

Mrs. BELL AND THE MONTESSORI MOVEMENT.

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Mrs. Bell's interest in the Montessori movement took the form, last summer, 1912, of having a Montessori School on Beinn Bhreagh, under the charge of Miss Roberta Fletcher.

The very promising success attained by the school led Mrs. Bell to have a Montessori school opened last autumn in her Washington home, 1331 Connecticut Avenue, under the charge of Miss Anne E George, and Miss Roberta Fletcher. This was in operation from October 1912 until April 1913, and attracted so much attention and interest that the parents of the children decided that it would be advisable to have a permanent Montessori school in Washington, and make it the headquarters of the Montessori movement in America.

This led to the organization of the Montessori Educational Association, which was organized in Washington, D.C., in April 1913, and incorporated under the laws of the District of Columbia.

The Association, recognizing Mrs. Bell as the prime mover in the matter, unanimously elected her President.

Mrs. Bell has purchased a house on Kalorama Road, Washington, D.C., and is having it put in order for an ideal school. The house is to be rented to the Montessori Educational Association. About fifty pupils have already been secured and it is probable that the school will be opened in the autumn with an enrollment of over sixty.

The school will ^{be} under the direction of Miss Anne B. George and Miss Roberta Fletcher. It is expected that this school will have a normal department for the training of Montessori teachers, and that several free schools on the Montessori principle will be opened and afford practice for the teachers in training,

There is every reason to believe that an educational movement of great magnitude and importance has been started by Mrs. Bell, and that the Montessori principles will spread from this school as a center to all parts of the United States. It has therefore been thought well to place in the Recorder an account of the inception of the movement and the part that Mrs. Bell has played in it.

We give first an account by Mrs. Bell herself of the Montessori school which she supported in her own house from October 1912, to ^{May} April 1913. We also give some newspaper notices relating to the new building now being prepared in Washington, and various letters and circulars written by Mrs. Bell, or inspired by her, in aid of her Montessori movement, and at the end of her article are given photographs of the school at Connecticut Avenue.

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by Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell.

As was noted in the Recorder at the time, see Volume X, page 341, Miss Roberta Fletcher opened a Montessori Childrens Laboratory at the Beinn Bhreagh warehouse last July. This Laboratory was conducted very successfully until its close in October, when Miss Fletcher and her little charges, Graham and Barbara Fairchild, Karel and Lilian Grosvenor, left for Washington.

On Thursday, October 31, 1912, Miss Anne E. George and Miss Roberta Fletcher opened their Children's House in a large room forming an annex to Mr and Mrs Alexander Graham Bell's house, 1331 Connecticut Avenue, Washington, D.C. This room was particularly well adapted to the purpose, being about thirty-three feet long by twenty-five at its widest part, and about fourteen feet high, and separated from the main house by a conservatory, so that the children were practically in a house by themselves.

The conservatory came in very usefully, as from the beginning there were many visitors, and these were accommodated with seats there. Otherwise it might even have been difficult to conduct the school at all, so eager were those to ^{watch} snatch every detail of the work.

Besides being large, the room was thoroughly well ventilated, having been remodelled as far as possible in

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accordance with Mr Bell's ideas on ventilation, heating and cooling. It was practically a room within a room, having four inches of a space between its walls, twelve inches between its floors, and four feet at its highest between its roofs. Air was forced in and forced out by electric fans.

The schoolroom was provided with several low tables carefully made for the convenience of small persons, and little wooden chairs also. These were painted a pretty green color, and it was intended that they should be individualized by having, for girls, a flower, and for boys, an insect of some kind painted on them.

But there were so many other things to do that only a few boys got their spiders or grasshoppers, and girls their cherry blossoms or snowdrops.

There were plenty of shelves for Montessori material and for the plants the children watered every day, and tables on which were placed globes of water in which tiny gold fish or black tadpoles swam.

There were small rugs with which the children could soften the hard floor when they built their towers, but which were not too large for small arms to carry or hands to fold.

Also there was a piano around which the little ones gathered with their little chairs and sang or listened, or at other times marched and deployed, or danced in rhythmic

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movement.

There were about twenty-three children enrolled during the school year, which lasted till May 15, 1913.

Some of the children dropped out, either through illness or because the parents left town, but others came in, so that the attendance was largest toward the end, and the children were doing so well that it seemed a great pity to close it.

The children were chiefly those of friends of Mr and Mrs Grosvenor, and Mr and Mrs Fairchild, - little sons and daughters of Scientific, Army and Navy men, - but some were brought from a distance for the purpose of attending the school.

Besides Miss George and Miss Fletcher, there were assisting them Miss Margaret Perkins, who gave her services as pianist in return for the training she got as assistant teacher, Miss Fleisher, and during the early part of the year, the Marchioness

But most influential of all there was Miss Alys Bentley, Director of Music in the Public Schools of Washington D.C. . She early became very much interested in watching Miss George's work with these very young children, and gladly availed herself of the permission granted by Dr Davidson, Superintendent of Public Schools, to try out her system of

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rhythmic dances on these little ones.

She directed the movements herself twice every week, and the children entered eagerly into the wonderful new games of being kangeroos and hopping about, or lying down and going to sleep and slowly awakening with many long slow stretchings of arms and legs.

Miss Bentley very soon came to the conclusion that she could get better results with these little ones than with older public school children, through their greater suppleness and perfect unconsciousness of themselves.

Besides the regular Montessori employments and the play out of doors on the sand pile or up and down the toboggan slide, there was the special feature of the daily luncheon.

While most of the children were out of doors at play, two remained to set the tables, placing the paper napkins, plates and glasses. This was always a serious business, for the napkins had to be straight, and the tumblers set just so, after having been carefully carried on trays two or three at a time across the room.

Then when the others returned and took their places these two little servers had to trot back and forth filling every glass with milk, and offering every one a piece of cracker. When all were served, these two helped themselves, but theirs was never an uninterrupted meal, for every now and

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then there were calls for more milk or cracker, to which they carefully responded.

This service was never hard for the children, all took turns, and one could see from their faces that they felt their responsibility, - and this sense of responsibility more than anything else is what these luncheons taught the children.

