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JUNE, 1918.

L'UMILE PIANTA

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- Hon. Assistant Secretary—*
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- Hon. Editor—*
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MISS F. W. YOUNG, 102, Cranbrook Road, Ilford, Essex.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS.

1914. Claxton, K. M., c/o Baroness Profumo, Swiss Cottage, Boxhill, near Dorking (summer term only).
 1912. Curry, V. C., c/o Mrs. Wilkinson, The Laurels, Bushey Heath, Herts (non-resident, class).
 1912. Davidson, C. H., Stoneleigh, Salcombe, S. Devon (sole).
 1911. Deck, M. (Mrs. L. H. Deering), Braeside, Cardross, Dumbar-tonshire.
 1901. Hirtzel, S. (Mrs. O. W. Albrechtsen), c/o C. H. Hirtzel, Esq., P.O. Box 3,298, Johannesburg, South Africa.
 1913. James, K. M., Greensted Hall, Ongar, Essex (post).
 1912. Malden, T. S., Casa Nostra, St. Alban's Road, Ventnor.
 1912. Maude, W. L., c/o Miss Portal, Freemantle, Over Wallop, Hants.
 1912. Moffatt, B. S., 68, Forest Road, Aberdeen (sole).
 1905. Smeeton, Harriet, Kirton, Boston, Lincolnshire (sole).
 1911. Smith, J. R., c/o Mrs. Read, Ainderby Manor, Northallerton, Yorks (post).
 1915. Taylor, M. R., c/o Mrs. Thorneycroft, Plean House, Plean, Stirling (temporary).
 1905. Tetley, E. R., Hilbro Grange, Bedford (sole).
 1903. Thomson, D. L. (Mrs. Esslemont), 30, Addison Avenue, Holland Park, W. 11.

NOTICES.

Owing to the greatly increased cost of production the PLANT has had to take upon itself a new form. The Garden City Press have been very considerate and most anxious to do the very best possible for us with the funds at our disposal, which unfortunately do not increase, and this June number is the result. Before November we may have to curtail it even more, but we are living in unusual times, and changes have to be made. The increased postage under the new Budget will affect our general expenditure also, so will all students who have not yet paid their subscriptions kindly send them to the Treasurer (Miss Gray, 3, St. David's Avenue, Bexhill-on-Sea, Sussex) as soon as possible. There are still a great number unpaid, and some still owe for 1917, and even for 1916. The money is needed now more than ever before in the history of the Association.

The next number of L'UMILE PIANTA will appear on November 15th. All communications should be written on *one* side of the paper only, and must reach the Editor (Ainderby Manor, Northallerton), by October 20th.

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE A.O.S.A.

The annual Meeting of the Association will be held at 27, Craven Road, on Saturday, July 6th, by kind permission of Miss Evans. It is decided to have some papers and discussion in the morning from 11 to 1, and then to meet again for tea and talk at 3 o'clock. Details are not yet decided, but probably students will be glad to talk over the form of the

Peace Memorial, and there will probably be ample time for any student to bring forward any subject that she has at heart. Will all who expect to be there be sure to let Miss Evans know beforehand, for she has kindly undertaken to provide tea, a difficult matter in these days, and it will be much easier for her if she knows the numbers. I hope that as many as can will be there, and that the day will be a success.

LILIAN GRAY.

REPORT OF THE PRESENTATION TO MISS WIX.

Students will be interested to hear that over a hundred students responded to the suggestion of giving Miss Wix some small token of our appreciation of all her excellent work for the Association through the PLANT. Thanks to the kind help of Mrs. Esslemont we were able to get a good pair of bird glasses at a price considerably lower than we could have done if left to ourselves, and there was a sufficiently large balance to buy a pendant as well, a charming piece of hand-made jewellery—yellow topaz set in silver. Even then there was a small balance of 5s., which will probably be used in having some little name plate put on the bird glasses. I feel sure that all will feel that the best possible use has been made of the money at our disposal, and that the gifts are both useful and ornamental, and we hope that Miss Wix will find much pleasure in possessing them.

