Margaret McMillan

Margaret McMillan (Books by)

EARLY CHILDHOOD. 1900.

EDUCATION THROUGH THE IMAGINATION. 1904. (Second edition, 1923.)

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LONDON'S CHILDREN: HOW TO FEED THEM AND HOW NOT TO FEED THEM. 1909. Independent Labour Party.

See also:

THE ETHICAL END IN EDUCATION, being an essay by Margaret McMillan in *Ethical Democracy*. Edited by Stanton Coit. 1900. Grant Richards.

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CONSTRUCTIVE AND DECORATIVE STITCHERY. By E. G. Foster, with contributions from Margaret McMillan. 1921. Educational Needlecraft Association.

Margaret McMillan

Margaret McMillan

Prophet and Pioneer

Her Life and Work

By

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TO THOSE

WHO HAVE PASSED, ARE PASSING,

OR WILL PASS

THROUGH THE

RACHEL McMILLAN TRAINING COLLEGE

IN THE CONFIDENT HOPE

THAT THEY WILL

BE FIRED WITH THE SPIRIT

AND CONTINUE THE WORK

OF

MARGARET McMILLAN

PREFACE

In view of the deeply rooted and widespread influence of Margaret McMillan on the education of children at home and abroad, both before and during the years of school life, it was inevitable that an attempt should be made to record her work and to express her teaching.

The responsibility has fallen, by a combination of governing circumstances, into my hands. I welcome it not only as a duty entrusted, but as a labour of love.

So far as is possible I have set out her own words, reinforced by the many estimations of those who shared, in greater or less degree, the labours of her days.

She was an untiring speaker, lecturer, teacher, journalist, pamphleteer, and author. Her letters were many, but fragmentary, being but sparks from the anvil of her constructive toil. A number of them have been entrusted to me in full faith by her friends. She retained very few of the letters written to her, but these, together with her papers, she placed in my hands before she died.

In order to give direction to the narrative, overflowing with multitudinous activities, chronological details of her life are presented at the outset.

In large measure her life was spent in a present-day attempt to answer the question put by Glaucon to Socrates twenty-four centuries ago:

> Concerning the nurture children are to have while very young, in the period between their generation and their education, which seems to be the most troublesome of all, endeavour then to tell us in what manner it should be done.

Those who have either assisted or lightened my labours are too many to thank individually as I do collectively, but I cannot forbear to mention Miss Stevinson, of the Rachel McMillan Training College; Robert Blatchford, founder and first editor of the *Clarion*; Mrs. Sutcliffe, who is writing elsewhere on Miss Margaret McMillan in Bradford; and Dr. James Kerr, "the first school doctor." I owe an incalculable debt to the officials of the Board of Education, as well as to those of the Education Committees of Bradford and London.

It only remains to express my deep sense of obligation to Mr. and Mrs. Christopher

Turnor, under whose hospitable roof the book was written, and to Mr. John Ramage, who has rendered me both able and devoted help in searching out details which otherwise might easily have been overlooked; also to those of my friends who, having read my manuscript, helped me in its final preparation.

ALBERT MANSBRIDGE.

"Miseris Succurrere Disco"

Motto of the McMillans

"*She died in the firm faith that the students of the College will carry onwards the torch she has dropped and that the schools of her heart's desire will multiply and the children be comforted.*"—*The Times*, 30 March, 1931.

The author's and publisher's profits from the sale of this book will be devoted to the maintenance of the Camp School at Deptford, founded by Margaret McMillan, for children over five years of age.

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A CHRONOLOGY

A CHRONOLOGY OF MARGARET McMILLAN'S LIFE

1858. Marriage of James McMillan of Glen Urquhart, Argyllshire, and Jean Cameron of Dochfour, Inverness, on the eve of their departure to the United States.

1859. 25th March, birth of Rachel McMillan.

1860. July, birth of Margaret McMillan in Westchester County, New York.

1865. 16th July, death of Elizabeth (younger sister, aged 3 years).
21st July, death of father, aged 49 years.
Brought with Rachel to the home of her maternal grandparents at Inverness.

1870–6. Attended Inverness High School and Inverness Academy.

1877. April, death of grandfather.
14th July, death of mother, aged 50 years.

1878. Studied music at Frankfurt-on-Main.

1879. Governess to the children of Mrs. Drummond, of Craiglockhart, Edinburgh.

1881–3. Student teacher at Geneva and Lausanne.

From 1883. Occupied in various posts as governess (Ludlow, etc.).

1887. London, living with Rachel in Bloomsbury.

1888. Became companion to Lady Meux of Park Lane and "Theobalds," Waltham Cross.
Trained for the stage. Taught by Emil Behnke, Henry Neville, and others.
Death of grandmother—Rachel Cameron.

LIFE IN RELATION TO HER TIMES

TIMES

1861. On 14th April, at 4.30 a.m., the first gun of the United States Civil War was fired against Fort Sumter.

1865. General Kirby Smith surrendered the last Confederate Army on 26th May.

1870. Elementary Education Act. Authorization of School Boards.

LIFE—*continued*

1889. Her first article published in *The Christian Socialist.*

1892. First Public Speech made in Hyde Park on May Day.

Resigned her post as companion to Lady Meux.

Became a member of the Fabian Society.

1893. Accepted invitation to settle in Bradford.

Became a Foundation member of the recently founded Independent Labour Party.

1894. Elected in November to Bradford School Board. Feeding of school children initiated by Cinderella Club.

First recorded medical inspection of school children at Usher Street school, Bradford.

1896. School Board issued, for parents, her pamphlet on correct breathing for children.

Received by the Home Secretary as a member of a deputation on Half-time Attendance of school children.

1897. First school bath opened on 21st July at Wapping Road Infant School.

School Board issued her circular on Infectious Diseases.

Re-elected a member of the School Board.

1900. *Early Childhood* published.

1902. Resigned from Bradford School Board and joined Rachel in London.

1903. Delivered lectures for and worked with Ethical Society.

Education Through Imagination published.

Elected a member of the Council of the Froebel Society.

1904. Began to assist the Workers' Educational Association.

Mr. Joseph Fels offered, in May, £5,000 to the L.C.C. for the provision of a Health Centre. The offer was declined in November.

TIMES—*continued*

1889. Great London Dock Strike.

1893. Independent Labour Party (I.L.P.) founded in Bradford.
Education (Blind and Deaf Children) Act.

1899. Education (Defective and Epileptic Children) Act.

1902. Education Act.

1903. Foundation of the Workers' Educational Association (W.E.A.).

1904. Medical Inspection of school children recommended in Report of Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration.

LIFE—*continued*

1907. Member of the National Administrative Council of the I.L.P.
Labour and Childhood published.

1908. 8th December, Bow Clinic opened.

1910. 7th June, Bow Clinic partially closed.
15th July, Deptford Clinic publicly opened.

1911. Evelyn House, 353 Evelyn Street, Deptford, put at her disposal by Mr. Evelyn.
Night Camp in garden for girls over eight years of age. Nursery School during day for infants. Camp School in St. Nicholas churchyard for boys.
Grant for dental treatment made by L.C.C. to Deptford Clinic.

1912. Visited U.S.A. Attended Conference on Education and Medicine at Washington. Visited Westchester—her childhood home.
Grant for eye and ear treatment made by L.C.C. to Deptford Clinic.

1913. October. Stowage site granted by L.C.C. at nominal rent.
Permission to use 232 Church Street, Deptford.

1914. March: Opening of Nursery School, Night and Day, on the Stowage site, Deptford.

TIMES—*continued*

1905. Report of five women inspectors of the Board of Education on children under five in schools.

1906. General Election, resulting in return of 41 Labour members, including F. W. Jowett of Bradford.

Mr. Augustine Birrell, President of the Board of Education, introduced Education Bill containing clauses relative to Medical Inspection. Passed in the Commons. Rejected by the Lords.

Education (Provision of Meals) Act.

1907. Education (Administrative Provision) Act. Provision made for Medical Inspection in Clause 13.

End of eighteen years' Progressive majority on L.C.C.

1908. Report of Consultative Committee of the Board of Education on children under five.

First clinic opened in Bradford for medical treatment of school children.

School Feeding based on rates commenced.

1911. Institution of Exchequer grants for Dental Treatment of school children.

1912. Institution of Exchequer grants for Medical Treatment of school children.

1913. Outbreak of suffrage agitation. "Cat and Mouse" Act.

1914. Outbreak of war on 1st August.

LIFE—*continued*

1914 (*cont.*). Injured in House of Commons while on "Cat and Mouse" Act deputation.
Serious illness.
Visit to Norway.

1917. 25th March, death of Rachel McMillan.
Opening of Nursery School building by the Rt. Hon. H. A. L. Fisher, President of the Board of Education.
Invested with the Order of C.B.E.
The Camp School published.

1919. Elected a member of the L.C.C. for Deptford (appointed to Education Committee).
The Nursery School published.
1921. H.M. the Queen opened the new department of the Nursery School on 22nd November.
1922. Defeated in election for L.C.C.

1923. Elected President of the newly formed Nursery Schools Association.
1924. Serious illness.

1927. Granted Civil List Pension of £75 per annum.
The Life of Rachel McMillan published.
1929. Resigned Presidency of the Nursery Schools Association.

TIMES—*continued*

1916. Ministry of Munitions grant for care of children of munition workers.

1918. Education Act. Included provision for Nursery Schools and made Medical Treatment a statutory duty of the L.E.A.'s.
Representation of the People Act (included Women's Suffrage).
Armistice concluded 11th November.

1921. Consolidated Education Act.

1922. Economy measures of Sir Eric Geddes (Geddes' Axe).

1924. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald becomes Prime Minister in first Labour Government.
Mr. Stanley Baldwin becomes Prime Minister in succeeding Conservative Government.

1929. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald becomes Prime Minister in second Labour Government.

LIFE—*continued*

1929 (*cont.*). Founded the "Margaret McMillan Open-Air Nursery Schools and After Association."

1930. H.M. the Queen opened Rachel McMillan Training College (the new buildings) on 8th May.
Invested with the Order of Companion of Honour.

1931. 27th March, died at a nursing home at Harrow.
31st March, buried in the grave of Rachel McMillan at Brockley Cemetery.

TIMES—*continued*

1929 (*cont.*). Circular 1054 (Ministry of Health), 1405 (Board of Education) issued on 5th December, advocating the provision of Nursery Schools for children between two and five years old, etc.

1931. The second Labour Government resigns.
Mr. Ramsay MacDonald becomes Prime Minister in a "National" Government.
Education subjected, in common with other public services, to drastic economy.
The "National" Government returned to power after an appeal to the country.

CHAPTER I

THE FORMATIVE YEARS

Birth and parentage—Childhood in Westchester County, New York—Death of father and younger sister, Elizabeth —Departure for Scotland with mother and elder sister, Rachel—In the house of the maternal grandparents—Schooldays at Inverness—Student-teacher on the Continent —Introduction to Socialism as an interpretation of Christian teaching—Service as governess—Companion to Lady Meux —Trained for the stage—Writer and speaker in the Labour and Socialist movement—Departure from Lady Meux's service—The call to Bradford—Equipment and achievement.

THE birth in July 1860 of Margaret McMillan, the second daughter of James and Jean McMillan, at Westchester, New York, gave great joy to the home people in Dochfour, hard by Inverness.

It is impossible for me [so wrote on 23rd August, 1860, Margaret Cameron, always Auntie Maggie] to express the pleasure I felt on mother's receiving your dear husband's letter with the unexpected news of a daughter. Little Margaret was very lucky to us, for just as mother was reading the letter, father brought in a salmon.

Rachel had been born on March 25th in

the previous year. Elizabeth, who was born in 1861, died at the age of three.

James McMillan, the father, was one of the youngest in a family of ten. In him were mixed puritanism and catholicism. His mother was a Roman Catholic, never able to rid herself of a subconscious, if not a conscious, longing for the Church of her Fathers. "She begged that she might go back and lie in her father's burying ground."

The family motto was prophetic and proud: "I learn to succour the helpless."—Virgil, *Aeneid IV.*

Jean Cameron, the mother, came of Highland puritan stock, firm and relentless in the face of disloyalty whether to God or country, but gentle and tender in all the relationships of family life.

Margaret sprang then from an ancestry Highland, Mystic, Protestant, Catholic, and pledged to serve. The mingling of so many qualities accounts for much in her own temper, outlook, and practice.

Her father may have sought greater freedom than he could enjoy under the rule of landlords who maintained semi-feudal conditions in the Highlands, but let him so much as hint that "Scotia" was not "the land of lands," much less praise America at its expense, and down

would come the wrath of Rachel Cameron, who never really forgave him for taking her daughter Jean away from "the purple hills, the shifting lights, and clear quick waters" of Dochfour. Thus on 31st August, 1859:

Let me once more wield my feeble pen to crush and bruise all who dare throw a reproachful glance or word at the institutions or laws of our exemplary country—a country that may well boast of her heroes or unparalleled exploits on the battlefield, of her bards, her statesmen, her theologians, her geologists, her astronomers, and last but not least, her spreading and being the first means of developing Christianity to remote and uncivilized countries of the world.

The fierce defender of her race could, however, be very gentle—and Jean was never found forgetful.

All the folk here is taking notice of how mindful you are of us. It makes us feel as if America is not so far off as it is.—*24th June*, 1858.

I can tell father, sitting at the fire, the very day you write, and the week I will get your letter.—*15th February*, 1863.

A glimpse of the American home is revealed in a happy recollection. James and the girls were sent, on the Sabbath, to an upper room to sing hymns. When the door was shut and the "impious" noise could not escape to the

mother's ears, he taught them nursery rhymes. Thus light and humour had place side by side with religious austerity.

Margaret's memories of Westchester were vivid. She utilized them in a little Fantasy, "The Innkeeper's Daughter" (*Clarion*, 18th December, 1897):

> From the low doorway or piazza of the Inn of the Grey Giraffe, midway between Westchester and New York City, no human dwelling was visible. In front stretched the wide and richly wooded plains, broken in the distance by the grey line of a river, whose banks remained virgin and lonely as when the earth was young. Beyond the maize fields wound a slight track made by the stealthy feet of Indians. Behind lay the mountains, rising still and vast—giving significance to the silence of this "Titanic scene."

Little dark-eyed, black-haired Margaret—deaf from scarlet fever—loved her life. The world was a splendid place. It was full of colour. As yet there was no sorrow. All that Civil War meant to her was incitement to sing vigorously and to march to the strains of music. The love of rhythm came to her very early.

Letters came regularly across the sea from Auntie Maggie to her namesake niece. According to the custom of those times admonition was their main purpose.

I hope you will attend to what Rachel says to you, she being older. You must be submissive to her.

Again, in March 1865:

Just you try if you can beat Rachel at your lessons. I dare say Lizzie will soon eclipse both of you if you don't take care.

But comfort, not stimulus, was needed a few months later, for there came

a terrible July, a month of fierce heat. Our little sister Elizabeth falls ill and dies. Something worse follows. Our father is ill, very ill, He too is dying. We go to see our father, but the door is locked; he has died in the night.

The little family, mother and two young daughters, were not only bereft, but in poverty. A fibre company, in which most of their money was invested, had just collapsed. Then Rachel fell ill. The grief-stricken mother turned her face to Scotland. In September the three of them set sail, yearning for the place of assured welcome.

The Inverness home was comfortable. It was good. The welcome was complete. But the little girls were not really of it.

Hitherto [Margaret writes] we had been the objects of quiet but intense interest and solicitude. Now

we have no claims. We learn this, not from our grandfather, but we learn it.

They were grateful, if lonely.

Granny's name was Rachel—Rachel Kennedy. She ran away with my grandfather at sixteen. He was a Cameron. Granny spun the blankets [Margaret writes this when sending an embroidered one to Mrs. Sutcliffe in 1928] about 1824. She was very clever, a very good scholar, though she was so young. I can see the dark clever little woman at the wheel.

Grandfather was a white-haired, handsome, and very silent man.

He died in 1877. Thirty years later she dedicated her book, *Labour and Childhood*,

To the memory of my grandfather, who was as a father to me, and whose gentle and chivalrous character first taught me to have faith in humanity.

In her own descriptions of her childhood Margaret reveals no impatience with her deafness. It did not pass until she was twelve years old. Neither was it obvious to Mrs. Robertson, one of the very few who remember the sisters in their childhood.

They were most interesting children [she writes], though a perfect contrast to each other, both in appearance and character. Rachel the elder was a quiet, thoughtful, very gentle, timid child, fair and pale.

GRANDMOTHER CAMERON (DIED 1888)

Margaret a highly strung, nervous child, with black hair and the most wonderfully beautiful dark eyes, very musical and possessed of a fine rich voice.

Margaret ever loved beauty. The sense of it seems to have transformed her young life. Messages came to her in starlight and sunlight, from the high hills, the clinging mists, and the mere all silvern. They flashed forth all the days of her life, lighting up her every expression and giving radiance to her imagination. Beauty and truth were to her an essential unity.

I remember most vividly [she writes] spring and summer; the big garden becoming suddenly bright with daffodils and narcissi; the hawthorn and fruit trees blossoming, and the lilies; the wall bright with japonica, which I tried to gather and carried to school, hoping to win attention, if not friendship, by the gift of it.

It may have been in her deafness and loneliness that she learned to listen to the incommunicable accents of the spirit; it may have been that for company she conjured up the actual, as they seemed to her, objective presences of the saints. It was not indeed until later, much later, in her last years, that she ever spoke of them, but all through her life she seemed to be aware of them, and this awareness coloured all her writing and her

speech, but was most evident in her often apparent withdrawal from material and even personal surroundings. She has been likened by many to St. Joan, whose voices came to her from the saints.

Such a girl, ardent, lonely, and proud, driven by forces she could not understand, even if she were conscious of them, must have presented many problems and occasioned many heart-searchings, and not least to the gentle Rachel, who, it would seem, followed her in trepidation.

There is little material for us to judge or even to value these days. An old schoolfellow, the Rev. John Mackenzie, tells us:

I remember very distinctly when Rachel and she came to the High School, Inverness. Rachel was a very happy, vivacious girl, and a great favourite. Her sweet smile won all hearts. When in the class the teacher's temper loomed dark and furious it generally passed away when in turn he came to Rachel. That answering smile scattered the gloom, and we entered upon another peaceful truce.

Margaret was a very earnest serious student. She generally was found parading the playgrounds with one or two like-minded, no doubt discussing some subjects far beyond their years. Rachel's lithe, slim figure formed a complete contrast to Margaret's short, well-knit figure, as did also her jet-black ringlets

to Rachel's fair hair. Margaret certainly was well-fitted in strength for life's stern battle; but who could have thought at that time that Rachel would in time be strong enough to bear equally with her sister the long, heavy, tiresome burden of the work before them? While one could well have confidence in setting Margaret to a hard task, one, on the other hand, could have wished for Rachel a more sheltered sphere.

On the 7th July, 1930, she wrote to him, mixing, as was normal with her, past, present, and future.

The High School is far, far away in time. I was a deaf child—and on the whole a very unhappy one. I remember Maggie Noble and John MacLeod (the latter had a brother Willie who frightened me), and Jessie MacLagan was older than me and wore her hair almost up!

There was a teacher who knocked my hair ribbon off when I didn't know what he said. I used to sit and dream of another world—where Rachel and Mother were with me and it was all beautiful. You boys used to walk all over the room when Mr. Wallace was praying. He had a horrid tawse, and used it. I think my horror of that and the Hygiene (or want of it) fired me to fight for Medical Inspection as I did, and School Clinics. Rachel was the best fighter though. It was she who got Medical Inspection at last—gentle as a dove, but bold as a lion was my Rachel. Well, I 'm all alone now.

The King decorated me yesterday, but I wish it

had been Rachel that lived and got the decorations (I have two!).

I went to Golspie as you say twenty-five years ago. The Duchess of Sutherland took an interest in my work at that time. Do you remember Harriet Grant? Pretty little chum of mine, Forsyth the stonecutter's niece, I adored her. There are 340 in this Open-Air School. There is another school for older children of 80, and 260 under five, and 80 students—a busy hive. When you come to London come to see us. I went to the Academy. Dear Mr. Thompson helped me there—but the girls were trained to be ridiculous snobs. The little fools always ignored the High School girls, and I think my school life made me a rebel and also a reformer.

There were several teachers whom I would like to talk to now. A certain Bannantyne. Oh, I would like to tell *him* the truth. No doubt he 's heard it before this.

Reform. Reform. That 's what Scotland needs. What memories of suffering and cruelty I have of my native land.

I spoil all my darlings. They are in a bath of Love, and I have thirty-two Hot-Water Taps. Pray for us.

In her life of Rachel she gives similar evidence.

We can see the mystic shy girl "filled with anxiety and distress," having "deep sympathy with unruly boys." A sympathy she kept

MARGARET AND RACHEL WITH THEIR MOTHER (*circa* 1874)

through life. No one ever heard her say an unkind word about sinners. She loved the sinner in his sin. Her part to remove the occasion of it.

Thou moreover [she may have mused in spirit even then with Father Zossima] art working for the whole and for the future thou labourest. And look not for any outward reward since, without that, thy reward on earth is already great: thine is the spiritual joy which only the righteous man findeth. Love all men and all things, seek this rapture and ecstasy, wet the earth with the tears of thy joy, and love those tears.[1]

Even so she was puzzled about

God and heaven and hell and death and sin. Why some people were rich and others poor. Though of course I was told that some children had fathers and others had no fathers, and that some people were diligent and clever and successful, while others were idle and foolish, I did not feel much the wiser. I knew a very good and clever old woman who was always glad of a little meal. Like most children, however, I gave up puzzling at last, and only hoped I might become very rich.

Her face was always set forward. She endured the troubles of the day without complaint. If lessons were hard and she had

[1] *The Brothers Karamazov*, Dostoevsky.

to listen to what she did not understand, she bore it. In fact she commended it. The schoolmaster did not study her, but she was allowed to study, and in faith she did so, storing her mind the while. She read eagerly, her mind was inquisitive. The books of a studious uncle who died young were to hand, a "whole library of books in the cistern closet," books of release and adventure.

After the death of her mother on 14th July, 1877, Margaret studied music at Frankfurt-on-Main, presumably to fit herself for a post as a finishing governess, which in 1879 she actually became, in Edinburgh.

There she was known as "Millie." Mrs. Drummond, her kindly employer, tells us that

> John Stuart Blackie was a frequent visitor. He became attached to her. They had many long talks together. There was no doubt of her great intellectual gifts and of the width of her reading. She read and she knew what she had read.

During this period she had a tempestuous love affair that nearly broke her heart. The leaves need not be turned. All her life she was conscious of it, but only made reference to it in those moments of confidence which no one dare reveal.

In 1881 she went to Switzerland teaching

English, and studying languages at Geneva and Lausanne. Her knowledge of French and German, both language and literature, was remarkable. Of that time Mrs. Worthington who, with others, knew her as "Gipsy," a name Margaret herself used, writes:

I do not think she was intent on self-development especially—or that she had then any definite ideas of future work—but she gave me a strong feeling of having been awakened to a great sense of pity for and sympathy with the sufferings of humanity. I think she had lately lost her parents at that time, and she and her dear sister had been separated by the necessities of life—the home had been broken up, if I remember rightly, and her sister was struggling also with the conditions of being obliged to become independent. I feel sure that she wrote poetry—how much I don't know—the spiritual values as well as the human were working in her—and it was a friendship I much valued as a girl of seventeen and a half. I always felt she would work out some kind of expression of her interest in humans—from the point of view of the desire to give the help to mind and soul as much as to the body of her fellow travellers in this world.

