

SOME OBSTACLES TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A UNIVERSAL
METHOD OF EDUCATION FOR PARENTHOOD
BY THE P.N.E.U.

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Method of Education for Parenthood by the P.N.E.U.

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Summary:

The thesis is based on an historical study of the period of active contribution to upper and middle class education for parenthood by the Parents' National Educational Union. It was founded in Bradford (1887) by Charlotte Mason and Emeline Steinthal and became a national society in 1890. The original purpose of the P.N.E.U. was the education for parenthood of fathers and mothers, from all social classes.

The study includes a reappraisal of the biography of Charlotte Mason (1841?-1923) and her significant influence over the P.N.E.U. The ideas in her book Home Education which gave impetus to the founding of the P.N.E.U. are reviewed. The problems in establishing a central organisation are described. The work of the P.N.E.U. branches is outlined together with a study of the only branch for artisan-class members in Liverpool and the Birmingham branch, remarkable for its longevity. Following the active period of education for parenthood work (1887-1921), most branches were transformed into Area Associations, in support of private P.N.E.U. schools. Three further educational schemes, organised by Miss Mason, are reviewed. These are the Parents' Review School, for children in home schoolrooms, the House of Education, which offered residential training for private governesses, and the Mothers' Education Course, by correspondence. Finally, the transformation of the P.N.E.U. emphasis from the education of parents to the promotion of P.N.E.U. liberal education in schools is analysed.

Universal education for parenthood by the P.N.E.U. was curtailed by Miss Mason's desire for control over the Union which fostered smallness, discipleship and inward-looking tendencies. Consequent rivalries and alliances between the P.N.E.U. women leaders led to the transfer of emphasis in education from the home to the school. The educational ideas and programmes as well as paternal participation were limited. Matriarchal leadership also fostered social class exclusivity of membership and inhibited outgoing social reform.

Key Words: Parents' National Educational Union;
Charlotte Mason; Education for Parenthood; Parenthood;
Liberal Education

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The subject of "Education for Parenthood" was new to me. It had been neglected in the literature of social work. My particular interest in Professor Richard Whitfield's challenging campaign for research into this field arose out of my experience as a social work practitioner and lecturer. For some time, I had been aware of an uncomfortable gap between the normative, individualist theories of human growth and development which appeared to dominate professional thinking and the diverse social realities actually experienced by parents and children in late twentieth century England. I wondered if it was possible to arrive at a coherent theory of education for parenthood.

Having agreed, initially, to undertake a small survey of rural parents and children, I included historical works in the preliminary reading to gain a broader perspective on what was proving to be a topic of some complexity. The discovery of Carol Dyhouse's scholarly and critical paper. "Working Class Mothers and Infant Mortality in England: 1895-1914" (1978) converted me to historical research. The ensuing search for suitable voluntary agencies to provide material for a case study, yielded the Parent's National Educational Union and its inimitable Founder: Charlotte M. Mason. (1841?-1923). Therefore, although the events leading up to the closure of the Department of Educational Enquiry in 1983, to which

I was attached, caused some disruption of the research, my consequent transfer to the Social and Technology Policy Division, during the final phase, had the helpful result of restoring me to my former undergraduate roots in a Sociology with a bias towards British Social History.

There have been problems of access to the archives of the P.N.E.U. They were believed to have been lost or destroyed. However, my enquiry to the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts revealed that thirty boxes of uncatalogued material had been deposited in the Palaeography room of the University of London Library. Unfortunately, from my point of view, as soon as I passed this information on to the modern World-Wide Education Service of the P.N.E.U., the Council took the decision to send the London Collection forthwith to the Charlotte Mason College of Education at Ambleside Cumbria. The removal was, fortunately, delayed until the renovation of the College Library was completed in the autumn of 1982, which enabled me to examine the archive in London. Plans were put in hand for the total collection, including material already stored at the College, to be listed by the staff of the Cumbria County Archives Department at Kendal. However, a combination of unforeseen circumstances meant that much of the archive has been virtually inaccessible to me, since November, 1982. The listing of the records from the Charlotte Mason College was finally completed on October 3rd 1984 and that of the P.N.E.U.

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ABBREVIATIONS

B.P.N.E.U.	Birmingham Parents' National Educational Union
D.N.B.	Dictionary of National Biography
"Ho and Co"	The Home and Colonial Infant School Society's Training College.
M.A.C.	Margaret Coombs.
M.E.C.	Mothers' Education Course.
N.A.M.C.W.	National Association for Maternal and Child Welfare.
N.S.P.C.C.	National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.
P.E.U.	Parents' Educational Union.
P.N.E.U.	Parents' National Educational Union.
P.R.	Parents' Review.
P.R.S.	Parents' Review School.
P.U.S.	The Parents' Union School.

Chapter 1:

Introduction: The Demands of Perfectibility;
Education for Parenthood and the Victorian
Gentleman's Family

1.1. Introductory:

This research project was begun with the idea of exploring the various aims and origins of all that might conveniently be labelled "Education for Parenthood" in Great Britain. The modern scene appeared confusing and uncoordinated with little or no interest shown in the analysis of the factors affecting present day developments. Those involved, mainly "experts" of various kinds, seemed more concerned with forward planning than with interpreting past experience. Was universal education for parenthood, however understood, desirable and what was it for? Historical analysis seemed essential to clarify this question. This work has, accordingly, been undertaken in the belief that past experience influences future development and that any educational programme, whether idealist, preventive or reformist, originates from responses to discernible contemporary events, traditions and opinions. The broad questions which informed the preliminary planning have been focussed on a specific study of a late Victorian upper class voluntary educational society called the Parents' National Educational Union (1887-), hereafter abbreviated to the P.N.E.U. It was established for the purpose of promoting a universal scheme of education for parenthood.

With Harold Silver's recent comments on the gaps in the history of education in mind, it is hoped that a meticulous case-study will show the P.N.E.U. microcosm to be the epitome of a larger universe⁽¹⁾. Although it seeks to

elucidate general issues, this study is firmly rooted in the particularities of personality, period and place. I, therefore, decided to respond to whatever was uncovered in the course of the investigation rather than to fit the findings into a predetermined theoretical framework. Predictably, this has led to some unexpected conclusions and insights. "Education for Parenthood" provided the raison d'être both for this research and also for the founding of the P.N.E.U. However, it soon became evident, within the specific historical context, that wider themes relevant to the understanding of the contemporary perspective on education for parenthood were being played out.

Charlotte Mason (1841?-1923), the central figure in my analysis, was an unknown Victorian spinster until her public reputation was established through her involvement with education for parenthood and the founding of the P.N.E.U., towards the end of the nineteenth century. She was primarily motivated by a desire for recognised social and intellectual status rather than by philanthropic charity. However, her ensuing struggle to win control over the P.N.E.U. did not constitute a rebellion against the constraints of Victorian patriarchal authority. Miss Mason's conflicts centred upon women colleagues who became matriarchal leaders within the P.N.E.U. Two interrelated but conflicting themes have emerged. They are concerned with the interactions between single and married women in the context of the paterfamilial domestic circle and their access to the world outside.

In 1.2., some of the relevant literature will be reviewed to explain the choice of the P.N.E.U. for an intensive case study. In 1.3. it will be explained that not only was the P.N.E.U. one of the first English societies to engage in education for parenthood but it was untypical in its focus upon the upper echelons of society. In 1.4., the anxieties which gave impetus to the founding of the P.N.E.U. will be linked to the issue of paternal absenteeism and changing definitions of women's place in relation to husbands and children during the nineteenth century.

1.2. Some Perspectives on the History of English Education for Parenthood.

My starting point was modern education for parenthood. It eluded precise definition⁽²⁾. It appeared to be an umbrella term, covering multifarious public and private activities and methods of dispensing information, some of which seemed to have a remarkably tenuous connection with issues of child upbringing and education. Both children and adults might be involved in the various schemes, in school and out of school.

"Although there is now considerably more activity on several fronts, approaches to preparation for parenthood are still piecemeal and uncoordinated. Quite different programmes are being undertaken by personnel in health, social services, education, the youth service, churches, voluntary organisations and by parents themselves. Teachers, psychologists, counsellors, social workers, health visitors, doctors, nurses, midwives, priests, youth workers, physiotherapists, education welfare officers-everyone is doing it". (3)

Two points of interest emerged from the contemplation of this welter of feverish activity. First, there seemed to be an underlying assumption that universal education for parenthood, variously defined, was eminently desirable, the only problem being the unexplained obstacles to coordination and focus. Secondly, there appeared to be scant interest in the history of past attempts in England.

Universal education for parenthood was presented as an ideal. It incorporated a vision of an harmonious society where each growing individual was enabled to develop the capacity to achieve his or her full potential while at the same time being prevented from harm and from causing trouble⁽⁴⁾. It was an ideal which transcended political, social and economic realities. Idealist and universalist conceptions of education for parenthood seemed to deny the influence of the past, in the spirit of Carlyle's (1795-1881) dictum: "Happy the people whose annals are blank in history books"⁽⁵⁾. Furthermore, the identification of significant past influences in terms of policies, practices and ideas, presented problems in this diffuse and undefined area. Considerable significance has been attributed to the influence of the "Baby Books". For example, from Rousseau's "Émile" (1762) to Dr Benjamin Spock's bestselling "Baby and Child Care" (1945), the belief in the power of such works to transform the attitudes of a generation or two has been widely accepted. However, in view of the difficulty of obtaining reliable evidence the conclusions must, perforce, remain somewhat speculative⁽⁶⁾.

For the purposes of this thesis, education for parenthood is defined more narrowly in terms of organised schemes or programmes of direct, or indirect, instruction or education, which may, or may not, make use of contemporary "Baby Book" literature. A distinction may be made between voluntary and interventionist education for parenthood. The former term refers to all those schemes freely chosen or organised by the parents themselves, such as the P.N.E.U. or the modern Pre-School Playgroups Association. The aims are primarily geared to the felt needs of those immediately engaged in upbringing or preparing for it. Interventionist education for parenthood, on the other hand, tends to be "instructive" rather than "educational". It has usually been directed towards those who are, or who might be expected to become a burden upon the State. It is concerned with the relationship of family-organised child bearing and rearing to the needs of wider society. Thus in China, at the present time, a massive national educational campaign has been launched, in the interest of population control, to deter couples from having more than one child. Interventionist education for parenthood, not usually explicitly so defined, may be viewed as a tool of social or political engineering which may, or may not be beneficial to the individuals concerned.

Harold Silver's categorisation of the various histories of education into "For" and "Against", suggested a flexible and useful means of analysing a controversial topic. Such a perspective might raise questions about the

origins of idealism and universalism, the relationship of individuals to the State as well as definitions of class and gender in the context of various approaches to education for parenthood.

"The history of education is in fact multiple histories, because education is itself no simple and homogeneous concept or category, and because its history can be explored in relation to almost endless variables....education...has no meaning when presented in isolated and discretely institutional terms. Its history can be discussed in alternative forms, and the problems of interpretation can be illustrated by suggesting two different ways of approaching the history of the purposes of education-the history of education FOR and the history of education AGAINST. If this is an oversimplification of the alternatives, it at least indicates how history involves selection, emphasis and interpretation"(7).

Thus education for parenthood may be presented as being for the improvement of child health and lifespan, for the well-being of mothers, for intellectual or emotional fulfilment, for good citizenship and the strengthening of a nation. It may be recommended for the promotion of international or family harmony as well as for the upholding of capitalist economies, patriarchy or hierarchical class structure. It may be advocated against the evils of too great or too small a population, a variety of social problems from intellectual under-achievement to delinquency, maternal depression, paternal absenteeism or family breakdown. It may be viewed as a preventive measure against excessive Government social welfare or educational expenditure or maternal employment outside the home. The analysis depends upon differing perspectives and definitions of the

role of the State, the Family and wider Society.

This kind of critical analysis appeared to be missing from the modern debate on education for parenthood. Indeed, contemporary writers, mainly concerned with education for parenthood as a means of compensatory social engineering have been so selective about its history, that its English antecedents have been virtually denied ⁽⁸⁾. The contemporary rejection of theories of inter-generational "cycles of deprivation", popularised by Sir Keith Joseph in a famous speech to the Pre-School Playgroups Association in 1972 (which he subsequently retracted in his Gilbreth lecture of 1979) has been paralleled by a comparable denial of inter-generational influences on the evolution of modern education for parenthood ⁽⁹⁾. For example, the two publications concerned with preparation for parenthood (1974), sponsored by the Department of Health and Social Security, at Sir Keith's instigation, provided a broad overview of the contemporary British scene but completely ignored the historical dimension ⁽¹⁰⁾. Professor Richard Whitfield's subsequent treatment in "Education for Family Life" (1980) also implied that education for parenthood was not taken seriously in England until the mid to late twentieth century ⁽¹¹⁾. In their latest survey of British developments, Gillian Pugh and Erica De'ath also devoted little space to historical perspectives. Questions need to be raised, for example, about the ideal of universality in relation to the marked trend towards "compensatory" education for parenthood, still primarily directed towards

"problem mothers" and girls of low intellectual achievement⁽¹²⁾. Finally, although the enquiry of Teresa Grafton and Lesley Smith into "Preparation for Parenthood in the Secondary School Curriculum" (1983) may be viewed as one modern response to educational questions raised by Herbert Spencer, as long ago as the 1850's, they were obliged to state:

"Definitive histories of 'preparation for parenthood' have yet to be written but the origins of the concept certainly go well back into the nineteenth century" (13).

The seminal work on education for parenthood, undertaken by Dr. H.H. Stern, more than twenty-five years ago, has been selectively ignored. One of the reports of his research, commissioned by UNESCO in collaboration with the University of Hull included historical retrospection and cross-cultural comparisons between four Western countries, including Great Britain. Stern not only reviewed various educational, medical and psychological theories which informed thinking about child upbringing but also some late nineteenth century movements, such as Froebelian kindergartens and the campaign for infant, maternity and child welfare services concerned with maternal educational reforms. His work, which has never been updated, was carried out during the post war reconstruction period, during the first flush of enthusiasm over the new British "Welfare State". At that time, it was logical to emphasise the need for growth and coordination of the preventive and compensatory educational

programmes planned to benefit future generations and nations all over the world⁽¹⁴⁾. Stern's "Whiggish" perspective was shared by other researchers, such as Dr. Madeline Roofff (1957). The latter's enquiry into partnership between the State and voluntary bodies had included a review of the patchwork development of the British maternity, infant and child welfare services, also described by Stern. She concluded that progress implied a more unified expansion⁽¹⁵⁾. Furthermore, a growing desire for preparation for parenthood had been shown by Dr. Alastair Heron (1949), who had found that both the adults and teenagers, whom he had surveyed, would have liked more teaching on the subject⁽¹⁶⁾.

In certain respects, Dr. Stern's work has remained influential. Modern advocates of education for parenthood have absorbed his Whig historical perspective and assumed the desirability of universal voluntary and interventionist education for parenthood. Criticism has centred almost entirely upon the piecemeal nature of its development as expressed in Stern's frequently quoted conclusions:⁽¹⁷⁾.

"In Great Britain, parent education has been approached cautiously. There is no national organisation primarily responsible for it. There are no 'schools for parents', no 'schools for mothers', and the term 'parent education' is neither widely used nor even widely known.....British experience illustrates an unfocalised diffuse and informal approach to parent education....."

"The main conclusion of this study is that there is a need for an educational policy concerning parenthood and for systematic educational efforts" (18).

The linking of modern education for parenthood research to contemporary policy-making has inhibited adequate critical and historical analysis⁽¹⁹⁾. The available literature reviewed has evidenced the need to look elsewhere for interpretations of the purpose and significance of education for parenthood in English society during the past century.

Further illumination of the controversial aspects of education for parenthood has emerged from the critical and independent perspectives of feminist historians. Their work on the relationship between the interventionist educational measures offered under the auspices of the Edwardian Infant Welfare movement and the social, political and economic position of the families involved, has suggested alternative interpretations to the progressive view of twentieth century education for parenthood. Some light has been thrown on the obstacles to development. For example, nineteenth century ideologies of "Motherhood" have been shown to have coloured beliefs about what was suitable education and work for women living under the domination of patriarchal capitalist structures. Such beliefs informed decisions, by experts and policy makers, about education for motherhood as well as the embryo social welfare policies with which it was inextricably entangled. Anna Davin (1978) has traced connections between the contemporary emphasis on motherhood and fertility with the Imperialist concern for renewed national military and industrial strength⁽²⁰⁾. Carol

Dyhouse (1976, 1978) has looked critically at the influence of these domestic ideologies on the selection of subjects in girls' schools and on the widely held belief that high rates of infant mortality, around 1900, were primarily caused by the employment of women outside the home and by the "maternal ignorance", rife among the fertile women of the "poorer classes"⁽²¹⁾. Dr. Jane Lewis has confirmed in the "Politics of Motherhood" (1980), that education was offered to mothers as a panacea for a range of political, social and economic problems impinging on the lives of working class families during the early decades of the twentieth century. She noted that while women's groups welcomed educational provisions, such as the mothercraft classes offered in the Schools for Mothers (1907-1918), many of the mothers' real problems, unrecognised by the policy makers, remained unsolved⁽²²⁾. The work of these scholars has demonstrated alternative perspectives on the history of education for parenthood and the need for further meticulous investigation⁽²³⁾.

This review of some relevant recent literature indicated that there was an English history of education for parenthood worth exploring further. One might begin by asking why nineteenth century ideas had been ignored by modern family reformers. Herbert Spencer (1861), for example, had made some definitive statements about the need to include preparation for parenthood in what would now be termed the "core curriculum" in schools⁽²⁴⁾. Those who have discussed his educational theories have ignored this

part of his argument: (25) .

"Poor Herbert Spencer. From the standard histories of education it would be difficult to deduce the extent (or even the existence) of his impact on social thought, and from the books on Spencer's sociology it would be difficult to deduce that he wrote anything at all about education" (26).

If Spencer's proposals for the introduction of education for parenthood in all schools had been eminently sensible and even practicable, why had they not been implemented? Carol Dyhouse has shown how such education offered only to girls was, during the nineteenth century, limited to very basic domestic subjects, often crudely taught and inadequately organised. This was not what Spencer had intended⁽²⁷⁾. What seemed to be required was some exploration of the gap between, on the one hand, the Utopian ideals reaching towards the perfectibility of man (if not woman), which the youthful Herbert Spencer had expounded during the "fifties" and, on the other hand, the humdrum, practical realities of interventionist instructional programmes which had, since their inception, usually been restricted to "lower-class" mothers and girls. By penetrating beyond the descriptive narrative of Dr Stern and others, the feminist historians had exposed some controversial aspects of education for parenthood. Their work also implied the need for detailed "For" and "Against" analyses of education for parenthood, at all levels of society during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Accordingly, it seemed fruitful to pursue some of the reasons why education for parenthood had failed to develop

ideally, universally and comprehensively in England. Focus appeared essential in a complex and controversial area which bordered on several discrete academic disciplines. The obvious course was to undertake a specific historical case study, rooted in relevant contemporary issues such as class and gender, in relation to parents, children and upbringing methods, taking account of defined aims and objectives. This seemed to offer a well-delineated approach to these questions.

1.3.i. The Selection of the Parents' National Educational Union (1887-).

The P.N.E.U. emerged as the obvious choice for a case study. Other Victorian societies considered seemed less suitable. Some were solely devoted to the needs of children. Of these, the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (1884), which grew from protective movements such as the Infant Life Protection Society (1870) to limit by legislation and intervention, the incidence of children being harmed within their homes by their parents or others, did not at first believe that educational programmes would serve a preventive function⁽²⁸⁾. Knowledge of the Child Study Association (1894), an American import, only emerged after work on the P.N.E.U. had begun. This society certainly included education about child development within its aims, but appeared more explicitly dominated by child care experts than the P.N.E.U.⁽²⁹⁾. Other societies focussed specifically on the parents,

usually the mothers. The Mothers' Union (1876, 1885), an Anglican religious society ostensibly included the education of mothers within its objects. However, in practice, it developed as an advanced form of the Mothers' Meeting, primarily devoted to prayer and religious fellowship among women⁽³⁰⁾.

Finally, after due consideration, the National Association for Maternal and Child Welfare (1912, 1938) was rejected as a case study choice. As Dr. Stern had observed, it had been one of the most influential voluntary societies promoting education for parenthood from the introduction of "parentcraft" classes and specialist literature to the setting up of examinable courses in State secondary schools, the forerunners of certain C.S.E. options. However, the Society was not properly constituted until towards the middle of the twentieth century and therefore not the first in the field. Secondly, although in its modern form both medical and educational orientations have been successfully incorporated, it originated from the amalgam of voluntary societies set up to fight Infant Mortality. The N.A.M.C.W. was therefore rooted in the limited medical didacticism of the Infant Welfare pioneers who promoted compensatory and interventionist educational programmes rather than ones which were voluntary and universalist. Thirdly, the feminist historians already mentioned had already made a thorough investigation of the early twentieth century Infant Welfare movement. It seemed useful to extend the debate by exploring new ground.⁽³¹⁾

Apart from the erudite Dr. Stern who had heard of Charlotte Mason, the contribution of the P.N.E.U. to the early development of voluntary English education for parenthood has been forgotten, both within the modern movement, now known as the World-wide Education Service of the P.N.E.U., as well in other present day circles of those interested in the subject such as the National Children's Bureau⁽³²⁾. The discovery of the P.N.E.U. came through reading an article entitled, "A New Educational Departure", which described the origins of this late Victorian educational society⁽³³⁾. The anonymous author, who turned out to be Charlotte Mason, described the purpose of the society to be the "education of the parents" from all social classes. Its aims embraced Utopian idealism, still featured in the modern debate, a universal approach to education which went beyond mere didactic instruction and concepts of partnership between fathers and mothers as well as between parents and professional educationalists. If these aims had been satisfactorily achieved the P.N.E.U. contribution to education for parenthood would have been well remembered. What, then, were the obstacles to the establishment of a universal method of education for parenthood by the P.N.E.U.?

This study, which was started with the comparatively simple aim of uncovering the details of the P.N.E.U. approach to education for parenthood during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was, from the beginning, confronted by the problem of Charlotte Mason. The official

biography (1960) and other writings, both published and unpublished, presented Miss Mason as an original and progressive thinker, whose ideas had informed the educational folk wisdom of the twentieth century⁽³⁴⁾. The findings of the Plowden Report on "Children and their Primary Schools" (1966) were, for example, directly attributed to the influence of Miss Mason⁽³⁵⁾. If this was true, why had few people heard of her, why had she received no public honours, and why was she not featured in the standard anthologies of great modern educational thinkers or even the Dictionary of National Biography? The initial exploration was, therefore, concerned with investigating the antithesis to the standard P.N.E.U. thesis on Miss Mason. It was hoped that the final synthesis would incorporate a balanced picture of the personality of Miss Mason and the key part she had played, within a studied perspective on the P.N.E.U. contribution to education for parenthood.

1.3.ii. Methodology:

"Educational researchers have developed an interest in case study not only as an analysis of multiple realities but also as a methodology which permits of the widest range of angles of vision of the participants.....A view of history which is both interpretative and self-consciously resistant to unilinear explanations offers the best possible approximation to the past experience under scrutiny" (36).

It is obviously impossible for any historical researcher to be completely free from previous preconceptions in the pursuit of objective analysis. These have, doubtless,

been unconsciously incorporated within this thesis. One check to inherent prejudice may be supplied by exposure to different perspectives within the same broad area which, thereby, introduces a necessary element of debate into discourse with the past. This is the justification for avoiding the use of a single grand theory or historical categorisation as an aid to logical analysis:

"..the grand theorist in fact sets forth a realm of concepts from which are excluded many structural features of human society, features long and accurately recognised as fundamental to its understanding" (37).

In attempting to research one of the "gaps" in educational history, it appeared that the investigation of a small section of society, during a particular period, might unearth new evidence which did not fit neatly into existing frameworks.

The literature review had revealed first, that there were different ways of looking at the history of education for parenthood and secondly, that it was a problematic subject for research. Taking both these approaches into account has opened windows on to new vistas. These have been used as stimulus to conceptualisation as well as for the clarification of different aspects of the study⁽³⁸⁾. For example, certain twentieth century psycho-dynamic theories, such as those of Klein and Erikson, suggested interpretations of Miss Mason's individual personality, motivation and conflicts but required contextualising in terms of her changing social situation and historical

period. Feminist analyses of the subordination of women and domestic organisation to the demands of Victorian patriarchy illuminated the strategies and circumventory tactics used by women members of the P.N.E.U. to enhance their public status and gain some control over their lives. However, those analyses which adopted a uniform view of women as a category have failed to suggest interpretations of the competitive struggles between the women themselves, represented by the "spinster" and the "matriarch" and manifested in the development of the P.N.E.U. "Modernisation" theories also offered only partial explanations of the strategies used by P.N.E.U. families to absorb progress within traditional approaches to upbringing and education, both at home and in school. Finally, notions of "class conflict", viewed as integral to any description of the Victorian hierarchical and unjust social order, overlooked the strategies adopted by P.N.E.U. members who, by locating themselves through education and membership, within that fluid social category known as the "educated classes", were able to participate in free and easy association with the upper classes.

Secondly, the case study investigation has been set within the framework of a broad problem suggested by contemporary anxieties about the piecemeal nature of English education for parenthood. What were the obstacles to the development of a universal method of education for parenthood by the P.N.E.U.? This approach has permitted a wider perspective and also a disciplined ordering of the research findings. It has avoided the constraints imposed by adhering too rigidly to one particular interpretative formula

such as the feminist or patriarchal views of history. In consequence, key issues which have emerged from the material, for example social class exclusivity, were able to be pursued in a logical way. The handling of the problem has been linked to the three divisions of the thesis. What effect did the individuality of Charlotte Mason, a key figure in the analysis, have upon the development of the P.N.E.U.? How were the educational programmes used by the P.N.E.U. members? What were the consequences for the Society of the interaction of Miss Mason with the P.N.E.U.?

"The historian starts with a provisional selection of facts, and a provisional interpretation in the light of which that selection has been made-by others as well as by himself. As he works, both the interpretation and the selection and ordering of the facts undergo subtle and perhaps partly unconscious changes, through the reciprocal action of one on the other" (39).

The intention has been to build up from the available records as plausible and as objective an account as possible of the growth and development of the P.N.E.U. and Miss Mason's significant interaction with the Society, in the context of the period. The research has included methods appropriate to detective investigation such as the following up of leads, the testing of hypotheses and the interviewing of witnesses. This approach has not only uncovered relevant new evidence and offered alternative interpretations, but has also highlighted some significant gaps in the record, such as the skilful expunging of all traceable references to Miss Mason's early life. Following Dr. Jane Lewis, the material elicited from the interviews, "has been used for illustration rather than as an

integral part of the analysis because of the small sample and the special problems associated with interpreting data"⁽⁴⁰⁾. There was a search through the registers and catalogues of appropriate record offices and libraries for additional evidence to supplement the main archive collection which was discovered in different locations in this country. The research therefore involved meticulous scrutiny and the ordering of the evidence acquired. It also involved a careful reading of the published P.N.E.U. sources not merely for overt statements but for implicit themes. For example, Content Analysis was used to glean personal references to Miss Mason and her mysterious past from her published works⁽⁴¹⁾. Inevitably some of the conclusions must remain speculative in the absence of concrete evidence. Clear indications will be given where this is seen to be the case.

"We have come to see that the biographies of men and women, the kinds of individuals they variously become, cannot be understood without reference to the historical structures in which the milieux of their everyday life are organized" (42).

In the thesis, both biographical and institutional analyses are interwoven to add depth to the interpretation not only of the individual psychological and social processes involved but also of the way in which a myth is created and an institution formed and changed. Sociological perspectives have helped to clarify the inter-relationship between the individual, the institution and the wider social context of class structures, family life and modes of education in relation to competitive industrial society.

Ideas and ideologies have been seen as integral to certain social processes and changes affecting the small group.

The thesis is about changing relationships between spinsterhood and motherhood in the context of paterfamilial dominion expressed, for example, by the rise of a new phenomenon, the female professional expert, during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The P.N.E.U. material illustrates ways in which often uneasy adjustments were sought, through conflict and compromise, between the two branches of the "silent sisterhood", from different generations and gradations along the social class continuum. The study is about the different uses to which a society for the promotion of education for parenthood was put. Central to this discussion is the tension within the society between the use of education for parenthood as a means of social reform and as a mediating agent to preserve family and class unity, while reconciling traditional styles of upbringing with the demands of a modern competitive machine-age society. It is about the use of school education to keep the child within the family cultural tradition of the educated classes. The material also illustrates the influence of the public acceptance of paternal absenteeism upon the vain P.N.E.U. attempt to bring images of the Victorian patriarch and man of affairs into line with renewed concepts of a participant fatherhood, combining the gentlemanly courtesies of a Lord Chesterfield with the practical wisdom of a Cobbett.

Finally, as befits a moral tale of Victorian times, interwoven with the development of the P.N.E.U. is the impelling story of one remarkable spinster's individual struggle for ascendancy within a harsh, friendless and male-dominated hierarchical society. In the next section, some of the ideas and anxieties which provided the background impetus for the founding of the P.N.E.U. will be discussed.

1.4. The Quest for Manliness, Motherliness and Perfectibility in Victorian Times.

"Every society consists of men in the process of developing from children into parents. To assure continuity of tradition, society must early prepare for parenthood in its children; and it must take care of the unavoidable remnants of infantility in its adults. This is a large order, especially since a society needs many beings who can follow, a few who can lead, and some who can do both, alternately or in different areas of life" (43).

The paradox of the Victorian age, devoted to the belief "that the home was the foundation and the family the cornerstone of their civilisation" was that the men, who were the acknowledged leaders of society, were not primarily being prepared for fatherhood but for man's work in the outside world⁽⁴⁴⁾. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, a widespread public acceptance of the notion of absentee fatherhood had become firmly entrenched; symbolised by the somewhat alarming image of the Mother-Monarch who remained unsupported on the throne for the last forty years of her life. Fatherhood was transformed from the vivid image of the mid-century Victorian paterfamilias into an elusive and vague concept during

the succeeding century. Fatherhood does not appear as a separate category in the indices of social histories of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: neither from Trevelyan to Bédarida, nor from Panks to Branca⁽⁴⁵⁾. Edward Shorter (1975), for example, mentions motherhood on eighty-seven pages, women on twenty-seven but is silent on the subject of fatherhood. He only discusses men, as a separate category, on twenty-three of the pages of his controversial history of the modern family⁽⁴⁶⁾. It is only very recently that historians, such as Anthony Wohl have pointed out the need to explore the domestic background of all members of the family⁽⁴⁷⁾.

The impact of industrialisation, the concentration of work in the newly developing urban centres has been associated with the break-up of traditional family structures of shared work and domestic life. The father was the first to "advance...in all directions outwards from a stable and fortified centre"⁽⁴⁸⁾. Harold Perkin has shown that transformations in the place and pattern of work developed quite slowly during the early years of the nineteenth century⁽⁴⁹⁾. The changes were, therefore, not so rapid as to inhibit a revival of domestic education at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. "....There occurred a vigorous, widespread and self-conscious movement to enfold the children of the gentry and the professional middle classes within their own families"⁽⁵⁰⁾. Fathers as well as mothers had an important part to play in this movement, informed by

the popular discourses of the "early educationalists" to be discussed in Chapter 5. Manuals, directly appealing to fathers such as Richard and Maria Edgeworth's "Practical Education" (1789) and William Cobbett's "Advice to a Father" (1829) were widely read⁽⁵¹⁾. It is clearly significant that Cobbett's nostalgic rural idyll of loving and fully participant fatherhood should have become a best-selling classic, even running to a further seven editions between 1900 and 1980⁽⁵²⁾. It was expressive of an apparently fulfilling style of life which many late Victorians doubtless believed to have been lost forever in the smoky cities and tenement dwellings.

The actual demands of work at all levels of society, below the leisured classes, as it subsequently developed in new and varying forms during the nineteenth century, seemed incompatible with active fatherhood. The work itself might be tiring or stressful, the travelling dangerous. The hours were long and there was the ever-present fear of "overpressure" or failing health. The new responsibilities shouldered by individual workers outside the protective family nexus doubtless caused them much anxiety. Furthermore, the sophisticated modes of production and the development of large-scale factories and workshops away from home meant that fathers were unable to continue the training and supervision of their children. The growth of school education and higher technical and professional training had further eroded paternal educational responsibilities by the end of the

nineteenth century⁽⁵³⁾.

The thesis is focussed upon those middle and upper class families associated with the concept of the Victorian paterfamilias. It is hard to tell how far this stereotype was based on myth rather than reality. The interest lies in the social significance of this concept. Was the paterfamilias a compensatory role, designed to protect the status of the father within the family circle, from which he was, by mid-century, presumed to absent himself each day?⁽⁵⁴⁾ It was a powerful image to sustain his confidence in his individual powers of survival, shattered by the daily experience of work:

"The man, in his rough work in the open world must encounter all peril and trial:- to him, therefore, must be the failure, the offence, the inevitable error; often he must be wounded or subdued; often misled; and always hardened...." (55).

Towards the end of the century, the precarious equilibrium sustained by working gentlemen was in danger of being upset by the upsurge of the populace. Elementary education, the extension of the franchise to male householders and lodgers, in the towns in 1867, and the country in 1884, and the granting of freedom to engage in collective bargaining in 1875, were some of the measures which gave the brawny working man, the epitome of manly strength, more political and economic muscle than some of his more delicately nurtured upper class compatriots wished to see implemented⁽⁵⁶⁾.

Comfort could be sought in Spencerian and Social Darwinist theories of the hereditary superiority of gentlemen. Their excellence was said to have derived from long-term, inter-generational exposure to the beneficial adaptations of the civilising process through education. Such theories, however, had their limitations. Common sense indicated that many gently nurtured male members of the upper classes were not really made of the stuff from which the great heroes, eulogised by Carlyle, were fashioned⁽⁵⁷⁾.

"His face was so unlike any face I had seen then; though bronzed a little with exposure, it was fair and delicate in outline, and even I could see that he was of a different class from ours. His hands, lying so limp and motionless, were very different from the horny palms of my father and his mates..." (58).

Young "Greek Gods" of a similar delicacy to this "young gent" needed preparation for the "rough work in the open world" which taxed their fathers' powers. The popularity of the English Public Schools, which grew substantially in numbers by the end of the century, suggests a general desire to expose growing boys to the hardening régimes of all male institutions as a suitable preparation for the work of Empire building⁽⁵⁹⁾. There was a felt need to assert the independent manliness of gentlemen. The biographer of a certain Bishop Mackenzie, who might be assumed to have proved his manhood, by leading the University Missionaries and dying in Central Africa, nevertheless felt obliged to justify his subject's gentleness of manner:

"'Some persons might have said', writes his biographer, 'that he was not manly enough, too girl-like, too soft, but there was a real manliness which is ever considerate of the feelings of others which shrinks from everything mean and unworthy'..." (60).

One senses conflict and anxiety, not normally associated with the awesome image of the bearded patriarch portrayed in Victorian family portraits. The popular image is of the successful man, the provider of the means of "conspicuous consumption", the epitome of manly virility demonstrated by the size of his small kingdom of subject children, guided by the devotion of his adoring wife and female relatives. Erikson's analysis suggests an alternative picture and an interpretation of the presumed anxiety behind protestations of manly vigour:

"Having learnt in clinical work that the individual is apt to develop an amnesia concerning his most formative experiences in childhood, we are also forced to recognise a universal blind spot in the makers and interpreters of history: they ignore the fateful function of childhood in the fabric of society. Historians and philosophers recognise a 'female principle' in the world, but not the fact that man is born and reared by women.....man..... refuses to see how he became what he really is and how, as an emotional and political being, he undoes with infantile compulsions and impulses what his thought has invented and what his hands have built. All of this has its psychological basis-namely the individual's unconscious determination never to meet his childhood anxiety face to face again and his superstitious apprehension lest a glance at the infantile origins of his thoughts and schemes may destroy his single-minded stamina" (61).

Many Victorian gentlemen, the group seemingly most obsessed with manliness, may have been in the process of recovering from the favoured Puritan style of "early Victorian" upbringing which was stern at best and

terrifying at its worst, as the novels of Mrs. Sherwood suggest. As the product of the evangelical revival, such methods are believed to have been fairly widespread⁽⁶²⁾. Samuel Smiles remarked with some perception:

"The influence of woman is the same everywhere. Her condition influences the morals, manners and character of the people in all countries....For Nations are but the outcome of Homes, and Peoples of Mothers....." (63).

For example, the upbringing and "family school" methods employed by the energetic Susanna Wesley (1669-1742), described in a famous letter to her second son, John, (1703-1791), the ascetic founder of Methodism and encapsulated in the biblical precept: "Train up a child in the way that he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it", were much admired throughout the Victorian age. It was an upbringing that eschewed molly-coddling and endeavoured to enforce early emotional independence. For example, from one year old, the nineteen children were taught to "'cry softly' by which means they escaped an abundance of correction....They retired at eight in the evening and were 'left in their several rooms awake, for there was no such thing allowed in the house as sitting by a child till it fell asleep....'"⁽⁶⁴⁾. The youngest son, Charles (1707-1788) seems to have transformed any fears he might have felt about being alone in the dark into powerful hymns, many of which were published in "Hymns Ancient and Modern" (1861) and sung repeatedly in Victorian Churches of various denominations across England. His "Soldiers of Christ Arise" seems emotionally

compensatory, for in its twenty-four lines, there are no fewer than nineteen words relating to strength and winning. The hymn is in striking contrast to the child-like panic and desolation of the following extract:

"Jesu, Lover of my soul,
Let me to Thy Bosom fly,
.....

Hide me, O, my Saviour, hide,
Till the storm of life is past,
Safe into the haven guide;
O, receive my soul at last.

Other refuge have I none;
Hangs my helpless soul on Thee;
Leave, ah! leave me not alone,
Still support and comfort me.

.....
Cover my defenceless head
With the shadow of Thy wing...." (65)

As Erikson's analysis suggests, the problem for Victorian gentlemen, struggling to survive, was how to cope with the different manifestations of womanhood which they had experienced in relation to their mothers and others who had cared for them in infancy. In speculating on the symbolism of social and familial structures, it could be argued that masculine solutions to early childhood anxieties were sought in the cutting of the giant Mother-figure of infancy down to size, by splitting female functions into separate spheres as indeed they often were in reality. The logic of this pseudo-rational doctrine of domestic efficiency could be found in the application of the principle of division of labour to improve overall productivity at the workplace. The stereotype described

the three separate functions of womanhood: the mistress of the house, the mother and the sexual consort. Of central importance was the wife or "Angel in the House". The other two were subsidiary figures: the maternal duties banished to the nursery and the sexual functions hidden in the brothel. The Freudian map of the mind suggests a suitable analogy (1923). The purpose of the Angel, a figure like Mary, the sister of Lazarus, was to support the conscious "ego" of the paterfamilias. The functions of the other two were submerged in the unconscious. These included the maternal regulation of moral behaviour, like a Martha, representing the "superego", whose equipoise was threatened by the unleashing of the instinctual drives of the "id" in sexual intercourse with a Magdalen⁽⁶⁶⁾.

As Freud pointed out, a great deal of effort and energy is needed to maintain the central balance of the ego. Male strength was required for work: to build up British industry, to maintain the world-wide lead and to consolidate Imperial power. It is not surprising that Victorians were obsessed with rest. John Ruskin (1819-1900), the over-protected only child, crystallised an economy of the complementary spheres of husband and wife, which was immensely popular:

"Now their separate characters are briefly these. The man's power is active, progressive, defensive. He is eminently the doer, the creator, the discoverer, the defender. His intellect is for speculation and invention; his energy for adventure, for war and for conquest, wherever war is just, wherever conquest necessary. But the woman's power is for rule, not for battle-her intellect is not for invention or creation but for sweet ordering, arrangement, and decision..... Her great function is praise: she enters into no conquest but infallibly adjudges the crown of conquest..."
(67)

All the elements of counter-productive fear which had made the gentlemanly paterfamilias tremble whilst reciting his prayers at his mother's knee were, theoretically at least, to be banned from the domestic hearth:

"This is the true nature of home - it is the place of Peace; the shelter not only from all injury, but from all terror doubt and division" (68).

During the "golden fifties" and after, the Nation could not afford to lose momentum by allowing the dissipation of limited, but highly-prized male energies on the frivolous sexual and material demands of their dependent wives (69).

It was the duty of the pure wife, swathed in moral swaddling bands, as her piano legs were discreetly shrouded in the drawing-room, to conserve the sexual powers of her husband in the interests of productivity in the workplace, as well as the nursery. The beautiful lines of Coventry Patmore (1823-1896) transcended this ideal of economic efficiency to the level of religious sacrament:

"Ah, wasteful woman! -she who may
On her sweet self set her own price
Knowing he cannot choose but pay-
How she has cheapen'd Paradise!
How given for naught her priceless gift,
How spoil'd the bread and spill'd the wine,
Which spent with due respective thrift,
Had made brutes men, and men divine" (70).

The Churches supported this market-place line of argument. The Catholic revival, following the 1829 Emancipation Act, gave impetus to a renewed doctrine of

Mary, which incorporated both the purity and redemptive powers attributed to the ideal Victorian lady. In 1852, a popular treatise, "The Glories of Mary" was first translated into English. Jesus, the Son, was proclaimed King, which accorded his immaculately conceived, Virgin Mother, the rank of Queen. However, a quotation from Cardinal Hugo, established their relative positions: "Christ is the greater light to rule the just and Mary is the lesser light to rule sinners". The author of the book, showed implicit recognition of hidden male fears of maternal dominance;

"It is true that Jesus...has supreme dominion over all, and also over Mary; it will nevertheless be always true that for a time when He was living in this world, He was pleased to humble himself and to be subject to Mary.....of Mary alone can it be said that she was so far favoured as to be not only herself submissive to the will of God, but even that God was subject to her will....." (71)

The Church of England also supported the Victorian paterfamilial reluctance to be in any way subject to the will of a woman. As factories were efficiently run by the oligarchical control of management over the workforce, so firm leadership was required at the domestic hearth. "The late Bishop of Calcutta" outlined, in his "Hints on the Duties of Married Life", a soothing, Pauline paradigm for the support of the male ego and economic power:

".....Let each observe God's order as to the relations and duties of married persons; the husband to love, honour, cherish, protect the wife; the wife to yield, obey, honour comfort the husband.

If differences arise, let the wife, as in the inferior relation, yield.

Let the wife consult the interests of her husband, his success in life, his necessary plans of domestic economy, his anxiety to provide all things honest in the sight of all men. Married families are ruined by the freaks, caprices, foolish opposition to frugality, love of show of the wife, as often as by the speculations of the husband....." (72)

To maintain this state of affairs, it was crucial to maintain the age-old belief in the intellectual inferiority of women, which was helped by the fashion for inconsequential "accomplishment education", designed to please the potential husband⁽⁷³⁾. This belief supported the establishment of exclusive male preserves, in the universities, the Church, the Club, the workplace or the smoking room, where all important matters were discussed in retreat, from the all-knowing maternal eye of interfering womanhood. Mandell Creighton (1843-1901), subsequently Bishop of London, had been well-trained in such prejudices. These were partially modified by marriage to a very intelligent lady, six years after he had written the following highly-charged letter:

"....I find ladies in general are very unsatisfactory mental food: they seem to have no particular thoughts or ideas, and though for a time it is flattering to one's vanity to think one may teach them some it palls after a while. Of course at a certain age, when you have a house and so on you get a wife as part of its furniture and find her a very comfortable institution; but I doubt greatly whether there were ever any men who had thoughts worth recounting, who told those thoughts to their wives at first, or who expected them to appreciate them. I should like to hear from Tennyson a comparison of his

feelings towards Arthur Hallam and towards his wife. I believe men are driven into matrimony by the necessities of life, which tend to make friendship impossible by engrossing all a man's thoughts....." (74)

Although the "Angel in the House" remained a popular ideal, throughout the century, it was not without its critics. An anonymous contributor to St. Paul's in responding to a much publicised article in the "Saturday Review" remarked: "If therefore the author of the 'Girl of the Period' had contented himself with pointing out that petticoats and purity did not necessarily go together, and that women were by no means the angelic and ethereal beings which poets of the Patmore order have been accustomed to pourtray, I for one should never have dreamt of protesting against the new evangel" (75). The constant reference to the ideal, notably in Church circles, suggests that changing circumstances were making it a hard ideal for women to live up to in practice. The Editor of "Home Words" in 1887, significantly printed the answer: "Housewife" close to the following "Charade":

"Dear is my first when closing nights draw near
But 'tis my second makes my first more dear;
My whole with prudent care my first preserves,
And thus to be my SECOND well deserves" (76)

In traditional warfare, the balance of power is often believed to be affected by numbers. A focus for traditionalist male anxiety during the second half of the nineteenth century was the issue, labelled in derogatory fashion, the problem of the "surplus women". In 1886, an "Author of 'Many Things'" revealed his anxiety, by going to some pains

to point out that, although in 1881, out of a total population of 25,968,286, there was an excess of 718,778 females over males, this number "would be greatly lessened were the army, navy and merchant services not excluded from the reckoning"⁽⁷⁷⁾.

Sara Delamont has remarked on the shortage of men as "the British Empire had taken many men abroad....The 1851 census showed that one-third of British women would not be able to catch husbands"⁽⁷⁸⁾. However, Patricia Branca's interpretation of figures from census data between 1851 and 1911 suggests that contemporary worries about the "surplus women", particularly from the middle classes, was somewhat exaggerated. "In 1850-52, out of 1,000 girls who were unmarried at the age of 15, 859 could expect to have married at least once by the time they reached their 50th birthday". The ratio remained relatively steady for the following sixty years; the proportion of women who could expect not to marry was 141 in 1850-52 and 182 in 1910-12⁽⁷⁹⁾. These conclusions suggest that the Victorian "Woman Question" was charged with some irrational emotional feeling.

Women as a category had become a problem. Attempts to introduce calm deliberation into the debate were often in vain. Criticisms of women's behaviour ranged from their dress, to campaigns for the franchise. Whately-Cooke Taylor was one sympathetic protagonist who argued the utility of women's abilities and potential"....Let those of the other sex who have nothing but the threadbare

prejudice of custom in their favour, nothing but an assumed superiority born of the principle that "might is right", tremble for their power, and let those who have so long sneered at the 'strong-minded woman' feel that weight of her displeasure", he threatened, just a year before J.S. Mill (1806-1873) published "On the Subjection of Women" (1869) ⁽⁸⁰⁾. To some, it seemed as if women, emerging from domestic obscurity, were threatening to invade every jealously guarded male preserve.

Solutions to the "Woman Question" were sought by daringly shifting the central emphasis from the Angel-wife to the Mother-Madonna. The fragile, ideal marriage between Paterfamilias and his inferior, submissive, helpmeet, sanctioned by both Religion and Science, had not been constructed with the offspring in mind. It was designed to support the Paterfamilias, made in the ikon of God the Father, who symbolised, but only indirectly participated in family life. The subject children had not been at the centre of the stage. John W. Kirton LL.D. wrote a disapproving story of Mrs. Maxwell who "neglected herself, her husband, her home-all for the darling baby. He was the first and last object to be considered, and all other matters had to take their chance" ⁽⁸¹⁾.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, "The Child" erupted into public awareness. Everyone had a lot of children wrote Mrs. Layton, during the early years of the twentieth century, when thinking back to her childhood, which began on April 9th 1855. "I was my

mother's seventh child, and seven more were born after me - fourteen in all - which made my mother a perfect slave. Generally speaking, she was either expecting a baby to be born or had one at the breast. At the time there were eight of use, the oldest was not big enough to get ready to go to school without help"⁽⁸²⁾. Like women, children became numerically significant during the nineteenth century. James Walvin has noted that between 1800 and 1914, children aged 14 and under, never formed less than a third of the total population. Furthermore, "a growing proportion of the nation's children were urban dwellers, often, quite literally, children of the streets"⁽⁸³⁾. Since the beginning of the century, the population had been increasing at a rate of about two million every ten years. The rise, is generally considered to have been caused by a fall in the death rate of those aged five and upwards, the infant mortality rate showing no improvement⁽⁸⁴⁾. This gave grounds for hope that investment in the children might bring some future return in terms of national strength and world power. The problem lay in upgrading the quality of the product. Since babies and infants were failing to survive or thrive during the time when they were totally in the care of their mothers, the fault, it was believed, lay in the inadequate nature of contemporary maternal care⁽⁸⁵⁾.

The solution was to train all women for motherhood to improve the quality of the end product. Motherhood, actual, surrogate or vicarious, was defined as a state

common to womanhood in all classes of society. The new ideology of motherhood embraced married and single women alike, defining certain occupations such as nursing or teaching as suitable for women because they were extensions of the motherhood role⁽⁸⁶⁾. Preparing upper class women for motherhood would equip them to teach their inferior sisters. Full time motherhood, rendered more demanding by the advancement of science, would chain women securely to their domestic duties. Fear of maternal domination, it was, doubtless secretly hoped, could be held in check by a policy of rigid segregation of the sexes within their separate spheres. The mothers' responsibilities lay with the children, an ideal home industry. John Burns (1858-1943), the radical Labour politician and the product of a Victorian childhood, has encapsulated male ambivalence towards women and lack of concern for maternal sacrifice, in a famous address delivered in 1906:

"I speak now as an engineer, as a member of a great society numbering 100,000 men, and here is a very cheerful and remarkable fact, that in fifty years, through many causes, partly high wages, cheaper food, better housing, shorter hours, increasing intelligence, and growing sobriety on the part of the engineer, the average age at death of engineers has been extended by ten or twelve years. Wives have also extended their age in the same period, but not quite so much, and never will, because that is the penalty woman pays for being the creator of us all. It is a burden she cannot altogether dispense with, and perhaps it is as well that altogether she should not - yes, for it is only by sacrifice that we live and we learn and we work and transmit....."

The infantile memories of John Burns reassured him that Mothers were large, strong capable people who managed:

"I had a good mother; she did not go out to work because I had a good father. She had enough to do looking after us. When I inform this Conference that I am the sixteenth out of eighteen, and that nine of us survive, you may have some idea how my mother was occupied. Now as to the effect of this on the children....I know of no influence on youthful lives so great as that of the mother at the head of a table, and her children around her, and the father coming home regularly to his meals from his work or his factory....." (87)

The preceding analysis suggests that there were mixed motives behind pleas for universal or partial education for parenthood, or motherhood, during the late nineteenth century. An elevated rhetoric of "The Child", which spoke to both religious and national interests, not only offered a unifying symbol for the promotion of social and family harmony, but also the overt rationale for plans to raise the quality and quantity of the coming generations. However, it seems reasonable to infer that some underlying aims behind such endeavours stemmed from latent patriarchal desires, backed by Church authority, to re-adjust the balance of power threatened by legislative measures such as the Married Women's Property Acts (1870, 1882) and the improved education and campaigning zeal of the new breed of married "strong-minded" women, in favour of masculine supremacy and comfort⁽⁸⁸⁾. It can have been no coincidence that Nietzsche's "Superman" fantasy (1884) caught the imagination of late Victorian gentlemen in need of an antidote to the maternal dominance they were attempting to evade in all-male institutions. The education of the sons, destined to be the supermen of the future, took primacy over that of the daughters, chosen to be the mothers of the race:

"Lo! I teach you the Superman! The Superman is the meaning of the earth!" (89)

However there was also a rhetoric of "Motherhood". It masked the general "apostasy of the paterfamilias" whose dignity was conferred by work⁽⁹⁰⁾. It also hid the unspoken negative aspects of mother-son relationships, engendered either by excessive strictness, or by deprivation, maternal absence, preoccupation with other children, the delegation of maternal duties, or by the rigours boarding-school life away from home.

Nostalgic ideal motherhood promised to unify all the split-off aspects of womanhood into one comforting whole. Thus the late Victorian mother was elevated into a more central position in the family, as in John Burns' anecdote. The negative side of this picture was concealed by the public reinforcement of the view that the father's place was primarily at work. The well-known figures of Christian symbolism provided the model: God, the Father, sustained by his family, The Church, representing the feminine principle, the Holy Mother. The Father and Son were Divine, the Mother was human and of the earth. A Victorian hymnologist, S.J. Stone (1839-1900) unconsciously expressed the predicament of the late Victorian family in an extremely popular hymn:

"The Church's One Foundation
Is Jesus Christ, her Lord
.....

From heaven he came and sought her
To be his holy bride,

.....

Though with a scornful wonder
Men see her sore opprest
By schisms rent asunder
By heresies distress;

.....

'Mid toil and tribulation
And tumult of her war,
She waits the Consummation
Of Peace, for evermore;

.....

Yet she on earth hath Union
With God the Three in One...." (91)

The absence of the paterfamilias gave the Victorian matriarch some room for manoeuvre but her life was, nonetheless defined by her relationship to him. Her problem was how to reconcile the more demanding styles of child-upbringing with her essentially supportive roles as Angel in the House, Madonna and Mistress, the epitome of cultured companionship. How was she to prepare her daughters? What part was to be played by the steadily growing number of unmarried gentlewomen? What was their place in the paterfamilial orbit? Were they surrogate mothers? If, alternatively, they pursued one of the increasing numbers of independent non-domestic careers, were they doomed to be members of an unacceptable "third sex", floating in limbo beyond the charmed circle of the domestic hearth?

"Miss Buss and Miss Beale
Cupid's darts do not feel
How different from us
Miss Beale and Miss Buss!" (92)

As will be shown, the thesis is about the strategies which the P.N.E.U. gentlewomen adopted to deal with some of

these problems.

1.5. A Brief Synopsis of the Thesis:

The main body of the thesis is divided into three parts. In Part I, the personal biography of Charlotte Mason (1841?-1923) is reinterpreted. In Part II, the history of the P.N.E.U. approach to education for parenthood, with particular reference to the period between 1887-1921 is described. In Part III, the discussion is concerned with the tensions, rivalries, alliances and reconciliations formed between Miss Mason and her P.N.E.U. women colleagues which led to the transformation of the P.N.E.U. from the education of the parents to the education of the children.

1.5.i. Part I (1841?-1923)

In Chapter 2 (1841?-1873), some attempt will be made to penetrate the mystery which has enshrouded Miss Mason's early life. Her childhood and early adult years will be presented as a struggle for basic survival. The discussion of her childhood is, perforce, speculative. Additional evidence has however helped to clarify problems which she experienced during her training at the Home and Colonial Infant School Society's Training College and as the mistress of the William Davison Infant School in Worthing from 1861-1873.

In Chapter 3 (1874-1886) it will be argued that Miss Mason adopted strategies to raise her social and intellectual

standing and also to achieve freedom from daily work. From 1874-1878, she was Senior Governess at the Bishop Otter Training College for Ladies. During this period she acquired material for her subsequent books. Illness from 1878-79, assured her of support from the wealthy Miss Brandreth, of Worthing. This care included hospitality, foreign travel and time to write. The end of this arrangement necessitated a move to Bradford where from 1880-1891, she was the guest of Mrs. Groveham, a former College friend. From this secure base she launched herself first as a published writer of schools books, secondly as an expert on "Home Education" (1886) and thirdly as a founder of the Parents' Educational Union.

In Chapter 4 (1886-1923), the story diverges from the account of the founding and development of the P.N.E.U. to be discussed in Part II. The focus is upon Miss Mason's personal life in Ambleside (1891-1923). The analysis will centre on the fulfilment of her ambitions to become the gracious mistress of an elegant property, the head of an educational institution, the leader of a band of disciples, a figure of national repute and the complex strategies she used to achieve these goals. Particular attention is paid to two key disciples: Miss Kitching who supported her at home and Mrs. Franklin who worked for her in London.