It was no easy matter carrying on this Montessori Children's House during the early days. There were about fifteen or eighteen small children, all brought suddenly together, few of them knowing the others and confused with the strangeness of everything.

It was some time before they were won from their shyness, and some more time before order was finally brought out of the chaos into which many fell when once their shyness was conquered and they had not learned the difference between liberty and license.

There were boys who had known no law but their own wills, girls who could not keep steadily at one thing for a moment, and by their restlessness infected others.

But Miss George and Miss Fletcher had the Divine gifts of patience and sympathy joined to great firmness, and at last there came a time when they could say, - "It is as Montessori said it would be - 'the miracle is wrought'."

The children remained children, happy, simple, unspoiled children, but they had advanced far in the direction

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continued.

of concentration in their work, power of instinctive self-control and recognition of each others equal rights.

The meaningless, rambling markings on paper had become controlled purposeful drawings, - crude indeed, but showing unmistakably the intelligent mind that directed and trained hand that executed.

Visitors became more and more frequent till a regular system of appointments by card only had to be insisted upon, and parents became more convinced that they had found what they wanted for their little ones.

In April, 1913, they called a special meeting which was held in the schoolroom and attended by about two hundred and fifty of their friends and others interested in the work.

This meeting was called to order by Mrs Bailey Willis, one of the mothers, and addresses followed by Miss George, Dr Davidson and others, and reported in the "Evening Star" that day. Following this, the parents formed themselves into a committee to secure the establishment of the School on a permanent basis, with Miss George and Miss Fletcher in charge.

That done, they called another evening meeting in the schoolroom and organized the Montessori Educational Association for the purpose of helping in the establishment of other Montessori Schools all over the country.

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Miss Lathrop, head of the U.S. Children's Bureau, was present at this meeting, and expressed great interest and sympathy, but felt that her official position precluded her from being one of the Trustees. Later, Miss Margaret Wilson, one of the daughters of the President, accepted a position on the Board of Trustees and the Executive Committee, on the understanding insisted on by her that she would take an active part in the work of the Association.

It was then too late in the season for more than the business of organization and drawing up of circulars and letters to be sent out all over the country and Canada, inviting people known to be interested in educational work to become members; as it was designed to make the Association thoroughly National or rather American in its scope, and the distributing headquarters for all information concerning the Montessori system and the official representative of Madame Montessori.

To this end the New York Montessori Committee, - an organization formed a year previously at the request of the Dottoressa, - affiliated with the Association as incorporators.

The purposes of this Association are as stated in its Constitution ; -

"To promote and develop in America the educational movement based on the principles and theories of Dr Montessori, and to assist in the establishment and

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continued.

" maintaining of schools for children,
and schools for observation and prac-
tise conducted according to said prin-
ciples."

In pursuance of these we have advanced so far as to purchase a large brick building with good grounds in a desirable part of the city, to be used as a Children's House.

The house is three stories with basement, brick, with brown stone trimmings and stands high on rising ground, commanding from its rear windows a wide view of the city and especially of fine large gardens belonging to the surrounding houses. It is now being improved by the addition of large fireproof verandahs on each story, connecting with the rear garden by wide fireproof staircases.

These verandahs are to be used as outdoor school rooms on all suitable days. Besides this, big triplet windows are being opened so as to let in plenty of morning sunshine on each floor.

The basement will be fitted up as a carpenter and manual workshop, and under the lowest verandah will be space for a gymnasium for use when the weather is too inclement for the children to play outside.

The grounds will be fitted with toboggan slides, cross bars, swings, etc. in one part, while the other will have space for the children's flower gardens.

During the past winter only children from two and a half to five years were accepted, although Graham Fairchild,

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who was six years old, was one of the pupils. But next winter the effort will be made to adapt the Montessori system to children as old as eight years; and the house will be divided into rooms for the regular Montessori class of children from two and a half to five, and others from five to six and six to eight.

The enrollment already numbers about fifty children with a possible enrollment of sixty, and the directing staff consists of Miss Anne E. George and Miss Roberta Fletcher Directors, Miss Reynolds and Miss Margaret Perkins assistants in charge of the different classes. Miss Gretchen Schmidt will be one of the pupil teachers, and there will be a pianist and other assistants.

The equipment will be very carefully selected, much of it - such as lockers for every child - being specially built. There will also be provided low pantry tables, wash-basins, etc., all adapted to the children's sizes, where they can themselves prepare and serve the daily luncheon, and later wash and put away the dishes used.

These, while not being expensive, will be selected for beauty as well as usefulness, and are being purchased abroad by Miss George.

In the workshop there will be trays for clay modelling with which it is designed to have the older children learn about geography, through modelling of hills and valleys, land and oceans, as well as the forms of the various animals in-

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habiting the different lands.

While this school is being maintained by the parents of the children, as a model school, the members of the Association in general will arrange for the opening of free schools in connection with social settlements. These schools will be in the immediate charge of ^sMontessori trained teacher but under Miss George's direction and her assistants will be young ladies who desire to receive practical training in Montessori work before opening schools of their own in other parts of the country.

At the present time Miss George is abroad, consulting with Dr Montessori over the education of the older children; Miss Fletcher is at Menlo Park, California, conducting an open air Montessori school under the shade of the giant Redwoods; and on Beinn Bhreagh Miss Schmidt is using the upper room of the warehouse as a sort of music room for Lillian, Alex and Eliend^egaline Grosvenor, to which they have invited their little friends Sadie and Anna Rose.

No attempt is made to conduct a regular Montessori Children's House, and on fine days, - of which, alas, we have lately had all too few, - the room is deserted while the children play on the shore. But a piano has been installed, and on wet days Miss Schmidt plays Miss Bentley's rhythms and the children follow with the corresponding rhythmic movements, or draw, or play with the stuffed animals.

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as their own fancy wills.

And at home every evening the three little things take turns in setting their own low supper table, and serving each other, afterwards washing the dishes in their own wash basin.

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The Montessori School, 1912 - 13.

Tracing letters, with eyes closed, by the sense of touch.



The Montessori School, 1912 - 13.

Sandpaper letters, and rods for number work, on the floor.



Alec. and Eliandrine Grosvenor, (Elsie Alexandra Caroline),

At the Montessori School, 1912 - 13.

ORGANIZATION OF THE MONTESSORI EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION

April 8, 1913.

