NEW SCHOOLS IN THE OLD WORLD

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by

CARLETON WASHBURNE

in collaboration with

MYRON M. STEARNS

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C. W.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

CARLETON WASHBURNE, brought up from early childhood with the influence of John Dewey and Colonel Francis Parker permeating his home and school life, drifted accidentally into school teaching shortly after being graduated from Stanford University in 1912. In his first rural school, and then in a village school, he began experimenting with ways of developing each individual child. This brought him into contact with Dr. Frederic Burk, late president of the San Francisco State Teachers' College.

For five years he served on Burk's faculty, stimulated and inspired by Burk's dynamic thinking and personality. After completing his doctorate at the University of California he took the superintendency of the public school system in Winnetka, Illinois. These schools he transformed into an educational laboratory. The experiments carried forward there have become known around the world.

Not satisfied, however, with what he could observe and work out in his own schools, he secured leave of absence from Winnetka and made an extensive tour of European educational experiments, reporting back to the United States Bureau of Education.

In addition to running his schools, Dr. Washburne lectures widely, writes school textbooks of a new kind, conducts educational research, and gives summer courses in various universities.

MYRON STEARNS is a New Englander with Pacific coast leanings, having spent more than 15 years in California. He was graduated from Stanford University in 1906, expecting to become a lawyer; later, giving up law plans on account of defective eyesight, he traveled a good deal and gradually took up magazine writing. A chance meeting with Dr. Washburne while returning from Europe led to a friendship that resulted first in a rather extensive series of articles on education, published in *Collier's Weekly*, and, later, to the collaboration on this book.

AN INTRODUCTION FOR PARENTS

This book gives an account of the work being done in a dozen progressive schools scattered throughout Europe. At first glance it may seem quite simple—merely a series of brief sketches of what a few advanced schools abroad are doing. But if you *read each chapter in terms of your own child's schooling*, the descriptions become important. You will get the full import of the book, if, each time you find an account of the way in which some desirable quality is developed in the fortunate children who attend these schools, you note the difference between their ways of work and those of the school where your own child is studying. Each time there is a wide divergence—and you will find many—from the orthodox ways of American education, compare the two methods, and their results.

A new day is dawning in the educational world, a day in which the individual child is coming into his own. On the heights there are these schools that have caught the first glimpse of this new day.

The earliness of the dawn causes grotesque shadows to fall on some of these schools, and the

awakening in others is not yet complete. But below, in the valley where most of the world's schools are, night still reigns. It is not a night of slumber, but one of confused darkness. Here well-intentioned people, groping, do violence to little children. Here, because of the darkness, children are treated as though they were all alike.

They are crammed with dry facts. The inability to see their interests and desires, the inability to see their differences in mind and temperament, results in an effort to push them in herds and droves from one grade of the school to another. Too often they are compelled to learn like parrots, instead of being developed into finer human beings. Their abilities are neglected in order to give more time for mental drill—drill frequently distasteful, sometimes useless, and sometimes harmful. Sometimes they actually leave school less confident, less joyous, less able to think independently and meet successfully the problems of life, than if they had not gone at all.

To understand this situation, which to some appears in America to be approaching a crisis, we have to go back a few decades.

As long as America was to a great extent a pioneer country, formal education was still relatively unimportant. Knowledge came from the woods and fields, from the day's needs and the day's

work, from father and mother and older brother and sister or companion. School supplemented the education gained in the home and the great outdoors by training children in the "Three R's," in a few of the common essentials of knowledge, not so readily picked up at random, that would in later life prove to be necessary for success in any complicated social structure. For those who were to enter the professions, particularly the ministry, institutions of "Higher Learning" sprang up even in early Colonial days—the academies and first colleges. They leaned heavily on the formal requirements of the ministry, of law, and medicine —a knowledge of the classics, together with a smattering of the odds and ends of culture that we have since learned to classify vaguely under the head of "A Liberal Education," or "Liberal Arts." Then, gradually, the country developed. Cities grew like mushrooms. We stepped into an age of scientific development, a mechanical and industrial age of railroads and steamboats and electricity and factories, of automobiles and skyscrapers and quick communication by telegraph and telephone and radio. Above all this we developed a complicated superstructure of business, of new political and economic and social needs. We outgrew our schools.

At the same time we entered upon a great ex-

periment in universal education that was to meet the demands made upon coming generations by this new and infinitely complicated social structure. Schools increased in size, and became, seemingly at least, more and more important. School hours increased, and bit by bit the curriculum changed to meet the new economic demands.

But note: Early American schools, the ancestors, as it were, of our present educational system, were merely auxiliary. They supplemented the knowledge of life and the development of abilities gained *outside* the schoolroom with a certain advantageous minimum of formal learning. American schools to-day, to a far greater extent than our forefathers dreamed would ever be so, are being asked to prepare children *for life itself*.

It is true that American public schools have changed immeasurably in the last half century. But the educational needs of the children they serve have changed also, and even more rapidly. Formerly, in a great measure, initiative and independence, a sense of responsibility, character, and the ability to work and cooperate effectively, were developed outside of school. The Little Red School House contributed a working knowledge of the three R's, and, theoretically, a bit of training in self-control and application thrown in for good measure. To-day we look to schools to develop

character and the ability to think constructively and independently—and are shocked and disappointed when the inherited system of doling out facts in classrooms fails to accomplish those results.

In order to get new light, in order to get any possible assistance in solving these great problems that confront the modern school, of how to develop common sense and independence and creative ability and sympathetic understanding along with knowledge of fractions and the multiplication table and geographical locations, we need to study progressive schools and methods of the forward-looking educators of Europe, as well as of our own country.

Education is an international, as well as a national, problem. Human nature is pretty much the same the world over. If Madame Montessori in Italy finds new ways of letting children teach themselves, we want to know about it, and utilize the new knowledge in our own schools, for the benefit of our own children. If Decroly in Belgium goes a step beyond Montessori, in originating new materials and attaining greater flexibility of method in adapting the new instruction to individual children, we need to know of his work, too, and benefit by it. Already Montessori's teaching methods have made themselves felt from New

England to California; her name is a household word; but of Decroly's work we know far less. The work at Bedales suggests a new valuation of coeducation. We should know of it. Miss Mackinder's amazing work with children of the London slums illuminates the whole significant subject of self-instruction. Cousinet's success with group-instruction in France leads us to think of possibilities beyond anything that our own Project Method has yet achieved. We need to know about them all.

It is not with the common run of schools that this report deals. People who are struggling toward the light, who have seen just enough to realize the darkness with which they are surrounded, can do better by turning their eyes toward those schools where day is dawning.

It was to search out those schools beyond the range of the American experiments with which we were already familiar, to look at the new day of education through the eyes of the teachers in them, to watch the children as the new light begins to steal over them, that I left my own schools and, accompanied by my wife and two of my teachers, visited a number of experimental schools in Europe.

We found much of absorbing interest. The intensity of suffering which Europe has experienced

and the great changes resulting from the World War make Europe even more dissatisfied than we are in America with the schools that have turned out the present generation of adults.

There are a number of types of educational experiments in Europe; few, if any of them, are strictly scientific. Many of them are striving toward the fullest possible development of each individual child.

This book is not scholarly. It does not represent a scientific investigation. It does not attempt to evaluate the experiments it describes. We were not in any school long enough, and had neither the time nor the means, to make a critical study. It does not attempt to be comprehensive. We were searching for schools and experiments that would throw light on our particular problems, that would stimulate us to new thought and effort, rather than for material for any scientific treatise or comprehensive summary. Those who wish more detailed accounts may turn to such interesting and valuable books as *Bedales,* by J. H. Badley; *Individual Work in Infant Schools,* by Miss Jessie Mackinder; *The Decroly Method,* by A. Hamaide; *The Dalton Plan,* by Miss Helen Parkhurst; *The Dalton Laboratory Plan,* by Evelyn Dewey; *Saunderson of Oundle,* by H. G. Wells; or, to books of a more general nature, *The New Educa-*

tion in Europe, by Frederick W. Roman; and the First Yearbook of the International Institute of Teacher's College.

These sketches attempt to catch something of the spirit behind the pioneering schools. That the schools have many faults and limitations is of course true. But every one of them has a vision. Every one sheds some light on the problems that we who are educating the new generation must attempt to solve.

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CHAPTER I

Modern Lights in Ancient Halls—Oundle

ALL important types of experiments may be found in England developed to a greater or less degree. We are therefore glad that through visiting a number of experimental schools in England first we were able to have a glimpse of each kind of experiment that we were later to meet in the various countries on the continent. In England we found schools which boldly grafted the new on to the old, and these presented a rather incongruous appearance. We found schools which sought the fullest development of the individual child through a carefully balanced day with a wide range of activities, a reasonable amount of freedom and fine living conditions. We found a congested school in the poor part of London where little children were recognized as individuals even when one teacher had to handle forty-five or fifty of them, and we found a daring experiment up near Manchester where the teachers sought to develop each child by giving almost complete freedom.

The traditional secondary education for boys of the upper classes in England is in the so-called "Public School," which, of course, is very far

from public in the American sense of the word, being a high-priced boarding-school for the élite. Most of these Public Schools value tradition and athletics above all else in the world. The classic Latin and Greek are considered the only course for boys of ability, the "modern side," or course containing modern languages and science, being largely relegated to the dullards.

All this was gone over for me by the highly refined, genial, and scholarly head of one of the most ancient of the Public Schools. He and his viewpoint were very much like the assembly hall in which the boys were chanting their prayers in Latin. The original assembly hall had been built before the Norman Conquest, and some of the stones still remained from that day. The rest had all been built in the Middle Ages. It was dark, interesting for its antiquity and traditions, quite fascinating for an American on a short visit, but oppressive and gloomy to the extreme when considered as the dwelling-place of living twentieth-century boys.

But there is a Public School in England which is trying to break away, and has installed a modern electric lighting system in its educational concepts. The effect is a rather startling lighting up of the stone walls of tradition that remain at Oundle, not far from Northampton, but at least it is a lighting

up. This is the school which Mr. H. G. Wells chose from all England as the place to educate his own sons, and which he has so fully and eloquently described in his *Saunderson of Oundle.*

Recently, in America, the terms "horizontal ability" and "vertical ability" have been creeping into the educational vocabulary. They are awkward terms, but they serve to point a distinction of great importance to teachers and children alike, that is, bit by bit, becoming recognized. Psychologists speak of a child who has learned by rote, who can recite his memorized lessons glibly but is unable to apply the information they contain to facts of his own existence, as having "horizontal ability" only. On the other hand the child who can *do,* who can apply his knowledge to life, who is able to utilize his arithmetic in actual bookkeeping and his knowledge of physics and mechanics in repairing a motor, is spoken of as having "vertical ability" also. The difference between the two abilities is, roughly, the difference between knowing about automobiles from reading about them, and being able to drive a machine oneself or recognizing a particular make at a glance. It is the difference between knowing Latin for classroom purposes only and the ability to recognize a Latin root in an unfamiliar word encountered in an English novel and guess its meaning. In a sense it may

be said to be the difference between "pure" and "applied" knowledge. It is the lack of the ability to impart not only knowledge but its application that is at present one of the gravest charges against American schools. In too many cases, apparently, grammar and high school graduates alike in America receive only "horizontal" training; not infrequently students graduate from this or that college with high honors without having acquired the "vertical ability" that enables them to do more than remember unrelated facts, or do anything with the information they have amassed except teach it to others in the way they acquired it themselves. "Culture," Norman Hapgood wrote, when, as Editor of *Harper's Weekly*, he was attempting to formulate a set of stimulating definitions, "is the ability to apply knowledge to life." Using the word in that sense too many students leave American schools without their due share of "culture." They lack that almost indefinable "vertical ability."

It was to meet, in a measure, this lack that the manual training movement developed in American schools at the end of the last century. It is in response to the same need that our great technical high schools have come into existence, with their forge work and factory work and domestic science and all the rest. That they have not altogether

satisfied the need is perhaps because, to a great degree, the link between classroom work and machine shop has never been adequately welded; too often the teaching methods have remained those of the traditional system of which the manual training development is merely one experimental outgrowth.

It is here that Oundle can help us; not so much by presenting anything particularly new or different as by suggesting a unification of two divergent educational methods. At Oundle *every* student gets a certain amount of such work, is required to develop at least a certain amount of "vertical ability." It is true that the two branches of learning, the classical and the "scientific" or manual course, are pitifully unrelated; but at least it is true that every boy in the school, even those taking classical courses, must become acquainted with certain phases of mechanical education. In many American schools we allow the students to elect, as at Oundle, classical or scientific courses; but we do not see to it that those choosing the classical courses are not allowed to leave the school until they too have acquired at least some knowledge of machinery and its uses on which so much of our entire social development is predicated. Certainly if Latin was necessary for all schoolboys two hundred years ago, a similar

knowledge of mechanics can not be an altogether useless thing to-day. Unquestionably this application of shop work to students electing classical courses would have a tendency to give them balance and keep them from becoming the over-specialized students of the horizontal-ability-only type that we see caricatured in American cartoons of the little boy with the high forehead, wearing horn-rimmed spectacles. There is also, to be sure, a certain pre-vocational value in the combination of at least some such work with a classical course, inasmuch as it enables every student to find out for himself whether or not he enjoys mechanical work and can do well at it.

Oundle has shops and laboratories as well equipped as the best American technical high schools, an equipment quite without parallel in the secondary schools of England. Every boy, whether studying on the classic or the modern side, must spend one week out of every ten in the shops. During this week he makes equipment for the school. He spends one or more of these shop weeks in learning to draught patterns, another period of time is spent in making these patterns in wood, another period in casting, another period in the forge, another period in the machine-shop. By the time a boy has finished his course at Oundle, he has had all of the basic work in iron and wood,

not for making playthings, but for making equipment and scientific and technical apparatus for the school. During their free time, however, the boys may use the shops to make things for themselves.

I asked boy after boy whether he liked the shop work. The usual reply was, "Yes, but we wish we had one week out of ten in class and nine weeks in shop!"

In the laboratories again we found real interest on the part of the students, and first-class equipment and instruction. Chemistry was still being taught with the idea of disciplining the pupils' minds rather than of giving them useful information or skill, yet the practical applications of the chemistry were numerous, and a considerable amount of individual freedom was allowed the students.

In the biology laboratory one found the reverse ideal. "I would not teach botany as botany for anything in the world," said the young instructor. "But give me a laboratory into which we can bring real problems and solve them, and the boys and I can throw ourselves into the work. We go out into the fields and orchards. Perhaps we find a disease in one of the trees. We bring in the evidences of it and examine them under the microscope and use our books. Then we put our knowledge into practical application by going out to cure

the disease. Or we find that a piece of ground will not raise the crops which we wish to plant, because it needs draining, and we go out and dig the ditches. Yes, these sons of English gentlemen get right in and dig, and they like it."

He went on, full of enthusiasm, to tell of the botanical gardens in which they had samples of many kinds of crops. He showed us his museum of specimens, both zoological and botanical, prepared by the boys themselves. He showed us the skeleton of a pig which had died on the farm, been buried by the boys in lime, and was now being mounted by one of them.

The success of this work in biology and botany has been paralleled in some of the American agricultural colleges. At the University of Wisconsin, for example, faculty members are detailed for contact work with farmers in the different counties of the State. This brings them in touch with actual farm problems, and when they return to their classrooms they bring these problems with them, so that the agricultural students are given work on the experimental farms of the college almost as closely related to the living problems of agriculturists as those of the schoolboys at Oundle in their work of investigating plant diseases actually encountered on their field trips. In both cases there is this great advantage of field work over the

ordinary biology and botany classes: that where the latter are liable merely to find illustrations of what has already been taught, the agricultural colleges and the Oundle teachers are more likely to obtain the living problems in their subject first, and allow the teaching to develop through the solving of these problems.

Another instructor told of the teachers' effort to fit their school to each individual boy. "We never let a boy fail," he said. "When one of them shows no ability in the classics, we give him more modern languages and science. If he does not show ability in one science, we try him in another. We had one boy here a while ago who was poor in almost everything he undertook. He had no self-confidence; but we discovered that he had a knack of handling people. So we gave him the job of building that little foundry you see out there." (He pointed to a one-room wooden building.) "We gave him regular paid laborers to work under his direction and he rolled up his sleeves and worked with them. He became so much interested in it that he stayed on during his Christmas holidays, and the day when the building was finished he did not stop work until eleven o'clock at night, he was so anxious to make the first casting in that foundry. Through this piece of work he learned confidence in himself, and he gained the confidence of his

fellow students. We began to find the lines of his ability and to develop them. We are not trying to give all our boys the same education. We are trying to find the ability of each one and to develop it as fully as possible."

In finding something that each boy can do well, that he can find joy in and gain confidence from, lies Saunderson's greatest single contribution. It is in the failure to do this very thing, in so many instances, that the more limited of our American schools can be justly criticized. The school that, quite aside from its success with the ordinary curriculum, is able to give a child confidence through his own successful accomplishment is taking a big step forward toward solving that greatest of all educational problems, how to teach, not merely arid information, but *successful living*. Nowhere, as yet, is this being done, either here or in England, on the scale on which it should be done.

Oundle, though doing many fine things, uses the same old method of lectures and classes in Latin and Greek and mathematics that have been used since medieval days. There is no more life, no more indication of the modern spirit than in the ancient and musty Public Schools to which most English gentlemen send their sons.

The only touch of modernism in methods of

instruction was in the department of history. Here an effort was being made to train the boys to look up topics in the library, and even to have charts of various historical epochs. This was too much of a strain, however, for continual application. Consequently the only history classes which were being conducted during our visit were the traditional dry lectures by the masters with laborious notes and occasional laconic answers to questions by the students. We saw their charts, however, and their plan for topical reference work in the library.

While the school itself dates back to about the thirteenth century, its shop and laboratory activities date back to the time when Saunderson, a man of broad vision, energy, and progressive ideas, took charge of the school. He had died the spring before our visit.

Oundle School is a rather surprising combination of the best things of the modern American technical high school with the ancient traditions of English education; of an arid scholarship with a profoundly human ideal. On the outworn older system it grafts some of the fine things of the new.

CHAPTER II

The School from Which the Dalton Plan Spread—The Girls' Secondary School, Streatham Hill

PEOPLE in England who can not afford to send their children to expensive Public Schools, send them to secondary schools where the fees are more moderate. It was in one of these schools in London that the most widely known experimental work of England began—the Girls' Secondary School at Streatham Hill. The head mistress is Miss Rosa Bassett and the experiment is one borrowed from America, known as the Dalton Plan. The Dalton Plan is a clear, even though incomplete, expression of the newer educational ideals. In developing responsibility the Dalton Plan takes a big step forward. It leaves a child feeling that he is himself responsible for his education, instead of allowing him to throw that responsibility on the teacher. In developing initiative, too, it is helpful.

In its origin one feels the influence of Montessori. Madame Montessori, with her keen intuitive vision, has stood strongly for individual development and comparative freedom for children. She has believed in allowing children to select from a carefully prepared environment those things which

are most necessary for their growth. She has urged that once a child is interested in an activity, he be not interrupted, that he be encouraged to concentrate for long periods on the work he is doing. All these elements exist in the Dalton Plan.

In 1915 Dr. Montessori demonstrated her work at the Panama Pacific Exposition in San Francisco. An American woman was in charge of the demonstration class. This woman was Miss Helen Parkhurst.

It happened that in San Francisco there was an American educator who had long seen the light and preached it with fiery words. In the elementary department of the State Normal School, of which he was president, Frederick Burk for years demonstrated the desirability of permitting children to progress through school at their own individual rates. He has exerted his utmost influence against lock-step methods. To him came Helen Parkhurst.

When Miss Parkhurst, imbued with Montessori's ideals, threshed out educational problems with Frederick Burk, the sparks flew. I was fortunate enough to be present at some of these discussions. Out of them grew certain modifications in Burk's work, by which children who were self-reliant were permitted to organize their own programs during a considerable part of the day. And

out of them, I believe, grew also some aspects of the Dalton Plan.

