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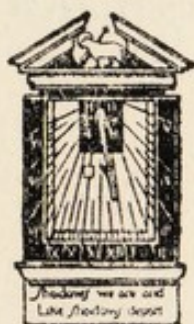
THE NURSERY SCHOOL



RACHEL McMILLAN AT THE AGE OF NINETEEN
Born on Lady Day; died on Lady Day

THE NURSERY SCHOOL

BY
MARGARET McMILLAN



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DEDICATED TO
MY SISTER
RACHEL

*"Educate every child
as if he were your own."*
RACHEL McMILLAN.

PREFACE

THIS book was written in response to a desire expressed by many people in every part of the country for some help and guidance in the starting of Nursery Schools.

The need for a book on this subject is certainly urgent. Not merely a few children here and there, but hundreds of thousands are in dire need of education and nurture in the first years; for lack of this early succour all the rest of life is clouded and weakened.

The fate of vast numbers of little children given over to all the dangers and horrors of the streets was brought very forcibly before us in the autumn of 1918, when after the summer holiday we found that one-third of all our nursery children were diseased and obliged to spend a week at the clinic ere they could come back to our school.

We set about the treatment and restoration of the few. This book was written in order to urge the nation to set vigorously about the salvation of the many.

Nursery Schools, we are often told, are in the experimental stage. This can hardly be true, for the experience of nearly twenty years' work has yielded convincing proof as to how nurture can be given. It has indicated beyond all question the kind of environment that should be secured, and the means (very simple means they are) by which the dangers of bringing many little children together can be avoided. The next step need not be tentative, it should certainly not be timid. There is a tide in the affairs of men and nations which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune. That

flood-tide has come twice. It came in 1919, when this book was first published, and it was not taken. It is here, in 1930, once more. We should take it bravely; not by cautiously adapting small houses and leading into them groups of forty to fifty children can we solve this great problem in our great cities. How we should approach it, and what we should do, I have set forth as well as I can in this book.

In the last chapter I have tried to thank those who helped me in the work of pioneering the large open-air Nursery School. In the earlier Foreword I thanked my friend and publisher, Mr. J. M. Dent, for his unfailing courtesy and helpfulness. I now extend my warm thanks to his son, Mr. Hugh R. Dent.

The Preface to the first edition of *The Nursery School* was written by me in 1919. Over ten years have passed, and only now is a second edition asked for in England, though in America the book has sold well and has given, I am assured, the initial impulse which has resulted in the opening of hundreds of Nursery Schools in the United States. In England the book and the movement met with unexpected difficulty and arrest. The former won the faint praise that is often said to be the most damning form of condemnation when it comes, as it did, from influential quarters. Yet it did not die. To-day in 1930, after ten years, the sales quicken so that this second English edition is now in demand. As for the movement, after meeting the blasts of the first after-war years, it was forgotten or brushed aside by more instant and urgent problems. After twenty years there are not two thousand children in British Nursery Schools.

The American schools continue to multiply, but their aim and method are, for the most part, other than those which inspired this book,

In spite of all, there is little—there is nothing to change in the Preface. All that it claims holds good. We have had new experience only to learn that the main statements are now capable of new proof. Moreover, as I said, the flood-tide has returned. It is here once more, the moment that will settle the future of millions. Public opinion is gathering in volume. The great local authorities, the great cities of England are waking—are making ready. The message of this book is offered once more.

M. McMILLAN.

1930.

FOREWORD TO FIRST EDITION

BY PROFESSOR PATTY SMITH HILL

*Director of Lower Primary (Kindergarten-Primary)
Education, Teachers' College, Columbia University,
New York City*

HERE is an epoch-making book which all who have to do with the welfare of children cannot afford to overlook. It is truly an inspiring and absorbing account of experiment in child-saving which "warms the cockles of the heart" with its evidences of intelligent insight and sympathy in dealing with the "toddlers" and young children in the slums of London.

At last the world seems to be awakening to the fact that human destiny is largely shaped by the nurture or neglect of early infancy and childhood.

Miss McMillan presents a most convincing study in the power of early environment, which provides for health of body and the refinements of beauty, saturated with all those human values which make for morality, and mental and emotional health.

The importance of early influences has been appreciated by people of rare insight, or sympathy, in all ages, but society at large even to-day is singularly blind or indifferent to the practical outcome of such facts.

We are inclined to look upon what is vaguely designated "disposition" as a foregone issue, determined and controlled by the mysterious forces of physical heredity. The emotional habits of happiness and amiability, or

discontent and irritability: the habitual attitudes of affection and confidence, or antipathy and suspicion; the feelings of selfishness and malice, or generosity and good will toward man—are established in the dim beginnings of life by the social ideals and standards of those around the child. This influence which Professor Mark Baldwin calls "social heredity" has, in all probability, as much to do with the making of disposition and personality as the forces of physical heredity predetermined at birth. When Mr. Maltbie Babcock was making an effort to prove the power of the human will in controlling one's natural temperament, he said that while we may not be responsible for the disposition we are born with, we are for the disposition we die with. Even so scientific an observer of child life as Dr. John Dewey says:

Especially precious are the first dawnings of power. More than we imagine, the ways in which the tendencies of early childhood are treated fix fundamental dispositions and conditions in turn taken by powers that show themselves later.—*Education and Democracy*.

How slow the world has been in learning this.

Education seems to move from above, downward, the earliest and most impressionable years being left to chance, or positive neglect, centuries after later childhood and youth have been provided with the best that education can provide in guidance and environment.

If the findings of mental hygiene and psycho-analysis can be depended upon as pointing toward a future science of the power of the unconscious forces of life, they will go to prove that we have abandoned the most formative period of human life to the uncertain forces of chance experience.

Froebel and Montessori were wise in turning to the pre-school age as one of untold educational possibilities,

but the Nursery School Movement in England has improved upon their plan in pushing education back into the pre-kindergarten years, when neglect is most expensive both to the individual and society.

We must give full credit to the earlier efforts to care for infants in the crèches and day nurseries in England and other countries, but Miss McMillan's work has little in common with these. While she is aware of the fact that to neglect human life at the period when greatest susceptibility to disease is at its high-water mark, is the most expensive and tragic mistake a nation can make, she sees beyond this into the demands of the human spirit. Such national neglect is not to be measured only by the thousands of little lives snuffed out at the dawn of existence, but by the sickly, wrecked physical and moral specimens who survive to a bare existence, which leaves them incapable of coping with life, and a burden to themselves and society.

Life is more than meat, and man cannot live by bread alone. Thousands of infants die in institutions where the physical environment is far superior to that of the average home, providing all that makes for the welfare of the body. This mysterious missing element of human affection and devotion must permeate the atmosphere of any institution which hopes to save the souls as well as the bodies of little children.

Miss McMillan has proved that the children of poverty may not only be saved, but that they may be worth while to themselves and society in their survival. Rural life will always be impossible for large numbers of families. When the parents earn their livelihood in our great cities, it is neither possible nor advisable to sever the bond between children and parents by sending the little ones to the country, except for short vacations. While these short vacations are better than nothing,

the children quickly lapse when brought back to the city to continue their neglected existence in the squalid environment of the children of misfortune. Miss McMillan saw that it was impossible to keep large numbers of children in the country, so she created a garden spot in the slums of the city—literally a child-garden. Her transformation of a London "dump heap" into a paradise of childhood is a stroke of real genius.

Another interesting thing about this miraculous transformation of slum surroundings is the comparatively small outlay of money put into its equipment. A minimum of money goes into the buildings. They are little more than "shacks" or shelters set in a garden of flowers and trees, overlooked by tenements of the lowest order. Sunshine, open air, baths, food, sleep, play and work in beautiful and happy surroundings—these are the great means of education she employs. The money goes into land and good teachers, who are nurses as well as teachers. The number of children to the teacher is kept sufficiently small to make it possible to preserve the individuality—the personality of every little child. The best medical attendance is provided, clinics being an important part of her scheme of education, and not only death but disease is kept at bay.

These tiny toddlers with clean, well-nourished bodies, living in the open, surrounded by intelligent and sympathetic care, soon leave little for the physician to do. Strange as it may seem, these little children from the worst slums of London when they enter the regular school at eight years of age are straight of limb, broad-shouldered, tall, and, so far as can be seen now, are as normal in mind and heart as the children of the so-called privileged classes. This seems so logical that we wonder that society has come to the realization of it so slowly. A few years ago, a survey of the homes of

children below normal in weight, height and class-standing, proved that a regularity almost mathematical could be counted upon in the relation of weight and height to the one-, two-, three- or four-roomed homes from which they came. (*Hygiene of School Children*, Terman.)

If this be true, why should we be astonished at the beautiful children made possible, when they are rescued from these squalid homes and placed in gardens of delight, in sunshine and flowers? Walt Whitman expressed it long ago when he wrote: "A child went forth one day, and what he saw he became." We can almost imagine the thousands of little lives struggling to survive in the slums of our great modern cities, unconsciously offering the prayer of Matthew Arnold: "Nor let me die, before I have begun to live."

The little children of Miss McMillan's Nursery School not only live but have a rich abundant life of health, and happiness, and beauty, which should be the birth-right of all the children of all nations and races.

It has been said that the test of civilization is the attitude toward young children. Most superintendents are absorbed in the problems of secondary schools or in industrial and educational vocations at the cost of the younger children in our public school systems. The finest buildings, the costliest equipment, the most highly-trained and highly-paid teachers are procured for high schools. If funds run low, the younger children are usually the ones to be sacrificed. It is almost invariably the fate of the youngest to be housed in the most insanitary and the most unsightly buildings, herded in the largest classes and crowded in ill-ventilated rooms, with overworked, underpaid and often the most poorly-prepared teachers.

Civilization demands a new environment for our

youngest children—a new type of nurture and education—a high standard of teaching, teacher-nurses or nurse-teachers, who understand the right of the youngest in our democratic society to “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” Miss Margaret McMillan, Miss Grace Owen and others have been pioneers in this great movement for saving and educating the babies of England. State funds are now provided for the education of mere babies and the training of teacher-nurses in the Nursery Schools.

When will America awaken to the fact that her babies are left to chance, and that as Professor John Watkins, of Johns Hopkins University, says, if we wait until the child is three years old, it may be too late to form those habits of physical, mental and moral health which are the foundation of character and citizenship?

NEW YORK, 1921.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

THE infant welfare movement has had a wonderful success in this country. It has brought down the baby death-rate at a run, and all within a short period. In January 1912 my sister and I opened our infant clinic and ran it as part of our school clinic, and this work for infants will probably be resumed at an early date. In this book there will be no reference to baby camp or infant welfare at all.

The open-air Nursery School is a new departure and is distinct, if not in aim, yet necessarily in method, from infant welfare work. The swiftly changing characteristics of growing young children demand new treatment. As soon as he can toddle we introduce the child to a new environment, which is nevertheless his long-lost natural home, his God-designed habitat, where his senses and spirit may be allowed to waken, and his impulse and activity will not meet unnatural obstacle or definite arrest. He is to live in the open air from the first, having shelter from rain, cold, and heat, every extreme and undue rigour of climate, but free to look upon the sky—to see the moving trees and living creatures of the world at last. He, the slum child, is to feel the warm and healing light of the sun on his limbs and to experience if not watch the continuous changes that we call morning, midday, and evening. This is a great revolution, and I do not believe that this present generation is able to estimate fully all that it implies.

The garden is the essential matter. Not the lessons, or the pictures, or the talk. The lessons and talk are about things seen and done in the garden, just as the best of all the paintings in the picture galleries are shadows of originals now available to the children of the open air. This new contact with originals, under trained helpers, should mean a great release of power in children: it should make them ready for the later work of "lessons" by letting them learn in a natural way from the first. Ruskin declares that all the best books have been written in the country (with the exception of a few, perhaps, that were written in jail). Little children, as well as great writers, should be, if not in the country, at least in a place that is very like it, and does not take all its great advantages from them in the first years. If not in great space with moorland or forests and lakes, at least in sunny places, not in foul air and in grimy congestion.

It is important to get the question of environment settled first—to have it take precedence of method (of which much is said and written); for until this matter of environment is settled no method can save us. Moreover, the loss involved in putting up expensive and unsuitable buildings will cripple the finances of local authorities so that they will shrink from every and any kind of new proposal. When economy is possible it should be practised at the beginning of an enterprise, for later, as vistas open, we may learn new ways of spending; and the opportunity seems to have come in view of the new proposals for meeting the needs of older scholars. If the indoor school can be used for the senior classes of fourteen- to fifteen-year-old girls and boys, we can now surely make new plans for the nurture and education of the younger children. The open-air garden school can be theirs first. There need be no

more building of costly infant schools, but rather a new finding and clearing of suitable sites, especially in crowded areas, where the new work can begin under new conditions.

This would seem to have been impossible in the distressed nineteenth century to the boldest reformer. The prophets cried aloud, but the destruction of a great race went on apace. The bravest and most practical educational reformer of all, Lord Shaftesbury, pressed with salvage work of every description, yet found time to go out into the dens and dark places of the city and rescue the lost children exposed to weather under railway arches. He introduced Esquirol to the English Parliament of the forties. Being well-informed about the work of Pinel, Itard, and Séguin, he held a world of knowledge and insight in reserve, which he could not, in his own day, apply. Fierce political antagonisms held back the mere possibility of getting the greatest reforms carried out in the new schools. They were schools of a party dominated by industrialists on one hand, troubled by religious feuds on the other. Earlier in the century one man, Friedrich Froebel, saw the vision of the future, the Nursery Child Garden. He saw it with the inner eye, but he never saw it in material reality.

My dear sister and I acquired, in 1911, free of rent, the full use and life ownership of a good six-roomed house, the gift of Mr. and Mrs. Evelyn. We never used it as a school, but as a kind of hospital; for our experience of the school clinic had, by this time, shown us that the children (other than those fit only for hospital) were in no need of any kind of house. They suffered from lack of experience in the open, and of the open.

We installed, in the little garden behind the house, a canvas tent facing the east, and fitted with very primitive

bedsteads and a more or less sound wooden floor. This was our first camp school; it was also our first Nursery School shelter, and it is through the experience gained by working with these children, all of the poorest class, and all living with us under the most primitive conditions, that we learned to trust nature and the masters altogether, and to advocate not merely gardens as an annexe, but as the only proper kind of schools for all children, but above all for young children up to their eighth or ninth year.

.

The subject of this book was divided in the first edition into two distinct parts. First, the Nursery School and all that concerns the children who attend or will attend it; and secondly, the Teacher; also the Student Teacher and Probationer and their preparation and training for the new work. This last formed the subject of the second part of the book.

In 1919 there were very few Nursery Schools of any kind, and no large open-air Nursery School that I know of other than our own. As for the training of teachers it was not even considered as yet, so confused, so blind indeed was the general view on this. Many people believed that training of any kind was unnecessary for a nursery teacher, just as they still believe that it is quite unnecessary for the woman who is a mother. Nursery Schools were to be a dumping-ground for the well-intentioned but dull women of that day.

The rapid fall in infantile death-rate which has lately followed the tentative instruction of mothers has given pause to many. It is surmised that instinct is not the only guide in child nurture. True, there are many intelligent men and women who tacitly believe that a very little knowledge will go a long way in mother or

nurse; "few lessons" tacked on to various orders of training, or even to no training at all. But the New Psychology and its findings begin to take some hold of the public mind. A wonderful system of Nursery Schools numbering hundreds has sprung up in the past eight years in America. They will doubtless be multiplied in the course of a few years. Most of these are research schools, working intensively under teams of experts: teachers, psychologists, nutrition workers, and social workers. Meantime, Geneva sends out a rain of new works based on practical observation. In short, there is a growing movement that is concerned with the problems of child psychology.

The object of this book is not research—save as a means to social salvation. It is, of course, true that any real live undismayed venture in education is research and leads to discovery. Our objective, however, is not research as it is commonly understood. We are here to work out a scheme of education of children. And the question of training teachers is too large to be treated as part of this book on Nursery Schools.

Our own college has grown and will soon number from eighty to a hundred students. The Board of Education has recognized it fully as a training college for teachers, and has allowed us to draw up our own scheme of training, subject of course to its approval, while keeping our large Nursery and Camp Schools as practising schools for our students.

I hope to bring out shortly a companion volume to this book, in which the scheme and method of training teachers will be dealt with in detail.

The year 1918 will stand out in the history of education with even greater lustre than 1870. The Forster Bill decreed that, sooner or later, every child should learn the three R's. Mr. Fisher's Bill decrees that every

child shall, sooner or later, have nurture as well as teaching. Between the passage of these two Bills lie nearly fifty years of struggle and anguish, of brave effort—yes, and voiceless sacrifice. The movement that reached its climax in the Bill of 1918 quickened its pace in the nineties and passed a goal in 1907, when the medical inspection of children was made part of our school system. But the history of education is really the history of democracy, and as the people advanced slowly in social hope and faith, the level of their demands in education and nurture rose with the tide.

And yet we are still bound to answer a very simple question. Why, we are asked, do we want Nursery Schools? Should not every mother take entire charge of her little ones till they are of school age? Is it not her duty to remain at home and to devote herself to them? At every moment, and certainly at every meeting, this question is asked, so it may be well to answer it here. Nurseries and Nursery Schools are wanted simply because little children want nurses. They, being children, need that very important kind of early education called nurture. Can this be given, and given entirely by, let us say, the average mother? The well-to-do mother never attempts to do it alone. She engages a nurse, perhaps also a governess, perhaps a schoolroom maid; a great many engage a cook, also a housemaid. All these mother-helps work in a spacious house, with probably a fine garden. I don't wish to continue the parallel. It is too cruel. The working-class mother in her tiny home has no help at all.

Yet the man and woman in the street, the average wage-earner and his wife, have been developing new susceptibilities and needs for many years. He is wonderfully like the rich man in everything but the difference of income. For example, the rich man buys

a motor-car, but the poor man needs a tram or bus. The rich man has a fine library in his house, the poor one likes to have one in some street near his home. He tries to do collectively what the wealthy man does alone—and both have one end in view, the satisfaction of known wants. Well, in the fullness of time, nurseries also have come to be wanted. True, there is no mention of the word nursery in any of the newest plans for workmen's dwellings. But there are rumours now of collective nurseries, where children can be gathered in safe and pleasant places, close to their homes and mothers, and under the charge of trained and educated nurse-teachers.

It is the private nursery enlarged, and adapted to the average family's needs; and there is no reason at all why it should not rival any private nursery in its homelikeness and efficiency, or why, for that matter, it should not one day include as staff some of the mothers themselves.

However that may be, I have been asked to deal with the question of Nursery Schools; to set down in order what I have found out in the conduct of such a place before and during and after the Great War; to show what may be desirable or necessary in the choice of a site, in buildings and equipment, in feeding and clothing, and the daily round of bathing, sleeping, play, work, and leisure; to deal also with the mind-work of the classroom and the nurseries, the methods of teaching the usual subjects and others to children from one to seven years old; to deal only casually here with the question of staff, and the training and education of young teachers, but to consider the relations of parents to the Nursery School; in short, to break new ground on many aspects of a vast and new subject. It is from every standpoint a very large question. I assume in

the start that the Nursery School will, if successful, change and modify every other order of school, influencing it powerfully from below. Knowing all this I might even have shrunk from the task, but the experience and efforts of which this book is the result have cost much. They were paid for finally by the sacrifice of my dear and noble sister, who poured forth all her resources, material and also spiritual, in order to begin and develop this work, and who died exhausted and, alas, perhaps saddened by the long fight, on her birthday, Lady Day, 1917, just as the plans for the extension of our nursery centre were passed. I dare not, therefore, fail to complete the task begun and continued with her for so many years; nor can I forget in anything I say, her great and brave axiom: "Educate every child as if he were your own."

The kind of school planned in any given place must take account of the particular as well as the general needs of the children and mothers. A very crowded industrial centre where mothers and fathers both go to work cannot be treated exactly as if it were a suburb, or a nest of small shopkeepers.

The Nursery School of which I have experience, and of which, therefore, I must often speak, was started in a very poor, very crowded district in the south-east of London. The workers of this place are largely casual, and, save for such training as is given in large factories for the making of boxes, tin cans, packing-cases, and the like, unskilled. There are a dozen public-houses within a stone's throw of the school, and some of the streets are quite dark and very noisy after dusk. All this makes the experiment more, not less, valuable; the work is as difficult as it can well be, and if success can be won here *it can be won anywhere*.

For such an environment breeds a great crop of evils.

The clinic we started in 1908 at Bow and removed in 1910 to Deptford has been crowded for twenty years with thousands of children suffering from diseases that can easily be wiped out for ever. True, the clinic as such cannot make any kind of war with the causes that breed these diseases. It cures them again and again. It does not prevent and cannot prevent their return. A school clinic is not, literally, a preventive agent; but a large system of Nursery Schools, if properly equipped, would cut at the root of all this misery. It would bring up a race of children with new habits and new needs. It would open the eyes of mothers to things they have never glimpsed at all. We say it would do all this because we have seen it done. In twenty years the clinic has not wiped out any disease at all. It has not emptied its own waiting-room.

But the Nursery School has swept most of its children far, far from this old world. It should, in time, entirely empty the minor ailment clinic. It should be unthinkable that any Nursery School child should cross its doors.

Often they pass near its door. After luncheon and in the afternoon the gate of the nursery opens, and a troop of lovely children file out and pass, a river of beauty and grace, up the dim alley, and across the sordid square flanked by public-houses. Women stop in their hurried errands; men coming to and fro, or standing idle by the street corner, turn softened eyes on this line of nurtured children. Are they really children of this neighbourhood? Did any one of these ever run in the gutter, or linger, shockheaded, near a dirty close-head? We need not ask such questions now. Already the past is far away. These children come to school every morning clean and fair. If many still take the school bath it is because they love it, many

do not need it any more. And how do they differ from the well-groomed nurslings of Hyde Park or of Mayfair? Certainly they should not, and we believe will not differ from them through any lower standard of purity or nurture.

Thus far we have won already in the Nursery School.

.

The first open-air nursery was started years after the camp school for older children, and both are the result of work done in the school clinic. While all around us hundreds of anæmic and weakly children pined and strayed in the dim alleys and muddy streets, there was in front of our doors an acre of waste ground which the L.C.C. had bought as a site for a three-decker school. We asked for leave to use the site as an open-air nursery, and leave was granted: "Only you can't have it long," we were told, "for we shall want it soon for building purposes."

If buildings could save us we had a good many here already. All around us they rise. Huge and very high schools with stone staircases and asphalted playgrounds. Tier upon tier of humanity, all thrown back daily at four-thirty into the street. Far be it from me to say that miracles are not worked by teachers behind these walls; but the hour had come, as it seemed, to try a new road.

So in March 1914 we moved the Nursery School we had opened in Evelyn House garden to the Church Street site, having first cleaned the ground as well as we could, and put up the first large shelter of corrugated iron; and then for the first time we had the first condition of any great advance—that is, site or space to live on.

Children want space at all ages. But from the age

of one to seven, space, that is ample space, is almost as much wanted as food and air. To move, to run, to find things out by new movement, to "feel one's life in every limb," that is the life of early childhood. And yet one sees already dim houses, behind whose windows and doors thirty to forty little ones are penned in "Day Nurseries." Bare sites and open spaces are what we need to-day.

Surveys are made for various purposes in every city. We know that free spaces lie between many streets and thoroughfares. A railway ride from Whitechapel to Barking, for example, will show you large spaces lying idle, the ground broken here and there perhaps by allotments, but for the most part all unused. In Deptford itself, perhaps the most thickly settled district in South-east London, we are surrounded on all sides by waste space. There are small pieces and large. There is a waste space in front of the camp, and one on the right of our hostel. We had a big dumping-ground behind the camp opening on the recreation ground, which we cleared to make the camp itself. There are other places close by. Yet I admit there are barriers to-day. In 1919-20 the L.C.C. tried to get open spaces. It found sites, but it found, too, that many of them were tied up by old laws and agreements that made purchase difficult. This, of course, should not deter the L.C.C. It has been found possible to open vast parks even in London—great open spaces that are the lungs of a district. We have these in Deptford close to the thundering street, green, health-giving, and for the most part empty. Through the long hours of the summer day our recreation ground here is empty. We have now to clear spaces that will not be empty. In these spaces we must have not only flowers and grass, *but children*. They must be allowed to live in gardens,

and these gardens may be lungs for the area. They should be prettier than the parks and more interesting.

The nursery itself should be attached to homes, otherwise it is not a nursery, but only a receiving station. How dreary when one wakes in November to set off walking or wheeling through chill, wet streets, carrying a little child to a nurse. There is no need for such pitiful journeying. A covered way, paved or asphalted underneath, could be built out from any great street of flats or blocks of houses; and along this path little children could be taken by guardians or even by the teacher-nurses themselves every morning. In this way we can get nearer what is best in the good private nursery, viz. the nearness of the mother, and also her co-operation and even control. She should, if possible, see her children all day, or be near them and able to see them often.

It is not enough to have show-days and fêtes, visits and formal talks. Show-days are exhausting, as Mrs. Poyser found out long ago. They are no part of the workaday life of joy and labour. A Nursery School is, or should be, a part of the home life. Ours is overlooked by a hundred windows, and often there is a crowd of eager faces at each, but every moment a face appears, glances out and goes. These are English people, the children's children perhaps of those who knew Marlowe, and danced with him on the village green close by (Deptford and Greenwich is Good Queen Bess's area). They loved open-air drama in her day. And still the people love to go to the pictures, having no outdoor summer plays any more. But the nursery is for them a kind of return to the outdoor theatre; it is an open space, a garden, a school, very gay, a place of life and movement and action. The recreation ground near by has only trim paths. That is, perhaps, why no one walks

there. There is no spectacle. But here! No one passes the gate without looking in. All day there are groups near the entrance and eyes watching through the palings. They make me think always of the queues waiting to go into the theatre. Here in London there might be a gay drama played out continually under the eyes of admiring mothers in all quarters. "It's better than a play," said a poor woman, hiding a jug under her apron. "Better'n the pictures."

