FREEDOM FOR THE CHILD

The Organ of The Montessori Education Association

The first number of the organ of the Montessori Educational Association of America (of which Mrs. Bell is president) appeared as a bulletin of the Association.

It was then decided to give the bulletin a specific name :- "Freedom for the Child", and the first issue in this form is bound into this number of the Recorder as page 146.

The seal of the Association printed on the cover contains silhouettes of Alexander Graham Bell Grosvenor and Barbara Lathrop/Fairchild.

On page 1 of "Freedom for the Child" will be found an article by Mrs. Fairchild entitled "Dr. Montessori's Visit to America, How it Came About, & Some Account of her Stay in Washington", and on page 7 will be found a very interesting by Mrs. Bell:- "What the Montessori Method Means to Me."

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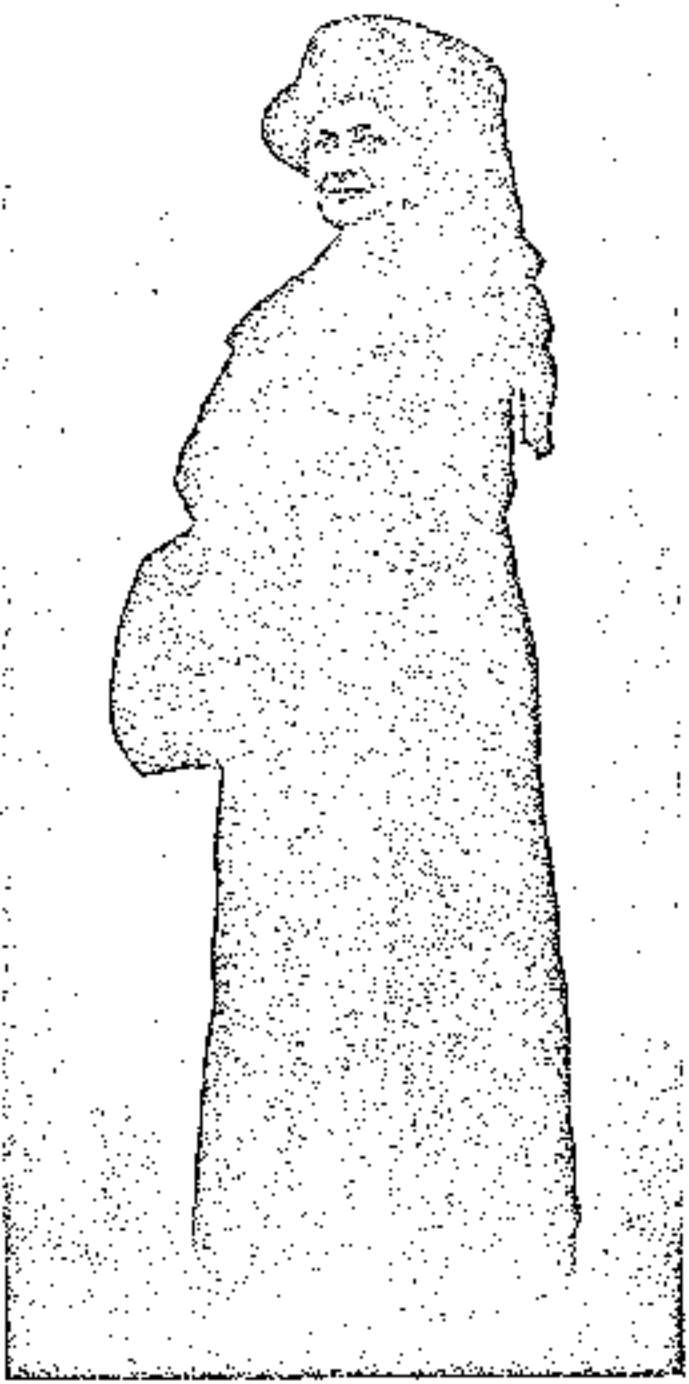
Freedom
for the
Child

JANUARY
1914



DR. MONTESSORI IN AMERICA

Freedom for the Child

Montessori Educational Association

1840 Kalorama Road Washington, D. C.

Vol. I JANUARY, 1914 No. 2

MESSAGE FROM DR. MONTESSORI

"I want to express my gratitude to all the members of the Montessori Educational Association, and I should like at the same time to be permitted to consider this Association as my big family in America to which I therefore give my whole affection and my entire confidence."

DR. MONTESSORI'S VISIT TO AMERICA.

How It Came About, and Some Account of Her Stay in Washington.

MARIAN FAIRCHILD.

All last winter Dr. Montessori's American pupils urged her to come to this country; in August our Association, through its president, sent her a most cordial personal and official invitation to come here under our auspices, and finally, one day when Mr. McClure was in Rome negotiating for the use of the moving pictures of her Case dei Bambini for the lecture tour he was proposing to make, and told here again of the interest in her work, the Dottoressa felt that the psychological moment had come, and, turning suddenly to Mr. McClure, she said, "Why should I not go to America too?" And so, after half a dozen hundred-word cables had gone back and forth across the Atlantic, the lecture trip as carried out was arranged for, and ten days later the Dottoressa started.