1.5.ii. Part II (1887-1984)

In Chapter 5 (1886), the ideas in "Home Education" which provided the impetus for the founding of the P.N.E.U.

are discussed in detail. The book offered a satisfying blend of Spencerian "New Education", Carpenter's scientific physiology of habit training, couched in the language of the liberal education tradition, which had appeal for the aristocratic and educated classes.

In Chapter 6 (1887-1921), the founding and establishment of the P.N.E.U. will be described with particular reference to the P.N.E.U. branches. The obstacles to universalism and expansive growth will be discussed in terms of organisational issues and the exclusion of the fathers and poorer classes from direct participation.

A more detailed comparison of two P.N.E.U. Branches will be given in Chapter 7 (1894-1984). The Liverpool Victoria Settlement Branch (1906-c.1923) was a small group of artisan-class mothers, organised by the Settlement workers. The Birmingham Branch (1894-1984) distinguished by its unique longevity, was a large branch dominated by Edgbaston matriarchs. While these two branches were not strictly comparable they shared some common ground in relation to feminist issues, family and class solidarity.

1.5.iii. Part III (1890-1923)

In this final part, the significant interaction of Miss Mason and the P.N.E.U. is examined more closely. In Chapter 8 (1891-1923), Miss Mason's three Ambleside educational ventures will be described. They were first, the Parents' Review School, for children learning in home schoolrooms, secondly, the House of Education for the

training of governesses and finally, the Mothers' Education Course by correspondence. These schemes were significant because in supporting both Miss Mason and the upper class mothers, they were designed to serve, they strengthened the internal cohesion of the P.N.E.U. and fostered exclusivity. However, the Parents' Review School also offered the means for the transformation of the P.N.E.U. from the parents in the home to the children in schools.

The theme of Chapter 9 (1890-1923) is the effect of the interaction between Miss Mason and the P.N.E.U. upon the central organisation. The analysis is concerned with the institutional consequences of four focal events: the Great Row of 1894 and the rivalry with Lady Isabel Margesson, the alliance formed between Miss Mason and Mrs. Franklin, the publication of the 1904 Synopsis and finally, the Liberal Education for All movement in the State elementary schools from 1914. The recurrent theme of the thesis is concerned with changing relationships between spinsterhood and motherhood, during a period of transition, which will be shown to have contributed to the twentieth century transformation of the P.N.E.U.

Finally, in Chapter 10, the main themes of the thesis will be drawn together. The three parts of the thesis will be summed up. The first part is concerned with Charlotte Mason the individual. The second part is concerned with the P.N.E.U. as an institution for the promotion of education for parenthood. The third part is

concerned with the interaction of Charlotte Mason and the P.N.E.U. and the consequence of this interrelationship upon the development of the society. The obstacles to the development of a universal method of education for parenthood by the P.N.E.U. will be identified, together with some suggestions for future research.

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Part I: The Making of the Charlotte Mason Myth (1841?-1923)

Chapter 2:

The Struggle to Survive: An Escape from a Secret
Childhood to Infant Schoolteaching (1841?-1873)

2.1 Introductory: The Significance of the Charlotte Mason Myth

The official P.N.E.U. biography, "The Story of Charlotte Mason" (1960), a graceful essay in hagiography, was put together by Essex Cholmondeley (1892 - ~~1985~~), a former student and Principal of the House of Education, from material gathered together by Elsie Kitching (1870-1955), Charlotte Mason's close companion for thirty years⁽¹⁾. Although Elsie Kitching began serious work on a biography in 1923, shortly after Miss Mason's death, she never completed her self-appointed task before she herself died, thirty-two years later. The advertisement, reproduced in Appendix I, suggests that Miss Cholmondeley's biography was hastily assembled for publication because Dr. Monk Gibbon (1896-) a poet and former P.N.E.U. schoolmaster, was bringing out a "conversation piece" on one of the most significant P.N.E.U. personalities, the Hon. Mrs. Henrietta Franklin C.B.E. (1866-1964)⁽²⁾. "The story of Charlotte Mason", furthermore, has been found to contain many minor errors, possibly the result of too hurried a preparation for publication⁽³⁾. In part III, Chapter 9, the reason why it seemed vitally important for the followers of Charlotte Mason to bring out a suitable biography to counter Monk Gibbon's somewhat critical comments, will be considered in relation to the question whether there was a significant competitive rivalry between these two doyennes of the P.N.E.U.⁽⁴⁾

"The Story" also contains errors of different order. New evidence and a reappraisal of the existing archives, to be discussed in Part I, suggest that Miss Cholmondeley assembled the carefully gleaned information on Charlotte Mason's early life to establish the cultural, moral and intellectual acceptability, of both her subject's past experiences as well as her antecedents, to impress upper class members of the P.N.E.U. and distinguished educational colleagues.

"My first impression was of a number of striking remarks on educational and philosophical problems, simple in statement and thought, seemingly obvious at first glance. Then as I read more the remarks began to fit together to form a surprisingly modern conspectus of the educational field. I soon began to realise that the apparently simple and disarming propositions were endowed with that hidden depth that belongs to work of genius." (5)

Charlotte Mason did not want to have her biography written. Her admirers interpreted this reticence as an expression of the humility which they had come to associate with her character.

"When asked if she would not dictate some notes of her life, her only reply was, - 'My dear, my life does not matter. I have no desire that it should ever be written. It is the work that matters and, I say it with all reverence, it will be some day (not in my lifetime) seen to be one of the greatest things that has happened in the world.'" (6)

Miss Mason was also successful in restricting the opportunities for conversational revelations. Miss F.C.A. Williams, who had known her since 1876, wrote:

"...dear Miss Mason was so much absorbed in her work that she spoke but little of her own life. For many years before her death those who lived with her tried to save her as much as possible from the fatigue of conversation: we always read to her in her few leisure hours." (7)

It is, however, hard to believe that her friends were entirely free of curiosity and refrained from private speculation. It is worth noting that Elsie Kitching preceded her own account of Miss Mason's early life with the following curious passage from the Gospels.

"There was another reason why Miss Mason never talked of herself. It was a matter of principle On this particular point she would dwell on the words 'If I bear witness of myself, my witness is NOT true,' and she would say to the students, 'My dear friends, think of this. Do not dwell upon yourselves, your belongings, even your families unduly, in talking to others. This saying is literally true.' If I bear witness of myself my witness is NOT true.'" (8)

At this point, the investigator is confronted by a paradox. On the one hand, the published evidence indicates a general consensus, between both famous people and the less well-known, that Charlotte Mason was a good and gracious personality, a great educational philosopher, pioneer and also reformer. (9) On the other hand, the veil that had been drawn over Miss Mason's background and early experiences suggested a determined attempt by Miss Mason and others to keep certain significant information secret? Why was this necessary? Had a myth been constructed to keep a veil of secrecy in place?

It will be argued, in the light of this research, that a myth concerning Charlotte Mason, her past life and work did develop and that it is, to a certain extent, still in existence in modern P.N.E.U. circles. (10) It will be shown that this myth was established in response to the way the P.N.E.U. was developing after 1894 and that it, therefore, had an institutional significance for the Society. It will be argued that the purpose of this myth, on a personal level, was to establish without question that Miss Mason was not only a cultured lady but also had the right kind of qualifications to lead the P.N.E.U. into the twentieth century. This had the consequence of limiting the education for parenthood aspects of P.N.E.U. work. Therefore, in order to understand the obstacles to the establishment of universal education for parenthod by the P.N.E.U. and the nature of Charlotte Mason's involvement with this work, it seemed essential to investigate the reasons for the myth by exploring Miss Mason's biographical history more thoroughly.

Charlotte Mason's story is fascinating in its own right. It is an amazing tale, in the tradition of Samuel Smiles' "Self Help" (1812-1904) of an unprotected Victorian spinster who became the acknowledged founder of an influential educational movement, whose views were published regularly in "The Times" and who counted Archbishops, Peeresses and Professors among her correspondents. The story has interest for the way it reflects

back the cultural, religious and social preoccupations, as well as the attitudes to upbringing, of the Victorian and Edwardian "educated classes." The revised story also attempts to explain some of the complex reasons why one particular school teacher and College Lecturer chose to take up the education of the parents towards the end of the nineteenth century.

In this chapter, the available information on Charlotte Mason's life from birth, until the end of 1873 will be discussed. Little is known of the closely guarded secrets of her birth, parentage, childhood and education. More objective material is available for the period she spent in training at the Home and Colonial Society's College, in London from 1860-61, and in infant school teaching at the William Davison School, in Worthing, from 1861-1873. It will be suggested that both psychological and social motivation operated on the combined and complex force of Charlotte Mason's strengths and weaknesses to achieve first of all her basic survival and secondly, her more ambitious aspirations. It will be argued, concurrently, that Essex Cholmondeley tactfully endeavoured to place Miss Mason's career in the best possible light. It seems reasonable to assume that much of the incorrect detail proceeded indirectly from the Founder of the P.N.E.U. herself.

2.2.1 A Mysterious Birth

When "The Story of Charlotte Mason" was published, two personal extracts entitled "Memories" and "Recollections", allegedly written by Miss Mason, had crept into the biographical record. However, in view of the fact that neither of the original manuscripts has apparently survived, that this material was not printed in "In Memoriam" (1923) and that the "Memories" were never published in the Parents' Review, as claimed by Miss Cholmondeley, it seems reasonable to assume that they were a biographical reconstruction, perhaps gleaned from the rare conversations which Miss Mason allegedly held with favoured students⁽¹¹⁾. These two extracts contain the sum total of all that was known or guessed about Charlotte Mason's parentage and early life.

It is now known, from the Worthing Census returns, that Charlotte Mason stated on 7.4.1861 that she was a lodger, a spinster and a governess, that her age was twenty, which would have been consistent with a date of birth in 1841, and that she had been born in Douglas, Isle of Man.⁽¹²⁾ Ten years later, on 2.4.1871 she was only twenty-nine. By then her birth place had been altered to Bangor, Caenarvon, in North Wales⁽¹³⁾. "It happened that I was born in Bangor (1st January 1842)...."⁽¹⁴⁾ Charlotte Mason's oldest known friend, Mrs. Elizabeth Grovenham, told Elsie Kitching that Charlotte's parents had married in Dublin in 1841. Since then, the family had moved around a lot between Dublin, Bangor, Liverpool

and Birkenhead.⁽¹⁵⁾ Charlotte Mason may not have wished it to be known that she was Irish. She may have been born into a family uninterested in, or unable to, note the precise details of dates and places of birth.

"... we did not talk things over in our house."⁽¹⁶⁾ However, the most likely explanation, in view of Mrs Groveham's statement, is that Charlotte Mason was conceived or born out of wedlock. Any suggestion of illegitimate birth carried an appalling stigma well into the twentieth century. It was an unthinkable status for anyone claiming membership of the respectable and educated classes.⁽¹⁷⁾

2.2.ii "My father, J.H. Mason, was a Liverpool Merchant"⁽¹⁸⁾

If Charlotte Mason's father was called "Joshua Mason", as claimed in her obituary notices, there is objective evidence that a man of that name lived in Birkenhead in 1855 and in the Oxton district of Liverpool between 1857-59. His occupation was "gentleman".⁽²⁰⁾ As he was not living at either of the above addresses, during a census year, there is no information as to whether or not he was married, with a daughter called Charlotte. According to Essex Cholmondeley, Mr. Mason was a respectable Liverpool "drysalter" who lost all his money during the disastrous trading years of 1848 and 1849.⁽²¹⁾ F.C.A. Williams had understood that Mr. Mason had been ruined by the recession in the cotton trade caused by the American Civil War (1861-1865).⁽²²⁾ Mrs Groveham, who



first met Charlotte in 1860, was convinced that Charlotte was already an orphan by then. Her version was reproduced in "Recollections" ⁽²³⁾. Mr. Mason was presented as a refined man, able to take a place among the merchant princes of Liverpool. ⁽²⁴⁾ "The years '48 and '49" may have been carefully chosen. There was less disgrace attached to bankruptcy in Liverpool, during the "Hungry Forties". Many able and respectable men, such as the father of AnneJemima Clough (1820-1892) the founder of Newnham College, Cambridge and subsequently one of Miss Mason's advisers, lost all their money during those difficult competitive years. ⁽²⁵⁾ Liverpool was a growing, bustling, tempestuous city, vainly endeavouring to absorb the steadily increasing stream of Irish immigrants who arrived at the ports, looking for work, as Mr. Mason himself, may have done. ⁽²⁶⁾

The point of this discussion is that, as Charlotte Mason remained unmarried, it was essential for her to be able to claim relationship with a father who had held a respectable position, if she was later to assume a secure position among the middle and upper classes. Mr. Mason's bankruptcy was described in terms that would refute any charge of fecklessness and explained her penniless state. In compensation, he was also portrayed as a cultured, intellectual who was not only "very fond of books", but used his leisure to teach his daughter. ⁽²⁷⁾

"Class in Victorian Society was defined through a subtle combination of occupation, income and values; hence the difficulty historians have in defining the limits of any one class. Definitions of class were linked to the occupations and incomes of males. Females were assigned to a class according to the status of their fathers so long as they were unmarried...."(28)

The social status of a mother was far less significant in Victorian times.(29)

Charlotte's father does not emerge as particularly kind or careful from the brief details given in the "Memories" and "Recollections". He apparently dropped Charlotte in the sea, while bathing her from the shore. He was not encouraging about her appearance:

"I think I was a dull, silent uninteresting and not very observant child; people used to like to pet me, perhaps because I was rather pretty. Anyway, my father used to say later that I was pretty as a child but grew plainer every day..."(30)

2.2.iii "Mother was beautiful; always an invalid"(31)

Nothing whatsoever is known of Charlotte Mason's mother. There is no record of her name nor her background.(32) All that remains is an idealised picture of a cultured and gracious lady, lying on a sofa, immersed in a little brown leather copy of Pope's Homer's "Odyssey". It was a style of life that was later to become habitual with Charlotte Mason. The following charming vignette was composed with some knowledge of ladies' fashions in the 1830's and 1840's.(33)

"My mother wore long curls at each side of her face, and I can recall her coming to kiss me goodnight before going out in a low dress with a bertha and the curls tickling my face. There was a broad window-seat on a landing where my mother used to play with me at making dolls' houses, with lovely little snail like shells....."(34)

Superior social standing was delicately hinted:

"I do not recollect any toys, but some beautifully made REAL fire-irons which the little girl of the laundress gave me and which my mother caused me to return as they were rather valuable....."(35)

Whether or not Charlotte Mason knew and lived with her mother is not known. If she really had enjoyed the happy childhood claimed by Miss Cholmondeley, one would have expected a far larger legacy of memories.⁽³⁶⁾ Those that have been recorded seem to belong to one specific period in a very young child's life. They are also idealised which suggests deprivation and unhappiness. Passages from Charlotte Mason's writings show that she often expressed powerful longings to be loved and mothered;

"But, dear mother, take your big school girl in your arms... and let her have a good talk, all to your two selves; it will be to her like a meal to a hungry man. For the youths and the maidens, remember they would sell their souls for love... Who will break down the partition between supply and demand in many a home where there are hungry hearts on either side of the wall?"(37)

It will also be noted that Charlotte Mason's most significant close relationships were with women, usually old enough to become a "mother-figure" or young enough to play the part of cherished and dutiful daughter. In the Victorian tradition of hero-worship, Charlotte Mason held on to a picture of the ideal mother:

"I knew a girl This girl would watch her mother about a room walk behind her in the streets-adoringly. Such intense worship of their parents is more common in children than we imagine...." (38)

There are no comparable passages about father figures. It is not known if Charlotte Mason was, in fact, an only child and the child of only children, as alleged.⁽³⁹⁾ What does seem likely is that she had an unhappy, lonely and love-starved childhood.

2.2.iv Early Education

As with the description of her mother, the account of Charlotte Mason's home education with her parents seems idealised and unconvincing. This story has, similarly, been given an historical context. The first book which Charlotte apparently remembered was Layard's "Nineveh". She enjoyed the "strange monstrous pictures" but could not read the text. The book came out in 1848, when Charlotte would have been six or seven. However, if her parents were as poor and as isolated as alleged, it seems unlikely that they would have purchased the book in publication year. If they had bought it when

when Charlotte was older, she must have been late in learning to read. On the other hand, she was apparently able to read "Robinson Crusoe", a treasured gift for her eighth birthday.⁽⁴⁰⁾

There are other odd features about this brief account. First, there is no mention of the Bible or a religious education. Secondly, for a young middle class girl, Charlotte's education seems to have been entirely lacking in all the feminine arts and accomplishments.⁽⁴¹⁾ Thirdly, her literary education, appropriate for the son of a gentleman, bears a striking resemblance, apart from the lack of bible reading, to that enjoyed by John Ruskin, one of her later heroes.⁽⁴²⁾ Charlotte Mason was allegedly reared upon Scott's courtly novels and Lord Chesterfield's "Letters to his Son", an eighteenth century paradigm for the upbringing of a gentleman. Through Butter's famous "Spelling Book" she was introduced to Aesop's Fables which supposedly put her into touch with the traditions of classical antiquity as recommended by another of her later heroes, Matthew Arnold.⁽⁴³⁾

The "Recollections" imply that Charlotte Mason did not attend school regularly but occasionally paid privileged visits to an establishment run by "a tall lady with a dark shawl thrown scarfwise across her shoulders...." Through seeing this lady and her "whole train of tiny children" it was claimed, Charlotte

developed a vocation to teach "poor children".⁽⁴⁴⁾

The "Recollections" made a virtue of necessity. Teaching was the only occupation available, at that time, to a woman with any pretensions to respectability.⁽⁴⁵⁾ No explanation is given as to why she did not seek work as a private governess if she had, in reality, received the rich literary education described. All that can be said for certain about Charlotte's education during the school age years, is that by the time she was fifteen or sixteen, someone with the initials "E.A.B.", thought her sufficiently literate and erudite to appreciate a loving gift of Paley's "Natural Theology", perhaps for her birthday on 1st January, 1857 and also Girten's "Physiology" in April, 1859.⁽⁴⁶⁾

2.2.v Preparation for Teacher Training:

"The strain of poverty told upon the health of Charlotte's beautiful mother and in 1858 she died. Mr Mason never recovered from this loss. He died soon afterwards, leaving Charlotte at the age of sixteen alone in the world."⁽⁴⁷⁾

It seems that Miss Cholmondeley faced some difficulty in accounting for this period in Charlotte Mason's life. However, it is true that the above statement is consistent with the disappearance of Joshua Mason's name from the Liverpool directories after 1859. Mrs Groveham thought that Charlotte was taken in by a Mrs. Wagner who died two or three years later.⁽⁴⁸⁾ Essex Cholmondeley suggested, in conversation, that an

"uncongenial relative" had looked after Charlotte but in the biography a "friend" is mentioned.⁽⁴⁹⁾ The problem lies in determining how Charlotte Mason managed to overcome all the necessary hurdles to win a place at the Home and Colonial Infant School Society Training College in 1860.

Charlotte Mason once told Lizzie Groveham that she and her family attended St. Aidan's Church, when in Liverpool.⁽⁵⁰⁾ The only possible Liverpool church to which she could have been referring would have been St. Aidan's, Kirkdale, which was opened in 1856 and consecrated in 1860.⁽⁵¹⁾ During this period, in Kirkdale, the local population was caught up in a massive evangelising campaign, led by the dynamic Canon T. Major Lester, who became the Incumbent of St. Mary's Kirkdale, in 1855. He was also involved with the establishment of St. Aidan's and other new churches in the district. The work of evangelism included the extending of educational provisions for local poor children. For example, the "Kirkdale Industrial Ragged Schools and Homes" was founded in 1856. Its charitable workers specialised in the rehabilitation, education and lodging out of destitute children.⁽⁵²⁾

It is a plausible theory that Charlotte Mason was helped to become self-supporting through one of Canon Lester's educational schemes. It would explain how she came to take a training normally intended

for the more intelligent members of the respectable working classes only and was content to remain in the relatively lowly position of infant schoolmistress for twelve years at Worthing. Her apparent lack of an early religious upbringing in contrast to the passionate religious devotion of her later life is explicable if she was literally rescued by Holy Mother Church. Furthermore, it seems likely that she must have exhibited some exceptional quality of personality or intelligence to be selected to go forward for teacher training. Such a singling out, one might speculate, would have contributed to the feeling she had of being special which she expressed in her earliest letters to Lizzie Groveham.

The usual mode of entry to an elementary teacher training college was through the pupil teacher system, inaugurated by Kay Shuttleworth in 1846.⁽⁵³⁾ The five year apprenticeship afforded a certain financial independence, as the pupil teacher was paid on a scale which rose from £10 a year at thirteen, to £20 at eighteen, when he or she was qualified to sit the Queen's scholarship examination. Whatever her circumstances were in reality, it seems likely that Charlotte Mason would have been expected to have contributed to her own support. The probability of her having spent some time as a pupil teacher is high, particularly as her skill in teaching was commended at the College.⁽⁵⁴⁾ Whether or not she actually

sat the Queen's scholarship examination is not known as no lists are available for the key years.⁽⁵⁵⁾

It seems more in character for her to have won a Queen's scholarship, through some personal recommendation, in view of her later fear of examinations.

It is statistically improbable that Charlotte Mason was privately financed, and not a Queen's scholar, during her training from 1860-1861 at the Home and Colonial Training Institution in London. The Newcastle Report (1858-1861) showed that out of the 2,000 students attending the 33 training colleges, only 25 were self-financed. Furthermore, at the "Ho and Co" in 1860, there were 124 Queen's scholars to 16 ordinary students. In 1861, the proportion of State supported students was even higher at 137 to 3. Mrs Groveham also stated that Charlotte Mason could have had no friends, relatives or alternative means of support as she spent her vacations at the College.⁽⁵⁶⁾

2.3.1 The Home and Colonial Infant School Society's Training Institution in the Gray's Inn Road, London

The Home and Colonial Infant School Society was founded in 1836 to establish Pestalozzi's (1746-1827) teaching methods in English elementary and infant schools.⁽⁵⁷⁾

The Training College, which, by the time Charlotte Mason arrived, was taking women exclusively, was part of this plan. Interdenominational in origin, it endeavoured to send out dedicated teachers imbued with the "principles

of Pestalozzi leavened with evangelical truth." (58)

The "Ho and Co" had a justifiably high reputation for being one of the most successful training colleges. It had a stable, longstanding staff and more applicants than places: Charlotte Mason was therefore fortunate in winning a place there. The College was a flexible institution, providing a variety of different courses which ranged from the standard two year training, to courses for private governesses, infant specialists and for those preparing to work in the new "middle" schools. (59)

The depth of the educational discussion and the variety of subjects discussed in the Society's educational papers testify to a training of some distinction. (60)

Barry Turner must surely be incorrect in the following assertion:

"When they arrived, most of the girls were as ignorant as it was possible to be without being totally illiterate, but by common consent, the College somehow managed to turn this unpromising material into an effective teaching force." (61)

The girls were not only successful in obtaining posts but they were first-rate at passing examinations. The results of the 1861 Christmas examinations for the Certificate of Merit, which have fortunately survived, show that out of 29 men's, women's and mixed Colleges, the "Ho and Co" had the best set of results and no failures. (62)

Pestalozzi, whose work lay mainly among the very poor, had taught that the teacher must not only be altruistic but also learn to respond to the natural unfolding of the individuality of each child. He also argued that the parents, particularly the mother, made a crucial early contribution to educational progress and that love was the best discipline.⁽⁶³⁾ The "Method" was based on the "Object Lesson" which, as English disciples of the Swiss pioneer educationalist discovered, could be adapted for use in the huge galleried classrooms, overflowing with children of all ages, which characterised the British elementary education system during the middle years of the century. Doubtless, the submissiveness instilled into British children under the watchword "Holiness unto the Lord", which was promoted by the "earnest inculcation of pure evangelical truth", enabled the "Ho and Co" students more readily to avoid Pestalozzi's temptation to give the recalcitrant a sudden cuff on the ear!⁽⁶⁴⁾ However, the application of an individualist, "progressive" approach in the context of enormous classes, must assuredly have presented the new teaching force with considerable problems in maintaining both order and studious application.⁽⁶⁵⁾ Charlotte Mason's later solution to this problem was to foster individual study within the classroom.⁽⁶⁶⁾

It is clear that Charlotte Mason's subsequent educational ideas owed much to the English version of

the Pestalozzian method. Her emphasis on the child's individuality, her use of the oral tradition, the "object lesson", her acknowledgement of parental influence in education and the notion of educational principles, were some of the ways in which her indebtedness to the "Ho and Co" training was subsequently revealed.⁽⁶⁷⁾ Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the influence of Pestalozzi was superseded in schools and training institutions by that of Friedrich Froebel (1783-1852) whose ideas Charlotte Mason publicly rejected in 1894.⁽⁶⁸⁾ Therefore, those who came in touch with Charlotte Mason's educational precepts during the early twentieth century were probably unfamiliar with the Pestalozzian method and unaware that she had drawn upon this source for a number of her ideas.

2.3.ii The Influence of Robert Dunning

The available evidence suggests three ways in which Mr Dunning was an important early influence upon Charlotte Mason. First, he gave her confidence in the beneficence of Victorian gentlemen because in a gently paterfamilial manner he was personally kind and did his best to help her. Secondly, he provided a model, which she later internalised, of an integrated religious and educational approach to training. Thirdly, in ratifying her fears about her ill health, he inadvertently sanctioned the use of illness as a way of escape from difficult situations. Charlotte treasured the

two letters which Mr Dunning sent her. They are the earliest letters to have survived in the archives. She also kept his lecture notes for over thirty years, subsequently publishing them in the early numbers of the Parents' Review.

Mr Dunning, a former headmaster at the famous Borough Road school, was a well established lecturer at the "Ho and Co" by the time Charlotte Mason arrived. (69)

"They sought for a training master and were so happy to find in Mr. Dunning a man ready to grasp, and hold firm the principles they were all labouring to inculcate. The teachers sent forth from the Institution were of acknowledged superiority...." (70)

Anne Clough had met Mr. Dunning, while visiting various metropolitan educational establishments in 1849. She had found him to be "a good, kind man, apparently, but rather over religious." (71) The tone of his letters to Charlotte Mason confirm this view.

Adaptation to a large institution, set in the heart of London's noise and bustle and run on the economical principle of "plain living and high thinking", must have been difficult for a young north country orphan, uprooted from familiar surroundings. (72) It would have been only natural for her to have sought support from whoever was available. The fact that she survived fourteen months at the College suggests some staying power, although she would have had little choice

in the matter. However, she managed to make at least three friends, notably, Lizzie, later Mrs. Groveham, who was the same age as herself and probably also a northerner, as she was born in Preston.⁽⁷³⁾ There was Sally, a few years older, who later married Dr Coleman of Manchester.⁽⁷⁴⁾ There was also Selina Healey, later Mrs. John Fleming, who went to teach in Anne Clough's "middle" school, at Ambleside in 1862, and remained there until her death in 1911.⁽⁷⁵⁾

Mr. Dunning's second letter shows that Charlotte Mason had appealed to him for spiritual guidance.⁽⁷⁶⁾ It seems probable that this somewhat gloomily religious man exercised a formative influence upon the development of her evangelical religious beliefs. It is also unlikely that she would have attracted his beneficent concern, if she had not presented herself as a deeply religious young woman. The intertwining of religion and education which was integral to the ethos of the "Ho and Co" also represented the spirit of the age.⁽⁷⁷⁾ Women, in particular, were expected to wrestle daily with their consciences as they endeavoured to purify their souls through prayer, in preparation for the world to come⁽⁷⁸⁾. Mrs. Groveham wrote of Charlotte Mason: "As a girl, she was ever spiritually minded."⁽⁷⁹⁾

Charlotte Mason became ill and may have believed that she did not have long to live. However, she returned to the College to take her turn at giving one

of the dreaded "criticism" lessons, but collapsed, probably in tears, before she had finished. Mr Dunning wrote a kindly note:

"I was very sorry indeed this morning when I found that giving a lesson was too much for you. When I saw you first I was exceedingly pleased thinking that you were better and strong and not nervous in giving a criticism. Indeed I felt as if you had lost all fear of me as a critic and regarded me as a friendly genius willing them to do you a good turn. But oh you naughty girl - it was your own spirit and resolution that wd. not give way even before disease - that would discharge a duty at whatever it might cost you, you must not attempt another. I shall not let Mr. Hassel approach you any more. You can teach well and need only to study our principles... I liked your lesson much....." (80)

Women's health was problematic for Victorian men. The understanding of female physiology as well as of nervous or hysterical states was still in its infancy⁽⁸¹⁾. It was feared, throughout the nineteenth century, that "overpressure" from too much study actually caused physical disease, especially in women.⁽⁸²⁾ Tears were sometimes viewed as a precipitating factor in serious illness, as Charlotte Mason, herself thought in 1907.⁽⁸³⁾ Mrs Groveham believed that Charlotte Mason had always been frail and had chronically suffered from "heart trouble". She thought that ill health alone had been the impediment to Charlotte's success at College:

"She was too ill to take the Certificate...Could have taken it well enough....." (84)

Given the level of contemporary medical knowledge, it

was reasonable for both Charlotte Mason and her friends to subscribe to the belief that the palpitations and other painful sensations she may have experienced were symptoms of physical illness, rather than a fear of being adversely criticised.

However, with hindsight, it is possible to make an alternative interpretation. It will be shown that Charlotte Mason was scarcely ever off work with illness during her twelve years at Worthing. One might suppose that full time teaching, with "night school" classes, would have imposed greater demands on a sufferer from "heart trouble" than the routine of College life. The following verdict only makes sense, given the contemporary belief that study was more dangerous than work:

"She was too delicate for the work and after about a year she was advised to take work in Worthing". (85).

Lt. Col. Walton has noted that many conditions which the Victorians attributed to heart disease have been subsequently found to have an alternative aetiology. It will be shown, in chapter 3, that the evidence for Charlotte Mason's heart trouble is insubstantial.⁽⁸⁶⁾

It will be argued that there may have been an unconscious hysterical purpose behind Charlotte Mason's attacks of "illness". There was something about this particular outburst which unnerved Mr. Dunning, an experienced training master:

"I could not leave comfortably without scribbling this note. I was so grieved. Affectly. yrs. R. Dunning"(87)

There is an impelling quality about the implicit demands made by persons suffering from hysterical symptoms which arouses guilt in the onlooker.⁽⁸⁸⁾ It is alarming to observe someone, apparently seriously ill, struggling to fight against imminent collapse. Mr. Dunning assumed that Charlotte might die shortly:

"I trust the Good Lord will spare your life and permit you to work in his vineyard for a while here. If, however his Sovereign will-to depart and escape this world and its snares wd. be more for your real and eternal happiness. Do not you love the Lord, dear Miss Mason, and so^o behold his face will be glorious. I hope your affliction does not teach you to repine. You may be young in years but rich in experience and to suffer perfects more and faster than to do. Thus you are brought to be more like the Saviour...."(89)

Thus, the authoritative Mr. Dunning taught Charlotte Mason not only that illness was acceptable and understandable but that it conferred greater spiritual power than health. It was a lesson that she was to remember some thirty years later, when she chose to take to the blue sofa at Scale How on a permanent basis. At the "Ho and Co" Charlotte Mason learnt, perhaps for the first time, that there was some advantage to being ill. It brought kindly attentions from those who mattered and also provided her with the opportunity of honourably leaving the College without a qualification.

2.4.i The Twelve Years as the Mistress of the William
Davison Infant School in Worthing.
(March 1861-December 1873)

"Allow me to inform you, my dear E, that I am at present bearing a higher honour than you can ever hope to achieve. I am the mistress of the first Infant School that was ever established in the British Empire.

How I wish you could see my children. Some are such sweet little cherubs and some are such noble little Washingtons and some such tiresome little monkeys...

.....I should like to send you one of my children to London in a bandbox. She would be like a week in the country to you all she would refresh you so much. She gives herself the name of "itta Looi" and is the most loveable little lisper that I think I ever knew." (90)

The years at Worthing seem to have had a stabilising effect upon both Charlotte Mason's health and personality. The pleasant small resort, the sea air, the independent life in lodgings, on a more than adequate salary which she was free to manage as she pleased, as well as an agreeable feeling of self-importance that accrued from her position as mistress in charge of the infant school, contributed to Charlotte's sense of having arrived. She was indeed fortunate that a post was vacant, in one of the more pleasantly situated schools, with "Ho and Co" connections. Mr Dunning had done his best to place her comfortably.

This was, doubtless, the first time that the shy, dark-haired, rather "frail" and tense young woman had held any kind of position in local society. (91) To some of the grander inhabitants of Worthing, the post of infant schoolmistress would have seemed very lowly. (92) For Charlotte, however, recently arrived from a stressful period at a rather dreary, urban institution, her new position, must have signified a turning point in her life. From the outset she was, nonetheless, not entirely content. The improved diet and fresh air probably fed her ambitions as she became physically stronger. She regretted not having qualified with the others. Although she displayed considerable staying power for ^{over} twelve years, perhaps because she was in reality, a fairly unexceptional teacher, her letters to Lizzie show that she was full of dreams and plans for a better future. During these years she seems to have been torn between the unladylike desire to become better qualified educationally and a growing social ambition to become like a real lady herself. It was a legitimate mid-Victorian conflict for an unprotected young spinster who was attempting to make her way in the world.

Some fifty years later, Charlotte Mason put her own gloss on the Worthing years.

"I was reading a good deal of philosophy and EDUCATION at the time, for I thought

with the enthusiasm of a young teacher, that EDUCATION should regenerate the world.

I had an elementary school and a pioneer church high school at this same time so that I was enabled to study children in large groups...." (93)

In a few pages, full of inaccuracies, Miss Cholmondeley went to some pains to show that Charlotte Mason was not only special but had undertaken pioneering educational work in Worthing particularly in relation to the "girls' school".⁽⁹⁴⁾ This was a reference to a girls' middle school which Charlotte Mason convinced Mrs Groveham that she had founded.⁽⁹⁵⁾ There seems to be no factual evidence for the existence of this "middle" school.⁽⁹⁶⁾ However, belief in its reality provided the basis for Valerie Hetzel's claim that Charlotte Mason was a significant educational pioneer in Worthing and comparable to the dynamic founder of her infant school, the Rev. William Davison. "Davison school certainly seems to have missed her organising and teaching talents."⁽⁹⁷⁾ Hetzel had been puzzled by the mysterious non-existence of the "middle school" in the records and had explained this by arguing that as the school had been managed by Charlotte Mason alone, it declined when she departed for Chichester in 1873.

2.4.ii Mistress in Charge:

Charlotte Mason was the mistress at the Davison school from 1861 to 1873. She was not technically

speaking a "headmistress" as she did not have qualified staff working under her. However, the writer of the Souvenir Handbook of 1954, perhaps believing like Mrs. Hetzel that, because Charlotte Mason subsequently became well known she must have been a dynamic force in Worthing, definitely asserted that she had been the first "Headmistress" of a school, which did not, in fact, become a Church Secondary Girls' School until 1927-28.⁽⁹⁸⁾ The evidence suggests that Charlotte Mason led a fairly humdrum and routine existence.

The 1861 census recorded that she took lodgings near the school, with a Mrs. Redford, a seventy-year old widow. Mr Collins, a twenty-one year old painter and glazier shared the lodgings. The following quotation suggests that Charlotte Mason kept herself to herself:⁽⁹⁹⁾

"I am all alone here: there is no one with whom I can seek that sympathy which is such a craving of my nature. I live within five minutes walk of the sea, and yet, until this evening I have not even been there. I had no one to go with and could not summon courage to venture alone in a place so strange to me. This evening, however, old Mrs. R. took the matter in hand, and after a great deal of persuasion succeeded in getting me to try the experiment." (100)

Considering her anxieties, Charlotte Mason was managing very well. Her infant school, under the management of the Chapel of Ease, in Broadwater (1812), later the present St. Paul's Church, was one of three opened in the Broadwater district during 1817. It was linked to the nearby Boys' (1812/13) and Girls'

"National" Schools but there is no evidence to suggest that Charlotte Mason undertook any teaching in these more senior establishments. Her own school had been founded by the first Chaplain, the Rev William Davison (1779-1852) and rebuilt in 1854, as a memorial to that energetic promoter of local education.⁽¹⁰¹⁾ It was therefore a well established school, organised according to the old monitorial system. It catered for, on average, about 120 "mixed infants", aged from about 2 to 4 and girls, up to the age of 7. The daily attendance varied and was for example, high at the time of the annual inspections. For example, 180 children attended for the examinations on 23.11.1863. There may also have been a "night school".⁽¹⁰²⁾

Charlotte Mason was not the first trained mistress to take charge of the school as two former "Ho and Co" graduates had worked the school during the 1850's.⁽¹⁰³⁾ She was not, however, without assistance; for example, the school log book which dated from 1863, and was compulsory according to the requirements of the 1862 Revised Code, stated that on 12th June, "Three Monitors absent in the afternoon. Children disorderly." On 25.11.1863, it was recorded that the "Mistress" was working with "Sarah Ellis Ass. Mis." as well as "Fanny Norman" who was a second year pupil teacher.⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ There is no evidence to suggest that Charlotte Mason ever visited her pupils' homes as Miss Clough had⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ done in Liverpool. The assistant mistress would have

been the one to be sent out to collect the weekly pence from defaulters.⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ The Mistress taught the top standards, in this case, the older girls, the younger children being looked after by the pupil teachers or monitors.⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ Until the new schoolroom for the girls was opened during the summer of 1865, the children were taught in two groups in one room. The noise at times must have been unbearable. It is not surprising to learn that whole mornings were sometimes spent in drill or singing.⁽¹⁰⁸⁾

Charlotte Mason began teaching two years before the new regulations imposed by Robert Lowe's 1862 Revised Code came into force. Its parsimonious measures were roundly criticised by humanistically minded H.M.I's such as Matthew Arnold (1822-1888), as well as by the Home and Colonial School Society, because the critics believed that the new measures restricted the curriculum, fostered teaching by rote and precluded the very poorest children from obtaining some schooling. In reality, life in the classroom may not have significantly deteriorated after 1862, being dictated by the size, physical conditions and local support given to the school.⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ For Charlotte Mason, however, the most demanding feature of the new system was the introduction of the annual Government Inspection examinations, which exposed the quality of the teaching to public scrutiny, and was also linked

to the State grants awarded to the school. Essex Cholmondeley is therefore incorrect in her claim that "the Davison School, Worthing, had no connection with the Government". Charlotte Mason would have had no responsibilities in the matter of selecting staff. (110)

On the whole, Charlotte Mason acquitted herself adequately before the Inspectors, apart from a period towards the end of the 1860's and the beginning of the 1870's when her work attracted less favourable comment. This may have been the reason for her decline in status from a class 3 teacher to class I. (111) On March 2nd, 1865, the H.M.I. reported on the school:

"This is worked as a Girls' and Infants school in one large room with two classrooms, the whole under the management of Miss Mason, two assistants and one pupil teacher. Much skill and judgment are shown by Miss Mason in the management of so large a number of children, all of whom seem to receive a due share of her attention. The Scripture lessons are remarkably well given" (112)

However by December 1866, the Inspector noted:

"...the weak point was numeration, the second standard. Unless this defect is corrected next year, a reduction will be made in the grant..." (113)

That year the grant was not renewed in respect of four children who were deemed to be incorrectly presented for the examination. In 1872, the H.M.I. reported even more sternly:

"The results of the examination are fairly satisfactory. Arithmetic weak. The Log book has not been duly kept, nor have the class registers invariably closed. My Lords have ordered a deduction of one tenth from the Grant for the defects noted by the Inspector in his report. The registers and log book must be kept for the future with greater care or the Grant may be entirely withheld..." (114)

Although the School Managers could scarcely have been pleased at this careless loss of revenue the rebuke did not affect Charlotte Mason's salary. She had begun work in 1861 on £35.0s. 0d. per annum plus lodgings allowance and was receiving £76.5s.0d. plus a £20 lodgings allowance in October 1873, shortly before she departed. By her final year, the H.M.I. wrote more approvingly: "The Children are under good moral influence and are fairly instructed by Miss Mason in the usual subjects." (115)

It is not certain that Charlotte Mason obtained a teaching qualification by sitting an examination. No "Teachers' Parchment" nor "Certificate of Merit" has survived among her papers. However, when she left the "Ho and Co" she seems to have had every intention of returning to sit the examination for the Certificate of Merit in December 1861 or 1862. Lizzie kept her in touch with her fellow students' studies:

"Thank you very much for your advice respecting my studies, I will try to follow it as closely as possible, though as you will easily believe studying for a certificate after a hard day's teaching is not without its difficulties.....I have heard from

Miss W. that certificates are to become honorary... is it all true? (116)

Later that year, she appealed to Mr. Dunning for advice. His reply was delayed until October, 1861, because he and his wife had been ill, following the sudden death of a beloved daughter, only two years older than Charlotte herself. This sad experience probably influenced his feeling that he must dissuade his sick former student from risking the examinations too soon:

"... You must think that I have forgotten you and have given you up as a faithless correspondent and friend....And believe me, dear girl, I consider your case a far more trying one than mine. An orphan, alone and a stranger and a woman too... Ah I would rather close the eyes and adjust in the coffin the last of my dear daughters than leave them orphans to weep for me and their nice comfortable home without anyone in a cold world to be their protector and guide. My heart is always very tender towards the orphan..."

These were not sentiments calculated to reassure an anxious young woman who had been fearful that she was "sinning against the souls of her children". Mr Dunning urged her to put health before all other considerations:

"But do not without a Doctor's advice attempt trying for a certificate. Let your lawful desire to occupy the ground of a certificated teacher be put aside. God speaks to you in disease these words. Do not excite the brain and general nervous system or you are a dead or useless woman. Is it not better to work without a certificate than to pass a certificate and be useless for work afterwards" (117)

These words made a profound impression upon Charlotte Mason and her subsequent attitude to intellectual endeavour. Although she seems to have obediently retreated into conscientious religious observance, which doubtless made her a good scripture teacher, and devoted her spare energies to sending Lizzie Groveham some sanctimonious advice in preparation for the Christmas 1861 examinations, she never seems to have lost her longing for a qualification.

All that is known, is that Charlotte Mason received some kind of qualifying status in 1863. She may have passed the examinations in 1862. However it seems most likely that she received her new status on the recommendation of the Inspector.⁽¹¹⁸⁾ Lee Holcombe has shown that the school status of teachers was not necessarily linked to certification. In 1875, only fifty seven per cent of women teachers were both trained and certificated.⁽¹¹⁹⁾ In 1863, the log book stated that Charlotte Mason had attained the status of a first class teacher with one year's training. H.C. Dent has stated that the first class was the lowest level recognised.⁽¹²⁰⁾ That her status was conferred by an Inspector's recommendation is suggested by the evidence that it was altered twice more. Miss Mason's status was raised to third class on the 19th December 1864 and lowered to first class on 11th October 1871.⁽¹²¹⁾ This experience

would explain her disenchantment with classroom teaching, her dislike of governmental inspection in other situations as well as her general disapproval of competitive examinations.

2.4.iii Nurturing both Intellectual and Social Ambitions

There seems to be little doubt that from quite an early age, Charlotte Mason had the sense of being someone special and wished in some way to be a success. At Worthing, with her College failure in the recent past, she began dreaming of ways in which she could eventually rise above the lowly status of infant schoolmistress. She faced problems in translating these dreams into reality because they required the independent initiative that she seems to have lacked. Even with considerable support, she found the daily routines of the school quite taxing as the inspectorial criticisms indicate:

"...I am having a terrible struggle to get my school under foot and am in hopes I shall succeed.. I have as usual been making wonderful resolutions... I mean to be so firm, so kind, so loving, so altogether admirable, I really feel half inclined to fall down at the feet of what I mean to be... Alas I may do so for 'what I mean to be' is the only part of myself that I shall ever be able to admire..." (122)

Throughout the twelve years, Charlotte was toying with various schemes. Should she plead illness and become a "sort of thinking and governessing but not working party", supported by another trained mistress?

The prospect of the annual inspection seems to have brought that particular idea on.⁽¹²³⁾ Later, she enquired whether she might become an itinerant teacher of English and "go about from school to school in Brighton", presumably in view of her recognised difficulty in teaching numeracy.⁽¹²⁴⁾

One route upwards was by entry into the new field of middle class education, as her friend Selina Healey had done at Ambleside.⁽¹²⁵⁾ In fact, Charlotte and Lizzie Groveham made plans to start a "middle" school of their own, presumably as soon as the former had acquired her certificate of merit. At the last minute when the prospectuses and letter heads had been printed and the finances worked out, Charlotte Mason got cold feet and refused to leave Worthing for Bradford, where Mrs. Groveham had chosen to settle. In a lengthy letter, she mingled her true feelings with some exaggerated statements:

"...I have really not been able to write to you. Again and again I have sat down to write to your but I could not answer your loving letter otherwise than as you wished and I might not answer it so... I feel now that I dare not leave Worthing. I have been blessed, prospered beyond my wildest hopes since I have been here...

...but when they say that it is impossible to carry out my life work without me, that they will not attempt it... what can I do?....

...If I leave Worthing it can only be because I shall be so much happier and altogether happy with my friend...

Anyhow will you not go on with the scheme and carry it out yourself. You will do it nobly and well, quite as well alone, as with my help and it is a great work. I long to know that there is a Middle school in Bradford, conducted by you..."(126)

The last wish was granted. Mrs. Groveham went on to make a success of her middle school or ladies seminary.

Charlotte Mason did not want to leave Worthing for an uncertain future. At the school there was some backing. She seems to have doubted Lizzie's ability to provide adequate emotional support. Lizzie probably married during the early 1860's which might have led Charlotte Mason to fear that she would feel excluded, as the following letter suggests:

"You want news of S.C. (Sally Coleman) and I hardly know where to begin - she is very delicate much thinner than when you knew her, but very pretty and graceful & winning & much younger looking than I tho' she is really three or four years older. Her home is a most prosperous and happy one & I tell her it is time she and her husband had got over their honeymoon but that is the way with you married people. You one can quite understand...."(127)

If Charlotte Mason never obtained her certificate of merit, as the evidence suggests, she may not have wished her friend, who had not only been academically more successful but had also achieved married status, to have known of her failure. Such a dread may have provided the motivation for what appears to have been a tissue of lies about a non-existent middle school

in Worthing. Robert Drake has found no evidence for such a school and Valerie Hetzel was sure that it no longer existed in 1873 (128). The following excerpt illustrates Charlotte Mason's determination to place her actions in a favourable light:

"Besides, darling, my duty lies here at present. There is work to be done in Worthing that I feel that it is possible for me to do - indeed one of the very few things that I am at all fitted for. The tone of the intellect and feeling here is very low. The people want to be raised - forced if need be - to a higher level. The tradespeople being almost the only class resident, give tone to the town, and that tone is narrow coarse and illiberal. Well, dear we know that if the young women of any district be elevated they will raise the rest. So pet, my work is by means of our school for tradesmen's daughters to refine and cultivate the young women..." (129)

Seventeen years were to pass before Charlotte Mason finally accepted Lizzie's recurrent invitation to join her in Bradford. In the meantime, she not only felt anchored to Worthing because of her dependency needs and mistrust of new situations but because she had begun to discover ways of raising her own social, cultural and intellectual "tone" with the new friends she was slowly making. At the Church, she became one of old Mr Huston's "girls" who were regularly invited to tea on Sundays. (130) Others she met through school contacts. The Rev. William Read (?1799-1884) the present Chaplain and his daughter Mary, who both served on the school management committee were, doubtless of great practical assistance.

It seemed to be Charlotte's destiny to observe the father and daughter relationship from the outside. When Miss Read died suddenly in 1877, Charlotte Mason told Lizzie:

"I counted Miss Read among my dearest, truest friends and now she is gone I find I cared for her even more than I thought. I wish I could tell you how beautiful and perfect her life was - her father's favourite maxim is 'throw perfection into all you do' and this idea seemed to be the groundwork of her lifewhat she was as a daughter no one can tell - her life was so utterly devoted to her father, so merged in his, that no one saw it was devotion or thought it possible that she could have any pleasure apart from him..." (131)

It was perhaps fortunate that neither of the significant paterfamilial figures in her life asked Charlotte to replace the lost daughter in their homes as she would not have found their high standards of religious and domestic perfection to her liking. As with Mr Dunning, Mr Read maintained a beneficent interest in her doings even presenting her with a gift of Golbourne's "Thoughts on Personal Religion" in 1866. (132)

Charlotte Mason was to reap her greatest rewards from another father and daughter dyad who had longstanding charitable connections with the Davison school.⁽¹³³⁾ Thomas Shaw Brandreth (1788-1873), a distinguished lawyer, scientist and classical scholar, was a Liverpool man who had moved his family to Worthing. He was living with his daughter Emily,

some twelve years older than Charlotte Mason, at 15, Steyne, near her lodgings. In view of the age and class difference, it seems likely that the relationship between Miss Brandreth and Charlotte Mason was one of patronage rather than mutual friendship. (134)

Miss Brandreth was engaged in looking after her brother, Ashton's three young Anglo-Indian children. In 1871, Harriet was aged 8, Sam, 7 and Edgar, 3. (135) Charlotte Mason's subsequent attitude to these children suggests that it was the first time in her life that she had met well-brought up children of cultured and educated parentage. They seem to have been instrumental in confirming her belief in the contemporary social Darwinist view that upper class children belonged to a higher evolutionary stage of development than the noisy, unruly, grubby children, from the poorer classes, whom she met every day in her class room:

"While still a young woman, I saw a great deal of a family of Anglo-Indian children who had come 'home' to their grandfather's house and were being brought up by an aunt who was my intimate friend. The children were astonishing to me; they were persons of generous impulses and sound judgment, of great intellectual aptitude, of imagination and moral insight..."

She was amazed at their capacity to show concern for others. Harriet at the age of five had cried over the plight of a tramp, just as if she was a character in a novel by Charlotte M. Yonge.

"...such incidents are common enough in families but they were new to me..." (136)

It was doubtless in the company of Miss Brandreth and the children that Charlotte Mason began to think about home education and upbringing. Her early manuscripts show that she perceived marked differences between the firm methods used in upper class homes and what seemed to be a lamentable lack of method among the poor. Furthermore, she was given an insight into an upbringing organised by an "old maid" rather than the parents which provided her with a standpoint from which to criticise the seemingly inviolable upper class parent: Ashton and his wife appeared over indulgent towards the children, while they were home on leave:

"Who does not know of the heart-burnings that arise when Anglo-Indian parents come home to find their children's affections given to others, their duty owing to others; and they, the parents, sources of pleasure like the godmother of the fairy tale, but having no authority over their children?" (137)

Miss Brandreth was an immensely important figure to Charlotte Mason.⁽¹³⁸⁾ It may be inferred that the relationship promised upward social mobility and was the reason for the change of Charlotte's date and place of birth in 1871. Social success for someone in Charlotte Mason's unprotected position depended upon marriage or patronage. It, therefore, seems significant that Charlotte was not prepared to leave Worthing until Miss Brandreth departed after her father's death:

"Dear Mr. Brandreth has gone to his rest. Miss Brandreth is going abroad for a couple of years so your friend is taking the opportunity to break loose from Worthing for the present and make a new life for herself...."(139)

As the door to social success seemed to have been suddenly slammed, Charlotte Mason looked to her only other resource, which was her intellect, as a way of rising in the world. Although her career had not been obviously distinguished, it seems clear that both she and her friends believed that she had ability.

"...My plan is to leave here at Christmas and sit for the Cambridge Women's exam in June..."(140)

In the event, there was no need for Charlotte to have recourse to such a drastic solution. A visit to London to look at some schools may have included an interview with Mr Dunning. (141) He must surely have been the person to recommend Charlotte for the superior position of governess at the Bishop Otter Training College for Ladies in Chichester. Her former mentor had once again offered an honourable way forward.

2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, three interwoven themes have been developed concerning the Charlotte Mason myth, the nature of her remarkable personality and her intellectual and social strategies for both survival and success. Independent evidence has shown that in terms of Victorian society, Charlotte Mason may have had good reasons for concealing the truth about her

childhood and early career. The Cholmondeley biography has been shown to have provided sufficient unsubstantiated detail and alteration of the existing evidence to lull the unsuspecting reader into the belief that Charlotte Mason was a carefully nurtured and well-educated pioneer from an early age.

The additional evidence, used in this chapter, has proved Charlotte Mason to have been an even more remarkable personality, than at first supposed. Whatever the truth of her origins, she overcame an obvious lack of early education to obtain training at the "Ho and Co" and a good post at a Worthing infant school. Her problem lay in surmounting the difficulties of her background, poor health and education, to achieve certain social and intellectual ambitions. She displayed tenacity in carrying out demanding pedagogic duties but had recourse to personal charm and illness to mask her failures, as at the "Ho and Co". In her relationship with her exact contemporary, Lizzie Groveham she was inclined to depart from the truth in order to impress. Finally, it will be shown, in the next chapter, that the foundations for her particular later successes were built upon the ideas, conflicts and experiences of the first thirty years of her life.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 2

1. Cholmondeley, 1960, "Dedication and Authorship" at the front of the book. The House of Education is now the Charlotte Mason College of Education at Ambleside.
2. Monk Gibbon, "Netta", London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960, (hereafter Gibbon, 1960) p.vii-viii.
3. E.G. see Cholmondeley 1960 p. 15 where St Mark's church is called St Mary's, p. 296 where only 4 titles are given for the 5 Geography Readers.
4. Gibbon, 1960 pp. 37-39.
5. "E.F.B." quoted in Cholmondeley, 1960 p.vii.
6. Elsie Kitching in "In Memoriam" 1923, p.119. Cholmondeley, 1960 p.xi. M.A.E. Franklin in "In Memoriam", 1923 p.99. A.M. Harris in ibid p.81.
7. F.C.A. Williams in ibid. p.56. Mrs Courtenay Walton to MAC 14.6.1981. Sister Sheila Mary to MAC 6.5.1982. Both these ladies confirmed that delving into the past was firmly discouraged both before and after Miss Mason's death.

8. E. Kitching in "In Memoriam" 1923 p.119
St John's Gospel, (A.V.) The Bible, ch.5
v.31. C.M. Mason "Ourselves", London, Kegan
Paul, Trench and Trubner, 1921 (hereafter Mason,
1921) p.107.
9. W.H. Draper, Master of The Temple in "In Memoriam"
1923 p.20. Sir Michael Sadler C.B. in "In
Memoriam" 1923 pp.17-19. J.D. Rose (of Matlock)
"The Educational Philosophy of Charlotte Mason"
PARENTS' REVIEW vol. 77 no.3, March 1966
(hereafter J.D. Rose 1966) p. 52. Jack Smith
"Improving Learning and Teaching" The Journal
of the P.N.E.U. vol. 13 no.1, Jan/Feb/ March,
1978 (hereafter Jack Smith 1978) pp. 15-16.
10. ed. Boulter, 1983 p.1 & 9. Charles Smyth
"Charlotte Mason and the P N E U" SPECTRUM vol.8
no. 1. September 1975 p.21. Jenny King "Charlotte
Mason Reviewed" Ilfracombe, Devon, A. Stockwell,
1982, (hereafter King, 1982)
11. Cholmondeley 1960 pp.1-2 and 3-5. Mrs Esther
Card told MAC on 25.11.1982 that her mother was
one such special student. Miss Mason had told
her about the frocks she used to wear as a child.
Valerie Hetzel listed the "Recollections" in
her list of sources. I have been unable to locate

it in the P N E U Collection. Valerie Hetzel "The William Davison School", Brighton College of Education, Unpublished Dissertation, 1975 (hereafter Hetzel, 1975 p.80). A thorough search through the contents of the Parents' Review vols. 1-34 (1890-1923) has revealed no "Memories" nor personal anecdotes. Essex Cholmondeley talking to MAC 28.4.1982 stated (incorrectly) that all the papers had been destroyed when the biography was completed. Although aged 90 at the time, her mind seemed very clear. Therefore the confusion over the existent of these two extracts seems significant. Essex Cholmondeley writing to MAC 8.7.1982: "Alas the letters mentioned in 'Memories' and 'Recollections' have not survived".