In Switzerland she herself tells us she met an American girl of great ability

who had lived mostly in Europe, and who gave me a most detailed account of the history of land tenure in the Highlands of Scotland.

She returned to her native land much enlightened, and indeed ready for the Socialist leading and teaching of Rachel who, having been set free from years of faithful nursing of her grandmother, had turned to face new work inspired by new ideas, in response to an inner call—"a sudden inrush of new consciousness."

John Gilray, the friend of a cousin, pointed the way to the effective expression of the Christian life in and through Socialism. He himself was a disciple of Dr. John Glasse, an eloquent and convincing preacher. Gilray's pockets seemed to be full of copies of *The Commonweal*, of *Justice*, of revolutionary tracts.

Rachel followed in no unhesitating way. "I believe," she writes in 1887, "they (the Socialists) are the true disciples and followers of Christ."

The American girl at Geneva had kindled a spark, Rachel fanned it to flame, Margaret fed the flames with *Das Kapital*. Karl Marx became to her the prophetic writer of a "new Bible."

It is not probable that the kindly families at Ludlow and elsewhere, where she was received as a governess, recognized in the gentle, affectionate Margaret, a revolutionary in the making. But of the years 1883–7 there are no records. The fierce fires burned

controlled and unseen. They were bound to blaze forth.

As time went on she confessed to being a Socialist. This as a rule sealed her fate, but one whom she chose to call Lady X, but whom we need not hesitate to identify with Lady Meux, found her to be a charming novelty, and engaged her as a companion.

Margaret has written in detail of the ups and downs of this period.[1] There is little doubt that she faced luxury and wealth and found it wanting.

She delivered her judgment in *The Labour Prophet* of February 1893. It took the form of a fierce satire, led up to by this text:

In the age of Gold every man and woman is necessarily the victim of Gold. Those of us who belong to the working classes know very well where the shoe pinches. The horrible wrong that has been perpetrated on our sisters of the "submerged tenth" is obvious enough. What we are apt to forget is—that we are *all* victims. We—not women of a particular class—but all women. The ladies who preach to us, the ladies who build homes and soup kitchens, the ladies who employ us are suffering and stunted. They, no more than we, have attained their full moral and intellectual, or even their physical strength. For every woman wronged, all women do penance. It is a way that nature has!

[1] *Life of Rachel McMillan*, pp. 43–72.

It concludes:

They who fight the battle of the workers are, in doing this piece of righteous work, making straight paths for all feet that have wandered into strange places. They are the Saviours, not only of the slum girl, but of all poor, wealthy Ladies Featherpoll.

At this time of her life she was doubtless surging with impatience. Sir E. A. Wallis Budge, the eminent Egyptologist, has clear recollection of her:

She was very keen about her work, and her energy and enthusiasm knew no bounds. Lady Meux subsidized several of her works for some time. Miss McMillan worked very hard, but we thought her a little impatient. The misery she encountered appalled her, and she wanted the Millennium to come forthwith. Her zeal and energy at that time nearly burnt her up. And in the many talks which we had, whenever I urged patience, she thought I was unsympathetic and Lady Meux also. Later she learned wisdom, and her work became invaluable.

When we could make her forget her work she was a delightful and charming woman. We all liked her very much.

Another who visited Lady Meux at the time was impressed by the courageous way Margaret would stand for her aims and ideals in an atmosphere of dense materiality.

The training which Lady Meux encouraged and helped was for the stage. "You 've to be an actress. You must be trained." In this way Margaret's magnificent voice became fitted for all kinds of public speaking. She was sent to take lessons from Emil Behnke, a skilled voice producer.

Teachers worked with doctors, voice producer and actors—all working at some part of one task, training the voice. For the first time it began to dawn on me that the original of all tools and weapons is in the human body. For the first time I saw how Nature when she made man, worked out the original of every kind of instrument—horn, violin, organ, and even piano, shadowed and worked out in nose, palate, lips, lungs, ear, and inner ear—all instruments and means of music; and music can reach and pour through limbs as well as throat, so that the whole body thrills with it. I had been taught to sing, and I had learned several languages, but no instrument of mine was in good order. Then one must learn to breathe—a thing that a baby can do well, but that I, for example, had done wrongly for years. At last, when there is breath enough, one may begin to learn what to do with it—and finally go on to speech, to movement, and at last the goal—music.

All the week I recited, practised, and took breathing lessons, but on Sunday morning I was at the Dock Gates—the great strike was raging.

You may see these two ardent sisters on

Sunday mornings selling copies of *Justice*, *The Commonweal*, and tracts at the Dock Gates, stopping on the way home wherever and whenever they found a few loafers, to address them on the new era, teaching singing to jam-girls and mill-girls who jeered.

The first article Margaret ever wrote was for *The Christian Socialist*, December 1889, edited by Paul Campbell. It is a criticism of "The Church," based on a remark of the Rev. Llewellyn Davies, the father of her later friend. It is a careful essay. There is about it none of the delightful *abandon* that was characteristic of her later writing.

She foreshadowed the twentieth-century movement for the education of working men and women.

As the subject of political economy is one of vital importance to the working man, one moreover of which he is assumed to be entirely ignorant, it would be a still more conclusive proof of disinterestedness on the part of the educated classes if they would enable and encourage working men to study political economy for themselves.

The writer became the speaker.

On May day, 1892, I made my first speech in Hyde Park, Paul Campbell aiding and abetting me, and that was the end of all the stage practice,

as also of her association with Lady Meux.

It 's dreadful of you [said Lady Meux to me]. You 're going about with dreadful people. You speak in the Park.

Decide or go.

Go! You may blot me out of your memory.

Throughout her life Margaret felt sad as she thought of Lady Meux. She never had it in her to see faults in any one, much less in one who had shown her positive kindness. All her attacks were reserved for the things which let and hindered human life. On 21st January, 1911, she wrote to a friend:

I was in America when Lady Meux died. In the last week I was so unhappy. I was always thinking of her. She was dying all that week. On Christmas Eve, when I came on board ship to go home, she was buried. We had so many Christmas Eves together. I was her oldest friend, and I think she liked me. She said she would leave me a lovely place in Wiltshire —but, of course, there were conditions. She hated my views. She took me back so often. Then in the last two sad years she never saw me. She said the Budget was killing her, and that I was helping.

Margaret had no option. The cry of the people was insistent in her ears. Luxury or even fame were merely temptations, to be glanced at perchance and then ignored. Her way was clear. She had no doubts.

As for me I had finished two trainings—a training

for a finishing governess (as we were then called) and the hard training to be an actress, but I no longer wished to be a governess or an actress. My earnest desire was to cast away from these orders of service and to devote myself to the new party (the Independent Labour Party) that was born in Bradford.

Bradford called her, to Bradford she went.

The formative years were ended. Margaret had become a powerful and dignified woman. Her early deafness had increased her sense of colour and beauty. It had driven her to listen to unspoken voices. The Highland tradition of piety, mysticism, scholarship and unremitting industry were ingrained in her, so also a fierce Highland pride. She was adventurous and independent. Her intellect was well developed and her mind stored.

To the foundations laid by the constant use of the Bible she had added a superstructure of all that was finest in literature. The wealth of quotation drawn from Goethe, Carlyle, Whitman and other philosophers and poets proves that abundantly.

There was aim in her life. The creation of a society that would make beautiful life possible for all. She harmonized the teaching of Christ, William Morris and Karl Marx in a powerful synthesis of her own, which satisfied the needs of her ardent nature.

CHAPTER II

PIONEER WORK IN BRADFORD

The Labour group and the Labour Church—Margaret with Rachel enters Bradford—Rachel returns to London—Early days—Lectures in the district—The writing of *Early Childhood*—Her studies and reading—Elected a member of the School Board—Training for voice production—Cleanliness and school baths—The first medical inspection—Half-time—Feeding of school children—Ventilation—Leaflets for parents—Her unconventional methods—Resignation from the School Board—The nature of her influence—The place of Bradford in the world of education.

THE Labour Movement in Bradford had full knowledge of and no doubts concerning Margaret McMillan. It was, in truth, a national rather than a local expression of the rising spirit of Labour. The leaders of it were in everyday communication with the big figures in London, who had been impressed by her knowledge and power. Even Keir Hardie, rough and unconventional, yet splendidly sincere as he always was, paid her the, for him, rare compliment of standing up when she entered. "I 'll be glad to see you, Maggie."

Moreover she was already recognized as an eloquent and forceful speaker. The

progressive journals of the time had revealed that she was a ready writer and a fearless controversialist.

Her attitude to the Labour Party was clear.

> In the midst of all the turmoil of contesting parties, there exists one party of which little is heard, but which is enrolling its members by hundreds every week. I speak of the Independent Labour Party. . . . We desire at least to make known to women the fact that there is a labour party—born of a real necessity, possessed of a formidable and increasing power, and inspired by a great aim.—*The Woman's Herald*, 18th June, 1892.

The Bradford group had arisen in a time of comparative prosperity. The men and women composing it, among them F. W. Jowett, Arthur Priestman, Edward Hartley, were so varied in experience and equipment as to make a combination which would have been remarkable in any place at any time. In addition to working men and women, trained and experienced in reform movements, there were manufacturers and literary men.

They were forerunners of the Independent Labour Party, which met for the first time in Bradford on 13th January, 1893.

For the greater part they worshipped in an undogmatic Labour Church, on the type of that founded by John Trevor in Manchester

with "God is our King" for creed, which satisfied their need for spiritual expression and inspiration. They read the Bible, they sang, prayed, and preached, but in such a way as to invite no dogmatic differences. To this Church Margaret lectured in June 1892. The members of it were captivated and enthralled.

She tells us that "Mr. Harry Smith invited her." Be that as it may, the Labour Church, through its secretary, Edwin Halford, "called" her to its service, whilst a formal deputation, led by Mr. F. W. Jowett, sent by the Socialist group, urged her to make her home in Bradford.

There was little or no money to pay her, but there were innumerable lectures, for some of which she would get perchance five shillings. The working man of those days had a marked objection to paying lecturers, and did not hesitate to express himself. Margaret hated taking fees. The *Clarion* which had been founded in 1891, and to which she was a regular contributor, was hardly in a position to pay more than ten and sixpence an article. The lack of money, so far as it related to her personal needs, however, then as always, never concerned her overmuch.

Rachel was more practical, but ever ready to sacrifice herself for her brilliant sister. "You won't earn anything," she said, "I must earn

money." She went away and earned it, sending remittances to Margaret all the time.

In such a way these two women, poor and without influence, faced a situation promising them nothing but hard and laborious days. Their high courage and their inspiration arose directly out of a consuming love for a hindered and oppressed people which never failed them. They drank long and deep and often at "fountains of living water."

The companionship in work—through days of poverty—which never ceased whilst Rachel lived, is a romance in our time. Nor, in spirit, did the companionship cease even after Rachel's death. It is not to be wondered at that those who understood both loved and reverenced them.

In spite of such uncertain material resources they made a joyous entry to Bradford, on a stormy night in November 1893.

> We saw in a swuther of rain, the shining statue of Oastler, standing in the Market Square, with two black and bowed little mill workers standing at his knee.

It was to them a symbol of the tasks ahead. Moreover the seventh Lord Shaftesbury, defender of working children, of whose presence in the spirit Margaret was always conscious, had unveiled it in 1869.

"Next morning we awoke in a new and unknown world."

"Our Margaret," as she was known in Bradford, had arrived.

Her delight and interest in the men of the Labour group never waned. In their Church she felt her need for worship satisfied. She was glad to be one of a little band of devoted women, led by Katherine Conway,[1] Enid Stacy, and Caroline Martyn, who were giving new strength and hope to the I.L.P.

She was a strange if alluring figure to the North of England working folk, a being apart. But her manifest sincerity, reinforced by a well-stored mind and a radiant spirit, caused them to enjoy the idiosyncrasies of her speech and manner.

It was during the Bradford years that, as *The Times* said on 30th March, 1931,

> She developed a rare intensity of impressive and disturbing appeal. Textile workers were made aware of their children not as potential "doffers" and "little piecers," but as the heirs of the ages. Their children were likened to "Lilies of the Field," and the unfolding of the child-mind to the unfolding of creation. Margaret herself, radiant with conviction, spoke of a light shining above the place where "a young child lay," and made the earnest souls in the audience see that

[1] Now Mrs. Bruce Glasier.

light. In those missionary days a speech by Margaret McMillan left groups of her auditors with a vision that for days or weeks kept them quickened and aglow.

Professor Alexander, the eminent philosopher, tells of a crowded meeting held in the Free Trade Hall in Manchester somewhere in the nineties. As Margaret got up to speak a loud voice rang from the back of the hall: "Our Maggie." The whole audience cheered.

There were naturally whole sections of Bradford people who, not knowing her, regarded what she said and did as visionary and unpractical, if not dangerous. Attached to the Socialist party as she was, the flow of her influence at the outset was necessarily restricted.

"Many people," writes Mr. Rhondda Williams, the well-known preacher, "thought she had a bee in her bonnet." More people ignored her. Those who did come to know her, simple people for the greater part, soon learned to love her. She so manifestly cared for them and for their children. The discerning among them knew her for a prophet.

She lectured unceasingly, and poured out a torrent of articles.

The towns about knew her, no matter how inconvenient it was for her to reach them.

Some thirty-five years ago [writes Mr. E. Butter-

field] I met her at Kildwick Station (for Cowling), there was no bus, only a milk cart. I well remember the jolting she got on this journey.

A few of the comrades [writes Mr. Robert Meats] thought well to take her to Bulwell, a mining district four miles from Nottingham. Miss McMillan was well content to ride in a coal cart belonging to a comrade, Mr. Tom Culley, and a rare cheer the Bulwell miners gave her when she alighted from her uncomfortable seat.

So it went on, day in, day out, except when she was exhausted, as happened not infrequently, to the point of temporary breakdown.

Her first considerable book, *Early Childhood*, was written in those days. It opened up a new area of influence, stamping her in the eyes of a wide public as a scholar to be reckoned with.

She was constant in her studies, reading, it is evident, the authoritative works in French and German, as well as in English.

In a letter written on Christmas Day, 1898, in response to a direct request of a friend for guidance in reading on Education she says, in her own natural and unrestrained manner:

Do you know I haven't any books to speak of on Education. I read up Literature on *Defective* children when I was trying to get to know at first—and I still think that this is a capital thing to do. Also the works of neurologists—Lombroso is useful. But

especially Séguin, whose work *Normal and Abnormal Children* is translated I think, and also *Idiocy*. Felix Alcor, Rue Hachette, Paris, sells them in French. I don't know the names of the English publishers. Then Bernard Perez's book, *The First Years of Childhood* is suggestive, and Mosso on *Fatigue* and *Fear*—I think one needs to read these with Froebel, who was, great man as he was, QUITE WRONG in some ways, and dangerous ways too. Liberty Tadd's new book, *Bi-manual Training* is useful—not to the artist, but to the teacher—for his exercises must have a good effect on the nervous system I think. But then I am only an amateur myself. On the whole, people had better keep an open mind. Donaldson's *Growth of the Brain*, published by Walter Scott in Contemporary Science Series is useful. Bastian is old, but one needn't despise him. *The Child's Voice* by Behnke doesn't tell much—still one might read it. And Baron Posse's *Kinesiology*—a treatise on physical training—very useful, costs 17s. 6d. Still it 's worth it. Mrs. Behnke's *Speaking Voice*, 2s. 1d., Chappell's—is what we use in the Voice-Production Classes. Have you seen *Board School Laryngitis*, by Greville McDonald, Sampson and Son, and Francis Warner's *The Children—How to Study Them*, 1s. 6d.?

At one time she studied chemistry at the Mechanics Institute. Since she came late in the session she engaged or induced Mr. T. M. Whitehead to give her the earlier lessons privately. This was a prelude to her intention,

as she wrote to Mr. Mattison on 31st December, 1895, to contribute to the *Clarion*

a series of short articles on Science—very simple and elementary, intended for women who are very busy baking and cooking, and have no time at all for study. "Nunquam" [Robert Blatchford] is very anxious to interest the wives of the men he has influenced.

As the result of her sincerity and power Margaret's place in Bradford soon became one of prominence. The Labour Party, inspired and informed by her, determined that she should serve it in a representative capacity at the first possible moment.

There were few opportunities for public service open to women in the eighteen-nineties other than membership of School Boards, which were authorized by the Education Act of 1870.

Bradford had for some years shown a remarkable interest in Education, and had, through its School Board, already taken forward steps.

The most notable of these was the appointment in 1892 of Dr. James Kerr[1] as the first

[1] It is important to note that Dr. Kerr was Medical Officer (Education) in Bradford and London for the greater part of the period of Margaret McMillan's work there. The first steps in medical inspection and treatment were largely due to the fact that Dr. Kerr was working on the medical side while Margaret, by advocacy and experiment, was forcing the whole matter on the attention on the public.

elementary school doctor entrusted with the duty of considering the health of children. Two years previously the London School Board had appointed Dr. W. R. Smith as Medical Officer, to advise on buildings in relation to air space, ventilation, sanitation, and light, but he was not charged with the duty of examining the ordinary children.

This important initial step in Bradford has been noted as an indication that the stage was, in that respect at least, well set for her.

The Labour Party, ever on the look out, perceived an opportunity to win a seat in the East Ward at the 1894 election of members of the School Board.

Margaret had given a series of four lectures on literary subjects at the Labour Church, which greatly moved her audiences. At the conclusion of the last lecture, Mr. Moscovitch, Chairman of the East Ward of the Labour Party, suggested, to the general satisfaction of his colleagues, that she should be their candidate. She agreed, was nominated, and duly elected, by very few votes, lowest of the successful candidates.

On the evening of the election day she went to Bowling Back Lane Club to see her constituents. They were all very much depressed because, as one comrade said,

"It was too bad to have only one out of three elected, and," looking at her contemptuously, "*her* only a woman. That 's all we 've got."

"You don't even know the history of the Board," said a Liberal lady, sighing. "You must read up the Blue Books," cried another. But there were more cheering voices. "You 'll do champion, Margaret," cried a weaver comrade.

If she knew little about the administration of schools she had a definite point of view concerning children, as her appeal "To all overworked Mothers," published in the *Clarion* the previous 29th September, had shown.

Why, you have only to show the little one that he lives in a fluent moving world, where everything moves and strives—that air and water are his best friends (you had better show him what happens when he breathes, and when he washes); that there is a Force keeping the particles of his spoon together; that there is another Force keeping his stool on the floor; that the stars and the big world move in solemn rhythm; that the winds have a path; and the light makes a long journey; and he will begin to live reverently as well as joyously. It will be very difficult for him to become a brute or a snob in later years. He will probably never bore people by his bigotry or vex them by his cynicism, or bring them to despair by his self-conceit. It will be difficult because what we learn from loving lips is knowledge that is vital. It will be difficult

because the great *truths* we learn in childhood are the truths we live by always. It will be difficult because even these few truths I have stated suggest the whole problem and mystery of life.

It is of importance to note that the Fabian Society had reissued in 1894 tract No. 25, *Questions for School Board Candidates*, in preparation for the School Board elections.[1] This pamphlet, which represented the most advanced thought of the time on local government problems, contains no reference to the subjects on which, in her years at Bradford and after, Margaret McMillan laid such stress: "Air and water are his best friends," Ventilation and School Baths, Medical Inspection. But in the second edition, October 1894, there is to be found, in one respect, a notable advance. Question 23: "Power to be given to School Boards to provide a crêche for every infant school," was altered to "Power to be given to School Boards to provide skilled nurses to visit the school."

The first meeting of the School Board Margaret attended was on 6th December, 1894. She was put on the School Attendance, Education and School Management Committees.

[1] The work of Mr. Sidney Webb (Lord Passfield). *History of the Fabian Society*, by E. R. Pease.

At once the children called her. She saw

that the half-timers slept, exhausted at their desks, and still from streets and alleys children attended school in every stage and state of physical misery.

The recollection of her own voice-training was fresh in her mind.

Many children had adenoids, the majority breathed incorrectly, noses were often running problems, teachers used their voices incorrectly.

To help to remedy this she persuaded the Board to let her bring the widow of Emil Behnke, her own teacher, to Bradford on twelve occasions to examine young teachers' throats, to note defective speech, and generally to call attention to defects and suggest remedies.

She herself continued to give lessons and advice.

Continued action resulted, in May 1898, in the appointment of Miss Rita Burnaby to teach voice-production in the junior teachers' central classes. As a result of this it was reported that the teachers "had gained considerably in lung capacity and chest measurement." Moreover, Mr. Walter Palliser, accompanied by Miss Esther Palliser, the well-known soprano, paid special visits and expressed their delight "at the singing of the

scholars, and the ease with which the tone was produced."[1]

On every possible occasion, in addition to the use of the human voice, she insisted on the wide use of colour and the training of the eye to see it. Her passion for colour was both insistent and persistent. In Bradford days it brightened her meagre apartments, and solaced her in hours of depression.

The opportunity for constructive work was not long delayed. There came a day when Margaret visited a school called Wapping in the Bolton Road. By some chance a little old swimming bath was there. This the children played in when opportunity afforded. It was there she became horrified at their dirtiness.

> The condition was indescribable [she said]. At the first bathing centre the children had to stand on large sheets of paper while they were being undressed.[2]

The caretaker used to burn clothes when, as sometimes happened, fresh ones were provided. This experience led to her unceasing agitation for the provision of school baths.

She regularized the use of the primitive

[1] *Triennial Report of the Bradford School Board*, 1897.

[2] Quoted from *Fundamentals of School Health*, by Dr. James Kerr, p. 640.

facilities at Wapping, and made it a real and vital educational proceeding.

I saw the Wapping children to-day in the baths [she writes on 29th November, 1898]. "O teacher," said one to me who had made a huge volume of water look like ink, "I 'm so happy I wish I might never come out."

This was six months after she had won her first victory, after three years' fighting, over those who preferred to leave children dirty, refused to see the educational value of ordered cleansing, and who, rather than sacrifice their prejudices or theories of public responsibility, satisfied their consciences by saying parents should send their children to school clean.

Then only by a majority of one — for baths seven: against baths six—the School Board, acting on a recommendation of the Sites and Buildings Committee, decided to erect baths at the Wapping Road School, at an estimated cost of £550 to £600,[1] as an experiment.

Dr. Kerr, in his capacity as the School Medical Officer, had stated in a report shortly before that

Considerable numbers of children attend school in

[1] "Tenders were accepted for £575 16s. 5d., but the entire cost has been £737 13s. 3d."—*Triennial Report of Bradford School Board*, 1897.

such a state of uncleanness, either personal or from dirty clothes, that they are objectionable to others.

Moreover, that children were often absent from school suffering from diseases due to filth.

Thus Margaret had unquestionable support.

"I believe that all children are by nature clean," was the first article in her Education Creed. "How can you educate a dirty child?" she asked passionately.

In her fight she brought a whole armoury of universal practice to support the advance. Romans, Easterns, Jews, were all cited in support, but not, alas, "modern Christians."

Yet:

All children—especially English children, love the water. And as joy is the best stimulant, the exercise they take in the bath is taken under favourable circumstances.—*Early Childhood*, page 85.

She could leave to Dr. Kerr the medical and scientific arguments. Hers was the vision of lovely children, sweet and clean, "white as lilies," and she knew, Séguin had taught her, "to educate through the senses." How could the senses function in an unclean body?