After leaving San Francisco Miss Parkhurst began experimenting in a little private school in New York. One of the patronesses of this school was Mrs. W. Murray Crane, wife of the late senator from Massachusetts. Mrs. Crane made it possible for Miss Parkhurst to introduce her idea in the public high school at Dalton, Massachusetts, where Mrs. Crane lived.

It was from this high school that Rosa Bassett obtained her inspiration. She started the plan in her own school in England, then came to America to visit Miss Parkhurst's work at Dalton and also to see other American experiments. She spread the gospel so vigorously in England that the Dalton Plan became the topic of educational meetings everywhere. We, in America, scarcely knew that Dalton existed, to say nothing of knowing of its educational experiments, until Miss Bassett's work in England became widely known.

Let me describe Miss Bassett's school as we found it. We entered a large study hall in which a number of girls were working independently and without the supervision of any teacher. Off this hall opened various classrooms and the office of Miss Bassett, the head mistress. I stepped up to one of the girls in the study hall and looked over

her shoulder. She was studying history. The girl sitting next to her was doing algebra. I asked her how it happened that each was working on a different subject. She replied:

"We may study anything we please. This is an individual period."

"What is an individual period?" I asked.

"A period when we may study anything we choose, or go into any laboratory room."

"What do you mean by a laboratory room?"

"Why, just a regular classroom where the mistress is ready to help you with your work in her subject."

"How do you know what to study?" (I made myself appear more ignorant of the plan than I really was. I wanted to see it through the child's eyes.)

"We have our assignment sheets," she told me. "You see this sheet from which I am studying is my month's assignment in history."

I saw that the sheet was a mimeographed one, containing four weekly assignments. Each assignment pointed out certain topics which were to be mastered, and referred to the pages in the text where these topics could be found.

"What do you do when you have finished your month's assignment?" was my next question.

"I work on my other subjects."

"But suppose you finish all of your subjects before the end of the month, then what?"

"Then I can do anything I want—read, or just do nothing."

"Can you go on to your next month's work?"

"No, we can't."

"What happens to you if you have not finished a month's assignment on time?"

"Then we must stay after school or work on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons."

"If you don't succeed in finishing your assignment each month, even with Wednesday and Saturday afternoon's work, what happens to you at the end of the year?"

"We fail the course."

"Then must you repeat the whole year's work in that subject? And how about your other subjects—must you repeat those too even if you did not fail in them?"

"Yes, we must do the whole year's work over if we fail in any main subject."

She left me to go into one of the laboratory rooms now for some help, so I turned to her companion and continued my questioning.

"How much of your time is devoted to individual periods?"

"That depends," she answered. "My own program gives me six individual periods a day, while

some girls have only one or two. It depends on what subjects we are taking and how often our classes meet."

"Don't you girls waste some time when you don't have to prepare your assignments day by day?"

"Of course we do," she giggled, "but if we waste too much time we won't get our assignment completed by the end of the month."

I stepped into one of the laboratory rooms. The teacher sat at her desk. Most of the girls sat at their desks studying. A few were gathered about the teacher, asking for help in that teacher's subject. While I was watching this, the bell rang and most of the girls rose and left the room.

"What is it?" I asked the teacher.

"The beginning of the next period," she answered. "I have a class in here now."

"Is that class programmed?" I asked.

"Yes, of course. The girls meet with their teachers according to regular program two or three times a week for presentation of new subject matter and for discussion. During the programmed times the girls must come to the class."

"Are all the girls programmed at once, or are some having individual periods while others are having class work?"

"The latter is the case. You will notice that

some of the girls are remaining behind in the study hall, others are going to rooms where the teacher is having a laboratory period, while these girls who are coming in here are regularly assigned to this class at this hour."

"Could girls who are having individual periods come in to you for help while you are having a class?"

"Not at all. They can only come in to me when I am having a laboratory period. Some mistress is having a laboratory period at almost every hour of the day. Therefore, if a girl needs help she can work on the subject in which there is a laboratory period at the time."

At luncheon we had some lively discussions with different teachers. All of them were in favor of the Dalton Plan as compared with the old type of schooling, but they were frankly critical of its limitations. There was an amusing tendency on the part of almost every teacher to show why the plan works less well in her own subject than in any other. The Latin teacher particularly was vigorous in her defense of the plan, but equally emphatic in showing that it was more applicable to almost any other subject than it was to Latin.

I tried to get at the underlying cause of this criticism and found that it hinged largely on the tendency of the girls to procrastinate until the end

of the month. During the early part of the month the teacher would have almost no correcting of papers, while toward the end she would be swamped. It annoyed the teachers to see many girls loafing the first part of the month, then driving themselves to finish their work toward the end.

The limitation which I felt most keenly lay in the setting of a time limit, making every girl, regardless of her capacity, cover the same amount of ground in a month. This limitation does not exist in Miss Parkhurst's own private school in New York, and is not so much a part of the Dalton Plan as it is a failure to carry out the Plan fully. Miss Bassett recognized this relic of the mass method of teaching and tried to remedy it in part by having extra assignments. Every girl was expected to take the extra assignment in one or two subjects, having freedom in the choice of these subjects. Thus, one girl might do five problems in algebra, while the girl doing special work would take seven. This made some provision for individual differences. Then of course the freedom with which children could arrange their own programs during their individual periods enabled each girl to spend the longest time on the subject which required the most time in her particular case.

In spite of these efforts to provide for varying abilities, however, we see in the effort to make all students cover the same ground in a month or a year one of the weaknesses of the Dalton Plan, as carried out in London and in some schools in the United States. It is clearly an inheritance from the American system of education that Burk characterized as lock-step, the effort to make children of varying ability keep step in regimental formation, class by class and grade by grade.

In certain more advanced American schools where the unfairness of making all children advance at an even rate is recognized, pupils are frequently divided into three groups. The A group covers a certain amount of ground with an abundance of additional practice work. The B group, of slower children, covers the same amount of ground according to the textbook, but with less practice work and other related activity. The C group, the slowest of all, covers the necessary textbook minimum, just as the A and B groups do, but without any additional practice work or related activity at all. This is what Miss Bassett achieves through giving assignments of varying difficulty. The method is called "enriching the curriculum" and allows the brighter students to do more work than the minimum required for the mastery of the subject. But its obvious unfairness applies just as much

to the Dalton Plan as to the ordinary American public school grouping, since obviously it fails to give additional practice to the very students who need it most—the slowest of all. Exactly the reverse process is needed, something that will let the C group scholar solve the greatest number of problems in any particular subject, since the C group child is the one who needs the practice most, if the subject is to be thoroughly mastered. It all grows out of the effort, in itself arbitrary and unnecessary, except insofar as the convenience of the teachers rather than the need of the children is taken into consideration, to keep the scholars together instead of letting each advance at the rate best suited to his own particular ability. As the Dalton Plan is gradually improved and modified it is reasonable to expect that this grave defect will eventually be done away with.

Already in several United States schools extra curriculum work is given where expediency demands that children of varying abilities cover approximately the same textbook ground in a year. At Winnetka we allow the brighter students, who finish their assigned work in short order, to busy themselves with outside activities which they themselves select; they may, for instance, do work for a school paper published by the students. In Rochester, New York, student clubs furnish

a similar opportunity, the brighter students getting more time to devote to the radio or other club that they are particularly interested in. In the University of Chicago high school "plus credits" are given for extra work, with the idea that securing these extra credits will in itself assist in developing initiative. A student finishing the prescribed work in a course will attain for that work a possible grade, say, of C. Additional outside work, done on the student's own initiative, may raise that mark to B, while a still greater amount of outside work will give a possible A. Obviously where this is done with the idea of developing initiative particularly in mind, the outside work should be both free and different from that of the regular course, rather than merely more of the same type of work.

The Dalton Plan is a real part of the new educational movement. It is characterized by its effort to provide more natural growth and greater freedom for each child. The definite assignments through which each girl in Miss Bassett's school moves forward at her own rate during the month shows Burk's influence. The permission to arrange their own programs so as to allow each girl to concentrate as long as she wishes on any one subject shows Montessori's part in the origin of this Plan.

The Plan develops a sense of responsibility; it encourages initiative and self-reliance; it takes definite steps toward an adaptation of the school to the individual differences of the child; and it does all of these things in a way so simple that any school can readily adopt it. All that is necessary is to mimeograph the month's assignments in each subject, decrease the number of class meetings from five per week to two or three per week, and give the pupils individual periods in the time previously devoted to class meetings and study.

One great contribution of Miss Bassett's school is that it has assisted the progress of the Dalton Plan by *publishing its assignments.* This has helped others who wished to inaugurate the system and has undoubtedly been in no small degree responsible for its successful spread in England. The importance of publishing assignments can readily be seen when we realize that one of the greatest stumbling blocks in the way of successful operation of the Dalton Plan by those unfamiliar with it lies in poor assignments.

More Dalton Plan attempts fail, it is safe to say, because of poor assignments than because of any other reason. Publication of assignments makes possible criticism, discussion and eventual

improvement, as well as guiding those who are for the first time experimenting with the Plan.

It is encouraging that through means so simple as the Dalton Plan, such worth-while things can be accomplished; and it is also encouraging to note from the swift spread of this Plan that many teachers are awakening to the need for more freedom for children and greater adaptation of the schools to individual needs.

CHAPTER III

An Old "New School" That Is Still Young—Bedales

FINE as the Dalton Plan is, it is limited and incomplete. We realized this more vividly when we visited a school in which some of the limitations of the Dalton Plan, as practiced in the Girls' Secondary School, had been removed, and we saw the ideal of the fullest possible development of each individual child as the dominant note. Such a school was Bedales.

Bedales lies on a low hill in a beautiful stretch of English country between the north and south Downs. It is one of the earliest modern experimental schools. It was founded thirty years ago by its present head master.

When a young man in his late twenties, J. H. Badley was associated with Cecil Reddie in the first "New School" in England, "Abbotsholm," founded in 1889. Three years later, Badley's father died, leaving him a considerable inheritance. Instead of using this to lead a life of leisure or to found a big business, Badley deliberately set out to find a way to use it in the service of mankind. Being imbued with Cecil Reddie's ideals, he felt that the best service he could perform would

be to establish a school, based on the same broad general principles as Abbotsholm, in which he could develop a type of education organized around the needs of children rather than around the traditional discipline of their forefathers. He therefore bought one hundred sixty acres of beautiful land near enough London for people to visit and be influenced by his work, and far enough away to have the atmosphere and solitude of the country.

The buildings themselves, the grounds, the equipment, and the teachers are all unusually fine. I wish I could give something of the feel of the place, the quite informal atmosphere, the beautiful countryside, the buildings—attractive and efficient places for work—the boys and girls respectful, well-mannered, but unrepressed and natural. As one talks to Mr. Badley himself one feels that the school is the very expression of the ideals of this kindly, wise, and able man, with his full brown beard, his soft shirt, and his eyes showing both tenderness and fire.

American public schools are facing each year a more serious problem in the attitude their boys and girls maintain toward each other. It is the old problem of coeducation, from grammar school age to college. Recently it has become in many sections of the United States even more acute, with high

school students indulging in mixed parties and escapades that leave parents as well as teachers shocked and questioning. Words like "flapper" and "sheik" have come into common use to denote the existence of a new order of adolescence, with a precocious, over-sentimentalized sex relationship that starts playing at loving-making far too early.

In direct contrast to this early development of the boy-and-girl relationship to the sentimental stage, we find at Bedales boys and girls playing and studying and working together under almost ideal conditions of friendly cooperation and frank, unsentimentalized companionship.

Bedales is in itself something that we do not find in America—a coeducational boarding-school for children of widely varying ages, from kindergarten to college. Those from five to nine years old are in the junior division, those from ten to seventeen in the senior.

The boys and girls ride together, shoot together, dance together, act, play tennis, play hockey, and play cricket together. They care for the school grounds, working side by side, and throughout it all the attitude of the boys toward the girls, and of the girls toward the boys, is comradely and straightforward, a relationship that can be admired and that does not have to be feared.

How has this attitude been brought about? If

we could only take the answer to that question and apply it to our own schools we might here and there better coeducational conditions immeasurably. But it is not as easy as that. For more than thirty years at Bedales a tradition has been growing up, fostering this attitude of frank comradeship and discouraging sentimentality. It has been built up by the teachers but has been carried along by the students themselves, until now, as school generation succeeds school generation, the boys and girls themselves wield the influence of society against any over-sentimental offender. If flirting starts, those indulging in it are soon *de-sentimentalized* by the attitude of their companions, who regard the performances as merely silly.

We asked Mr. Badley if, in general, he would favor coeducation for boarding-schools, housing children from the time they were five years old until they entered the university. He was unequivocal in his reply.

"It is one of the essentials of the school," he said. "It is the natural and logical outcome of our view of education as a training for the whole of life by means of the fullest possible range of experiences. It should not be limited to one sex any more than to one nationality or creed. The aim of bringing up boys and girls together is not to make them alike, but amongst other things, to see

that neither sex is debarred from the fullest individual development by merely conventional differences of treatment. Once we recognize that no two human beings are exactly alike, and that children, if we are to educate instead of merely drill them, cannot be treated in masses, but must be considered as human beings, each in some respect unique, we soon discover that the differences of sex are no greater than those of temperament and natural capacity. Only when boys and girls grow up together do they develop and hold natural differences, as well as resemblances, most normally and healthily."

Certainly the spirit between the boys and girls at Bedales was unusually fine—natural and devoid of sentimentality. Whether or not such good results could be accomplished along similar lines in American schools by securing the whole-hearted cooperation of the teaching force in building up such a common-sense attitude among boys and girls as prevails at Bedales is an interesting speculation. It should at least be abundantly worth trying.

In its organization Bedales is divided into two sections—the lower school and the upper school. Both sections are boarding-schools and both sections are coeducational. The lower school contains children between the ages of five and nine. They are divided into three groups according to age,

the "early bedders," the "middle bedders," and the "late bedders." The early bedders have freedom almost as complete as that which we were to see in O'Neill's school. These children are using the Montessori materials under well-trained Montessori teachers who keep themselves in the background and allow the children to find their own ways of using the material.

The "middle bedders" have a slight semblance of a program. Half of their morning is spent in some form of intellectual work and half in the crafts. During the time in which they are supposed to be doing intellectual work, however, they are free to do anything except go to the shops or in the playground. They may read, write or do arithmetic, or even sit and do nothing.

The groups are very small, the discipline quite informal, without disorder. In spite of this freedom I was surprised to see that a considerable number of children were working diligently in an effort to learn the English tables of weight. I asked the teacher how it happened that they were doing this.

She said, "They are going to have a test on Monday. We do not usually give tests, but the children themselves have demanded one; so I have told them what it will cover and they are preparing for it."

I asked her what would happen in case a child missed any examples in the test or failed the test completely.

"Nothing at all," she replied.

"Won't they even have to make up the examples which they missed?"

"No. The test is given because they want it and if they wish to do the examples which were wrong, of course I shall help them."

The handwork for both the "middle bedders" and the "late bedders" was unusually good. Indeed it was what one would expect after seeing the adequately equipped workshops, with their materials for drawing, woodwork, and basket-making. There were well-made looms, and we saw the children weaving artistically designed scarfs and mats. In a sunny window several little girls were busy making hooked rugs. Others were getting a room ready for dyeing their own fabrics. The children were quite free to do any kind of handwork they wished, provided only that the instrument they wished to use was not being used by some one else.

The "late bedders" did their studying in the evening.

"In the morning they are full of energy and want to create things," the house-mistress explained to us, "so in the morning we let them go

into the woodworking shop or into the other shops and make things. In the afternoon they have their rest and their outdoor games. Then by evening they are physically tired and ready to settle down to mental work."

The intellectual work for these "late bedders" is by assignment and follows roughly the Dalton Plan.

The senior school, for children between the ages of ten and seventeen, is much the largest part, occupying several buildings. It was here in this senior school that we saw how the Dalton Plan might be developed.

Bedales has really taken only one step beyond Miss Bassett, but that step removed several of the objections to the Dalton Plan as we saw it in London. *There were no time limits on assignments.* A child worked on one assignment until he had finished it, then proceeded immediately to the next.

One of the effects was an increased industry on the part of the children. They felt that it paid them to work up to capacity, whereas at the Girls' Secondary School there was a tendency to loaf during the first part of the month and work hard later. At Bedales, months had nothing to do with assignments. The harder a child worked the sooner he could finish any particular subject and go

on to the next—the sooner ultimately he could finish school, or take advanced courses and electives which he desired. This naturally resulted in eliminating the tendency complained of by the teachers at Streatham Hill, the tendency to swamp the teachers with paper-correcting during the latter part of each month. Under the Bedales plan, children were finishing their assignments at all times.

At the Girls' Secondary School, if a pupil finished an assignment ahead of time there was nothing to do except additional work along the same line. At Bedales, every moment could be profitably used. At the Girls' Secondary School again, if a pupil had not finished a year's work in a year, she had to repeat the entire year's work in all subjects. At Bedales, failure was impossible. No child need ever repeat a year's work. If the year's work was not done at the end of the year, the child could go on the following September from where he had left off.

Another advantage of the Bedales plan is the thoroughness with which each child must master his assignment. He can never go on to the next assignment until he has reached standard.

Still another contribution that Bedales makes is in showing how certain advantages of individual instruction can be secured by parallel courses. The

class work does not, for the most part, correlate with the individual work. In French, for example, the class work is practice in conversation and pronunciation, while the individual work is drill in grammar, vocabulary, translation, and prose composition. The course in spoken French is offered to those who, through superior work, can fit themselves to benefit from it. It is conducted somewhat after the manner of the "language clubs" with which we are familiar in America, and offers a strong inducement to all children taking French to do their best that they may participate in it.

In mathematics there is no regular class work, the master taking advantage of such groups as naturally form themselves from time to time, to discuss new aspects of the work.

In history and geography, the teacher felt that too great a disparity existed between the discussions in the class periods and the individual work that the children were doing. Consequently, she was reorganizing these two subjects so that children could only do one month's work at a time.

"There is no great harm in this," she said, "if it is done in only one or two subjects, for the children can use any surplus time in individual work on any of the other subjects or in special assignments in the history or geography."

It is not the individual instruction, however,

which would be considered by Bedales as its outstanding educational contribution. It is the effort to develop fully whatever is in each child, to bring together boys and girls in an environment which will develop them on all sides. There are physical exercises and athletic games, there is actual work on the place for the good of the school, there are hours in the library for quiet study and investigation, and, above all, there is the atmosphere lent by the surroundings of the school and by the earnest, well-trained teachers.

The program of the school illustrates the balanced day. The rounded development of each child is its aim. It was one of the older boys who explained the program to us as he guided us across the hills, past flaming holly, toward the lower school.

"We get up at 7:15," he said. "This morning I got up at 7:00 because we had fire drill. Twenty minutes after we get up there is a 'call-over,' usually out of doors. Then we take a run and then breakfast. After breakfast, we make up our own beds and tidy up the dormitory. Then our classes begin. We have a half hour break in the middle of the morning and we also have a period for gymnastics.

"Just before 1:00 o'clock there is an inspection, then we have dinner and a half hour's siesta.

During this half hour we loaf around outdoors, go to the library or go to our rooms and read, or take a nap. In the afternoon we have our regular school games and athletics. If it is raining, we take 'wet runs.' On some afternoons we study and on two days of each week we do outside work around the place.

"We have tea at 6:00 and usually have class work, study and singing until 8:30. On the days when we study in the afternoons we use part of the evening for our school societies, a lecture, concert or dancing. At 8:30 there is an assembly for prayers. Then we all shake hands with the staff and go to our dormitories and to bed."

Coeducation, the lofty aims of Badley and his staff, the balance between physical and mental activities, adaptation of the academic work to individual needs, and the beautiful surroundings, all combine to make Bedales an almost ideal school.