In Dr. Bell's "Home Notes", under date April 9, 1913 page 251, I find the following account of the meeting at Mrs. Bell's house at which the Montessori Educational Association was organized:-

JS.

"1913, April 9: Yesterday evening (April 8) at seven o'clock we had a Montessori dinner party.

Present: Mr. & Mrs. A.G. Bell; Miss George; Miss Fletcher; Mrs. Fairchild; Mr. & Mrs. Grosvenor; Miss Lathrop; Miss Westcott; Mrs. Peters; Miss Bentley; Dr. P.P. Claxton, U.S. Congr of Education; Mr. Davidson, Supt of Public Schools; Mr. Charles J. Bell; Mr. Lerner, Member of the Board of Education; Dr. Dunlop, who has a child in the Montessori School; Mrs. Bailey Willis; Mrs. Alfred Brooks.

We will ask Mrs. Fairchild to fill in the missing names by-and-by.

After dinner, and speechifying, we adjourned to the Montessori schoolroom. Dr. Davidson, however, had to leave and Mr. Peters arrived.

The meeting organized by the election of Mr. Grosvenor, Chairman, and Dr. Dunlop as Secretary.

On motion of Mr. Lerner it was decided to organize and incorporate under the laws of the District of Columbia

the Montessori Educational Association. All present at the meeting to be incorporators of the new organization.

A committee was then appointed by the chair to submit the names of persons who should be Directors of the Association for the first year. The Committee reported later in the evening, but I was not present at the time so do not know the names of the Directors.

Mr. Larner undertook to prepare the necessary legal papers for incorporation, and take necessary steps to bring it into legal existence.

The meeting then adjourned.

AGB.

THE OFFICERS & TRUSTEES OF THE
MONTESSORI EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION.

Officers

President,-----Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell.
1st Vice President,-----Philander P. Claxton.
2nd Vice President,-----S. S. McClure.
3rd Vice President,-----Mrs. Bailey Willis.
Secretary,-----John Dunlop, M.D.
Treasurer,-----Gilbert H. Grosvenor.

Director of Montessori Work

Miss Anne E. George.

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Chairman -----Miss Edith C. Westcott
Mrs. Alfred H. Brooks.
John Dunlop, M.D.
Mrs. David Fairchild.
William Morrow.
Mrs. Bailey Willis.
Miss Margaret Woodrow Wilson.

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 Mrs. BALENY WILLIS.
 MISS MARGARET WOODROW WILSON.

Mrs. BELL'S DRAFTS OF CIRCULARS &c.

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In May, 1913, Mrs Bell prepared the following drafts of an invitation to membership and a circular describing the origin and purposes of the Montessori Educational Association.

These were submitted to the Board of Trustees and formed the basis of the invitation and circulars ultimately sent out .

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Invitation to Membership

May 25, 1913.

Dear ; On behalf of the Board of Trustees of the Montessori Educational Association we extend a cordial invitation to you to become a member.

Enclosed please find a circular which explains our purposes.

We believe that we are inaugurating a movement which is destined to have a momentous influence on all future educational work, and to give to our children such opportunities of happy and harmonious development as they have never before been granted.

We wish to make Washington a centre for the dissemination of the Montessori principles with the hope of introducing them into a national educational system; and trust that you will share our desire to extend its benefits to as many children as possible.

Very sincerely yours,

President.

Secretary.

Circular Concerning the Purposes of the Association.May 25, 1913.ORIGIN OF THE ASSOCIATION.

The organization is the outcome of the enthusiasm aroused in the parents by the success of Miss George's application of Dr. Montessori's method to American children.

In 1911 the first Montessori School in America was opened in Tarrytown, N.Y. under the direction of Miss Anne E. George, Dr. Montessori's first American pupil and the translator of her book. This school made possible by the far-sighted interest of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Vanderlip, soon showed that the method which had been so brilliantly successful with Italian children was equally applicable to those of America and Miss George received urgent calls to open schools in several cities. But patriotic motives induced her to accept an invitation to the Capital city, where in October, 1912, she opened a school in the house of Mrs.

Alexander Graham Bell in Washington. Here, the results obtained in Tarrytown were further emphasized and so much enthusiasm was aroused among all the parents whose children attended the school that they not only banded together to establish it on a permanent basis, but determined to form an Association to give to other children the benefit of the same wonderful training, and on the 6th of April 1913, therefore, they and others animated with the same love of children and belief in the efficacy of the new method met together at

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continued.

Mrs. Bell's house and incorporated themselves as the Montessori Educational Association. The Montessori American Committee, a voluntary committee formed in New York in 1912 at the request of Dr. Montessori, immediately joined them, the Secretary of which became one of the incorporators.

This Association thus founded on some parents satisfaction with the benefits their children have received from Dr. Montessori's system, appeals to all who share the almost universal feeling that there is need of some improvement in our present school system; to all who feel, in the words of the eminent physiologist, Dr. George W. Jacoby, that, "in order to render the child mentally and physically fit for the struggle for existence it is not sufficient to equip it with a certain sum of knowledge and acquirements," but that, "only he can successfully compete in the struggle for existence who has adapted himself to his environments, who is prepared for the changing requirements of life through which he is confronted, now with one task now with another", and that "education therefore must strive above all else to arouse that initiative, that mental spontaneity which will enable the child to think and act independently".

In Miss George's school one recognized pre-eminently that the children were acquiring this initiative and independence - that they were adapting themselves to their environment and "being confronted now with one task, now with another".

Circular Concerning the Purposes of the Association.

continued.

Almost daily it was possible to see increased evidence of the childrens' growth in habits of order, concentration of mind, continued application to work, forbearance and kindness to one another. From the opening chaos, where restless, un-disciplined children hurried from one toy to another, came quiet, long sustained work, increasing interest and quick recognition of musical direction. Above all the characteristics of the school was gladness, shown in their bright faces and dancing steps, and eager fulfilment of their self-selected tasks. And at the close of the school the accumulated piles of papers bearing each child's name and the dates gave incontestable evidence of the efficacy of the training they had imbibed. These papers contained drawings made by the children themselves with the "inserts" which form part of the Montessori equipment. As the child has to hold the frame steady with one hand while he uses the pencil in outlining these frames, it, of course, requires considerable control of the hands to make a good drawing and the change from the first shapeless markings to the last really carefully outlined and filled in drawings was astonishing.

