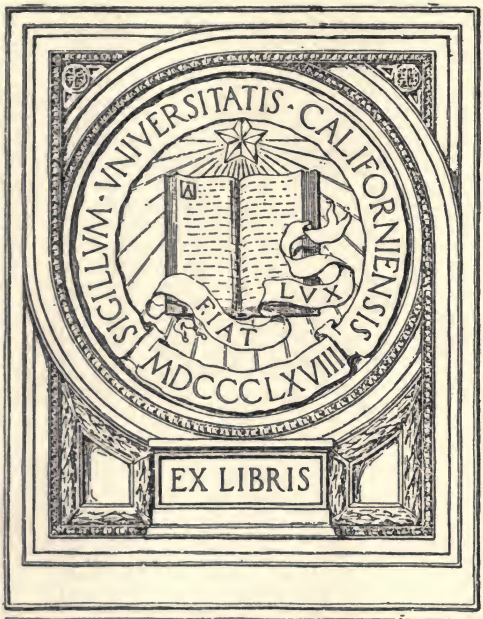
AN ENGLISH PRIMARY SCHOOL

BY

A. E. PRITCHARD & F. ASHFORD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AN ENGLISH PRIMARY SCHOOL

"In the child's world of dim sensation play is all in all. 'Making believe' is the gist of his whole life and he cannot so much as take a walk except in character. . . .

"Children are able enough to see but they have no great faculty for looking, they do not use their eyes for the pleasure of using them but for by-ends of their own. . . . Surely they dwell in a mythological world and are not the contemporaries of their parents. . . .

"Why can we not all be happy and devote ourselves to play?"

R. L. STEVENSON

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BY

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LONDON

GEORGE G. HARRAP & COMPANY

9 PORTSMOUTH STREET KINGSWAY W.C.

MCMXII

PRINTED BY
BALLANTYNE & COMPANY LTD
AT THE BALLANTYNE PRESS
TAVISTOCK STREET COVENT GARDEN
LONDON

PREFACE

INCOHERENT this book is. A series of fragmentary questions in the science of teaching, and not one of them more than partly answered.

We have tried to free ourselves from the *idola* of the class-room, to seek a continuity with the past on the one hand and a future on the other. We have invoked the Spirit of Play, that by him our work might be made natural, vigorous and fruitful. We have tried to make the intercourse of our little community as free and wholesome as that of a family. We have hoped to make our activities real and purposeful, stimulating the mind as purposeless employment must always fail to do. It is important to know, to learn first by experience and afterwards through books, but it is more important to live.

Come let us live with our children.

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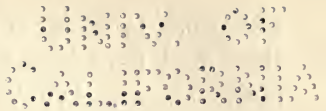


CHAPTER I : INTRODUCTORY

WE arrived on a warm September evening and spent the next two days in furnishing the little cottage where we two had decided to make home, as simply and economically as possible. We surveyed the garden and its heavy clay soil with a dismay which might well have been prophetic, not only of the difficulties which were in front of us there, but also of that Child-Garden which we had come to cultivate. The cottage-garden had been sown with nasturtiums as an attempt to make it presentable. The Child-Garden had been abandoned after a short trial by its first worker, as unprofitable labour.

After two days of settling house, we spent a quiet Sunday—walked by the river, and looked over the flat country with a longing for the blue distance of the Yorkshire wolds. "But what a good thing it is to have the river, we can at least bring the children here : there are rushes to gather for their weaving,

and plants to study, and there's a water-rat! And there must have been yellow water-lilies here earlier in the summer... We shall surely come this way very often."

We walked back to the cottage, looking across to the west at the village hall, engaged temporarily for our use until a school could be erected. There was a Sunday evening service going on as we passed. The hall was used for many purposes — church, Sunday-schools, club, lectures, concerts and the like. It was the meeting-place of the village. Well, we must be prepared to put up with difficulties—the Committee expect to build almost immediately, but building takes time, and we can't do as we like on other people's premises.

On Monday we met the children—flushed faces, tumbling, scrambling, pushing one another into the room, little grubby hands lifted quickly in self-defence, a fairly clean pinafore concealing more grubbiness beneath. "There are baths in all the houses, but they don't use them much," was my first comment. A few parents with north-country brusqueness and some distrust as well as curiosity concerning the strangers who had come to "keep school," put in appearance. "Just see my John has some lunch, will you? He didn't eat any breakfast, he was that excited about school." The 'lunch'

consisted of a banana, thick slice of tea-cake (left over from Sunday's tea), and a piece of tart, and John ate it all like a little savage as soon as he felt unobserved, throwing crumbs and paper on the floor. It was soon pretty evident that in most cases good wages were being earned. It was not under-feeding we should have to fear for the children.

The next few weeks I have almost forgotten. I remember the first school walk when two boys left the little party who were gathering rushes by the river-bank, and slipped away to a field at some distance where they were observed chasing cows. One of these was dragged back to school later by his father, who had encountered him thus engaged, and who said, holding him by the collar while the boy kicked and struggled: "Give it him, Miss, lay it on thick, the young rascal, I'll back you up." The second boy stayed away from school the next day—his mother wrote to say he had a bad influenza cold; but the indisposition was evidently not serious, as I saw him playing in his back garden in the evening. We had some skirmishes with the parents, chiefly concerning irregular attendance and uncleanliness, but after some up-hill work and uncongenial experience, we felt we were gaining ground, and a round of visits in the evenings brought us a few friends amongst parents whose friendship has been staunch and true ever since.

We began our work in a most unprofessional way. "Where is your time-table?" asked our first inspector. "We have none," we replied calmly, and proceeded to explain that we had a general plan of work which was governed by the interests and activities of the children, and subject to seasonal changes. We thought children from five to seven years of age were better without time-tables. If we were favoured with a sunny day (this was not frequent, for we were in the cold, grey north) we took the children out to enjoy the sunshine, to watch the field-work, to learn the names and habits of birds and wayside plants, and this provided us with material for dull days which followed. If it was cold, with a keen north wind blowing, we had a sudden access of energy with regard to morris dancing and old English games. We did a carpenter's job which called for much energy in rubbing down with sand-paper, or hammering in nails, and when a rest was needed we sat round the fire and told the old fairy-tales from Grimm and Hans Andersen, or some of the Norse legends.

And there was no bell to call us to order at the end of a twenty minutes' lesson on number, for the children were learning to count and measure in all kinds of ways while doing their jobs, and they learned to print their own names, and the names of things

they were using, and to identify all the familiar neighbourhood signs. They learned to talk and argue with one another sensibly, as well as to enjoy conversation with the teachers. We had most of the usual problems to encounter: "Arthur does like school, and he does take notice of all kinds of things I never knew nowt about, but I wish you would learn him his A B C." I laughed, and said to the father, "Why?" "Well, you know that's what school is for, to teach 'em to read and write." "When did they begin to teach you?" I inquired. "Oh well, I learned when I first went." "And did you go on reading all the time?" "Why, yes, we had a reading lesson of some sort most days when I was in school." "But what a long time to spend on that! Why, I shall expect Arthur to read quite easily and to enjoy what he reads after a term's serious work at it when he is a little older."

Then one of the Committee: "Do you think it's the best kind of training for children to make them so *interested* in everything, you know? They will have to lead such dull lives afterwards!"

And yet another business man: "That child's printing is quite good, and it's clear and big, and all that, but don't you think he ought to be learning how to hold a pen and write a copy-book hand? You know scarcely any of our junior clerks can write

a decent hand." "Yes," I replied," "but then you must remember they were probably all taught on the same method that you are advocating now."

"Nature-study!" said a woman of the village with a world of scorn in her voice, as she stood with hair in curling-pins and arms akimbo at her cottage door engaged in a wordy skirmish with her next-door neighbour, which was resumed as we passed on to visit the "frog-pond." But some of the fathers were proud that their children were so interested in their gardens and wished their women-folk would take a little of the same interest instead of grumbling at the dirt they brought into the house from "that garden of yours." "You know my Annie told me not to kill the worms—she said they were as good as a plough," said one of these fathers who had come out from the town with his family to obtain better housing and health. "And she told me the frog would eat the bugs, too, and I was for killing the beast."

Many of the parents could understand me when at the end of the term we gathered them for a social evening, and I talked to them of the preparation of the soil as of the first importance, and quoted from Plato, "Then are you aware that in everything the beginning is the most important, especially in dealing with the young and tender?" And when we

had spoken of the fresh air, and sunshine and freedom needed for growth, one father said with satisfaction: "Well, I reckon I've learnt something to-night. I never knew what that word Kindergarten meant before." And "I'll take your advice" said another, with an air of conferring a kingly decoration upon me, "and I'll give the kids a bit of the garden for their own, and let 'em make their mud pies if they wants to."

The most interesting thing in the village was the building which was going on with great rapidity, block after block of cottages being put up, to be occupied the moment they were ready. Unfortunately the workmen seemed to look upon all children with disfavour (possibly born of unpleasant experiences of them in past days), and we could not often let them watch the work at close quarters.

I find the following account in the School Diary of one child's answer to the question, "What did you see?" after a visit to the foundations of a building.

"I saw men wheeling barrows, and one man was tipping mortar into the gutter, and he patted it down with his shoe—so——" (illustrating). Bricks were piled up on top of one another, and fastened together with mortar, and they were as high as my arm." C. C. (six years old).

A very interesting place in the village was the brick-kiln, an account of which is given later. We should like to have been able to make the work with the local clay a great feature of our school handwork, but our space was limited, and everything had to be cleared away at night or else we arrived in the morning to find it broken or interfered with by the people who used our rooms as club-rooms.

But the head of the brickyard was the father of one of our children—an intelligent man who was genuinely interested in his work, and respected us possibly because we were interested in ours. He made us welcome there when we came with the children, and frequently in the evenings as we passed the gate, we would see some of our children playing happily there, shaping something with the clay or watching the workmen.

There was a small play-ground outside the school garden for the children, and "Let's go to the swings" was a frequent cry. They were not allowed in the fields, since the farm-land was very limited and consequently very precious, and all available sites were taken for building purposes.

The mothers were fearful about the river-banks, and trees must not be climbed, so the play usually took place in the road, where the little crowd scattered at the approach of a motor or cycle.

How we longed for a grassy hillside on which these young growing things might exercise their strength! We had races along the road, and played a simple form of net-ball in the garden, and even in the winter frequently found it possible to have lessons outside in the shelter of the south entrance; so that the children grew sturdy and rosy. The possibilities of educating a healthy child are almost unlimited. Perhaps we were fortunate in having children who were not exceptional in any direction. We sometimes sighed over the lack of initiative, in the younger children especially, but the power of suggestion is a great strength, and there came a time when "I do wish we could do so-and-so" was the frequent motive for some of our best work. You don't expect children to be bored by a lesson which they have almost demanded. "Oh, this is 'extra' (a local superlative) and we've been doing it all the morning, can't we go on with it when we come back?" Perhaps we realised more clearly what had been arrived at when a new child was admitted. "What are you waiting for?" "I want a pair of scissors." "Well, it won't walk across the room to you!" And they all laughed so good-temperedly that even the unfortunate one joined in. Every child was given a wooden box in which to keep his treasures as soon as he emerged from the class of

little ones, who were only allowed a share in common property. The box was large enough to contain school utensils—ruler, scissors, pencil, paint-box, coloured chalks, duster, reading-book, and occasionally such an individual treasure as a piece of coloured glass, a 'lucky-stone,' a piece of coloured silk, or a pretty advertisement. So long as the box was fairly tidy and contained what was needed for working purposes, those in authority were content, and there was keen competition over the brightness of the scissors and the length of the pencil, so that the aforesaid persons in authority found the box a good investment. This may sound a small thing, but it is the basis of all law and order. "What do you give them for punishments?" asked a visitor. "I suppose they are naughty sometimes!" They were naughty, it was true, but it was generally a sufficient punishment to deprive the culprit of a share of what was going on.

Fortunately, though busy people over housekeeping, gardening and occasional dress-making, we were sufficiently free from professional worries to be able to feel cheerful and happy with the children, and though we always hailed the week-end with its opportunities for a long country expedition (which was often given up to geologising in the neighbourhood), or time for hunting up the county folk-lore in

the nearest reference library, we could still feel that perhaps after all our best times were in school.

Cheerfulness is an essential of digestion: it is also an essential of education. The only time when the schoolroom may legitimately become depressing is when a sense of wrong-doing pervades the atmosphere. When these clouds do descend, we are, most of us, acutely miserable, and after such a storm there is inevitably a keener desire for the sunshine and a contrast which is more felt than any moralising.

It was a long time before parents understood that our first aim was not that the children should "get on" in the accepted sense of the term, that we considered it to be more necessary that the children should be truthful, and clean in body and mind, but I think many of them began to realise that though we might sometimes adopt a 'fad' as they called it, yet we were striving after the best we could give the children and so were fundamentally in sympathy with them, and gradually there crept in the custom of coming up to talk over a difficulty, or to give some confidence concerning a child which might have led to much misunderstanding had it been withheld. It is undoubtedly a help to the teacher to live amongst his work, and to take a share, even if advisedly a somewhat small one, in the social life

of the community. "Harry is very trying lately; but there is a new baby, and the strike has thrown his father out of work this week—we had better try not to notice much."

Besides the interests of the little community were part at least of our interests—we were glad when the concert was successful, or Mr. Smith won a prize at the big Horticultural Show for his vegetables; we were indignant when the County Council let our high road get into a bad state of repair, and raised our rates.

There were rare and good times when a visitor from that 'outside world,' which sometimes seemed very far away, came to look us up, and we slipped into the old talk of books and music, and social and educational problems of which our little experiment seemed to be a very small part.

There were cabbage and potato patches in our garden, but there were also one or two small struggling things that we loved, and, like our Child-Garden, guarded with the most jealous care.

And this is the story of our hopes and fears!

CHAPTER II : HANDWORK

As it was better, youth
Should strive through acts uncouth
Toward making, than repose on aught
found made.

THAT handwork must be purposeful, that it must be in close relationship with common life and the other work of the school, that it must make use of materials at hand, simple and unprepared, are the ideals with which we have endeavoured to harmonise our work.

For a wish on the part of the child is the best motive, the motive which gives life and reality to what he does, which awakens best his latent energies and enables him to become 'ingenious,' that is, to control matter by his mind and create after his own will.

