books of travel, adventure, and sea-warfare. For Natural History, *The Sciences*, by E. S. Holden, pp. 149–182; *The Changing Year*, by F. M. Haines, August to December, and *Life and Her Children*, by Arabella Buckley, pp. 261–301, were being used.

Some first lessons in Citizenship were being learned from Plutarch's *Lives, Solon* being the life studied. If Form II. B was working separately it was using Mrs. Beesly's *Stories from the History of Rome*, pp. 33–61 instead.

For Picture Study a characteristic, and with the children, a favourite subject, little reproductions of six pictures by Israels and Mauve were being used. This term they have Van Dyck.

But we cannot follow the programme further. Enough has been given to serve for illustration; enough to provoke a score of questions. Let us deal with a few of them.

Does every child have all of these books? Not all. Some, e.g., Plutarch's *Lives* and *The Changing Year*, are intended to be read aloud to the children by the teacher. Most of the others are intended for the children's use, but even a generous education committee will hardly be able to provide them all. *The History of France*, therefore, will probably be read aloud by the teacher, and very likely *The Sciences* as well. Arnold Forster costs 8s. 6d. a copy, and probably at first you will have to do with one book between two children, and make the books serve Form III. as well. There are ways of managing, and the teacher who wishes to adopt the method will not be left unaided.

"These books," it will be said, "are very hard, much too hard for the children of a village school." Experience has proved that they are not. They seem hard at first, though not even then impossibly hard, to children who were not introduced to the method at the beginning; to a child who began in the
[p 37]
lowest form they offer no difficulty but what it will face with confidence. Arnold Forster, of course, is not easy reading; and in a junior school, which has been following the method for four or five terms, the writer was told a few weeks ago that the staff thought that it would be better for Standard III. (the top class) to drop the work of Form II.B, and be content with that of

Form I.A. While they all loved Shakespeare (for, unspoiled by notes, no other writer is so universally enjoyed), Arnold Forster was thought to be beyond them. It is useless to ask for too much, so he assented; and then, to his secret joy, the two class teachers began to wonder whether after all the change would be wise, for A and B and C and D would be so disappointed. They were interested, and had been asking to be allowed to take the book home. Think of it! Boys in Standard III. wanted to read Arnold Forster's history at home! That is one little illustration of what the method does.

Plutarch and Scott are both of them difficult for children of nine and ten, but much of the difficulty is really created by teachers who have not quite grasped the secret of the method, and who forget how they themselves began to read. We did not as children check at each hard word, each passage that was obscure to us, in our *Treasure Island*. We read on, content to get the story. And as we read book after book we gained power and mastered the difficulties unconsciously. It was very seldom that we paused to ask for help.

We *will* interfere too much, forgetting Miss Mason's warning, and making of ourselves an unnecessary "bridge between the pupil and the real teacher, the man who has written the book." Another student of Miss Mason's methods gives us the result of her experience. "In the schools," she says, "where the teachers do not explain and interpret, but let the knowledge make its own appeal, the children prove their natural capacity to understand."

Let us have faith in them. Our troubles generally arise because we forget what Miss Mason has told us.

The full development of the power of narration calls, of course, for skill and judgement on the part of the teacher. One needs to see a good teacher take a lesson. The first attempts are humble, but the amount that is read before narration follows soon rises from a sentence to a paragraph, a page, or with the older children, considerably more. With large classes every
[p 38]
child cannot narrate at each lesson but all are ready to narrate. Many will contribute points that the narrators omit, and help to build up the story. Some children are extraordinarily exact narrators, reproducing the writer's very words in many passages. But it is no mere parrot memory that is brought into play, for both the knowledge and the vocabulary become the child's own. They are, as it were, fused in his mind. They are at his command, and reappear at the most unlikely times.

The effect upon the composition of all this reading of good books followed by narration is nothing short of startling. The quantity that even children in Standard III. will write is beyond belief. Equally beyond belief are the wealth of language, the feeling for style and rhythm, the reasoned sense of order ("What next?"), the kindling imagination, the love of literature, the beginnings of a perception of what wide reading means.

Of course this looks like the exaggeration of an enthusiast possessed by a new idea. To such a charge the writer can only reply, as he has replied before, "Go and see." He believes that many of the children of ten to twelve years of age in primary schools that are following the method, are racing ahead of their fellows in secondary schools who come from favoured homes. No one can say of them what is so often said of the children from the primary school, that they come up to the secondary school unable to study when left to themselves.

THE AMBLESIDE METHOD AND SECONDARY EDUCATION[5]

BY H. W. HOUSEHOLD.

THE writer has already upon several occasions directed attention to the remarkable results that are being obtained in a number of public elementary schools, which are following the programmes and employing the methods of Miss Charlotte Mason. Much interest is being taken in the work which those schools are doing. They receive many enquiries and many visits. Naturally, however, a still greater interest attaches to the source from which the methods and their inspiration are derived—the Secondary Training College and the Practising School conducted by Miss Mason herself at the House of Education at Ambleside. The writer has on two occasions spent some delightful days there as

[p 39]

Miss Mason's guest. He has watched the work done by the students and the children, and he would like to put on record something of what he saw.

Two of the lessons that he saw were of great interest, and, so it seemed to him, of much significance to all who are concerned with secondary education. The first was a French lesson.[6]

The second lesson, a short lesson sandwiched between others as a demonstration for the visitor's benefit, was given by a student to Form V. in the Practising School, girls whose ages range from sixteen to seventeen and a half. The form was reading Browning's "A Death in the Desert." The forty lines beginning, "Go back, far, farther, to the birth of things," were read straight through by the girls in turn, the rest following in their books; and again, without pause or hesitation after the one reading, narration began, and the girls in turn took up the paraphrase of the difficult lines in well chosen language, and with a precision that bore witness to their close attention, and to their thorough understanding of what had been read.

In every class it was the same. The oral narration and the written composition, and "reports" of lessons, were of extraordinary excellence. There had been interest, there had been close concentration, and the result was power, mastery.