Dr. Montessori's intuition that it was the psychological moment has been amply justified; everywhere she went the hall was filled, everywhere there was the spontaneous rising of the whole audience to greet her. It was a great and inspiring sight,—the welcome given this friend of little children, and it came, not because she brings us something new, for truth is never new, but because what she brings is old, is something

that we have felt in our own hearts and minds, and she stood before us an interpreter to us of our own inspirations.

Besides wishing to see America, with all that it stands for, Dr. Montessori had a very definite financial end in view. She feels very keenly the imperative need of having her own school, where she can carry on her observations and experiments for a period of years with the same children. This she has never been able to do, except to a very limited extent, for she is not a wealthy woman, and has given her whole life to this research work and not to money-getting. We are glad to think that her trip to America will help to make this possible.

It was a very bold step for Dr. Montessori to take, coming practically alone to a new and a strange land. It is hard for us who think so little of distance and who are used to the feverish activity of our American ways, to realize quite what an ordeal it was for a woman whose whole life is one of quiet concentrated study, and who is continually protected by a little coterie of friends from every distracting detail of outside life, to be suddenly the center of a whirlwind of publicity and social attention. Her need of some quiet time in every day made it, of course, impossible for her to accept one hundredth part of all the invitations extended to her, but, as she has herself assured us, this hurried trip is but a first greeting between friends.

When Dr. Montessori landed in New York she was met by Miss George, acting as the official representative of the Montessori Educational Association, and throughout the lecture tour Miss George accompanied her, so we may feel that very literally the Montessori Educational Association has been the mouthpiece of the Dottoressa.

Leaving New York, the first stop was made in Washington, where Dr. Montessori was the guest of our president, Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell, this being the only private house in which she stayed.

The Italian Ambassador called at once and put his Italian and English stenographers at the Dottoressa's service.

The next morning the Dottoressa visited the Montessori Educational Association's' school at 1840 Kalorama Road, spending a couple of hours there, and it was there that the photograph reproduced here was taken. The Dottoressa was particularly pleased with the outdoor classes on the big porches and with Miss Bentley's rhythm work for the children. She considered the whole school charming.

The opening lecture was given on Saturday, December 6th, at the New Masonic Temple, Dr. Bell presiding.

The charm of her gracious personality and the musical Italian voice which, without effort, filled every corner of the house, combined with that rare and subtle quality of personal magnetism which the Dottoressa possesses to an extraordinary degree, prevented any break in the eager attention with which she was followed.

She opened her lecture with a cordial appreciation of her reception

in America and a charming reference to Mrs. Bell, who, she declared, has taken this new method in her arms as a mother would take a child.

She told very simply, and almost as if speaking of someone else, what had been the training to fit her for her work. She told how she had studied one science after the other, always more interested in learning the way to learn, and the method of discovery, than in becoming proficient in the subject itself, and always with the instinctive feeling that she was groping for a bigger subject still. She told of her work with deficient children and of her realization that if by scientific education so much could be done for defectives, how much more could one do with normal children; and then came to her the vision of the world as it would be with every individual developed to the fullest capability of all his powers—and she knew at last what her life work must be.

Her incidents of the Case dei Bambini were charming, the prettiest of all being perhaps the story of the day when certain distinguished visitors came to the big tenement house where the school was, and found it closed for a holiday. Some of the children who were playing in the court yard noticed the little group of people and, finding out their disappointment, said, "Wait a minute," then ran off, and soon came back with the schoolroom key and some more children. Opening the door, they ushered in their visitors, brought out the material, and set to work to show how all was done.

The lecture closed with moving pictures showing little tots at work in the various activities of a Casa dei Bambini. First the daily house work, little brooms and dust pans busily plied, tables scrubbed and all things set in order for the day by a busy, happy responsible little set of children. Another film showed lunch in a beautiful convent garden, and a huge soup tureen being carried about and all the children served.

Again we saw the matching of the colored spools, the blindfold games of recognizing textiles by the feel of them, the silence game in which the teacher writes the word "Silence" on a blackboard, and all the children quiet down and keep as still as little mice and listen for the teacher's voice to whisper their names one by one. As each child is called it is beautiful to see how earnestly he tiptoes to the teacher's side, so careful not to make a single unnecessary sound. To those of us who have seen our children happily at work day after day in a Montessori Children's House, the Pictures were fascinating, and for those who have never had that pleasure they must have been a revelation.

Mr. and Mrs. Bell's reception which followed the lecture was a brilliant social affair, at which Miss Margaret Wilson, daughter of the President, and Mrs. Franklin Lane, wife of the Secretary of the Interior, and Dr. Claxton, Commissioner of Education, assisted in receiving. Of the many distinguished people who came to meet the Dottoressa, she was perhaps most interested in meeting Admiral Peary, the discoverer of the North Pole.

The closing event of Dr. Montessori's visit to Washington was a little lunch to which came, among others, the Commissioner of Education and Miss Alys Bentley. Miss Bentley was for many years director of music in the public schools of Washington. Her work in rhythm and in music is comparable to Dr. Montessori's work in other lines. It is indeed America's contribution to the new "Scientific System of Pedagogy," which is Dr. Montessori's own name for the "Montessori Method."

Dr. Montessori was delighted with what she saw of Miss Bentley's work, and said, "This is splendid, this is fundamental, I want to take this back to Rome with me."