That the will is not enduring is the experience of every teacher. And here necessity may come into play. It might be better perhaps if Jimmy had to do without his dinner until his broken cooking-pot

was replaced by a new cooking-pot, pressed out in a basket, dried and baked in a fire. But it is not convenient that necessity should thus press upon him in present day condition, and so the teacher, taking the function of priest or divine king, will see that the task lightly undertaken is cheerfully accomplished. For under primitive conditions the painfully completed handwork (sometimes of infinite beauty and complexity of design) is often initiated as well as preserved by such institutions as priestcraft and tapu.

Let me take an example.

My class consists of anything up to twenty children aged five and six years. We wish to make some mats for our dolls' houses, or some little table-mats for presents to grown-ups. I suggest how nice the rushes by the river would be, how smooth, how green —and what fun it would be to gather them. There is no dissentient voice, the power of suggestion is a mighty force. We go by the river. Certain careful children are permitted to pick by the waters' edge, to certain irresponsibles this is 'tapu.' I pick also. "Look what a big bunch Miss A. has got. I should like to beat her. I've beat Jimmy." The first pinch comes now when the idlers of the community do not perform an equal task. Luckily the children's comment does much to shame them.

We return, fingers a little sore, arms a little tired, but bringing our sheaves with us. We joyfully exhibit our burdens to the other children, and a wistful eye completes our satisfaction. (We are very young, and we must after all feel the pride of possession before we can learn to be generous.)

Weaving frames of the simplest description are requisitioned (they are like slate frames with holes bored in them), these are strung with cotton thread (knitting-cotton), and thus at two steps we avail ourselves of other men's ingenuity and labour. I would rather not, but this seems to be a case where adherence to a rule would be a hindrance. The older children are to make the school weaving-frames later on, and the younger children will witness their manufacture. As to the cotton-thread—its existence is the result of a highly complex series of events. We northerners are poverty-stricken as regards natural products, we turn to the countries of the sun. I can find no commodity to take the place of this manufactured material. Spinning we hope to practise when the children are older, but now we accept the prepared thread and pay due homage to its complex structure and its distant origin.

The frames strung with thread I undertake to tighten, and see that the knots are firmly tied. A neat-fingered child has to make several attempts for

himself before my help is conceded, but I must interfere to prevent the acute disappointment of a half-finished mat that comes 'all to bits' after much persevering labour.

Then as king I assume the monopoly of the rushes. The children seek white pebbles out of the gravel (they are in a small proportion), and buy the rushes from me at the price I name. This is barter and the use of a coinage. The children with a good number-sense always buy larger quantities of rushes. It gives them a sense of proprietorship. Those with little capacity, one or two at a time.

Work proceeds. This simple up-and-down weaving is not so straightforward as it might seem. The question of the selvedge floors many of the children. Some will seize the idea at once and only make mistakes when their attention is diverted. These are the sensorily alert children, the children whose eyes, ears and fingers are habitually active. Some rely on a mechanical repetition, "under one and over one," and seem to attain the result by rote. I have one thoughtful child, a girl, who finds it extraordinarily difficult. She has been shown many times; I now leave her to struggle with the unruly materials until the necessities of the case force themselves into her mental stock. At that age, incapacity is no excuse: we are going to be complete, and must halt

along some paths while our compensation is that we go lightly over others.

While this steady task proceeds, conversation goes on unless it interferes seriously with work. It is then that the best remarks are made, and that an unobserved observant teacher can take note of the children's inner ways. She must be unobserved, the talk must be unconscious, and healthy minded children do not trouble themselves so much about the teacher as about their own playmates. The idler neglects his work for a fascinating roving talk; he is made to sit down and that near me, and to proceed with his work, or else he becomes a nuisance to his little community.

The mats are slowly brought to completion: the strings cut, one at a time, by all means—or behold the tattered wreck!—and tied and tested, and the mat is finished. A. and B. may play with their dolls' houses, may help me wind some string, may go out with the kite. C. and D. are emulous to finish. E. and F. are blushing and ashamed, and you may rest assured will do the best mat on the next occasion.

But all this has taken no end of a time. We have given our day to it, and perhaps another afternoon. We have been out and returned, bought and sold, purposed and persevered, pursued and achieved, triumphed and relaxed into play afterwards; or have been self-convicted of foolishness and very much

ashamed. We have conversed also, have seen and felt many things—we have added a day to our life in fact. Does it not go on the credit side of the account?

The textile handwork is preceded in difficulty by the twisting of wool round a card frame to make a ball, or of raffia round a frame to make a table mat, or napkin ring (not usually very satisfactory objects), the wool and raffia being chosen for their advantages of length and tenuity. The ball is of obvious use as an indoor plaything, or a present for baby; the others as presents for grown-ups. The little woolly doll can also be made by twisting wool round a card —but the finishing is too difficult for a child much under seven years. We may tie head, waist and arms with the child watching us or we may let an older or cleverer child finish what the little one has begun. Tassels are fascinating objects, and the twisting of wool to make a double thread is a puzzling mechanical experience—then you have a little curtain holder.

If raffia be used instead of rushes, it will take the penny dyes and a beginning in colour design can be made. But I have not been able to obtain those dyes lately.

We grew some gorgeous yellow plants of Woad (*Isatis*) with the intention of using it for this

INTERIOR OF DOLL'S HOUSE

Furniture mostly of paper; matchboxes utilised, woollen and bast mats

purpose; we want to make use of Dyer's green-weed (*Genista*), Madder (*Rubia*), Dyer's rocket (*Reseda*). Logwood (*Hæmatoxylon*) is, of course, used in America; but we have not as yet found opportunity for the experiment. The Woad was destroyed by an accident, and the other plants are of very infrequent occurrence in this district.

Introduce cane, and you can make a circular or oval mat sewn over with raffia row by row in a spiral; or you can fasten straight canes or willow sticks in a row on a weaving frame and work over and under with raffia. In both these cases, a tool in the shape of a blunt rug needle must be used. These methods can easily be expanded into the making of boxes and baskets with lids.

We have made circular mats of thin withies crossed and woven with plaited rushes. The brown bark and the dull green of the dried rush make a very satisfactory colouring—and this is after a time appreciated by the children. Leave out three long thin withies, bend your twigs upwards as you work, and tie the three ends together and you have a simple hanging basket.

Basket making as it has been practised is too difficult for children under seven. And, to my mind, it will be better to wait until the children's fingers are strong enough to tackle the softer twigs of our

English willow which they can cut for themselves. It should not be a difficult matter for a country school to cultivate its own rushes (*Juncus communis* for small work, *Scirpus lacustris* for coarse work) and osiers (*Salix viminalis*) for the use of the children in a district where the conditions are suitable. In our sub-soil of boulder-clay, with its meandering streams, willows and rushes are the proper inhabitants of the water meadows.

In another direction the textile work may be extended. We are making larger weaving frames, with flat-headed nails for the attachment of the warp threads, and a 'comb' of nails driven into a strip of wood for drawing up the weft. The number of threads and the fineness of the work will be increased, variations in pattern will be introduced, such as twills and simple diapers. The use of colour gives further opportunity. Stripes arranged in most haphazard fashion, of any accidental width, is the earliest production. Then some one is dissatisfied and perhaps does a white centre with coloured stripes at either end. Every one wishes to throw away his mat and begin another after the new fashion.

We hope later on to have a simple spinning-wheel and spin our own yarn. We have had ideas of a complete flax industry, from the seed to the web. We have many hands to employ, primitive methods

CLAY WORK

A village by the little ones. Note church and tombstones, bridge and cottages, horse and roller

THE BEGINNINGS OF BASKET-MAKING

Willows ("withies") gathered from trees by the riverside

suit us best—we would like a hand-loom and the implements of a century ago.

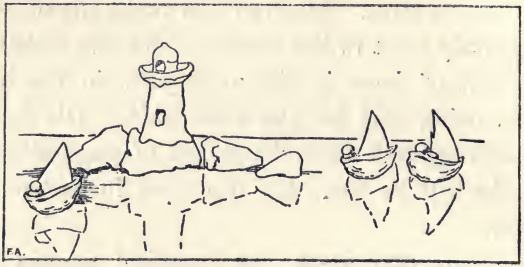
The study of primitive implements and methods is essential to the training of a teacher of handwork. It will lead to a rational adoption and adaptation of primitive human labour, by means of which the child will gradually learn to control the world of materials in which he lives. Much of the materials of adult life scarcely exist to the country child who makes his plays out of doors in the wood-yard, in the barn, in the fields, and by the water-side. His indoor surroundings will often be sterile of suggestion to him—he will be there the destroyer instead of the creator.

The carpentry class, our technical schools, our modern industries, are often too far removed from the natural world of the child to be of much use in the training of his teacher. The ethnological museum is the most profitable study. These primitive implements are most appealing to the child engaged in making or using them—he plays at being himself. He naturally goes in for the odd 'contraptions,' inaccuracies, and yet the marked decorative beauty. Live with the children and you live in the dark ages—a very delightful period it is, too.

A visitor to our school remarked, "These little mats and baskets are very decorative, they remind

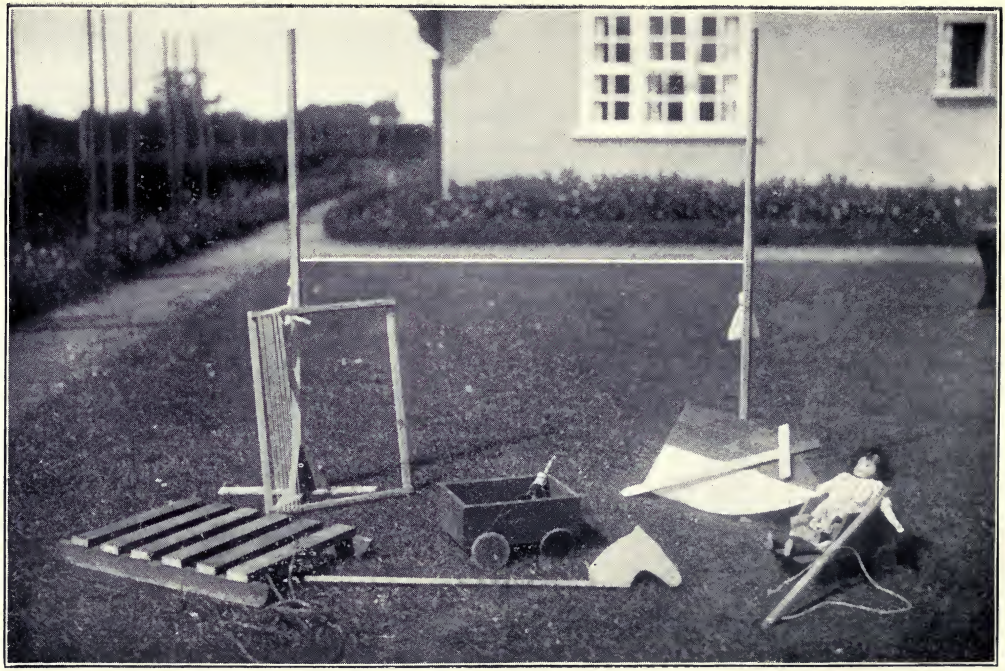
me of the things one sees at a missionary exhibition." Out of raffia and cane the children had created, after their own mind, articles of savage workmanship.

A chapter is devoted to the brickyard, and an account of brick-making will be found there. In addition to that the little ones make all kinds of suitable objects from plasticine in the winter. Wild



Rocks, lighthouse of clay, walnut-shell boats with paper sails

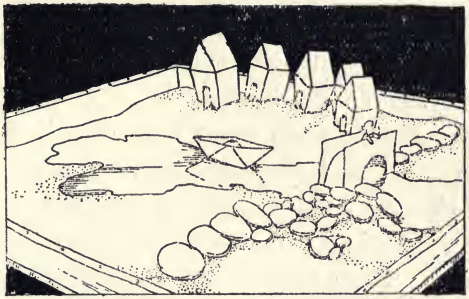
beasts, houses—once, a part of a village with the church and a bridge was erected by the little ones. This, like most of their work, involves all kinds of different jobs. A paper boat must be folded, a sail stuck in a walnut shell—("what fun to float it down the real river")—little bushes must be cut from the box edging in the garden to plant in the churchyard. At one time a clay windmill with paper sail, that really blows round, is made; the miller and his house as well. At another, a lighthouse is built and rocks made. The sand-tray is frequently in demand



SAMPLES OF WOODWORK

Sled, weaving-frame, shield and sword, hobby-horse, whip, cart, and doll's carriage

for such plays. It is three feet square and lined with zinc, "so that you can have real water in it." Paper boats, paper bathing-machines, paper people, are fine to have in it. The hills can be planted with box and turned into a forest. The shores can be roughened with big stones. The watering-pot can



The Sea-Side. Paper models of bathing tents, bridge and boats in the sand-tray

pour a sea into it, and then the boats will really sail about—"if you blow hard enough."

In the summer aprons can be donned and real clay used. Pots and jars, cups and jugs are made, and the best sent to the kiln to be fired. They are unglazed, but will hold water for a time. "Couldn't we make our own flower-pots?" We hope to have a potter's wheel soon, when the work is a little better. The industry is simple enough, simpler than textile work, and great artistic achievements are possible in

it. It is age-old, and a few of our finest literary passages have reference to it.

To turn to woodwork. With a big, fixed-bladed knife and thin strips of wood, supplied from the local carpenter's waste, the children cut out and afterwards glued together some rough and ready doll's-house furniture. Fenders, tables, ladders, and pairs of steps were made; an ingenious child leading the others. Next they clamoured for a saw and real carpentry. We don't altogether approve, for not one of our youngsters could have conceived a saw, we are sure; and carpentry involves several tools, which they are only too ready to take and use without consideration. But it was not wise to repress ambition. So we bought two small backed saws, a key-hole saw, two clamps, two hammers, nails and sandpaper, and got some odd pieces of soft wood sent to us. The first job was the making of two sleds, for the snow had come down. An old packing case, made of strips of wood five-eighths of an inch thick, was sawn up into lengths, and runners with curved ends were made. I cut the curved ends, of course. The runners were held upright and the strips nailed across on the top. We branded the school initials on them with the red-hot poker, burnt a round hole through at the front, fastened in a rope, and behold a sled. What a glorious playtime—right along the road, riding

THE WOODWORK CLASS AND FURNITURE FOR DOLL'S HOUSE

in turns, with the Esquimaux dogs pulling away at the rope, and the sled gliding over the smooth snow.

