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Box 17, Folder 06 - "Montessori Notes-Miscellaneous" (E.M.S.)

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Montessori Notes - Miscellaneous.

World Exhibition San Francisco 1913,?

In the educational Section was a model class specially built ^{of} ~~The exhibit was built with wax and glass~~ The classroom was built with walls of glass. All around were rows of chairs for the spectators. Thirty children were chosen. the spectators were admitted from the first day and it was kept open for a month.

One day a little girl who was in it for the first time was so delighted that she asked the Teacher "Do you know how to write too?"

The mother of this child wanted to open a school herself, and the child said " ~~I~~ I 'll help you ~~to~~, I know the way to learn writing; you must have sand-paper letters.

One day they had a festive lunch (on some one's birthday) and each child carried a lighted candle; but there were no accidents.

DIVIDING UP THE METHOD

It is useless to take on the method in little bits without the spirit of it. Some people will take a little liberty others a little individual teaching; or some of the apparatus. Some will take the principle of Observation as everything and observe everything solemnly even the most foolish and disorderly actions. Others will believe in just physical liberty; others will perpetually reason with the children. Other will introduce all kinds of objects - and use a confused blend of toys and games.

WHERE THE JOY COMES FROM

Nothing gives more joy than the development of the normal faculties; the learning of new facts and fresh knowledge which always leads on to something further on

THE BEST ARGUMENT IN FAVOUR

At an exhibition of specimens of the children's writing on

one of the visitors - a schoolmaster - refused to believe that children of 5 and 6 could write so well. Some one made a protest at this incredulity. Dr Montessori, who was in another part of the room happened to overhear this conversation. She called the lady who was so perturbed at the incredulity and said "But don't you see, his incredulity is the finest testimonial that we could have"

HISTORY OF THE METHOD

About thirty years ago our method ~~was~~ became known as an educational system for children from 3-6. The method was praised, appreciated, approved, imitated and degraded and finally wrapped in a veil of silence and ignored.

Yet the work went on quietly, unobtrusively, and spread itself over the whole world in space - and up to secondary school age in time.

NO NEW BOOKS

It is not so widely known as it was at first owing to the fact that no new books have been written on the subject for 20 years (1934)

LEARNING FROM THE CHILD

The more closely and minutely we observe the child the greater are the truths he reveals to us.

(Montessori the Scientist .

THE NEW CHILDREN

From the very beginning these characteristics appeared in the children in our schools. But at that time attention was not focussed upon this fact but rather upon the new technique of acquiring culture.

But as for us these new and peculiar characteristics were always the most important fact; and it was because of this the method spread thro the world.

At that time new books were written about this revelation in America "The Discovery of the Child; in England The New Children

These ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ indicate - not a new method of education but the revelation of new forms of the child's personality.

The Queen Maria of Italy said " I am expecting a new philosophy to arise from what is seen in these little children of 5 years of age .

NOTES ON MONTESSORI (2)

Searching for methods to help mental deficients she went to the Bourneville Inst at Paris . It was there she heard of S^guin - who says at the end of his book

"Deficients can be made to look normal and enter society and even earn their own living ; and still remain deficient

After me someone will come who will apply these principles to normal children with infinite possibilities .

HER INTIMATE RELIGIOUS FRIENDS

She had a great friend - a Nun -Madre del Patrocino di San Giuseppe , who used to call Montessori her " daughter in the world " . (ancilla mundi ")

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Another Nun who was her great friend belonged to the Handmaids of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary . It was she who said "Montessori e nata a ornare e rallegrare il caelo e la terra " (Montessori has been both to adorn and make joyful heaven and earth - high praise for a nunn nun)

HOW IT STARTED

Son Montessori wanted to get hold of some normal children under six ; but according to law there were no schools for the under sixes. It was a matter of red tape. Then came the affair of the tenement houses

Before that some one starting a journal had asked Montessori to write an article - which she did. It was this article which led to her being chosen by Sgr Talamo for the job of looking after the children in the tenement houses - and so to her work ("Obedience to Events ")

IO MI VUOTO

Some one (Maccheroni ?) found the Dottoressa standing entranced before these wonderful children " del cielo / and murmuring to herself " io mi vuoto ! io mi vuoto "

AN INTERESTING AND SUGGESTIVE POINT

The materials for the San Lorenzo schools were made by the boys of the Reformatory of Sr Micheal .