In two particulars the influence exerted in the school was especially marked. One was the seriousness with which the children met the requirements laid upon them in serving lunch. There could be no doubt that the sense of responsibility towards others was being aroused in them. The other was the quietude with which twenty normally active healthy children

Circular Concerning the Purposes of the Association.

continued.

eat through the wonderful silence period and waited until the stopping of the music gave the signal to begin lunch - which was always most promptly obeyed.

All these and many others are characteristics produced by the application of the Montessori system in capable hands, aided by a sympathetic heart as in the case of Miss Anne B. George's.

Is it any wonder then that those who have watched this school through many months feel that here is a method that fulfills Dr. Jacoby's requirements and that they are eager to diffuse the knowledge and extend the benefits of this system throughout the land to the end that all American children shall share ⁱⁿ it.

In this spirit they propose to help by opening free schools in connection with social settlements; by the training of teachers to carry on the work under Miss George's direction; by acting as a sort of clearing house of information on all matters concerning the method; and by issuing bulletins of information to members.

MEMBERSHIP

A large membership from all parts of the United States and Canada is desired. The annual dues are \$2. Any person in sympathy with the purpose of the Association is eligible to membership. Members will be elected by the Board of Trustees from names which have been favorably re-

Circular Concerning the Purposes of the Association,
continued.

Membership, (contd) ported by the Membership Committee.
Any person duly elected a member, may, upon payment of the
sum of fifty dollars, become a life member, and shall there-
after be exempt from payment of dues. Any person contributing
the sum of \$100⁰⁰ or more to the support of the Association
shall become a patron.

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Letter, Mrs. Bell to Miss Margaret Wilson,

May 22, 1913.

Miss Margaret Wilson,
White House,
Washington, D.C.

Dear Miss Wilson,

The Executive Committee of the Montessori
Educational Association was gratified to receive today through
Miss Hagner, a message which we interpret to mean that you
accept membership on the Board of Trustees of the Association.

As we are well aware how fully your time is occupied,
we would not venture to ask more of you had Miss George not
assured us that you feel as keenly as we do the importance
of the new-movement in education we are inaugurating, and
desired to take an active part in the work, and would if possi-
ble serve on the Executive Committee.

We feel your advice and help would be of the utmost
importance and do not want to hurry your decision.

Unfortunately it is necessary to get out our circulars as speedily as possible, the season being already so late, and everything is now being held up until we hear from you. Consequently we would be extremely obliged if you would let us know as soon as convenient if we may add your name to the others of the Executive Committee.

Yours sincerely,

Mabel G. Bell,
President,

Montessori Educational Association.

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Letter, Mrs. Bell to Mr. Carnegie
1913, June 23

My Dear Mr. Carnegie,

I was so disappointed not to have been able to find you when you were in Washington, several weeks ago. I wanted to ask you to come up to the house to see our little class of twenty odd Montessori children at work and play. I desired you to come that day because I wanted to interest you in the Montessori method -- but chiefly because I desired you to share our great delight in watching these little children.

I was sure that you would pass some very pleasant moments and you have brought joy to so many that I wanted to give you that pleasure.

You could not be found that morning and the little class broke up for the season a few days later. But it left all who watched it with a strong conviction that Mme Montessori has given to the world sane ideas on education that are going to be of incalculable benefit to all coming generations. These ideas -- principles rather, are going to influence our methods of education all the way through from primary schools to colleges, but the methods by which they are developed so far are adapted only for ~~very~~ very young children, and most especially for the children of the poor. To these, especially, they will bring sunlight and joy in dark and dreary places. We desire to reach as many of these little ones as soon as possible, and have formed a society for the purpose of providing schools and teachers.

I should be so glad if you could become sufficiently convinced of the value and truth of these new principles to desire to become identified with the movement for their extension.

Mr. Brashear watched our class at work and can tell you about it.

With kindest regards to you and Mrs. Carnegie, and best wishes for a happy summer,

Very cordially yours,

(Signed) Mabel G. Bell.

Letter, Mrs. Bell to Mrs. Russell Sage,

June 15, 1913.

My dear Mrs. Sage,

May I call and see you in regard to a project in which I am greatly interested and believe you would be also.

Mr. Bell and I maintained a small Montessori school for the benefit of our own grandchildren and the children of some of our friends in our house during the past winter, with the result that we all felt that we had, in the Montessori system, of education, a very great and beautiful thing, too beautiful and wonderful to be kept only for our own.

So we are going to give it to as many other little ones as we can and I would like very much to have the opportunity to tell you about it; - our plans and what we know it can do.

I expect to be in New York this week and could come at almost any time convenient to you.

Yours sincerely,

(signed) Mabel C. Bell,

(Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell)

Letter, Miss Todd to Mrs. Bell,
1913, June 17.

604, Fifth Avenue,
New York City.

My dear Mrs. Bell,

Your letter asking if you may call on Mrs. Sage in order to interest her in the Montessori method of educating children has been received.

As Mrs. Sage is preparing to leave the city for the summer, and it is not possible for her to receive callers now or to have matters of business brought before her during the warm weather, as she has not very much strength to withstand the heat, and we trouble her as little as possible with letters of appeal during ~~xx~~ her stay in the country, where she goes for rest, I fear I shall be unable to present your letter to her.

Miss Hunter has not been connected with this office for nearly a year.

Regretting to disappoint you,

I am,

Yours sincerely,

(signed) E. L. Todd;

Sec.

Letter, Mrs. Bell to Miss Todd,

June 18, 1913

My dear Miss Todd,

I am very sorry indeed to hear that Mrs. Sage is not very strong and is feeling the heat so much. I hope her stay in the country will be as restful and beneficial as all her friends must desire.

Of course I would not want to trouble her if she is not able to see visitors, and indeed I would not have asked to see her at all, except on account of the importance of the matter.

Naturally the Secretary of the Montessori Educational Association would apply to the Trustees of the Sage Foundation because of the social aspects of its work.

