

(Forming of Branches etc)

* Greetings by the Editor

The Parents Review carries loving Christmas greetings to all the families, scattered widely, over the world, where it is a welcome visitor. It is rather overpowering to think of the thousands of beautiful English homes where these words will be read & accepted with more than Christmas goodwill. For we of the Parents Review, we who write & we who read, are beginning to feel ~~an~~ feeling a more & more close bond of fellowship. Some of us have met in the flesh, & the meeting is always unusually cordial & intimate. Some of us, as yet, are only in rapport in the spirit, but the relation between us is none the less real & vital for that. There is a sort of formalism among us. We recognise each other by certain indubitable signs. At once we plunge into real heart-talk, & the weather & the gossip of the day are passed by as ~~foreign~~ topics foreign to our thought. A zealous young ex-student of the House of Education listened, involuntarily, to the talk of two ladies at the door of the compartment in which she was travelling. Her heart burned within her for they talked of Education & on our lines. She laid little plans as to whether she would be able to get into ^{Conversation} talk with the lady who was to be her fellow traveller, & tell her all about the Parents National Educational Union, but, behold, ~~while~~ before she had mustered courage to speak, the familiar red cover was produced by the lady & it proved an open sesame. There was no difficulty about mutual outpourings after that. Perhaps we all feel that what a dear little girl calls the 'angel book' (from the figure on the cover) is a sufficient letter of introduction. We know something, at any rate, of the aspirations of any chance acquaintance in whose hands we find it. It is a badge of membership. ~~This~~

This is all very pleasant, ^{very helpful} but, like most pleasant things, it ~~brings its own~~ brings its own responsibility.

The discovery of ~~new~~ new relation in life is also the discovery of new responsibilities & it is time that the thousands of 'us', who are to be in the van of educational thought, should perceive that we carry in our hands a gospel for the world, that gospel of education in the wide sense of the formation of character which is perhaps the special evolution, belonging to our day, of the Gospel of Christ. 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord' is the attitude proper for that beneficent angel whom men call Education, & the time is coming when the world will recognize that our Lord's binding precepts for the up-bringing of children are among the first of his commandments.

Another glorious Society^{*} has made it its business to see that no child shall be maltreated bodily. The report of this Society is heart-sickening at showing, the fearful & horrible cruelty possible to the hearts of parents, the pitious unnamable distresses inflicted upon children. Already, 85,000 little ones have been brought under the sheltering & healing wing of the Society, & Mr Benjamin Waugh, the true 'Childsman', has succeeded in carrying, what he rightly calls, the Children's Charter giving to the children all the rights of legal protection which hitherto, strange to say, have been enjoyed solely by the adult, the law, ~~no law~~ ^{of the} the law of the land, ~~no doubt,~~ ^{no doubt,} having been framed under the somewhat sentimental notion, that a parent is naturally & necessarily a wise & loving person, devoted to the interests of his children, instructed too, by Nature, in all manner of knowledge & moral rectitude proper for their well-being. Alas, we find, that we have been living in a fool's paradise, that there is no degree of fiendish cruelty which is not possible to parents even in the so-

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Report of the National Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children, 1893. Printed
Central Office
The World of Forgotten Children, 7, St. Andrew Street, London, W.C.

called educated & wealthy classes. The records in the newspapers (not a little like or
 a hundredth of the cruelties discussed by this Society find their way into the papers) fill
 us with shame & an awful sense that anything is possible. "Lord, is it I," we say within
 ourselves, & an overwhelming conviction, that we are not wholly free from blame in
 this matter, comes home to us all in proportion as our minds are awakened to the
 possibilities of education & to our own responsibility in the matter. It is well for us all
 that a strong & noble Society should have taken off our shoulders the anxious
 physical care of the 'problem of forgotten children' asking only for the funds for a
 campaign which many of us are only too glad to help forward in this way. But there
 are ways of despising, offending & hindering the children which have not yet
 come under the world's category of cruelties as cruelties. As yet the world does
 not think that the child who is suffered to grow up greedy, sullen, wilful, disobedient,
^{so long as he is well fed, well clothed, & sheltered in a luxurious home}
 is cruelly treated, & yet there is more hope for one of these neglected little ones, however
 emaciated & forlorn, than there is for the spoiled child; spoiled, as an article
^{article of dress or ornament}
~~spoiled & an article of~~ is spoiled, never to be of its full use &
 beauty anymore. Mr. Leach finds that the thing to do, in a firm town, is to
 awaken public sentiment, correct public opinion, by forming a branch of his
 Society there. The strength of public opinion is well illustrated by the
 agonised cry of the wretched woman who found herself in the ~~law courts~~ ^{dock} the
 other day "Oh my God, they look worse than they did yesterday," she cried, when
 the unhappy little bairns who call her mother were brought into court, & her
 eyes were opened by the force of public opinion & she saw her work as
 others see it. ~~Now~~