Two other features in the methods compel the attention of those who are familiar with the work of the public schools and of the public secondary schools. The first is that interest, attention, and concentration are secured, and all the extraordinary results that flow from them are obtained, "without mark, prize, place, praise, or blame." The second feature is equally arresting and suggestive. There is no evening preparation, and by the whole of that amount the hours are shortened. There is no revision for examination, and the time spent over revision in other schools is saved. The examination at the end of each term is as searching as one could wish, but what is read once and then narrated is known, and no revision is required.

In the elementary schools interest, attention, concentration are as easily obtained; there is the same power, the same mastery. The writer could produce many exercise books and examination papers in literature, history, and geography which, for their facility of expression, their range of vocabulary, and their wealth

[p 40]

of ideas, would bear comparison with similar books and papers in any secondary school.[7]

VIII.

(i)

COURAGE IN EDUCATION.[8] (1917).

BY MRS. CLEMENT PARSONS.

AT a recent Meeting of the British Association Sir Arthur Evans, in his Presidential Address, deplored the fact that present-day education fails to interest either children or their parents, and the Bishop of Carlisle, in the November number of this Review, charged national education with the double shortcoming of failure to interest children and inability to spiritualise them. 'Multitudes of children hate school,' wrote the Bishop, and 'Every child has a soul … and on the nation's soul in the long run depends the nation's destiny. Our education has partially forgotten this fact.'

In some elementary schools in the North of England an experiment is being made the working of which is so wonderful that the present writer, one among seventy pilgrims attracted during the last two years to the pioneer school of the group, cannot choose but tell what is being done there.

The experiment arose out of the discontent of one Headmistress with elementary education on the usual lines. In her own words:

> I am extremely dissatisfied with the results obtained when I consider all the time and trouble taken; all the energy and thought expended on our work. There is too much work done by the teacher—too little by the child. The children's memories are not good, and the reason they do not remember things seems to be because of a lack of *living* interest. Their power of expression is weak, and their vocabularies are poor. The children are getting their information too much in tabloid form, in spite of illustrations, pictures, etc., hence this mental indigestion and arrested mental development.

For these reasons this Headmistress obtained permission to substitute another method, one which, though new in elementary schools, has been in force for twenty-five years in private schools that work under 'The Parents' Union School,' the creation of a now veteran educator, Charlotte M. Mason, of Ambleside. The method proceeds from a philosophy, or call it a point of view with regard to children, which may be thus summarised:

[p 41]

A child is a person. Not a machine, embryo, jug to be poured into, 'average child,' or numeral in a school census, but a person.

Being a person, with the aptitudes of one, a child possesses, among the rest, appetite for knowledge, and knowledge nourishes his mind as food his body.

He best assimilates knowledge that includes an appeal to imagination. Therefore—and also because literature forms taste—the best books should be his principal lesson-books.

A child loves to retell at length what has interested him. When telling it he does not only memorise but puts in an additional something of himself that demonstrates assimilation.

Out of these four basic simplicities has been evolved the method of teaching I will describe in its newest embodiment.

The outside environment, a mining village of the West Riding, the tram terminus of a great town, is distinctly unsympathetic. It consists of a black-gray, expressionless street of bare cottages in barren gardens, the only colour enamel advertisements of black lead and soaps nailed to walls. Nothing else visible but slate shingles, gray stone, and, near the school, where

the village ends, the road, between black hedges, murkily sloping to the moor. The weather, on this winter day, shares the Brontë character. It is a morning of low sky, cold wind, penetrating, disheartening rain. A few women with shawls over their heads move about, raucous-voiced. Some of the mothers are temporary workers, and where there can be no home midday meal the children bring bread and butter to school and get their cocoa heated on the school stove.

In such a setting, narrow and earth-bound, what fostering, one might well ask, is possible for idealism, for the subtle thing that's spirit, for the quality of Admiration by which, said Wordsworth, men live? If inside the school-house one were to find mechanical education, over-strained teachers hammering at incurious scholars, a Procrustes' bed to which every child is stretched or shortened, and other defects on account of which the critics in the Press arraign elementary schools, then woe betide the collective soul of the rising generation in this Yorkshire village, typical of many villages!

In the usual Council School class-room, glass-screened from its neighbour rooms and brightened by pictures and flowers, an assistant teacher stood reading to a class of forty girls, their

[p 42]

average age seven. She read two pages—a traveller's account of African parrots—reading slowly, reading into the children, letting them feel how interesting she, the reader, found the book, but never pausing to interpolate any word of explanation or definition. The children sat, engrossed in what was being read, and, moreover, aware that at the end of this, the one and only reading of it, some of them would be required to narrate. As soon as the reading ended, up rose a forest of small arms. One girl was called forward. She faced the class and quite without self-consciousness gave what to a visitor seemed an astonishing narration of what she had heard, astonishing in its consecutiveness, in the ease with which she had made the adult vocabulary her own, and in the good intonation copied from the teacher's. She proved to be by no means the show child. Others, one after another, came forward with the same quiet confidence either to take up the tale where a predecessor had been told to stop or to supply details earlier narrators had missed. The general level of narration was most impressive, and so were the alertness of the children, their delight in any lively touch of description. And the enthusiasm is for knowledge for its own sake; there are no marks, no places, no prizes, no external rewards whatever in the school. One might have imagined the scholars were teaching the teacher, so busy and free were they, so unobtrusive she. It is only in the younger classes that the children are read to instead of reading for themselves. The reading habit, the power of self-sustained attention took time to form, but the result in mental development has proved time and trouble well expended. The mistress said that the power of quiet reading, weak at first, had so strengthened term by term that she could not have imagined beforehand the present capacity to master a subject and get the better of a difficulty.

In the next room geography was being crisply and arrestingly read to a Standard II class, and, while this was going on—so whole-hearted is the concentration the new method induces—another class that had to share the room was studying with absorbed eyes (each girl privately at her own desk) postcard photographs of a picture by Pieter de Hooch, on which one of the weekly Picture Talks was shortly to be held.