Just before she left for the train a bunch of violets was brought in to Mrs. Bell, with a beautiful letter from the Dottoressa, an extract from which heads this issue of the magazine, and as she left we all felt that a very great soul had been among us.

DR. MONTESSORI IN NEW YORK

CAROLYN SHERWIN BAILEY,

Editor of the Children's Department in the Delineator.

Three thousand people thronged our huge Carnegie Hall the night of Dr. Montessori's first New York lecture, and a sufficient number were turned away to fill the hall again, the following week.

From the orchestra, up through the boxes to the pit, a blurry sea of faces stretched. The society woman whose limousine purred outside sat next a dark-eyed mother who had sung her bambino to sleep in a tenement of New York's Little Italy before she could come to hear the Dottoressa. Those of us who had met in Rome last spring, and the grind of the city's duties had separated, found each other again and saw in imagination the white rooms of Number 3 Via Principessa Clotilde. A skeptical college professor rubbed elbows with an eager young newspaper man.

"What's the reason for all this; why is the press so interested?" the reporter asked of his neighbor. And before the doubting pedagogue realized what he was doing, he had argued himself into belief in Montessori by explaining that New York was welcoming a new explorer—the woman who has discovered the divinity of the little child.

There was a buzz of interested gossip and query in which one heard liquid Italian blended with English. Then, a hush, and we saw our beloved teacher again.

As she entered, a graceful, very beautiful figure in her draping black, one felt that so she has entered the hearts of the nations—silently, but with a complete enthrallment. The crash of applause, the emotion that gripped the largest audience an educator has ever drawn in New York and pulled it to its feet seemed a meagre way of expressing our appreciation. The breathlessness that followed was a greater welcome.

With the art of her Roman inheritance and the appeal of her unique genius, Dr. Montessori presented to her New York audience the greatest drama of the world, the spontaneous development of a child's spirit.

"I beg that you give your children the same rights to live and to grow that you, yourselves, enjoy," she pleaded.

"We keep our little ones in a prison house built of our caprice and inspired commands. We will, at least, allow children the same freedom that is ours in our drawing rooms."

Taking to herself no credit, she told of the steps by means of which she had found her way into the mental life of little children, and how, through observation of children's instinctive activities, she has been able to build very simple brain stimuli, the didactic materials.

"Education," she explained, "will consist, to-morrow, of the selection of the minimum of stimuli which will result in the maximum of self activity," summing up her discovery for us.

She gave us in her vivid way bright word pictures of the babies at Rome who have taught the world so much; of their joy and self control and eagerness for acquiring knowledge which reacts upon the family, the community. And as Mario's sunny, curl-crowned face smiled at us from the moving pictures, and we saw the other little ones of the Trionfale and Via Guisti Schools at work, we who know, felt like shouting, "See! you said it was only a story, but it is true!"

Dr. Montessori clarified the vision of all who had come asking, "why?"

For the Sociologist she painted the triumph of the freed individual.

For the educator she outlined a new psychology.

To the mother she said, "Watch your little ones and have faith in them."

To the physician she said, "We have studied disease too long; now, we will study the conditions that surround health."

Her last words thrilled with spiritual meaning.

"We will build beautiful souls to dwell in perfect bodies."

Usually a New York audience hastens homeward. This one lingered, still held in Dr. Montessori' spell.

"She has given me an idea for some experimental clinic work," a brilliant young physician announced.

"I never understood before what freedom meant," a politician announced.

"Don't you want to go somewhere for supper?" the husband of the society woman asked.

"No" the answer was final. "I want to go home to the children."

That is the great fact of Dr. Montessori's visit to America. She led New York home to its little ones.

BROOKLYN LECTURE.

Grace D. Parsons.

The lecture given by Dr. Montessori on December 15th in Brooklyn was an interesting combination of the educational and social. As that the Monday previous in New York had set before her audience her "real teachers the children" about whom many illustrations were given to show in what direction these pupils had led her to her educational conclusions; so in Brooklyn her points were based more largely on scientific lines. To those who knew her, it was evident that she was in one of her most earnest moods.

Sense Training and Liberty, these two points stand out clearly endowed with new vitality, though stated with the utmost simplicity. "While the sense of Touch is primitive," she said, "it is the means by which the child's education begins, he must touch, feel, this thing is round, that square, this rectangular, all come quickly under the busy fingers on their wonderful voyages of discovery." "Why does my child touch my writing materials?" remonstrated a Professor, the blotter was a rectangle, the inkstand a square, the pencils and penholders, long and narrow pieces of wood—many things are like that to the child, but the adult meets him with "Don't touch." It is a wonder that the child's quest is not wholly frustrated, it is only that the need of the desire within him is so strong that it succeeds in overthrowing obstacles. May not this be often the reason for the irritability in little children that they must forever come up against the grown person who does not understand them and conquer him?

In regard to her idea of Liberty, she desired not to be misunderstood. It was not a formula to be applied to each and every child alike, a bird should not have his wings clipped and be shut in a cage, to him liberty was unfettered movement up towards the blue of the sky, to the tree it would be quite a different matter to expose its roots, moving it from place to place would mean death to the tree.

From the moral standpoint, her method had been criticised as withdrawing from a child's life the constant need of making sacrifices. In this respect, the Dottoressa felt their children were not behind others, showing when the opportunity came that the capacity for self sacrifice, devotion, loyalty, was there—using a parallel taken from the physical realm.