This very fact would seem to defeat one of the main purposes of Bedales—that of being a model that other schools may follow. Certainly it will be a long time before people the world over will give their children the opportunities for all-around development which are given at Bedales. Yet Bedales has played its part in stimulating educators and in serving as a model for schools in other places. At least two of the schools which we visited

later, L'Ecole des Roches in France and Glarisegg in Switzerland, were directly inspired by Bedales.

Although next to the oldest of all the "New Schools," Bedales is one of the newest in its methods. The individual work which I have described at some length was only a year old when we visited the school. Badley himself is keenly awake to new ideas, anxious to find ways of improving the school, close to the problem of making education fit the new needs of a fast-changing world.

CHAPTER IV

Babes Who Teach Themselves—The Marlborough Infants' School, L.C.C.

EVEN Bedales did not have such a complete development of individual instruction as we found in an infants' school in Chelsea. Here Jessie Mackinder has worked out a most fascinating array of devices by which children from poor homes, massed together in classes of forty-five and fifty, work freely and individually in teaching themselves the three R's.

Miss Mackinder has hit upon a means by which individual work can be done with large classes; the use of self-instructive and self-corrective material. She is a brown-eyed, ingenious woman, who for the past five years has been experimenting with individual instruction. She, like most teachers of the new order, owes much to Montessori. Her very little children—three or four years old—use the regular Montessori materials in a large and attractive nursery room. When the children are five years old they begin to use Miss Mackinder's own games to teach themselves to read and print and figure.

Her school building is ugly, with a walled-in

cement courtyard for play. The district is a congested part of London. The children come from homes in some of which the whole family has but one room. Yet, on entering a classroom in this school, one feels immediately a breath of freedom, a stir of activity and intense interest.

As we looked about one of the rooms, we saw that each child was busy with some game or device. We stepped up to a little girl. On her desk she had a box of letters with the alphabet printed on cards. In the lower left-hand corner of each card was a dot on which she was trained to put her left thumb so that the card would surely be right side up. She took one of these cards and with it walked to the back wall of the room. On this wall were twenty-six pictures, each with a letter of the alphabet under it—there was an apple with *a* under it, a boy with *b*, a cat with *c*, and so on. The little girl had a *t* in her hand. She held it under *a* of the apple to see whether it matched. Finding that it did not, she held it under the *b* of boy, under the *c* of cat, and under each other letter of the alphabet until she finally came to a *t*. She saw that her *t* matched the *t* on the wall and looked up to see what picture was above it. It was a top. Then she repeated the word, stressing as best she could the initial sound, *t*op. She worked hard for a few minutes, trying to get the first sound out of the

word. Finally she got it. Saying the sound of *t*, she ran to her teacher. She held up her little card with a *t* on it and said "*t*—*t*!" The teacher gave a nod and the child ran back to her desk.

At her desk was a box of pictures cut from magazines and pasted on cards. Under each picture was the name of the object depicted. The child selected each picture which had a name beginning with *t*. Each time she would say, "*t*-tram," or "*t*-tack," or "*t*-turtle." Then she took a little blackboard, the size of a slate, and on it she printed the names of these various pictures beginning with *t*.

Each child learns, by some such device as this just described, the sounds of all the letters of the alphabet. The next step is to learn combinations of letters, like *sh*. For these he uses a card with, say, the picture of a fish. On this are printed the letters "fi," followed by the letters "sh," slightly above the first two letters; thus fi*sh*. The child already knows how to sound out the *f* and *i*. He is taught that when two letters together have a line under them, they are sounded as if they were one letter; therefore, he knows that *sh* is a single sound. Since he knows that the whole word is from the picture, and knows the sounds of *f* and *i*, he can work out for himself the sound *sh*. By

using such cards he works through all his letter combinations and simple phonograms.

Miss Mackinder has described her work recently in a well-written, freely illustrated book. She has many concrete, practical suggestions immediately usable in our own schools. To describe each of her devices in full would simply be rewriting her own book. Suffice it to say that through an ingenious series of devices such as those of hers described here the child is led, one step at a time, to a mastery of reading and printing. Through a similar series he learns all of his number combinations and the four fundamental operations of arithmetic.

The development of new materials by which a child can be assisted and stimulated in self-instruction has been, in fact, the outstanding feature of Miss Mackinder's work. Her resourcefulness in this development of materials opens new vistas for individual instruction by showing how large classes, like her own, up to fifty and even more, can successfully be handled—even with younger pupils down to kindergarten age. When we recall the fact that she is working in a London tenement district, with limited funds, the results she has already obtained seem almost miraculous. In America, Courtis of Detroit alone has even ap-

proximated her success with larger classes; his success, like hers, has been largely through the creation of the necessary *materials* (in his case, picture-reading books and the like) for self-instruction.

It is interesting that in this reconstruction of materials Miss Mackinder has paralleled the work of several American educators who have been preaching the doctrine of individual instruction. Burk, at San Francisco, entirely reconstructed all of the elementary materials on an individual basis, and since his death Miss Mary Ward has carried the work along. A. H. Sutherland of Los Angeles has done similar work. Courtis has been working along the same line for years. And my own teachers in Winnetka, beginning about the same time as Miss Mackinder did (1919), have prepared self-instructive materials for children of all grades with exactly the same purpose in view. But until very recently, at least, none of us in this country has developed the individual instruction materials in the primary grades as completely and as ingeniously as has Jessie Mackinder.

Her work shows that whenever proper materials can be invented or procured and, through their use, the proper start be made, children working under the methods of individual instruction can be allowed greater freedom to develop along their

own lines, with happiness and individuality. Just as at Bedales, in fact even more than at Bedales, the working spirit, the desire to learn, can be instilled by the intelligent utilization of such materials as Miss Mackinder, Madame Montessori, and others have developed. Nowhere is there a more convincing demonstration of how necessary and effective the right materials are in developing in children the desire to learn, and encouraging them and stimulating them to successful self-instruction.

Miss Mackinder's work also throws additional light on Madame Montessori's work, in showing how the underlying principles of Montessori's methods may be utilized even when the materials are changed. The limitation of the Montessori method to the Montessori materials has at times proved one of the greatest handicaps to the method itself, the principles being more far-reaching and valuable than the devices that have so far been associated with it. Because of the limited number of the Montessori materials, many American followers of the method have used the materials in ways that, although effective, would have amazed Madame Montessori herself.

Because of Madame Montessori's own prohibitions few teachers have improved on her materials. Miss Mackinder is one of the most important of

those who, working ahead along individual and independent, although similar, lines, have added greatly to the store of known devices for assisting children to learn and develop.

The children in Miss Mackinder's school learn to print rather than to write. Let me pause here a moment to say parenthetically that in many of the English schools of to-day, and recently in a few American schools, they are teaching what they call script printing, instead of the "cursive" handwriting commonly used here and in most countries. They claim that not only is this printing far more legible, but that children taught such printing spell better, because they see the relation of what they write to what they have read. They claim, too, that it is much easier to teach a child to print than to write, and most striking of all, they produce figures to prove that children taught to print do so as rapidly as other children write.

About two hours of each day in Miss Mackinder's school are spent by the children on individual work. During those two hours they are almost uninterrupted. The teacher walks about among them, helping this child, answering that child's question, getting out new boxes of cards, working every minute. The children, having something to occupy their full time and attention, work like little beavers. We saw no disorder and no attempts by

the teacher to discipline the children. There was a hum of activity throughout each room. The children moved about freely and spoke quietly to one another about their work, but each child was too busy to get into mischief.

The rest of each day is given to such activities as singing, drawing, story-telling, folk dancing, little dramatizations, and physical exercises. Miss Mackinder finds she has ample time for such free activities.

When we were there Miss Mackinder had just given some standard tests to the children and found that on the average they were nearly a year in advance of children in other London schools—this in spite of the poor surroundings, the large classes, and the short amount of time spent each day on formal school work.

In reorganizing schools so that they will develop each individual child fully, one object is to make the school work fit the child's individual capacity. There was only a touch of this at Oundle. The Dalton Plan carried it further. The Bedales plan reached real individual instruction, but Miss Mackinder has shown how work can be individualized for little children in big classes. In her work alone we find the materials of instruction made over with the new purpose in view. Miss Parkhurst in our own country, Miss Bassett at

Streatham Hill, Mr. Badley at Bedales, have found ways of using for individual instruction materials that were originally prepared for class instruction. Miss Mackinder has gone still further. She has prepared material especially for individual instruction, and prepared it at the level where such instruction is most difficult.

CHAPTER V

Freeing Mill Drudges—O'Neill At Kearsley

AN entirely different experiment is that of E. F. O'Neill at Kearsley in Lancashire. It was the most radical experiment we found in England, and next to Hamburg, and perhaps Bakule's school in Prague, the most radical experiment we found in all Europe.

Freedom, in its essence, is self-government. In a world of democracies, no progress toward greater freedom and higher civilization is possible unless the capacity for intelligent self-government is continually advancing. This fact has a pronounced application to our American schools; we have only to realize that a child unable to govern himself can never become an effective citizen in a self-governing community, to see its force. And our educational problem is tremendously complicated by the fact that here in America we are still teaching children, by and large, not by methods that develop control and responsibility and independence and self-discipline, but by methods that rely on teacher control and teacher discipline and teacher responsibility—in other words, by methods

that tend to break down, rather than build up, the capacity for self-government.

Early American schools developed under free conditions. America, as a pioneer country, was a land of freedom; from the very beginning largely a self-governing land. Freedom was in the air; children grew up as individuals, independent, able to think for themselves and take part in their self-governing communities. It was not necessary for the schools to develop the spirit of independence. Children acquired their sense of responsibility, their capacity for intelligent, independent thought *outside* the classroom; the little red school-house added the three R's, with, here and there, a strict disciplinary routine that tended merely to balance, rather than break down, the abundant independence the youngsters already possessed.

But to-day conditions have changed. The need for developing responsibility and independence has fallen more largely on the schools, where children now spend a greater proportion of their time and receive a greater proportion of their training. Conditions of American life to-day, particularly metropolitan conditions, no longer have in themselves the independence-fostering qualities that life in small, self-governing communities formerly afforded. "The Wind of Freedom Blows!"

reads the translation of one of our American university mottoes. But, where originally this Wind of Freedom blew outside the schoolhouse, it is now necessary that, to a far greater extent than is yet the case, it blow *inside* the schoolhouse as well, that it may continue blowing without.

It is for this reason that the experiments in the so-called "Free" schools of Europe, such as that of E. F. O'Neill, are particularly stimulating to American teachers and parents, interested in seeing the coming generation developed into men and women able to use, and not abuse, real freedom.

O'Neill was hard to find. He has been somewhat neglected. Few English educators seemed to know much about him. He is of the genius type, independent, brilliant, rather caustic, displeased with compromise, going his own way without much attention to the ways of others.

When we arrived in Kearsley we were struck with the ugliness of the town; the houses were long continuous buildings of plain red brick, with a series of entrances of the different families. A stubble of chimneys from the continuous roof of each block of dwellings showed the exact number of fireplaces there were to warm the inhabitants. The streets were of cobblestone. Large brick weaving-mills dominated the smudgy landscape. As we walked down into the town we heard a

loud clatter. Turning, we saw that the noise was made by the children running down the street wearing clog shoes with a leather upper and a wooden sole, bound with iron.

When we reached the school, the children were in the assembly room, having prayers. A few moments afterward, Mrs. O'Neill greeted us cordially and took our things. We then met Mr. O'Neill and began to learn something of what he was doing. He speaks volubly and intensely of his work. One feels instantly that here is a man whose whole life is given to the serving of an ideal and that it is no mean ideal and no mean life that is serving it.

The school is centered about a long assembly room in which are tables and chairs, as in a library, but less formally. On each side of this assembly room are classrooms and at the end is a two-story section of the building, containing classrooms downstairs, and two offices, a cooking-room and a woodworking shop on the second floor.

The furniture is crude, much of it having been made by the children themselves in the shop, yet on the walls everywhere are really beautiful pictures, some originals and many fine copies. We learned later that Colonel Holmes, one of the teachers, had bought these from his own pocket

and lent them from his own home in order to surround the children with fine art.

O'Neill has tried to substitute *stimulation* for *coercion*. He has looked for it and tried to provide it in the school environment. Beauty, to him, is in itself a stimulating force, something that children will respond to when given the right opportunity. He surrounds children with beauty and gives them freedom to respond to it; with the freedom he gives, however, goes his own forceful personality that, whether he is himself entirely conscious of the fact or not, wields a guiding influence.

I find it difficult to describe the breath of freedom in this school. It is a school without a fixed curriculum, without a fixed program, without fixed anything. In Colonel Holmes's room we saw a horizontal bar, made by long poles lashed together, right in the classroom. A child might swing on this pole while another child was studying. One child might be working on one subject while a second child worked on another. The children were entirely free to move about and communicate with each other. In one of the classrooms the teacher was absent and had been for nearly a month. There was no substitute there—two twelve-year-old girls were in entire charge. This was the only classroom in the school that was orderly in the usual school sense.

To the pedagogue the school would seem to be hopelessly chaotic. There was undoubtedly an air of confusion and a lack of organization. Yet remarkable powers were being developed in these little children whose parents were drudges in the mills and who themselves were probably doomed to a life of drudgery as soon as they should leave the school.

O'Neill himself was the teacher of an intermediate group of boys and girls who were scattered about in the assembly room during most of the morning. He was too busy telling us about the work and showing us the school to pay any attention to the children, and the way they worked while he talked to us was a credit to any school. He talked very loudly in his earnestness, the children working within three feet of him; yet the children seemed entirely undisturbed.

I asked him if they had no curriculum. He said: "Yes, we have many, but we do not keep them. We make them out, then we change them. Merely because a thing is good at one time does not mean it is good at another. If we wish to work all this week on arithmetic and not do any reading or writing, we do; then perhaps we will spend the whole next week on literature. We try in a general way to spend one-fifth of our time on arithmetic, two-fifths on English, including all phases of his-

tory, geography, writing and literature, and two-fifths on physical activity, but of course we do not really do it. Once in a week we check up to see if we are slighting one of the main activities, and if we are, we spend more time on it. If a child gets behind in some one subject, he must show us the time chart he keeps. If he is spending too little time on that subject, we suggest that he spend more."

I asked if there was no time spent in regular classroom teaching. O'Neill replied that about two hours and a half each week were spent on this type of work; but that it is not the usual kind of teaching. The teacher finds that there is something the children need to know. He talks to them about it. He works with them, arouses their curiosity, helps them start independent work on this topic. Once he has given them the impetus, he stops his class teaching and lets the children go ahead by themselves. They come to him for help, of course, but they work independently of each other.

It is all very informal. If a child gets tired working on the subject a teacher has started, he stops and does other work, or goes into the shop quite freely. When the teacher finds that most of the children have lost their interest, he has another class period and gives the children a fresh start, this time perhaps in another subject.

The teacher is an instigator of activity, a stimulator of interest, a helper in work that the child is doing voluntarily, rather than the usual sort of instructor.

"We do not care what children know beyond being literate, and able to make change," says O'Neill. "What we want is to give them the ability *to do*. If they learn to be responsible; if they learn to live successfully with each other; if they learn to want to read or to understand, we will have given them more than any amount of book-learning."

There is a remarkable spirit of adventure, freedom and hard work among the teachers of the school. Two teachers once came without salary in order to work in a school with this ideal of freedom, and Colonel Holmes spent over £300 on paintings for the school. He himself is an artist and gets much of the work of his class done through art stimulus.

Mrs. O'Neill, on the other hand, works more through poetry. The children in her room were all writing verse, and some of it was surprisingly good. Take this, for example, and realize that it was written by a thirteen-year-old youngster who has lived in the ugliness of Kearsley and who may be destined to remain there. And as you read it, realize what a remarkable thing Mrs. O'Neill

has done in making it possible for this little girl to feel and imagine and express herself as she does:

THE BROOK

Rippling waters ever running,
Silent as the night,
Tripping onwards, ever going,
Passing flowerets bright.
It rumbles by the water mill,
It rushes through the glen,
It passes by the Fairy hill,
And meets the little men.
It passes through the pasture green,
And helps the crop to grow,
It whispers of the things it's seen,
As onwardly it flows.
It watches little children play,
While they gather flowers
On a merry summer's day,
Spending happy hours.

Would you not like to see the brook,
As wandering onward with your crook?

Here is another, and the child wrote the music as well as the words:

THE STORM KING

The sky is black with thunder,
The Storm King wrathful is he

As he prepares his chariot,
For a ride o'er the writhing sea.
All is ready;
He cracks his whip,
Humans quiver,
The storm is at hand,
For the Storm King wrathful is he,
The Storm King raises his sword on high,
And lightning flashes through the sky.
The chariot wheels roll
And the thunder rumbles—
A crack! a flash!
His wrath is high,
His blood-red beard streams through the sky,
Another rumble and the lightning flashes.
The king draws nearer,
The thunder is clearer,
A flash!
A crash!
And a rumble,
The Storm King passes on high.

This is not the best in the room. I have a collection of several verses done by a child who has more talent and, of course, there are others who have less. But they are all thinking and creating and imagining.

It may be that O'Neill is right when he says it does not matter whether they know the same number of facts in history as the children in more formal schools, or can do advanced arithmetic

with the same degree of speed and accuracy, if each child's imagination is awakened, if each child learns something of the love of work, and if in each child a sense of responsibility is developed. Nevertheless, the children do learn to spell and write correctly, as witness the above verses.

O'Neill told us of children who when they first came did not wish to do anything unless told to do it, and then only when the teacher was watching. These same children now have developed self-reliance and initiative. The fact that they have begun to do so was evidenced when a mill owner complained that one of O'Neill's graduates had asked to change jobs two weeks from the time that he was set on an uncongenial task. O'Neill asked if this had ever happened before. The mill owner said, "Not in sixty years of operation of that mill." O'Neill said that he was glad his school was beginning to produce results.

An example of the programless informality of the school occurred when a new child from another school entered and showed that he knew some poetry by heart. O'Neill stopped his other work, let the rest of the children work by themselves, and began introducing this boy to Tennyson and gradually to Browning. He spent a whole morning reading poetry with the child. Other children began gathering around; the group be-

came bigger and bigger until the children were listening with their eyes wide open, one of them with tears streaming down his cheeks. As O'Neill said, "The spark has been lighted. These children's appetites will grow with what they are fed on."

As an instance of the way the more formal work is done, we saw a child who was working in arithmetic come up to Mrs. O'Neill and ask a question about the division of fractions. Mrs. O'Neill asked the other children how many of them did not understand this same point. About half of them raised their hands. She then made an appointment with these children for three o'clock to come to her for an explanation and help. They were not required to come, and when the system was first started many of the children ignored such appointments. Now, however, they have come to realize that the appointment is their opportunity to learn a thing they need to know, and the appointments are faithfully kept.

In one of the lower-grade rooms some of the children were reading and others were doing geography. One child decided to clean up his desk. He got a pail of water and a scrubbing-brush and proceeded to do it. Others liked the idea and began doing theirs. Still others began doing the floor. The teacher did not interfere until one child

threw water at another; that child was deprived of the right to do any more scrubbing; otherwise he was free and unpunished.

Examples of the informality of the work, of the earnestness with which children arrange appointments with their teachers, of the free, responsible way they make use of the cooking-room and the wood-working shop, of the work done in reading and arithmetic without formal requirements, might be multiplied indefinitely; but these that are given suffice to show the lack of organization and definiteness together with the remarkably fine spirit of the school.

One recognizes in this school a reaction against formulas, against autocratic teaching, against set progress, against mechanizing children's work.

I asked O'Neill whether he had not had trouble getting permission to carry out so radical an experiment in a public elementary school. His eyes twinkled a little as he said he had never asked permission, but he was full of fire as he described the official investigation carried on by the school board on the complaint of some of the parents that their children had actually forgotten how to read and figure under O'Neill's régime. This investigation had come about two years before our visit and two years after O'Neill had started the experiment. The Board asked, "Is it true that you have

no program, no set course of study and no formal discipline? Is it true that your children know less about the common school subjects than they did when you came?"

