

of "commercialized vice" offers opportunities for a man to "go on a bust" whenever he individually feels the impulse. The license of the savage has to be more cooperative. It is the difference in the forms of trade made by barter and by money; the difference between fairs and shops. There is still, however, something gregarious about modern "busts." Sundays and holidays are a social provision for a gregarious kind of "bust," and Sunday and holiday recreations are as a rule gregarious. Coney Island, for example, is a country-wide form of gregarious Sunday "bust." Public "celebrations" are another form arousing the emotion the routine of the unimaginative private life fails to arouse. Natural catastrophes also furnish onlookers opportunities for an emotional outgo, and the more stolid the onlooker the more welcome the opportunity. The newspaper headline on disaster by flood and fire, by tempest and earthquake, caters to this demand. Contributions to the Red Cross are often, I suspect, another expression of this kind of emotional debauchery. So is the vicarious interest in minor individual catastrophe or crisis, the interest in marriage and divorce, in suicide and murder.

But war is the "bust" par excellence—alike for those who go and for those who stay at home. It is the greatest of gregarious forms of excitement. It sweeps people off their feet; it carries them along; it gives them something to think about, or rather feel about; it brings people together; it makes them forget themselves. The more monotonous the life, the stronger the appeal war makes. The duller the nature, the more welcome the appeal. The less a man finds to stimulate his imagination in daily life and the less imagination he has to be stimulated, the crasser and the more unusual the stimulus must be. And yet too unusual it may not be. To be enjoyable war must not upset the deeper-seated habits nor exact spiritual adjustments. It must not startle us with new ideas or distress us with new feelings. It must appeal to us only in what, as we say, is elemental in us. It may stir us to the very depths, but to new heights it may not call us.

As for the shock of the material adjustment war requires, it is mitigated by enduring it either collectively or with the backing of the community. It is much less trying to a woman to go with a neighbor and, with her, drop her jewelry in the melting-pot of government, than to dine with that same neighbor the only guest unbejeweled. It is much pleasanter to literally share a crust with a hungry friend than because of the ill turn of butcher or of cook to have had to omit a dish

ferred together that they are tolerable—and from the same point of view for non-combatants more intolerable. Non-combatants have far less gregarious support in their suffering. Herein we may find one of the reasons women are less warlike than men. Another reason for their comparative pacifism lies in their disinclination in general for periodic debauch. Women do not go on "busts" like men—perhaps because they are comparatively incapable of or unused to, steady, protracted effort; scatter-brained and volatile, they feel no need of breaking bounds.

Not only are the hardships of war tolerable, suggests a discerning critic, Emily James Putnam, but they are alluring. For the satisfactions of collectivism are not insignificant among the baits of war, at least to modern men. The burdens of individualism modern life imposes are great. It is personal responsibility which wears us out, and from which almost any escape is welcome—the civil service, factory drudgery, the church, the army or navy. But outside of these resorts of the would-be irresponsible there are numberless positions straining the human machine almost beyond endurance by their demand upon it for some measure of personality. To all such overtaxed machines war offers an irresistible opportunity of escape.

ELSIE CLEWS PARSONS.

When We Went to School

A RECENT correspondent in these columns declares that the real puzzle in education is as to content. She asks us to outline the facts we have found of value, so that she may be sure, as she confesses she is not now sure, what children should know when they leave school.

I search the memory of my nine years in the public schools, and wonder what I really learned there. I must have learned to read and write and spell and work sums, for I can do all those things now; but I came out with no connected sense of my country's history or that of any other, and if I had any geographical grasp, it came only from a certain abnormal delight I took in poring over maps by myself. Algebra, geometry and physics I recall to have passed before my attention. I was a very dutiful child, and it was my moral rather than my intellectual sense which enabled me to get "marks" in these subjects. I cannot say that they were "learned," in the sense of being woven into experience in any way. Latin rather appealed to me, chiefly because of its elegance of form, which

text-book we used. Certain English classics appeared like dim ghosts on my horizon. At no time could I have given an intelligible account of the plot or argument of any of the books we read in Latin, Greek or German. The French and Italian which I picked up later I can read more easily than the German upon which I spent three school years. Imagined geographical wanderings, the disentangling of some verses of Vergil, certain neat algebraic solutions, are all of my "learning" that excited my interest or enthusiasm. Nine years seems an unconscionable time to spend learning these simple things.