The baths—a small swimming bath, with about a dozen slipper baths and dressing boxes —turned out to be a marked success. They kept the children healthy. Before Margaret

left, Bradford decided to add baths to the Feversham Street School—and at least one election was fought and won over the baths issue at another school, Green Lane.

The Green Lane baths were opened on 23rd July, 1903. It was said then that the Wapping baths "had raised the people morally." Children were brighter and showed greater receptivity.

There is a note of undoubted triumph in her letter to Miss Llewellyn Davies, then Secretary of the Women's Co-operative Guild, on 17th May, 1900.

When you come to Bradford come and see me. We are trying to go on and just now negotiating for land on which to build a bath for the Feversham children. And Miss Esther Palliser is coming to lecture to us. But our pupil teachers have done badly in examinations this year. We interrupted them with new orders of things: a certain member severely said it was all along of my "restlessness." What do you think of that?

It was on 11th July, 1903, that the Feversham Street baths were opened. Margaret returned to Bradford in triumph to perform the ceremony. Of course she had a golden key. The Infants' mistresses added a golden chain.

It was an occasion which appealed to her greatly. Her excitement was so great that, speaking from the edge of the bath, she was

in such obvious danger of stepping into it that the chairman felt bound to restrain her.

The provision of school baths has not been undertaken to any great extent in England. This is perplexing, if not astonishing, since their use has been wholly beneficial. In towns there are, of course, public swimming baths, but, useful as they are, they are not and cannot be a substitute for the school bath, which can be used as an instrument of education. There are admittedly difficulties in the country schools, but, in the very few places where they have been overcome, the baths have been of the utmost use, and parents are ready and willing to make small payments.

Margaret McMillan's influence in promoting the cleanliness of the most heavily-handicapped children of the poor, whether in town or country, is obvious in every report which has been made in recent years on the health and condition of school children.

Medical Inspection. The experience gained in her work for the construction of school baths led Margaret directly to the idea of medical inspection. To the lasting benefit, not only of the children of Bradford, but of Great Britain and beyond, Dr. James Kerr had not only the authority but the desire and the capacity to undertake the first recorded

medical inspection of elementary school children in England.

It was at the Usher Street schools, and took three days. Margaret never missed a minute of it. She sat on a chair and gave such counsel and advice as was fitting, especially in cases of deafness, of which she had her own childhood's experience. In all 285 girls were examined. Dr. Kerr's severely professional report was as follows:

Some half-dozen years ago I examined in detail 285 girls of an elementary school; it was the first attempt made in this country to assess the average condition of school children, and was in one of the poorest schools in the West Riding. Of these 285 girls, between the ages of six and thirteen, forty-two said that they had no fathers, and twenty-one said that they had no mothers, yet I only found four to be seriously affected in any way of ill-nutrition, while sixty-five were described as only fairly nourished, and the conclusion arrived at was: "Speaking generally, there were fewer exceedingly bad cases of dirty or neglected children, but even taking the very low standards of cleanliness and health which were adopted, there were more dirty though not exceedingly dirty, and more ill-nourished though not actually diseased children, than had been expected." [1]

[1] From Memorandum by Dr. James Kerr to Inter-departmental Committee on Medical Inspection and Feeding of School Children attending Public Elementary Schools, 1905.—Cd. 2779.

This inspection was followed by a public meeting. It commenced at 2 p.m. on a Saturday, and was only closed with the day. Edwin Halford, Chairman of the Guardians, presided, whilst the chief speakers were Dr. Kerr, F. W. Jowett and Margaret herself.

She made the people of Bradford see that far too many children were grievously afflicted and in such a state that reasonable education was impossible for them. At the same time she showed that the greater number of their afflictions were not irremediable.

People's consciences were awakened and to no small effect, but the battle for medical inspection and treatment could not then be joined.

HALF-TIME. At this period Margaret was brought up against the "half-time" problem.

> The Half-Timers' school is a forlorn Hope—or, at best, it is a place where Hope becomes so very moderate that Ambition dies.

She divided them into classes, the "very bright" and the dull. The former were children of eleven who passed their standards early, and got half-time exemption in consequence. The latter, unable to pass their standards, began work at twelve.

The period of human education [she said] ends when the child enters the mills.

There were 4,134 half-timers in Bradford in 1894. It often meant, and she knew it, one session at school and the rest of the day at work. On 23rd January, 1894, she voted for a motion brought before the School Board that standard-three children should not be granted half-time exemption, as was then the case, but only standard-four and upwards.

On 9th April, 1895, she led a deputation to Mr. Asquith, and struck the first powerful blow at half-time, which was finally abolished by the Education Act of 1918.

The deputation simply asked that the limit of age for the employment of half-timers in factories should be raised from eleven to twelve years.

I shall be glad [said Mr. Asquith] if we are able to make the small instalment you ask for. It is nothing much towards the reform on which your hearts are set.

Feeding of School Children.—Margaret never tired of arguing that it was wasting money to try to educate a hungry, let alone a starving, child.

The State compels the children to work (in school)—it makes the demand for sustenance urgent, intolerable.

But it does not compel parents to feed their children. Hence it is certain to some of these hungry little ones free education is less of a boon than an outrage.

Here, for example, is a group of very hopeful children. They have known what hunger is all their lives, but never have they been so hungry as now. When they were little they used to get scraps of food, and now and again a good meal, and this was enough to allow them to live a free, careless life in the fields or alleys. But at last the School Board officer got on their track. They were led into a big school, and obliged to read, write, sing, calculate. Not one of these processes but involves a quickening of all the life processes, a new expenditure at a definite rate of nervous energy and living tissue. Lo! at noon all the children are ravenously hungry. The thought that dinner is a movable feast—that there is no dinner to be had—is now a dreadful one! Yesterday's hunger is a mild thing compared with to-day's.

The argument is convincing, if you make demands on a child you must see that he is in fit condition to respond to them. The ill-nourished child must everywhere be sought out, where parents can pay they must, but the child must not suffer.

In addition to her public advocacy she co-operated with Mr. R. Blatchford in the work of the Cinderella Club and it was largely due to her efforts that the Education (Provision

of Meals) Act was in 1906 placed on the Statute Book, and the question of meals for needy school children finally settled.

The story has been well told by Mr. J. H. Palin, in his pamphlet *How Bradford feeds its School Children* (I.L.P. Publication Dept., 1906). The width of the appeal made may be measured from the fact that all ranks of society joined in the Cinderella Club at Bradford for the purpose of systematically feeding and clothing the needy children of the slums. It is also evidence that the appeals which Margaret made were listened to and acted upon, outside the immediate area of Labour influence.

VENTILATION. At the outset of her work in the schools she was much troubled by the bad ventilation of the schoolrooms. She consequently fought vigorously for the adoption of methods to secure pure clean air.

Her efforts to develop voice-production were heavily handicapped. As she explains in an essay published in *Forecasts of the Coming Century*,[1] for children to get the best advantage of the lessons, they had to learn how to breathe rightly, and that meant that they must have pure air. Opening the windows proved of little use. So she insisted on the provision of mechanical means for ensuring currents of

[1] Edited by Edward Carpenter, 1897.

pure air, which would not cause draughts or unduly lower the temperature.

In an article printed in the *Labour Echo* (3rd April, 1897) she spread her net wide, invoking common sense, science, the habits of bees, the tragic story of the Black Hole of Calcutta, and the opinions of many doctors.

She made the question a test one on the occasion of the School Board elections of November 1897.

The chief points in her manifesto were:

Loss of health and teaching power lies in the foul air of class rooms and assembly halls.

The loss per head in teachers' salaries in naturally ventilated schools is 23s.

In mechanically ventilated schools it is only 18s. per head.

Add to this that the school attendance grant is larger in mechanically ventilated schools than in others, and you will see that the cost of mechanical ventilation is not so great as it appears.

This experience led her directly to the advocacy of Open-Air Schools, which she persisted in both by word and constructive action throughout her later life.

She compiled leaflets for parents, which the School Board issued. "Written in such a simple manner," affirms the local press of one of them, "that there can be no possible excuse

for neglecting it." One of them was adopted in other Yorkshire towns, and copied widely in Germany. It deals with infectious diseases, and contains admirably compiled instructions as to means of preserving general cleanliness, treatment of the hair, teeth and nails, fresh air, and sleep.

The following significant sentences occur. Margaret, passionate as she was for school training, was, then and throughout her life, insistent on parental responsibility.

> Only the mother's care can ensure a child having good white teeth and the sweet breath that goes with a clean mouth. These few hints may be quite unnecessary to many, but no mother can object to their publication, because dirt and disease germs are our greatest enemies, and kill many children, whilst they leave others weakened or maimed for life. There is only one sure way of fighting these enemies, and that is by cleanliness. The condition and habits of a child depend mainly upon its mother.

Her methods must at times have been startling, not to say disconcerting. Two examples will suffice.

She and two colleagues went on a deputation to Glasgow to inspect baths. On the return journey she asked if they would support her if she pressed the matter of school baths for Bradford. They said they would. She then

tore a page from her notebook, wrote on it: "I promise to support Miss McMillan when she raises the question of school baths," and asked them to sign it, which they did. By the time the matter was brought up one of them had left the Board, but the other voted against the resolution. Miss McMillan then handed the slip of paper to the chairman and requested him to ask . . . if that was his signature. "Yes, it is. Good afternoon, gentlemen," was his reply.

Margaret was known among the school caretakers as the "caretakers' friend." There are constant references in the School Board Minutes to the wages of caretakers. On one occasion this matter had been raised, and the secretary to the Board had been instructed to get information from other authorities of the wages paid. The caretakers were refused this information (which had been circulated to members of the Board) and therefore went to Margaret, who supplied it. They were thus able to present a full statement of their case, citing as evidence the information that—with the exception of Hull—the rates were lower at Bradford than elsewhere. The secretary complained that either one of its clerks or some member of the Board was guilty of a breach of confidence. Margaret said that she wished

no suspicion to rest on any clerk or any member of the Board—it was she who had given the information, as she felt entitled to do. The caretakers got their rise.

The period of her work in Bradford drew to a close. The year 1902 was for her in reality one of breakdown. Her mind and body could not stand the strain of unceasing labour any longer. They would have given way before had it not been for the re-creating power of her spiritual impulses. Moreover, we cannot doubt that, "having set the ball rolling," as Mr. Halford said, "she wished to get to the centre of things in London," and to live once more with Rachel, then living at Bromley as a teacher of Hygiene under the Kent County Council.

The members of the School Board, the majority of whom were not members of the Labour Party, were anxious that she should not give up her seat. The Chairman accordingly wrote to Rachel saying that he would move that leave of absence should be granted to Margaret to cover the period of her long illness. His letter ends with an expression of strong desire for her early recovery on behalf not only of himself, but of his wife and children, together with hosts of friends. It is clear that she was regarded with no common affection.

Leave of absence did not suffice. Her resignation was inevitable. On 8th October, 1902, she attended her last meeting.

My last visit for the Bradford children [as she terms it] was on 4th November, 1902, to meet, for the School Board, the Yorkshire Ladies Council of Education, respecting a Training Course for the advanced Froebel Certificate.

She delivered her last lecture on the "Child as artist" to the Bradford Branch of the Froebel Society on 5th November.

Members of other parties than her own vied with one another in genuine tributes.

The Chairman (W. Claridge) said on her retirement:

She was a pioneer whose influence had been greatly felt in the city. Her ideals were far in advance of the current education of the day. She did not look upon the educational question through ordinary spectacles, but had the power of grasping the inwardness of educational problems, and had been a theorist, whose views had been adopted with marked success.

She had introduced free arm and ambidexterous drawing, and lessons in voice production, colour perception, etc.

Never a member of the Board had taken the interest she had done in the physical development of the children.

Of all those who opposed her, the Roman Catholics were most consistent in their opposition. This makes the letter she received from the Rev. Matthew Gosse on her retirement the more impressive.

He wrote on 19th November, 1902:

I was too grieved to say anything. Though differing fundamentally in the line of action which it was your duty to take up, I always felt that when in opposition to you, such opposition would not be misunderstood nor alter the cordial relations which ever existed between us. In conversation with you I always felt perfectly at home, and could always be natural. I always considered it a piece of good fortune for the society you represented that they were able to secure the prestige which your well-known abilities and cultivated character brought them.

On 24th June, 1915, a further compliment was paid her which she particularly valued, as a proof of continuing friendship.

Mr. Coffin, the Director of Education, wrote to inform her that a new Central School for Mentally Defective Children had been opened at Thackley. The Committee desired to record their appreciation of her service to education in general, and of her work for afflicted children in particular, by naming the school the "Margaret McMillan School."

The importance of the work of Margaret

McMillan in Bradford lies in the fact that it has influenced profoundly education in England.

She entered the city as a political propagandist, knowing little of the technique and administration of schools, but she left it as one who had taken in her course, not merely pioneer, but constructive action in regard to care of children in and through education.

> Many of her ideas [writes Mr. Rhondda Williams], despised and rejected of men, have now become corner stones of the educational edifice.

As a result of her Bradford experience she came to realize more completely the supreme needs of children, and consequently devoted to them much of the time and strength she had hitherto expended on "grown-ups."

It marks a distinct stage in her career.

Most important of all was the creation, for it was no less, of the systematic Medical Inspection and Treatment of the school child.[1]

No one who has read *The Health of the School Child*, being "The Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education for the year 1930," can doubt that as the

[1] In making this high claim it must not be forgotten that in some form or other School Medical Inspection had received attention notably by Dr. Priestly Smith of Birmingham, and Dr. Clement Dukes of Rugby, but the Bradford action is the most outstanding.

result of this effort of hers, nobly assisted by Dr. Kerr, Medical Superintendent to the Bradford School Board, the children of England have been lifted to a higher plane of physical health and mental power.

She herself in one of those periods of depression common to her wrote that she regarded her work as having largely failed to effect the desired reforms, but her aim was high, and she was ever in the fight against apathy and indifference. It must be left to those who see her work whole, and in a detached manner, to pronounce upon it. Her work and influence are not complete. They are moving things in the right direction. The judgment must be not on things as they are, but on what they are becoming.

She worked unceasingly with, as Dr. Kerr said,

> an insatiable curiosity and entire disregard of self, sublimating all her energies on the children, and, although without scientific training, with the possession in her subconsciousness of a very clear realization of ultimate truths.

The flame of her spirit lit fires in Bradford which were never put out.

She led, they all admit it, a fine group of men and women, ranged largely under the Socialist banner, to real and positive constructive efforts to bring life, especially the life of children,

into harmony with the best Christian desire for it.

In a sense she transcended party, because she dealt with fundamental things. Her victories were only achieved by the help of men and women of all parties.

Bradford became, under her influence, an educational "Mecca." If we may accept the testimony of Sir George Kekewich (Permanent Secretary of the Board of Education, 1890–1902), Bradford so beset the Board of Education with new problems and instances of doubtful expenditure that "during the whole of the past eight years it had been in bad odour with the Board of Education." He considered that such activity "did Bradford great credit."

Directly after Margaret McMillan had left, through ill-health, for London in 1902, and Dr. Kerr had moved earlier in the same year to take office under the London School Board, the men and women she inspired and indeed taught, together with Dr. Ralph Crowley, the new Medical Officer, continued the work, and made successive notable contributions, until Bradford became less conspicuous owing to the adoption of its methods and practice in other progressive towns. Even so Margaret's direct influence can be easily traced in the attitude and actions of the Bradford Education Committee to this day.

CHAPTER III

LONDON: WORK FOR PROGRESSIVE CAUSES

London friends—Lectures for the Union of Ethical Societies—*Education through the Imagination*—The Women's Suffrage Movement—The silent protest—Mr. Joseph Fels offers £5,000 to the L.C.C. for a school health centre—Rejection of the plan by the L.C.C.—The continued help of Mr. Joseph Fels.

On leaving Bradford Margaret joined Rachel. The sisters lived and worked together until 25th March, 1917, when Rachel, overstrained and suffering from the shock of air raids, died. The London period thus divides naturally into two parts: 1902–17, with Rachel; and 1917–31, alone.

For six years, 1902–8, Margaret fought strenuously for progressive causes—as politician, lecturer, and writer—but most powerfully and successfully for the medical inspection and treatment of school children. Then begins the period of her constructive work, resulting notably in the Children's Clinic at Bow, followed by the Clinic, Camp Schools, Open-Air Nursery School and Training College at Deptford.

Throughout the whole period she went untiringly over the country, the ready servant of all, visited the Continent frequently, and America twice. Her importance became world-wide.

Of course there was a group of London friends to receive her. In the little room of 51 Tweedy Road, Bromley, they sometimes came together, Rachel busy with tea, Margaret anxious to reconcile what were often explosive opposites. I remember speaking with pride of our newly founded classes for working men and women to Prince Kropotkin, and his tearing them to shreds. His contempt of their study of Economics was cutting. They should learn about the Universe, and their place in it, he said. Then there was Joseph Fels, soap manufacturer of Philadelphia, keen single taxer, delightfully friendly, scenting with the concentration of a detective any one likely to promote the operation of the principles of Henry George; the Lansburys, a devoted couple; Margaret Llewellyn Davies, promoting women's suffrage; the Stanton Coits, leading the Ethical Movement; and the Countess of Warwick, ready to encourage any democratic adventure. In reality it was a "salon."

Yet, in spite of it all, Margaret and Rachel were, or soon became, strange, aloof figures.

It was probably due to complete absorption in work, perhaps to some extent to the mothering and protecting personality of Rachel. In any case, by 1917 they were alone.

> We went on alone. And strange to say never was our work so strenuous, never our path so straight and clear as now, when the joy of comradeship was lost for ever.

After 1917 the shock of Rachel's death gradually sublimated into worship of her. It was in reality with added power that Margaret drew to herself, or rather to her work, some of the finest men and women of her time. Yet, in her desire to honour Rachel, she lost much of the independent reticence which had previously characterized her. But of that period it will be better to speak later.

In January 1903 she began to lecture for the Union of Ethical Societies. Her chief course was "Education through the Imagination," ten lectures delivered at 19 Buckingham Street, Strand. The journal *Ethics* reported that:

> Miss Margaret McMillan's lectures are most acceptable at all our ethical centres in London, the attendances at them are an easy first.

This course resulted in perhaps the most notable of her books: *Education through the*

Imagination, published in 1904. In a later introduction (1923) Mr. John Lewis Paton, then High Master of Manchester Grammar School, wrote:

> To those in the home or the school who cherish the forward look I commend as their companion instead of bitterness and complaining, this book of hope and endeavour. It is mystic and it is practical—practical because it is begotten of experience and mystic because that experience has been linked on from the first to the great unseen forces which supply and support all life with vision and power.

She continued, more or less, her work with the Ethical Society, but it ceased in 1914, or thereabouts, owing to the increasing claims of her direct work for the children. In a regularly meeting circle of ethical enthusiasts, including J. Ramsay MacDonald, Harry (now Lord) Snell, S. K. Ratcliffe and, of course, the Stanton Coits, she was a prominent and leading figure.

This work led her straight into the Suffrage Movement. Dr. Stanton Coit had proposed "The Silent Protest." She gave her support. In a letter to the *Daily Herald*, 11th February, 1913, she said, appealing to women to attend the Abbey or other places of worship during Lent:

They will take part in the service, without disturbance; but their presence will mean a protest against the irreligious and unjust treatment now meted out to women by this Government—treatment so contrary to the spirit and the teaching of the Founder of Christianity, Himself the greatest enemy of false peace and cowardly domination.

Shortly before this the Bayswater Ethical Church had urged in a manifesto that a group of women should take it upon themselves to induce Margaret to postpone her work for the health of school children until women were granted the vote.

This was asking the impossible, probably it was not meant literally, but a few months later Margaret had to give up all work for a time. On a beautiful day in July she joined a deputation led by her friend, Sir Victor Horsley, to the House of Commons, for the purpose of urging the repeal of what was facetiously known as the "Cat and Mouse" Act. It will be remembered that women refused to take food in prison, and were consequently released because of their physical condition. On their recovery they were again imprisoned. A huge crowd had gathered which the police attempted to disperse. In the confusion Margaret, peacefully waiting,

was thrown down and trampled on. As she naïvely puts it:

> There was a big meeting that night, at which I was to speak, but, of course, I did not speak at that meeting, nor at any other for weeks.

Naturally enough, Rachel's indignation was beyond bounds. She entered into a resentful correspondence with Ministers, but secured little satisfaction beyond a testimony from Mr. Illingworth[1] to the ability and charm of Margaret, whom he had known on the Bradford School Board.

The generous sympathy of friends, however, did not fail her—the Wedgwoods and the Stanton Coits offered their houses, and the *Christian Commonwealth* gave full vent to widespread indignation. In the result, the cause benefited. A notable peaceful suffragist had been injured in its behalf.

A year later the Great War silenced the dispute and, partly as a result of the services rendered by women to the nation at a time of overwhelming need, the vote was granted to them. The Suffrage Movement was but an interlude in Margaret's life. It appealed to her, but the whole current of her thought and activity flowed in the way of helping children.

[1] Now Lord Illingworth.

Anything she did, whether political or social, had the children as the one and only objective. No one entered more completely into the rising movement for Adult Education. Quite apart from her own native interest in it, she saw clearly that the education of adults and the education of children were dependent the one upon the other.

Her positive work made a new start when she conceived in 1904 a new type of Health Centre. She "wanted to make the whole scheme preventive. Bathrooms which should be classrooms; treatment for adenoids; new methods of speech-training and singing; training in the oral subjects." Mr. Joseph Fels, who had discovered in her, at Bradford, "a personality with views and ideals of unlimited importance for the well-being of the future generation," readily proffered his personal and financial help. "Look here, something to help poor children? Health Centre, eh? Start at once. I 'll give you £5,000." So generous an offer was, from him, a great tribute, for he had consecrated his life and fortune to securing the adoption of the Single Tax proposals of Henry George. Margaret was always anxious to work with the statutory bodies, for therein she perceived the conditions of permanence, and it was their operations she wished to affect;

so she induced Mr. Fels to offer, in May 1904, both money and scheme to the L.C.C.

After much delay the whole plan was rejected. Margaret could never understand why. The building of two school baths, which the L.C.C. proposed as a substitute, did not appeal to Mr. Fels as a reasonable return for his money. "As very often happened when Joseph was present," writes Mrs. Fels, "the interview with the L.C.C. became somewhat stormy." He never again offered £5,000, but he gave Margaret from the starting of the Bow Clinic in 1908 until his death in 1914 altogether some £1,600, without which she would have been greatly handicapped.

During those years it was mainly the resources of the sisters, their own expenses cut to the bone, together with Mr. Fels' contributions which kept things going. Moreover, the intrepid little man was always ready for any adventure on their behalf, particularly if it was to help them to secure land. He hated to see any plot unutilized, and had formed the "Vacant Land Cultivation Society."

The death of Mr. Fels in 1914 was a great blow. Margaret was bereft of a friend, and the work had lost its chief benefactor.

CHAPTER IV

MEDICAL INSPECTION AND TREATMENT: WORK WITH SIR ROBERT MORANT

Fight for medical inspection and treatment of school children—The final victory—Sir Robert Morant at the Board of Education—His attitude to the physical condition of scholars and teachers—The first annual report of the Medical Department of the Board of Education—Grants for approved schemes of treatment based on inspection—The Holmes-Morant circular—Margaret's defence of the Board of Education—Sir Robert's appointment as Chairman of the Insurance Commissioners — His continuing interest—His death in 1920.