12. Worthing Census Returns 7.4.1861. Broadwater District.
13. Ibid 2.4.1871.
14. Cholmondeley 1960 p.1. Registration of Births was not compulsory in the Isle of Man until 1874. Searches have revealed no trace of a birth or baptism certificate at Douglas from 1840-1860, nor at Bangor, N. Wales from 1840-1845. General Register, St Catherine's House London, Douglas Public Record Office, Bangor Public Record Office.

15. Elizabeth Groveham writing to Elsie Kitching
p.c. n.d. c. 1923, letter 9.7.1927. There is
also a Bangor in N. Ireland.
16. Cholmondeley, 1960, p.1.
17. A.S. Wohl "Sex and the Single Room: Incest among
the Victorian Working Classes", in ed. A.S. Wohl,
1978 (hereafter Wohl, 10, 1978) pp. 197-213.
John R Gillis "Servants, Sexual Relations and
the Risks of Illegitimacy in London, 1801-1900,
in ed. J.L. Newton, M.P. Ryan and J.R. Walkowitz
"Sex and Class in Women's History" London, Routledge
and Kegan Paul, 1983 (hereafter Gillis, 1983)
pp. 114-139. Thomas Hardy "Tess of the D'Urbervilles"
Harmondsworth, Penguin, (1893) 1981. Grant Allen
"The Woman Who Did" London, John Lane, 1895.
Elizabeth Gaskell "Mary Barton" Harmondsworth,
Penguin, (1848) 1981.
18. Cholmondeley 1960 p.2.
19. The Times 20.1.1923. The British Weekly 18.1.1923.
Who Was Who Entry: Charlotte Mason.
20. Janet Smith, Liverpool Record Office to MAC
2.3.1983 quoting from Gore's Liverpool Directory.
21. Cholmondeley 1960 p.4.
22. F.C.A. Williams in "In Memoriam" 1923 p.56.

23. Mrs Groveham to Elsie Kitching 18.5.1924.
Cholmondeley 1960 p.4.
24. Ibid pp. 2,3. G. Kitson Clark "The Making of
Victorian England" London, Methuen 1980
(hereafter Kitson Clark 1980) p. 5.
25. B.A. Clough "A Memoir of Anne Jemima Clough"
London, Edward Arnold, 1897 (hereafter B.A.
Clough, 1897) p.20.
26. C.M. Mason "The Forty Shires", London, Hatchards',
1881 (hereafter C. Mason 1881) pp.41-43. B.D. White
quoted in Sir Charles Petrie "The Victorians",
London, Eyre and Spottiswood, 1960 (hereafter
Petrie 1960) pp.80-81. J.L. and B. Hammond
"The Bleak Age" London and Aylesbury, Pelican
1934 (hereafter J.L. and B. Hammond 1934) pp.52-74.
Trevelyan, 1944 pp.553-554.
27. Cholmondeley 1960 p.2.
28. Joan Burstyn "Victorian Education and the Ideal
of Womanhood" London, Croom Helm, 1980
(hereafter, Burstyn 1980) pp.12-13.
29. Ibid. Branca, 1975 p.40.
30. Cholmondeley, 1960 p.2.
31. Elsie Kitching's notes of her conversation with
Mrs Groveham at Woodbridge c.1923.

32. The name "Shaw" was used in Charlotte Mason's will and after her death. She signed one poem "M Shaw" see letter from Mrs Lienie Steinthal to C Mason n.d.c. April 1890.
33. E. Kitching in "In Memoriam" 1923 p.119
Cholmondeley 1960 p.2,3. Jack Cassin - Scott
"Costume and Fashion in Colour; 1760-1920"
Dorset, Blandford Press, 1971 pp.44,66. A "Bertha"
(1842) was a kind of collar made up of lace
frills around the décolletage. Pélisses, an
overgarment with trimmings to match the dress
were also fashionable during the 1830's and
1840's.
34. Cholmondeley, 1960 p.2.
35. Ibid.
36. Essex Cholmondeley talking to MAC 28.4.1982.
37. C.M. Mason "Some Studies in the Formation of
Character" London, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner
and Co. Ltd. 1914 (hereafter C. Mason 1914) p.117.
38. Ibid p.115.
39. Cholmondeley, 1960 pp.1,2.
40. Ibid pp.4-5. Young 1977 p.170. J.L and B. Hammond
1934, p.231. Public libraries were open during
the 1850's so that it was less essential to be

wealthy to be well read. J.J. Rousseau trans. Barbara Foxley, London, Dent Everyman (1762) 1974 (hereafter, Rousseau 1974) p.147. Defoe's "Robinson Crusoe" was the only book Rousseau deemed suitable for the ideal pupil Émile.

41. B.A. Clough 1897 pp.34, 42-45. C. Woodham Smith "Florence Nightingale 1820-1910", London The Reprint Society, 1950 (hereafter, Woodham Smith 1950) pp.32-33. Josephine Kamm "Hope Deferred: Girls' Education in English History" London, Bodley Head, 1965 (hereafter Kamm 1965) pp.166-171.
42. John Ruskin: Directory of National Biography (hereafter D.N.B.)
43. Matthew Arnold "Report for 1880" in ed. G. Sutherland 1973, p.53, 64-67. Henry Butter "The Etymological Spelling Book etc" 1830 (1860, 238th Edition).
44. Cholmondeley, 1960 pp.4-5.
45. Kamm 1965 pp.120-135, 142-144, 166. Alice Zimmern "The Renaissance of Girls' Education in England; A Record of Fifty Years' Progress", London, A.D. Innes and Co Ltd 1898 (hereafter Zimmern 1898) p.18. C.S. Bremner "The Education of Women and Girls in Great Britain", London, Swan Sonnenschein, 1897 (hereafter Bremner 1897)

- p.11. Barry Turner, "Equality for Some: Story of Girls' Education, 1974 (hereafter B. Turner 1974) p.82.
46. Don Cupitt said that Paley's "Natural Theology" was the kind of book given as a confirmation present during the nineteenth century.
47. Cholmondeley 1960 p.5.
48. E. Groveham to E. Kitching n.d.c. 1923.
49. Essex Cholmondeley talking to MAC 28.4.1982. She thought C. Mason lived with an "uncongenial relative" but denied this in Cholmondeley 1960 p.5.
50. E. Groveham to Elsie Kitching 9.7.1927.
51. Janet Smith (Liverpool Record Office) to MAC 2.8.1982. There is no record of Charlotte Mason being baptised or confirmed at this church between 1856-1861. Bishop's Transcripts Liverpool Reference Library.
52. Anon. "Church Portrait Gallery" in Home Words. 1886 vol. 16 no. 5 p.106.
53. J. Lawson and H. Silver "A Social History of Education in England", London, Methuen, 1973 (hereafter Lawson and Silver, 1973) pp.268-270. Lee Holcombe "Victorian Ladies at Work 1850-1914"

Newton Abbot David and Charles, 1973 (hereafter
Holcombe, 1973) pp.34-36.

54. Robert Dunning to Charlotte Mason n.d.
55. I.T. Godson (Department of Education and Science
Record Office) to MAC 13.7.1982. R. Potter
(P.E.S. Record Office) to MAC 22.7.1982.
56. Ibid. E. Groveham to E. Kitching 7.5.1924.
57. Margaret E.M. Jones "A Brief Account of the Home
and Colonial Training Institution", London,
Groombridge and Sons n.d. c.1861 (hereafter
M.E.M. Jones c.1861) P.4.
58. Memorial plaque to Elizabeth Mayo (1793-1865)
the sister of Charles and a lecturer at the
"Ho and Co" cited in D.N.B.
59. M.E.M. Jones c.1861 pp.5-8.
60. Home and Colonial School Society's Educational
Papers : vol. 1 1848 and no. 14 April 1862 p.59.
Home and Colonial School Society "The Quarterly
Educational Magazine" April 1848, 1868.
University of London Library.
61. B. Turner 1974 p.65.
62. Home and Colonial School Society's Educational
Papers no. 14 April 1862 p.59. Dr Barlow's

address at the opening of the new Home and
Colonial Training College at Wood Green on 27.1.1904
Lambeth Palace Library pp.5, 8, 13.

63. M.E.M. Jones c.1861 p.3. Kate Silber "Pestalozzi:
The Man and His Work", London, Routledge and
Kegan Paul 1960 (hereafter Silber 1960) pp.66, 326.
J.H. Pestalozzi "Letters on Early Education
addressed to J.P. Greaves Esq " (1827) trans.
C.W. Barden LONDON, 1898, (hereafter, Pestalozzi,
1898) p.57 (17.12.1818)
64. Oscar Browning "Educational Theories", London
Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner 1899 (hereafter
Browning, 1899) pp.156-157. L.E. Roberts,
"Pestalozzi" Parents' Review vol. 9 no. 6.
1898 pp.383-384. Browning, 1899 p.157.
65. Ibid.
66. C.M. Mason "School Education", London, Kegan
Paul, Trench and Trübner 1917 (hereafter C.
Mason 1917) pp.215-240.
67. C. Mason, 1899 p.vi. C. Mason, 1914 p.129.
68. ed. Evelyn Lawrence "Friedrich Froebel and
English Education", LONDON, ROUTLEDGE AND
KEGAN PAUL 1969, (hereafter ed. Lawrence, 1969)
C.M. Mason "P.N.E.U. Principles" Parents'
Review vol. 5 no. 6 (July 1894) 1895 pp.426-431.

69. B.A. Clough 1897 p.73. M.E.M. Jones n.d. c.1861 p.4.
70. Ibid.
71. B.A. Clough, 1897 p.73.
72. C.M. Mason "Parents and Children" London, Kegan Paul, Trench and Trübner n.d. c.1904 (hereafter C. Mason, 1904) p.264. G.M. Young "Victorian Essays" LONDON, Oxford University Press, 1962 (hereafter G.M. Young, 1962) p.117.
73. Bradford Census Returns: Manningham District 1881.
74. C. Mason to E. Groveham January 1877.
75. B.A. Clough 1897 p.80-88. Letter to Miss G Bell. Memorial plaque to Mrs Selina Fleming in Ambleside church.
76. Robert Dunning to Charlotte Mason 22.10.1861.
77. C. Mason to E. Groveham n.d. c.1870's. Young 1962 pp.62-69. Young 1977 pp.5, 55, 78. M.E.M. Jones c.1861 p.3-4.
78. B.A. Clough 1897 pp.22, 44. C.M. Yonge "The Daisy Chain or Aspirations", London, Macmillan 1904 (hereafter Yonge, 1904) pp.15-17. Maria L. Charlesworth "Ministering Children: A Tale dedicated to Childhood", London, Seeley and Co 1893 (hereafter Charlesworth, 1893) p. iii-iv.

- John Ruskin "The Ethics of Dust" London, J.M. Dent
1865 (hereafter Ruskin, 1865) pp.103-119.
79. E. Groveham to Elsie Kitching 14.6.1923.
80. R. Dunning to C. Mason n.d. c.Spring 1861.
81. George H. Napheys "The Physical Life of Woman;
Advice to the Maiden, Wife and Mother", London,
The Homeopathic Publishing Co. n.d. (hereafter,
Napheys n.d.)
82. Herbert Spencer 1949 p.25. Lorna Duffin "The
Conspicuous Consumptive: Woman as Invalid" in
Delamont and Duffin, 1978, pp.26-54. C. Dyhouse
1981 pp.132-138. In an anonymous tale "Good
but not Clever", London, Wells Gardner, Darton
& Co. 1899, the hero, Willy dies of 'Overpressure'".
83. C.M. Mason "What is the Best Way to Bring Up a
Child" The Daily Mail 3.4.1907.
84. E. Kitching's notes on a conversation with
Mrs Groveham at Woodbridge c.1923. Cholmondeley
1960 p.6.
85. Ibid.
86. Lt. Col. H.C.M. Walton to MAC 3.6.1983.
87. R. Dunning to C. Mason n.d. c.1861.

88. Anna Freud "The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defence", London, Hogarth Press 1968 (hereafter A. Freud, 1968) pp.47-50.
89. R. Dunning to C. Mason n.d. c.1861.
90. C. Mason to E. Groveham n.d. c.April 1861.
91. E. Kitching's notes on a conversation with Mrs Groveham op.cit.
92. Lawson and Silver, 1973 p.288.
93. C. Mason "An Essay Towards a Philosophy of Education" London, J.M. Dent and Sons; 1954 (hereafter C. Mason, 1954) p.10. Cholmondeley, 1960 p.10.
94. Ibid pp.9-10.
95. Mrs Groveham to E. Kitching n.d.
96. Cholmondeley 1960,p.8. Robert Drake has found no evidence for a "middle school", see notes pp.8-10 4th January 1983 to MAC. Both V. Hetzel and K.S. Sandell thought there was one. R. Drake to MAC 2.7.1982. K.S. Sandell's Memories in "Souvenir Handbook of the Centenary Celebrations of the Davison Church of England Secondary School for Girls,Worthing" May, 1954.

97. Valerie Hetzel "The William Davison School"
Brighton College of Education Unpublished
Dissertation , 1975, (hereafter, Hetzel 1975)
pp.34-36, 42.
98. "Souvenir Handbook" op.cit. p.6.
99. Worthing Census Returns P.R.O. 7.4.1861.
100. C. Mason to E. Groveham (E.G's transcript)
n.d. c.1861.
101. H.L. Jefferson "St Paul's Church, Worthing"
1969. (no pagination)
102. Hetzel, 1975 p.42.
103. R. Drake to MAC 25.5.1983 and 8.12.1983 that
there were trained mistresses from the "Ho
and Co" at the Davison School before C. Mason.
104. Extracts from the Log Book. Extracts from Log
Book quoted in Souvenir Handbook.
105. B.A. Clough 1897, p.26, 34.
106. P.H.J.H. Gosden "How They Were Taught", Oxford,
Blackwell, 1969 (hereafter Gosden 1969) pp.40-41.
107. Robert Drake to MAC 25.5.1983 p.7 (notes on the
Log Book).

108. Log Book Extract 12.6.1863, 30.7.1863, 4.12.1864.
R. Drake to MAC 7.12.1982.
109. Matthew Arnold in ed. G. Sutherland 1972,
"The Twice-Revised Code (1862)" pp.27-51.
Home and Colonial Society Educational Paper
1867. "The Educational Blue Book and the
Revised Code" (from the "Record" 30.8.1867)
pp.9-19 and 19-27.
110. Cholmondeley 1960 p.6. Lawson and Silver,
1973 p.292.
111. Extract from Log Book for 25.11.1863. C. Mason
1/1yr Ms. Sarah Ellis Asst-Mis. Fanny Norman
2 yr. 19.12.1864 Charlotte Mason 3/1 etc.
11.10.1871 (noted by Robert Drake) Charlotte
Mason 1/1 etc. Robert Drake to MAC 4.1.1983.
H.C. Dent "The Training of Teachers in England
and Wales 1800-1975" London, Hodder and Stoughton,
1977, (hereafter Dent 1977) pp.19-21, 25-28.
112. Quoted in "Souvenir Handbook" 1954 pp.11-12.
113. Log Book excerpt supplied by Robert Drake 25.5.1983.
114. Ibid.
115. Robert Drake quoting from Log Book and Davison
School Accounts to MAC 25.3.1983.

116. C. Mason to E. Groveham n.d. c. April 1861.
117. R. Dunning to C. Mason 22.10.1861.
118. H.C. Dent cit. 1977 pp.19-21, 25-28.
119. Lee Holcombe, 1973 pp.34-36.
120. H.C. Dent 1982 op.cit.
121. See note 111.
122. C. Mason to E. Groveham n.d. c.1861. Cholmondeley, 1960 p.7 for bowdlerised version.
123. C. Mason to E. Groveham January 1864.
124. C. Mason to E. Groveham n.d. c.1870's.
125. Cholmondeley, 1960 p.9.
126. C. Mason to E. Groveham n.d. 1863 (E. Kitching's transcript).
127. C. Mason to E. Groveham, January 1877.
128. Hetzel, 1975 p.42. R. Drake to Mac 4.1.1983.
129. C. Mason to E. Groveham January 1864.
130. C. Mason to E. Groveham n.d. Sunday (E. Groveham's transcript).
131. C. Mason to E. Groveham January 1877.

132. Fly leaves of C. Mason's books sent to salvage in 1914.
133. Thomas Shaw Brandreth, D.N.B.
134. R. Drake to MAC 4.1.1983.
135. Worthing Census returns 1871.
136. C. Mason, 1954 pp.9-10.
137. C. Mason "An Old Maid's Tale" Unpublished MSS.
C. Mason n.d. (1904) p.12-13. Cholmondeley
1960 p.10.
138. Ibid p.48.
139. C. Mason to E. Groveham, May/June 1873.
140. Ibid.
141. C. Mason to E. Groveham n.d. Summer 1873. It is not clear if she actually saw Mr Dunning on this occasion.

Chapter 3:

A Rise in Status: From Ladies' Training College
Governess to "Home Education" Expert. (1874-1886)

3.1. Introductory

"Without any heartache I say to you if you are still hesitating - go on yes surely go on and go on conscientiously, oh yes and cheerfully and thankfully..." (1)

On the basis of what is known, or may be inferred about Charlotte Mason's early experiences, an interpretation was made in the previous chapter, that her life was dominated by conflicts engendered by two contrary ambitions to succeed intellectually or socially. In this chapter, it will be argued that her crowning achievement, which was to place herself in a position, through the publication of "Home Education" (1886), from which to educate upper class parents, was the outcome of her urgent need to reconcile these two conflicting motivations, in both social and psychological terms.

The weak, dependent, anxious and frightened side to Charlotte Mason's character is more explicable if in the fact she received little or no parental care and nurture. Her sensitivity to external social pressures and change, which was both a strength and a weakness, may be explained if she was never encircled by a family who shielded her from the harsh, cold world outside. However, whatever the nature of her childhood deprivations may have been, her capacity to survive many vicissitudes was apparent by the time she had reached her early thirties. The unifying principle in her life, which was fed by her ambition, appears to have been supplied at that stage by a belief or hope that she had some special quality, which

certainly impressed her friends and may have compensated for her lack of mother love and stable support. One may speculate that this feeling was engendered by a combination of factors. She had intelligence and a quick wit. She also had an ability to please and charm significant others, doubtless borne of the desperate need to survive. Finally, she possessed a certain self-interested determination, a further survival mechanism, which permitted recourse to an imaginative capacity for reconstructing her personal history convincingly in her favour. Her task was to maintain a sense of personal unity, in spite of the rifts engendered by internal conflicts and external social pressures.

What had Charlotte Mason achieved by the end of 1873? She was alive and well and in employment which was no mean success for an unprotected spinster during the middle years of the nineteenth century.⁽²⁾ There was room for regret. She had not distinguished herself at the "Ho and Co". Her continued survival had been bought at the price of becoming a respectable but rather ordinary working infant teacher with the minimum qualifications. Her mode of life was comparable to that of other sturdy working-class women, rather than a lady of leisure⁽³⁾. However, her social and intellectual aspirations would not permit her to rest content. The Worthing years were punctuated by periodic unease. There was the nagging question of whether she should branch upwards into the fashionable pioneering field of middle-class education

with only the untested support of Lizzie Groveham.⁽⁴⁾

Or should she try to become a real lady, like Miss Brandreth? She seems to have lacked the courage to take the necessary steps to change her life, until a combination of chance and circumstances put a feasible opportunity in her way.

This chapter spans the period in Charlotte Mason's life from when she finally gave up her front line Pestalozzian educational work among the children of the poor to become, eventually, a successful author on the topic of "Home Education". The four years as Senior Governess at the newly re-opened Bishop Otter Training College for Ladies, in Chichester, provided her with the stimulus and circumstances for the productive intellectual work, upon which she was later to base her books. However, certain anxieties or events prevented her from remaining in this post after early 1878. Her consequent "illness" provided the opportunity for a gracious rescue by her benefactor, Miss Brandreth, who gave her continental travel, time to write and the daily existence of a cultured lady. Whatever may have been the reasons for the termination of this arrangement, the end of 1879, saw Charlotte Mason travelling North, to Bradford, in the company of Fanny Williams, an "Otter" graduate. Secure in the hospitality of Lizzie Groveham, Charlotte Mason was successful in having several school books published between 1880 and 1884. Finally, a request to give a course of lectures to ladies living in the district of

Manningham, where Mrs. Groveham's house was situated provided the necessary impetus for the publication of "Home Education" (1886), which brought considerable acclaim.

3.2. Senior Governess at "The Gentlewomen's College" (1874-1878)

The Chichester College, which had been founded in 1839 by the enterprising Bishop William Otter, to improve and extend the National Society's influence over elementary education, was the first Church of England training college for schoolmasters to be organised at diocesan level. However, after a "chequered" early history, the Bishop Otter College was obliged to close in 1867⁽⁵⁾. One factor had been the decline in the numbers of male teachers, as women were beginning to predominate in what Dr. David has graphically described as "the rump of the teaching profession"⁽⁶⁾. An increased demand for trained teachers, in response to the expansionist provisions of the 1870 Forster Act, provided one of the justifications for the re-opening of the College, within six years, as a training institution for "reduced" gentlewomen. These "surplus" women needed respectable employment. They cost less than male teachers. Furthermore, gentlewomen would provide the elevating and moral influence to attract the children of the respectable classes into schools which had previously been the preserve of the poorer sections of the community⁽⁷⁾.

"Bishop Otter's Memorial College in
Chichester for Women of the Upper and Middle
Classes:

This College will (D.V) be opened in January 1873 for the reception of pupils, not under 18 years of age, desiring to be trained as Teachers in Elementary Schools, according to the regulations of the Committee of Council....."(8)

Miss Fanny Trevor was appointed the first Lady Principal in November 1872. She was, by all accounts, most successful in establishing a high reputation for the College during the next twenty-three years, until her retirement in 1895⁽⁹⁾. The College was probably at its most unsettled during the first few years because of a building programme, the setting up of the practising school and other teething troubles⁽¹⁰⁾. Miss Steventon, a former "Ho and Co" student, was appointed as the first senior governess at a salary of £75 per annum. Unfortunately "after only three months of teaching, Miss Steventon was given notice by the General Committee and Miss Trevor was asked to find a suitable replacement who would be able to cope with the expected influx of students"⁽¹¹⁾.

"To replace Miss Steventon, Miss Trevor recommended Miss Charlotte Mason"⁽¹²⁾. It seems likely that this recommendation resulted from joint consultations between Miss Read and Mr. Dunning⁽¹³⁾. If so, it provides further proof that Mr. Dunning thought highly of his "frail" former pupil. It would not have helped the reputation of the "Ho and Co" to have put forward a second

unsuitable candidate. The Committee was, doubtless, looking for someone with practical school experience. It may also be assumed that a young woman who had been associating with the Brandreth family and who was also a regular churchgoer would have been able to demonstrate that she had both the moral sensibility, the culture and gentility expected of a lady governess⁽¹⁴⁾. However, this time the Committee was taking no chances. Charlotte Mason was invited to teach at the College on a weekly basis, during the autumn of 1873, before her appointment was confirmed at the beginning of the new academic year:

"Miss Mason resigned the School at Christmas in consequence of having accepted the post of Senior Governess at the Chichester Training College: (signed) Managers: William Read, Mary Read" (15).

As with the story of her childhood and the Worthing period, the account of the four years at Bishop Otter was altered in Charlotte Mason's favour, in the Cholmondeley biography. First, it was suggested that she obtained the post on the strength of three letters outlining a mixed-class educational scheme, which had been written from Charlotte Mason's Worthing address and subsequently found in an old blotter⁽¹⁶⁾. This suggestion accorded with F.C.A. Williams' view:

".....I know that about this time she became Headmistress of a Church School at Worthing, and held this post for some years. Under her management the school became quite famous in the neighbourhood; perfect order was maintained without any severity and the pupils worked with intelligence and eagerness. It was not surprising that Miss Mason made many friends in Worthing and was recognised as

an authority on education....."(17).

Secondly, Essex Cholmondeley stated that Charlotte Mason had been appointed "Mistress of Method" in the Practising School and also Vice-Principal of the College. Finally:

"Charlotte threw all her strength and enthusiasm into her work at the Bishop Otter College and after four strenuous years she had such a serious breakdown that she was obliged to give up teaching....."(18).

Elsie Kitching's first account also implied that Charlotte Mason had been a lecturer of superior quality at the College.

".....at Bishop Otter College Miss Mason came into touch with the minds of young women and she found them very little different from those of the children except that their powers were not so fresh....."(19).

Although there is no evidence to prove that "The Blotter Letters" were posted to a distinguished educational authority, they are of interest in terms of Charlotte Mason's personal development. First, the letters show recognition of the business potential of educational endeavour. They incorporate quite a detailed and profitable educational scheme which allowed for ".....a salary of £200 a year - at least without any personal expenses".(20) Secondly, the letters addressed the anxieties of those advocating the extension of middle class education, who believed that under the existing system the children from the lowest classes were receiving the best elementary education available.⁽²¹⁾ Charlotte Mason's plan, which

included different levels of practical training, was to displace the existing working-class teaching force by attracting University graduates for training and work in a new type of school for pupils from all social classes, on a differential scale of fees. Not only would the smaller ratio of middle class children, boarded out from weathy families be exploited to attract these highly educated new teachers, but they would also be expected to impart cultural influence "in these schools so that the children left them with the habits of veneration, trust and graciousness....." (22) The third letter established her reverence for the existing social order: "The underlying rule should be that all children make companions of their own order - this to prevent toadying as well as other evils....." In Essex Cholmondeley's view this was Miss Mason's first plan for "a Liberal Education for all" (23).

Although the fee-paying Bishop Otter model "practising school", designed to fill a local gap in education provision for "lower middle class children" aged from four to fifteen, was built and opened, by the time Charlotte Mason arrived at the College, there is no evidence to suggest that she was "Mistress of Method". Her previous experience had been limited to children up to the age of seven. There also is no record that she was "Mistress of Method" in the school log book. It was noted that she visited the school on only four occasions, during the first and third year of her stay at the College. During

1874, she taught the children three times in place of the mistress in charge of the school. In 1876, she was recorded as attending a "criticism lesson" given by two students⁽²⁴⁾.

There is also no evidence for the statement that Charlotte Mason was appointed Vice-Principal. Dr. McGregor, who has ably charted the whole history of the College from 1839 to the present day, discovered no proof for this claim:

".....the records show that it was not until 1886 that a post of Vice-Principal was established. The annual reports and committee minutes for her first three years at Bishop Otter make no mention of Miss Mason, nor is her departure recorded anywhere in the minutes....."(25)

Dr. McGregor added that the crucial annual report for 1877 "which would surely have acknowledged her resignation and contribution to the College has, unfortunately not survived in either the College or the National Society archives"(26).

The few remarks recorded by Fanny Williams, when she was "73½" contain the sum total of contemporary opinion of those who knew Miss Mason at Bishop Otter.

"In 1876 I went to Otter College as a student and thus came under dear Miss Mason's influence. Unlike her I was not a born teacher, I was simply anxious to do some useful work and help my family (my father was a clergyman and I wished to help him retire). Under dear Miss Mason's teaching, my views of life changed; I saw that teaching might be a noble profession instead of a mere trade, and I too longed to put her theories into practice. I am sure that many old "Otters" would gladly testify to the help and enlightenment they received from Miss Mason's lectures on Education. I remember she told

us that the true teacher must be prepared to lay down her life for her pupils....."(27)

This is likely to have been a partial opinion. Miss Williams was the only one of Miss Mason's former friends to be absorbed into the charmed circle at the House of Education. Miss Williams had also lived with Miss Mason in Bradford. She was summoned to the House of Education in 1898, "to relieve Charlotte of her lectures and of some administration". She remained at Ambleside for twenty-two years until her retirement, just over two years before Miss Mason's death⁽²⁸⁾.

Dr. McGregor's researches have suggested some reasons why Charlotte Mason might have found life at the Bishop Otter College so difficult that she decided to leave after four years. First, because her salary was about the same as at the Davison school she may not have felt she had gained an appreciable rise in personal status, remaining in post as "senior governess" throughout the period. There seems to be little doubt that she lectured in "Education" and "Physiology" and probably also in "Geography"⁽²⁹⁾. However, as there is no firm evidence to prove that she devoted all her spare hours in Worthing to extensive educational studies, it seems likely that she found the preparation of these new courses of lectures very hard work.⁽³⁰⁾ Not only had she grown accustomed to the intellectual pace of young children but old fears of illness caused by "overpressure" might have been revived. Her students were, doubtless, a formidable

group. The ages of the first year's intake ranged from eighteen to forty-two although all were single women, apart from one widow. The students apparently did well in the examinations and were successful in obtaining teaching posts⁽³¹⁾. Only two of her students have been mentioned as becoming particular friends. Both were younger than herself. The first was F.C.A. Williams, already discussed and the second was Frances, later Mrs. Epps who occasionally wrote for the Parents' Review⁽³²⁾.

Dr. McGregor's work also suggests that the first few years after re-opening would have been difficult due to the authorities' anxiety to maintain high standards whilst also promoting expansion. The latter involved a building programme from 1874-1876 which was probably very noisy and disruptive. There was also much sorting out of working relationships, notably between the Principal and the Chaplains⁽³³⁾. Charlotte Mason's anxieties may also have been raised by proposed curriculum changes following the Devonshire Committee's report in 1875 which recommended additional training to accommodate the teaching of science in elementary schools. In view of her preference for English subjects and her known difficulty in teaching rudimentary arithmetic, these plans may have been a further factor in her decision to leave. Finally, although no individual inspectorial assessment of her lecturing performance has survived, the critical opinion of Canon Tinling, H.M.I. was reported

in June 1878, just after Charlotte Mason had taken her final departure:

"The House is satisfactory and should remain certified for forty students. The practical school is sufficient for the practical training of the students.....The teaching power of the College he thinks weak and 'occasional' and recommends a larger staff of resident teachers..... He doubts the expediency of having pupils in the college preparing for the scholarship examination, as this causes a strain upon the teaching power....." (34)

In conclusion, it seems likely that the subsequent imaginative reconstruction, reproduced in the Cholmondeley biography, which placed Charlotte Mason's time at the Bishop Otter College in a favourable light, was designed to mask Miss Mason's inability to cope with some of the problems described. Knowledge of Miss Mason's character and previous coping mechanisms suggests that excessive academic work was likely to bring on feelings of acute anxiety, in view of Mr. Dunning's authoritative statements. It suggests that she would also have found it hard to deal with any kind of competitive element or personal criticism. A letter written to Lizzie during the summer of 1877, indicates that her feeling of strain was emotional in origin:

"Do not be uneasy dear. I am bodily quite well and mentally too, now I am here in this beautiful country. I find the work at the College too trying and have settled to give it up at Christmas and take a rest....."(35).

However, it seems improbable that she told Miss Trevor how she felt. She left, ostensibly to take up a new post in a Chester High School, which may well have involved a

return to teaching very young girls⁽³⁶⁾. However, although she had apparently been taken ill in Chester, she returned to work at the Bishop Otter presumably because a replacement had not as yet been found. It seems unlikely that Miss Trevor would have taken her back if she had really been as seriously ill as was subsequently claimed. The route to intellectual advancement through lecturing it would seem, had closed because she had, in certain ways, found the work beyond her capabilities.

3.3. A Flight into Invalidism (1878-1880)

In this section, it will be suggested that notwithstanding the treasured medical diagnosis of "over-work" by a distinguished physician and the physical symptoms Charlotte Mason may have exhibited, the effect of her eighteen month to two year period of "illness", was to enable her to give up work at a Chester school as well as the Bishop Otter College, without disgrace. It also permitted her to enjoy the benefits of the continental travel, hospitality and time to write, arranged for her by Miss Brandreth. In Sir George Pickering's definition it was a "creative malady" after the manner of Florence Nightingale (1820-1910) or Charles Darwin (1809-1882)⁽³⁷⁾.

When Charlotte Mason went to Chester to make the final arrangements for her new post she "felt very poorly"⁽³⁸⁾. She was, however, well enough to travel on to Manchester. She was perhaps looking for a sympathetic

reception from her College friend Sally Coleman. The previous year Sally had responded most gratifyingly to Charlotte Mason's dramatic attempts to rise from her bed and travel, despite manifestations of serious illness:

Sally "kept me by various devices such as locking up my clothes, writing to Mrs. Goble, a week longer than I meant to stay...."(39)

On this second occasion, the diagnosis must have puzzled Dr. Coleman. Although he declared that she "must have perfect rest for six months", he took her all the way to Birmingham for a second opinion. The distinguished Dr. Balthazar Foster, MD, FRCP, also an authority on public health and infant mortality in Birmingham duly recorded:

"I have this day seen Miss Mason and find that she is suffering from the effects of overwork. Her condition requires absolute rest for some months, and I am quite unable to sanction her doing any education work for the present"(40).

Charlotte Mason was not sufficiently alarmed by this diagnosis to cease work altogether. It provided the excuse for her to escape from her commitment in Chester but did not deter her from returning for a few weeks to the familiar surroundings of Bishop Otter. It is not known when Miss Brandreth returned from her foreign travels and sojourn in Hoxton to resume residence at 15, Steyne Worthing. It is conceivable that Charlotte Mason's subsequent relapse into "illness" coincided with Miss Brandreth's return. By March 20th 1878, Charlotte Mason reported to Lizzie that she had been rescued by "dear Miss Brandreth who certainly

does possess the secret of rest"(41) .

A precise diagnosis of illness would not have been necessary at a time when "overpressure", a term borrowed from the mechanics of steam power, was the recognised result of too much study, especially in the case of delicately nurtured gentlewomen (42) .

".....The Victorian ideal of the perfect lady was the perfect symbol of status.....Her symbolic status, however, gave her no purposeful activity but instead rendered her progressively more and more useless..... The image of the perfect lady, in time, became the image of the disabled lady, the female invalid....."(43)

Charlotte Mason had given Lizzie Groveham a mental picture of her beautiful mother who was also an invalid, whether or not this was in fact true to her childhood experience. Motherliness and gentle birth had become associated in Charlotte's ideal image perhaps epitomised by Miss Brandreth. Curiously enough, her life was to be a kind of enactment of Lorna Duffin's Victorian stereotype. However, at this stage, it may be inferred, that her first need was to be cared for lovingly. This would not, of course, have been possible if Miss Brandreth had not had the leisure and the means to take her on. It was to be a convalescence in the grand manner.

"Our next move is to Lucerne whither we go in a fortnight and stay for two or three months as the case may be. Another lady travels with us - a Miss D'arcy, otherwise Sister Maria, the lady with whom Miss Brandreth went to work in the Hoxton parish and who is now done up and, like somebody else, in need of rest. How am I will be your next kind? Very well when I am doing nothing, but knocked up by the least effort, the least attempt to bring myself together and attend to anything.

However, the Birmingham man promised me that if I would take the absolute rest he commanded I should be quite well and longing to work when it was over, and so I try to keep in good heart but it is not always easy". (44)

It is not known precisely how long Charlotte Mason remained in Miss Brandreth's care but she was certainly with her during the following summer in 1879⁽⁴⁵⁾. Her letters to Lizzie indicate that she took great satisfaction in travelling in a luxurious comfort that she had not enjoyed on her previous trips abroad. Presumably Miss Brandreth paid all expenses⁽⁴⁶⁾.

"Miss Brandreth's sweet love and tender care made it so very easy. We never travelled for more than six hours at a time and always broke our journey at good comfortable hotels. But I must not write you a long letter now dear as letters are an effort beyond me....." (47)

The four closely written pages were, however, inscribed in a firm hand, full of intimations that the writer of a set of geographical readers was soon to emerge:

"..... and then the mountains! The glorious Alps, snow covered, happily, and delighting us every hour with endless play of colour and apparent change of form....." (48)

That journey in 1878 was to be the prototype of all Charlotte Mason's journeys abroad as well as the everyday life style of the Ambleside years, justified on similar health grounds. She would travel, and live, in the future, like a queen, with all tiresome anxieties carefully smoothed away by devoted friends, like Miss Brandreth⁽⁴⁹⁾. A single lady had become, for her, a model of loving maternal care. Her reaction to this definitive period of

her life suggests that she had never before been the happy recipient of devoted nursing and attention from someone whom she admired. During this period her anxieties were sufficiently tranquillised for her to undertake some creative writing⁽⁵⁰⁾.

3.4.i The Bradford Years: (1880-1891) "A Grand Change" (51)

"Bradford, which stands where three valleys join, is in the heart of the district which makes worsted goods; that is, all woollen goods which are not pulled after being woven. All round it are busy towns and villages occupied by the makers of cloth or stuff. After dark on a winter's evening, the town is illuminated by the light thrown from the countless windows of the large factories: Six or seven stories of such windows, in a long line and close together, each throwing out a bright glow. Merinoes, aplacas, coburgs, cords, every kind of stuff is made in Bradford: it is also the great wool market of England....." (52)

It may be supposed that Charlotte Mason's agreeable stay with Miss Brandreth was terminated because she had noticeably recovered her health. Both doctors had recommended a rest of a few months but it seems that Charlotte Mason had managed to prolong this period to eighteen. She also produced a great deal of writing during this time which would have indicated satisfactory recovery from "overpressure". One can only assume that Charlotte Mason elected to go north to Bradford, at this stage in her life, because she believed that she had no other options open and also wished to be looked after to some degree. How she managed financially during this period of

unemployment must remain a mystery⁽⁵³⁾. What is clear is, that by this stage in her life, she never went anywhere or did anything alone. While that would have been usual behaviour for a lady of gentle birth it seems that for Charlotte Mason it was a sign of her growing dependence on others for constant support. Mrs. Groveham mentioned "Katie Webster, always wanting to be with her". It seems probable that Charlotte Mason chose to move north, after nineteen years in Sussex, only when her former student, Fanny Williams had finished her certificate examinations and was free to accompany her⁽⁵⁴⁾.

As there are no remnants of an interesting correspondence, because Lizzie and Lottie were living together during this period, a picture of life, at number two, in the secluded tree-lined Apsley Crescent, must remain somewhat elusive⁽⁵⁵⁾. Although Manningham was dominated by the huge Mill, as well as the nearby brewery and quarry, the district itself was salubrious. It was mainly inhabited by bankers, manufacturers and respectable tradesfolk. Many of these families were of European origin such as the locally important Steinthal family from Germany, some of whose members were to play a leading part in the founding of the Bradford Parents' Educational Union⁽⁵⁶⁾. Bradford was a thriving industrial "Worstedopolis" but very cold and surrounded by desolate moorland⁽⁵⁷⁾. The model industrial village community out at "Saltaire" and the new municipal buildings, carved out of the local "freestone", gave

Bradford a certain grace⁽⁵⁸⁾. However, despite prosperity in some quarters, Bradford was beset by the usual nineteenth century urban problems of poverty, bad housing, inadequate public health and high rates of infant mortality. For example, at a free breakfast given in January 1886, the doors had to be closed, before all the hundreds of starving people who turned up could be fed⁽⁵⁹⁾.

There is no contemporary description of the magnanimous woman who supported Charlotte Mason during the most interesting and critical period of her life. Lizzie Groveham was one of the unsung heroines behind the scenes of the P.N.E.U. The Groveham family seems to have epitomised the stable, bourgeois Victorian household. Lizzie appears to have managed her lady lodgers, one or two boarders, the servants and members of her family as capably as she organised her Bradford Girls' Middle School, known to the directories as a "Ladies' Seminary"⁽⁶⁰⁾. Lizzie's enduring qualities seem to have been a practical capability and a persistent constancy which characterised her management of the school for at least thirty years as well as her life-long relationship with Charlotte Mason. She had married John Groveham, an agent, some eleven years older than herself, sometime during the early 1860's. They may have had three daughters but only Edith is known to have survived to adulthood⁽⁶¹⁾. It seems likely that John Groveham died in 1882. One might speculate, that if the two old friends had drawn closer together as a result of this sad event, herein lies the explanation both for

Charlotte's prolonged stay, as well as for Fanny Williams' sudden departure. Fanny Williams had been appointed headmistress of a Higher Grade Board School but later claimed that she "did not succeed very well in this position"⁽⁶²⁾. Also,

".....her hearty ringing laugh which greeted every discomfort and turned every annoyance into a joke....."

may have come to grate on the sensitive ears of Mrs. Groveham, during her period of mourning⁽⁶³⁾.

It is not known how Charlotte Mason supported herself financially during the Bradford years, apart from the teaching she undertook in Mrs. Groveham's school⁽⁶⁴⁾. Later, Mrs. Groveham, whose loyal discretion served Charlotte Mason well after her death wrote warmly and positively about Charlotte's contribution:

"It is worthy of note, that Miss Mason has influenced the lives of hundreds of girls in Bradford both directly and indirectly. Indirectly by inducing me to carry out the scheme we had conjointly planned on the lines of the Worthing school and directly (later) by taking part in the actual teaching of the school.....One parent writes, ".....We have a keen appreciation of Miss Mason's good influence. Our girls think and speak of her with much affection....."⁽⁶⁵⁾.

Although this was hardly a cloud of witnesses, Mrs. Groveham's constant loyalty to her remarkable friend shines through this extract.

3.4.ii Published Authorship:

"Three constant conditions influence this story: lack of family relations, lack of means and

lack of stable health. The first of these..... brought Miss Mason a deep experience of loneliness in early life. Later a wealth of friendship came to her, bringing companionship and support....."(66)

Charlotte Mason's aspirations had soared since the Worthing years. Perhaps due to the Brandreth influence, they had been transformed from those of a working teacher to the strategies employed by a gentlewoman in reduced circumstances. To make good her lack of her family, she had looked to her friends to give her, at least partial support. In addition, she had been nurturing serious plans to become a writer, perhaps hoping to maintain herself, as the Brontë sisters, at nearby Haworth, had done.

By the time she moved to Bradford, Charlotte Mason had prepared quite a lot of work for publication and had ideas for a vast series of children's school books⁽⁶⁷⁾. It is not known how much of this early writing was actually undertaken, while in Miss Brandreth's care, nor how she knew how to find a publisher. However, early in 1880, she received a positive response from Hatchard & Co., the Piccadilly Booksellers. Mr. Hatchard was known to publish some works to please struggling authors, out of philanthropy rather than a profit motive⁽⁶⁸⁾. It is not known how Charlotte Mason might have raised her share of the expenses.⁽⁶⁹⁾

Charlotte Mason's first completed work was "The Forty Shires", a kind of historical geography of the counties of England for school children. Although the firm's reader found the treatment old fashioned, he said

that "the MSS is full of interest of a special kind....." Hatchard & Co, in promising to publish, said that they liked ".....the easy style of it very much....."(70). It was brought out in time for Christmas 1880, earning one or two "nice little notices"(71). There is, however, no evidence to support Miss Cholmondeley's claim that "The Forty Shires" (1880) was widely read and that "its sales for a time relieved Charlotte of financial cares"(72). The book made a loss of £105 and only went into second edition to recoup this deficit. 840 copies were sold in all and Charlotte Mason received the princely sum of £10 for all her pains(73).

She was advised to seek a second publisher for her next manuscripts. Edward Stanford of Charing Cross, who published school books, undertook to bring out some volumes of "Geographical Readers for Use in Elementary Schools". The idea may have been engendered by the 1867 regulations which extended the provisions of the Revised Code (1862) to the teaching of history and geography, in elementary schools(74). Although Charlotte Mason had originally planned this work on a truly grand scale, she, in fact, produced only five volumes which were published between 1881-1884(75). A prodigious amount of work went into the making of these books for children and their author intermittently displayed a tendency to flag. For example, the county of Essex was reduced to a paragraph: "Of Essex, also, little need be said....."(76) Charlotte Mason's plans and ideas soared far above her

actual achievement. This may have been one factor behind the decision to insert the unabridged version of "The Forty Shires" as the third volume of "The Geographical Readers", renamed, "The Counties of England".

Hatchard's and other publishers have confirmed that this is perfectly acceptable, particularly if the author owns the publication rights. However, it is noteworthy that the title page of the third volume stated that the author had written a previous work called "The Forty Shires" (77). Instead of admitting that the two works were one and the same, Charlotte Mason stated in her introduction that:

"Indeed it was found necessary greatly to reduce a larger work which was at first prepared as a school reading book....."(78)

This was an example of imaginative reconstruction of the truth. "The Forty Shires" had been previously cut, but only because Messrs. Hatchard had requested it as a necessary piece of editing, before the work was published for the first time⁽⁷⁹⁾. Not surprisingly, Charlotte Mason was seeking the maximum return for her effort by expanding her list of published works as speedily as possible. Indeed, the speed with which she had launched into published authorship with six volumes to her credit within five years, was remarkable for a woman of over forty, apparently only recently recovered from serious illness.

It should also be noted that Essex Cholmondeley referred to the series as "The London Geography Readers"⁽⁸⁰⁾.

This title properly belonged to the scholarly and substantial work, also in five volumes, of the late Keith Johnson, F.R.G.S. and genuine explorer, which had been brought out by Stanford at the same time. Unlike Charlotte Mason's more elementary work, Johnson's series had run into five editions by 1896⁽⁸¹⁾. The implication was that Charlotte Mason's work had been accorded a comparable standing by the publisher. In contrast to the famous explorer, Charlotte Mason had not visited many of the places she had described. Doubtless she believed with Harriet Martineau that

"....Her imagination was at home in distant lands as no doubt it was also in past ages....."(82)

The Geographical Readers do not appear to have been successful. They were not, apparently, reviewed⁽⁸³⁾. Like "The Forty Shires" the books were not profitable although the total loss was not as great as Mr. Stanford had predicted. The long term loss was £37.5s.5d in 1904 when all but volumes 3 and 5 were out of print⁽⁸⁴⁾. At that stage Charlotte Mason ignored their previous reception. They were bought by the P.N.E.U., for the price of the loss, for reissue as "The Ambleside Geographical Readers". Reasonable sales were assured as they were recommended for use in the Parent s' Union School⁽⁸⁵⁾. No one seems to have noticed that they apparently contained many old fashioned "racist" remarks that were subsequently to cause offence in a post League of Nations world⁽⁸⁶⁾.

It is not known from where the enterprising new author got the idea of engaging in a little personal publicity. It is also somewhat surprising that she was able to afford to send her books away to interested recipients. However, her former pastor and mentor, then aged 81, responded with gratifying approbation:

"I was much pleased.....that you have entered upon another and highly important sphere of public utility. Your proposed undertaking promises to be of great usefulness and I am delighted to find that you have secured Mr. Stanford's always valuable co-operation.

Be sure that I will not fail, at every possible opportunity to express my favourable opinion of whatever you propose to effect for I am sure it will be very satisfactorily performed"(87).

She had also sent the Geographical Readers to the distinguished Bradford H.M.I., Thomas G. Rooper (1847-1903) He replied courteously:

"I have today received your Vth book and am reading it with interest. I am sorry that I have not been more successful in introducing your previous books into this district....."

Mr. Rooper bemoaned the fact that".....the text - easy as it is - is too hard for the children under the Code..." He thought there was a greater need for cheap pamphlets because the schools were not prepared to lay out money on books. He urged her to write a short book for the local children on Yorkshire and discussed practical ways and means of producing a cheap publication of this nature⁽⁸⁸⁾.

It seems unlikely that Charlotte Mason seriously entertained the idea of confining her talents to the

production of sixpenny pamphlets for school children. Her personal public relations campaign suggests that she had more ambitious aims. What she had to face was the harsh reality that despite her wealth of school experience, she had not been able to attract a market for her childrens' wares. Although her work probably seemed a little old-fashioned, was of variable quality and too verbose for late Victorian elementary school children, it appeared, from Mr. Rooper's seasoned advice that the main fault lay not in the writing, but in an educational system that failed to encourage pupils to read big books. Charlotte Mason was to store this deduction away for future reference. Her problem, at this stage, was to find an alternative market and the determination "to go on and go on" (89).

3.4.iii "Home Education"; A Course of Lectures to the Ladies of Manningham: (1885-1886)

When the Rev. Edward Wynne, the evangelical Vicar of St. Mark's Church, Manningham (1877-1889) invited Charlotte Mason to lecture to local ladies, the opportunity was comparable to being appointed senior governess at the Bishop Otter College from the infant school. She reacted by drawing on the material she had used in her former lectures. For the second time round her intellectual work with children had not brought much personal success. It was natural that she should turn once again to an adult audience. She had received some encouragement to do so.

For example, the journalist who reviewed "The Forty Shires" for "The Athenaeum" had commented, "..... The style is good, pure and simple.....and the subjects treated are mostly of a kind that should interest men and women of all manner of growths....."(90). Furthermore, Mr. Wynne, whom she got to know well not only through the church but also because she sent him a copy of her first book, had also responded very favourably:

".....Allow me to offer my most sincere thanks for the little volume you have so kindly sent. I shall always esteem it highly as a present from its gifted authoress.....I.....find it a most instructive little book.....It seems to me most suggestive and likely to induce many readers to enquire further into some of these matters of which you give such a light but effective sketch.

Mrs. Wynne is delighted with the book and means to read it to the women at her Mothers' Meeting as she is sure it will interest them.....(91)

In 1884, the American Consul in Bradford remarked on the extensive evangelising programmes of the different churches:

"It is astonishing what a movement is abroad preparing for the new advent of Christianity - the selfish and luxurious are shaking in their shoes..." (92).

In St. Mark's parish, the work of evangelism required larger premises. It seems that all the local people, who attended the Church, were drawn into the fund-raising effort, in aid of new Sunday School buildings⁽⁹³⁾. A series of concerts and a bazaar were held in the autumn of 1885. At one of the former, ".....performances were sustained by Miss Groveham and Miss Milly Müller...."(94).

Charlotte Mason later described how the lectures which subsequently led to the founding of the Bradford Parents' Educational Union, had been encouraged by Edward Wynne:

".....the lectures on "Home Education" which originated the whole scheme, were given under his kind auspices and to help a parochial effort....."(95)

Essex Cholmondeley suggested that much 'simmering thought' went into the making of the lectures⁽⁹⁶⁾. Although it is known that Charlotte Mason paid a single visit to the Reading Room of the British Museum in August 1885, it seems probable that most of the material was based on her Bishop Otter lectures on "Education" and "Physiology"⁽⁹⁷⁾. Miss Cholmondeley's statement that the lectures "aroused wide interest" is also highly questionable. There was no mention of them in the local Bradford Observer during the winter of 1885-86. This paper had not only covered the St. Mark's concerts and quite minor items such as the monthly meetings of the Sketching Club, but had devoted space to reporting Mr. Rooper's Sunday afternoon educational lectures at the Temperance Hall⁽⁹⁸⁾.

It is not known how many ladies actually attended the lectures. Mrs. Wynne was, however, one of those present. When Edward Wynne wrote to Charlotte Mason to thank her for sending him a copy of her sixth lecture on "The Will and the Conscience", he expressed further interest and approval:

"I am delighted with it. It is full of noble thoughts expressed in simple but beautiful language. Mrs. Wynne has returned from your lectures full of the subject, taking up one after another of the

points on which you have touched and discussing them with me with great eagerness. After reading this lecture I am not surprised that this should have been the case. You go to the heart of the matter and deal with the whole question in a thoroughly practical way. I have been greatly struck by some of the counsels you lay down for the religious training of children knowing them to be opposed to the ordinary practice of worthy Christian parents....Your observations on thechildren's conscience have brought vividly back to my remembrance my own experience of more than fifty years ago, about which I will tell you when I see you...." (99).

At least two people had found the lectures challenging and interesting. The Wynnes were, however, elderly and it remained to be seen whether Charlotte Mason's "Home Education" would appeal to the younger generation.

Charlotte Mason had one considerable advantage over her middle class audience. The scientific and educational ideas upon which she had based her lectures had been acquired in elementary training colleges which were unfamiliar territory to the wealthier classes. At that time, university men and public schoolmasters received no educational training. It is, therefore, likely that many of these men and their wives would have been uninformed about the ideas upon which "Home Education" was based, particularly as the sources were not very precisely acknowledged⁽¹⁰⁰⁾. Although Charlotte Mason appeared to be a lady, it seems likely as has been shown, that she was not reared in the same upper class traditions of upbringing. Her lectures, developed from the standpoint of an observer contained some novel juxtapositions.

3.4.iv The Publication of "The Home Education" Lectures
(1886)

Edward Wynne suggested the publication of the lectures:

".....I am satisfied that the publication of these lectures would be an immense boon to the cause of Christian education.....I feel sure the lectures, when published will attract general attention and be much valued by thoughtful people....."(101)

Charlotte Mason lost no time in despatching her lectures to the publishers, Kegan Paul, Trench & Co of Paternoster Square, London. She did not pause to adapt the lectures into book form⁽¹⁰²⁾. It is not known who provided the introduction. It seems possible, in view of the comments on the proof sheet, that Charlotte Mason may not have had to contribute to the publication costs in this instance.

The proofs were corrected by the Rev. Charles Kegan Paul (1828-1902) himself. As an experienced author who had written a life of William Godwin (1876) and edited the letters of Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1798) he may, as his notes suggest, have been sympathetic to an emergent woman writer⁽¹⁰³⁾. Apart from a few trenchant remarks on Charlotte Mason's religious views, recommendations for further reading and a childish inclination to burst into "baby talk", Mr. Kegan Paul was impressed with her book:

".....this is an excellent and very sensible one in which almost the only fault is this baby talk....." (104)

This book was duly brought out towards the end of 1886,

less than a year since the course was completed.

"Home Education" was quite widely reviewed. This may have been largely due to the fact that Review copies were sent to both national and provincial newspapers, although not, it would seem to the "Bradford Observer". The reviews preserved in the P.N.E.U. collection were all favourable and it is not known if there were others, which were not kept because they were less complimentary. Some reviewers were aware of the sources from which she had drawn her ideas:

"Of the making of books about education there has been.....no end.....The author.....has availed herself of the rich harvest of thought and experience of the past but has, by the way, gleaned new grain and gathered fresh flowers for her readersA commendable feature.....is her employment of physiological and psychological teaching - the latter perhaps a little too much from one school of writers - to enforce the care of the body as well as the culture of the mind. On some of the many detailsopinions will inevitably differ - and rightly so.....We cannot doubt, however, that the volume..... will prove helpful and suggestive to many parents and instructors of youth". (105)

Although the popularity of "Home Education" may have been due to the fact that few books of advice to mothers were published between 1870 and 1890, Charlotte Mason's lectures were praised because she addressed two contemporary anxieties: the religion and science controversy and the problem of the education and occupation of gently nurtured girls. Her training at the "Ho and Co" had equipped her to reconcile modern educational theories with religious belief. The Glasgow Herald noted: "Miss Mason says a code of education has been expressly laid down by Christ in the

Gospels....."(106). The reviewer from the Liverpool Mercury remarked that, "Miss Mason tells us that her attempt is to suggest a method of education resting upon a basis of natural law.....we have some admirable observations on the conditions of healthy brain activity, out of door life for the children, the laying down of lines of habit such as "Shut the door after you', obedience, truthfulness, sweetness of temper.....together with kindergarten games and occupations with a chapter which binds the whole together in a manner every way worthy of the subject and entitled, 'The Divine Life of the Child' (107). "Home Education" managed to achieve the reconciliation of modern scientific educational theories by translating them into theological terminology. It was also argued that despite post-Darwinian fears about the dominance of hereditary factors it was still possible for parents to influence the course of their children's education|development (108).

