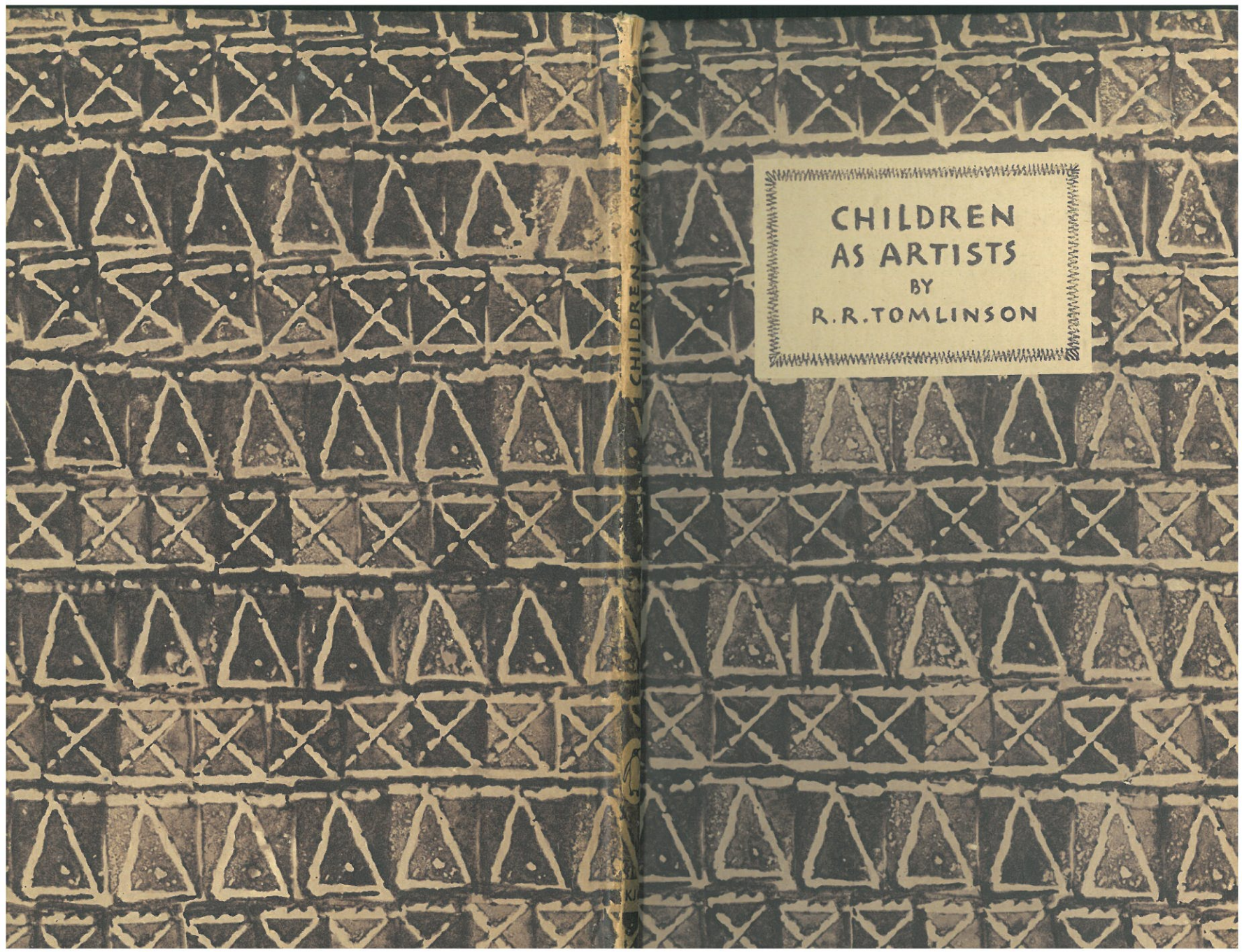
CHILDREN AS ARTISTS
BY
R. R. TOMLINSON
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R. R. TOMLINSON
Senior Inspector of Art to the
London County Council

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Lino cut, *Stampede of Elephants*. by William R. Jerrens, age 13, pupil at a Secondary School.

To Amanda

A GENERATION ago, the title of this book would have been considered facetious, not only by the general public but by the majority of the members of the teaching profession. For it was generally believed that although children could of course draw and even paint, their best attempts produced only bad drawings and bad paintings; that is, when these were compared with the works of adults and judged by academic standards—the only standards then generally accepted. Owing to the courage and tenacity of pioneer teachers, however, and the fuller understanding by the general public of modern developments in painting, all but a few will today accept the title of this book without question.

No claim is made by the author that children's drawings have the same art content as the work of adult artists, but he does contend that they have a similar appeal to the emotions. Much naturally depends on the sensibility of critics, and on their insight into the æsthetic mood and aims of the artist, however young or however mature he may be. Little is to be gained by consulting the dictionary for a definition of art: for art,

being one of the fundamental things of human experience, can no more be defined than can life itself—or time, or love, or any other basic principle or passion. Those who cherish the three Greek ideals—the good, the true, and the beautiful—identify art with the beautiful. Others mystify matters by quoting Keats's celebrated dictum: Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty. But the very statement that art is concerned with beauty has itself been challenged. Such an authority as the late Roger Fry once said, 'The word "beauty" I try hard to avoid', and Max I. Friedländer in his recent book on *Art and Connoisseurship* appears to find a similar difficulty in the use of the word 'beauty' ; for he says, 'Since beauty in nature and that which has value in art are divergent, we feel inclined to avoid the expression "beauty" in judging art'.