The Montessori system of education, however, is such a new and big conception, fraught with such wonderful possibilities of great good for all coming generations that I felt that if Mrs. Sage knew more about it she would want to be more personally associated with its introduction into the United States; and that if she desired it, this good and noble woman should be given the chance.

It was with this friendly personal sentiment that I wrote her.

Yours sincerely,

Mabel Gardiner Bell.

(Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell)

MRS. BELL'S DRAFT
OF THE CIRCULAR SINCE SENT OUT.

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Miss Anne E George, Dr. Montessori's first American pupil and the translator of her book, opened the first Montessori school in America at Tarrytown in the winter of 1911-12, under the auspices of Mr and Mrs. Frank Vanderlip.

✓ During the past winter she has conducted a Montessori class in the house of Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell in Washington. The parents of the children enrolled in this class have been, without exception, so much impressed with the results that they are making considerable efforts to establish a school on a permanent basis. More than this, out of their conviction that this method is ^{designed} ~~designed~~ to revolutionize our whole educational system, they have undertaken to extend the field of its influence to include children of all classes, and to make it national in ~~its~~ its scope.

To this end the Montessori Educational Association has been incorporated, "having as its object and purpose to promote and develop in America the educational movement based on the principles and theories of Dr. Montessori, and to assist in the establishment and maintenance of schools for children and schools for observation and practice conducted according to said principles".

Of late years the cry "Teach to the individual" has been growing more and more insistent. It is becoming more apparent every day that an education that attempts to force all human beings into the same mould, without regard to their responsive abilities cannot develop the full powers of each individual; ^{and} may even in some cases smother or distort them. There is often a great waste of time expended in useless work, and of energy misdirected. If the child at the formative age can be trained to the best use of its faculties, much of this waste may be avoided.

This, the Montessori method claims to do, and the justice of this claim has been demonstrated to the satisfaction of all who have watched Miss George's work this winter. It has been found that this method develops the child's individuality, while inculcating habits of concentration, order, forbearance and steadiness. The result is that the child goes out from this training with a mind capable of effective application to the work ~~before~~ before him.

Dr. Montessori lays great stress upon the importance of self-development. Through a carefully graded series of games she has made possible a full development of all the senses. The mind is awakened and strengthened through the work and normal growth of the whole being. The power to read and write, the knowledge of numbers, come only incidentally as a result of the child's ability to cope with his environment; and this is done not by forcing, but by intelligent direction of the natural development.

In this attention to the individual, however, the part that he must play in the community, the relation that he bears to other individuals, is not lost sight of. He is but a member of a group, represented by the schools, and through his relation ~~sk~~ to the others he learns lessons of forbearance and co-operation invaluable to him as a future citizen.

Believing that these principles evolved by Dr. Montessori have a potent value in education, the Association desires to provide an opportunity for their practical working out.

It is natural to assume that Washington is the appropriate center for a broad educational movement. Furthermore Miss George has already enlisted the co-operation of Miss Alys Bentley, Director of Music in the Public Schools, whose work in musical rhythm has been a most important feature of the school this year.

✓ The immediate aim is to establish, in addition to the tuition school, one or more free classes, probably in settlement houses, which may ultimately become practice and observation classes. It seems fitting, also, that the Association should take over the work of the Montessori Committee, whose members are numbered among its incorporators. It should become a bureau for the dissemination of information and for the registration of Montessori teachers.

The Association is fortunate in having secured Miss George as the Director of the schools proposed. She will have as assistant Miss Fletcher, who has been associated with her in all her Montessori work in America.

In the past only children from two-and-a-half to five years old have been admitted to the school, but next year a primary department for older children will be added. In time, it is hoped, the children can be carried through several of the earlier grades by work based on these principles.

The support of the tuition schools is practically assured for next year through the interest of those especially concerned in keeping it in Washington. But for the larger project -- organization, dissemination of knowledge and maintenance of free schools, -- a guarantee or endowment fund must be raised. The immediate activities of the Association will be in this direction.

If science and experience have at last revealed to us the road whereby the individual may arrive at full development of his faculties, shall we not do all in our power to throw open that road? At present, owing to the cost of maintenance and the ignorance of its value, the system is available to only a few fortunate children. But what of the great mass of citizens? Everywhere reformers are crying out upon the spread of vice and forming societies whose watchword is "prevention". If it were possible to take all of the children of this nation at the age when the intelligence begins to quicken, and give that intelligence opportunity to expand and develop its own latent powers, there would be an end of idlemindedness, which criminologists tell us, is the soil that fosters vice and crime.

Points Suggested by Mr. Baird

- (I) The method has proven a great success with defectives for years. It was essentially the method that produced Helen Keller.
- (II) It is believed by the best teachers with the ripest experience to be the most promising change which has been suggested in primary education.
- (III) It stimulates individuality and teaches mutual responsibility at a time when the child mind is forming its habits and at a time when altogether too many children are left to the care of ignorant nurses.
- (IV) It allows the teachers to study the needs of each individual scholar instead of grouping them into classes and concentrating her attention on the maintenance of order and the carrying out of a regular programme.
- (V) It develops the teachers as students of child mind development.
- (VI) The teachers who will conduct the school are experienced and know the defects of the old method and the superiority of the new.

CIRCULAR ISSUED BY THE PARENTS
of the
PUPILS ATTENDING THE MONTESSORI SCHOOL
at 1331 Connecticut Avenue,
THAT PRECEDED THE ORGANIZATION (Apr 8)
of the
MONTESSORI EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION
(Probably issued March 1913)

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1331 Connecticut Avenue,
Washington, D.C.

We, the parents whose children have attended the Montessori School conducted by Miss George and Miss Fletcher during the past year at the house of Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell, have been so much pleased with the result^s of the method that we are extremely anxious to establish a permanent Montessori school for young children in Washington, and to offer other parents the benefit of this method.

The school here has already attracted so much attention throughout the United States that Miss George and Miss Fletcher are being constantly urged to open schools in other cities, and from two in particular they have received extremely good offers, to which they must reply definitely by Easter.

The reason for sending out this letter is that we know that there are many people who would be deeply interested in keeping the school in Washington, and we must know at once the approximate number of pupils we could count on for

next year to see if we can offer sufficient inducement to Miss George and Miss Fletcher to remain with us.

