

EDUCATION

Labor's Laboratory School

By NELLIE M. SEEDS

Wood-cuts by pupils of Manumit School

IN the foothills of the Berkshire Mountains, sixty-six miles north of New York City, labor is trying out a new venture in the field of experimental education.

Manumit School, as it is called, was founded two years and a half ago by William and Helen Fincke, who contributed to the enterprise their fertile and well-stocked dairy farm of 177 acres. The present buildings consist of an old colonial farmhouse with its barns and out-houses, one small cottage which is used as a dormitory, two small shacks used as a carpenter and print shop, an arts and crafts shop, a gymnasium and boy's dormitory, and a director's home. A tumbling trout stream furnishes opportunity for swimming and youthful experiments in the art of navigation. In the summer the hillsides and broad fields can be used for crops; in the winter they can be used for coasting and skiing, the temporary ice pond for skating. Milking, caring for the horses, pigs, cattle and chickens, ploughing, planting, harvesting, and truck gardening complete the circle of projects in which the children are free to engage.

Manumit School is controlled and directed by the Manumit Associates, a voluntary group of men and women actively identified with the labor movement or with educational institutions or projects. The school has been endorsed by a large number of trade unions and labor federations and individuals prominent in the labor movement. Its thirty-eight children represent nineteen different trades, with a few whose parents are not connected with any trade union.

Manumit School by no means represents a separatist movement. Its children represent a true cross section of life. Most educational experiments that have been successful attribute their success to the fact that they start with a picked group. Manumit hopes to show the feasibility of the new education methods with a representative public school group, under conditions which are attainable for the average public school parent. If it succeeds in so doing, it can offer a direct contribution to the whole public school system. For as the laboratory school for the labor movement, Manumit can arouse public opinion which will demand the improvement and broadening of our public schools, whose level can never rise until the level of public intelligence rises and bestirs itself consciously toward that end.

Many experimental schools have been started for the children of the well-to-do. Manumit is the first to be started by workers for their own children.

With its acreage Manumit can use as project material current economic processes, rather than artificially devised schemes. It contemplates a comprehensive view of the child's need for physical activity and the cultivation of health habits as a routine of life. It is interested in mental hygiene oversight, aesthetic development, civic responsibility. The entire school organization, in short, is planned to serve as an integrating life experience.

In still another aspect, Manumit School can be viewed as a far-sighted social enterprise. Presupposing the permanence of our metropolitan areas, it contemplates quite seriously the possibility of demonstrating how feasible it would be to have groups of public school children, at first during the summer months, radiate out from the centres of population for their education; in other words, to reconstruct education on a definite zone system and move metropolitan schools to the outlying areas. A successful demonstration school would be the first step in the working out of such a social scheme.

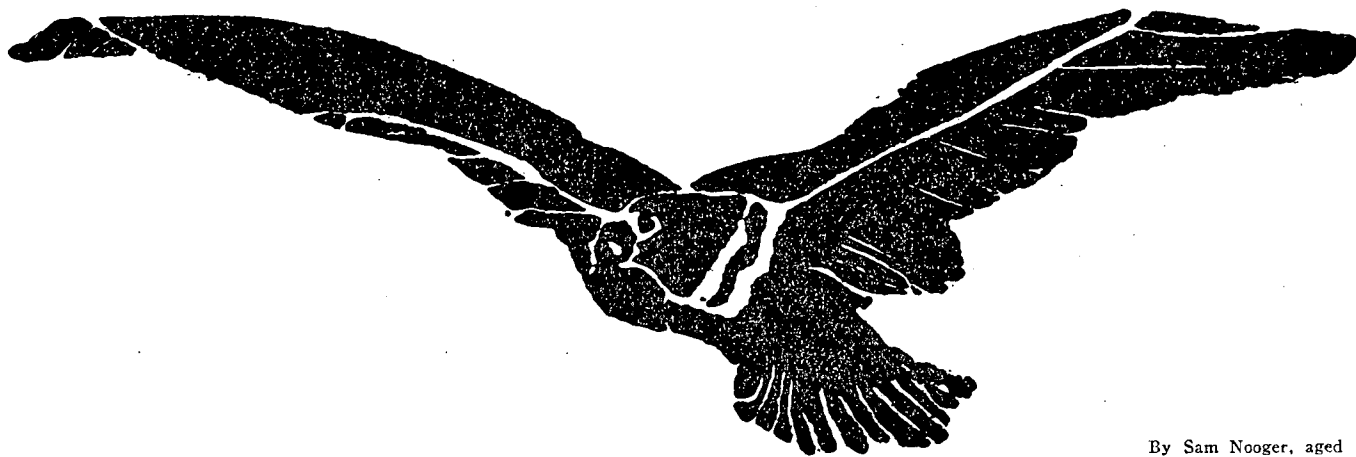
Because of its intimate relationship with the school problem, Manumit is seriously concerned further with the improvement of human relationships in the home. Through the school must eventually come the influence that will reconstruct the home. If it is to be saved as a social institution, some offsetting influence must be found to counteract within it the radical disintegration which has been brought about by a combination of our social attitudes and by economic pressure. The child in the home acquires certain reactions toward life, he establishes his values, his sense of relationship to the community. The school must take the child from the home and return him again to the home

