

THE TEACHING OF CITIZENSHIP IN THE PARENTS' UNION SCHOOL.

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THAT the teaching of citizenship as an integral part of education should form a distinct and vital item of the school curriculum, is, I believe a universally acknowledged and accepted fact throughout the various systems of education which prevail at the present time. The child of to-day is the citizen of the future, perhaps even the statesman of the future, one who will help to control his country and direct its laws. Surely in realising this, we cannot exaggerate the need of training in children a sense of the duties and responsibilities of the individual towards the state; of awakening in each child a consciousness that he, too,

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is a citizen; and of revealing to him something of what that term implies. What rights and privileges he will share, and what, in consequence, he will owe in energy and thought as his contribution towards the well-being of the community. We have but to turn to Aristotle and Plato to realise that the importance of early teaching and training in citizenship was recognised among the ancients. The former asserts:—"All who have meditated on the art of governing mankind have been convinced that the fate of empires depends on the education of youth." And we may here recall the high ideal he suggests in his famous epigram,—"*The state arises for the sake of life, but is for the sake of good life;*" while, in his Republic, Plato has, I suppose, given to the world the earliest ideal sketch of a comprehensive education which shall fulfil and satisfy the needs of the human mind. You will remember how, in that Ideal State he conceives—the parent of many Utopias,—he advocates the "breeding and rearing of citizens," and how he works out this training in various steps and degrees, from that of military honour and glory to the awakening of the citizen spirit, and lastly, a conception of the great soul of the ideal statesman.

The fact that the teaching of Citizenship forms an especial feature of the Parents' Union School curriculum is but natural when we recall the fundamental principles underlying the psychology of education formulated by Miss Charlotte M. Mason. In her book "School Education" (the third of her Home Education series) she claims that "Education is the science of relations, or, more fully, that education considers what relations are proper to a human being and in what ways these several relations can best be established."

In training children in citizenship we must, then, try first to help the child to establish for himself those relationships in life which must, sooner or later, become part of our conscious selves, and on the building up of which depend character and personality—viz: the relationships to Self, to the Race, and to God. These three form so complete a cycle that it seems to me we cannot attach a greater importance to anyone in particular above the other two. For how can we recognise the values of the things belonging to God, unless we can realise the values of those which concern our higher selves? And is not this accomplished through our service to our fellow men in the exercise of self-control, the ennobling of the victory over that which is petty or sinful, the realisation of how we are degraded by an undeveloped (or rather an arrested) standard, the courage to be true to ourselves? These react upon our sense of what is due to others—justice and toleration—and make for consideration of

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their requirements and opinions. And are not these in turn influenced and brought to attainment by the guarding within us of that flame, kindled by the breath of God, which purifies motives and creates in us the desire to express ourselves in service to Him through our relationship to our fellow men? Here then, it seems to me, lies the true inwardness of what we, who are followers of Miss Mason, mean by Citizenship—its moral and spiritual aspect on which depend the more direct lessons on the subject and without which they lose their value; the ideal of a threefold relationship which shall help the child to adjust his views of the values of life when he shall come to take up his part in the future?

Jean Jacques Rousseau has said, “It is the houses that make the town, but the citizens, the city?” Let us, in whose hands lies the responsibility of raising [sic] the future citizens of the nation, keep before us a clear and high ideal in handling this subject, having in our minds a remembrance of the attitude of the Greeks towards education:—That it involved a moral as well as an intellectual process—that indeed the two were inseparable and together formed education:—not limiting it to the mere art of acquiring information.

Methods in the P.U.S.

We approach then the teaching of Citizenship in the Parents’ Union School by presenting to the children such living ideas as will arrest attention and arouse enthusiasm, and will create for them an ideal standard of that in which true citizenship exists.

We deal with the subject in two ways:—

(1) By teaching it *directly*, in its concrete and notional sense.

(2) *Indirectly*, in a wider and more valuable degree through what I may term Humanitarianism.

Except in those lessons dealing expressly with the government of countries and the more obvious facts of economics the teaching is of this indirect character. The most valuable help we can give towards the establishment of relationships is by presenting to the imagination living ideas embodying Self-Control, Self-Sacrifice, Recognition of the Highest by consideration of the welfare of others; such ideas as will help to enable the child (when he shall come to man’s estate), to identify himself with social and national life, to be a good patriot, a careful guardian of his country’s honour and of her justice, to have a reasoning and balanced judgment, to gain a wide outlook on social and political problems, and above all to exercise a large toleration, quick to appreciate the rights and opinions of others.