Modern Hygience has done much in eliminating from a child's life causes that have prevented his growing to his full perfection physically, but there still exist many illnesses from which a child must be protected, would you say he would become stronger by being exposed to those illnesses while still a sensitive child?

After the lecture Dr. Montessori, her able interpreter, Miss George, and Brooklyn guests seated upon the stage, Miss Stevens, of the Brook-

lyn Heights Seminary, Mr. Frederick Pratt, of Pratt Institute, and Mr. Healy, of the Brooklyn Institute, held an informal reception.

THE LECTURE TOUR

In Philadelphia Dr. Montessori was met by Dr. Witmer, of the Psychology Department of the University of Philadelphia, and was driven directly to the University, where a reception was given her. Her lecture was attended by many prominent educators, and was very well received; it was followed by a brilliant reception given by Mrs. Kelsey.

In Chicago she was received at the University of Chicago, and at the lectures was introduced by Miss Jane Addams and Mrs. Ella Flagg Young. Both lectures were attended by crowded audiences—as were the lectures in Boston and Pittsburgh.

WHAT THE MONTESSORI METHOD MEANS TO ME.

Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell.

It means Light after Darkness;—Hope fulfilled;—a new world whose existence had been felt, but never known,—revealed.

Like many another, I had felt from the early days of my motherhood, that there was something wrong in our methods of bringing up our children. It is not right to strike them, to shut them up in closets, or to stand them in corners and generally to antagonize them. And yet of course disobedience,—the disobedience in particular that would result in bodily or moral harm to the little ones, cannot be permitted. I sought much advice, I read many books and tried many experiments, but never found what I felt was the true method of character building. All either put me in opposition to my children or required the administration of punishments which though they might claim to be "natural" I felt unjust as it was mostly possible to trace the cause of the childish delinquency to some mismanagement of my own.

Not only did it seem to me that there was something wrong in our scheme of child rearing,—I felt also that there must be a terrible waste of time in deferring systematic education for four or five years. If, as I was told, a baby learned more in the first hours, days, weeks and months of its existence than in succeeding months and years, should we not be able to utilize them in some ways not hurtful even to the tiny brain? Surely it should be possible to put purpose in the eager little hands stretching out after bright colors. It could be no more of a tax on the small intelligence to have things systematically presented for its consideration than to allow it to search aimlessly around, confused and bewildered by multitudes of objects unrelated to each other, and utterly beyond its comprehension or interest.

Here also I got little help. The family physician when appealed

to murmured something about Froebel, and I tried earnestly to get hold of his writings to discover his real thought, for I was convinced that there was much more in his philosophy, than what appeared in the Kindergartens that I visited. Unfortunately I never found a book of his, or a satisfactory account of his theories; while the occupations I saw did not appeal to me.

So I had to wait and struggle blindly after something I knew my babies ought to have, but which I could not give them. I did try. The babies had bright red, yellow, green, purple and blue balls to play with, and when older grown were trained to notice leaves and flowers;—the lay of the landscape forming peninsulars or islands, etc. A doll's house made with their own hands under their father's direction was approaching completion when a fire destroyed both it and the family home. The children's father, a true Montessorrian before ever the Dottoressa was born,—gave advice and suggestions. But these, though they helped greatly, were not enough, and he was too busy a man to be able to give much time to the children.

So the years,—the precious years in which so much more should have been accomplished, slipped by—and the youngest baby was a twelve-year-old girl before I at last saw the first Kindergarten that seemed to me what Froebel had meant that they should be. It was a really wonderful place where children, blindfolded, were trained to recognize cubes, oblongs and spheres by the sense of touch, where, in short, there was real sense training, with every faculty reached and made active.

It remained the ideal by which all other educational work was gauged; till one wet snowy day in February, 1912, I stumbled on a little school in Tarrytown, New York.

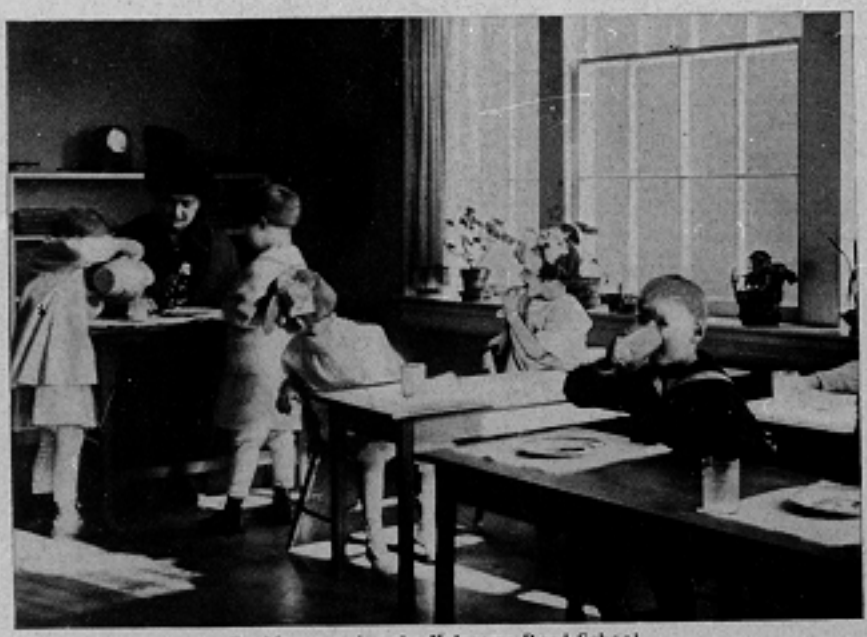
The children were the youngest I had ever seen in school, and at first glance they were having about the same training as in the ideal Kindergarten. The true significance of what we saw did not strike me at first. I said to the teacher, Miss George, "Of course you insist on their finishing everything they start to do. Of course you insist that they put away their things before beginning other occupations." And I was surprised that when recess came the teachers and children just played "tag" and "Blind Man's Buff," good healthy old-fashioned games, but not improving, like the pretty Kindergarten plays.