The attributes which are so appealing in the unsophisticated work of children are their integrity, frankness and inevitability, and those who admire their drawings most, refer to them as being charming rather than beautiful. It cannot be claimed that their work is skilfully expressed, neither is it desirable that it should be so; for a child's means of expression is found to be adequate for the occasion by those with sympathy and understanding.

The author therefore proposes to confine himself to describing the artistic training of children in the past and the present, and to speculating (with some misgivings) on future developments and possibilities. He has chosen his illustrations from as wide a range and area as possible; and with a view to as varied an art content and spirit as possible. For one must look at children's drawings to understand them. The written word cannot replace or reproduce their spirit. Whether the little people who have done the pictures shown in this book are worthy of the title of artists, the reader must decide for himself.

The similarity between the unsophisticated work of children today in all civilised countries and that of primitive people leads to the conclusion that the means

and modes of expression in both graphic and plastic forms are inherent in the human race. The recapitulation theory, the belief that the development of the child follows somewhat the same course as the history of the race, may or may not have been conclusively vindicated, but it seems true that in dealing with children we are dealing with little primitive people. The term 'primitive' is used with reference to two distinct groups. It is used by the ethnographer to describe uncivilised people, and by the art historian to denote the early stages of a well defined school of painting. When used in the latter sense it is most commonly applied to the Italian school at the time of Cimabue and Giotto. Primitives of both groups, however, resemble children in one essential respect: in their artistic urge to explore with zeal entirely new paths untutored and unaided.

To enable us to gain some knowledge of the principles which underlie the evolution of Art, it is advisable to study the work that has been produced by the primitive peoples of the first group. One fact of great importance that can be gleaned from this study is that a great deal of artistic expression owes its birth to attempts at realism —attempts faithfully to reproduce nature. The fact that æsthetic laws and the laws of nature are intimately connected may be responsible for this instinctive association. The study and understanding of both are essential to the equipment of the educationist, of the teacher, and indeed of all who have the welfare of children at heart.

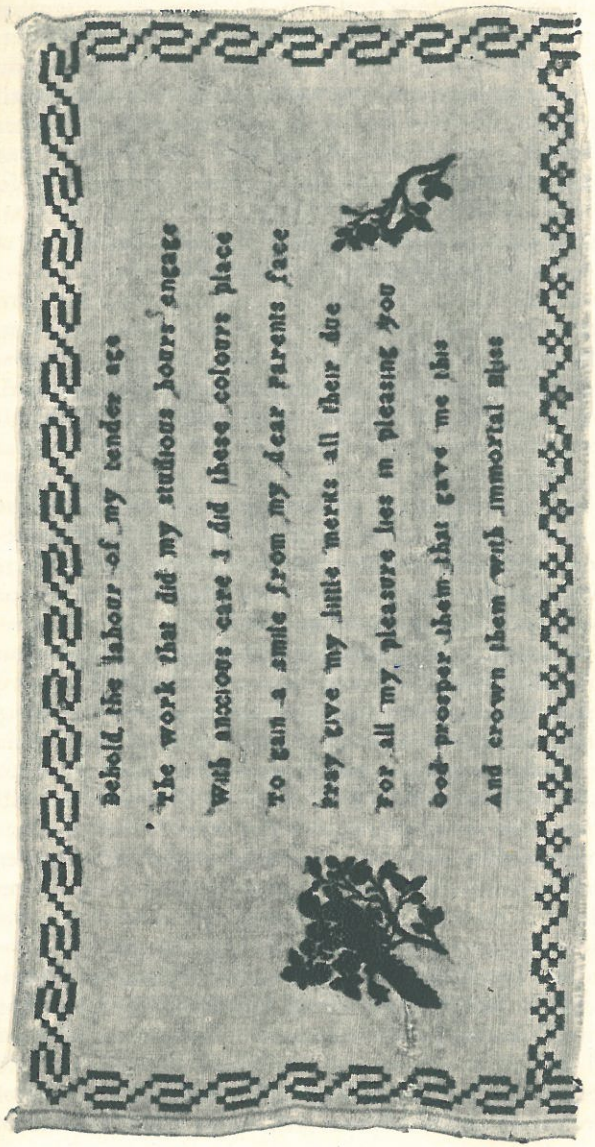
Space will not permit of further consideration here of this important relationship in the evolution of art. Those seeking further information will, however, find much to help and guide them by a close study of primitive art and the history of art generally. They are referred for this purpose to such helpful works as *Evolution in Art* by Dr. A. C. Haddon, *Primitive Art* by L. Adam (a Pelican book), *Decorative Patterns of the Ancient World* by Sir Flinders Petrie and the guide books to the Ethnographical Sections of the British Museum, published by the Museum authorities.

A study of the work of primitive people shows that the urge to draw and create is innate. It is vitally important, therefore, that this form of expression should not only be allowed to grow naturally but be encouraged and fostered. This innate urge in a child to draw and create is a precious inheritance, the value of which has not yet been fully realised by education authorities; neither has the beneficial effect of its encouragement upon other forms of expression and growth been apprehended by them sufficiently.