"Come on," cries a man at the corner, "come an' 'ave a look at the kids."

This is not child-study, perhaps, in the strict sense, but it is joy in the beauty of childhood, and joy is the beginning of much, particularly among the descendants of the people who liked Good Queen Bess.

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"How do you select your children?" ask our visitors. We do not select them. Mothers come to our doors and, if we have room, we take their children, their toddlers of two years old, with only two conditions. First, they must be free of all infectious diseases, and secondly, they must be normal. The slighter ailments and preventable evils we take in hand and settle before entrance, as I will explain. Once inside, the child comes under the influences of the great healers, earth, sun, air, sleep, and joy, and it is admitted that these work continual wonders.

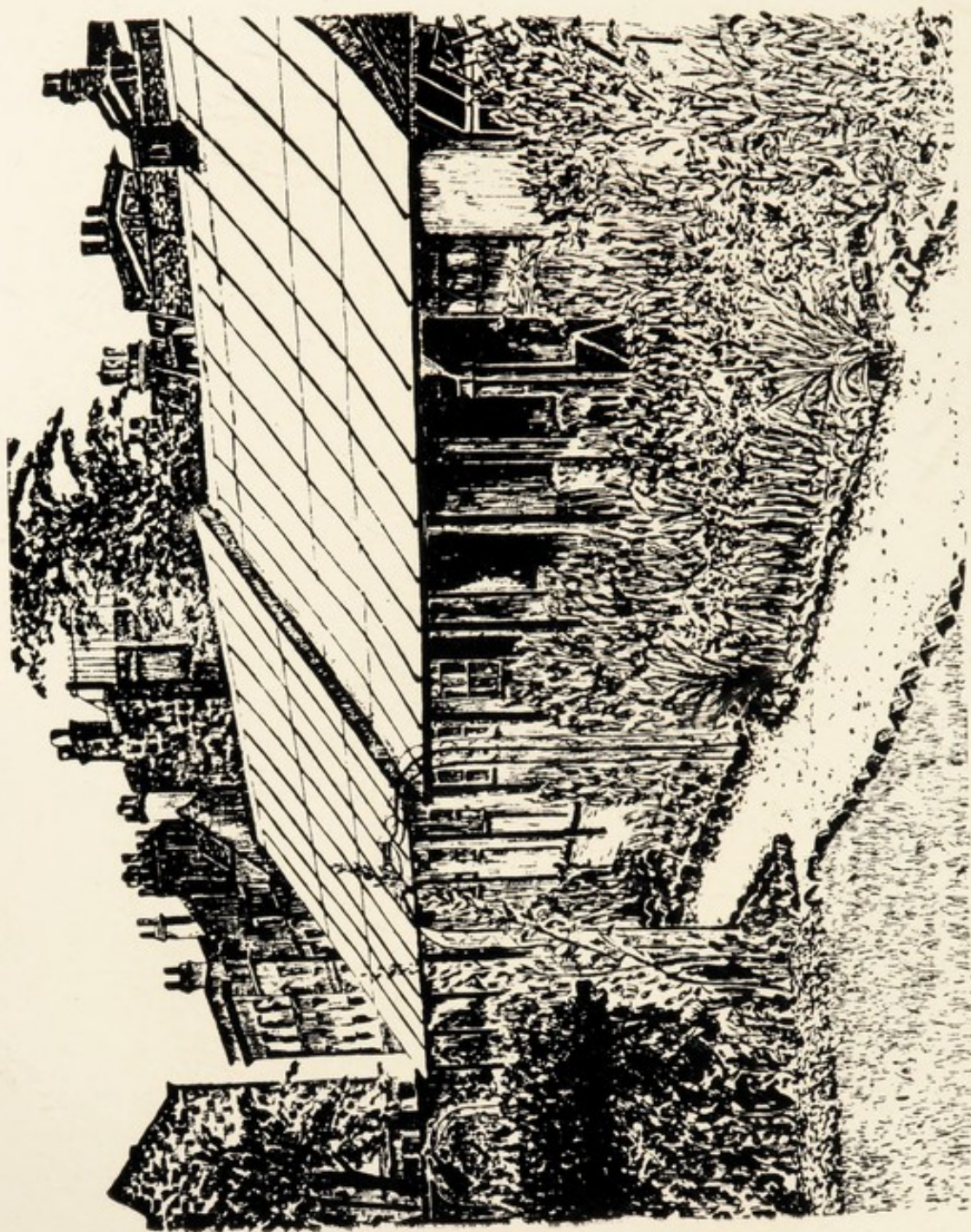
CHAPTER II

PLAN OF THE BUILDINGS

IN planning the buildings for an outdoor Nursery School, we have to think of three, perhaps even of four stages of childhood. Early childhood ends at seven, that great milestone noted by the leaders of all great races and religions, and now by those who tell us that brain-growth stops here. During the Great War, when the grant was paid by the Ministry of Munitions, we did not let go the tiny hand of the infant of days, or toss it away when the little traveller was two, three, or even five years old. Though the Bill says three to five, we will not think merely of one or other of its stages, but of childhood as a period of existence ending at seven. Otherwise we are not students at all, and are like mothers who care for their children at one age, but ignore them at another.

Childhood is a time of change, of swift transformation. As an infant a little one sleeps much. As a toddler he wants to run and range all over a large place. At three or four he has become another person, with new needs and desires, and later still he is a schoolboy. That is why we have to plan so that the children do not interfere too much with each other's lives, while at the same time these lives are not isolated or wrenched apart one from the others. They should meet often as in a family, in the gardens, at playtime, in visits to each other's shelters, and even at other times.

In planning the shelters we have to think about the weather also. It is not a fearsome thing to dwell on. The best health records of the open-air nursery are not



THE CAMP IN SUMMER
Pen and ink drawing by a first year student

all in summer. July is an anxious month, and August (when the primary school closes). In spring, in May and June, and throughout autumn till November, we have the cleanest bill of health. But "Nature never does betray the heart that trusts in her," even in winter. This trusting does not mean that we are to expose our children to hardship. It does mean that we are to make them resistant. The cool light, the steady feeding, regular sleep, and active interest *do* give reserves not only in bright summer mornings when the garden is gay with bright processions, and groups playing among the flower-beds, but on winter afternoons when it is soon dark, and on cold and wet mornings. We must think without fear of them. And we know now that we may think of them all without any great shadow of fear.

The buildings should face south or south-east, and in order to have this, the general line of the rooms or shelters may be straight, the walls at either end shaped in butterfly form to catch all the sunshine possible. The building may be of poêlite or some other composition.

Poêlite is fire-proof. It is of a soft grey colour, very pleasant to look at. And with strong blue or red painted woodwork it makes wonderfully pretty rooms. In pre-war days it was sold in large sheets that cost only 7s. 6d. each, and these make good strong walls, which can be roofed over with wood-ridged asbestos, giving a very pretty, gay effect. The street-like appearance of the shelters may be broken up by long awnings, or paved cloisters that offer shelter to children in rainy weather, or on sunny afternoons. Opposite is a picture of our camp building, drawn by one of our students. It shows the outlines clearly of one shelter.

In planning for bad weather it is well to put up an outer wall if possible, to shelter the buildings from northerly and easterly winds, and in front there should

be terraces to break the force of southerly gales in winter. The front of the shelters should be open most of the year, but sliding glass doors or screens may be fixed in about the time when the days grow very short. If there is plenty of top light the movable screens do very well. Only on six or seven days in last winter were the screens and gables closed. The back or northerly wall, the only one that is in all the year round, has a deep opening behind it where the roof slopes down, so that a current of air is always coming in from this quarter without making a draught. There may be low gates and fences to the shelters of the younger children, and a very low step running right along, so that tiny feet can pass in and out without hindrance or risk. Overhead, where the walls stop, the open wooden framework is seen, and there the air flows in a free tide. During summer the gables are open, and on many days also in mid-winter. The gables should have movable screens put in on the same principle as window-blinds or screens. The walls are in movable sections in some orders of shelters. They may lie out most of the summer, but *poêlité* does not lend itself to this treatment.

Any private nursery is part of a larger thing. It is part of a home. The collective nursery should be also, so far as possible, a part of the homes around it from which its children are drawn. In order that mothers and children can pass to and from this nursery which belongs to them all and serves them all, there might be a number of covered ways leading from the houses, as I have already said. "Covered ways" are quite a feature of this new kind of building. They might in some places connect the shelters with the bathrooms and offices, but they are even more useful and necessary for mothers who have to face the snow or rain of a winter morning.

The building, we will say, is up. On the fair smooth

floor the sun flood falls on summer days and on winter days too. But let us say it is summer. Through the open gables, and open spaces of the easterly wall, rustles now the green and tremulous curtain of leaves, and in front, though we are in a slum district, it has been possible to give a vision of radiant flowers, of happy bird-life, of noble trees even, to the children. Within the shelter only free space is wanted, space for little feet that run the whole length of the room and back again as a new and glad experience. Space to trundle hoops, to play at ball with little hands outstretched and missing always, but always eager. Space, the joy of joys under the sun-flood. That is life and it is sweet. All the furniture is planned so as to give this sweet freedom. The stretcher-beds, made of stout canvas, are buttoned on to a simple wooden frame with collapsible legs.

They can all be packed away in a big cupboard or cupboards, which can hold from forty to a hundred of them. The cupboards should be built in. This leaves space, and everything can be packed away out of the reach of dust. Our toddlers' cupboards run the whole length of the back wall of the shelter. They hold a vast number of toys, and make a shelf, too, for the many things they want to handle. The toy-tables, with high bordered edges, fold down into small space, and can be easily stacked away too. The little chairs, so light, can be ranged in small space. In fair weather the glass screen with the low lattice-work wall in front is down, so that, as we saw, with one tiny step the toddler can be in the garden.

The low step and the low gates are useful. The toddler loves to lean on the fence. He learns to use the step, too, going up and down very carefully at first. He learns also to climb on the outer stones of

the long terrace, to jump from the flat stone at the end, and on the lattice he can slide along when he is learning to walk. If the true story of a toddler's days were told it would be more thrilling, perhaps, than anything ever written. On what a sea of wonder does he adventure forth every morning! Vast to him is that garden, with its big blowing flowers and great bushes; and how strange must be the winged things flying about the flowers, like moving blossoms themselves, and never waiting to be touched. How wonderful the life of the meadow, and the birds that pick the hearts of the young green things. The rabbits, the tank, the great clouds to which we are sometimes asked to lift our eyes, the vault of light, the shadows on the white walls. The rustling trees with their great branches, the stones that we gather and carry to nurse in wet pinafores. The pools after the rain into which we diligently go. What wonder and joy that will never come again fill the long hours and moments of a toddler's day!

The bathroom should open off the nursery proper, all being of course on the same ground-floor. It is convenient to have a wide sliding door, that never bangs, and never gets unhinged or out of order. The bathroom should be enclosed or indoors, but furnished with big windows looking south. White sink baths fitted with hot and cold taps do very well, and they should be so high that the nurse need not stoop in bathing. They should be furnished with a wooden plank on which the child can sit. This plank can be buttoned back when out of use. There must be a high table on which the children can be dressed. Ours runs along up to the window, so that Tommy can hail his friends in the interval of getting his vest and knickers on, and Ted can watch his rabbits while he submits to having his hair brushed. The offices would open out

of this room and be all indoors. There should be plenty of towel-pegs and tooth-racks.

The bathroom of a toddlers' room should be large enough to allow all the children to occupy it at once. This is very important. *But every shelter should have its own bathroom*, that is more important still.

The shelter of three- or four-year-old children should differ a little from that of the toddlers, and it would be very easy to put up a beautiful one which would show its purpose at once to even the careless eye. It should be like the toddlers' nursery in being large and sunny, and built so as to be open at the sides, gables, and front in mild weather. One or two sides may have the same kind of cupboards, large and built in. Down one side and above the low-hung blackboard should be lockers so that each child should have his own locker and shelf. The few pictures should be hung low. They cannot be too good of their kind. They should be pictures of things that the children have seen or can at least understand a little, and drawn or painted in simple masses or outlines. The tables should be big enough to seat four or perhaps six. Bigger tables can be used in summer when dinner is taken in the playground or garden. And a chair for the teacher, who will want to gather her flock round her knees as in a home nursery, not talk at them from a distance. And there should be a piano. If, as in one Nursery School, some teachers learn the violin, it will be a great joy. For very little children appear to have a great love for stringed instruments. The flute is a good instrument for a Nursery School, and also the zither and the banjo.

The bed-lockers need not take much space. They look like big wardrobes at the end of a shelter, and can be made of poëlite (like the walls), with plain wooden framework. This shelter for threes and fours should

have wide, low steps that look a little like the Dutch stoep of the wooden houses of the old settlers. (The floors of all the shelters must be concrete underneath the boards, and be raised up so that little people can look down as well as out on the world.)

Opening off the larger room there might be a play-room fitted with toy-cupboards, and with a space for dolls' houses, etc. This is not quite necessary; but in any case the shelter should be very spacious, as it will have to serve for sleeping, dining, playing, and work room, and indeed can, as is proved, serve all these purposes very well. A room of fifty feet long by thirty wide is not too large for a family of forty children.

The restless little hand of the toddler has won great things and made wonderful progress in the second year. That gay and fruitful progress need not be checked in the three-year-old shelter. There should be writing-boards all along the walls; but even that is not enough, for children use the hand, as they use the voice or the tongue, not in mere lesson-time but all day long and in every kind of play or work. The occasion to use it is always arising and, being so, we must make provision for a natural activity. Some at least of the tables should have writing surfaces, so that one may draw or write, as one speaks, wherever one feels one has something to do in that way. I had blackboards put up even on the outside garden walls. Thus by constant practice, not by set lessons, our three-year-old will learn the basis of many crafts and arts just as the toddler, by the same method, learns one language, and, it may be, two. In the evening hours a child will want to draw, or paint, or work, or listen, as in any happy home.

The ideal of such buildings should be home life, not school life as we know it. Low chairs for the nurse, who is mother and sister for the time; pictures and

prettily coloured walls and light, musical instruments, flowers, and an atmosphere of joy and love. That is what is required for the child of wealth. It is needed for the children of all classes.

Older children up to five or six do not use the high bath suitable for toddlers. They use the flat tiled bath with hot and cold shower, bathing thus like the Easterns in ever-clean water. Here children of three or five may be bathed in sixes or even in dozens, finishing off with a clean spray of rather cold water. A simple place it is, fitted up as a bathroom in this kind; the walls whitewashed and fitted with towels and racks; the great luxury being found not even in glazed tiles and fittings, but in a full and free supply of hot and cold water at all hours. There should also be a hand-washing place for the children of three and over, with low basins fitted, each with hot and cold water taps. On plumbing we should spend so that washing would be made easy for child and nurse-teacher, and dirt become a thing for which there would be no excuse. A laundry room too is a necessity and also a drying-room. But these may be very simple; the simpler the better!

The shelter for children over five differs from the others in that it is frankly a school. It must have lockers and specimen-boxes and geography and history play-tables. This in summer should be a lovely room looking out on the fair garden, and even in winter it should be gay, with its open screens and southern frontage. The children see these rooms all day as part almost of the garden; this is why they give them sunny and fair impressions of life and the beauty in a spacious world. Though our camp school was lacking in many things in early days it had new things, things our children had never known. Pigeons flew about the arches, and all day long we saw the rustling green of the

recreation ground trees. We were not allowed to go as a school into the empty ground, but we saw the grass. It was a real open-air school. Now it is far better equipped, but we do not see so much grass or sky. At night our boys slept out in the shelter. They saw for the first time the fairness and the splendour of the night sky. They looked at the dawn. They would have, I think, some great ideas on building and architecture in later life, for they would know the great originals.

There is an arcade or covered way round all our buildings. Paved underneath, it is a good place to play in; to sleep in also.

One note of warning may be added. Of all rooms to be avoided in the Nursery School plans the assembly-room is the most dangerous. Here, in this central room all children are massed at certain hours in most schools; but this massing is a serious danger for little ones. One of the secrets of avoiding infection is to avoid breath-contact at all times. In the two-year shelter the children must be spaced well for meals, and must never be allowed to huddle together at any hour or place. Nothing can better illustrate for us the need not only for a new order of building, but for new habits and observation, than the continual risk of infection and outbreak of contagious disease that so often follows entertainments, children's parties, assemblies, and the close contacts that accompany these.

Also the cloak-room should be an open-air place, at least for dry clothing. Wet clothing must be dried, but hung later in an open-air place. In the last hour of the day the need for vigilance is greater than at other times. *Children should not sit about in outdoor clothes.* They should dress only to go home. That they meet, in large numbers, only in the open, is one great safeguard of the Nursery School.



WHEN THE LEAVES ARE FALLING

CHAPTER III

THE GARDEN

THE Nursery School garden is planned to meet the needs and natural desires of young children. Their needs are many and various and they differ in some ways very much from those of older persons, so that it is necessary to go a little into the question of child gardens.

It is said by some people that young children, being not only very active, but keen to experiment in movement, should have a garden that is a kind of gymnasium. But no mere gymnasium, however well planned, *can* be a garden, or supply what a garden offers. Perhaps in bygone days, when it was believed that motor and sensory nerves were highly differentiated and almost independent structures, there might have been some kind of scientific basis for this specialization; but we believe to-day that the human nervous system is not constructed on these lines, nor does it function through entirely isolated mechanisms. There are motor elements in perception, and there is stimulus in the sight of lovely or strange things. Most things provoke or encourage movement in children or adults.

Trees. It is always a relief to think of trees. They are surely the finest kind of apparatus for climbing you can have; boys prefer them to any other, and even though our little ones cannot scramble up the trunks, we need only help them to a seat between two strong branches to see their deep and vivid joy in this kind of "apparatus." Apparatus can be made by fools, but only God can make a tree. Trees offer, too, shelter in wet and in sultry weather. In spring and summer their stillness, their movement, their streaming beauty,

have a strange kind of reassuring effect even on the youngest. In towns the plane-tree seems to be the best of all, its big leaves offering a real shade to temper the heat of summer days. Under them our toddlers and three-year-olds sleep safely on July afternoons. In every city Nursery School some of these serviceable trees should be planted. But these are not the only trees that do well in the heart of a crowded London district. Poplars, limes, sycamores, some chestnuts (but the chestnuts do not like smoke), hardy willows, weeping birches, and even ash and oak (but these last two are stunted) grow freely near congested streets. Even flowering trees do well. Laburnum, cherry, apple, and almond trees. Plum trees flower well (ours yield no fruit). The garden is very gay in April and May. Climbing roses do not count among the other trees as such. They grow riotously in spite of fumes in South-east London dockland, covering arches and pillars. The fig-tree grows in South London districts in any space cleared in the dockland area, and the vine flourishes, yielding many clusters in the open, though the fruit does not ripen.

We cannot, of course, claim that all these trees will flourish in northern cities, yet the north has its own trees, and they are many.

In any part of Britain except the Western Isles and the extreme north, all but a few—the silver birch, the vine and fig and mulberry—will grow. Shrubs and mosses, and flowers of rare delicacy grow in the north. Bog-myrtle is lovely as well as the musk rose.

Flowers. Not only every place; every month has its own beauty. We have to plan our children's gardens so that they will see laurel, holly, and winter jasmine in December, as well as cherry blossom in May. February is full of promise. Scyllas, snowdrops, aconites,

crocuses are with us then, and daffodils begin to peer. But with March the great pageant begins. It should be freely offered to the eyes of little children, for no painted apparatus will take the place of massed colour. The golden sweep of tulips or daffodils a-blow, preparing us for a greater sweep and depth of colour by and by; the fire of geranium, bright fields of marigold, and rivers of blue veronica and larkspur. Lilies of all kinds; even Eastern lilies that scent the garden, lilies of spring, summer, and autumn. Many lovely things bloom freely in our city gardens. It is only a question of getting the garden idea to replace the fixed idea of indoor things, of cut flowers, bulbs in pots, and little boxes of flowers—all good in their way, but giving no adequate impression to the child of the real nature of living colour. When he has been in the garden, and only after he has been there, should a child try to recognize the colours in his boxes and tablets and match them. The first impression is the original, without it any colour-work is artificial and vague.

Perfume. This is not unimportant, for smell is a function on which health and safety depend as well as a pleasure. It is a sense, too, that has deeper associations with lasting memory than any other.

The three-year-olds love to smell flowers. I cannot tell whether they smell wandering scents such as violets or sweet briars, for they do not yet speak of all their experiences, but I think it likely, since they love to smell the cut flowers whose scent is not nearly so sweet as the breath of living blossoms.

Young children also observe flowers and make naïve remarks on them as soon as they can speak a little. A delicate three-year-old little boy, often ill, whom I carried one day to see a dark-spotted lily, appeared to enjoy the scent very much. "It is like me," he said,

noting the spots, "when I had measles." A little crowd was often on the path while this lily lasted—looking and smelling.

Herb Garden. No Nursery School garden is complete without herbs. They need very little attention after the seed is sown, and some grow so fast and spread so as to take more than their share of garden ground. Balm, for example, will soon overgrow a garden, and so will mint. Fennel ("You take it with fish," says the gardener) grows high, and rue does not obtrude its pungent smell. All of these, marjoram, rue, mint, balm, rosemary, thyme, sorrel, can be grown from penny-a-pocket seed. The two-year-olds press the leaves and come into the shelters smelling their fingers.

Kitchen Garden. Many city children never see vegetables grown, and come to think of them only as things to be found in shops. We cannot feed our large school of three hundred and forty children with garden products, but every Nursery School should grow some vegetables for their enlightenment and interest. Potatoes, cabbages, parsnips, beetroot, carrots, parsley, onions, radishes, rhubarb, and marrows—they should see them all. The memories of these growing things, many of which are eaten raw by the children, will be associated with warm, happy days, when with flapping sun-hats they followed the Nursery School gardener from bed to bed. "Take me to the beetroot," says the student, and the babies connect this. "Show me the onion bed." The three-year-olds walk to the right bed or point to the right place. They sow and they also dig in the sunshine, stooping for the humbler things that may be gathered from the earth. The bigger boys go off with the cherries and apples so we can hardly keep these until they ripen; but these big, impatient boys have never been to a Nursery School.

It used to be the custom in many places to give children little gardens of their own. This may be helpful to children over toddler age, more especially if they sow big seeds (such as the sunflower, cornflower, and nasturtium). The little ones don't begin so; they love most of all to sow in the big garden just as they love to wander there. It looks for them a flowering world—a forest—a wilderness. Some part of it should be a wilderness where they may sow what they please.

Greenhouse. This may seem a luxury, but that is only because we have spent so much, hitherto, on things that are of little interest to children, and have not yet begun to think of school or even nursery life as a natural world.

The greenhouse need not cost much. Our camp boys built one for us eighteen years ago, and here it is still, full of greenery and pots and bowls.

With a little contriving we can have a pipe from the boiler-room near by inserted in the wall, so that no frost ever reaches the winter plants; and it would not cost any great sum to have a vine in the greenhouse.

If one remembers how in early childhood the sight of grape clusters falling from a sunny roof lifted all the dim consciousness of that time into a sudden clearness, one may wish to give this arresting vision to many children. And the vine grows here, in London city; the fig-tree also, though the fruit does not ripen out of doors. The mulberry, however, spills its rich fruit over the path and grass in August and September, and the boys go out with purple streams leaking from their pockets.

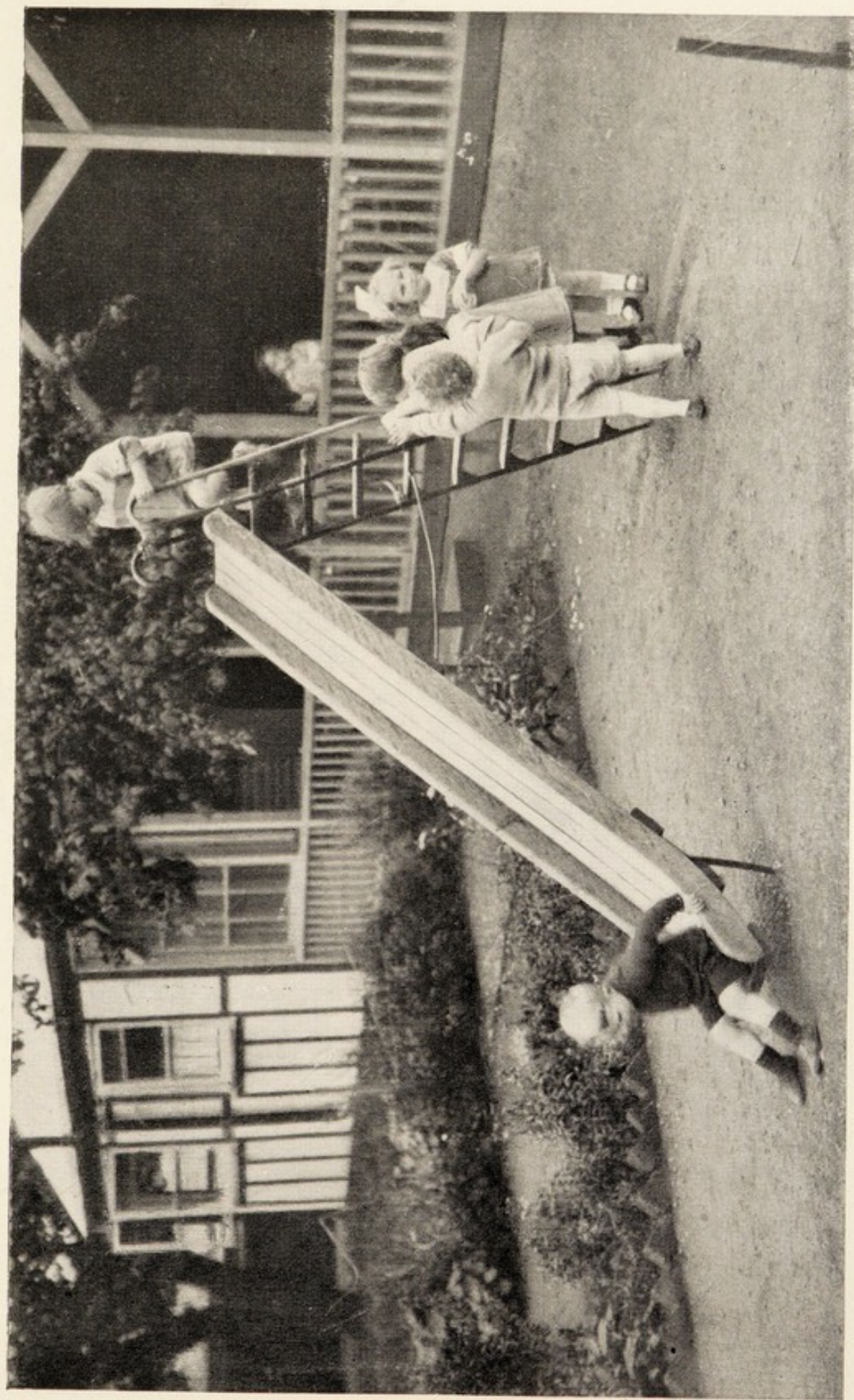
Terraces. These are not only beautiful; they are very useful in breaking the force of wind and storm. In the sloping stone wall of them rock plants grow, and flowers like the wild convolvulus. Baby research work is done at the terrace, where toddlers embrace the great warm

stones in summer, and even seize at times a blossom or even a rooted plant. One must begin research somewhere.