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The subject, then, for the most part, should be taught incidentally as the occasion arises; and it will arise, again and again, in the ordinary routine of a school curriculum; in history, in biography, in the fairy tale, and in literature.

The teacher should be ever on the watch for the opportunity to direct the attention, and guide the perception, towards those points bearing on the conduct of affairs and of men in relation to the people and the state. This direction, this guidance, (of perception, not of opinion; any attempt to force opinion is strongly to be deplored) requires great tact and judgment.

Means for carrying out this teaching.

In the programmes of work for each term set by Miss Mason for use in the P.U.S. opportunity for the development of the training in citizenship is given in a careful and sequent gradation throughout the forms. In the lower forms, the teaching is naturally incidental only; in the higher forms it is studied both incidentally as opportunity occurs in the different lessons, and expressly by the use of books dealing with morals and economics.

For example, in the lower forms (IA. and IB.) the teacher uses the opportunity offered for giving ideas as to citizenship, in such lessons as English History, lessons on places in connection with Current Events, and in the reading aloud of such books as Mrs. Frewen Lord's *Tales from St. Paul's*, or *Tales from Westminster Abbey*, two delightful books from which the children learn to appreciate something of the real value of the great men who have worked and fought for the Country and the Empire. For instance, in the chapter read from "*Tales from Westminster Abbey*" during this last term, the children heard of the great soldiers, explorers, social workers, politicians, and poets whose graves or monuments are to be found in one certain part of the Abbey; Havelock, John and Henry Lawrence, Outram; Franklin and Livingstone; Howard and Fawcett; The Cannings; Chaucer, Tennyson and Shakespeare, (I mention the names in this order according to the position of the monument or grave) and finally, Handel, whose works we have studied in the programme of music for the term.

Then, too, occasion is found in the poetry to be learnt, the legend to be read. Who does not remember with delight Kingsley's description of the education given to Jason and his fellow heroes by that first of all Scoutmasters, Chiron the Centaur, and how he played and sang to them of "the birth of Time, and of the heavens, and the dancing stars: and of the ocean, and the ether, and the fire, and the shaping of the wondrous earth? And he sang of the treasures of the hills, and the

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hidden jewels of the mind, and the veins of fire and metal; and the virtues of all healing herbs, and of the speech of birds, and of prophecy, and of hidden things to come. Then he sang of health and strength, and manhood, and a valiant heart: and of music, and hunting, and wrestling, and all the games which heroes love: and of travel, and wars and sieges, and a noble death in fight: and then he sang of peace, and plenty, and of equal justice in the land;"—and who remembering, will not agree that in this passage lies much that is the basis of all true citizenship?

But here, the handling must be most delicate, the allusion most sensitive, for these (the poem and the myth) speak for themselves in their beauty and in their influence upon the imagination.

In Forms II., III., and IV. the subject is treated more expressly, and a larger scope is offered in which to give suggestions. Not only have we History, Current Events, Literature to deal with, but Citizenship is set as a distinct lesson and worked out in a two-fold scheme. Principles of conduct and government are studied; in the first place by the use of books bearing directly on the subject such as "*The Complete Citizen*," Form II.; "*Social and Industrial Life*," by St. Loe Strachey, Form III. "*Citizenship*," by E. R. Worts, Form IV. (a most helpful book and one much enjoyed by the pupils) and secondly by hearing read the lives of the Greek and Roman patriots (soldiers and statesmen) written by Plutarch, (The lower division of Form II. takes "*Tales from the History of Rome*," by Mrs. Beesley instead of Plutarch). These Plutarch's Lives (we use the translation by Sir Thomas North, 1579) are an essential feature of the P.U.S.

programme, and it is difficult to over-estimate their value. As language, as literature, as biography, as history, they present in themselves a wide field of education; but their chief educational value lies in the sphere they offer for the training in citizenship. Think of the range given for illustration and application in such lives as that of Julius Caesar, Cato, Solon, Lycurgus, Demosthenes, Pericles, Aristides the Just. North, in his Prefaces to Elizabeth, and to the Reader, points out the value of reading these lives in just this connection. Keeping in our minds the fact, that, under the dominant Tudors, the princes *were* the State, we read in the Preface to Princess Elizabeth

“For, most Gracious Sovereign, though this book be no book for your Majesty’s self, who are meeter to be the chief stone, than a student therein, ... yet I hope the common sort of your subjects shall not only profit themselves thereby, but also be animated to the better

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service of your Majesty. For among all the profane books, that are in reputation this day, there is none that teacheth so much honour, love, obedience, reverence, and zeal to Princes, as these lives of Plutarch do.”