Now this is precisely the work that the Parents' National Educational Union

is divinely called to do. It is not for nothing that we are in the van of educational thought. 'How the world is to be peopled is not my concern & need not be yours' says the prince in Rasselas. But such sublime indifference to 'those others' is neither lawful nor ~~expedient~~ ^{expedient}. It is not absolutely & certainly our business to see that the light we possess ourselves shall not be hid under a bushel but set on a candlestick. Now, in the nature of the case, we cannot go about holding up our light in this matter as private individuals. We may indeed show the world a family of well brought-up children, no doubt, that is ^{illuminating} ~~an illuminating~~ influence but to see that beautiful & delightful product of many ^{many prayers} efforts, a good & simple child, no man shows others ~~how~~ parents how to do likewise than would the display of a watch instruct us how to make one. Here is a case where we can do little or nothing for our neighbors individually, but, with the Society at our back, whose principles we can proclaim, whose methods we can advocate without any risk of being offensive to our neighbors, there is simply no limit to the help we can give. The full comprehension of our principles is necessarily slow work, because this is, in itself, a very advanced & liberal education, but, sympathy with our efforts, desire to follow our principles & unite with us in our labors, which we have only to learn how to obtain, is the response we shall meet with if we make even so slight efforts in this direction. For example, a fortnight ago, a lady offered her services to help in forming a Branch, expressing her willingness to act as secretary should her services be acceptable. Her offer was gladly hailed. She seized an opportunity to gather a few friends to hear an address from one of our most active & inspiring members. She could only give a day's notice, some of

The people she asked were engaged, some were shut up by the damp, some were selling at a great bazaar. Only thirteen came, but out of the thirteen ten joined at once. This is the sort of encouragement that awaits any who will fix themselves heart & soul to this great work. There should be a Branch in every town in England & every County should have its own honorary Secretary. Will any of themselves fix the work of secretary, either for town or County? There is probably no good work quite so easy, quite so delightful or quite so wholesome in its effects on one's own personal character. Nothing is easier than to begin the work. Write to either of the Hon. Secretaries, Mr. Perrin* or the Editor* or to our most earnest ^{& able} ~~inspiring~~ Chairman of Committee, Dr. Schofield* for instructions, ^{papers} ~~exhibits~~ etc. Get up a drawing room meeting ^{large or small}. Get some friend of the work to speak, or, failing that, some lady or gentleman of local weight to read the most inspiring & instructive parts of our reports & to speak to the resolution (That a branch of the Parents' National Educational Union shall be formed at —). At the close of the meeting invite members to join. Form a little Committee etc, according to instructions, with surprisingly little effort & in a very short time a Branch of the Union will be in full swing & every year will make some new departure of great use & interest to both Parents & Children. We have not space for more now than an urgent appeal to our friends to take heed to our entreaties in this matter, unless it be to beg all subscribers to the Parents' Review to send in their names & subscription (5/-) to Mr. Perrin & thus to become members of the Union, pledged to advocate its principles whether or no they are able immediately to form ^{or join} a Branch.

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what these principles are, ^{in essence} all our readers know pretty well, but we hope to print them ~~in a~~ in a short form in next ~~month's~~ month's issue. In the meantime Mr Henry Perrin will, we know, be delighted to send copies of our rules & principles to any who write to him for them. (with stamped envelope)

Let us end as we began with loving Christmas greetings to the parents & the children in all the homes which the Parents Review reaches. May ^{you} ~~they~~ have indeed a 'Happy Christmas'. "It is a comely fashion to be glad". May we venture to add that gaiety of heart, is not ~~only~~ ^{merely} a wayside weed that springs of its own accord, when it is not even wanted, but is a choice plant, not quite easy to rear, tender & delicate as it is lovely, a plant one must strike with the psalmist's heart resolution "I will be glad" & then must shelter assiduously from the damp chill of every self-regardful feeling. Gaiety (not of occasion but of heart) thrives only in an atmosphere of lighter love. Farewell, dear friends, keep us & our work ~~in~~ in remembrance on your 'Happy Christmas'