Next we made carts for the little ones, one for their dolly and one to carry bricks in. I cut out the wheels, but the children measured and sawed and hammered together the rest, taking turns over the work, for only two of them are eight years old. Another cart we made and took to the babies at an infant school not far away. The carts we painted red or blue or green. Then the children copied or modified a simple idea for a doll's-house settle, in their own fashion without assistance. These they put together with little nails, and are going to paint. They have also designed and made tables and beds.

The eldest of our children are as yet only eight. 'Courses' of handwork are entirely unsuitable for classes of young children, whatever may be urged in their defence in the upper school. Naturally, we follow up and develop one interest, we make use of one acquired skill or invention and build up others upon it, but the 'training' we receive from the work does not rule our choice, necessity (an amiable necessity) and ambition are the arbiters. We get our training incidentally, as they say. No child was ever priggish enough to elect to do a job because it was 'good' for him. He would

healthily reject such childishly false motives. Some want or other, some practical end, is the right motive for handwork, and if the handwork be strong enough he will compass impossibilities to get his job completed.

Our handwork sometimes dominates our other work. As, for example, when we are spring-cleaning and re-furnishing our dolls' houses. Then any writing or reading or conversation has reference to this important episode. When we grind the oats at harvest-time, when we have a big washing and ironing day (a gas ring, over which a thin iron plate is laid, some basins, and some clean boards are our only apparatus); when we have a tea-party, or make our Christmas puddings, these are obviously occasions of absorbing interest, and other things become subordinate to them.

Sometimes handwork falls into the background. When the first excitement of spring is on us and all the out-door world lays claim to our attention, we leave our tools and go out of doors to learn of the "things not made with hands." When we have a story of absorbing interest, then our handwork will become merely a means of expression, an accessory to the acting-out of the events we have followed. When Balder dies we must make the bow and arrow and act out the thrilling memorable scene.

CHAPTER III : NATURE-STUDY

A great green book, whose broad pages are illuminated with flowers, lies open at our feet. RICHARD JEFFERIES

INTEREST in Nature receives a fresh impetus in the spring, so it seems easier to begin with some account of the spring work and to show how this is continued throughout the year. In the autumn the children had brought bulbs and plant-pots, scrubbed the pots, prepared the soil, planted the bulbs and duly labelled each pot. At Christmas there was so little sign of life that no one was especially anxious to take the pots home, but this was done, and those who had snowdrop bulbs were much rewarded, and the crocuses also showed some signs of life before the holiday was over. Curiosity was now thoroughly aroused, and a visit to the flower-pots was a part of the daily programme instituted by the children. In the meantime, the fortunate older children, owners of school gardens, had other investigations to make

whenever weather permitted. Then came a heavy snowfall, and the making of two sleds for school use on the road outside, but even this excitement did not prevent the feeding of birds, looking out for foot-prints of beasts and birds in the snow, watching the effect of the snowfall on trees and shrubs, making a snowball and, like simple Simon, bringing it in by the fire to roast. "I suppose you've had lessons on snow this week," said a teacher I chanced to meet. It seemed difficult to answer her. We had lived in the snow—we did not talk so much about it, but it dominated everything. No lesson could make a child feel that delicious 'crunch' of shoes on the crisp snow, or the sense of stillness, which made one of them say, "How quiet the snow is, and what a noise we made when we went out with the sleds, they must have heard us all over the village." "Doesn't it make my pinny look dirty?" "But it makes my eyes ache, and I see red. Why do I see red?" How the little ones caught the snow and shrieked with joy. "Old Mother Holle, she's shaking her feather-bed!" "Old Mother Holle" had to be told every day while the snow lasted.

The days hurried by, regret at the departure of the snow was soon lost in the interest of the thaw, tales of bursting pipes, and flooded meadows, and such a noise made by the beck. "How muddy

and swirly it is!" Then came more surprises—purple and golden crocuses, daffodil bulbs unfolding, much counting and measuring to see which had most flowers, and whose was the tallest and biggest, and keen desire to paint them at different stages, "so we can remember them when they're done." sighs of pleasure over the golden trumpet, excitement over the golden dust inside. The peewits came back in flocks, 'starlights' the children called them,—a pretty name too, as they were wheeling in the wintry sunshine. The little tom-tit came to the oak tree, the robin sang from the gate-post, and the thrushes seemed very hungry although they were so fat.

Then came a few days of high wind, when the peewits flew low, and the little birds sheltered where they could, and our children helped to construct a kite with pieces of cane, and calico, and a fine tail, and in the afternoon we took it out to an open space to fly it. One great disappointment we had during this season. Last summer the older boys and girls had measured off a piece of hedge some distance along the road, and had made a list of the plants found there; those which grew high, such as the bramble and rose-brier; those which grew low because they couldn't climb, and little wayside plants in the ditch at the bottom. Naturally

with the renewing of life around them the children desired to see what signs were evident in 'our hedge,' and we went out there to find a rigorous cutting-back of the hedge had taken place, the brambles were trailing in the ditch, the briers were lopped, the whole place had been trimmed almost beyond recognition. There were loud outcries—and "I had a bramble and it was seven feet long when I measured it before Christmas." I proposed to adopt another hedge. "No, it won't be the same; besides, they'll do it again." So a pond was suggested instead. "Perhaps when the new school is ready we can make a pond for ourselves." "I dug a hole in the clay in our garden and lots of water came."

We were also tending sycamore, oak and chestnut seedlings for the new school garden.

There are other pleasures in the spring-time—lambs, hen and chickens, little pigs. The ponds swarm with beetles, water-boatmen, caddis, and water-snails; the frog's spawn is found in the ditch and brought to school for closer study. "There's babies in the village, too," said one child; "everything seems to get borned in the spring." The earth is crammed with things, and the days are all too short to enjoy them. If we have time to read at all it must be the printed names of these plants and animals; and the shopping lessons which were sug-

gested at Christmas have given place to measurement of twigs and enumeration of all kinds of earth-treasures. "I found a celandine with eleven petals to-day; 'tisn't often you can do that!"

There is the construction of a simple sun-dial, which seems fitting when the growing power of the sun is so noticeable—in summer days we become used to this. It is in this kind of work that one notices the children's habit of jumping to conclusions. "Then the shadow travels two inches in half an hour," they said, after measuring the distance between two marked points. I suggest a cricket stump shall be used next time instead of the small stick about seven inches long, and then we can see if the length makes any difference. "My mother says the world's round—is it?" asked Harry. "I believe it is," I replied. "Then I don't see how it ends; everything *must* end somewhere." I picked up a ball (we were in the playground). "Where does this end?" Harry was puzzled. "Well, I suppose you'd have to jump off," he said. "Where?" I asked. Harry jumped. "Into the air, but you can't stay there." Gerty G., who had been listening: "But it's only your feet that stay on the earth, the rest of you is in the air." (The children then walked about on their feet, as if it were a completely new idea to them, like Alice in Wonderland.)

Edgar: "My father says if you go up very high there's no air, I don't know how high, but it's *miles* anyway. He read it in a book." Gerty R.: "Then some one must have been up there and written it down." Evelyn: "But you *can't* live without air, so how could he?" I told the children that people had gone up in a balloon and found the air was less. "Then," said Jimmy, "your balloon gets empty like a bicycle tyre when the air's let out, I s'pose." Unfortunately, as in most of such conversations, side-issues were introduced; in this case they were balloon and cycle accidents, and the speculations ended.

Sometimes we suggest the question to them. One morning one of us asked: "Is the sun very high?" "Yes, higher than the clouds."

"Higher than the church tower." (Clara, aged 5.)

"My father was on a mountain once, but he didn't touch the sun." E. R. (6 years).

"Why doesn't the sun fall down? What keeps it up?" the teacher asked.

"Don't know!" (5 years.)

"God holds it." (6 years.)

"God holds it in his hand." (James D., 6 years.) He afterwards supplemented this by "The sun's round, and the moon's round, and they roll." (Some dissent from class.) "You never know what the

things are doing up in the sky. At night the moon rolls up." (More dissent from the class, but James continued.) "It's round, and it *can* roll, and when the moon rolls down, the sun rolls up."

Edna (accepting situation, and thereby preventing more discussion): "They must get tired rolling up and down."

Elsie: "Yes, the moon does look tired sometimes."

And all they have power to see
Is a straight stick bent in a pool.

But is it not something to have that power if at the sight there is aroused the question?

We have many children who are unfortunately quite content with the first explanation which is offered; only the few are born sceptics.

What a glad hearing it would be: "Do leave me alone and let me find out." Sometimes it comes out in our school walks. "Oh, please, let me try. Oh, I know I can reach that without falling in. No, I don't want you to hold me."

The delightful part of Nature-study is that the continuity is preserved for us, so that we have to go on finding out more about the same things. Those chestnut buds in school bursting into leaf now were picked up from under the chestnut tree on the road-

side in the autumn, when the gale blew off the small twigs. We saved the seeds from the blue and red flax flowers and the nasturtiums in our school garden last summer, and now we can plant them again.

The rooks are building their nests just in the same place as last spring, only they have repaired the old nests, and built on; and when the summer comes the tadpoles will be frogs and we shall take them down to the beck, and perhaps next spring there will be more frogs' eggs and more tadpoles. The darker side of Nature doesn't seem to affect the children. It doesn't occur to them to wonder "What becomes of so many of them?" The sad sight of a dead mole or bird is quickly forgotten in the desire to have the honour of burying it. A law of the school walk is not to pick without permission; when we can study the plant where it grows there is no need to gather the flowers. Sometimes there is pleading. "Couldn't I pick just one to show the little ones?" —and this may be allowed. Once we found a plant rare in the neighbourhood—a blue chicory, growing on a piece of waste ground. The children watched it from bud to seed, but did not pick one flower, though it was a sore temptation. Next year we found the plant in the same spot and two smaller specimens not far off, so their virtue was rewarded. It was not always so; the thrush's nest with five eggs in the

hawthorn hedge was guarded with jealous care, but a big lad "who didn't come to our school" took the eggs.

Summer Nature-study means extended walks, sometimes a whole day spent in the fields with paper and pencil for notes, a piece of string and ruler for measuring, and perhaps a poem or two from "A Child's Garden of Verses" or some Folk Songs by way of a rest and change. In these excursions we arrive at a clearer idea of a plant community. We are not studying merely the oak trees by the roadside, or even the plants in our hedge, but we learn which plants like the shade of the woods, which grow beside the stream, and that some are friendly with their neighbours, as we know because we often meet them together in our walks—and others, like the stinging nettles, can only get on with their own kind. There is more comparison of one plant with another, especially in their habit of growth: the rosettes of the daisy and plantain, the umbrellas of the hedge parsley and wild carrot; the trails of bryony, black and white; and the straight spire of the foxglove. Many of the children go very little beyond the village except in the direction of the town, so these walks open up a new country to them. Here we have the beginnings of geography in the need to explore this unknown land. We look back

and describe the way we have come (the children have gained a sense of direction, N. S. E. W., in the school garden when we practised "Go to the east," "Turn to the south," &c.). We name the roads, indicating the direction by drawing with a stick on a sandy roadside. We put in a stone to mark the position of the principal farms or houses, and so the first rough map is made; possibly it is drawn again on our return to school that the parents may know which way to go for the next Sunday walk. "Can we colour it?" is the next question; "green for the grass fields, and yellow for the field of mustard, and blue for the river."

Once we followed the beck to find out where it began. The windings of the stream were very puzzling because the roads were straight! On another occasion it was a pond which excited curiosity as to how it came there. A big stone is heaved into a small pond, and you stand on the island monarch of all you survey. Or you make hills and valleys, which you have never seen, because it is so flat here, but which you may see some day. Such a place as that where David fought Goliath, while the two opposing forces looked on from the hillside.

Even a rainy day has its advantages, since we can notice the tiny river cutting its way, making its own windings; we can see the bar formed, or the island, or the valley.

After the summer holidays it is possible that several children have added considerably to their knowledge of geography. Some may have gone to the sea, others to a farm, and there is much to talk over and compare when we meet again, and collections of shells and stones to examine. We have come back in time to watch the ingathering of the harvest, to gather our own little sheaves of 'gleanings'—oats, wheat and barley, some to be kept 'for luck,' some to be ground and made into porridge, and some to be sown and grown again. We make collections of coloured leaves, paint pictures of them; gather in berries and seeds, some to make "a hedge in a window box" for the London children who can't go out between the hedges; and once again the autumn gales are blowing off the seeds and twigs, and the gardens have to be dug over ready for next year, before the winter comes.

We kept no Nature calendar. The older children liked to date their drawings so that we might be quite sure when we found the willow catkins or the first primroses. Most of the writing in the summer time consisted in printing accounts of what was seen or done during a school walk, but the idea of a daily entry never seemed to occur to the children, and we felt that probably such a systematic record was too formal for their years, and might be postponed with advantage.

It seemed still more impossible to plan a course of lessons. Nature planned for us. Our only care must be to keep ourselves and our children in sufficient sympathy with her by a healthy outdoor life, with senses alert to receive the teaching she is so ready to give to those who ask.

It is perhaps not difficult to understand why the uninitiated imagine that Nature-study is a waste of time, and that the children might be more usefully employed. The early development of a habit of observation and inquiry is perhaps more valuable than the actual knowledge gained, but some of us can realise there is something of at least equal importance—a joy in Nature which is only too rare. I have taken the children out ostensibly to study the plants by the water-side. They have learnt something from this work, and they have received some training, I hope, from it; but I remember an atmosphere of joyousness in the little party, a sense of rapture brought about by the sweet spring air, the blue sky, the warmth of the sun, and the gentle ripples on the water. Nothing else could give the children that atmosphere, and could anything make up for the lack of it? These occasions are not common, even in our frequent walks abroad, but when they come they are not forgotten. Perhaps they will help our children to appreciate Wordsworth's "Prelude" one day.

One of the advantages of Nature-study, which is much talked of but little understood, is its help in the development of individuality. To the teacher it becomes an almost unequalled opportunity of studying the individual characteristics. There is the child who goes along the road gossiping about her Sunday clothes to any companion—and there is usually one—who will listen. When the pond is reached it may be that the Sunday clothes find an unexpected rival in the curious caddis who has constructed his case of sticks and grass and tiny shells. There is the boy who is crazy over any kind of farm implement, and who cannot be dragged away from the disused plough in a corner of the field. There is a demure maiden who leaves the little group which is watching the whirligig beetles, and sits down to make a long plait of rushes, quite undisturbed by the excited whispers that reach her. There is the child who cannot go near a puddle without putting his foot in it; and another who works with the keenest zest during the first part of the outing and afterwards gets tired of everything, and some one else has to help him carry his stones or his rushes back to school, or he is not helped and has to do without the materials which others can use for some interesting purpose.