O'Neill replied somewhat as follows:

"Yes, that is all true, but when I came the children hated school; now they are often here until 9:00 o'clock at night voluntarily. When I came, they were tattle-tales, now they attend to their own troubles. When I came, they were little liars, now you can trust their word. When I came, many of them stole and the schoolhouse was locked from the time school was out in the afternoon until the next morning; now the schoolhouse is never locked, and nothing is stolen.

"We do want the children to be literate, and if you give us time, they will be. But we want them to want literacy. And it takes time to overcome their reaction against forced study. We do not care what knowledge the children have beyond literacy and ability to do such arithmetic as is involved in buying things they need in everyday life. For other knowledge and further ability, let each child follow his own natural interests. We are much more concerned with the children themselves. We want them to be responsible. We want them to learn to respect each other's rights, not because some authority is enforcing this respect, but be-

cause they see the need for it. We want them to learn to cooperate freely and intelligently with each other. We want them to see the beauty in nature and the beauty in literature. These things cannot be achieved by forced study and forced discipline. They are the natural outgrowth of free association with each other and with their teachers.

"We teachers can be companions to the children only by ceasing to be dictators. As their companions, we can give them the best that is in us. It takes patience and will-power to allow freedom. Do you think that it is as easy for us teachers to live in the bedlam which often prevails as to live in a well-ordered school? Do you think it is easier to spend all our waking hours in school than to spend the conventional six hours a day? Don't you suppose we go home at night discouraged and utterly worn out again and again? Yet we are convinced that the ultimate results are worth this sacrifice. Don't let the misunderstanding of a few parents make all our sacrifice come to nothing.

"We are just beginning to come out of chaos into the light. To restrict the children's freedom now, when after two years of abusing it they are just learning to use it, will make those two years waste years."

The Board felt the force of his plea. They asked him, however, to make out some sort of study plan,

some rough division of time, so that they could convince the parents that the children were learning something.

So O'Neill and his co-workers prepared the general plan that we found when we visited them.

O'Neill's methods shock the close followers of tradition. But it is a healthy shock, a stimulating shock. Since visiting his school, I have tried to see how we could obtain in our own schools at Winnetka some of the results achieved at Kearsley, without paying too high a price in efficiency.

In America, Marietta Johnson and the Walden School in New York City are among the few that are paralleling O'Neill's efforts at all closely.

The application of O'Neill's work and influence, as of the other "free" schools of Europe, is found in its wide variation from the generally accepted routine schools of this country. That any one can depart so widely from our accepted educational idea, our idea of what a school should be, and still achieve such fine results, in itself compels reflection.

To make up for his losses in school efficiency and academic learning, the children under his régime gain in naturalness, in spontaneity, in creative ability, independence, and self-reliance.

In O'Neill's school the ideal of developing in

each child the best of his possibilities rings out strong and clear. One comes away stimulated, thoughtful, and filled with respect for this little group of people who have had the courage of their convictions and have dared to overturn all traditions in their effort to give the children of the ugly little mill town a touch of freedom, a glimpse of beauty, a chance to create, a breath of real independence.

CHAPTER VI

A Glimpse of Decroly's Work in Belgium

FILLED with a zeal for his work, profound psychological knowledge, and an understanding love of children, Dr. O. Decroly is touching with his own fire not only the schools of his native Belgium, but some of those of France and Switzerland. He sees in every child a human being, one who may be developed into an integral part of human society.

As, with continually increasing population and advancing scientific knowledge, our whole social and economic structure becomes more and more complicated, it is increasingly necessary to teach children to cooperate, to play a part, smoothly and effectively, in the complex life of our civilization. Even a baby soon learns that he can not bite his toe without hurting himself; yet to teach the social application of that same truth, that we can not injure any member of the society of which we are a part without injuring ourselves, is not easy. Few of our American schools even attempt to grapple with so abstract a principle, vital as it is in its daily application to individual lives and actions. Nearly all our social evils, the crime wave, the whole great problem of swollen profits, corrupt practices, mis-

use of power, and a decaying sense of justice, grow out of the inability of our American schools to instill in children the fact that all members of society are interdependent.

The system of education Decroly has gradually evolved sheds at least a gleam of light on the training of children in that very thing—cooperation. His method also tends to develop both initiative and responsibility.

We first met Decroly when he and Raymond Buyse were making a tour of America to study experimental schools. They spent a day in Winnetka, full of eager, intelligent questions—charmingly simple in their manner. We knew from their cards that Decroly was a professor in the University of Brussels and Buyse a State Inspector of Schools, but we did not know until months afterward that the modest, unassuming, brown-bearded, fatherly-eyed Decroly was perhaps the leading authority in all Europe on the education of defective children.

It was with defective children that Decroly began, as did Montessori. He has a school for defectives adjoining his own home in a suburb of Brussels (Uccles). In this school he watches with the skill of the trained psychologist, and the sympathy of the child-lover, the minds of subnormal children, and tries with infinite patience first one type

of material and then another in his effort to find what will arouse and hold their interest and develop their power for concentrated attention.

The visitor to the school is almost dizzied by the number of devices covering tables and filling cupboards, the materials by means of which the children can be led from the inattentiveness and flitting interest, characteristic of the feeble-minded, to the concentration and discriminating observation necessary to the mastery of reading, writing and number-work, and equally necessary to the attainment of skill by which the children may become, later, self-supporting members of society. Out of the wide range of devices, let me select a few typical ones to make his methods concrete:

On one table are a number of thin boards. From one of these, three banana-shaped pieces have been cut out, a small one, a medium-sized one and a large one. The pieces themselves have been painted to look like bananas and can be fitted into the holes in the board from which they have been cut. The child learns by feeling, appearance, and experimenting which banana will fit into each hole.

Another board has a landscape painted on it, but the windmill and some of the trees of this landscape have been cut out, and must be fitted into the appropriate holes. There are a number of similar boards, graduating from very easy ones to

some that are fairly difficult. The purpose of these boards with insets is not unlike that of some of Seguin's and Montessori's materials—a training of the senses, a development of closer observation and discrimination. But the materials are more interesting than geometric insets and form boards—they are always objects familiar to the child and provocative of his imagination.

This principle is characteristic of all of Decroly's work. He is constantly trying to connect the formal work with real experience, constantly trying to stimulate the child's imagination and enlist his interest. All the materials have some emotional content.

Another example is the material for the discrimination of height. This function is trained, not through the arrangement of sticks and cylinders, but of cut-out, painted wooden trees and houses. Discrimination of breadth is brought out by hanging a series of wooden dolls on hooks in the order of their fatness. Dolls are also used for the gradation of colors, the dresses varying in hue.

There are, too, many matching games. The technique of making one thing match another, of noting less and less obvious differences, is quite necessary in learning to read. Consequently, one finds such things as these: A card shows a number of pictures of the same figure, each figure having a

differently colored dress; and the child matches cut-out figures to those on the card. Another card shows a boy in various acrobatic positions, to which the child matches an envelope full of small duplicate figures. A third has a series of identical tea-tables, on each of which a football occupies a different position; a series of small cards must be matched to the pictures on the large one. The matching devices are graduated from very easy ones to some that are quite difficult.

After a child has played with many such devices as these and formed the habit of concentrated observation and work—sometimes after a year or, with very low mentalities, after four or five years—he begins to use similar puzzles and games to learn to read.

One of these is the matching of a sentence to a picture which the sentence describes—such as, "The cat is drinking milk." Later he takes a group of words made from the same sentence cut apart. He arranges these in the same way as the original sentence.

Then there is word study. One device for this consists of small match-boxes; the covers have the names of objects on them; the boxes contain these objects; the child puts the right cover on each box.

At a more advanced stage the child may take a

card at the top of which is a picture or some small object glued to the card. Under the picture or object are several questions such as, "What is this?" "What color is it?" "How do we use it?" In an envelope he has the printed answers, which he must match to the corresponding questions.

One is constantly struck by the fact that in every device there is either an actual object or a picture which is likely to be familiar and interesting to the child. The use of real objects for teaching dates back at least as far as Pestalozzi, but Decroly has carried this out with an unusual amount of ingenuity and consistency.

It is not desirable in this account to multiply examples of the devices used by Decroly, ingenious as they are. They begin so simply that even the most subnormal children can be provided with interesting materials. They step up by very slight degrees from the simplest materials to those which give the rudimentary skills of reading, writing, and number-work, with a wide variety of devices at each step. Constant use is made of the child's imagination. The work is strictly individual and in many cases self-corrective.

The children are quite fascinated with the work. They develop the ability to concentrate for long periods, with consequent development of the skills in which Decroly is training them.

This work with subnormals has given Decroly valuable clews for his work with normal children. He has a private school in Brussels for boys and girls where his educational ideas are put into practice for normal children ranging between four years and high-school age.

Immediately on entering this school, we were impressed by an atmosphere of happy, unrepressed child life, and active work. The classrooms were usually furnished with long tables, around each of which a group of about fifteen children sat. On the walls were many pictures made by the children. There were cabinets with various specimens in them, cages of guinea pigs, rabbits, white mice, or birds, or glass bowls with lizards or fish. The first-grade room had cotton snow-flakes suspended on threads from the ceiling of one quarter of the room, cords representing rain in another quarter, and a large yellow sun suspended in the middle. A long narrow strip of paper pasted to the wall along the stairway from the first to the second floor bore the legend: "This is the Way to the Great and Wonderful Zoo"—relic of a recent school circus.

The children everywhere communicated freely with each other—quietly in the upper grades, more noisily in the primaries. The teachers were in authority and repressed any abuse of this freedom,

but for the most part there was very little need for discipline.

At first we saw almost no resemblance between this school for normal children and the one for subnormals. The quantities of ingenious devices of the school at Uccles were not in evidence here. The children's education seemed to be less organized, more spontaneous, to deal less with devices and more with living things, field trips, discussions, and stories.

As a matter of fact this difference is not so complete as it at first seems. The subnormal children at Uccles also have contacts with living things and also have excursions and stories. And as we watched more closely the work at the school in Brussels, we began to see the use of devices. But the devices assumed a secondary place in the education of these normal children.

One important difference between Decroly and Montessori lies in this very fact. Decroly feels that the detailed sense-training needed by the subnormal children can be dispensed with to a considerable extent for the normal ones. He retains very few of the preliminary training devices, and uses chiefly those that deal directly with reading, writing, and numbers.

The work in these elements is purely individual.

It resembles closely Miss Mackinder's work, although neither Dr. Decroly nor Miss Mackinder had ever heard of the other. The detail of the devices differs, of course; but the general type of devices, their self-instructive and sometimes self-corrective nature, their use for individual instruction in the mastery of the tools of learning, all these are the same in both cases. Miss Mackinder has developed a more complete series of steps, more definitely organized, than are used in Decroly's school for normal children. With her, this individual work is the central activity of the school, the group work taking second place educationally and being to a considerable extent recreative.

But Decroly makes group work his chief concern, supplementing it with individual instruction in the elementary skills. The group work makes use of these skills, and may serve to bring out the need for them, but it is not for the purpose of teaching them. It is this group work, that, beyond everything else, teaches cooperation. It is calculated to develop the qualities that enable each individual child to fit effectively into the complicated social structure of our time.

Education for Decroly is a development of the child's initiative, his imagination, his ability to observe keenly, to work concentratedly and to cooperate with others. The three R's are of second-

ary, though real, importance. The organization of the school by groups is therefore not designed primarily for the *teaching* of children, but for *the development of desired characteristics.*

As a means to this end the children's environment is made as rich as possible; hence the pets, the various exhibits of interesting things, the field trips and excursions. But there is a direction to the children's reaction to this environment, a definite topic, or center of interest, for their work.

This "center of interest," which may last a month or a year, is always connected with things with which the children are familiar. In one grade it may be hunger, in another, work. The children bring to school everything they can find connected with the central theme which they are discussing. They cut out pictures and file them in envelopes; they draw, model with clay, and do some work with wood, all bearing upon this theme.

From the central theme on which the group as a whole is working, each child selects some topic that interests him. The topics are most variegated. Among those we heard discussed were monkeys, the sea, the working of a steam engine, and linoleum.

Having chosen his topic, the child investigates it. This is usually done by reading, but may, if the topic permits, include a direct study of the object

or process. He gathers illustrative material concerning it, using, where possible, the collection of pictures brought by all children in the group to illustrate the big theme on which the class is working. He also draws original pictures. He prepares a full report, writing it up in his note-book and illustrating it with the cut-out pictures or original drawings. He spends about a week preparing this report. It is carefully corrected by the teacher, and all mistakes are rectified by the pupil.

When the report is ready the child delivers a "lecture" to the class. He uses the blackboard freely, passes out specimens or illustrations among the children gathered about the long table, and answers questions. The children pepper him with questions, both from interest in the topic and from a desire to see how well he knows it. If his lecture or answers are unsatisfactory, they may require him to look up the information he lacks, or even to re-do the whole report.

The listeners all either take notes during the lecture or write up a résumé afterwards. They have a note-book for this purpose, which they illustrate.

The discussion and writing up of the reports of others, and the preparation and correction of their own reports, occupy the greater portion of each child's day. The rest of the day is spent in in-

dividual work, in singing, physical exercises, recreation, and occasional excursions.

The reports are one of the most characteristic features of Decroly's method with the normal children from third grade on—indeed they have their beginnings even lower. They form the real center of the activities of the school. They are the basis of a very large part of the work in reading, writing, spelling, composition, language, grammar, history, geography, and drawing. They correspond in many ways with certain types of "project work" in America, but they differ, too. They are supplemented all the way along with some individual formal work, in which self-instructive devices play the chief part. This has the advantage of freeing them from the incubus of an attempt to teach all things. Such instruction as the reports yield in the usual academic subjects named above, while real, is incidental. It is not the purpose of the reports, but a by-product. Their purpose is to develop initiative, self-reliance, cooperativeness and a habit of observation.

The chief disadvantage of the method is, of course, the fact that during a "lecture" the listeners are not getting nearly as much benefit as the speaker. It is the inevitable disadvantage of the lecture system of teaching, intensified by the fact that the lecturers are decidedly amateurs.

The advantages, however, apparently outweigh this disadvantage. There is a real spirit of cooperation, every central theme being contributed to by every member of the group and each topic having the benefit of group discussion of a very live sort. The training involved in the investigation and careful preparation of a report, and the delivery of it to the group every week, is admirable. The freedom to follow out individual interests, combined with the broadening influence of the interests of the rest of the group, develops initiative tempered by cooperation.

The groups in Decroly's school contain about fifteen children. In a public school with large classes, each class could easily be subdivided into two or three such groups, and the method adopted *in toto*.

Fortunately, Decroly's method is not confined to his private school. It is in successful operation in public school classes in Brussels. The class organized most completely along these lines was that of Mlle. Hamaide. She had been formerly a teacher in Decroly's school and knew his work thoroughly. She has recently published a book on his method. She had a class of some thirty-five or forty eight-year-olds.

In her class one finds the use of self-instructive devices more prevalent. She has added to those of

Decroly similar ones of her own invention. This work is entirely individual. She has not made as many of the devices self-corrective as she might do, and a less skillful teacher would therefore probably be swamped in an effort to keep up with so many children, all doing different things. She, however, knows every device and every child so well that no child has an idle moment.

Whether it is because her class is large, or because the children are young, or because they must go from her room to a regular classroom with more formal methods, or for some other reason, the individual, self-instructive work in the common branches occupies a more important place in her class than in Decroly's school. With her, as with Miss Mackinder (and perhaps for the same reason), the group activities seem to occupy a position of secondary importance.

But that does not mean that they do not exist. Mlle. Hamaide takes her children on all sorts of trips. They were making a map of a part of Brussels when we were there, showing the route of their last excursion. And she used the note-books and illustrative materials much as they are used in Decroly's own school. For keeping the cut-out pictures she has a series of large envelopes hung around the wall below the blackboard. Each envelope is marked with a general topic, and in it are

put the appropriate cut-out pictures brought by the children and herself. All children have access to these envelopes for materials to illustrate their note-books.

While Mlle. Hamaide's class is the best example of the Decroly method under typical public-school conditions, the most potent influence in the spread of the method to public schools is probably that of Raymond Buyse.

Buyse is the inspector, appointed by the Belgian Ministry of Education, for the St. Gilles district of Brussels. He is a friend and admirer of Decroly and was his companion in the study of American educational experiments in 1922. He has introduced the Decroly method into one or two classes in each of a number of the schools in his district—wherever he can find a teacher whom he considers able to introduce the work successfully. His hope is that the Decroly class in a school will interest the other teachers and that the method will gradually spread to other classes. He is also anxious to find out wherein the method needs modification to fit the public schools; for this purpose these selected classes serve as experiment stations.

While in the public schools of Brussels Decroly's methods are decidedly diluted, nevertheless they are a leaven in the stereotyped formal work of these schools. The schools have not so

much taken over Decroly's method as they have yielded to Decroly's influence in the carrying on of their regular work. That influence is one toward greater freedom, toward an opportunity for children to express themselves and to develop their own initiative and originality. It is an influence away from the factory methods of grinding out children all alike, and toward the same ideal that one finds so universal in experimental education to-day—the full development of each individual child.

It is interesting that the different elements in Decroly's work have not been so much taken from others as worked out by Decroly himself, independently of others. It is a remarkable demonstration of the fact that when a great movement is in the air it finds expression in the simultaneous work and efforts of widely separated individuals working independently of each other. The very fact that Madame Montessori, Miss Mackinder, Decroly in Belgium, Courtis in Detroit, and so many others are each developing ways and means of teaching that were not contemplated as possibilities even thirty years ago, is an impressive demonstration of the effort that is being made to meet the almost desperate educational need of our changing civilization.

Except for a recently established private school

in Florida no one in the United States is carrying out fully Decroly's methods, although numerous educators here are carrying forward some phase, one here and another there, of his activity. Decroly's work shows how many of the best elements of modern progressive educational methods can be combined. His work includes many of the elements of individual instruction, of project work, of the Dalton Plan, and of the Montessori principles. It is, in itself, a demonstration of how any independent educational leader may combine and improve and invent and build upon the educational materials already at hand and the educational methods already, here and there, successfully developed.

CHAPTER VII

The Humanitarian School in Holland

ABOUT two hours from Amsterdam on a little stoomtram, which winds around among canals and meadows, there is a village called Laren. It is a village of picturesque cement houses with tiled or thatched roofs and brightly colored door panels and shutters. Many of the people who live here are artists. In this village is a little school called the Humanitarian School, looked down upon by the more aristocratic "High School" as a school of cranks and faddists—"Teetotalers and vegetarians."

But it has its lesson for Americans.

The Humanitarian School itself consists of several one-story shed-like wooden buildings, and the house in which the director and four of the teachers live. It was founded in about 1904 by a religious organization known as the International Brotherhood, with seven children who came to school in the director's house. It has grown to about one hundred and thirty children, who crowd the low wooden buildings. The present director is the only remaining member of the faculty who is also a member of the International Brotherhood. He is

a man with a full reddish-brown beard, and kindly eyes with a spark of fire and zeal in them. The other members of his faculty work with him shoulder to shoulder, equally responsible for the school's welfare.

The general methods of the school are not especially remarkable. There is a considerable amount of handwork just as there is in most progressive European schools—in fact a school's chief claim to being progressive in Europe seems to be the possession of many examples of things made by the children. The school has followed the lead of Ian Ligthart's school which was founded several years earlier, and which from the beginning has preached more freedom and more activity for the children and more life in the curriculum.

It is the spirit of the Humanitarian School which makes it worth while—this and its ideals. It is a school which believes whole-souledly in universal brotherhood and peace. One of the faculty members served a term of imprisonment during the war as a conscientious objector, and had the other members been mobilized they also would probably have served such terms.

In the school we find a growing, spreading force of international good will. It is nothing that comes from books; it is not included in the curriculum. It is an expression of the attitude and example of

the teachers themselves. In a small way they are doing, successfully, what the League of Nations and the Disarmament Conferences and the various leagues for international good will are all attempting to do on a big scale—but not always successfully.