I have said nothing of ponds and fountains, brooks or pools, and yet children love these, perhaps, best of all, would run to these first and leave them latest. The truth is that any artificial or still water is hard to keep sweet. If we keep it long it gets foul; if it is exposed it dries up in the sun and in winter it freezes; yet it is fascinating and indispensable. The only little brooks we have are the rain streams in the shallows of concrete, and we love them. But we take our little ones down to the stream of the wide-curving Thames, and there some of their happiest moments are spent.

Some day there will be many Nursery Schools along the banks of rivers. Already there are several that allow a child to get a glimpse of the moving waters of the Thames, with its various craft, its changeful beauty. The days when they can look at this and play on the banks or strand must be unforgettable. What part these memories play in mind development we cannot know. Meantime we can dream of the little brooks in far-off country places which will have new spectators; of the sea-side where one day poor children may paddle; of rivers, by which they will learn. All this, so long hidden from our island children, will be restored to them in their earliest years, and be their heritage for ever.

The Garden as a Gymnasium. Though the garden is not merely a place of movement, yet a little children's garden must offer every kind of inducement to muscular play and action. It must be planned with an eye to real safety; but fitted with the kind of apparatus that will provoke children not only to play, but to play bravely and adventurously. The simpler and more natural this apparatus the more it will be enjoyed and prized. Thus we have rough stones leading up to our



WHEN THE RAIN IS OVER

By kind permission of the Recordograph

terrace walks, stones that are not too high for little limbs and feet, but which give opportunity for care and adjustment. The narrow paths are straight and smooth, so that one can run and give chase even safely, and at one end there are graded steps for exercise in jumping. All over the garden, indeed, there are jumping-off places. On the walls are low rib stalls for climbing, and in the midst of one grassy stretch a tall jungle-gym, where a dozen children can climb and swing at once. The paths are firm and high, and can be swept dry after rain. There is a climbing upright and slide that is in great demand, and in front of every shelter open space and long paths for running and large-muscle play. Over and above all this children love living apparatus, and make a tense bar, a swing, or a climbing-pole of adults who allow such activities or encourage them. Also many of the big toys, such as trailers, fairy cycles, loaded trains, etc., are popular, and the first traces of co-operative play appear in motion games, such as horse and rider, running, etc.

As the Habitat of Animals. One of the most reassuring things about the garden school is that it is a home and haunt of living things. Pigeons fly about; they strut in the grass and the paths; they rise in heavy flight to the roofs and come to be fed in the open spaces at regular times. A little grain offered in tiny hands will bring them at any moment. In the aviary, canaries twitter and sing loud, perching on real trees, and love-birds glitter like gems in their own house. Guinea-pigs squeak from the hutches, and rabbits look out from their burrowing-place, which should be as big as possible. Cock-crow cheers the morning and hens lay eggs for the Nursery School child to gather. In the aquarium fish swim; and pink and brown mice draw wondering eyes of many observers.

The garden school can hardly have too many kinds of animals, provided there is space enough and the conditions of a happy life. Strange! It is easier to make ideal conditions for birds than for others, for some are tame in freedom—as the pigeon and those who gather at the bird-tables; and some, like the canaries born in captivity, have the joy of flight if not of freedom.

Children have shown us that these do not exhaust the resources of the garden—of any garden. They turn up the stones to find beetles; they watch the ants, the butterflies, the bees in the flowers, and in early autumn the spiders. These creatures being small, attract and stimulate them, but the insects do not awaken feelings of pity or sympathy. At first very often they stir little children of two to three to acts of cruelty. Pity is for the larger creatures. The cat, the guinea-pigs, the hedgehog are not wilfully hurt. Pigeons are chased not as enemies, but only so as to illustrate the wonder of flight.

Training in habits of restraint, and the winning of sympathy for the animal creation, is no more than other kinds of learning, a matter of theory and exhortation. If we love our brother because we have seen him, as an easy approach to love, we are likely also to feel love for animals by getting to know them a little when we are small. By feeding them, watching them, seeing them, and hearing the noises and calls every day. Then, just as the colour apparatus is useful once we have seen the flowers, the teaching on kindness will be in place when we *know* the creatures we are hearing about. This is the natural approach and it is one of the great uses of a child garden.

As time goes on we shall doubtless enrich it, just as in bygone days we multiplied our class rooms, and varied our methods of teaching the three R's.

CHAPTER IV

I. THE SIZE OF THE SCHOOL

THERE is no question that has given rise to more discussion and dissent in Nursery School circles than this which we must now deal with, viz. the size of the school.

It was believed at first that the Nursery School must be small, and this for reasons that appeared at the time very intelligible. It was urged that in the big school there would be great danger of infection; and as the children were to be very young and of an age when risks are at their maximum, this appeared to be a serious matter. This, however, was not all; it was feared that overcrowding would ruin the morale of the nursery. In the large school the homely charm of the small groups would be lost—a fatal thing for little children. Only one great stumbling-block appeared to exist as an obstacle to the opening of small schools, to wit, the excessive expenditure, and here indeed the small school advocates' worst fears were realised, as we shall note in the chapter on Finance.

The answer to the fears of infection is given in the history of the open-air school. No house could be so safe as the open, for little ones. Let us keep them, therefore, in the open. As for fear of unhomelike atmosphere, that was due to a misconception of all that is implied in the new method of building a Nursery School. We do not follow the old tradition of erecting one large building, but abandon this method once and for all. The large open-air Nursery School is in reality a village of schools, and consists not of one but of many

shelters, each standing alone, however, with free air around it—a self-contained unit—each furnished with its own bath, offices and general equipment; each presided over, and this is important, by its own head teacher, assisted by her own staff; each making full provision, in short, for a family of thirty-five to forty or forty-five children. Thus the great danger of overcrowding is avoided, just as it is avoided where every family lives in its own house. And that home atmosphere so rightly prized and so precious in a Nursery School is not endangered at all, since every Head is in charge of only her own small school or family.

When all this begins to be fairly understood we shall see why the danger of infection is not greater, but is much smaller, in the large than in the small school. We shall see, for example, how the youngest children, who are most susceptible, and for whom infection offers the greatest risk, can be provided for in a specially bright and spacious shelter of their own, and under a head whose duties as a guardian are more or less specialized. We can see, also, how isolation would be easy in a special shelter, if necessary. This need is not likely to arise. There is no object in making too elaborate provision. We have evidence to show that given the building methods we have indicated, the children enjoy a security that is very difficult to ensure even in a very small school, and which is indeed quite impossible in any indoor school, however well equipped.

The Public Health Reports of the L.C.C. of 1926-7 give some interesting comparative figures on this point. These show that young children attending a Nursery School numbering hundreds compare very favourably as regards risk of infection with those who attend small schools numbering thirty, or only twenty little ones.

As nearly always happens when a new thing is

advocated, we find that it is not new at all. The idea of a village is not new; nor of a township. We find it wherever man has escaped from the solitary cave that was once his home. Only this social way of building has never yet been literally applied in building *schools*, and that is why it has been difficult—though doubtless not always impossible—to get a home-feeling into schools, and above all to get enough sunshine and free air into them.

The new order of Village School will vary in size. It may have three, six or even twelve shelters. The Rachel McMillan has eight and will soon probably have ten shelters. A school may be too large, but I see no objection to the number of children being three hundred. Many, indeed all the advantages of social life are to be enjoyed in the large garden school, advantages which the modern man and woman love and will not give up. Many love solitude, but few want to be always isolated. Yet adults change far less rapidly than children. The life of a young child undergoes change, as I have said already, even within very short periods. A two-year-old is very unlike an infant of weeks or days—the former is seldom still and the latter is nearly always asleep. The toddler is also very unlike the five-year-old. He is very unlike the three, if not in his mode of life, yet in the range and nature of his activity. True, the children of these various ages like to be together at times, and learn much from contact with and observation of one another. This does not mean that they want to be *always* together or that constant companionship is good for them; on the contrary, at each stage of childhood, children learn most from people who are in their own stage and state of life. This was not clear yesterday. Many things were obscured yesterday that become clear as we make new observations, and create places for observation.

This world for children, for example, that we try to bring into existence, is nothing more or less than a place where children can really be seen and known at last as children, not as beings who have to fit into adult worlds, and are forcibly obliged to accept conditions that restrict them merely because to us they seem easy and necessary.

At the head of any large school there must be a superintendent, who will gather all the various lives and homes together, and keep them working harmoniously. And here we touch on the great question of staffing, which must be dealt with later, but not here. One point, however, we must note here. The work of the head-mistress of any *small* Nursery School is very strenuous; she has not only to carry very heavy responsibility, but she has to bear it all the time, inasmuch as she can seldom or never be relieved. This is at the root of the obscure but deep-seated objection of many teachers to large schools. They feel, only too sadly, that the work is hard and that the danger of break-down and failure is constantly present even in a small school. What then, they argue, would be our fate if we undertook a school of hundreds? This fear, like others that we have been considering, rests on a misconception. The small school is not the large school *en petit*. It is another entity, with another framework and organs. Let me try to illustrate this fact. The staffing and work of the new school bear no resemblance at all to that of the little school. Its success depends on getting good Heads, and above all in getting teachers who can co-operate and even, if need arise, can supplement and relieve one another. With this power of co-operation the shadow of lonely and unlightened responsibility passes. A new release of power and freedom comes to every teacher, a sense of power

not won by slackness or indifference, but through co-operation. Ambition once stifled can live again, aroused now by the new opportunities for research and special study or work that are made possible. Security of a new kind is won. Just as a great liner that takes three seas is steadier than a little craft, so a big school can not only make a swifter voyage but a safer one than can any small school.

I have seen so much happiness through fellowship in a big residential school. Nothing that is dark in a very poor neighbourhood could affect the spirit of the teachers and students. Alone, the situation would be hard—perhaps hopeless. Faced in fellowship it has no terrors.

Of course in country districts, lonely villages, and where homes are scattered dwellings, there *must* be smaller schools. If the village is large, but not very large and scattered, one or two small schools may serve. They can be built on the same plan as the large school; one or two shelters may serve, with a cottage for base, also kitchen and bathing-place. In districts where villages are small and isolated some arrangement must be made for the transport of children to the Nursery School. The children living in these places are more in need of social contact than any. I have seen in Wales, children who cried at the sight of any stranger. They had lived with two or three people all their lives. Yet it has not been found impossible to build schools *for older children* in such places. It should be easier to find a site here for an open-air Nursery School. Cost need not deter in any order of district. We do not need to engage architects to draw up plans. The labour of building and equipping a simple shelter in which children can thrive and develop is a problem easy of solution for any people

of good will. Only transport is perhaps difficult. It is surely possible in summer, if not in winter, to gather even little children in a garden school.

We have to consider every district as it presents its own problem. It is impossible to deal with the crowded Dockland area, for example, with its teeming streets and over-populated houses, as we should deal with a remote village with hardly enough little children to fill one shelter. Dockland presents the bigger problem. It has been solved.

Here experience, which means of course practical effort and experiment, alone furnish solution. The most difficult situation of all has been met already. It is the crowded slum!

2. LENGTH OF THE NURSERY SCHOOL DAY

The subject that comes next is a vexed one. True, it is seldom discussed as yet at conferences or meetings; but this may be, and probably is, only because the boarding of a new and difficult subject is naturally avoided as long as possible. Many teachers view it, if not with alarm, at least with reluctant and shrinking disapproval. The long day is even more to be feared by many than the large school. Why a longer school day? They argue: "Is not the present five-hour day long enough? It is often lengthened too by home work." This objection is after all very reasonable. It rests, as does the opposition to the large school, on a misconception. The elementary school day is a five-hour day. As a study day it may be long enough; for younger children it is, in the opinion of many, too long. This opinion I do not question or dispute if by a Nursery School day, we mean a day such as children spend in class rooms and in study. The open-air

Nursery School offers, however, no study day, nor is it founded on the tradition of the primary or secondary school. Nurture and the organic education that accompanies it is one thing: study and school work in the ordinary sense, is another.

This distinction was not recognised when, in 1870 and earlier, schools were opened and children of various ages were gathered or massed in classes. "School" was "school" in those days, and it was nothing else—a place where you were set, whatever your age, to learn the three R's by methods adapted more or less to your years, but with one subject-matter for older and younger. We have moved on since those days. Some new light has been thrown on the still obscure processes which condition learning at *any* age, but above all in the most fateful years of all, the first seven years of childhood. And we realize how much learning depends at first, and for years, on environment. Also, that time is an essential factor in this organic education. It cannot be given in a short study day of four or five hours. Its processes are too slow as well as too shrouded. They have no real parallel in later life and learning, or in any case, their importance as a condition of learning becomes less and less apparent with years. For maturation is not what we are accustomed to call learning. It is an earlier and more fundamental thing. It is a preparation of the organism for all and every kind of progress and learning.

A short nurture day is in a great measure *a waste of time and money*. The great process which it exists to forward is not possible in short sessions, broken by long intervals. Schools and nurseries are, of course, not the only places where maturation goes on. There are, happily, homes where maturation can go on without interruption; but these homes are nurseries, more or

less. This is not true, however, and cannot be true of millions of homes in our congested areas and in our countrysides. In the poorer quarters of all cities the out-of-nursery school life interrupts and may even destroy the work of the Nursery School. A child goes back to a one-room home, or he runs in the streets. This experience blots out, or at least withers, what he had begun to win at the Nursery School. It breaks up and clouds all that inner preparation which was attempted there and was going forward. It is very much as if a child were allowed to rest only for very short periods at night, being wakened always when his sleep began to deepen and do him real good. It is a new, but an altogether reasonable view, that for the same reason that he requires long nights of sleep he needs also long nurture days.

In the open-air Nursery Schools nine hours is a reasonable nurture day. *Not* five out of the twenty-four, but nine; and this is the minimum if the work is to be really effective. That is why in the Rachel McMillan Open-Air Nursery School the children are expected to arrive at 8 a.m., to have their three meals per day at school, and to remain till 5 or 5.30 p.m.

It may be said, and is said often: "This will take the whole burden of parenthood off the mother and father." In so far as the mother is concerned it has the opposite effect. New responsibility is acquired through increase in power and knowledge (and by no other means whatsoever). This fact is now being illustrated on an ever-increasing scale, and in various countries and classes.

The rich, educated, American woman who attends new study circles at the Nursery School is not getting less responsible; she is growing every day more feverishly anxious to undertake new work and make new efforts

for her offspring. The poor and ignorant mother in a one-room home, with a brood of little ones, scolding and striving and failing, is not at all conscious that she is not doing all that can be done for them. She believes she is all right. It is not she who has reduced the heavy infantile death-rate of all the centuries, nor does she even know that it has been reduced from two hundred and seventy-four per thousand to sixty in some areas, and all in ten years. She thinks of her life as hard, but not of her work as failure, and yet she is not very different in all this to her richer neighbours in recent days, the truth being that, until very recent years, the whole race took a wild chance with all its children, and takes it still for the most part.

Rachel, weeping for her children all down the ages, does not and never *did* know why they died: nor did it ever seem possible for man to dream of disentangling the skein of influences and tendencies that make wholesale tragedy inevitable.

To go back to the study day. Most of the great educationists, from Comenius and after (as well as before), have put on record their conviction that four hours or five for older children is enough, and perhaps more than enough, for school attendance. And on this advice and experience the present (four- to five-hour) school day has become general. This intensive day should, in process of time—say nine to ten years—ensure proficiency in the three R's for the majority. It can hardly be said to do so much for all, but it now begins to dawn on those who have observed Nursery School children that our failures in education are mainly the result, not of bad teaching, but of inadequate preparation for any kind of learning whatsoever. And this applies, of course, not to school children alone but to adults also. In the case of adults it seems probable that

early failure in nurture has produced a crop of permanent results. I don't claim that the Nursery School or any other agency can be relied on to alter this, but if any agency is adequate to prevent such failure it is to be found, surely, in the open-air Nursery School. There a new order of preventive work is going forward; it is going forward under the eyes of mothers. Also, we have seen many a woman change and even try to come abreast, as far as she can, of the Nursery School methods. This is another fact which is hopeful. Our experience is limited as yet to very few schools and, above all, to very few children (the majority of schools being so small); but within this narrow range we are justified in saying that all the evidence gathered in places where the nursery child remains under nurture conditions far beyond the Nursery School age, goes to show that, even in the poorest homes, the organic education of the first years in the Nursery School makes possible a new facility and power of response that transforms for the nurtured child the whole business of learning. Camp-school children *do support this view*.

The question suggests itself at this point: "What of the teacher's side of the question?" Is she to be sacrificed to the child's needs? Is she to have a nine-hour day? And how will you induce her to agree to it?

We are not considering the teacher's side of the question *at all* in this chapter, or even in this book. That subject will be considered in another place, being admittedly of great importance. Yet we shall not entirely evade this question even here. The teacher need not and will not necessarily have a nine-hour day. In an existing school she has a seven-hour day, being relieved and released at suitable hours so as to make this possible. The very static views prevalent on most school subjects have led many to assume too readily

that new conceptions on staffing are out of the question. They are in the question! A new conception of staffing must be introduced into Nursery Schools. They must have a composite staff; it may include some helpers who are *never* going to be teachers.

Little children sleep at midday; they ought at the age of two to have a midday sleep of hours. The sleeping shift is important, but there is no need to have trained teachers in constant attendance during the whole time. Younger and less highly paid workers can take their place, not only in this interval but at other times. We shall discuss the time and intervals in another chapter.

There is no formal and intensive mental work in a Nursery School. No one is toiling to pass an anxious and difficult examination there. The three-year-old is *not* learning the three R's, neither is he set to any weary tasks. He works hard, not under compulsion, but obeying an impulse that brings its own happiness.

Motor activities are indeed not only an element in all perception, they are the great element of all learning and perceiving. That is why to a healthy child, learning is indeed, at first, pure happiness. The teacher shares the gaiety of this work that is not only play but also adventure—an adventure that opens the door to every order of new pleasure. If she is in the spirit of this world, and assisting in this adventure, she is herself back in the play-world. For young people it is not a long journey. Given the right environment, the Nursery School teacher's work is not comparable with that of the teacher of older children. *It can be sustained for a much longer time.* This does not mean that it is all play for her. It cannot be all play for her; being responsible, she has of course real work, and may even feel exhausted at times; but her work is of another order; it is not

intensive in the same degree as form-work. Its conditions, its tensions and its reliefs are all different; and such being the case they are to be studied and realized as new experiences in themselves, and not to be confused with the tasks and tensions of a college tutor.

But if the Nursery School is not all play for the teacher still less is it all manual or physical work. For, strange to say, here in the play-world the greatest opportunities for scientific and original research offer themselves to every worker. The new chances for naïve observation in this field are indeed unrivalled. Experimental workers in all countries agree that the greatest problems of life are presented in the Nursery School, under conditions that are at once stimulating and encouraging. The older child becomes more or less an enigma. The younger child is still showing his hand. Every hour he may, and does offer some great clue, unexpectedly; time and again some fluttering edge of the cloak that hides the mysteries of growth is lifted here. The Americans have rapidly come to understand this. Their schools are, as we saw, centres of ardent research; but not in America only. In every country psychologists will welcome the Nursery School as the thing they have long waited for—the place where they can see and study under new conditions. It will come to them as a surprise, for no one believed or expected so much from this institution in the beginning, or dreamed it would promise so much. It is here—the new observation centre, the place where the new world will be not only created but understood at last. The Nursery School teacher can retain ambition; the modes of work are new; the opportunities new also.

CHAPTER V

DIET AND CLOTHING

It is a mistake to think that all "poor" children are under-weight and under-fed. Some are too heavy. And a good many eat too much, though a great many are, on the other hand, much too light and eat too little.

The remarkable thing about most of the unnurtured is that they eat the wrong kind of food, and at the wrong hours and intervals. There is hardly a toddler who does not appear on the first day loaded with bread and margarine or jam, or treacle-stick apples. This is not the only cause of rickets, but it is one link in the chain.

Furthermore, the life of many children is so inert and so unwholesome that they do not digest well. This is true of many well-cared-for children behind model dishes in model schools, as well as of the poor and neglected. They sit about. They are over-clothed. They do not bathe often or regularly. They do not run and shout in the open. They sleep in faint air. They sit and move and walk in a state of dull, half-aliveness. Therefore, any question of diet, plus digestion, must take in all our life in camp, where, as we can now prove, rickets and anæmia have short shrift and where children who used to hate wholesome food get very hearty appetites.

First of all we take away the jam pieces, and the crumbly bags, or in any case arrange that they will not be brought to school any more. The children have breakfast at nine, after the bath; they have dinner at twelve, and "tea" at four.

Breakfast and "tea" do not vary much. I get the oatmeal for porridge from A. MacKenzie, King's Mills, Inverness. It outstrips all qualities of meal ever tried, and we have tried a great many; we have also tried various preparations of oats and cereals, always with the result that the children's weight fell. Oatmeal should not be eaten with sugar. It can be cooked slowly in a bran-box, or chaff-box, but this splendid meal does not require the long boiling needed for inferior grain. It should be slightly salted, and stirred with a wooden spirtle. It should be kept in a dry place and in a wooden box.

If a child cannot eat porridge, he should have slightly toasted brown bread, not new, with good butter. Crusts should be given to all so as to help the teeth and encourage chewing. So crusts must be got ready in the oven. For breakfast and "tea" our children have milk, and they get to like it sooner or later. For tea we give bread and butter with a little jam or honey, and sometimes fresh fruit, or plain home-made cake. Raw apples are given as often as possible, and we wish they could be given every day.

The dinner is varied. The same dinner is not given twice in one week, and there are always two courses. Here is the menu for a week:

Monday : Minced meat with green vegetable and potatoes, followed by rice pudding and Sun-Maid raisins.

Tuesday : Vegetable stew, followed by suet pudding with treacle.

Wednesday : Minced meat and potatoes, with raw grated vegetables, followed by custard and fresh fruit.

Thursday : Fish pie made with potatoes, milk, flaked fish, and butter, followed by rice pudding and fresh fruit.

Friday : Barley soup, followed by roly-poly jam pudding.

Crusts at all dinners.

The above is the winter menu. In summer the diet is changed, as for example, a favourite summer dinner is scrambled eggs with lettuce and tomato, followed by a fruit pudding. Salads of fresh fruit are given. Delicate children have, over and above these, orange juice. Malt is given twice a day to all delicate children. Between meals children drink water freely.

Out all day in moving air children are always hungry at meal-times, but no food is given between meals. In summer they have fruit from the old mulberry-tree, and we give, as I said, small spoonfuls of orange juice. Fruit and fresh vegetables are needed by everyone, but especially by growing children, and most of all by children of the poorest class in cities. Their bones are literally starved of mineral salts. They suffer from starvation in the way of nitrogenous food and of all that nature supplies in green food and fruits. Bread, bread, and always bread in surfeit is their portion. Our fresh vegetables, meal, and milk work marvels (see the reports of Sir George Newman). None, even of the poorest class, who have been two or three years in camp, show any trace of rickets. How easy then would it be to make rickets disappear altogether. (See for confirmation of this statement the chapter on Finance.)

Clothing. In the bathroom all children drop the livery of poverty and become the kindred of the fairest, the blood brothers of Murillo angels, of the cherubs of Italian masters, and even of the Greek gods. All this happens when clothes are slipped off. These ugly clothes often leave their mark. The foot suffers early. It is rare to see an older child who is not more or less flat-footed. Heavy, hard boots have hurt the delicate little feet and weighed down the pretty instep. The first step is to get the wrong kind of shoe off. The mother will now, usually, help. I try to show in a later chapter what

the stages are by which the foot *lifts* and strengthens. Here I will only say there must be sensory experience. To run on cool grass or warm earth is a privilege of the open-air nursery child.

Shops do not as a rule cater for the poor at all, save in the way of making a poor, cheap article that will soon wear out. It is not cheap. It is dear in the long run; but because she is harassed the poor mother has to buy it. That is why Mrs. Glasier Foster once opened the Educraft shop in Evelyn Street, Deptford, but no boot-shop of the same order is now to be found in Deptford.

The need grows ever more urgent. As long as children were huddled away in big classes and in huge schools it did not matter so much what they wore. But in the camp school and the open-air nursery clothes matter. The foot is seen, the body is seen. That is the first step to salvation. We are reminded that footgear matters—that clothes are of real importance. They must, in winter, be warm. They must, in summer, be fair and light. They must always be clean, for on most days the sun flood is there exposing everything. Above all, in summer, he has no mercy on shameful covering. Get them off at last! He seems to shout it. Off! Off! We have to get things that will lift the children of the gods sheer out of the gutter. Soft greys stitched with mauves or red, hollands edged with blue or rose, hollands slashed with green and orange and scarlet, darker garments embroidered with blue for gala afternoons. No two garments are alike, and each appears to have something gay and brave in it. Yet the cut should be always smart; no suggestion of freakishness or dowdiness, and none of mere lapse into peasant forms all out of harmony with the New Spirit.