Yesterday the children spent from 11 to 12 o'clock

in the garden watching the eclipse of the sun through bits of smoked glass. Some were lying on their backs staring up at the sun, others, with smutty noses, running about excitedly. "Oh! do look through mine, you can see 'extra'!" "I'm sure it's smaller now!" "How red it looks!" "Just look at the horse racing about in the field; does he know there's an eclipse?" "And the birds are going to bed. Will it get awfully dark, do you think?"

Then came a stampede indoors to fetch chalks and pencils, and paper to make a picture to keep; and the big ones say, "We must be sure to write the date." And one boy says, "I shall send my drawing to my Uncle in Canada." At twelve o'clock the little crowd dispersed homeward, with smoked glass still in their hands. "It's best of all now, and my mother *must* look at it!" From our garden we could see Freddy, the school baby, showing his mother and her neighbours the wonderful sight through his precious glass, and talking at the top of his voice, clutching his mother's skirts.

It was most curious to contrast the excited children with the stolid workmen who were painting—not too energetically—the school window frames, and who accepted our offer of smoked glass without much alacrity.

The children were very disappointed that they had not seen the eclipse of the moon a little while ago, and had looked forward joyfully to this occasion. "And I am going to keep my drawing of the eclipse for always and always, and always."

CHAPTER IV : STORY-TELLING

In some old garden thou and I have wrought,
And made fresh flowers spring up from hoarded seed,
And fragrance of old days and deeds have brought
Back. WM. MORRIS

WE have, both of us, a sympathy with the child's attitude toward his nursery tales, a jealousy born of deep affection which would keep away all intruders in the shape of modernised versions (though these may indicate literary growth) or moralisings, or alterations in the plot which are more in accordance with present-day ethics. The wolf *did* gobble up Red Riding Hood's grandmother, though in " my Sunday-school prize it says he didn't." We know that the gruesome fact only heightens the thrill of Red Riding Hood's deliverance. So the stories we tell our children are the genuine old versions of folk and fairy tale so far as we can obtain them. We have been much indebted to the translations of Grimm, and Sir George

Dasent's "Popular Tales from the Norse," and also to the charming tales of Hans Andersen, though the last are appreciated in quite a different sense and not so universally. The children are never weary of the folk-tales, they have become a part of them, they are as happy in listening as we are to the tales of an old schoolfellow or college chum whom we have met after a long absence. I should not like to say how many times we have told of the brave little sister in the story of the Seven Ravens or of Tom Tit Tot, or of the Three Billy-Goats Gruff, and always there is the deep-drawn sigh of pleasure at the happy end, and the relaxation of the body which indicates the previous mental tension: sometimes tongues wag freely discussing incidents of the story, sometimes there is a clamour for another, and, if it becomes insistent, who would quench the interest by resisting the call? For from the first day when we gathered in a circle to listen to the story of the Sleeping Beauty, the story has been a strong bond of sympathy between teachers and children. It may be round the fireside on a winter day, or in a shady part of the garden in the heat of the summer—the surroundings matter little—except that we naturally have more time for stories in the winter days when Nature is less pressing in her demands upon our attention. It is more exciting to hear of the Storm-

Giants when the wind is rattling in the chimney, and we are sitting round a big fireside; or of the wonderful rainbow bridge where the gods walked, after an April shower, for the stories must be seasonable, in the sense that they harmonise with the children's growth and experience. But it must be remembered that the story-telling leads the children into a new world, as the piper led the children of Hamelin town long ago. They are drawn there, they know not how, and the dragons and fairy beings and princes and magic arts are all taken for granted. When the story is ended and the children re-enter the material world, I am not sure what part the story plays in their existence. I know it is a part of their mental content. I know, for instance, that an old tree-stump by the roadside has been christened the Giant, and was pelted with snowballs in the winter. I know that one or two became nervous and glanced fearfully around in search of a wolf when a school expedition was made to a wood. But with the majority it is impossible to find out how far the child lives in this world of romance or how much it means to him.

Our children enjoy R. L. Stevenson's poem:

O wind a-blowing all day long,

but I don't think they would be likely to personify

ST. GEORGE AND THE DRAGON

the wind. They are the children of town-dwellers, and they have no sense of kinship with Nature as a part of their family heritage. Moreover, there is a kind of cheap science circulating amongst this artisan population which seeks to explain everything, and leaves no room for reverence or for the idea that man's knowledge is limited.

I wish we could be sure that the wholesome enjoyment of romance would mean as much to these children as it has to ourselves in brightening the monotony of existence. I should like to feel that they would grow up into a sturdy manhood and womanhood that would brave the keen winds of this northern climate with the zest of their forefathers who believed that in wrestling with the forces of Nature they were wrestling with a race of mighty gods, and that the sight of the tree-buds bursting into life would be of deeper significance to them than the fact that another spring has come. It is staggering to discover how strong a hold the materialism of the present day has upon our children. It is evident sometimes in discussing the incidents of the story: "I don't think I should have given away my purse if I'd been that dwarf," was the outspoken avowal. "If you had the wishing-cloak, what would you wish for?" "Why, to go into town to buy toys." "I think I should like a new Sunday frock." Only

one child wished "I should change into Robin Goodfellow or Tom Thumb, or something like that, you know." One must, of course, be glad of sincerity; it is better than the answer of the little girl who wished to "be good and have everybody love me."

Are we able to point to any visible results of our story-telling? Only a few indications can be seen—a robuster attitude in the playground, a stronger sense of justice, and right and wrong, an occasional deepening of the feeling of joy on a windy day, or interest in the sky, or certain features of the landscape, as when an elfish boy runs to the hedge sparkling with water-drops and exclaims:

> "*I will go seek some dewdrops here*
> *And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.*"

While our stories are mainly confined to the realm of folk-lore, we sometimes have excursions (for the older children at least) into other fields. They have much enjoyed Kipling's Just-So Stories, especially the Cat that Walked, the Elephant's Child, and the Sing-Song of the old man Kangaroo. These are often dramatised with great zest. They are sufficiently elemental in their passions to appeal strongly to the child of seven, and the dog was looked upon with quite a new respect as First Friend, the horse as First Servant, and the cow as Giver of Good Food.

The Norse tales and legends formed an admirable introduction to the new venture in the shape of stories of the landing and settlement of the English. The children could understand something of the religion of their forefathers, of the ideas of right and justice which governed those early communities.

These history stories were an entirely new departure in another sense—"How do you know these tales are true?" they asked, "where did you get them from?" "How do you know what happened so long ago?" "Is the Bible history true?" "Are the fairy-tales true?" Questions which were not too easy to answer but which showed that some primitive ideas of the history of literature were growing up within them.

I find an extract from the Diary about this time:

"Out in the copse they played at the landing of the English, a ploughed field was the North Sea, on whose shores they landed boats (tree-logs), and the battle of Aylesford was fought across the beck, sticks for weapons. After the battle a meeting was called and held at the 'moot-tree' and a prisoner brought to trial and convicted for crossing the 'mark' without blowing his horn." This was quite spontaneous; in fact, I must confess on that occasion I had been trying to interest the children in willow-

catkins, which grew by the beck, and had brought them out for that purpose.

The best laid schemes o' mice and men
Gang aft agley.

Perhaps it is as well that this sometimes happens to our 'educational' plans. We are on the horns of a dilemma here—shall we forego our plan and let the child's interest have sway? If not, we must be prepared to substitute by the force of suggestion a stronger interest, and in that case, are we studying the child, or a pet theory of our own? I don't think our children were over-ready with their own suggestions, so we usually had no difficulty in deciding which course we should adopt. We adopted theirs with alacrity, if not with gratitude.

Perhaps I should say a few words about our Bible Stories. In accordance with the requirements of the Board of Education, the religious instruction was given daily at a certain hour, so these stories came to be regarded by the children as something quite apart from the fairy and folk tales, or even the history lesson. They never asked for a Bible story at another time, and the little ones who asked "Are you going to tell us about Cinderella this morning?" were criticised severely. "*That* isn't in the Bible." "She gets all these out of the Bible, you know."

If they ever questioned after the story of the finding of Moses, "Is it true?" they were always satisfied with the answer, "I read it in the Bible," and one child who ended up a biblical narrative by repeating our usual fairy-tale formula, "and if you don't like it you can mend it," came in for a universal protest.[1] I do not think any of the stories made so strong an appeal to the children as a few from the Old Testament, especially those that were concerned with the wanderings of the Children of Israel from the time of the plagues to that most glorious thrill when the walls of Jericho fell down and they entered in and took possession. The pillar of fire by night and the pillar of cloud by day were very real tokens of the Divine Presence; in fact, we could not but realise that these children were at that epoch of primitive religious belief when the cloud in the sky, or the bird flying overhead, were the outward signs of the presence of a protecting Great Spirit. This phase of belief they could understand; the modern theology, "God is everywhere but we cannot see Him," filled them with confusion of

[1] We did not wish to emphasise the distinction between the Bible stories and others. The Bible has many folk tales as well as the historical elements, and there seems no reason why its subject matter should receive different treatment. But in these days of religious controversy it is necessary to conform to the regulations in this matter.

ideas. "What happens when you die?" one child asked another, as they were weaving together. "They cut your head off, and put your body in a grave, you know." I suppose there was some idea of the head as the seat of thought being immortal: it was only the body that perished. But one cannot pry too closely into these childish mysteries any more than we can dissect the plot or the characters of the folk-tale with them. There is the soil in which the thought may grow—we can plant, we can water, but we cannot give the increase. Only we are trying to give the child something of the inheritance of the past that he may have some wisdom to live in the present and to look forward to the future. We recognise that there is a force in these old tales which has endured, and made men to endure: and that out of these has come our best literature; and so we hope that when the children in later days turn to Chaucer, and Spenser, and Shakespeare, they will recognise the fruits of the elements of beauty, justice, truth and courage, as first seen in the folk-tales of their childhood.

There were times when the children made illustrations of these stories—Gold-Mary, with her shower of golden leaves; Pitch-Mary, with blackened face and frock. The heroines usually had golden hair, curls preferably. "Eh! but ye're a bonny little lass," said

one, regarding her pictured heroine with tender admiration. The dragons were terrible with much fire and smoke and innumerable legs! These illustrations generally showed the incident which had most appealed to them, only as the children grew older and more self-conscious, they sometimes neglected any part of the story which proved difficult to illustrate, and contented themselves with simpler compositions. The younger children were more inclined to neglect nothing—prince, dwarf, giant, houri, soldiers, magic rings and wishing-carpets—they were all included in a common perspective.

It seems good for the children to try to express some of their ideas concerning the story, though it is frequently evident that they become more engrossed with the illustration and the manipulation of chalk or paint, as the work proceeds, than the actual idea of rendering a part of the story. This is no doubt true also of many of our modern illustrators. Some of the best expressions in art have been those done by the younger children, and these much resemble the primitive work of an early stained glass window. We show the children very few illustrations, but we did take some of them to see a fine example of early glass in an old church window to St. Christopher, and they identified the subject with

great readiness, and were full of interest in that and in other windows which they saw in the same church, apparently understanding and appreciating the subjects portrayed much more readily than the average adult.

We have had evidence over and over again to show that primitive art in design, and primitive stories as well as music, make the strongest appeals to these young children. There is undoubtedly a wide field of research for those who may be interested in the beginnings of human endeavour in art and literature.

CHAPTER V : LANGUAGE TRAINING

WHEN the children come to us first, usually at five years old, we spend the time in handwork, with a small but increasing amount of conversation. Young, shy children, busy over a job, soon lose their shyness, and talk freely, unless the intricacies of the work engross all their attention, and for young children it seems wise to plan fairly long periods of quiet, steady work such as are provided by plaiting or weaving, when free talk can be allowed. Children of seven to eight years of age engaged in a harder occupation, that of carpentry for instance, probably need to think more about their work—the measuring, judging direction and distance, &c., and the conversation becomes fitful, desultory, perhaps ceases altogether. The opportunities of conversation with the youngest children are the most valuable aid we have in their language training. Often the home vocabularies are very limited, and it

is curious too that a child who talks intelligently at school has either little to say at home, or else lapses into the jargon of those around him. The definite training in the use of words is given in this way. Possibly the children chance to bring to school with them a handful of rosy catkins from under the poplar trees. After some detailed notice of these, they may make a picture, and when the picture is made, and the artist has signed it, there comes the desire to print the name of the object drawn—in other words, the picture must have a title.

So c a t k i n is printed on the blackboard, and the children, before writing it, say it slowly, emphasising individual sounds.

The picture may be kept in a cover, and afterwards, when a number of these have been made, the pages are bound together, and the first child's picture-book is made—after all are we not only modernising the famous *Orbis Sensualium Pictus* of the seventeenth century? The word and the thing still go together—with this important alteration be it noted: then the child went to the book to learn about the thing; now he studies the thing and makes his book Such a picture-book is the outcome and record of the child's experiences. The words are not given in logical or alphabetical order, but as the interest and need arise. Sometimes certain letters are printed on

the board, and the children are asked if they know what these say; sometimes they are given a sound and asked to tell any word they know which begins with this sound. "'W' for wish; I wished once, but it hasn't come true yet." These words are always connected with some immediate experience.

Clearness of speech was never more necessary than at the present day when we are in danger of losing the beauty of our English language by our slovenly habits of talk. Some time each day is given as a rule to teaching phonetics, but this has been one of our chief difficulties since two classes have to be taught in one room, and some careful arrangement of time is necessary. When we can work out of doors this difficulty is removed, and we always notice a distinct improvement in the children's singing and enunciation and general conversation, as a result of the outdoor work.

Incidentally it may be mentioned that as a part of the training in phonetics the children learnt a little French singing game, and one or two German folk-songs quite easily. It seems possible for them to acquire some conversational power in either language, in a recreative form, in the singing lesson, or games and dances, if continued through their school life, and this should make it easy for any child to master a foreign language afterwards,

should need arise. In an elementary school one does not want to add another *lesson* to an already overburdened curriculum.