The school this year was for children between the ages of two-and-a-half and five years, but we propose next year to add a primary department so that older children may have the benefit of the broad principles of the Montessori method. This is also the plan proposed by the other two cities referred to.

Miss Anne E. George, the Director of the School was for twelve years engaged in primary work, but feeling keenly the need of greater liberty and individual development for young children, she gave up her position at the Chicago Latin School, to study with Dr. Montessori in Rome. She was the first American pupil, and later translated Dr. Montessori's book into English. For two years past she has applied the Montessori method to American children. The school in Tarrytown, N.Y. during 1911, made possible through the interest of Mr. & Mrs. Frank Vanderlip, showed results that left no doubt as to the value of such training for American children, and these results have been greatly emphasized during the past year in Washington.

Miss Roberta Fletcher has been Miss George's assistant and in all her Montessori work in America and last summer conducted a school of her own.*

* See Recorder Vol X, p 341

Miss Alys Bentley, Supervisor of Music in the Washington Public Schools, has been so deeply interested in the methods that she has given much attention to the school, with the result that the development of the music has far surpassed anything done in Rome.

We should be much obliged if you would let us know as soon as possible the name of any person who may desire to send a child to the Montessori school next year.

If we are to keep Miss George and Miss Fletcher we must make them a definite offer at once.

Please address "The Montessori School", 1331 Connecticut Avenue, Washington, D.C.

Mrs. James Baird	.....	3316 Newark Street
Mrs. Alfred Brooks	.....	3100 Newark Street
Mrs. Richard Cobb	.....	1742 R Street
Mrs. Joseph Darling	.....	2254 Cathedral Avenue
Mrs. John Dunlop	.....	1712 22nd Street
Mrs. Sampson Lane Faison	.....	1707 Mass. Avenue
Mrs David Fairchild	.....	1331 Connecticut Avenue
Mrs. Gilbert H Grosvenor	.....	1328 Eighteenth Street
Mrs. William Curtis Hill	.....	2300 S Street
Mrs S.L. Johnson	.....	The Cordova, 20th & Fla Ave
Mrs. Arthur MacArthur	.....	1854 Kalorama Road
Mrs. Jesse Pope	.....	3214 Newark Street
Mrs. Gervin Peters	.....	1723 Corcoran Street
Mrs. Harrison Stidham	.....	3322 Newark Street
Mrs. Bailey Willis	.....	1788 Columbia Road.

CIRCULAR

Issued after the Organization (Apl 8)

of the

MONTESSORI EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION

Announcing That

The MONTESSORI SCHOOL WILL RE-OPEN OCTOBER 15, 1913,

at 1840 Kalorama Road, Washington, D.C.

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The Montessori School which was opened in Washington during the past winter in the house of Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell, has been established on a permanent basis.

The Children's House will re-open on October 15th at 1840 Kalorama Road, within half a block of both the 18th Street and the Mount Pleasant car lines.

In the past the work has been adapted only to children between the ages of two and a half and five years of age. Two primary classes will now be added for children from six to eight years of age, corresponding to the first and second grades in public schools, but conducted according to Montessori principles.

All classes will be under the direct supervision of Miss Anne E. George. It is through Miss George's success during the past two years in applying the method to American children that a recognition of its fundamental importance

has been secured. Her work is characterized by intuitive sympathy and unfailing patience in her handling of little children.

It is reported that Dr. Montessori has already completed much of the material devised by her for a primary class, material of an exceedingly interesting character. Miss George will pay a visit to the Dottoressa during the summer, and she hopes to bring this material back with her for use in the school. Failing this, however, she is herself eminently fitted, both by reason of her sympathetic understanding of the principles involved and also because of her twelve years of experience as a primary teacher in Chicago, to conduct this branch of the work.

Miss George will be assisted by Miss Roberta Fletcher, who has been associated with her in all her Montessori work, and Miss Margaret Perkins, who has been a teacher in the school during the past winter.

In addition she has been fortunate in enlisting the co-operation of Miss Alys Bentley, Director of Music in the Public Schools, whose work in musical rhythm is based on the same fundamental ideals as those which actuated Dr. Montessori, and thus complements the work of Miss George.

The Montessori method requires as an ideal environment plenty of light and space in which the children may carry on their activities freely and without restraint. With this in view the house on Kalorama Road has been carefully selected. The class-rooms will be spacious and airy, and large ^{or} porches will be provided, so arranged that in all

favorable weather the work will be carried on entirely in the open air.

For the preparation and serving of the luncheon by the children, a large pantry is provided. Here also can be kept the indoor plants which are the children's especial care during the winter months.

Additional ground adjoining the house has been secured in order to provide a space for a suitable playground, and also for the garden which it is proposed that the children shall plant and care for.

For the older children a large workshop will ^{also} be provided, in which the simpler forms of manual training may be carried on. The use of plastic material forms a large factor in Montessori work.

It is proposed to form a club among the children by which their activities in the afternoon may be supervised. When the weather allows, they will have their games and sports on the playground adjoining the school, and in bad weather indoor games and exercises will be provided. A class in manual training will form one of the features of this club. There will necessarily be a fee for membership in order to cover cost of equipment and special supervision. Membership will, of course, be entirely optional with the parents.

All sports and exercises and all apparatus employed will be subject to the sanction and approval of Dr. John Dunlop, who takes a deep interest in the best development

of the children. Records of the children's physical development will be kept on charts devised by Dr. Montessori for this purpose.

The school year opens October 15th and closes June 1st. The hours will be from nine to twelve. The tuition fee is \$100⁰⁰, payable in two installments on October 15th and February 1st.

Additional charge will be made for special classes in manual training.

A slight charge will be made for luncheon to cover only its actual cost.

The number of pupils will necessarily be limited. Parents desiring to enroll their children are urged to fill out the enclosed blank and forward at once to the Montessori School Committee, 1788 Columbia Road. Applications received after the enrollment is full, will, if desired, be placed on the waiting list.

The Children's House

The fundamental idea underlying the Montessori principles is that the child should be allowed to develop naturally, along the lines indicated by his own individuality. The function of a teacher becomes that of an observer, aiding and encouraging the development peculiar to each child. There should be no set tasks and no rules laid down governing action save one only, that the rights of others must be respected. Full liberty of thought and action is allowed, but this does not mean undirected, unemployed liberty, which would soon

result in license. For the child's occupation materials are furnished calculated to develop the various senses, particularly the sense of touch, and he is encouraged to do the thing before him entirely alone. This rouses his interest and ambition, and concentration follows naturally.

