

poor magistrate was 'in a very weak and deplorable condition,' suffering as he was from jaundice, dropsy, and asthma.

A severe and prolonged winter does not improve matters. 'Dr. Joshua Ward Drops' are mere drops in the ocean of his maladies. Even Bishop Berkeley's Tar Water fails him, and, in desperation, he sets off on that journey to Lisbon from which he was never to return. His cheerful courage, as shown in the famous *Journal*, is amazing. It may well have been sus-

tained by the consciousness of a hard task well done. On the credit side of the account the admirable discharge of new and difficult duties, while on the debit he may have felt somewhat in the vein of his great admirer—that the strenuous magistrate at Bow Street had not been altogether useless to the historian of *Tom Jones* and *Amelia*, whose exquisite pictures of humor and manners have already outlived, if not the Palace of the Escorial, at any rate the Imperial Eagle of Austria.

[*The Times*]

RHYMES FOR CHILDREN

WHEN asked to recommend poetry suitable for children one feels much as if one had been required to give a list of plays suitable for Sioux or Mohicans. The Last of the Mohicans is the only Mohican one knows anything about; the rest are legendary figures whose taste in drama is a subject only suitable for German scholars seeking for an abstract question having that illusive air of reality appropriate to a prize thesis. The only child the poet really knows is the child he once was; and with the majority of us that child marvelously quickly fades away into a past so remote as to become almost fabulous and to seem peopled with palæolithic monsters

who drag
Vast bodies in the mud and agelong go
Bobbing small heads in silence.

It is a rare gift in any man or woman to remember truly the mood, the general atmosphere of his mind as a child. Most people can remember incidents

of all sorts — this kind of accident, for example:

As Dick and Bryan were at play
At trap, it came to pass,
Dick struck the ball so far away
He broke a pane of glass.

This is taken from a book entitled *Rhymes for Children*, 'illustrated with appropriate wood cuts.' The poem continues:

Though much alarm'd, they did not run
But walk'd up to the spot;
And offer'd for the damage done,
What money they had got.

So far, this 'poem' is a plausible narrative of what, in the imagination of adults, interests the child mind; but the poem concludes:

When accidents like this arise,
Dear children! this rely on,
All honest, honorable boys
Will act like Dick and Bryan.

and the cat is out of the bag. These *Rhymes for Children* are merely dis-

guised moral lessons. It is incredible that at any time in human history 'grown-ups' could deceive themselves into thinking these were 'rhymes' that children would naturally like; obviously they were just sugar-coating what they thought to be an excellent pill and the sugar was the music, the noise that the words made — though nothing better than a rudimentary jingle. The publication and sale of such products, however, reveals in author, publisher, and purchaser a complete oblivion of their own childhood. Incidents similar to the broken window pane are all that remain — the mental consciousness, the 'ego' for which and in which that far-away world existed, has completely vanished. It is almost enough to disprove Berkeley and verify the existence of 'matter.'

There never was a child not mentally deficient who could not perceive and resent lessons tricked out in rhymes; and however plentiful the sugar the presence of the medicine is sure to be felt and the foundation of a dislike for poetry laid. But the great bulk of poetry for children is of this nature, and even such a book as Robert Louis Stevenson's *A Child's Garden of Verse*, is full of sententiousness, though done with more literary skill. Curiously enough, the neat exposition of moral and practical advice in verse, however little it may attract children, undoubtedly gives most grown-up people pleasure. There is a poem in the book from which quotation has already been made which — under a comparison of the several fates that befell Miss Lucy White and Miss Sophy Ball, who, in a delightful phrase, 'had faded teeth' — admirably sets forth the importance of regularly visiting the dentist. This 'rhyme' can be counted upon to give a gentle satisfaction, an 'inward glow,' to every adult, whether his teeth survive or

whether they have long 'faded'; and it comes from contemplation of the horrible experiences other people will one day have to endure. This is a form of pleasure which it is impossible to expect children to appreciate.

It is amusing and not altogether surprising to find that the didactic note thunders in the children's verse of such a good poet as Mr. Hilaire Belloc. It is Mr. Belloc's nature to admonish his audience:

I call you bad, my little child,
Upon the title page,
Because a manner rude and wild
Is common at your age.