To return, the younger children, after a careful grounding in phonetics, find it fairly easy to analyse the sounds of a simple word. They become familiar with the appearance of printed names of things around them by writing labels which are attached to different objects: window, piano, door, blackboard, &c. By-and-by, when about seven years of age, they are given some printed sheets (printed by the teacher with a box of rubber type, or hektographed in large type). These sheets contain a copy of a poem they have learnt or heard, perhaps a riddle to guess, or a nursery rhyme, or some brief incident of school life. The printed pages are purposely made different for different children, so as to give opportunities for individual and unaided reading. Tastes differ, but the ordinary class reading-book takes little account of that. "You are always giving Doris poetry to read." "That's because I like it," said Doris, apparently quite satisfied. "And I like about bears and tigers," said Jimmy.

The class retires into corners—best of all, if the weather be suitable, into garden nooks—and when the secret of the printed page is discovered, and has been mastered sufficiently for clear delivery, it is

brought out in triumph, read aloud to the teacher, and finally put into the book-cover which has been made and decorated for the purpose. Glancing over a book one comes across the following pages:

(a) The world is so full of a number of things,
I am sure we should all be as happy as kings.

(b) 2 legs sat upon 3 legs,
With 1 leg on his lap.
In comes 4 legs,
Runs away with 1 leg.
Up jumps 2 legs,
Catches up 3 legs,
Throws it after 4 legs,
Makes him bring back 1 leg.

Who was 4 legs?	Dog.
Who was 3 legs?	Stool.
Who was 2 legs?	Man.
Who was 1 leg?	Ham.

(c) Walter went to the post office for a packet of post cards—they cost 1d.—and

6 penny stamps, and 12 half-penny stamps. I gave him 2s.

How much did he bring back?

(d) Can you draw a picture of the bramble stem trying to creep up the hedge?

(Space left for the child's picture.)

There was a great desire to show the reading-books at home, so the children decided to print a copy of each page when the reading had been mastered, and then the copy in their own printing could be taken home and read again. We did not use pen and ink, but coloured crayons for the younger children, and pencils (a soft B pencil) for those in the next class. All the printing was clear and bold, and when a few children were anxious to emulate their elders, it was not difficult for them to turn the print into a bold and legible script. They learnt to address an envelope clearly, to write a letter to an absentee, or to a class of poor children in a London school.

"How do you teach spelling?" asked an Inspector. Much seems to depend upon the child's power of visualising the word. "Turn your back and write that word without looking at the board" was

a frequent direction. Every child who began to read kept a spelling-book, and at the end of the day, or during the reading lesson, entered up the new words learnt. The spelling-books were brought out at odd moments and looked over, and any whisper of an inspection of spelling-books produced an access of energy, which reached a climax of excitement when the class 'stood in a line' and 'took places' in an occasional spelling lesson.

There is no doubt about the advantage of the reading material being under the control of the teacher, who knows the interests—burning, absorbing interests of the day—who knows the difficulties, and can watch how they are gradually surmounted, and where a new stage of difficulty is reached. Also there seems no doubt that in these early days reading and writing must go together.

Sometimes we wrote an order for school material, or a list for my housekeeping, or we took an inventory of the doll's house furniture, or played at shops and labelled and priced the goods. All this seemed more helpful than reciting "It is an ox" or "A fat cat sat on a mat," though when the fat cat entered the school it proved an incident worth chronicling.

At one time we had a letter-box, in which the children posted letters to each other; and a postman was chosen to deliver these daily. This was a time

of letter-writing mania, and it did not last! Probably some adults can understand the phase. Here again necessity must govern us—the need to communicate. What are the results of this method, if method it can be called? The children enjoy the work, they want to read, they do so without unnecessary difficulty, they have learnt to speak distinctly, to express their thoughts naturally, to read for the sake of getting something out of the book which they appreciate, and which we hope will lead them to appreciate better things by-and-by.

To-day we have had an instance of the way in which our reading material is supplied, often quite unexpectedly. A load of coal was delivered, and the horse patiently waiting at the entrance formed the subject of talk. Afterwards they wanted to write down various words in their spelling-books—horse, mane, tail, fetlock, hoof, eyes, nostril, axle-tree, chain. A few of the older children made an attempt at a written description:

> **"I am an horse. I am brown, and I have a curle tail. I have a big body, and big eyes, a soft mane, a long fetlock, and big nostrils."**
>
> W. H. (8 years).

Just lately the teachers have been unable to keep pace with the more advanced and rapid readers, and a selection of books was made for their use. Here the earlier idea of regarding the book as a treasure proved helpful. "We must cover them," they said at once, and gave up play-time to make the necessary covers. We were careful to choose complete editions, not abridged, and it was sometimes difficult to obtain these cheaply in good print and with good illustrations. The latter we might have dispensed with; in fact, we did eliminate a few undesirable illustrated pages from our copies, but it seems easier to get a book with a few bad illustrations than with none at all.

A few of those books which were much enjoyed may be mentioned:

"The Tailor of Gloucester."
"Little Black Sambo."
"Alice in Wonderland" (with Tenniel's illustrations).
"Through the Looking-glass" (with Tenniel's illustrations).
"Æsop's Fables."
"Mother Goose."
"Fairy Gold." (Everyman, 1*s.*)
"Grimm's Fairy Tales." (Everyman, 1*s.*)

"Han's Andersen's Fairy Tales." (Everyman, 1*s.*)

Miss Edgar's "A Treasury of Verse for Little Children." (Harrap, 1*s.*)

"The Golden Staircase" (an anthology of poetry for children, Jack),

and the much-loved "Child's Garden of Verses."

I am rather afraid we have hurried on to the epoch of books. I would gladly have waited for this until another year of childhood was passed. Eight years old is early enough to learn to read. But until the school building was ready we had to give up our older children (those over seven) to the nearest public elementary school, and we could not send them altogether unprepared.

CHAPTER VI : NUMBER

NUMERICAL ideas are based upon possession and barter. Standard weights and measures are devised of necessity where simple counting is impossible. Ideas of space measurement follow on rough comparisons of size: human standards, as, for example, the foot and the hand, being the first means of comparing lengths.

Simple counting is obviously the first process, whether for the child or in the case of child-like man. The collection of shells, fir-cones, pretty pebbles or marbles, must be counted or some will be lost. It is amusing to see an acquisitive youngster of five who has collected over twenty acorns and counts them differently each time. He is afraid of losing them, but can only check a big decrease in the number. He soon learns to count. The treasures are frequently strung on a string. Last autumn was a prolific one. We planted some acorns (they are now shooting) and strung as many as we could

upon string. A thick needle patiently wriggled round inside the nut made a hole (the oak-tree had provisioned against this destruction) and the thread was pulled through. It was real hard work but none the worse for that. The strings were triumphantly counted over and over again and measured one against the other. Then the proud owners of the longest ones hung their chains about their necks and felt very big. They wanted to wear them home, but we were afraid of unwise adults, who might laugh and shrivel up all the delightful make-believe. One boy of six was rewarded for a piece of good work by a string of red berries; he blushed with pleasure, and wore them like a mayoral chain. "When I went home mother wouldn't let me wear those berries—she took them away." Now the proper place for necklaces, if we are to have them, is about the necks of our children, where a real sense of their fitness exists, and not about the necks of our magistrates.

The seaside child has in some ways an advantage. A varied collection of sea-shells, a number of coloured pebbles, they are the things which even an adult may have the sense to admire. We content ourselves with snail shells from the cleared ditches, and little marbly stones in the gravel. The town child might make strings of orange pips, apple pips, and melon

or marrow seeds. They can be dyed by boiling in an old saucepan with coloured material of not very fast dye. Two of our children collect stones and shells in their holidays, but the idea of mere number is lost in these cases, they aim at curiosity, and the collection is tending toward a scientific end.

We had been gleaning in the autumn and had brought back oat and barley ears. These were threshed after the method of the birds in individual grains by busy fingers, and the grains stored in jars preparatory to grinding into meal. It was difficult to count out barley grains, so the children took handfuls. That was, I think, their first suggestion of a measure on their own account. They are quite ready to imitate the milkman's method of measuring out liquids, but that has not yet arisen as a necessity of their school existence.

At one slack period in the winter I instituted a system of wages, and for every good industrious piece of work a child received a bead. These were stored in little bags made by the children. At the end of the week the children were taken to a shop to buy toys, and then a play-shop was opened, and you bought the possession in school of a ball, a top, some marbles, a dolly, or some shells (for example). The children printed shop labels. Beads counted as pennies. A penny doll was marked sixpence, and

so forth, at whatever proportion of value the children thought fit to attach. This gave an additional incentive to work, caused vigorous competition, a great leap in the matter of computation, and taught the necessity for saving and foresight if a large purchase was desired. It was very real, but too upsetting to the moral tone of the class to be continued for long—we were "getting and spending" all the time. Sometimes the children were given some beads and allowed to play shops with the articles in school, the labelling and arranging being done by themselves. It is surprising how very simple this buying and selling becomes when they play as they like, what small sums are named and small quantities purchased; the difficulties of reckoning are reduced to a minimum. "Please for a penny box of crayons." "Please, Mr. Shopman, I want one pair of scissors, here's my six pennies." "Please will you give me two penny pencils?" When I keep shop I don't sell pennyworths, and the reckoning gives more scope for thought; after all, it is the eldest child who keeps shop in the home play, and why not the teacher at school?

Out of doors in the summer we have make-believe shopping. A general village store seems to be the accepted type of shop. Chopped grass for tea, stones for potatoes, clay dabs for buns, sand for sugar,

PLAYING SHOPS

berries for fruit, strips of wood for bacon, and so forth, as ingenuity will devise. We use rough school-made balances, a rod of wood suspended by a string in the centre, and two tiny lids for pans. A fairly large stone serves as a pound, and two smaller ones of fairly equal size that will together balance it are called half pounds; by balancing we could find other pound stones and mark them with paint, cheerful inaccuracy being the order of the day. The real procedure was thus: the shop prepared, "We want to weigh things." "We haven't any scales." "Then you must make some to-morrow." So the materials were got together and the children watched the construction, assisting in the fetching and putting away of tools and expressing their opinion as to the satisfactoriness of the work as it proceeded. Very irritating to one who is unused to it, but we generally go on unruffled through such tornadoes of discussion. I have seen adults made angry by the criticism of children, but after all nothing is easier than to turn the laugh against a child, and few things more unwise than to indulge one's advantage over him. The children wrote down the words 'stick,' 'string,' 'lid,' 'pan,' 'scales,' from my example on the board. The new children attempted only the words of three letters. This occupied part of the time while I cut a scoop scale-pan out of a tin with an old pair of

scissors (wire cutters are better); the tin lid formed the pan for the weights. Holes were pierced by hammering a nail through the tin, the string was passed through the holes and a gimlet hole made in the beam at either end. The pans were attached, and then the beam was balanced on the back of the saw held between my knees. This was very exciting. "This side's too heavy—no, that." "Why, it isn't in the middle." "No, that scoop is heavier." "If we had both pans the same it would balance in the middle." (This from a child of six whose father is a skilled mechanic.) I bored a hole at the right point, suspended the balance by string. "Hey! If we made scales like that, we could really keep shop, couldn't we?"

When we plait rushes the children have to buy the rushes. When we use clay, they frequently buy the clay from me in pounds and half-pounds—or a child who is good at number-work is allowed to be shop-keeper.

Later we institute a coinage—a period is spent in cutting out twelve pennies, two sixpences and a shilling; we make brown paper purses and gum them down, we write our names on the purses (copying from the labels on our crayon-boxes), and then are prepared to play shop with 'money.'

The older children have German-made imitation

coins of cardboard (the English law does not permit an English firm to make them!) and use these in their calculations. They are taken to 'shop' whenever it is feasible, and are often sent to buy stamps, stationery, postal orders, &c., frequently with a valuable coin to be changed. They have to be attentive to the message, and are usually quite trustworthy, but sometimes curious things happen. Said one of us: "I want you to go to the Stores"—the child flew out of the room, and after five minutes returned looking rather foolish; there was a hearty laugh—"and get me a packet of envelopes, that will be *2d.*, and a postal order for 1*s.*; here is a two-shilling piece." The child did the business, and brought back the correct change the second time.

When a doll is bought for the little ones, or bulbs for the school garden, or flower-pots or sewing materials, we go to small shops where we receive reasonable attention and take some of the older children. They help to choose, to reckon up the amount spent, to pay, and to count the change. They have an opportunity of riding on the electric cars, of buying their tickets, and of carrying back the parcels to school. I was much amused on one occasion when I took two boys and two girls with me to do the buying. At first the boys stoutly insisted on carrying

all the heavy parcels, but after a little they took to playing 'Tig' along the road, and commanded the girls to do the pack-work. A little ridicule served as correction.

Here are two discussions which occurred in shopping lessons. Said six-year-old Doris: "If we pay the shopman some money, and he gives us change and something else (the thing we buy), isn't that the *value* of our money?" "Well, then, how can the shopkeeper grow rich, because he only gives us the same (value) as we give him?"

On another occasion they considered the value of the bulbs they had bought.

Miss P.: "What good are the bulbs to you when they are in the ground? Haven't you wasted your money?"

The children puzzled for a little.

"No value at all."

"But they're growing."

"They'll be pretty in the spring."

"We can cut off the flowers and sell 'em."

"We could sell the bulbs next year. Perhaps they'll make more bulbs."

Miss P.: "Do you think money is the only thing you can get out of them? Doesn't your mother value you? She gets no money out of you."

"No, she spends a lot."

"She doesn't know what she'll do if she has any more children."

"I'm not worth anything to her now, but I shall be able to get her lots of money by-and-by."

"Well, we might watch our bulbs come up, and guess the colours they're going to be."

"We can show the flowers to people."

"We can smell 'em."

"We can paint them and put them in our scrap-book."

"Our bulbs are really good value, though we can't see them—now."

This work with coinage is considered by some as too remote from pure number, but all our practical work is done with some arbitrary standard or another, of length, weight, content, or coin.

The need for numerical signs is soon felt. Our little ones at first learnt the Roman numerals I, II, III, IIII, V, VI, VII, VIII, VIIII, X. These have obviously much more meaning in them to a child than the Arabic numerals, and give a help to number analysis. The fingers are the constant appeal in early stages of counting and in the analysis of these figures. "Six is five and one more." "Nine is five and four more." "Ten is two fives one on top of the other." To our children the stroke on the paper is more natural than the notch in the stick;

they handle pencil and paper more often than knife and stick. We play a kind of skittles with our big wooden bricks and a woollen ball. Each child keeps his score (it is advisable to watch the record), adds it up, and expresses it in the correct notation.