Miss George did not say much; she left me to draw my own conclusions, and gradually it dawned on me how radically different everything was from anything that I had ever seen before. That, whereas I had been giving my children and grandchildren things to do, these children were doing things of themselves! This meant the opening of a whole new world of ideas, and month by month since that day the wonder and absolute rightness of it has grown, and little children have become more and more a source of intense interest.

To so treat the little new human entity that it shall unfold itself, in-

SIXTH WEDNESDAY EVENING RECEPTION.

MONTESSORI EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION.



Dr. Montessori at the Kalorama Road School

stead of making a mould into which the childish plastic material is to be forced for shaping into a pre-designed form; this, baldly stated, is the new conception.

Just to state it shows the wonderful, the inestimable possibilities opened to every child.

It means that the parent's will is not to be forced on him, *because* it is the parent's will, and the child's duty is blind obedience. Instead the child is to be taught that he has the right to the enjoyment of his own will;—so long, that is, as it does not interfere with other people's equal right to theirs. This is liberty, not license. He is also to be taught that there are laws which he must obey, but these laws were made for his good, and that of all people, both big and small, so that big people have to obey too. Thus is a bond of union created between parent and child, where formerly was division like unto that of dictator and subject.

And when fits of naughtiness come; as come they must under any system of life, these fits are to be dealt with as one does with those of sick persons; with restraint, but with sympathy, as things which the child has either unfortunately brought upon himself, or for which he is not accountable. That is, he is not to be *punished*, only to be restrained until such time as he recovers his control of himself.

What a relief to be able, with a clear conscience, to allow one's self

place of Columbus, and showed, enclosed ina cryst..

a pinch of the dust of Columbus.

to show sympathy with a naughty little one—not the less dear on that account,—and without reproof, to try reasoning as soon as the first passion fit is passed!

The readiness with which even the tiniest denizen of a Montessori Children's House will respond to such treatment is marvellous. I know—for I have seen.

In Helen Keller, we have a shining example of what may happen when a rich nature has thus been left to unfold itself unhampered, free from interference, and with the appeal made to the child's own reason and will. Mrs. Macy, her teacher, testifies, "I brought her up in the true Montessori spirit," and further adds, "I could have trained her in my own image; I preferred to leave her to develop herself."

Our children may not all prove Helen Kellers, neither may we all have Annie Sullivan's ability to guard and guide them as wisely. But with this new point of view, we shall at least feel secure that these little human beings shall have a larger measure of that liberty to live and develop as God and Nature intend, which we adults so jealously claim for ourselves.

MONTESSORI AND HELEN KELLER.

Dr. Maria Montessori met for the first time today Miss Helen Keller and her teacher, Mrs. John Macy (Anne Sullivan). The meeting is significant in the history of education, for as the following summary of their conversation makes evident, their work is closely akin. They feared at first that owing to their lecture engagements they might miss seeing each other, but their paths crossed in New York this morning, and an hour was arranged for at the Holland House. Miss Anne E. George, translator of "The Montessori Method" and head of the Montessori school in Washington, was present and acted as interpreter. Dr. Montessori's words required a double interpretation. Miss George translated them into spoken English and Mrs. Macy spelled them in the manual alphabet into Miss Keller's hand.

Dr. Montessori embraced Mrs. Macy and Miss Keller, and there was a confused greeting in Italian and English.

"Say to her," said the Dottoressa, to Miss George, "that I am too much moved to express what I feel."

Miss Keller stood with her hands on Dr. Montessori's shoulders. Then she said distinctly: "Blessed are the feet of her who comes across the sea with a message of liberty to the children of America."

"How clearly she speaks, and her face is lighted with her soul."

"I am glad," said Miss Keller, "that your lecture last night was so successful; they say the hall was crowded."

"Not all the thousands," replied Dr. Montessori, "mean one-tenth as much to me as this meeting."

"I myself am a product of the Montessori method," and her hand ught the lips of Mrs. Macy, who smiled and nodded emphatically.

"Does she know," asked Dr. Montessori, "that I have written a dedi-ion to her for my new book?"

"She knows that you have dedicated the book to her, but she does t know what you have written."

"I have said that I have learned from you as pupil learns from aster."

"But," replied Miss Keller quickly, turning to Mrs. Macy, "you ould have said that of her."

"Of both, for you are one. She is the creator of a soul, but you al the soul to be created." Then she murmured to Miss George and iss George translated: "She is using an Italian word which cannot be ndered in English. It is a combination of precious and tender."