This is a vein not unfamiliar to Mr. Belloc's readers; but however agreeable it may be to adults, it is doubtful that it can appeal very deeply to children, and Mr. Belloc's advice:

Do not as evil children do,
Who on the slightest grounds
Will imitate the kangaroo
With wild unmeaning bounds,

has been known to set children bounding like the kangaroo who were unaware before of that particular kind of bound — and for this, possibly, they may be grateful. Nearly one hundred years separate the 'Rhyme' first quoted from Mr. Belloc's, so the moralizing attitude toward children is still flourishing, with this difference — that the later writer is aware of the slight absurdity of the ancient pose and does not expect to be taken seriously; in short, he writes in a spirit of fun — but the fun is nearly all for the grown-ups, that is the defect. The subject is children, but from the 'grown-up's' point of view, and it is a subject on which children cannot share the 'grown-up's' point of view. It is too intellectual and too little human, for it depends — like the problems of Euclid — upon a number of postulates which, happily, no child would be degenerate enough to

accept. Far more gratifying to children, who enjoy them with less tranquillity than adults, are the nonsense rhymes of Edward Lear. 'The Dong with the luminous nose' is a favorite with most children, and in the days of the Boer war there was a music-hall song which was an echo of Lear's tale of the man in whose beard the fowls of the air built their nests. This song was an enormous success with men, women, and children. It was primitive and was an appeal to childish rather than to children's minds. But it is worth quoting, because it is so extraordinarily effective with children that it should be interesting to discover the reason. A man has died:

They dug his grave for forty miles
But still his whiskers grew.

They took them in a big balloon
And tied them round the Sun and Moon,
But still his whiskers grew.

They covered the ground for miles around
And still his whiskers grew.

These words, when sung in a music hall to grown-up people, make just an ordinary, more or less amusing, comic song; read to children, they have an amazing imaginative effect.

It is the fecundity of the child's mind — lying like a quiet pool in a tropical forest teeming with images that sleep unnoticed until the surface is touched by the wind, and then awake into a thousand troubled shapes — that is stirred to creation by a certain simple strangeness and extravagance in these lines, and the ability to understand this effect may almost be taken as a test of the survival in us of that sensitiveness of the imagination (characteristic of children) the loss of which is responsible for such extraordinary freaks as *Rhymes for Children*, and for the 'grown-up's' lack of understanding generally.

Even when we come to the work of the poet who has not lost his imagination, we find frequently that he has forgotten his childhood. There is not a poem in Mr. Sturge Moore's book, *The Little School*, that can give a child the thrill and the pleasure of that apparent doggerel about whiskers, although it is full of exquisitely written verse. For the poetry of it is attained by summoning before the inner eye of the weary and experience-soiled man the freshness, the cleanness, the simplicity of childhood. Almost entirely about children, it is not for children, but for men and women:

Sing gladly when you wash and start
A sweet song when you take your bath;
Clean hands they make a lightsome heart,
And clean feet tread a happy path.

Into the trembling water dip
With soiled and clammy skin,
Soon from the tossing bath to skip
Clean as a new pin.

Who ever heard of a child who cared about the cleanness of a new pin? This intense craving for cleanness, this ardent passion for blue and white, the blue and white of crockery, of blue sky and 'a cloth like level snow,' of the blue veins and white feet of children, which pervades Mr. Sturge Moore's book as it was the inspiration of Luca della Robbia and of the creator of Nicolette, who was so white that the daisies 'looked dark against her feet' — is entirely adult. It proceeds from the fullness and ripeness of the senses; and the minds of children are too vast and empty, too hungry for wild and mountainous images, their senses too undeveloped to be so nice. The natural instinct of the child is to get dirty; no amount of mud can deter it in its thirst for adventure. The cleanness, the proportion, the symmetry, the subtlety, and the propriety of things do not interest it; and poetry

whose essence is the discovery and portrait of these qualities is not poetry for children. Nor do children wish to hear about themselves and their doings; to begin a poem:

Kate rose up early as fresh as a lark —

is to begin in the worst possible way, although it is the way into which most people fall when they begin to think about children. To read in Mr. Sturge Moore's verse the excursion of a mature and sophisticated mind into this simple vein:

Before their nursery fire one day
Upon two hassocks sat
Willy and Nance, half tired of play;
Between them purred the cat,

reminds one irresistibly of the American who divested himself of all his worldly goods and proceeded to a remote island in the Pacific Ocean, where he lived upon a mountain and wore running shorts, two sandals, and a wedding ring, and preached the 'simple life' to the cannibals who inhabited the island, and who had begun to take to wearing pajamas and top hats. The poet who understands how near to cannibals children are will not go very far wrong; he will, at least, be free from the danger of sentimentality.