LILIAN GRAY.

LETTERS.

Scale How,
 May 20th, 1918.

DEAR OLD SENIORS,

I am sure every one envies us this term in this lovely country, and we find it is going all too quickly. We have had some exquisite days since we came back on April 27th, and you all know what a fine half-holiday can mean here! Last term we had the great pleasure of a visit from Miss Parish, who came here for a few days, and made Scale How her headquarters for a few meetings in the neighbourhood before seeking fresh worlds to conquer in the south. She talked to us about the spread of the P.U.S. programme among elementary schools, and made us realize the tremendous field that has opened for expansion of the school and the spread of Miss Mason's methods. We certainly feel that we are citizens of no mean city, and inspired to do our best to help on the work. The Juniors gave two very good plays for Miss Parish, and showed that they possess a great deal of acting talent and some good organizing powers.

"Fanny Burney at Court" was a charming incident from poor Miss Burney's court experiences, and "The Mistake at the Manor" showed Oliver Goldsmith when young as the hero, or rather victim, of an amusing contretemps. The next treat we had was a visit from Canon Rawnsley, who gave us a lecture on "Beauty." He talked of the beauties of this countryside, and how they should be preserved, showing us in very poetic language his own deep appreciation of nature. He then read us two unpublished poems of his own. This term we have had a celebration of the enrolment of the fiftieth elementary school under the P.U.S. banner. We meant really to have it at the end of last term, when the fiftieth was just coming in, but by the actual date, May 11th, nearly seventy schools had joined. As the afternoon was wet the first part of the celebration was held in the classroom. First the Fairfield children danced some Morris dances, which were very pretty and, Miss Mason said, showed one very noticeable feature of P.N.E.U. children—their gaiety. Miss Mason spoke to us of the P.U.S., and then Miss Kitching told us all about the elementary schools, and made us realize more than ever how very much has been done in the last three years. Some poems written by students for the occasion were read, and a hymn composed and written by Miss Cholmondeley, a present student, was sung. Then we went up on the terrace, where we planted an oak tree.

There are now eighteen girls at Fairfield, and three of them sleep up in the Millet Room with the school mistress. The school itself is rearranged, and the Fifth Form have lessons at Fairfield, giving more room in school for the others. I am giving below some remarks made by Miss Mason at criticism lessons lately, which I am sure will interest old students.

On March 7th, Miss Mason said she thought one reason why such good results had been obtained from P.N.E.U. work, when undertaken by elementary school teachers, was that the teachers were well disciplined, and were able to sink their own personalities sufficiently to let the set books exercise their due and most powerful influence on the children. The good teacher must not come between the child and the book. She must exercise much self-control, and not be tempted to "embroider" the lessons on her own lines. She must merely act as introducer of child to book, and of guide when necessary.

On March 14th Miss Mason again expressed her dislike of lessons in which great pains are taken by the teacher to introduce extracts from books other than those set, and extraneous matter generally, in order to (in the teacher's view)

"improve" the lesson, but really to hinder the object of the lesson—to bring the child and the book set together. She also laid stress on the old saying that "Teachers must teach less and scholars must learn more."

On May 8th, apropos of a lesson in History to Form I, which had failed to elicit any narration to speak of from the children, Miss Mason said:

(a) That to help children to catch new names coming into the narrative the teacher should read the name very clearly, and with emphasis, and might even introduce a new character with a few words of her own.

(b) She should read into the children, looking at them while reading, and as if the subject matter were something which had only just occurred to her.

(c) The teacher should expect good narration: she is much more likely to get it than if she betrays by her manner that she fears the children will not be able to narrate.

(d) The difference between a successful and unsuccessful lesson sometimes depends on the little details and touches, as much as on arrangement, length, etc.

(e) The moment when a teacher feels a lesson is not going well is the moment to rally her forces and turn failure into success.