Readers who care to see the style of dress should read

Mrs. Glasier Foster's book on *Educraft Needlework*, and Margaret Swanson's *Educational Needlecraft*, published by Longmans.

The child form does not vary with the fashion of dressing. Limbs free, skirts short and loose, with embroidery in the right place (this is always under the neck, and near the wrist, and also perhaps at the seams). Miss Swanson and Mrs. Foster are at one on these points.

The latter has swung far from the peasant embroideries of many lands. She has gone "back to nature" for the evolution of all her designs and patterns. "I begin to draw," says the writer of *The New Needlecraft*, "but I do not know what will come. Only I know that I must keep my lines straight!" Thus from the beginning the element of revelation is not driven out. Wonder is allowed to break through the very humblest work. The writer, or embroiderer, does not always know whether she is going to evolve a curve or petal.

Nothing can exceed the joy of the little ones in their pretty clothes!¹ "It is like going to a party every morning," cried one child; and this is quite true. The teacher-nurses themselves are nearly as gay as the children, and they love to turn out the children well. The hair must shine like silk, the teeth must shine like little pearls, the nails like shells. Ribbon and pinafore must match, and the footgear, when shoes or boots have to be worn, must shine also, so as not to spoil the pretty toilet. Nothing can be prettier than the sortie from the bathroom on a June morning. The children are at last in harmony with nature's own scheme, gay as the butterflies or the blossoms that greet the sun.

It is strange to see how quickly and how completely

¹ Many mothers now make the pretty clothes, and many are learning.

even the poorest children get used to pretty clothes. These are the symbol of new order. They make one realize oneself a part of the new order. How hard to be thrust out again. We hope that soon the home will come fully abreast of the school; that the children need not lay aside any pretty school clothes to go back to the old ones. Never then shall there be any *poor* children, though parents may still be straitened.

The labour and effort to raise the standard has borne fruit already. Few or none of our children come back dirty, while twenty years ago, and less, seventy-five per cent were verminous. We should not record this, we should forget it. But the heavy duty is laid on us to tell all, to hide nothing, so that all can be remedied.

Formerly, when the school was open on Saturdays, we did not change the clothes. Then some children were dressed prettily in clothes they had bought, but others had only the old rags. They saw the gulf open again on Saturday as they looked at others and then down at their poor worn clothing. "Come here, Winifred," we called once to a tall girl standing in a path behind the roses. But she looked down at her sordid boots and worn clothing and shook her head. Surely this dull, half-strangled shame and pain should be taken away now, once and for all. It is quite unnecessary. Standard kits are made at the lowest cost and of the prettiest style and colour by mothers, or sold to mothers who pay by instalments at twopence, threepence, or sixpence per week. In a few months the home-dressing should draw abreast of the school. The heavy woollen caps and hoods, the ugly winter coats our little ones used to wear on June mornings, the hideous mufflers, must go. The hard and dreadful boots must go too. They are not gone yet! But we see some children trip out of an evening looking

as much like children of the day as possible; and on one recent morning in June the school gave us a delicious shock. It came back clean and radiant, almost like a school of the West End; Monday morning had the grace of Sunday! Nor were clothes fragile, like the cheap laces and second-hand silks of yesterday.

CHAPTER VI

WHAT TO DO FOR A TODDLER

THE toddler begins his day with a bath. The student-nurse talks to him. "This is our shoe; we will take it off! And our stockings! Oh, see what a lot of funny things—toes! A big one, that is the mother, and one—two—three—four children." The girl chatters on merrily and the little one listens and at last makes sounds too, and this is the way to learn the English language.

In the water he is busy. He fills the sponge, he tries to wring it. He lets the water pour through his fingers, and the nurse laughs, and plays with him, which is almost as important as the giving of the bath. The bath is a splendid place for two-year-olds to study physics.

Meantime the student will observe first:

- The circumference of the head.
- The width of the chest.
- The length of the limbs.
- The condition of the skin.
- The state of the muscles.

The doctor and head mistress will have a fuller record. If there is anything gravely wrong they will know it. They will have noted the presence of rupture, or traces of infantile paralysis, or rickets, or adenoids. And the student will know how to observe these ailments, too, under supervision. The bathroom is a classroom for her. Our toddlers are treated so promptly, that they offer a poor field indeed for pathological observation. But it is a new place of observation.

Let us look at this little man in his bath! As a

matter of fact, he is not a little man at all. His proportions are not those of an adult. The head is very large (the student will measure it round the forehead, and also the length from the back to the chin). The body is long in proportion to the legs. The student must take the chest measurement and the limb measurements, say once a month. And from these she will learn something about his progress, and also about the stage of life at which he has arrived.

The cerebellum is growing fast, stimulated by great motor activities—the learning to walk, and the dawn of speech. A two-year-old is busy learning these wonderful things, but as yet and for a long time he learns mainly not by thinking but by experiencing, that is, through the sympathetic system.

The student will get to know many things. She will know, for example, that the child of poor streets suffers from catarrh. She meets this by frequent handkerchief drills and training. Soft paper is used and flung into a large basket, whose contents are burnt. At first a child may dislike all this new hygiene. Later he gets used to it, likes to carry his handkerchief and *needs* it. One day he puts on his own shoes, and he begins to wash his own face, and even his own hands, and to all this the teacher leads him on as she talks to him in the bath and in the dressing-room, and she may note the result of all this work on the growing intelligence.

The hygiene of the nursery has to be learned. The scalp should be softly rubbed or brushed as well as the hair. The teeth must be washed, up and down, and across, and the brush, after being rinsed, put in the rack and set out in the sun to dry. After a time our toddlers will try to do this for themselves, and will put the brush back in the rack.

The toddler should wear a soft vest, loose knickers

and bodice; in winter another garment, but in summer only an overall. He need not have stockings or socks or shoes on all the year round, but in winter the legs should be covered by woollen stockings or gaiters.

Toddlers are always trying to get hold of the new world they are in, and all their waking life is spent, when they are well, in doing this. The student has to learn the various ways of helping him, and here are some of them.

Twelve years ago we took our toddlers in at one year old. At that age some could walk. Some tried to walk. But our toddlers enter now at two years old. Most of them can walk and even run by that time. There are exceptions. Sometimes a child comes in who needs help and encouragement. We have had a two-year-old who could hardly stand, but after some training she can run about, and even dance a little.

Next, a little child's babble means nothing but nonsense to the ignorant. To the more enlightened it means a great deal—nothing more or less than the awakening and functioning of the motor speech centre which is setting in motion the muscle-controlling centres on both sides of the brain. At first he makes sounds that are almost simple reflex actions.

The infant in crying uses vowels, but the first words, such as ma-ma, pa-pa, ta-ta, are consonants before vowel sounds. They are doubled nearly always. Tommy calls his nurse na-na and sometimes with ardour na-na-na, tripling the sound. That is how he practises.

Formerly it was believed that we should teach little children to say big words like adults. Now we know that this is not natural or reasonable; a child who says "gee-gee" instead of horse is simplifying things so as to make his task possible. If we want to help a toddler we must begin where he begins and follow him in the

path along which nature is leading him. Encourage him to say his labials well and with energy, and even to shout them as well as double and triple them, which he does with great delight. Bo-bo, ba-ba, ta-ta he calls out and later button, bed, big, bat. It is of course useless to give these as drills, but many occasions arise in the course of a day to exercise him in labials and in other sounds which should be taken in the order which is marked out by the special powers or weakness of the little creature. And even this order cannot be laid down absolutely, for in nothing do little children vary more than in speech development. Some begin by gutturals, others with linguals—roughly speaking, “th” and “f” remain faulty in older children to-day, while “l” and “r” are badly used by most town children. “v” and “w” used to be more generally confused in Dickens’s day than they are now.

By movements of the lip upward and other gymnastics practised in schools, teachers as well as nurses have done a great deal to help children to say “f” and “v.” Every case, however, is a separate study and sometimes we have a child who needs no help other than example.

Kathleen, standing with Tommy on the drying-table, talks. “Button! Button!” she says, and he echoes her word. Sometimes she goes further, and in an access of ardour shouts “Button my shoe,” and Tommy follows suit. He is in the purely imitative stage, when one repeats or echoes what is said without troubling about meaning. Kathleen is just passing out of this stage—the kind of speech known as echolalia. She is further on than Tommy for memory now has intervened, so she says what she has not heard this moment, but an hour ago.

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In order to show the opportunities that arise all the time, I may be allowed to describe here in parenthesis a winter day in the toddlers' camp.

It is a day to test the camp—a bitter day in mid-January. Yesterday a cruel fog hung over the streets and clouded even the garden and meadow. To-day the cold is bitter, but the fog has lifted. Clammy drops no longer fringe the eaves. On the new lawn with its privet border, where the stark old mulberry-tree raises his arms against the rosy ball of the sun, sparrows have come and gone all the morning, chirruping and fluttering over the new-turned earth, now covered by a light fall of snow.

Inside the shelters it is warm and bright. The blue bathroom door of one is drawn back slowly, for it is eight-thirty and all the toddlers will soon be out from the bath.

There are thirty-five of them, ranging in age from two to two and a half years old. Already a little golden head appears in the doorway, and a pair of grave blue eyes looks down the wide empty room, with its shining floor. A rosy gas fire burns in each of the stoves, but it is turned low, for strange as it may appear, the shelter is warm. It is January, but here it is not damp nor chill. Jimmy gazes out over the damp garden, advancing with slow steps. He folds two tiny arms on the top and leans over the low gateway. Soon, three little heads appear at the doorway on his left, and in a few minutes the whole nursery of toddlers are in the shelter. They sit down at little tables covered with gay chequered cloths, and eat their breakfast of milk and porridge, or bread and butter. They do not yet talk to each other much—but they talk to themselves a good deal, and if a friend goes by they will hail her with smiles and waves of the hand. They are,

moreover, very much individuals already—each living in his own world, and taking hold of it in his own way. Already, too, there is selection. The Head of the shelter has a ball, big as a football, which was made by her mother in the Christmas holidays. And the giving of malt and orange-juice being over, she brings it out. It is made of pieces of velvet, silk, calico, satin, wincey, leather, and the little ones handle it. They do not try to talk about it, but they handle it for a long time, hiding it, throwing it and catching it, rubbing their small faces against it, and later teacher gives out smaller balls of wool and cotton and indiarubber.

Tommy loves only two toys: his ball and stones. As we have said, he has a passion for stones. He gathers them outside. He hoards them in a big bag. He ranges them on the floor and holds them tightly to his heart. He throws them at other children also, but usually in the way of research. This passion for stones lasts for a lifetime in many people, and was very keen in the north and west of Scotland, as well as in Ireland, where there were many sacred stones and amulets and mystery-stones.

Some do not play. The lure of the garden holds, though it is snowing fast. The ground is white. The children run to the fence to watch the great white flakes. The arcade is dry yet with its low roof hanging over like an umbrella, and the children stand watching, watching, with lax muscles, in that state of reverie which we note in them every day, and which is becoming to us a condition as well defined and deserving of respect as sleep. Perception *takes time*.

On the white shelf of the cupboards, near a musical-box, Victor is sitting. He is our oldest toddler—nearly three, and very musical. A stodgy-looking, dark little lad, with a very steep back to his head and a rather

sullen mouth, he melts and lives for and answers to one thing—music. When the record is fixed he sits rapt, while the sweet notes flow out over the big shelter. Victor will not run or play while he can listen. He sits still. He rubs his small hands. He gazes lovingly at the box. Harold gathers up his train and walks up to look at him, with the mute wonder that one little dog gives to another. Harold hears no magic in the noise that comes out of the box. *He* will not understand, never will understand that; but after a while, finding no further interest in watching Victor, he goes back to his toy. It is a tiny train, and he has fastened a string to the engine.

"Does it run?" asks the teacher.

No answer. Harold puts down the toy, draws it a little way, and comes back.

"Have you seen the big train at the station?"

Harold nods. He draws the toy up and down, with a curious look. Suddenly the blue eyes lighten and the face grows rapt and eager. He puts his hand on the top of the toy engine.

"No 'moke," he says.

A little dark girl (aged two or thereabouts) dances up with a doll in her arms. It is Rebecca, our Jewish child, whose mother brings her every morning all the way from Stepney. Her graceful little body, dark eyes, sparkling and intelligent, and her dark pale face, stand out in any group. Dressed in warm knitted wool from neck to ankle, and neck to wrist, she is a reminder of the strong mother instinct that has brought the Jewish race through so many troubles.

"Mine dolly," she says, holding out a doll she has dressed. "Nice, nice baby," she adds, pulling its bonnet straight.

Near the gateway, with tearful face, stands the new

child, Edith. A great gulf divides her from all the others, and the cause of this great difference is plain to be seen. Poor Edith is uneducated, whereas all the others have undergone a long, serious, and wonderful course of experience—mostly happy but not altogether free of efforts and unpleasantness—which has opened the silent doors of a new world to them. They obey mysterious inhibitions, they follow paths that poor Edith's feet refuse as yet to tread. She will not play, she stands alone, turning away from the young girl students in the bathroom. To-morrow it will be different, she will not refuse the new things offered. This is Edith's first day.

The head teacher of the toddlers sits in the middle of a large group. She is a trained teacher, but here, in this room for very little people, she is making ready the world, and even providing the changing world where learning may go on without interruption. She has arranged the shelter so that there are opportunities here. Fish in the tank; bulbs in the bowls; toys, new objects. Toddlers run to her often, and begin to "talk" to her eagerly, putting their little hands on her knees and fixing their eyes on her face, while she gives herself up entirely to listening, to give them opportunity for impressions and then for contacts—that is all. They try hard, without any words hardly, to tell her about some new thing. "Fith! Fith!" cries a child of two years old, who lives a full and crowded life of a morning. Tommy has already escaped into the garden and is gathering stones. *He* comes to her with his clean pinafore full of wet things, which he proceeds later to pile on the floor. He tries to build. . . .

This little world is a kind of mirror of the bigger world outside. It is not all swept or garnished and made

ready and perfect in every way. There are even examples of isolation and wantonness. Before a great cupboard full of toys sits a new child, Terence. He picks from the great pile of things one toy after another and flings it down again. His distressed face shows that he has no real pleasure in any of them. He is a pale and very fretful new-comer!

Most of the children are playing. Some are wheeling carts. Some are building.

It is impossible to doubt that this nursery is unique in its opportunities, in its variety and interest. Psychologists have discovered this fact, and there is no doubt that they will use the Nursery Schools as their great and unique centre of research. The school, however, exists for the children. It is a new thing for them. It differs from anything that came before it. It is so large that there is no crowding and no haste, yet it presents a much larger field for choice and initiative than a private room could offer to any mere family group. And although there is free play, yet new experiences are taking place not only every hour but every moment.

All the games are brought to an end when a sudden burst of sunshine transfigures the camp. The sky opens like a great blue flower, birds chirrup in the privet hedge, and the children run out, helter-skelter, with shouts of joy. Up the arcade they run, deaf to the voices of the young girls at the bathroom window; away, away, obeying a voice more urgent than theirs, with little cries and hurrying feet.

Something happens at the memorial room gate. There a class of older children are dancing to music, and the room is all alight with gay little forms moving in harmony. The little ones are arrested by this new vision; they stop dead to look. Victor grips the fence tightly, and the long row of toddlers form in a line and

lean over the top bar, which is nearly as high as their shoulders. They stand still as a picture. A young girl calls them: "Belle! Charlie! Harold! Victor!" No answer.

It is like sleep in its vague absorption, its helpless abandonment: the reverie of those who still feel mainly through the sympathetic system, that great central motor tramway route, as Séguin called it, of the nervous system. On this great route most of the traffic of life is still done. It is a route that is well beaten out, and broad, and safe, and yet the traffic is heavy.

After tea on this same day Victor began to sing the new song, Margaret danced the new dance as a kind of aside. Rose learnt some of the words. It was a surprise. No one had taught them. Gently as the bud bursts, as the leaf opens without any kind of training, by a process we cannot even trace, so rapid is it and so still, this was done. It is in this way that little children teach one another—setting tasks in right sequence—advancing by the small steps we never measure exactly in all our scheming. Having learned to walk, they soon see a new kind of walking—take possession of a new world without formal lessons. To understand and give the right atmosphere and opportunities—that is the task of the adult.

It is a quarter to twelve o'clock. The children come flocking back into the shelter bathroom and the before-dinner ritual starts. It starts at the same hour, at the same moment every day, and every sensitive little nervous system learns to know this, to expect it, and form habits that are fixed a little better every day. Here is the right field for routine, here is the basement of the nerve structure. When the children troop out at twelve they are made ready for the next event, ready with clean hands and nails and faces, and eager to

fetch bibs (though they cannot tie them on yet), to carry mugs or spoons (though they cannot set tables yet like the older children).

Now we are seated at the low table. It is a pretty sight. Charlie, a two-year-old, who has been with us all his life (this was written in 1919), sits at the top of his table. His dark eyes shine. He clasps his hands and looks joyfully at the great tureen and plates and at the pudding dishes on the side table, and then out into the garden. "More! More!" he calls out, addressing himself not so much to the teacher-nurses as to the whole scheme of nature.

The children are served. They have already a kind of manual training. These little hands that will soon draw and paint and model are already far on the road to all these arts, for, though they do not yet handle a pen, they handle a spoon perfectly. One little hand is kept below the board. With the other the toddlers proudly hold and use the spoon. Sometimes it is the right hand and sometimes it is the left. The left hand is used quite as much in the shelter as the right. What a child does with one hand he is trained also to do with the other. The children eat cleanly and slowly. (Only little Edith, the new-comer, a stranger here, eats anyhow, will not say "thank you," or even "ta," will not pass anything, cannot even use her spoon.) Yet for all the ritual is so well learned, the natural joy of life is not dimmed here, nor even restrained. Charlie, grave and observant, when the first helpings are given, grows more and more radiant as his own turn draws nigh, and shouts like an enraptured cherub as he receives at last his good dinner!

After dinner there is toilette drill again, and at twelve-thirty, thirty-five little people are tucked into thirty-five little stretcher-beds. The screens are drawn over a

little, for the winter wind is rising, and flurries of rain lash the terrace and dark flower-beds. The children sleep calmly, the tranquil sleep of returning or established health. Not a cry, not a murmur from the toddler beds. Even if, as in the case of Tommy, sleep does not come at once, rest comes, and the bright dreamy eyes scan the roof with its open gables, and the swinging branches of the trees by the garden wall. . . . At last the dark eyes close. The teachers will have a pause in their busy day for two hours or more.

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Getting-up time is not sudden or sharp. It is a gradual process, waking, in a nursery, and all do not waken at one moment irrespective of individual needs. The older children open their eyes first, as a rule. They are wide awake at once, and want to get out at once and run in the garden. The toddlers wake more slowly. Sometimes we get a child who sorely needs sleep, and is allowed to sleep on.

In summer the children are out of the shelters for the greater part of the day. Life changes for them, indeed, with every season, and gives them new opportunities. And *they* change also—so rapidly, so continuously that within one year a child is almost unrecognizable. And happily the change is a happy one, in nearly every case. In some it is a transformation.

It is well that students and teachers should witness it. The figures that are put down on record-cards are useful, but they are no substitute for the actual vision of changing life in a Nursery School.

Here girls begin to see, perhaps for the first time, that life really is—revelation. That is the greatest experience. It opens the eyes to all the other happenings and learnings.

Thanks to it they gain a new love for study; want to know how and why *this* happens. They begin to be impressed more and more every day by the richness of the great mines of information that lie near them, and by facts and observations which they long to interpret but whose interpretation lies outside *their* powers and experience. The old-world psychology with its empirical methods does not offer them much help. Suppose they pass "examinations" on these lines. Even that does not help them much. They are like people who have been drawing from old copies and now stand in front of the living model. It is very strange, very new. Yet they are ready to look at this wonderful living unexpected being, and to put down their own fresh and new impressions of him. To report; to gather new information; to interpret in the light of workaday elder sisters; to give life to the barren work of new scientific schools, divorced as they often are from life and reality.

In this book little or nothing is said with regard to the training of those teachers. But this much can be said, the result of work and training is to be found not merely in the improved health of the children in a good open-air Nursery School, nor even in their greatly increased responsiveness and intelligence; it is to be found also in the change in the teachers themselves. Already, in the first year of training, they are, literally, changing, growing through the new inflowing impressions and the dim, but new and ever-clearing vision of life.

Slow, slow as are the processes—yet the result is sudden at last. Let us take for example the early tests of Binet. Here is Tommy. He was slow and has not made haste for years. He has played and slept, lived a baby life for years. He has assisted at the

washing of his own face and teeth. He has made observations in the garden. Now he is far beyond the stage when the question "Where is your nose?"—Binet's test for his age—is any test for him. Here is Bertie, aged four. He has scribbled long, and then drawn men, circles, curves, houses of various sizes for nearly a year. Suppose we now draw two parallel lines (a Binet test for four) and ask him "Which is the longer?" Bertie would not take the question seriously. He is ready for other tests than these! The nurtured is not as the unnurtured child. But the great gulf between what was yesterday, and what may be to-day or to-morrow, is seen in its fuller contrast when we deal with still older children. Ronald is seven years old. Suppose we put down in front of him four slips of paper, red, blue, green, and yellow, and, touching each in turn, ask him, "What is that colour?" Ronald has been in intimate relations with many different shades and tints of various colours for years, and this test is no longer a test for him. Binet would say to a five-year-old, "Put out your left foot," or "Show me your right hand." That would be a good test for an unnurtured five-year-old. Jessie, who has been dancing and marching and playing for two terms with a teacher of dance and song and who has often to use one hand or foot or to stop without any hesitation, cannot be "tested" by such a question as this. Yet one cannot say that her culture has been forced, since at an earlier age she learned to know all this with no more fatigue or effort than is implied in learning to stand or to walk.

Such tests were, of course, given to us only as samples. It will be sad if they harden into dead samples, as did the Froebelian occupations! To the student-teacher, looking out over her garden and shelters, many new and varied tests may suggest themselves. She may, at the

right moment, ask her five-year-old: "Which is the biggest leaf in the garden? Which is the smallest? Show me all the dark blue flowers. Point to the lime-trees. Where is the plane?" Still in the garden she may give even such tests as these to the six-year-olds: "Name four vegetables *quickly*. Show me where they grow. Name five trees. Show me two of these. What is the colour of the Hiawatha rose? Name a yellow rose. Show two creepers; name them. When did the crocus flower? When did the Michaelmas daisy come?" For a seven-year-old: "Name all the flowers you know. Name all the vegetables. Of which vegetables do we eat the roots? Of which the leaves? What is the colour of the hellenium—make it quickly on the wheel. What are the months of the year? When does the narcissus come, the tiger-lily, the lily-of-the-valley? When is the parsnip ripe? When did the dahlias flower?" Most of these questions should be answered by seven-year-olds who have been in camp five years.

For the older child, after five years nurture, graduated tests such as these can be thought of in the garden. Others can be worked out for the bathroom, the dining-room, the play-room on wet days. And in these play drills, for such they are, the idea of *pace* as a factor in the growth of intelligence is present in good time, giving all the exercises that vim and go, which the French call "entraînement," and which on the physiological side means the clearing and tidying-up as it were of all the paths of sensory and motor impulses. I do not know how far such work as this can be carried on in and out of school hours. Children have not waited for big people to make tests for them; they make them for themselves every time they run a race or guess a riddle. It is clear that *none* of the dangers of over-pressure are to be feared on these lines. It is not by free and rapid

use, but by premature use of the nervous tissue and by starvation of the nervous system with all its routes and centres that mischief is done. Just as a child loves to run fast, loves to jump off a high stump, loves to throw a stone far, just as he loves these things and for the same reason he loves to marshal all his memories, to use them and feel his life quicken in so doing.

The "entraînement" *follows* the slow work of silent growth.

It is often assumed that the things we have been considering—that is diet, fresh air, sunshine, regular and right meals, sleep, etc.—constitute all that is known as hygiene; that having won all these for any child, we have then to go forward and to occupy ourselves with something quite different, that is to say, with the science of education. This great error is the child of two misconceptions that have shrouded our thinking in the past. First, the error, once almost general, that there is a gulf fixed between body and mind; and secondly an error, once so highly respected that it was the hall-mark of general culture, that the final interpretation of life and nature is materialistic and mechanistic. These two giant errors drove hygiene into a shabby cellar of the halls of science, and left it there. The educationists meantime went upstairs, as it were, going on, as was supposed, with their more interesting and important work.

We are, however, learning now that we cannot get rid of cause and effect in this summary fashion. Everything that happens to a child has results. Everything that any one and every one does, roots. But science itself is held up to-day because it has no adequate laboratories where the higher hygiene can be studied.

The little child's mind is a seed-field lying open all day. Things happen to him. He sees, hears; and much

that he sees and hears and experiences is ungrasped, unheld, unnoted, and unremembered in his conscious life. We cannot, however, say that these impressions leave no result; that it matters little whether he sees a bulb planted or a drunken man hurt. For these light-footed visitors we call impressions are like the tiny seeds that fall in the earth. They show their real nature only after many days. An observant teacher may note how Tommy reacts to other children on the slide or the sand-pit. But she may also hear those soliloquies in which little children faintly register the embryo movement of unborn thought.

I had an example of this to-day. A four-year-old, taking part in the planting of lily-bulbs, kept up a monologue or conversation addressed to nobody: "Seeds grow in the ground. Stones—not stones—no, stones do not grow in the ground."