HE WILL DO IT ANYHOW BUT NOT SO WELL

The developing child has to make his way through a number of Vanities while he works at the great task of building up his personality. The world offers him many - far too many things of various kinds all mixed up together : and yet still he manages to derive from them ideas of colour, size, form and so forth.

This mental work he cannot be forced to do, nor yet hindered ~~from~~ from doing : a vital impulse within him drives him to do it willy-nilly.

THE GIFT OF MAKING ABSTRACTIONS

A child of 4 years distinguishes a material object from its qualities, and gives the same name to a simple straw-bottomed chair and one carved and upholstered. Who taught him to form an idea of chairs which include them all without regard to their individual peculiarities? The mind is so made that it works in this way and thus arrives at forming general ideas.

THE STUDY OF GRAMMAR

SIMPLY CONTINUES A NATURAL TENDENCY TO CLASSIFY WORDS.

J.
Sir Gilbert at a banquet in honour of Dr Montessori - he was Chairman of the Educational Committee of the London County Council - said :- " Dr Montessori is a great personality and a great educationalist of untold value. I desire to tender the thanks of London for the remarkable influence which she has exerted on the London Schools" Given at a Meeting in the Central Hall Westminster 1931.

THE SENSE OF ORDER AND THE QUEEN

A child had composed several words with the movable alphabet. He had begun to put the letters away when the Queen saw him and said : "make Vive l' Italia !". The child calmly went on putting back the letters into their box, taking no notice of the Queen's request. It was a tense moment for the observers. In a low tone Montessori said "Did you not

not hear what the Queen said?" "Yes," replied the child, "but first I must put back everything". The Queen praised the child on account of his sense of order and greatly appreciated the spirit of the methods.

Queen Margharita of Savoy took a great interest in Montessori's work and helped it in many ways.

MONTESSORI IN 1906

She retained all her feminine grace and made it serve her mission.

Right from the beginning - as far back as 1906 - at the opening of her lectures on Pedagogical Anthropology she already had notions on educational method.

- 1) The teacher must not tyrannise over the child - should rather serve him
- 2) It is the hurried acquisition of culture with the view to marks and examinations which fatigues and exhausts.

The intelligence needs to have time and ~~important~~ opportunity to meditate and assimilate on what it has taken in.

EVOLUTION THE MONKEYS MOUTH

What a difference there is between the mouth of an ape and that of a man. The former has a prominent mouth all ready to snap at things; but man's mouth is ready to -- smile!

SCIENCE AND THE EARLY FATHERS

She compares Lombroso's theory of Criminality with St. John Chrysostom's doctrine of the "Community of guilt"

MIND IS ACTIVE AS THE BODY

In children the mind is more active even than the body. They therefore need to move with an aim in view, an aim dictated by their intelligence. The Prepared Environment affords them a great many possibilities of doing something useful. Thus their bodily activity is disciplined and guided in harmony with the inner activity of thought.

NOTES ON THE LIFE OF MONTESSORI

"Piu voi soffiare piu vado in alto "

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Renilde Montessori

When Dr. M was a student she used to have to carry back and forth to the University such a number of big medical books that her mother Renilde struck on the idea of unbinding the books and taking them only in sections as needed. This idea - or something similar - Dr. Montessori later used in "The Children's Pink Missal" and also in the Libro Aperto - "the Opened Book" - or The Mass Cards.

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When Renilde was dying and could not move her ~~ink~~ eyes M. stayed for a long time in the same position so that she could be seen. When she died her haughtiness could not be persuaded to eat for many days.

Signor Montessori, the father, was a very polite and correct military man who had been commended for bravery as "a sentinel avanzato".

He was so polite that on one occasion at a party he was so bored that he actually fainted ~~thru~~ rather than show his boredom to his guests (cf Herbert Spencer and his wads of cotton wool)

On the year 1900 took place the Jubilee of their marriage. Her daughter gave her a present - which was in a hat box. The Mother who was an invalid said "But I don't need a hat: I never go out". On opening the box which was a big one - for many hats - out came a number of balloons which sailed up in the room.

HOW TO DEAL WITH A LUNATIC

After graduating Dr. M. practiced as private doctor, and especially in connection with mental diseases. One day she visited a young man who had gone mad. He locked the door after her entrance and said "Now we must have a fairy /"

"quite so, of course we must have one" replied the young doctor: "I will go out at once and look for one" At which the patient opened the door and she went out.