On May 16th Miss Mason said that the teacher must not let the desire to get a complete lesson obsess her, and make her prolong her lesson when the children are tired.—Yours very sincerely,

THE PRESENT STUDENTS.

Fredville, Nr. Dover,

April 23rd, 1918.

DEAR STUDENTS,

I wish I could write separately to every one of you who so very kindly have contributed to the lovely presents I have just received. It was such a surprise to get an exciting looking registered parcel, and to find in it a particularly beautiful pendant and chain—topazes and silver—and to wonder who could possibly be feeling so kindly towards me! I do wish you could all see it. Then I read the accompanying letter, and found that there were bird glasses too! And now I have just received them—such beauties. Thank you all; I cannot see what I have done to deserve such kindness; but any way, I am very lucky and most grateful.—Yours affectionately,

HELEN E. WIX.

DEAR EDITOR,

I have read with great interest the various proposals concerning the War Memorial Fund. I hope there will be no undue hurry in deciding on the form the memorial should take, for I am sure we want it to be a real expression of as

many students as possible. It would lose half its value if it were not so.

I was under the impression that the money had to be contributed at once, and am glad to see that it will not necessarily be called for till peace is proclaimed. I should think it would be convenient for many not to have to find the money at the present moment.

It is a most happy suggestion to use the words Peace Memorial instead of War Memorial, and I hope that it will be followed. I think a chapel at Scale How would be a most fitting and beautiful expression of such a memorial. It would be a real inspiration to each generation of students, while acting as a beacon to the distant ex-students. What love could be expended in making it beautiful—the students giving of their own handicraft. Only I hope we should be able to raise enough money to employ a good architect, so that real beauty of line and true proportions could be obtained.

I feel, like many others, that after this war a great awakening is awaiting us; that a far greater value will be given to the things of the spirit. Would not a chapel stand for all that is highest in a student's life of service?

Perhaps a collecting box might be placed in the chapel for contributions towards endowing a bed for St. Dunstan's Home for the Blind, an object that I think would especially appeal to us. Ex-students could send donations to the fund. Our chapel would thus be helping us to express our gratitude in a practical form. Also effect would have been given to the excellent suggestion that our Peace Memorial should be the endowment of a "Scale How Bed."

If the idea of a chapel should be adhered to, may I make a suggestion that perhaps a tablet could be inserted in the outside wall in some prominent position, with words inscribed thereon that would show, to future generations, the spirit in which the chapel was erected. If I venture to say what the words might be, it is that others should be helped in finding some worthier words or apt quotation:

PEACE MEMORIAL (*date of peace*)

THIS CHAPEL IS DEDICATED TO
(*Dedication name*)

for a memorial of those who gave their lives in the Great War, with the hope that it may prove an inspiration to that higher spiritual life which their sacrifice caused to dawn upon a new world.

"The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." A. M. M.

Fredville, Nr. Dover.

DEAR EDITOR,

May I make yet another suggestion for the Peace Memorial? I do not think it would be more costly than a chapel. It is that we should all make an effort to collect, say, £500, invest it and *use the interest* as a bursary for a girl who cannot afford the Scale How training fees. It might bring in £20 a year. This may not sound much to those of us who were able to pay our fees easily, but I know of more than one girl to whom £20 a year—which did not have to be paid back—would be a very great consideration. There is also the suggestion of a loan fund, but there are other loan funds, and it seems to me that a bursary would be more useful.

As to the chapel, could one be built for £500 that would be anything but cheap and nasty? Even were it beautiful, I personally should be sorry that the prayers we all remember so well should cease to be said in dining-room and classroom.

Would it not be possible in any case to start the collection *now*. As the months go on we all, I fancy, get poorer, and expenses rise, and they are not likely to decrease.—
Yours, etc.,

HELEN E. WIX.

May, 1918.