It is interesting to enter the school-room during the hour when the children are at work with these "sense materials". One feels an atmosphere of occupation and absorption among these babies, each so intent on his own task. Each has his own little chair and his place at one of the tables, but he is free to move about as he pleases. As you look around you find some engaged in buttoning or lacing or tying with their canvas frames; some are carefully arranging cards of colored silk according to shade; others are at work with their crayons or with the insets of different sizes. One child, blindfold, is balancing on his hands bits of wood given him by the teacher, and testing their comparative weight. Another has laid a train of graduated blocks and is walking along it balancing herself on her little moccasined feet. These moccasins worn by all the children in the schoolroom, are a great delight to the children and teachers alike, with their freedom and noiselessness.

The "silence" game which comes later is very popular, and it is remarkable to see how ~~very~~ quickly the little ones learn to maintain an utter silence, either sitting still or moving across the room when called.

An interesting episode of the morning is the luncheon, arranged and served by four of the children chosen each day for the purpose. You feel the grave sense of responsibility expressed on the little faces as they arrange each chair and place each napkin, plate, and tumbler accurately and neatly. When all is ready, the others, who have been at play outside, are called in and the little waiters or waitresses bring the pitchers of milk and serve each one in turn, pouring steadily and carefully.

The rhythmic games have a special place in the children's pleasure and welfare. The music tells them that they are fairies, and tells them that they are many other things besides, and what the music says they do. But as they tire of this, one by one they drop out unhindered, and presently ~~again~~ you will find them again absorbed in some task.

Reading and writing are learned unconsciously, as a natural result of the child's interest and pleasure in the form and sound of letters. Thus ~~with~~ the development of the mind keeps pace with that of the body, and takes place naturally, absolutely without forcing, through the rational and happy employment ~~of~~ and cultivation of all the faculties. It is charming to watch the happy, bright spirit of this schoolroom, but best of all are the results. We mothers, who have seen our children develop into self-reliant little persons happy and sweet tempered in their relations with their companions, capable of unusual concentration and the capacity

to initiate their own amusements, can feel only gratitude for the opportunity which has made this possible.

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NEWSPAPER NOTICES ANNOUNCED THE OPENING
of the
NEW MONTESSORI SCHOOL

From "The Washington Herald", June 16, 1913.

HOUSE BOUGHT FOR PLAYGROUND

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Montessori School Committee Plan Ideal Children's House

TO OPEN NEXT OCTOBER

Structure and Grounds at 1840 Kalorama Road is selected by
Workers.

An ideal Children's House, with large grounds, well shaded, upon which most approved playground equipment is to be placed, is being put into order at 1840 Kalorama Road for the benefit of kindergarten pupils, to be taught by the

Montessori method by the Montessori School Committee, of which Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell is one of the leading members. This school is to be opened next October.

The Montessori method of training little children was introduced in Washington by Miss Anne E. George, who taught a small class at 1331 Connecticut Avenue last winter. The new method of interesting children in their work greatly pleased the mothers of the little pupils by the results obtained, and good report of the system brought so many applications for places in next year's class that a larger home for the school had to be sought. The work of finding and fitting out the new home properly fell to the care of the Washington Montessori School Committee, which is a part of the larger Montessori Educational Association.

After a long search an unfinished house was chosen. The requirements that made selection of a place difficult were that the rooms of the house should be large and open to sunlight and fresh air, that it should have big porches, where the children could take their work in summer, and that it should be ^{at hand} ~~in~~ easy reach of a car line. The house on Kalorama Road measured up to all requirements.

Mrs. Bell is Pleased

The Montessori School Committee is composed of the parents of the children who attended Miss George's school last winter. They are enthusiastic in their praise of the new method and plan to make its adoption for the little children

of Washington as wide as possible. Mrs. Bell believes that the establishment of free Montessori Schools in connection with social settlements in this city would be of great benefit. In speaking of the plans for the new school Mrs. Bell said; "We have been most fortunate in securing for its Directors, Miss Anne E. George and Miss R. Fletcher, who will be joined by other experienced teachers. We were indeed particularly fortunate in inducing these women to remain in Washington, as they were besieged with many requests last winter to establish schools from Boston to San Francisco.

"The search for the house was pursued for more than a month. So great was the interest to get just the right one that practically all of the mothers and most of the fathers joined in the search. It was found that there were many lovely big houses, with large grounds where fine trees grew, but they were all in the old part of the town. In the new city of the Northwest, where the young parents dwelt, there are practically no large house spaces and grounds. So that when the house we have chosen was discovered, we deemed ourselves very fortunate.

"During the summer the porches will be put on and alterations will be made to adapt the house still further to the children's use. The grounds will be laid out under the direction of the Director of the District Bureau of Playgrounds. Everything, in short, will be done to make this an ideal children's home."

From "The Evening Star", June 16, 1913

(Washington D C)

CHILDREN TO BE TAUGHT BY MONTESSORI METHOD

House at 1840 Kalorama Road

Secured for Private School's Use

A house in which strictly private classes for kindergarten pupils in Montessori methods are to be conducted has just been obtained at 1840 Kalorama Road, by persons interested in the Montessori system headed by Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell. It will be opened as a private school next October. Pupils will consist of children of the Directors and their immediate friends.

Miss Anne E. George, who taught a small class in the Montessori method at 1331 Connecticut Avenue last winter, will be at the new school, as will also Miss R. Fletcher. Several other experienced teachers will also be procured for the work.

It was necessary to get a larger place than that used last winter because of the increased ^{demands} for membership at the school.

To fit the needs, the house had to have an abundance of sunlight and fresh air. It was also necessary to have

large porches, where the classes can be taken when the weather is mild. Another requirement was that the house should be located near a car line.

The work of finding a suitable house was put in the hands of the Washington Montessori School Committee, which is a part of the Montessori Educational Association. So great was the interest taken to get a suitable house, said Mrs. Hill that nearly every mother and most of the fathers of children of the classes joined in the hunt.