"I have followed your career for years. Professor Ferreri told me uch about you. Do you remember him?" Professor Ferreri is an alian teacher of the deaf who some years ago read a few stanzas of nte with Miss Keller.

Miss Keller's face lighted, "Oh, yes, I remember him."

"Can you remember any of the Italian words he taught you?" Miss ller threw her head back and her face took on its curious perplexed and arching look. Then she shook her head.

"No. What is the word for 'you'?"

"Lei."

"Well, then—Lei anno."

"Dottoressa," asked Miss George, "don't you want to tell her some-ing about the children in the house of childhood?"

"Tell her this," answered Dr. Montessori, "that my children under-nd her, they know the triumph of the soul over difficulties. But the ildren of the future, the men of the future, will understand her even tter than men do now, for they will be liberated and will know how e spirit can prevail over the senses."

"You," said Miss Keller, "are fighting for the freedom of children. e are fighting for the freedom of the parents, for the industrial revo-ion."

"But it is all one," said the Dottoressa. "The complete revolution is ternal and internal, too."

"How wide and far-reaching and many sided," exclaimed Miss ller, "is the Montessori system!"

"I began," explained Dr. Montessori, "as a sympathizer with political olutionists of all kinds. Then I came to feel that it is the liberation this, what we have in our hearts, that is the beginning and end of olution."

"But, surely," said Miss Keller, "we never can have the Montessori

system or any other good system of education so long as the conditions of the home, of the parents, of the workers, are so intolerable."

"Certainly, certainly, that is true. But we must educate children so that they will know how to free themselves and others from bondage. And the first thing is to bring our children under the care of worthy teachers. You and Mrs. Macy symbolize such education, the education of the future, the development of a soul by the union of an inspiring teacher and the child whose soul has grown freely with such stimuli that debase and hinder growth."

"When you think of the appalling conditions," said Miss Keller, "under which people live, it sometimes seems a miracle that the children grow up at all to intelligence and decency."

There was a moment's pause, during which every one seemed to be thinking of the enormous mountains to be moved. Then Montessori said:

"Because of you the world has a greater sense than ever of the possibilities of the soul."

Miss Keller pressed the Italian woman's hand, and said simply: "Blindness and deafness have their compensations if there is some one to help. I cannot begin to tell you what my teacher's coming meant to me. She was almost blind herself. She came to teach me amid strange surroundings. Her eyes did not permit her to read. She knew almost nothing of educational theory and psychology, but taught me, as we say, out of her own head."

Dr. Montessori was studying Miss Keller's face. "In spite of all you say, Mrs. Macy, all your explanations of how she was taught, I do not see how her spirit has such vision. She seems like a special revelation of God."

"Every child," said Miss Keller, "can be a special revelation of God, if he is taught properly and is allowed to live under right conditions."

"Helen," said Mrs. Macy, "was a revolutionist before I was. Two or three years before I cared for them, she had all these ideas. You see, I could have moulded her in my own likeness, I could have made her a copy of myself. But I left her free to think."

"That is it. Liberty to think."

"Did it ever occur to you, Dr. Montessori," asked Mrs. Macy, "that the same ideas spring up in many parts of the world at about the same time? I did not know of your work nor you of mine. What is it? Is it the spirit of the age manifest here and there in one and another individual?"

"It is all in what we want," said Miss Keller, "We ought to want more, for what we want we get, if we want it hard enough. For example, women want the vote, men want better conditions of labor and children want more freedom. And remember, what we really want we get."

"You will come to see our schools in Rome some time?"

"Oui, je ferai cela avec grand plaisir," replied Miss Keller.

"Oh, she is speaking French."

"Yes, I speak it a little, not very well."

"But you are tired," said Mrs. Macy.

"No, no, only too much moved to say all I would. I have known of you for years. This summer, when I came closer to you through Mr. Macy, I felt it a great privilege, and when you sent me your picture it was one of the happiest moments of my life. And now I meet you, I am sorry that you had to come to this hotel to see me. When I first came to America I felt that I must rush to you to render homage."

"I hope," said Miss Keller, "that the next time I see you I shall be able to speak with you in Italian—at Rome."

—Permission of Boston Herald.

THE FUTURE OF THE MONTESSORI METHOD IN AMERCA.

Dr. Philander P. Claxton, U. S. Commissioner of Education, First Vice President of the Montessori Educational Association, in an interview with a reporter said, "I have read Dr. Montessori's book, and I think it very good. I rather think it will become a classic in education. The system seems to me to be worth while. Important principles of the Montessori methods are the ideas of freedom and muscular development. This tends to encourage spontaneity and the training of the senses properly. The whole system might, if approved, be introduced into our schools without much increase in proportionate cost."

MUSIC EDUCATION THROUGH CORRELATED MOVEMENT.

EDITH C. WESTCOTT.

A feature of the Children's House at 1810 Kalorama Road which is regarded by the Directress as scarcely less important than the Montessori work itself, and which has been incorporated as an integral factor of each day's activities, is Miss Bentley's system of Music Education through Correlated Movement.

I have used the word "system" for lack of a better, but I would not be interpreted as implying that there is anything formal or didactic in the rhythmic games, and plays which are participated in so spontaneously by each child, that for each the exercise is an expression of individual feeling.