DEAR FELLOW STUDENTS,

It is just possible that some of us may not have seen Dr. Helen Webb's letter in the May "*P.R.*," and some having seen it may not have heeded. May I therefore repeat what Dr. Webb proposes as a means of raising funds to help carry on the propaganda work of the P.U.S., which is a matter of so much interest to us all? She says:

"I know that several people have been good enough to guarantee definite sums for a certain number of years, but it has occurred to me that there must be many others like myself, former students for example, and those who have been their pupils, who, while unable to give largely, would like an opportunity of helping our work, the thought of which is such a constant joy to us all. In order to give us such an opportunity, I have undertaken to organize a little sale of things for children. It is intended that it shall take place in October, at 12, Smith Square, Westminster, by the kindness of Mrs. Walter Rea. Clothes or toys or anything else for children which any friend will make, will be gratefully received at the above address any time after October 1st. The exact date of the sale will be published later. I shall be glad to hear from anyone willing to help, and to answer any questions or give advice on things to be made."

What an opportunity for us to respond as a body of students! Surely there is not one of us who could not hold herself responsible for one sale-able (!) piece of handiwork, and what an extra opportunity such a selection of work would furnish in showing what P.U.S. teaching can produce!

We all rejoice greatly in what some of our fellow students are doing in spreading the work and principles of the Union. Yet some of us, perhaps, feel that our sphere of influence is more limited, and we are unable to achieve great things. Here, then, is our chance to help in a little thing. I see no reason why we should not be able to send such a worthy contribution to Dr. Helen Webb that she feels compelled to allow us a whole stall for work done by Ambleside students and their pupils. The object of the sale should appeal to us specially, seeing that it is "For the Children's Sake."

Hoping we shall each make a hearty response to this suggestion, Yours very sincerely,
FLORENCE W. YOUNG.

MOTHERS IN COUNCIL.

I decidedly appreciate a corner in the magazine for Mothers in Council, and was very much interested in the first contribution. I have found *Practical Motherhood*, by Helen Y. Cambell (Longmans, Green & Co.), published in 1910, quite a useful book. It is rather large, and perhaps too full of information, but it deals very fully with children's diet, especially from infancy to six years old. Part I deals with "The Hygiene of Pregnancy, Infancy, and Childhood." Part II, "Feeding in Infancy and Childhood," with a whole chapter devoted to "Feeding after the First Year." Part III, "Difficulties and Illness in Infancy and Childhood," one chapter being given to "First Aid in the Nursery." Part IV, "Development and Training of the Mind in Childhood." The possibilities of play are dealt with from six months to four years. Part V, "School Age."

I have two quite delightful companion books of nursery rhymes: *Our Old Nursery Rhymes* and *Little Songs of Long Ago*. The original tunes are harmonized (very simply, but well) by Alfred Moffat, and are most charmingly illustrated by H. Willebeek Le Mair. There is a picture to each rhyme. They are published by Augener Ltd., or A. & C. Black. I also have Alfred Moffat's *British Nursery Rhymes* (Augener Ltd.), consisting of seventy-five old rhymes set to music, but not illustrated. *Song Time*, by Percy Dearmer and Martin Shaw, is a very good musical collection (no illustrations), but has not so many nursery rhymes. It is

"A Book of Rhymes, Songs, Games, Hymns, and other music for all occasions in a child's life."

The Mothers' Union is publishing in leaflet form "A Year's Course of Lessons in Home Religious Teaching for Little Children." The syllabus is at present issued in monthly parts. Price 3d. each, or 2s. 6d. for the twelve parts, postage extra, from the Mothers' Union Central Office, Church House, Westminster. It has some excellent suggestions for teaching quite little children, and it is very useful for the various books it mentions for Sunday and week-day reading.

Can anyone tell me of a good collection, in a book or otherwise, of pictures illustrating the New and Old Testament. It is for my little boy, nearly four years old. I have William Hole's beautiful pictures in his book, *The Life of Jesus of Nazareth*. My little boy seems very fond of them, but finds them rather puzzling. I think they are too full of detail, and not definite enough for so small a child. I want something simpler and bolder, though artistic. Also, will someone please recommend a good sacred picture for the nursery (not the Sistine Madonna), saying where to find a good reproduction, and whether it can be had in good colours, and the approximate price if known. I would rather like one of "Christ Blessing the Little Children," old or modern.