This is a vice to which the English, and, above all, the Germans, are supposed to be particularly susceptible; yet it is doubtful whether any English or German poet has ever plunged deeper into sentimental bathos than Victor Hugo, who in *L'Art d'être Grand-père* wrote about children, in the words of the late M. Faguet, '*avec mièvrerie et sur un ton bébé.*' *L'Art d'être Grand-père* is distinctly a book for grandparents and not for children; but it is for grandparents in what is called their second childhood, not in their lusty and vigorous old age. It may be said, indeed, that most chil-

dren's books and books about children are for men's second childhood, not for their first. Occasionally Hugo's imagination is stirred just as a child's might be:

La face de la bête est terrible, on y sent
L'Ignoré, l'éternel problème éblouissant
Et ténébreux, que l'homme appelle la Nature,

but how far from the magical simplicity of the greatest work is the expression — that sophisticated and prosy *que l'homme appelle la Nature!* It would almost seem that the nearer we get to poetry which satisfies the child the nearer we get to great poetry; it is certain that children will have none of this *que l'homme appelle la Nature* jargon, which has spoiled the work of so many poets. Yet it is doubtful whether any child could appreciate the decorative delicacy of Hugo's

Dansez, les petites filles,
Toutes en rond.
En vous voyant si gentilles
Les bois riront.

These lines have an extraordinary charm — the charm of a room with a carved late Gothic roof and Renaissance panels painted with the portraits of children; their secret lies partly in the alliteration and the assonance of 'rond' and 'riront' and the curvature of the letter 'r,' and partly in the association of children's faces with woods. A few, rarely gifted children might be sensuously precocious enough to be aware of this pictorial and fragile beauty, but not the majority. This brings us to the question how far children can appreciate the work of one of the greatest of modern poets — Mr. Walter De la Mare — whom we have been approaching by slow degrees.

It is well known that Mr. De la Mare's book of rhymes, *Peacock Pie*, has an immense success with children, with whose 'vision' Mr. De la Mare

has more sympathy than any poet we know of. Mr. De la Mare's verse puts a spell upon them, partly by its music and partly by its rich and quaint fancy. Of these qualities it is probable that the music is the more important. There never was a greater master of delicate and cunning rhythms than Mr. De la Mare; and they carry an exquisite vowel melody that haunts the ear of a child who does not even know the meaning of half the words used. But the majority of the poems in *Peacock Pie* are, on the surface, simple and intelligible to children quite apart from their music, and Mr. De la Mare always supplies the children's demand for definite images. What could be more vivid than his poem about a Sweep?

Black as a chimney is his face
And ivory white his teeth,
And in his brass-bound cart he rides,
The chestnut blooms beneath.

'Sooeep, Sooeep!' he cries, and brightly peers
This way and that, to see
With his two light-blue shining eyes
What custom there may be.

And once inside the house, he 'll squat,
And drive his rods on high,
Till twirls his sudden sooty brush
Against the morning sky.

Then, mid his bulging bags of soot,
With half the world asleep,
His small cart wheels him off again,
Still hoarsely bawling, 'Sooeep!'

That is a poem every child can appreciate, and *Peacock Pie* is full of poems like it, as well as having many delicious, quaint tales, such as the tale of the three jolly farmers named 'Off the Ground,' whose extraordinarily insistent rhythm actually sets children dancing. This poet also deals with giants, ogres, princesses, fairies, spinsters, and old women, with a sharp concreteness of imagery and a wealth of bright, clear detail that is quite

magical in its effect. Even more remarkable are his landscapes. One is always suddenly looking from the edge of a wood into dark valleys with the stars blazing quite near, the transparent bubbling of water at one's side and the crackle of the undergrowth from queer, furry things behind. It is night, but wonderfully dark and clear, and the earth is full of flowers that burn with a soft, intangible brilliance not of this world. Few children will fail to be transported into Mr. De la Mare's dark flower-burning valleys, or to those most marvelous of poetry's mountains:

Still, and blanched, and cold, and lone
The icy hills far off from me
With frosty ulys overgrown
Stand in their sculptured secrecy.

No path of theirs the chamois fleet
Treads, with a nostril to the wind;
O'er their ice-marbled glaciers beat
No wings of eagles in my mind.

Yea, in my mind these mountains rise
Their perils dyed with evening's rose;
And still my ghost sits at my eyes
And thirsts for their untroubled snows.