The geography lesson turned on Japan, and after it the teacher showed a pair of chopsticks and asked the children if they could remember anything about chopsticks in the lesson
[p 43]
of a week earlier. The children positively clamoured to get a hearing.

'We are in a little verandah,' began an unkempt child, clearly not from a good home, in a grimy pinafore—it was a surprise to hear 'verandah' from her lips—'a closed up verandah. We have to do the best we can to eat our meal up with chopsticks. When we do get it in our mouths it feels like leather. Yosoji [this fluently said] who is in the background looks at us and he laughs a little bit.'

Another child carries on. 'The little maid begins to giggle and Yosoji has to give a little giggle too. And the water in the bath was red-hot and the Japanese are fond of getting into it when it was hot.'

The head teacher entered, and asked if anyone could tell the story of Perseus. It had been read aloud six weeks before from Andrew Lang's *Tales of Troy and Greece*. The children's ardour over Perseus and the telling of his story must have been due, no doubt, to the magic of a noble tale over unspoilt minds. 'You must only tell me a very little bit,' warned the mistress, but already eighteen or twenty children were contributing incidents and names, and to the visitor there was something uncanny—or should one say divine?—in hearing their lively, ready utterance of such words as Zeus, the Temple of Apol-l-o, Danaë, the god-dess, Acrisius, Polydectes, words they had only heard once in class, and that six weeks earlier. The great truth that interest carries attention and that where attention has been absolute memory does not fail, because the committal to memory has been a vital, not mechanical, process, was here strikingly illustrated. Interest is to knowledge what flavour is to food. The moment interest fails during a lesson, attention, the mother of memory, slackens. Children always and only remember what has truly interested them. Once thoroughly interested in a subject and keen to know more about it, almost every child will welcome effort, as babies love hard crusts.

No child can keep the bow bent for long, so the reading must be brief. Ten minutes are enough for the young beginner, but the length of time naturally depends on age, stage of training, and the difficulty of the matter.

The next class consisted of girls of average age eleven who sat silently reading *Macbeth* in Blackie's Plain-Text Shakespeare (6d. a volume), one copy between two. The book difficulty in this
[p 44]
education by books is, indeed, the apparent obstacle in the way of its wide adoption in Council Schools, but, seeing that in this pioneer school £20 has provided a sufficiency of books for a year for a hundred and sixty children, the difficulty is not too serious. In the case of the dearer books, such as *Our Island Story* (10s. 6d.), the expense is, even in private schools, a consideration, but is met by the fact that a book of this type covers two or three years. The scrapping of 'specially prepared' books, summaries, abridgements, school Readers, leaves each child the possessor of a little library of living books.

To return to the *Macbeth* students. Three girls were asked to read aloud the page they were studying, the scene between the Doctor and the Gentlewoman with Lady Macbeth. They came to the front with self-possession, and, with a little pacing to and fro on the part of Lady

Macbeth, they read the scene in a spell-bound way that even to a hardened playgoer was nothing less than thrilling, and, in view of the readers' parentage and home surroundings, infinitely touching. One had been disposed to think, These are selected children, these are the aristocrats, but it was not so. The child who read Lady Macbeth, giving the difficult words, 'Come, come, come, come,' their full weight and just betraying her Northern vowels in 'blood,' is the eldest of ten children of a soldier whose wife has only the Army allowances.

Afterwards, the books were closed, and the class was asked to 'Write what you think led the Doctor to come to this conclusion about the illness of Lady Macbeth: "I think, but dare not speak."' Here is a paper, taken up at random and very little different from any other. It was written by a girl of twelve.

> In a small ante-room a doctor and gentlewoman were talking of Lady Macbeth.
>
> The doctor was trying to persuade the gentlewoman to tell him what Lady Macbeth had said any time as she was walking in her sleep, for it was an accustomed thing for her to do so.
>
> While they were thus talking about her, she came walking very slowly into the ante-room with a taper which was lit in her hand.
>
> With the other hand she was rubbing the hand that held the taper, and all the time was talking of different things.
>
> Some were about spots of blood on her hand, and about Duncan having a lot of blood in him, and yet all the time she was in a fast sleep. At last she went to bed not knowing she had been up.
>
> When she had gone the doctor said 'I think, but dare not speak.'
>
> He must have thought that Lady Macbeth had killed Duncan, but dare not say so for many reasons.

[p 45]

> First, because Macbeth, who was now king, could have him hanged.
>
> Another reason was he had not sufficient proof that it was true.
>
> So he bid the gentlewoman good-night, saying 'This is beyond my practice,' and the gentlewoman replied 'I would not have a heart in my bosom like hers for all the world. Good-night, good doctor,' and there they separated, not saying a word to anyone about what they had heard or thought.

Such narrations show what incalculable educative power this teaching by literature, i.e., letting literature make its undimmed appeal, has over children. Something provocative, something quickening has passed from the soul of Shakespeare to their souls that would never reach them were they 'taught' 'Is this a dagger?' and other dislocated extracts in the ordinary way, and through it they gain foundations for all manner of discernments. One could see the responsive glow spring to their eyes—the eyes of these miners' children in their uncouth village.

The new method trusts the children and gives their self-activity full play. The narrations about Lady Macbeth were not memory work but genuinely intellectual, the interaction of the characters thought out and assimilated. As to whether the assimilation of a great imaginative scene from Shakespeare is suitable school work for a miner's child, one must reply in the words

of a Labour leader who said recently 'The question is not what a working man's child should learn but what any man's child should learn.' The man in the street is certainly the worse for having but one adjective wherewith to express himself, and the fact comments significantly on the education that reared him. 'He learned nothing great' said Stubbs of Henry the Third. To learn what is great—this alone constitutes a liberal education,[9] and a liberal education is the essential basis of vocational education for the children of our democracy who to-morrow must take part in the rebuilding ahead. The more a child learns great things the more of a person, intelligent, magnanimous, sober-minded, does he become.