The world's great educationists, however, have from the time of Ancient Greece—and probably before that time—recognised the value of co-ordinating sensory and mental training. Plato and Aristotle, both of whom dominated the intellectual world until the Middle Ages, stressed the importance of training the hand as a preliminary to the formation of right habits of mind. Plato, furthermore, recognised also the paramount importance of æsthetic laws in their application to education.

Their teaching was furthered by such great thinkers as Rabelais, Montaigne and Comenius—particularly the latter. In the seventeenth century the English philosopher John Locke advocated the training of the senses and by doing so inspired Rousseau. Contributions to the cause were made by Salzmann, Pestalozzi, Herbart and Froebel. All these great educationists recognised and stressed the value of development through sense-perception as against the time-honoured formal study of grammar. They revolted against the theory that education is a purely intellectual discipline. They maintained that the essential thing in education is the development of all human powers, physical, mental, and spiritual, and that hand and eye training is as important as the study of Latin and Greek. These theories at last influenced progressive educators, and ultimately the State itself.

Just over a hundred years ago the British Government appointed a Select Committee to enquire into the best means of extending a knowledge of the arts among the people of the country. Their report stated that it would



Sampler.

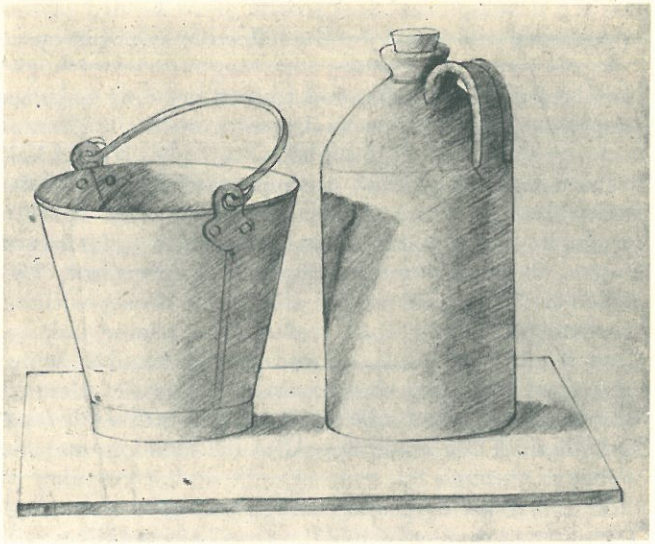
be an excellent thing both for the artist and the consumer of works of art to make art, to a certain extent, part of elementary national education; it had already been done in Germany and Switzerland. It was not until after 1850, however, that, as a result of renewed interest awakened by the great Exhibition, art teaching was introduced into the curriculum in State-aided schools in England. At last, art as a subject was recognised as an integral part of a liberal education, and not merely a polite accomplishment for the leisured classes.

As a result of the industrial revolution and the consequent reproductions of the work of the artist craftsman by the machine, industry began to ask for skilled workers, and since then an ever-growing demand has persisted. Thus, when the protagonists of the Art and Handicraft movement in schools used the slogan 'Skill of Hand and Eye', they did not only appeal to the practical sense of the nation in general, but more particularly to the industrial magnate to whom skilled hands were of immediate importance. In view of this situation, it is not surprising that the course of art study at first drawn up for use in schools in general was systematically and methodically arranged, and depressingly lacking in imagination and understanding, aiming at technical qualities very much in the same way as the samplers with which, long before boys began to develop their skill of hand, girls were made to stitch maudlin sentiment in verse on to canvas. This mechanical art training of the nineteenth century was, incidentally, no British peculiarity. Conditions in other countries were just as bad. The reader is referred for fuller information to the chapter on methods of teaching art in the principal countries in the world in *Picture Making by Children* by the author (published by The Studio Ltd.). A review of these early soul-destroying and sterile methods first introduced into the curriculum, and the various developments that followed until the modern movement was initiated, will prove to be enlightening, even amusing, to those who were not subjected to them. Others will inevitably, in view of

modern developments and results, be reminded of lost opportunity and talent by the following brief survey.

In the first place, children were taught to draw straight lines of different lengths, and trained not only to judge proportion but direction as distinct from the horizontal and perpendicular. This method, during the second half of the nineteenth century, was replaced by the use of the freehand copy. These freehand copies usually took the form of a symmetrical linear rendering of an architectural feature, the most popular being the Acanthus leaf. The skilled child was eventually allowed to draw, without mechanical aid, the Ionic volute—a fearsome task indeed. To justify the cause of so-called 'freehand drawing' advocated by them, contemporary authorities claimed that there are observable in freehand outlines certain æsthetic qualities which appeal to the emotions and stir within us through the sense of sight similar emotions to those awakened by music through the sense of hearing. They argued that individual lines can be beautiful as well as combination of lines. Attention was called to the beauty to be found in the contrast between thick lines and thin, and the gradation from thick to thin, in good copper-plate penmanship. It was further pointed out that beauties of combination of lines are the result of conformity with certain fixed laws derived in the main from the study of natural structure as seen in the growth of plants. The ornamental classic treatment of the Acanthus leaf was held up as an outstanding example of the observance of these laws. Drawing in tone, or so-called light and shade, was a development not readily accepted, but was eventually given a place in the syllabus together with freehand drawing.