Charlotte Mason had not only managed to render contemporary scientific theory acceptable to religious traditionalists but had also upheld the Victorian ideal of the Domestic order while at the same time recommending better education and occupation for the idle "Girls of the Period" (109). Her eighth lecture, "Young Maidenhood; the Formation of Character and Opinions" attracted the most positive comments from several reviewers. The anti-feminist Saturday Review thoroughly approved of her common-sense approach to the practical issues of home life and

and child upbringing⁽¹¹⁰⁾. Charlotte Mason was familiar with the problems of growing girls. Apart from her own experience, one of her Worthing landladies, Mrs. Goble, had four daughters. There were also adolescent girls at Mrs. Groveham's house. Finally, her stint at Bishop Otter College had demonstrated the need for gentlewomen to acquire a suitable training. These perceptions gave her remarks on girls' education a contemporary relevance, commended by the Liverpool Mercury:

".....it is not enough that they learn a little cooking, a little dressmaking, a little clear starching. Every one of them should have a thoroughly recognised training for some art or profession, whereby she may earn her living doing work useful to the world and interesting and delightful to herself....."(111)

In this way the experience of "reduced" lower middle class women was adapted for a novel application to the upbringing of "young maidenhood" among the upper classes.

Charlotte Mason did not rest on her laurels. She or her friends undertook a further public relations campaign. She sent the book to those eminent people who might be expected to show interest. In 1884, Lord Aberdeen (1847-1934) an evangelical philanthropist had been one of those involved with Lord Shaftesbury in launching the N.S.P.C.C., from the Mansion House. "Home Education" was accordingly despatched to his even more energetically reformist wife, Ishbel (1857-1939) who had founded the Haddo House Association to promote education of the isolated young working women on the Aberdeens' Scottish estate.

She thanked Charlotte Mason for the book and ventured to ask her to recommend a governess "imbued with the ideas expressed in this book.....one who would wish to work with the mother"(112). She also commented, independently:

"I am v. pleased with a new book, "Home Education" by Charlotte Mason; really very sensible, rather on the lines of Herbert Spencer"(113)

The public relations campaign had reaped a rich harvest. Not only had Charlotte Mason received a letter from the wife of an Earl, a friend of Mr. Gladstone, whose antecedents stretched back to the seventeenth century, but this great lady had actually condescended to ask her advice about the choice of a governess. It is not known how Charlotte Mason responded at the time but Lady Aberdeen's request was later claimed to be the rationale for the founding of the House of Education for the training of governesses. There was no question about it; Charlotte Mason had arrived. Not only had she achieved intellectual success, ironically, by writing on a subject in which she had little or no direct experience, but her social aspirations were being fulfilled simultaneously. "Home Education" brought her two ambitions together and also offered a potential market among the prosperous upper classes.

3.5. Conclusion:

In the absence of firm evidence, it is only possible to speculate about the reasons why Charlotte Mason was able

to fulfil both her intellectual ambitions and social aspirations, while she was living with the Groveham family in Manningham, Bradford. Her relationship with Lizzie Groveham may have provided the trigger to action. Lizzie was the only longstanding friend to have been an exact contemporary. She had succeeded where Lottie had failed, during the early stages of their career. She had finished the training, passed the examinations, and founded her own girls' school which she managed for at least thirty years. Furthermore, she had married and given birth to daughters. Lottie's prevarication about what appears to have been a mythical Worthing Middle school is the only piece of evidence indicative of a competitive element in the friendship. However, it is significant that Lottie's Bradford successes were achieved in areas where Lizzie seems to have had no experience: in lecturing, in writing and in associating with the upper and educated classes. Was Lottie "ill" in Bradford? It is not known. Lottie's prolific output suggests that she had little time to succumb, unless illness was used to excuse her from teaching duties. One suspects that Lizzie's "up and go" was as bracing as the moorland air.

"Home Education" (1886) was some ten or eleven years in the making, spanning the experiences of the years at Bishop Otter through to Bradford. Charlotte Mason was about forty-five when its publication transformed her life from that of a private individual to public personality. As the discussion in Chapter 5, will

suggest, "Home Education" was not a classic nor an original work, comparable to John Locke's "Some Thoughts Concerning Education" (1693). There is no record that "Baby Book" researchers such as Hans Heinrich Stern or Christina Hardyment exclaimed, "Ah..!" when they opened and read the book for the first time.

Nonetheless, for Charlotte Mason, the publication of "Home Education" was a significant event both in personal terms and because of the P.N.E.U. movement which subsequently developed. For her, the book represented a reconciliation between her intellectual and social ambitions. Her supposedly "masculine" desire for public intellectual success had been achieved by writing about the acceptably "feminine" topic of motherhood and child upbringing, in terms which subscribed to the Victorian perception of complementary roles for each sex. Furthermore, the book had provided access to a relationship with members of the educated classes and the aristocracy. The new problem which Charlotte Mason faced, to be explored in the next chapter, was how to preserve personal equilibrium in the face of public demands. After some years of public activity with the P.N.E.U. to be discussed in Part II, she elected to withdraw into a private, well-ordered existence, maintaining her public life through discipleship and correspondence.

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10. G. P. McGregor, 1981 pp. 94-97.
11. Ibid pp. 93, 96.
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16. C. Mason "The Blotter Letters" n.d. (own hand).
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18. Cholmondeley 1960 p.12.
19. E. Kitching in "In Memoriam" 1923 p.120.

20. C. Mason Blotter Letter No.3.

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22. C. Mason Blotter Letter No.3.

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104. The Rev. Charles Kegan Paul's notes Op.Cit.
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Chapter 4:

Coming to Rest as the Gracious Lady of Scale How;
the Nurture of Disciples and the Pursuit of Liberal
Culture (1886-1923)

4.1 Introductory:

"If you can say 'with the mind I serve' - then you are safe." (1)

This discussion spans the period from the publication of "Home Education" (1886), which was followed by the founding of the Bradford Parents' Educational Union (1887), to Charlotte Mason's death at Ambleside in 1923, when she was 81 or 82. In this chapter, the development of Charlotte Mason's life will be treated separately from the P.N.E.U., insofar as this is possible. The point of the analysis is to explore further the obstacles to the universal development of education for parenthood by the P.N.E.U., arising from Charlotte Mason's life experiences and personality. It has been argued that she was motivated by both social and intellectual aspirations which, at this stage in her life will be shown in Chapter 9, to have limited her concern for the educational work of the P.N.E.U. branches, discussed in greater detail in Part II. This chapter is about her concern for herself and her own position.

One interpretation of the motivating force behind Charlotte Mason's various aspirations is suggested by her passionate search for a unified educational philosophy: "But we have no unifying principle, no definite aim; in fact no philosophy of education" (2). It has been argued that her remarkable drive was generated by the need to reconcile the conflicting elements in her

psycho-social make-up. Was her ultimate success to be based on "masculine" intellectual achievement, through the discovery of a definitive educational philosophy? Or was it to come through her "feminine" social aspirations and desire to become in some way, the mother of a family? There were strategies by which an unprotected Victorian spinster could receive public recognition and acclaim but it was socially unacceptable if she appeared to lose her femininity in the process. One of the reviewers of "Home Education" (1886) had remarked, "she just lectures overmuch, which is not only pardonable, but what must be expected of a female professional oracle..." (3) The new breed of professional woman expert walked a perilous tightrope between the manifestations of modern professional expertise and acceptable feminine behaviour in traditional patriarchal upper class society.

Charlotte Mason, arguably, sought a unifying principle in her personal life by attempting to reconcile the best of both the masculine and feminine influences upon her development. She wanted both to achieve and to be looked after. She had no wish to upset the patriarchal order but desired public recognition of her educational contribution, perhaps in fulfilment of the Pestalozzian injunction to transform the world by education, which she had learnt from Mr Dunning when she was a young student at the "Ho and Co".

At the same time, her early deprivations led her in a different direction, by impelling her to seek the tender care and social respect due to a delicate Victorian lady of culture, which she had fleetingly experienced in Miss Brandreth's care. As will be shown in Parts II and III, the founding of the P.N.E.U. added to her difficulties in both social and psychological terms. She needed to find a solution to solve all her conflicting problems simultaneously. This chapter is about the various strategies which she adopted to achieve personal and social equilibrium without losing hold of her central ambitions. Her strategies, which involved a considerable amount of energy and ingenuity, were modelled on those adopted by at least two eminent Victorian spinsters. Like Dorothea Beale of Cheltenham Ladies' College, Charlotte Mason elected to become the gentle angel-matriarch of an all-female "total educational institution".⁽⁴⁾ Like Florence Nightingale, she used the seclusion secured by discipleship and illness to engage in writing and "behind the scenes" control over the development of her organisation. In Part III, the links between Miss Mason's personal strategies and their effect on the P.N.E.U. will be analysed further.

First, the way in which Miss Mason achieved the move from Bradford to Ambleside will be described. There, the founding of the Parents' Review School and

the House of Education, to be discussed more fully in Chapter 8, provided her with the means to rent and subsequently to purchase Scale How, the elegant hillside mansion which had belonged to Wordsworth's niece. Secondly, the cultivation of disciples, epitomised by key relationships with Elsie Kitching at Ambleside, and Henrietta Franklin in London, will be shown to have provided personal support for Miss Mason as well as helping to extend her control over the P.N.E.U., both at home and abroad through a network of alliances. Thirdly, in the light of the available medical evidence, the various functions of Miss Mason's spells of illness will be discussed in terms of her emotional needs and personal relationships. Finally, it will be shown that her well-ordered life style at Scale How provided a much needed framework of secure seclusion. It enabled her to die, as she had lived for the last thirty years of her life, as a great lady of culture, with a national educational reputation.

4.2.i The Retreat to Ambleside (1890-91)

The meteoric rise of the small Bradford P.E.U. into a national educational society, by the end of the 1880's seems to have been matched by Charlotte Mason's growing disenchantment with the northern industrial town which had brought her fame. First, the departure of some of her especial friends from Manningham must have been a significant factor. The Rev. Edward and

and Mrs. Wynne, who had not only initiated the "Home Education" lectures, but also joined the P.E.U., left for a parish in Forest Gate, London in 1888. Secondly, the warm-hearted Lienie Steinthal, who was the co-founder of the P.E.U. with Charlotte Mason, in 1887, moved with her family, seven miles out to Wharfemead, Ilkley, in April, 1889.⁽⁵⁾ The prospect of organising a third and fourth winter programme for the Bradford P.E.U., without the encouraging support of these friends, may have seemed too onerous for an aspiring educational reformer, approaching her half-century.

Charlotte Mason also needed money. The hasty launching of the P.E.U. as a national society had involved expenditure on travel, postage and printing. Furthermore, the decision to bring out the Parents' Review, early in 1890, as the Society's monthly organ without any firm financial backing or capital, was to lead to additional heavy expense. It is not known how Lizzie Groveham viewed these various ventures nor if she was in any way involved with the P.E.U. There is no record of her membership of the national society nor of her ever having visited Ambleside, only sixty five miles to the north. If she had already been supporting Charlotte Mason, to some degree, during the eleven years of the latter's stay, she may have been reluctant to extend her goodwill any further. It is also likely, that Charlotte Mason's own vision had enlarged with the founding of the P.N.E.U. Having

perceived that she could hold her own with the glamorous and aristocratic new acquaintance which the P.N.E.U. had brought her in London and Cambridge, she may have begun to visualise herself in a more spacious setting than no. 1; *Apsley Crescent* where the Groveham household had recently moved. In that sense, Mrs. Groveham may have outlived her usefulness.

However, in formulating plans for a new way of life, Charlotte Mason showed that she was as dependent upon her friends as before. An opportunity had occurred, perhaps through Miss Clough herself, to renew acquaintance with Selina Fleming, who had trained at the "Ho and Co" before taking over Miss Clough's "middle school", at Ambleside in 1862.⁽⁶⁾ Miss Mason may have been invited to stay in July 1887. She also secured a further invitation to visit the Belle Vue School, during the winter of 1889.⁽⁷⁾ It would seem, judging from the following reminiscence, which dates from one of these occasions that Miss Mason must have made an excellent impression. She was asked to address the school leavers:

"...A very ordinary looking little lady sitting in the midst of us, motioning us to draw up closer round her - a voice so quiet that one must concentrate if one wanted to listen, a smile that took us all with one sweep into a very confidential partnership ... touching lightly many quite ordinary thoughts and facts, made them glow with colour and mysterious light, giving a hint of hidden treasure within... Speaking to us who were leaving, there was no oration on the subject

...no warnings against this or that. Rather with that 'confidential' smile, that hidden wave of her wand, she shewed us what wonderful, even charming creatures we were, with just one boundless outlook, one limitless possibility and opportunity ... We were women - each would become a mother or aunt to children somewhere...

...But one fact remains, very strongly with me that she touched upon the every day familiar details of the daily life of Home and left them with a light upon them" (8)

Home, sweet, home, the pivot upon which the Victorian domestic ideology rested, was the one thing which Charlotte Mason had never possessed for her very own. At least since her adolescent years, and possibly from babyhood, she had always lived in institutions or as a guest or lodger in other people's houses. She had never been named "head of household" like old Mrs. Redford, Mrs Goble or Lizzie Groveham. It was, therefore, not surprising that her longing for a home of her own should have made her speech glow with feeling. Those quite ordinary school girls took for granted what she had never had. (9)

However, once the Flemings' support had been fully enlisted, as a result of several visits, Charlotte Mason had won for herself a foothold in the beautiful surroundings of the Lakes, portrayed in many a poem and painting. Ambleside was a promising setting for the development of cultural and intellectual sensibilities. Merely to live in the place was acknowledged to be a "liberal education", the recognised meeting point between

Art and Nature. The famous Arnold family had lived nearby at Fox How. Matthew Arnold (1828-1888), poet and H.M.I., was one of Charlotte Mason's heroes. John Ruskin (1819-1900) had a house at Brantwood, Coniston. Charlotte Mason was later to become friends with Mrs. Firth and Julia, who actually knew the great writer. Miss Clough's poet brother, Arthur Hugh (1819-1962) who had worked for Florence Nightingale, was known to have visited the Arnold family. The indomitable Harriet Martineau (1802-1876) had lived in Ambleside and had written many distinguished books. Her treatise, "Household Education" (1849) possibly an influence on "Home Education", (1886) which advocated habit training as a method of upbringing, was written too late to redeem another former resident, the unfortunate Hartley Coleridge (1796-1849) whose intemperance, Dr Carpenter had attributed, not to poor upbringing, but to the effects of bad hereditary influences.⁽¹⁰⁾ Canon H. D. Rawnsley (1851-1887) also a writer and poet lived nearby at Allen Bank, Grasmere. He and his brother Willingham, later a great supporter of the P.N.E.U. liberal education movement, were to become close acquaintances of Miss Mason.⁽¹¹⁾ Essex Cholmondeley marked the significance of the move to Ambleside by stating:

"In Ambleside and elsewhere she was now known as 'Miss Mason' just as her contemporaries were 'Miss Nightingale' or 'Miss Beale' to those who were not their intimate friends or relations..."⁽¹²⁾

It was fortunate that Charlotte Mason had friends in Ambleside. As a holiday centre, it offered the possibility of attracting visitors to a holiday course or summer school.⁽¹³⁾ She may have got the idea when staying at "Highfield", near Ilkley, "a house which was a favourite resort for intellectual and poetic natures in holiday time..."⁽¹⁴⁾ The story of the unsuccessful attempt to start an Ambleside P.N.E.U. Summer School in 1891, the profitable initiation of the Parents' Review School at the same time, the founding of the House of Education in January 1892 and the Mothers' Education Course in the autumn of that year will be described more fully in Chapter 8. What is of interest in this context, is the stolid determination and relentless hard work which Charlotte Mason and her supporters put into these activities until some assurance of success was received. Miss Mason appears to have doggedly searched for the support she needed until she found the right response. For example, a visit to the Wynnes, in London, in January 1889, brought a meeting with Mrs Parker and her daughter Violet. If the Parkers had not somehow been prevailed upon to move to Ambleside in January 1892, the House of Education might never have been started. Mrs Parker took, rented, managed and furnished "Fairfield" and subsequently "Springfield" the first proper residence of the House of Education. It is not known if the Parkers expected any personal acknowledgement for the financial and moral support

they gave to the new venture. Violet, one of the first intake of four students, was the only one to be awarded a "first class".⁽¹⁵⁾ Like her namesake, Charlotte Mason, who founded a "House of Rest" (1866) in remote Shropshire, for tired "Biblewomen" from the East End of London, the heroine of this story was obliged to draw upon all her resources of faith that support would be forthcoming to float her new enterprises.⁽¹⁶⁾ At this stage in her life, Miss Mason seems to have been able to command the necessary single-minded ruthless determination to succeed.

4.2.ii The Acquisition of Scale How: (December 1894)

"Wordsworth's niece, Dorothy... 'the beautiful Mrs. Harrison' as she was called, came to live at Scale How and till the year 1890 she continued to be the gracious presence of her delightful home... Often enough as I walked up the drive, to chat with her... I could almost hear the sound of Wordsworth's feet coming after, to inquire, as he one time did, day by day, after the health of his dear niece, Dorothy; and as Mrs. Harrison talked of the old days, I heard Professor Wilson's hearty laugh, Faber's beautiful voice, and Hartley Coleridge's torrent of excited eloquence. But when I turned and left Scale How, the face that haunted me was the face of a grey-eyed lady, with fresh and beautiful complexion, and snow-white hair sitting in her easy chair, clad in a black silk gown, with a red shawl across her shoulders, so calm and so cheerful, that one felt it was a blessed thing to be old..."⁽¹⁷⁾

When one fingers the scarlet fringed shawl and the black silk and velvet dresses, in the collection at the Charlotte Mason College, which are believed to have been worn by Miss Mason, it seems reasonable

to infer that Mrs. Harrison's gracious lifestyle provided both the model for the last thirty years of Charlotte Mason's home life as well as the motivation behind her determination to become mistress of that particular, elegant hillside mansion.

There were sound practical reasons for the House of Education to move to more spacious accommodation on a single site. Since 1892, the number of students had increased. Both the staff and students had been lodging inconveniently in different Ambleside houses, meeting for classes at lecture rooms in the village. Further expansion would have been impossible under the existing circumstances. However, Scale How, was an expensive property. As when the Parents' Review was launched, Miss Mason ignored the gloomy prognostications of those who tried to dissuade her. She sought support from many quarters from her array of titled patronesses to Dr Schofield, (1846-1929) the Chairman of the central P.N.E.U. executive committee.⁽¹⁸⁾ Dr Helen Webb, a friend of the distinguished Dr. Mary Scharlieb (1845-1930) who was on the P.N.E.U. Council, was invited to Ambleside during the Summer of 1894. She was taken to view Scale How and recorded that she and Miss Mason said to each other, "Just think, Wordsworth stood here and looked at all that!" ⁽¹⁹⁾

Somehow, Miss Mason raised sufficient funds to purchase the lease. She moved her House of Education

into the elegant new premises in December, 1894. Doubtless, the profits from the popular P.R.S. were of assistance. Miss Mason managed the accounts personally and it seems clear that this profitable venture provided the necessary backing for both her living expenses as well as other less remunerative aspects of Ambleside work. In 1923, the P.R.S. fees, alone were worth £2,590 2s.7d.⁽²⁰⁾ The overheads had always been minimal. It was not until 1911 that Miss Mason was able to become the legal owner and head of the household at Scale How. The property was owned by a local architect, called Mr Mason who put obstacles in the way of purchase because he knew how much Miss Mason longed to own the property. In the end, she was obliged to agree to continue to pay the rent of £209 per annum under the terms of the existing lease as well as paying over a £1,000 more for the property than its capital valuation at £5,000. Miss Mason ignored professional advice to wait until a better deal could be agreed. The sale was completed on 12th May 1911.⁽²¹⁾

There are several reasons for assuming that the legal ownership of Scale How was extremely important to Charlotte Mason. It afforded her symbolic status as head of the family of "bairns", her name for the students, which, one suspects, met a deeper need than just being the Principal of an educational institution, important though that position was. Scale How was also

to provide her with personal security for life. In 1906, Mrs. Franklin, by then the sole Hon. Organising Secretary of the P.N.E.U., initiated negotiations with Robert Morant (1863-1920) to persuade the Board of Education to "recognise" the House of Education. She was informed that the Board could not grant recognition to a private profit-making institution. The suggested solution was to form a non profit-making Trust.⁽²²⁾ Miss Mason, with some subtlety, chose to relinquish the chance of recognition by the Board, in favour of retaining her personal control over the Institution. The same motivation influenced her second refusal in 1918, to form a joint Trust, as part of the plans to Incorporate the P.N.E.U. in 1921. She did not wish control of the House of Education to pass into the hands of the P.N.E.U. during her lifetime and that of her disciples. She chose the more expensive option of bequeathing the House of Education which by then included Scale How and other properties such as "Fairfield" school, to an Independent Trust, which operated separately from the P.N.E.U., until the amalgamation of 1961.

The perilous traps set by the "recognition" issue doubtless impressed Miss Mason with the urgency of the need to purchase. Her ready acceptance of the somewhat unfair terms of the deal set by Mr. Mason, after only a few months of negotiation, suggests a firm intention to secure legal ownership of the property at a high cost

and without delay, to avoid further threats to her position. It was a shrewd move. She was, presumably, less concerned about outright ownership. Although the value of the Scale How property had fallen to £4,000 by 1923, there was still a sum of £2,200 outstanding on the mortgage when she died. (23)

"Miss Mason disliked any form of red tape ... and she dreaded organisation...She had a wonderful power of estimating the value of anything... She bore the financial responsibility entirely alone..." (24)

Miss Mason has not received the recognition she deserves, for her audacity and courage as a business woman in later life. If she enjoyed a measure of prosperity denied to her "bairns", no one seems to have overstepped the boundaries of good taste by mentioning it. It was overtly agreed that she had managed on a shoestring. At first, the formula of "plain living and high thinking", popular among the impoverished members of the cultured classes, was doubtless necessary to keep the enterprise afloat. If the bairns complained of the oil lamps or cold bedrooms, their trials could be justified as a disciplinary preparation for any future discomforts they might have to face as governesses. The plain furnishings were also justified on aesthetic grounds: (25)

"The whole atmosphere of the house was so extraordinarily good - nothing ignoble seemed natural within its doors, and moreover, the actual surroundings, the books, the pictures, (reproductions of old masters) the simple furniture and the WILD flowers for decoration

everywhere were a revelation in those days when the world either lived in a crowd of ancestral treasures or in the unutterable hideousness of the Victorian Age when prosperity had to be apparent..."(26)

Hidden behind an aura of economy, Miss Mason's personal expenses must have been quite high. Guests were often entertained. She retained a Victoria carriage with coachman and horse. There was a "good butler", and a personal maid, apart from the other servants. Two men were required to carry her up and downstairs each day.⁽²⁷⁾ She also gave away large numbers of books as gifts. Her annual trip to Bad Nauheim was allegedly paid for by the letting of Scale How each Summer. If so, this would have provided a further incentive to retain control over the property.⁽²⁸⁾ Miss A M Harris, a local neighbour, noted her generosity and "her readiness to take the heavier share of financial transactions with which she was concerned with any other." ⁽²⁹⁾ She could not have done that if she had been as poor as the P.N.E.U. tradition suggests.⁽³⁰⁾ In fact, when she died, she left an estate worth just over £10,000.⁽³¹⁾ "Serving with the mind" at Ambleside, enabled Charlotte Mason to combine, with some subtlety, the atmosphere of "plain living and high thinking" with the generous hospitality of a gracious hostess of wealth and style, after the manner of a Mrs. Harrison.

4.3.i The Nurture of Disciples at Scale How: The
Indispensable Elsie Kitching (1870-1955)

Winifred Kitching was one of the second year's intake of 13 students at the House of Education (1892-93). Miss Mason was invited to stay with the Kitching family during the summer of 1893. At the end of the week's stay, she invited Elsie, Winnie's younger sister, then aged 24, to return forthwith to Ambleside to live and work with her. Elsie apparently accepted the invitation with alacrity and remained at Ambleside for the rest of her life. She worked closely with Miss Mason, who was thirty years her senior, for almost thirty years.⁽³²⁾ At the foot of Miss Mason's ornate tomb in the Ambleside churchyard, there is a flat stone slab with a "K" at each corner. Thus in death, this unequal relationship between mistress and subservient companion has been permanently symbolised, for at least as long as the churchyard exists.

What did Elsie Kitching do for Charlotte Mason? It has already been suggested that Miss Mason seems to have been reluctant to do anything or go anywhere alone. Miss Kitching, whom Miss Mason referred to as "Kit Kit", provided total companionship. Miss Mason had probably been on the look out for a suitable companion since 1892 because the pressures of work in Ambleside were increasing. As Winnie was going to a post in Ireland, Elsie may have seemed the obvious choice. It would have

been out of character for Miss Mason to have selected a confident or successful woman who might have posed a threat to her position. Although Elsie had been teaching in a High School, while studying for a University of London degree, she was said to have been "unwell" or "nervous" and a worry to her mother. By the time they met, Miss Mason's reputation was sufficiently well established for the invitation to appear very flattering. As a rather plain, shy young woman she was probably amazed at being singled out and, no doubt, readily fell under the spell of Miss Mason's magnetic charm.⁽³³⁾ The success of this unequal, but key partnership seems to have rested both on the fact that "Elsie Kitching as a child and all through her life preferred to keep in the background" and also on "that astonishing devotion to labour in the service of others which was just the expression of herself."⁽³⁴⁾

As Miss Mason and Kit Kit were always together, there is no existing correspondence by which to assess their relationship. It seems to have been a "symbiotic" merge. Miss Mason took the role of imperious matriarch; Miss Kitching became a dutiful and subservient daughter, whose wishes, like those of Miss Read towards her father, were entirely blended with those of the older woman. Although it has been shown that Charlotte Mason held tenaciously on to some relationships, her capacity for disinterested loving remains unproven. One of Kit

Kit's functions may have been to remedy this lack in Miss Mason's make-up by constantly reflecting back her own devotion towards her seemingly more cold-hearted mistress. Conversations with those who knew Kit Kit have amply substantiated Miss Plumptre's opinion that "Everyone loved Miss Kitching because she was a friend to all."⁽³⁵⁾ Her lifelong devotion to the P.N.E.U., particularly in relation to the Parents' Union School (formerly the P.R.S.) of which she was appointed Director at Miss Mason's death, "was rooted in a disciple's love and admiration for the founder, Charlotte Mason."⁽³⁶⁾ She displayed no inclination to escape but lived to make her personal contribution to the Charlotte Mason myth. What did Miss Kitching do with her negative feelings? Although there is no evidence to suggest that she ever expressed them, therein may lie the explanation for her inability to complete Charlotte Mason's biography after thirty years. The price of both publicly and privately denying the negative elements of this demanding relationship may have been the sapping of all independent creative activity.⁽³⁷⁾

A former student, Violet Curry remembered:

"Miss Williams was there of course, guiding the stream of College life, but Miss Kitching was in and out to Charlotte Mason all day long, and writing, writing herself, taking time off to take students for 'Bird Walks', but seeking little other relaxation..."⁽³⁸⁾

Not only was she observed to have an exclusive relationship with the elusive Principal but her constant service was taken for granted:

"She was a young woman then, quick as a flash of lightning in all she did, comprehending in her scope the most varied assortment of occupations from arranging the flowers to setting the examination questions and reviewing books. She kept all the College and Practising school records and accounts, and attended to all details of Miss Mason's personal comfort and well being..." (39)

Elsie Kitching helped to maintain the aura of mystique which surrounded Miss Mason:

"Her devotion, her self-effacing vigilance guarded Miss Mason literally day and night, year in, year out, even as through these later years she has lived with the one purpose of guarding and promoting Miss Mason's work...." (40)

Miss Mason's success lay largely in her ability to persuade others to work on her behalf. Within the supportive community at Scale How which was sustained by her closest disciples, Miss Mason brought her skill in delegation to a fine art. She was able to enjoy an outward show of reverence for her position and also indulge a helpless dependence upon the care of others. She enjoyed seclusion without having to be alone. It is significant that her periods of acute anxiety seem to have occurred during the night hours.⁽⁴¹⁾ She selected the work she undertook without having to engage in any of the more troublesome or worrying routines of lecturing or administration. She was

spared the effort of conversation, reading and writing her own manuscripts, because Kit Kit was prepared to do all her reading and writing for her. When she travelled, she was assured of constant devoted attention. When she spoke, Kit Kit would be there to transcribe her every word.⁽⁴²⁾ By shouldering all her burdens, Kit Kit effectively eliminated most of the stimulus for taking action and facing new challenges. In earlier years, this had been provided by the urge to survive and the driving ambition which had propelled her into starting the P.N.E.U. in the first place.⁽⁴³⁾ Miss Mason's problem was that although total care, by her devoted "bairns", conserved her matriarchal status and made her as comfortable as possible, it did not satisfy her craving for intellectual achievement and wider recognition.

4.3.ii The Functions of Malady:

To anyone contemplating the stiff ascent to Scale How, it seems extraordinary that a person apparently suffering from chronic heart trouble should consider taking up residence there. However, as has been shown, although belief in Miss Mason's "frailty" and "heart trouble" was well established before the House of Education was located on a steep hillside, it does not appear to have occurred to anyone to cast doubt on the matter.⁽⁴⁴⁾ "Lack of stable health frequently interrupted the course of daily life."⁽⁴⁵⁾ In this section, the questionable nature of Miss Mason's illness

will be discussed in relation to the functions served by her maladies in later life.

Some of Miss Mason's prescriptions, dating from about 1900, have been preserved. There are remarkably few for a chronic invalid. Courtenay Walton, who has analysed these prescriptions, found "nothing here to remedy any heart condition."⁽⁴⁶⁾ Miss Mason seems to have suffered from indigestion and wind as well as occasional soreness of mouth or eyes. She was reputed to have abnormal eating patterns: for example, she would eat very little for a long period, and follow this up by a substantial intake of food.⁽⁴⁷⁾ In his analysis of the causes of death, Courtenay Walton remarked that it was strange that "cerebral thrombosis", which he would have assumed to have been the precipitating cause of death, was listed after "morbus cordis" (diseased heart). This suggests, in his view, that belief in Miss Mason's "heart trouble" may have overridden medical precision.⁽⁴⁸⁾ Miss Mason's medical advice was carefully selected.⁽⁴⁹⁾ As already noted, Victorian doctors believed that many symptoms now discounted, such as an irregular pulse, were indicative of heart disease. Irregular heart beats tend to be exacerbated by the prolonged rest which was the usually recommended treatment. Therefore, because Miss Mason took to her sofa and carrying chair from 1897, when she was only fifty-six, she would never have been free of such symptoms.

Furthermore, the chronic lack of exercise would, doubtless, have contributed to the sleepless nights. (50)

"Ah, Lord we are aweary!
And yet we think on Thee
On our beds remember Thee;
But comfort fails to come
Rest keeps not in our name." (51)

Miss Mason's state of health had some unusual features. Physical danger does not appear to have troubled her. Wet or icy roads did not necessarily deter her from being driven down the fairly steep decline from Scale How. She suffered no physical shock when the horse fell down between the shafts although she must have been severely jolted. Finally, although she was not supposed to put her feet on the ground, she was known to walk when it suited her. (52)

It has already been suggested that public acceptance of her state of chronic ill-health served a number of useful purposes for Miss Mason. Robert Drake has pointed out that Mrs. Franklin's description of her condition was phrased with some delicacy:

"...rather frail, obliged eventually to plan her life as carefully as an invalid..." (53)

At Scale How, invalidism gave Miss Mason's life order and predictability and limited her activity. It assured her of constant care and attention, like a small baby in arms. It enabled her to delegate unwelcome duties to others. Like Herbert Spencer, who adopted the more

straightforward device of putting on velvet ear stoppers when bored with talk, Miss Mason put it about that conversation and writing letters tired her.⁽⁵⁴⁾ She also claimed that talking to more than one person at a time, or even having more than one visitor staying in the house was too much for her! "You know how ever such a trifle throws me over the plank."⁽⁵⁵⁾ By these means, she used the opportunity to exert her personal magnetism over each disciple individually, without fear of distraction. Visits by outsiders to Scale How could be carefully planned, as those living in London were rarely able to "drop in." No exceptions were made, even for those who believed themselves closest to her, which suggests a strong desire to keep the upper hand. Netta Franklin was forbidden to bring Mrs Clement Parsons with her on one visit:

"But seriously, Dearest, I must have you all to myself..."⁽⁵⁶⁾

Secondly, invalidism enabled Miss Mason to live like a great lady, with attendants at every hand like the demanding Lady Ashburton of Dr. Schofield's reminiscences.⁽⁵⁷⁾ It justified the expense of comfortable, first class foreign travel. From 1897 - 1914 she settled into an annual routine of travelling with Kit Kit to take the bath treatment for heart trouble at the fashionable German Health Spa, Bad Nauheim.⁽⁵⁸⁾ Finally, ill-health provided the excuse for withdrawal from P.N.E.U.

public engagements from 1897.⁽⁵⁹⁾ She acquired an aura of mystery, because few people saw her outside the beautiful environs of Ambleside. That her withdrawal from public life was related to a desire to avoid criticism and confrontation is suggested by evidence that she felt able to move freely among people in public at times when she believed her fame and reputation to be quite secure. For example, after the long-awaited publication of her 1904 "Synopsis" which had generally been well received, Miss Mason:

"... did more at our garden party than I have been up to for years - and without more fatigue than I have now got over..." (60)

Secondly, the completion of what she believed to be her magnum opus, "An Essay Towards a Philosophy of Education" (1925) and the warm reception accorded to the P.N.E.U. "Liberal Education for All" movement in Gloucestershire State elementary schools, actually spurred her on to visit the schools and talk to the teachers, although she had done no propaganda work for twenty-five years, in spite of a "frail body - which, indeed had grown a little stronger of late." (61)

It has been argued that the medical evidence for Miss Mason's physical disease is slender. This is not to deny that she may have experienced uncomfortable symptoms about which she felt anxiety. However the additional evidence suggests that her illnesses served certain social and emotional purposes and were not simply caused

by debilitating physical states. If Miss Mason had really been as helpless an invalid as the P.N.E.U. tradition has claimed, it is hard to see how she could have maintained such a powerful influence over the total organisation. In the next section, the significant friendship which she formed with Netta Franklin will illustrate a crucial way in which she maintained control over the P.N.E.U., from Ambleside.

4.3.iii The Hon. Mrs. Henrietta Franklin (1866-1964)

Mrs Franklin first met Miss Mason at Ambleside during the late Spring of 1894:

"We stayed at Lowood Hotel, and I made my pilgrimage one afternoon to visit Miss Mason. Years afterwards she used to say, 'I looked out of the window and I saw a young person in a holland frock approaching the hall door.' Only that it sounds silly, I would say that we fell in love with each other at first sight. Miss Mason did say quite often that with my arrival she had found her long-awaited and predestined 'Chela'. If that was true on her side, it was still truer on mine. I had found the 'guru' or sage and teacher, of whom I stood so much in need. I can only give you a very faint idea of the inspiration of her personality. She was quite small, rather frail ... But she burned like a clear flame..." (62)

As a result of this momentous meeting, Mrs Franklin was eventually to become the matriarch of the P.N.E.U. In 1904, she was elected the sole Honorary Organising Secretary holding that office until 1954, when she was eighty-eight years old. She remained active on the P.N.E.U. Council until her death in 1964, not long before her ninety-eighth birthday. In this section, some

attempt will be made to explain how it was that the formidable Mrs Franklin, a member of a leading Jewish banking family, came to be so captivated by Miss Mason and her educational approach that she made the P.N.E.U. the centre of her life's work and ambitions.⁽⁶³⁾

To those who knew Netta Franklin in middle and later life, she presented an impressive personality. Married to Ernest Franklin (1859-1950) for sixty-five years and the mother of six children, she remained the immensely wealthy mistress of large households throughout her life. She was always exquisitely attired. As the daughter and sister of Liberal politicians and first cousin to Herbert Samuel M.P. (1870-1963) Liberal Statesman and sponsor of the 1908 "Children's Charter", she entertained almost every leading figure of distinction from Robert Morant (1863-1920), the architect of the 1902 Education Act, to Earl Barnes, the well-known American Professor of Child Psychology.⁽⁶⁴⁾ Apart from the P.N.E.U. Mrs Franklin was the doyenne of 42 committees. These included the National Council of Women, of which she was President from 1926-28, the National Council for Equal Citizenship (1925) and the Council of the Synagogue. Through her sister Lily Montagu (1873-1963), she assisted at the birth of the Liberal Jewish movement.⁽⁶⁵⁾ In 1950 she was awarded the C.B.E. for services to Education.⁽⁶⁶⁾

However, the dominant personality and abundant self-confidence of her later life was built upon foundations laid by Charlotte Mason, who encouraged her to take on the P.N.E.U. As a young mother, she had been grappling with the residual problems of her childhood and adolescent years: notably an agonising shyness in company and a need to develop her intellectual powers. Mrs. Whitaker Thompson, who had married into a well-known Bradford family, had introduced Mrs. Franklin to the P.N.E.U.:

"When as a young mother of 26, I first read a copy of the Parents' Review and became a member, I at once felt that the P.N.E.U. was the one "cause" which appealed to me. Though still a young woman I had married so early that I already had quite big children, and I felt sorry that I had known of this rather late.

"I was determined to learn all I could and to help others to avoid those first mistakes which so often mean tears and sorrow..." (67)

Netta, the eldest of twelve living children, in an orthodox Jewish family was brought up in an atmosphere of strict moral training. She grew up acutely shy and self-conscious, perhaps because she had received little attention from her mother, apart from disciplinary supervision. The latter must surely have been a prey to ill-health caused by frequent pregnancies. Netta was only born after her mother had suffered a still-birth and four miscarriages. (68) Netta's father, Samuel Montagu, (1832-1911) came from Liverpool. From an early age he

displayed great flair and drive as a financier. With his cousin, connected by marriage, he founded the profitable banking firm, "Samuel Montagu & Co." It is still in existence today as part of the Midland Bank Group. He was also Liberal M.P. for Whitechapel (1885-1900). Created a baronet in 1894, he was raised to the peerage, as Baron Swaythling in 1907, on Campbell-Bannerman's recommendation. Although barred by sex from inheriting the title, Mrs. Franklin was entitled to add "The Honourable" to her name from that date. (69)

After a home education with difficult German governesses, Netta attended the Doreck College in Bayswater which probably nurtured an early perception of feminism. (70) There, the experience of what was delicately described at "Schwärmerei", resonant of the great romantic friendships of the eighteenth century, later more crudely known as the "School Girl Pash", was the accepted fashion, as in other girls' schools and colleges of the late Victorian age of "Hero-worship". (71) Such experiences of "schwärmerei", relatively socially acceptable because of a general denial of female sexuality was not merely "'a rehearsal in girlhood of the great drama of woman's life'". (72) It also served a social function, as in the boys' public schools, of establishing a sense of feminine solidarity and corporate identity. As at the House of Education, this phenomenon, while accentuating the separate identity of the new educated

woman from her male counterpart, also provided support and institutional encouragement for struggling "new women" to break out of the domestic sphere and compete, albeit with many compromises, in a male world. (73)

Netta's particular passion was for a High Anglican lady who taught her Latin. This teacher displayed reciprocal feelings which persisted after Netta's marriage. This may have been the real reason why Netta was taken out of school at fifteen, ostensibly on account of a curvature of the spine, for which she was constrained to lie for many hours on the dreaded Victorian invalid couch.

"In fact, my 'schwärmerie' or 'pash' was such that nowadays it would not be encouraged. I would stand long at the window, regardless of rules, in the hope of seeing her pass on the way to church..." (74)

Netta was permitted to continue her studies at home, with tutors, and passed both the Senior Cambridge and the College of Preceptors examinations. However, she was forbidden to proceed to Girton. (75) It may be assumed that her sternly orthodox father had already made dynastic plans for her marriage. Doubtless she earned parental approval by being married at the tender age of nineteen, in 1885, to her first cousin, who was not only associated with the family banking business, but also became highly successful in his own right. (76)

By all accounts, Netta did not find marriage and motherhood easy. She had an independent cast of mind

and a stormy temperament. Despite the obvious advantages of great wealth and a team of servants, Michael, her beloved youngest post P.N.E.U. child recalled, "his mother in bitter tears daily upon the sofa"⁽⁷⁷⁾ Her feminist views sometimes clashed with her husband's authority. For example, in 1909, she contracted "sarcoma" and the amputation of her leg was advised. Mrs. Franklin faced the emergency with characteristic courage and, as a feminist, insisted against her husband's wishes, on having the operation performed by a woman surgeon, Louisa Aldrich Blake (- 1925), at their London house. She refused to be overcome by her disability. She disdained the invalid couch, beloved of Charlotte Mason, and appeared, on crutches, on the platform at the P.N.E.U. Annual Conference in Birmingham, less than three months after the operation.⁽⁷⁸⁾

As with other members of her family, notably her younger sister Lily, Jewishness was an emotive issue for Netta. Her father, a self-confident and masterful man, with an aloof manner, had insisted that his children maintained strict observance of orthodox Judaism. He arranged to disinherit any of his children who deviated from the true faith of Israel or married a Gentile. Unlike the redoubtable Lily, Netta avoided disinheritance, but while remaining steadfast in the practice of Judaism, desperately required acceptance by the wider world. Although Jewish mothers were

frequently praised by experts for their reverence for the family and their healthy practice of breastfeeding their infants, anti-Jewish prejudice was distressfully commonplace, perhaps, particularly in the "best circles".⁽⁷⁹⁾ Lloyd George, for example, used the Jewish blood of Edwin Montagu M.P., (1879-1924) Netta's younger brother, as a focus for his abuse:

"Montagu is a swine of a sneak. When I come back I'll re-circumcise him." (80)

Mrs. Franklin was eligible to join the P.N.E.U. because the wording of the original constitution had been changed, in 1890, to read "That a religious (rather than Christian) basis of work be maintained." (81) That she was passionately grateful for her acceptance into a primarily Christian society is evidenced by the heat with which she reacted to the rejection of her Jewish candidate for admission as a student at the House of Education, by Miss Parish, who succeeded Miss Mason as Principal. (82)

Although Netta, as the eldest, was reputedly her mother's adviser and devoted her earlier years to running the lives of her younger brothers and sisters, motherhood, it seems, did not come easily to her. Her first four children, born in quick succession during the early years of marriage, doubtless left her frustratedly trying to reconcile the rights of her husband with the demands of her children, social commitments and the Jewish way of life. By all accounts, she found it no

easier to bring up the two sons who were born after she joined the P.N.E.U. (83)

"It is not to be expected that six children of pronounced and differing temperaments were easy or peaceful. The mutual devotion between them and their mother sometimes added to the stress. There was an abundance of friction ... of difficulty for a young mother and some bewildering heartache... here was a young mother with ... a conviction ... that children were the most important things in Creation. No wonder she set herself with her own to mould them nearer to the heart's desire." (84)

When she met Miss Mason, the bringing up of children was Netta's career. She had no other and wished to excel. She sought constant advice from Miss Mason. She read to one or more of her children for over twenty years. She docilely registered for the "Mothers' Education Course" although there is no record of her taking the examinations. She read "Home Education" thoroughly and even sent her ten-year old daughter Madge to Miss Mason at Scale How in 1897, to be "habit-trained" out of some unspecified fault. Illness cut short the little girl's treatment. (85)

However, Mrs. Franklin, who seems to have been well aware of her own problems as a mother, had less confidence in the educational abilities of parents than teachers. Having been to school herself, she regretted the P.N.E.U. taboo on the use of kindergartens. She believed in school education for her children and subsequently sent her sons to the to the new progressive

establishment, Bedales. (86)

For Netta Franklin, enjoying a respite after a period of constant childbearing, the P.N.E.U. offered a useful work beyond the domestic sphere. In Miss Mason whose fame she accepted unquestioningly she discovered a gentle, sensitive spirit, with a welcome reserve who seemed to understand exactly how she felt. Miss Mason, some twenty-five years her senior, not only filled the gap left by her former "schwärmerei" but somehow gave her much more by offering guidance for a troubled mother and, a new direction in life. She found, within the aristocratic P.N.E.U. circles, opportunities to engage in useful and prestigious work which satisfied her intellectually. Miss Mason urged her into public life, through the speaking and propaganda work required of leading P.N.E.U. members. From the outset, even before she attained office, she became the doyenne of the Central Executive Committee and Council. (88)

For Miss Mason, as will be shown in Chapter 9, Mrs. Franklin provided the solution to her problems in maintaining control over the central executive. Mrs. Franklin seemed a happy combination of a strong and forceful personality who needed the kind of support Miss Mason was well-equipped to give from a distance. She accepted her Jewishness unquestioningly. She accepted her need to love her own sex. She was, by then, experienced in attracting devotion from younger women.

The following letter illustrates the depth of Mrs. Franklin's feeling for her chosen inspirational leader, following Madge's stay at Ambleside:

"...I hope, dearest, you are not too tired. I feel I have got nearer to you this time than ever. I miss you very much. I have to thank you very much, my girlie, and a better self, but above all I thank you for your love and friendship. It is only me who loves you as I do and who knows the sacredness of friendships that knows what this means. Dearest! I thank you, I thank you. I cannot say more but I can dedicate to you a life of loving, humble service in your work and a constant prayer that I may become worthier of you and it. Your loving Netta" (89)

Unlike the discreet Miss Cholmondeley, Monk Gibbon had few reservations in declaring that the relationship between Miss Mason and Mrs. Franklin, which lasted for almost thirty years, belonged to "the great age of women friendships".⁽⁹⁰⁾ However, to classify it simply as a latent or overt lesbian relationship would be an over-simplification of the complex processes involved. Although Mrs. Franklin, a securely established wife and mother, had always been quite frank, for example to her sisters, about her tender feelings towards the women whom she admired, the evidence discussed in Chapter 9 suggests that she needed Miss Mason's friendship to inaugurate and maintain her position as doyenne of the P.N.E.U. At times of discord, following Miss Mason's death, she would refer to this special relationship to imply that she alone possessed true comprehension of Miss Mason's aims. Presumably her motivation for

presenting Mrs. Walton, the P.N.E.U. Chairman, with copies of her intimate correspondence with Miss Mason, during the autumn of 1958, was to prove the same point, to safeguard her position on the Committee, despite her great age.⁽⁹¹⁾ Similarly, Miss Mason needed Mrs. Franklin to support her own standing within a society from whose active operations she was becoming increasingly distanced, during the years of their mutual association. In time, despite the numerous discords, a harmonious working relationship was established. Sheila O'Ferrall, a student at the House of Education observed, as no doubt did many others, that the two educationalists were "absolutely devoted to one another."⁽⁹²⁾ It was a friendship which was to transform the P.N.E.U.

4.4 Conclusion: Like a Royal Passing

A central theme of this chapter has been the benefits which the P.N.E.U. conferred upon Miss Mason. Although, as will be shown in subsequent chapters, she exerted considerable drive and determination to establish the P.N.E.U. and the interrelated Ambleside educational ventures in the first place, it has here been argued that Miss Mason also used the organisation to provide a secure base and to promote personal fame. Miss Mason's achievement was to become a mythical figure in her own lifetime. With the help of her friends, she effected this in three main ways. First, she lived out the life of an invalid Victorian lady educationalist and thinker

on the lines of popular heroines such as Miss Nightingale and Miss Beale. Secondly, by building a tradition of devoted discipleship, she safeguarded her reputation, both at Ambleside and throughout the P.N.E.U. organisation. Thirdly, by maintaining contact with the eminent educationalists and other leading citizens, whom she had met through the P.N.E.U., and by keeping her ideas before the public through the press and propaganda, she became well known nationally. Her problem was that she had chosen to identify both her lifestyle and her theories with an educational tradition which had become old fashioned by the time she died.

"Her personal influence was probably more widespread than any of the educationalists of her time. The loyalty which she inspired was more than could be accounted for by the mere weight and force of her educational philosophy..." (93)

To all appearances, Miss Mason led a well-ordered and gracious existence in her beautiful Ambleside retreat. She immersed herself in literature and expressed her well-known love of nature by taking drives each afternoon in her little Victoria.⁽⁹⁴⁾ If anyone managed to penetrate these carefully constructed defences it has not been recorded. She seemed to welcome a public reputation that was not dependent upon her physical presence:

"Her gift for inspiring deep personal effectation in the heart of many who never saw her was rare, if not unique" (95)

Her proverbial frailty ensured that she was very sparing with public appearances and played little active part in the life of the House of Education. Contacts with friends and visitors were carefully planned, presumably so that she could be well prepared and always seen at her best. Similarly, friends and students were forbidden to take snapshots of her, delve into the past or catch her at unguarded moments as, for example, when she was being carried upstairs. Perhaps she had some hidden anxiety about her personal appearance. She was never photographed in the College groups.⁽⁹⁶⁾ This physical invisibility was matched by an elusive personality which few were able to capture in words. She impressed people but they seem to have been unable to define the precise nature of that impressiveness⁽⁹⁷⁾

"You no more felt that she was old than she was frail and weak of body. She had quietly (for she was always quiet) put pain and weakness and age from her and you were conscious only of what she had - of her surpassing gifts; it did not seem to you that she lacked anything. Her face was full of light, of wide sympathy and understanding, of delicate humour and gentleness and love. She always knew ... you could put your whole trust there." ⁽⁹⁸⁾

Like Dorothea Beale of Cheltenham, she was the fulcrum of Scale How. The manner of her passing, as gracious as her life, was also modelled on that of the famous headmistress.⁽⁹⁹⁾ When Miss Mason died peacefully at the beginning of the new academic year her mortal remains were laid out on the sacrosanct blue

sofa in the drawing room. As at Cheltenham in 1906, the students were invited to file past to pay their last respects. One of the incoming students incurred lasting displeasure for refusing this signal honour. (100) Somehow a prestigious plot had been secured between the memorial to W. E. Forster M.P. (1818-1836) and the Arnold family graves. Thus the impenetrable mask of her graciousness and fame was maintained even in death.

Tradition was integral to the myth: Miss Mason's reputation was handed on from the "bairns" to the "grandchildren" in the school:

"When at the age of twelve, I first came to the Practising School and saw Miss Mason, I had had it carefully explained to me by the other girls that she was a very great and wonderful person..." (101)

Miss Mason also made direct provision for the maintenance of her tradition in her will. Scale How was left in Trust. Miss Parish and Miss Kitching, two of her most devoted younger adherents, were appointed Principal of the House of Education and Director of the P.U.S. for life, respectively. (102)

Miss Mason's retiring manner, gentle voice and unassuming mien were popularly assumed to be expressions of a deep humility. There is little evidence to substantiate this theory. She devoted considerable time and energy to publicly proclaiming

the value of her educational theories. Her letter to Robert Morant contains one such classic statement of her belief:

"...It is only about once in a hundred years that a complete scheme of educational thought arises - philosophic, coherent in all its parts and absolutely effective in the details of its working ... Please do not smile. I really know this and proclaim it unblushingly because mightily little of the credit is due to me. It is the sort of thing that 'comes'..." (103)

No gentleman could accuse her of arrogance because her large claims were always most charmingly phrased. With Sir Robert Baden-Powell's (1857-1941) ready acquiescence, she boldly claimed responsibility for inspiring the founding of the Boy Scout movement. (1908) ⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ She also wrote to the Secretary of the Pan-Anglican Conference (1908) to offer her life of Christ in six volumes of verse "The Saviour of the World" for use as an inspirational teaching aid. By these means, her name was kept before the public. ⁽¹⁰⁵⁾

"She (Miss Mason) never hesitated as to the value of this philosophy. It had come to her much of it at 25, or even earlier, and she often said how strange it was that she could only repeat what she said so often. Her answers dictated to letters were the same in thought as pages in 'Home Education'" (106)

The only change was that, during the Ambleside period, Miss Mason had chosen to rest her reputation on a theory for educating school children rather than an original scheme for educating parents, which had

only been partly of her making. Her problem was that her educational ideas, as will be shown in the next chapter, were not truly original. They were also not progressive. Her fame rested largely upon persistent propaganda. For example, Mr. Household, the Education Secretary who promoted the Liberal Education movement in Gloucestershire elementary schools had been primarily motivated by the desire to get good literature read in these schools.⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ However, largely due to Mrs. Franklin's influence, decisions were made, within the P.N.E.U., to preserve the traditional belief that Miss Mason had discovered an original educational philosophy.

This is exemplified by the P.N.E.U. handling of the publication of Miss Mason's final book, "An Essay Towards a Philosophy of Education" (1925) which had not been published by the time of her death. The Publishers did not think that the book would sell. It was repetitious, old-fashioned and mainly composed of a compendium of nine papers, previously published separately.⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ A compromise was proposed. The Rev. and Hon. Edward Lyttelton (1855-1942), a former headmaster of Eton, popular writer on educational subjects and a staunch P.N.E.U. supporter, was commissioned to write an introduction to render the work saleable. Although he was "paid ... for his name and his 'fathering' of the book" Mrs Franklin and Miss Kitching joined forces in condemning his 6,000 word critical assessment which,

by introducing alternative educational theories, in their opinion, detracted from the value of Miss Mason's writing. Mrs Franklin took particular exception to his phrase, "late-lamented early Victorian", finding it "stilted and ugly!"⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ The Hon. and Rev. gentleman courteously agreed to withdraw his critical essay, replacing it with a brief and innocuous foreword. Doubtless the P.N.E.U. were obliged to meet the costs of publication.⁽¹¹⁰⁾

Charlotte Mason was a remarkable woman. Within a select circle she was able to inspire lasting devotion which effectively silenced criticism of her failure to develop an educational theory beyond the derivative ideas in "Home Education". This chapter has been concerned with a discussion of some of the ways in which the P.N.E.U. was centred upon herself and how she created a following to sustain her personal reputation. It was a position that will be shown to have inhibited the independent development of the P.N.E.U. branches. She turned her weaknesses into strength. Through illness and a certain rare quality of personality, she satisfied her need for attention by inspiring discipleship. A carefully planned lifestyle, acceptable to her upper class contemporaries, reinforced her personal power. She ended her life at the peak of her national fame and would have been well satisfied with the eulogies delivered by distinguished men. The last word should rest with Sir Michael Sadler

(1861 - 1943) at that time Vice Chancellor of Leeds University, who, most of all, encapsulated a view of Miss Mason by which she would have chosen to be remembered:

"Miss Mason was grande dame, grand âme. Her thoughts and tastes had lineage. To be with her, to come under the spell of her courteous and considerate self-possession was to know what it must have been like to meet ...those great ladies of the ancien régime who won fine culture through teaching children..." (111)

The former Liverpool orphan had successfully completed her upward evolutionary development within one lifetime.

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Part II: The Parents' National Educational Union:
"A Great College of Parents" or an Exclusive Association
of Matriarchs? (1887-1984)

Chapter 5:
"Home Education" (1886): A Suitable Science of Education
for Evenings at Home.