Round the school-room walls were pinned original illustrations of *Macbeth* in coloured chalks by the children. One girl, perhaps doubting her power to deal with protagonists, had chosen to illustrate the line

A sailor's wife had chestnuts in her lap.

Take care of the reading, let that be plenteous, varied, and

[p 46]

first-rate, and spelling and grammar will to a large extent take care of themselves. Composition is no longer an isolated subject: it develops unconsciously by narration, written or spoken.

'The knowledge of God is the principal knowledge,' wrote Charlotte Mason in 1886 in her first book, *Home Education*, 'therefore the Bible lesson is the chief lesson.' The object of Bible teaching by the Ambleside method is to get children to know the very words of the Bible. Narrative portions of the Old Testament and the Gospel story are read to the 1st Form, and the children are asked to narrate them. How much they catch of the spirit and literary flavour is shown by the following, dictated by a girl of nine in the terminal examination.

'*Tell the story of Jairus*' *daughter*':—

> Jairus came to Jesus and said: 'Master, my daughter is very ill, please make her better.' And then another man came and said: 'Don't trouble Jesus, because your daughter is dead.' But Jesus went with Jairus, and when He got to the place where Jairus lived everybody was weeping, and He said: 'Weep not, for your daughter is not dead, but sleepeth'; and they mocked Him and said 'Of course she is dead.' And He went into the room and left everybody else outside, and said to the daughter, 'Arise,' and she arose, and He said to the mother and father, 'Give her something to eat that you may see that she is really alive.'

The teacher prepares the lesson very studiously beforehand with set books chosen for helpfulness in suggestion and in the treatment of difficulties. A teacher spoke of one of the children to whom, coming home from church, some grown-up said, concerning the preacher, 'What a dreadful man not to believe the world was made in six days when the Bible tells us it was!' To which the boy of seven replied 'After all, it does not matter if God did it in six days or thousands of years. I think it would be more wonderful to take a long time over it.'

Since children naturally enjoy Bible stories in their own clear-cut language, the teacher does not talk a great deal. A new passage will probably have to be connected with the last lesson, and an Oriental custom, such as the wailing for Jairus' daughter, explained. The children

may be helped to form pictures in their minds, such as that of five thousand men, beside women and children, sitting down in ranks where there was much grass in the place.

The times we are living through do everything to justify the great stress the founder of the Parents' Union School has always laid on Bible teaching. The men in the trenches have found

[p 47]

they 'want God'; the children at school, men and women of to-morrow, want God too. No other book exists through which they can so vividly learn the nearness of God, the meaning of right, the law of consequence, as the Old Testament. It is the most powerful of lesson-books but it needs intelligent handling as every powerful instrument does. New Testament teaching is on a different plane. There, the pervading idea is not the distant scene, the *ancien régime*, but a Person to adore and serve. This idea is the centre of Parents' Union education, but it is impossible here to dwell adequately on the hope and promise of its radiating idealism.

By history we learn just judgments, the art of living, and the love of people and nations, therefore history is given a leading place among subjects. To it in the elder classes (not yet reached in elementary schools) are added civic morals and economics through the study of such books as *The Citizen and the State* by J. St. Loe Strachey and *The Laws of Everyday Life* by H. O. Arnold-Forster. Plutarch's *Julius Caesar* (1s.), recently substituted for the ordinary primer in a little mountain school in Wales, has completely vivified its history classes. Life speaks to life.

In the Yorkshire school a passage from *Modern Painters* on lichen and mosses was written without comment on the board. The children read it heedfully, the board was turned away, and they wrote what they could. A half-timer of twelve remembered the statement that to the humble work of the forerunners, lichen and moss, the 'cedar kissing the blue sky' owes its existence. Perhaps she thought 'blue' too everyday a word for the poetic prose she had been reading, for she wrote 'the azure sky.' To a visitor it seemed mighty pretty that a child, looking as she looked, should have put in from her inner vocabulary 'azure.' She was a stickler for exactitude, all the same, and at the end of her narration added, as postscript. 'By saying the cedar kisses the sky it means that it is so tall that it looks as if it is nearly touching the sky.' There was no parroting here, but the child's mind self-expressive, supple, and moving in a genuinely intellectual element.

These children take into their homes something of what goes on in the school. When a child was ill her classmates went and told her what they had read in the various books on the morning she was away. Some of the children asked for their

[p 48]

books as Christmas presents.[10] Next to the first great cause of slum housing most of the slovenliness and brutality that exist come of ignorance of resources for good occupation of leisure, and that comes of ignorance that life is of the spirit, not of the flesh. It is a matter of supreme moment that the rising generation should be given definite preparation for the occupation of leisure by the initiation of varied interests.

Education by Things stands beside Education by Books in order that children shall know and love nature and realise the happiness of handicrafts. Nothing could be better in these directions than the original designs, cardboard models, embroidered overalls, and nature drawings that caught one's eye in the Yorkshire school. Material for the nature drawings is week by week supplied, for that treeless, flowerless country, by unseen schoolmates in more

favoured districts. There is no forgetfulness of mechanical and utility subjects, but in these less reform is needed since they are, generally speaking, well taught everywhere to-day.

It may perhaps be permitted an unprejudiced listener to record that as regarded a similar lesson on Richard the Second, heard, first, in one of the Yorkshire elementary schools, and afterwards, in a 'Parents' Union' class in a private house in London where the pupils belonged, emphatically, to the governing class, the comparison was by no means unfavourable to the rough miners' children and the little half-timers. One somehow felt the latter were hungrier and had more zest for food. The impression given supported the contention that no difference should be made in the food offered, whether the pupil be rich or poor, 'elementary,' 'private,' or 'public.'