Discipline was still maintained, however, by subject matter. Fundamental geometric forms, such as the sphere, cylinder and cube, were represented. But they, too, left the child uninterested and unsatisfied. The use of tone in place of line led to what was known as the mass drawing movement. Objects were represented in mass without the aid of an outline, and it was found that other



A typical example of model drawing (old method) by a boy age 12.

than purely geometrical forms had formative worth. This introduction cleared the way for the late nineteenth century 'Back to Nature' cult. Children were permitted and encouraged to draw natural and fashioned objects of simple character, such as fruit and flower pots, and it was claimed that the study of these in line in form, and, what was a progressive innovation at the time, in colour—so appealing to children—provided a complete education in the art of representation. For representation, in a literal and photographic sense, was regarded as the ultimate goal.

The attention called to the importance of good lettering by the fine work of Edward Johnston also had a considerable effect upon the art syllabus in both Elementary and Secondary schools. As a consequence, script writing, developing into the illuminated page, became an addi-

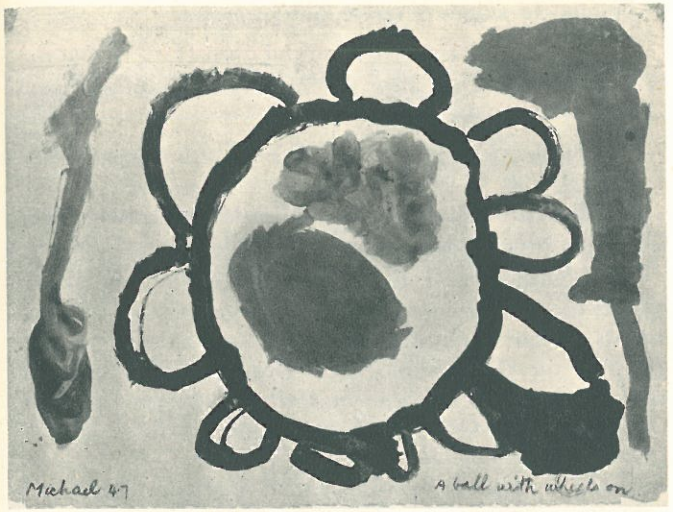
A group of models (new method) by Phyllis Harvey, age 15, pupil at a Secondary School.

tional subject. Plant form in line and colour latterly found favour, and the claims of industry, into which so many children found their way upon leaving school, called attention to the importance of design. So-called exercises in design took the form of the conventional rendering of plants and flowers; but they were invariably, if not almost exclusively, symmetrical arrangements in the flat. These surface patterns were subsequently applied to various materials and shapes in the round. Hence the term 'applied art' which is unfortunately still so extensively used. The author, in his book entitled *Crafts for Children* (published by The Studio Ltd.), being aware of, and opposed to, this practice, pointed out that:—

> 'Art cannot be applied; it is inherent in the very construction of an object. In view of this the art and craft course in a school must either be under the direction of one and the same person

or be closely linked. The link between the two subjects is design. The term design is often confused with ornament or decoration. The term, however, connotes everything connected with the production of an article apart from the craftsman's manipulative skill. The form in the first place claims attention with due regard to material, for out of material all appropriate design should grow. Embellishment or decoration is prompted by a desire to make the most of a piece of craftwork by going beyond what is necessary or utilitarian. Such decoration must, however, be related to the form of the article and to the material in which it is made.'

At this time the use of abstract motifs was not encouraged, and consequently they were rarely seen. It can be truly said that from the time when art was compulsorily included in the curriculum, until the time of the new movement and the use of modern methods, the aim of the art teacher was, and indeed in some cases still is, to develop in the children under his care technical skill with adult standards in mind. This attitude was due in the first place to the fact that the specialist teacher engaged by education authorities was drawn from the practising profession and not from the ranks of trained art teachers. An examination of art syllabuses commonly used during recent years, that is immediately before the introduction of modern methods, which will be fully dealt with later, shows that they provided for the study of natural and fashioned objects, drawing from plants, lettering and design. In view of the great possibilities opened up to the teacher for the development of the creative power in children and for the encouragement of their natural reaction to visual beauty, it is regrettable to have to relate that there are still teachers of art in schools, both in this and other countries, who contend that the teaching of their subject through the means described above as those in use up to quite recent years is the best means of providing for the art education of children. What is even more important, it was considered that this formal training provided the pupils with the means of apprehending beauty in nature, in art and in everyday things. During the long period under consideration, throughout which the ideas of the teacher



A Ball with Wheels on, by Michael, age 4½, pupil at an evacuated Nursery School.

were imposed upon the child, a few enlightened pioneers, teachers and in particular psychologists, had been busily engaged in experiment and research. They refused to ignore the natural instincts, interests and tendencies of the child.

It is not possible within the scope of this book to consider fully the work of the psychologists; it is, however, helpful to review some of their discoveries and conclusions. Psychologists are largely responsible for the important developments in methods of teaching which have taken place during recent years under progressive authorities. Although their convictions vary, they all agree that children pass through certain well-defined stages of development and that during these periods methods of teaching must vary accordingly.

Briefly the stages of development are:—

FIRST.—The stage of manipulation (2 to 3 years).

SECOND.—The stage of child symbolism (3 to 8 years).

THIRD.—The stage of pseudo-realism, a transitional stage (8 to 11 years).

FOURTH.—The stage of realisation and awakening which coincides with puberty.