I conclude that there is not much use teaching children things that they will not assimilate with their own curiosity, and connect with what they consider worth while in their world. In my own case this curiosity rarely worked in school. I cannot defend its algebraic and Vergilian workings except as springing from some embryo aesthetic sense. But the geographical enthusiasm is perfectly intelligible. It is connected with that intellectual education which I was pursuing parallel to my school work, and which merged with it only occasionally. This unofficial education, begun at a very early age, came through the medium of the newspaper. The *New York Tribune*, lying freshly on our doorstep every morning, was gathered in like intellectual manna by my small and grateful self. It told me daily of a wide, fascinating and important world, and to it I reacted with never failing curiosity. On the political events, personalities, foreign wars, riots, strikes, plays, books, and music that streamed disorganizedly through its columns, no school subject threw any light except geography, which at least enabled me to place things on the map. History, which might have helped, was taught, not backwards, in the order that one's curiosity naturally approaches it, but forwards, so that at no time did we get within hailing distance of the present.

My real education, as I look back on it, consisted in making some sort of order out of this journalistic chaos. I got some help in the debates on current events which a radical superintendent introduced into our high school. I remember pulverizing, at the age of thirteen, my opponents in debate, with proofs that a ruthless dictatorship was the only form of government possible in the primitive state of Santo Domingo. Our household, however, was innocent of current discussion. The public library had not been born. I had to plot out this larger world by myself. Indeed, the grown-up people whom I sought seemed on the whole less familiar than I with the bearings of my curiosity. I cannot say that these

ance of the newspaper. It was all I could do to get the world mapped out, and become familiar with the names that I read. I remember following the Greco-Turkish War with a great deal of satisfaction, though the issues involved and the real military operations never meant anything at all. I got only the pleasant familiarity with this wider social world that one would get in meeting the same faces constantly in the street, without knowing the names of the people or speaking to them.

Whatever familiarity with the trend of events and the wider interests of men and women I had when I left school was obtained in this way. The school had been practically valueless in giving me the background of the intellectual world in which I was henceforth to live. My framework was bony enough and the content flimsy, but the outlines of my interests were there, and curiosity enough to keep me ceaselessly at filling in that content. Nothing has occurred since that time to show me, through various vicissitudes, that it was not the most useful I could have. That its foundations had to be laid outside the school seems to me a sheer waste of educational energy on the school's part.

Boldly then, and in true egocentric fashion, I say that the child when he leaves school ought to have the foundations of interest in the events and issues in which people generally are interested. These practically all come within the attention of the metropolitan newspaper. The child should be equipped to get some kind of intelligent reaction to what he reads there about political and sociological events and issues, personalities, art and literature. No one could accuse a curriculum based on the newspaper of being aristocratic, esoteric, or ultra-cultural. The newspaper is the one common intellectual food of all classes and types in the community. Many persons, it is true, may react only to certain specialized departments, and yet even into the most rudimentary journals filter most of these larger issues and events. To use this stock as clues and work out the historical, geographical, and cultural ramifications in the school curriculum would provide this broad familiarity with the world the child is to live in which I suggest. I would not make the horrifying proposal that the newspaper be used as a school text-book. I am too well aware of that cardinal tenet of current educational morality which banishes the newspaper entirely from the school. There is something rather symbolic about that tenet, by the way. But to use a sort of generalized newspaper as the nucleus and basis of a curriculum would be a differ-

child is to know. As far as the purely intellectual content of the school is concerned, it would do what so many educators desire, connect the school with life.