5.1 Introductory:

"Charlotte Mason represented the culture of the home-school at its best. The writers of her generation had shown themselves a little blind to the beauties of the best home teaching...."(1)

This chapter is about Charlotte Mason's most important book, "Home Education" (1886), its main themes and the sources of its central ideas. "Home Education" is not a great work of definitive educational philosophy for all time. Its significance is largely rooted in the fact that its content appealed to those who became members of the Parents' National Educational Union, which Charlotte Mason helped to found, in 1887 and was, accordingly, used as a text by the Union. As already stated, it consisted of a series of eight lectures on home education and child upbringing which were originally delivered to god-fearing ladies living in the Manningham district of Bradford during the winter of 1885-86. "Home Education" was not a work which advocated radical social reform like Pestalozzi's "Leonard and Gertrude" (1780).⁽²⁾ It did not address the burning, if less respectable, late Victorian issues of parenthood such as Infant Mortality, Eugenics or contraceptive practices.⁽³⁾ It was also not a "Baby Book" in the usual sense. The lectures were primarily concerned with educational issues relating to upper and middle class children, aged between six and ten as well as adolescent girls.⁽⁴⁾

The appeal of "Home Education" for the educated classes, seems to have arisen from the juxtaposition of apparently contradictory ideas. Earnest late Victorian parents were obsessed with the importance of education in an increasingly competitive world but, at the same time, they wanted to preserve the peaceful and orderly domestic life which they believed had been maintained in the good old days of "Children should be seen but not heard." In "Home Education", modern scientific ideas on education were reconciled with religious precept, progress was aligned with tradition and the school with the home. In a basically eclectic work, which owed no obvious allegiance to any one particular school, the keynote was harmony.

"Victorian liberals expected a great deal from education....Education had to protect civilisation; but it was also regarded as a liberating and modernising force which might advance civilised progress..."(5)

For these reasons and because of the cultural emphasis of the last two lectures, directed towards older children, those who have dared to admit that Charlotte Mason's writings were not spontaneously original, have located "Home Education" and her subsequent books, within the liberal education tradition. Furthermore, the liberal educational approach was favoured by the educated classes. Charlotte Mason decided to align herself exclusively with this tradition when she devised plans for extending P.N.E.U. educational methods in schools during the early twentieth century.⁽⁶⁾ Notwithstanding these views, "Home Education", whose original purpose was the education of mothers, also

derived from alternative educational traditions.

The first lectures in "Home Education" were based on some of the theories propounded by the "new" or "early" educationalists such as Locke, Rousseau, Pestalozzi and Spencer, who had argued that because education began from the moment of birth, the parental contribution was of crucial importance.⁽⁷⁾ Locke's theories also provided the philosophy behind the habit-training theories of the nineteenth century physiologists whose work influenced several other "Home Education" lectures. However, the juxtaposition of "new education" with "liberal education", in a sense, brought a perspective of education as a harmonising and reconciling force, to the discussion of issues of child upbringing and education. The consequence was that "Home Education" seemed to contain a blueprint for a universal theory of education for parenthood, which rendered the work suitable as a text for the P.N.E.U.

That this was the result of chance rather than design is suggested by Charlotte Mason's subsequent attitude. Some eighteen years after delivering the eight lectures, Charlotte Mason remarked, with one of her rare flashes of humility: "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread."⁽⁸⁾ Although pleased by the acclaim with which "Home Education" had been received, she was obliged to come to terms with the fact that her definitive unified theory of education was still waiting to be discovered.

"Not having received the tables of our law, we fall back upon Froebel or upon Herbart; or, if we belong to another School upon Locke or Spencer; but we are not satisfied. A discontent, is it a divine discontent? is upon us; and assuredly we should hail a workable, effectual philosophy of education as a deliverance from much perplexity. Before this great deliverance comes to us it is probable that many tentative efforts will be put forth, having more or less of the characters of a philosophy; notably, having a central idea, a body of thought with various members working in vital harmony..."(9)

The evidence suggests that the material from the central sources which informed "Home Education" was first used in lectures which Miss Mason delivered to her students at the Bishop Otter College.⁽¹⁰⁾ However, this material was overlaid by a veritable kaleidoscope of ideas, doubtless the product of Charlotte Mason's subsequent indiscriminate reading.⁽¹¹⁾ This led Lienie Steinthal's sister to conclude, "that it is only written for the very educated" and to ask if Miss Mason had "anything for the less cultured"⁽¹²⁾ Because of Miss Mason's compendious style, it is hardly surprising that the sources of her ideas have proved difficult to trace. In Isaac Taylor's memorable phrase, Charlotte Mason, like the young child he was describing, composed her lectures with:

"...a lap full of the blossoms of philosophy unsorted and plucked as they have come to hand..."(13)

Charlotte Mason's originality stemmed from her persuasive personality, described in Part I, and a certain bold disregard for intellectual authority, doubtless the product of her independent pursuit of a "liberal education."

This led her to take her ideas from where she pleased, with a nonchalant disregard for the boundaries of certain schools of thought.

"All our great educational reformers have been men. The reforms of women have taken the direction rather of practical application than of original thought. This is worth thinking about in connection with the theory that the Home-training of the children is the mother's concern. Happily it does not fall to each of us to conceive for the first time, the principles which underlie our work. But when we take the conceptions of other minds into ours so that we are able to work them out - to handle them as the skilled artisan handles his tools, to produce by their means - why then we do originate.." (14)

In that sense, "Home Education" was a work of some originality. Miss Mason introduced a series of interesting and topical juxtapositions of contrary theories, couched in a pleasantly readable style, which gave food for further reflection.

In this chapter, the three broad themes underlying "Home Education" will be discussed in terms of their sources. The book falls roughly into three sections. Lectures 1, 2 and 5, concerned with education for motherhood, were mainly taken from Herbert Spencer's four "Essays on Education" (1861) (15) Lectures 3, 4, and 6, which dealt with specific methods of child training were primarily derived from Dr. William Carpenter's "Mental Physiology" (1874) which was an expanded version of ideas which had formed part of his major physiological work, published in 1839. The final lectures, 7 and 8, later republished in "Some Studies in the Formation of Character" (1905) instead of "Home Education",

were concerned with the home culture of boys and girls attending schools and the further education of "grown up" girls at home. Romantic and liberal education dimensions informed this debate. (16)

5.2. The Prophets of Parent Education:

The notion of educating for parenthood first emerged in the writings of the "early educationalists." These advocates shared with Charlotte Mason the distinction of having little or no practical knowledge of the realities of parenthood, from the adult point of view. Some of these, like Charlotte Mason, had been teachers or tutors and viewed parenthood from the critical perspective of the "looker on" (17) Mia Kellmer Pringle (1975) has stated categorically, "Modern parenthood is too demanding and complex a task to be performed well merely because we have all been children." (18) If the same injunction had been applied to the theorists of child upbringing and education, there would have been few dominant ideas on the subject. Books of advice to parents abound but, seemingly, it is those thinkers who have written on the subject from the lynx-eyed perspective of the child who has been the object of more or less unsatisfactory parental endeavours, whose ideas have taken a hold on the public mind.

John Locke, (1632-1704), a doctor and public figure as well as philosopher, whose teaching on early habit formation was still influential two centuries later,

despite some youthful love affairs, "remained a bachelor all his life, and does not seem to have regretted it."⁽¹⁹⁾ Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) was influenced by Locke's "Some Thoughts Concerning Education" (1693) which had been originally written as letters of advice to Edward Clarke on the education of his son.⁽²⁰⁾ Rousseau's "Émile" (1762) reputedly transformed child-rearing methods and introduced naturalist approaches to education right across Europe. His work was also said to have inspired the late nineteenth century "Romantic Revival."⁽²¹⁾ Rousseau claimed that he had not only fathered five children by his mistress Thérèse Le Vasseur but had arranged, against her will, for their delivery to a nearby Foundling hospital shortly after each birth. He later explained in his "Confessions" (1770)

"...that in handing my children over to the State to educate...by destining them to become workers and peasants instead of adventurers and fortune hunters, I thought I was acting as a citizen and as a father and looked upon myself as a member of Plato's Republic....More than once since, the regret in my heart has told me I was wrong..."⁽²²⁾

Whether or not this strange tale was true, Rousseau's "Émile" influenced "Father Pestalozzi" (1746-1827) who lived out the principle that educational influence should work upwards through a corrupt social order from below.⁽²³⁾ His "kitchen-living" room style of homely education was influential, although by the late nineteenth century the kindergarten methods of Friedrich Froebel (1782-1852) had greater appeal for the parents of large families in late Victorian upper class society.⁽²⁴⁾ Although married and

a father, Pestalozzi seriously neglected his paternal responsibilities:

"All his life Pestalozzi suffered from a persistent feeling of guilt towards his family for having neglected his first duties as a husband and father. Nonetheless he would never have contemplated leaving off his (educational) experiments for his family's sake." (25)

Like Pestalozzi, the eccentric, hypochondriacal bachelor, Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) had preferred being educated at home to his unhappy experiences at school both as pupil and later as a teacher. He had enjoyed the individual intellectual encouragement and scientific training which he had received from his father, a progressive schoolmaster in the Pestalozzian tradition. Although he claimed never to have read the "Émile", his ideal of non-coercive upbringing, attainable only by the servant-supported classes, was expressed by his favourite slogan, "Submission not desirable." He maintained this life-long position, despite an effective practical critique of this philosophy sprung upon him by the insubordinate Potter girls! (26) His criticism of contemporary parental practice began when he was a young man. In his first book, "Social Statics" (1850), Spencer stated:

"...the main obstacle to the right conduct of education lies rather in the parent than the child..." (27)

As an eldest son, who remained an only child because his eight younger brothers and sisters all died,

Spencer was understandably critical of parental failure. It was in character for the young philosopher, who was later to write, "of my mother's intellect there is nothing special to be remarked," not only to stress the joint upbringing duties of both parents, but also to attach an especial importance to the paternal contribution to child education. Although the paterfamilias was a strong social image during the 1850's it would seem that the vogue for the domestic education of children which had arisen in response to "Rousseaumania" was on the decline. (29)

Herbert Spencer, the last of this particular line of prophets, exerted a direct influence upon "Home Education". It was from the "Essays on Education" (1861) that Charlotte Mason took over the idea of education for parenthood. As she moved away from his progressive "new education" theories to the liberal education approach of her later writings, in response to her social aspirations, the notion of educating parents gave way before the education of the children. Herbert Spencer would, doubtless, have been extremely surprised if he had learnt that his early views on education for parenthood, as well as the broad curriculum of child education which he had outlined, had been put into active operation through the P.N.E.U. branches and the Parents' Union schools. However, despite the subsequent neglect of his views on parent education, Spencer should rightfully be accorded his position as the founder of the twentieth century movement for education for parenthood.

5.3.i The New "Science of Education" (30)

In her "Introductory", Charlotte Mason explained that her intention was to provide "professional" training for those mothers who were free to give themselves to the bringing up of their children as "seriously, regularly, punctually, as a man does to the business by which he gets his living."⁽³¹⁾ In so doing, Charlotte Mason, established herself as a "professional expert", versed in a "method of education resting upon a basis of natural law."⁽³²⁾ She was thus qualified to advise others. The concept of applying natural law to educational processes had been derived from Spencer's "On Education." (1861) Miss Mason was undoubtedly influenced by reading R.H.Quick's (1831-1892) "Essays on Educational Reformers" (1868). In this work, Quick, later a member of the first P.N.E.U.Council, had included an essay on Spencer together with those on other great educational reformers. By this means, he believed that he had brought the little known educational theories of the great philosopher before an educated Victorian public.⁽³³⁾

Uneasy adjustment to scientific progress was one theme of the Victorian age of industrial advance.⁽³⁴⁾ Spencer was the first to coin the phrase, "The Survival of the Fittest". However, he rejected the idealism of Rousseau's romantic "Naturalism" and argued that if human progress was to be achieved by appropriate education, there were certain inexorable "Laws of Nature" comparable to those in the physical sciences and ascertainable by methodical scientific

observation, which had to be obeyed. (35)

"Some acquaintance with the first principles of physiology and the elementary truths of psychology is indispensable for the right upbringing of children General principles only accompanied by such illustrations as may be needed to make them understood, would suffice....here are the indisputable facts:- that the development of children in mind and body follows certain laws; that unless these laws are in some degree conformed to, there must result serious physical and mental defects; and that only when they are completely conformed to, can a perfect maturity be reached...." (36).

It should be noted, at this point, that Charlotte Mason was not an analytical thinker. She simply reproduced the ideas of Spencer and the other writers in her own words. She did not attempt to address the philosophical problems raised by the material she selected. It seems that the technique, which she may have used quite unconsciously, was "narration" which was later to become the central P.N.E.U. teaching method. (37) It was neither new nor original. It was one of the educational methods, based on the Homeric art of "narration" as a means of re-telling the traditional tales of the heroes, which Plato (427-347 B.C.) had recommended in "The Republic." It appears that Oscar Browning (1837-1923) first introduced Miss Mason to Plato's Republic in 1889 which explains why this method was not described when "Home Education" was first published. (38)

The notion of principles of education had been taught at the "Ho and Co." In Spencer's hands these principles were raised to the status of natural laws. Although Spencer had been reared in the Dissenting tradition and,

at the time of writing "On Education" still expressed belief in some "Ultimate Cause", he had acquired a reputation for shocking atheism by the time "Home Education" was published. Miss Mason was untroubled by his reputation. (39)

Two years before the publication of "Origin of Species" (1859), Charlotte Mason had been given William Paley's (1743-1805) "Natural Theology" (1802), the book which had rendered Newtonian physics acceptable to the theologians. The decades of fierce controversy which followed the Darwinian revolution and found expression, for example, in the Huxley-Wilberforce Debate (1860) and "Essays and Reviews" (1860) seem to have passed her by. (40) Paley's theory of "intelligent design" could be readily adapted to Spencer's scientifically established "Laws of Nature." They were determined by Divine Plan. Furthermore, the Bible contained certain fundamental educational laws which enjoined respect for children.

"And this superior morality of some non-believers, supposing we grant it, what does it amount to? Just to this, that the universe of the mind, as the universe of matter, is governed by the unwritten laws of God; that the child cannot blow soap bubbles or think his flitting thoughts otherwise than in obedience to Divine Laws; and that all safety, progress and success in life come of obedience to law, to the laws of mental, moral or physical science, or of that spiritual science which the Bible unfolds; that it is possible to ascertain laws and keep laws without recognising the Lawgiver..." (41)

Charlotte Mason had already pointed out following Pestalozzi that "this knowledge of the science of education, not the best of mothers will get from above; seeing that we do not often receive as a gift that which we have the means of getting by our own efforts." (42) In this way, "Home

Education" acceptably introduced the notion of laws of normal child upbringing to religiously minded mothers. It was a useful contribution to the process of reconciliation between scientific discovery and religious precept which caused much anguish during the Victorian era.

Charlotte Mason, in advocating professional expertise in the upbringing of children echoed Spencer's utopianism, without his perturbing concept of social evolutionary stages of development.

"...My attempt is to point out, not what is practicable but what appears to me to be absolutely BEST for the child from an educational point of view..." (43)

It was a statement that was to be echoed within the P.N.E.U.

"The First obligation of the present-that of passing forward a generation better than ourselves rests with the parents..." (44)

This doctrine established the need for expert advice. It also accorded with Imperialist ideals and the pre-occupation with "National Efficiency" which characterised the closing decades of the nineteenth century. (45) Furthermore, the Spencerian "new education" approach in "Home Education" appealed to those Victorians who were beginning to tire of the repressive styles of upbringing which had dominated the Puritan revival at the beginning of the century.

5.3.ii Education for Parenthood:

"'The training of children' says Mr Herbert Spencer, 'physical, moral and intellectual - is dreadfully defective. And in great measure it is so because parents are devoid of that knowledge by which this training can alone be rightly guided....'" (46)

Herbert Spencer argued that education for parenthood was crucial to the beneficial development of society. He had located it as the third priority, in his four part scheme of rational scientific education, designed to prepare the individual for the actual realities of adult life, instead of wasting time over unnecessary and useless accomplishments. (47) He recommended educating young people for parenthood, while still at school, to provide a basis upon which they could later build their future rational thinking on the subject:

"If by some strange chance not a vestige of us descended to the remote future save a pile of our school-books or some college examination papers, we may imagine how puzzled an antiquary of the period would be on finding in them no sign that the learners were ever likely to be parents. 'This must have been the curriculum for their celibates, we may fancy him concluding, 'I perceive here an elaborate preparation for many things especially for reading the books of extinct nations and of co-existing nations.....but I find no reference whatsoever to the bringing up of children. They could not have been so absurd as to omit all training for this gravest of responsibilities. Evidently then, this was the school-course of one of their monastic orders'....." (48)

This idea, although considered, was not taken up by the P.N.E.U. Quick had argued against it in his critique of "On Education", believing that young people would have little interest in the subject until they themselves became parents. He felt that the Home provided the most appropriate venue for

this aspect of education, as did most other Victorians. (49)

By the end of the century, the "celibate" tradition of boarding school education, for most middle and upper class boys and some of their sisters, had become widespread.

The pressures of the competitive examinations which offered opportunities of winning a position, in an increasingly meritocratic society, did not allow space on the curriculum for non-competitive subjects such as education for parenthood. (50) It was thought sufficient if the schools provided opportunities for general character training. The upbringing of children was considered to be the province of the mothers in the home.

Quick had, however, concurred with Spencer's views on the "lamentable ignorance of parents," a point which Charlotte Mason developed only implicitly. (51) Spencer had not quite made up his mind about the problem of the existing inadequate parental force. Should they have rational education or dogmatic instruction at this stage? (52) At all levels of society, "ignorance", "coercion" and other unsatisfactory approaches to upbringing prevailed in a world that was far from ideal. In a future Utopia, it was hoped that well educated, superior parents would be able to reason out for themselves the principles by which they should act in respect of their children. Under the present unsatisfactory circumstances, Spencer implied that parents had to be told categorically how to proceed. (53)

"When a mother is mourning over a first-born that has sunk under the sequelae of scarlet fever - when perhaps a candid medical man has confirmed her suspicion that her child would have recovered had not its system been enfeebled by over-study - when she is prostrate under the pangs of combined grief and remorse; it is but small consolation that she can read Dant  in the original." (54)

Although Charlotte Mason followed Spencer in deploring parental ignorance and reliance upon outmoded traditions she also remarked that some theories of education encouraged too much freedom. There was no question of adopting the Spencerian slogan, "submission not desirable." Parents were obliged to judge:

"..how far theories of education are wise and humane, the outcome of more widely spread physiological and psychological knowledge, and how far they just pander to the child worship to which we are all succumbing..." (55)

She sought a compromise by mixing the methods. Spencer's notion of principles or laws of education was aligned with the gentler and less inexorable Pestalozzian "Method".

"Method implies two things - a way to an end and a step-by-step progress in that way....the following of method implies an idea, a mental image, of...what.. you propose education shall effect in and for your child...method is natural; easy, yielding unobtrusive, simple as the ways of Nature herself; yet, watchful, careful, all-pervading, all-compelling. Method, with the end of education in view presses the most unlikely matters into service to bring about that end....The parent who sees his way---that is the exact force of method-to educate his child, will make use of every circumstance of the child's life almost without intention on his own part, so easy and spontaneous is a method of education based upon Natural Law..." (56)

Thus, in theory at least, Charlotte Mason brought together the relaxed natural methods of child upbringing which had been the legacy of the "new educationalists" with the watchful, careful supervision that had belonged to the child training methods of the Puritan tradition. Theoretically she seemed to be restoring a mild form of authority to the parents. In practice, like Spencer, she placed the rights of the child above those of the parents.

5.3.iii "A Prince Committed to the Fostering Care of Peasants." (57)

In the tradition of all known treatises on child upbringing and education, "Home Education" was both explicitly and implicitly critical of contemporary parenthood. No one is recorded as having objected to Charlotte Mason's remarks on the subject. Mothers had few legal rights and little education which may have rendered them a prey to expert criticism. One of the functions of the late Victorian ideology of Motherhood was to promote the improved care of the children who were numerous and also seen as a national asset. Mothers were expected to render service to the Nation by fulfilling their high calling with efficiency. Many mothers, long conditioned to service to others and accustomed to second place may have welcomed advice which seemed to make their task easier without experiencing distress at their dethronement in favour of the little prince.

"And first, let us consider where and what the little being is who is entrusted to the care of human parents. A tablet to be written upon? A twig to be bent? Wax to be moulded? Very likely; but he is much more - a being belonging to an altogether higher estate than ours, as it were, a prince committed to the fostering care of peasants." (58)

The Romantic revival had converged with the late nineteenth century notion that children were no longer their parents' property. The Child was a "Public Trust" and also a "Divine Trust". Thus child upbringing was both a duty to the State and a duty to God:

"The children are, in truth to be regarded less as personal property than as public trusts, put into the hands of parents that they may make the very most of them for the good of society. And this responsibility is not divided equally between the parents: it is upon the mothers of the present that the future of the world depends, in even greater degree than upon the fathers, because it is the mothers who have the sole direction of the children's early most impressible years..." (59)

The point was that during the new age it was not enough merely to let well alone and trust to the instinctive processes of nature. It might be agreed that the child who arrived "trailing clouds of glory" was no longer tainted with original sin, but he still required training both for his place in the world as well as in eternity. Church and State were united in expecting the best from the mothers of the nation:

"The wonder that Almighty God can endure so far to leave the very making of an immortal being in the hands of human parents, is only matched by the wonder that human parents can accept this Divine Trust with hardly a thought of its significance..." (60)

Charlotte Mason, an individualist in the Spencerian mould, was here arguing the responsibility of the family, through the agency of the mothers, to support the State and the Churches. It was the reverse of Rousseau's principle of asking the State to support the family, after the manner of the late nineteenth century poorer classes who were believed by many to look to the State to feed and educate their children.⁽⁶¹⁾ Some years later Miss Mason joined a Conference of the anti-Socialist "British Constitutional Association" (1907). In a paper entitled "The Family versus the State" which was doubtless an imitation of Spencer's famous essay, "Man versus the State" (1884), Charlotte Mason was reported as arguing: 'the duty of most persons, however poor, is to support their own children! The children who could properly be regarded as children of the State were orphans, children whose parents were criminal by profession, or insane or under the periodic insanity of habitual drunkenness or victims of the slothful habit. Probably one object of the British Constitutional Association, Miss Mason observed, would be the delimitation of the powers of the State to supersede parents in the care of their children. Sustenance by the State implied State control...' ⁽⁶²⁾

"Home Education" therefore used a Romantic view of the 'Child' combined with religious imagery of childhood innocence embodied in "Gentle Jesus, sweet and mild", to recall parents to their public duty: "It is a great thing to be a parent: there is no promotion, no dignity to compare with it." ⁽⁶³⁾ Those who read the book may have glossed

over these topical injunctions. The general appeal of lectures 1, 2 and 5 lay in the useful Spencerian ideas for providing a broad rational curriculum of home education and amusement, which owed much to Pestalozzi's influence. (64) Although some of the recommendations for nutrition, hygiene and clothing seem quaint to the modern reader, it is noteworthy that many of these educational ideas, subsequently exclusively attributed to Charlotte Mason, such as the scientific nature walk, the encouragement of individual study, time for play between lessons, picture study and craft work which must have provided anxious mothers with many useful and instructive ways of amusing their children, have survived in the modern P.N.E.U. Curriculum. (65)

5.4. Habit Training and the Will: "I AM, I OUGHT, I CAN, I WILL" (66)

For earnest Victorians, however, upbringing could not simply be regarded as a matter of promoting physical health and intellectual development, important though these aspects were. There was also the issue of good behaviour in public as well as inner self-control. Spencer, for example, had recognised the value of self-control but had argued that it should be acquired by rational means, through the gradual, natural and logical experience of the "discipline of consequences." He appeared to assume that once self-control had been acquired, good behaviour in public would be automatic. (67)

There was an alternative, older tradition of behaviour control which stemmed from Locke's "Some Thoughts Concerning Education" (1693). Habit training, in this view, was not just a matter of domestic routines imposed upon the young child, such as, for example, being "set upon the stool" regularly. It provided the groundwork for internal intellectual development:

"He that is not used to submit his will to the Reason of others when he is YOUNG, will scarce hearken or submit to his own reason when he is of an Age to make use of it." (68)

Habit training was popular in Victorian times when families were large. The cult owed much to the publicising of Susannah Wesley's famous methods of upbringing as a result of the Puritan revival. Although Mrs Wesley lost nine of her nineteen children, her methodical approach to child training, encapsulated in the precept from Proverbs: "Train up a child in the way that he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it", was vindicated by the fervour and fame of her two sons, John and Charles, the founders of "Methodism",⁽⁶⁹⁾ Lord Shaftesbury (1801-1885), the sternly evangelical philanthropist who had himself been unhappily reared in this tradition, stated:

"At home the principles of subordination are first implanted and the man is trained to be a good citizen."⁽⁷⁰⁾

Apart from the inner control required to overcome the boggy of "Original Sin", external good behaviour was eminently to be desired as there were so many children

about.⁽⁷¹⁾ Natural methods had proved inadequate in terms of achieving a satisfactory level of discipline as the victims of "Rousseaumania", such as Richard Lovell Edgeworth (1744-1817), had ruefully discovered. He had been obliged to send his unruly son, the product of this lack of method, to a boarding school for training.⁽⁷²⁾ Many Victorians did not share Lord Palmerston's belief that children were born good. They believed, with Charlotte Mason, that they were born with a potential for either good or evil.⁽⁷³⁾ Accordingly, the new scientific justification for habit training, a forerunner of behaviourism, provided by the new discipline of "mental physiology", was to prove widely acceptable in matters of child upbringing. One of the leading exponents of habit training was Dr William Carpenter (1813-1885) who offered a modern scientific answer to the vexed questions of discipline and moral training. Dr Carpenter's "Mental Physiology" (1874) came out during the year in which Charlotte Mason had begun lecturing at the Bishop Otter College. It may have been an approved text. In this work, Dr Carpenter expanded on ideas already discussed in his much praised tome: "The Principles of General and Comparative Physiology." (1839) Spencer, who reviewed a new edition of this early magnum opus for the first number of the Westminster Review, commented that the book was:

"considerably more useful and vastly more entertaining than books about 'fights, despatches and protocols'" (74)

Unlike Spencer, Dr William Carpenter was a family man. He also did not repudiate the religion of his forebears and, for example, played the organ regularly at the St. John's Wood Unitarian Church. He was the eldest son and fourth child of the reflective educationalist, Dr Lant Carpenter (1780-1840). He was also younger brother to Mary Carpenter (1807-1877) the educational philanthropist and penal reformer. She discussed her plans for social reform with her scientific brother, who has been described as the last of the eminent Victorian "universal naturalists" (75)

Dr Carpenter's aim was to formulate physiological theories to explain the crucial relationship between the development of the "Mind" or mental processes and the physiology of the brain. (76) In a very real sense, Dr Carpenter's "valuable educational hints" were about "fights, despatches and protocols." (77) His theories supported the struggle to maintain public order in an increasingly democratic society and appealed to Puritan evangelicals poised to eradicate evil from fallen human nature. Through his presentation of a biological physiology, the forerunner both of the Freudian psychology as an enlightened science of the mind and also Watsonian behaviourism, he had devised a weapon to control the dark forces of animal instinct. Victorians feared the expression of instinct in the post-Darwin era, believing it to be an uncultured expression of the residue of man's descent from ape ancestry. Dr Carpenter's treatise offered ways of controlling the irrational thought processes of the

subconscious mind, apparent in the frightening contemporary bogey, "Human Automatism."⁽⁷⁸⁾ R.L.Stevenson, later, made this particular horror fictionally explicit in the tale of "Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde" (1886)

Dr Carpenter, who was in favour of the use of military drill in education, to which Charlotte Mason had often had recourse for disciplinary purposes while at Worthing, argued that habit training left permanent physical traces on the brain. This was a physiological re-statement of Locke's arguments for the early habit training of the young child's mind.⁽⁷⁹⁾ Habit training was a matter of some urgency, once it was appreciated that, after physical maturity had been reached, "Both the Intellectual and Moral Character have become in a great degree fixed."⁽⁸⁰⁾ For Charlotte Mason, Dr Carpenter's scientific justification for habit training explicitly resolved the apparent conflict between religion and science. It was also a popular subject for the many sermons she had listened to while living in evangelical Worthing. She explained this religious perspective on habit training in a lecture whose title was borrowed from one such sermon, "Habit is Ten Natures."⁽⁸¹⁾ She based three out of the eight lectures on Dr Carpenter's two chapters, "Of Habit" and "Of the Will"⁽⁸²⁾

The point was that habits were not merely the learned physical responses of the very young child. The training could be used to develop and control the powers of the mind.⁽⁸³⁾ Carpenter had also devoted a whole chapter to "Attention."

Charlotte Mason, subsequently, made the cultivation of the habit of attention, by the presentation of the appropriate "Idea", discussed in "Home Education", a central feature of her educational statement. It is not clear if she meant her concept of an "Idea" to be understood in the Lockean sense. It seems most likely, as she rejected his "tabula rasa" view of the child's mind, that she interpreted this concept in the simplest form of a mother simply putting the idea for example, of shutting the door, into the child's head.⁽⁸⁴⁾ The value of habit training lay in the way in which it saved both physical and mental energy and reduced the danger of "overpressure". Charlotte Mason, who seems to have tired easily, welcomed a theory which explained how "nerve-force" might be conserved by mental habit training. Her subsequent life-style at Ambleside was modelled on this discipline.⁽⁸⁵⁾ As modern readers will readily appreciate, the problem with habit training, as Dr C W Valentine a P.N.E.U. member for twenty-five years pointed out, is that habits tend to be highly specific and are not necessarily transferable to different situations. Thus a child may become accustomed to shut the door for his or her father but fail to do so for anyone else. Similarly: "A woman neat in her person and clothes may have a very untidy dressing table, a man whose books are precisely arranged may have ruffled hair and a sagging necktie."⁽⁸⁶⁾ It was a theory of upbringing that could only have credence in a class who delegated most aspects of child training to the proverbial "ignorant nursemaid."

In turning her attention to the training of the Will and the Conscience, Charlotte Mason followed Dr Carpenter's paradigm:

"I AM, I OUGHT, I CAN, I WILL" are (as has been recently well said) the only firm foundation-stones on which we can base our attempt to climb into a higher sphere of existence." (87)

Carpenter had been influenced by J.S.Mill's personal struggle with the determinist "doctrine of automatism."

"'I saw' he says, 'that though our character is formed by circumstances our own desires can do much to shape those circumstances; and that what is really inspiring and ennobling in the doctrine of Freewill, is the conviction that we have real power over the formation of our own character; that our will, by influencing some of our circumstances, can modify our future habits and capacities of willing.'" (88)

This was a doctrine which had a powerful appeal both for Charlotte Mason and other earnest Christians. As a self-schooled individualist, Charlotte Mason had determinedly used educational means to pull herself out of obscurity. She appropriated the catchphrase "I AM, I OUGHT, I CAN, I WILL" used by Dr Carpenter, which she further sanctified by attributing it to St. Augustine, to illustrate the stages that Carpenter had outlined, by which parents, aiming at perfection, might help their children to develop moral strength. Also drawing on Dr Morell's brilliant "Introduction to Mental Philosophy" (1862) Charlotte Mason argued that the development of the Will, following the formation of good habits, was an even greater responsibility for the parents than the cultivation of the intellect. (89) Thus science was pressed into the service of religion.

"I am pressing upon mothers the duty of saving their children by the means put into their hands. Perhaps it is not too much to say, that ninety-nine out of a hundred lost lives lie at the door of parents who took no pains to deliver their children from sloth, from sensual appetites, from wilfulness, no pains to fortify them with the HABITS of a good life...I do not see much ground for hoping that Divine grace will step in as a substitute for any and every faculty we choose to leave undeveloped or misdirected. In the physical world, we do not expect miracles to make up for our neglect of the use of means; the rickety body, the misshapen limb, which the child has to thank his parents for, remain with him through life.....and a feeble will, bad habits and an uninstructed conscience, stick by many a Christian man through his life, because his parents failed in their duty to him..."(90)

Here was a doctrine of redemption by works and effort. Education might, by these methods redeem the effects of poor heredity. Charlotte Mason followed Carpenter in departing from the old Puritan view that the child's will had to be broken. They argued that the child was really "will-less" and required training in good behavioural habits as well as in developing mental powers of attention. Through the presentation of the "right" ideas and by helping to "turn the thoughts" of the child away from undesirable ideas or action, the parents would be able to strengthen the child's will along the "right" lines from an early stage in life. In this way the adult self-regulating conscience would become automatic and all would be "sweetness and light."⁽⁹¹⁾ This was a counsel of perfection suited only to the children's hour in the drawing room. It did not take into account the emotional vagaries of child development nor reflect changing and contrary views about what might, or might not, constitute correct behaviour. However, the perfection of "an old maid's children" proclaimed by

Charlotte Mason, accorded well with the Victorian passion for working to an ideal. (92).

5.5.i The Home Education of the Schoolboy and Schoolgirl with particular reference to "Young Maidenhood." (93)

The last two lectures, while accepting the inevitability of school education for all older boys and some girls, were concerned with the delineation of the complementary contribution of the home and the school. Although these lectures received the most favourable comment from reviewers, as already stated, they were subsequently transferred from Home Education for insertion in a miscellaneous anthology of Charlotte Mason's writings. (94) The most topical issue discussed in these lectures was the education and future plans for the adolescent and young adult girls living, at home, in middle and upper class circles.

Charlotte Mason had had little direct experience of boys over the age of four. This may have been the reason why she did not specifically address herself to "the Boy Question". In general, she made little clear distinction between boys and girls, tending to treat children per se as a distinct category. This was also partly due to the fact that, in the class she was addressing, boys' home education was largely a preparation for later school education, whereas for girls it was frequently an end in itself:

"..the youth is, earlier than the girl, necessarily left to the education of circumstances.." (95)

Charlotte Mason's self-appointed task was not only to remind the proverbial Victorian schoolmaster that children were, indeed, born with parents, but to point out to the latter that home education should not cease with the start of schooldays.

"..It seems to me that we live in an age of pedagogy; that we of the teaching profession are inclined to take too much upon ourselves, and that parents are ready to yield the responsibility of direction, as well as of actual instruction more than is wholesome for the children." (96)

With a characteristic inconsistency that exposed her chameleon-like ability to take on the views of her upper and middle class audience and, apparently, unmindful of her critical allusions to parents in the other lectures, Charlotte Mason attempted to re-establish the supremacy of home training over that of the school. At that time, "there were not a few private schools in which an attempt was made to reproduce the stimulus and restraining influence of a cultivated home." (97) Much of her advice to parents which stressed the importance of the parents' keeping some control over their children's lives on the lines of the habit training already discussed, accorded with Victorian idealism, if somewhat trite and sentimental to the modern reader. For example:

"A mother sits up till midnight darning stockings for her boys; she says nothing about it and the boys put their stockings on scarcely knowing whether they are in holes or not...."

The mother is enjoined not to upbraid them for thoughtlessness but to instruct them quietly:

"...But gentle rallying on 'those great holes which kept Mother up till midnight' with a 'Never mind', my boy; you know work for you is a pleasure to your mother, 'sinks deep; and the boy is not worth his salt who, after that does not MEAN to buy his mother silks and satins, gold and jewels, 'when I'm a man!' (98)

As Mrs.Beeton had already told the world, "...it is only a gentlewoman ...who never is betrayed into an angry word or cross retort; example and precept must go hand in hand. Our experience is, that in life what we believe people to be, we make them." (99) Miss Mason's piece of advice was one of many which bore the unmistakeable signs of the "looker on" who had herself succumbed to the age of "child-worship." It was a popular contemporary view. Motherhood was primarily for the upbringing of a young prince with the manners of a Lord Fauntleroy. It was a further bonus if this "little adult" of a young gentleman also redeemed reprobate grown-ups after the manner of the little earl or the angels portrayed in "The Ministering Children" (100) Understandably, Charlotte Mason was not concerned with problems of manliness. Her image of the gentleman belonged to the drawing-room.

In entering the public debate about the limitations of school education, Charlotte Mason argued that the task of the school was primarily to prepare pupils to pass competitive examinations through the steady inculcation or cramming in of the required facts. In contrast, the home, as in Ruskin's ideal, provided the right atmosphere for the expression of individuality and the acquisition of a truly liberal culture. "The liberal soul deviseth liberal

things", Charlotte Mason declaimed, thus giving her remarks the aura of biblical as well as cultural authority. (101) She did not enter the heated nineteenth century debate on the relative merits of a scientific training versus immersion in the dead languages, which had been Spencer's especial concern. Instead, following those such as John Ruskin (1819-1900) and T.H.Huxley (1825-1895) who had attempted to bring the best English culture to the people, Charlotte Mason recommended a home culture based on literature, good music, aesthetics and elegant table talk which belonged to the experience of the gentlewomen whom she was addressing. (102) In his address delivered at the South London Working Men's College in 1868 Huxley had concluded:

"For literature is the greatest of all sources of refined pleasure, and one of the great uses of a liberal education is to enable us to enjoy that pleasure. There is scope enough for the purposes of liberal education in the study of the rich treasures of our own language alone. All that is needed is direction, and the cultivation of a refined taste by attention to sound criticism.." (103)

It was a view that Charlotte Mason was later to appropriate as her own in the development of P.N.E.U. school education. The extension of literary culture into the schools was one expression of the extension of the domestic influence for "stimulus and restraint."

5.5.ii "What is to be done with the Girls?" (104)

"Home Education" represented an attempt to train women to become "professional mothers." The first lecture had

launched into the following contemporary debate about women's work and women's status:

"Not the least sign of the higher STATUS they have gained is the growing desire for work that obtains amongst educated women. The world wants the work of such women; and presently, as education becomes more general, we shall see all women with the capacity to work falling into the ranks of working women with definite tasks, fixed hours, and for wages, the pleasure and honour of doing useful work if they are under no necessity to earn money.

Now that work which is of most importance to society is the bringing-up and instruction of the children...." (105)

Charlotte Mason was, in no way, a radical exponent of women's rights. As a spinster, it did not occur to her to question the established order of the relations between married men and women, succinctly summarized by Lord McGregor:

"To the Pauline conclusion that they two shall be one flesh, the Victorian husband added the explanation; "and I am he..." (106)

Charlotte Mason was an advocate of the religious and Romantic view that the mother's true place was in the home, as the fulcrum of the domestic hearth. Notwithstanding Ruskin's eulogies and the specific social trends of the nineteenth century described in Chapter 1, the belief in an intelligent and responsible motherhood had a long tradition. (107) Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1798) had argued for an intelligent and well-educated motherhood to ensure the best and safest upbringing for the children. (108) Charlotte Mason's personal view accorded with that of Rousseau, whom Mary Wollstonecraft had roundly criticised for the unequal status which he accorded

to women. In most respects, Miss Mason's "young maidens", the unfolding buds eulogised by the American psychologist, Dr. Stanley Hall, were to prepare for a future married life to be modelled on "Julie, ou la Nouvelle Héloïse," although, doubtless, without the unacceptable fall from grace. (109)

Julie, an early prototype for Émile's perfect future wife, Sophie, although deferring to her husband in all matters with true "docility", also kept her children about her, educated them, and showed herself to be extremely capable in all manner of household duties. (110)

The function of the mother was to remain a figure of constancy at a time of rapid change:

"For we are an overwrought generation, running to nerves as a cabbage runs to seed." (111)

However, in apparent response to the late nineteenth century women's movement, Charlotte Mason argued that a broad general education, along the cherished liberal lines, was to be responsibly used by women, in the service of others, for example: to uplift a "cottage mother", or even to mediate "between labour and capital." Women could extend their powers of reconciliation in these ways. The mother's sphere of "docile" duty could therefore be extended into the public sphere without upsetting the established order:

"Women have been clamorous for their rights, and men, have on the whole, been generous and gentle in meeting their demands. So much has been granted that we have no right to claim immunities which belong to the seclusion of the harem. We are not free to say, 'Oh these things are beyond me; I leave such questions to gentlemen.'" (112)

Charlotte Mason's recommendation for the older girls at home was in line with her perception of the mother's public and domestic responsibilities. The girls' home education was to be disciplined and comprehensive. It should include ^{the} evangelical emphasis upon duty and service as well as the acquisition of culture. Household responsibilities were to be mastered but within a balanced programme which allowed for exercise and cultural studies. However, there was a problem to be faced, as the young girl grew older and perhaps did not marry. Must she

"..wait until the prince comes by and-throws the handkerchief...What if the foolish prince should throw the handkerchief to the wrong maiden and leave her out in the cold, with nothing to do, nothing to look forward to all the rest of her life?" (113)

Furthermore, many parents of slender means were unable to support their grown-up daughters indefinitely. Charlotte Mason was speaking to a receptive audience, among the educated classes, when she argued the need both to satisfy a girl's "craving for a career" and to encourage her to train for some suitable branch of "women's work":

"It is not necessary to specify the lines for which women may qualify by thorough training-art, music, teaching, nursing, loftier careers for the more ambitious and better educated; but may I say a word for teaching in elementary schools-a lowly labour of quite immeasurable usefulness." (114)

5.6 Conclusion:

"Home Education" was essentially a popular treatise, designed to appeal to the Victorian educated classes. Like other popular books of a similar type, it reproduced some

of the leading contemporary views on moral and cultured upbringing and education, in a form acceptable to the general reader, without complicated analysis. It brought some of the interesting educational texts used in the training of elementary teachers to upper class ladies. In common with other popular books, it sought both to improve and console. "Home Education" raised anxieties but also offered useful advice on educating, disciplining and amusing children.

The lectures suggested both ideal counsels of perfection and also the possibility of compromise. On the one hand, the book argued that children could be transformed by education if parents began a systematic method of training early enough. Child education was therefore a matter of some urgency. It was also a duty to be undertaken "professionally" for the sake of the children, the State and God. On the other hand, it was suggested that education should be an easy, agreeable and natural process. This could be achieved by responding to the individual unfolding of the child, within the context of his natural home environment. "Home Education". therefore, offered a compromise between total naturalism and stern discipline. Scientific method was aligned with religious teaching, traditional culture with modern school education in a work that seemed both up to date and also old-fashioned. "Home Education" mirrored the compromises which late Victorian upper and middle class parents were doubtless confronting daily in their attempts to educate and train their unruly offspring. The advice offered by Miss Mason suggested an

ideal to aspire to as well as a reassuring reflection of the usual mode of life in cultured homes.

However, Home Education had been originally addressed to ladies. It dealt, in essence, with the problems mothers faced in attempting to rear charming but dutiful daughters. The sons and fathers, primarily absorbed with school affairs and business, were relegated to the background. It was intended for an audience of parents from the educated classes. These facts rendered the work unsuitable for use as an exposition of a universal method of education and upbringing for use by both parents, from all social classes.

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Chapter 6:

The Limits to P.N.E.U. Development through the Branches;
"Class Legislation" and the Peripheral Paterfamilias.
(1887-1921)

6.1 Introductory:

"'You know,' Dora interrupted, 'when people want to do good things they always make a society. There are thousands - there's the Missionary Society.'

'Yes' Alice said, 'and the Society for the Prevention of something or other, and the Young Men's Mutual Improvement Society, and the S.P.G.'" (1)

This chapter is about the founding of the P.N.E.U. and the development of the local branches until 1921, when changes in the Constitution limited the education of the parents by these means. Following the publication of "Home Education" (1886), a collaborative friendship was formed between Miss Mason and Mrs. Francis Steinthal. This led to their joint founding of the Bradford Parents' Educational Union (1887), hereafter known as the P.E.U., with some local teachers and parents. The aim of the new society was to educate mothers and fathers from all social classes as well as public opinion in "the right bringing up of ... children." (2) It was hoped that a universal Utopian transformation in child education and upbringing would thus be achieved. Using the Bradford P.E.U. as her personal launching pad, Miss Mason precipitately urged forward the national expansion of the Union by a widespread appeal to influential "leaders of thought". A propaganda campaign was undertaken to establish a nationwide network of local P.N.E.U. branches. To further communication between the branches, a P.N.E.U. monthly journal, called the Parents' Review, was initiated by Miss Mason in 1890.

In this chapter, it will be shown that although the P.N.E.U. became a prestigious and professionally recognised society, it remained small and limited in its aims and objects. It will be suggested that the failure to expand and develop the education for parenthood aspects of the P.N.E.U. work, which had been its original raison d'être, was due to the fact that contrary purposes were built into the aims and objects of the society from the outset. Was the true purpose of the Union to reform the upbringing of children nationally or to enable Miss Mason to rise to a position of eminence in the educational and aristocratic worlds? Was the aim to raise the level of parental participation and competence in the home or to influence public opinion generally on the subject of child education? Was the name: "Union" intended to express a reformist desire to bridge the class divide in matters of child upbringing, because parenthood was an experience common to all levels of society? Or was the implicit purpose of the society the mutual support of a united and exclusive group of mothers from the "cultured classes"? In short, was the purpose of the P.N.E.U. social reform or mutual self-help?

The founding of the Bradford P.E.U. and the establishment of the national society will be described in this chapter. An analysis of the size, scope and development of the local branches will be given together

with the aims and objects of the P.N.E.U. constitution. There will be some discussion of Miss Mason's status within the Union which will be further developed in Chapter 9. Finally the exclusion of the poorer classes and the relegation of the fathers to the periphery will be discussed within the context of the original universalist aims of the P.N.E.U.

6.2.1 Emeline Petrie Steinthal (- 1921)

In the Spring of 1887, Mr and Mrs Francis F Steinthal moved, with their young family to 2, Walmer Place, Manningham Lane, just around the corner from Apsley Crescent where Miss Mason was living with Mrs. Groveham. Lienie Steinthal apparently wrote to Miss Mason, after reading either an article in the paper on "Home Education" or one of her other pieces for the popular press. She was delighted to find that the author was close at hand. They met and became friends. Together they talked and talked as they made plans for reforming the world as they walked round "those Manningham squares of which we wore out the pavements..." (3)

Lienie, who was probably between ten and twenty years younger than Charlotte Mason, was attracted by a personality, seemingly "brimful of vitality and enthusiasm" who was also a published author.⁽⁴⁾ She was in the throes of early motherhood for, having married in 1882, she gave birth to three healthy sons and a daughter

between 1883 and 1888.⁽⁵⁾ Miss Mason, who was called "Aunt Mai" by the Steinthal family, possibly in imitation of Florence Nightingale's favourite aunt, Mrs. Sam Smith, was good with the children. Dorothea, who was born in 1884, wrote:⁽⁶⁾

"We loved 'Aunt Mai', with her slow smile and gentle voice, and every Christmas brought a batch of books with a personal inscription for each one of us. A bright-coloured illustrated "Chaucer for Children" and another, 'Queen Victoria's Dolls.' I remember specially also that Miss Mason liked to teach her dolls as a child..."⁽⁷⁾

Miss Mason seemed to be a sympathetic and understanding person with whom Lienie could discuss her children. She even felt able to confide her regret that her responsibilities, in caring for her husband and children whom she loved devotedly, stood in the way of a promising career as a sculptor.

Although not a beauty, Lienie was warm, loving and determined. In her, the artistic temperament was combined with the late Victorian passion for reform.⁽⁸⁾ She had local standing. A daughter from the well-known northern Petrie family, she had married a son of the patriarchal Carl Gustavus Steinthal, who had been one of the founders of "Little Germany" when he moved to Bradford in 1844 and established his family wool firm.⁽⁹⁾ Unlike Miss Mason, Lienie showed how deeply she felt the plight of the poor who were painfully obvious, in Bradford. She taught art in an elementary school for

many years. She was later to devote much of her energy to various forms of philanthropic educational work amongst the poorer classes.⁽¹⁰⁾ The Bradford P.E.U. was to provide Lienie with a challenging and exciting outlet at a time when she must have, undoubtedly been feeling especially hemmed in by home duties and child-bearing. She wrote to Miss Mason:

"...it was nice for us that we found you. It has often comforted me. With fondest love, your loving and grateful Lienie." (11)

Lienie's gift to Miss Mason was greater. She helped to change her life. Lienie's support and collaboration were essential to the founding of the society which was to promote Miss Mason's rise to fame. Later, Charlotte Mason, in claiming to be the sole founder of the P.N.E.U. was anxious to prove that she, alone, had initiated the total scheme for the P.N.E.U. Miss Cholmondeley has supported this contention by suggesting that the idea had originated during the preparation of the "Home Education" lectures which were the product of "much simmering thought" rather than afterwards.⁽¹²⁾ Charlotte Mason was much put about when she read the obituary notice after Lienie's premature death in 1921. The Ilkley Free Press and Gazette recorded, seemingly innocuously:

"Together they founded a society called the P.N.E.U....." (13)

No representative of the P.N.E.U., apart from G.K. Chesterton

who attended unofficially, was present at Lienie's funeral. With an apparent disregard for his state of mourning, Miss Mason, wrote to Francis Steinthal to complain of the Press notice. He, too, had been immensely supportive to her in the past. For example, he had helped to float the Parents' Review Company. He replied with courtesy:

"...I am so sorry to read that you have been pained by some silly newspaper reports. When I think of Lienie I don't know what she would say. She would be quite upset... It was of course, not written by me, but taken down from my recollections...

Of course I never dreamt of claiming for Lienie the sole foundership of the P.N.E.U.... The whole thing is absurd...

Your position is so secure that you should not give the matter any further thought. I do hope that you will never doubt our entire loyalty to yourself and the great cause which you stand for..." (14)

Perhaps Francis Steinthal's gentle and kindly response touched a chord in Charlotte Mason's heart. She endeavoured to make reparation. In the preface to her final book, which was completed shortly after Lienie's death, Charlotte Mason publicly attributed the initiation of the Liberal Education for All movement in the State elementary schools to Lienie:

"This is how the late Mrs. Francis Steinthal, who was the happy instigator of the movement in Council Schools wrote:- 'Think of the meaning of this in the lives of the children - disciplined lives, and no lawless strikes, justice, and end to class warfare, developed intellects and no market for trashy, corrupt literature! We shall, or rather they will, live in a redeemed world.'" (15)

The Bradford P.E.U. owed much to Lienie's warm-hearted reformist zeal. It was the product not only of the ideas in "Home Education" but also of joint discussions between Miss Mason, Mrs. Steinthal and the teachers and parents who joined the first committee.

6.2.ii The Bradford P.E.U.; A Definitive Experiment (1887-1891)

The Bradford P.E.U. was initiated "just before the summer holidays" in 1887. It was officially inaugurated at a meeting held in the hall of the Bradford Grammar School, in the presence of an invited audience, during the autumn of the same year. Although the Bradford P.E.U. remained in operation for only four years, the decisions made at the first exploratory summer meetings were to define the shape of the P.N.E.U. branches for the following thirty-four years. Lienie Steinthal "invited several of her friends" to meet Charlotte Mason in the drawing-room of 2, Walmer Place. It was intended for

"... parents who would be interested who could form a society to carry out Miss Mason's ideas on education..." (16)

Both teachers and influential local citizens were invited. The P.E.U., which was modelled on the format of the prestigious and learned Bradford Philosophical Society (1865), was destined to be an influential body of teachers and parents which aimed, both directly and indirectly, to raise the general standard of upbringing and education among all classes of society.

The original account of the first Bradford committee meetings described in the Parents' Review, clarified that all decisions were made corporately and that no especial lead was taken by Miss Mason. She may have addressed the initial meeting on the basis of a scheme, hastily put together on a "simple sheet of foolscap", but as this document has not survived, there is no objective proof that she did so. It seems probable that an early lead was taken by the teaching profession. The Rev. W. Keeling, who joined the P.E.U. with his wife, was headmaster of the prestigious Bradford Grammar School, which he was in the process of turning into a centre of excellence by attracting the brightest boys from the local "Higher Grade Board Schools" through a system of scholarships. Mr Keeling was also President of the Bradford Branch of the Teachers' Guild whose aims were remarkably similar to those of the new P.E.U. (17) His Vice-President was Mr. Rooper (1847-1903), the distinguished Bradford H.M.I. who had already been in contact with Miss Mason over her "Geographical Readers." A bachelor and liberal educationalist, he was committed to the reform of elementary education. As a former tutor, he also had some insight into upper-class home education issues. He "drew himself into every movement likely to interest teachers in their profession and so humanise their work." (18) Although Charlotte Mason made no arrangements to send a P.N.E.U. representative to Mr Rooper's funeral in

1903, she subsequently wrote positively of his contribution to the P.N.E.U.:

"From the first inception of the idea he was with us. He was a member of the first committee which held many meetings in Bradford ... he went straight to the principles of the Union and embraced them with great warmth and insight ... But we of the Parents' Union seem to have worked a new vein in that so rich mind and generous nature..." (19)

It seems probable that Mr Rooper and Mr Keeling were mainly responsible for devising the P.E.U. principles rather than acting merely as responsive witnesses.

Apart from the educationalists, those with local standing were invited to join. These included, Mrs. Illingworth, "a member of one of the best known Bradford families", Mrs. E P Arnold-Forster, a daughter-in-law of the late M.P., Mrs. Alfred Priestman, "a well-known Quaker", representing non-conformity and Mrs. Gates, the wife of the local County Court judge.⁽²⁰⁾ The first President of the Bradford P.E.U. was Mrs. Boyd Carpenter, the second wife of the silver-tongued Bishop of Ripon, beloved of Queen Victoria and the absent-minded father of eleven.⁽²¹⁾ It seems most unlikely that "Mrs. Boyd Carpenter was another young mother who wrote for advice in 1887", as Miss Cholmondeley has claimed.⁽²²⁾ Later to work closely with Lienie over the establishment of the Mothers' Union in Yorkshire, she must, surely, have been asked to become the President to confer prestige and to forge links with the Church of England hierarchy.

In this way, the Bradford prototype for the P.N.E.U. was established on the basis of alliances formed primarily between professional educationalists and the locally influential.

6.2.iii The Aims and Objects of the Bradford P.E.U.

The Bradford P.E.U. was characterised by far-reaching reformist aims and strictly limited objectives. At the first meeting, it was "hazarded that the education of the parents was the object of the society..."⁽²³⁾ Presumably this suggestion emerged from the critical perspective of the teachers present.

"... A proposal to educate the parents sounds a little like an offer to teach the doctors - to the non-parent at any rate who has a great respect for parents per se..."⁽²⁴⁾

This statement is indicative of the growing public criticism of contemporary parental practice both within the schools and nationally through the new movements on behalf of children's rights.⁽²⁵⁾ It was an act of temerity to criticise prestigious parents from the "educated classes." To win their interest and exemplary concern for the new educational movement, it was suggested that the knowledge to be offered through the Union was not only new, but of an advanced nature. It could be acquired by members of the "educated classes" to equip them to fulfil their traditional role of instructing the lower orders more effectively:

"...It became clear that the object of the society was the study of the Laws of Education as they bear on the bodily development, the moral training, the intellectual work and the religious upbringing of the children... to bring common thought on the subject of education to the level of scientific research, the question is, how to give parents grip of the enormous leverage offered by some half-dozen physiological truths..." (26)

This Spencerian statement, leavened with religion, attempted to establish both that parents should master the new knowledge and also that, those who were cultured were probably already fulfilling the ideals of upbringing to a great extent. The P.E.U. was established during a transitional phase in the relationship between the parents and the professionals. Before the post-War Truby King era when mothers from all social classes were believed to be as gravely in need of habit training as their infants, partnership between the professionals and parents from the educated classes appeared to be a viable proposition. (27)

"The practical wisdom of experienced parents... should be of the greatest service to the rest; and besides parents, other persons interested in education should be useful allies, if only on the principle that lookers on see MUCH of the game..."

"... The most desirable members are young earnest-minded people, full of purpose for their children. They are, no doubt, the very persons most likely to bring up their children well, but ... in an attempt to educate public opinion it is a great thing to have the best on our side..." (28)

Although it was a popular upper class Victorian belief that a little good influence from above inspired the

masses as the leaven raised the level of the dough, it may also be inferred that Miss Mason's desire for the P.E.U. to be publicly influential, which was clearly expressed in her report took precedence over direct social reform. Accordingly, because the society was destined to be influential, eligibility was more important than universality.