Both parents and teachers are strongly advised to study the conclusions and discoveries of the psychologists. Their attention is called particularly to the chapter on the Pedagogy of Drawing in *Educational Problems* by Prof. G. Stanley Hall, *Mental and Scholastic Tests* by Prof. Cyril Burt and to two articles in *The Journal of Experimental Pedagogy* (Volume I, No. 3, and Volume II, No. 2), in which Dr. P. B. Ballard describes important discoveries relating to children's preferences as a result of the examination of some thousands of children's drawings.

Meanwhile, pioneer teachers in this and other countries, who also respected the natural and instinctive means of expression they found in the possession of children, were busily engaged upon experimental forms of teaching. Mention can only be made here of a few outstanding names. In America, for example, Prof. Wesley Dow did most valuable work in calling attention to children's creative powers and freeing them from the restrictions of the disciplinarian. Over a hundred years ago in Germany, Friedrich Froebel demonstrated the value of freedom in education. The teaching of drawing on Froebelian principles is still widely practised throughout the British Isles, particularly in infant schools. But perhaps the credit for most effectively clearing the way for the introduction of modern methods, in this country at least, should go to Mr. Abblett, and particularly to R. Catterson Smith, Director of Art Education for the City of Birmingham. Working somewhat along the lines used in France by Lecoq-de-Boisbaudren for training the

Mummy, by Shirley, age 4, pupil at an evacuated Nursery School.

artist's memory, Catterson Smith drew attention to the value of training the visual memory as an aid to creative art. What is still more important in his teaching, however, is that he made the exercise of the creative faculty the basis of artistic training.

Having recognised the value of the work of the psychologist and pioneer teacher, the credit for the revolutionary reform which has taken place in the methods of teaching art in most civilised countries, in Europe and America in particular, must be given to Professor Cizek of Vienna; for, in spite of ridicule, incredulity and firm opposition, he demonstrated the benefits which accrue from releasing the mental images and the creative impulses innate in children. Franz Cizek was born in 1865 at Leitmeritz on the Elbe in Bohemia, where he studied art until he was nineteen years old. He then became a student at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna. It was at his lodgings there, in the home of a carpenter, that he first became interested in the art of children. The carpenter's family, with whom he soon lived on the most friendly terms, watched him draw and paint in his rooms, and became so interested that they wanted to be taught by him to become painters also. Instead of teaching them, he gave them materials and encouraged them to try without his assistance. The results both interested and astonished him. This interest in the unaided work of children caused him to notice more closely children drawing with chalk on a wooden fence, which, by a fortunate chance, was opposite the house in which he lived. What intrigued him most was the dissimilarity of their drawings from those produced by children in schools. Having made this discovery, he began to study, whenever he had an opportunity, children's drawings done under similar conditions. He found that children invariably drew the same things in the same way when out of school and that their drawings were quite unrelated to those produced under formal instruction.

He proceeded therefore to collect the unaided work of children. At about the same time, in the year 1896, the younger generation of Austrian artists severed connections with those working along traditional lines known as the 'Akademiker' and founded the 'Sezession.' These young painters were like their colleagues in other countries, particularly in France, searching for new

The Refugees, by Mary Dibson, age 11, pupil at a Secondary School.

forms of expression. To them and to architects Cizek showed his collections of children's drawings. They immediately appreciated their worth and saw in them the means, as did Cizek, of the foundations for a new method of art teaching. It was, however, a more difficult task to secure the approval of the education authorities, and to put his new methods into practice. Cizek's programme of study was simple and brief: 'Let the children grow,

develop and mature'. After passing through many trials and tribulations, he at last succeeded, and his name and teaching became world-famous. Those who are desirous of reading more fully about the history and great work of Professor Cizek are recommended to read *Child Art and Franz Cizek*, written by his advocate and close friend Dr. Wilhelm Viola (published by the Austrian Junior Red Cross, with a foreword by the author). Here Professor Cizek's credo will be found. He believes that each child is a law unto himself and should be allowed to develop his own technique. No child should, therefore, be subjected to a rigid course of technical education. Ideas and methods of expression of adults should never be imposed upon children. Children should be given a choice of material with which to express and create. Their expression in the chosen material should be allowed to mature according to their innate laws of development. It should not be hastened artificially or altered to satisfy adult ideas. Above all, children's efforts should never be ridiculed and criticism should always be sympathetically given. Care should be taken not to praise skill at the expense of creative ideas.

Professor Cizek gave a warning against the sophisticated, for even what is childlike can by clever children be imitated. He had admitted children to his classes who had marked creative ability, with the effect that those who were not so gifted soon felt their shortcomings and absented themselves after a short stay. He formed the opinion that at the age of puberty the creative power of both boys and girls became dormant, in girls at a somewhat older age than in boys. Although the literal copying of natural and fashioned objects—which he had found to be so much in favour in schools at the time of his discovery—is according to him not art, he recognised in the power of accurate representation an international language which should be in the possession of all children before they leave school. Care should be taken, however, that children are able to distinguish between the literal copy and the artist's interpretation.

Exhibitions of the work of children done under his care and guidance were held in London in 1908 and created quite a sensation. Similar exhibitions were subsequently held in the principal towns in Europe and America. Many converts to his methods were made by these, with the result that new methods of teaching art to children were introduced. As has already been pointed out, however, old methods still persisted.