equipped and prepared to cope with the problems and conflicts which exist there. No ready or easy solution can be offered to enable the school to rehabilitate the home, but Manumit is at least aware of the direct responsibility which the school does and should bear.

Manumit believes that education, in its last analysis, is life, not lessons. Its methods are free, but scientific. Its approaches are factual and concrete, through projects which the children



By Sam Zausner, aged 11



By Sam Nooger, aged 12

select for themselves. The community is self-governing and democratic. One person one vote, on all questions save those of health, safety, and educational procedure, is the principle governing the weekly community meeting. Required academic standards are met. But Manumit endeavors to do so by teaching children rather than subjects. It offers no prizes nor punishments, but substitutes for authoritarian control the discipline of life itself in a cooperative social group.

The curriculum of Manumit includes the essentials of arithmetic, English, social science, natural science, creative music, art and craft work. The children study in age groups, and a conscious effort is made to correlate the instruction of all departments. In the music department, for example, the centralizing theme is the orchestra. Instruments are manufactured in the carpenter shop, painted in the art shop, and played in the studio. From these simple hand-made instruments, zithers, ukeles, drums, made from cigar boxes, chalk boxes, cheese boxes and wooden chopping bowls, the child who evinces unusual musical ability advances

to the more complicated piano, cornet, banjo, or violin. But Manumit is more desirous of drawing out the musical expression of the many, than of cultivating the talent of the few.

Interest is always the motive which stimulates the child to creative activity. Manumit endeavors to create an atmosphere in which he can freely express his entire personality. It recognizes the dignity of manual labor, and practices democracy rather than preaches it, for all of the work of the school is shared by all of the community alike. The responsibility thus placed upon the children develops in them the independence, initiative, power of self-direction and control which are so vitally needed by the citizens of a democratic nation. Manumit endeavors to make these children of workers proud of their fathers and mothers who work, and of the labor movement which they represent, to give them a fair perspective on labor's past efforts to achieve a better world, to equip them to play their part intelligently and scientifically, and with a new zest for life's adventure.

New Doors Open

By RUTH GILLETTE HARDY

THIS year's was the seventh meeting of the Progressive Education Association and the first, I believe, to move West. Although less than two hundred were present from schools outside Cleveland, this number represented an almost equally large number of schools. Private schools, chiefly country day schools, made up almost the entire group, yet the most active corner of the exhibit hall was that occupied by the public school of Winnetka. In Cleveland itself and in the suburbs, the public schools were much alive to our significance.

Progressive education has arrived in the established order of things. No longer can it be called "experimental;" there is a recognizable technique. "Creative" seems a bit exaggerated when one watches the changing fashions taking hold; this season we learn civilization no more by way of the Indians, but by building a Viking hall. (Next year someone may discover my beloved Melanesians and the exhibition will be swathed in grass mats and *tapa*.) The perennial sceptic rises in me to inquire whether the young

stuff may not "jell" too soon, before all its proper sugar is melted in.

The Association this year became institutionalized only to the extent of securing a full-time executive secretary, whose inaugural address summed up his observations during a tour of the progressive schools of the country and attempted to evaluate the growth and the weaknesses which the movement as a whole now shows.

The formal meetings of the conference suffered from being held in a church auditorium too large for our numbers and conversational voices; it was difficult to maintain a creative spirit while one's eye was forced to wander over the machine-stencil reliefs of violet compo-marble which filled the apse of a peculiarly debased neo-Roman basilica. The most lively meeting was, for this or some other reason, Keeping Parents Informed About the Development of Their Children, held at the headquarters hotel. Although in a progressive school a child lives more of his true life than he did in the readin', writin', 'rithmetic shop of tradition, yet the inter-action with the home is far closer than when

the sole medium of communication was the report card.