Ideas of length come in all kinds of haphazard ways. "I'm taller than she is." "Clara doesn't grow a bit." "Mine is the biggest chestnut." "My bulb has the tallest shoot." "My stick is longer than yours." "Oh, Dorothy has done a long plait; it's longer'n anybody else's." "Oh, what a big rush; it's twice as tall as I am." I had to suggest the use of the hand or foot for measurement (imitation of adult work suggests a foot rule), and it is most difficult to get little ones to make a repeated measurement without overlapping. "My desk is sixteen hands long"; nine would be much nearer the mark, but the nimble extremity has skipped along regardless of exact points. They find it quite hard to cut off lengths of cotton equal to one provided.

The older children measure the length of the path, the width of the road, the length and breadth of the grass-plots, &c., with their own feet before they are given foot-rules; once in possession of them they use them continually, sometimes merely for the sake of measuring. Fairly accurately, desks, chairs, tables, floors, their own heights, are measured and

recorded. A shoot is measured from week to week. The distance between the points at the end of two shadows cast by a stick at the beginning and end of an interval of half an hour is measured, and the measurement repeated.

In the handwork lessons the rule is often in use, to measure a pattern for a handkerchief, to mark distances, and to rule straight lines for sawing. "You have sawn that crooked." "He didn't rule the lines straight; he only made one mark; he ought to have made two." They are asked to make a new cart exactly as big as the first one, and that involves much careful measuring and the rejection of crooked pieces. They are so obsessed by the ruler that if several pieces are to be made alike they make separate measurements instead of using the first piece as a standard. The resulting pieces are not too exactly alike, but the tangible error is sufficient correction

These measurements should lead on to more accurate and scientific work, records and calculations, but it is a long step even to Boyle's law of the seventeenth century, and perhaps a greater still to our graphic methods of recording and calculating based on Descartes. Yet we have every right to believe that reason and criticism are awake and active though in a crude and savage form.

CHAPTER VII : THE SENSE OF RIGHTNESS

Whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report . . . think on these things.

WHAT is right in the care of the person, what is right in obedience to natural laws, what is right in the conduct of human affairs, man's or child's, what is right and pleasing to the unspoilt senses, are matters which can be brought together under this head.

It will be seen that æsthetics and morals and the fundamental physical decencies here join hands. They are far from being separate identities in the mind of the child. They are in the main "I like" or "I don't like," or the compulsion of inherited instincts and tendencies of "I must" or "I mustn't."

Every young child likes the comfort of a bath, the pleasure of early rising, the comfort of clean clothes. These healthy instincts may be easily destroyed, or

may be easily made into deeply rooted habits with obvious advantage.

The young child is gradually attaining the mastery over his body, it is a pleasure to repeat a new movement, to feel increasing control. The strut which is affected by many children of four is surely an expression of this feeling, it is more or less conscious right through adolescence.

We pay great attention to the cleanliness of the children, the daily bath is recommended to them, and clean, well-brushed hair and well-brushed teeth are made matters of great importance. A daily inspection was necessary at first. In the summer barefoot drill on the warm grass, and barefoot play is encouraged. The delight of free toes once experienced, the children clamour to be allowed it again. There is some prejudice against this among the lower classes inland, especially among the less cleanly parents. But a generation which accepts and demands the deformity of the modern foot might be expected to go any lengths. The children are asked to come without hats; most do, and gain in comfort, health and beauty. We had some trouble with the cleanliness of the heads at first, and this regulation was a useful precautionary measure. There is an element of molycoddle-dom which clings obstinately to the safety of head-coverings

and innumerable wrappings. Experience will not convert prejudice. Most of the children are overclad. I quote two actual examples:

Boy. Thick woollen vest.
Shirt.
Knickers.
Waistcoat.
Old Jersey.
New Jersey.
Overcoat for outdoor wear.

Girl. Long vest.
Flannelette chemise.
Stays.
Flannelette knickers.
Flannel petticoat, with flannelette bodice.
Cotton petticoat, with flannelette bodice.
Kilted skirt with bodice.
Jersey.
Coat for out of doors.

These are not the worst cases.

The most lightly clad boy wore in the winter:

Long vest, rather thin.
Shirt.
Knickers.
Jersey.
Coat for outdoor wear.

He is always perfectly warm, though, of course, some children require, if not more garments, at least thicker ones. The shirt and chemise are equally inconvenient but the inevitable wear, so also are the conventional juvenile stays or 'braces.'

We have not yet made a request for a school uniform such as is usually required in a secondary school for the sake of physical exercise, but we hope to do so soon, as the gain to the girls will be very great.

The atmosphere is always kept fresh by means of natural ventilation. The temperature aimed at is 55°—this has been found quite warm enough. Frequently it has fallen to 50°, and the children have not been cold; they do not sit still a great deal. A temperature below 50° we found unsuitable, though through lack of fuel we have, both this spring and during the previous winter, experienced school-room temperatures of 45°. This of course necessitated vigorous employment. Sedentary work was abandoned. With little ones there is discomfort and some danger in a low temperature like this, but there is no reason why older girls and boys should not undertake the harder forms of handwork in a comparatively cold room. We do not want our younger generation to be too soft. There should not be a larger discrepancy than can be avoided between the outdoor and indoor temperatures.

At home the small rooms are frequently made very hot with a huge fire and closed windows. Civilised English folk have learned to exclude draughts and have long ago destroyed the meaning of the word 'window'; we reap the benefit in increase of tuberculosis and decrease of vitality. During the week-ends our children often take cold. Some of the parents take an unwholesome interest in disease, the child is frequently coddled, his ailments are discussed in his presence, he feels much absorbed in himself and comes back in an unhealthy frame of mind. We are obliged to discourage coughs and the patent medicine advertiser's view of life. We maintain that it is grand to be well and a mistake to be ill, that people who have baths and sleep in fresh air do not take colds, not even if they get their feet wet! One would imagine that the feet ought to be adapted to the wet, but the mid-Victorian view is that they are the vehicles for most lung-troubles. Locke's Elizabethan attitude seems a little more robust. A child who plays vigorously in fresh air has his extremities 'as warm as a toast.'

Sunshine is most desirable in the school-room. Ours is dark, but we have an open south shelter and a glazed western one with doors and windows. The south shelter is warm on a sunny wintry day even though without artificial heat, and during summer

there is a fair depth of shadow in it when the sun is at its highest (this is a feature of a south shelter which is sometimes overlooked). The north light is as bad for a school-room as for the art-room, where modern methods have superseded the convention of our earlier art schools. Bright rooms and sunny illumination will prevent eye troubles. A child accustomed to fresh air and a sunny aspect will have a happier outlook on life, and if deprived of them later on will make some efforts to obtain them for his children.

Sleeping and feeding are things over which we have no direct control. We can tell the children their proper bedtime, we can talk over with the little ones how they are to chew their food and what it is wholesome to eat and drink. We propose to extend this work in connection with cookery lessons in the new building, simple cookery lessons that are to be a part of the work of each class, in addition to a special class for the elder girls. By means of little tea-parties with dolls' tea things, the younger children learn to behave prettily and with proper consideration for one another at table.

Consideration is to be the basis of all politeness; and truth the foundation of all intercourse. A child who has to correct his own work, to make his own measurements (and abide the consequences), and

his own observations of natural phenomena, early learns the necessity for truth. Lying is so futile, so unscientific. We should like our children to find it foreign to their nature. There are Hebrew stories, stories from the Norse Sagas, stories from our plainer folk-lore, that vividly set before a child the meanness of lying and the beauty of truth. The story of Achan, the detestable character of Loki, the tale of the Goose Girl and the Water of Life from Grimm's collection, are notable examples. There are sharp and scheming children, children who are 'on the make,' whether in character (as they fancy) or kind; they have to be taught that it is more profitable to be truthful, that lying brings punishment in its train. Our children will scarcely ever 'own up'—it is a thing demanded of our secondary school girls and boys. It is a thing which we have laboured day by day to bring about. A smashed saucer, and no one has done it; a gasping fish from an overturned jar—no one knows anything of it. In each case the school was called together and witnessed a close cross-examination until the discrepancy in the evidence was found, the truth of the accident disclosed, and the culprit self-condemned. The flower-pot saucer is nothing, it is the dishonesty that matters; but it was mean to tip over the hapless fish and run away without telling. The

children were not punished—we were miserably disappointed in them. The whole school saw their conviction, they were publicly disgraced, it was punishment enough.

Tale-telling and lying are close comrades—the little ditty of our childhood, 'Tell-tale tit,' &c., is a good antidote for the former habit. A premium put on frankness, the aforementioned scheming child soon simulates it and tells his cheerful lie with a cool face and steady eye. "Be ye wise as serpents and harmless as doves."

It might be argued that trickery and subterfuge will increase a child's cleverness. That may be so, but let him find better ways of using his ingenuity, as in folding an envelope, making a new weaving pattern, devising a 'tricky' new toy, in keeping secret a piece of work that he is doing.

There is a necessity in the child's life for certain private possessions and a certain privacy. It is not so well developed in our children as in the children of wealthier parents; it is not developed very much in young children. Without privacy there must come a positive need for concealment and subterfuge —but this is scarcely a matter for a day-school, rather for the home. Proper possessions can be permitted and ought to be encouraged in school. Our little children have bags and boxes with their

collected shells, or lucky stones, or acorns, or chestnuts as the case may be. (A periodic clearance when the short-lived interest in the collection has died out is necessary.) On possession are based numerical ideas, and more important still, ideas of honesty—crude at first, but always modified by the idea of the common property of the school building and equipment. Generally this is the only property that the school child has, and he can, therefore, gain little idea of personal interest or personal responsibility. In these days our children will have complicated problems on this question to solve when they become men and women, and it is well that they should receive some training in the earlier morals of the case through real experience in school. Our children of seven have each a box, and are responsible for certain properties, *e.g.* pencil, ruler, reading-book, dancing-shoes, and paint-box, given them by the school and returnable at the end of the year. This is sufficient to establish a strong sense of ownership, and the word 'my' vehemently used is applied to any object that has gone astray.

As to rewards and punishments the greatest reward we can offer our children is an expression of confidence. "Gerty and Harry, you may paint the cart in the other room, because I can trust you to do it by yourselves." In school it will be seen the child

is very much a social unit, and individual freaks of elfishness cannot be tolerated. Edgar paints the noses of the other children and a great confusion ensues. He is deprived of paints, and is made to feel very silly and irresponsible. Evelyn dares Wilfred to cut her hair off, and burns the tell-tale locks: they are both deprived of scissors and are treated as 'babies.' For with free work there must of necessity be a great sense of individual responsibility, responsibility of one member of the class to the other members, and of each to the teacher. The greatest punishment is deprivation of the right to do a coveted 'job.' The above-mentioned painting of the cart was such a piece of work; the children who indulged in the nose-painting episode were forbidden to finish. Younger children joyfully undertook the work, and were allowed to take it to a poorer school for a present. One is sorry for the culprit, but one good punishment will save many later on.

The presentation of the cart and some other toys brought by our children will, we hope, tend to foster the gracious virtue, generosity. By that I do not mean the hand-in-the-pocket business, but a feeling of unselfishness and large-mindedness toward others. Our bigger children grew some cress and I provided bread and butter, and they made sandwiches

for themselves and the little ones to taste. "Don't see why we should give our sandwiches to those little 'uns. They've done nothing for us," was the outspoken remark of one of the children. It is very hard for the artisan and smaller clerk to be generous. Necessity presses hard upon him, the life-struggle is keen, and he has no chance of cultivating the liberal virtues. But our children must not be cramped and dwarfed. They shall have enough in school and time to spare to be benevolent and tolerant one to another. The bigger ones have to be careful of the little ones, they must neither hurry them nor push them, they must never bully or boss them. They must give the little ones a chance to express themselves in class conversation, they must take care of them in singing games, they must make excuses for some of their deficiencies. They make them presents for the dolls' houses of mats or furniture, and sometimes the little ones will give a string of berries, which it is the older one's duty to accept with consideration of the will rather than of the crude actuality.

There was a feeble old man whom some of the children used to shout at. Here was an opportunity for a lesson. Imagination was called into play—they put themselves in the old man's place, and afterwards he was astonished at the respect they showed him.

Among equals in age and strength give and take prevails, tussles and quarrelling are not infrequent in the school garden, but we do not interfere. A child must assert himself or be dominated. At the age of seven self-assertiveness becomes quite strong, the garden is the scene of active and vigorous competition, the class-room no less so. It is not the teacher's business to interpose and shield a child from the experience which is his best encouragement and discipline.

In the discussion of stories and in the discussion of the events in their small world, our children make uncompromising moral judgments. "That was mean." "That was kind." "I don't think he ought to have done that." "I wouldn't like to have done that—not even to save my father, I should be too frightened." The others laugh, but the teacher says, "If John would be frightened, it is brave of him to be honest and say so." "I want to be rich and grand like that prince." "But he had to be brave and good first."

There is an overwhelming desire for fine clothes and great possessions. It is innate in the home life, the carpet, the sideboard, and the closed best room, the smart clothes for the town, perhaps the consequently neglected children. We have to try to show that to us at least these things are not of

great importance, we dress simply and live simply, doing most of our own housework. But I believe that these very modesties tend to undermine our position in the eyes of the parents, and in the eyes of our middle-class neighbours. Yet no reputation at all is better than a meretricious one.

Our religious teaching, historical and otherwise, has as its aim the realisation of a something more than a material world, the wonderfulness of living things, the praise of a Creator, the realisation of the worshipfulness of Christ's humanity and humility. Religious teaching is a dead thing in some of our elementary schools, controversy has taken away its life. Our religious teaching must be as free from dogmatism as our examination of history and political change will be when the children begin to study these subjects. We wish only to train our children to judge for themselves and to rely on their own will when they enter the stormy arena of adult life. The teacher's temptation to proselytise and convince is one which must be resolutely put behind. We are to show, discuss, investigate, but never to lay down the law, never to force our own conclusions in controversial subjects upon the yielding minds which are as clay within our hands. It would be monstrous to exclude the teaching profession from the domains of politics and sectarianism, but more

monstrous for a teacher to let personal convictions colour his lessons and arguments.

The children daily sing a hymn, or a psalm to some simple old chant, and afterwards say the Lord's Prayer, and kneel for a space of silent private prayer. Very beautiful it is to see small devout unconscious faces with moving lips whispering to the great God "Wish." We do not know what they ask, we would not intrude into their sanctuary.