These words or something like them may have come flitting through other minds on a still lower level of sub-consciousness and were not thoughts in our sense at all. But they were none the less seeds of a kind. They were more than notions. For notions are the product of the senses. Ideas deal with the relations of things. We are not used to tracing, or attempting to trace, cause and effect below a certain level. We ought to trace them; to follow the new trail farther. Nurture does not consist wholly, or mainly, in the giving out of grated carrot or orange-juice. It is the basal and organic part of education, and offers the only *point d'appui* that has safe foundations and undimmed horizons. Seguin had a glimpse of its true meaning. If he had won past the outposts of his subject he would have been in a marvellous world of hitherto unglimped realities.

Certain modes of work—certain school-subjects—

affect the metabolism. Others, such as music, affect the circulation. Premature work on abstract subjects, or prolonged work of this kind, induces symptoms that indicate arrest. Yet curiously as it seems, the failure to engage in more advanced kinds of study, when the time is ripe, induces nervous disorder. Under-work is dangerous; perhaps even more dangerous than over-work. The fact that it is common does not obscure the truth. The child is injured by premature forms of learning, but much more obviously injured by lack of interest, application, and hope. For example, a crop of "nervous diseases" is often explained to-day by hasty references to the events of the war. The children of to-day are probably less "nervy" than were their parents. There was a very large crop of nervously diseased persons before the Boer War. England had been at peace for generations. The nerve cases were not all among the poorer classes. They were common among the well-to-do. Rest-cures were fashionable—and very ineffective. Some people got worse after rest. Neither peace nor rest helped them. What *was* the cause? It is pretty safe to assume that there was a cause. That seed-sowing produced this strange kind of crop—a crop very different in its nature and symptoms to anything that was known in the earlier days of the century. The epidemic of nerves coincided with a system of education that made individual work difficult in schools. Large classes; routine methods. This appears to have a *bad effect on the general health* of many. Something does not function that ought to function. Since that time there has been improvement in school methods. With this progress came new power of resistance. It coincided in the race history with new strain on strain. How far was the improved health and new power of resistance the result

of individual work at school? We have not inquired very closely, because the whole attitude of the world yesterday and even to-day is one that takes little account of the deeper causes of failure. If we are to-day occupied, then, in providing the means of cleanliness and bodily well-being for little children, this does not mean that we are engaged in a small and isolated department of human affairs. On the contrary, we are trying to get past the outposts. We may not have passed them yet. We cannot even empty our minor-ailments clinics. The work for knowledge that would ensure a safe and real development in the intellectual and spiritual sphere is held up.

But a beginning has been made. The first crop of nurtured children will present us with new data—and a new basis for comparison.

CHAPTER VII

THE THREE-TO-FIVE-YEAR-OLD

Movement. Breathing is a great rhythm. On its depth and regularity depend the whole physical and spiritual life. This fact is realised by Eastern people, but it is still commonly overlooked or under-estimated by the average Western man or woman.

Deep breathing can be induced in the nursery mainly through new play opportunities that exercise the large muscles and *induce* free functioning of the lungs: pulling, climbing, jumping, and running. It is to encourage these that the school itself is a place where the child can run a mile; a place, too, where he can climb on the walls and rib stalls, where he finds in the middle space a jungle-gym or a ladder-slide, also steps and elevated planks and jumping-off places, stone steps leading up to terraces, etc. Also big trailers, motors, wagons, and engines to pull, and young teachers who can invent new games of the large-muscle order. Children who enjoy all these opportunities at two to five years old are the less likely to be "nervous" or tense at ten or twelve.

Let us go a little farther. Children must learn to *balance*. If the ear has been injured by scarlet fever or other children's diseases, the learning to balance may be long and difficult. Miss Alice Campbell, the head of our biggest shelters, begins by stepping, quick stepping (it is harder to go slow than fast), and running. Then as one gets confidence the arms are held up while the feet march fast or run.

The children learn to stop when the music stops. This means that they *listen*. They have to keep still; and this opens the door for a new pleasure, the power to be very quiet and listen. The teacher strikes a sweet chord which vibrates through the loosened, sensitive little bodies, bodies that were once, perhaps, swaddled or stiffened unnaturally: "March now, loud one foot, soft the other."

The time comes soon when given such experience, the foot lifts. That is a great achievement. Soft tiptoeing then begins in earnest, but attainment may still be far off. There is nearly always what is called here a "tadpole stage," when children rise on one foot but cannot rise on the other; this is the stage at which they grasp the fire-guard for support, or fail altogether. But after a few trials the new movement is conquered and the children not only learn to tiptoe—they learn to skip (skipping-ropes are given for garden play).

The three-year-old cannot usually sing and dance *together*: but as he is moving in a large circle the power of suggestion is always at work and sooner or later he is drawn into the rhythmic movement world of the others. Soon he is able to make arm or hand movement, to sing and to take skipping steps all at once. That is when the dancing begins in earnest.

There is a great wealth of singing games and dances waiting for the Nursery School. Animal dances (such as "Have you ever seen a cat that walks upstairs?"); courtesy dances (such as the charming "Oh, will you dance with me, little girl?"); ring dances (such as "The Jolly Fishermen"); craftsmen games (such as "Cobbler, cobbler, mend my shoe!"). Lullabies, and best of all, little dramas founded on nursery tales and nature stories. The child, who began perhaps by trying to manage his feet and keep his balance, finds himself

soon entering a little doorway of art! The principal actor, for example, in a "Spring Song." With new control the children win a growing power of enjoyment in music and movement.

All that I describe here is won in the open. In January as in June the children dance in a wide, free place, sheltered above, and with pictured walls and smooth floor, but literally for all that a part of the big garden which stretches in front of them with its promise in winter, as well as its glow and beauty of spring and summer. Behind or before the shelter visitors love to linger, watching the gay, tripping or dancing little figures with their shining hair and gay clothing. It is a pity that the joy of such scenes is not as common as the joy of daisies in the fields, for it is as easy to win; it is an essential and may easily become an everyday thing in any neighbourhood of toiling people, reminding all of the great possibilities of life and suggesting deliverance and hope to all.

And it is timely! That is a great point. This is the *time* for rhythmic movement and joy in it.

The growth of the cerebellum, the organ that controls movement, is completed by the end of the fourth year. It is reasonable to suppose that it is helped by this graded practice in balancing and specialized movement, and that a new source of happiness and power is won for ever where this learning is offered.

Colour and Form. Colour is introduced freely and on all sides into the Nursery School world. Not only is the sky and earth uncovered and open to the eyes of the children at last—their own clothes are gay. Their shelters are painted in bright tints. Their apparatus, toys, mugs, plates, table-cloths, cupboards, and the pictures on the walls offer all the gaiety of colour to the child-world.

Apparatus has its uses. Colour tablets are used for recognition, not for initiation.

It is, of course, outside the province of education to determine what any child can actually hear or see. In listening to a musical-box or record, one child of three or even two is enraptured, while another is not apparently affected in any way whatsoever. The garden we have made so gay is not really very bright for all, since not all are capable of experiencing the same pleasure from given stimuli. The objective world does not alone suffice to determine an experience—in addition to it we have to consider the constitution and temperament of the child himself. Not many are colour blind. An investigation into the number of these does not concern us here. The great majority are more or less sensitive to colour impressions.

Children vary much, as do adults, in their feeling for colour, but it is a sense which can be educated in early childhood.

We begin with two contrasting colours, say blue and red. I have squares of wood, about three inches wide and long, coloured and varnished.

(1) First of all, two of these are placed side by side. "This is blue," we say, and "This is red," as Séguin said it to his scholars long ago.

(2) Then we give the children a square of painted red cardboard and say, "Put this on the red wood," and "This on the blue."

(3) Then we ask, "What colour is this?" This is done with pairs of contrasting colours—blue and yellow, red and green, violet and yellow. These are the first exercises.

(4) The second group of exercises introduces scales of colour. At first the scale is small, but later new shades and tints are added. We have a scale of six for the primary colours.

The child places them in order. The standard or middle blue comes first. The tints are ranged to the right, and the shades to the left. A child is then asked to arrange the scales of different colours, which he does with pleasure, as a rule, for most children love to handle the pretty varnished squares.

(5) At this point one may introduce the wheel. It is a Bradley Martin one, bought I think in New York, but it could be furnished here. It is spun by a turn of the handle at the back, moving the wheels held by an elastic band, and spinning a disk. The disks are of every colour, and there is a black one and a white one to make shades with and also tints. The disk is split at the top to make possible the introduction of a black and white one, or a disk of another kind to make broken colours.

The teacher shows the children how to spin the wheel, and lets them see how by altering the disks, or the quantity shown of any disk, she can make colours, and new colours at will. This is a great discovery. The child feels that he can make a colour come, and this by movements that are even more pleasant than the handling of a brush. All the children want to see what they do, and they hold up one colour, and then another. We select, say, a standard blue, for that is easy, and when it is spun say, "Make it lighter." "Make it darker." The children have to find this lighter or darker blue among the blocks on their table, and by and by some at least get very quick at noting the exact tint or shade. This is the time when the scales have to be made larger.

(6) The children are now dealing with colour as a thing depending more and more upon quantities. We put one child at the wheel. He is very proud of his position and eager to do well. Only we must be careful

to give one order at a time, and to make it such that he can carry it out perfectly. We say: "Put half the white disk on, and half the black." When the child spins this we arrange the scale that begins in black and ends in white. We then say: "Put more white on," and when we have three-quarters of white spinning we find the light grey tint. We also begin to measure and say: "This is a quarter."

One child after another then goes to the wheel, and we say: "Put a quarter of the white disk on," till all know how to do this quickly.

(7) We now begin to experiment with the disks. We say: "Put on blue and red, and see what will come"; and, "Put on green and yellow, half and half." At this point the children want to make colours themselves. They want to shift the disks about and make their own discoveries. And this is surely what we want them to do. When the tablet scales no longer offer any illustration we have the garden to fall back on, with its sea of colour. We sit at the wheel with a hue of deep purple and say: "Find a petal or flower like this." Then the hunt begins, and this hunt implies not only that a child remembers a colour, but that he recognizes it.

The wheel is set every day for a new colour, and at last even the three-year-old will try to match it. At six years old, or even at five, a child is ready to use a paint-box. Before six it will be better to use only crayons and chinks, and in the four-year-old section paint-brushes, as well as pens and pencils, are out of place.

Conversation should include colour references: "Give me the yellow car," or "Bring the red motor, with the man in brown and purple on the seat." More popular even than these is Nursie's red overall, or "My new pinnie, with pink roses on it," or the pigeons' glowing

green and purple necks. As spring advances there is wealth of coloured things to talk about.

Form. Of all the "occupations," modelling is perhaps the oldest, the safest, and the best. To begin with it falls back on the oldest sense, the basal sense of touch and the muscular sense. Begun as the little child begins it, it cannot put any strain on the finer nerves or muscles. He uses his hand mainly at first, particularly the palm, not the fingers.

The ball is here as elsewhere the first form. We give each little child a piece of clay and show him how to roll it between his palms. That is the first exercise.

Next we take a piece of clay and roll it into long chains, for to make chains as to make balls is childhood's deep-seated impulse. And by the time he has done these two things he can go in the garden as well as the shelter, and find he can make many of the things he sees there—worms and twigs, stones and ropes, also links and balls, all the things he has a special love for. He can pierce his ball too, and make a bead of it, or turn it into an apple. At this stage he will want to use his fingers more, and can be taught how to scoop clay, and make a cup or bowl and put a handle to it.

The little potter, now fairly started, will want to make a hundred things—pots and pans, aeroplanes, men, houses, and baskets—nothing frightens him. Least of all is he afraid of modelling men and even armies, and there is no need to stop him, for the object of helping him is, not to make him into a sculptor or even into a potter, but to make a path for his creative energy and develop his power of observation.

Nevertheless our children keep close to the things they know well. Some martins build high in the wall above our shelter, but the nests are so high that we hardly see them. The children modelled the nest and

the little birds in it, but without enthusiasm. On the other hand, they have made marketing baskets with great gusto; also potatoes, cucumbers, and tomatoes; bottles also, and jugs, cots, and little chairs. I think that this bold variety is like the ceaseless chatter of very young creatures who have not yet learned to speak. The teacher should be able to model. She should go far in this art. Should make good aeroplanes, drays, horses, and Red Riding-Hoods; in short, any or every thing that passes through the busy heads. It should trouble her that her men do not look right, and that the boat or the bridge spanning a river near the sandpit are not all that she could wish. We are imitative now, as we never will be again, and take a thousand subtle impressions and stimuli from the human beings near us, which this work helps to make fast.

More than any other place our children love the great heap of stones and builders' rubbish that the masons have left behind them after building our extension. To put up some kind of house, to fix some kind of tent, and to sit inside—that is the aim and desire of all the children of five and over. And the making of this house is a more popular occupation than any other, except of course the making of mud hills and trenches and the filling of dams and rivers.

Here again the making of apparatus shows how educationists have traced the instinct and interpreted it. There are very expensive articles in the market with leaden floors which cost a great deal of money, and do not leak. Nothing could be better except, possibly, a spare piece of ground in the meadow or in a corner of the playground where channels could be tunnelled and rivers set flowing without the aid of lead.

The desire for construction is now ever apparent and is not confined to any single material.

Our three-year-olds and four-year-olds fit letters for the fun of putting them into their own grooves, but having done so proceed at once, not to make words, but railways, boats, forts, houses, and even men with them.

The toddlers will patiently draw strokes, pleased with the feeling of power in doing so. The four-year-old has no use for strokes save as a means of drawing ladders, houses, carts, fences, gates, tadpoles, and aeroplanes.

Construction. Séguin's method of teaching defective children by the aid of geometrical insets has been followed up in recent years as an occupation for normal children: this work has revealed something as regards the national sequence of development and achievement; it has revealed also the great variety of aptitude and disposition in even young children of three and under.

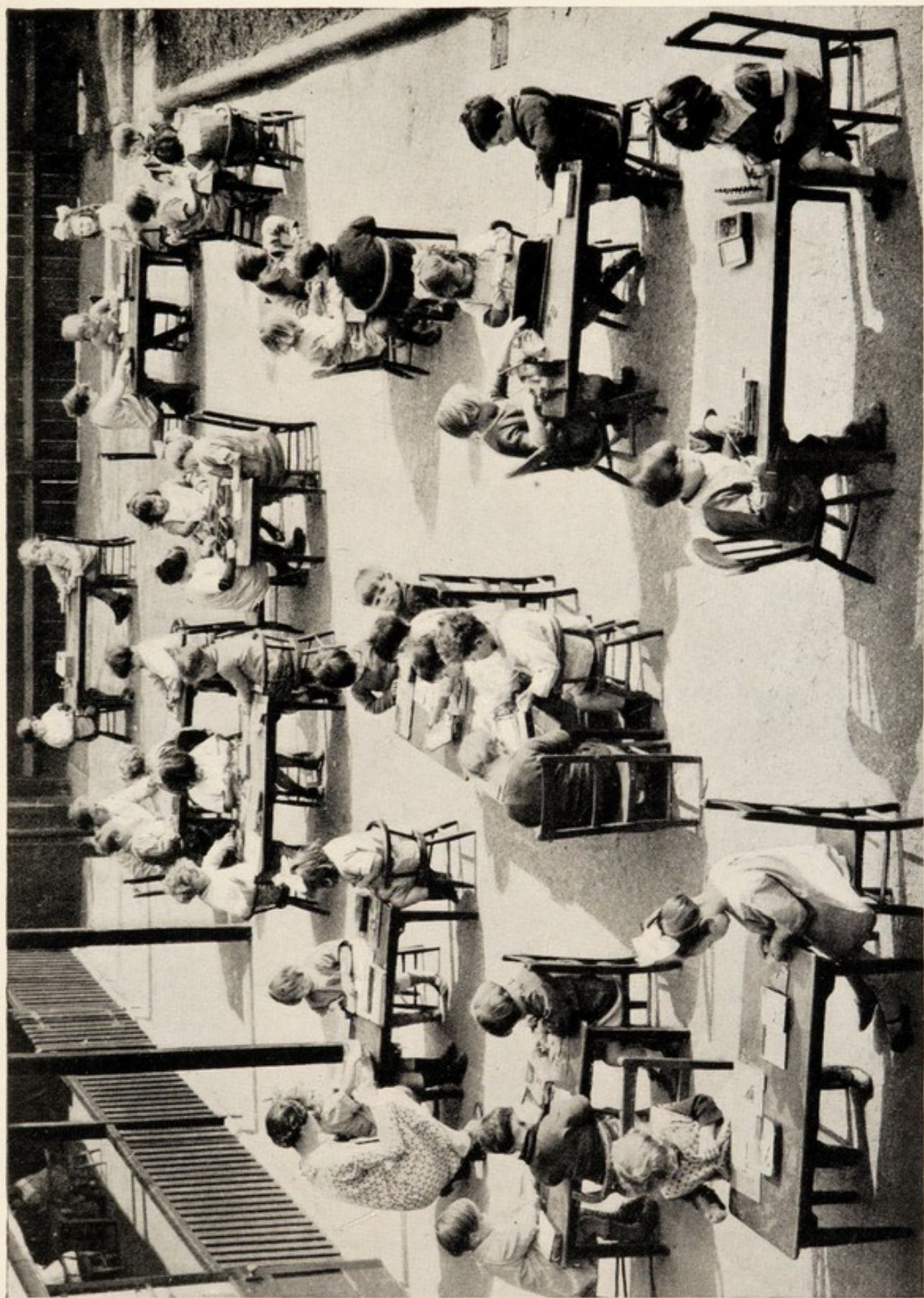
The tendency of all but the youngest children is to turn all this kind of apparatus into constructive or building material. The two-year-olds do not show this tendency. They will lay blocks or insets alongside, or knock piled blocks down, but they do not build. The three-year-olds, on the other hand, take pleasure in piling blocks, or making long low side walls, and this is specially true of boys.

On Friday afternoons the children of three have all the toys and apparatus out, and they are all free to choose their occupations. The new-comers are least able to avail themselves of this power to choose, and these will often run aimlessly, not always unhappily, about the shelters. The beginnings of co-operative play are seen in girls who dress and bathe dolls more or less in groups, and in boys who pile bricks and take some pleasure in building up, but a great deal more in throwing down.

The successive steps by which children are led on to make new efforts and new achievements have to be planned by adults—since, for young children as for intelligent animals, this very planning is too advanced a process to be voluntarily undertaken. What is important is not the giving of instruction, but the preparation of a suitable provocative environment, an environment where new chances are made possible. For it is not the lack of instruction that impoverishes and arrests the little child of poor streets—it is rather the shrinkage in possibility of any kind of experiment in his narrow surroundings.

In all learning the first performance is the most important of all. It contains what psychologists call the determining "factor." But there are different kinds of learning; some, like sucking, are instinctive and involve only the functioning of a perfected mechanism in the organism. Some are merely a perfecting of something already done, and involve the exercise of memory. There is, however, another form of learning that determines and dates a general new advance in mentality. It comes into action in a performance where insight is gained and more especially when, through any activity, a new power of adapting things to an hitherto unforeseen end is won. To help, if one may, in the advent of such moments is the work of the psychologist who has become a teacher.

The means by which this is done must be, for the human, as varied and wide as the mental resources of a teacher. In providing the means of test and achievement for animals and defectives the bait is always a coveted food—fruit, sweets, cake, etc. The human is, even at three, capable of a higher motive. He wants, for example (as even the chimpanzee does not), to place his geometrical shapes so that they will fit firmly into

D... *... of the (D) ... of ...*

their place so as to make the building of something possible. The example of the teacher should be useful and stimulating since she builds better than the child, but the best results follow when a child's new building opportunities come to him in the form of problems that are not beyond his reach, and above all where material is supplied not for one process but for many. One may have adhesive material as well as bricks, and even tools for excavation can be improvised; in short, all the play material should be put into requisition for new ends, as occasion arises. One problem solved, one must go on to the next.

At four, children seem to make a great advance and become eager to use floor space liberally for great schemes: houses, docks, bridges, streets with drays and cars. All this is attempted as imitative play. Expressive work follows a visit to the near-by pier and river-banks or harbour. But already there is in a child of four an impulse to go far beyond this imitative and memorizing work. A child, Edward, was shown many geometrical insets, and recognized and named them easily, but without apparent interest. It was suggested to him by a teacher that the square is different to the circle, that they cannot be confused or mistaken one for the other. After this, it was observed that Edward looked very long and thoughtfully at the square. Then he began to handle it—to turn it rapidly in his strong little fingers. He indicated that it might be a circle if it went round fast enough.

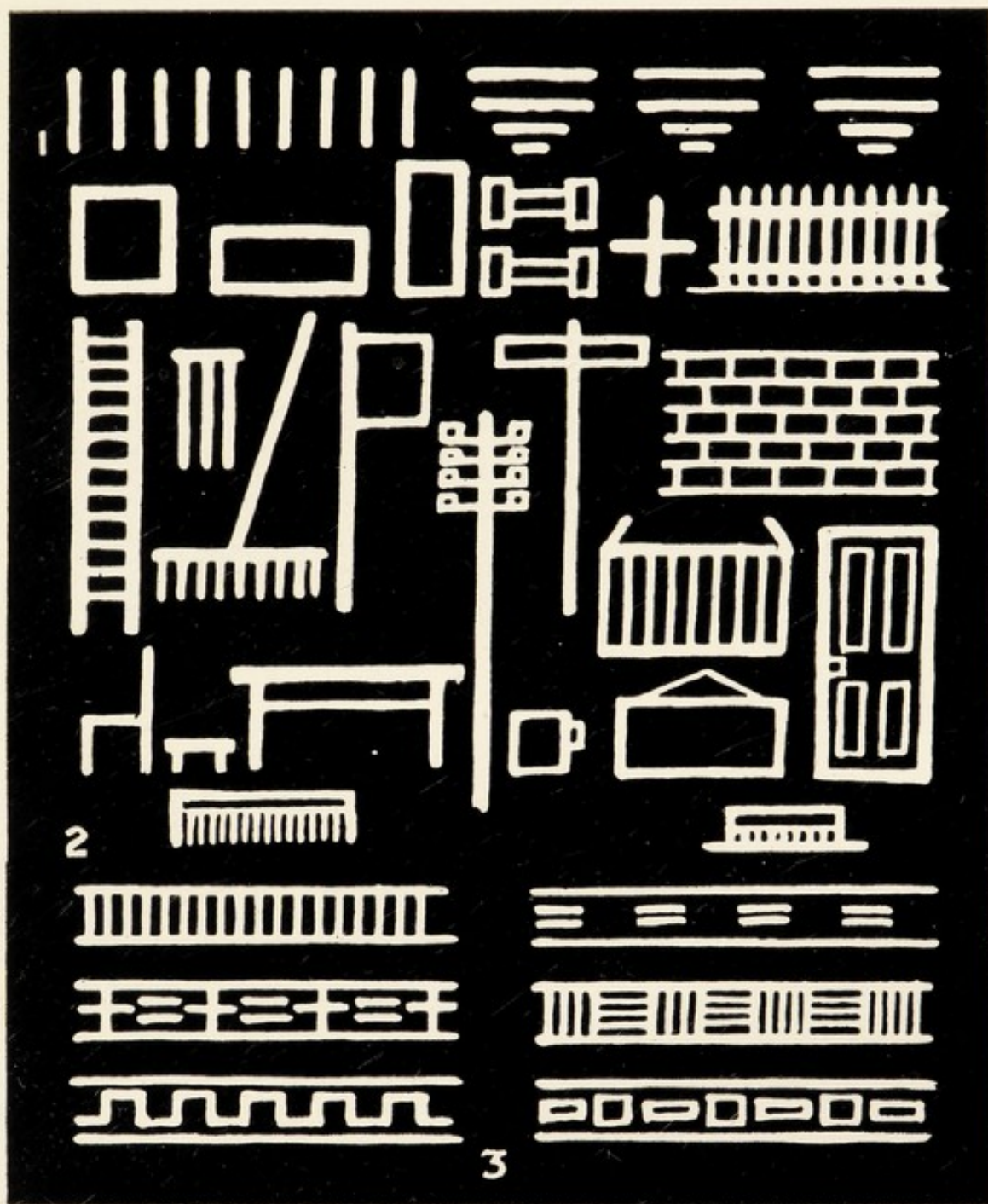
Problem work is not very liberally provided for as yet, even where apparatus is abundant. Yet an approach to it is found in the numerous puzzle picture boxes which are a feature of the four-to-five-year-old shelter. It is achievement and even discovery when a child, taking a number of disconnected and bewildering slats or tablets,

succeeds in uniting them so as to form an entirely new thing—a picture with many lines and colours all arranged so as to give one uniform and stimulating impression. The fact remains that most of the best opportunities for achievement lie in the domain of free play, with access to varied material. (Huygens declared that the invention of the telescope originated in the play of certain children in the workshop of an optician.)

Letters do not function as letters in the Nursery School proper. But as a means for visual training and the amplification of associative images they play a part.

In 1919 I had a very long alphabet board made of polished wood, which we laid not always on the table but more often on the floor. It was fitted with big letters nearly three inches long which were covered with a tinselled French dust which rubbed off and left the surface rough. The children worked at fitting the letters in groups. Now we use only grey asbestos tablets with large insets for red capitals and blue small letters. This is not "learning letters," but matching forms with inset grooves. Sometimes, a child furnished with a linen picture-book will say, "Here is a letter we know," and as the need arises the letters are named, for when a thing is known it should be named.

Training in observation and comparison is carried on in individual work by means of objects, pictures, and words printed on tiny cards, which, however, are not really read but matched. I have seen children neglect the printed symbol altogether while matching rapidly enough the picture and object. The design meant something that they could reproduce; the letters nothing. When, however, the association of the printed word with these begins to take place, the recognition is not the simple thing one may suppose, nor is it perfected by one activity alone—it involves three



UPRIGHT AND HORIZONTAL LINES

1. Upright and Horizontal Lines.
2. Simple Objects from Upright and Horizontal Lines.
3. Borders.

kinds of activity almost simultaneously, to wit, unification, analysis, and articulation, and this is revealed when the child proceeds to draw the word on the blackboard. He draws them sometimes in mirror-writing, or with letters facing from right to left, with little regard to their position. They may even be upside down. Such writing is the beginning of analysis. It offers the opportunity for new adaptation to special conditions, and all the anxiety to preserve children from premature mental or school work (so commendable in itself) does not obscure from us the integrating nature of this work, and its inevitability as a means of advance and adjustment. We must admit, however, that letters as mere symbols are not good material for early analysis and articulation, and such exercises can well be deferred, in most cases, till the sixth year.