Can some kind person tell me the name or artist of a picture that I was very fond of as a child? An angel in pure white is standing near a precipice with hands outspread guarding two unconscious little children who have wandered rather near the edge whilst gathering flowers on the borders of a wood.
A. M. MOORE.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND CUSTOM.

Some day, I hope, that as a kind of "extra" of the Students' Conference, there may be held a meeting of all of us who are both mothers and ex-students. In sending the following for the mothers' section of our magazine, I am making no attempt to write fully, but rather venturing to offer, as a subject for discussion at such a meeting, a short statement of certain convictions with regard to the religious education of children that sixteen years of motherhood have given me.

I do not know what have been the latest findings of scientists as to what heredity can or cannot do in passing on accumulated soul-experience from one generation to another, but I am sure any mother who reads this will agree that she finds it impossible conscientiously to bring up her

children on exactly the same lines, however fine, as were used in her own case. She may possibly also share my own belief that each succeeding generation represents a fresh step towards Truth in so far as it tends to expose the insincerities and empty conventions of earlier days, and to make human intercourse increasingly more direct and simple. The world is journeying, however zigzag the path it takes, to the Truth and Goodness at the heart of things, and grows impatient of forms and ceremonies, which were formerly found to be helpful, and often held to be essential, to spiritual life.

We see this conspicuously in the matter of church-going, a convention which young people, if left to themselves, are found to have little use for, not because they have no aspirations for the best and highest, but because they know that, for them, there is no approach by the way of over-familiar services (often reduced to a kind of sanctified mechanism) nor by a formal worship that gives little scope for the corporate realization of an immediate Presence. We mothers need to take our courage in both hands, and going, if necessary, bravely in the teeth of what our elders and betters would say, allow our children to grow up in the comparative unfetteredness that their particular Age-spirit demands. The aim of all religious teaching and influence is to do nothing to hinder a child's heart finding its way into that Communion with its Father for which it was born, and to which it is adapted with a perfection we shall never fathom; but I believe that it is just here that we make our worst, and most well-meaning, mistake.

So strong is our faith in direct human teaching—in doing good by force, so to speak—that we do not allow ourselves to believe that “the tuning of our life's strings into purer spiritual notes is going on without our being aware of it,” and therefore we set to to teach our children to say prayers, to get used to attending services, to become very familiar with the details of Christ's life, and with the Old Testament “as literature.” In so doing are we hindering or helping them? Putting them in the way to Reality, or to a merely easy acquiescence in the beliefs of others?

To refer briefly to our old friend, Habit.

I suppose we shall all agree that we are given the power to form habits, or reflex mental or physical actions, in order, at any rate, partly that the highest region of our mind, and the brain it uses, shall be relieved of all concern in those matters that can be adequately carried out without its supervision. This highest region is thus being left free to devote the whole force of its powers to activities that require the full play of its co-operation, such activities, for instance,

as those of prayer and public worship. Let these be repeated unvaryingly and frequently, and the inevitable happens. Habit, who loves stereotyped ways, sees to it that as soon as possible they grow automatic, and a deadly tendency to formalism begins to destroy their freshness, spontaneity, and sincerity, and without these what chance is left for the development of any vital intercourse or friendship? This is surely no imaginary danger, but one which is all the more difficult to avoid because the usually accepted conventions of public religious life lead directly towards it. Many mothers, I believe, teach their children, often as mere babes, to repeat a prayer morning and evening. The same prayer is continued for many years, when a new and longer one is substituted. The idea thus impressed upon a child's mind is that prayer is chiefly a “saying,” and after a few weeks' regular use any such saying may readily become just a vain repetition. It is more than likely that the prayer contains references to sins of which a normal, good-hearted and happy child cannot possibly be constantly and genuinely conscious, and makes request for spiritual blessings for which he is not always athirst. Such set prayers may be absolutely the best *on occasion*; they are ruined, as a means of communion with God, when they are allowed to become stale and hackneyed.