MARGARET, during the first years of her life in London, never ceased to press for the Medical Inspection of School Children. In deciding to leave Bradford, the fact that she could work for this reform more effectively in London, must have had great weight. She bombarded the Press, pleaded wherever she could get an audience. "Get a Medical Department," "Sweep out disease," "Enrich teaching by a new influx of knowledge of a physiological kind."

Dr. James Kerr had come to London as Medical Officer (Education) early in 1902. He had no doubt of the need.

Millions of children are robbed of their earliest days of happiness, underfed, badly housed, without space to run or play, badly clothed and without medical oversight, sometimes till death is in sight. This is the lot of the majority of pre-school children all the time and of many school children most of the time.[1]

Margaret and the doctors, notably Dr. Kerr and Dr. Archibald Hogarth, were reinforced by the emphatic recommendations of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration, 1904 (Cd. 2175). Ultimately Mr. Birrell, largely as the result of the efforts of Dr. Hogarth outside Parliament, and Russell Rea, M.P. for Scarborough, inside, accepted an amending clause to his Bill of 1906 providing for compulsory Medical Inspection. The Bill was thrown out by the House of Lords, but the battle was won. It was the biggest victory in which Margaret had ever shared. Without her it might easily have been defeat. As a matter of course the clause was ultimately included in the Education Administrative Provisions Act of 1907, and power was given to Local Education Authorities to provide treatment. In 1918 the provision of treatment was imposed as a duty on such authorities. This brief outline is essential to an understanding of Margaret's work in London.

[1] *The Fundamentals of School Health*, p. 632.

One of the happiest pages in the life of Margaret McMillan is the record of the confidence and trust reposed in her by Sir Robert Morant, the Permanent Secretary of the Board of Education, not only in relation to the authorization and initiation of Medical Inspection and Treatment, but in consequent work at Bow and Deptford.

Sir Robert was a truly great man, supreme in his time as a civil servant, with unique powers of constructive administration. At the Board of Education he revealed himself as a veritable driving force. The result was revolution in its methods. It is generally admitted that he was the author of the Education Act of 1902. That Act, like himself, had its defects, and the defects made enemies, but his prophetic power transcended apparent injustices, just as the main stream of the Act ultimately swept past even the grievances of passive resisters.

Sir Robert had an eye for genuine educational enthusiasts, and came whole-heartedly to their aid. Whenever he was able he made their cause his own, taking incredible pains to advise them, and putting them into right relationship with the Board of Education.

He saw Margaret McMillan for what she was, and he helped her with all his power, criticized, guided, and admitted her to a rich

friendship. His letters she treasured. They help us now. They reveal a large-hearted, kindly man. It is not clear how and when he became convinced not only of the justice, but of the necessity of Medical Inspection, but he wrote on 26th June, 1907:

> For myself I have for some time past come to feel that for the good of the children and the people, what subjects are taught and how they are taught *do not matter anything like so much* nowadays as attention (*a*) to the *physical* condition of the scholars and of the teacher, and (*b*) to the physiological aspect of school. I think I lay more emphasis in my own mind on the *Preventive* side of this quasi-medical aspect of sociology than you do: and that you are thinking more immediately or more predominantly of the Therapeutic Remedial side. But between us we shall do something I am sure if we can avoid raising public hubbub against our efforts, and I have found it an immense help to have had a talk with you. I trust we may have many more together.

He consulted her at every step, so far as he was at liberty to do so having regard to his position and responsibility.

In a way which few people at the time realized, he sought to meet the keen supporters of this, and indeed any other, important movement. Mr. Archibald Ramage recalls a tiny meeting of the I.L.P., which Margaret

was to address, held at Clifford's Inn in 1907, with Keir Hardie in the Chair. There bustled into it the tall burly figure of Sir Robert. Since it was a private meeting, he said, it was possible for him to give his fullest blessing to the projects of Miss McMillan for the physical welfare of school children.

Of course Margaret pressed for the provision of clinics. She knew as every one else did ultimately that treatment was the unavoidable consequence of inspection. It became statutory in 1918.

On 12th April, 1910, Sir Robert had to explain:

As regards treatment, as distinct from inspection, we are compelled to bear in mind that the Act speaks with quite a different voice—inspection being a compulsory duty, but treatment wholly optional to the Local Authority. Hence were we to attempt such a Circular as you suggest, making Clinics practically compulsory in certain areas, we should be met at once with the reply that we have no powers whatever under any Statutes to adopt any such attitude or to enforce such a view; and I am sure you would agree on consideration that nothing would be more unwise than for such a Department as this to be beaten, and rightly beaten, on such an issue; and that we ought only to say "must" when we can effectively enforce it. Apart from this, all that we can do is to exercise steady pressure for forward movements in suitable areas, and

thus gradually start a trend. And this we are doing as best we may. More than this would be a breach, on our part, of the duty entrusted to us by Parliament.

But meanwhile Medical Inspection was to be in full swing.

28th October, 1907.

I wanted to ask if you would come and see me for a good talk in Whitehall on the inauguration of Medical Inspection under the new Act, and help me by going through my draft circular with me, for I am very anxious to keep the zealous interest of those who care for this new development, so that we may get it started right, and that it shall neither hang fire nor get started on wrong or futile lines. Would it be asking too much to beg you to give me the benefit of your criticisms, and to have first, a good straight talk on the matter?

Then came the first Annual Report, initiating a series which have been of inestimable value to the nation. Margaret, writing in the *Life of Rachel McMillan*, says:

Two years later Sir Robert Morant sent us the first printed draft of the first copy of the first Medical Annual Report on School Children. We were at Maidenhead for Christmas. Rachel was pleased. She read his gentle and generous letter with shining eyes. People were dancing near by in the drawing room of "St. Ives." Christmas bells rang out "Ring out the old," they rang later "Ring in the new."

22nd December, 1909.

This is the *first* clean proof of the *first* Annual Report of the first *national* system of School Medical Inspection that this country has known: and I cannot resist giving myself the pleasure of sending it, in confidence, to yourself; for you are to me the person who has most signally and most effectively embodied, in a private individual, the best enthusiasm and the most warming faith both in the possibilities of medical inspection, and in the potentialities of a real honest preventive conscience in the State and in the people.

Much in it will seem to you belated; much in your view will be missing from it; but at least the volume will show you that through all the obloquy and the wrangling we have tried to do, and we have to *some* extent at least done, what I told you long ago at the Cobden Sandersons' that evening we *meant* to do; only we have had to do it more gradually and more slowly than *you* would have wished. I hope you will feel that you have helped to a thing which is some good.

P.S. Dr. Newman is a *splendid* man. He has worked like ten men and twenty women, always tactful, always persuasive. *His* is the credit. Please thank him for it.

In subsequent letters Sir Robert made it clear that he, in his place, was doing all he was able to secure public aid for treatment. In this he succeeded. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Lloyd George, announced in

Parliament that the Board of Education would have power to give grants to sound schemes based on Medical Inspection.

Then came a catastrophe. It was no less. A private circular, known as the "Holmes–Morant," became public in 1911. It asserted the superiority over others of university-trained men as Inspectors of Schools or Directors of Education. Margaret commented in the *Labour Leader* on 2nd June, 1911:

> The teachers for their part are in a state of indignation. They have been classed among the "uncultured," and are declared to be "victims of routine." Generally speaking if one is told one is "uncultivated" it is always well to believe it, to accept it, and to cast about for means of winning a higher culture. Simple acceptance has an awful effect on the accuser. It shows him to begin with that he is wrong.

She defended the Board of Education in no uncertain terms:

> To turn now to a matter which concerns us as members of the Labour Party. Socialists have very little reason to join in the outcry against the Board of Education, and its President. Within the last three years more has been done, and infinitely more begun, for the long-suffering children of the people than in the four decades that preceded them. "No thanks to the Board and President for that" is said on

all hands. Infinite thanks to them. They betray no all-seeing eye, and do not profess to do more than grope at present. Even the groping is a little wide at times. When all is said and done, however, the new Medical Reports from Whitehall show plainly to any unprejudiced mind the new and strong desire to grapple with a momentous question, to meet, at least, with open mind and strenuous endeavour a situation big with bewildering possibilities for the whole race. No! Our new rule is not the barren one of Rejection —but the fruitful one of Acceptance. Accept and acknowledge the new spirit or any breath of it—more especially in high places.

On 1st April, 1911, she wrote characteristically to Lady Morant:

Don't be vexed about the "error of judgment." Your husband is the best friend the children of poverty ever had at Whitehall. I have a right to say this, and I *will* say it just as often as I please.

I don't know the circumstances of this mere detail of administration, but I 'm quite sure Sir Robert acted for the best, and perhaps with better reasons than his opponents.

Don't be vexed. It 's nothing. No one who matters will join those who were waiting for any opportunity to condemn.

Come and see us soon. We have such nice curtains!

Whilst to a letter of 12th December, 1911,

to Sir Robert, there is a characteristic post-script:

You 're not disliked as much as you think. It 's all surface feeling—nearly. In Scotland you 're very much respected, and there is not any prejudice at all. I spoke in seven towns in eight days, and talked freely to people who know. This agitation *appears* what it is not. It is sectional and inspired by partizans. Besides, what did you say? What every one thinks. *Don't* be morbid, for mercy's sake.

The teachers however were not to be placated, or satisfied, until Sir Robert Morant retired from the Board of Education upon his appointment as Chairman of the Insurance Commissioners. He revealed his deep distress to her:

Tuesday, 2 a.m.

Please do not think that I have basely deserted what you care about. I 've not taken the Insurance Commission Chairmanship from choice. I would *rather* have stayed on at the B. of E., especially as we may now at last get some money wherewith to give a big stimulus to clinics. But I have increasingly found that the deep suspicions of me and misconceptions of me, and the widespread notion that I am a denominationalist and I don't know what else—have grown so strong that it prevents my President from being able to use me, and prevents me from being able to help him, and an atmosphere of distrust reigns which prevents

effective work. So I reluctantly realize that they can't wisely keep me much longer where I am. It has deeply distressed me that those for whom I truly have been loyally working should be the ones to make it impossible for me to do so! Thus when L. G. says: "I want your energy and strength and force to help push my Insce. Bill"—I cannot but obey the summons, as I am a Civil Servant, since (for the reasons I 've given to you above) I *can't* plead that I have a prior duty at the B. of E. since I 'm prevented from doing that duty by these monstrous misconceptions of me. Queer comedy, isn't it? To me a tragedy, to have to leave to the hand of (unknown) others the organization I 've built up in nine years loving toil. Can't be helped. I must just hope that I may have a little chance occasionally in my new chairmanship to bend the work under this amazing Insurance Bill into wise Public Health channels. . . . 'T is a queer world. Please don't think we at No. 4 care less for the clinics. My shift does not mean that. Little Margaret is knitting red woollen scarves for your bairns for Xmas.

Sir Robert's watchful interest in Clinics, and later in Nursery Schools, did not cease until his death in 1920. Always he cheered Margaret and when he could he sent her material help.

16th November, 1913.

Well, it is indeed good to read your report; to see how you keep steadily at the work; and to realize what it is doing, and what you and your staff are doing, not

merely in or for Deptford, but as exemplar for England. It is splendid; and, most of all, your persistence and patience. . . . How *splendid* of Miss Riddle to stand by the ship. But that is the result of the spirit in which you have had all the work done.

Margaret owed much to one of the greatest civil servants of modern times.

CHAPTER V

THE SCHOOL CLINIC AT BOW

Development of medical treatment in England—Dental clinic at Cambridge—General clinic at Bradford—Inception of the clinic at Bow—Conditions of the work—Judgment of the doctors—The closing of the clinic—Transference of the work to Deptford.

THE development of Medical Treatment for School Children has been a remarkable phenomenon of the last twenty years. At the close of 1908 there were only three recorded clinics in England, whereas on 31st December, 1930, there were 1,741 provided by Local Education Authorities. In addition, hospitals were widely used. In London alone 70 treatment centres, provided by voluntary bodies, and financed mainly by the L.C.C., were at work.

The beginnings of this movement, and especially the part played in it by Margaret McMillan, are, therefore, of the utmost importance.

General authority was given by the Board of Education in Circular 596, July 1908, which affirmed that School Clinics "may serve two

purposes. They may be used for further and more scientific examination of cases" than can be carried out in the ordinary way, and also, under specified conditions, for "the treatment of defects revealed by inspection." It will be remembered that whilst Inspection was compulsory, Treatment was permissive.

The Local Education Authority at Cambridge had taken a step prior to this. Encouraged by the bounty of Mr. Sedley Taylor, Fellow of Trinity, it had started a dental clinic in 1906, for which it secured recognition directly the Act was passed. Bradford, however, as might have been expected, was the first to establish a General School Clinic, coincidently almost with the issue of the Circular, to carry on an uninterrupted war with children's diseases and defects, the removal, or at least the decrease of which, was now seen to be a necessary condition of child education.

In London the pace was much slower, but Margaret McMillan's determination made progress possible. She gathered round her an admirable group, notably Joseph Fels, Clara Grant, Nurse Pearce, and the visiting doctors, M. D. Eder and R. Tribe. It commenced on 8th December, 1908, with the establishment of a clinic. Since this served

only one school the individual costs were too high for general adoption. Consequently Margaret partially closed the clinic on 7th June, 1910, having secured the opportunity at Deptford of dealing with children from a group of schools.

The "Committee for the Physical Welfare of Children" undertook all the clerical work of organization, Miss Grant, the headmistress of the Infant School, gave untiring assistance. The L.C.C., without taking any responsibility, helped in various ways.

Miss Grant gave up her private room for the clinic, which the L.C.C. rented to the Committee at one shilling a year. By arrangement with the L.C.C. the medical officers of the clinic were not to treat any children who had not previously been medically inspected by one of the Council's medical officers, nor to carry out any operations on the school premises. Dr. Kerr, the Council's Medical Officer, and Mr. Tyrell, the Medical Inspector, gave unstinted assistance. After Mr. Tyrell had notified the names of children requiring treatment, a circular was sent round to the parents advising treatment, but absolving the Council of responsibility.

In every case the parents acted on the advice. Actual authority for the conduct of

the clinic lay in the hands of the "Independent Labour Party Committee for the Physical Welfare of School Children," a voluntary body, possessing no power to enter the school. Fortunately, a little later, the L.C.C. set up a local Children's Care Committee, and appointed Nurse Pearce to it. Thus she was able in her capacity as a member to enter the school, and was regarded as an essential part of the staff. She attended on every occasion, and received directions for the treatment of each child.

In starting the clinic [writes Miss Grant] the Committee were obliged to select a school (*a*) which was poor, (*b*) where teachers were sympathetic, (*c*) where a room could be available, in this case the headmistress's room, (*d*) where a non-County Council nurse was available.

The clinic attracted much notice, but it will be more to our purpose to report the considered opinion of the doctors. In all 338 cases were treated, and 264 were cured or improved. Most of the cases were diseases of skin, eyes, or ears.

As an instance [reports Dr. Eder in a paper to the Third International Conference on School Hygiene, Paris] of the possibilities of a school clinic let me quote the case of one child: Ethel B., aged 8 years, suffering from Croupous Conjunctivitis for which she had been

attending the hospital for eight months receiving lotions and ointment. The nurse, treating the child daily with a solution of silver nitrate (10 gr. to the ounce) cured her in a week. I have in mind another charming little girl, aged 5 years, who had been suffering for a long time with discharge from the ears; her external ears and face were covered with patches of eczema set up by the discharge. Her teacher described the child as sullen. She had had intermittent syringing for a long time without effect, and the mother had given it up in despair. Assiduous syringing by nurse was carried on for ten weeks, once a week chromic acid was applied, and then glycerine of tannic acid. A complete cure was the result. There is no discharge, no eczema, no sullenness.

All the teachers gave us gratifying accounts of improvements in the children's habits, manners, and school work who had been treated.

Nor was the work without general effect upon the whole school. The first batch of cases we had, whatever else was the matter with them, were certain to have verminous heads. Through nurse and mother we got rid of this trouble, now the school is a clean one, there was not a child with a verminous head last June (1910) in the school.

Dr. Tribe (now the Rev. Father Tribe, Director of the Society of the Sacred Mission, Kelham) wrote on 17th May, 1931:

When we started work in the school clinic at Devons Road we had nothing to guide us, but only the

consciousness of an enormous amount of untended disease amongst school children, and a passion to do something to cure it, as far as we could.

Dr. Eder and I took an afternoon a week each. I, being a general practitioner among the comfortable classes, was anxious to do the same sort of thing for poor children as I was doing for the well-to-do; watch over the general health of the difficult children, deal with defects, and advise so as to prevent disease. I may add that the doctors were paid for their work at standard rates.

We weighed delicate children week by week, we attended to chronic sepsis in its various forms, and we investigated closely those who were sent along by the teachers as backward or obviously ailing. There was no outfit for attending to eyes or teeth, and we did not attempt to deal with cases needing operation, for it was felt that we had to go cautiously; so we sent these cases on to hospital.

I think we left a permanent effect of improved health upon a few children—but only on a few. The work was really intensive, as we were practically dealing with only one school, though a few from a neighbouring school came in later. *Miss McMillan, with her big vision and her practical genius sized up the situation in a few months. What was wanted was a bigger and more ambitious scheme. It needed a centre to serve several schools, and, above all, it required means for dealing with eyes, teeth, and operation cases. So the whole scheme was transferred to Deptford, and started upon these larger lines.*

The experience gained at Bow proved to be of the utmost value in the succeeding years. It gave to Margaret McMillan the power to demonstrate, beyond a shadow of doubt, the overwhelming need for treatment. It was a necessary prelude to the taking of a right attitude towards the possibilities of hospitals, and to the construction of clinics in which the cost of individual treatment was such that the Local Education Authorities could not only approve but provide.

CHAPTER VI

ACHIEVEMENT IN DEPTFORD

Importance of the Deptford period—Influence of Rachel McMillan—Support of devoted colleagues—Her vision of Deptford—A garden of children—The fateful years in child life—Expression of her desire for child life—Physical and mental education in the power of the Spirit.

THE Deptford period of Margaret McMillan's life is by far the most important. There she fulfilled her prophecies by courageous and deliberate constructive achievement.

The Dental and General Health Clinics, the Open-Air Nursery School, the Camp School, and the Training College, have each in their degree and place demonstrated the practicability and the far-reaching power of her conceptions of education.

Dr. Arnold Gesell, of Yale University, says: "She wrought revolutionary changes in the health, happiness, and activities of children," whilst Dr. Kerr, in his Cockburn Memorial Lecture, 1930, states:

For me the greatest single contribution to practical education in our time has been the demonstration of

the Nursery School as the requirement of every child of civilization.

It was whilst at Deptford that Margaret became an international figure, affecting profoundly the conceptions and practice of the education of the pre-school child in many lands. The remarkable developments in the United States were largely inspired by her, and the Nursery Schools, at least, were guided by those she had either trained or who had sought her guidance.

Consequently it may be fitting at the outset to glance at the whole period, always remembering that from 1910 to 1917 she was accompanied by Rachel, and that from 1917 until her death in 1931 she worked alone. She ascribed to her sister all that was real in her work, both in conception and construction. She was always conscious of the presence of the living spirit of Rachel as the supreme source of her strength, yet no one was more consistently and loyally helped by those about her. Miss Stevinson led a group of able and devoted colleagues. Lady Astor both provided and secured finance. The officials of the L.C.C. and the Board of Education did their utmost. The Queen cheered her in dark hours, and honoured the days of triumph.

Margaret entered Deptford seeing, not

merely the hard-driven, overcrowded, sadly hindered populace, but the heroes of the past. The naval men of years long past still trod boldly for her along the time-honoured streets, lined with houses, the glory of which, time and misuse have not wholly obliterated.

In her mind's eye she conjured up the beauties of Evelyn's garden. She determined, as she thought of Peter the Great driving his coach through the parterres and over the carefully tended flower beds, that she would make a lovelier garden still, for in it she would place the little ones of Deptford, and no one should spoil it. She heard the call to work, she schemed, and planned, and she succeeded. There is universal testimony, educational literature abounds with it, to the power of her redemptive action. Little children made straight, bounding into healthy life, with bright eyes, attuned ears, sensitive touch, and high spirits. The working mothers of Deptford, as they tell of it, seem to be transformed; they speak of Margaret as of one who did so much that she is, in the spirit, still with them.

The little children of the Nursery School returned to their homes as new creatures, inviting new conditions of feeding and treatment. All about them their elder sisters come from far, learn the magic and the mystery of

childhood, and go out to make other gardens in the midst of the slums. Margaret was too much the prophet to regard herself except as the stumbling pioneer. In her depressed hours, and they were many, she saw the hideous procession of hindered life sweeping past her, but in her prophetic hours she rose above it, and saw the unfolding splendour of redemptive work.

It is not our purpose to record in detail the story of these days, neither shall we try to paint the pictures of developing work or to heap incident upon incident. There are many articles written by herself and by visitors from other lands. In her own books: *The Camp School* (1917), *The Nursery School* (1919), *The Life of Rachel McMillan* (1927), and in Miss Stevinson's *The Open-Air Nursery School* (1927) all these things are told. Rather shall we seek to reveal her achievement as she moved deliberately, untiringly, confidently on her destined way.

She entered Deptford in 1910 determined to justify remedial and preventive medical treatment in a properly run clinic. Yet she soon saw that the terrible home conditions tended to undo her work, consequently she created a night camp for girls at Evelyn House, and a night and day camp for boys in

St. Nicholas churchyard. The open air, the moon, the stars, and the quiet, were all to bear their part in the work of strengthening.

This led to her perceiving clearly that the suffering little ones were damaged in the early years in that time between "generation and education" which troubled Glaucon, and so she devised her Open-Air Nursery School. In this she found the springs of power, and became convinced that, if she could have the little ones for "nine hours," she would be able to strengthen them even to the point of victory over the foul forces of the slums.

Thus she became the unrelenting foe of all those who, seeing the vital and powerful truths of the pre-school training of infants in poor areas, would offer anything less than the best. Like all those who have accomplished great things, she demanded the most complete, the highest. With infinite scorn she looked on those who, seeing the vision, condescended to palliatives because they would cost less. Such scorn passed into what Bernard Shaw called "cantankerousness" when she came across people who saw but would not, or did not, help.

She saw that progress is gained in the long run by the creation of even the few finest rather than by the multiplication of the mediocre.

Let us at the outset have a few good clinics, she urged, rather than many poor ones.

Till the end of her life she sought to fight against the absorption of her children in the ordinary schools. She insisted on the unity of the whole school life, hating the conventional breaks, and had at great sacrifice constructed her new camp school for all the little ones she could keep beyond the age of five.

Her dying hours were suffused with a heart-breaking anxiety for her growing children. "You will work for them," she pleaded. The longing of her being transcended pain and weariness. The last words she spoke, to me at least, were broken, but in them lay the implication of her life's work: "there must be no interruptions"—"new shelters are to be built for older children"—"their education must be very largely—literary and humanistic"—"give them plays and poetry and art"—"make them speak beautifully." "They must not be defrauded of the humanistic—they must be brought up as beautiful humans first—take the big view." They are given as she spoke them, these last anxious thoughts.

Then came a light in her eyes which seemed to banish even her intense yearning as she murmured: "Ladies—they *are* ladies."