Yet one cannot believe that children can appreciate to the full the almost supernatural beauty of lines like these, not to speak of what may be called their mystical quality. Children have yet to experience the long years of searching after an unattainable beauty and to taste fully the agony of that unappeasable thirst for something indefinable, something beyond space and time, before they can be aware of the great wealth of consciousness of which these poems are but a few bright jewels. Yet perhaps something of that silent music that a flame makes trembling over dark fragments of coal, a music which croons with an intense and strange ecstasy through Mr. De la Mare's poetry, and something of that stilled and frosted

light that collects in stanza after stanza the afterglow of some Cimmerian sun may be felt by children.

In looking backward, and straining hard to recover one's own childhood and to look once more upon the world as in those bygone days, it becomes more and more certain that one was sensitive to the color and the aspect of tree and sky in winter and spring, in dawn and dusk, and that the soft and steady fall of snow on windless days was a most marvelous music. Can it be possible then to believe that children will not be stirred by that imaginative vision of themselves in 'Winter Dusk'?

The-fire-flames crooned a tiny song,
No cold wind moved the wintry tree;
The children both in Faërie dreamed
Beside their mother's knee.

It is not possible, and yet it is not to be believed that they can feel the beauty of this and of Mr. De la Mare's other poems as intensely as we can. It may be only on rare occasions that they can feel it all; for their minds are most often too avid, too eager fully to taste and to absorb such quiet and exquisite beauty. But of all our great English poets there is none who has written with more of the child's strange freshness of imagination.

We are, perhaps, too apt to think of children in the lump. Children differ one from another, just as men do; and we would not talk recklessly of poetry for men as we talk about poetry for children. There are, no doubt, children to whom such poetry as Mr. De la Mare's would not appeal greatly — some of it probably not at all. Unimaginative children — the term is relative, as it is questionable whether there can be such a thing as a really unimaginative child — children in whose heads ideas do not associate freely but run along logical tramlines,

each in its separate car, will not take much delight in the finest of Mr. De la Mare's poems; but they may, nevertheless, like a jolly noise such as he often gives them. It is largely the jolly noise that has made Mr. G. K. Chesterton's poem 'The Road to Roundabout' so popular with children. Screams of delight invariably greet the end of the last verse:

Some say that when Sir Lancelot
Went forth to find the Grail,
Grey Merlin wrinkled up the roads
For hope that he should fail;
All roads led back to Lyonesse
And Camelot in the Vale,
I cannot yield assent to this
Extravagant hypothesis,
The plain, shrewd Briton will dismiss
Such rumors (*Daily Mail*).
But in the streets of Roundabout
Are no such factions found,
Or theories to expound about,
Or roll upon the ground about
In the happy town of Roundabout
That makes the world go round.

Children like this sort of thing immensely, although the content of Mr. Chesterton's poem is far more remote from their minds than any poem of Mr. De la Mare's. This is true of all Mr. Chesterton's verse, delightful as it is, including even the famous 'Song against Grocers,' which is obscurer to a child than 'Sordello' could possibly be to any adult. Mr. Chesterton would possibly resent his poems being called intellectual, but intellectual they are, and, therefore, not food for children, who meet a mind far more congenial in Blake.

Tiger, tiger burning bright

is a poem all children like. They may not be — indeed, they undoubtedly are not — conscious of the wonderful artistry of the poet. The poems of Blake, like the poems of Mr. De la Mare, will increase their freight of beauty with the years, but something of that essential magic is communi-

cated immediately to the child, for it is of the very stuff of his own mind.

As far removed from the enjoyment of children as Mr. Chesterton's 'intellectuality' is the precious artificiality of Victor Hugo's English worshiper, Swinburne, to whom 'babe' suggests 'astrolabe.' If we bend our ear close to Swinburne's verse we may catch an echo of the Frenchman's 'ton bébé,' for the latter's sentimentality turns in the English poet to a somewhat mawkish dalliance with children as chaste and languid decorative forms. Swinburne is always comparing children's faces to flowers. It is a fancy in which children cannot participate. They have little sense of their decorative value, and though they may take a faint delight in colored marbles they are really more at home in the higher flights of the imagination. Even the freshness and charm of Herrick calling a primrose 'this sweet Infanta of the year' is hardly for them. Children have little of that exquisite susceptibility to beauty that men and women have, or rather, perhaps, it is not gratified by art so strongly as is their imagination. Indeed, the imagination works with such power in children that the recital of Southey's lines,

I would not for any earthly thing
See the face of the Crocodile King,

makes them involuntarily shudder.