My own conviction is that we may best give our children a right attitude in regard to prayer, in their earliest years, by praying ourselves in their presence, in words that the occasion itself suggests. Let such occasions be *events*, in some sort, sufficiently unusual to be full of interest, yet sufficiently familiar to be full of peace, and happy association, and the warmth of affection. Their own prayers, when they come to them later on, would naturally be of the same spontaneous and confiding nature, expressive of real wants genuinely felt. A thoroughly nice good mother once told me, when we were discussing the advisability of regular church-going for children, that she always made a practice of it, it was “so good for children to learn to sit still”! It seemed to me absolute sacrilege to propose to use church services for such a purpose, especially as sitting still, when not due to absorbing interest, really spells boredom to children; and if there is one thing with which no sense of dislike, or dullness or apathy should ever be allowed to mingle, it is a church service—the gathering of two or three together to which is promised the nearest possible approach to the “heavenlies.”

Our task, as mothers, is to give Prayer and Worship a far wider, a richer and more varied significance. If it is an asking for blessings it must be equally a deep, still ex-

pectancy of answers; if active and vocal it must also be passive and silent, a drinking in of a Presence at least as real and actual to the soul as is that of the flooding sunshine to the open fields of summer. It is this attitude which the western mind seems to find so foreign and difficult of achievement; but if we are to lead our children to any vital experience of an inner world of the Soul, we must show them, step by step, what concentration of soul or meditation may become, and what deep channels of life and strength and insight it will be found to afford us.

At what age children should begin to pray, by what methods we may best create in them spiritual hunger and thirst, how best we may introduce them to fellowship in worship without accustoming them to sit silent, but uninterested and untouched during the ordinary church service, and by what means such an attitude of mind and soul as meditation involves may gradually be led up to, are difficult, but absorbingly interesting questions. For their solution the varied experiences of many types of parents and teachers will be required; but one thing is sure: direct verbal instruction will be the smallest part of our work. The essential is that we should ourselves be the thing which we require of our children, should ourselves help to supply the atmosphere which strengthens the deepest trend of their souls—the trend that, unhindered, may be trusted to lead them to the highest that Time and Eternity have in store for them.

BEATRICE E. MORTON.

A WORD TO THE WISE.

Many years ago, the "Present Students" sat under the beech tree and listened while Mrs. Dallas Yorke—may her soul rest in peace—talked about dry-rot. It was Trinity Sunday—and hot. She made them see the beautiful stateliness of one of England's famous homes, undermined by a gradual foe that yet worked with a swiftness that was incredible. I do not suppose any who heard her will forget the scene and the word-picture. Dry-rot was what they should shudder at, when they could recognize it, all their lives.

Another scene comes up to one. The drawing-room on Sunday afternoon, and dear Miss Mason sitting by her little table, telling us the history of our badge—its motto and its meaning; while her hand—such a beautiful hand—fondled the gold one she wore as she talked.

I have often thought since they were two of the most wonderful lessons I ever had. The first was negative: Avoid Pride; the second positive: Cultivate Humility.

This was a great many years ago. Now I wonder sometimes if the lessons are reversed. Are students trained to cultivate pride and disdain humility? I hear so much of what they cannot do. I have seen so much of what were better left undone. Ignorance masquerades as superiority. Laziness shelters behind gentility. I thought we had stopped being genteel. I thought it was not what we did, but how we did it that mattered. It seems too often that we trade upon a great idea to cover our own inefficiency; that we cloak incompetence with a certain glibness of quotation, and trust that the reputation of others will carry us through. These are typical conversations:

"There seem to be many mosses in these woods, Miss Brown. Will you help us to collect them?"