The school tries to inculcate its ideals in the children, not by direct moral instruction, but by the attitude of the teachers and through the type of emphasis placed in the teaching of history, geography, and literature. The teachers try to make their own lives, both in and out of school, an example of the ideals they wish their pupils to hold. It is true that they are "teetotalers and vegetarians," and the teetotaler in Holland is even more of a faddist in the eyes of most people than is the vegetarian. But these teachers are not faddists. Whether or not one agrees with their principles there is no doubt about their sincerity and steadfastness of purpose. They do not directly teach the children abstinence from meat and alcohol. They do, however, try to instill in them a love of animals and a desire for clean, healthy lives.

One of the best examples of the sincerity of the teachers and their spirit is the way they handle the difficulty of getting a sufficient staff under the State grant. The State grant allows only seven teachers for the number of pupils enrolled in this

school. Since some of these are special teachers, it means that the classroom teachers would have about forty children each. This they are unwilling to do, feeling that they can not give the children the best instruction under these conditions. The teachers therefore have decided unanimously that each one will give up two-ninths of his salary in order that two additional teachers may be employed—and teachers' salaries in Holland are not high.

There is some spontaneity in the work of this school, but no real freedom, owing to the fact that if the school departs from the strict time-table required by the State, it will lose the State aid, on which its support depends. Twenty-two of the twenty-six hours per week must be spent on the usual academic subjects and physical education. Consequently in the four hours which are left, must be included handwork, field trips, and all other activities in which the school especially believes.

The centralization of school control in Holland is typical, in its devitalizing effect, of centralization in every European country where it exists. The contrast between England and present Germany with their multiplicity of educational experiments, and Belgium, Holland, France, and Switzerland with their paucity of new ideas in public

education, is directly related to the contrast between the freedom of English and German schools from central control, and the centralization of most continental European education.

For American teachers the great inspiration in the Humanitarian School lies in its demonstration of what can be accomplished even under the limitations imposed by a strict and conventionalized routine. Too frequently, in America, just as in Holland and Belgium and France, we see the centralization of authority, in a State Board of Education or State Board of Regents, deadening and devitalizing individual effort. "How can *we* do anything?" is the attitude one frequently encounters, where the individual teachers and principals and superintendents feel the inescapable grip of traditionalized authority above them. But the Humanitarian School shows what a tremendous effect the living philosophy and sympathy and example of individual teachers can do, even under such hampering restrictions.

With a little more freedom to work out new ideals, the Humanitarian School at Laren might make a real contribution to education. Hampered as it is, it is still an inspiration to those who are fortunate enough to come in contact with it.

CHAPTER VIII

Cooperative Learning—Cousinet's Experiment in France

IN France one has to look deep for educational inspiration. It is there—but in the work of few people.

France is one of the most barren countries of Europe in educational experimentation. It is still in the midst of a post-war reaction educationally as well as politically. The Ministry of Education at the time of our visit was reported desirous of restoring "the glorious education of the 18th century." Present leaders would like to abolish much of modern education in favor of a more vigorous mental discipline in the classics.

There is another side, however. We learned something of the "Compagnons"—men who came together during the war and believed that if people of all classes can fight side by side, they can go to school side by side, and who would therefore have "l'ecole unique"—a single school for rich and poor. Montessori's influence also was being felt, spread especially by an American woman, Miss Mary Cromwell, who established five hundred Montessori schools in the devastated region. And there were several "New Schools," or country

boarding-schools patterned after Cecil Reddie's "Abbotsholm" in England, from which Bedales too had its origin. We visited one of these, L'Ecole des Roches, and found a happy, free atmosphere and much shop work, but little change in the methods and subject matter of the academic work.

When we turned to the public elementary schools, which are attended by the children of the masses, we were depressed by the lack of evidence that any of the people in control of public education in France are even aware that a new day is dawning.

Yet one inspector of schools has caught more than a ray of light. This is Roger Cousinet, an inspector of some one hundred and forty schools scattered over the countryside around the little French village of Arcis-sur-Aube.

From Cousinet's work we can perhaps learn as much as from Decroly's; in one important respect, at least, he gives us even more. This is in the matter of developing particular ability and social confidence.

One feels in Cousinet a buoyant, modern, youthful spirit, quite different from that of many school workers whom we met in Europe. O'Neill, in England, was, of course, such a man, far more fiery than Cousinet, but with less broad knowledge of progressive education the world over. After talk-

ing with Cousinet one would like to have one's own children in the schools of such a man. He is thoroughly imbued with the philosophy of John Dewey, whose ideals he tried to put into practice in France. He is hindered all the time, however, by the centralized French educational system.

The examinations made out by the Ministry at Paris for children of all classes in all parts of the country must be passed by the children in Cousinet's district, like the rest, whether or not they have been taught the same dead facts and trained to master the same useless subjects. Any efforts, therefore, to reorganize the schools in his district have to be tempered by the knowledge that his children must gain exactly the same amount of formal knowledge as those of schools in which formal instruction is the sole purpose.

Furthermore, Cousinet has to use the products of the French normal schools, who are trained in the formal type of work.

A normal school instructor in Paris, asked whether the normal schools were doing anything to encourage teachers to give children more freedom, replied, "No. At one time, a few years ago, we encouraged the teachers to allow children some freedom, but we found that the children became regular chatterboxes. They thought they had a

right to discuss any subject; so we are now going back to the older and stricter method."

Out of all his schools, Cousinet has only succeeded in introducing his methods into three or four. One of these is a rural school taught by Mlle. Wauthier. Unfortunately for us, when we visited Cousinet his engagements made it impossible for him to show us any of his experiments in operation. Let me therefore quote from Mlle. Wauthier's description of her own school.*

"Mr. Cousinet came one day to visit my little class and we talked together for a long time. During this conversation, he made this statement, which could not fail to astonish me more than a little: 'We must create an environment for our children where they will find everything that is necessary for their education, so that they will be able to educate themselves without our help. And,' he added with a smile, 'you may be quite tranquil, for you will have nothing to do but watch them live.' I repeated these words several days later to a neighboring colleague who did not hesitate to say to me, 'That M. Cousinet is crazy, and you are half crazy already for following him.' Nevertheless, I have continued to work in the direction indicated by M. Cousinet.

* From a report to the First Assembly of the "New Education" held in Versailles in June, 1922.

"Let us enter the school. It is 8 o'clock; it is Monday. The children have brought me some things collected yesterday and carefully preserved. They are mostly plants and animals which the children wish to study more closely, or which they wish to show to their comrades. Among others, to-day, there is a bat which was found stupefied this morning. There are flowers and other plants, but the chief thing is a lizard which George's father killed in his vineyard yesterday and which the child has brought to school, altogether happy and proud. It is evident that all of these cannot be studied this morning. We shall have to make a choice. Which shall we take? The flowers? We can easily find more like them to-morrow in the fields. The older children hesitate between the lizard and the bat. The girls show a repugnance towards the latter. 'M'zelle, is it true that it brings bad luck?' It is necessary to explain that it does not, to combat the stupid prejudice and to explain that on the contrary it is one of the best aids to agriculture. In the end it is decided that the lizard can wait until to-morrow and that we shall examine the bat right away.

"The children then divide themselves into two groups, one of which invariably contains the larger children who are from nine to twelve years old; the other, the small ones who are from six to nine

years. I forgot to say that my class contains seventeen children from six to twelve years of age.

"Each of these groups then gathers round the blackboard, the small ones with their lizard, the large ones with their bat. To-morrow, it will be the reverse. One of the children is at the board and writes what the others dictate. I have remarked that these collective exercises of observation, instead of stifling and suppressing the individuality of each child permit him, on the contrary, to express himself fully. Each child's own faculties are given free play. Some of the children are specialists. All of them observe, but some do not take pains to formulate their remarks in good French and *always* they are reprimanded by one or two unmerciful little girls, who recast the sentence, giving it a more elegant turn, sometimes breaking it into several smaller sentences, or, on the contrary, putting two or three into one. These are the specialists in style. Another child personifies the critic and always says 'Try to say it again,' for the ideas as well as for the manner of their expression. And there are also the specialists in spelling. These guard against errors, and, I must admit, find a malign pleasure in making the copyist correct the mistakes which he has made from inattention or ignorance.

"Thus, through collective work, the children

are not merely observing together, but each child is exercising his own specialty. It is this which refutes the criticism made of collective work—that it is inferior to individual work for the development of the child's personality. The group work gives this personality full opportunity for growth.

"The children then ask me to read over their work. I do so aloud. I make them find out the mistakes in spelling which have escaped their eyes. We seek together to correct them. It is sometimes, indeed almost always, a veritable lesson in grammar. Whenever we discover an error, the children correct it themselves. I only explain in the last extremity when it is really impossible for the children to make the correction.

"Once the work is corrected, the children copy it in their special notebooks, which we call 'cahier d'observation.' With this copy, they draw the animal or the plant, as well as each part which has been especially studied.

"When this work is finished, we prepare a chart, summing up the description made on the blackboard.

"On a rainy day, when it is impossible to put one's head out-of-doors, the children may come with me to make an excursion in the archives of the school. In the archives of country schools, one may

find incalculable riches. In mine we discover a mass of old dusty books, torn lamentably, but illustrated with pretty and interesting pictures. We quickly rescue these old 'bucains' and, having come back into the class, the little ones, armed with large scissors, cut out the pictures. The older children then proceed to classify them.

"With these pictures, our children give lectures. They choose from the envelope the picture or group of pictures they desire and they write about these in their notebooks, later reading what they have written to their comrades. They are very amusing lectures. Some children abstain from any reference to their notes, others have a superb self-possession and do not allow themselves to be disturbed by any question of their comrades. In general, all of the children are most anxious for this type of exercise.

"The idea of this sort of exercises was given to me by various articles of Dr. Ferriere and of Dr. Decroly who in their 'New Schools' use a similar procedure.

"The work in history is carried on in the same manner, but we have, in addition, recourse to hand-work. The children dress dolls in the costumes of the period which they are studying. They construct in sand and model the houses of different epochs.

What I wish to emphasize in particular with regard to the history work is the dramatization of history by the children.

"I can best explain what I mean by telling you how the children have written and played a scene from history."

She then proceeds to describe in detail an interesting dramatization. Following this, she shows how the same general process may be used for learning geography as well as for natural science and history and how in each case more formal subjects may be studied through these centers of interest. She concludes her report as follows:—

"It is needless to say that the parents have been very much pleased with this innovation and that in our winter evening meetings they have helped us more than a little. We have profited by their interest and have succeeded in getting certain funds as a consequence of which we have been able to found our little journal. At present, all things concur to make our school a little corner in which the children are able to pass joyfully and profitably their young years. All things concur to create about these children that environment of which M. Cousinet speaks, in which they find all that is necessary for their education, so that they may teach themselves. I scarcely interfere at all in their life at the school because the children educate them-

selves, thanks to the processes and methods of M. Cousinet which I have rapidly sketched for you here. We have little need to interfere. The children's personality and their faculties develop freely and without outside aid. Thanks to the common work, the children learn to help and correct each other, and gain more than through any course in morals or system of rules, orders and prohibitions. It is for this reason that I do not hesitate to maintain that the children through this system educate themselves and that moreover I have almost nothing to do but to watch them live."

Cousinet publishes a little periodical called *The Bluebird*, in which he prints some of the children's own compositions and illustrations. This circulates among the schools interested in Cousinet's work and among those European educators who are in sympathy with his ideals.

Cousinet gives his children more freedom than does Decroly. His work is not so well organized or systematized. The children, for instance, choose their own projects, whereas in the Decroly classes subjects are usually chosen by the teachers. This makes Cousinet's schools more haphazard than Decroly's, with the advantages, as well as the dangers, of greater freedom.

Cousinet sums up his own work in three general rules, as follows:—

(1) Let the children group themselves as they please, and let these groups modify themselves according to the will of those who compose them. Never interfere to make a child enter a group or leave it, nor to make a group accept or refuse a collaborator.

(2) Never interfere when a group is working. Let the children work entirely alone. If a member of a group seems not to work, notice (and this always happens) that the other workers will put him out of their group. If they are interfered with by his bad will or unsuitability (superiority or inferiority), he will go by himself to join another group.

(3) Correct the work. The work is free but the children must get the habit of correct work. When they have finished, and only then, the teacher should interest himself and point out the faults—of form only—which may exist. The correction of these faults may result in a lesson of grammar.

He then gives more definite rules for work in science, geography, history, and mathematics.

The significant move toward securing confidence comes through Cousinet's division of labor in the group activities, *allowing each child to do the thing he can do best.* The best writer in the group writes the composition, the best speller corrects the spelling, and so on. This leads each child to a knowledge of his own weak points, together with the

ability to use his own particular strong points, in social activities.

Cousinet's experiment is quite obviously a form of what we, in America, call the "Project Method." One finds aspects of this method in practically every progressive school—but in no other European school we visited (except perhaps Bakule's in Czecho-Slovakia, which was a very different kind of school) did we see the project, growing out of children's interests, made the sole means of instruction, as it appears to be in Cousinet's plan. The strict "hands off" policy during the group work reminds one a little of Montessori. The division of labor in getting the school work done seems to be Cousinet's own idea.

Probably the answer to the relative divergence between Decroly's method and Cousinet's lies midway between the two; this would mean an effort to secure even greater flexibility in the choice of subject matter and in teaching methods than Decroly permits, without ignoring entirely the possibility for guidance in the choice of subjects that a more mature mind can give. It should be borne in mind—and the fact makes the success of Cousinet's whole experiment all the more remarkable—that all his work is done under routine examination requirements as strict as any of those that are met with in the United States. To see the force of the

parallel, imagine a group of students following Cousinet's method in, say, New York State, where the children would have to pass the Regents' Examinations in each of the regular traditional subjects in order to secure promotion to the grade above. That such requirements can be met, and met successfully, as the result of work done after the manner described by Mademoiselle Wauthier, is noteworthy. It is enough to make any follower of traditional teaching methods stop and think. For if Cousinet is able to secure for his children the necessary grounding in prescribed subjects for which the more formal systems of training have been devised, and at the same time develop more of initiative, of self-reliance, of responsibility, of independence, of confidence, and of cooperation than the more formal systems develop—certainly Cousinet's results are superior.

Colling's experiment in our own country, while differing materially in detail from Cousinet's, nevertheless seems to confirm Cousinet's, since it shows that informal group activities may lead to at least as good a mastery of subject matter as do more formally organized lessons, and give freedom and responsibility, and training in cooperative effort.

Whatever the limitations of Cousinet's cooperative learning-by-doing method may be, it is

undoubtedly a part of the broad general movement to study children's interest, to make school work active rather than passive, to develop each individual along his own lines, yet socially, and to give children more freedom.

CHAPTER IX

A "New School" in Switzerland—Glarisegg

IN Switzerland we visited in Geneva the delightful little class in Dr. Adolphe Ferriere's home,—the class which has since grown into "The International School"; L'Ecole des Petites, near by; and the interesting and scientific work in the Jean Jacques Rousseau Institute. Then we went to Glarisegg.

Glarisegg is a boarding-school for boys between nine and eighteen years of age. It derived its inspiration directly from Cecil Reddie's work at Abbotsholm, Badley's school at Bedales, and the Landerziehungsheime of Lietz in Germany.

The new school movement started in Europe in 1889. A number of the "New Schools" that are to be found here and there date from that period, when it was realized that educational methods must change to meet new demands and conditions. Bedales was founded in 1892, L'Ecole des Roches but little later and Glarisegg at almost the same time. The idea was to give a balanced training, instead of only academic learning.

In the United States there came into existence the movement that only now, nearly thirty years

later, is about to burst into flower; it was born in recognition of the inadequacy of routine and merely informational learning, which demands fuller development to meet the greater needs and greater responsibilities of a new day.

When we inquired in Steckbörn—the nearest Swiss village to Glarisegg—whether Glarisegg was a village, the reply was, "No, it is just a place," which is very nearly the truth. It consists of an inn, a few houses, and the school. At the school we found the two sons of Mrs. Carlton Parker (known in America for her *American Idyl*), the son of Professor Zueblin of Boston, and the son of the late Dr. Beck, a prominent Chicago physician. The Parker boys had been at the Horace Mann School in New York and Dr. Beck's son had attended the Francis Parker School in Chicago. From these boys we received some interesting side-lights comparing two of our American experimental schools with this typical European one. I asked Mrs. Parker's sons to which school they would go if they had their choice between Horace Mann and Glarisegg. They were a good deal puzzled as to how to answer. They felt on the whole that for athletics they greatly preferred Horace Mann, as it was a larger school and therefore had a wider variety. They liked the boarding-school feature and home life of Glarisegg and they were enthu-

siastic about the Glarisegg French instruction (Glarisegg is in the German part of Switzerland and all the regular work is carried on in German.) The boys from the Francis Parker School missed the morning exercises or assemblies of the school in Chicago, but on the whole were fully as happy at Glarisegg.

As a matter of fact, the comparisons made by these children, as well as those we received in L'Ecole des Roches and one or two other schools where there were American boys, revealed more the adaptability of the American youngster to almost any kind of school and the tendency to be loyal to the one which he is at present attending than any actual comparison of the schools themselves. It is hard to realize how little even intelligent twelve-and-fourteen-year-old boys understand the process of their own education. They are aware of being happy, or not happy, of missing perhaps something that they enjoyed in the previous school and finding some compensating pleasure in the new one, but they are blissfully unaware of the sometimes radical differences in the educational philosophy which is guiding their school life.

Glarisegg is beautifully situated on a hill overlooking an arm of Lake Constance. It differs from most European boarding-schools in its lack of bar-

rack-like dormitories. The boys have rooms in pairs, or, at most, fours, and decorate these according to their own fancy.

The boys at Glarisegg choose the master in whose particular care they are to be. Each master is the guide and adviser and house-father of a group of boys who select him. This is decidedly an innovation, and one which, on the whole, works out very well in a relatively small school such as Glarisegg—about seventy-five pupils. Whether a school of three hundred and fifty pupils such as L'Ecole des Roches could prevent flocking to a popular master and the avoidance of an unpopular one, is a question, but certainly where it is practicable, the Glarisegg plan results very happily.

This organizing of a school into house groups, each group having its own master or house-father, almost like a small fraternity with an older faculty member as brotherly adviser, has in it something of apprenticeship, in the relationship of the boys to the master of the group they have chosen. If the personality of the master is strong—and Glarisegg is fortunate in having teachers who can command the affection and respect of the students —the boys gain a great deal from the close contact with him, particularly because of their own attitude toward him, of voluntary acceptance of his leadership.

An interesting parallel may be drawn between the organization into groups at Glarisegg and the organization of troops in the Boy Scout movement, each Scout troop with its Scout Master. It is possible that in no small degree the great success of the Boy Scout movement in America—and in only lesser degree in England and other countries—is attributable to this element of leadership that enables the boys to look up in voluntary allegiance to the advice and instruction of an older man, particularly selected because of his fitness for the work. Any teacher who is able either through the formation of a group or in any other way to command such voluntary allegiance and cooperation of pupils is fortunate indeed. Certainly the influence of such a teacher is infinitely greater than that of one able to maintain discipline, secure attention, and impart information only because of delegated authority.

At Glarisegg, as at L'Ecole des Roches, the morning is given wholly to academic work, the afternoon to handwork and work in the field; but it is a school with much flexibility of program. If there happens to be a heavy fall of snow and winter sports are good, the whole school may drop its books and spend the day on skis, sleds, and skates.

The methods of instruction in the academic subjects are not especially new, although the teachers

allow more freedom of discussion and encourage more activity on the part of the pupils than is done in typically conservative schools and even in such schools as L'Ecole des Roches. But there is one class which it was a delight to visit.