What school can do to straighten out tangled home relations by tactful intervention, how much more the home inevitably creates or mars character, be the school ever so bad or ever so good, is continually before the eyes of the progressive teacher. The tool of the progressive school, used with increasing technical precision, is the detailed record of observation. Eugene R. Smith, headmaster of the Beaver Country Day School, spoke with authority and real insight of what that meant. His illustration was a story of the irate father arriving to demand what right the school had to complain of *his* son, who was left for a half hour to cool himself on the complete folder of his boy's day-to-day record, while the headmaster was the equivalent of "in conference." At the end of the half hour the father only wanted to know what he could do to help toward improvement. Too often, the old-fashioned school, unless it was dealing with gross misconduct, could not prove its case; the technique of the progressive school should not only prove but also clarify any case.

That meeting in each conference which, by common consent, is most delightful is the final one given over to Ten Minute Contributions from the Field. Two forcibly beautiful impressions were left on my mind from the morning's offerings which convey the fundamentals of the progressive education movement.

Laura Garrett, presenting the summer camp for the first time as an educational institution and, speaking more philosophically, Elsie Wygant of the Francis W. Parker School of Chicago, stressed the leisure that derives from concentration and, correlatively, the need for leisure in which the child can concentrate. Formal school work, Miss Wygant urged, must be motivated by the need of the creative spirit. Both the formal work and the child's personality are endangered by comparison with others in marks, grades and such devices.

Even stronger was the impression made by the two speakers on the training of teachers for the new schools; a work far less developed than the new schools in which they will work. Marietta Johnson, pioneer in this as in so much else, stirred her audience by her plea for signs of growth as a criterion of a flourishing child; thus the training of the teacher lies in experiencing the means of growth, such as handicraft, rhythm, story-telling and nature, and in observing the child a-growing. But more fundamental because he neither subordinated the child to the teacher as does the traditional pedagogy, nor the teacher to the child as would Mrs. Johnson's philosophy, nor leaves them separate units rotating in their own spheres, as does too much of our present-day routine text-book test schooling, was the significant viewpoint suggested by James Tippet of the Lincoln School of New York. His interest is in the mutual growth of the child's and the teacher's personality at work. The test of good teaching as he defines it is the contribution each makes to each; the teacher's joy in setting a stage of environment based on a scientific interest in child life; the child's joy in finding himself through creation.

Even machine repeated bas-reliefs before one's eyes could not destroy the lift of such vision. A generation to whom such possibilities in education are open won't titivate its nerves, after its eyes have gone dull, with highly colored repetitions, sumptuous only in expense. One sceptical listener came away with renewed hope and courage after all.

COMMONWEALTH COLLEGE in the Ozarks is an experiment in cooperative education. In the intervals of lectures, recitations and study, faculty and students have cleared the college farm, erected the study hall, dormitories and library, all of a frontier architecture and carried on both and the agricultural processes. This summer extending its service to the community in which it is located. During the summer months, while the students are away, earning their tuition and pocket-money for next year, the college plant is to be thrown open to an experiment in adult education. Men and women of the mountain farms and villages nearby are invited to "a summer school of rest and recreation," which will include "evening readings in poetry and literature, lectures and forums on present day political, economic and social problems . . . moonlight hikes, all-hour swimming, picnics and outdoor and indoor dancing." The college faculty will conduct informal classes and act as hosts and hostesses. No tuition fee will be asked, and "one dollar a day will cover board, lodging and the educational and recreational incidentals."



DO THE boys and girls in a large city high school select their school on the basis of intelligent guidance? How far are they conscious of their goal before or after graduation? An attempt to answer these questions was made by Kenneth W. Wright and Ellen E. Garrigues of De Witt Clinton High School, New York, during the closing school year. A questionnaire, put before the 6,000 members of the student body, asked why each pupil chose that particular school and what plans he had for the future—to work before graduation, after graduation, to go to college, or "undecided." Half the students chose DeWitt Clinton because it offered a general course, one-sixth because of its reputation, one-sixth because it was recommended, and the rest for scattering reasons, including location. 61 per cent planned to go to college, 17 per cent to work after graduation, 4 per cent to work before graduation and 17 per cent were undecided. A report of the survey adds, "This would be very gratifying if a large number of these ambitious young men were not foredoomed to disappointment. But the preferred colleges, forced to eliminate a large proportion of those clamoring for admission, demand in most cases an average of 75 per cent in the applicant's high school work. Thus the holder of a mediocre record is turned away from one door after another, until he either comes to rest in some struggling institution too anxious for students to quibble over standards, or he abandons his search in disgust and gets a job."

AN ENDOWMENT of \$100,000, putting its radical educational experiment on a permanent basis, is being sought by the Modern School of Stelton, N. J. The school, "founded by workers, maintained by workers for the children of workers" is located in the famous Ferrer colony. Stelton was one of the pioneer schools in making the attempt to "base its activities on the child's spontaneous interest." So far as it has a curriculum, "it aims to represent as much as possible of human experience and aspiration, to study the universe in its relations to man's problems and hopes. Everything includes the purpose of progressive life. The effort is to exclude nothing essential to that end."