Lienie Steinthal and Thomas Rooper were among those who wished to reach the poorer classes. They may have been responsible for the clause that "parents of whatever class should be eligible as members." (29) Although this clause was retained in the final draft of the "objects", the poorest parents were automatically excluded from membership, although it was piously hoped that they would benefit from indirect influence. The artisan classes offered more promising material. Two classes of members, as in the Mothers' Union (1885) were proposed: the educated parents who would pay five shillings and the artisans who would pay nothing. (30) In fact joint meetings were not held. At Lienie's insistence a meeting for artisan parents was held at the Temperance Hall. During the second session of the P.E.U., there were also "four working mothers' meetings, two mixed parents' meetings and three meetings for nursemaids" as well as various parish "mothers' meetings" and "women's guilds", which had been given talks on "matters concerning sanitation and moral and religious training." (31)

"The question of 'class legislation' caused some perplexity ... It was felt that, while here was common ground on which rich and poor should meet together, yet... the details of home training and culture are not the same for people who have nurseries and artistic surroundings and for those whose lot is cast within narrower lines..." (32)

From the outset, the Bradford pioneers found it impossible to achieve universality because the barriers to communication between parents of different social classes on a basis of equality, were too great. This conflict was solved by exclusive membership.

Other conflicting aims were present within the P.E.U. from the outset. The question of whether the purpose of the Union was the education of the members or public opinion was solved by the inclusion of the fathers. A father, who was present at the first committee, argued that fathers should belong because they "must share with mothers the responsibility of bringing up children and what is to be of use to one should help the other also." (33) However, "Home Education" had been addressed to ladies only. Furthermore the whole issue of education for motherhood was bound up with the problem of girls' inadequate education in general. In a sense, they required education to win a place among the cultured classes. (34) Men were already deemed to be highly educated. Although many of the fathers who had been educated at the public schools would have had little knowledge of the "science of education" it was readily appreciated that the

presence of gentlemen would confer prestige and help to promote the Union's influence:

"Certainly the Society must gain in vigour and power by the inclusion of fathers, so the suggestion was accepted joyfully." (35)

Charlotte Mason followed Spencer in advocating that young, unmarried people should be eligible for membership. In fact, young people were never officially invited to join the Union. No provision was made for separate meetings to meet their special needs. Perhaps the parents on the committee were responsible for their exclusion:

"Young people are lynx-eyed in spying inconsistencies and might be quick to think, if they did not say, that theory and practice failed to jump together." (36)

The actual work undertaken by the Bradford P.E.U., the prototype for all the other branches, seems modest by comparison with the original large aims. The education was to be transmitted by means of the lecture, beloved by the Victorians. Apart from the public meetings and artisan groups already mentioned, there were four lectures during the first winter programme (1887-88). In the summer, two field excursions were arranged for mothers and children under nine, to acquaint them with all natural objects near their homes as recommended by Spencer and Huxley. (37)

Eighty members had reputedly joined after the meeting at the Bradford Grammar School in 1887. By the second session (1888-89) membership was said to have doubled although the figure has not been recorded. Lady Aberdeen and Mrs. Boyd Carpenter were among those who gave lectures that year. No reason has been given for the collapse of the branch in 1891. The closure was presumably linked to the departure of Miss Mason and the Steinthals already mentioned. However, the decisions made during the first year of work in Bradford were to define the scope and extent of the work in all the other branches.

6.3.1 Going National:

From Miss Mason's point of view, the Bradford branch provided the means of entry into a larger universe. In preparation for the autumn meeting in 1887 she had written:

"We wish to make it clear at the outset that we do not propose a local society with only local objects but that we are wanting to unite with other branches and be affiliated with a centre when that arise.

Union is strength and who knows but we may turn out to be a powerful society some day and do great things in the cause of education... a large hope will do no harm in the meantime..."(38)

Taking advantage of Mrs. Groveham's move to the house next door, she determinedly planned her national campaign from the more prestigious-sounding address

"Mornington House, Bradford. (39)

There were three ways in which Miss Mason promoted national expansion of the P.E.U. First, there was continuous propaganda through letter and pamphlet writing, lecturing and meeting people. Secondly, certain key meetings were held to establish the Union, nationally, on a proper legal footing. Thirdly, as Miss Clough had observed, "it was apparent that the Society must have an organ expressing definitely the views it was designed to advance." (40)

With a remarkable verve and audacity, Miss Mason sent letters to all the influential people in Education and the Church who seemed likely to show an interest in the embryo Union. (41) She used Lady Aberdeen's name as an initial introduction. However, not all her correspondents responded positively. The choleric Archbishop Benson (1829-1896) found Miss Mason's aims unclear and did not lend his name to the emergent Society. (42) With some contacts she was more fortunate. She visited Miss Clough (1820-1892) the gentle founder and Principal of Newnham, in Cambridge. Miss Clough vigorously and helpfully criticised "The Draft Proof" of the new Union, which had been hastily put together on the train. She urged Miss Mason to keep the society on a local basis:

"She (Miss Clough) united in a unique way the old and the new. She understood and believed in parents of the sort who educated their children quietly on the lines of EVENINGS AT HOME etc. She had no sympathy with the cry which for a while obtained among educationalists: "Oh that children were born without parents." (43)

Miss Clough also introduced Miss Mason to several influential people from Brooke Foss Westcott (1825-1901) to Frances Buss (1827-1894). It was probably also on this occasion that Miss Mason took tea with Oscar Browning, followed by Chapel at King's. (44) A local society was out of the question. Miss Mason was enjoying her new life, pleased that she could hold her own in intellectual conversation at an ancient university.

6.3.ii Establishing the P.N.E.U.

The final version of "The Draft Proof" provided Charlotte Mason with a basic pamphlet to send out. It was printed and circulated early in 1889. (45) By the end of that year, Miss Mason, who had prematurely ordered letter heads printed with P.N.E.U. at the top, arranged for letters to be sent to all known supporters to proclaim the satisfactory progress of the new Union. Apparently eight meetings had been held in London which resulted in five branches being formed in the Metropolis. Six more were in the process of formation and twelve provincial branches were confidently expected by January 1890. In all, "about seven hundred persons were addressed in groups...These were usually influential

inhabitants of their several neighbourhoods. The audiences were in all cases sympathetic, sometimes enthusiastic..." (46)

The important London meeting, held in the Indian music room of Lord and Lady Aberdeen's house in Grosvenor Square, demonstrated the success of Miss Mason's determined campaign to attract the influential to her cause. The meeting was deemed "informal" because the number of professional educationalists who attended actually outnumbered the ordinary parents. However, those present managed to constitute themselves into an "informal central council", with sufficient powers to set up a provisional London executive committee under the chairmanship of Canon Daniel, a former Principal of the Battersea Training College. (47)

The provisional executive committee met, immediately after the Christmas holidays, at the Graham Street High School, to draft the constitution of the new Union. (48) The following month, a provisional Central Council meeting was held at the College of Preceptors, by kind invitation of Robert H. Quick. Several leading educationalists who had agreed to join the Council, or who had accepted vice-presidencies, were present. Emily Shirreff (1814-1897), the founder of the Froebel Society (1874) attended, as did the Rev T.W. Sharpe, an H.M.I. Finally, Anne Clough, despite her previous expressions of disapproval, untypically but "exquisitely dressed in rich black silks

fashioned to suit her own dignified personality", arrived to make her personal contribution to the formulation of the principles and objects of the new national Union. (49)

At last, on 3rd June 1890, the first official annual general meeting of the P.N.E.U. was held at Fulham Palace, by kind invitation of Dr. Frederick Temple (1821-1902), the Bishop of London, who presided. The Society was legally constituted and Miss Mason complimented for the "conception and inception" of the movement through her work in "establishing a small local Union" in Bradford. (50) In some ways the exhausting two year campaign had been a success. Miss Mason's Union had been safely launched from a Bishop's Palace, supported not merely by a handful of mothers but by senior pillars of the Church, Education and even Medicine. Her contribution had been publicly acknowledged. However, there was no suggestion, at that stage, that Miss Mason was the leader of the National Union. The newly defined "Principles and Objects" were also open to wide interpretation and made no specific reference to that definitive work, "Home Education". Furthermore, the new executive committee chairman, Canon Daniel, in arguing that the Union required an efficient centralised organisation in London indicated clearly that he thought that the management of the Union should pass into more experienced hands. Such comments

were a poor reward for her hard-fought achievements. The fact that Miss Mason was not content to be relegated to the status of amateur nor to let the control of the P.N.E.U. pass out of her hands entirely suggests that she had hoped that the Union would secure her personal fame and fortune. It seems likely that she would not have welcomed a patriarchal take-over even if further prestige had been conferred upon the Union in the process. (51) Although she withdrew, to some extent, from the challenging metropolitan centre of operations to build up a safe retreat in Ambleside, while Canon Daniel was at the helm, she was reluctant to relinquish her hold entirely. As it will be shown in Chapter 9, the threat to her position, when it came, was to be from a member of her own sex.

The Principles and Objects of the P.N.E.U. laid down at the College of Preceptors on 14th February 1890 although subject to periodic review, remained in essence, unchanged for the next thirty years. The following version is the one published after the revision of 1894 which was subsequently regularly printed in the annual reports.

"The CENTRAL Principles to which all Local Branches of the Society (while free to organise themselves) - shall be pledged are:-

- i) That a religious basis of work be maintained.
- ii) That the series of addresses and other means employed by the Union shall be so

arranged to deal with Education under the following heads a) Physical; b) Mental; c) Moral; d) Spiritual.

- iii) That arrangements concerning lectures etc. be made with a view to the convenience of fathers as well as mothers.
- iv) That the work of the Union be arranged to help parents of all classes.

THE OBJECTS ARE:

- a) To assist parents of all classes to understand the best principles and methods of Education, in all its aspects, especially those which concern the formation of habits and character.
- b) To create a better public opinion on the subject of the training of children, and with this object in view, to collect and make known the best information and experience on the subject.
- c) To afford to parents opportunities for consultation and co-operation so that the wisdom and experience of each may be profitable to all.
- d) To stimulate their enthusiasm through the sympathy of numbers acting together.
- e) To secure greater Unity and continuity of Education, by harmonising home and school training" (52)

6.3.iii The Parents' Review (1890-_____)

"The Society struggled into birth without its own magazine but it was felt, in the very early days, that such a Society, without an inspiring organ, would be a mere tool in the hand of every educational faddist who had a theory to advance..." (53)

The idea of starting a journal was not unusual. Most voluntary societies relied upon one to establish communications and to proclaim their message. For example, the Froebel Society published "Child Life" (54)

Charlotte Mason must have quickly recognised that a journal, edited by herself, would not only help to spread the Union nationally but also place the editor in a key role. It might also prove to be an acceptable channel of both propaganda and profit. Doubtless she felt that her experience with publishers, and in writing short articles for family magazines like "Cassell's" and "The Quiver" would stand her in good stead. (55) From the outset, the journal was designed to be an influential, cultural organ which was only peripherally concerned with direct issues of child upbringing and education:

"...a high class educational magazine appealing to a public of parents, not in the least 'popular', limited by the nature of its contents to educated and really earnest readers would seem foredoomed to failure..." (56)

The Parents' Review made its first appearance in February, 1890. It has remained in print up to the present day, although the name has been changed since the second world war. Most people had advised Charlotte Mason against the idea. The Boyd Carpenters thought it a very risky venture for someone without capital. However, the Cassandras were reckoning without the amazing strength of will and determination which Charlotte Mason displayed in getting this enterprise to take off. She had nothing to lose and everything to gain. She had a great capacity for tossing off a chatty moral tale with speed. (57) She had tremendous

powers of persuasion and a ruthless desire to succeed. She also understood the pleasure taken by budding authors in seeing their work in print. From the outset, she sought articles from the well-known but was equally ready to accept pieces from inexperienced writers.

Although she wrote to Oscar Browning, who had kindly supplied a paper for the third number, "The Review is the pivot upon which a great scheme of education turns." the journal was by no means able to fulfil that role⁽⁵⁸⁾. She was not able to carry out all her advertised plans. For example, "The Parents' Friend", an eight-paged tract for cottage mothers, containing "brightly written tales by an able writer" to "illustrate some one part of home training" was never produced.⁽⁵⁹⁾ Instead, she made plans to use Lady Aberdeen's own improving magazine for cottage mothers, "Onward and Upward" (1890) which had also been running into financial problems.⁽⁶⁰⁾ It appears that P.N.E.U. readers of the Review were reluctant to distribute this rather elaborately produced magazine amongst the poor and the subject was dropped. The Review, therefore did not reach a working-class readership and was not deemed suitable for such a purpose. The promised "nursery supplement" was also not produced. Instead, three years later, Lienie Steinthal edited a children's section, called "Aunt Mai's Budget".⁽⁶¹⁾ It seems clear that Charlotte Mason was less concerned with helping the parents than with attracting an intellectual and cultured

readership. In her second issue she felt constrained to apologise for devoting both the Editorial "and an undue proportion of articles... to a single topic" of child care and upbringing.⁽⁶²⁾

The influence was to be one of indirect cultural infusion, on the principle that "Education is an atmosphere" ⁽⁶³⁾ Lienie wrote, "We are more than delighted with no. 3. The whole thing is so first class."⁽⁶⁴⁾ Mrs. Whitaker Thompson commented, "I hardly know what it was that attracted me so strongly to the movement was it the Parents' Review - a magazine of Home Training and 'Culture'- magic word."⁽⁶⁵⁾ No one could have accused the Review of faddism. Within a very broad framework of Liberal Culture, no clear party line was discernible in the eclectic collection of varied articles. Like Miss Mason's own writings, the Review was a charming pot-pourri. Medical papers on hygiene were juxtaposed with literary pieces, as it were bringing the nursery into the boudoir. Editorship demanded considerable stamina. Miss Clough, who kindly supplied a paper, although she hated writing, wrote, "It is a great thing the Review answers and I hope it may succeed".⁽⁶⁶⁾ The early volumes illustrate the struggle to obtain material. Lienie's sister, for example, supplied "Star Charts." When all else failed, Charlotte Mason reproduced the notes from Mr. Dunning's lectures or filled the pages with her own moral tales, articles and poems, either anonymously or

under an assumed name such as "Heinrich Hoffman". Despite competition from the many comparable magazines, the Review eventually attracted a larger proportion of distinguished contributors mainly because they had lectured to P.N.E.U. groups. (67) As the Review became more "professional" the publication of the mothers' anxieties in the letter page ceased, presumably to maintain the outwardly ideal image of perfect parenthood, proclaimed by the P.N.E.U.

"How one remembers the 'fearful joy' of the first number of the P.R., what it was to fetch it from the publishers at the moment of issue, to carry it to the nearest A.B.C. shop, to ponder its pages and its cover...now with joy, now with anxiety, now with doubt, again with rejoicing! ... Was there the least chance in the world that so new a venture in magazine literature would find a public?..." (68)

Far from supporting the developing P.N.E.U., the Parents' Review, in reality, depended upon the members to produce the readership. It was initially financed through a Limited Company which Miss Mason must have persuaded the Steinthals and other Bradford friends such as James Gordon, the manager of the Old Bank to float. At first she hoped that it would become a financially independent enterprise, with some power over the P.N.E.U.:

"The Directors of the Parents' Review Company are so entirely in sympathy with the objects of the P.N.E.U. that they will be glad to afford space for the Society's Reports, notices etc at 20/- per page, 15/- per $\frac{1}{2}$ page and 8/- per $\frac{1}{4}$ page...." (69)

Unfortunately the P.N.E.U. did not have any money either. The Review was soon in desperate straits despite the backing of friends, including the Aberdeens. Once Charlotte Mason realised that the Review would never pay, despite the periodic appeals of the early years and once there was a new executive committee, after the 1894 débacle whose members she felt she could trust, she thankfully handed over the financial management of the Review to the P.N.E.U. She was permitted to retain Editorial control. This solution gave her the best of both worlds.⁽⁷⁰⁾

The main result of the hard work, which produced the regular monthly issue of the Parents' Review, was the additional prestige acquired by the Editor, within the P.N.E.U. circles. Miss Mason had been wise to seize hold of the position and courageous in putting her dream into effect. She displayed considerable resilience and flair in keeping the venture going and was charmingly uncritical of the contributions she received. However, the Review did not apparently attract a readership outside the P.N.E.U. The circulation rate seems closely linked to membership numbers. In 1907, 2,300 copies were issued. In the later expansionist phase in schools, the circulation rose to something over 45,000 in 1925.⁽⁷¹⁾ There is no evidence to suggest that the Review was responsible for the transformation of child upbringing within the exclusive circles it was read.

6.4.i The Limits to P.N.E.U. Development: "Class Legislation" against the Poorer Classes

As a general rule, the P.N.E.U. branches followed the example of Bradford in excluding all but the "educated classes" from membership. The late nineteenth century arguments for education for motherhood were rooted in various anxieties about the physical and moral weakening of the Nation and religious adherence. There was some tension between the different approaches to family reform.⁽⁷²⁾ Some sought moral solutions by missionising campaigns. Others such as the Fabian Socialists (1885) or the members of the Christian Social Union (1889) argued the merits of direct social engineering to alleviate family problems. The P.N.E.U. was most closely aligned to the liberal education philosophy of Canon Samuel Barnett (1844-1913), with whom Miss Mason was, herself, in correspondence in 1909.⁽⁷³⁾ Barnett believed in the civilising effect of the transmission of culture by the educated classes to the masses. This philosophy provided the basis for the argument that parents of all classes should be brought together in one union to share an experience which was common to all. On the one hand, the educated mothers could exert a cultural and "gentling" influence upon their "poorer sisters." On the other hand, those anxious about a declining birth rate and church attendance amongst the educated classes may have implicitly hoped that association with capable artisan mothers, blessed

with a rosy-cheeked quiverful might encourage a rise in the proportion of educated-class children to the total child population:

"It has been a prevailing thought in Christendom ... that ... even large families are a blessing; that ... they are a proof of physical and moral healthiness..." (74)

It was important to ensure that the idle upper class wife had a proper work to do for the Nation.⁽⁷⁵⁾

The Mothers' Union (1885) confronted the problems of "union" by boldly establishing two categories of membership. While some mothers from both the M.U. and P.N.E.U. were prepared to meet with working class mothers under certain circumstances, the whole pattern of rigid chaperonage and segregated education imposed upon carefully trained upper and middle class Victorian children, suggests that a contamination effect was feared if upper and lower class families intermingled too freely.⁽⁷⁶⁾ Upper class Mothers' Union members were expected to extend the public influence of the society. Working class members were given direct guidance for living. Their membership card included a list of specific instructions, such as: "You are strongly advised never to send your children to the public house" or "Do not allow young girls to go about the streets at night."⁽⁷⁷⁾ It was inconceivable that such situations could arise in the families of the educated classes.

However, in an age devoted to philanthropic reform, the P.N.E.U. failure to reach working class parents remained a small but nagging presence like a thorn in the flesh of comfortably situated P.N.E.U. members. Even Charlotte Mason had been spurred into action by the publication of the Salvationist, General Booth's universalist paradigm for social redemption:

"In Darkest England and the Way Out". (1890) She argued, in the Review, that educational habit training and presentation of ideas offered a better corrective to the adverse effects of heredity than conversion.⁽⁷⁸⁾ In her view, which was shared by many of her P.N.E.U. colleagues, one could do little for "a class whose sole heritage is an inconceivable and incalculable accumulation of vicious inclinations and propensities."⁽⁷⁹⁾ This absolved the P.N.E.U. from the necessity of engaging in direct reform.

Mr Rooper and Mrs Steinthal were not, however, content with passive acquiescence. They did not subscribe to the prevailing belief that good influences gently permeated through to the mass of ignorant and feckless working class parents. At Mrs. Franklin's first P.N.E.U. Conference in 1897, Mr Rooper pointed out that, after ten years, the P.N.E.U. had not fulfilled the terms of the "original draft" by bringing "the best current thought on education" before the artisan classes, nor "among domestic servants who

are in charge of children" (80). Quoting liberally from Mrs. Bosanquet's "Rich and Poor", Mr Rooper argued that artisan mothers were in great need of practical education in the management of their homes and in the training of their children to create a more responsible future parenthood.

"Improved earning power would no doubt make women of the poorest class respected by men, but nothing short of an altogether higher standard of civilisation can raise them out of bondage and give them a chance of leading a life worth living. This is the real 'woman's question' of the day..." (81)

Mr. Rooper's practical solution was to recommend the setting up of a British institution, similar to the Pestalozzi-Froebel House in Berlin, which he believed to be superior to the new schools of cookery, laundry-work and housekeeping which were being introduced in England at that time. (82) The Berlin courses were not merely practical, but included training in all aspects of child development. Through a shared need for such knowledge, Mr. Rooper expressed the hope that rich and poor might study, side by side, in the lecture room, the kindergarten or at the ironing board. (83)

During the discussion which followed, both Mrs. Steinthal and Mrs. Anson urged that more should be done directly with the poorer classes. Fortunately for the Founder's peace of mind, Mrs. Franklin, threw cold water on Mr. Rooper's recommendations. As the

executive committee minutes reveal, she shared with Miss Mason the desire to extend the P.N.E.U. influence among the upper echelons of society. She saw no useful purpose in direct work with the poor and persuasively pleaded caution: (84)

"...I think we ought to remember that we are not a very strong body yet, therefore I think before we start anything fresh we ought first of all to urge upon all the members to help us in the work of the Union and not leave it to a few. Many societies are weakened by stretching out in too many directions." (85)

Mrs Franklin claimed that the P.N.E.U. had indirectly influenced the lives of the poor through work in Mothers' Meetings and Girls' Clubs. "... I think that for some time to come our work should be more in that way." (86)

This summing up by the forceful Mrs. Franklin protected those P.N.E.U. members disinclined to engage in direct contact with the poorer classes and subtly defined the limits to P.N.E.U. involvement. Questions concerning the poor were periodically raised at the annual meetings of the Branch secretaries. Although general approval was extended towards those branches such as Finchley, Brondesbury, Birmingham or Liverpool who introduced lectures for children's nurses, courses for artisan mothers or sent lady P.N.E.U. members as "lecturers not speakers" to mothers' meetings and guilds, there was no generalised campaign to reach the working

classes, apart from extending the talks to nurses which was directly beneficial to the P.N.E.U. members and their families.⁽⁸⁸⁾

The very limited development of the work among the poorer classes suggests not only a reluctance to bridge the class divide but that the P.N.E.U. members saw themselves as "the poor dear neglected rich" who needed the various services of the Union for their own benefit.⁽⁸⁹⁾ Those of the more conventional who were preoccupied with serving the needs of husbands and children and perhaps keeping up standards on a small income may have had little energy, confidence or education to enable them to feel adequately equipped to venture out of the leafy suburbs into dingy temperance halls.⁽⁹⁰⁾ Others reared in the individualist tradition and versed in the prevailing ideology of the hereditary determinants of character and the evolutionary superiority of the cultured classes, would have seen no purpose in intervention.⁽⁹¹⁾ Not all however were satisfied with this expression of laissez-faire. Lienie Steinthal had always been deeply concerned for the poor. She withdrew from active P.N.E.U. work from 1901-1914 to devote her energies to the Mothers' Union which she believed was reaching the poor and needy in a more realistic way.⁽⁹²⁾ Lienie represented the social conscience of the P.N.E.U. and of Charlotte Mason. In one sense the Liberal Education for All Movement in the elementary schools was an act of reparation for the

for the neglect of "those whose lot is cast within narrower lines."

6.4.ii The Limits to P.N.E.U. Development; the Peripheral Paterfamilias.

The P.N.E.U. was primarily a Women's society, operating under feminine leadership. In many respects, the relationship of the P.N.E.U. to the upper and middle class men, who shared jointmembership with their wives, was like that of the little girl to her absentee father in the proverbial Victorian tale, recounted, amid much laughter, at the second annual general meeting of the Union, by the eminent physician, Sir James Crichton Browne (1840 - 1938): "'Mamma' asked a child, 'who is that gentleman who comes here on Sunday and carves the joint?'"⁽⁹³⁾ The separate spheres of domestic life, in the context of a prevailing ideology of the absentee professional or businessman father, were mirrored in the structure of the P.N.E.U. The women organised the day to day details while the men were treated as respected but occasional visitors.⁽⁹⁴⁾

The general dearth of articles on the subject of "Fatherhood" in the Parents' Review offers one measure of the limited public P.N.E.U. interest in the subject. During the first thirty-four years of issue, only nine articles on the specific theme of fatherhood were published. Of these, all except one, were written by men. Four of these articles were published during the

first seven years. The remaining five were spread thinly over the following twenty-eight. In comparison, thirty-six pieces on motherhood were printed during the same period. There were also, for every year of publication, no fewer than two papers, and sometimes as many as nine or ten, dealing with one or more aspects of childhood. It is true that thirty-seven articles on parenthood also appeared during the same period. In these, however, the subject of parenthood tended to be treated somewhat abstractly and idealistically after the manner of Miss Mason's early but short-lived run of uplifting propagandist essays, later brought together in her second book: "Parents and Children" (1896) ⁽⁹⁵⁾

Charlotte Mason had not originally envisaged the inclusion of the fathers in her educational scheme. Her popular articles, written during the late 1880's invariably portrayed the master of the house as much wiser, more caring and understanding than his wife. ⁽⁹⁶⁾ Theoretically, it should not have been easy for a Victorian spinster to argue the case for the reform of fatherhood. However, in response to the interest shown at the first Bradford meetings, she launched into the subject in her first editorial for the Parents' Review:

"Children ... are not...born fatherless; and that the male should be ever on the wing homewards with a worm in his bill is not, however, praiseworthy, the sole duty that attaches to human paternity. This is not a

protest against the practice of fathers. The annals of fatherhood would, no doubt, furnish as fine reading as those of motherhood. But it is a protest against the notion that early education is the concern of the mother alone." (97)

Like other spinsters of her era, Charlotte Mason appears to have entertained genuine feelings of respect for the Victorian paterfamilias with whom she rarely came into intimate contact.⁽⁹⁸⁾ It is clear that she primarily welcomed the inclusion of the fathers in the Union for their intellectual contribution as well as for their wider social and professional influence. From the beginning, in common with the organisers of other voluntary societies of the period such as the N.S.P.C.C., it had been her deliberate policy to seek the support of leading Churchmen, educationalists, aristocrats and men of affairs in the light of her ruling principle, "it is a great thing to have the best on our side."⁽⁹⁹⁾ It would have seemed presumptuous to have laid on a "Fathers' Education Course." P.N.E.U. gentlemen displayed a tendency to be highly educated. Most of them seem to have been educated at one of the nine great public schools as well as Oxford or Cambridge. Indeed, no gentleman had volunteered for Miss Mason's hastily conceived Ambleside Summer School in 1891. The fathers were to be treated with a cautious respect. The same attitude is reflected in the only specific reference to the fathers in a P.N.E.U. Annual Report, during Miss Mason's lifetime:

"It is the only Union of the sort that regards fathers as having a practical interest in the child's welfare as well as the mothers, and fathers are a distinct power in the conferences and deliver themselves of many wise remarks and practical precepts at the numerous local meetings." (100)

It was not in Miss Mason's character to seek confrontation. Her strategy was withdrawal at times of conflict. Her relationship with gentlemen, apart from those such as Canon Daniel over whom she could exert no power, were characterised by alliance. Although Miss Mason aspired to a leading position in the P.N.E.U., it is not immediately obvious that she was responsible for the relegation of the paterfamilias to the periphery of the P.N.E.U. in order to promote her own advance within the society. However, as her experience with Canon Daniel exemplified, gentlemen often displayed a tendency to take control of any organisation in which they were involved. Miss Mason had control of the publications of the P.N.E.U. It is therefore possible that the neglect of the subject of fatherhood in the Parents' Review and the Annual Reports was linked to her personal views. Such a neglect, after all, merely reflected prevailing ideologies of absentee fatherhood within upper and middle class circles.

Victorian middle class men, as "A Father" pointed out, were away from home for the greater part of the day. (100) In wealthy homes, where a large staff was employed, the father enjoyed very limited access to the nursery,

the province of "the natural guardians of infancy, the mother and the nurse." (102) Despite a revival of interest in Rousseau's ideas, the notion of placing the child within the context of a grand educational scheme, supervised by the father, seemed too problematic for an industrial, urbanised society. Nobody seriously expected the resurrection of a Richard Lovell Edgeworth or an Isaac Taylor. Schools were believed to be the right places for educational experimentation. (103)

The Rev. H.S. Swithinbank remarked, "So, child-study is a chief requisite of fatherhood." (104) This was Sully's solution to the problem of low paternal interest in young children. Both Charles Darwin (1809-1882) and leading P.N.E.U. Council member, R.H. Quick had kept diaries of their children's developmental progress as forerunners of the Piagetian method. (105) Sully claimed that men were best suited to this type of scientific research:

"...Women who have had scientific training will, if they happen to become mothers, hardly be disposed to give their minds at the very outset to the rather complex and difficult work ... It is for the coarser fibred man, then to undertake much of the early experimental work in the investigation of child-nature." (106)

Under Miss Mason's influence, the P.N.E.U. was opposed to "Child Study". This was justified on the Romantic Wordsworthian, pre-evolutionary view of the child as a "person". (107) To make these little "angels" the

subject of a scientific investigation implied that they were a sub-human species. Miss Mason was also opposed to competition from rival societies and was, for example, as strongly opposed to the Froebelians as the Child Study Association. Her model of fatherhood stemmed from Locke and Lord Chesterfield rather than Sully.

Furthermore, child investigation would restore the nursery to paternalist rule. Miss Mason may have been aware that P.N.E.U. mothers were reluctant to relinquish their control over the staff and children in the segregated nurseries of large houses, in view of their otherwise dependent status. Much of her work was devoted to helping mothers gain more control over their lives through the educational schemes and the provision of trained governesses. Few, seriously envisaged the fathers following the popular views of William Cobbett and taking pleasure in sharing with their wives the everyday care and nurture of the children.⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ Not only was this approach better suited to the servantless household but it seemed inappropriate for a rising, manly man, wishing to display "conspicuous consumption". There was an additional problem, as Mr. Swithinbank noted in his P.N.E.U. lecture. Undue attention to small infants was the mark of a cottage father:

"I can never get over the surprise with which I see working-class fathers snatch up a grimy, howling baby and walk about with it

in their arms, pressing kisses on its cheeks,
and crooning lovingly, 'what be 'um doin' to
'ee lil gal; what be 'um doing' to 'ee then?'"(109)

It was common belief that working class fathers were feckless, tending to shift responsibility on to the mother and the state school. Such a fussing over a baby was indicative of the failure of this class to inculcate their young with orderly habits and due subservience. Such behaviour in a middle class father would appear undignified and irresponsible.(110)

Not only was the middle class father barred from the nursery and prevented from showing affection towards his offspring but his educational role in respect of his sons had been eroded by the expansion of school education.(111)

In an increasingly competitive society where meritocracy was replacing the traditional forms of patronage, it was understandable, as several contributors to the Review suggested, that late Victorian and Edwardian fathers perceived their educational duties towards their children to begin and end with the selection of a public school.(112)

As the father's responsibilities were believed to be diminishing, the mothers' duties were expected to increase, particularly if, as was usual among P.N.E.U. families, the daughters remained on their hands until marriage.(113)

Furthermore, the popular ideology of upper class female purity, combined with the contemporary elevation of "Motherhood", encouraged the view that maternal guidance was as essential for the moral development

of both sons as well as daughters, at a time of anxiety about the corrupting influences of public school life.⁽¹¹⁴⁾ All the father was left with, as most of the nine P.N.E.U. writers on fatherhood agreed, was his authority.

The popular image of the paterfamilias, like his inspiration, "The Father of All" was of a remote figure who symbolised "Authority" and "Justice".⁽¹¹⁵⁾ As the provider he also presented a model of citizenship and discipline appropriate to a class obsessed with habit training and character formation, in the future generation. It was a reversal of Ruskin's fears. After decades of endeavouring to adjust to the demands of work in large scale enterprises away from home, the paterfamilias had acquired status by virtue of the moral fibre and character he displayed in working for the Nation.⁽¹¹⁶⁾ His home gained in strength from his presence and the power of his authority derived from his public service. If the adjustment of the paterfamilias to a working life outside the home seemed complete, at home the equilibrium was in danger of being upset as the domesticated mother endeavoured to gain entry to the public sphere. The late Victorian and Edwardian decades were difficult times for the married women, particularly if they had daughters.⁽¹¹⁷⁾

Notwithstanding the defined P.N.E.U. aims and objects, the very limited public discussion of fatherhood in P.N.E.U. circles suggests an acceptance by both the leadership and the membership of the inevitability of

middle and upper class paternal absenteeism. It is not known if fatherhood was discussed informally in the branches. Apart from the Review papers, already mentioned, Fatherhood was not selected as a lecture topic. Research into the Birmingham branch, to be discussed in the next chapter, confirms that the fathers were relegated to the background. Furthermore, despite public concern about the alleged fecklessness of the artisan father, there seems to have been no attempt to reach him at his usual meeting places, comparable to the forays made by some P.N.E.U. lecturers into Mothers' meetings and the like. The study of the Liverpool Victoria Settlement branch in the next chapter confirms this educational neglect of the artisan father.

However there was no comparable decline in emphasis on the authority of the paterfamilias which was vested in him by virtue of his position as provider and head of the household. The P.N.E.U. response developed during a period when child-care and early education were increasingly being regarded as the mother's sphere. The women, who had begun to benefit from improved education, used this period of adjustment to extend control not only over their nurseries but also over their personal lives. Despite their politically subordinate position, those with nurses and governesses could use the freedom this gave them, at times when their husbands were absent from home, to exert power in situations, such as P.N.E.U.

committees, without seriously altering the authority-docility ratio in the domestic sphere.⁽¹¹⁸⁾ P.N.E.U. mothers were not "new women" but were in the process of making gentle adjustments to their lives in accordance with the trend towards the emancipation of women.⁽¹¹⁹⁾ Similarly, as the effective leadership of the P.N.E.U. came to be vested in matriarchal hands, the male members were looked to for support, rather than direction, and as providers of political, social and intellectual resources in what was primarily considered to be the woman's sphere.

6.4.iii The Limits to Sisterhood between Matriarchs;
The Small-Scale Development of the P.N.E.U. Branches:
(1887-1921)

At first, Charlotte Mason and her colleagues had envisaged the universal development of the P.N.E.U. primarily through the establishment of national and international networks of local branches, with a membership of teachers and parents working in partnership. However, the growth of this central aspect of P.N.E.U. work was strictly limited. The P.N.E.U. remained a very much smaller concern than, for example, the comparable Mothers' Union, which profited from its close links with the existing world-wide organisation of the Anglican Communion. By the end of the First World War, with some notable exceptions, the day of the P.N.E.U. branches was virtually over. The expansion of the P.N.E.U. movement was thereafter

promoted in private and State schools. Local branch autonomy was curtailed in 1921 through constitutional changes designed to encourage the formation of area associations for the support of P.N.E.U. schools.

There were at least three internal institutional reasons for the limited growth of the P.N.E.U. branches. First, as shown in section 6.4.i., the P.N.E.U. developed as a society for individualist mutual support amongst the upper classes and failed to devise an outgoing programme of social reform, as recommended in the original objects. Such a programme would not only have provided a more definite raison d'être for meeting but would also have won alliances with child care and educational professionals. Secondly, the exclusion of the fathers discussed in section 6.4.ii and the vesting of organisational control in matriarchal hands, deprived the Society of access to male external networks, at a time when women, confined to the domestic sphere, were primarily limited to local neighbourhood contacts. In contrast, the Mothers' Union flourished by sharing the male networks of Church organisation. Finally it will be argued in this section, that the P.N.E.U. was dominated by Charlotte Mason who had originally encouraged the individualist self-supporting tendencies of the mothers, through the educational schemes to be reviewed in Chapter 8, because she had hoped, in this way, to be supported both socially and financially by the P.N.E.U. However, when the locally autonomous branches failed to produce a sufficient

number of disciples, well-versed in her writings, she rejected the branches in favour of schools.

In 1892, the first P.N.E.U. annual report proclaimed a healthy growth. Although the Bradford P.E.U. had collapsed within four years, there were 14 active branches in England and four more in the process of formation. The P.N.E.U. had also reached the colonies; a branch, that was to prove short-lived, was set up in Sydney, New South Wales. During the next fifteen years the number of branches increased to 33 in England and Scotland, 13 of these being based in London. There were also 4 in Melbourne, Victoria, with a membership of 88 people.

In 1907, the total P.N.E.U. membership was 2,314 at the time Mrs. Franklin remarked realistically that the P.N.E.U. was not a very strong society. Of this number, 990 belonged to the London branches. Mrs. Franklin's own branch: Hyde Park and Bayswater had risen to the top of the league table with a membership of 222. The branch was to hold this position until the amalgamation of all the London branches was organised in 1914. In spite of strong competition from the adjacent Belgravia branch, the Hyde Park and Bayswater membership, doubtless, additionally profited from Mrs. Franklin's political and Jewish networks. Apart from the Central Office, which could also boast a membership of over 200, because of "floating members", only three other branches had more than 100 subscribers. Membership of the remaining branches ranged

from 96 to 18, so that it would be difficult to talk about an average. In comparison, the Mothers' Union (1885) had established 1,550 branches with a membership of 60,000. By 1908, there were 250,000 members in 6,000 world-wide branches. (120)

P.N.E.U. membership reached its peak in 1913. There were 44 branches, which included four overseas branches. The total membership was 3,280. Only seven branches had more than 100 members. These larger branches tended to offer a wider range of activities such as classes and outings for the children, a Natural History club or musical evenings in addition to the programme of winter lectures. In 1920, the last year for which branch figures were recorded in the annual reports, the total membership had fallen to 2,646. There were 21 British and 2 overseas branches. There is no record of how the members felt about their branches nor how they viewed the work, apart from the limited comments contained in the study of the Birmingham Branch. Little additional information can be gleaned from the minutes of the annual branch secretaries' meetings, apart from the periodic request to do more for poorer mothers. All that can be concluded from the limited records is that the most successful, long-lasting branches, as the Birmingham study demonstrates, seem not only to have provided more interesting and varied educational programmes for the members, but also to have taken the needs of the children

into account. These larger branches probably owed their comparative success to matriarchal leaders who were, not only well-rooted within the local neighbourhood, but also had access to wider social or professional networks. (121)

Ellen A Parish, who had trained with Miss Mason, at the House of Education in 1902, was appointed assistant organising secretary to the London Central Office in 1907. She kept a diary of her branch propaganda work for the ever-watchful Miss Mason's benefit from 1907-09. Her notes confirm the preceding analysis. During her first six months she addressed sixty-one meetings in various parts of England, in an attempt to form new branches. She noted that she met with apathy and hostility, unless a local enthusiast of some standing had taken pains "to work up the meeting". (122) She found criticism of the expense of the work, the rule enjoining strict adherence to Miss Mason's teaching and the isolationist stance of the Society. (123) Small groups were resentful of the rule that a branch could not be represented on the Central Council nor receive free lectures unless there were fifty members. (124) A Mrs. Schultz from Northwood thought that the P.N.E.U. had had its day and was only suitable for younger mothers. (125) A Mrs. Wilson of Brondesbury said "hard things" of Miss Parish's paper on "Truthfulness" which had followed the P.N.E.U. line. (126) At Bexhill, Mrs. Sieveking was "grossly insulting about the way the P.N.E.U. works for its own profit." (127)

In the face of this variable and adverse response, where there was little local support for the P.N.E.U., it is not surprising that Miss Parish wailed, "I would give anything to know why it is I don't make people join." (128) Miss Parish, a true disciple, was merely confirming Miss Mason's suspicions that discipleship was rarely to be found amongst upper and middle class mothers in the provincial districts of England.

At first, the branches had been the raison d'être of the P.N.E.U., in Miss Mason's eyes, because they had provided her with the opportunity to enter public life. While her personal ambitions coincided with branch development, she was glad to support the work by energetic propaganda and public speaking up to about 1897. "Parents and Children" (1896) was publicly dedicated to the branches. She was, allegedly, frequently heard to utter, "I believe in Parents". (129) In 1894, the annual report had confirmed the primacy of the parents in the P.N.E.U.

"Many thus think that the P.N.E.U. is some new Union of school teachers, or at any rate is conceived primarily in school work and school life. Now the word education means 'to draw out' or 'to develope' and is rightly used for parental training in the formation of physical, mental and moral character. School teaching and book learning should never be called education...." (130)

Such adulation of the parental contribution to education and upbringing was to be short-lived. Perhaps the popularity of Home Education and her other homely

pieces on child training had lulled Charlotte Mason into the belief that the parental world would have been an easy one for her to conquer. Her earlier career as a teacher and lecturer had not been marked by similar approbation. However, the P.N.E.U. branches did not supply the parental support which Miss Mason desperately needed. The propaganda work as Miss Parish's notebooks and Mrs. Franklin's letters confirm, was demanding and difficult and the outcome uncertain. Neither the branches nor the Parents' Review were sources of remunerative support. Miss Mason had been obliged to devise the additional educational schemes, described in Chapter 8 to support herself and her various enterprises. Many branches formed with initial enthusiasm collapsed quite quickly. Miss Mason must also have been aware that the P.N.E.U. was very small and developing very slowly by comparison with other voluntary societies of a similar nature. Miss Mason withdrew from the affray, leaving the organisation of the branches in the capable hands of Mrs. Franklin. Miss Mason thereafter publicly attributed the failure of the branches to develop more widely, to weak discipleship and failure to understand basic P.N.E.U. principles. The notion that she was more interested in personal fame than in furthering the cause of universal education for parenthood is suggested by the following letter which she wrote to Mrs. Franklin in 1904, the year when she published her "Short Synopsis of Educational Theory". The letter was intended for the

Central Executive Committee:

"I think you have already brought before our Committee my strong sense that the P.N.E.U. is rather wasting its opportunities. It is practically a Society for providing desultory lectures to parents of a more or less instructive and stimulating character.

It might be, and was in my original intention, a College of Parents, existing to study and propagate a philosophy of education - I believe the only sufficient and efficient philosophy that exists.

I take all the blame to myself that we have not lived up to our calling... because it is so distasteful to have to proclaim one's message as one's own that I have tried to take refuge in the unmeaning phrase P.N.E.U. thought - a phrase which properly covers all the divers thought of all the members and all the lectures...

To one man is given the idea of a new button, to...this woman the perception of a beautiful, expansive, efficient and sufficient theory of education.

The people who get the message are more than enough honoured by the message, but it is necessary that it should bear their name....

The members of the Union know how they are indebted to those of our number who have embraced this teaching with passion and power and have gone about from Branch to Branch spreading the light.

I am getting old and I am in feeble health and am no longer able to go about winning adherents by guile! Therefore will you think me bold if I say I must have disciples...." (131)

Mrs. Franklin, as the sole Honorary Organising Secretary in London, from that year, was left to cope with the parents, the propaganda and the branches, despite her belief in extending professionally the school side of P.N.E.U. work. However, she perceived the danger of putting all the P.N.E.U. eggs into one basket and

worked diligently to push forward the expansion of the P.N.E.U. on all the fronts, apart from direct social reform which had been originally devised in Bradford. As it has already been noted, the strenuous propaganda campaign to form new branches, which had utilised Miss Parish's services, from 1907-1913, only succeeded in raising the number of members, from just over two thousand to just over three thousand, as England prepared to go to War. In the face of such markedly limited expansion, it is not surprising that Mrs. Franklin saw the future development of the P.N.E.U. in the sphere of both State and private school education.⁽¹³²⁾ She was the prime mover behind the 1921 constitutional changes which restricted the local autonomy of the traditional P.N.E.U. branches.⁽¹³³⁾

6.5 Conclusion:

The foregoing analysis, of the processes by which the P.N.E.U. became established as a small national society, has suggested at least some reasons why a comprehensive scheme of universal education for parenthood failed to develop through the local branches.

First, "Home Education" as has been suggested in Chapter 5 was inadequate as a definitive text for the P.N.E.U. As will be shown in Chapter 9, Charlotte Mason narrowed her educational perspective in response

to the threat to her status. At the same time, the P.N.E.U. members only had recourse to the Parents' Review which offered a diffuse, unclear and eclectic body of thought and to lecture courses which were similarly broadly based. No theory of education for parenthood was developed. The members were only united by similar social backgrounds and approaches to child training within a vaguely cultural and liberal educational context. Thus P.N.E.U. theory did not keep abreast of new developments in psychology, educational methods and physiology which characterised the early decades of the twentieth century.

These theoretical problems were aggravated by Charlotte Mason's insistence on becoming the philosophical leader of the P.N.E.U. She looked, unsuccessfully, to the branches to supply disciples rather than listening to the changing needs of the coming generations of P.N.E.U. mothers. Thus the P.N.E.U. became too individualist and turned in upon itself as a society. There was an almost universal refusal by the branches to engage in outgoing educational or social reform which would have brought alliances with other similar societies and professionals.

For a small society, the P.N.E.U. had a considerable public influence. This was due to the spread of discipleship, extensive propaganda on Mrs. Franklin's part as well as alliances formed with the aristocracy and socially influential. Matriarchy conferred standing in the Edwardian era. However, although the relegation

of the fathers to the periphery, enabled P.N.E.U. matriarchs to play a leading role in the general organisation there were few who had recourse to sufficiently far-reaching networks of public and social influence to enable the Union to grow in the English provincial towns. As will be shown in the next chapter, Dame Elizabeth Cadbury of Birmingham was a notable exception to this general rule. It will be argued in Chapter 9, that the power and influence of the P.N.E.U. was primarily vested in the hands of the two members of the controversial Mason-Franklin partnership.

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worked under her central organisation after Miss
Mason's death. The Ambleside contingent foiled this
plan until 14.7.1961

CHAPTER 7

Mothers Meeting: A Study of the Liverpool Victoria
Settlement P.N.E.U. Branch (1906-c1923) and the
Birmingham P.N.E.U. Branch. ((1394) 1902-1984)

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, a detailed study will be made of two P.N.E.U. branches to illustrate further how the organisation worked in practice. The Liverpool Victoria Settlement P.N.E.U. branch was located in the deprived inner city area of Everton and started with the purpose of educating artisan mothers in the principles of child training. It was selected for study because it was the only P.N.E.U. branch whose members did not belong to the "educated classes". The Birmingham branch was also based on a neighbourhood and initiated with the similar object of educating middle class parents, living in and around the spacious central suburb of Edgbaston. It was chosen because it was the only branch still in active operation, until March 1984.

These branches were not strictly comparable. There were obvious differences linked to size and longevity as well as to environment, organisation and social and economic status. However, the study has highlighted some common ground. The issues of the domestic "woman question", feminine education, citizenship and leadership, the father's role, exclusivity and the interaction of neighbourhood and community with both branches, in different ways, affected and limited the development of P.N.E.U. education for parenthood. These two studies have highlighted connections between P.N.E.U. membership and the status of the domesticated mother, both within the home and in relation to the wider community.

7.2. The Victoria Settlement P.N.E.U. Branch, Everton, Liverpool, (1906-c, 1923) Educating Mothers for Community Responsibility.

7.2.i. Liverpool at the turn of the Century:

Liverpool, the leading British provincial mercantile port during most of the nineteenth century, was also one of the major "problem" cities and a popular location for imitative and innovatory social reform.⁽¹⁾ Although by the end of the nineteenth century, Liverpool's population growth had declined in relation to other rising cities, many of the 147,000 inner city inhabitants were still very poor, inadequately housed and suffering from religious and racial tensions, exacerbated by immigration and urban congestion.⁽²⁾ In 1883, a pamphlet entitled, "Squalid Liverpool" showed that 23,690 cellars were occupied as dwellings with an inner city density of 1,200 persons to the acre.⁽³⁾ The two nations of rich and poor segregated into separate districts. One contemporary Bostonian commentator remarked that it seemed a "'crying evil' that two communities whose members dwell within the sound of the same bells and under the same chief magistrate should in many respects be practically as wide apart as if they resided in two quarters of the globe."⁽⁴⁾ The city was also divided by religious sectarianism. Perpetual strife between the Catholic and Protestant populations was still virulent at the turn of the century. "Processions were frequent, effigies were burnt amid intense excitement, and

street fights were not uncommon." (5)

Liverpool became a centre for philanthropy. The multifarious solutions devised to combat the city's social problems ranged from periodic, large-scale municipal interventions to a variety of persistent individual voluntary enterprises. (6) One such solution, which was brought to Liverpool from the south, was the Settlement idea. This was engendered by Canon Samuel Barnett, within the cloistered and cultured setting of Oxford University, in 1884, as a way not only of helping the poorer classes with organised relief, education and recreational facilities but of bridging the gap between rich and poor, by encouraging educated young men to live in the poorer urban districts where the Settlements were established. Late Victorian advocates of the Settlement movement assumed the permanence of the existing class order and sought to promote harmony between the upper and lower classes rather than radical change, through what H.G. Wells rudely called "benevolent pick-nicking". Barnett believed that the mutual sharing of the liberal culture acquired by his band of enthusiastic social reformers, at the ancient universities, would exercise a gentling effect and further social reconciliation through common educational interests. (7)

7.2.ii The Liverpool Settlements.

In 1897, the Victoria Women's Settlement was opened in Netherfield Road, Everton, sponsored by the Cheltenham

Ladies' College, during Miss Beale's time.⁽⁸⁾ The building, still in existence today, stood in a garden and had, "on clear days, a view of the Mersey widening to the sea, with occasional glimpses of great liners slowly moving down the estuary on their way to all parts of the world. At night, the flashing of lighthouses can be seen."⁽⁹⁾ It was situated at the heart of both Catholic and Protestant strongholds. The purpose of this new northern Settlement was essentially practical. It was for the relief of poverty and the provision of food and medical services, not free before the 1911 Insurance Act.⁽¹⁰⁾

On 12th July, 1906, a month after the first National Conference on Infant Mortality was held in London, the Victoria Women's Settlement branch of the P.N.E.U. began work. Three months later, Liverpool University opened a second Settlement which, although designed to meet the needs of men and boys to complement the work in Netherfield Road, subsequently broadened in scope to include all members of the family.⁽¹¹⁾ Although both Settlements provided a wide range of educational, recreational and social services, the new emphasis on babies and mothers, in response to the 1904 report of "The Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration" which gave impetus to the early twentieth century Infant Welfare movement, seems to have influenced the chosen spheres of work at the Settlements.⁽¹²⁾ Schemes to combat "physical deterioration", in the coming generation, as well as

"maternal ignorance" were set up in Liverpool from 1900 onwards. These included a variety of infant welfare services from the provision of uncontaminated milk from Milk Depots, health visiting, post and ante-natal care and day nurseries as well as the new statutory provisions for school meals and medical inspection through the Acts of 1906 and 1907. (13)

Because of these new provisions and the benefits conferred by the existing Settlement clubs, home visiting, classes and holiday schemes, Elizabeth Macadam, the Warden of the Victoria Women's Settlement, believed that enough was probably being done, in Liverpool, to meet the physical and material needs of the people. (14) She had doubtless absorbed the liberal education Settlement ideal and may have shared the fears of the majority of the Poor Law Commissioners (1905-09) that excessive philanthropy, particularly if involving material aid, would undermine the last remnants of personal responsibility among the poorer classes. (15) Although Miss Macadam must have been aware, from her special vantage point, that the solution to most of their material problems lay beyond the personal control of her poorer clients, trapped by the inequities of a capitalist market economy, the residue of the individualist Victorian belief that poverty was self-inflicted by fecklessness and ignorance, died hard. Miss Macadam, who desired to combat the national disease of "moral deterioration" believed that most of the twentieth

century "forms of social effort" were "frankly materialistic". (16)

7.2.iii. The Victoria Women's Settlement P.N.E.U. Branch
(1906-c. 1923)

It seems that both a liberal education philosophy and notions of fostering self-help informed Miss Macadam's aims in starting the Victoria Settlement P.N.E.U. Branch in 1906. Like the Edwardian Infant Welfare Campaigners, she believed that the most effective way to help local mothers improve the care and training of their children as well as the organisation of their homes, was through a non-materialistic educational programme geared to the needs of the neighbourhood. She looked for something better than the traditional Mothers' Meeting which, she believed, was suited only to the very poor and uncritical:

"At the worst I picture a stuffy, dirty schoolroom, a wheezy harmonium or jangling piano, rows of miserable white-faced women, with a considerable sprinkling of grandmothers, with babies in arms and toddling little ones, who are stuffed with biscuits by the kind ladies during the address to keep them quiet, a few hymns, a prayer, a passage read aloud from some sentimental story, a short religious address by the Church worker or curate, often a very young man; a clothing club and a fund for an outing in the summer represents thrift....." (17)

Miss Macadam preferred the Mothers' Union because it aimed:

"at educating its members in the duties of Motherhood, and that, though its main purpose is

spiritual, its programme is wide enough to include anything that concerns healthy home life..."(18)

However, the Church of England affiliations of this society rendered it unsuitable for introduction into the fiercely sectarian environs of Everton. An alternative, non-religious model was suggested by "the modern type of social effort known as Schools for Mothers"(19) She felt, in retrospect, that the educational approach was excellent but the general philosophy was too materialistic, and the quality of the schools too variable, to be suitable for artisan mothers:

"They of course, vary from the highly organised, well equipped centre to the informal infant welfare work conducted in a parish school room for an hour or so a week...."(20)

Accordingly, of all the available prototypes, the P.N.E.U. appealed to Miss Macadam as the most suitable educational, non-sectarian society to introduce to the respectable artisan-class mothers and fathers living nearby.

"With the object of impressing on parents the importance of developing strength of character in their children, we have started a Branch of the Parents' National Educational Union, a society which fathers and mothers of all creeds can join."(21)

Although Miss Macadam believed that there was no class distinction within the P.N.E.U. she assumed that the reason for excluding members of the working classes by default was due to the fact that:

"First, that conditions are so entirely different in the homes of the workers to those of the educated classes. Secondly, many of the discussions are obviously intended for women of some education. Thus the average working woman would be out of her element in most of the existing branches of the P.N.E.U." (22)

From the outset, however, Miss Macadam did not believe that her P.N.E.U. should be open to all comers. She adopted similar latent tactics to those of Mrs. Franklin and, as will be shown, of Mrs. Cadbury, to get the "right people" to join. (23)

"No attempt was made at any time to urge or attract people to join. Tea was never provided at meetings. There were no loaves or fishes of any kind." (24)

News of the society was passed around by word of mouth within the select circle of those known to the Settlement. In this way the very poor, desperate and disorganised were indirectly excluded.

"There was a certain amount of ceremony about joining. An entrance fee was charged (3d.) besides a small annual subscription (6d.). Each new candidate for membership had to be moved and seconded by two members and her home was visited. If, as seldom happened, the house was dirty and unsatisfactory, her candidature was discouraged. We had no wish to have members whose standard of home life was below the level of decency. Those were dealt with by other agencies." (25)

Membership was comparable to that of the average small P.N.E.U. branch. It started at 36 in 1906-07, rising to the peak number of 73 in 1911, at a time of general P.N.E.U. growth. After that, the numbers comparably, slowly declined, during the War years, to 24, in

1920, the last recorded figure. Although the membership was technically large enough to support a committee, one was never formed. Class distinctions were preserved both within the Victoria Settlement P.N.E.U. and in relation to the parent society. The Settlement ideal of spreading social harmony from the educated to the lower classes was reflected in the P.N.E.U. structure set up by the Staff, who kept a firm grip on the management of the branch. In contrast, the middle class Liverpool Branch (1911-1919) had a committee of 18, recruited from a membership of only 33, during the first year. Meetings seem always to have been held at the Netherfield Road premises rather than in the homes of members, as with the "drawing-room" class P.N.E.U. branches.