This was a class in French, taught by a gray-bearded man in his late sixties, who was just like a grandfather to every boy in the class. He sat in a chair in the front of the room and called the boys up to him one by one. As a boy came up, the teacher would put his arm around him, draw him close to his side and teach him then and there before the rest of the children, talking French to him and becoming greatly excited when the boy made an error; chaffing with the rest of the pupils and keeping the whole class on its toes with interest and amusement. The intensity of the teacher in his desire to have the boys speak correctly reflected itself in an intense desire to learn, on the part of the boys. If a boy made a stupid error, the old gentleman would indicate to what animal the boy was related by tracing a pair of long ears rising from the boy's head. The whole thing was done in such a friendly, amusing way that no one could possibly take offense.

He used the direct method of teaching French, working entirely from conversation. His results were remarkably good, but they arose from his

personality far more than from his method, however good the method be.

The spirit of pupils and teachers all through the school was fine. For example, the mathematics instructor changed his own bedroom into a club-room for his group of boys. The boys made lamps for this club-room in the wood-working shop and their sisters at home made lamp-shades and hangings. The instructor himself took a much inferior room as his sleeping apartment in order to give the boys a good place for their club.

Glarisegg is a school with much more pupil self-government than we found generally. Most European schools speak of self-government as meaning government by prefects appointed by masters; but at Glarisegg there is a constitution made by the pupils themselves and the assembly meets three or four times a year in which pupils and teachers have equal voice, and in which all important matters of school conduct and policy are freely and democratically discussed. Decisions are made by the vote of the assembly, in which the teachers have no more voice than the boys.

The group organization makes this student government particularly effective, since through the influence and personality of the house-father it gives a check on the freedom allowed the students. Self-government in American schools is too often

self-government in name only. Of course no students ever have, a moment's reflection will assure us, entire self-government. But our American difficulty is that where self-government is attempted, the students are too often not allowed complete freedom and responsibility where they should have it. They are not allowed to make mistakes and see the consequences. At Glarisegg the lines are clearly drawn, certain matters, of necessity, coming under faculty supervision, while other matters are left to the decision of the students. Then the students, in their own realm, are left entirely free from faculty interference. In this way Glarisegg has real student government.

One of the most striking contrasts between progressive European schools and those in America is the number of fine men connected with the former. The influence of men like the French teacher and the mathematics teacher with his boys' club at Glarisegg is a real factor in the lives of the children. I think that many such schools would profit by having, in addition to these men, young women of our best American type, but certainly we in America would profit greatly if in our schools we had a more even proportion of men and women, especially if we could get such men as some of those at Glarisegg.

CHAPTER X

Schools That Dare to Give Children Complete Freedom—Hamburg

SCHOOLS with no program, no course of study, no grades, no examinations, no rules, no punishments —with their whole work centered on the development of each child's soul from within—these are the public experimental schools of Hamburg.

Five Hamburg teachers, two of them the heads of their schools, sat around a table with us after our first day's visit. "Begin at the beginning," we said to them. "Pretend that we did not have a conference last night, and that we know nothing about the school we visited to-day."

"There is no beginning—or all is a beginning," Herr Gläser replied. "Wherever we begin we strike down to the fundamental things. It is just that way in the school. We do not have to begin at any special place or follow any special order of instruction. We always get down to the fundamentals. That is why we let the younger children group themselves with the older children if they wish and we allow children to select their own teachers and work with them."

"But," we asked, "have you no course of study

in your mind, no list of things which you think the children should know—the things which they are going to use in adult life? Don't you from time to time take stock of what the children have learned and possibly stimulate them to an interest in those useful topics which they have not touched?"

"No!" (very emphatically.) "We want no such list in our minds. That is exactly what the old type of school does and what we want to break away from. We do not know what children are going to use in their lives. We know nothing about what the future holds for them or for Germany. We do not know for what kind of society they should be prepared—socialistic or capitalistic. We know only one thing—that the children have living souls to be developed and that we wish to give them every opportunity possible to express fully what is within them."

"Still," we insisted, "it is possible to find out what things are so commonly used as to justify teaching them to every child. You know, for example, that every child will have to do some reading in life—some arithmetic—that he will have to be able to write and spell certain common words —that he will need a certain rudimentary knowledge of history and geography. You can determine these common essentials by direct statistical investi-

gation of the life around you, and thereby avoid leaving holes in the children's knowledge."

"Do you really think that after a child has lived with us for eight years, bringing his questions to us freely, talking about everything that interests him during that part of his life, there would be any important factors left out? Do you believe that such a child would not know anything about Paris, for example, or America, when we have ships plying to and from Hamburg every day and when the children go with us to see these ships loading and unloading their cargoes? Can you give me any single example of a topic of really basic importance that the children would be likely to omit in eight years of such life?"

We had to admit, looking at the faces of those intelligent, idealistic men, and thinking of the teachers (both men and women) whom we had been seeing in the school, that surely eight years' living with such people could not fail to educate a child. But we were not quite satisfied. "It is possible to think of things that would never come into an ordinary conversation. Things which are not properly children's interests but which they will surely need in their later life; some knowledge of banking, for example. Could you not make it easier for them in life by giving them this

knowledge while they are in school and have you to help them?"

"I will answer you by a paradox," said one of the men. "In trying to make things easier, we often make them harder." His point was clear. In taking an adult need out of its natural setting and trying to make the young child feel and prepare for this need far in advance, we make the child work much harder to gain his knowledge than he would later as an adult when the need was imminent. We took another tack.

"You say you let the children's instruction come purely from their own questions and the interests they express to you. Suppose you have read a book in which you are much interested or have seen something which has seized upon your imagination, do you not allow yourself to talk of these things to the children?"

"Of course," they replied. "We have a right to express ourselves, just as the children have. But if we see that our interest does not kindle an answering fire in the children, we speak no more of it."

"Then," we urged, "why should you not have in your own mind some plan of the things which you think it would be advisable for the children to know and be able to do? You need never force the children or even urge them to learn these

things, but you could try them on the children from time to time, stimulating their interest in those knowledges and abilities which would later be helpful to them. Why should you not do that?"

"Why should we?" was the somewhat disconcerting reply.

"Because then you would be making their environment on the basis of knowledge and not on the basis of chance. The questions the children ask you now are the result of things they happen to see at home or in the street, or words they happen to hear, which is all accidental and limited by their locality. A child can not ask questions about something of which he has no knowledge. Suppose, for example, you feel that the children should have some knowledge of Africa and you know that no questions have arisen which have brought out this knowledge. Why could you not some morning place pictures on the walls of African scenes or customs, or bring something African to school and let it work on the children's imaginations and curiosities until they are eager to know something about it? Why should you not, in other words, substitute a scientific knowledge of children's needs for the accidental interests that happened to come up in their limited lives? In this way you could make them citizens of the world instead of merely citizens of Hamburg."

"We do help to make them citizens of the world," said one of the men. "I took a group of my boys down into Bavaria, not long ago, traveling back and forth, seeing new things. We broadened our horizon far beyond Hamburg—and the shipping here too gives us contact after contact with the outside world."

"Some of your children must go on into the higher schools. Does your type of education prepare for these higher schools?" one of us asked.

"No!" was the emphatic answer. "We are not some little school reform, but a revolution. It is for the higher schools to adapt themselves to our product. There is a movement toward the formation of higher schools to carry children forward along the same lines as these on which we have started them. Most of our children, however, go directly from our schools into life."

"You have not answered my point yet in regard to making the environment scientific instead of accidental," we held out. "Why not substitute stimulation toward interest in things which you know the children will later need, for the accidental stimulus of daily life?"

"I suppose that is the difference between America and Germany," was the reply. "There, in America, you feel that everything is settled. You are educating your children for a continuation in

a permanently fixed state. You expect your capitalistic and industrial society to continue unchanged and you have therefore to give your children a scientific preparation for efficient life in this static social order. Here, in Germany, it is different. We have passed the stage of fixed order. We know nothing of what the future holds for us and we have learned to look deeper. We know that the essential thing is the freeing of each person's individuality, the natural opening and expanding of each person's soul.

"Last night we said there were some things in our Hamburg schools which you, from America, could not understand. You argued that if we tried to make it clear and you tried to understand, a mutual comprehension would be possible; but this is a good example of what we mean. You people in America have not yet felt the needs which come out of real chaos. Fifty years from now, you may know what we are striving for. At present only a few of you, the thinkers who see the vision of the future, can possibly understand our effort to use the schools, not as a means of training and instruction, but as places where the life energies of the children may be liberated and where their souls may grow to their fullness in freedom."

The next morning we went into one of the schools again and watched these theories in practice. Some things were good, some were bad. Let us show you at random, as we saw them, a few pictures of the different class activities in one of the new Hamburg schools—that of Tieloh-Süd.

We go into the room of beginners—five- and six-year-old children. This is the only graded room in the school. All children beyond this beginning grade choose their own teachers and groups regardless of age or academic advancement. The classroom is dingy, with bare walls. The furniture consists of the typical European double desks which, however, are shifted around to the sides of the room, leaving the middle clear. Some children are sitting on the desks or on the window-sills, chatting affably; others have formed a circle in the cleared part of the room and are dancing a folk dance around a visiting mother. The teacher, a man, stands in one corner playing a fiddle for the dance.

A child calls out that it is his birthday to-day. The teacher asks others if they know their birthdays. Then he takes the calendar and shows the children the date. He asks how many can count. As they count, he writes the numbers on the blackboard. He invites the children to try to write the

same numbers. Some come to the board and write, others write on their slates, still others show no interest.

He then reads from the back of the calendar a little verse that happens to catch his attention. The children at first think he is fooling them, that no such thing can be on the back of the calendar. They turn to us for confirmation. Being assured that the little black marks really say this verse, some become interested and the teacher capitalizes this interest by telling the children of letter sounds, showing them how to write them.

While some of the children listen to the teacher and attempt to do as he suggests, others sit dreaming idly or gossip with one another. One little boy rides around and around the room throughout the period in a little red wagon.

We go into another room. The children here are older, ranging from ten to fourteen years. The teacher has not yet come—his wife is ill and he will be late. The children gather informally at one side of the room and discuss what they shall do. It seems that they are to have a parents' night this evening; so they decide to work on the program of entertainment. One boy has selected a passage in one of the books dealing with the Congo slave trade. The others ask him to read it aloud to them so that they may decide whether it is suitable. He

steps forward and reads the passage with fine dramatic feeling. His fellows listen respectfully and with perfect attention.

After the reading there is considerable discussion. Several of the children have written papers to present during the evening in which they are anxious to show the Negro as a human being. This is in contrast to the way the people in the passage just read have treated him. During the discussion the teacher enters and sits down among the children. They pay no special attention to him aside from a courteous nod—this in Germany where children usually rise as a unit when the teacher enters and stand stiff until he sits!

The discussion waxes warmer. A strong difference of opinion arises and the children argue vociferously. They indulge in personalities and the scene becomes almost as disorderly as an American legislature.

Then in the midst of the hubbub it is possible to distinguish a low rumble. As one listens, he becomes aware that the teacher is speaking. The teacher has not called for order and many of the children are paying no attention to him. Those sitting nearest him, however, stop talking to hear what he says. The circle of silence gradually spreads until all the children listen.

"Do you think you will ever settle this question in this way?" the teacher is asking. "Are you trying to win a point or are you trying to plan a program? Are you trying to get united action or are you trying to beat one another in an argument? John, do you think Gretchen will agree with you because you call her a Dumkopf?"

"But she is a Dumkopf," John interrupts.

"I am not, you are!" Gretchen rejoins.

"Probably you both are," the teacher says quietly with a smile, "if you think you can come to an agreement by this sort of wrangling. At the rate you children are going now you will still be arguing about this program to-night when your parents come. If you really want a program, you will have to work together, not against each other. You will have to listen to each other's points of view and see how your different ideas can be harmonized. You will have to be willing to yield."

As much by his quiet friendly manner and the soothing tone of his voice as by the logic of his words the children are brought into order. The discussion becomes constructive and cooperative. The children proceed with their planning.

Another classroom.

The children are all writing or drawing. The ones who are writing are doing so in booklets. These they mean to send to some children in a

Swiss school where some of the educational ideals harmonize with those of this school in Hamburg. The children are writing stories and letters. They are decorating their pages in water-colors and the art work as shown in these books is crude and entirely untrained.

Of the children who are drawing, three boys are trying to draw sail-boats sailing toward them and leaning to the wind. The teacher has seen their difficulty in attempting to show this in proper perspective and has therefore made a paper model. He and the boys examine this at the angle of the ship they are drawing. The boys' third attempt is a definite improvement.

The teacher takes me aside. He tells me that not long ago two boys in this class asked his permission to stay out of school for the day. He asked their reason. They said they wanted to study a steamboat engine. He granted their request. Then next day they again asked permission to stay away from school. They told him that a friend of theirs knew a locomotive engineer who would show them a locomotive engine. Again permission was granted. Then next day the boys wanted to go down to the shipyards and watch the shipping. A few days later they said that they had made friends with the captain of a fishing boat and they asked if they might go out to an island with him. Later these

boys told their experiences in detail to their fascinated classmates.

Let us enter one more room. Here the teacher is reading aloud to the class. The children in the front part of the room are listening to her while those in the back part are talking quietly among themselves. From time to time, however, this conversation in the back part of the room grows louder. The teacher raises her voice and tries to read over the noise. The children in the front part of the room become annoyed by the disturbance and turning to those in the back, say, "Psst!" loudly.

We notice after a few minutes that something is attracting the attention of some of the children who have been listening to the reading. It apparently is near us, along the wall between the classroom and the corridor. Two or three children titter audibly. Glancing down, we see that some twigs are being thrust through the waste-can which opens into the corridor and also into the classroom. These twigs are waving about in the classroom fantastically. We suspect two boys whom we had noticed loitering in the corridor when we entered this class. As the sticks wave and the children giggle, it becomes more and more difficult for any one to hear the teacher read. Finally two little girls can stand it no longer. Without saying a word to

any one, they get out of their seats and march resolutely out into the corridor. There are sounds of a scuffle. In two or three minutes the little girls return, somewhat ruffled and flushed, but with the light of victory in their eyes. They return to their seats and listen while the teacher continues her uninterrupted reading.

We asked the principal of the school—Herr Henningsen—how it happened that some teachers seemed to have definite things that they wished to teach the children and even sometimes called the children to order. He answered, "The freedom which we allow our children we also allow our teachers. We, too, are individuals, and we differ on the details of our work. There are some of my teachers into whose rooms you could not go because they do not believe that there should even be an exchange of ideas between teachers or between schools. They believe that each teacher's methods should come from within himself, just as each child's work should come from within the child. Others always welcome people like you who come to study what we are doing. You will therefore find that while our ideals are common to all four of the Hamburg schools in which this experiment is being carried on, we differ from school to school and from class to class in the details of procedure. We have no special method. Each

wants to free the lives of the children as well as he can, always striving to let the children grow spontaneously and naturally."

We recalled from the previous evening what one of the men had said in regard to propaganda. "We do not try to spread ideas. We do not lecture. We do not write. People whose hearts are ready come to us, see what we are doing and perhaps write about us or put our ideals into practice. But when an idea is formulated into a theory, it is no longer living. We do not wish to formalize and deaden our ideas by making a systematic method or general theory. Our schools are not a completed system. They are a growing and living and changing idea."

In the whole Hamburg experiment an American trained teacher sees, of course, the *reductio ad absurdum* of school freedom. It is impossible for those of us who have come to believe in organization and efficiency to avoid feeling that the Hamburg schools go too far in discarding, *in toto*, the accumulated rules as well as the rubbish of orthodoxy, the accumulated wisdom and experience along with the red tape and useless baggage. The Hamburg educators have the courage of their convictions; but they have failed to incorporate in their educational philosophy the advisability of giving any organization to their work or particular

direction to the lives of the children entrusted to their care.

And yet the Hamburg experiment is inspiring; any open-minded educator will find food for much reflection in it. While he may not, on the whole, approve of what the Hamburg schools are doing, the results that he sees will very likely cause him to disapprove in turn of much that he finds in his own schools. Such radical experiments as that at Hamburg do not so much bring about the complete revolution they aim at as cause others, inspired by their example, to make a fresh start of their own—not necessarily along the Hamburg lines, but in ways that will improve upon conditions already existing.

The idea of the Hamburg schools is spreading. There are several other schools in different parts of Germany organized on the same fundamental theory. And Paulsen, the Superintendent of Schools in Berlin, told us that he hoped to establish twelve Berlin schools in accordance with the Hamburg philosophy. It was Paulsen who was Superintendent of Schools in Hamburg at the time the Hamburg experiment began. When, later, the Socialists came into control of the Berlin Board of Education, they invited Paulsen to come to Berlin as Superintendent of Schools. Then the Socialists lost control and Paulsen was left with a

rather conservative school board. It was evident that he had battles ahead of him; but he was optimistic as well as idealistic. "If we can start these twelve schools in this big city," he said to us, his eyes alight with enthusiasm, "then many other places will see that it is possible to give school children freedom." So far, he has not been able to realize his plan; but sooner or later, in Berlin or elsewhere, he will carry his new ideas further.

And the significance of this daring German experiment in Hamburg? To the conservative, it will appear as merely an extreme swing of the pendulum away from the old autocratic Prussian system—one of many swings in the perpetual see-saw of progress, but to some people it is the first complete educational revolution in history and the beginning of a spiritual awakening.

The children were probably less advanced academically than those of the more orthodox schools. The teachers would probably have admitted this quite freely. It would have been necessary to chloroform the teachers, however, had one desired to subject the children to any kind of standardized test.

On the other hand, the children were more spontaneous, more natural, more likeable, and more self-reliant than those we found in any other schools except the orphanage at Krnsko and Ba-

kule's school for cripples in Prague, described in the final chapters of this book. And both of these schools gave their children a large amount of freedom. Freedom seems everywhere to lead to self-dependence and naturalness.

It is of course unlikely that the Hamburg idea in its present form will be universally adopted, but the Hamburg idea itself is an expression of a world-wide movement. A breath of freedom is blowing over the world. One feels it in Montessori's influence throughout Europe and John Dewey's in America. One feels it in the spread of the Dalton Plan even into the Orient. One feels it in the attempt to recognize individual differences by Jessie Mackinder in London, and in several American attempts to fit schools to the varying needs of individuals. One feels it strongly in the Czech orphanage and school for crippled children, and again in Cousinet's work in France. It is more starkly evident in O'Neill's daring efforts at Kearsley in England, but it is in Hamburg that one feels its full force.

Perhaps the most startling thought that the Hamburg experiment gives, is that, throwing away everything the traditional methods of education hold to be necessary, it still achieves results almost as good as, and in some ways better than those obtained under the old system. It is rather stagger-

ing to realize that here we have a demonstration that we could scrap our entire educational system and create, overnight, without plan, without preparation, without anything whatever except buildings *and* well-educated, idealistic teachers, something almost as good.

In the new day that is dawning in the educational world, one of the forces that will bring about the complete development of each individual child will be the force of greater freedom.

CHAPTER XI

An Orphans' Paradise in Czecho-Slovakia

IN Czecho-Slovakia we found two schools that have succeeded in combining life and education in a truly inspiring way. For Americans who have been brought to realize how greatly our own inability to bridge that important gap between formal education and life itself handicaps our schools, there is much to be learned from these Czecho-Slovakian experiments. They show us, by contrast, what our own schools lack, and are suggestive of ways in which we may progress toward better conditions.

Bear in mind that the bulk of American schools to-day, with their still largely formal curriculi, their regimental lock-step, their heart-breaking retardations which compel children to tread again the weary round of last year's work and failure, are unable to combine life and school satisfactorily. They seem unable to develop in children the happiness and confidence and responsibility and ability necessary to meet successfully whatever situations may arise.

Then consider these Czecho-Slovakian experiments that have in great measure succeeded in ac-

complishing the very things at which our own schools fail. And finally, note how their methods differ from ours.