In such a manner she gave final testimony to

the message of her life. Little children are pure and undefiled, their bodies and minds are meant for the unfettered expression of their spirits in life and work. If brought into early and right relationship with the natural creative forces of the world, they will become and remain "beautiful humans."

Many think of Margaret as a prophetic advocate of physical education. But she was not this alone, and she would have been the first to denounce any system which was not based on a right understanding of that balance between spiritual and physical power which goes to make the complete human.

CHAPTER VII

THROUGH CLINIC AND CAMP TO NURSERY SCHOOL

The support of the L.C.C. and the Board of Education—Working agreement between the L.C.C. and the Deptford Children's Health Centre or Clinic—Opening of the centre—Camps for boys and girls—The first Nursery School—Occupation of the Stowage site—Growth of the Nursery School—The Camp School for children over five years—"The Margaret McMillan Open-Air Nursery School and After Association"—Broadcast address delivered on 17th November, 1927—Tributes to Margaret's work from overseas.

In the light of the knowledge of Margaret McMillan's development and outlook, it is now possible to consider the details of her work, and particularly her relationship to the L.C.C. which, according to her wish for permanence, became a predominant partner.

It will be remembered that by 1910 Medical Inspection was compulsory, and Treatment could be provided. The carrying out of her work, therefore, depended largely on the financial and moral support of the Board of Education and the London County Council. This was progressively given, except that by law they were unable to give financial support to the Camp School for post-nursery children.

It is still impossible for this to be aided unless the children are admitted, exclusively, on account of certified ill-health. It ranks as an approved voluntary school, outside the system.

Speaking generally, it may be said that Margaret was always pressing for new help, and that it was a Herculean, when not an impossible, task to induce her to conform to rules and regulations or to provide intelligible accounts, yet she had no more eager and anxious collaborators than the officials both of the London County Council and the Board of Education. They never sought to check her impetuous career, although they never knew what she was going to do next, or what activity of hers they would be called upon to discourage or divert. Indeed they followed Margaret so long as their lines of communication with the County Council or the Treasury and Parliament were not broken.

Since, for the purposes of practical work, she was necessarily more in direct contact with the London County Council than with the Board of Education, the former authority will be more obvious in the record, but we must remember that it was dependent upon the decisions of the Board, acting in harmony with successive Education Acts and the rulings of the Treasury.

(From 1919–22 she was a member of the L.C.C., sitting for Deptford, and was appointed a member of the Education Committee, but this period of office seems to have diverted or affected very little, if at all, the ordinary routine of her life, or the development of her work. In February 1912 the progressive party sought to secure her co-option as a member of the Education Committee, but failed.)

On 17th December, 1910, Sir Robert Blair communicated the sanction of the Board of Education to a working agreement between the Council and the Deptford Children's Health Centre for the purposes of Dental Treatment, which parents were to secure at charges which in no instance exceeded 1s.[1] The medical grant for general treatment followed a year later.

This was the result of much persistence. Margaret had to be patient. The L.C.C. members who supported the Dental Clinic were almost as keen as she was, and the officials, as usual, most helpful.

Meanwhile the Clinic had been opened at the old Vestry Hall on Deptford Green on

[1] The L.C.C. charge for treatment of minor ailments is still 1s. covering a period of six months, after free treatment for two weeks (Circular MT 1). For special treatment of teeth, adenoids, ringworm, etc., the charge is 2s., which may be reduced in special circumstances to 1s., or even remitted (Cir. MT 1 (*a*)).

21st June, 1910. Dr. Cunningham of Cambridge dealt with dental defects (later Mr. North of Bradford became full-time dentist), and Drs. Tribe and Eder with general cases, while Miss Riddell gave the children breathing lessons and undertook remedial orthopædic work.

Towards the cost Mr. Fels gave £400, the Ogilvie Trustees £200 for three years, and the Greenwich Council remitted the rent. Mr. Evelyn provided a house rent free, 353 Evelyn Street, which became known as Evelyn House. Margaret had it in possession for life. There was a triumphal opening ceremony on 15th July, 1910, at the Creek Road Council School. Sir John Gorst presided. Sir Cyril Jackson, Chairman of the Education Committee of the L.C.C., stated that the L.C.C. having concluded that inspection was of no use whatever without treatment, would assist financially, but he opposed "Miss McMillan's efforts to put the physical welfare of the children under the control of the Education Authority."

The local doctors, or at least some of them, looked askance at the new venture. There were animated letters in the *Kentish Mercury*. One of them asked: "Is it fair that the professional men in the district should be deprived of a portion of their incomes?" Nowadays,

The Girls' Camp at 353 Evelyn Street, 1911

they, with Deptford as a whole, think with pride of both the Dental Clinic at 24 Albury Street, and the General Clinic at 78 Wellington Street, which under skilful management, aided by grants from the L.C.C., pay their way as they help to redeem the children of Deptford from dirt and disease.

The foundation of the Clinic was a prelude to new adventure. The garden at Evelyn House was turned into a Night Camp. Girls under treatment were to sleep there, not in their own overcrowded homes. Margaret's resourcefulness was amazing; she used the most unlikely materials for her equipment. The bed-frames were made of gas-pipes with canvas stretched over them. A length of rubber tubing, fixed so that the water ran down a conveniently placed drain, was the shower bath. Seventeen girls in all, ranging in age from 6–14, were the first to arrive "all atwitter late in the afternoon like birds—arranged their night clothes and beds under the canvas (open to the eastern sky) and played in the garden." They washed and slept and gained strength, "began to dream—to love to listen—to look forward. The night sky wakened them."

This was the first expression in Deptford of Margaret's faith and trust in the preventive and remedial effects of "open air."

In the day time she used the garden and the simple equipment for a Nursery School for infants. Although the school did not last, it was, in reality, the germ of the later and epoch-making school.

Boys, not only girls, must be provided for, so she constructed, in June 1912, a Night and Day Camp in the churchyard of St. Nicholas. Sentiment was outraged.

> The health of the young [said the *Kentish Mercury*] is, we admit, a matter of the most serious concern, but surely movement may be made in the direction of securing it without going to the length of growing broad beans and other esculents in the dust, it may be, of Christopher Marlowe. We are afraid that Miss McMillan's commendable zeal has in this case outrun her discretion.

Undoubtedly the journalist let his imagination run wild, but there is no doubt, in spite of all her care, that a school camp in a graveyard was too unique to last. Reverence for heroes of the past easily overcame reverence for living and very ordinary boys, so reluctantly she had to seek another place for them. She rented a piece of adjacent waste land at 5s. a week, and here the camp boys found refuge. Their presence was greatly resented by the inhabitants of neighbouring houses. Indignant

Ilf Boys Camp in St Nicholas Churchyard 1911

women urged the bigger boys to make themselves a nuisance, but Margaret, cheered by Rachel, kept heroically on her way.

Then came a big advance. They entered into occupation of the Stowage site as a Nursery School. It is said they "jumped it," lying, as it did, invitingly near to their clinic. This may or may not be true in fact, but it is true to type.

We can now revert to the L.C.C. story. This site, on which the main part of the Nursery School stands, was bought by the L.C.C. in 1912 for the erection of an ordinary elementary school, and would ultimately have been used for this purpose had not the decrease in the local child population, following the War, rendered additional school places unnecessary.

In October 1913, Mr. Joseph Fels, on behalf of Miss McMillan, asked the Council's permission to use part of the site "for recreation purposes in connection with the clinic" until it should be wanted for building. The Council readily and generously agreed to let the land at a rent of 1s. a year for not more than twelve months, the occupation to be terminable at one day's notice. He was also allowed the use of 232 Church Street, a house on the site.

So in 1914 the Girls' Camp at Evelyn

House and the Boys' Camp were moved to the Stowage. The children, about fifty in number, lived and slept there in the open air through the summer of 1914. An opportunity provided by the War was at once seized. The Ministry of Munitions authorized a grant of sevenpence a day for the minding of each child of munition workers, and so it was possible for a Baby Crêche to be maintained, and this crêche was in reality the Open-Air Nursery School, differing only from later developments in that it received munition workers' babies, even as young as two or three weeks.

By August 1917, in spite of the terms of her tenure, Margaret had erected buildings at a cost of something like £2,000. She had also spent about £400 on 232 Church Street, which had been damaged in air raids.

It was characteristic of her that, seeing the need, she failed to see the possibility of any difficulty such as might have arisen if the L.C.C. had felt itself bound to utilize the site for its original purpose. In law the Council could have claimed possession at any time with a penalty of £1 a day until possession was given, but that troubled her not a whit. She probably never thought about it. If any one had pointed the fact out to her, she would have thought it, at best, "academic." "What

purpose," she would have argued, "could possibly transcend the use of it for little ones, for always?" She still further staked her claim by having her new buildings, accommodating one hundred children, opened in August 1917 by Mr. H. A. L. Fisher, then President of the Board of Education. These buildings form a great part of the Nursery School as it is to-day.

During all these years, indeed until 1920, no grant was received from the L.C.C. Everything was done by means of the munition grant and private subscriptions.

In 1919 the L.C.C. did give her security of tenure, renewable every five years, on the condition that the site and buildings should automatically pass to them on her death. This they did in March 1931. The strange dual occupation was ended.

Meanwhile the Nursery School grew. The L.C.C. itself built a school for one hundred children on the lower part of the site at a cost of about £2,300. Children were first admitted to this part of the school on 5th September, 1921, and it was formally opened by Queen Mary on 22nd November, 1921. Thus there was opportunity for two hundred and thirty children in these two schools, both of which were under the same managing committee.

In 1924 thirty more places were added, by taking in the premises of the former cleansing station in Wellington Street. A generous legacy from Mr. J. M. Dent was utilized in 1928 to provide an additional shelter. It is known as the Dent Memorial, and it houses thirty markedly delicate children.

The cost of maintenance at the Nursery School is a consideration of importance. Margaret stated, in 1926, that the net cost was £11 15s. per head. As has been said, the rent she had to pay was the nominal one of 1s. a year. Moreover, she was exceedingly economical when repairs were in question.

During the year ending 31st March, 1930, the cost of keeping one hundred and thirty-three children, which was the average attendance in that part of the Nursery School not under control of the L.C.C., was £2,059 16s. 2d. (it would have been greater but for co-operation with the L.C.C. school, e.g. the salary of the superintendent controlling both schools, the wages of the schoolkeeper and the cook, also the cost of gas, etc., were shared). This amount includes food, £387 15s., and the cost of cooking and cleaning, but the parents contributed £430 13s. 3d. in payment for food, thus the average cost per child was roughly £12 5s. The cost in the L.C.C. part, ninety-

THE QUEEN AND THE LITTLE ONES, 8TH MAY 1930

five in average attendance, was £13 7s. 3d. per child. These low costs are due to the large numbers. A small school similarly run is much more costly per unit.

As far back as 1913 Margaret began to retain children after they had reached the age of five. For them no grant could or can be secured, either from the L.C.C. or from the Medical Branch of the Board. They were those children whom she wished to keep under her own supervision, either because they were especially gifted children, or because she was afraid entry into the normal infant school would unduly handicap their development. She was very proud of these children. The whole cost of their education fell on her. In 1922, at a cost of £600, she built in Wellington Street, near the Nursery School, a new shelter and necessary offices for seventy of them. This shelter was opened in June 1923, and at the same time she made a renewed application for a grant in aid. The L.C.C. had no legal power to give it. The ground upon which the shelters were built is now needed by the L.C.C. for their Watergate Street area Housing Scheme, so that new shelters will be required. In this matter the L.C.C. has, as usual, been generous. It agreed in 1931 to provide a new site adjoining the Nursery School

ground and adequate compensation. For the use of this site for the Camp School the L.C.C. proposes to charge only a nominal rent. Just before her death Margaret was greatly cheered by a grant of £1,000 from the Pilgrim Trust for the new shelters. Her Camp School will thus be safe so far as the buildings are concerned. It is recognized under section 147 of the Education Act, 1921, as a certified efficient school for seventy children of elementary school age. In itself it is an interesting and necessary experiment in open-air education, and in the continuation or rather development of Nursery School methods for older children.

There is convincing evidence that the Camp School children reach a higher level than other children of the same age in elementary schools. They learn to read, speak, and recite in a markedly excellent manner.

Margaret McMillan had her eye clearly set on securing the best results. Her children ought to have accurate knowledge at command and training in the use of it. She expected them to do better in the ordinary subjects requiring precise knowledge and skill than children in the schools of the district.

The problem of the maintenance of this work is the one legacy of financial responsibility which Margaret left. It will be necessary to

find help to replace that which she provided or raised personally. Every penny that she could spare went to the support of the Camp School.

She clearly had the older children in mind when, in 1930, she constructed the "Margaret McMillan Nursery Schools and After Association." This Association included many of her supporters and friends, but her last illness prevented her bringing it to formal birth. The statement issued gives her final conclusions in regard to Nursery Schools and nurture. It is evident that she regarded this Association as complementary to the Nursery Schools' Association, of which she was elected President at the outset in 1923, and held office until May 1929. Her resignation from this Association was largely due to the fact that it appeared to her to acquiesce in the creation of Nursery Classes, and not to emphasize sufficiently the necessity for a nine hours' day in nursery schools serving slum areas. Her relations with the Association were harmonious to the end. She appreciated them and they her. In their Seventh Annual Report, December 1930, they refer to her "amazing energy, tireless devotion, and prophetic voice." She also attended a deputation to the Board of Education in 1930, and showed plainly that she wished to harmonize with, and

support, their representations to the President, not breaking the line at any point. She said afterwards to one of the deputation, "I was good, wasn't I?"

The discussion centred on the determination of further steps to promote the development of Nursery Schools, consequent upon the issue of the Joint Circular on Children under School Age, which had been issued by the President of the Board and the Minister of Health on 5th December, 1929.

The chief outcome of the discussion was the following reference to the Consultative Committee of the Board:

To consider and report on the training and teaching of children attending Nursery Schools and Infants' Departments of Public Elementary Schools, and the further development of such educational provision for children up to the age of seven plus.

This somewhat prosaic record may well be regarded as an introduction to her own conception of the Nursery School which she gave in a Broadcast Address on 17 November, 1927.

Before I do anything else this afternoon, I want to tell you just what a Garden Nursery School is like, because many of you may never have seen one.

Let me describe a day in the Rachel McMillan Nursery School at Deptford in the East End of London. The children come in at eight o'clock. They range

in age from two to five years, for the Nursery School proper, though we have older children of whom I shall say nothing now.[1] On entering they go, not all into one big house, but separate shelters or light buildings scattered all over a big garden. In each shelter there are baths and every child is made physically happy and sits down, warm and clean and glowing, at nine o'clock to a breakfast of oatmeal porridge, milk, and brown bread, etc. They thus begin the long day of adventure and life that we think they ought to have. For they need experience now, just as they need food. Colour and light and music, animals, and the sight of birds a-wing, or tame in the garden and pigeon cotes. Apparatus too, gay and varied in its place, but above all free movement and experience—this is their life in the garden and shelters.

Everything is planned for life. The shelters are oblong in shape. The air is moving there always, and nearly always the southern end is away! Healing light falls through lowered gable and open doors. This world, too, is full of colour and movement. Colour on the walls. Colour on the dinner table, colour in pinafore as well as in the garden. In short, the children just emerging from the long sleep of pre-natal life and fitful dream of the first year waken at last to a kind of Paradise. A kind of Paradise, not a fetid, crowded room, a dim-lit cellar or cave-like place, but in a garden where human life wakes, if it ever wakes fully at all, because then it meets the vibrations that rouse it.

[1] The children of the Camp School of ages from five upwards.

At a quarter to twelve o'clock there is a two-course dinner, and at twelve-thirty 300 little children are fast asleep in little cots where the sun, the blessed doctor in the sky, who cures rickets, can rest on the sleepers. (In winter, of course, they are wrapped warmly in red blankets.)

The afternoon is filled with music and dancing, with tales and play, and throughout all the great function of speech is never forgotten. The deformed speech which amused people yesterday and gave joy to novel readers meant inner deformity. It will pass away with the advent of the Nursery School.

At four or later there is another meal of milk, and perhaps pudding or brown bread and butter, and at five to five-thirty the little ones are taken away home by their mothers or by elder children. (I don't speak of the elder children who remain in these surroundings at all.)

Now you will ask, how, and when did Nursery Schools begin? Well, they are as new as aeroplanes, as the wireless and broadcasting of our modern days. True, there were kindergartens for little children yesterday, there were infant schools also for the four- and five-year-olds of the millions. But Nursery Schools were born only a few years before Mr. Fisher named them in his Education Act, and placed them on the Statute Book for ever! How did they come into being?

They were wonderful the last years of the War—terrible, but wonderful. Women who had never thought of the masses woke up then and praised poor

Tommy Atkins, seeing him for the first time in the light of war. "He is splendid," they said, "the best should be given to his children. We 'll not only have Homes for Heroes. We must have gardens for the Heroes' children." They crowded our clinic at Deptford, they saw the shelters of our Open-Air Nursery School. They hailed the new Act too! The local authorities for their part began to plan for a new order of nature and education—founded on health. The L.C.C. voted £26,000 at once and prepared to begin new garden schools in dark places. We went down to Bow, to Shoreditch, to Whitechapel, and found sites. But this expansion was short-lived. The Geddes' Axe fell.

The nation had to go back to infant schools and kindergartens, and to the ways of the past, when people thought some young children might need some education, but that all were better at home with their mothers whatever their circumstances, than in any other company.

It was not the society woman alone, however, who had wakened up. The new thinkers, the psychologists were awake too, and they would not go to sleep again. They began to show why the first five years of life are the most important of all. They went about observing and noting things down. They told us how the first five years was the time of swift events and that destiny was settled then. In the Rachel McMillan Nursery School it was found that 80 per cent of all the children were rickety at the age of two. Four-fifths of all the little ones who had never been away

from their mothers were white, sickly, anaemic, rickety. No wonder their fathers had grown into C3 men. The infant school and the kindergarten offered no remedy. The damage was done before the children went to these schools, and besides they offered no remedy. The Nursery School did offer a remedy. The Rachel McMillan School numbers 350 children —260 of whom are under five. In one year every case of rickets is cured. The incidence of measles fell to ·5 per hundred, whereas outside this deadly disease struck down 7 per cent. The attendance rose to nearly 92 per cent, and yet the cost of this school was no greater, but less than was that of the infant school.

Now you may ask why should we give all this to the children? Because this is nurture, and without it they can never really have education. For education must grow out of nurture as the flower from its root, since nurture is organic; it is the right building up of nerve structure and brain cell. To give it is to clear away half the plagues that distress us and compel us to spend tens of millions on hospitals, sanatoria, etc. 39 per cent of all dull people are dull through lack of nurture. Much of the money we spend on education is wasted because we have not made any real foundation for our educational system.

The educational system should grow out of the Nursery School system, not out of a neglected infancy.

There are seven points which make for success in the Nursery School. First, it should be large—from 200–400 children is the right size. The small school is too costly, and proves too little, besides it is at the

mercy of every storm. Even the school of 100 is unsteady, like a ship that falls between two seas. But the big school is like the great liner that takes three seas, and is steady and capable of great adjustments. Yet there is no massing of children. A shelter takes 34–45 children, and is self-contained. Yet all may meet in the garden. Secondly, it must be open-air, to give movement and safety from infection. And it must give three meals per day, for which the parents can pay.

It must have a long day—nine hours, not five. Growing out of this fourth point is the fifth. It must have a new system of staffing through diluted labour. Each shelter has a trained teacher at its head, but she is helped by students whom she trains for Nursery School work. The Centre consists to-day of over 30 students in training.

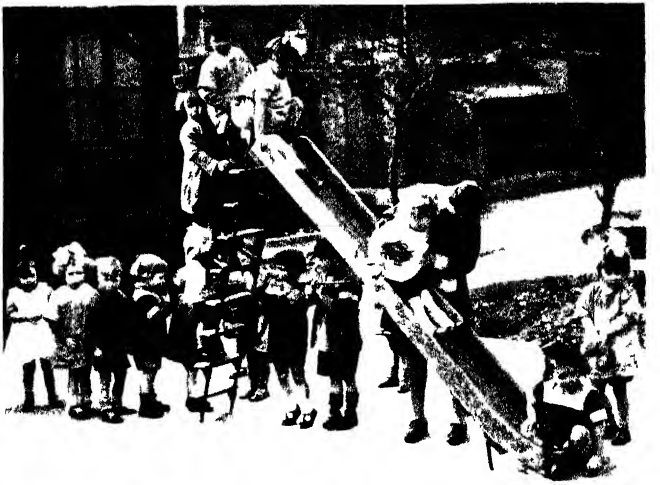
Then the old style of buildings, however handsome, will not do. Nursery School buildings are cheap and they must consist of self-contained shelters, built of asbestos, and costing a third of the usual price for buildings. Last of all, the Nursery School should offer a social centre to mothers, and for this it must provide residence for at least the higher members of its staff.

Perhaps some of you listening to me this afternoon may be saying to yourselves: "Why can't we have a Nursery School in our town?" So I want to end by telling you how you can help to get one. The Government now pays a grant for Nursery Schools, and Local Authorities are also empowered by law to

give a grant. And they are not costly things to run if you bear in mind the points I have just given you. There is no real difficulty for worried ratepayers, for in 1926 the cost per head was only £11 15s. in Deptford, the income we receive from parents amounts to over £1,000, and in Dundee, a Nursery School where the jute workers send their children is so well supported (the parents pay 3s. 6d. a week each) that if the school were a large one we could provide all that is needed for a happy childhood for every little Briton.

If you are interested, go and find out if other people are interested too. See if you can find a site in some densely populated district. See if help cannot be found to get a Nursery School going. And go to your Local Authority. Remind its members that they have a right to help. The case for the schools is overwhelming. If Great Britain will go forward without fear at this hour she will sweep away the cause of untold suffering, ignorance, waste, and failure. Don't forget and don't delay.

That Margaret did not in any sense overrate the achievement of the Nursery School is made abundantly plain by the testimony of many educationists, not only at home but in other lands. Dr. Arnold Gesell, Professor of Child Hygiene in Yale University, has made direct testimony to the fact that, in the United States, the Nursery School movement, which deals more largely with better-off children than is the case here, has been inspired and directed



Joy Rides at Dellford Any Time Any Day

by women who in their turn have been inspired and trained by Margaret McMillan.

It is in this district [writes Dr. Gesell] that the McMillan sisters with great daring undertook to develop an open-air type of nursery, consisting of a central garden, and a group of simple shed-like structures called shelters.

By means of very simple methods this school has wrought revolutionary changes in the health, happiness, and activities of children from 1–6 years old. In this Nursery School one finds over two hundred children of pre-school age, who have in a large measure escaped the blighting effect of the poverty in which they were born. They have escaped solely because of the intervention of a welfare agency, which surrounded them with the basic conditions of nurture which it was beyond the power of parents to provide.

And again, on 25th July, 1931, Dr. Gesell wrote:

History will show that the Nursery School Movement owes much to the life and almost sacrificial devotion of Margaret McMillan. Even though the importance of pre-school education had been recognized by many writers from Plato to Pestalozzi, and to Robert Owen, the developmental rights of young children needed a new champion at the beginning of the twentieth century. Miss McMillan was such a champion. She had the vision and the fibre of a pioneer. Her most important influence came from the crusading, pioneering fire of her spirit. Some of

this fire she communicated to idealistic young women who became devotees to the Nursery School ideas. Legislators, social reformers, educators, were quickened to a better sense of the meaning and the needs of early childhood. The absence of overt cruelties and open injustices made her task more difficult, and her results more important. Although her zeal led her into exaggerations and limitations of viewpoint, these vanish in perspective. She has left a rich accomplishment which extends far beyond the slums of Deptford. And in her best utterance there was prophecy.