Again in his “Preface to the Reader,” where he urges “that there is no profane study better than Plutarch” he claims that,—

“Whereas *stories* are fit for every place, reach to all persons, serve for all times, teach the living, revive the dead, so far excelling all other books, as it is better to see learning in noble men’s lives, than to read it in philosopher’s writings. Now for the author ... I believe I might be bold to affirm, that he hath written the profitablest story of all authors ... (for) being excellent in wit, learning and experience, (he) hath chosen the special acts of the best persons, of the famousest nations of the world.”

Amyot, too, in his “Preface to the Reader” puts forward the same plea for the appreciation of the Lives and their benefit to the world. He says,—

“For it is a certain rule and instruction, which by examples past, teacheth us to judge of things present and to foresee things to come; so as we may know what to like of, and what to follow; what to mislike and what to eschew. It is a picture, which setteth before our eyes the things worthy of remembrance that have been done in old time by mighty nations, noble kings and princes, wise governors, valiant captains, and persons renowned for some notable quality, representing unto us the manners of strange nations, the laws and customs of old time, the particular affairs of men, their consultations and enterprises, the means that they have used to compass them withal, and their demeaning of themselves when they were come to the highest, or thrown down to the lowest degree, of state. So as it is not possible for any case to rise either in peace or war, in public or private affairs, but that the person *which shall diligently have read, well conceived, and thoroughly remembered histories shall find matter in them whereat to take light, and counsel* whereby to resolve himself to take up art, or to give

advice unto others, how to choose in doubtful and dangerous cases, that which may be for the most profit; and in time to find out to what point the matter will come if it be well handled: and how to moderate himself in prosperity, and how to cheer up and bear himself in adversity. ... For books are full of examples of men of high courage and wisdom who ... have willingly yielded their lives to the service of the common weal, spent their goods, sustained infinite pains (both of mind and body) in defence of the oppressed, in making common buildings, in establishing of laws and government, and in the finding out of arts and sciences necessary for the maintenance and ornament of man's life: for the faithful registering wherof [sic], *the thank is due to histories*. ... To be short, it may be truly said, that *the reading of histories is the school of wisdom*, to fashion men's understanding, by considering advisedly the state of the world that is past, and by marking diligently by what laws, manners and discipline Empires, Kingdoms and Dominions have in old time been established and afterward maintained and increased; or, contrariwise changed, diminished and overthrown."

And he quotes in illustration, the achievement of Lucius Lucullus

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in the Mithradatic expedition, "thro' the study of books yet having had no practical experience in war-fare." Amyot then goes on to answer those who would argue on behalf of experience versus book-knowledge, that "Experience is the schoolmistress of fools," for that should we tarry for this wit that is won by experience, which costeth so dear and is so long a-coming, a man is oft-times dead in the seeking of it before he have attained it. Therefore, we must make speed by our diligent and continued reading of histories, old and new, that we may enjoy that happiness which the poet speaketh of:

"A happy wight is he that by mishaps
Of others, doth beware of after-claps."

I expect, though, that we shall all agree that a three-fold combination is best: book-knowledge—(I place that first) aided by experience and enlivened by common sense.

I have read these extracts from these two translations of the "Lives" because in them lie embodied those very aims and ideals which have prompted Miss Mason to include them in her programme of work under the subject-heading 'Citizenship'—i.e., the study of how the character and actions of great men have influenced a nation—an epoch—a civilised world.

But indeed in Forms III. and IV. the whole trend of the syllabus, in biography, in literature, in geography, in history, general and particular, should cause the pupil (in whom this sense of responsibility has been carefully and gradually developed) to reflect on patriotism, on statecraft, on citizenship—its grants and its demands. This sense is still further encouraged by the setting of special reading: for example the following books are set for the coming term: "Ourselves," by C. M. Mason; Southey's "Life of Nelson," "Our Guardian Fleet," and "Fighting for Sea Power in the Days of Sail" (the two latter by H. W. Household), and by the study of books dealing with questions of social and political economy, and on problems relating to the welfare of the race; such as those which I have already mentioned; "Citizenship," by E. R. Worts (Form IV.) and "Social and Industrial Life," by St. Loe Strachey (Form III).