During this transitional period a pupil of R. Catterson Smith, Miss Marion Richardson, was working along somewhat parallel lines at the High School for Girls in Dudley. Although Miss Richardson had studied the methods advocated by Professor Cizek, her methods do not coincide with them. She contended that all children are gifted with the power to create and should therefore be given equal opportunity to express themselves. The results of her teaching at Dudley, completely revolutionary in this country, were first given publicity by being included in an exhibition of drawings by children of artists held at Roger Fry's Omega Workshops.

Roger Fry, always ready to support progressive work and experiment, subsequently arranged a special exhibition of the work by pupils of Miss Richardson, which was held at the Grafton Galleries in London in 1917. It met with a mixed reception, but was highly praised by discerning critics. Miss Richardson was appointed Art Lecturer at the Institute of Education, University of London, in the year 1924. Teachers trained and influenced by her were appointed to various parts of the country and thus spread her methods. In the year 1930 she was appointed District Inspector of Art by the London County Council, and it was in this capacity that her influence on the art teaching of children became most active and effective. With splended energy she put her progressive ideas into practice and every opportunity to do so was afforded to her by the Education Committee of that great authority. Perhaps the most important development made in the teaching of art to children has been in the method of teaching design, for the under-

standing by the future citizens of the principles underlying good design can have the most vital repercussions upon a nation and its industry.

The patterns of primitive peoples are derived from various sources, but mainly from two: from attempts to make lifelike representations of nature, usually taking the form of animals and the human figure, which are afterwards simplified until they become decorative symbols, or from the use of tools and the characteristics of certain materials and processes. Children today, however, are too often required to produce decorative motifs without craft experience or other assistance. Until quite recently, indeed, most children were taught to dissect plant forms for inspiration and to torture natural plant growth to fill complicated geometrical shapes. Patterns so derived were rarely related to material or craft, but unfortunately satisfied examination requirements, and still do so in some cases.

Miss Richardson, being fully aware of the need for new methods in the teaching of pattern-making to children, fully conscious of the difficulty they experienced in making suitable motifs, associated lettering and writing with design in a most successful manner. 'Repeating', 'all over patterns', and so-called 'writing patterns' of rich variety are produced by children in schools today. These are related to potato and lino-block printing processes on various materials. Plate 8 is 'grown'—to use the child's own expression—from the letter S, and fills the space in a most satisfying manner. The cover of this book is an exact reproduction of a potato-print made by a child aged fourteen. The desire on the part of primitive people to convey information in the past led to the pictograph, the pictograph in turn to the symbol and letter, and these ultimately led to writing. To reverse the order of procedure is not unsound, now that the making of the necessities of life no longer provides craft activities for all, and the consequent acquaintance with various materials and processes. Results obtained certainly justify the experiments that have been made and provide

A War Wedding, by Betty Holmes, age 14, pupil at a Secondary School.

a rich addition to the art course. Miss Richardson's methods are fully described and illustrated in a series of books entitled *Writing and Writing Patterns*, published by the University of London Press.

The division of design into two great classes—

(1) Design in the 'flat',

(2) Design in the 'round',

calls attention to the need for closer consideration of Class 2 in the future. This can only be obtained by a closer association in schools between the teaching of art and the teaching of craft. This need is fully realised by progressive teachers, who deeply desire that the children under their care should, by the time they leave school, have learned to appreciate the significance of fine spatial relations and beauty of structure, as well as of surface decoration.

We have now considered a wide swing of the art education pendulum from primitive ages, through the classic and mediæval periods and the days of the Industrial Revolution in this country, right down to modern times. Having in mind the creative power innate in children, the sound principles which their spontaneous efforts satisfied, and the rediscovery of these principles in their relation to art education today, it is important that education authorities should make sure of the right direction for any further movement. Progress demands movement, and teachers must and will supply the motive power. If this is to be supplied without hindrance, it is vitally important to overcome obstacles that exist in the minds of those opposed to modern methods. Their opposition comes as a rule from faith in the supposed virtues of technical skill in young people. They contend that the advocates of modern methods actually admire the technical incompetence displayed by children in their efforts to express their ideas and experiences. This is not so. What they admire is creativeness, and study and investigation have convinced them that insistence upon the attainment by children of technical skill alone causes creative power to atrophy for want of activity. Skill,

leading to slickness of expression, is a poor exchange indeed for creative power.

Perhaps the most serious difference which exists between these two contending parties is the high value placed by those wedded to academic standards upon the possession by children of a knowledge of the principles of perspective. They quote as their authority Leonardo da Vinci, who commenced his *Treatise of Painting* by making the following assertion: ' Whoever would apply himself to painting must, in the first place, learn perspective. This will enable him to dispose things in their proper places, and to give due dimensions to each. Having done this he must learn to design, choosing for that purpose some able master who, at the same time, may give him an insight into the contours of figures; he ought then to consult Nature, to confirm himself in what he has already learnt; and lastly, let him apply himself to the study and imitation of the greatest masters, in order to get a habit of reducing what he has learnt into practice.' Leonardo da Vinci wrote this in the early sixteenth century, for the benefit of the adult intending to become a practitioner, not for the benefit of teachers of children.