There are no plays which interest children more than those which are accompanied by appropriate rhythmic movements and simple words.

The number of these rhythms and melodies is endless, and as the quickness of ear and responsiveness of body develops the change from one to the other is directed with correlated movements.

As there are plays for the proper use of the body, so there are tone plays and songs which are given all unconsciously, but none the less

DR. MONTESSORI IN AMERICA

surely, to correct wrong habits of breathing, and to establish pure tone and clear enunciation. All the more formal musical training is based on the songs and melodies used in the games and plays. While the ear is learning to recognize the symbols so that children are early started on a sure way to musical appreciation and enjoyment.

The adjustment of music to the child's need, has been difficult in a scheme of education, in which it is impossible for each child to express himself, day by day, as an individual, according to his own moods and desires; where both the selection and the interpretation of music have been largely dependent upon the feeling or even the caprice of the individual adult teacher, and finally where the music was played upon an instrument which when carelessly played is in itself harmful to the delicately sensitized nervous organization of the child.

Nervous jumping, purposeless jerking and screaming will cease, when the feeling of satisfaction has been created by natural and orderly movements. The breathing will become more sustained, and relaxation and freedom in the singing voice will grow. The desire to sing will be spontaneous, because each child has been free to express himself in obedience to his own feeling. This feeling has been at all times directed by the laws of organic growth, by means of wholesome music through correlated movements.

To educate or organize feeling under the stimulus of music so that it may rightly and surely function in life, is the purpose of Miss Bentley's work in correlated movement, as practiced in the children's House. As a principle it should be applied to the teaching of little children, and of mothers and teachers who have the personal care of them.

DR. MONTESSORI'S RECEPTION IN ROME.

From the Tribuna, Rome, Jan. 2d, 1914.

As already announced, Dottoressa Maria Montessori arrived yesterday at 5 o'clock from Liverpool, returning from the United States. Many friends and admirers had gathered at the station to greet her, together with groups of little children and their teachers from the various Case dei Bambini (infant's schools) of Rome. Among these children were the sons of Guglielmo Marconi and those of the English Ambassador. Her majesty the Queen Mother, who has always warmly supported Dr. Maria Montessori's work, especially charged Signora Maraini Guerrieri to convey her salutations to the Doctor, and to express her satisfaction at the success of the system abroad, and the honour it had reflected upon Italy.

MONTESSORI MOTHERS IN COUNCIL.

Dr. Montessori, as she was leaving this country, paid a beautiful tribute to the American Mother—

"I must bow with humility to the American mother. She is one of the great wonders of your growing race."

It is because we so strongly endorse Dr. Montessori's opinion that we are instituting a department for Montessori Mothers. We want this department to become a means of really helping towards solving the problems which arise in giving freedom to the child. Helpful ideas which mothers have discovered, practical suggestions of all kinds, and questions relative to the difficulties encountered in the upbringing of children will be answered according to this Gospel of Freedom. The department will also be open for discussion. From many letters we choose the following to show what many American Mothers think of Dr. Montessori.

"In April, 1912, I opened a little private school in my own home, with my own little ones as a nucleus. I had one of the first sets of the Didactic Apparatus made by the House of Childhood. That set of materials has been priceless to me, and the Doctoressa's book, setting forth her wonderful message, has been an inspiration. Left a widow at twenty-nine, with three little children and a very small income, life suddenly seemed a very great problem to me. I feel that I owe a deep debt of gratitude to Dr. Montessori, for in the attempt to work out and apply her principles, with my little people, I have found a soul-satisfying and peace-giving work."

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

ANNIE E. GEORGE.

1. Is there any part of the work in which the children are all engaged either:

(a) In all doing the same thing at the same time.

(b) Where each is doing a part of one piece of work?

Ans. Dr. Montessori feels her experiments have shown that intelligent and valuable collective lessons cannot be given until individual order and power of attention have been established.

(a) The Silence Lesson, the Luncheon, lessons in the handling of objects, care of the room, etc., all give the Directress opportunities to test the progress of her group toward collective order.

(b) As the Montessori Materials are considered by the Directress as stimuli through which she hopes to awaken the child's inner activity, the activity which shall lead him to independent progress and control, she presents her lesson to individuals. Her task is to observe the direction taken by each individual rather than to lead the group to develop with the material some idea predetermined by her. The children often form spontaneous groups but these are never large.

2. In what way is number taught?

Ans. The Long Stair forms the basis for teaching number, through comparison of rods varying from a decimeter to a meter in length, the child becomes familiar with the idea of quantity and the relation of units.

Later he associates symbol with quantity placing the sandpaper figures on the corresponding rod. With these rods he comes to understand the process of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Small counters are also used to make possible the repetition which children need and want in acquiring an idea of numbers.

3. What is their training in invention and appreciation of design, architecture, etc.?

Ans. The geometric forms are presented in the solid and in the plane. The material in the latter form being unusually rich as Dr. Montessori thinks the plane aspect of forms is seen most often in daily life (table tops, windows, books, plates, etc.). In the presentation of all her materials her aim is to awaken the interest of the child in form, dimension, color, texture, ect., so that he will the more readily observe them in his environment. The joy of discovery, the business of application is left to him.

4. Please state the relative rapidity with which children learn to read, write, draw, do arithmetical problems, etc., in the Kindergarten as compared with Montessori System?