They learn a good many of the Hebrew psalms; for example, "The Lord is my Shepherd," "I will lift up mine eyes unto the mountains," "Praise ye the Lord, praise Him in the heights!" and they have learnt from Proverbs, "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom." We hope that the beauty of the sense and sounds will pass into them and be a continual possession, and the echo of ancient human experience will reach them when they are in need. Theirs is the time for memorising, we will let them enrich their minds before they rely, foolishly, too much on books.

A good man visited us one day—he came in as a member of an education committee—but he turned out to be a kind of missioner. Whether the mission was self-imposed or not, I cannot say. He told us he had been teaching a great many little boys and girls.

"How many fingers have you?"

"Ten," chorused the little ones.

"No, I mean on one hand."

"Five," they returned smiling.

"I will teach you five words to go to your five fingers." He held up a large blunt-fingered hand and opened his large mouth: "The—Lord—is—my—Shepherd."

He repeated it five times, accenting each word in turn. The bright eyes turned upon him in wonder, what was he going to do next.

"Oh! yes we've learnt that and some more, too." But he didn't want to hear what they had learnt.

"We can sing it, too."

"What is a shepherd?" he solemnly announced.

"Look in the picture, there he is."

"Piping to his sheep."

"And the little bird is flying off the tree."

"Who is *your* shepherd?"

"God takes care of us."

"Like he did of David."

"David was a shepherd-boy, too."

"That's why he sang about sheep."

They were self-assertive and amused. They began to feel that this big man needed to be instructed. He changed the subject of his questioning and began

to sing—a terrible mission hymn, about waves rolling over his soul. But the little ones only laughed; they were amused by his big voice. He felt he had cast his pearls before swine. Our little elves bade him a sprightly good-bye.

One or two of the older children put on a pious expression, and he was much gratified. He could not be quieted. He questioned, and a specious infant pattered forth expressions of sentiment. The others gazed at him with disgust.

"A very promising boy—very promising indeed."

He was not told that the same youth had a few days before broken an umbrella, and lied about it deeply and perseveringly.

I turn next to the idea of rightness in what appeals to the senses: the cultivation of taste, whether in choice of colours, textures, or form in handwork, in choice of musical form, of words, or delight in natural beauty. There is but a short step to the rejection of the mawkish in story or false in sentiment.

In their handwork the children have some opportunity of choosing materials and colours, but once the materials are chosen they have to be manipulated, and generally dominate in truly artistic fashion the form of the object to be made. You cannot weave a round mat, but you may sew one, and if you use

raffia there are only a few obvious direct roads to completion; if raffia and cane, they can only be combined in one or two ways. If you wish to vary the colour, your childish ingenuity can only suggest stripes as the possible combination, though the colours must be arranged and chosen so that they do not clash. The warp threads must be tied, you knot them into a little fringe—what else would you think of doing? The cart you are making must be of such a shape that it is convenient for carrying bricks, the wheels must be of such a proportion, it must be painted all over the same colour with perhaps just a line following the top edges for decoration. You want a canvas mat, you either fringe the edges or make a hem, and the thick coloured thread you use makes a decoration in itself. You put blanket-stitching in scarlet wool round a brown mat. You work an initial in the corner. Superfluous trimming is tedious, and you come to regard it as rather foolish, but a line or decorative mark that has meaning is admired. The plain pinafore with a little band of embroidery is approved, and the frilly machine-made pinafore condemned—it tears so easily, it is too much trimmed.

In musical training we rely on the voice chiefly for the present. The children have learned a number of Old English singing games.

"The Farmer's in his Den,"
"There came three Dukes a-riding,"
"Poor Jenny sits a-weeping," and
"The King of the Barbaree"

will serve as examples. The body keeps time to the tune, fast or slow, and there is an attempt at graceful measured movement. We can see the awkward beginning and rapid improvement of a new child. Lungs are thoroughly inflated, and this is an important matter, for there are no hills to give the necessary extra demand upon heart and respiration. A musical student who visited the school said that the children had a remarkable sense of time.

Singing games are followed by morris dancing and other simple dances, and any number of unaccompanied folk-songs, fresh, human, and sincere. The singing lesson is a pleasant episode of the day; generally it occurs after a period of rest at the beginning of the afternoon session. If there is trouble or disgrace in the school there is no singing, no dancing,—we cannot pretend to be enjoying ourselves. For our dancing and singing are emotional as well as physical exercises. They are an expression of joyousness, of sadness, or religious feeling. During the afternoon rest we often read or sing to the children. Unaccompanied ballads and the folk-songs they are to learn they hear first in this way, and

have a knowledge of the song as a complete work of art before they sing it for themselves. Very little analysis is attempted or desired; it is on these first experiences that a later study can be built up. They learn more and more—a new song every other week, perhaps, or possibly the old ones over again. They hear some accompanied singing—Arne's and Schubert's settings of Shakespeare's lyrics. We should like to make a simple instrumental and vocal recital an annual school event. Every now and again we hear all the voices individually, but in the ordinary way any child may be called upon to sing alone, and does so in a large hall without embarrassment. We have, as yet, very little definite vocal training. Correct breathing is frequently practised—at drill, before singing, before dancing. We have had only one case of adenoids and those were developed before the child came to us.

We do something toward the revival of festivals. We have a little Christmas party, at which we eat our school-made pudding. We have a carol-singing. Very exciting it is to go in procession in the dark and to sing in the flood of light from a friendly door, the hall being no longer large enough for us to go inside.

"The holly and the ivy,"

"As Joseph was a-walking,"

and "In excelsis gloria" we like the best. The little Christ-child who

Shall not be clothed
In purple nor pall;
But in fair white linen
As wear babies all,

finds a warm cradle in our hearts, and we, too, must sing like the angels in praise of Him.

We have a festival at the coming of summer, on old May Day, if the frost giants are safely banished. We dance the may-pole bare-foot on the grass to the accompaniment of our own singing, the younger ones playing singing games, and then we have racing, high-jumping, and some of the recreative competitions of the drill class.

We have more physical drill in winter, more dancing and games in spring and summer, when "beasts do leap and birds do sing," for we also feel like it.

"Why do you like dancing and singing?"

"I like dancing, but I don't like singing."

"I like both."

"I don't know why."

"I like the tunes."

"It's so jolly to jump about on the grass."

"It makes my legs strong."

These remarks are crude enough, there is no analysis of beauty of sound, rhythm, conscious grace. But our children recognise and enjoy all these, though in very varying degrees. Give them a quiet green place and they will make them for themselves. The steady movement of weaving is almost certain to suggest a song. They sing when they are on an expedition.

"That's a fine song to march to."

"You can't march to this one (three-quarter time), your feet won't go to it."

The children can distinguish between the strong beat of a straightforward dance tune, or of a march, and the gentler rhythm of a song that can be modified to suit expression—hastened or slackened, accented or slurred; between the regular rimed verse of a simple modern poem (say Stevenson's "Wind") and the hot pulse of a Saga, or the solemn varied rhythm of a Hebrew psalm. Through singing and movement many of our children of seven have been led to a real delight in poetry. The jingle of nursery rimes pleases the little ones (and the older ones too, we fancy); they sometimes experiment in making rimes as, for instance, in the song "There was a pig went out to dig—Christmas Day" (English country songs), a quaint little thing in the minor mode. One wonders why the word-building

fanatics did not adopt some such pleasurable device to relieve the monotony of a motiveless reading lesson.

Physical drill plays its part in the æsthetic development of the child. Conscious control is the aim of these lessons. There is a great delight in the balance and poise of the body; our children feel in a small degree what the athlete experiences. Smartness of the class, as a whole, does not much matter; we are not concerned with a squad of recruits, but it matters considerably that each individual should hold himself well, should breathe his fullest, and should be growing and developing up to the right average, possibly beyond it. Children of about seven begin to take formal drill lessons, usually a quarter of an hour per day; and in them, even if much work is not accomplished, we have a chance of closely observing the movements of the individual child and correcting wrong tendencies, although there is not much need to correct the evils of sedentary work, so varied are the occupations of our children. Barefoot drill is encouraged in the summer, in the winter hard boots and shoes are taken off and a slipper made of drugget is worn—it is soft and thin, does not prevent the proper impact of the foot on the floor, but prevents the stockings from wearing out.

Our children always draw in coloured crayons, and those in the upper class have paint-boxes (Reeve's Primary), with four colours (red, blue, yellow, and burnt sienna). The drawing and painting lesson may be a training in the art of seeing, or an expression of an imagined scene. Conventional symbolism is the probable starting point of free expression drawing; we have to lead the child through careful study of the objects and practice in the manipulation of his tools to a truer pictorial effect. We don't hinder or advise very much, we compare the work afterwards, and select the best for admiration. The preservation of drawing or painting is the reward for a good or happy piece of work. There are so many things to paint or draw, the field and sky, the leaves, flowers, tools and toys, the animals one meets, the blue pond, the blowing clothes on the line. As long as the subject is or can be made interesting there is no reason why it should not be attempted. It is no good to expect neatness, it is not natural; it is foolish to accept careless work. The behaviour of the child while he draws is the best guide to the value of the work as far as he, individually, is concerned. In the teaching of drawing, teachers frequently adopt an extreme attitude; they either expect accuracy and neatness, when all free attempts are impossible, or else they praise indis-

criminately, and there is then no encouragement to better achievement.

I recollect a barley ear, and a bending twig of young larch, depicted by some of our children. The drawings were well placed, freely treated, and more decorative than much adult work. Such happy instances are not of daily occurrence, but I might have been glad to adopt these drawings for my own use.

We do not encourage our children to draw patterns. The proper place for design is in the handwork lesson, where the materials govern the choice. The decoration of a Christmas card or of their little book-covers is always pictorial and unconventional. I have not found a child who wanted to draw a pattern by his own suggestion.

Whatever influence the interior of the house may have—there are roughly two kinds: the frankly vulgar with a brilliant wall-paper and cheap lithographs, and the would-be refined with the "Hundred Best" or other smudgy photogravures (the latter being the worse because it indicates that another's choice is being accepted instead of one's own)—the children out-of-doors have the sky and the trees and the flowers, and pretty dwellings (though monotonous in design) with pleasant gardens. They like to look at the red sun when he goes down, at the sunny clouds, at the birds flying and the wanderings of the

river. A group of kingcups (water-blobs) will cause a shout of delight—even if you are not allowed to pick them; a dew-bespangled cobweb will bring a sigh of pleasure. So that we hope our children will enrich themselves by delight in things not made with hands, that money cannot procure.

A visit to a wood, a real deep wood—it meant a day's expedition—is a memory the older children still carry with them, though it is a year ago. It has meant more to them than the annual treat to the excitements of a fashionable seaside resort usually provided by the Sunday-school.

In summer the outdoor world provides sights enough; in the wintry days we may see the snow and the peewits wheeling in the sky, the wind-tossed twigs and the brown furrows, but we have to spend many hours indoors, and then we need pictures, and good pictures, or we can have no development of taste. For neither our interiors or our clothing or our common articles of use are decorative or even beautiful in their plainness. We do not care enough, have not time enough for a peasant art in England.

We have now in school the "Seasons" in the Fitzroy series, a copy of the Sistine Madonna (unfortunately not coloured), and some small Japanese colour-prints of plants and birds. There is an excellent German series of decorative wall-pictures, but we have not

yet purchased any—having very little space for hanging them. Mention has been made elsewhere of the use of some old stained glass in the education of our children. Here we have at hand a perfect example of early art on their own level. It seems to me that copies of such windows, reproductions of the illustrations in the Harleian manuscripts and mediæval work, and of the Bayeux tapestry are needed, native masterpieces being chosen before those of remoter origin. We want coloured pictures if we can get them. We do not want the elusive manner of modern art; it is too foreign to the child's mind. We want also copies of good primitive pottery (not the too ubiquitous Greek designs—hard, cold, machine-made)—of early textile designs, of good examples of savage handwork, and of peasant art. The dainty conceptions of the Japanese in their everyday boxes or buttons, mats or lacquer, have a refining influence, but unfortunately very little work that is not debased finds its way into England. The taste of the English and American market has had a fatal effect.

We have old buildings, whether Norman crypt, Gothic church, timbered dwelling-house, or mellow gabled mansion; these must play their part in the making of the child. We take him to visit them, he picks up the fair English heritage of taste which a commercial generation was in danger of losing altogether.

CHAPTER VIII : THE BRICKYARD

OUR school is situated upon a flat area of boulder clay, the deeper parts of which are usually a tenacious laminated bluish clay, free from lime and suitable for brickmaking. There are brick-ponds not far off and disused brickyards, but better still, another brick-yard in which the industry is actively carried on. It is not far from the school, and we have the son of the manager for our pupil. Our children have been allowed to pay several visits to the yard at different seasons. The hand-process interested the children most. They watched the men digging out the clay from the pits with a curved iron spade in the autumn. The upper five feet (after the soil is removed) is used for the inferior bricks, and the next nine feet or so, bluish and finely laminated, for the best bricks. They watched it drawn up in the bogies on the narrow railway lines. They saw it tipped out on the higher level, and saw it left to weather in the frost until it

became a soft mud-heap. Next, in the spring, they watched the men turn it over again with a wooden hand-tool, fringed into a 'whisker' at the lower edge. They noticed the precaution taken to keep it wet all the time. They watched the heaps of prepared clay being covered with straw to keep it in condition. Another fine day they went to watch the making of the hand-bricks. There was a big clear floor of red brick fragments, a large bench with clay on it, and an inclined plank up to the top of the bench. Three men were hard at work with a rhythmic regularity of motion. One brought barrow-loads of clay, wheeled them to the top of the bench and tipped them out quickly and carefully. Another filled a rectangular wooden mould with clay, a third picked it up, held it carefully tilted so that the clay could not fall, walked away and gently slipped it out upon the ground—a beautiful new brown brick.

"It looks quite square and hard now."

"But it isn't really, it is soft as putty."

"Softer, *I* think."

"The rows of bricks *are* straight, aren't they?"

"How many in a row?"

"Twenty-four!"

"Twenty-five!"

"Twenty-four, twenty-four!"

"Ssh!"

"How many rows?"

"Oh! but they aren't finished yet."

"Oh, that one's gone all crooked."

"He's putting it back again."

"He's squashed it all up."

"Couldn't we make bricks?"

"And build a wall?"

"You'd have to bake them first."

"In a kill?" (kiln)

"Oh, I wish we had a kill."

"Can we ask for some clay, and really make some ourselves?"

"Yes, certainly, but you'd better watch now."