But in both places the outstanding fact was the self-activity of the children, the absence of wandering glances, listless faces, sleepy minds, the immunity from class boredom, that bugbear of stereotyped teaching where, while the teacher teaches even to hoarseness, the scholars become daily more hostile or more impervious to learning. Here, the scholars learn, they are not 'taught,' and the memory one carries away is not of a 'teacher' asking questions to elicit what has been taken in, but of children asking questions to satisfy their desire to know. Once, in the

[p 49]

Mayfair class, when the teacher was called downstairs, three beginners, who could scarcely read, somehow read for themselves and on her return begged to narrate. All this struck a visitor as a wonderful contrast to those classes often met with in all manner of schools wherein little more is expected of the children than to listen to a beautiful oral lesson and contribute 'Yes' and 'No' and a few other passive monosyllables to the questions asked. *No profit grows, where is no pleasure ta'en*, said the wisest of mankind. *Studies serve for delight*, said the next wisest. The new method illustrates these profound dicta.

Children have a passion for having their education placed in their own hands. Knowledge is just *food*, and a child's mind craves food to its taste and can assimilate it, and the greater variety it deals with the sounder and stronger is its development. Mental power is like bodily power in having no relation to class. The only differences are between individuals.

Though I was not able, for lack of time, to hear a Picture Talk in the mining village, I should like to describe one I heard a week ago in a Parents' Union school in London, average age nine. The teacher put up an octavo photograph of de Hooch's *The Courtyard of a Dutch House* in the National Gallery. 'When the War is over we shall go to see this picture in its beautiful colours,' she began. She gave a few facts about de Hooch, helped by a *Chart of Mediaeval and Modern Painters* (Lamley and Co., 6d.) pinned to the blackboard. A second copy of the photograph was handed round and each child was asked to write down one noticeable thing in it, 'something out of the way,' said the teacher, as though it were a game. One by one, the children read out:

'A broom on the floor bound with white.'
'There is a door through the wall—a sort of hatchway.'
'Some letters on the wall opposite.'
Teacher: 'Could you find some better words than "wall," John?'
John: 'Above the arch.'

'There are steps leading up to the wall.'

'Beside the open door there is Pieter de Hooch's name on a little stone. It is P. D. H. A.D. 1653.'

'Right at the back the bricks are put in the same way as on the arch in the front.'

'There is a box with rubbish in.'

'The cobbles are quite smooth.'

'The little roses growing.'

'Flowers in the foreground.'

Teacher: 'What do we mean by a vista?'

[p 50]

'When we can see through a door and see down a passage and see through another door.'

Teacher: 'Why does the other lady look so much darker?'

'Because she is in the shadow of the door.'

'Because she is further away.'

Teacher: 'Because she is in what we call the middle distance. Now I am going to ask you to draw the lady. She is about seven heads high—that is about the height of a woman.'

She draws her on the board, and, as she draws, says:

'Her head is all in shadow and a little bit of her kerchief. What I put in white on the board you will remember to put in black with your pencil. Dutch ladies nearly all wear these little jackets, don't they? And the lady herself throws a shadow. Her shadow goes half-way up the wall. The light just catches her on the shoulder. The light catches her down the edge of her frock. If you walk along a dark passage the light just shows on each side of your skirt. Have you noticed that effect? The Dutch lady is smiling to the child. Always patient and kind and not "Oh, what a bother you are!" When the Dutch came to England with William of Orange they could teach the English how to keep their back yards nice and tidy and how to make a broom out of almost nothing.

'What other pictures of Pieter de Hooch have you seen this term?'

'A Terior with Woman and Boy.'

'What's that, Joyce, a Terior?'

'I mean Interior with Woman and Boy—and the arched doorway and the almond tree outside in the street opposite the house.'

This lesson and these children are undoubtedly alive, and it is a thrilling thought that the same training is going on in the ugly, hopeless-looking mining village and in other Council schools in various parts of England where the same method is being adopted. In the mining village six reproductions each of Millet, Watts, Corot, Meissonier, Raphael, Memling, and Dürer have been studied during the last two years. 'My scholars take a surprising interest,' reports the Head of the school, 'in the pictures and life stories of the artists.' Children who have had even a little of this training can never in after years feel so blankly at sea as working people do to-day who without preparation drift into the galleries of which they are, after all, part owners. Without previous preparation even a conducted visit to a museum or gallery is apt to degenerate into a melancholy farce of yawns and flippancies. These children, on the other

hand, will have relationships already formed with pictures, and a habit of looking for their decorative and human details. If, after the War, art and manufacturing industry must draw closer together for the sake of the nation's prosperity, these foundations of sympathy with art may count as no mean part of the elementary outfit, regarded from the standard of livelihood. And since the
[p 51]
larger hope of education is fulness of life these picture talks may rank as one of the most liberalising, as they are certainly one of the favourite, lessons in the whole curriculum.

'I think I could understand, Mummy, if you did not explain *quite* so much,' said the harried little girl. In the schools where the teachers do not explain and interpret but let knowledge make its own appeal the children prove their natural capacity to understand. The teachers, on their side, seem singularly fresh and unstaled. They are saved the endless correction of exercise books and the 'getting up' of lessons, and they, equally with the scholars, live on great ideas. A number of elementary assistant teachers who have tested the new experiment wrote down their opinions. Among them:

> 'The strain on teacher's voice is much less than when lessons are oral.'
>
> 'It is much more interesting to children to receive knowledge first hand from a good authority.'
>
> 'Work is set definitely on books used.'
>
> 'Written work shows improvement in spelling and matter. There is not any padding in the composition.'
>
> 'A training for the child to consult a book for itself.'

Lady Bell, in her thought-rousing *At the Works*, stated that during a year in Middlesbrough only 4½ people out of every 100 took out a book from their very good Free Library. The ironworkers, she reported, had no formed acquaintances in literature, and therefore did not know what to ask for. The Parents' Union has entered the elementary school to try to modify for the adults of to-morrow so regrettable a state of things. Popular Educators with their Self-Help Smiles ideals are not what are wanted for our children in village and city. Success may be desirable and a livelihood is necessary, but it is not because we have received guidance concerning these things from Shakespeare and Dickens and Lamb and Carlyle and Stevenson that we laud their glorious names. The themes of literature are beauty, and ethics, 'and love, and man's unconquerable mind,' and on these humanities must be based that liberal education which is the right and needful food of every child of the nation.
[p 52]

(ii)

STUDIES ARE FOR DELIGHT.[11]

BY WILLINGHAM F. RAWNSLEY.