It is also interesting to have the testimony of Lieutenant-Colonel R. B. Phillips, the School Medical Officer for New Zealand, who went rather hesitatingly to Deptford:

Some eight or nine years ago it was suggested to me that I should read *The Camp School* by Miss Margaret McMillan. I essayed the task and failed. The book was altogether too feminine and sentimental.

Nevertheless, as time went by, from various sources bits of information regarding Miss McMillan's work in Deptford came to my notice; and gradually it dawned upon me that the Open-Air Nursery School was a matter of vital importance. So it came about that when in 1927 I had an opportunity of visiting England, I determined to see the Open-Air Nursery School for myself.

I wrote and asked Miss McMillan if I might come and spend a day at Deptford. She replied that I might,

and gave me instructions as to how to get there. On my way from the railway station to the Nursery School I passed one of the London County Council's huge three-storied schools, packed with children, while just opposite was a park without a soul in it; and this on one of the few comparatively fine days in a very wet summer! Shortly after this I inquired my way from a woman accompanied by two children. She told me she was just going to the Nursery School herself, and we walked along together. Her verdict on the school was that it was a godsend to the neighbourhood.

On arriving at the school I was welcomed by Miss Stevinson, the Superintendent, and shortly afterwards by Miss McMillan herself. We proceeded on a tour of the school. The first thing that I noticed was the attraction that Miss McMillan had for the young children, many children leaving their own teachers and going to her directly they saw her. On the whole of our tour of inspection we were accompanied by a little girl of about three years of age, a new-comer to the school. We would walk a short distance, and then the little girl would whine to be carried; Miss McMillan would pick her up. Shortly afterwards the child would whine to be put down; and Miss McMillan would set her on her feet again. Now nobody in the world knew better than Miss McMillan that, as a general principle, a child who whines for a thing should not get it; yet here she was doing everything the child wished, although it was continually plaguing her with its querulous demands. This showed me that Miss McMillan had a quality—unusual

as it is valuable—she could break a rule. The reason for her breaking the rule was, of course, obvious. The child was in new surroundings, and the first thing for Miss McMillan to do was to gain her confidence and affection. This she would never have done had she checked her at their first meeting.

Not long after this I observed a small boy climbing, in what appeared to me to be rather a dangerous manner. I called Miss McMillan's attention to him. She took a glance at the boy, and then turned away with some such remark as: "So far we have been very free from accidents." This was point No. 2. Apparently she preferred to take a little risk, and add a little more to her own anxieties rather than hazard the introduction of fears into the mind of a fearless youngster.

Miss McMillan kindly asked me to have lunch with her. We all had lunch together; Miss McMillan, Miss Stevinson, and the whole of the staff and students. Miss McMillan said grace, and then I had an opportunity to look round me. I have seldom seen so many happy faces—every one looked bright and cheerful, and I saw on no face any trace of that rather careworn, slightly discontented, and overdone expression that is sometimes seen on the faces of school mistresses. By this time I had come to the conclusion that Miss McMillan had such a real affection for children that she could not, and would not, tolerate on her staff, or among her pupils, any one who had not the ready smile indicative of a tranquil and happy spirit within.

After luncheon I was left to my own devices, and

made my camera an excuse for wandering round by myself. During that peregrination I observed an incident which illustrates the spirit of Miss McMillan's staff. A little girl was in some distress about something, and a young teacher seized her up and gave her a hug which quickly dried her tears.

I took farewell of Miss McMillan at the gate of the school. A small person of three or four years was holding on to her skirt. (When a statue is made to Miss McMillan one or more children holding on to her skirt and looking up into her face should be included.) I shook hands and said good-bye. Much to my embarrassment the little girl held up her face for me to kiss. She evidently quite expected me to do so. I think this illustrates very well the happiness and confidence of the children in the school. It is not every slum child that would expect to be kissed by a middle-aged man, whom she had never seen before.

Without such a thing having been even remotely alluded to in the course of our conversations together, the piety of Miss McMillan was so much part of her being that one could not fail to observe it. Undoubtedly herein lies the mainspring of her life's work—"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of these little ones . . ."

CHAPTER VIII

THE TRAINING COLLEGE. HER LAST DAYS

Creation of the Training College—New buildings—Recollections of a visit by Walter de la Mare—Miss Stevinson, Principal—A student's memories of the last days—Death at Harrow—A last letter—Funeral—Many tributes—Letter from a working woman of Deptford.

THE creation of the College was Margaret's final triumph. Her mind was always set on the redemption of children in and through Nursery Schools everywhere. This made it necessary that she should be able to train and inspire many teachers. Consequently, as soon as was possible, she began to attract and to arrange for students, and organized a formal centre, which was duly recognized by the Board of Education in 1919. The students lived in the houses Margaret had acquired, and used the Nursery School as a centre.

It was possible to erect new buildings largely because of the enthusiasm and generosity of Lord and Lady Astor. The whole-hearted way in which the latter threw herself into all the work appertaining to both Nursery School

The Opening of the Training College 5th May 1953

and Training College gave to Margaret during her last years such joy and happiness as she seldom knew.

On 8th May, 1930, the Queen opened the new buildings. She had continually expressed her interest in the work; as Margaret said to her on this occasion: "You were with us in the hours of distress, and we are happy now to have you with us in the moment of fulfilment and joy."

The blue-clad students of the College, coming from all parts of England, and indeed from many lands, are a familiar and cheering sight in Deptford. They stand for hope and redemption in the eyes of the working mothers who, better than any one else, know what Margaret and the Nursery School have accomplished.

On 1st October, 1931, there were ninety-seven of them, fifty starting their first year, and forty-seven in their second and third. The students who remain for three years, or who are certificated by the Board of Education before they come, may gain the Higher Certificate of the National Froebel Union, in addition to that of the Board which constitutes full and complete qualification for service in, or superintendence of, Nursery Schools. Twenty students receive Board of Education assistance

during their second and third years. The normal fees are £100 per annum, covering board-residence and tuition for thirty-six weeks. At the end of the last school year every third-year student qualified.

The academic curriculum follows the general lines of the Froebel training. During the first two years students work for two sessions per week in the Nursery School, and in the third year for four sessions.

They also observe and work in the Camp School, and attend the Clinic. For three continuous weeks they teach in the infant departments of elementary schools.

The international importance of the school is indicated by the fact that since its inception students from India, Egypt, America, Sweden and Poland have been in residence.

It was Margaret's never-failing delight to secure for the students visits and lectures from any one who she felt would excite or satisfy their interest. On one occasion Walter de la Mare lectured, and he has contributed a memory of the occasion which makes Margaret and the College live for us.

The very words "lecture" and "lecturer" suggest an "atmosphere" alien to anything one thinks about when thinking of Margaret McMillan. Nevertheless,

it was a lecture—6th November, 1929—that gave me the happiness of meeting her—once only, alas; but unforgettably. Her invitation had come clean out of the blue—the deep blue—with an unusual grace and directness: "It is a slum district. But this is a pioneer college, and is sending out pioneers. . . . Do come. . . . I know you go to some beautiful colleges. Come to *us*." Nor, since, in its matter-of-fact fashion, it lights up her way of doing things from so many angles, will I forbear to add her postscript: "I shall be glad to pay your fee." And then, in her next letter, followed no less wild a venture: "As 'long' a lecture as you will give!"

Though, however, I can happily recall the packed upper room, and the intent young faces, faces that had been persuaded to be intent however dry the procedure, what chiefly comes back to me—vividly and signally—is not that *sole* solid hour. It is Margaret McMillan herself; that one clear glimpse of her.

We had dinner first, four of us altogether in the other little upper room, and with endless talk and laughter. I was nothing but a novice, knew nothing at that time of her work, though "work" is hardly the word to use nowadays when it is regarded as a synonym for "hard labour"; and I asked a novice's questions. There it was—the "Centre," in unmistakable bricks and mortar. It had begun with one baby; it had ended in a positive warren. But when any notion of that Centre's circumference came into mind, and exactly what that circumference margined, then it wasn't in bricks and mortar that one could reckon up the courage

and sacrifice in the beginners of such a venture, and the human miracle of its achievement.

The word "pioneer" is apt to suggest a hatchet-profile and backwoodsman virtues. Not even the stupidest of physiognomists could have detected any such symptoms in Margaret McMillan. The serene eyes beneath those straying strands of grey hair seemed to look out as if from a dream, as with head slightly drawn back, gently smiling, she sat listening and talking. A sense of humour was hers in abundance; what she did was surely impossible without it. And yet, as we sat there talking, her unfailing presence of mind seemed to consist so largely of absence of mind. Unless I am mistaken, I followed her out into the rainy dark of that Deptford November night on our way to the lecture-room with only a candle for illumination; and a candle one felt was all she needed, however dark it might be. Possibly I am wrong about the candle. In that case the visionary one in memory is an instinctive symbol. *Her* beams so shone out, not only into a "naughty" but into a dark, dismal, and muddy world.

It is a difficult thing to express—but she seemed to be talking out of so full a life that she could think of three things at once. And I should have guessed, meeting her by chance, say, in a railway train, first, that she had lived alone a good deal; and next, that she was one of those invaluable phenomena England used to be so rich in, "a character"; and one fully competent not to notice the world's absence much. Anyhow, there must have been a kind of "they" that for her didn't matter, however much the "they" of her life's

surrender did. Offhand, indeed, I should never have divined her competence to "run" anything that might be called a Centre. Do not such endeavours largely consist of difficulties and obstructions that flatly refuse to be "run," have to be firmly pushed—out of the way? But how superficial first judgments may be; her sagacity and indomitableness, after a little talk, were as clear as her abounding hospitality of spirit.

None the less she reminded me, and still reminds me, of a half-terrestrial being not exactly in *Alice in Wonderland*, but from that delectable region. You had landed on an island, and soon realized how extensive an "inland" there was to it—her inexhaustible knowledge, for example, of human nature alone. She was like an all-beneficent spider, sitting there in the midst of a web of natural loving-kindness, a loving-kindness, too, with ample reserves of strength of mind and purpose when these (as they must always be in "Centres") were necessary. And when, as if there were only two or three gathered together, she talked for a minute or two before and after the lecture to her students, she talked to them as one having authority, the authority which few human beings can rebel against for very long—that of the sure heart, and one within call of the head.

The Principal of the College is now Miss Stevinson, who was for many years in charge of the Nursery School, where she was succeeded by Miss Campbell. Margaret had that confidence and trust in her which was justified by

years of friendship in the fulfilment of a great task. To her, more than to any one else, she entrusted the carrying on of her work.

In Miss Stevinson's capable hands the "McMillan" tradition is safe, it will develop as time passes and experience grows. As year succeeds to year fully qualified and certificated teachers, reverencing the tradition and knowing intimately the principles and practice which have created it, will go out to Nursery Schools in all parts of the World. They will have learned to know the mind and spirit of one who was not only a great teacher in her own time, but in all time.

Margaret was not destined to enjoy for long the greater comfort and spaciousness of the College; not that her personal convenience troubled her a whit, but she did rejoice in seeing the bright rooms of the students, into which, as into the College, she put as much colour as possible.

Before 1930 was out she fell ill, and could only struggle with her work. Her last attempt to fulfil public engagements is recorded by one of her students, whom she asked in December 1930 to speak for her at two meetings.

Although in bed at the time, and seemingly very

tired, both mentally and physically, she spared no effort to help me in preparing my speeches, and wrote down part of them herself. When she became too tired to write, she dictated the rest to me, and with such eloquence and rapid flow of words that I had to stop her once or twice as I could not keep up. But this she would not tolerate. "You must keep up, dear. You must. I can't remember what I 've said and the rest doesn't come easily if you stop me." So I had to take down what I could.

The second lecture was one which she had never given before, she said, and which she dictated to me straight off, with scarcely a pause for thought, and yet she followed the classic principles of oratory, dividing the speech into its six distinct parts, saying, "That will do for the exordium, now for the peroration," and went straight on again.

This effort so exhausted her that she turned over in bed, and lay quite still for a minute or two, and then asked me to come back after lunch and read it over to her.

When I returned Miss Stevinson was asking her whether she 'd drunk her hot water. "I don't want it now," said Miss McMillan. "But dear, you must drink it." "You see, they don't let me do what I want," she said, turning to me ruefully. Then I started to read over the lecture, but she soon stopped me. "You 're going too fast, and remember never begin a speech too loudly. You get people's attention far better by talking quietly to start with."

One of her last pieces of advice to me was: "If

you 're going to get on never be afraid of criticism. If you think a thing is right say it, and never mind what people say about you."

When I was going she kissed me and said: "You know, dear, I 'm not doing what I meant to do. I wanted to do so much for all my girls here, to give them lectures, and tell them all the things they ought to know about education, and here I am—but perhaps they wouldn't have liked it. Do you like my lectures?"

She so often showed that humble and childlike side of her which made one forget one was in the presence of a woman of world-wide reputation and achievement.

In January 1931 she was moved to a nursing home at Harrow, where she received skilled and devoted attention. No one who visited her there would dare to try to express the sorrow of it all, and the flashing beauty, but her last letter is a fitting last note in a life which only a musician could ever hope to express.

BOWDEN HOUSE,
HARROW ON THE HILL.

MY DEAR STUDENTS,

I hear you are building a chapel—God helping. How I sympathize. So in poor stables and humble places *all* great movements begin. The great temples and luxury belong to the material world. The poor stable is the *real* shrine. The angels came there, and

the kings as well as the shepherds—and the poor dumb things knew it as their home!

Dears, I am separated from you by illness, but in spirit I am with you. I think of you as the brave new army of young soldiers, vowed to the Christ-life and the Christ work.

May He be with you in every effort you make to serve Him and His children—so precious to Him that He did not disdain to make them the centre of His Gospel.

God bless you,
MARGARET McMILLAN.

There assembled on 31st March in the Church of St. Nicholas, where she asked that her body should be taken, a throng of men and women from near and far.

Many of them were powerful and well known in the world of Education, but not a few were the working women of Deptford, who loved her both for herself and because of what she had done not only for their little ones, but for themselves. A "Mother in Israel" she had been to them.

Before speaking of her and her work, the Bishop of Woolwich read a message from the Queen, but words, however eloquent, could not be more than a mere index of that sorrow, gratitude, and triumph which transfigured all.

The students of the college lined the churchyard path as her body was borne away.

She was buried in the grave of Rachel.

There have been a multiplicity of tributes written in papers and letters, or spoken on platforms. They clearly and unmistakably show that leaders, not only in education but in public life, whatever their party politics, or creed, or nation, realized and appreciated the work that she accomplished. They knew her both as prophet and pioneer.

In our own country, Premier after Premier, President after President of the Board of Education have made their testimonies, concluding with that of Mr. Lees Smith, speaking to the Education Estimates in the House of Commons on 15th July, 1931. It is with reluctance that I have not included them, but they are so unanimous in the expression of wonder at and appreciation of the "rich accomplishment which extends far beyond the slums of Deptford," that the repetition of them, even if possible, would become monotonous.

But some at least will insist on knowing what the women of Deptford thought. Fortunately enough, there came, unbidden except for a request in the papers, a letter from one

of them, revealing Margaret McMillan's methods with convincing sincerity. It is included here, just as it was received, only the name of the writer being omitted.

SIR,

I read an article in the *Daily Hearld* that you were thinking of Writing A Book on The Live of Miss McMillan. I can Truthfully Tell you in the year 1907 about 24 years ago Miss McMillan came to our House we were living in Creek Rd. at the time and my children Attending Creek Rd. School, when I opened the Door I shall never forget her she said I think the people in Deptford think I come to their Houses to pry into their Business as this is the 9th Door I have knocked at and received no answer until now. But I only come for the Good of their little Children Nothing Else she said I have visited your little boy Charlie in his Class and spoken to him and find he has A Cleft Pallat and do you know he will never speak properly without an operation and will be Handicapped in his Manhood through it. I have come now to get your Consent to have it done. I said I will speak to my Husband and see if he agrees with it. He did not as when the Boy was Born Dr. Russell our own Dr. told me he was Born with A cleft Pallat. I did not know what it ment then so I asked him he said the Roof of the Mouth is Cleft but it is only partly Cleft I said can anything be done for him while he is a Baby he said no as he gets older and grows the flesh will join together of its own accord. Of course I and my

Husband Believed in what he said and nothing was done for him when Miss McMillan came to help us it was just the same we would not have it Done we were under the impression the Dr. was Right however she would not take no for an answer she said she knew A Physician and told him all about our Boys Case and he said that was nonsense it would never Cleve together of its own accord. Well she kept coming to our house 3 times A week trying to Persuade us to alter our mind for a whole Year we still said not, we were both very much against it, at last she came with A Letter from Dr. Berry A Physician in the Royal Free Hospital Grays Inn Rd. and said I have A letter here for you to take your Boy to Dr. Bury and he will perform the operation when he is fit. well I thought after her taking that trouble I will take him to the hospital, so I went to the Hospital saw Dr. Berry myself and left him there he was a very Delicate child and they had to keep him there six months before he was strong enough for the operation. But from that time Miss McMillan became the Best friend I ever had personally and also my Boy I shall never forget her the Day he was operated on she was on the phone all the time it was being Done. She was so worried she said Mrs.... if anything happens to your Boy you will blame me for it and I shall expect it. as you and your Husband have been so very much against it you would not have had it done only for me. I said yes we should but however thank God and Miss McMillan it was successful and he is A strong Healthy Man to-day. the father of 6 children but I should never have known Miss

McMillan only for him and his affliction. well when he came out of the Hospital after being in there 9 months she sent him away Convalsent to A Beautiful Farm Hous in May Land Essex, where he had plenty of Milk from the Cow and New Laid Eggs he came back after 6 Months Bonny Healthy and fat. from that time Miss McMillan never lost sight of us, her and her sister Rachial used to have my Boy at their house to tea every Wednesday. he was ten years old by this time, they lived in George Lane, Lewisham, that would be about 1909. I used to take him there after he came out of school and go Back for him at 8 o'clock it was a 2d. ride from our home and she used to come in our home and have A Chat with me at least every 2 or three weeks but a very sad thing happened in 1910 my Husband Passed away in 8 days with Pneumonia he was ill and Dead in 8 days and strange to say Miss McMillan came to pay me one of her visits while he was laying Dead and she came in and saw him in his Coffin. I was left then with 5 children Poor Miss McMillan she was so upset she said whatever will you do I said I must get some work, I could not go out to work because of the children but I was a good Hand Button Holer so I got some work in that at Home. I used to sit Button Holing from 4 in the morning till 2 the next morning to make up the time I used in the day seeing to the children but I could never earn more than 10 shillings A week so one day came Miss McMillan to see how we were getting on, this was about 1912 when the suffergets were about trying to put sweated Labour down and

getting Votes for woman which we have now thanks to them and Labour she said to me you sit very close at that Button Holing how much do you earn a week, I said 10s. how much do you get for a dozen Collars I said 3½d. and there is 36 Buttonholes in a Dozen Collars 3 in one Collar. she said what scandilous sweated Labour well, we are going to try and alter that, I think she must have been one of the suffergetts for the week after that she called on me again and asked me if I would take some Collars and speak at Knights Bridge Palace Hotel on sweated Labour and my work and take some Collars with me so that I could do one and just let people see how long it took quick as I was, she said you will get well paid for it and here is 5s. for your fare. they want you to go to morrow. well I went and told them every thing about the work how cruel the Guardians served me. they were cruel at that time I was introduced to Lords and Ladys there were two people I remember very much there, Lord and Lady Dudley, I do not know if there alive today. I have never see or heard of them since, well I was greatly appreciated and Clapped ever so long after I had spoken well for that I received 10s. and 5s. for my fare made 15s. and A jolly good Tea. another Day Miss McMillan came A few weeks after and said they want you to go to st Andrews Church Romford and speak like you did at Knights Bridge I had never been to Romford before nor yet since. it is over the other side of the water but my fare was Paid so I went but it was in A little cold Church it was not a very warm day and I

felt cold directly I entered it and again before I began speaking A Lady said you may only have 10 minutes to speak well I am one of those People that must tell you from beginning to end or I should spoil it so my Brain had to work very quickly to think what I could say in ten minutes of course may be the most interesting perhaps was left out, after I had done speaking A gentleman came to me he said you have not spoken here like you did at Knightsbridge I said I was allowed to speak there till I had said all I had to say here I was given 10 minutes that made all The difference I am a bad one to speak when I have to think what I can tell in the time I spoke for quite an hour at Knightsbridge and in the Evening News the same Evening there was A little Pragraph about A Poor Widow woman Mrs. . . . with 5 children to support Living in the Back Slums of Deptford working 22 hours out of 24 to earn the Paltry sum of 10 shillings A week. the woman I worked for used to take the evening news in and when I went at night to take the Collars back she said what does this mean in the news and let me read it. I dare not tell her I had been to Knightsbridge with the Collars she would have taken the work away altogether and bad as it was I could not afford to lose it just then. so I said Miss McMillan came in to see me questioned me about the work and I told her the truth never thinking it would get in the paper that was the only way of getting out of it she said its like her Cheek but I did not think so I thanked her for it. A few weeks after she called again it was summer time and A Lovely day she said can you put that Buttonholing away A

little while and come out with me I want you to show me where Greenwich Pier is and round the waterside I said Yes we went out at 2 oclock and got back at 5 she took me in A cafe gave me A good tea and when I saw her in the tram to go home to Lewisham she slipped half a Crown in my hand that will Pay you for your loss of time I said Miss McMillan I should have to work 2 days for that I often think she did that in her goodness to take me away from my work as she knew I sat too close to it in 1913 I decided to get work in A factory as the children were getting older and the oldest one could look after the other three my older girl was at work I started at Mchoniche over at Millwall Miss McMillan came several times but of course I was allways at work she saw the children they told her I did not get home till 8 oclock at night then she came when she knew I should Be at home and said how glad she was I was not doing that Buttonholing then came the War in 1914 that upset everything Miss McMillan did not come to see us and I lost sight of her for A few years I joined the Womens section of the Labour Party 10 years ago and have heard Miss McMillan speak in the Borough Hall she was A Beautiful Orator. I always went to here her speak at New Cross but could never get to speak to her but of course I saw her and that was all but strange to say my oldest Daughter took her little girl to the camp school about 4 years ago and saw Miss McMillan and made herself known to her because she was 14 when her father Died and she remembered Miss McMillan. she said your never Mrs. . . .'s daughter, why hasent

your mother been here to see me she said Mother did not know you lived here she hardly seemed to believe it well she said how is your Mother. Annie said quite allright thanks she said will you tell her to come and see me here at ten oclock tomorrow morning as I want to have a little chat with her I went and sat in her little Dining room she called it for half an hour talking about old times she said you know when I first came to Deptford the People did not welcome me I said no but They Reverence your Name today and that is everything. I went to the Camp once again after that to see her and she was excitably pleased to see me that was about 2 years ago I came home to my Daughter and said I thought Miss McMillan was Breaking. she seemed far from well even then Well the end came and I was in St Nicholas Church to see her carried out and walked beside as far as New Cross Rd. when they began to go fast I hope this will be of some use to you I could not help bringing my own Business in to explain how and why she helped me hoping you will be able to understand the writing as I am A very Bad writer

Yours Respectfully,

CHAPTER IX

MARGARET THE WOMAN

Her place in the gallery of the great—Personal memories —Attitude to clothes—Power of detachment—As author— As letter writer—Readiness of resource—Place of money— Hospitality at Deptford—Persistence—Changefulness—Not of this world—Guidance of the spirit—The Church Universal —Voices of the saints—The glory of triumphant love— Margaret the conqueror.