This ideal may be incredible, but it is not necessarily impossible. Take the child at its lowest terms, as a troublesome little person whom its parents send to school to get it out of the way of the crowded home until it is old enough to go to work. Then take the present curriculum, a medley of equally emphasized cultural, scientific and manual studies. Now the child certainly should have a command of the three R's before he is ten years old. Suppose then we transfer the mathematical and scientific studies to a place subsidiary to the vocational and manual work that is being so rapidly developed. They would be taken up, that is, only as the theoretical basis for this practical work. This would leave four or five years for the study of the history, geography, literature, language, and civics, before the minimum age at which the child in the more advanced states is allowed to leave school. There seems to be no inherent reason why a great deal could not be done in that time to prepare this imaginative background for the world we live in.

If "cultivating the imagination" means anything, it means ensuring that what one experiences in daily life will call up interesting and significant images and ideas. The public school sometimes attempts to cultivate a sort of literary and mythological imagination, but as for ensuring that those refer-

ences to places, persons, books, political institutions, ideas, which occur in the papers and weekly journals, shall call up to the mind prompt, accurate, and stimulating images and meanings, it has been a dead failure. An exploration of the current imagination of the average person would be a curious and profitable enterprise for a psychologist to undertake. For the cultivation of this imagery, we are all left, as the child is left, to the chance provision of the contemporary news-provider, the illustrated paper and "Sunday magazine." Here is where we get our notions of things as they look and act.

Beyond all else the child should leave school with a wide and reliable imagination—not with facts or theories so much as pictures, sympathies, apprehensions, what we call "the feeling for the thing." Thus equipped, his curiosity will provide him with all the facts and theories he needs. The custom of teaching by subjects is as artificial and absurd as could be imagined. We do not think in terms of history or geography or language. If I read a foreign newspaper, all these are merged into one imaginative impression. We think in terms of situations, which have settings in time and place, and all sorts of fringes and implications. Unless the child is taught in this spirit, the isolated subjects will have no meaning. Without the imaginative background that fuses and vitalizes his studies, he will go out from school untaught and unknowing.

RANDOLPH S. BOURNE.

CORRESPONDENCE

From a Chinese Student

SIR: I read with great interest the letter from "A Friend of China," published in your Journal for February sixth. I heartily share his optimism that "the situation now developing may be of decided advantage to all concerned," but I entirely disagree with him in his notion of the ways in which his optimistic dreams are to be realized. He seems to hold that the solution of the Far Eastern question lies in Japan's taking a "responsible and effective direction of China's affairs." That, in my humble judgment, can never be the real solution of the problem.

"A Friend of China" seems to have ignored the important fact that we are now living in an age of national consciousness. He forgets that even the Philippines cannot rest contented under the apparently "beneficial" rule of the United States. In this twentieth century no nation can ever hope peacefully to rule over or to interfere with the internal administrative affairs of another nation, however beneficial that rule or that interference may be. The Chinese national consciousness has exterminated the Manchu rule, and, I am sure, will always resent any foreign rule or "direction."

self-government and self-development. "The Republic," says he, "held up to the world as evidencing the regeneration of the East has proved, as was bound to be the case, a dismal failure. . . . China as a progressive state has been tried and found wanting. She is incapable of developing herself." So runs his accusation. But let me remind him that the transformation of a vast nation like China cannot be accomplished in a day. Read such books as John Fiske's "The Critical Period of American History," and it will be clear that even the establishment of the American republic was not achieved by a sudden and miraculous fiat. The Chinese republic has been no more a failure than the American republic was a failure in those dismal days under the Articles of Confederation. The Chinese Revolution occurred in October, 1911. Three years have hardly passed since the formation of the republic. Can we yet say, O ye of little faith! that "China as a progressive state has been tried and found wanting," and that "she is incapable of developing herself"?

I sincerely believe with President Wilson that every people has the right to determine its own form of government. Every nation has the right to be left alone to work out its own salvation. Mexico has the right to revolution. China has the right to revolution.