PART II.[12]

Now perhaps the reader can see the governing principle of this method by which the absolute attention of the whole class is secured. It consists in the fact, which all the children recognise, that the passages which they listen to *will only be read once*. They are eager to hear

and delighted to be chosen as narrators, and proud of success in that capacity; and they know that unless they give the closest attention they will have no chance, but will be left out of the game. This makes them serious and eager listeners; and the habit once formed is not forgotten, but attends them with increasingly good results all through their school career. Henceforth, interest in their work being awakened, they take a real pleasure in it; and the more they hear and read the more they desire to read. This desire being established, all the rest follows easily, and the children teach themselves and work hard at doing it; for Miss Mason's contention is that the children should teach themselves by reading to themselves, and that *they must labour* and not have the work done for them. Books and more books, and all of the best are what is needed and these are supplied in plenty, and a fresh list is made out in advance for each term, most if not all of which are read and assimilated as the test examinations show, the teacher setting all this going in each class, helping with any necessary explanations and illustrations, and keeping lazy ones up to the mark; always at hand to help or explain or draw attention to points they might miss but never pumping facts into the pupils, only encouraging them to feed their own minds on the good literature provided. The teacher also tests the value of the books for educative purposes.

One thing more. This method depends greatly on the teacher who must have enthusiasm and sympathy as well as endless patience, and, what officials so often lack, imagination. This is a thing which happily the child *does* possess, and it is increased by the reading of the classic mythology and the fairy tales in which they all take such delight. Madame Montessori refuses to allow that the child has imagination and she will have nothing to
[p 53]
do with fairy tales which, next to dolls, are the great delight of English children, but seem to be unknown in Italy. The method also brings out a hitherto unsuspected intellectual power in children from the poorest homes, only waiting its opportunity to expand, and that opportunity Miss Mason offers by a plentiful supply of the right books.

. . . . . .

Such then is the "education by the humanities," i.e., through the Masterpieces of English Literature, and it is not only intellectual power that the children gain but as one of the ablest of the Head Teachers in a Gloucestershire School well says "books have a tremendous influence on *character*, and to bring children up amongst good books is an education in itself."

It is an education too not only intellectual of the mind, but also moral, of the will, which governs in the world of morals, and further by means of well-selected books on various subjects many doors are open to the children leading by pleasant paths to knowledge of birds and flowers and the nature of the earth and wonders of the starry heavens; and by the pictures they study and by the classic stories and modern fairy tales their emotions are stirred, and the realms of art and beauty opened to them. All this and not less than this is aimed at and certainly attained in considerable measure, whilst the life of the teacher is made easier and more joyful, to match the delights of the children in helping themselves to knowledge and power.

This is no vain dream, but an assured reality; and is it not a great gain that during the their early years children should have a really deep draught of that joy in work which is alas lacking in industrial life? There is no other method of education that even pretends to do this; and, given the right kind of teacher, on which so much depends, it all comes back to books and

these we have to ask the Education Authorities to supply. They are more expensive than the little manuals and selections, for we only wish to have whole works so as to study the authors, or at least some of their chief writings, as wholes and not in snippets. The study of literature without some knowledge of the Author is rather futile, and the children themselves see and take an interest in the connection of Plays, Novels and History: as one boy expressed it "our history fitted in with our plays and the plays fitted in with the novels," e.g., "The Talisman" made the history of Richard I. more vivid, "Long Will" (by F. Converse)
[p 54]
illustrated Richard II., and Shakespeare's "King John" and "Henry V." made the chapters in Arnold Forster's "History of England" full of reality. In some schools the children by weekly payments have bought for their own, copies of the plays and of the Waverley Novels to take home, and have read them through several times, 23 boys in one school bought "The Talisman." Well-selected Books in Natural History are found to be very attractive. Some of Plutarch's "Lives" are read with great interest and there is hardly any play of Shakespeare's which cannot hold the child's attention and help in his self-education. And though these books cost more than the Little Manuals and reading books issued to the schools by the Education Boards, they last over several years, and of the most expensive only one copy is needed which is read aloud by the teacher, also the books which one set of children have done with can be taken up by the next lot for they are not thumbed to pieces in three or four years: so they are not in the end much more expensive than those at present supplied, and are they not well worth it?

Some of you would think that some of the books are too difficult for the children to understand. Well, it is not necessary that they should on first reading understand every sentence, but they don't mind that, and they do get the drift of the work and come to realise the full meaning after a time of a bit which at first was hard, and occasional bits which they passed over do not interfere with their interest in or understanding of the story as a whole. Thus books become the children's delight and school-time a pleasure and education a reality.

I append some of the answers to examination questions made by children in the Gloucestershire Schools.

Children of eight usually dictate their answers, but this little fellow in the —— School, writes his own: the handwriting is quite clear and the stops are right, but the spelling of the proper name has been a difficulty.

Question: Tell how Patroclus went to battle and was slain.

> "Patroclus went to Achilles and said "Will you lend me your armour"? Achilles said yes, then Patroclus started off. Patroclus rode swiftly down the hill, when the Trojans saw him they began to run away thinking it was Achilles. The two horses of Achilles were called "the children of the West Wind." Proclus climbed up the walls of Troy thrice, but Hector saw him, so he told his charioteer to fling a big stone at him, but Proclus went to fling a big stone at Hector which missed him but the stone hit the charioteer.

[p 55]

> Then Hector drew his spear and sent it clean through the body of Proctlus. Then Proctoctolus fell to the ground. Then Prococlus was carried to the ladies who washed

him. Achilles wept over the body and ordered a gold cup to lay Proctroclus on. Afterwards he held sports, wrestling, racing and chariot racing. Ulysses was wrestling and racing."

This same boy of 8 having read the "Pilgrim's Progress" tells how Christian got out of the Slough of Despond.