THE foregoing chapters, recording the outstanding events in Margaret McMillan's life, have, it is hoped, made it possible for those who never met her to create in their minds the conception of a powerful and compelling personality, moving majestically in her time.

She stands and will ever stand in the gallery of the great benefactors of the human race. Those who have sought to discover women with whom she might be compared have turned naturally to Joan of Arc and Florence Nightingale, justified in the one case by the profound spiritual mystery which enveloped her, and in the other, by the constructive nature of her work for the alleviation of human pain.

She was a blend [writes Robert Blatchford in 1931] of Joan of Arc and Florence Nightingale, tempered by the humour of Jane Austen.

As far back as 1908 Dr. J. J. Mallon wrote in *The Woman Worker*:

In the Middle Ages they did some things better than we. Had Margaret McMillan lived 500 years ago, she had lived as the Saint of poor children for ever.

It is inevitable that any attempt to portray her must be in grave danger of passing into the region of the superlative, a danger that can only be avoided by the constant reminder that she was very human. She was, as George Bernard Shaw said:

Not only one of the best women of her time and in her orbit, but also one of the most cantankerous, and she owed a good deal of her effectiveness to the latter useful quality.

I take up the difficult task of revealing her, with full consciousness of her human weakness as of her spiritual power. The first impulse is to think of the utterances of prophets and poets in their portrayals of noble women, but it must be resisted. There can be and ought to be no other source of inspiration than Margaret herself. "It is her humour which makes a picture often so baffling, her irony, her

blood-red scorn. What a woman! Intellect, humour, sunny courage and infinite compassion."

I must be almost wholly personal in a prelude to the consideration of her qualities and the spiritual dynamic which forced them into action.

I knew her only as a leading figure in the Socialist and Labour Movement until the year 1903. At that time I was seeking support for the newly founded Workers' Educational Association. "You must see Margaret McMillan," said C. H. Grinling of Woolwich. I went. At once the whole movement which sought to bring about the higher education of working men and women by a united effort on the part of scholars, co-operators, and trade unionists was confirmed in its intention. All that I ever thought concerning it was not only clear to her, but in accordance with the ideas which she had expressed years before. You may imagine the interview. For the first few moments she regarded me with narrowed eyes, her face inscrutable, even sphinx-like. Then the light of encouragement flashed from her. The trying ordeal was over. Margaret had become a friend, never to fail. In times of difficulty she was alert to help, whether on the platform or in the Press.

It was largely due to her that the movement triumphantly withstood the attacks of those who asserted that the union of Labour and Learning, which the Association sought to effect, was a mere device on the part of universities and the possessing classes in general to sidetrack the working man from the pursuit of his legitimate inheritance. With Margaret on our side there were few in the Labour Movement who doubted our integrity.

On the platform she became truly inspired. The picture of her, dominating a vast audience at Sheffield in 1908, will never fade from my mind. It was a time of political unrest, but into her speech entered no politics, it burned with intense desire for the working man to lift up his heart and enter into the illimitable treasures of knowledge and discovery as an essential concomitant of creative power.

At that time, even in an educational movement, Labour people, strange to recollect, often protested against the singing of the *National Anthem*. On this occasion an emphatic and influential protest had been sent me. I consulted Margaret on the journey to Sheffield. "Of course we 'll sing it," she flashed, "the King needs our prayers."

In such a forthright manner she dealt with most problems, whether superficial or profound.

Although she was always in need of money herself, she took pains to bring us into relationship with those of her friends who could help us.

It was with a twinkle in her eye that she introduced us to Joseph Fels—who didn't think much of us (we would not advocate the "Single Tax") but, because he liked Margaret, gave us substantial help.

As the years passed I saw her in many moods, but I cannot recollect her speaking an impatient word to me. She had given her confidence, and that was enough.

In a manner that was not wholly whimsical she would refer to our success, and imply her own failure. Of course she felt herself a failure in the face of the vast issues before her. If it had not been for "her voices" she would have passed sadly from the battle.

It was a great joy to see her in the early Deptford days. She was as happy as a child in all her plans for Evelyn House. She loved the preparations made to use St. Nicholas churchyard for the Boys' Camp. When that attempt was frustrated she simply turned in another direction, and discovered a disused plot, serving as a mere receptacle for tin cans and other rubbish, and immediately set about making a new camp of it.

On a memorable occasion she spent a week at Oxford, and became a dominant force in a Summer School for working men and women. I can see her now, enthroned on the grassy bank of the Fellows' Garden at Balliol. She missed nothing, encouraged and cheered everybody, and at the same time was most eager in her determination to understand all that Oxford meant or might mean.

Then came the sad days of the Great War, with intrepid courage she seized every opportunity, until Rachel died. From this time she seemed to be alone, but the power of her spirit was intensified. She had to discharge her debt to Rachel. She must hasten. The spirit of Rachel was ever with her, but she was obviously hungering for the old human touch and care. When we met her she made us feel that we were in a dual presence and the glory of that presence was Rachel.

In a sense she became once more a child, and so grew to that complete understanding of and sympathy with children at which every visitor to Deptford marvelled. Her world was made up of Rachel and the children. She flung her love over all; but even the devoted staff and the eager girls of the training college were but a means to an end, the greater glory of children.

She cared nothing for herself; it seemed as though she would force herself through any obstacle, whatever her physical and mental weariness, to reach the objectives which Rachel revealed to her.

She would even go out into the world she had never known. I have seen her, sitting aloof and alone, regarding the passing guests at a garden party or a reception. She would sit there brooding, but ever ready to make a dash at any one whom she believed could help her children and Rachel.

Even when disease laid her low her work for children never ceased. She planned and schemed, she urged and inspired colleagues and friends to carry on, and she died in the high and certain conviction that she would, in the spirit, continue her unfinished work for the children of men.

To consider her qualities and characteristics in greater detail we can seek the help of others who knew her, but once again, the testimonies are so many and so uniform that only here and there can one be used.

There is convincing evidence of the dignity and power of her presence throughout her mature life. It had developed before her entry into Bradford, where she was immediately recognized as "marked and distinguished."

This recognition was entirely due to her personality. She never appeared to think of clothes as having any other purpose than that of covering. Anything would serve. She was, however, sensitive to the use of colour by others. "Mr. Walter Crane" (the artist), she wrote in 1898, "wore a horrible magenta handkerchief, and yet he was most kind to us all." The use of green repelled her. If she thought any one wished her to look nice she would do her best. "Yes," she promised a friend, "I 'll take my well-known evening dress and the coat Lady —— gave me."

"Laws," she wrote to Miss Stevinson from Matlock in 1924, "I am a frightful hen—and they all dressed up—smart Americans are taking me for drives."

When her colleagues dressed her for some notable occasion, she would be as pleased as a child, and would do her best to sit still for fear she might disturb their handiwork. Then when the auspicious moment arrived she would display herself in her unwonted glory. This was not often. The number of those who have written, recalling with manifest satisfaction their experiences in "hooking her up," or stabilizing her hair before a meeting, would be surprisingly large to those who did not know her. Many of her listeners must

have had anxious moments. On one occasion, at Oxford in 1911, a friend pointed out to her that the dress she was about to wear was alive with ants. "I 'm surprised that they have lived," she said, "they must be very hungry. It is two weeks since I wore it last."

Not infrequently she arrived even at strange houses without normal accompaniments.

She arrived absolutely empty-handed for a three days' visit to me a complete stranger [writes one who later became a close friend] but was not in the least perturbed by it. She had forgotten to bring her travelling bag—but what did it matter? Could I lend her a nightgown? She was indifferent to anything else but she was a delightful visitor. Though liking to be alone with leisure to think and dream, she yet was interested in all the household doings. She always seemed at home in a home whether it were the Countess of Warwick's or a simple cottage home. She always appeared to be genuinely unconscious of her body and never realized that she was hungry, cold, or tired until such things were pointed out to her. She would limp through a whole day half conscious of some vague discomfort and find a terribly blistered heel at night caused by a tight shoe. She would sit writing in a room till blue with cold without thinking that she could put a match to the fire. Without thought for her own comfort she spent her life in trying to bring comfort to "these little ones." Nothing could ever be too good for the children of the slums.

Not only was she oblivious of cold or discomfort when she was writing. Her children could make any noise they wished. The time of day or night passed unheeded. Anything would do to write on. There was little method and no order. She was only saved from utter confusion by the dynamic of her purpose. The chaos was reproduced even in the office of Mr. Dent, her publisher, who

read through her chapters as she finished them, the loose sheets of an old exercise book on which they were written would fly all over his office in wildest confusion. It took the efforts of three of us to collect and arrange them.

In his description of Florence Nightingale, Lytton Strachey speaks of her at work as he might of Margaret McMillan.

Her soul, pent up all day in the restraint and reserve of a vast responsibility, now at last poured itself out in these letters with all its natural vehemence, like a swollen torrent through an open sluice. Here, at least, she did not mince matters. Here she painted in her darkest colours the hideous scenes which surrounded her; here she tore away remorselessly the last veils still shrouding the abominable truth. Then she would fill pages with recommendations and suggestions, with criticisms of the minutest details of organization, with elaborate calculations of contingencies, with exhaustive analyses and statistical statements piled up

in breathless eagerness one on the top of the other. And then her pen, in the virulence of its volubility, would rush on to the discussion of individuals.

It was not unusual for Margaret to place a pencil and paper by her bedside, so that she could write at any moment even in her sleep.

Mrs. Drummond tells us that in early life Margaret submitted to the treatment of a hypnotist as a test experiment on condition that he should help her over something she was writing in which she found great difficulty. The words she spoke in a trance were taken down and proved to be what she wanted.

Her writings, whether in fugitive articles or books, are a natural expression of her personality. They bear however the evidence of solid research and learning.

She was not an exact scientist, but she had the intuition and insight which enabled her to perceive scientific reality.

The comparatively small circulation of her books is simply due to the fact that they were in no sense textbooks. Rather were they the means of stimulation and direction to workers in the field of education. There is little or no quotation from them in the educational literature of the time.

This attitude to her books is in part due to

her own prominence in the area of educational construction. People thought of her either as a pioneer or a prophet. They spoke of her work and accepted her direction, but prophecy is hard to quote, and moreover hers, as all prophecy must be, was in harmony with that of all time. It is traditional to quote Isaiah or Plato. Moreover her masters Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Froebel, had provided the material for academic study. Their writings were familiar to every student. Margaret will be more quoted in the generation to come. Her books are being translated into other languages.

Of the quality of her writings there can be no two opinions. Her works were recently given to two detached scholars, one English and the other Russian. They approached them for the first time. Their verdicts were strangely similar.

A mere rapid perusal of *Education through the Imagination* is enough to make it impossible to miss seeing that here is a prophetic voice. When I say prophetic I mean that quality which sees through to the truth and speaks to the future. I could not help being reminded of the method of Plato or of Aristotle, in so far as she starts from a theory of man, his natural endowments and his proper perfection. Through education the spirit develops in freedom—naturally, that is to its proper perfection. At every step you are

conscious of theory that has developed out of practice. Like the Greeks, she is always on the plane of reality, that is near to the spiritual.

My impression is of a strong enthusiastic personality who faces all matters of fact and difficulty with courage and prophetic insight. She is a masterly writer with the training of a scholar and may claim her place as a great teacher. She is inspired by love and pity for humanity, seeing clearly what it is and having the vision of what it might be.

No more need be said. Her works will live. Their strong emotionalism will be the better appreciated as men and women see her writings and her work more in a perspective that resolves itself into a prophetic and constructive unity.

She was a tireless letter-writer, but for the greater part her communications were personal, to meet the needs of the moment, and therefore unimportant except for their immediate context. We must beware of overvaluing her "obiter dicta." She was a creature of moods. At times she poured out her spirit, sometimes she was wrathful and did not spare her correspondent, but usually she was very gentle and full of veneration. She always esteemed people and saw their qualities, perhaps at times overrating them.

The first letter, dated 22nd February, 1895, was written to Mrs. Robert Blatchford. It gives us a good deal of Margaret's philosophy of life:

I can sympathize with you. I also have found myself continually in company with those who would not deign to speak to me. I used to feel it so much. I truly suffered. And for years and years I believed that they were very superior to me. But now I think they were only very bad-mannered people. And what does one know so much more than another? We could not even perceive the difference if we weren't all rather little.

I am not even frightened of even real big people now. (I don't meet many, of course.) And I 'm not frightened of what they think. In *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, a cruel book—there is that silence of Angel, when poor Tess said "Shall we meet again." I used to think that was dreadful—and that Angel and all clever people were dreadful! But now I don't mind *them*. I think a woman knows as much as men about big things, and simple women like me as much as the others. And these great people never (like the nastiest animals) see anything but what they have tried to see a long, long time, it was there all the time, but they saw it only after long looking. "There are more things in Heaven and Earth than are dreamed of in our philosophies." And Angel had been only looking for Tess, and Huxley, for bones, and you, dear, for your sweet little Baby. Yes, I do think he lives yet, and

that you will see him again. We are still so gross I think it no wonder we can believe very little. Faith is not credulity for me, but a kind of gift or vision: and the pure in heart *see* I believe that everything is very well.

I don't like writing any more because it seems too weak and poor. When I see you, I will try to tell you better what I think. Little Children have led us all up from barbarism—the more one thinks of them the more mysterious they appear. I wish they didn't tumble them about so in the schools, but they are improving fast.

Canon Simpson and I are at daggers drawn. I got the other priest in a corner the other day and I said to him: "Why does your Brother oppose me always?" "Well," he said, "he doesn't like you, Miss McMillan. He doesn't approve of you at all." "What a heathen he is!" said I. "Miss McMillan," says he, "*aren't you afraid* to say that?"

P.S. Pah! Tess! I have been reading it again. I agree with a critic who said: "There were too many cows in the book." She with her milk of human kindness—running *all* to milk. Men draw splendid cows—I wish one of them could draw a woman.

But she could write in another vein. In 1899 she poured out on Robert Blatchford the vials of her wrath. There were no half measures. Her letter seethes with indignation as always when people refused to tread what was to her an obvious way.

I haven't had it out with you yet. With Sir Norman Lockyer and Budge—but with you, no! I told Sir Norman what you said, and he agreed with you, and Wallis Budge (great Archaeologist) agreed. Friend of Sir E. Wood, who talks about you. What is it that you all say? That the work is badly done by a parcel of suburban tradesmen. Very good. Why don't you come and do it yourselves? Huxley went on the London School Board—and went off directly. Walter Crane has *resigned.* No one it appears has the civic spirit for this—but suburban tradesmen.

A word is a deed you will say. Yes, it is. A very easy deed. "But," say you and the infuriated others (I come home after a fearful row!), "we can't go on. We have to write and to investigate." Well, but suppose you wanted to do something other than throw words on the wind you would have to stop your investigating and writing, lend yourselves to drudgery as the tradesman does—Ratepayers grudging expenses on one side, raw material on the other. The white Vision of Fame and pleasure in the use of flaming faculties (greatest pleasure in the world) swimming past. Everything past and well lost but the Will not to do one easy deed but a thousand dull, and drudgery ones. No, can't do it. But then your brilliant advice and blame shouted from the shore is a thing to laugh at. You don't even see where we are! Oh, if you were on Boards of course things would be changed. "*We know that.*" "Come and lecture on Voice-Production," said I to Marchesi the other day, and Palliser. Palliser said "Yes," but will She come?

I doubt it. None of you come. You 're not available —that 's all.

Yes—*of course* I should send my children to the Board School. I should want them to mix (as I mixed) with the poorest and the dirtiest. I should give them two baths per day—but I should say "Yes. You see how horrible Dirt is. It makes one *sick.* Every one ought to be clean. But you mustn't run like a coward though you feel sick, but be brave and human *as a child.*" Bad manners. Christian manners are good —alone good—better than the Labour people's—much better than the Bolingbrokes who entirely lack distinction in talking to people whom they *believe* to be their inferiors! *Of course* my children should go to the Board School. They should not be bullied and beaten there, because I would not allow that, but they should see from Childhood how other children lived. Why don't we get things for our Board Children? Because you and the like of you won't send your children to our Schools—and are therefore in no hurry to examine what our Schools are like. If you *did* send them you would all have insisted long ago that *the best* should be given. But instead of that you kept them away—exclusive as you are—and then an accident makes you want to examine into things a little.

"Why do you go on a Board?" you asked me once. Why? Because things have to be done by Boards. Here are 5,000,000 children. "Let them be clothed and educated beautifully," say you and Sir Norman. Certainly. Let them be beautifully educated. Sir

Norman will direct the teaching Astronomy, and you will take Literature, please. Every one is ready—except you and Sir Norman.

I haven't any more time else I 'd write more, though I dare say you 're tired. I 've had the last Word—Two last Words. However I promise I shan't write again even if you answer this!

"I like my children at home," you say. And Budge said something like it. *You like ! ! !* In God's name what does it matter what you like? Are your children a kind of furniture then?

In 1929 she sought his help.

One day, soon, you will have to help me. It won't be the first time. How long ago you sent a real bright stream of influence through my very bewildered days?

The Premier [Mr. Baldwin] came to see my bairns week before Xmas. I agree with what you said once after hearing him over the wireless—a simple, honest Englishman, with a really fine kind of steadfastness and simplicity. One of my 9 year olds—a widow's child and so poor she is on the verge of want always—carried him away so he forgot everything for some time. She played Miss Betty Barker in *Cranford.* They have talent enough these bairns.

I 'm getting the College to train people to help them. The L.C.C. are helping me, but not enough to go on without other help. Soon—not yet—you must write for me so as to get money. Soon, not yet, I 'll tell you. Lady Astor is helping me. Lord Astor bought the site for £4,000. I 've got some money myself, and

Lady Astor gives £3,000. Mr. Wall gave me £1,000, and a lady left me £1,000, and Lloyds are getting £1,000.

18th February, 1929.

This morning my wee children came in crying. They 're not crying now. Jolly as sandboys. Hundreds of 'em. No poor mother can do that in their wretched homes. And it 's at their doors. And the elder ones are having lessons—warm as toast and having joy in poetry and real literature. You see, I think they spend too much on buildings, on administration, and there 's nothing left for real things. Clothes, and music, and colour, and small group nurture, and they think it 's the climate, God help 'em. They can ventilate submarines, but they build fortresses for the poor little things.

Try to show (as you can) that the child should be the central thing, not the teacher (she has her Burnham scale), or the building (it costs too much already), and here are the seven points of the new nurture school I want as a base:

(1) Large—taking hundreds.

(2) Open-Air (never mind fogs and frost. Of course our shelters are warmed and closed to-day).

(3) Three meals a day (stick to this).

(4) A *nine*-hour day. There is *no use* in a five-hour day.

(5) Residential staff.

(6) Supplementary staff.

(7) Mothers' centre (clubs, etc.), this to help here —given this (it costs £11 15s. a year per head) there

will be no child problem. It will be solved. Tories, Liberals, and Labour should be glad of that.

My students are trained to go into any school. Elementary, Secondary, or Nursery. *But nurture is the base of their work.* Now have I told you right? Don't say I 'm a great woman. Oh, I don't care to be. I tried to get things at Bradford—baths and open-air, and new singing and speech, but I had to come here and begin with the babies—I haven't any place among educationists. That was all swamped long ago—it got lost in the seas of misery that rise round my head here, and will to the end. Never mind. The sea will be no more. "There shall be no more sea."

I 'm not at Pixie. I 'm here at Deptford. Mrs. Baldwin is coming here to-day, strange, isn't it? Dear old friend still I turn to you. But the good old tories —some of 'em—are so good. I didn't know it. Sorry I can't do more to thank you.

Occasionally humour flashes.

We engaged a young woman whom I thought I didn't like—but I find I do like her. She is gentle. Her public name is Lurline, and you can see her on Bills diving like a fish and coming out of a tank like a mermaid. "Miss," she said to me, "I 've no furniture in my Box." "What do you want?" I asked. "I 'll want a looking-glass," she said. Dear me, I thought, and I suggested a chair so she is going to have the chair too as a luxury.

It was this same sense of humour which

helped to carry her through situations which might have baulked other people. She faced the problems of transport in a characteristic spirit. Any conveyance would do for her, whether a milk cart or a coal cart. Nothing daunted her, only if a thing proved impossible did she forbear. Age did not affect her. Mrs. Kennedy Herbert tells the story in a letter to *The Times* of her only aeroplane journey.

I should like to be allowed to tell the following story of Miss Margaret McMillan's characteristic determination to further her mission. She had engaged herself to speak to the National Council of Women at Bedford on Nursery Schools. Through an error for which she was not responsible she missed her train by one minute. Finding there was no other which would enable her to keep her engagement, she taxied to Hendon, hired a Moth ("the boys," as she afterwards described them, lent her an air helmet), and telephoned to Cardington for a taxi to meet her. She arrived only a quarter of an hour late, and spoke for three-quarters of an hour, afterwards confessing that she hated flying, and had never travelled by air before. This, only two years ago, at the age of 68!

The lack of suitable land, buildings, or material for her purposes never perturbed her. She utilized what was to hand. It is literally true, as we have already seen, that she made

equipment out of canvas, gas-piping, sacks, and trestles, and turned a small garden into a camp school. The air was there, and the open sky.

It was a real girl-garden in the three years before the War—a garden where night and day, summer and winter, human plants grew in beauty.

Hot water was necessary—so an apparatus for it

was rigged up in the garden fence communicating with a neighbour's boiler.

As for baths,

a pipe and hose were fixed over the yard drain and enclosed with canvas fastened down with stones in the hem. This cold shower cost 2s. 9d., and it was more amusing than a tiled and marbled indoor bathroom.

The caretaker became a carpenter. He built a shed—but the authorities ordered it to be taken down. This did not depress Margaret, she soon erected another.

In a mysterious way power either accompanies or is generated by such an attitude. Even scientists have testified that they do better work when forced to improvise their apparatus. Sir William Ramsay is reported to have said:

It 's a very good thing in research work to have to

contrive your apparatus out of what happens to be lying about. It 's a spur to ingenuity. Our American colleagues who lecture from gold rostra to students sitting on marble benches don't find out anything more than we do—perhaps not so much.

Obsessed as she was by the ever ready criticism of "cost" she strove to do things cheaply, using whenever possible inexpensive materials. On occasions this was not wise, better fabric would, for example, have lasted longer, or not have sagged so quickly.

An amusing, if uncomfortable, result of her resources in the practice of economy has been revealed to us by one of her visitors:

> The thing I remember best at Bradford was that she had just newly painted the bath, and that when I got into it I stuck to it, and turpentine had to be fetched from the chemist's to release me.

Mrs. Drummond remembers finding Rachel and Margaret on one of the early days in London sitting down in a little room to a meal of a cup of tea and a bloater. It must have been a life of straitened resources since they had very little money. "She had her Hielan' pride; she would give presents but never accept one."

In reality money had but one meaning to her. It helped her work. All she could get

out of her own small personal store, from her friends, or from public resources went willy-nilly into the common stock. If need arose, personal or collective, all she could reach went to supply it. She never understood "money" any more than a child does a "key." It worked. If she thought that the organization for which she lectured needed the money more than she did, it went back.