The grounds ^{about} ~~where~~ the house will be laid out under the direction of the District Department of Playgrounds. Miss Margaret Wilson, daughter of the President, is one of the directors of the school.

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"THE MONTESSORI DEPARTMENT"

Conducted by Allen Yale Stevens

(McClure's Magazine, August 1913, p201)

On closing the department with this issue of McCLURE'S MAGAZINE, the editor feels that the purpose for which it was started - to serve as a central bureau of information regarding the progress of the movement in this country and in Europe and to provide an open forum for discussion - has been accomplished. The Montessori Educational Association,

lately incorporated, should now become the official medium of communication, especially if it published a bulletin, as is suggested in the announcement of its plans.

The teachers who have returned from the training course in Rome are opening Montessori schools and classes all over the country which ought to become centers of influence and object lessons in the method.

The editor has been impressed by the number of letters received from isolated mothers living in remote parts of this country and in Canada, to whom the Montessori message has come as a personal revelation of truth, and who are seeking further help in applying the principles or in using the materials, as they cannot place their children in Montessori classes.

McClure's desires still to be of service to these and to others, and will continue to publish, as occasion arises, any important news regarding the movement, or articles of timely interest.

It bespeaks for the Montessori Educational Association the cordial support it deserves and urges the far-away mother especially, to avail herself of any help it can give.

That the Montessori movement has passed the experimental stage and is now an important factor in the educational development of this country, is evidenced in many ways. Perhaps the most important step in its progress was taken in May when the Montessori Educational Association was

incorporated in Washington, D.C.

Among the incorporators of the Association are the active members of the Montessori American Committee, a voluntary Committee formed in 1912 at the request of Dr. Montessori.

The Montessori Educational Association was formed, as stated in the articles of incorporation, "to promote and develop in America the educational movement based on the principles and theories of Dr. Montessori, and to assist in the establishment and maintenance of schools for children and schools of observation and practise, conducted according to said principles".

The organization is the outcome of the enthusiasm aroused in the parents by the success of Miss George's application of the Montessori method to American children.

In 1911 the first Montessori school in America was opened in Tarrytown, N.Y. under the direction of Miss Anne E. George, Dr. Montessori's first American pupil and the translator of her book. This school soon ^{showed} that the method which had been so brilliantly successful with Italian children was equally applicable to those of America, and in October, 1912 Miss George opened a school in the house of Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell in Washington. The parents of the children enrolled in this class were so much impressed with the results that they became convinced of the value of this method for all educational purposes. They determined not

only to establish this school on a permanent basis, but to put forth ~~an~~ every effort to extend the same benefits to all other children. To this end they have formed a national association with headquarters in Washington.

Its Purpose and Scope

In this spirit they propose to establish in Washington, under Miss George's direction, free schools in connection with social settlements, for the purpose of providing training classes and furnishing the inspiration and special technique necessary for Montessori teachers.

These schools will at all times be open to observation. In such a laboratory educators from all over the country will be able to appraise the value of the methods, and experimental psychologists will have a field for research.

The Association expects to issue a bulletin of information upon all matters of special interest to its members. This bulletin, though modest in its beginning, may grow into a publication of importance; but, even in the simplest form, it will be of great value to members.

One function of the Association will be to serve as a clearing house for information about all matters connected with the Montessori method of education.

Membership

A large membership from all parts of the United States and Canada is desired. The annual dues are two dollars.

Any person in sympathy with the purpose of the Association is eligible to membership. Members will be elected by the Board of Trustees from names which have been favorably reported by the membership committee. Any person duly elected a member, may, upon payment of the sum of fifty dollars, become a life member, and shall thereafter be exempt from payment of dues. Any person contributing the sum of one hundred dollars or more to the support of the Association shall become a patron.

The Training of the Imagination

The question is often asked in regard to the Montessori method whether it does not limit the imagination of the child and curb his creative and constructive powers by holding him to definite material which he is to use in a definite way.

Imagination is a fundamental and most valuable part of our mental life, and its proper nature and training are very important features of any educational system. Dr. Montessori, as a physician and psychologist bases her training on the laws of mental growth and realizes that the imagination of the child must be developed, first by the education of the senses, for the material of the imagination is ^{essentially} sensorial. Not only that, but our sense-training follows our own special aptitude and native endowments. If we are of the visual type, we may develop our imagination chiefly along this line and become artists; if we are of the audi-

tory, in the same way, we may become creative musicians; but if we are born deaf or blind we can never form images of that of which we have had no sense experience. Dr. Montessori, therefore, provided in her system for such sensory and perceptual education, giving the child plenty of material, which he is to select according to his own spontaneous choice, and helping him to an orderly, intelligent use of such material.

Broadly speaking, memory as well as imagination proper are powers latent in the child, and ~~are~~ developed because of the inherent quality his mind possesses of restating past sensory or perceptual experiences in the form of images. But an image can never, like Minerva, spring full grown from any brain; therefore, the fuller the child's sensational life is, the more he develops correct percepts, the greater will be his power to bring back in the form of images past experiences, which we call memory, or, more valuable still, the greater will be his power to construct images by new combinations of sensation, perception and other images, which is all that the greatest creative imagination in the world can accomplish. Milton, Dante, Michael Angelo, Raphael, Shakespeare all soared to the empyrean from firm Mother Earth; their "imagination" were always tied to the stake of perception."

The image making power is developed in the child from the beginning, in the Montessori schools, because he is left free to select, to focus actively his attention on what most

interests him. This fixation of the attention assures active instead of passive perception - true apperception, as Dr. Jacoby points out,* and therefore sharp, well-defined images. After a proper foundation has been formed through this fixation of attention and active apperception, the next step in the development of imaginative power is taken as the child is led to order his experiences, to discriminate, to associate, to think and to reason, and thus to form new combinations of images in a creative way, according to his temperament and native qualities of mind. He may become an inventor, a scientific discoverer, an artist; but, however far he soars, his star must be hitched to a wagon, to reverse Emerson's famous dictum.

This insistence on plenty of training in true perception places the emphasis where it belongs rather than on false perceptions and illusions. We find a contrast here between Montessori and Froebel which is fundamental.

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* See "The Montessori Method from a Physician's View-Point", published in the Medical Review for Apr, 1913.