"Christian was on his way with Pliable to the wicket gate until they fell into some mud. Christian had a burden on his back. They began to sink lower and lower, at last they began to struggle and Pliable got out of the mud, so he ran away home leaving Christian their. Then a man named Help came along and said "Didn't you see the steps"? Christian said "I fell in." Then Help said give me your hand, so he pulled Christian out and then Christian started for the wicket gate."

This eight year old then writes a long account of a voyage round North Britain showing that he knows his geography well, for which he gets full marks; and in History he gives a short account of the sailing of the Mayflower and the founding of Plymouth.

He is not too young to take an intelligent interest in a picture by Carpaccio which he describes. He also draws a diagram showing the poles and the Equator, taking care to inform us that the axis and the Equator are not real lines but imaginary. His Natural History paper answers he dictates; and this is how he describes the arum.

"The wild arum is not a perfect flower. It only has stamens and pistil, no petals. It grows in the hedges and we sometimes call it the cuckoo-pint or Ladies' finger. If a bee or other insect came along he would think it would be a nice place to lay its eggs, but when he gets there he finds it is hard, then he crawls downwards till he comes to the little hairs which he passes and through which he can't get back out. He is flying about the stamens and getting covered with dust then the sweet juice comes and then the hairs die and he is able to get out, the little stamens turn into red berries for the winter and are very poisonous."

It will be noticed that in common with most of our poets who generally speak of the singing bird as "she," though it is only the male who sings, our little friend gets the sex wrong and speaks all through the worker bee as "he."

I will now give a specimen of the work of a ten year old who has done so well that she has won a "Free Place" in a Girls' High School. She is asked to give the life history of a Butterfly.

"The first form of the butterfly is the egg and the mother leaves the eggs in a place where when hatched they will have plenty of food when they are hatched; the next form is a grub. It crawls about on the cabbage leaves until it becomes so big that it has to rest for a time. When it has rested

[p 56]

awhile it goes on eating greedily. It then climbs up to a mossy branch of a tree and makes a hillock; it then rests its two back legs in this hillock and splits its skin. The next

skin grows hard, into a chrysalis and it sometimes stays like this all the winter. By and by this hard skin gets so thin and transparent that you can see the form of the butterfly inside. In the warm weather the nerves begin to send messages to the limbs to move about. It then begins to appear, and begins to move slowly and surely about. When it gets stronger it flies away to a flower or plant and most likely into a field to find a mate. It has very pretty wings but they have a lot of pollen on them and if you touch it much, it all comes off."

I have only selected some of the answers of the younger children, but I will give one specimen of the work of a boy of 13. It is called a Picture Study and the children were asked to describe the St. George by Carpaccio, so the boy writes as follows:

"This picture of St. George and the Dragon is a very horrible one it shows many skulls. The fight is taking place near the sea and the ground must have been very marshy. The Dragon is rushing at St. George and St. George is rushing at him: where they are fighting is the Dragon's Den. The head of the dragon is somewhat after the same as a bagger (badger) because its mouth is open and is showing its teeth just like a bagger. With all these skulls and parts of the bodies of men who have tried to slay the Dragon but have been unsuccessful we should think that St. George would have been trembling with fear, but he looks determined to overcome the dragon for the sake of Una, who is watching the combat afar off. In the background there is in the distance, a big castle and rocks with a lighthouse on the top. There is also on the sea a ship gliding through an archway and another on the side. The tail of the dragon is curled round a tree. This picture of St. George and the dragon was painted by Carpaccio."

The boy who wrote this is one of a pair of brothers who were, by the mistress of the little school to which they properly belonged, found to be somewhat unmanageable. Their father was serving in the army and the mother had to be out at work, so the home could do nothing for the boys. One, when he first came to a larger school, seemed to have no ideas at all and no interest his work, but in spite of the handicap of his home and previous school life, Miss Mason's method has appealed to him and the change in him is spoken of by his present teacher as little short of miraculous, and the result, in quite a short time, is that he has got the offer of a good situation and will, without doubt, go ahead and make his way.

The humanizing power of this teaching "by the humanities" shows itself not only in the way it appeals to and gets grip on children who have not responded to other methods, but even those children who are called "backward" and are distinctly deficient in power and intelligence have, after a term in which they

[p 57]

have been slowly getting hold of the meanings of things, been found to be able to take a pleasure in their lessons and eventually to put on a bright look and to take their part in narrating with the rest of the class. I have seen one instance of this and heard of several others. One girl I saw used to go about with her mouth open and a silly look on her face, and dull eyes, but after nine months she was looking alert and like other children, and this was brought about by seeing all round her the delight manifested by the others in their daily work. Happily the

teachers in these schools do not try to cut all children to one pattern or to thrust information down their throats, but allow time and environment to produce effects slow but sure.

But to get back to the children's work. These examination papers are not set for the purpose of placing the writers in examination order but just to test them and make out whether they have assimilated what they have read in the term.

A girl of 10, amongst other very well written answers sends up the following in a literature paper. Being asked to "write a short résumé of the play 'Samson Agonistes' quoting any lines that interested you. What do you know of the author's early life?" she writes:

> "Samson is a captive by the Philistines, and has his eyes put out. He has to work very hard, and, when he goes out he has chains on him. His friends come to see him, and among them is Manoah, his father. Manoah tries to comfort him by saying he will ransom him. Presently an officer comes in and asks Samson to let him see how great his strength is, and will he go with him. For the Philistines are going to offer a sacrifice to their god Dragon, for putting Samson into their hands. Samson went with the officer and leaves his friends to talk together. While they are talking they hear a great noise, and they know it is the Philistines cheering when they see Samson. After a short time they hear a crash, and a messenger comes running out. He tells them that Samson has pulled down the pillars in Gaza, and all the lords in the gallery fell down on him, and killed him. Manoah is very sad. John Milton was the author of Samson Agonistes. He was born on a bleak day in December. When he was quite young he went to school and also had a tutor. But he was not content with this, but used to stay up at night till eleven or twelve o'clock doing lessons. When he was older he went to Cambridge University. When he was grown up he went away for a month and when he came back he brought a wife with him. He went out a bachelor and came back a married man. His wife was a Royalist and he was a Puritan. After two or three days of feasting Mary (for that was her name) was left with her husband. But John did not have any more feasting and Mary did not like it. One day she asked her husband if she could have a month's holiday with her mother. John consented and Mary went. But a month passed and she did not return. Milton said he would never love her again and he would not have her at his house. He set to work