Blackboard Drawing as Motor Exercise. The free use of the blackboard, even from the second or third year, is an important means of enriching the child's opportunities for free motor development. The first lines, like the first walls or structures, are so long that they suggest the little workers have as little power to end as they have difficulty in making a start. Moreover, the power to measure lengths of strokes is small or non-existent, even sometimes in children who can measure solid lengths well and quickly. Help is needed here, just as help is needed often in learning to walk. All are eager to start. Once, long ago in the days when we engaged nurses, the toddlers were deprived of their chalk on account of the fact that some wanted to eat it. The children, however, found a new way out. They moistened their index fingers with saliva and proceeded to draw with new vigour. They are no longer reduced to these straits.

The three-year-old gains sense of power in swinging

circles and drawing strokes with one hand or another. The order seems to be such as I have sketched out on these cards—circles, horizontal and vertical strokes, sloping lines, curves, and ovals. It is mere muscular control work, and can be done in sand with sticks or on gravel; and cannot be said to differ really from the motor control games children invent for themselves in "skittles," "skipping," etc., or other child gymnastics. Nevertheless, to quote Koffka, "learning is never entirely specific." The new power won is used at once by children of three and over to draw real things—ladders, pens, worms, balls, turnips, candlesticks, beetles, houses, and above all aeroplanes and steamships, motor-cars and Zeppelins. And here begins free drawing, for free drawing, so long misunderstood, implies power, power already won somehow. If we cease to win more power it is difficult to see how one can buy more freedom.

Implications of the Natural Life of the Open-Air Nursery School. It is not only through free play and by the use of toys, apparatus, etc., that the Nursery School child is led into new situations that provoke learning of various kinds or orders. He dramatizes freely in the Peter Pan houses that are his very own, and is policeman, sailor, merchant, postman, cart-horse, and motor-car in succession. He may dramatize the nursery tales and does, but over and above all this he has useful work to do. He and she lay and set the table for meals, for example, and this involves a certain amount of eye-practice and measurement, notions of number of spoons and mugs, and, above all, the placing of them in an order that constitutes a finished plan, a real configuration of something that suggests meals and the pleasure of them. There is so much that is implicit in a well-laid, well-served, well-cooked, and heartily eaten communal meal, that I despair of getting all the



SLOPING LINES, ETC.

1. Sloping Lines and Combinations.
2. Simple Objects from Upright, Horizontal, and Sloping Lines.
3. Borders.

various elements and features that go to compose it. The hygiene that is preliminary, the washing and making tidy; the busy time of laying and getting tables ready; the sitting down in little groups of four to six at gaily laid, flower-decked tables; the first sweet chord from the piano and the singing of grace in the sunlit shelter—a grace that has real meaning:

Thank you for the world so sweet,
Thank you for the food we eat,
Thank you for the birds that sing,¹
Thank you, God, for everything.

Then the formal serving by the little father or mother of each table, the hand-work involved in carrying, dividing, and helping food, the prolonged hand-work of eating, the early talks of little creatures who yesterday hardly used speech at all as a means of communication, the involuntary counting of "helps" and dishes, all indicate how the beginnings of nearly every "subject" are implicit in any well-ordered human function planned for children. When the meal is over and cleared away they will sleep in the quiet shelter or under the trees; even in winter they will sleep, warmly tucked up, but in a place where the light can fall and the moving air pass freely over and between the sleepers.

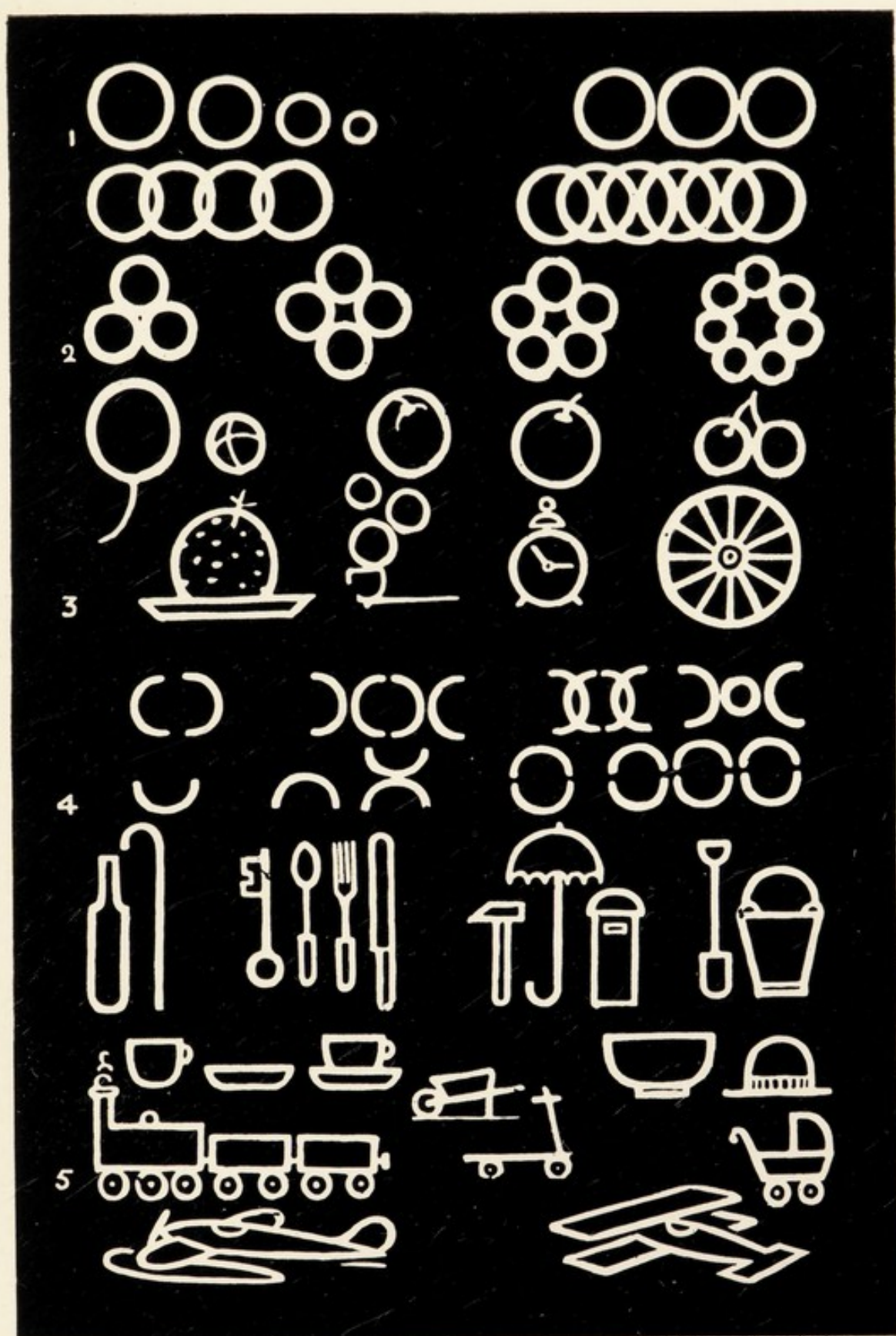
¹ The canaries close by pipe out cheerily very often during the grace.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SEVEN-YEAR-OLD

It is said that the Nursery School child should leave the Nursery School at five, and go forth into another kind of school. This is a strange proposal, for a five-year-old is in the full swing of a life-movement that does not pass into a new key till seven years have passed. To drive him forth into a new environment that is alien to the earlier one is to invite the loss of much that was bought at a price. Haste spells ruin all the time, and this kind of haste is not going to help, but to hinder the new work. The Nursery School teacher specializes in infancy. Infancy does not begin at two; it does not end at five. But to assume that it does end at five is to balk all real training.

What is to be done to-day then, when the official age of transfer is five? We have to stand for the truth and forward it by any means we can employ. The medical certificate for over-five children is granted in some cases. Granted or not we keep eighty out of two hundred and sixty children in the Rachel McMillan School and educate them under nurture conditions up to fourteen or fifteen. By such means can the really genuine results of early training be tested. For it is not enough to send out a bright and straight-legged child of five. The fruits of nurture are not quite so easily gathered. Many of them can only be judged by prolonged nurture, under conditions that do not make war on and destroy



THE EARLY STAGES OF ART

These movements are no more Art than is walking or even creeping—but they may lead to Art. And, indeed, there is no other way possible.

the latencies of early nurture and preparation in the mind of the Nursery School child.

Some rough but reliable indications we have already. Many of the more obvious achievements are recorded in public reports and admitted very freely in official documents. These apply only to the five-year-old passing out at this age into the infant school. But the seven-year-old is the flower of the Nursery School. I have no desire at all to overstate or exaggerate; nor do I even propose to offer my own judgment, which is, I hope, more critical and reserved than is that of most observers.

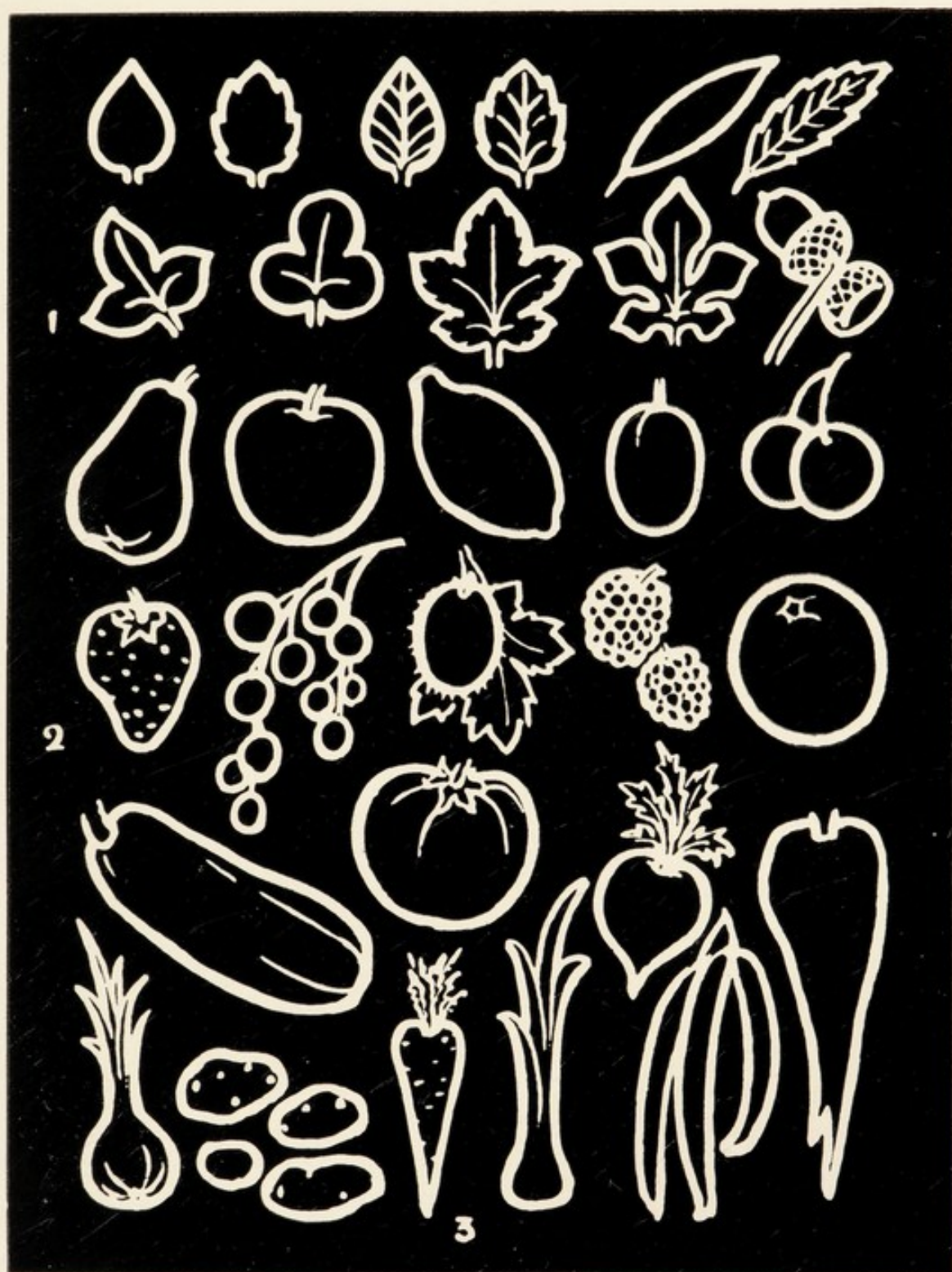
They are nearly all straight, well-grown children. All are straight indeed, and the average is a well-made child, with clean skin, alert, sociable, eager for life and new experience. He can read and spell—writes not always with freedom, but expresses himself freely in some medium. It is admitted by *all* that his English is good and so well grounded as to overcharge the deficiencies of the home accent and replenish its vocabulary by sheer weight of habit and adequacy of material. (I have satisfied myself that French too might be spoken now, fluently and correctly, though this is not true as yet of my own school.) The first years were spent in an atmosphere of love and colour and fun, and the last two years were full of interesting experiences and experiment. He has seen many people from many lands; and has seen too the native memorials that are in his native streets or near them; has questioned his own grandparents to their delight, and even taxed their memories to the vanishing-point of all patience. He has lived in a garden and taken some part at least in all the changes and work of the passing seasons.

This new seven-year-old is a kind of new coin of the realm. We look at him as he stands in the open air

in front of the shelter and realize that when he or she present themselves in tens of thousands at the doors of the junior schools, something unforeseen in its ultimate consequences will have happened. To begin with, the elementary teacher's work will be changed by this sudden inrush of new life from below. A new order of child will have presented himself for education, and the "newness" will not leave intact or unchanged all the formula and methods of yesterday.

Not that our seven-year-old is a prodigy or can do wonders in "sums" or "grammar." He is not a wonder at all. Sometimes we may even think he ought to do better in school subjects, in view of all the love and service that has been given to him. It is not by looking at his drawings or his sums that we learn how great is the abyss that parts him from the child of yesterday. Rather do we begin to understand this when we see how far removed his condition of mind is from the condition and mind of yesterday's street imp. He has none of his cunning and adroitness. He is *not* smart or "cute" at all. Nothing is matured in him to the point at which one can say "he is clever." On the contrary, everything proclaims that he is still only a child—still holding back and hesitant even in the way of learning. He is full of *held-back forces*, all his powers still groping forward in a kind of twilight. Yet the forward tendency is a clearly insistent thing, which is the greatest thing we can say perhaps of the achievements of childhood.

The abyss between him and the child of yesterday yawns deepest, perhaps, when we compare the *state* rather than the achievements of the nurtured child with that of the other. The nurtured seven-year-old is a stranger to clinics; he knows very little about doctors. He sees the dentist, but has hardly ever, or perhaps



GARDEN OBJECTS, ETC.

1. Leaf Forms.

2. Fruit Specimens.

3. Vegetable.

NOTE.—These objects are not intended as designs for the children to copy: they are suggestions for the teacher of the type of things she can select (generally from the Nursery School garden) for drawings. The most popular thing of all is the drawing of men, women, children, and fruit.

never, needed any dental treatment. The bathing centre for the neglected, the minor ailments clinic over the way are places of woe which he has never entered and will never know. To unclean streets the nurtured child is a reproach. To the public-houses that fill these streets with drunken noise and horrors, he is, however they may deny it, a new order of challenge and silent reproach.

If this book is not mere nonsense from cover to cover, its very subject is a warning and a challenge: "Make straight in the desert of these awful streets and alleys a pathway for the young." They are getting ready in garden-nurseries to go out into the world. The old world is not in harmony with the life processes that they now share with the well-to-do. The old world must therefore change. It is changing; but very slowly. With this order of school its pace must quicken. The dark life of the slum sickens and languishes already near the door of the new centres of nurture. To further and attain this end, however, we have had to leave the existing infant schools of to-day; to come out, taking the teachers with us as quickly as may be, not because we wanted to break with these schools, but because we could not present the new work and the new ideal in the old building. Since these words were first written the experiment of putting the new wine into the old bottles has been tried, and the truth of the above statement (that the new wine must have a new bottle) has been illustrated in a very conclusive way. The old school does not open to receive the new save as a devouring, not an assimilating agent. The work is not merely dissimilar, it is *alien* in its aims and method. Every effort to prove the contrary has failed, and the open-air Nursery School is parodied rather than imitated in the nursery class that is incorporated in the old school.

The illustrations of the open-air Nursery School must begin in the open. Given, not as an annexe or extension of any existing thing, but as a new thing, it is charged with latencies that depend on a favourable environment for their release and development.

CHAPTER IX

EFFECTS OF THE OPEN-AIR NURSERY SCHOOLS AS SEEN IN OLDER CHILDREN OF SEVEN TO FOURTEEN

It is now possible to trace the effect of nurture with education in children who, having entered the open-air Nursery School at two, remain in a school that does not drop the elements of nurture till the fifteenth year.

The life of such children changes, naturally, with every year, so that in the latter years "nurture" means still that they have regular meals and live for the most part in the open.¹ But the safeguards by which they have benefited from infancy have ensured the winning of certain observable results even in those who come, as indeed they practically all come, from the poorest homes.

The habit of cleanliness has been formed, not by admonition, but in the only way possible—that is daily practice of washing, etc. in a properly equipped bath-room, and in a regular outdoor and organized rhythm of life. The average of "delicate" children who remain delicate after three years in the Nursery School is about 7 per cent. This contrasts favourably with the average of 25 to 35 "damaged" entrants into the elementary schools.

The methods by which they are taught do not conform to any set standard, however popular, but are being worked out in the light of daily effort and experience. The values and limitations of individual

¹ Nurture means more, as I have tried to show, than meals and fresh air. But it *includes* these in the case of the camp children.

work are closely watched and assessed in the higher school as well as in the nursery shelters. And the standard for oral work is placed high at every stage, but especially in the ages between nine and fourteen.

A child's speech is at first imitation, but it is not *mere* imitation. The ability to perceive and to use such perception is involved in real language. The model offered is the thing to be imitated, but the stimulus given by it arouses and focuses powers already won and harnesses them for a new purpose. The more primitive an organism is the more unquestioned is the acceptance of speech models, as is obvious from the babblings and repetitions of early childhood. The same inability to stop which is perceptible in the drawings of the toddler is observable also in his repetitions and responses.

The inability *to stop* is often prolonged, and is only too obvious in the answers of children of twelve and over. Such children will fasten bright attentive eyes on a teacher and repeat a phrase or answer a question without the possibility of arrest, and with the rapidity and completeness of an instinctive action. Such children are *difficult*, and none the less because they often recite beautifully, read well, and take a good place in dramatic work. They are weak in punctuation. (This weakness is often traceable to faulty motor education in the first years. The inability to stop implies the impossibility of thinking.)

Ordinarily, however, the good models provided in the nursery shelters do ensure, not only fair speech, but the ability to use it for real expression. This end is approached by every timely conquest the child makes. Dancing, listening, training in the nursery is preparation. There is nothing unrelated in the whole training. One may claim that learning is less specific as one grows

older; that the imitation of good models is most effective in every activity in the early years. Later language-training is more specific; though in reading and reciting suitable poems and by the acting of plays and free dramatization there is, of course, general, as well as specific, progress.

Although oral work is very individual, yet no other subject is more effectively helped through the great opportunities offered in class teaching. The class is not to be considered as a number of children who are all to learn the same thing at the same time; still less as a collection of units, one of whom is called on to be the focus of interest and activity while the rest are passive witnesses of his success or failure. This idea is largely responsible for the failure of oral teaching in schools.

The class is, in reality, a group, large or small, of units, every one of whom has something to contribute which is not only useful to all the other units, but which can make the group powerful to attain ends that could not be envisaged if each worked individually but alone.

For the imitation of the good model in prose, verse, or drama is not merely imitation, but is rather discovery through imitation—is interpretation. But as it proceeds the critical as well as the interpretative powers of the whole class should be brought into play. The children should interpret not only the model poem, for example, but each other; for this implies and provokes a power of discernment that is deeper and more extensive than the mere attentive and appreciative interest that is centred on a model. This fact is illustrated not merely in the growing enjoyment and enthusiasm of the class doing collective oral work; it is shown also in the forming of groups who want to contribute something to the poem or play, or who, in the lesson take the history or geography

side, or a play for example, read the history of the period, or illustrate in painting, so as to bring new understanding and atmosphere into the whole performance. The co-operative class is the form of group that, succeeding the freer grouping of younger children, prepares a child for individual work that can be no longer shared in the fullest sense; the work is known as actual study or formal individual written composition.

Progress depends on preparation—that is to say on obscure happenings that declare themselves later in new achievement. This means that the influences of a Nursery School, being helpful, widen not only the interest, but the desire for co-operation in learning. The solitary or recluse method follows later. But this prolonged and satisfactory training in oral work of various kinds is a preparation for literary and even for scientific work.

Release from the barriers that hedge in the thought-life of children comes, not through the hurrying into advanced and adult forms of work or subject, but through the enrichment by creative methods of the more primitive forms of expression in music, drawing, oral work, dramatization, so that the advance towards science and literary work may become easy, and at last inevitable.

Two evidences of the reality of these results I may be allowed to cite here. The older children of the camp school are often invited to give entertainments—plays, etc.—by the religious and other organizations of the neighbourhood. What is even more satisfactory, the complaint that school language is overpowered by home language cannot be said to hold good for them; since, in many cases, the school language enters the lists with the deformed home language, struggles with it, and overpowers it at last, so that adults are drawn into

the new order. But there are other results, which I will try to indicate later. More, however, than collective class work, preparation is needed for later work, viz. experience and, incidentally, *holidays*. I shall speak of this in a later chapter.

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The following is a quotation from the 1919 edition of this book:

The Nursery School should make a new junior school possible because it will send out children who are equipped for a much easier and more rapid advance than is the average child of to-day. To begin with our Nursery School child will speak English, and this in itself means an enormous saving of time. The teacher can begin, without any delay, to use and perfect this instrument. She can raise the level of her teaching, and the great strain now borne by so many teachers of simplifying, repeating, straining the voice, perhaps forcing the emphasis, will begin to be unnecessary. The teacher will then be free to think of the subject-matter of her lesson and to use her powers in developing that. Who but a teacher knows what a lifting of burdens this must mean?

Then our child of seven can read and *has* read: in ninety cases out of a hundred is eager to read more. The modern world of interest and movement and wonder will be ajar to him already, a thing unknown almost to-day, except in our most favoured schools. We shall have to have *real* school libraries even for eight-year-olds, great long shelves with hundreds of books on them, *and here the junior school teachers will send classes to browse, and choose their own books at stated times in the day*. No longer need she have the whole of her big class marshalled in front of her. Some can be always in the library, and she will know how to help them when they are there.

This appears to me to be a prophecy of the Dalton System. But I should now say that sections of older

children should prepare in the library for oral lessons, while older pupils still do individual written work only.

The joy of quiet work will come into our terribly disciplined schools, stealing in like the morning and breaking up without disorder the half-frozen masses. At a word children can be ready to sit absorbed—as we see them—in gathering their own materials.

The teacher's task is not less arduous. But now she is not doing grinding work only in order to give simple tools of learning. The real work of learning may indeed be said to begin when the tools are held firmly. For then the getting in touch with life—for which many orders of individual work in the Nursery School prepare them—can be entered on. The value of tools is that they make it possible for a reality to emerge; that is indeed the test of any tool. To get into this kind of work, and do it well, involves a long process; but one that has not the deadening influence of the artificial, unnatural grind imposed on the unprepared intelligence.

As I said, one great result of the Nursery School will be that the children will be prepared so that they will get fast through the curriculum of to-day. When they are half or two-thirds through their elementary school life it is safe to predict that Nursery School children will be doing much more advanced work. And why should they be held back? Work now taken only in central and secondary schools may be started in Standard VI or even Standard V. It is very hard, for example, to find any good reason why all children in Standard VI should not be learning two languages. To-day this seems foolish, because so many cannot even speak their mother tongue; a thing difficult to understand! Public opinion is formed on a state of things that is unnatural.

Every educated Russian or Finn has to learn two languages from his cradle, and yet we feel that *one* is more than enough for our children's powers! No wonder the League of Nations remains a dream. A certain number of more or less gifted people are in every group of adults or children. Any gift—say music—should be recognized as a precious thing. But there is serious wastage to-day. Many have had little or no training. The Nursery School makes a new demand for musical girls. It has shown too how this demand is not met to-day. . . .

The great classification is that which divides us all more or less into two great orders, viz., first, those who observe, and secondly, those who interpret. Some, perhaps all, do both, but not in equal proportion. The outer world draws and absorbs the former, the inner world is the great theatre of the latter; and it is of great importance to understand both types.

It is time we put a higher estimate on the ability of the average British child. But how could we have done this? Only when he has nurture does he begin to show his real paces.

In short, the Nursery School, if it is a real place of nurture, and not merely a place where babies are "minded" till they are five, will affect our whole educational system very powerfully and very rapidly. It will quickly raise the possible level of culture and attainment in all schools, beginning with the junior schools. It will prove that this welter of disease and misery in which we live, and which makes the doctor's service loom bigger than the teacher's, can be swept away. It will make the heavy walls, the terrible gates, the hard playground, the sunless and huge classroom look monstrous, as they are. It will give teachers a chance.