The scheme is elaborated and the scope enlarged in the work set for Form V, by books dealing with Morals and Economics (this term the book set to be studied is "The Rights and Duties of the English Citizen," by H E. Walden), and by the study of the character of great men and their work for the nation, by the reading of essays such as Macaulay on "Warren Hastings," and of books which will be helpful in the training of citizenship. This coming term such books will include Fisher's "Napoleon,"

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Burke's "American Speeches," Nelson's "Letters and Despatches [sic]," "The Expansion of England," by Sir J. Seeley, in addition to the books set for English and General History:—Green's "Short History of the English People," and "The Legacy of Greece and Rome." The reading of such books should help to deepen in the pupil the powers of insight and discrimination, and to inspire him with a sense of the responsibility and co-operation of the individual to the state. I have not referred to the programme in use by Form VI., as these are set for the year to cover the work to be studied for matriculation.

On 'Books.'

In setting the programmes for the P.U.S. Miss Mason carries out the theories forming the theme in her series of papers entitled "The Basis of National Life," for in them she provides that the child shall acquire knowledge and training in citizenship from the right sources; that is, from the personal contact with and study of the books which go to make up our literature. In this connection she has said, "The best thought the world possesses is stored in books; we must open books to the children, the best books; our own concern is, abundant provision and orderly serving."

The examinations set on the books studied during each term afford an interesting insight into the motive and ideal which has governed and influenced their choice, and of their application to this study of relationships. Let me instance my meaning by reading to you certain questions set on the books read during the Autumn term, which seem to me inspired by this sense of citizenship, and which prove how faithfully Miss Mason carries out her theory that true education does not consist in the mere acquiring of information (the knowing of facts) but has its inspiration in a high ideal and its application to human life and conduct.

Form IV. Citizenship. Question 2. Nicias had "a paternal regard and friendship for the people." Tell two stories to shew this.

Note. Subj. 3 books set.

3 questions only set.

Form IV. History. "Let sleeping dogs lie." How did Walpole act on his motto? Give a sketch of his career.

Ques. 2. Describe the character of Carteret, and of Newcastle. (A question affording an interesting opportunity for contrast.)

Form V., VI. General History. Shew fully how Greek Literature influenced Greek life.

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Ques. 1. Trace the steps of the Conversion of England to the Whig Party, and discuss the policy of his party at home and abroad.

Morals and Economics.

Ques. 1. Shew what part ideals and faith play in the building up of a nation.

Ques. 2. By what arguments does Socrates shew that it is right to fulfil the laws?

Form Ia. and Ib. English History. Tell a story about Lord Clive or David Livingstone.

Form II. Citizenship. Ques. 1. Tell a story to shew that Nicias might justly be called "the servant of the people."

Ques. 2. What things are to be considered in building a pleasant house.

And now let me offer a few hints based on personal experience in the treatment of this subject.

Apart from the reading of the book set and the narration by the pupil which naturally follows, discussion affords the means for the exchange of opinions; ideas are circulated and a feeling of co-operation is created which animates the child with a sense of dignity. The spirit of comradeship, of sharing as citizens, is thus set up and will of itself convey the initial impression of forming one of a community. During last term, in introducing the subject to pupils between the ages of 8 to 11 in *Form II.*, I devoted the first two lessons to such a method—talks or discussions on taxes and the return we get for the demand made:—and most delightful and amusing talks they were, ranging from personal cleanliness and cooking, through taps to reservoirs and the Water Rate; and vesting the dustman, the policeman, and various lesser lights, with a halo of interest and appreciation; creating in us all a virtuous and amiable spirit towards the rates and taxes and the benevolent government that imposes them. With the older pupils, this discussion may take the form of a debate when some special point of interest or some particular issue will be the theme. In either case the teacher should endeavour to inculcate a passion for justice, and to guard against sweeping condemnations. Caution should be exacted (as well as exercised) in expressing opinions. The teacher should keep a careful watch upon himself and upon his attitude towards the subject under discussion. He should try to give as many aspects, and to quote as many opinions as possible, pointing out that all have a right to think as they choose, provided they have thought carefully, deeply, and for themselves.