The Victoria Settlement P.N.E.U. had four officers. However, only the post of Honorary local Secretary was opened to a member, after the first year. Only two mothers held this post during the life of the Branch. The Treasurer's position was always filled by one of the Settlement Staff, which meant that none of the members handled the subscription money. As might be expected, the President was a middle class lady from outside the neighbourhood. Mrs. (later Lady) Dale, the wife of the Vice-Chancellor of Liverpool University, honoured that office from 1906-1920, when she was succeeded by Mrs. Charles Booth. When they were finally invited to send a Branch Representative to the P.N.E.U. Central Executive,

in 1920, the position was, predictably, filled by Miss Wells, who had succeeded Miss Macadam as Warden. (26)

The members of the Victoria Settlement P.N.E.U. were not, it would seem, treated on equal terms with the drawing-room class branches by the Central Office. There is no record of their being invited to attend or give papers at the P.N.E.U. Annual Conferences. When the other Liverpool Branch opened (quite improperly affiliated to the local Child Study Association, condemned by Miss Mason) no links between the two branches were forged during the four active years of the former's existence. Indeed, when Mrs. Franklin visited Liverpool, in November 1912, she took the trouble to deliver a lecture on "Home Life during Schooldays" to the respectable Liverpool Branch, but merely put in an appearance at the Settlement Branch, while Miss Melly read a paper on "How the School can help the Home"! (27) A policy of separatism was assumed.

7.2.iv. Everton Artisan Fathers and the P.N.E.U.

"Fathers as well as mothers were encouraged and for the first few years attended astonishingly well" (28)

Built into the organisation of this branch of the P.N.E.U. was the aim of improving the general education and cultural awareness of the members as well as the provision of specific education for parenthood. This may have been the reasoning behind the inclusion of the fathers with the mothers in two expeditions to Liverpool University,

presumably arranged by Lady Dale. The tour of the laboratories and the demonstrations on "Liquid air experiments and Rontgen rays" (1908) and "Sea Fisheries" (1910) must have been planned to interest the fathers in particular. Such occasions, when the members enjoyed a more equal class footing with their benefactors, at least for an afternoon, were, understandably, remembered as "red letter days."⁽²⁹⁾

The inclusion of fathers as well as mothers in a society for the promotion of education for parenthood was, as has already been shown, going against the prevailing belief that the husband and father's proper place was at work, in a men's world, and the wife and mother's in the home with the children.⁽³⁰⁾ In his two surveys of the "Infant Consultations" and "Schools for Mothers", initiated by Infant Welfare pioneers, I. G. Gibbon remarked that educational meetings arranged for the working-class fathers tended not to be successful. The short addresses given by the lady home visitors added "another terror to matrimony." The "better type of father" was also likely to stay away, regarding the whole thing as "his wife's business."⁽³¹⁾ During the Edwardian period, it was frequently argued that poor domestic care and high rates of infant mortality, in working class districts, were caused not only by maternal ignorance, but by maternal employment. Therefore, by definition the "better type of father" was one who worked hard enough to be able to afford to keep his wife at home

to fulfil the responsibilities of motherhood.⁽³²⁾ Gibbon, accordingly, argued that what was required of the father was not the kind of detailed, participatory knowledge of child rearing, advocated by Cobbett, but a general understanding and sympathy for his wife's work and difficulties in the domestic sphere. He believed that this attitude to fatherly responsibilities should be transmitted through specifically male organisations such as Church men's groups, Trades Unions, or Friendly and Co operative Societies. In this way, the working man would not suffer the loss of dignity occasioned by being lectured at by a woman.⁽³³⁾

Although the P.N.E.U. attempt to incorporate the fathers into the society, on equal terms with the mothers, may be interpreted as an expression of the belief in the unifying principle of social harmony, designed to repair the breaches, not only between parents, but also the different religious sects and social classes, the capitalist doctrine of separate spheres proved to be an almost insuperable barrier to equal opportunity for education for parenthood. Miss Macadam seems to have shared Gibbon's views. She attributed the subsequent decline in the fathers' attendance at the P.N.E.U. meetings to the advent of new educational provisions for men at adult schools and the classes organised by the Workers' Educational Association. (1905)⁽³⁴⁾ Miss Macadam did not associate the absenteeism of the fathers with her personal feminist perspective. Meetings were structured

to encourage the mothers to have their say:

"The level of speaking in the discussion was surprisingly good. There was a tendency when men were present for them to usurp the discussion, but this was sternly suppressed." (35)

The use of the P.N.E.U. as an agent to promote public confidence and leadership among the women members, probably inhibited equal participation by fathers, at the Victoria Settlement.

7.2.v. An Education for Mothers in Self Respect and Social Responsibility.

In summing up her eleven years' work with the Settlement P.N.E.U., for the readers of Parents' Review, Elizabeth Macadam became aware that two conflicting aims had been built into the structure of this small society. On the one hand, typical of the reformers of the late Victorian and Edwardian period, she had believed it her duty to promote domestic reform among the working classes:

"The home is not yet an obsolete institution among the workers, though a certain type of sociologist might lead us to think it was. There are signs of revival of interest in this oldest of all social institutions. Better housing, better domestic science teaching will revolutionise home life, even in humble circumstances." (36)

Her aim, in starting the P.N.E.U. had been to teach, in addition, middle class notions of character training and development to artisan mothers. On the other hand, her

feminism and single, childless state, led her to do everything in her power to educate the P.N.E.U. women for public rather than domestic responsibilities. After she left the Settlement, during 1917-18, she worked with her friend Eleanor Rathbone M.P. (1872-1946), to set up the radical feminist "1918 Club" for women concerned about social and political issues. (37)

"Though we used the name of your Union we were, strictly speaking, not working on what I may call your principles... we simply used the framework of your valuable organisation for our own ends, without the vital spirit behind it. I can see many ways... in which our little branch might have been developed if we had been fortunate to secure an educated mother who had studied and practised the principles for which you stand... Those who know the homes of the poor know that father and mother alike are too often ineffective in the control and training of their children... Is it not... possible that with the more conspicuous place the domestic sciences have in the education of the girl that a better and higher ideal of home life may prevail... May not we hope that a better day is dawning, and that the working mother, relieved of much drudgery may have time and ability to consider her children's mental and spiritual as well as physical welfare?" (38)

From the outset, Miss Macadam had wanted her P.N.E.U. to provide a more comprehensive education in child up-bringing than that provided by the instruction cards and leaflets handed out at "Mothers and Babies Welcomes" or "Schools for Mothers". (39) The lecture courses, held each year, included typical P.N.E.U. subjects such as "Child Training", "Home Discipline", "Co operation between Home and School", "Mothers and Daughters" or "Domestic Training for Girls". Provision was also made, during the early years, for the members to attend other classes

provided by the Settlement on Infant Welfare Movement lines. These included: "Inexpensive Cookery", "Cutting Out Children's Garments" and "The Care of Infants and Young Children".⁽⁴⁰⁾

In Miss Macadam's opinion, her working-class P.N.E.U. mothers emerged as a competent intelligent group comparable to the Women's Co operative Guild. They were more than capable of handling the limited amount of responsibility they were given. They spoke up well at meetings and sometimes presented short papers, written by themselves. After four years they were encouraged to care for each other by visiting sick members on a monthly basis, taking flowers or eggs, paid for out of P.N.E.U. funds.⁽⁴¹⁾ They also formed a nucleus of local support for other Settlement activities. They joined other groups and helped, for example, with local canvassing for a new woman Poor Law Guardian. The lecture subjects reflected this change of emphasis from home duties to public responsibilities. Interwoven with home training topics were subjects such as "Children and the Poor Law Reports" (1910), "A Talk to Women on the Care of Their Health" (1913), "The Work of a Guardian" (1913) "The Working of the Insurance Act" (1914), by Eleanor Rathbone and "The Social Needs of our Young People" (1917)⁽⁴²⁾. However, in 1914, when many of the P.N.E.U. members joined the newly formed Liverpool Women's Citizenship Association the topics of the Union's monthly meetings reverted to domestic issues. This changing emphasis reflected in

the broader educational topics addressed by the Victoria Settlement P.N.E.U. illustrated, not only Miss Macadam's developing social and feminist consciousness, but a growing public recognition, ratified by women's war work, that even working-class women were people in their own right and had citizenship responsibilities beyond the domestic sphere. (43)

In the absence of objective evidence it is not possible to draw conclusions about the success or failure of the seventeen year experience of the Victoria Settlement P.N.E.U. Branch. There is no record of the members' views. It is clear, however, that Miss Macadam believed that the branch had not fulfilled its original aims. She thought that an "educated mother" might have been of more help than the Settlement Staff as she had observed that working class mothers listened more readily to those who had parental experience of children. (44)

"To those of us who were responsible, this was only one of many claims, and we had no great experience or knowledge and too little time to acquire it. The result was a somewhat desultory programme and the want of a guiding and connecting line of thought." (45)

It did not occur to Miss Macadam to criticise the P.N.E.U. Central Office for, apparently, making no provision to assist this branch with its special needs. Miss Mason's works also do not seem to have been used to provide the "guiding and connecting line of thought"

which the Founder believed to have been her particular contribution to the upbringing debate.⁽⁴⁶⁾ In short, P.N.E.U. methods appeared inappropriate for artisan mothers. The expected revolution in domestic organisation and child behaviour did not take place in response to P.N.E.U. teaching.

The brief study of this branch demonstrates the difficulty of assessing effectiveness in education for parenthood. All that is clear is that Miss Macadam seems to have been able to help the members to take on public responsibilities and to educate themselves more fully. Despite the class difference and subjection to middle class feminine control, the members of the Victoria Settlement P.N.E.U. seem to have had much in common with members of the drawing-room class branches. The P.N.E.U. provided a meeting point for informal discussion as well as lectures for capable women seeking further educational development and opportunities to engage to a greater or lesser extent in public life, without necessarily upsetting the domestic order. What is not known, is whether this programme of mild emancipation for mothers was engineered solely by Miss Macadam, the unmarried feminist, or how far it signified an expression of the members' own aspirations.

7.3. The Extension of Matriarchal Influence over
Neighbourhood and Family Networks through the
Birmingham P.N.E.U. Branch. ((1894) 1902-1984)

7.3.i. Introduction

The Birmingham Branch was one of the largest and also the most enduring of the traditional P.N.E.U. branches based on the original 1887 Bradford model. Its vigour, local influence and healthy independence from central control has forcefully confirmed the wisdom of Anne Clough's opinion, which Charlotte Mason ignored, that "... the work of the Society should be local... that living work must arise out of local needs."⁽⁴⁷⁾ Although the thesis period ends with Miss Mason's death in 1923, it was found necessary to survey the development of the Birmingham P.N.E.U. from its inception until the closure on 22.3.1984 to understand the changing purposes it served for middle and upper class mothers, living in and around Edgbaston. The study suggests that it was no accident that the P.N.E.U. was located in Edgbaston and the lower classes excluded from membership.

It will be argued that because the branch was promoted through the matriarchal leadership of Mrs. George (later Dame Elizabeth) Cadbury (1858-1951), it served the purpose not only of conferring status and enhancing the lives of the mothers who joined, as at the Victoria Settlement, but also helped to strengthen the influence and extend the

Cadbury family networks, by drawing only selected new families into its fold and by handing on membership across and down the coming generations. Joint membership brought in the fathers, who conferred prestige, but were denied all but nominal leadership, as in the other P.N.E.U. branches.⁽⁴⁸⁾ Thus, as will be shown, the Birmingham P.N.E.U. mothers contributed to the preservation of family and community solidarity, within a select circle, until the late twentieth century.

7.3.ii "..A.. family of prominent citizens, living together in delightful homes at Edgbaston"⁽⁴⁹⁾

By the end of the nineteenth century, Birmingham had become the second largest city in England, after London. Despite its size, the diversity of its business and industrial enterprises and the complexity of its social problems, comparable to those of Liverpool, historians have noted a social cohesion which operated within political, economic, cultural and reformist spheres and also bridged the divisions between groups with ostensibly opposing interests.⁽⁵⁰⁾ In describing Birmingham as "a great village", Dr. Robert Dale, the outstanding minister of the centrally situated Carr's Lane Congregational Church (1854-1895) was, undoubtedly, not only giving expression to the contemporary belief in a municipal consensus, encapsulated in the phrase, "civic gospel", but was also making a comment upon the close-knit social and community life around the city centre.⁽⁵¹⁾

Birmingham's "civic élite" was primarily drawn from the powerful bourgeois classes who had congealed their "delightful homes" in "the salubrious middle class neighbourhood" of Edgbaston, situated within a mile of the new Town Hall.⁽⁵²⁾ As Birmingham was to the nation, the focus of a national transport and communications network, by virtue of its central geographical location, so Edgbaston stood advantageously positioned in relation to the rest of the growing city. The well to do professionals, industrialists, merchants and traders who lived together in Birmingham's wealthiest and most central suburb were thus favourably placed to take a leading role in the public affairs of the city.⁽⁵³⁾ If the respectable residents of Edgbaston felt somewhat under siege by virtue of their uncomfortable proximity to the less salubrious poorer class districts of, for example, Ladywood and Balsall Heath, long awaiting the promised municipal improvements, the new "garden village", to the south, which George Cadbury (1839-1922) had constructed for his expanding workforce, around the Bourneville cocoa factories after 1895, provided a more reassuring example of an adjacent, respectably ordered and cleanly artisan community.⁽⁵⁴⁾

7.3.ii; George and Elizabeth Cadbury

The Cadbury family, whose "Puritan ethics" stemmed from Quaker nonconformity, had risen to prominence in Birmingham, during the second half of the nineteenth

century, largely on account of the successful cocoa business, which moved out to Bourneville in 1878.⁽⁵⁵⁾ In 1899, the deaths and departure of his brothers, left George Cadbury (1839-1922) the head of the family both at the Bourneville works and at home. George had grown up in Edgbaston and had attended a nearby Quaker day school. He, therefore, grew up with a strong sense of family and neighbourhood roots and was said to have remarked, characteristically: "God has placed men in families and there is no influence like that of the parents upon the children."⁽⁵⁶⁾

Once the family business was securely established, George Cadbury married at the age of 34. He had five children by his first wife, Mary, who died in 1887, and six by Elizabeth (Elsie), the former family governess, whom he married in 1888.⁽⁵⁷⁾ George Cadbury's family life, which extended into the works from the domestic sphere, was an epitomy of the Victorian and Edwardian ideal.⁽⁵⁸⁾ Throughout his life, and in his various houses, George Cadbury, a man of such regular and disciplined habits that would have been a credit to a P.N.E.U. upbringing, had he experienced one, maintained his position as an active paterfamilias, using every means in his power to bind his large family close together. The daily family prayers both at home, and at the works, were one expression of his benign patriarchal control. Netta Franklin recalled one such occasion during her stay

at Northfield Manor in 1902, when Elsie Cadbury accompanied the hymns on the family organ. (59)

Within this familial atmosphere, there were reformist elements. For example, women, otherwise treated as equal to men, after the manner of the Society of Friends, were, if married, barred from employment at Bourneville, regardless of circumstances. George Cadbury argued that a married woman's duty lay at home with her children. By this tactic, he also eradicated child labour which had, incidentally, become uneconomic. (60) He drew family, friends and associates into the many and varied public and private reformist enterprises to which he devoted his spare time. His philosophy stemmed not only from the evangelism fostered by his life-long membership of the Society of Friends, which engendered respect for all human beings per se but also from enlightened business interests which demanded a healthy and intelligent workforce. Religious sentiment, business interests, social service and family co-operation were inseparably interlinked in the pattern of George Cadbury's productive and successful career. (61)

Elsie Taylor was thirty when she married George Cadbury, nearly twenty years her senior. She had been reared in the same Quaker tradition of service to humanity and belief in equality. She was an intelligent, energetic person who had benefited from being educated at home with her brothers as well as at Miss Buss' North London Collegiate.

Like the other formidable Liberal feminists, associated with the P.N.E.U., such as Ishbel Aberdeen and Netta Franklin, her new status acquired by virtue of her marriage to a wealthy and well-established business man from a reputable Birmingham family, provided Elsie Cadbury with the necessary spring-board for the launch of her own independent but complementary career in voluntary social and educational service, for which she was awarded the D.B.E. in 1934, some twelve years after her husband's death. During her marriage, her voluntary work complemented that of her husband. She also combined home duties and child upbringing with the entertaining of a constant stream of family and friends, as well as arranging large-scale social occasions for the Bourneville staff and those in need. Such an extensive sphere of operations would have been impossible without the backing of a well-managed staff of servants.⁽⁶²⁾ Her busy career bears witness to a family-centred but forceful, well-organised and indefatigable personality, for whom the P.N.E.U. provided the cohesion which drew together many of the different elements of her varied and demanding life.

Netta Franklin, some eight years her junior, seems to have got on well with her. After Elsie Cadbury's death in 1951, at the age of 93, she wrote:

"...She was by no means beautiful in feature... She had the quiet mind and great ideas which had fashioned for her a really beautiful countenance with an engaging smile. Her courtesy in the Chair and in private conversation was entrancing. She

was always ready with the right word. She never lost her temper. She suffered fools gladly! Her vitality to the end was indescribable. Possibly her early morning swim and cold bath gave her the strength".(63)

7.3.iv From "Mothers in Council" (1894) to the Founding of the Birmingham P.N.E.U. (1902).

The Birmingham P.N.E.U. originated from an earlier society called "Mothers in Council." Little is known of this society which was founded by a group of Edgbaston ladies during 1894. It is not known whether it had connections with the Mothers' Union but in view of Mrs. Cadbury's membership, it seems likely to have been undenominational. Brief notes in the early minute books show that the society had similar educational aims to the P.N.E.U. Lectures were arranged on comparable subjects such as "Mothers and Daughters", "Discipline" and "Froebel and the Home".(64)

Mrs. George Cadbury's name as a member of Mothers in Council was first recorded early in 1900, soon after the society began to keep full minutes. She read a paper on "Self-Control".(65) It is reasonable to assume that Mrs. Cadbury generated the enthusiasm for amalgamation with the P.N.E.U. She attended the important second quinquennial meeting of the International Council of Women, held in London in July 1899. Lady Aberdeen, co-president of the P.N.E.U. who presided over the Conference, probably urged the delegates to attend the evening conversazione, where Mrs. Clement Parsons read her paper

on "The Principles and Objects of the P.N.E.U." (66).

Mrs. Cadbury may have met Mrs. Franklin on that occasion.

Two years later, when Mrs. Cadbury was President of Mothers in Council, Mrs. Franklin was invited to the 56th. meeting, in Mrs. Priestman's drawing-room, to

"give an account of the advantages of belonging to the Union. This account was given in so charming a manner that... after a short discussion it was voted unanimously by the members present that the Society should, after the end of the present session (ending in May 1902) should be called the Birmingham Branch of the P.N.E.U." (67).

The title of Mrs. Franklin's lecture had been cleverly called "How Parents may help Forward their Education" (68)

The merger was recorded in the P.N.E.U. central annual report for 1901-02, although the Birmingham P.N.E.U. did not produce its first report until 1903-04. The former members of Mothers in Council automatically slipped into key positions on to the new committee notwithstanding the P.N.E.U. rule about the equal status of fathers. Mrs. Cadbury retained her position as President. She was also Branch Representative to the P.N.E.U. Central Executive, an indicator of the alliance formed between herself and Mrs. Franklin. Thus, from the outset, the pattern of matriarchal dominance was carried forward from Mothers in Council to the new Birmingham Branch.

7.3.v. The Status of the Paterfamilias in the Birmingham P.N.E.U.

The position of fathers in the Birmingham P.N.E.U.

throughout its eighty-two year history, illustrated Charlotte Mason's opinion that the inclusion of the fathers in a union of parents conferred "vigour and power". They were regarded as crucial background support, but their personal needs in relation to the upbringing of their offspring were almost totally ignored.

In 1957, an "important debate" was held on feminine territory at the Y.W.C.A. and recorded in the "Birmingham's Woman's Notebook".

"Members of the P.N.E.U. met to debate whether 'Father is the most important member of the family' and fathers were... I rather fancied... in the majority. It seemed clear that they felt vital decisions were at stake and they came to support one another. Proposing the motion, Mr. Gordon Matthews said that of course Father is the most important member of the family because after all it was he who decided who Mother should be. Mother has to be sheltered and protected at least until the children have grown up and it was therefore a delusion to talk about the equality of the sexes... Mrs. J. H. Crosskey nimbly countered Mr. Matthews' opening gambit by reminding him that "Father may think he chooses Mother.... Poor sap" she added with gentle irony. Men suffered from a lack of lap and that is what a small child misses about father when its world is upset.... Men can't do two jobs at once as most mothers do and the very fact there are more widows than widowers certainly proved that women are the stronger sex...

..... Miss Jean Fisher bravely rushed in to second the proposition... Let us have no "Barretts of Wimpole Street" fathers but heaven forbid the matriarchal mums too. She neatly wound up with a defence of the male's small worries-straight out of the classic "Mrs. Beaton's 'Household Management'" (69).

Although the pro-father contingent won this debate, the margin of 27 votes to 25 was narrow. Perhaps this was to be expected at a time of national receptiveness to

Bowlby's maternalism.⁽⁷⁰⁾ The lively discussion demonstrated that fathers were struggling to break out of the periphery of family life, even after more than half a century of P.N.E.U. meetings in Birmingham. Fathers were still fighting to regain public recognition of their contribution as upbringers and educators rather than as mere progenitors and providers, stereotyped in the nineteenth century capitalist model. These modern fathers implicitly recognised that the P.N.E.U., although nominally geared to the needs of both parents, was deeply rooted in the concept of "the Matriarchal Mum", a residue of the Victorian ideology of Motherhood. Active and responsible participant fatherhood, for which they were attempting to gain credence, belonged, in the public mind, to the pre-industrial eras of John Locke, Lord Chesterfield or William Cobbett.

Although the majority of those who subscribed to the Birmingham P.N.E.U. were married couples, enrolled as joint members, fathers were not invited to take executive control. The President, secretary and treasurer were invariably women. The Committee, too, was composed of women apart from the three years from 1927-30, during Mrs. W.A. Potts' dynamic Presidency, when she successfully achieved the election of two fathers, for that period.⁽⁷¹⁾ The only office open to gentlemen was that of Vice-President. In 1906, six distinguished male Vice-Presidents, including Alderman Kenrick, were elected to

join Mrs. Cadbury and two other notable matriarchs. Although they remained in office until 1932, when they had all either died or retired, no other fathers were chosen to replace them. The gap was filled, instead, by just one woman, a fact that displeased modern P.N.E.U. fathers when they heard about it at a talk in 1982.⁽⁷²⁾

Through the policy of joint membership, fathers lent their names to a Society which operated primarily for the benefit of their wives. Their membership conferred status. Each year, the printed lists recorded an array of well-known Birmingham names such as Cadbury, Nettlefold, Chamberlain, Kenrick, Lloyd, Darby and Martineau. Distinguished professional men were well represented. These included teachers and one or two professors from the University, conveniently sited in Edgbaston. Sir Oliver and Lady Lodge were members (1903-04). Professor C.W. Valentine, the psychologist, whose book, "The Normal Child" (1956) is still a best-seller, belonged with his wife, from 1920-1945. Medicine was well-represented: the numbers of doctors ranged from just under 10 to not more than 20 in any given year. Perhaps because of the non-conformist influence through the Cadbury family, there were fewer clergymen. Between 3 and 6 clergymen were members up to 1929, when the number dropped to 1 from 1929 to 1969, when there were 5. After that, only 2 were members until the 1984 closure. The Bishop of Birmingham and Mrs. Barnes were members from 1924-31.⁽⁷³⁾

Fewer educational sessions were open to the fathers. Since 1899, when the mothers in Council had planned some evening sessions "to render their attendance practicable" one or two evening meetings were arranged annually to accommodate the fathers, one of whom took the Chair.⁽⁷⁴⁾ Attendances were generally reported to be much higher at these evening lectures, but this may have been due to the higher calibre of talk, the presence of both husband and wife as well as the more spacious venue of a hall, rather than drawing-room. The fathers, like some of the mothers, also periodically delivered lectures. Repeats were, however, infrequent. Professor Valentine, for example, was only invited to lecture three times during his twenty-five year membership, notwithstanding his especial expertise. Although the mothers had the benefit of additional afternoon meetings, there is only one report of a special lecture course being laid on for the fathers by Sir Gilbert Barling, during Mrs. W.A. Potts pro-paternalist period of influence.⁽⁷⁵⁾ After the second world war and the death of Dame Elizabeth Cadbury in 1951, when the number of lectures and evening sessions declined, the fathers were chiefly valued for their contribution and presence at the social functions which replaced them.⁽⁷⁶⁾ For example, the Diamond Jubilee of the Branch, in May 1963, was celebrated by a dinner dance rather than an educational discourse.

The fathers, therefore, believed to be less involved with the direct care and upbringing of the children, had

comparably fewer opportunities for parent education. Unlike the mothers, who valued the mutual support conferred by meeting together, particularly when the children were young, the fathers probably enjoyed many other opportunities to relate together, through business and professional associations, as well as socially. These meetings were however, unlikely to have included discussions on fatherhood. The educational work of the Birmingham P.N.E.U. seems therefore, to have been ineffective in promoting shared parenthood and in changing the public view of fathers as progenitors and providers. The existence of a latent fatherly interest in upbringing was, however, evidenced by the interest displayed by individual fathers who participated in the few evening discussions. (77)

7.3.vi. Matriarchal Independence, Exclusivity and Family Tradition in the Birmingham P.N.E.U.

First, "those very interesting lectures" and subsequently, the children's activities provided the justification for the existence of the Birmingham Branch. The lectures and the planning of the yearly programmes afforded a regular meeting point for the members. As Mrs. Worsley remarked, there was nowhere else an educated mother could go to discuss her children. (78) In preparing a history of the first fifty years of the Branch for her "Golden Jubilee" address, Mrs. Betty Potts observed that the structure and substance of the lectures had remained virtually unchanged during the long period

of Dame Elizabeth Cadbury's direct influence.⁽⁷⁹⁾

On the whole, the lectures were delivered by professional experts, many of whom had P.N.E.U. connections. In 1903, for example, Lady Isabel Margesson, "gave a most interesting and suggestive address on the subject of psychology as applied to education"⁽⁸⁰⁾ The Branch seems to have had the necessary influence to attract the big names from Sir Oliver Lodge to Mary Macaulay. There was a noteworthy lack of continuity. It was rare for a lecturer to be invited back more than once or twice, if at all.⁽⁸¹⁾ The topics, only rarely based on P.N.E.U. teaching, reflected changing public preoccupations in education, psychology, culture and upbringing.⁽⁸²⁾ Child discipline was the most constant topic for the first fifty years. After the second world war, the greater contemporary preoccupation with marriage and relationships was reflected in the subjects chosen. Education for parental responsibilities were not specifically mentioned until Dr. Leslie Housden, the first parentcraft adviser to the Ministry of Health, was invited to speak twice on the subject.⁽⁸³⁾ The topics, which had always been wide-ranging, including general cultural as well as educational perspectives, showed less consistency and were more diverse from the 1950's onwards. Subjects ranged from child deprivation and drug addiction to travel, flower arranging and police work.

This post war transformation of the Birmingham Branch

from a Society for education for parenthood to a group of people meeting to discuss general topics was matched by a marked increase in the children's educational and social activities. These had started as early as 1925, with arranged tours of the Birmingham Art Gallery, but became the main focus of the Society's work from 1945-1973. (84) According to Mrs. Worley, the function of these post-war children's activities at weekends and during the school holidays, was to provide a nucleus of suitable local friends for the members' children attending boarding school. (85) By the mid 1970's most members' children were apparently attending local day schools. It was argued that Parent Teacher Associations supplied the educational requirements of parents and the schools themselves provided sufficient extra curricula educational trips and activities to render the efforts of the Birmingham P.N.E.U. superfluous. (85)

Although it would be hard to maintain that an annual programme of four to six lectures exerted a significant influence upon the members of the Birmingham P.N.E.U., the survey of the eighty-two years of the Branch's existence, reflects a public change of attitude towards the middle class parent, as much as the obvious control exercised by the indefatigable Dame Elizabeth. Up to 1950, the emphasis on child discipline was expressive not only of the prevalence of home education but of a recognition of parental partnership with professional

educationalists, one of the first justifications for the P.N.E.U. The decline of domestic service and the expense of the private governess after the second world war ensured that the majority of upper and middle class children attended school.⁽⁸⁶⁾ The lecture topics reflected both the desire of the post war child care professionals to instruct all classes of parents in the new subject called "parentcraft", and also the prevalent feeling that the schools were doing it all anyway. For a time, the children's activities served the function of drawing the members and their families more closely together, but this, for reasons which require deeper analysis, could not be maintained after 1984. The explanations offered included the statement that members were too busy, disliked the exclusivity of the Branch and accepted the importance and usefulness of the provisions made by the schools.⁽⁸⁷⁾

The Birmingham P.N.E.U. was large, influential independent Branch, which established a leading position from 1904, the year of its first annual report. The three double columns of names, printed each year, testified to the vigour of the society throughout its existence. With some periodic fluctuations, the size of the Branch remained remarkably stable. There were approximately 99 members in 1904, and 114 in 1981, just three years before closure.⁽⁸⁸⁾ Numbers peaked in 1929, at 204, during Mrs. W.A. Potts' (1874-1965) energetic presidency.

The statement that the Branch was closed on account of falling membership cannot be justified overall, but the society did, in fact, experience a decline of about 80 members between 1970 and 1981.⁽⁸⁹⁾

The Branch was not only remarkable for its size but for its longevity. Unlike many other branches, Birmingham remained in active operation during both world wars and the membership actually rose during those times.⁽⁹⁰⁾ When the new policy, initiated by Mrs. Franklin in 1920 to weaken the local loyalties of members to their branches, by calling in all subscriptions to

the Central Office, the Birmingham Branch's response was robustly negative:

"It was unanimously agreed that a strong protest be sent to the Central Office against this rule which in the opinion of the Committee would kill the Branch".⁽⁹¹⁾

Finally, the Branch survived a further 10 years after 1974, when the first male Director of the P.N.E.U. (Charles Smyth O.B.E. 1974-1980) discontinued the regular reportage of the activities of the three surviving Branches in the P.N.E.U. Journal (formerly Parents' Review) to give priority to his new plans to extend further, the world-wide school education service of the P.N.E.U.⁽⁹²⁾ This capacity for survival seems to have been linked to a sturdy independence of thought which may have been rooted in the non-conformist, egalitarian background of many of the members, the longevity of the officers and

the inter-generational shared family membership. In 1905, for example, those present, attacked Mrs. Phillip's regret that the "old graces" were in decline by firmly asserting that "the highly educated woman was more likely to produce and bring up a family useful to the State than the ignorant, frivolous and uncultivated." (93)

There is also no evidence that P.N.E.U. indoctrination reading circles were ever set up nor of direct involvement with a P.N.E.U. school. In 1926, the Committee received complaints that the Parents' Review had become so uninteresting that many members no longer took it. They felt, at that time, that the reports of meetings in Birmingham should also not be subject to a 50 word limit. (94)

The longevity of the Branch was also assured by the fact that the matriarchal leaders retained life-long links with the Society they had joined while their children were young. Dame Elizabeth Cadbury served in one capacity or another as President, Vice-President or Committee member from about 1899-1943, when she was elected an "Honorary Life Member" on the occasion of her resignation, at the age of 85. She was also the hostess at the Branch's Golden Jubilee Celebrations, conveniently, if incorrectly, held on Tuesday, 20th June 1950, just eighteen months before her death. This event had the effect of linking present members to the past, thus preserving a traditional continuity. (95)

Mrs. W.A. Potts, who took on the same offices, joined with her doctor

husband in 1905, and remained involved, latterly, as another "Life Member" until her death in 1965. (96)

Mrs. Lewis Mathews, a former member of "Mothers in Council", was the first treasurer, retaining that office until her death in 1942. Mrs. Edgar Worsley replaced her for the next eight and a half years which ensured that there were only two treasurers for the first fifty years of the Union's existence. Long service also characterised the work of other committee members. (97)

The survival of the Branch was ensured by the prevalent habit of passing on membership to the next generation, many of whom inter-married within the charmed circle of the P.N.E.U. These close relationships were fostered by neighbourly proximity. A casual glance at almost any page of the Society's Address Book, reveals a preponderance of members and their families living in Edgbaston and adjacent Harborne. (98) Those with addresses further afield, seem usually have been related to Edgbaston families. (99) For example, the Arthur Chamberlains were members. They were joined by the Neville Chamberlains from 1920-1925. Neville's daughter, Dorothy, married Stephen Lloyd, who worked for Guest, Keen and Nettlefold. They were joint members from 1947-1951. Dr. and Mrs. W.A. Potts, encouraged their doctor son, of the firm "Potts and Chambers", to join with his wife, Betty, who also became a President and Life Member. (100) Many other examples could be

mentioned. The fulcrum of the branch emanated from the Cadbury family, who belonged in large numbers, bound together by the familial consciousness of George and Elsie. They supplied officers and committee members, at least up until the mid 1970's. Elsie Cadbury also organised a small P.U.S. school, taught by a House of Education governess, for the children and grandchildren of local members. A connection may be postulated between the declining influence of the Cadbury family over both the P.N.E.U. and Birmingham society, which may have contributed to its closure. While Bourneville has retained elements of the old paternalism and some family members are still on the Board, much of its original ethos and local influence has been diluted by mergers and take-overs with alien firms, in response to the demands of modern competition. (101)

Exclusivity was maintained by a select membership proposed from within the charmed circle. (102) The functions of this unity, forged between families of a particular suburban class, ensured matriarchal solidarity and a local pool of suitable companions for their offspring, drawn from members' families. There was never any question of drawing in working class parents. Indeed someone firmly deleted the words "of all classes" in the list of the P.N.E.U. "Aims and Objects" pasted on to the front page of the 1936-1952 Minute Book. The training of children's nurses, another way in which the P.N.E.U. had

attempted to educate the working classes, was also strictly limited to two sessions, held in 1910 and 1926. The mothers, doubtless, did not enjoy participating in a mixed gathering with nurses, when Dr. Helen Webb came to address them in 1910 for only the latter group sent in "many expressions of pleasure." (103)

Although the working-classes were barred from membership from what was primarily an exclusive afternoon club for middle class Edgbaston mothers, by invitation only, the P.N.E.U. members were not permitted to dodge their philanthropic obligations to the poor and needy of Birmingham. It may be inferred that Dame Elizabeth Cadbury drew heavily and persistently upon this available pool of closely-knit capable matrons to help with voluntary social service. She herself was heavily committed to the City's educational services. Florence Potts was a founder of the Birmingham Infants' Centre in 1905 and of the Marriage Guidance Council in the 1940's. A group of P.N.E.U. mothers which included Mesdames Barrow Cadbury, Bushill-Matthews, Worsley, Kenrick, Lloyd and Lady Martineau worked for the Middlemore Homes and the Quaker inspired Family Service Unit, set up to help inner city problem families. (104) It has been suggested that the P.N.E.U. both contributed to the formation of the external business, professional and political links of P.N.E.U. fathers as well as drawing strength from them. In the same way, P.N.E.U. mothers were doubtless more

firmly bonded together by shared public voluntary work as well as through family and neighbourhood ties. The P.N.E.U. expressed, in a small way, the social and civic cohesiveness believed to be typical of Birmingham life.

The Birmingham Branch was, therefore, large, dominant and characterised by a long-serving matriarchal leadership, local autonomy in relation to Central Office, exclusivity based on an 'elitist' neighbourhood, and an inter-familial tradition of handing on membership to the coming generations. It was a society organised primarily for the benefit of the mothers, but fathers were drawn in through a policy of joint family membership. Useful links were in this way maintained with local professionals in education, medicine and the Church.

7.4. Conclusion :

The life of the Birmingham Branch was four times as long as that of the Liverpool Victoria Settlement P.N.E.U. It was also between three and four times larger. Its members were wealthy and middle class. The Everton members were poor and belonged to the artisan class. More people would have heard of the Birmingham P.N.E.U. whose members occupied positions of influence. Yet the members of both branches might if given the opportunity, have recognised in each other a common desire to exercise control over their domestic lives, as well as to gain some recognition in the wider community outside.

Rigorous selection procedures in both branches ensured that members were not only similar to each other, with roots in one neighbourhood, but were also exemplars of the domestic art of motherhood and concern for child training and character development, as it was locally interpreted. The mothers seem, in both cases, to have used the P.N.E.U. as a way of gaining further mastery over their lives through education and committee work, without disrupting the complementary Victorian domestic order. Because mothers were seen as the prime guardians of domestic and community life, although the fathers were officially joint members, the society was able to be controlled by a dominant feminine leadership. In the case of Liverpool, Miss Macadam, the professional social worker, used the P.N.E.U. not only for the benefit of the mothers but to strengthen the other Settlement programmes as well as local community enterprises. In Birmingham, it was argued, that Dame Elizabeth Cadbury, also used the P.N.E.U. not only to strengthen her matriarchal status beyond the confines of home but also to consolidate the community and neighbourhood based cohesion of a group of families, with similar social class backgrounds, already interlinked by shared interests in business, public services and religion. P.N.E.U. membership therefore, provided access to a privileged and influential group for those newcomers fortunate enough to be welcomed into the fold.

There is no evidence to suggest that these two P.N.E.U. branches effected any transformation in child upbringing and education. The changes outlined in the Birmmingham Study were dependent on broad social, political and economic factors, beyond the scope of this thesis. What the branches did achieve, however, was the provision of supportive nexus for women endeavouring to reconcile the responsibilities of motherhood with community obligations, beyond the home sphere.

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4. Dr. William Channing, quoted in Briggs, 1968 p.64.
5. Macadam, 1917 p.15.

6. Briggs, 1968 p.p. 236, 335.
7. K. S. Inglis "Churches and the Working Classes in Victorian England" London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963 (hereafter Inglis, 1963) pp. 143-174.
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14. Macadam, 1917 p.5.

15. Bédarida, 1979, p.142.
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16. Macadam, 1917, p.3.
Lewis, 1980, pp. 89-109.
17. Macadam, 1917 p.2.
18. Ibid, pp. 2-3.
19. Ibid.
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23. Parish, 1907.
24. Macadam, 1917 p.7.
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28. Ibid p.6.
29. P.N.E.U. Ann. Reps. 1909 p.40, 1910 p.41.
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42. P.N.E.U. Ann. Reps. 1910-1918.
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pp. 141-166.
55. Ibid pp. 13, 22-23, 142.
56. Ibid. p.18.
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58. Wohl, 1978 pp. 10, 17.
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59. Ibid pp, 29, 252-271.
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61. Ibid, pp. 167-177.
62. Bourneville Magazine Memorial Issue December 1952
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65. Ibid: 47th Meeting, 9.3.1900.
66. Mrs. Clement Parsons "The Principles and Objects
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66. continued..

London, Women's Printing Society Ltd. n.d. (1899)

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Mrs. Cadbury was Hon. Treasurer of the International Council of Women's Finance Committee. Like Mrs. Franklin she was involved with the National Union of Women Workers (1899) and a member of the British National Council of Women after the affiliation of these bodies in 1914.

67. B.P.N.E.U. Mins. Vol: 1899-1913.

49th Meeting n.d. and 28.11.1901.

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70. Elizabeth Wilson "Women and the Welfare State"
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pp. 149-158.

Denise Riley "War in the Nursery, Theories of the Child and Mother". London, Virago, 1983 (hereafter Riley, 1983) pp. 97-105.

71. B.P.N.E.U. Mins. Vol: 1917-1935, 30.4.1926.

72. B.P.N.E.U. Ann. Reps. 1903-1980.

MAC to Members of B.P.N.E.U. 5.10.1982.

73. B.P.N.E.U. Ann. Reps. 1903-1980.

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74. B.P.N.E.U. Mins. 1899-1913, 5.10.1899.

74. continued....
B.P.N.E.U. Address Book n.d.
75. B.P.N.E.U. Attendance Book vol: 1934-1963.
Mrs. C. L. Potts' Diary 1950 p.31.
B.P.N.E.U. Ann. Rep. (20th) 1922-23.
76. Mrs. Harrison to MAC 17.11.1981.
77. B.P.N.E.U. Ann. Rep. (35th) 1937-38.
Mrs. V. Worsley to MAC 30.3.1982.
78. Ibid.
79. Mrs. C. L. Potts to MAC 12.5.1982.
Mrs. Potts' Diary (MSS)
80. B.P.N.E.U. Mins. Vol: 1899-1913, 17.3.1903.
81. Professor C. W. Valentine spoke to the B.P.N.E.U.
on 3 occasions between 1920-1945.
B.P.N.E.U. Ann. Reps: 1921, 1922, 1943.
82. Mrs. Franklin visited B.P.N.E.U. six times
(1901-1950) during Dame Elizabeth Cadbury's lifetime
only.
In 1948, Miss Joan Molyneux, the Director of the
Parents' Union School was especially welcomed "as we
sometimes feel we deviate from P.N.E.U. topics"
B.P.N.E.U. Ann. Reps. No.49, 1949. The total
expenditure by the Branch on Miss Mason's works was
15/- in 1907, only.
83. Dr. L. Housden was also involved with the N.S.P.C.C.
and N.A.M.C.W. and author of several books on

83. continued....
Motherhood and Parentcraft.
B.P.N.E.U. Ann. Reps. No.43, 1945. and No.51, 1953.
84. B.P.N.E.U. Ann Reps. No.23, 1926- No.70, 1973.
85. Mrs. Worley to MAC 9.7.1984.
Mrs. Henson to MAC 7.6.1984.
86. Bédarida, 1979 pp. 208, 256, 271.
In 1900 45% of occupied Women worked in domestic service. This dropped to 32% in 1921 heralding a steady decline after that so that by 1975 only 0.5% of all families had a servant or servants.
87. Mrs. Worley to MAC 9.7.1984.
Mrs. Henson to MAC 7.6.1984.
Mrs. Harrison to MAC 17.11.1984.
88. Married couples counted as one member.
89. B.P.N.E.U. Ann. Reps. 1901-1981.
Central P.N.E.U. Ann. Reps. 1901-1921.
Mrs. Henson to MAC 7.6.1984,
Florence Potts (Mrs. W.A.) was President from 1927-29.
90. B.P.N.E.U. Ann. Reps. 1913-19, 1939-50.
In 1918 there were 180 members.
In 1949 there were over 190 members.
91. B.P.N.E.U. Mins. Vol. 1917-1935, 9.10.1920. and 26.6.1921.
92. Charles Smyth "Report of the Council of the P.N.E.U.

92. continued,....
to Members for the Period 1.7.1973 - 30.6.1974",
P.N.E.U. Journal (formerly Parents' Review).
Vol.9, No.5. (New series) Sept./Oct. 1974. pp. 193-
194 and last page.

Charles Smyth "P.N.E.U. - An Educational Force"
P.N.E.U. Journal Vol.10. No.1. (New series) Jan./Feb./
March 1975, pp. 1, 9-13, 37.
93. B.P.N.E.U. Mins. Vol: 1899-1913; 6.12.1905.
94. The Birmingham Branch were asked by Mrs. Franklin
to support the Liberal Education Movement in Schools.
After visiting a school at Stroud in Gloucestershire
they endeavoured to interest some Elementary teachers
in Birmingham but did not become directly involved
with the support of school(s) as a Branch.

B.P.N.E.U. Mins. Vol. 1917-1935, 6.3.1918,
9.10.1920, 15.3.1922, 24.5.1922, 15.5.1923, 30.4.1926.
95. B.P.N.E.U. Mins. Vol. 1936-1952, 20.6.1950
Mrs. Potts' Diary (1950).
96. B.P.N.E.U. Mins. Vol. 1960-1968, 11.5.1965.
97. Mrs. Potts' Diary (1950).

B.P.N.E.U. Mins. Vol. 1899-1913.

B.P.N.E.U. Ann. Reps. 1903-1951.
98. B.P.N.E.U. Address Book n.d.
99. Mrs. Bailey to MAC 5.12.1981.

Mrs. Potts to MAC 24.3.1982.

99. continued,...

Mrs. V. Worsley to MAC 30.3.1982.

100. Mrs. Potts to MAC 24.3.1982.

Mrs. Potts' Diary.

101. Philip Mumby, Executive Cadbury/Typhoo to MAC
22.7.1984.

102. Mrs. Henson to MAC. 7.6.1984.

103. B.P.N.E.U. Ann. Rep. No.7. 1910.

104. B.P.N.E.U. Mins. Vol. 1960-60, 11.5.1965.

Mrs. George Cadbury "Address of Welcome" Parents'
Review, Vol. 21, No.1. January, 1910 pp. 2-3.

Part III: "Whose We are and Whom We Serve";
 Miss Mason's Power over the P.N.E.U.
 (1890-1923)

CHAPTER 8

For the Mothers' Sake? The Ambleside Educational
Ventures (1891-1923)

8.1. Introductory:

The three educational ventures which Miss Mason initiated at Ambleside will be described in this chapter. They were the Parents' Review School (1891), the House of Education for the training of home governesses (1892), and the Mothers' Education Course (1892). These educational schemes were important for three reasons. First, in locating a market for her educational wares, Miss Mason highlighted some of the specific needs and anxieties felt by mothers from the "educated classes", during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which were not being met or resolved through the P.N.E.U. branches. Secondly, the three schemes interrelated with the other aspects of P.N.E.U. work to form a unified organisational structure which strengthened the society and Miss Mason's position within it. Thirdly, the success of the Parents' Review school prepared the ground for the transformation of the P.N.E.U. from a society for the education of the parents to an organisation promoting liberal education methods in schools.

Although each educational venture was started in response to specific requests from within the P.N.E.U., the ideas had already been raised in "Home Education". Considerable benefits accrued from Miss Mason's educational entrepreneurial activity. The Spencerian curriculum, sent out through the Parents' Review School

into home schoolrooms, was an especial boon for the cultured mother unable to afford a governess. The House of Education offered a protected training for girls of slender means whose parents did not wish them to seek paid employment in the harsh, open world. Wealthier P.N.E.U. mothers could look forward to employing a trained governess, who had received a cultured liberal education. Finally, the Mothers' Education Course provided a stimulating, if rather taxing syllabus for a few intelligent mothers bringing up their children at home. These programmes were attractive to the traditionally minded domestically oriented mother from the "serious classes". Although the scope and extent of these ventures was limited during the remaining thirty years of Charlotte Mason's life, she herself, benefited immeasurably. She was able to establish herself securely as the Principal of the House of Education, in a safe retreat at Ambleside. The Parents' Review School provided her with a sufficient income to lead the life of a gracious and cultured lady as well as the personal security she badly needed. Through these schemes she was enabled to launch her individualist campaign for public recognition.

8.2. The Parents' Review School (1)

The Parents' Review School (hereafter abbreviated to the P.R.S.) was not only the first of Miss Mason's ventures to be launched but was also the most successful

in terms of consumer response and profitability. The P.R.S. met a gap in educational provision for the young children of earnest parents who belonged to that fluid social category of varying income levels known as the "educated classes". Clergy families in country districts were, perhaps, typical of this class. The P.R.S. was suited to both rich and poor home schoolrooms and could be used with, or without, the assistance of a governess. The method of teaching was primarily based on books which obviated the need for excessive or trained teacher participation.

Whether by accident or design, the P.R.S. offered answers to three problems. It offered systematic educational occupation for children aged between six and ten and older girls, who were living at home but not attending school. It answered the educated classes' desire for a segregated education for their carefully nurtured children, at a time of scant provision of private boarding and day preparatory, schools. Thirdly, the P.R.S. offered the essential liberal cultural education, which was believed to promote sound moral development, as well as more practically promising future access to cultured upper class circles.⁽²⁾ Because the P.R.S. was addressed to young children and girls, the whole issue of modernised preparatory education for a competitive meritocratic society was neatly avoided.

Within six months of her final move to Ambleside,

Miss Mason and her friends had launched the P.R.S. in a small way, at half-term, on 15th June 1891, in the year that State elementary education was made free.⁽³⁾ The P.R.S. was initially organised through the Parents' Review, which was already sponsoring one or two adult correspondence courses, and was designed to reach families all over England.⁽⁴⁾ It offered the broadly based Spencerian curriculum, which had been outlined in "Home Education" with some literary accretions.⁽⁵⁾ There was a certain irony, which would have been lost on Charlotte Mason, in the use of Spencer's educational curriculum as the basis of an upper class liberal early education. Spencer was a passionate advocate of a rational, utilitarian and scientifically oriented education. However, as Young has remarked, Spencer wrote on education during the universalist phase which ended with the fifties; "Science and poetry, business and adventure, religion and politics are not yet divided into separate professional avocations".⁽⁶⁾ If Spencer provided the structure for the P.R.S. syllabus, Mathew Arnold supplied the underlying spirit.⁽⁷⁾

"To find the real ground for the very different estimate which serious people will set upon culture, we must find some motive for culture ... such a motive the word curiosity gives us.... Montesquieu says: 'The first motive which ought to impel us to study is the desire to augment the excellence of our nature and to render and intelligent being yet more intelligent'. This is the true ground to assign for the genuine scientific passion, however manifested, and for culture viewed simply as the fruit of this passion; and it is a worthy ground even though we let the term curiosity stand to describe it."⁽⁸⁾

The P.R.S. curriculum encouraged this spirit of enquiry which, however, was primarily directed towards literary explorations, with a little nature study, art, music and physical recreation thrown in. It was a style of education which had contemporary value in the eyes of the late Victorian "serious classes".

Mary L Hart Davis, a Berkshire country Vicar's wife may have been the first to acquaint Miss Mason with the problems faced by isolated parents who were obliged to educate their children at home.

"I owe you so much gratitude for your book "Home Education"...I have read it and re-read it so many times, that much of it is a possession for life... it has given me inspiration, strength of purpose, guidance and courage which has made a real difference to me in health....

..I have eight children between the ages of three and thirteen and the problems of life and education are very hard to solve sometimes. We are far away from High Schools and many modern advantages are quite out of our reach but your book has made me feel what can be aimed at and accomplished in "Home Education" and every hour of the day I try how near I can come to your ideal....."(9).

Another mother had written to the Review to ask for a clear and simple "scheme of education to assist mothers in rightly planning the schoolroom life... I think this would help many a young mother who has to buy her experience at the cost of many failures through ignorance..."(10)

Before the P.R.S. had officially begun work, Miss Mason declared boldly:

"We receive great credit for this 'Brilliant Idea' and we are indeed happy to have met a strongly felt need of that clientele of 'Parents' to whose service we devote ourselves...our pupils are so far the children of cultivated parents...with able governesses...will not our readers enable us to reach families less favourably circumstanced?" (11)

It seems probable that Miss Mason's series of respectful articles on parents, already mentioned, which were being published in the Parents' Review during this period, with flattering titles such as "Parents as Inspirers, Rulers, Teachers etc" were written as much with the aim of attracting pupils to the P.R.S. as members to the P.N.E.U. If both fathers and mothers could be encouraged to spend more time with their children, who were allowed the free run of the "natural" home environment instead of being restricted to the nursery quarters, they would speedily recognise the value of the educational service offered by the P.R.S. The limited contact afforded by the brief "children's hour" in the drawing-room failed to reveal to parents the extent of the children's need for occupation, amusement and physical movement. (12)

As the teaching profession claimed, many parents were unable to cope with their children as one despairing contributor to the Review explained. She had experienced no problem with her three docile daughters, but found her eight-year old son beyond her:

"...At Christmas I bought him ten shillings' worth of toys, all the kinds he wanted; he never

played with one of them. Before a week was over he had lost or traded away to his schoolfellows for sweets all the implements of his fret-saw work, he smashed his engine to see what was inside and sold his other toys to buy cakes.... He seems to have no TASTES; he likes tops and marbles and running wild... His father is a busy man and says it's a woman's place to look after children...If I COULD be shown some way of keeping him at home amused and happy..."(13)

The P.R.S. aimed at the application of the principles of school discipline in the home classrooms.⁽¹⁴⁾ Serious-minded parents and teachers would have shared this mother's fear that her small version of Rousseau's "noble savage", with his precocious commercial abilities, was in conflict with the contemporary norm of cultured, ordered and quiet family life of which the key precepts were not "Nature" but "Obedience" and "Reverence". This perspective was integral to the ethos of the P.N.E.U.⁽¹⁵⁾ " 'How shall we order the Child' was echoed along the ages in many a mother's heart..."⁽¹⁶⁾ . As Miss Mason had argued in "Home Education", the purpose of a liberal education was to foster early in life the habits of attention and intellectual curiosity through a wide curriculum, short lessons and a varied daily schedule with plenty of time for "masterly inactivity" and play.⁽¹⁷⁾

There were moral and disciplinary dimensions to organised liberal education. Early habit training in the home school-room fostered the powers of attention and made a contribution to the formation of character.⁽¹⁸⁾ An early acquaintance with

"great literature" was expected to put the young mind in touch with the thoughts and deeds of the great heroes of history. As Plato had suggested in the Republic, these ideal models were expected to inspire the young to aspire to similar virtues.⁽¹⁹⁾ However, since the Arnoldian reforms of the public schools and the cult of manly virtue, many parents believed that the schools also had a contribution to make to character training. The anxious mother had, indeed, enquired if eight was too young an age to send her obstreperous boy away to school.

As J. A. Banks has noted, in 1870 there were only about a dozen preparatory schools in existence. By 1900 the number had increased to 400.⁽²⁰⁾ This rise indicates an increased demand by parents for preparatory education for their sons destined for one of the growing number of public schools. Such preparatory schools posed a threat to home education particularly as the syllabus was designed to ensure successful results in the public school entrance examinations. The declining death rate of children aged five and over would have also led to an increased demand for school places.⁽²¹⁾ However, there were those who argued that the ability to pass examinations was not necessarily the sign of a liberally educated mind. Furthermore, many parents were anxious about corrupt practices amongst the boys at the great public schools.⁽²²⁾

In the course of negotiating the national development of the P.N.E.U., Miss Mason had met many public schoolmasters

and Old Boys from Thomas Rooper to Oscar Browning.⁽²³⁾ She had implicitly followed Thomas Arnold's (1795-1842) and John Henry Newman's (1801-1890) definition of the education of a gentleman by nailing her colours to the liberal education tradition.⁽²⁴⁾ It could be argued that such an education, permeated through the convenient medium of the P.R.S., if begun within the sanctity of the home circle, under the watchful moral guidance of the mother, would provide the future public school boy and leader of men not only with a sound intellectual foundation but also an inner defence against the external threats of insipient vice and corruption, particularly in relation to the unmentionable sexual activities which were giving cause for concern in the public schools of the day. It seems likely that Charlotte Mason put together the book "Our-selves, Our Souls and Bodies" (1904) as her own personal campaign for "social purity" and to encourage anxious parents to enrol their children with the P.R.S. This book, which like all Miss Mason's works was on the P.R.S. syllabus, had been inspired by a phrase in the Book of Common Prayer (1662). It was modelled on "The Holy War", written three centuries earlier by John Bunyan (1628-1688), the eminent Puritan Divine. In this four hundred page, two volume work, which she described as a "fragment of amazing virtue", Miss Mason put the case for encouraging the highest ideals of moral purity and total chastity for the "mansoul" enshrined in every future leader and mother of the Nation.⁽²⁵⁾

The P.R.S. scheme was, therefore, in these various ways advertised as being suited to a range of different educational and moral needs.

"No school advantages can make up to a child for the scope for individual development he should find at home, under the direction of his parents for the first eight or ten years of his life..."(26)

Miss Mason organised the P.R.S. herself and managed all the finances. (27)

"The fee for Supervision is one guinea a year; for Direction, five guineas..."