CHAPTER X

MEDICAL AND DENTAL ATTENDANCE IN NURSERY SCHOOLS

It is impossible to know exactly how many children really need medical attendance. In order to know this we should learn first how far the real needs of children are being met—sunshine, fresh air, regular and right feeding, sleep, etc. How many remain ill in spite of all. Doctors usually recommend all these good things for ailing children. They send them to sanatoria, to open-air schools, and probably they would like to send nearly all ailing little children (who are not hospital cases) into open-air Nursery Schools. But only a few hundreds can be admitted into these schools. So the need for *clinics* grows and grows even though clinics cannot in any way take the place of a nurture school.

Our own Deptford clinic is next door to the school. If, between the weekly medical visit of the L.C.C. doctor anything occurs to alarm us, we can send any ailing child across the road. The need arises very seldom, and medical attendance resolves itself mainly into the weekly visit of the L.C.C. doctor, who examines every child on admission.

The dentist also pays visits regularly, and children who need dental treatment are sent to the dental clinic. The greatest discovery he has made up to the moment is that the youngest nursery children or toddlers have very sound teeth, and that dental troubles begin, for the most part, after the third and fourth year.

It is not medical treatment, but nurture and

education that concern us, however, in this book. We are not here concerned with the clinics. Nevertheless, the teachers and students of the new order have to learn something about treatment as well as training, even though they may not undertake the former at all. And the question arises therefore as to how, and from whom they are to receive the training that will give them a special power and equipment for reading symptoms, and dealing with health questions—a practical equipment and knowledge never asked for hitherto in the primary or infant school.

It is suggested by some that the Nursery School students should enter a hospital, and take part of a hospital nurse's training. This appears to be inadvisable for the following reason. The aim and spirit of a hospital training is not and cannot be that of a Nursery School teacher—for the former necessarily dwells on the idea of disease and cure, while the whole weight and focus of the latter's work lies in prevention. The day will come, we hope, when disease and the need for doctoring will be regarded as the shadow of failure and even as disgrace by mother and teacher alike. Moreover, the hospital training includes that which is unnecessary for the teacher. While admitting the importance and dignity of physical work, there is no reason why a Nursery School teacher or student should spend any part of her time in the ruder forms of manual labour. This is not any part of her equipment. She is simply to learn before all a new sensitiveness and awareness of all that is dangerous or likely to be hurtful to children. But this need not and does not imply the scrubbing of floors and polishing of taps, etc. It is her work to learn what the social conditions of life are to-day and how they affect our children, and to order the work of her school so that it will deal with these

in a direct and effective way. But this she can observe in the school clinic, where also she may gain a real insight into the causes of preventable disease. It is for this reason that every student should spend some weeks in a school clinic, and, what is even perhaps more important, attend the lectures, and observe the work of the visiting dentist and doctors at her school or elsewhere.

The dentist of the clinic near our Nursery School examines the teeth of all the children at least once a year, and reports on the state of every mouth. The teacher receives his report on every child. The students received in 1919 definite information from the dentist, who gave them a course of twelve lectures.

The dental course of lectures and observation work with Mr. Magraw was as follows:

- Brief description of jaw-bones.

- Structure of a tooth.

- Development of the teeth.

- Eruption of the teeth.

- Disorders connected with teething.

- Defective formation of teeth.

- Effects of feeding in infancy on the shape of the palate and dental arch.

- Effect of adenoids on the growth of the jaws.

- Caries.

- Salivary glands, saliva.

- Diseases arising from oral sepsis.

- Oral hygiene.

After these lectures the pupils sat for an examination.

In the minor ailments room the real meaning of preventable disease comes home to the young student as never before. Even in the waiting-room she has her first initiation. There, ranged on seats by the walls, sit scores of sufferers. Blepharitis, impetigo, conjunctivitis, skin diseases of many kinds—these are

not seen in our school. They are seen in the clinic—thousands of cases, all preventable. They come back, and back again, and the ointment and lotion bills remain heavy after twenty years. The plain fact is that nothing in such treatment touches the great problem at all.

Into the minor ailments clinic pour other cases: children with cuts and bruises, and wounds that are allowed to get septic; cases of minor accidents too—burns, as when little ones fall on a fire-grate bar, or have hot water spilt on them. All these children suffer because they have no nurture, and it must occur to our students that if *all* children had nurseries we should need very few minor ailments clinics. It is part of their training to give treatment meantime to those scalds, burns, cuts, and bruises, however they come.

A torrent of adenoid and tonsil cases rushes through our clinics. In one year, before the war, we did over seven hundred operations for these, and the student learned something by watching this great stream as it passed. She learns thereby why we have nose-drills, why we have paper handkerchiefs hung on the wall so low that every child can reach them, and why we do other things that may seem to the lay person very unnecessary.

In the clinics she learns that a great many children are more or less deformed before they are twelve years old. Who would have thought so many young backs were crooked, so many insteps fallen? In the nursery, in the bathroom, *even more than in the clinic*, our students' eyes are opened. She who has eyes to see may see and read—in a new book.

The clinic torrent stems a great many cases of gastrointestinal trouble, of chest diseases, colds, coughs, bronchitis, dilated bronchi, old lung trouble, suspected tuberculosis, and enlarged glands. Chest troubles are

common in the areas of the badly housed. The Nursery School cases, nevertheless, make some resistance. The wider field for observation in this kind is the clinic.

It may be said that an untrained girl cannot give much skilled help in a clinic, and that the staff cannot give her much attention. And this is true of the clinic as it is certainly true of the hospital. Formerly I made terms with certain of the clinic staff so as to get some instruction and extended chances of observation for students. But even this course is beset with difficulty, for in treatment hours the clinic staff has to work rapidly, perhaps even too rapidly. The rooms are packed with sufferers, and the whole attention of the staff is needed for patients and mothers. It is a survey of social conditions that the clinic offers, and this has great value. But more is needed.

When all existing channels are tapped it is well to recognize that something more is needed. The evolution of the Nursery School brings with it the need for an entirely new kind of organization and method in the teaching of hygiene. It is not enough to study methods of teaching; these must be applied in the new Nursery Schools, and a new technique worked out there. We have now to study the material, the equipment, and, above all, the new work that is to be undertaken by students and teachers. This cannot mean only the reforming of something we do. For the schools did not exist before, and we have frequent evidence that even our experts to-day are strangers to the work and its opportunities. The new Teacher of Hygiene in colleges must go into the new Nursery Schools and study *there* the new opportunities for a great application of the principles of hygiene. Until this is done the subject cannot be brought up to date, however we insist on hospital or clinic training.

How often have we heard, "Bathing a child is not a teacher's work. The reading of a child's symptoms is no business of hers!" This attitude must be changed. It can be changed only by a change in our training colleges. There must be in these colleges a new and adequate conception of the scope of the new hygiene. There, at least, it must be recognized that the principles on which it is based, and their application in the school environment and social centres of to-day, demand an extension of effort, an elaboration of methods, and an enlarged consciousness of which the lessons of former days gave no warning or promise.

CHAPTER XI

ATTACHED AND DETACHED SCHOOLS

"THE first flight of Nursery Schools were with one exception indoor places, though it is only fair to say that some of them had gardens." These words were written in 1919, and they were true.

The old schools were small—from thirty to forty children—but now there are at least three schools of eighty, and still larger schools are building. The figure of a hundred and fifty seems to have gained ascendancy, but it is after all only an arbitrary number. After a hundred and fifty is reached the magic of the bigger school begins. All the greatest economies can be made only in schools of a hundred and eighty to three hundred. After the figure of a hundred and fifty is passed, there is no added cost for any equipment but that of shelter—no added cost for kitchen utensils at all. The same fire, almost the same amount of service will do. Only the quantities of food must be larger, which is at this point a thing that can be done without great increase in actual cost. The cost of feeding three hundred is practically little more than the cost of feeding two hundred and fifty. One hundred and fifty is a bad figure to stop at! A bad choice! It shuts the gate to the real marvels beyond. All this is set forth in the chapter on finance, and need only be incidentally noted here.

The great hope of rapid advance still depends on the new detached open-air schools. A serious effort has now been made to graft the new school into the old

fabric. I cannot believe that it is not doomed to complete failure. There is no way of grafting old and new, save at the price of mutilation for the latter. At the first application of the forcible union the young school dies, or virtually dies. How indeed could it be otherwise, since the very idea which gave it life is ruthlessly sacrificed at the door of the old school? The little child of two is there abandoned. The long nurture day is sacrificed. Even the regular meals are given up. We are told to be satisfied with good methods once more; which, being interpreted, means small classes and stretcher-beds.

The more serious study of educational method and psychological problem can be attempted only when the conditions make possible the slow processes and adequate supervision on which all real progress in the knowledge of infant life depend.

It is claimed that possibly the Nursery School and its ideals will "permeate" the old. But what is this "permeation"? And who or what are the agencies of whom this great service can be expected? Permeation is made possible when a subtle, continuous, and powerful stream of influence has reached a point at which it begins to carry an outworn agent of civilization away by its main force. Now, the open-air school idea is still in its infancy, and its first months and years were troubled. It seemed to get over-laid in the first war years, and suffers from the effects of long partial suffocation. It no sooner got its breath and could stand a little than it was put into the big older school so as to "permeate" it. But it has not permeated, and will never permeate it. What has really happened is that it has got its own immature life threatened so that it is difficult now to see what it stands for, or will ever—under these circumstances—stand for.

The schools that still grow, and promise something, are the open-air Nursery Schools that have had nothing to do with the primary and infant departments. These actually stand every day more and more for things that are not adapted from older growths, but are genuine offshoots from a new root. As the days go by, a process of revealing takes place; an unexpected opening-out of new possibilities; a growing consciousness that things that are not yet obviously clear to us as part of any real plan, are nevertheless related. We see, for example, the nature of our problems themselves change with our changing children, and above all, perhaps, with our changing parents. Where are the fathers and mothers of twenty years ago in this area of Deptford? Frankly, I do not know. We never see them now. In their places is a new order of people whom we cannot even classify, doubtless because the social influences playing on them have not flung them back into any old social mould. They are certainly interesting, and have a new sense of what is possible through co-operation, as well as new power of expression allied with something that is worthy of originality and interesting to hear. This development is related to the varied happenings of a full-grown workaday open-air nurture school life—a thing unknown (as they often tell us) in bygone days. To look for substitutes now is to throw all this away. The substitute is a thing that destroys. We know it; the French know it. They say it with their own naïve precision: "*On ne détruit que ce 'qu'on remplace.*"

The nursery class's first act is to drop all that puts us in new relations with parents. It also takes away the children's dinner. It drives them home to eat, and dismisses them when they have slept through the afternoon session.

Such a programme as this does not offer us any-

thing. It merely offers us an excuse for dropping the essentials of Nursery Schools adapted to the needs of all poor areas.

In saying all this I do not deny that for the well-to-do child whose home offers many and wholesome experiences and opportunities, the short nursery-school day or class may suffice. It may even be preferable. We are here considering, however, the most difficult part of the whole problem of education—that is the education of the child of mean streets.

CHAPTER XII

HOLIDAYS

THE word "holidays" has a joyful sound to most people. It means going abroad, going to the sea, or perhaps play. In the L.C.C. schools too holidays are hailed with joy by many children even though they cannot leave London; and it is cheering to note how the parks and public gardens and open spaces are now used as playgrounds for city children. But in our Nursery School the word "holidays" is not a joyful one at all. Mothers think sadly of the toddlers sent out of the garden school. Many of the children always go back in holiday time to a damped-down life.

Poor toddlers! They cannot all make their way to the parks. Many have big brothers and patient sisters, but their interests are not entirely confined to the deal boxes on wheels in which little ones sit, and other improvised "prams." Many toddlers will have to remain for the most part in grim rooms or grim backyards. There will be no more play under the great planes and mulberries where the leaf-shadows fall on scores of little heads. No more, when the wind is up, will the meadow be alive with merry shouts. No more gay talk before tea, no news, no wonder, no dancing with the students when, in the afternoon, the toddlers waken.

Of course, in a sense, holidays are the finest test of the open-air school work that can possibly be devised. It is not regrettable that, at week-end, the burden of responsibility is given over to parents. The progress

of the whole movement is tested by the manner in which this responsibility is met. It is undeniable that within the past nineteen or twenty years parents of Nursery School children have taken on new duties, new cares, and also made new sacrifices, as the result of help given by the schools. The arrival of new helpers has meant new hope, new courage, and new effort on the part of many young mothers. Poor rooms have been made clean and bright. New beds have been provided. New school habits have been adopted so far as possible in bathless homes. We see scores of children arrive now on Monday mornings clean, fresh, and bright, where in pre-war days this kind of triumphal beginning of the week was exceptional. Holidays are good as tests as well as for new experience. It is well to remember, however, that they do not mean a new bath of glad experience for all.

Long ago we noted that August was a danger-month for little children in poor streets. The return in the end of this month of the Nursery School children was like the return of a sorely defeated army, sad-eyed, wan, roses gone from their cheeks; some dirty even and neglected; they came back with their mothers. "Thank God," said many a poor mother, "it's over, the holiday."

The young, generous-hearted students were indignant as they led their old charges back into the shelters. One of them spoke flaming words:

"It is a monstrous, an impossible thing, to turn children out of a nursery. It is like turning fledglings out of a nest, or people out of their homes. No mother dismisses the nurses and turns her children into the gutter when she goes abroad for a holiday, and yet *we* did this at the end of July."

This kind of student is the hope of to-morrow. Her consciousness has been deepened and enlarged so as to

understand the needs of all children, and this real expansion of imaginative power is about the best evidence we can have of widening intellectual ability and growth; so that I cannot but hold that the best students and interpreters of the science of education will be found at last in the ranks of those who have taken the hard way that leads to new vision. Meantime new help has come in the course of the past ten years which has given us some new evidence as to the meaning and effect of real holidays on the mental and physical development of children.

In 1924 Miss Hawtreys invited all the children over three or four to spend the August holiday at Avery Hill. This was a great experience and had great results; and the visit was repeated in 1925. In 1926 the children spent a month at Easton Lodge on the kind invitation of Frances, Lady Warwick.

It is no part of my work in this book to describe the beauty and charm of the surroundings in which these four happy weeks were spent. The results were, doubtless, far more remarkable than they could have been in the case of more favoured children. The groups lived with their teachers, who helped them in every way to find this new world.

Everything was new. All that had been heard and read of in books sprang suddenly into life. Here were hedgerows, dark with fruit, and wide lawns on which fell the shadow of innumerable trees; bosks and groves, lake and stream, bird sanctuary and tree-homes whither one could climb and be alone in the boughs. Wild duck and heron, monkey-houses and aviaries. Parrots screamed near the great houses where jewel-like tropical birds flew. The roofs were white with pigeons, and the gardens gay with flowers and peacocks. When the shadows fell the deer drew up silently behind the tents

and gazed down on the awe-struck children, motionless as they. Meantime something was happening in the long-denied children. It is happening still, and will go on always.

First they sprang into new life. They began to understand. The books came alive. That greater world out of which comes the glory of life—the expression of high vitality falling with rhythms of beauty did somehow dawn, not on a few, but more or less on all the older children—of eight to fourteen. The influence of the holiday may have been even greater and deeper on the Nursery School children, but it is not nearly so easy to trace and register in them. They reveal everything in other ways, and require more real power of observation in the teacher. In the elder children, after years, the effects of the great holiday are very obvious. “Where have you seen this?” “Where did you hear of that?” “How is it you like the books so much?” (On birds, on trees, but also on plays and people.) Nearly always the answer goes back to the time when, at Easton, the curtain was rent and the new world was opened.

England is full of beautiful homes, surrounded by scenes of unrivalled beauty and great expanse. The homes are passing out of the hands of many ancestral owners; but every normal person must hope and desire that the beauty will never pass away, never be lost, never be desecrated. I think there is only one sure way of preserving it. In the receptive years, in childhood, all should learn to *love* this beauty, to wonder at and treasure it as the gift of unseen and beneficent powers, and this they can do by beholding it, and living in it with real helpers and teachers for at least a few weeks, until at last it becomes a sacred heritage.

Happily the provision for holidaying is increased; though not at all in proportion to the need. Still, the

movement is growing. Holiday homes. Seaside resort hostels. Even day trips to country and shore have a balance of good to outweigh weariness. These last are not for young children.

Meantime I hope it is clear that, bad as is the plight of the little child abandoned for the summer holiday and of the mother who has to "fend" for him in a one-room home, yet it is not merely for physical reasons or as salvage work that we strive to face this problem of holidays for *all*.

There is no possibility any more of dealing with physical and mental growth as separate and distinct things. They are one and quite obviously one in the little child. The Nursery School is not a hospital annexe, but neither is it a mere psychological laboratory. The whole question of holidays is vital for children of every class and age. To-day, as in 1919, it is still for many children an interlude of privation and relapse.

The solution appears to be in a new elasticity with regard to staff holidays. After all, August is not the only month in which change and relaxation are possible. Business houses solve their holiday problem by giving the upper staff holidays in rotation. May, June, July, and even September are beautiful months.

For some years the staff of the Rachel McMillan have taken holidays in succession, and although this method offers certain difficulties that we do not minimize, it is the obstacle, not the principle, that we have to meet and eventually remove.

CHAPTER XIII

CHILDREN OF ALL ORDERS

It is said that this school for the children of poor and crowded streets is only one kind of school. "What," it is asked, "of the well-to-do?" The "only" child? The little ones that are taken for walks or "pram" rides in the Park every afternoon, tended by spotless nurses; the suburban child, the child of the highly skilled worker; the professional man's, or woman's little one. Should Nursery Schools be provided for them?

Some of those children attend Nursery Schools. In America, at least, they are the objects of very intensive care. The behaviourist studies them; the psychoanalyst considers them; there is a great literature growing up around and about them.

In England, the child of the suburb and of near market town outskirts receives nurture, for the most part, from his own mother. There are many intelligent, anxious, devoted, and nervously overworked young mothers who give all their time and strength to their children. It is not at all sure that they are giving their best to them. For the best is a rare wine always, and needs careful storage. The truth that seems to break in on us all at last is that the nurture and education of younger children demands much from mothers, but does not demand the precise kind of service and labour that she is so ready to offer. This education seems to depend, no longer, on individual but on collective thought, and co-operation.

The suburb child may profit by a five-hour day school. Even a morning session alone may be quite enough for him. Returning home, he may find at home all that can supplement what he has at school, and thus his life may be arranged quite otherwise than is the life of a Dockland toddler. I have nothing against the short day except that it does not meet the needs of tens of thousands. It meets the needs of thousands! The West-end child may find all that is now lacking to him in a small West-end Nursery School. It may be a little dull. But if one belongs to a small set one has to pay. Everything costs, even exclusiveness.

Let it not be said, however, that the education of rich or poor is not to be taken seriously, and studied in detail, however various the problem. The greatest—the *inner*—problem is the same for all. The external needs vary. We may have to offer baths and towels, or only the chance of making one's pinafore dirty, as an experience. In any case, there is no lesser or larger duty. Each child is equally important to the educationist.

It is safe now to predict that the great research work, and also the great achievements in education, will not be confined to any order of school, rich or poor. We cannot know which blade will yield and which languish. All we can be sure of is that the future is full of unexpected happenings. It is not wise to say, as has been said so often, that the poor and big open-air school is the annexe of a hospital, and is more occupied with the problems of poverty than of education.

That is mere assumption. Poverty is a *symptom* as well as a social disease and the study of psychology is not imperilled by an awareness on the student's part of the conditions under which the life and growth of a child is carried on. Quite the contrary. She starts at

a great advantage. Science has learned very little from the study of normal minds and normal conditions. She owes most of her progress to persons who are allowed to study the abnormal. Poverty is not an abnormal condition, but it induces abnormality; that is to say, new aspects and opportunities for research.

The open-air Nursery School is here for rich and poor. It is here, the thing, lacking which, our whole educational system was like a house built on the sand.

The Nursery Schools are here. An air of doubt and misgiving haunts many of them. Most of them are a little doubtful and come in all of a tremble! They have retired in some places into rather dingy houses, getting themselves walled round elsewhere in solid masonry, yet with timid peeps nearly always into the open, with gardens, even with verandas here and there, and awnings run up at a venture, most of them looking out dismally enough on the slum street or roaring thoroughfare. One, at least, faces the river with its never-ending panorama of light and shade, of sweep and swing of dark tide and gleaming water, its banks, too, by which in days to come there will be many a garden. Timidly, yet boldly, they are opened, and mothers look in half doubtful, yet half assured. "I've heard it's not just a place for minding 'em!" They come up our paths tired from the day's washing or work in the factory. "To-morrow I'll be easy in my mind if ye take them in. I thought" (they always say this) "it was only for children whose mothers go out to work."

The hot streets are crowded with little children. They swarm on the pavements. They run across where the vehicles go. They quarrel and cry on the doorsteps. When the hot August day wears towards evening,

mothers shout to each other from courts and open doors, and it seems strange to think that one day behind these very courts, behind these very houses, there will be open spaces with grass and whispering trees, and that these children's children will all be turned into something fair and unrecognizable, all tended and prepared for a new life. Nay, these very children perhaps may soon look no more across the cobbles, but across blooming flower-beds. As women they may fit their voices and their words and their actions to the beauty and sweetness that meets them in their own offspring!

Let us look for a little at the mothers and children in the hot and dusty street. Of these children forty-six per cent or more are what we call normal; and nearly twenty per cent are super-normal, which is a very glad thing to think of; only the very small percentage of children are *really* defective in any way, physical or mental. Let us now turn from the children to the mothers. At the outset we may say that they have the first claim on their children. We are not here to dispute that claim, we are here to offer help. The culture of plants is a great science and a great art, but the culture of human beings is a much greater thing. If we try to help mothers and to enlist the services of many people for their benefit, are we therefore trying to dispossess them? We might as well say that Burbank and Jackson insulted all gardeners by telling them something new about their plants and their soils. Well, we have started at last. We have infant welfare centres and clinics. We have baby welcomes and play centres, also schools for mothers. After we have said all we can in favour of these places, we cannot pretend that they represent the new science. If we cannot teach singing or drawing in "a few lessons," much less can we teach child culture by friendly talks and first-aid

warnings. Yet we want to have nurture at last. We desire it, just as our fathers fifty years ago desired to teach reading to everybody. What part can the mother play here, she who has the first claim, and who, help as we may, will always have the first place? First of all we must provide for her illustrations. Seeing, not hearing, is believing. We take a child from a dark home. We wash and dress and feed it. The mother at first sees only that for him every day now is a kind of Sunday. There is nothing very new in that. Later she begins to wonder why he does not take cold, why being out he does not get pneumonia! She wonders too why he sleeps every day at the same time. Coming into camp, she sees that sixty other children do exactly the same thing. Why do they do this? Her question opens the way for the first lesson; her eyes grow large with wonder.

She comes to camp often now. The children do not scramble at table. They come when they are called. They are merry; they are well. This is the mere A B C of nurture; but those who do not see it will not believe in it; and without a real Nursery School a working woman may never see it at all.

Even after she has seen and learned the first great lessons, charged with fate, she is only a beginner. However high her claim as mother, she is still in the lowest form as regards the science and art of child culture. The young student-teachers are only half-trained, but they are in advance of her. Will the day soon come when she will join in their studies? Perhaps that will depend on whether we can soon bear to hear the truth and put from us all the weak flatteries, the false sentiment, the falsehoods of yesterday.

Why have we not said all this before? Because there was no question of giving any real nurture to the millions.

With the advent of nurture the death-rate must fall everywhere and that sudden drop will be a mere incident. Far more wonderful than the saving of life will be the transformation within a short term of years of nearly all the survivors.

In 1919 we were invited to give nurture. We did not turn back and say: "One kind of nurture will be given to the rich, another kind which begins at the age of two and ends at five will do for the poor." And, "A three-months' training or a year's training tacked on to a general education will do for the nurse-teacher," for if these be the real aim, it is sad that some have lived and died to bring them into being.

The true aim is to give nurture under the same influence and teachers, up to the end of the seventh year. It assumes that every child born has a right to full nurture during this period. Thousands of culture-places must be opened for him; thousands of child-gardeners must be educated for him. And when at last he comes to the elementary school, the country must be able to say: "These are my jewels, saved till they are seven, equal in rights till they are seven, guarded and cherished till they are seven, educated on human lines only until they are seven." The voice of a wise Jesuit will then echo back to us reassuringly: "Give me a child till he is seven, then you can do with him as you please."

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One word I must say here on nursery classes. Why do I oppose them? Because they are, for the poor, a substitute: and also an excuse.

The phrase, "Half a loaf is better than no bread," is a particularly cruel phrase when it is used to excuse us for giving a child no dinner.

What is the half-loaf? Is it even bread? In this case, no. It is a group of costly things that do not really meet a child's real needs at all; that leave him dinnerless and send him out into the streets after his school day refreshed by untimely sleep but still unnurtured.

CHAPTER XIV

FINANCE OF THE NURSERY SCHOOL

WHAT does the Nursery School cost? On every hand this question is now raised and, happily, it is easy to give reliable figures, the accounts being audited by, inspected, and reported by local authorities. The figures here given are taken from Public Health and Annual Medical Reports of the Medical Board at Whitehall and of the L.C.C. There are, however, other figures which can be given—on building charges, some of which do not fall wholly and directly on any authority, though the payments are open to inspection of the L.C.C. and the Board.

The cost of land is usually, but not always, the greatest charge of all, and this brings us up at once against the term and cost of land in cities, a question that is at the root of so many delays and failures. The Nursery School of open-air type is specially affected. Space is needed for this order of school—not bricks and mortar. Space, not fine furnishings and expensive fittings. Where, in the heart of the crowded cities, are we to find land?

Even in 1919 the hunt had already begun. I was at that time on the L.C.C. On the agenda paper of the Central Care Committee of the L.C.C. on the 17th July of that year there were proposals for the opening of attached and detached schools, and the inspection of half a dozen new sites, which were, as I hoped, to be future open-air Nursery Schools.

Members of the committee inspected these sites, but

had great difficulty in buying any of them. They visited every dark place in Bow, Kensington, and various parts in the East End, as well as other sites near well-to-do areas. These last were as bad as any in so far as the condition of poor children was concerned. Some members were even at that remote date enthusiastic, and ready to start. One item on the agenda runs as follows:

"That the Housing of the Working Class Committee be asked to consider the question of setting aside sites, in connection with their housing schemes, for the organization of Nursery Schools."