By insisting on correct perspective in the art work of children, the same adverse effect will result as by overstressing technical attainment. Only at the stage of realisation and awakening—'the fourth stage of development', so described by the psychologist—children usually become aware of the shortcomings in their attempts to express their ideas in a realistic way. Today public advertisement, photography and the cinema tend to quicken this process, and inquisitive children desire to imitate adult expression, and ask for guidance in their attempts to do so. They cannot, and should not, be denied enlightenment and should be given the advantage of progressive ideas and knowledge.

The principles of perspective can be simply explained to any child of average intelligence and be kept in their proper relation to picture making by the trained and sympathetic teacher. The work produced in the Junior

Geometrical models used as motifs in design, by Betty Pearce, age 12, pupil at a Secondary School.

Art Departments of our Schools of Art has demonstrated beyond question how readily those in training for specialised work in various branches of art industry can acquire the necessary technical skill. It is therefore extreme folly to sterilise creative power in the community at large by insisting upon technical attainment during the period of general education.

It is now only left for us to consider future developments. Miss Richardson has demonstrated by her teaching that all have creative ability in more or less degree; she has also proved by results that creative power does not wane or disappear at the age of puberty, when children are understood and taught sympathetically at this critical stage in their growth. No standardised or

sure method has, however, been discovered which will tide over this period, neither is it desirable that the same method should be used for all. One book dealing specially with this problem has already appeared in print, entitled *Child Art to Man Art*, by William Johnstone (published by Macmillan). Mr. Johnstone, a practising artist and teacher of wide experience, has made in this book many valuable suggestions for carrying a child over the difficult period which Professor Cizek in his teaching noted and did not attempt to overcome.

The most noteworthy suggestions are perhaps the Collage, Montage and Photomontage methods. Briefly, these methods are advocated to satisfy the growing critical faculty and replace the dreary academic method whilst powers of expression are halting and developing. Photomontage has, of course, already been extensively and successfully used in the field of advertisement art; pupils are therefore not unacquainted with this method and can readily adapt the process to aid their own expression, and afterwards interpret the compositions by painting their own version.

Creative ability is not to be found more active at this stage—or any other stage of development for that matter—in the possession of those born and brought up in different classes of society. The illustrations in this book, for instance, have been drawn from the poorest districts in London and the Provinces as well as from the Public Schools and those for the comparatively wealthy. Environment can and does have a profound effect, however, upon the form which conceptions take. It is therefore of great importance that children should be made acquainted with the world's great art and craft in addition to well designed things of modern manufacture, and that they should live and work in as suitable and beautiful surroundings as possible.

Education authorities have recognised the importance of this; and a great deal of thought is being given to the placing and design of school buildings by architects. Colour schemes, lighting and proportions of classrooms

The Cattle Market, by A. Smith, age 10, pupil at a Public School.

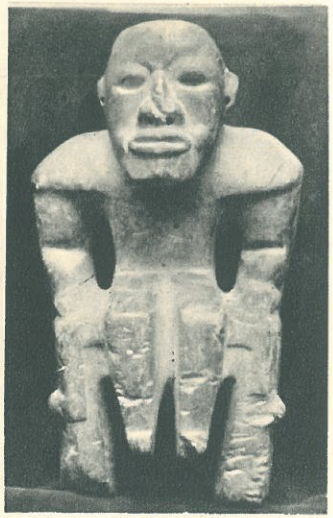
The Allotment, by Pamela Dickens, age 15, pupil at a Secondary School.

have also been given due consideration. Moreover, many education authorities have formed circulation collections of pictures for their schools. The London County Council, one of the first to recognise the cultural value of good pictures for school decoration, has a fine collection of reproductions, which includes all suitable examples that have been published in this and other countries. In this connection it is worthy of note that children, when given the opportunity to choose their own pictures for their classrooms, invariably choose modern examples, work of the post-impressionists in particular, rather than reproductions of the work of old masters.

'Going to Work' by van Gogh is a special favourite. No doubt this is due to the fact that the work of the old masters involved not only knowledge, skill, thought and sensibility, but sustained emotion which children are not capable of apprehending. Much good can yet be done, however, by giving children the opportunity of seeing well-designed things of everyday use as well as paintings. It is therefore to be hoped that a circulation collection of well-designed articles will be formed for this purpose in the near future. It has been mentioned that Professor Cizek advocated a choice by children of the material in which to express their ideas, but his advice, which is based on sound principles, has unfortunately not been taken by many teachers. Some races as well as some individuals possess this sense to a higher degree than others.

There is one aspect of art teaching, however, which has been generally overlooked, and that is the development in children of the power of plastic expression. Their drawings and paintings come in the main from visual images. Muscular and touch images are, however, just as vividly felt by them. Because this is so, many conceive both subject matter and form in three dimensions, and should have an opportunity for expressing themselves plastically. The example illustrated on the next page is curiously similar to negro sculpture, and negro sculpture has rightly been defined by Roger Fry as an

(*a*) A carving from a block of salt, by Christopher Whaite, age 9, taught by his father.



(*b*) Archaic greenstone figure, Chimaltenango, Guatemala.

example of complete plastic freedom. By giving children a choice of plastic materials and suitable tools as well as paint and paper in which to express their ideas and emotions, their tendencies as to two-dimensional or three-dimensional expression can be readily ascertained.