"Here comes the wheelbarrow again."

"I should spill it if I did it, I think he's very clever."

"You couldn't push that barrow up there."

"I could."

"You couldn't, it's as heavy as heavy. You couldn't push it empty."

"I bet I could."

"Haven't they got dirty hands?"

"All over clay."

"Well, they can't help it. They'll wash them afterwards."

"They turn up their sleeves to keep them clean."

"But they are all over clay splashes."

"Well, they can't help that. They've got on their old clothes."

"Look at him filling the mould, why he smoothes it down with his hand."

"We will turn up our sleeves and wear our aprons when we make bricks."

"Could we make a mould? It would be a lot easier."

"Of course we could make a mould, and glue it together."

"Glue ——" with deep scorn.

"Glue'd come all to bits when it got wet, you silly."

"Nails then."

"Nails would rust. Like London Bridge."

"No, they wouldn't then."

"Doesn't he do it quick?"

"Oh, I wish I could have a try."

"Why, look, those bricks over there are quite light brown."

"They're nearly dry."

"They were done early this morning before you sleepy-heads were up."

"I didn't know that bricks were brown first of all."

"Well, the clay's brown."

"Yes, I know."

"They turn red when they bake them."

"What makes them turn red?"

"The red fire, of course."

This suggests obvious experiments to a teacher.

"If you burn coal it turns red."

"But it all goes." The childish mind turns from the puzzling issue.

"I should think that man's back must ache."

"He's ever so strong."

"Twice as strong as you."

"More'n that."

"Twenty times as strong."

"Hundred times as strong."

"Then he'd be a giant, and he'd make giant bricks and build giant houses and come out and kill all the little children for his dinner."

"Now you be quiet. I'm going to count how many bricks he's done to-day. One, two, three . ."—with a small finger pointed at each one.

"You can't see them when you begin to count them, they jump about."

"Be quiet, Harry, you interrupted. How *can* I count if you talk and jiggle me?"

The counting proceeded, all the children joined in. Many of the little ones psalmed out the numbers mechanically, and watched the men and their dog all the time.

"More'n a hundred. More'n two hundred."

"What a lot!"

"He could build a house with those."

"Take's more'n that to build a house," said a bricklayer's son.

"That man couldn't build a house, he doesn't know how to build a house, he makes the bricks."

"Does Mr. C. give the bricks to people who want to make houses?"

"No, he sells them, you silly. He gets lots of money for them."

Mr. C. kindly informs us how many bricks will make a cottage, and what they will cost.

"Oh!"

"What a lot of money!"

"Aren't you very rich?"

"Well, he's got to give them all those bricks. I don't think it very much for all those."

Another day we see the making of commoner machine-made bricks. The clay is brought up on the trolleys to a machine where two cutters moving at different speeds cut it and pug it. A man throws in at intervals a handful of brickdust to lighten the machine. The clay passes down between two rollers where it is squeezed and crushed to a thin leaf, and then is fed out through a brick-shaped hole on to the cutting-machine. A board

slips over rollers. With a wire the operator cuts off the length for a little more than eight bricks. Nine wires screwed into position cut the mass into eight bricks, the waste is thrown back into the machine again, and the eight raw bricks carried out to be stacked and dried.

A boy whose father is in a first-class ironmonger's shop was the most interested. He examined the machinery, the engine, the straps and wheels, and the mechanism of the clay-cutter. Some of the children were amused and curious, but the youngest were only bewildered and puzzled.

"What a fine big engine!"

"Tchu! Tchu! Tchu-tchu!"

"How that wheel goes round!"

"What a red fire! Look, the engine's got wheels so that it can walk about."

"The man's going to put on some coal."

"He's the stoker. What a fine shovel! Doesn't he throw it in straight?"

"That fire heats the boiler, and the boiler's full of water that turns into steam and makes a piston work. *Doesn't it?*"

"And the piston turns round the wheels, and then the other thing where the clay is works too—that strap joins them. *Doesn't it?*"

This young man likes adult confirmation of all his remarks.

"You wouldn't think that wire could cut clay, *would you?*"

"I've seen a man cut cheese with wire, and it's harder'n clay."

"Well, it's quicker to make eight bricks at once than one at a time."

"But they don't look so nice."

"They look a bit scratchy."

"Out of the way! The barrow's coming."

"What a lot of boards to go on one barrow. Eight bricks on each board—that's——"

"Oh, it must be heavy. He can hardly start it."

"Ssh!" The young man was turning scarlet under the glance of so many keen eyes.

"Oh dear, he's gone, and I hadn't time to count."

"Well, count them on the machine there, before he comes again."

"I would like to work out in the sun instead of in this dark shed."

"But the door's open."

"There isn't any windows."

"But the wall's got holes in it."

"Doesn't the sunshine look bright on the floor?"

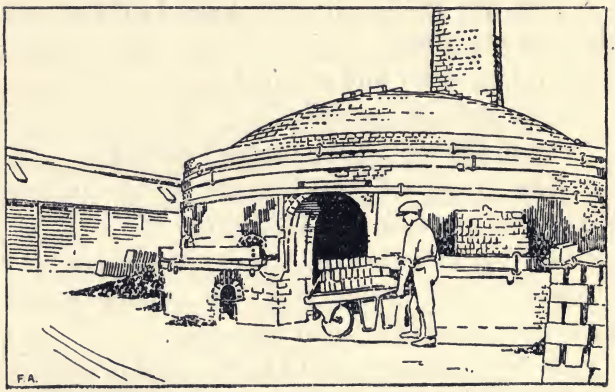
"You'd think it was something white you could pick up."

"He's got forty-eight bricks in his barrow."

"See, there's a piece of iron on the floor for him to roll it over."

"Else the wheel would wear it out."

Later, we saw the kiln filled with bricks lighted



The Brick-kiln

and with glowing interior. The clay was removed from the plug for our benefit, and the square hole left in the entrance was opened. The children were lifted one by one to see the marvellous sight.

"Oh, isn't it hot?"

"Please let me look next."

"Why, the bricks are nearly white."

"Does it hurt them?"

"Bricks can't feel, you silly, they aren't alive."

"Why, it would burn us all up to bits if we went in."

"But those three people in the Bible could go in. It's just like the 'burning, fiery furnace!'"

"But we couldn't."

"How will they get the bricks out again?"

"Why, they'll let the fires out first and then open the door, and let them get quite cold."

"Where are the fires?"

"All round the kiln. Look, here's one, and here's another."

"Oh, what a lot of fire-places!"

"What a funny round roof the kiln has."

"Yes, and the chimney's at the side, isn't that funny? It just comes out of the ground."

"Mr. C. says there's a flue underground to the chimney."

"Oh, there's a funny thing with a chain and a wheel and a big weight."

"Why that's the damper and it drops down into the flue and stops the draught, *doesn't it?*"

"Like in our kitchen ovens."

"But they're quite little and this is very big."

"But it's all the same, *isn't it?*"

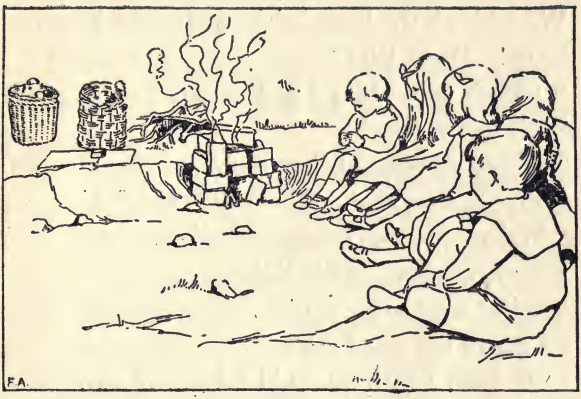
"And the bricks will come out all hard and red, and they will take them away in a cart to the buildings."

We looked at a 'clamp or stack of bricks, which were to be fired in primitive fashion without a kiln. An open structure was arranged underneath with knobs of coal between the bricks; above, the bricks were laid close together, with layers of fine 'pea' coal between. The men were scattering the 'pea coal and arranging the bricks upon it. The outside of the 'clamp' was protected by baked bricks of an inferior quality. We were not able to see the fire started, but determined if we could to bake some bricks for ourselves in this fashion.

We obtained some clay from the brickyard. It was not possible to prepare it for ourselves. We had no room, and I could imagine the state of mind of the parents if we had proposed to puddle the clay by stamping with bare feet, as is frequently done in the trade. We made bricks by hand. It was an exciting performance; the results were by no means uniform in size and shape. We dried them for a few days in the sun—a work of patience—and then sought out a piece of waste ground where we might build our kiln. We collected odd bricks left about by the builders; we borrowed a grid from a gas oven. We gathered sticks and I provided one or two bundles. We really ought to have gathered the whole lot, but we lacked foresight.

We formed a hollow in the ground, put a ring of

bricks down, and placed our grid on them. We carefully piled our raw bricks on the grid, we laid under it a wisp of paper from the waste-paper basket, and some sticks criss-crossed. We covered in our kiln with builders' bricks and lit the fire. The



Firing our Bricks

fire was fed at intervals with sticks by myself. The kiln began to get hot; the thin blue smoke curled in the air. We sat round our pit and watched. Some ominous bangs occurred. That meant some of the bricks were cracked "all to bits." After that the kiln drew quietly enough. We had to leave it to burn out in the dinner hour. I stuck up a notice "Do not touch." In the afternoon we returned.

"Some one's been touching it."

"No, they haven't."

"Harry's been putting in some more sticks; I saw him."

"Don't tell tales."

"Oh, I nearly burnt my finger; it's quite hot."

We took off the large bricks with some tongs.

"Oh! Oh! Oh!"

"There's one. May I pick it up?"

"It's hot as fire."

"We must wait till they cool."

"They'll soon cool. There isn't any fire."

"Perhaps the sun'll keep them hot."

"You stand and shade it."

"What a lot of grey ashes."

"They're the wood ashes."

"Oh dear, I wish we could take them out."

"I don't like waiting."

"Let's have a story while we're waiting."

So they had a story, and then the bricks were cool enough to take out with the tongs. We put them gently into an old steamer.

"Oh, that's a beauty! It's quite red and quite straight."

"That's mine."

"No, mine."

"Why, there's a lot of bits."

"That one is blue in the middle, look ; so are the others on that side. Was it the smoke that made them blue ? "

" I should think that was the windy side and they didn't get hot enough," I said.

" Why, they really are red. I didn't think they would really turn red."

" They *are* hard ; you can't scratch them now."

" We must get some mortar and build real walls now."

We did get some mortar, but it was rather too coarse for our purpose. We made little wooden trowels out of thin wood with a pocket-knife. We built walls and found pieces of tarred felt for roofing material. But we had nowhere to keep our huts. We made them on boards, but when they were shifted they collapsed. We wanted a private bit of waste ground, and then we could have achieved our end. Still the steps toward that end were glorious as an epic.

APPENDIX I

TWO STORIES COMPOSED BY CHILDREN

I. Gerty R., aged seven and three-quarters; and Harry B., age six and a half years. A joint effort, taken down in writing as they gave it.

"Once upon a time there was a giant, and his name was Grumbler, and he lived in a very tall castle, and he had a brother called Growler; and Grumbler was very hungry, so he dug a pit to catch people in, and he put sticks across the opening of the pit. When he came to look inside next morning he found a man and girl trying to get out. And he took them to his larder, and went and told Growler, but there was a ventilator in the outside wall, so they crept through and ran home safely. When Grumbler and Growler found there was nobody in the larder they went out to the pit to look for somebody else (but they stopped up the

ventilator first), and when they got there they were both trying to look in first, so they tumbled in; and a man behind the tree put a bear skin on the top and fastened them in. So they dug a hole in the ground, and so went deeper and deeper, till there was no more air, and so they died."

II. Doris P., aged six and a half years.

"Once upon a time there lived a prince, whose name was Prince Relenzo. His mother was very wicked so he left his house, and came to a big wood. There he saw a bear, and he was very brave, so he stopped and quarrelled with the bear; and he had no gun, so he didn't know what to do; and the bear tried to hug him, but the prince climbed up a tall bamboo tree, and the bear followed him, but couldn't go very far; he fell down with a crash, and he hurt himself very much, and so the prince climbed down the tree and ran away; and came to a castle where a princess lived. He stepped inside the door and came to a chamber, and saw a princess sat on a throne and dressed in silver satin with gold and diamonds shining; and he fell in love with her, and they both went to a church and got married,

and the church bells rang merrily; and they lived happy ever after."

The name of the prince, 'Relenzo,' was supplied by another child. Doris paused, and couldn't think of a suitable name. I asked Jimmy if he had heard the name before, and he said "No, but I heard about a 'Lorenzo,' and I just made this up."

NONSENSE VERSES MADE BY THE CHILDREN AS AN ADDITION TO AN OLD SONG

There was a pig
Went out to dig
On Christmas Day in the morning.

There was a dog
Went out in a fog
On Christmas Day in the morning.

There was some chalk
Went out to walk.

There was a mouse
Went out of his house.

APPENDIX I

There was an owl
Went out to growl.

There was a skate
Went out to wait.

There was a plover
Went out to cover.

There was a cat
That caught a rat.

There was a door
Fell on the floor

(In the new school suggested!)

APPENDIX II

CLEANLINESS NEXT TO GOODLINESS

Shining shoe and shining curl,
    Washen skin as smooth as silk,
    Pinafore as white as milk,
Ev'ry tooth a little pearl—
What a pretty little girl!

TOM-TIT

Little Tom-tit
In the oak-tree,
Busy is he
    Picking his food
    Out of the wood,
Pretty Tom-tit!

Sweet yellow-breast—
Fluttering wing—
Upside-down thing—
I love you best.

THE PLOUGH

The Plough, the Plough, with the jolly Ploughman ploughing—
He makes a deep, damp furrow, straight and true.
The iron chains are ringing and the horses' heads are bowing—
The brown earth breaks and falls as the sharp ploughshare goes through.

Oh, we'll leave Jack Frost alone
With the clods as hard as stone—
He will get into their heart
Till they softly fall apart—
For the little Barley Grain
To be sown and grown again.

O the Plough, the Plough, with the jolly Ploughman ploughing—
He makes a deep, damp furrow, straight and true.
The iron chains are ringing and the horses' heads are bowing—
The brown earth breaks and falls as the sharp ploughshare goes through.

AT END OF SCHOOL

For the pleasant light of day—
For the green and leafy tree—
For the river's shining way—
God our Father, praise to Thee.