FIRST aid for parents who are trying to choose either a camp or a school for Jessie and Johnny is offered by Children, the Magazine for Parents, in two pamphlets by Eva v.B. Hansl. Choosing the School and Choosing the Camp state briefly the various phases of the problems involved and include a brief and pointed "catechism" and an intelligent bibliography.

Books in Our Alcove

"There's a Screw Loose Somewhere"

LOCKSTEP AND CORRIDOR. *An Autobiography by Charles L. Clark, Convict No. 5126, Illinois State Penitentiary. University of Cincinnati Press. Illustrated. Price \$2.50 postpaid of The Survey.*

This is the unique book review—the autobiography of a convict reviewed by an ex-convict. Jack Black who contributed his own views on criminals in his memoirs of a yeggman—*You Can't Win*—last fall (see *The Survey* for December 1, 1926) now appraises the conclusions of Convict No. 5126, Illinois State Penitentiary. We have here expert testimony on the life of criminals. Jack Black spent thirty years of his life in and out of jail. Then Fremont Older helped him get straight, and he has been librarian of the San Francisco Call. Just now he is at Culver City, California, doing a prison play in the movies for the Metro-Goldwyn Company. Judge Charles W. Hoffman, of the Court of Domestic Relations at Cincinnati, says of *Lockstep and Corridor*: "The real merit of this book is that it affords the material for the study of the actuating motives and factors in the life history of a veteran, professional criminal, the conventional offender against society, working from his earliest days along the lines of standardized methods of crime. . . . It stands unique in the literature of crime."

LOMBROSO spent years and years trying to prove, in terms of biology, that there is a "criminal type," "half lunatic, half savage." If Lombroso did any good it was buried with his bones. Charles L. Clark, prowler and stick-up, now finishing his eighth felony sentence, steals a few transient hours from the corroding cares of Joliet prison and writes his most interesting autobiography. Clark doesn't try to prove anything. He sets forth a plain unvarnished tale of his doings—and undoings, and is content to say at the end, of himself and his sidekickers, "There's a screw loose somewhere." Lombroso's conclusions have been exploded. Clark's conclusions will never be exploded, for there is a screw loose somewhere. Well then, who's got the screw driver?

It would appear, from current press reports, that the Hon. Caleb Baumes of New York has it. Our California State Legislature probably borrowed it, for they have passed "fifty pieces of legislation" tending to the suppression of crime. Yet, a week after the bills were signed by the governor, we have the same old "Saturday special" bank stick-up at Los Angeles. No doubt the stick-ups were preparing to run away from California because of the new drastic laws and had to have "running expenses." Anyway, before you swallow the Baumes law and other "just as good" substitutes you'd better put your nose between the pages of Lock-



THE CONNOISSEUR

From a woodcut for the magazine *Book Notes* by Anton Lock

step and Corridor. A careful reading of its lines and what's between its lines will give you pause, and you may conclude there's a screw loose in other quarters. And here's something from Governor Clifford Walker of Georgia about the Baumes law, under press date of May 15:

The extreme crime wave reformers would abolish parole, probation and the indeterminate sentence, increase the severity and length of punishment, and frighten human nature into submission.

A harshly mechanical system of penalties strengthens the sentimentalists' plea for clemency and encourages the unscrupulous lawyer to acquit his client by unethical means. . . . One state adopts a penalty of death for hold-up with a weapon not appreciating the necessity it puts upon the bandit to kill his victims and thus prevent them from pursuing and identifying their assailant.

It hardly seems necessary to prove that crime cannot be prevented by fear of punishment or by harsh, cruel and inhuman treatment. Such methods have been given a fair trial. . . . There is no short-cut to the transformation of a delinquent. It must be attained by the long road of scientific improvement of our penal system.

Listen to this—from George Bernard Shaw—under same date—May 15:

To punish these people [criminals] satisfies our vindictive instincts. We hurt them for the satisfaction of hurting them, not that two blacks make a white, but that we think one good black deserves another. The punishment costs money and harms both us and its victims. . . . We have the grace to be ashamed of this and invent excuses or nice names for it. We use the word "retributive" instead of "vindictive" and we pretend that our ferocity deters people from crime.

It is true that cruelty would be a deterrent, if it could be made the inevitable consequence of crime. . . . It is surprising how a small penalty will deter if it is certain. But criminologists have long since had to admit that as certainty cannot be secured, punishment, though useful as an excuse for vindictiveness, is, as a preventive of crime, a dud.