Ans. As the usual Kindergarten does not offer materials through which a child may acquire ability to read, write, etc., no comparison can be made. As a rule, the five-year-olds in the Montessori Schools show very keen and decided interest in all materials related to reading and writing and numbers. The rapidity with which they learn varies with the individual, for some it is a matter of months, with others weeks.

If the materials are not presented until the child shows a decided interest, the mastery of the materials is apt to be rapid and sure as the child is both mature and eagerly interested.

I have under other methods brought classes to the point of sending in books and writing records of school activities within six months, but I do not feel that my direction brought about the self-mastery, the all round development which children require.

5. What advantage have the colored spools over the colored balls used in Kindergarten?

Ans. The same advantage that marks all of Dr. Montessori's material; they are auto-educational permitting the child to work alone. The color spools also make possible a great refinement of the color sense.

6. To what extent can a mother in the home, under the Montessori Method,

(a) Co-operate with the teacher?

How much can she accomplish where there is no teacher in her community?

Ans. Since the Method, on the part of the teacher consists in the assimilation and application of basic principles, the mother who grasps these principles (for example, the concept of liberty, the reverent observation of Life) can co-operate very fully.

(a) What she can accomplish with the materials at home depends upon the clearness with which she grasps the principles, the faith with which she believes in them, and the amount of time and spirit she can give to the work.

NEWS FROM THE SCHOOLS.

One little boy, 6 years old, who entered October 29th, is writing very nicely and is able to read quite long sentences. He watched me write silence on the board one day and the next day he ran up to me and asked if he might write it for me. I said, "Yes," and he went to the board, and although the "n" was about twice the size of the other letters, it really was very good. He is able to read a great many sentences now. For instance, if I write on the board, "It is a sunny day, or walk on tiptoe and get your coats," he reads them without much hesitation. I have taught the children to say "Buon giorno, Ariverderla, ruvido, lis cio," and many other words and phrases, and they just love the Italian.

I am sending you some work that my little five-year-old girl did. She was with me less than a month when she wrote simple words like dog, cat, etc. The little boy who wrote silence on the board wrote seventy-seven words day before yesterday. That may sound incredible, but nevertheless it is true. He wrote until I was actually scared. After he had written 15 or 20 words, he ran up to me and said, "Miss Hughes, I wish I could come back this afternoon, I just want to read and write, read and write for a whole week."

I never even suggested a word to him. He simply said, "I'm making up words," and away he wrote, one word after another a good share of the morning. Some words were small like it, at, of, etc. Others were quite long ones—buttercups, butterflies, mamma, baby, etc., making 77 in all. After that, he started to write, "Little Boy Blue, come blow your horn," but didn't finish it.

Before I close I must tell you what one of my youngsters said the other day in the Silence game. My children love this game and each child takes his turn calling the others. A little five-year-old girl was calling and had kept us sitting still a painfully long time. Finally, she called George, who got up and slid across the floor towards her. Anxious to see what she would do about it, I peeped through my fingers to watch her. She looked at him a moment, then said, "George, that isn't the way to be silent, you must shut your legs when you walk."

WINIFRED HUGHES.

To-day, Lucy, aged 4, asked for the movable alphabet for the first time. She had watched an older child use it. She had been writing her name on the black board, so when she asked me what she could make, I suggested a little story about something she had, and this is what she did:

"Lucy has a bunny," then "Helen has a break doll." I asked what that meant and she said, "A doll that can break." Then "Dorcas can boss." I gave her no help but to pronounce the words clearly and to show her that break had a silent letter and the double consonants in the other words. She became as excited over this as the Dottoressa describes some of her children.

One small boy of 4 could not button his shoes, so I told him how nice it would be if he learned, but he did not take to the idea, until one day he did the shoe buttoning frame 29 times, by my actual count. He came to me and said, "Now my mother will give me buttoned shoes because I have learned how to button them," and sure enough, it was not long before he was the proud possessor of a pair.

MARY JOHNSON WARING.

The children made every single thing for our Xmas tree, and today they filled the stockings with candy and trimmed the tree.

You'd be surprised to see how well they handled the scissors and how neatly they glued, though they had not done a bit before. Which just goes to prove that when they get control of themselves and have co-ordination of movement, they can apply themselves to anything.

I have just three three-year-olds, and they are so interested and so absorbed in each thing they take up; that certainly is the time for them to begin.

EMILY GREENMAN.

One little deficient girl of about six learned the sandpaper numbers 1, 2, 3, to-day and the meaning. She could count up to nine, from memory, but she couldn't count that many objects. She asked for these numbers, so I experimented. It took her a long time to remember long enough to say the numbers by seeing and touching, but after she got them she put the corresponding number of sticks in the box with the number cards time and time again without a mistake. I think that possibly half of the children are interested the whole morning in the one thing, and the other half change about or wander around watching the others.

EMMA M. WILHELM.

TRAINING COURSE.

Dr. Maria Montessori announces that her Second International Course for Teachers in her Method of Education as applied to young children, will take place in Rome from February 23d till June 30th, 1914.

Dr. Montessori herself will give the lessons, and new "Case dei Bambini," which have been founded in Rome, will give ample opportunities of observing the children. For further information apply to the General Secretary, Montessori Educational Association, 1840 Kolorama Road.