If this last suggestion had been carried out, success would have been near. The committee could have planned their houses so as to make them all open at the back on a communal open-air Nursery School. This is the ideal way, so far as can be judged even to-day, of doing this great work. It gets over the old complaint about "taking the children away from their mothers"—putting them under the eyes of their mothers for the whole day.

There are various ways of getting hold of land to-day. First, the local authorities, who are themselves landlords, should set apart sites for the new work in any area where it is needed—securing sites that yesterday would be given to other purposes. Secondly, where any great clearance scheme is going forward, as in Watergate Street and other crowded areas, the new dwellings should be planned so as to open on a free space devoted to the Nursery School. Finally, housing committees should, as was proposed so long ago, plan nurseries as well as houses on the new estates. As regards estimates no real indication can be given. Prices vary greatly. But a new policy in land use and land holding is overdue. A new survey of land in

rural and city areas, with the view of including this new necessity of the people's life, is one of the greatest needs of our generation.

No permanent building or house is needed, except for the staff, and not in every case for the staff. All the proposed nurseries, however, include a house of some kind, and we need not object to this, all the more as the children need never enter it. Their place, even in the most severe weather, is not in the house, but in the shelters, planned and built so that they may always be in moving air and a large space, and always, *when necessary*, sheltered.

The cost of building a shelter for over forty children here, was only £124 before the war. This did not include the plumbing, which actually cost more than the structure and amounted to £183. My sister Rachel planned this shelter, which is still the most commodious, the most simple, and yet the most convenient of all. For the essentials were foreseen and planned with real vision—as for example, the building offered adequate shelter even in wild weather, and yet caught the morning sun, as well as the midday light. It faces south. The folding doors of the bathroom, drawn back, allow the head of the shelter to command a view of her whole world even when she is supervising the most important work of bathing children. There is ample cupboard room—occupying the space along two sides of the shelter. The latter is oblong in shape to give running space; and the walls, though of poor material—corrugated iron—enclose something that is adapted perfectly to its ends. The colours are gay and can be easily changed. And the children are never exposed to rain, or bitter wind, since offices, bathroom, and living-room all open out of one another.

Since the day when my sister brought me to see this

first shelter we have built nine in all—and all more or less on the same plan. Each shelter has its own bathroom, with hot and cold water laid on for bath and wash-basins. The plumbing has probably cost more than the building in every shelter. I know that it has cost more in the case of five shelters, and this is not an extravagance. It was, and still remains an essential. The last shelter was built in 1927—an expense that was met by the bequest of my friend and publisher Mr. J. M. Dent. The shelter, inclusive of plumbing, cost £516, but this was due to some mistake made in the first laying of the drains and pipes. The original estimate was £460. The shelter is built for thirty-five children. I do not think these figures need be exceeded by local authorities, for the truth is that elaborate buildings play no part at all in securing the new things that are needed in order to give real nurture and education.

A few points may be mentioned here in regard to ways of securing real economy with efficiency.

The economies we make are made certainly in order to save money; but first of all and above all, in order that we may have money to spend on things that children have not yet possessed, and that are none the less essential to their education and future success as citizens. For example, there must be ample provision for bathing and washing—a new idea of what is necessary in the way of hot water. *Every shelter should have its own bathroom.* This is a necessity, for otherwise the new habits can never be won, and the atmosphere of order and calm so needful for little ones will be impossible.

It is cheaper, and may be necessary, to put the heating arrangements so as to serve two shelters. In this the boiler should be large, and fixed between the shelters,

but the bathrooms must still be *separate*. There are certain advantages in having one boiler for two shelters, as the larger kind do not readily go out of order, and there is a new economy possible in fact. Heavy items are *heating and lighting*. Indoor stoves throw out a great heat but require more labour than gas. On the whole it is cheaper to have stoves, but gas has certain advantages, in that it requires little or no labour, and with gas it is easy to ensure heat at very short notice and without risks of delay through negligence. The whole cost of heating nine shelters, accommodating 340 children through the six winter months, averages £200, exclusive of charges for kitchen and cooking fires. The cost in summer, for six months, is small—not more than £50.

We have already dealt with the question of the cost of food by giving the simple fact, attested by the authorities, that the whole cost per head of giving fifteen meals per week—that is three meals per day for five weekdays—is two shillings.¹ This includes milk twice per day and a two-course dinner daily. Milk is by far the heaviest charge. It averages from £50 to £60 per month for 340 children. Thus, the cost of food need not frighten us. It is the vaguest, wildest, most foolish fear of all. None need be hungry; none need be ill-nourished in childhood. If the open-air Nursery School has done nothing more than demonstrate this fact it deserves well of this and coming generations.

Looking back on these eleven years since the first edition of this book was written, I see that the average cost has not varied very much—or at all. The parents even then gave two shillings per week, and the children had seventeen meals, for at that time they attended

¹ Including wages of cook and gas used for cooking.

on Saturday morning. But these figures require to be read in the light of new happenings if they are to express the whole truth. In 1911, and even in 1919, the meals were not as good as are the meals we give now. At first, and for years, we had to cook in an outdoor boiler that was always getting out of order; and we could not offer what is given now. The L.C.C. grant enables us to put before the children the meals that have transformed not only the physical but especially the mental life of the children (assuming that these can ever be parted). There is nothing, I repeat, that is more cheering than this. All children can be well-fed for, comparatively, a trifle.

These words stand all the firmer when we come to survey the wider field of possibilities and actualities in England to-day. England's *variety* is seen in nothing more than the diversity of her people's life. In Dockland there is a grave problem of unemployment and bad housing. In this the congested East End riverside is not peculiar, for the same evils affect parts of Wales, Lancashire, Tynemouth, the Midlands, and many another area. Yet the *tradition* of the North, despite changing conditions, is still that of well-doing, effective people who can work well and earn big wages. There are smitten towns, but happily there are prosperous towns as well. And in these women pay, and have long paid, large sums to have their little children "minded." They are "minded"—not by trained persons. And mothers pay ten shillings per week, and even twelve or fifteen shillings, for this "minding." One proviso they make—the "minding" must go on for nine hours a day, for this is the working day at mill and factory and workshop minus the midday hour, when children cannot be hustled back to their homes to their hard-driven mothers.

Such mothers can *pay* for extra care, and for all the food and service their children need. Given a large open-air Nursery School they would pay at least five shillings. It is unlikely that they will be asked to pay four or even three shillings. The provision for Nursery Schools has been on the Statute Book since 1918 and is open to any citizen as is the provision for primary schools. Only the Act is to-day inoperative and mothers do not even know, in most cases, that they can have this new relief and amenity of Nursery Schools.

It is for us to *waken* them. To plant (literally) the schools where they are most needed. To break up the mill districts with child gardens—and to remember that in doing this we are not going to pauperize mothers but are going to enable them to buy new and better nurture at a price that will mean a saving to them.

No fixed price should be insisted on to apply to all places and all circumstances. One great element in the success of the Nursery Schools has been flexibility. Without it the new relief and the new opportunities that seem now to open like a flower will be lost. Through them we have been enabled to meet almost impossible situations and to solve problems that were at first sight insoluble. The cost for parents is graded, and adapted to meet not only the needs of various mothers, but also to make possible the attendance of individual children in time of stress as in time of plenty.

Our experience shows that an appeal to the public spirit and sympathy of parents is far more effective than the most rigid and carefully thought out system of money payment.

For example, the long nurture day not only gives relief to mothers but draws them into close relations with the school. In most areas a short nurture day would make impossible the close contact between staff

and home that is natural when the day does not close in the middle of the afternoon; and if this is true in London and southern towns, much more is it true in the busy north-country factory towns where mothers go out to work. For them the short day is of little use. It solves no problems for these workers. On the other hand, the school that can meet their real needs, by caring for the children all day till the closing bell releases the mothers—this school fulfils a great purpose, and meets a great need in their lives. They will be willing, as they have always been willing, to pay liberally for such relief. The Rachel McMillan Nursery Camp School receives to-day a steady income of twenty pounds per week from its mothers. If its site was in the heart of Blackburn, Nelson, or any other northern city where women go out to work, the weekly income of this school from mothers or parents alone would be at least fifty pounds. The jute workers in Dundee gladly paid an average sum of 3s. 6d. per week for the children in the Glen Agnes Road Nursery School. Briefly, we have no reason to hesitate on the score of expense. Given the order of school that is urgently needed, the income from private sources in the whole country should total at least half a million, and, possibly, a great deal more.

An outcry may be raised in some quarters against the charging of any sum to the parents for board. This outcry should, I think, be faced. The people were once treated as serfs. There seems to be no good reason for now treating them as paupers. The best among the poorest want to pay, love to pay, *claim the right to pay*. It is the reckless, the cowardly, the selfish who send their children back ill week after week. It was they who shifted all their burdens on to us in the dark days through which my dear sister battled alone with me;

it was they who broke down her failing strength, who broke our hearts and our purses, and even took a mean advantage of our love for their children, keeping them as a kind of hostage. They are the people who take everything for nothing without sympathy or sense of fair play. Happily they are not the majority in any area. *They are a minority that can be swelled in any area.* We have a right to make terms with them; to place on their unwilling shoulders new responsibilities and new burdens; to make terms as to giving of help; to require that the children will be sent clean and as regularly as possible, that they shall have suitable food at home, and that payments shall be steady when possible.

Formerly we could make no terms. To-day, when children are registered for this school before they are born, it is possible to ask for something. Happily there are few now who do not help gladly.

The demand for new open-air Nursery Schools, growing keen in these last years, has brought the question of staffing into the foreground, where indeed it is being debated, and even settled, before the conscious will and desire of the people has been fully, or even superficially, formed and expressed. The tendency to lose sight of some or, indeed, all the essentials of the new nurture school is only too obvious. The past, with its rules and habits or customs in dealing with school questions, is always overshadowing the future; and this is especially true when we come to think of such new departures as the long school day and the need for supplementary help to ensure it. Other points, once in dispute—such as the big school and its organization and the possibility of building so as to keep a homely atmosphere—these and other new features have been quietly accepted.

There are healing and reconciling forces at work that will, in time, make great changes possible.

The large school—say of two hundred or more—must have a trained and certificated superintendent, engaged on the same terms as any other infant mistress. She should be assisted by two or three trained and certificated teachers, but it is only fair to say at this point that the open-air Nursery School training is a new thing, and is not to be mastered by a hasty course of three or six months in an existing school, even if the applicant has all the qualifications of the Froebel or other societies offered to-day. Such training may be all that is claimed for it. The infant-mistress training of yesterday may carry with it great virtue and power. It is absurd to pretend that *no* training is needed in the application and extension of such knowledge; that the rough and ready method of trial and error in the new schools is enough.

Hard as it seems for many to realize it, the coming of the open-air Nursery School has brought with it not only an entirely new situation, but also a real and growing need for new training on the part of those who aspire to take part in the work. It is one thing to teach in an infant school or in a small private kindergarten. It is quite another thing to organize and develop a school working under new conditions, embracing new responsibility, and even working towards many new ends.

We must have trained help, which is not merely old certificated help. I go further. We must have plenty of it. There is no bona fide, specialized certificate yet for purely Nursery School work. There is training. And it is training we need. Failing such training our children, however efficient the head, will always be in the hands and at the mercy of the tyro, the inexperienced.

The Board of Education will pay grant for a three-

year course at the Rachel McMillan College. Such pupils will start on the Burnham Scale. There is another course of training which we know here as the "Free-lance course," for which no grant is paid. It is a shorter course of one to two years, but the work done and the standard achieved is often such as make the student a very efficient member of any Nursery School staff. The scale of salary begins at £108 and goes up to £180. Many students are eager to take this course who are nevertheless not desirous of becoming teachers in the upper schools; some are going finally into other kinds of work. Many are keen to take this training as preparation. It is surely well that, since *all* women are not to be teachers, some can have a training that will enable them to help children and understand life by sharing something of a teacher's training.

It is for this reason that the best opportunities for training are offered in the open-air Nursery School and College with its various courses of study

The number of assistants required varies, of course, with the age of the children. (*Everything* varies with the children's age.) A probationer, assistant, or student is needed for every group of eight in the two-year-old shelter. The group may be twelve for the three-year-old, and still larger for the fours. Briefly, in any school there must be one helper for every twelve children.

The vexed question now arises: Who *are* these helpers, and what are the conditions under which they are to work? To begin with, we must set our faces against the notion that they should be untrained girls taken haphazard from school to learn by experience. All the children should be not only indirectly under trained supervision at all times but directly under some order of trained supervision for most of the time. Though the sleeping shift requires skilled supervision, there

are periods—in the course and routine of it—when a conscientious watcher or guardian will do all that is necessary. But this kind of guardianship is not enough at any other time. Much more is wanted in the bath-room, and more—much more—at meal times, at free play too in the garden, and also in quiet times in shelters. And as no Head, however well trained, can make herself effective at one moment for twenty groups, it is quite vain to hope that an efficient Head—or even a few Heads here and there—will permeate a number of groups by a round of visits. That is a deceptive veil that must be whipped off the facts.

There is much physical work to be done in an open-air Nursery School—physical work not concerned directly with the children. The carrying of meals, the sweeping of floors, and re-arrangement of shelters at different hours—work too heavy for even the most helpful child. It seems that unskilled helpers should be engaged to do these things, for weekly wage and part board—plus a share in actual training and supervision of children that will give them at least some kind of technique, and also some inspiration.

It is surprising to note how, given a vigorous elementary education—enough to waken the real power of mind and character in some degree—girls may, after a short time spent in working and in watching the work of a Nursery School, be far from unskilled, far from untrained. One of our half-dozen probationers is certainly very well fitted for the highest kind of training we can offer. There is a strange overlapping of faculty in all grades of our workers. Nowhere is the line of division clear enough to bar any from the possibility of great achievements. And here as elsewhere the career should be open to talent.

One more source of help we must mention. Students

must learn their craft by action, not by books alone. It is of the first importance that all girls who aspire to be teachers should serve in the Nursery Schools. Here is their psychological centre for observation and practice.

All these sources tapped, we should be able to staff our schools, and not only staff them but make them profitable to girls, and, what is perhaps even more important still, *safe places for children*.

A Nursery School of two hundred and sixty children of five and under is run to-day at a net cost of £11 15s. per head.

The problem before us to-day is therefore not insoluble. It is, in fact, already solved. But the larger solution involves a new direction of expenditure: the saving of money on things that were once deemed important in favour of spending money in future on things that should now *take the first place*.

In short, we desire now to build and equip not new schools but new children—to spend more freely, but only in the things that will help towards this new end.

CHAPTER XV

HOME INFLUENCES OF THE NURSERY SCHOOL— THE MOTHERS' CLUB

EVERY order of society appears to evolve certain institutions that show the nature of the society—what it is founded on, its relations to groups and classes of persons, and to reflect their mutual powers or weaknesses, privileges or needs. Thus feudalism shows a closely knit society, graded and fitted so as to express the power and leadership of one person or class of person. Modern industrial society also brought into existence not only new classes, but also new relationships between these classes, the employer and *his* attitude to others; even to the submerged that belong to no class at all.

Our present-day social system is remarkable in that it appears to call into existence new orders of relationship that are not founded on old models, and this is very noticeable in the life and development of the Nursery School.

Its mothers' club does not stand for any order of relationship between rich and poor, enlightened or ignorant; still less is it an expression of any form of benevolent patronage. It will be seen from the chapter on Finance that the parents of the open-air Nursery School can and do pay their way, with negligible exceptions. They are enabled to find not more money but new possibilities in money, because they are using money in a new way. Just as there was a time when people did not understand the meaning of credit or interest, and had

not conceived of banks at all, and still less conceived of them as a part of the State's services, so there are many to-day who do not begin to realize the meaning of collective buying and collective organization, and who cannot, therefore, imagine that the pleasure and comforts of the well-to-do can ever come within the reach of the poor. Yet it is just this new idea, viz. that all can share the best things in life, given a new order of effective organization and undismayed trial, that is at the root of the open-air Nurture School.

As ratepayers and citizens, fathers and mothers have a right to send their children to the nursery as to the elementary and central schools. The added and important items of meals and other things they also have a right to provide for themselves on terms that may be arranged. And these they *can* arrange where many unite at a cost so small that even the poorest can hardly feel quite unable to pay; while simple arrangements can be and are made so that within a measurable time, doubtless, *no* child need suffer because his father or mother has died, or has fallen out of work, or is helpless.

It is not assumed that parents come to the club because they are ignorant, any more than it is believed that people go to religious services and lectures or even to courses of lessons because they are ignorant or specially in need of help. Most of the mothers who attend Nursery School clubs in America are well-to-do and are specially well educated, being for the most part ex-university students, or wives of professors, if not lecturers themselves. The mothers of our Deptford Nursery School make no pretension to being learned, but neither are they, as I said, enrolling in the new organization for social reasons that imply only salvage or even social work. They join the club so as to be a part of the new movement, a movement that has

already changed in some degree their own lives and the future of their children. What this movement is in its developed form they are as little able to see as others. They express a desire to come abreast of the school, to understand its aims and to forward them as they only can forward them. So from the outset there is a community of interest, and this is the basis of the new association.

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The club meeting is held weekly. It is, in reality, a kind of tea-party, and begins with a cheerful chorus of greeting and gossip in the shelters. Later there is a formal speech or lecture on one of a series of subjects all relating to the hygiene and education of children: sleep, diet, clothing, ailments, etc. Sometimes we have lectures on social affairs; on the League of Nations; on internationalism; on our relation to public bodies. In short, we try to remember that we are all citizens and have the responsibilities of citizens. One of our mothers is a Guardian. There is discussion which is often interesting, and private talks in which are revealed (even more than in the open meeting) the arts, the wisdom, and also the hopes of the very poor. Finally, the mothers form in groups, each of which has a leader: one group sewing, another cutting out, another knitting or darning, and some doing all the work of making clothes or renovating them. Mothers sometimes bring their own material, and many buy material by easy instalments. The cost, we found, of a good diet is small for children. The cost of clothing them in warm and pretty clothes in winter, and of making, for summer, many bright and dainty garments, is small too! Strange it is—and seems ever stranger—that these essential things, the right feeding, the suitable dressing of children in all seasons, cost so pitifully little, and are not yet achieved.

Many things are carried out in triumph. Great things are achieved. But the greatest things of all, enjoined on us by the greatest Teacher, simple, and costing little or nothing, are not done yet, save in isolated cases, and without any national consciousness of their real place and importance.

Well, the poorest mothers can feed and dress their children in association with the Nursery School.

Every season suggests ways in which the links between mothers and school can be drawn closer. In summer there is one golden day when all our women look their smartest and when with happy smiles and hopeful hearts they set forth in buses for the country home of Mr. Jack Evans, one of our new college governors. No children attend this treat. For one day mothers, not little ones, are the centre of interest and the honoured guests. It seems strange to look at them in the lovely gardens, and remember that they live in the area where my dear sister and I worked, under such different circumstances, twenty years ago. What have these kind and charming women in their neat attire and with young, smiling faces, restrained in all their joy—what have they to do with the people of yesterday? Doubtless many healing influences are playing now on many neighbourhoods—playing on them like the rain and sun that change and reclothe the world. It is often said that the churches are emptier, but never were there so many and such ardent social workers and helpers in the crowded cities. Among these last we may count some of our own mothers.

And among the healing agencies we venture to class our own open-air Nursery School.

CHAPTER XVI

THE LAST CHAPTER

HERE is this book on the open-air school. Often, while the first edition was a-writing, storms threatened to overwhelm it. Often even in the last six months ere its first issue, it was an open question whether our sorely tried and hardly won venture would be swept away. It was not swept away. In 1919 I found a few good friends among my colleagues on the L.C.C., and to their tolerance and patience in shielding an unknown and still unproved experiment I owed the power to carry on.

I say "power," and let the word stand. But the deeper truth is that power—real and resistless—was flowing in then, and long before that time from another source. My sister Rachel had been from her girlhood the inspirer of many; and through her I was able to face what seemed for years impossible obstacles and a hopeless enterprise. From 1904 to 1908 she worked with me for the passing of the legislation that gave medical inspection to school children. In 1910 we moved the Bow clinic to its present site and made our home in Deptford. The last seven years of her life were spent in work in this place. No one ever undertook or carried forward more hopeless and heart-breaking work than Rachel faced in these years. It meant a complete break with every interest than this of finding the depths where children perished in silence, and of discovering a way out of this abyss.

There is no doubt at all that great vision as well as power was granted to her. She never hesitated

to leave beaten tracks when she knew that they led to no real goal. And so her planning and building of the new schools was a shock to that generation. She saw that *any* house was a danger zone when little children were gathered there. So she planned their lives in the open: reared poor sheds at first, in the Evelyn Street Garden; built shelters later on the Stowage site—and all the while she was not only the target of local public opinion, she was cutting across the considered policy of the authorities. Finally, her purse was light, and she had no security of tenure for the buildings which we put up in faith. We might have to dismantle and quit within a week. The main lines of her work are well known. They have been extensively copied and adopted, and it is impossible to doubt that her creation, adhering and fitting together well in all its parts, is singularly and adversely affected by arbitrary change where, for example, her simple planning of the shelter is changed. If a bathroom or office is not where she placed it, the staff is sacrificed, the cost is raised. There is in it something of growing revelation, a mysterious arrangement of things and events that seems odd, but is found to be right in the final test; and withal such simplicity as of a child returning always to a wise father and coming back with the right message. Here, for example, is freedom at last! A child can run a mile in her school, or even miles. Hundreds of visitors can arrive in a day, or at the same hour—without serious injury to the school. There is always the play of light everywhere; everywhere the movement of air, yet no one is cold. And the many shelters supplement one another. Each is a home, but not an isolated home. Finally, it all costs so little that any area can do it, any child can have it. And for the development of a real science of education and research it offers unparalleled

opportunities and suggests safe experiment. These things have been seen and have been in full view of all for years.

Standing guard over what I must always believe was a great treasure of wisdom, my dear sister endured every kind of misrepresentation. She was, save for me, alone. And when illness overtook me she was often entirely alone, death staring her, as she said, always in the face. For we lived in a danger zone, and raids were frequent. In all the terrible years it never occurred to her that she should move to a safer place, or accept an easier destiny. When our house was shattered in one terrible midnight *she* was the one who gave peace to others. Her calm and strength possessed it even as its framework was shattered. To her as to a refuge every child turned, and every dismayed woman hastened. Yet she was near the dark valley herself. Pale, very beautiful, she moved among us, and no one thought that she could die.

And then it came—the end. But was that the end—this final triumph over anguish and self? This surely was not death that came to her. It seems it was new life and power and ever greater love that came to her. She has never left us. And her influence and message have flown all over the world.

Schools are coming fast; and though they are not all as she saw them, yet so much of her teaching has been accepted that it is almost commonplace now.

Open-air Nursery Schools are almost general. The vexed money question is laid bare, the causes of excessive cost shown. The real problem proved to be solvable. Big schools are admitted to be the safest as well as the cheapest. The long day is not yet popular. And beyond all this is much that she knew and saw that cannot even be presented as yet.

The Labour Government has given a stimulus to the

many local authorities who are now planning schools on her lines. As we have seen, most of the northern cities are awake to the need for Nursery Schools. Bradford, always in the van, has six or seven schools. The plans are passed for an open-air school of 200 at Liverpool, and the last schools are to be on that same garden village type of many shelters that she advocated. Gateshead has an open-air Nursery School and Newcastle has three on its plans. Birmingham and other cities are preparing to go forward. Farnworth's new open-air Nursery School will be open in April, and Bolton's in June. Many Lancashire towns are astir, notably Stockport, which has four schools in its plans; and in the London area Walthamstow's large open-air Nursery School was opened last June. Bethnal Green and Mile End Road Schools are a-building, and other districts are making plans or have plans passed already.

Over and above all these are many private ventures. The Hon. Mrs. Holman's open-air Nursery School at Slinfold is staffed by two of the old Deptford students (with helpers), and a very hopeful sign is the staffing of Poor Law schools with nursery teachers, as in the open-air annexe in Leeds, and also at Mitcham.

It is not hard now to find skilful and devoted young teachers. It is not hard to fill the new Rachel McMillan College with students. This great new venture, made possible by the generous help of Lady Astor and Lord Astor, is to be opened in May. The days are long past when Rachel tried to steady a staff that continually fled from raids, poverty, and the sights and sounds of the dreadful streets. All that is over. But the new day has come only because she endured, despising shame and reproach and carrying on till the end came. Faithful, literally unto death.

For eleven years Miss Stevinson, the Principal of her

Nursery School, has been faithful to her tradition. These years have not been years of calm security and easy fulfilment. They have been less terrible than the former years, but they offered no kind of incentive to Self. It would have been impossible to live through them except as one who guards a hidden treasure. I am thankful to know that Miss Stevinson will be the first Principal of the Rachel McMillan College.

In the past ten years we have made new and powerful friends, and in their sympathy and help we see a fair promise for the children of this country. Yet the old friends, Sir John Gilbert, Sir Cyril Cobb, and the sacred memory of Mr. Stewart Headlam, can never be displaced in our grateful remembrance. Still, in these ever-brightening days, those who had faith in and patience with us in the darkness, appear as gifts, mysterious, inexplicable, from some unknown power who gave them to us in the day of adversity. To live through such years is to win new faith and trust in a beneficence that outsoars the little dim circle of our sense perceptions. To live through them is to win faith in humanity too. Progress is not a triumphant riding on; it is a painful stumbling on.

In all parties and classes there are some, who are moving towards some great end. These transcend at critical moments all their more conscious and more personal strivings. They move as to some distant music, and obey some impulse from the Unseen.

Only after many days or years can we divine whither they were tending, and what the goal is which others, following them, will attain.

To be in that army is to succeed, even in failure and in death. For the purpose in its movement is Divine Will, and the rescue of all children seems to shine in its centre to-day like a new-found star.

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