[p 58]

> harder than before. He had pupils and they thought him a strict master. The Puritans were winning in the war and Mary, her brothers and sisters and her parents were turned out of their house. Mary's mother told her to go back to her husband but she was afraid. It was decided that Milton's friends and Mary's friends should meet and decide whether Mary should go back with Milton. One day John went to see a friend of his whom he visited often. He was waiting for him when the door was opened and who should come in but Mary. She fell down on her knees and asked for forgiveness. So Milton let her, and her family, her father and his pupils stay with him. But one day Mary died and left him with three motherless girls, the eldest of whom was only six. John was very sad and wrote a poem about her."

Pretty good for 10 years old!

In the next specimen a boy in Form III., aged 11, sends up a beautifully written set of answers in his Citizenship and Geography papers, with an account of Admiral Lord Nelson which shows how interesting biographies of great men are to school boys.

In the *Citizenship* Paper he is asked: "What is meant by (a) the Cabinet? (b) A Cabinet Minister? What are the duties of the Cabinet?" He writes as follows.

> "The Cabinet is a number of men who are elected from the winning party in Parliament. The leader of this party is acknowledged the Prime Minister. At present the Coalition is the Cabinet. The Cabinet is the link that joins the Government of the Country to the Parliament. The members each have a separate duty to perform. Each minister is appointed head of a department and he is responsible for its actions. The Chancellor of the Exchequer is head of the money affairs. The Home Office, the Admiralty, and the Food Office are all presided over by a Cabinet Minister. The duty of the Cabinet is to see to the affairs of the State. The army, navy, etc., are kept up by the Cabinet. The King takes his personal advice from the chief ministers. They have the power to "impeach" any minister."

Finally I add a page or two from a paper by a child of 13 on General History which seems to me to be something far above the work ever obtained in any but these schools I have been describing, and to show how the reading of good literature and the acquaintance with the History of the Greeks open up avenues of undreamed interest which take hold of the imagination of these alert young minds in a truly surprising matter.

General History. Form IV.

Give some account of the "picture gallery" we have in the Greek vases in the British Museum.

> "On these vases were painted pictures of the life of the Hellenes or Greeks.. On one is a picture of a baby reaching for a toy or crawling on the floor. This shows that the Greek children had toys as we have now. The painting of a Greek boy offering his toys to his gods, is on another vase. It shows the love borne by the boys to the beloved treasures of their childhood.

[p 59]

> One is offering his beloved "bounding ball." On other vases are pictures of maidens dancing, or making dresses called 'Chitons' which were very plain but beautiful. On the lid of a Grecian lady's toilet box is the picture of a wedding scene, in which the bride and bridegroom, attended by the usual crowd of spectators, are going home from the temple. On one vase is a picture of a typical Grecian feast. The youths are seen playing 'Cottobos' the name meaning sound of a successful hit. The 'Cottobos' is a construction resembling a modern lamp standard with a large saucer-shaped bowl half way down. At the top is a little figure and poised upon that is a smaller bowl. The object of the game is to throw the dregs of wine on to the top bowl, so unbalancing it to make it fall with a clang on the lower bowl. On another set of vases are the physical exercises done by Grecian youths. One is seen throwing quoits and another throwing a seemingly heavy weight. Two youths engaged in a wrestling match struggle near the weight thrower. On

the back of the most of these vases is a picture of Athene with sword, shield, and sometimes spear in her hands. Lastly, a beautiful, yet sad set of pictures are painted on the vases. The funeral and burial services of heroes of Greece. They shew the mourning and reverence with which the heroes were laid to rest. On one particular vase in this set is the supposed ferryman Charon bearing in his ferry-boat the souls of the dead over the river Styx; to rest evermore. To finish is a picture of a hero in the sports taking his prize, a vase of olive oil for his merit."

The language alone used in these specimen answers, and especially in the last, shows how immensely the children have profited by their reading both in grasp of their subjects and in language and style of expression; and surely the introduction of this method of instruction into elementary schools, this "education by the humanities" is just what "labour" stands most in need of.

For this education the first requirement is books and books of the right kind. "*Recorded language*," Sir E. Ray Lankester[13] tells us, "preserved and handed on from generation to generation, is an ever-increasing gigantic inheritance … It is clear that knowledge of that which is, and primarily *knowledge of the Great Record* must be the most important factor in the future progress of Mankind."

---

[1] With acknowledgements to the Editor of the *Nineteenth Century and After*.

[2] *Of the Institution and Education of Children.* Essays, Book I., Chap. XXV.

[3] NOTE.—Several teachers comment on this new borrowing of books.

[4] Printed elsewhere.

[5] By kind permission of the Editor of "The Journal of Education and School World."

[6] See Chapter X of *An Essay Towards a Philosophy of Education: Languages*.

[7] There are at present (1924) 170 Council Schools in Gloucestershire working on this Method.

[8] Reprinted by kind permission of the Editor of *The Nineteenth Century*

[9] Cf. 'Education should aim at giving a child a philosophy, and philosophy simply means the contemplation of the important things in life' (*A Dominie Dismissed*, by A. S. Neill)—a great saying.

[10] Since this article has been in print twenty-five scholars out of a class of forty in another of these schools bought copies of *Twelfth Night*, as their mothers wanted to read it, and in one home the father, mother, and children read it through in four evenings, each taking a part.

[11] I cannot illustrate the working of this method in elementary schools better than by quoting (with his kind permission) passages from 'Studies are for Delight,' an article written after a little tour among the Schools in Gloucestershire.

[12] Part I. set forth these principles and methods very fully.

[13] Nature, August 12th, 1920.