A close study of the following plates will convince all but the most sceptical that the creative power displayed by children encouraged to express their ideas by new methods of teaching opens up rich possibilities for the future which should not be overlooked. The great crisis through which this and other countries are passing, although not previously mentioned in this book, cannot be ignored, for it is to the children of today that we must look for the great reconstruction of our towns and of society which all right-thinking people hope to see brought about when peace returns. The children themselves have not ignored the war, as indeed they do

not ignore or overlook any scenes or happenings in everyday life, and they will apply themselves to the important task which lies ahead with their usual vigour when the time comes for them to act. They will act aright if, in the meantime, their imaginative and creative powers are allowed to grow and strengthen for the task by the right methods of education.

Art teachers through their organisations 'The National Society of Art Masters' and 'The Society of Education in Art' are busily engaged in preparing progressive programmes for the future. The latter society in particular, which has been formed by the amalgamation of 'The Art Teachers Guild' and 'The New Society of Art Teachers', has realised the wider implications and possibilities opened out in education by the development of creative power; for its aims cover the whole range of art in society and involve the acceptance as a first principle in all education of the development to full maturity of the imaginative power of the individual. Its members believe as does the author most sincerely that art—in the widest sense of the word—is a vital part, indeed the very soul, of all education and that it is of the greatest importance in helping to mould the adult of the future and he in turn the great new world, for, as Matthew Arnold—an inspector of schools—has told us in his writings: 'Culture seeks to do away with classes and sects; to make the best that has been thought and known in the world current everywhere; to make all men live in an atmosphere of sweetness and light.'

LIST OF TEXT PICTURES

LIST OF COLOUR PLATES

1 *A Fairy*, by Lorna Ferris, age 9, Secondary School.

2 *Two People Walking in the Sun*, by Rachel Cohen, age 5, Preparatory School.

3 *In a Waiting Room*, by E. Cullender, age 8, Junior Girls' School.

4 *Still Life Painting with Snowdrops*, by Doreen Stokes, age 11, High School.

5 *After the Raid*, by A. Cutmore, age 12, Secondary School.

6 *Landscape*, painted on the spot, by Helen Oakey, age 13, High School.

7 *The Seaside*, by Joyce Fegan, age 14, High School.

8 *Design grown from the Letter S*, by Betty, age 8, Junior Girls' School.

9 *Still Life Group with Flowers*, by Audrey Hislop, age 13½, Central School.

10 *Canal Scene*, by M. R. Warrener, age 16, Public School.

11 *Museum Study from African Sculpture*, by Vera Hole, age 15, High School.

12 *Portrait of a Sailor*, by Mary Bartlett, age 14, Central School.

13 *Portrait of a Fellow Pupil*, by Betty Jenkins, age 13½, Junior Art School.

14 *The Anderson Shelter*, by Barbara Vincent, age 13½, Junior Art School.

15 *The Sailor's Return*, by Ian Thomson, age 16, Public School.

16 *The Bombed Home*, by J. Tilley, age 16, Secondary School.

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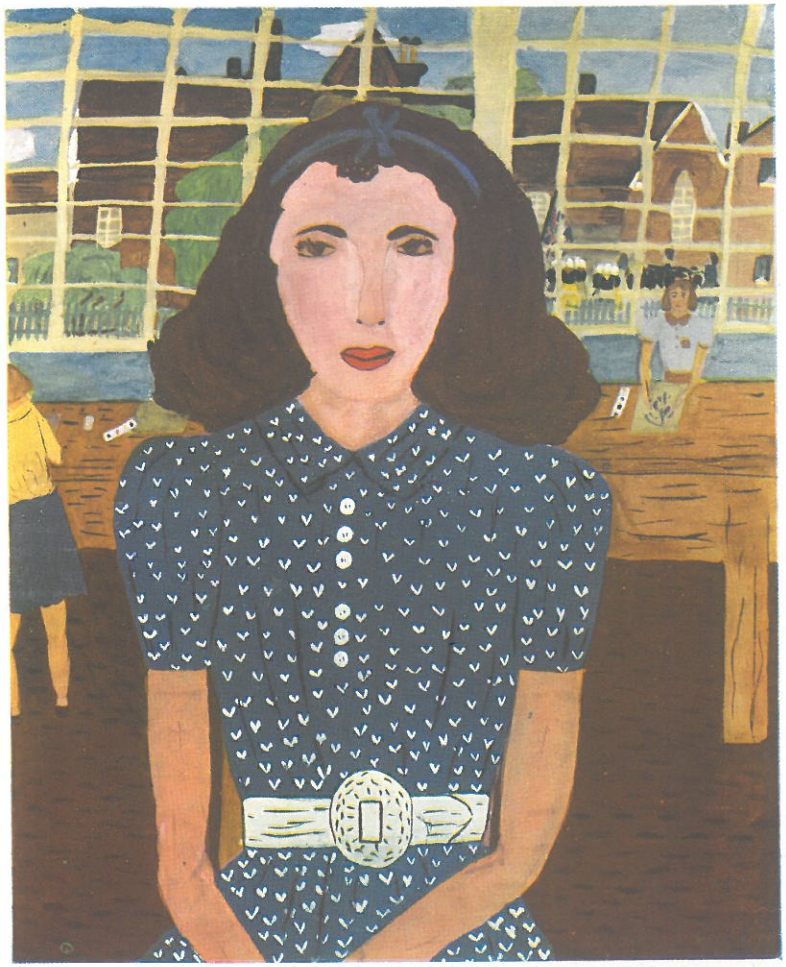

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