There is significant correspondence with the Mayor of Deptford in 1914. On 10th March he wrote:

A large body of friends, many of them working folk, are very anxious you should have a complete rest. They have asked me to become the intermediary for sending you the enclosed cheque for £25, and a similar amount for the next six months. It is, of course, their desire that you should devote this sum entirely to your personal benefit.

Apparently not satisfied with her plans for the £175, on 14th April he wrote again:

As Trustee of the Fund I do feel that I owe it to your friends to guarantee that the money shall be used in the manner that they wish, and not simply for your work. It may be that you have some other scheme, as, for instance, providing yourself with some convenient means of conveyance to your work so as to save yourself bodily fatigue.

Her answer to this has not been preserved,

but there can be no doubt it was characteristic. Money—well then—there was the clinic, the little ones. However, the mayor did his best, and let us hope that Margaret had a rest, but the mayor was optimistic indeed if he thought she would spend it on saving herself "bodily fatigue."

For comfort, or for other than necessary food, she had no desire. Many will recollect the narrow little room, with its uninviting gas stove, in which she worked, never rested, at the Nursery School. Yet her charming hospitality was ever obvious, and she loved her visitors to have nice things to eat.

Lady Harper, who was one of such visitors, has sent to us a picture of Margaret the Hostess.

I recall how we walked in the garden of the open-air school at Deptford where she had planted rosemary and other sweet-scented herbs and standing with her arm folded round a small, very delicate looking boy, she explained how these poor children had practically no sense of smell. "He could not smell the rosemary," she said, smiling down at him, "but now that he had his little pocket handkerchief, a nice one all for himself, he can smell all the lovely herbs in the garden and he knows every one even with his eyes shut." She was interested in herb and flower lore, I remember, and we found we had both an admiration for Nicholas

Culpepper, "though I never till now met any one else who had," she added. And as we parted she gathered and gave me a small sprig of rue, the Herb o' Grace, with which in olden times the floor and window-ledges of the Old Hall at Deptford were strewn on Trinity Monday for the yearly ritual of swearing in the new Master and Brethren of Trinity House. I brought that sprig of rue home with me, and it took root in my own garden where now it grows, a strong and gracious plant, as her work for the least of these little ones will continue to live and grow.

Her quality of persistence was marked. If once she defined an intention or a goal to herself, there was no cessation or rest until she attained to it. The flesh is subordinated to the spirit and driven. It is this which accounts for much of her success. If a child was unwell or afflicted she never ceased her attention. If the gates of Whitehall were closed she battered at them until they opened, or more prosaically waited on the steps. If she believed any one could help she never gave up asking. No sooner was there a new President at the Board of Education than she was there, persistent, implacable, immovable. Had any of the private secretaries been able to divert or meet the force immanent in her he would have regarded the occasion as one of the successes of his life.

With the same persistence she followed the careers of children. Once under her care they were always so.

No children were too bad or too difficult for her. She took to her heart the worst of them she could find. She never ceased to hope. The divine spark was there, the fire of the spirit would some day burn in them and redeem the flesh. There were some she never ceased to mother, she remembered them even in her will. She sent David Lynn, a twelve-year-old Deptford boy, to school at King's Langley, and to complete her work left £300 in trust for his education.

During the War [writes a friend] Rachel and Margaret McMillan adopted two little motherless boys from near Manchester. They were the children of a miner who was called up. After Rachel's death Margaret kept the boys till their father's return. She adored them, and spoiled them. They took advantage of it, and the situation was not always easy. The students have told me that it was a pathetic sight to see Margaret, who scarcely knew how to hold a needle, trying to patch the trousers of "Totty," the younger boy. When the father returned from the War he insisted on having the boys back in his mining village. This nearly broke Margaret's heart, especially as the beloved Totty kept writing queer little letters, begging her to come and fetch him back to the delights of

Deptford. I went with her once, on a bitter winter's day, to see the boys—several miles from Manchester, in an endless, shaky, draughty tram. We did not see the father. He was "down the pit." But a neighbour sent to school for the boys. The younger one threw himself on her, sobbing, and begged to go with her. It was very affecting. Margaret wept bitterly with the child in her arms and kept promising to "send for him." I don't know how we got away, the boys going with us to the station, crying all the time, and the neighbour jealously following to see that they were not kidnapped. But the father was adamant and would not agree to their returning to Margaret's care. Totty died two years later, and the father took the other boy to America.

The other boy works for Henry Ford at Detroit. To him she left £100.

It is probable that during the course of her life she revealed most of her adventures and her thoughts—but never to one person.

At Bradford she was a mystery figure, taken for what she said and did. Some of those who worked most closely with her knew nothing about her. The explanation probably lies in the fact that she was not greatly interested in herself.

She was a different person to her different friends. This was not pose. It was far from

insincerity. Her mood and quality responded to the moods and qualities of others.

She was a Highlander and a spirit, and she could be as young as she liked and as lovely as she liked *when* she liked.

This is the penetrating criticism of one who knew her well.

I had seen her do it. She came to see us at Streatham in 1895. She sat up talking with my wife and me. When we began to talk Miss McMillan looked a tired woman of middle-age. She was then about thirty-four. As she talked she grew younger and better looking, and still younger and still more handsome, and before we parted for the night she was a very beautiful young girl. Imagination? No. I said to my wife: "Did you notice anything strange about Miss McMillan?" and my wife said: "I should think I did. She frightened me." I asked why, and my wife said: "She kept getting younger and prettier. She turned into a beautiful girl." Well, a few years later I called on Miss McMillan in Bradford. With me went a friend; a matter-of-fact Yorkshireman who kept a grocer's shop. We sat and talked for an hour, and then Miss McMillan came down to the door with us and said good-bye, and she was a weary anxious woman of middle-age. So when we had walked a dozen or so paces, I looked back, and I called to my friend: "Look! Look!" There at the door stood Margaret, a radiant, lovely young woman. My friend was amazed.

In such a way she mystified most of those who saw much of her. But how sad and empty she seemed to be when the spirit was, as it were, withdrawn from her. Her wonderful glances were absent then. The mystics say that a period of flatness and staleness, the dark night of the soul, regularly follows the supreme experience of exaltation and illumination. It was so with her.

I stood in awe of that strange woman [writes Robert Blatchford]. She was a good deal of a poet and still more of an angel—a humorous satirical angel; even freakish at times, and her "virginal strange air" bade my wisdom fear. You see how she could write to me; like a pupil to a master. Yes. And like a big sister to an erring brother, and also—once I went to see her after many invitations I had to wait a while. Then she floated into the room, all smiles and—what do you think she said to her editor and hero? She said: "So you have come, you funny little thing." A strange, beautiful, gifted woman, great; but odd.

The real sources of her power were spiritual. Mystic, emotional, practical and intellectual, she moved in the ways of the scholar and the saint, and so found satisfaction in the fellowship of the simple.

Her body was but a means of expression. It had to do what it was told, and to go where it was sent.

Her real life was, in a word, otherwhere. She was not of this world, except in so far as her human body was concerned. Her mind flashed in obedience to her living spirit. There was a birth, food and sleep, and a death, that is all. By the strong paradox common to all true life she, caring not for herself, turned with passionate love to the task of nurture for young children. She who cared not for her own body, sought every day of her life to make straight, clean, and healthy the bodies of hindered children. Her own body was but a channel for flowing energy. Life and power coursed through her. Her might was not to be measured by the resources of her person, but by the limitless supplies from the heavens of God.

In our hearts [she might have witnessed with Goethe] there is the eternal impulse to surrender to some unknown power higher and purer than ourselves —to surrender willingly, in grateful thankfulness, striving to penetrate that which has never revealed itself to us: we call it being good.

To understand her it is necessary to regard her as one who was so deeply rooted in things spiritual as to be indifferent to all else. Yet such indifference, paradoxically enough, endowed her with passionate longing and untiring energy

—things temporal must be in harmony with things eternal. She saw humanity blazing in purity and strength, a many-voiced instrument, for the expression of all that was lovely. Her anger burned at the violation of the lives of little children. She fought as one inspired to prevent their misuse. But it was not as one who valued material things at all.

This reality that was hers explains the sense of her continuing presence, felt by many of those who had worked with her, and especially by many working women of Deptford, after her mortal remains had been laid to rest by those of her sister Rachel.

> They that love beyond the World [wrote William Penn] cannot be separated by it. Death is but crossing the World, as Friends do the Seas: they live in one another still.

The Bible was, from her childhood up, the supreme book of her life. Speaking to "young Scots" in 1903 she urged them to study and digest their bibles. "There is no other book like it for the education of the higher ideals."

All through her life when moved she took refuge in the great utterances of the prophets, psalmists, and evangelists. Other words were too slight for her, and these were greater than her own power of expression.

No Church could claim her; she was ready to seek experience and to peer into the inner courts, so far as they would allow her, of all of them. She sought out real people. She was of the Church Universal. Her beliefs she never discussed. They were simple, immutable facts.

"My Church is the Altar of Christ and the House of God," she might have said with Gabriella, "and so is any other Church. I believe in them all."

In later life her inclination led her to worship at, although not to be a member of, the Church of England.

In 1923 she was much moved by Rudolf Steiner, for whom she presided at an Anthroposophical Education Conference at Ilkley.

Yes, Dr. Steiner is a wonderful, glorious man [she wrote to Mrs. Sutcliffe in 1923]. I wish he could meet Mr. —— and the others, alas, they are "too busy" to come here. And now they have "arrived" [presumably become M.P.'s] they will all hum like tops, and not see him any more than the great emperors saw Jesus.

Steiner came here [to Deptford] and everything seemed new and wonderful when he entered the room.

I 'm sending you one of Steiner's books. The strange thing is that no one need tell him anything about themselves. He seems to see one. He knows

already when you come near and yet he never condemns or criticizes, or has bitter thoughts like me.

In St. Nicholas church, a remote and strange figure, she yielded herself up to prayer and worship in so complete a way that, the vicar has witnessed, her presence could be felt, even though she herself were hidden in some far corner.

To that church she turned when Rachel passed away, and to that church she desired her own body to be taken.

She was ever ready to explore with any one who seemed to her to see beyond the confines of this life. In her yearning for contact with Rachel she looked very eagerly to spiritualism, yet she never went to a seance or consulted a medium.

Throughout her life she was conscious of the communion of saints. "I always obey my voices, because they come from God," so might she have spoken any day of her life.

She was helped by visualizing her saints, and so Lord Shaftesbury, the friend of children, became as a living counsellor. In her last years Rachel became the central figure in this communion, all that she ever thought of or did that was holy and pure came to her through her sister.

The friends she loved also entered into the communion. A year before she died she comforted the stricken sister of a gentle and generous benefactor who had passed, by telling of her vision of him resting—all well, and in the company of the spirits of those who had loved and worked for little children, Lord Shaftesbury among them.

Some of those who loved her may have smiled a little at these revelations, unless indeed they heard her tell them, but they were of her real and abiding world, where she lived.

Those who do not hear the voices or see the saints may not deny the experience to such as she was. It may well be if we cannot hear or see that our ears are not attuned or our eyes not clear, our natures not uplifted or our spirits not in communion.

The increase of her perception "was never an earthly event at all."

I was in Ludlow in a rector's family [she wrote to Mrs. Sutcliffe in 1922] teaching languages and music, and Rachel gave me Laurence Oliphant's books. Then one night—well *it* came. I knew what are called the invisible powers, that they are near us all, but reach us I think only after suffering and prayer. As the end draws near one knows it is not an end. I don't understand much. Can explain nothing, only that beyond these voices there are others, and the others

matter most. And the ordinary person can be great, powerful—all powerful if he can get tuned to be the instrument of the Unseen. I got only such a little tuned, so very little.

And on Christmas morning, 1929, she wrote again:

Of course they are here. Our dearest. Why! Rachel came last night and put her little soft cool hand on me. "Be happy," she said, "on this great night." Isn't it folly to say they tell us nothing? Milton said they told him his *Paradise Lost*, and Dante heard them. I am very small—a nobody. But don't they manage all my affairs? Don't they tell me what to do? and what to expect and *who* they are sending to me? *Never once have they been wrong.* They get the money. Thousands and thousands we know who get it.

Not Rachel. No, my sweet sister has other work, and *I* never go to a seance. Never consult a medium.

I 'm taking on the raising of £10,000 just now for a college. We 've got £8,000. I, who had no sense about money and no training and great caution. Why! *All* business ability, as well as great poetry, comes from beyond.

In the constancy of her selfless love, some at least will perceive the supreme message of her life.

Unsatisfied as she was, frustrated in the expression of her personal love, bereaved and

left alone, she rose triumphant and each untoward happening increased the volume of her love, and forced it pulsating with new energy into that human life which was and is so sorely in need of it.

Her being must have yearned for children of her own. Hope must have been high, was high, in the early years — so high that its fall was tragic. But, "no children for me, then all children shall be mine," was the run of her thought. In action she turned with a tender yearning to the worst, the ugliest, the diseased. She had overcome her hindrances, they should also, nothing can stand against the rush of the spirit of love. Did they seem to fail to respond, then she must love more. It was her fault, not theirs.

She gathered the children in her arms, flowers of the most high God, she placed them in a garden, and the radiance of her personality made them very beautiful.

The supreme tragedy of all her life was the death of Rachel, so then, "Rachel's love must be added to mine, she shall work with me." It is literally true that the fierce abandon of her energy increased. She, in her human flesh, did not hinder, but made way for the pure passage of Rachel in the spirit. It may have seemed to some that she made Rachel an

object of worship, but what of it? She endowed her with all the excellences she could conceive, and in so endowing her, gained power to express them.

No friendless man, 'twas well said, can be truly himself;
What a man looketh for in his friend and findeth,
And loving self best, loveth better than himself,
Is his own better self, his live lovable idea,
Flowering by expansion in the loves of his life.

The Testament of Beauty.

So, in reality, Margaret the conqueror is an inspiration to all women, hindered in their normal expression, to conquer by love and by loving serve, though the day be dark and night looms ahead; to love as much as possible, before the chance goes. In the strength of her inspiration life will radiate love, fulfilling itself and moving perfectly in the rhythm of the glorious purposes of God.

Yes, I am alone on earth, I have always been alone.

I see now the loneliness of God is His strength; what would He be if He listened to your jealous little counsels; well, my loneliness shall be my strength too. It is better to be alone with God! His friendship will not fail me, nor His counsel, nor His love. In His strength I will dare, and dare, and dare, until I die.

St. Joan, Scene V.

SONG FOR THE NEW COLLEGE

(Found amongst her papers)

I will sing unto God a new song,
I will pour out for Him a new melody,
For He hath done great things and mighty,
And has shown His grace to me.

He has built His House in beauty,
He has reared its walls with power,
His Majesty is o'er my dwelling,
And His Mercy every hour.

He will fill it with His glory,
Even as waters hide the sea,
His wings shall be our shadow,
In Him all our trust shall be.

Round it Christ's fair angels hover,
Over it spread their webs of light,
Loving thoughts and prayers enfold it,
Like a curtain fair and bright.

Glory to my gracious Saviour,
Praise to God; and highest praise!
He has built His House in beauty,
High and hidden are His ways.

APPENDIX I

PRESENT POSITION OF "SPECIAL SERVICES" ADVOCATED OR CREATED BY MARGARET McMILLAN

School Baths.

There are no statistics available relative to the construction of School Baths. Several have been constructed, but no local authority has undertaken a uniform provision in its schools. Their use has been entirely beneficial but the cost of their provision has been held to be prohibitive in urban areas, having regard to the provision of other facilities for swimming, e.g. Municipal Baths.

Provision of Meals.

One hundred and fifty-three authorities provided meals in the year 1930–1. The number of children fed, owing to economic depression and the increase of unemployment, rose from 265,393 in 1929–30 to 295,121 in 1930–1. The number of meals provided was

40,313,951. Supplementary nourishment in the form of milk or cod-liver oil and malt extract was given where necessary. In addition to official arrangements made by education authorities for the supply of milk in schools, there are in hundreds of schools up and down the country self-supporting voluntary milk-clubs, for which teachers themselves make all arrangements. As these clubs are unofficial, no statistics are available as to the number of children who receive milk in school in this way, but probably about 750,000 do so.

Medical Inspection and Treatment.

Routine school inspection at the three prescribed ages of 5, 8, 12, is reported to be practically complete, while the number of special examinations and re-examinations continues to increase. The number of cleanliness examinations undertaken by school nurses was 14,573,155 in 1930. The percentage of children found to be in an unclean condition was 4·9.

The provision for the treatment of defective vision is now nearly complete. The number of children with defective vision requiring treatment in 1930 was 196,732. Three hundred and fourteen authorities arranged for treatment of 861,729 cases of minor ailments.

The total number of School Clinics provided by the authorities was 1,741.

Provision for dental treatment continues to make slow progress. It is estimated that about 4,000,000 children are in need of yearly dental treatment. During 1930, 2,840,270 children were inspected. Of these 1,974,856, 69·5 per cent, were found to require treatment, and 1,252,552 were actually treated. Dental treatment is one of the less advanced parts of the work of the School Medical Services: this is probably due to two main factors, the expense of treatment, and the widespread indifference to the care of the teeth shown by the parents and the older children.

Nursery Schools.

In 1929 a joint circular was issued by the Minister of Health and the President of the Board of Education calling the attention of Local Authorities to the urgent need of making better provision for children under school age. The number of recognized Nursery Schools increased from twenty-seven on the 1st April, 1929, to forty-five on the 1st November, 1931, twenty-three of these being provided by the Local Education Authorities, and twenty-two by voluntary bodies. In addition, plans of twelve provided Nursery Schools had been

approved by the Board of Education, and twenty-three other proposals were under consideration at some stage. The programmes of Local Education Authorities for the period 1930–3 included preliminary proposals for thirty-two more schools. The changed financial situation since these proposals were framed will, however, probably postpone the provision of some of the schools.

The total accommodation of the forty-five recognized schools was 3,375.

In Bradford there are six Nursery Schools:

(1) Bierley with 105 places.
(2) Bowling Back Lane with 120 places.
(3) Lilycroft with 60 places.
(4) Princeville with 104 places.
(5) St. Ann's (non-provided) with 80 places.
(6) Wapping Road with 50 places.

Three more Nursery Schools are being built at Bradford. Two of them, Swain House and Eccleshill, are on a new plan, with combined Infants' and Nursery Schools and accommodation for 105 children in each. The other, St. Joseph's, with 120 places, is a separate Nursery School.

The London County Council maintain, in addition to the Rachel McMillan Nursery School with 260 places, two other schools—Bethnal Green (Columbia Market), and Stepney

(Old Church Road)—each with 150 places. There are ten non-provided schools aided by grant from the Council, the largest being that founded by the National Froebel Union in 1908, and the recently recognized Foundling Hospital School, Bloomsbury, each having 80 places.

Although the call for economy is likely to hinder the provision of new Nursery Schools by the Local Education Authorities, and the recognition of further voluntary schools by the Board of Education, the steady adoption of Nursery-School methods, as far as possible, in connection with Infants' Schools, will proceed. The Education Act provides that the adequacy of the provision of Nursery Schools in an area shall be taken into consideration before any Bye-Law raising the minimum age of school attendance to six years is approved. No area is so far in a position to consider taking advantage of this provision.

A voluntary rural Nursery School has been founded at Dartington Hall, Totnes. It is equipped for research.

HEALTH OF THE SCHOOL CHILD

(*An extract from the Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education for the year* 1930)

No one can consider the daily work done in these five "non-medical" directions—cleanliness, nutrition, physical exercise, open air, health teaching—on behalf of five million children, over the period of nine years of their school life, without being convinced that its effect is almost wholly beneficial. This is no temporary medical or surgical aid to one child in four. It is a continual training in habits of health, much of which cannot fail to stand the test of time, *affecting the entire school population.* It is most economical in the long run, and least costly in operation. Moreover, it is a widening culture, bringing with it a widening outlook, which is transforming the whole outlook.

APPENDIX II

OBJECTS OF THE NURSERY SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION OF GREAT BRITAIN

THE object of the Association is to make more widely known the work already achieved by Nursery Schools and their claim to public support, with a view to ensuring that the clauses in the Education Acts of 1918 for England and Wales, and Scotland, providing for Nursery Schools shall be carried out effectively. It is hoped that the Association will be the means of forming a strong body of opinion which shall influence public action as regards Nursery Schools.

APPENDIX III

THE MARGARET McMILLAN OPEN-AIR NURSERY SCHOOL AND AFTER ASSOCIATION

(*Association planned by Margaret McMillan in the last year of her life*)

THE Association is formed to forward the cause of Nurture as an essential element in education at all ages. It is conscious of and

admits the great service rendered through medical inspection and school clinics to the children of the nation, but views with deep concern the evasion as yet of all adequate provision for nurture in schools of various orders, nursery, as well as primary and secondary. More especially is it concerned with this failure to achieve the greatest results of education with nurture in congested and poor areas of our industrial cities.

The steps which we consider essential and for whose adoption this Association is pledged to work are as follows:

(1) The provision of Open-Air Nursery Schools in all industrial areas, such schools to be run on a nine-hour basis, so as to ensure the possibility of giving adequate nurture even to the poorest children in crowded areas.

(2) The adoption of the village type of open-air shelters, so as to ensure the possibility of gathering large numbers of children into schools without any risk of overcrowding and without loss of that homely atmosphere which is essential to the well-being and progress of young children.

(3) The adoption of a system of staffing which will safeguard children adequately and without injustice to or disregard of the reasonable demands of the teaching profession.

(4) The raising of the nursery school age to seven or plus.

(5) Three meals per day to be served in all Open-Air Nursery Schools.

(6) The adoption of the element of nurture in all primary schools, as illustrated in the following provisions:

(*a*) All new schools to be of the adjustable and open-air type.

(*b*) Provision for midday meal dining-room and kitchen to be included in plans. In open-air conditions the former can be a room used for other purposes. The meals to be paid for, as in nursery schools, by parents, and only "assisted" by public funds where necessity arises.

(*c*) Provision for the learning of hygiene by the confirmation of habits learned in the Open-Air Nursery School.
To this end, inclusion of hot- as well as cold-water taps and baths, and towels, etc., for the practical demonstration and daily observance of the teaching of hygiene.

(*d*) Such readjustment and increase of the teaching staff as are necessary for the advancement of the welfare of children.

(7) The use, under supervision to be arranged, not only of school playgrounds, but also of classrooms, for the benefit of children in the evenings, so that costly school premises and amenities may not, as at present, be used only for a small number of hours daily even in areas where bad housing and overcrowding is general.

The Association concerns itself mainly with nurture as the organic and continuous process which is the major part of all real education. This great truth, ignored in the past, should not, we are confident, be obscured any longer. For lack of its admission our best efforts have been foiled and crippled. Again and again we have seen how learning of any kind becomes barren under conditions that ignore the health and sanity of the learner. There is no reform that is not rendered more or less negative by the persistent tendency to ignore the needs of happy and continuously nurtured childhood.

This Association exists to put forward this view: to pursue, develop, and realize the idea of nurture in education.

Incidentally our first line of attack is the demand for the Open-Air Nursery School, organized as a nurture centre, with a nine-hour day, admitting children at the age of two, and introducing elements of nurture in education, none of which shall be abandoned, but rather developed, in later school life.

Many interests make war on every effort for children's deliverance. They must all be met, and all conciliated at last. But the battle has been long, and is now entering on a new phase.

MARGARET McMILLAN.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