The comic seriousness of children has long been a source of considerable amusement to their elders, and in it we may find one reason of their universal passion for the poetry of Mr. Rudyard Kipling. That the wolf-cub should have gravely to learn and to keep *Jungle Law* which is expounded to him in his infancy seems to them the height of naturalness and common sense. They will listen with obvious approbation — and as if it were the most inevitable thing in the world —

while you tell them that these laws are engraved by old wolves on the stone floors of sacred caves and handed down from generation to generation. They have a great sense of the dignity of Empires and Kingdoms. Mr. Kipling also largely satisfies their thirst for knowledge and for reality, and he is a master of metre and of simple and bold antithesis —

Gold is for the mistress — silver for the maid —
Copper for the craftsman cunning at his trade.
Good! said the Baron, sitting in his hall
But Iron — Cold Iron — is master of them all.

It would be difficult to better that in its adroit mixture of intelligence with a real dramatic thrill.

At this point we come to that interest in mere drama to which all the wonderful sympathies of the average child's mind in the end inevitably degenerate. It is the time of life when children have become boys, who, if they wish to hear any poetry at all, it is 'How Horatius Kept the Bridge,' or girls who are beginning surreptitiously to read of 'lovers' quarrels.' There are some bright souls who escape the tarnish of this spiritual verdigris while full of an eager delight in battles. These are they who later on will recreate or keep alive the world's heritage of beauty. By some mysterious alchemy of matter, by some strange, secret pollenization of the spirit, their minds will not cease to flower when that short and dreamlike spring is over. They will remain in the world but hardly of the world; like the blooms that travelers see above their heads in the dark roofs of sun-barred forests — a joy and a consolation to the wayfaring man forever. Of the others we can only say —

The primroses scattered by April,
The stars of the wide Milky Way,
Cannot outnumber the hosts of the children
Magic hath stolen away.

[*The Hibbert Journal*]

SHALL WE REMAIN IN THE CHURCH? A LAYMAN'S VIEW

BY PROFESSOR DURANT DRAKE

THE habit of churchgoing is on the wane. Naturally enough, since men are modifying so many of the beliefs to which most of the churches demand allegiance. Even if the Liberal is welcomed by the Church, he is likely to be little helped or inspired; dogmas which are preposterous to his mind are thrust at him as though it were a sin not to profess them. Even the spiritual truth that might feed his soul is offered to him in ways he cannot accept. The whole atmosphere is apt to be stifling and oppressive; the Church seems hopelessly behind the times, and the attitude of the best people toward it is largely, as Emerson said, 'a hope and a waiting.'

But there is another passage of Emerson's which may well be pondered. 'Be not betrayed into undervaluing the churches which annoy you by their bigoted claims. . . . I agree with them more than I disagree. I agree with their heart and motive; my discontent is with their limitations and surface and language. Their statement is grown as fabulous as Dante's *Inferno*. Their purpose is as real as Dante's sentiment and hatred of vice.' Little as existing churches often avail to help the aspiring soul, stale and narrow and uninspired as are many of their preachers, bigoted and form-ridden as are many of their members, the Church is in potentiality and not seldom in actuality the most potent for good of all human institutions.

From some points of view a new

Church, not calling itself Christian or encumbered with any load of tradition and superstition, would seem best to suit our needs. The Ethical Culture Society, unfortunate in the coldness of its name, but numbering among its members not a few earnest and spiritual men, is one attempt to supply the need. The Fellowship, organized some years ago in Los Angeles, and since carried into a number of cities, has a happier name and is arousing considerable enthusiasm. The so-called Positivist Church (Religion of Humanity) in England, the Union pour l'Action Morale in France — these are examples of the new organizations that have sprung up to take the place of the Christian Church. Bare they may seem and lacking in all the atmosphere of a Church long established and endeared to the hearts of men. But that would mend itself in time; associations would gather, enthusiasm would grow with numbers, and traditions arise.

It sometimes happens that a new Church, because it answers more exactly to the existing needs of men, can do more than one that has become petrified in old forms and has ceased to represent living impulses. It does not thrust the skeletons of ancient beliefs upon men; and by putting its truth in fresh and contemporary language it may touch new springs of emotion in them and reveal heights which they had not before glimpsed.

Mr. Henry Sturt of Oxford, in his book *The Idea of a Free Church*, makes