One of the two schools that impressed us so strongly has, unfortunately, already passed out of existence. Its inspiring achievement was only a temporary illumination of what a wisely directed school may accomplish. That was the school at the Legionnaires' Orphanage at Krnsko. The Orphanage continues, but discontinuance of funds for the school has meant the school's abandonment, and the children who were fortunate enough to enjoy its advantages for a few years now go to the village school near by. It seems a great pity that such a splendid venture, with so much of far-reaching accomplishment in view, could not have been continued.

Two or three hours by rail from Prague is the little village of Krnsko. A fifteen-minute drive in an open brougham up from the valley in which the railway lies, brings one to what was once a castle, but is now a modern villa. The reconstruction of this villa has been done by an artist-architect who has known how to make each room so beautiful that it needs no pictures or other decorations. It has beauty of line and shape, and soft harmonious colorings. The villa is built around a court on

which it opens through arched cloisters and in the middle of which is a child's statue.

It was not, however, the architecture nor the physical surroundings of the place which made the first impression on any one fortunate enough to visit it. It was the sixty warm-hearted, rosy-cheeked, well-dressed youngsters moving freely from room to room, calling greetings to the stranger unable to speak their language.

We went into the reading-room and found a number of children scattered about, reading illustrated fairy tales or school-books, talking or playing quietly, unsupervised and free. As I looked over the shoulder of one, at the pictures in his book, a little girl took my hand in hers, and, noticing that it was cold after my drive, she began chafing it between her little warm ones, pressing it against her soft cheek. From then on, wherever any of us moved, we had an entourage of smiling, affectionate little boys and girls.

The school was founded by the Czech Legionnaires for the orphans of those who fell during the war. In organizing it, they looked over Czecho-Slovakia for the best men, the most advanced educational thinkers they could find to put at its head. They found them in the director, Dr. Krch, and his co-worker, Mr. Svarc. Both were men with

practical school experience, who had, even under the previous rigid Austrian school system, managed to do enlightened things in their schools. Both were young men, in their thirties, with their practical idealism and love of children stamped on every feature. They are the kind of men to whom any one would be glad to entrust his children. Together they started the school. To-day Svarc remains in charge of the orphanage, but, with the abandonment of the school, Krch has gone.

For a school which gave to such a great extent the advantages of freedom, Krnsko had also a good deal of routine, a good deal of definite plan and set aims on the part of the teachers. The children rose and dressed to a bugle; they had daily drills, and definite scholastic goals to be achieved. But their teachers, through an amazing success in allowing illustrations from the daily life and desires of the children in their charge to furnish the text for the day's work, gained a flexibility in their teaching that enabled their little pupils to grow and develop daily, as well as to merely learn.

As we sat down to a mid-morning cup of cocoa with the children, a tow-headed little three-year-old ran up to us and chatted affably, quite unconscious of our inability to understand his mixture of Russian and Czech.

"How does it happen," we asked, "that you

have in the school this little child who is so much younger than the rest?"

"That is an interesting story," was the reply. "Two years ago the Commander of the Czech Legion in Prague found a baby on his door-step, deserted by its poverty-stricken Russian mother. He didn't know what to do with the baby, but telephoned out here to the Orphans' School. He asked Director Krch if he would be willing to take the baby into the school. Most school men would have been reluctant, since there is no provision for infants, but Krch saw an opportunity and gladly accepted the baby.

"He went out to the children and told them about the baby. He asked them if they would be its little mothers and fathers. They joyfully agreed. Then two little girls came up and said, 'Mr. Krch, we want to be special mothers to that baby. There are so many children that the baby will need one or two who will always be sure that he is taken care of. May he be our baby?'

"Krch is always quick to seize any opportunity to develop responsibility and initiative, and he promptly acceded. Those two little girls have been the baby's special mothers ever since.

"They were the ones who started the idea of a children's village—you will see it this afternoon—by building a playhouse for their baby. For lum-

ber they used the boxes in which the American Red Cross had sent clothes. But not long ago they realized that they would be grown up while their little boy was still a child and they realized that when that time came, no little playhouse would satisfy his and their needs; so they came to Director Krch and said:

"'Mr. Krch, we want to earn some money; we want to earn enough money to build a really truly house for our baby, so that he can live with us when we are grown up and can't stay here any longer. We want him to be our own little boy, and to take care of him always. You pay money to the women who wash the dishes and wash the windows. We will do that work if you will pay us that money; then we can save up for a house for our boy.'

"And again Krch showed his understanding of children, his courage, and his willingness to seize every opportunity to develop the best that is in each child. He agreed to their proposition, discharged the two women, and arranged for the little girls to handle the work.

"But he called all the children together that evening and told them what these little girls wanted to do. He said something like this: 'You children all agreed that this was to be your baby, that you would help take care of him; and you have all loved him and have been good to him.

You know how these two girls who have been his special mothers have worked for him; now they have offered to do the work around the orphanage, the cleaning and the dishwashing, to earn enough money to buy a house in which they can bring him up. If they do all of this housework, they won't be able to do any more school work. The baby is partly yours. Don't you all want to help with the housework, so these two little girls will have time to do their school work?'

"The children readily agreed, and ever since then all of the cleaning and most of the dishwashing is done by children working in relays; and the wages that used to go to the two servants are being put into the bank by the two little girls who intend to buy a house in which they can live with their little boy when they grow up."

While this story was being told to us, the little boy had climbed up into my lap and snuggled down with perfect confidence that all the world was his friend.

Leaving the table, we walked about the school, through its attractive arcades and into its homey, soft-colored rooms. We found a good work-shop and a pottery room with truly beautiful products. Later we learned something of the way in which these children are taught to express themselves artistically and with originality.

Mr. Svarc, it seems, is an artist of no mean rank, and a writer and lecturer on art and its development. His method of instruction was new to us, and certainly his results were far beyond any we had seen in Europe or America, except that of Cizek's pupils in Vienna; but Cizek's is a school especially for art work, and naturally draws children of unusual ability. Svarc produced his results with unselected children. There is much in common between Cizek's and Svarc's methods.

Svarc believes, with O'Neill and others, in surrounding the child with a beautiful environment. He has played his part in the beauty of the school itself and has collected many beautiful objects to serve as a stimulus to the children's originality and creative impulses.

The day we were there he had been showing the children some of the beautiful head-kerchiefs made by the Czech peasant women. They were draped all about the room and hung on the walls.

"Suppose," he said to the children, "that you were going to make a kerchief for yourself, how would you like to have it? Make me a picture of the kind of kerchief you would like."

The children had pencils, crayons, water-colors, and paper. He gave them no instruction as to technique. Nor would he reprove them if they used both water-colors and crayon. They were quite

free. He did not even walk about among them. If a child brought a picture to him and asked him what he thought of it, he smiled, and if possible praised it. If it was very bad he gently suggested that the child make another, but he never condemned or found fault.

When all had finished, the drawings were hung along the wall, some twenty of them.

"Which ones do you like best?" Svarc asked.

The children themselves discussed the pictures and picked out their favorites. Then Svarc asked if they would like to make another, and the children, more conscious of the goal they wished to achieve, proceeded again to work.

"Suppose their judgment as to the best picture doesn't agree with yours?" we asked.

Svarc replied: "Then I bide by their judgment. I do nothing to interfere. I am not trying to train them to be artists. I am trying to train them to express themselves. I want them to love beauty, but I don't want them to express my idea of beauty. The idea must be their own."

"Do they never copy the designs that you have shown them, or the work of other children?"

"In all the years that I have been teaching," Svarc replied, "I have only known two children who copied some one else's work. The idea of copying is usually suggested by the teacher. There-

after the children are spoiled and always want to copy. Most people, in teaching art, impose adult ideas. In most schools, children draw to please some one else and not to express themselves. I take the utmost pains never to impose my ideas on the children. The other day I had been reading the story of Baba Yaga to the children. I asked them if they would like to draw pictures of the story. As they began to work, one little boy came up to me and said: 'Mr. Svarc, what did Baba Yaga look like? Was he tall or short, fat or thin, and did he have whiskers?'

"I didn't answer his questions. I merely talked with him about what kind of man Baba Yaga was —what sort of character he had. After we had discussed Baba Yaga, the man, without mentioning his appearance, the child went back to his seat and put his idea of Baba Yaga into the picture."

"Do you never teach them any technique?" we were impelled to ask, because of the strikingly fine work done by the older children.

"When the children have had several years of free self-expression and have reached the point where they are sure of themselves, I enter into the discussion of the relative merits of their pictures and point out the technique by which the more successful children have reached their results. Except for this small amount of instruction after

the children get older, their art work is, as it should be, self-expression, pure and simple. I want to give each child an opportunity to grow as he was meant to grow and to express what is within himself. If the results are beautiful, it is because there is beauty in the soul of the child."

The school, however, was not primarily an art school. It was a school in which the children were developed on all sides. Here is a typical day:

The children all rose early. They opened their beds wide for airing, and dressed, the older ones helping the younger ones. When all were dressed, the windows were opened; two boys washed the white tiled floors; other boys and girls washed out the wash basins and tidied up the sleeping and bath rooms and made the beds. When all was ready, Director Krch inspected their work. Then a bugle sounded and the children assembled in the inner court, where they went through vigorous gymnastics, exercising every part of their bodies until each child was aglow. Exercises over, the children went to breakfast. Then they had two hours of study, a half hour for cocoa, bread and recreation, and two more hours of class work. Their academic work in the morning was informal and had much in common with the best modern instruction in progressive schools. The children's work was grouped about their interests and activities as far as

possible. There was, of course, some drill, but wherever possible this drill grew out of a need which had occurred in the children's lives.

"It is easy for us to do this," said Director Krch, "because the school here *is* the children's lives. We know every child intimately. We know his interests and activities from the time he wakes up to the time he goes to bed. Naturally we make use of these interests in making our instruction concrete and real."

Naturally! But in how few schools is instruction naturally concrete and real and connected with the children's lives? Few American schools achieve this flexibility. Even at Winnetka, for example, we have our regular materials for mastery of drill subjects, and work with these materials in a way that is largely governed by routine. At Krnsko, through bringing in to a much greater extent the circumstances of the children's lives, greater variation and closer application to daily existence was obtained. The size of the school, of course, had something to do with this. With larger rooms and bigger classes it would prove much more difficult. Also, in the United States few schools have children so much of the time. The teachers never have an opportunity to know their pupils as intimately, to understand and sympathize with their interests and desires so

closely, as was the case at the Orphanage school. Some of our more far-seeing educators, such as Kilpatrick, have aimed at this very thing, this ability to intertwine life and education; Courtis of Detroit suggests repeatedly the advisability of giving children in even the larger school systems instruction more closely related to their own lives; but the goal is a difficult one to attain. In the City and Country School of New York a study is made of the children's interests, and their instruction, so far as possible, is related to those interests. But even then a great gap is left between the results achieved and those secured at Krnsko. Over and over again our American schools in some way seem to go wrong in this matter. There is more of science but less of naturalness, more of pedagogic theory but less of spontaneity. At Krnsko, by watching the children more closely, living with them more, *loving* them more, the American pitfalls were avoided.

It should be possible for our American schools to do more of this. It would be infinitely better for American children if we could. But it is hard to see just how it can be done. There, of course, lies the value of such an example as Krnsko gives us; to a certain extent we can see how the Orphanage school achieved its results; and to an even smaller

extent, within our limitations, attempt to achieve more of those results ourselves.

It is easy to see that departmentalization works against the opportunity to unite life and teaching. The less any particular teacher sees of her pupils, the less she knows about them, the harder it is to bridge the gap; the students go from life into the classroom and from the classroom back again to life. The classroom itself, instead of illuminating and being part of the child's whole existence, is then merely a single isolated compartment within it, a semi-detached and unrelated fragment of life itself. It is a serious thought that the Dalton Plan and the Platoon School, with their tendency to shift younger children about among different teachers, are apt to work against, rather than toward, the full knowledge that teachers might conceivably have of each child's interests and desires. That, in turn, would usually mean less of opportunity to unify teaching and life, to bring together the instruction the child receives at school and the daily learning he acquires outside the classroom.

In the afternoon at Krnsko the children were, for the most part, entirely free. A few might have their turn at certain parts of the housework, but most of them could play indoors or out, go into the shop or pottery room, draw, read, or play in the tree-shaded grounds. It was during their free

afternoons that the children started the construction of their village.

The village began with a little house built of box boards for the Russian baby. The house was not well planned, and after it was half built, the children found that they could not make a door in the front; but they managed to put a little one in the back, and they put a gable window in the roof. With their paint-brushes they decorated the house with elaborate designs, and with the things they made in the shop, they furnished it. Later, they wanted a larger house, better built. This they planned more carefully, with the experience of the first to guide them. When it was finished, it was really very good-looking. The box boards, it is true, had been split with a hatchet and their lines often followed the natural grain of the wood rather than the carpenter's square, but the roof was reasonably water-tight, the house was firm, with its foundation posts driven well into the ground, and the children's artistic ability was evident in both the decoration and the shape of the little building.

The directors of the school, seeing the children's interest in the houses, decided to make them the nucleus of a children's village, which should be occupied and managed by the children themselves. They therefore had carpenters build a somewhat larger playhouse for the children and allowed the

children to furnish and decorate it. The children made two beds and an oven, and many small articles of furniture. In their own gardens they raised vegetables which they brought into the playhouse and cooked in their oven and served to their teachers or other visitors. In the summer, three children at a time slept out in the little playhouse, taking turns each night.

During our first afternoon, we heard the children rush to the front door of the main building with a clamorous crowding toward a man and woman who had just arrived. These proved to be a well-known Czech writer and his wife, who were frequent visitors at the home and who had considerable influence on the children. The writer is known as "Gamma" in Czecho-Slovakia, and is a follower of Tolstoy in his philosophy of life, and of Ruskin in his philosophy of art. He used to spend weeks at a time with the orphaned children, take them for hikes, tell them stories, inspire them with his own ideals and give them copies of the books he wrote for children.

He was responsible for all the children at one time being vegetarians. It came about in this way:

Gamma himself is a vegetarian and used to annoy the children by pushing away the perfectly good food which was served to him and taking from his pocket a package of bread and cheese.

They asked Gamma why he would not eat meat. Gamma explained his philosophy but did not try at all to urge the children to follow it. Neither the teachers nor the children were vegetarians.

One day, however, the children caught a mouse. Gamma had taught them from his stories and his walks with them in the woods such a love for animals that no one of them was willing to kill the mouse. They therefore took it to Director Krch and asked him to kill it for them. When he learned their reasons for not wishing to kill the little animal, he realized that to kill it himself would be to seem heartless; so, after some discussion, the mouse was carried out to the woods and set free. But this did not end the episode.

A group of older children discussed the whole question of killing animals, pro and con. They finally decided that since Gamma was perfectly healthy without eating meat, the killing of animals was entirely unnecessary. They went to their director and said:

"Mr. Krch, we don't want any animals killed for us. We want to be vegetarians like Gamma."

With the same courage of his convictions, the same sympathy with the children's point of view that had led him to accept the Russian foundling and had led him later to permit the little girls to take on the burden of housework, and with the

same readiness to adapt the school to the children, he gave his consent. That group of children sat at a separate table and were given a vegetarian diet. Soon other children, discussing the whole matter with these older ones, caught the idea and asked if they too might become vegetarians. When we were visiting there, the whole school was on a vegetarian diet, the teachers having finally decided to go along with the children, the one or two remaining servants being the only ones in the orphanage who had any meat. We had our first meatless Christmas dinner with these children, whose thought and ideas expressed themselves in the conduct of their school.

The night before, we had shared the children's Christmas Eve. We ate the honey cakes with the many-colored frostings which the children themselves had made. We heard their Christmas carols and played and danced with them in their reading-room. As bed-time approached the little boys and girls ran into the nursery where each bed was a warm and pretty crib. I remained behind with the older children, watching their folk dances. Then I noticed that my wife had disappeared. No one knew where she was. I remembered that it was our first Christmas Eve away from our own children. I stepped into the nursery where the little ones had gone to bed and found her there.

"I kissed one little youngster good-night and tucked him in," she said, "and immediately twenty others jumped up out of their beds and refused to lie down until I should kiss them and tuck them in too. I am just finishing the job."

The method of humbly and lovingly muddling along with children, using the fruits of a riper experience to explain and clarify for them the events of their daily lives, is no mean way of teaching. Friendliness, naturalness, trustfulness, creative ability, will be found among the desirable results of such a method.

Reorganization of study to fit individual lives, whenever wisely possible, is, Krnsko shows, of tremendous advantage. Flexibility, under routine and in the achievement of definite goals, can be attained by willingness on the part of the instructors to seize upon any chance that the children's lives offer of making them familiar with, making them like, the things the teacher wants them to know. To-day, perhaps, something related to the children's lives and interests comes up that would, in the regular course of study, only be explained months from now; very well—use the opportunity now and relate the instruction to what the children feel to-day instead of waiting until the appointed textbook time for giving it, when in all probability its relation to life will not be so great.

All in all, the Krnsko experiment combined much of the freedom and spontaneity of such schools as those at Hamburg or Kearsley with the formal instruction goals of such schools as Bedales. A significant combination: an orderly and regulated life, in beautiful surroundings, with amazing flexibility of instruction, *and* freedom.

Those Orphanage children captured our hearts. That was a truly wise school. It developed children in freedom, yet their freedom was not unguided. The school itself was a growing, living thing, constantly adapting itself to the needs and interests of the children. It was, as all schools should be, a place where children could live and grow.

CHAPTER XII

Crippled Children Who Learn by Earning—Bakule's School in Prague

IT was in a school for crippled children on a hill overlooking Prague that we saw a little girl, with only one arm and three fingers, carving and decorating beautiful boxes with her own original designs. It was here that the armless Frantik was painting and drawing with his toes, and conducting the business side of this self-supporting school for cripples. It was here that we saw the large boy who, years ago, had come to the school on all fours like an animal, given up by others as an imbecile, but now the leading cabinet-maker of the group, training his own assistants. It was here, too, that we heard children's singing that was more exquisite than any we had ever heard.

This was the school of Frantizek Bakule, who has accomplished seemingly miraculous results in ways that set aside some of our most cherished American ideas concerning schools.

Our whole system of American education is based on the anticipation of needs.

"This child," we say in effect, "in order to become an efficient member of society, is going to

need to know how to read. He will need to know how to write. He will need arithmetic. Very well, we will teach him these things now while, as a child, he still has time to spare. Then, *when he needs this knowledge,* he will find himself already possessed of it."

It is like giving knowledge of first-aid measures to a person about to attempt a hazardous journey. Should the need arise suddenly, before the knowledge has been acquired, it will then be too late. At Bakule's School for crippled children we find this whole educational theory in larger part overturned. In that school *the need precedes the knowledge.* Knowledge is acquired in meeting the need.

Bakule has obtained in effect, education by the project method, but by the project method turned inside out, or the project method reversed. In American schools that use the project method the project is usually selected on the "anticipation of needs" basis. It is selected by the teachers in order that the child may secure knowledge that will later prove of use. But in the Bakule School life itself selects the projects. They are not chosen to anticipate a need. The need itself creates them.

Imagine, if you wish, a group of school children taken from their classroom and put off a train, with their teacher, at an isolated siding. Immedi-

ately needs would arise, and their teaching would begin.

They would need shelter. In order to protect themselves from rain, they would have to have a roof. In order to protect themselves from cold they would have to have a fire. In gathering materials for the fire and making it burn, in selecting a site for their camp, they would acquire knowledge and begin the development of skills that could not be imparted in any classroom. The need for food would mean the acquisition of either money or game; in either case actual need would furnish the incentive. Hunger itself, or the fear of hunger, would spur them on. Imagine, further, a teacher possessed of wide knowledge, or with books and information available as needed, to bring to bear the light of acquired wisdom on each subject that the needs of the group developed. Balsam boughs for beds might lead to a discussion of the conifers, and a comparison of balsam with hemlock and pine. Down that avenue of learning alone one might come to much knowledge of trees, of botany, of biology, and evolution—as much or as little as the need and the interest and the opportunity made desirable.

That, in effect, is the method which Bakule has followed. And Bakule's results are finer than could possibly have been foreseen.