"Oh, yes; we did mosses at Ambleside."

"What is this one, please, Miss Brown?"

"Oh, I don't know the names of any of them."

"Materials are so difficult to get, Miss Brown. Shall the children make socks and hospital bags instead of other handwork?" "Oh, I have never knitted a sock, but I dare say I could run up a bag."

"What was all that stamping and shouting I heard this afternoon?" "Oh, the children wanted to dance. I told them they had done enough, but they did not seem to mind."

"What an untidy room! Don't you have a monitress?"

"Oh, most of the things are mine; I did ask the children to tidy up, but they forgot."

"Are not the children doing the botany set for the term?"

"No, I thought I'd like to do astronomy. We had some lovely star maps at Ambleside."

"Oh, yes, my children have worked all their lives in the P.U.S. We don't have an Ambleside governess, though. We had one, but she could not keep order, so we got some one else and she has done splendidly."

"I tried one, too, but the schoolroom was always in such a litter, and the children were never punctual to anything, so I got an ordinary girl who did much better."

What answers are we to give to these people? What are we to say to earnest young parents who have made a really great effort to secure an "Ambleside governess" for their children, and find they are obliged to look after an incompetent fool who does not know enough to tell the children to change their stockings when they come in wet? Or who does not recognize that it is any business of hers to tell her

charges to wash their hands for lunch, or acquaint themselves with a hairbrush? What answer are we to give to parents who complain of bedrooms that it takes an over-worked maid half an hour to tidy in the morning? Are we never to wait on ourselves or other people when we once start life on our own?

I should like to write a book for the guidance of the Noble Army of Trained Teachers on the art of living in other people's houses. I should include in it a maxim that while treated as a guest one should seldom take advantage of the privileges offered.

Once, many years ago, the "Present Students" came into the classroom to find a motley collection of valuables on the little table, and one word on the blackboard: "Dirt." Do such things happen nowadays? Or are you all so busy with theatrical performances and wiles for examiners that order does not happen?

I admire enormously the enthusiasm of youth, but parents prefer it salted with the discretion of the middle-aged.

But I seem to hear a rumour of distant epigrams, so no more. Hate me, but think of these things. The strength of a chain is in its weakest link.

SIX PICTURES BY REMBRANDT.

I do not think I recommend to teachers of this term's pictures, the monograph on the artist by Lewis Hind in Black's "Artists in Colour" series. It is a melancholy work, and personally made me feel decidedly gloomy. How do we think of Rembrandt? As a child I thought of him as a mysterious painter, whose pictures one had to peer into to distinguish what there was at all, and whose choice of subjects, to my limited knowledge, was dull. I think our children will form a different opinion. It is a violent transition from the dainty imagination and Southern delicacy of the great Florentine, to the sombre mysticism and realism of the great Dutchman. We must go warily.

I think I should begin with either of the two etchings: the story of "The Two Beggars," or the glorious contrasting details of "Christ Healing the Sick." In the first it seems to me very wonderful how one is absorbed by the character in the three faces first. The woman is the breadwinner. It is evidently she who wins life for her father and children. The old man displays a touchingly resigned gratitude, but she is calculating the exact amount of food and shelter she will be able to get with the *klein gelt* dropped into her hand by the householder. Charity mingles with a certain amused contempt in his face as he gives his money. Amusement that is directed against his own soft-heartedness rather

than at their poverty. For they are sturdy beggars. The woman's face is round and comely, and neither of the children are exactly wasting away. The picturesque disorder of the boy's legs does not amount to rags and tatters. There is not the feeling of poverty about the picture that some of J. F. Millet's peasant pictures give us.

Then the Christ. Where can one begin? I always feel that Rembrandt was so oppressed with his own unworthiness to portray his Redeemer that he drew merely a lay figure, and the Divinity is expressed in the mighty works that lay around his hand. As I study this picture I am at a loss where to begin. With the central group, perhaps, and then work in increasing circles. That almost seems the painter's plan, too. It is one of his plates that is entirely life—and crowded life. The anxious disciple, the absorbed mother, the sick woman, faithfully raising her languid hand; the beseeching hands; the gaudily dressed lady, and the bald-headed beggar, each is perfect: each expresses the omnipotence of the Master. This picture wants examining with a lens to appreciate the marvellous workmanship in the personality of each one of the heads of the group of elders on the left, or of beggars on the right. That eager little boy who drags his mother with her sick baby, and the foppish young gallant who looks and listens, sceptical, but obliged to believe. Who else could do them? Who else would dare to concentrate the brightest light in the composition on a wheelbarrow? I think we shall come back again and again to this wonderful work, and see something fresh each time.

It is almost a relief to turn from the minutiae of all this detail to the broad effect of light and shade and distance in "The Woodland Scene." This is a forest we all know, peaceful, undisturbed, far from the noise and taint of city life, and yet near enough to open its healing arms to any satiated citizen who will wander down its chequered paths. I wonder if those are bluebells that splash upwards on the old trunks. It is a study of tree-trunks in shadow and of unexpected light that few could equal and none rival. It is a pity the reproduction we have leaves the break-up in the foreground so obscure. I cannot decide if it is a man singing or a heap of tools and leaves.

"How shall we order this Child." The Revised Version reads the text, "What shall be the manner of this child, and what shall be his work?" I think I should read to the children this 13th chapter of the Book of Judges, and the descriptions of the "Man of God," whose countenance was terrible. It explains better than any words of ours will the intensity of the abandonment of the old man to the mercy

of his God, and the decorous humility of his sweet-faced wife. How wonderfully has Rembrandt expressed the character of the woman as we read of her in Judges—her dependence on her husband, her faith, her submission. What a beautiful face it is! A little worn. She is one of the mothers of Israel, and as such knows the sorrows of war and the perils of peace. And how full of mystery is the "Man of God," who floats from their closed vision in the smoke of their sacrifice, taking their prayers with him!

I am transgressing my space allowance, and must say very little about the "Old Woman with the Scales." Such a wise, gentle old lady; I would like to know her. Gentle, well-bred hands, she is yet a woman of affairs, and there is a tremendous amount of character and wisdom in the lines of her clever old face. I do not think she would have the caustic wit of the old lady who criticizes with her wise old eyes and ever deepening wrinkles, the visitors to the National Gallery; but she would be a very satisfactory person to consult if one felt puzzled or ill, and I am sure her tales of obscure science would be endless.

"Simples" and "ungents" would have no secrets from her. She is a great lady, too, and the jewels that she weighs are but a small part of her wealth. Could we add 300 years to the portraits of to-day, and feel the same interest and sympathy with them? I am afraid the sitters are like the lines left out that make Rembrandt's old women such living personalities. I have left the "Girl at the Window" to the last because I find the children can "bite on" a difficult subject better earlier in the term. At its close we are full of dramatic performances, holiday plans, days missed for hay-making or fruit-picking. This fresh young thing puts no strain on our attention or perception. She is an embodiment of youth and health and good temper, with her square little chin and fat hands, and good-humoured indifferent interest in the affairs of the street below.

Here, as in all the rest, Rembrandt painted to please himself. The real thing; we love it as we learn it.

E. C. ALLEN.

BIRTH.

ROTHERA.—On March 17th, at Ruovias, Elstree, Herts, to Lambert and Marion Rothera, a son (still-born).

MARRIAGES.

DECK—DEERING.—On April 24th, at St. John's Church, Folkestone, Lucius Henry Deering to Margaret Deck.

WHITE—INGRAM.—On April 15th, at St. Thomas' Church, St. Anne's-on-Sea, Private Ernest Ingram, Artists' Rifles, son of A. V. Ingram, London, to Ina White, of Belmont, Uyeasound, Shetland, and daughter of the late Dr. Peter White, of Yetholm, Roxburghshire.