Here is the dramatic story of Bakule's School:

In 1913, a famous Czech orthopedist, Dr. Jedlicke, conceived the idea of starting a school for crippled children in connection with his sanitarium. To teach in this school, he employed a young teacher named Bakule.

Frantizek Bakule knew nothing about cripples. He had no special training for shop work or for activities by means of which cripples could become self-supporting. But he had a heart and a brain. These he put to work.

He saw that the little flock of cripples entrusted to his care were dependent upon others from morning until night. He saw that they felt themselves creatures apart from the rest of the world; and he immediately conceived the idea of making each one recognize his own usefulness. He began by building some school furniture. He didn't know how, and his very clumsiness gave the crippled children confidence. To their surprise, he called upon one and then another to help him with various parts of the work—they, the cripples, helping him, a man, sound and strong! It was almost incredible to them, but they helped and saw that their help was real.

Little by little, day by day, he called upon them for more and more assistance. As they learned to handle the tools, in spite of their deformities, he

would start a job, and leave it to the children to finish as he went on to the next. And so time passed—weeks and even months. No lessons were taught, no studies begun, the whole time was given over to making things. Bakule was training the children in the self-respect and self-confidence which arises from the ability to work and serve. He was also training them in the use of those parts of their bodies which were still usable.

Sundays, however, they did not work, and then time dragged. One Sunday a boy came to Bakule while the others were lying about or standing around listlessly, bored and longing for a work-day, and said:

"Mr. Bakule, I want to write a letter to my mother. Will you write it for me?"

Bakule replied: "I won't write it for you, but I will teach you how to write it for yourself."

"Could you really do that?" asked the boy.

"Surely, if you will try."

And he set about teaching the boy to write. The other boys gathered around, much interested. They too got pencils and paper and began to make letters. They had been taught to decorate with designs the things they made. They now began using the letters of the alphabet as designs, bordering their papers with H's, or A's, or U's. The children became much excited as they saw their

own progress, and worked hard at writing all that Sunday. At night they went to bed with their pencils under their pillows and their paper close at hand for the next morning. On Monday they immediately wanted to go on with the writing. Bakule consented, and that day, and the next and the next, for two weeks, those children did almost nothing but write. At the end of a fortnight every child had mastered writing and then returned to his regular work of making things.

Later, a problem arose as to the selling of some things they had learned to make. For how much should it be sold? The decision required a knowledge of arithmetic. Bakule showed them how the problem could be solved and then said something like this:

"You had to add several numbers to solve your problem. You are going to meet problems all through your lives like this one. You are going to have to add all kinds of numbers. But there are only a hundred ways that numbers can be put together and it won't take you very long to learn them. Wouldn't you like to get them mastered, once for all, just as you mastered your writing?"

Recognizing the need, and with fresh minds, the children threw themselves into the task of learning their number combinations. And in surpris-

ingly few days they had them mastered and were back at their work.

In this way, little by little, the children gained information. Their work naturally brought them face to face with needs; they sought and obtained the necessary information. They were encouraged to go to other authorities than Bakule and his assistants. They were shown that books contained some of the information that their teachers did not possess, and little by little they got their education.

"Getting their information in this way," I asked Bakule when he told me the story, "do your children know as much of the school subjects as children in the ordinary schools?"

"Possibly not," was the answer. "They are about a year behind the average child in academic knowledge. But see what they have in its place! When a child is going to go to high school from our school we give him six months of special drill in some of the useless things that the high school demands, like formal grammar, Latin, or advanced mathematics. Then they are able to go forward and do regular academic work in the higher schools."

The early part of the experiment took place before the war. When the World War broke out crippled soldiers were sent back from the front to Prague. Dr. Jedlicke combined the crippled soldiers' institute with his school for crippled chil-

dren. A soldier who had lost an arm or a leg on the battlefield came to the institute to receive treatment and learn a trade, feeling that his life was blasted. He met Bakule's little band of children, often crippled worse than he; and in their faces he saw none of the despair that was in his heart. Instead he saw life and joy and high hopes. "If these little children can face life with deformed bodies, cheerfully, I guess I can," he would say to himself. And these soldiers took a new lease on life. Their friendships with the children have lasted to this day.

Crippled soldiers and crippled children worked side by side, decorating, carving, and making things. The enterprise grew rapidly. Experts were called in to assist in the work. Fifteen workshops came into existence and the sound people of the neighborhood were drawn into the cooperative activity of the crippled children and soldiers. As the work developed, trained business management became necessary and the workshops became a public industrial enterprise, in which there was a division of labor and specialization for greater efficiency.

But Bakule was a teacher, not an industrialist. He felt that his crippled children should learn to do everything connected with their lives—housework, gardening, buying and selling—and he did

not wish to have the children feel forced to produce on a factory basis; so he reorganized his school into an autonomous children's society in which the children should work out their own plans with their teachers as equal, but not superior, members of the organization. Their teachers were their friends and advisers, and fellow-members of their organization.

Too frequently our manual training courses and technical schools have merely developed ability to meet the demands of a particular trade. Bakule's guidance has gone beyond this. He has led his charges toward the development of greater and greater ability, toward a continually widening outlook and more knowledge.

In order to make the children's environment as broad as possible, Bakule added some normal children from among the street waifs who gathered around the windows to watch the crippled children work. Dr. Jedlicke bought more ground to take care of the increased needs of the school; then a board of directors was organized to take over the general management of the school, freeing Dr. Jedlicke for his work with war cripples.

This Board of Directors wanted Bakule to make his educational work conform to some extent with the general Austrian system then prevalent in Czecho-Slovakia. Bakule was unwilling.

"If you will not give me freedom to develop this school in accordance with the ideals which were present when it was founded, free from any conformity with the state school system, I will go out," he said, "and the children will go out with me."

The Board of Directors held their ground and Bakule with twelve little cripples, a fellow-teacher, and three nurses, left the Jedlicke Institute. This was in March, 1919.

Bakule had five dollars in his pocket and had paid his week's rent for one room in Prague. He took some of the children to his room, others went to the police home for waifs, and still others slept in their own houses. But they all gathered daily in Bakule's room and worked, literally, for their lives.

Having no money with which to buy tools, the children carved with pocket-knives. They made toys and flower-sticks and boxes. They organized themselves into a little cooperative society and divided their labor. Bakule went out and lectured to interest people in what they were doing.

At the end of a week they found that they had earned enough money to carry them through the next week. They were overjoyed. A few weeks later they were offered a gift of one hundred and fifty thousand crowns by a wealthy man. They

thanked him, but turned the gift over to the Ministry of Education, to be used, they said, for children who needed it. They could support themselves and needed nothing unless they were ill.

Here again we find a far-reaching overturn of educational tradition. As in life itself, Bakule's pupils have *earned* what they got.

This is in direct opposition to the traditional effort to *give* each child a full education. Indeed, we go even further in America; we pass laws *forcing* each child to go to school, whether he wants to or not, until he has completed a certain formal course. To a certain point, probably, this is desirable; but perhaps we go too far. Certainly those students who wish for further learning enough to *earn* it, working their way through high school or college, get infinitely more from their opportunities than do those who drift along because "It's the thing to do," or because their parents are willing to support them while they attend the school, provided, free, by the State. Our theory is that each child is entitled to a liberal education. It is "owed" to him, we think, by the world, by the State, by his parents. But that is not life. And perhaps, in our effort to legislate intelligence and education into those who can not appreciate or utilize its opportunities, we attempt the impossible, and lose in so doing.

A gift of some shop equipment Bakule's cripples did not refuse. That gave them an opportunity to be more independent—to do more work. The children then drew models of things that were too laborious to make by hand, and had them made up roughly in a factory. The factory delivered the unfinished goods and the children completed and decorated them and prepared them for sale. When they asked the factory for the bill, the factory manager refused to render one.

In this way, the children earned 150 kronen a day, which, at the time, was worth two or three dollars in American money. On this, the children and their teachers—seventeen people in all—subsisted.

That summer Dr. Alice Maseryk founded her "Little Legionnaires" and promised them all a summer camp in Slovakia. To this camp Bakule's little group were invited. It was here that Miss Fanneal Harrison from Atlanta, Georgia, first met them.

Miss Harrison was directing the summer camp. She noticed that it was the Bakule children who thought of giving a marionette show, who wrote the play, who carved the marionettes, and who manipulated them. It was the Bakule children, too, who thought of starting a camp newspaper and who put the project through, doing the editing

and printing. What was it, she asked herself, that Bakule had given to that group of cripples that they, in spite of their deformities, showed more initiative and power than the children with sound bodies?

When she returned to America she interested her friends in what Bakule was doing, and through the American Junior Red Cross a fund was raised with which to buy a house for Bakule and his cripples.

It was in this house, on the heights overlooking Prague, that we first saw Bakule's children at work.

It was an old house, beautifully situated. It would have been large enough if it had all been available. But Czecho-Slovakia, like several European countries, had rigorous post-war housing laws, forbidding the dispossessing of any tenants; so the former tenants had moved upstairs, leaving the lower floor for school, workshops, salesroom, sleeping- and eating-quarters. Some children came only by the day, but a number lived in the house.

One boy—the one who had dragged his useless legs after him when he first crawled to the school —was doing exquisite wood-inlay work. He had built himself two tall, slender, saw-horse-like crutches, which fitted under his arm-pits and on which he could throw his whole weight while he

worked with his hands. He walked by swinging one of these forward, throwing his weight on it; then swinging the other forward—an awkward gait, but far better than crawling on his hands and dragging his legs. He was cheerful, competent and hard at work, the master-craftsman of the group.

A hunchbacked youngster near by was painting designs on sofa cushions—free-hand entirely, with no previous drawing; the work was beautiful and the child was happy.

And among others, there was a little girl, holding a knife in the only three fingers she had (her right arm was entirely missing), and carving a box that was fastened in a vise. She, too, worked free-hand, designing as she carved, then coloring the finished box. Her work was so lovely that we at once wanted to buy some of it. She called the armless child, Frantik, the business manager among the children. He slipped a foot out of his shoe, took our money in his toes so deftly that we scarcely noticed it—and slipped the money into his trousers pocket, I don't know how.

"Where do the children sleep?" we asked, as we saw the rooms filled with work-benches and the products of the children's craft.

Our question was interpreted to the children. They laughed gleefully—cleared their work-

benches and raised the hinged tops. There, in each work-bench, was a bed.

"Before you go," said Director Bakule, "you must hear my children sing."

He called them into the kitchen—the warmest room and the only one with clear space. We sat on kitchen chairs, near the door. The children—a pitiful looking little crew in their work-clothes, each one in some way deformed—grouped themselves in front of the windows, through which shone a few street lights in the distance. Bakule, tall and slender, stood with his back to us, under the gas light, facing the children. Every child's eyes were on him, expectant. He suggested a folk song and gave the key with a tuning fork. The children threw themselves into it with zest—their unaccompanied voices were full, sweet, unstrained. They sang in perfect unison. They gave full expression to the meaning of the song—the song was not a mere succession of notes, it was the expression of an idea, a mood.

Then they sang a humorous song. They laughed and rollicked through it; they improvised, they played, through the song. We, who couldn't understand a word, laughed with them.

There was a tenor solo—clear and true—by one of the older boys. Then Bakule turned to us and said:

"The children want to sing your own national song for you—through it they wish to express their gratitude to you for what America has done for them—for this beautiful home America has given them."

And the children sang the Star Spangled Banner. They sang it with a Slavic lilt and a tempo all their own. The words were sweet in the children's broken English—"by zee dawn's earlee light." But the children's faces will remain with us always—alight with love and gratitude, as they poured forth on us their thankfulness to America. Never have we felt so humble. Never has our national anthem so affected us.

Before we could regain our composure, the children sang an old Slavic song—one that had in it all the pathos and tragedy of the race. The little faces that a few minutes before had been gay with laughter, and then full of gratitude, now became sad and drawn. The children felt every word they were singing; they responded to every throb of the music.

When they stopped, I looked at my companions to see if the children's singing had affected them as it had affected me. They were crying, unashamed.

Frantizek Bakule had found the secret of detecting the potentialities of each individual child and then bringing these out. Whether it was music, or business ability, or artistic craftsmanship, he found an outlet for each child's soul. Through the deformed bodies came the pristine beauty of the children. Bakule's own great faith in them no doubt played its part in achieving this. He has felt that most children have many possible abilities and that every child, even though deformed, has at least some. So his problem, as he has conceived it, has been to uncover and develop these particular abilities. Working through his life-project method, he has sought consciously and definitely to learn what each child can best accomplish. Here we have the fine principle of developing confidence that underlies Cousinet's work, and that in some measure marked Saunderson's effort at Oundle. But with Bakule the great projects furnished by life itself afford opportunities transcending those of any classroom.

There is the story, for example, of one cripple with a deformed arm in which the elbow-to-wrist bones were only a few inches long, while the hand and fingers were of abnormal length. Bakule decided that this peculiar formation might prove of particular use in lithography. He could find no

lithographer to agree with him, so he set about learning something of lithography himself, in order that he might train the cripple and find out definitely whether or not his hopes were justified. To-day that long-handed cripple is an expert lithographer, having, as Bakule foresaw, a definite advantage over other workers with only normal fingers. The boy's deformity, as he developed into an expert, has been turned into a positive advantage for this particular work.

Dr. Herman Schneider, Dean of the School of Engineering and Commerce at the University of Cincinnati, has found one means of accomplishing much that Bakule's methods have made possible. His so-called "cooperative system" has been followed already by many technical schools and colleges. Antioch College is now attempting to apply it in the field of liberal arts. The method consists of alternating classroom work with a regular job. For so many days or weeks the student is employed at definite work—perhaps with an electrical company, perhaps with a railroad—and then for an equal length of time returns to his studies on the campus. Like Bakule, Schneider has also stressed the importance of finding one particular ability of each student through careful observation and experiment in this or the other line of work.

It is perhaps along these lines that the development of American education, to a point where the gap between the classroom and life can more nearly be bridged, will eventually proceed. Once we have the basic principle of learning what each child is best able to do, in work springing from the needs and opportunities of his own life, we can apply it to younger children just as Bakule did. Already, in some of our pre-vocational training schools—as, for instance, in the work being done by the Junior High School of Rochester, New York—we are reaching in that direction.

In Bakule's teaching and in the teaching that the crippled children in his charge have given each other, there is something of apprenticeship, with Bakule, the master, as guide and counsellor. But there has been more than apprenticeship; there has been the teaching principle itself, guiding the children continually toward a wider life.

How far is the traditional theory of education correct? How far is it necessary to go in anticipating the needs of educational life in childhood and preparing for them? We do not know the answer. Undoubtedly there are many things a child should learn while he has the time. But it is almost certain that our traditional system of education has gone altogether too far in deciding on theory what those needs will be. Scientific curriculum building in

America is cutting down greatly the number of facts and skills to be learned. Beyond this minimum what we need to do is develop *abilities*. We know they will be needed. Abilities and personal qualities. The ability to think, the ability to go ahead, the ability to meet unforseen situations as they arise. But when we come to centering our education around mere information, cramming a child with facts which, theoretically, he will be able to make use of later in life, we have gone astray—how far we can not say. Bakule's amazing success would indicate that it has been quite a distance. Most of our public school scholars in America are given a knowledge of algebra. Few of them apparently make any great use of that particular knowledge in later life; yet few children are given training that will enable them to decide important issues in terms of general social values rather than in terms of personal prejudices or provincial loyalties. Ability of that sort they have to pick up for themselves as best they can.

We can not throw away our entire educational system. Even assuming that we have gone altogether too far in the anticipation of theoretical needs, it is likely that an opportunist policy of waiting for life itself to decide the subjects to be studied, or course to be followed, would take us to an equally undesirable extreme. A certain mid-

dle ground, an intermediate course, is probably what we should come to.

Be that as it may, Bakule has obtained in his cripples a development that we may well look up to as a goal far more to be desired than a working knowledge of Latin and geometry, or even of geography and arithmetic.

Frantik, the boy without hands, has put it into words for us. He tells well what Bakule's training meant to him—what it means to feel one's self useful instead of useless, to be able to do one's share of the world's work. The first paragraphs below are from the early part of Frantik's autobiography. The last comes after he has told how Bakule has helped him learn to use his feet.

"Not once, but many times I thought: 'Why has God forgotten me? Had He not enough clay for my small hands? And if He could not finish me, why did He put life into me?'

"I felt afraid, oh, so afraid—and I felt heavy, oh, so heavy, at heart, thinking about my future. I sat by the roadway—a philosopher of ten years—and I was begging. And the people passing by were amazed to see how neatly I could put the pennies away with my feet. Oh, one can always learn. So I sat and sat, there in the dirt by the station and begged. . . .

"But to sit by the road, begging, and to think:

'Like this you will sit every day, every hour of your miserable life, because you cannot work,' oh, that is dreadful!

"I do not want this, no, never . . .

"I beg Him, who governs the course of nature, to preserve my feet, which my teacher and I have taught to work.

"Work, thou big beautiful Work, who givest forgetfulness of pain, be blest!"

CONCLUSION

And what does it all mean? Here, in America, looking at the whole panorama of those schools in Europe which are striving to find better ways of educating, as well as those in our own land, what conclusion can we reach as to the education of the future? What light do we find on the problem of reorganizing our schools to meet the needs of our new, complex, fast-changing social order?

Light there surely is. Oundle with its insistence that education for to-day must involve knowledge of mechanics and science as well as of the "liberal arts," and with its attempt to find some kind of education which will fit each boy; the Dalton Plan with its shift of responsibility from the teacher to the pupil, and its breaking up of formal time-schedules; Bedales with its organized, balanced living, its individual instruction, and its comradery between boys and girls; Jessie Mackinder's Marlborough School with its ingenious self-teaching devices that make freedom and spontaneity and the solving of individual problems possible under crowded, unfavorable conditions; O'Neill with his fire and revolt against compulsion and his sub-

stitution of a desire to learn in place of forced lessons—surely each of these English experiments sheds light.

And Decroly in Belgium, teaching through contact with real things, letting children learn by teaching others; the Humanitarian School in Holland, inculcating international friendship—a love of one's fellow man; Cousinet in France, developing the habit of cooperative endeavor; Glarisegg in Switzerland, with the intimate responsibility and care for each group of boys by a "housefather," and with its equal emphasis on manual, physical, moral, and mental education, characteristic of Europe's "New Schools"; Hamburg, with its daring educational revolution, showing what can be accomplished even when all traditional methods are thrown to the winds; the Czech orphanage at Krnsko, surrounding children with beauty and love and understanding, flexible to their needs; Bakule in Prague, with his complete faith in every child's potentialities, his genius for developing them, and his education through real living—from these, too, there is much light on our own problems. We leave them stimulated, thoughtful.

But a solution of our problem? That, one does not find ready-made. Toward that we still must work—less blindly than before, our direction

somewhat indicated, but the goal not yet in sight.

We can not say of any experimental school in Europe or America, "Lo, *here* is the ideal way." But we can see trends. And we can feel safe in moving in the direction of those trends in our own schools.

Let our school organization be less rigid—more flexible and more easily modified from day to day and hour to hour, so that it may mold itself to the needs and interests of the children.

Let the children have more freedom to organize their schedules and work, to develop interests, to carry out independent investigations.

Let the teacher be so much with her children that she knows each one intimately and can adapt instruction to his needs and interests.

Let the life of the school be more intimately a part of life outside, so that school work will bear a close relation to life-needs felt by the children.

Let the teacher be imbued with high ideals and lofty purposes, for the unconscious influence of such teachers is worth more than all book-learning.

Let children be recognized as individuals, allowed to progress and develop at their own rates, each one's special needs or abilities being made a basis for his fullest possible development.

Let children, through more closely coordinated

group activities, grow in the consciousness of social unity and interdependence.

As we work toward these things, the children entrusted to our care will grow into men and women more able to face life's problems than we are; able to direct, with more light, the education of the future.

THE

JOHN DAY

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