The charge was made by family, rather than by individual child, to enable "the large families of intelligent, gently born children whose parents are unable to afford educational advantages for them.." to participate. Miss Mason who, by all accounts, thoroughly enjoyed teaching children at a safe distance, claimed, with an eye to propaganda, that "the charges are made as low as possible considering that the clerical work must be done by highly qualified teachers". As shown in Chapter 2 this was not quite true. (28)

At the end of 1892, it was reported that sixty-five families were at work in the P.R.S. By 1899, this number had increased to three hundred, in England and overseas. After that year, precise figures were not recorded. From 1916 until after Miss Mason's death in 1923, it was vaguely and grandiosely stated in the annual reports that "thousands of children are being educated at home and abroad." (29)

Although no public accounts were kept for the P.R.S., presumably because Miss Mason wished to keep the income secret, it would seem that she would have received between £350 and £400 in fees during the first year of operation. In 1899, the annual fees could have been bringing in a sum approaching £2,000. In the accounts prepared after Miss Mason's death for the Scale How Trustees, it was shown that the Parents' Union School fees (formerly the P.R.S.) were worth £2,590.⁽³⁰⁾ This figure suggests either, that there was only a minimal growth between 1899 and 1923, or, that the figures had risen and subsequently declined. The first explanation seems most likely. During this period, Elsie Kitching, with a certain amount of help from Miss Mason, managed most of the clerical work unaided.⁽³¹⁾ They could not have handled the papers if, in fact, thousands of children had been involved. As they did the work themselves, using the services of Middleton's the local printer, the overheads would have been small. However, it seems likely that the plan to draw schools as well as families into the P.R.S., after 1900, arose from the need to find a growth area in the educational market, to bring in additional revenue as well as to spread the P.N.E.U. Gospel from the home base to the school. From Miss Mason's point of view, however, it would seem that, although the P.R.S. reached a restricted circle, it provided her with a sufficiently comfortable income for her needs.

In organisational terms, the P.R.S. was closely linked to the other aspects of P.N.E.U. work. The parents of children

working in the P.R.S. were expected to join the P.N.E.U. and take the Parents' Review. If these parents sought a governess, they were advised to offer the post to a lady who had been trained at the House of Education. The House of Education governesses were likewise expected to join the P.N.E.U. for life, take the Parents' Review and enrol their pupils with the P.R.S. The mothers of P.R.S. children were invited to take the Mothers' Education Course. Therefore, although the total numbers involved with the Ambleside educational schemes must have been relatively small, these institutional controls ensured that the P.N.E.U. was closely knit and inward-looking. In 1904, the annual report described the P.N.E.U. as a "living organisation".⁽³²⁾ In 1909, the position was stated even more strongly:

"We look to our members to help us by every means in their power in furthering the Union's sphere of usefulness. We want new branches, and, even more than new branches we want more members in the old Branches, and above all the real recognition of the "true inwardness" of the Union's work. England generally has been roused during the past year to an increased sense of responsibility with regard to the training of her future citizens... The position of the family in the educational scheme is gaining more and more weight, it is for the heads of the family to prepare themselves by such help as our Union gives, to meet the ever increasing demands made upon them and their children..."⁽³³⁾

The whole union, with all the interlocking parts working together smoothly was to become like one great family with Miss Mason at the head. The problem was that such inward-looking tendencies proved to be a real barrier to external growth.

Therefore, although the P.R.S. endeavoured to answer some of the problems of home education in a changing, competitive world, it cannot be said to have reached a wide market up to the time of Charlotte Mason's death. The scheme had its adherents. At the 1897 Conference, Lienie Steinthal, who had educated her own children in the P.R.S., rose to say that it had proved adequate as a preparation for public school. Her son, who was at Rugby, was said to be doing well. While Lienie might be expected to have adopted a warmly partisan stance, on the same occasion, Mr. Underhill, a self-designated "practical schoolmaster", described the P.R.S. as "perhaps... the most useful agency of the whole Union." He particularly approved of the curriculum for boys which was high praise from a professional teacher. Furthermore, Mrs. Anson, Mary Hart-Davis' sister, who was by no means a devotee of Miss Mason, also confirmed that the P.R.S. books had been a source of interest and stimulation to her family. Finally, in her address delivered before the delegates of the International Congress of Women in 1899, Mrs Clement Parsons said, "Perhaps one of the most original of the Parents' Union sections is that known as the Parents' Review School...it provides against grooviness, lax ways, absence of good methods and good books and the general mental stuffiness to which private education is so exposed.... I know individual cases of boys who have passed on from the Parents' Review home school to ordinary schools

the masters of which have cordially admitted that they had never before received pupils so thoroughly well grounded all round. So by its works we may know the Parents' Review School..."(34)

8.3. The House of Education 1892

The House of Education was opened in Ambleside in January 1892. In December 1894, the institution was moved to single premises at Scale How where it has remained ever since. It is now managed by the Cumbria Local Education Authority. There is no justification for the view that the House of Education was planned from the outset as a pioneer teacher training College. It was started as a business to provide a suitably domestically oriented training and home schoolroom employment for gently-born girls of slender means. It was designed to meet the demand for cultured governesses in upper class and plutocratic homes. The House of Education was also implicitly conceived as an intimate centre for the support and propagation of Miss Mason's educational ideas and to assist in the strengthening of the P.N.E.U.

The House of Education was Miss Mason's answer to the question which she had posed on the final page of Home Education, "What is to be done with the girls?"(35) While it remained an outward sign of the wealth and superior breeding of those fathers who chose to keep their grown-up daughters at home like Ruskinian hot-house lilies, the fact remained that declining incomes among

large sections of the "educated classes" meant that the daughters were obliged to support themselves, particularly if they did not marry. Inadequate education at home, followed by a period of waiting for marriage often severely limited the range of possibilities open to those "surplus women" who were inhibited from joining the more determined of the career-seeking "new women" of the "nineties." (36) "M.D.," who wrote to the Parents' Review, commented on the social evolutionary, eugenic and social class considerations which led impecunious parents to encourage their daughters to seek work within a domestic setting, so as not to preclude their subsequent chance of marriage and motherhood. "M.D." pointed out that although these superior girls might be permanently damaged by hospital nursing and other rough work better suited to their inferior working class sisters, there was also a danger of exploitation within private homes. To prevent these delicate specimens being used as "a sort of compendium machine" in return for a pittance of less than £25 per annum, the solution was to train them for work in more affluent houses where they might command an easier life and more substantial remuneration. (37)

Concern for the poor status, salary, education and working conditions of the governess, the only remunerative "respectable" occupation open to redundant women, graphically illustrated by the plight of "Jane Eyre" (1847) did not originate with Miss Mason and the P.N.E.U. as Professor

de Burgh suggested.(38) It had found expression at least fifty years earlier, through the pioneering efforts of the Governesses Benevolent Institution (1841-43) which promoted relief schemes and educational provisions which led to improvements in secondary and higher education for women.(39) The position of governess, a term used interchangeably with that of teacher, balanced precariously between the servants' hall and the drawing-room, represented a rise in status for some and for others, a sad decline. One nineteenth century debate about the status of the governess revolved around the question of whether a specialist training was required or if a sound character and good general education were to be preferred. Institutions such as the Home and Colonial offered training courses for the private governess. During the nineteenth century, however, teacher training was inescapably associated with low status work in the elementary schools.(40)

The private tutor, by contrast, usually a public school man and Oxbridge graduate, like Thomas Rooper, who had taught the future eleventh Duke of Bedford for five years (1871-1877), enjoyed a comparably high status to that of a prestigious and sometimes wealthy public schoolmaster.(41) They won respect for their paterfamilial status in loco parentis.(42) Accustomed to inculcating the classics by time hallowed traditional methods, all but a few, of the most progressive members of the Headmasters' Conference (1869), saw little point in professional

training for schoolmasters during the nineteenth century.⁽⁴³⁾

It was a question of social status. Miss Mason's own professional training and experience in the elementary sector had not conferred status. The problem she faced in initiating a training for governesses was how to combine up to date scientific knowledge of the educational developmental processes with the kind of character and personal status that would be acceptable in the houses owned by traditionally minded aristocrats and plutocrats, where the best employment prospects were to be found. Emily Lord, later Mrs. Walter Ward, a frequent speaker at P.N.E.U. gatherings in Belgravia and an original member of the Froebel Society, had recognised this problem. Like Miss Mason, she wished to introduce her trained private home nurses or "nannies" from the Norland Nursing School, Notting Hill Gate, (founded in the same year as the House of Education) into the homes of the aristocracy. On departure, she advised, "'Nurses, take your silver backed brushes to impress the servants.'"(44) The traditional belief in the proverbial "ignorant nursemaid" had left its mark. For trained professionalism to have influence within an upper class domestic situation, it had to be supported by evidence of social standing.(45)

From December 1887, when Lady Aberdeen had made her celebrated request for advice about a governess, it took Miss Mason just four years to open her House of Education in Ambleside. To advertise her plans, through the useful

medium of the Parents' Review, her flowing pen characteristically produced a superlative description of the end product of her training. Not only would the future employee be "more than a nurse and more than a governess" but she would be a cultured lady and professional expert combined. She was to be "Tante". This was a German designation. The name was inspired by the strength of family life in a greatly admired country where the authorities had compelled Ibsen to conform to the ideology of "Kirche, Küche and Kinder" in 1880. He had been obliged to rewrite the end of his shockingly feminist play, "The Dolls' House" to make Nora return to her children, before it could be performed on the German Stage.(46)

"Who is Tante? Tante is a gracious vision we have rejoiced in for these three years past.... Tante believes that mothers are indeed blessed among women, and that every woman who is not a mother should hold it a privilege to serve an apprenticeship to motherhood...

...Tante knows her place; we do not mean her social place-that is of course; she knows that she is a lady in all that is essential to ladyhood, or she would not be fit to be with children...

...But where is she to be had?

...The raw material of Tante exists in happy abundance in the shape of good women, refined, educated capable, doing nothing or doing the wrong thing for them, because they have not found their life-work; some of them with the child-hunger upon them which comes soon or late to all true women..."(47)

Miss Mason's "gracious vision" was characteristically comprehensive. The aim was nothing less than perfection. Her students would not only have all the essentials of

"ladyhood" but would be professionally competent. The advertisement explained that even a one-year training would be sufficient to confer expertise. The students would be carefully chosen for their "healthful, earnest and educated" attributes.(48) At the end of the course they would, hopefully, emerge with a certificate issued by the House of Education and also the National Health Society's Diploma. These would be proof of the knowledge acquired in "human physiology and nursing" related to children, "the principles of education", "the 'nature lore' children should possess" as well as "the subjects of instruction proper for children and of the right method and order for teaching each..."(49) The first prospectus explained that the training would be both professional and also geared to the needs of aristocratic and plutocratic mothers:

"The object of the House of Education is to provide for Women a special training in the knowledge and the principles which belong to their peculiar work, namely the BRINGING-UP OF CHILDREN... the need of devoted co-workers in their labour of love is grievously felt by mothers, especially by some of those of the upper classes whose engagements press heavily upon them."(50)

To make sure of attracting recruits it was carefully explained, in the Prospectus, that women of all levels of ability and attainment would be welcome at the House of Education. These included, "ladies (young ladies especially) who undergo training to enable them to fulfil the more intelligently the calling of motherhood or other

guardianship of children to which they may be called." This was directed at girls of low ability or very inadequate attainment as they "need pass no preliminary examination." At the other end of the scale, Miss Mason, hoped to raise the academic and professional standing of her House of Education by attracting, "ladies who are or wish to become governesses to older children." This group would be expected to possess "certificates of attainment." These entrants were to take a more advanced course which would include "character training" and "the laws of health and physical development." (51)

Alliances with the aristocracy were fostered through an impressive list of titled patronesses. The first prospectus listed one Duchess, (the daughter of Mrs. Dallas Yorke, the "Lady Visitor" to the House of Education) two Marchionesses, four Countesses, three Viscountesses, four peers' daughters, three wives of knights or baronets and only seven ladies with the plain title, "Mrs." This last group included invaluable old friends such as Lienie Steinthal and Mrs. Boyd Carpenter as well as the wife of Dr. Schofield, the new Chairman of the P.N.E.U. executive committee. (52)

The two aims of the House of Education which were to provide a suitable service for aristocratic mothers and a sound professional training for young women were not thought to be conflicting at that time. The House of Education, like the Norland Institute, represented a transitional phase in the training of women for professional child care work. The status of the aristocratic or plutocratic matriarch was such that it appeared perfectly appropriate to attempt to meet her requirements. Miss Mason endeavoured to balance both elements in the training. For example, Mr. Rooper, by virtue of his position as an Inspector of Schools was asked to make the examiner's report at the end of the first year's course. He recorded, of the four students, that he "was deeply impressed by the earnest and business-like way in which they addressed themselves to their work." He added that he did not "doubt that they will devote themselves to the care of children with exceptional zeal and knowledge."⁽⁵³⁾ However, he went to even greater pains to emphasise the cultural and ladylike aspects of the training. He remarked of the beauties of Ambleside that he "could not help feeling that a year spent in such surroundings would be a kind of education in itself." He also commented, "It is right that those heads of families who seek the advantage of assistance in rearing their children should enquire into the social position of

those whose help they require. The ladies who are trained at the House of Education are daughters of clergymen, officers in the army, professional men and merchants." (54) A similar point was made by the lady visitor, Mrs. Dallas Yorke. In an open letter appealing for more recruits, which was published in October 1892, she emphasised that an advanced educational training was given within an atmosphere of culture. She also commended the "elasticity" of a scheme relevant to all those "beginning on the freer fuller lines of early womanhood." (55)

However, attracting students to the training in sufficient numbers remained a problem during Miss Mason's lifetime. It was doubtless true, as claimed, that the demand always exceeded the supply. By 1894, the appellation "Tante" had been discarded in favour of "governess" or "teacher". (56) The diffuse early aims, comparable to those of the ill-fated 1891 Ambleside "Summer School", designed to recruit nurses, aunts and mothers as well as prospective governesses for training were perforce narrowed. Thereafter the incoming students all sat the same standard entrance examinations. (57) Miss Mason also appears to have been unsuccessful in securing either the highly qualified or the non-academic girls for her training. In 1892 there were four students. There were eight in the following year and thirteen in the third. (58)

Numbers increased first, after the move to Scale How, at the end of 1894, and secondly, after the extension of the training from one to two years from 1897. It has, however, been difficult to assess the total numbers accurately. The figures were not published in the P.N.E.U. annual reports. After Miss Mason's death "An Old Pupil" made a conservative estimate that Miss Mason had trained "some 400 students", during her thirty-one years as Principal.⁽⁵⁹⁾ Even if the accommodation for between 35 and 40 students, after the Scale How premises had been extended, had been fully deployed, the total number trained should have been nearer eight hundred to one thousand. It would appear however that vacant places were not always filled. For example, in 1918, there were only 14 students in the first year intake.⁽⁶⁰⁾ It would therefore be hard to argue convincingly that the House of Education exerted a national influence and that the students were the vanguard of a new educational movement "which was to raise the status of the teacher" as claimed by "R.A.P."⁽⁶¹⁾

"The House of Education is situated in a beautiful part of the Lake Country. It is an old-fashioned country house with delightful grounds, in the true sense of the word a HOME for the students, who must look back on their student life as something at once practical and full of hard work, yet suffused with a radiance due, not only to the high aims and ideals of the College, but also to the glorious setting of the life in its "house-beautiful".
(62).

Like other heads of contemporary female educational institutions, Miss Mason assumed the combined roles of spiritual leader, benign matriarch and academic Principal, although she delegated most of the duties appertaining to the last position after 1897. During the training, the students, known as Miss Mason's "bairns" received contradictory messages. On the one hand, they were taught that they were the pioneer evangelists of a dynamic educational philosophy and on the other, they were treated as dependent children without personal responsibility, as in contemporary girls' boarding schools. (63)

In many respects, the training emulated that of the elementary teacher. The subjects included the theory and practice of education which incorporated P.N.E.U. methods such as "narration", as well as a wide range of practical and academic subjects suited to middle class children and older girls. Teaching practice was offered through groups taken in a single room in the House of Education Practising School. The students were also rigorously submitted to the ordeal of the "Criticism Lesson" and, unlike Miss Mason, were rarely excused on grounds of illness:

"Each Thursday morning at half past eleven Miss Mason, accompanied by members of the teaching staff, entered the big room then known as the classroom and took her place. She sat behind a small table with a bell on it and facing her were the rows of students. In the space provided by the large french windows there was room for a table and chairs...to which the student giving the lesson led the children. They

all shook hands in turn with Miss Mason as they entered, then the lesson began. Three lessons were given during the hour to different forms by different students, then came half an hour of criticism. First individual students were asked to comment, then members of staff and the Vice-Principal, Miss Williams. Lastly Miss Mason said a word or two. She did not sum up or pronounce a verdict, but she illuminated a point of principle or practice. There could be stern comment or grateful appreciation, sometimes gaiety or enjoyment of a phrase used by one of the class...."(64)

Although Miss Mason's public appearances were strictly rationed, "...her life in the house and her presence were a very real influence to all who lived and worked at Scale How."(65) As Miss Mason's "Bairns" the students were treated like dutiful daughters rather than enterprising career women. Both the daily timetable and free time were subject to firm controls. The first prospectus had stated, "Each boarding-house is under the supervision of a responsible lady who trains the students in careful habits."(66) The process was continued at Scale How. By absorbing the domestic ideology, the spirit of service, a sense of corporate devotion to the head of the household with their smattering of languages and literature, the students were being prepared for the "status incongruence" of the private governess: (67)

"The dignity and glory of voluntary submission is so beautifully taught that the observance of rules which may at first seem irksome, soon comes to be a service, not only of honour but also of love and devotion."(68)

These womanly sentiments were suitably symbolised by the name of the students' journal, chosen by Dorothea Beale on a visit to the House of Education, which was "L'Umile Pianta". It referred to the humble rush in Aesop's fable which survived by bowing to the wind! (69)

Once a student had joined the charmed circle of the House of Education family, she was encouraged to keep closely in touch, after departure. The students' posts were selected for them; they were expected to join the P.N.E.U. for life; study the Parents' Review and make full use of the P.R.S. (70) As with other female "total institutions" of the period, the staff were recruited mainly from former students to preserve the ethos. (71) They were expected to be missionaries and as, disciples, spread Miss Mason's blend of culture, precept and educational saws. (72) However, not all found this possible. The P.N.E.U. ideology did not, apparently, mitigate the anomalies in the position of the private governess, present since early Victorian times. (73) Although the majority of employers must have had some P.N.E.U. connections, the Bairns' letters to Miss Mason testify to unhappiness and difficulty. As financially inferior employees, even if technically ladies, the students were not in a position to transform the educational attitudes of the parents. Some parents, often away, showed little

interest. Others interfered too much. The governess might also have to cope with social isolation or unwelcome sexual advances from her paterfamilial "poster". (74)

Many students welcomed the P.N.E.U. move into schools which offered both educational autonomy in the classroom and intellectual companionship. Mrs. Franklin had, herself, initiated this trend by starting the first small P.N.E.U. private day school in 1894, employing two House of Education students to undertake the teaching. Others, such as the Goode sisters who had trained with Miss Mason, followed suit by opening private schools during the early years of the twentieth century. (75)

In response to this trend, Mrs. Franklin tried to persuade Miss Mason to professionalise the House of Education. (76) The certificate was not nationally valid. Furthermore, some students were seeking posts in elementary schools. (77) Through her political connections, Mrs. Franklin met Robert Morant, the Permanent Secretary and discussed the issue of "recognition" by the Board of Education. Morant, a committed liberal educationalist who subsequently became an admirer of Miss Mason, was, on the whole, in favour of this move. (78) As mentioned in Chapter 4, the barrier to "recognition" was primarily erected by Miss Mason. First, because

she wished to maintain control over both the property and her institution she was reluctant to hand Scale How over to a non profit-making Trust, which was one of the requirements of recognition. Secondly, it seems likely that she was fearful of Government Inspection and possible exposure of her lack of advanced professional qualifications. This may have been the reason behind her refusal to allow Mrs. Franklin to succeed Mrs. Dallas Yorke as Lady Visitor. She was wary of prying eyes. During this period, she sought examiners not from the ranks of H.M.I.s, as formerly, but from university men such as Oscar Browning and Professor de Burgh (1866 - 1943) who were both liberal education-
alists. Miss Mason hid her fears of criticism behind bold proclamations of her definitive educational philosophy:

"I am glad to think that on the whole I do well to keep this college independent of the Board. I see distinctly that it would not do to receive grants either from the Board or from the local authority. May I quote a homely proverb, 'He who pays the piper calls the tune' and I wish myself to have the calling of the tune...." (79)

Thus, to safeguard her own position, Miss Mason failed to bring her private institution into line with twentieth century trends towards school education. She chose to retain her social status at the expense of professional recognition which left those students

seeking school posts in some difficulty. Her decision was consistent with the Victorian raison d'être of the House of Education which was to supply trained governesses for home schoolrooms.

8.4. The Mothers' Education Course (1892-1914)

The Mothers' Education Course, hereafter abbreviated to the M.E.C., was an educational correspondence course for mothers. It was organised by Miss Mason and Miss Kitching from Ambleside from September 1892 until it finally petered out just before the First World War. The M.E.C. was Miss Mason's third and final line of attack in her campaign to raise the standard of home education by educating the parents. In some ways it was an eighteenth century solution. Controversial thinkers like Rousseau in "La Nouvelle Héloïse" (1761) and Mary Wollstonecraft in "The Vindication of the Rights of Women" (1792) had argued for an educated motherhood to improve child care. These views had been shared by the "early educationalists" reviewed in Chapter 5.

"It is the want of domestic taste, and not that acquirement of knowledge, that takes women out of their families and tears the smiling babe from the breast that ought to afford it nourishment." (80)

The notion of the mother educating her children seemed more natural to those Victorians who viewed the governess

as "an indicator of the extent to which a man's wife was a lady of leisure."⁽⁸¹⁾ It was an appropriate theme for an age anxious to draw the mother into the Imperial endeavour.

"But thou, my daughter, meekly glad, has ta'en
A man fro' the Lord: thy joy has wholesome pain
Of diffidence:-Thou, Wisest, make me wise,
For the child's sake that in my bosom lies!....
...Who hast so graced these to a blessed birth
Wilt not His wisdom's waterings refrain?"⁽⁸²⁾

As Miss Mason had argued in "Home Education", intelligent motherhood demanded up to date knowledge. Divine Inspiration worked through these means.⁽⁸³⁾

In 1890, "O.O" had written to the Parents' Review to complain that, as a busy mother and Vicar's wife in a "wild parish", not only did she rarely "see a new book or meet an educated person" but she felt that she was gradually losing "all power of comprehending anything more improving than the daily paper."⁽⁸⁴⁾ She feared that she would be unable to meet the intellectual needs of her children as they grew older, unless she could work to some "set plan or scheme of reading."⁽⁸⁵⁾ Mrs. Hart-Davis, similarly placed, had also mentioned the tensions of a mother, who having become aware of the Parents' Review felt even more anxious about being "frittered away by the pressure of 'small things' due to constant interruptions."⁽⁸⁶⁾

In 1891, Miss Mason announced in the Review:

"Many mothers feel that they would be the better in body and mind for the mental activity that nothing but definite study affords.." (87)

Miss Mason's M.E.C., by correspondence, was for the highly intelligent mother capable of sustained academic study. The syllabus appears to have been more demanding than the theoretical work undertaken by the students at the House of Education. It was, therefore, intended to serve the double purpose of stimulating the maternal mind as well as offering relevant P.N.E.U. upbringing knowledge. The syllabus, for the three year course was divided into four subjects. It remained unchanged throughout the twenty-two years of its existence. Mothers were permitted to choose whether to take all, or part of the course, and to sit, or avoid, the half-yearly examinations. It was estimated that one year's work could be achieved at the rate of reading about 100 pages a week, from the recommended book list, for ten months. (88)

The course included Divinity, Physiology and Health Education and Nature Lore. Mothers were to be helped "to give their children such teaching as should confirm them in the Christian religion," They were expected to acquire "the knowledge necessary for the care and development of children in sickness and health." To this end, they were encouraged, as the House of Education Students, to work towards the National

Health Society's diploma. The Society had been founded in 1871 "for the diffusion of the knowledge of the laws of health amongst all classes of Society" and had been organised on very similar lines to the P.N.E.U. Under the catchy slogan, "A Nation's health is a Nation's wealth", instructive "homely talks" and leaflets were offered to working class mothers and girls. Ladies were able to qualify for the diploma, and perhaps a medal, by passing examinations after attending courses of lectures on the three subjects: "Domestic hygiene", "Nursing the sick" and "First aid to the injured and sick". In 1891 these lectures were taken to the provinces. Dr. Schofield, the P.N.E.U. chairman who was involved with the Society, was doubtless, as pleased to use the P.N.E.U. courses to spread general hygiene as Miss Mason was pleased to have one part of her syllabus pre-arranged.⁽⁸⁹⁾ Thirdly, the M.E.C. mothers were taught "to show the principles of education and methods based on those principles." Finally the course was intended "to enable mothers to awaken their children's interest in Nature and give them their first ideas."⁽⁹⁰⁾

By comparison with the P.R.S. and the House of Education, the M.E.C. received little publicity within P.N.E.U. circles. It was not mentioned at all in the Review after 1910. Although some leading P.N.E.U.

members such as Mrs. Anson and Mrs. Franklin registered for the course, the total numbers involved were small. Between 60 and 70 names were listed in the M.E.C. register for 1891-1900. A further 88 were recorded in another register, labelled 1896-1908. Finally, only about 12 names appeared in the third existing register for the dates 1910-1914.⁽⁹¹⁾ It is not known how many mothers sat the examinations or actually completed the three year course. Altogether the total numbers who took all, or part of the course, cannot have exceeded 170 mothers in seventeen years.

In an investigation of British educational services for women and girls, C. S. Bremner commented in 1897 very favourably upon Miss Mason's schemes:

"The House (of Education) is an outcome of the Parents' National Educational Union, which with its twenty-two branches in London and the country, makes a successful effort to place ideals and schemes of education before before that individual whom other education societies find so unreachable, the British parent. Miss Mason has made a praiseworthy effort to induce mothers to take up a three years' educational course; already 62 mothers have become members. The significance of the movement can scarcely be overstated; the idea it embodies is bound to spread."⁽⁹²⁾

This prediction was not to be fulfilled. The heyday of the M.E.C., if it may be so described, was in the 1890's during the brief period of P.N.E.U. reverence for parents, symbolised by Miss Mason's articles.

The general lack of take-up appears to have been related to the mothers' lack of confidence in their intellectual abilities, the pressure of constant interruptions and demands upon their time and attention and the belief that "life itself gives a mother the experience she needs." Apart from Mrs. Kinnear, the wife of a specialist in the diseases of childhood, who "had a large experience of examinations" and possessed both the National Health Society's diploma as well as one from St. Andrew's University, for most of the mothers, the M.E.C. appears to have provided their first experience of sustained, examinable academic study.⁽⁹³⁾ The existing correspondence abounds with excuses for failure to start, complete the reading or send in the examinations on time. One was nursing a sick mother, another had too many young children, a third could no longer afford the guinea subscription plus 5s. for each examination while a fourth pleaded the demands of the London Season, as her excuse.⁽⁹⁴⁾

Miss Mason may have been seeking both further guidance as well as discipleship from the experienced mothers who attempted the M.E.C. In 1894 she commented:

"Some of the papers...are a source of heart-felt delight, so gratifying is it to find mothers studying the theory of education with the ability and intelligence of the professed student added to the peculiar insight and tenderness which belongs to a mother only..."⁽⁹⁵⁾

Those who did well were rewarded by having their answers published in the Parents' Review. However, it seems that Miss Mason who, as had been shown, probably never sat an examination in her life, did not pitch the examination questions at the level of her correspondents. The questions appear thoroughly daunting to the modern reader. For example, at the end of the first year, the mothers were asked: "What difficulties present themselves in Natural Theology and how should a Christian meet them?" Or, "Give some account of the anatomy of the brain, with diagrams. How would you distinguish between the cerebro-spinal and sympathetic systems?" Finally, "What do you consider the CRUX of modern thought? Show how our definitions of the functions of education meet the difficulty." (96)

Even Beatrice Wolrych-Whitmore, who must have been Miss Mason's star pupil, for no less than seven of her answers on subjects ranging from "The Will", "Imagination" to "Nutrition and Habit" were published, complained of the difficulty of the course: (97)

"The standard of intelligence required seems to me to be rather high...the wording of the questions is sometimes ambiguous. It is probably my own fault but I have several times mistaken the meaning of the question..." (98)

It was in vain for Mrs. Anson, who presented the only discussion paper on the M.E.C., to plead the merits of sustained, examinable academic study as a stimulus

to the intellectual development of both mother and children. The puzzling questions, the undiluted books and natural anxiety must have combined to make mothers feel threatened rather than supported by the course. Mrs. Anson remarked, "If it is true as has been said that 'a mother is only a woman, but that she needs the love of Jacob, the patience of Job, the wisdom of Moses, the foresight of Joseph and the firmness of Daniel.'" (99) The majority of mothers probably did feel that they needed the strength of five Old Testament male giants to enable them to tackle Miss Mason's perplexing questions, given contemporary beliefs in the intellectual inferiority of women. (100)

Miss Mason's personal self-help struggles and independent single state did not equip her to understand the problems of these protected but subservient married mothers. One consequence of these difficult examination papers would have been to establish Miss Mason's intellectual superiority over these socially superior upper-class mothers. There may have been present elements of unconscious hostility which, one suspects, also supplied the motivation behind the rigid conduct of the students' weekly "criticism lessons". Unlike her well-situated correspondents, Miss Mason had been obliged to "fight every inch of the way we have come." (101) It is hardly surprising

that she sought instead disciples and admirers of her writings from among her correspondents.⁽¹⁰²⁾ In common, with those who used the other P.N.E.U. facilities the members of the M.E.C. were also organisationally drawn into the fold.

The M.E.C. had originally been devised during the period before 1894, when Miss Mason was open to a broad range of educational influence. This may have led to confusion but it permitted flexibility. From 1904, the M.E.C. waned as a result of a more determined attempt to win disciples from among the parents. "The P.N.E.U. reading course" was substituted, based on Miss Mason's "Home Education Series" (1904-06). It was offered, ostensibly as a simplified introduction to the M.E.C. in response to mothers' requests but was, in reality an exercise in indoctrination.⁽¹⁰³⁾ Participants were asked to read Miss Mason's five books and then sign a form stating that they had answered the questions printed at the back of this new series and had, therefore, mastered the principles contained therein.⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ There is no evidence to suggest that Miss Mason's somewhat variable range of books which comprised the "Home Education Series" were universally popular in P.N.E.U. circles. Some branches, apart from Birmingham, introduced P.N.E.U. reading circles but the general impression is that members were unfamiliar with Miss Mason's writings. This lack of interest is confirmed

by the fact that only fifteen people became "Qualified members" of the P.N.E.U.⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ Thereafter the subject was dropped although the P.N.E.U. reading courses were periodically resurrected, for example between 1926-1935⁽¹⁰⁵⁾

Thus, Miss Mason's attempt to train a professional motherhood through the M.E.C. was not far reaching. It failed to have a significant appeal after 1904 partly because the P.N.E.U. fostered discipleship rather than professionalism and also because greater educational opportunities had opened up for the younger generations of mothers through High Schools and Colleges.

8.5. Conclusion:

All three of Miss Mason's Ambleside educational services were designed to support, preserve and update the social and intellectual status of families belonging to the aristocratic and educated classes by providing a liberal home education for the mothers and children. One consequence of these schemes was the establishment and preservation of Miss Mason's personal status as a gracious lady of culture and intellectual head of the Scale How household. The schemes, however, depended upon the continuation of the Victorian belief in the superiority of the upper classes and the traditional links between class and status. The new element which Miss Mason did not

foresee was the power of modern professionalism. For her, professional training had been linked with the low social status she had been careful to hide from upper class patrons of the P.N.E.U. The threat of professionalism emerged from the unexpected direction of Mrs. Franklin. As a young matriarch whose father was to become a peer she might have been expected to subscribe to Miss Mason's veneration of traditional aristocracy. Instead she gave equal weight to the power of the coming professionalism, while retaining aristocratic alliances. This compromise accorded with her ambivalent social status both as a plutocrat and a member of the Jewish community.

Miss Mason's response to the threat of professionalism was to close ranks and draw the P.N.E.U. protectively around her through discipleship and carefully planned retreat. This curtailed the flexibility of her potentially interesting and useful educational schemes designed to assist the "unreachable" British upper class parent. She hid her lack of professional qualifications behind an eighteenth century image of the grande dame. Mrs. Franklin accepted Miss Mason's public ideal. Her aim was to upgrade the Ambleside educational ventures by professionalising the two most viable propositions: the House of Education and the P.R.S. As shown, she was unsuccessful in her

attempt to get the Board of Education to recognise the former. In the next chapter it will be shown that a revival of interest in liberal education paved the way for the taking of the P.R.S. into schools. Thus, although Miss Mason's educational ventures provided the means for the transformation of the P.N.E.U. from a home service to the school, Mrs. Franklin will be shown to have been the active agent. The transformation of the P.N.E.U. also arose from Miss Mason's desire to win a wider audience beyond her immediate circle of disciples to establish her public status more securely.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 8

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4. E. Kitching, 1899, (P.R.), p.431.
5. C. Mason, 1899, Chaps. 1, 2, 5.
6. Young, 1977, p.89. C. Mason, 1917, pp.240-241.
7. Young, 1977, p.77, 85.
8. Matthew Arnold "Culture and Anarchy" in ed. G. Sutherland, 1973, pp.165-166. According to Arnold, "Curiosity" used to be a term of opprobrium. C. Mason, 1899, pp.250-251.
9. M. L. Hart Davis to C. Mason, 6.11.1887, Gibbon, 1960, p.44.
10. "E.A.G.", in "Notes and Queries", Parents' Review vol. 1. no. 4., 1890, p.318.
11. C. Mason "Our Work" Parents' Review, vol. 2. no. 5., 1891, p.397.
12. George Sumner quoted in J. Coombs, 1965, pp.146-147.

13. "F.L.B." in "Notes and Queries" Parents' Review, vol. 1. no. 4., 1890, p. 317.
14. C. Mason, 1899, pp.52, 133-134, T. G. Rooper, n.d., pp.1-18 and 18-37. The Ven Archdeacon Blunt "Reverence for Work of the Holy Spirit in Children and the Young" Parents' Review vol. 1. no. 9., 1890, p. 721.
15. Gibbon, 1960, p.44, P.N.E.U. Ann. Rep., 1892, p. 1.
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17. C. Mason, 1914, pp. 86-97.
18. Plato, "The Republic" trans A.D. Lindsay, 1935, pp. 86-97.
19. J. A. Banks, 1969, pp. 190-191.
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22. Anstruther, op. cit., Rooper, 1892 (P.R.).
23. J. H. Newman "The Idea of University", London Longmans Green, 1912. (hereafter, Newman 1912).
ed. H. Tristram, "The Idea of a Liberal Education" London, George G. Harrap, 1952.
24. C. Mason to H. Franklin 27.5.1902. Anon "Should not Purity have the First Word" Parents' Review, vol. 6., 1896, p. 349-353, C. Mason, 1921. John Bunyan, "The Holy War", (1682), London, The Religions Tract Society n.d. E. H. Ussher "English Public School Morality", Parents' Review, vol. 21 no. 5., 1910, pp. 373-377.
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26. P.R.S. Fees notebook, Trustees accounts, 1923.
27. The Editor (C. Mason), Parents' Review vol. 2 no. 4., 1892, p. 313.
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 42. J. R. de S. Honey, 1977, pp. 244-252. Gosden, 1972, p. 216. Anstruther, 1983, pp. 149-156.
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 51. Ibid.
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55. Ibid. Note in Parents' Review, vol. 4. no. 4., 1894, p. 317.
56. Cholmondeley, 1960, p. 69.
57. Ibid. p. 37. "Our Work", Parents' Review, vol. 4. no. 7., 1894, p. 558.
58. "An Old Pupil", in "In Memoriam", 1923, p.87.
59. Mrs. H. C. M. Walton to MAC 6.6.1984, This was the year Essex Cholmondeley took the training.
60. R.A.P. (Pennethorne) "In Memoriam", 1923, p. 73.
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83. C. Mason, 1899 p.vi.
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93. Agnes B. Kinnear to Madam (C. Mason), 17.11.1898.
94. E. A. Williams to C. Mason, 26.7.1900, Frances Gardiner to C. Mason, 21.5.1901, Julian Radnor to C. Mason, 9.6.1902, Julian Folkestone to C. Mason, 16.4.?
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96. Printed M.E.C. exam. papers.
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98. Beatrice Wolrych Whitmore to C. Mason n.d.
99. Mrs. Anson op. cit., p. 464.
100. Burstyn, 1980, p. 40-41.
101. Quoted in Cholmondeley, 1960, p. 106.
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103. Lady Mary Cayley, 9.12.1897? Maud Roper, n.d. C. Mason to H. Franklin, 15.1.1904; 8.2.1904; H. Franklin to C. Mason, 20.3.1904.

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Chapter 9:

The Resolution of Conflict and the Bid for World-wide
Acclaim; From the 1894 Crisis to the Liberal Education
for All Movement (1890-1923)

9.1 Introductory:

Through an analysis of the operations of the P.N.E.U. Central Executive Committee, which was set up in January 1890, the central themes of the thesis will be drawn together in this chapter, to explain the transformation of the P.N.E.U. after 1900. The thesis has been concerned with conflicting relationships between an individual and a society, spinsterhood and matriarchy under paterfamilial domination, exclusivity and universality, as well as between professionalism and social class status, during the period of transition from the Victorian age to the modernism of the early twentieth century. In this chapter, too, the obstacles to the development of a universal method of education for parenthood by the P.N.E.U. will be more clearly crystallised. The discussion will be concerned with four focal events in the development of the P.N.E.U. during this time. These were first, the conflict in 1894, between Miss Mason and Lady Isabel Margesson, a dominant member of the executive committee, secondly the formation of the Mason-Franklin alliance during the same year, thirdly, the publication of Miss Mason's "Short Synopsis of Educational Theory" in 1904 and finally, the return of Lienie Steinthal and the inauguration of the Liberal Education for All movement in the State elementary schools, during 1914, which helped to resolve some of Miss Mason's conflicts:

Miss Mason's struggle for supremacy over the forceful Lady Isabel focalised some of the problems she had been experiencing in relation to the theory and practice of the P.N.E.U. This challenge to her leadership, not only exposed her need to be first, but also the actual insecurity of her hard-won intellectual and social status within the P.N.E.U. and at Ambleside. Furthermore, Miss Mason's consequent disassociation with the "new education" theories favoured by Lady Isabel Margesson in 1894, narrowed the eclectic educational perspective she had displayed in "Home Education" to the habit-training theories of the nineteenth century physiologists. This meant the loss of the theoretical basis for Education for Parenthood which had been supplied by the "New Educationalists". The confrontation also illuminated the difficulty of winning many disciples from among the P.N.E.U. matriarchs and explicitly challenged Miss Mason to produce her own theory for the P.N.E.U. that would stand the test of time.

The institutionally significant alliance formed between Miss Mason and her new disciple, Mrs. Franklin during the 1894 crisis, not only enabled the latter to become a key member of the central executive committee but also opened satisfactory channels of communication between London and Ambleside for the first time since 1890. This not only gave Miss Mason some control over the Union but ratified feminine leadership within the Society. The male participants were relegated to a background, supportive role comparable to the stereotype

of the absentee Victorian paterfamilies. Both Miss Mason and Mrs. Franklin fostered the upper class exclusivity of the P.N.E.U. However, as mentioned at the end of Chapter 8, Mrs. Franklin also presented a challenge to Miss Mason's leadership by attempting to professionalise the Union. This problem was solved by the publication of Miss Mason's "A Short Synopsis of Educational Theory" (1904), which, although it omitted all reference to the parental contribution, confirmed her intellectual status within the P.N.E.U. Her position was additionally reinforced by a network of key disciples.

Finally, it will be argued, that the unresolved issue of professionalism was partially solved by the transformation of the P.N.E.U. emphasis from the parents in the home to the children in the schools. As shown, the P.N.E.U. branches had supplied negligible confirmation of the validity of Miss Mason's "Home Education" theories. In contrast, the children's examination papers were believed by Miss Mason to furnish concrete proof of the soundness of her school educational philosophy, as set out in the 1904 Synopsis. The introduction by Lienie Steinthal of the P.N.E.U. or Mason Method of a literary liberal education in State elementary schools served three institutional functions. First, it opened up the upper class exclusivity of the P.N.E.U., which had originally been deplored by Lienie and Mr. Rooper. Secondly, the take-up of the P.N.E.U. methods in several local education areas confirmed that Miss Mason's educational ideas were, seemingly professionally

viable. Thirdly, the spread of these methods ensured a more widespread national fame than she had previously enjoyed and gratified her need to come first. As a result, as already explained, the P.N.E.U. attempt to educate for parenthood went into decline.

9.2.i Central Executive Committee Problems (1890-93)

From the beginning, Charlotte Mason did not find it easy to work with the P.N.E.U. central executive committee. The tension was caused by disagreement over where and in whose hands the executive power of the P.N.E.U. should lie. There had been few problems in agreeing a constitution. At the "informal" council meeting described in 6.3.ii, the members of the new executive committee had been asked to draft a constitution. They had achieved this within a month. It was formally ratified at the meeting held at the College of Preceptors on 14th February 1890, just as the first issue of the Parents' Review came out. The executive committee was also legally established, under the chairmanship of the distinguished educationalist and writer, Canon Evan Daniel (1837-1904), already mentioned.⁽¹⁾ His position was indicative of the interest shown by the London teaching profession in the new Union.⁽²⁾

The new members of the committee experienced greater difficulty in fulfilling their second mandate to set up a central P.N.E.U. office with a secretary in London. At the first P.N.E.U. annual general meeting, held in June, 1890, Canon Daniel had insisted that it was "desirable that London should be made the headquarters of the movement

and a committee should be formed in London for the purpose of organising the movement. Money will now be required for the purpose and I trust a sympathetic public will now come to our support".⁽³⁾ His hypassing of Charlotte Mason's services was understandable, although she had been appointed honorary "working" secretary to the executive committee. She had failed to attend the meetings and to submit the requested financial statement of her P.N.E.U. transactions. Her suggestion that the Union should be organised through "County" or "District" secretaries did not meet with the committee's approval. Instead, Miss Sharland was appointed as the honorary organising secretary in London.⁽⁴⁾ However, although she drew up plans for the limitation of executive membership to the London area which would have severely curtailed Miss Mason's influence as most of the country members were her Bradford supporters, the scheme was not implemented. For undisclosed reasons, the executive committee failed to convene for the nine months from July 9th, 1890 until April 23rd, 1891. At this stormy meeting which was, perhaps, prudently not attended by Miss Mason, it was discovered that the Union was in the red. All those present who included Canon Daniel, Mrs. Anson, Miss Sharland and Emily Shirreff offered their resignations to take effect as soon as the finances were sorted out.⁽⁵⁾

It is not known who had been expected to undertake the necessary fund-raising, The public had obviously not come forward. Presumably the blame for the Union's debts was

laid at Miss Mason's door. She had incurred heavy expenses over publicity and by publishing the Parents' Review without capital. The situation was critical. There was talk of dissolving the P.N.E.U. Council altogether. Miss Mason did not at first appreciate the danger of this suggestion. She had disliked having her transactions exposed to the critical scrutiny of the London Committee. She would have preferred the Union to have been organised by branch delegates or through locally based committees. However, a few days before the P.N.E.U. Council was due to meet, she was galvanised into action. She begged Oscar Browning to join the Council and support her:

"...Do please do this and help lick the Society into shape? The organisation seems to answer admirably with regard to branches-some of which are doing splendid work - but the centre unhappily started with dissension and we have never got on well. I think things may better now that the 'Opposition' secretary is retiring...

Do you remember saying in Bradford that only two or three people believe in education? The remark is profoundly true and the object of the Society is just this to get people to believe in Education. Do help!!..." (6)

Although only four people attended the decisive Council meeting held on 10th July 1891, the threatened dissolution was averted and a new executive committee formed. Charlotte Mason's supporters: Edward Wynne and Oscar Browning joined the committee. Her opponents: Canon Daniel and Mrs. Anson, retired from the fray. Although he was in poor health, Edward Wynne nobly offered to replace Miss Sharland. However, as he died the following summer, he was probably too ill to

organise committee meetings. These lapsed for a further nine months, until Dr. Alfred Schofield M.D (1849-1929) was elected as the new executive chairman, with additional committee members, from 8th April 1892 until the 11th January 1905. (7)

Dr. Schofield was an interesting, gentlemanly and slightly eccentric physician and writer, who initially threw himself wholeheartedly into the P.N.E.U. cause. Miss Mason wrote: "The gain to the movement in the adhesion of so able and active an educationalist and man of science is very great". (8) As already mentioned, he introduced Miss Mason to the work of the National Health Society, which was of assistance in her educational courses. He also wrote a series of five articles advertising the P.N.E.U. in the "Girls' Own Paper". (9) He was later to write: "The development of the mother instinct of woman into true motherliness is one of the greatest achievements of feminine culture and the root of altruism". (10) In theory he approved of the liberation of women. However, in practice, as a Victorian gentleman, he hankered after "the fragrant memory of the unemancipated yet gentle and lovable early Victorian woman..." (11) He did not find the new dominant type of committee woman agreeable. "To attain a truly desirable and legitimate end, a woman may use means that would offend the conscience of a man". (12) As the Chairman of the P.N.E.U. executive his leadership was weak and ineffectual. This was probably due to the fact that he led a very busy and varied life, as his autobiography

has revealed.⁽¹³⁾ He, therefore, probably did not give his full attention to P.N.E.U. business after his initial burst of enthusiasm, although he was a regular attender at the meetings after the first six months. e is not recorded as having introduced any original suggestions, beyond advertising "The teaching of hygiene" petition and a request that nothing in the publications of the P.N.E.U. should be "contrary to the accepted laws of the medical profession".⁽¹⁴⁾ The appeal of the P.N.E.U. for Dr. Schofield, doubtless, was the gracious old-world charm of its gentle founder, his contemporary. The problem in committee may have been that, as a well-mannered Victorian gentleman, he was inclined to defer too courteously to the ladies. Under his nominal direction, the actual leadership of the central executive passed into determined feminine hands.

9.2.ii The Meteoric Rise of Lady Isabel Margesson (1892-94)

Lady Isabel Margesson was young, strong and a whirlwind of reformist zeal. Her eruption into the hesitant debates of the executive committee relentlessly exposed the truth of Lord Aberdeen's comment, at the second P.N.E.U. annual meeting, "that the objects of the society were too vague for practical purposes".⁽¹⁵⁾ Her activities also uncovered the deficiencies of the central organisation. Although a constitution had been outlined, the P.N.E.U. administrators lacked clear goals as well as finance and a sound theoretical framework.

Lady Isabel and her husband, Mortimer R. Margesson, who

were related to the influential Emily Shirreff and associated with the Froebel Society, had been actively involved with the establishment of the P.N.E.U. in London from the beginning.⁽¹⁶⁾ Both were members of the P.N.E.U. Council. Mortimer Margesson had also served on the first executive committee under Canon Daniel and had retained his place when Dr! Schofield took over. Lady Isabel held a key P.N.E.U. position as secretary to the large, wealthy and lively Belgravia branch. It had been one of the first branches to be established and remained in active operation until the outbreak of the 1914-18 war.⁽¹⁷⁾ In Lady Isabel's capable hands, the Belgravia branch, influenced by existing Froebelian and P.N.E.U. ideas, set up an educational lending library, a Natural History Club, a children's correspondence course in art as well as additional lectures and courses throughout the year. Listed first in the annual reports for alphabetical reasons, the Belgravia branch also led in terms of size and innovation.

Lady Isabel's "Training lessons for Mothers" attracted particular attention. Her account was published in the Parents' Review. They were started in the same year that Miss Mason launched her Mothers' Education Course, by correspondence.⁽¹⁸⁾ Emily Lord, (recently married to Walter Ward) the Froebelian founder of the Norland Nursing Institute (1892) gave the first course on "The Theory and Practice of Froebel".⁽¹⁹⁾ The scope of the lectures were subsequently broadened to include guidance for mothers on all aspects of teaching young children at home. In her

article, Lady Isabel specifically stated that the P.N.E.U. alone could not "supply the place of that individual study of the subject" of "the science of education" which, she suggested, should include the works of Spencer, Locke, Sully, Froebel and Pestalozzi. Although she had, thereby, aligned herself with the "new educationalist" and "Child Study" schools, no adverse comment was made by Miss Mason nor other P.N.E.U. leaders at the time. Furthermore, the Belgravia branch was not reprimanded for varying their own list of "Objects" which deviated to a minor extent from those laid down in the Constitution. The Belgravia list of "Objects" were even published in the 1892-93 P.N.E.U. annual report. Miss Mason also appended an applaudatory footnote to Lady Isabel's article on the training lessons:

"The Editor earnestly hopes that 'Mothers' Training Classes' on this delightful pattern will be established in many centres. Such classes were part of the original scheme of the P.N.E.U." (20)

It is clear that at this point in the development of the P.N.E.U. Miss Mason had not decided that there was to be a specific P.N.E.U. philosophy. She welcomed innovations and seemed untroubled by their theoretical orientations, provided they supported P.N.E.U. development, without threatening her own position. Miss Mason was also very busy, during this period: editing the Review and establishing the Ambleside educational ventures.

It was probably on the strength of these well publicised "Training Lessons for Mothers", (which in fact

only thirteen attended), that Lady Isabel was elected to the executive committee, as meetings were resumed after the lapse of six months already mentioned. (21) She made her presence felt from the start. Her successful rise to a position of informal leadership seems to have been due to the absenteeism of out of town members, notably Miss Mason, and to the fact that the new committee was seeking support, struggling to become solvent and also pondering over the direction it should be taking. (22)

However, apart from writing what was to become a notorious pamphlet entitled "What is the P.N.E.U?", to be discussed in 9.2.iii, Lady Isabel was only involved with the passing of one committee resolution which directly impinged on Miss Mason's territory during 1893, her first year on the executive. This measure, introduced apparently without consultation with Miss Mason, required the students, who had completed their training at the House of Education, to pay five guineas out of their first years' salary to the Committee to entitle them to two years' full membership and the publications of the P.N.E.U. This was a far larger fee than the ten shillings expected annually from individual members. (23)

"Lady Isabel is charming, her ardour and enthusiasm a pure delight - but the rush with which she takes things is appalling. I well understand it must leave the Committee panting!" (24)

It is unlikely to have been due to chance that Lady Isabel's meteoric rise, after a year on the executive committee, coincided with Miss Mason's first significant period of

withdrawal, through illness followed by travel in Italy with Mrs. Firth and Julia. ⁽²⁵⁾ At the first meeting of 1894, held strategically on Belgravia soil, Lady Isabel who had somehow managed to elevate herself to the Chair, notwithstanding Dr. Schofield's presence, launched her campaign to transform the central organisation of the P.N.E.U. ⁽²⁶⁾ She had imported two Belgravia allies to lend support. They were Mrs. Anson, who had previously resigned from the executive committee during the 1891 contretemps over finance and Mrs. Hallam Murray, the Hon. treasurer of the Belgravia Branch. ⁽²⁷⁾

The business of the meeting was to set up a sub-committee to establish the long overdue central office. Those elected were Lady Isabel, Mrs. Ronald McNeill, another Belgravia member, Henry Perrin, at that time the Hon. Secretary to the P.N.E.U., and Dr. Schofield. The fact that the new sub-committee moved straight into session and immediately produced the following report, demonstrated that the whole matter had been pre-arranged. The idea was to draw on the resources of the newly established Parents' Review Company to assist in the funding of the new central office:

"We have communicated with the directors of the P.R. Company Ltd and have obtained from them a guarantee of £100 to cover any loss on the working of the proposed office for the first year." ⁽²⁸⁾

The report went on to state that an office had already been chosen in Victoria Street. The annual rental was £45. Miss Forsyth, the former Principle of the Forsyth

Technical Training College for Ladies, had already been appointed Secretary, at an annual salary of "£75 for the first year and 25% commission on all advertisements obtained by her for the Parents' Review, and travelling expenses". (29) Furthermore, the committee proposed to take over the financial management of the Parents' Review. The branches were to be asked to raise £100, out of which sum, the Belgravia branch had already offered the lion's share of £30.

Although Dr. Schofield returned to the Chair, during the next five months, Lady Isabel swept the compliant committee along with many of her plans. Her crowning triumph was election as one of the four Honorary Organising secretaries of the P.N.E.U., at the Annual General Meeting in June. (30) She had joined a select group which included Miss Mason, Mrs. Steinthal and Mr. Perrin. Her success must have been largely due to the fact that many of the practical reforms which she had initiated, such as the setting up of the London office and secretariat, were long overdue. (31) What made some members uneasy was the insidious control over the Central Office exercised by the adjacent Belgravia branch. Not only had Lady Isabel taken it upon herself to find the office and choose the furnishings but Miss Forsyth, the new appointee, was also secretary to the Belgravia branch. Almost without noticing, the committee had sanctioned the use of the Central Office for the transaction of the Belgravia business, in return for £15 expenses from branch funds. Furthermore, the new "office sub-committee"

which included Lady Isabel and Mrs. McNeill was beginning to usurp the role of the full executive committee. (32)

It seems clear that Lady Isabel wished the Central Office and executive committee to have full control over the total P.N.E.U. operations, as Canon Daniel had originally intended. There were plans to transfer the P.N.E.U. financial management from James Gordon, in Bradford, to London. Mr. Margesson was entrusted with the legal negotiations with the Parents' Review Company. Miss Forsyth was also empowered to organise P.N.E.U. lectures and training sessions, subject only to the approval of Dr. Schofield and Lady Isabel Margesson. Furthermore, Lady Isabel put forward a significant resolution which proposed a variation in the P.N.E.U. Constitution, "to suit the altered conditions of working caused by the establishment of the central office". (33) Comparable to Miss Sharland's plan, the proposed measure was designed to exclude out of town members from the executive committee. The six members, showing the lowest level of attendance were to be voted out before the following A.G.M. This measure would have firmly located the executive power of the P.N.E.U. in Metropolitan hands and also excluded Miss Mason and her Bradford supporters. However, the final straw for Miss Mason, was not the variation of the Constitution to strengthen the London committee. The real threat to her precarious position at Ambleside came from Lady Isabel's and Miss Forsyth's proposal to set up an influential London Centre for Education for parenthood,

with southern satellites of grouped branches. This was planned to include a School of Housewifery to be run by Miss Forsyth, as well as a second branch-supported House of Education, just like Miss Mason's. (34)

Miss Mason's problem, which she had to face on her return from the exhilarating Italian tour which may have drained her financial resources, was that, although her House of Education had been intended to provide personal security, the enterprise had not been established on a sufficiently firm footing by 1894 to enable her to be independent of the support of the P.N.E.U. executive. The proposal to open additional Houses of Education, possibly funded by wealthy branches, would make her own makeshift effort in scattered premises seem very inadequate by comparison. When she received a visit from the two ladies from Belgravia, at Springfield, she perceived that Lady Isabel had too strong a personality to be captivated by her gentle spell. She found Miss Forsyth more docile:

"The two ladies, Lady Isabel and Miss Forsyth have been here and departed - a most pleasant visit, not unaccompanied by discussion... I like Miss Forsyth much, - she is a Lady - refined and enthusiastic and personally a credit to us - but she is easily led and at present Lady Isabel is her committee and her P.N.E.U...." (35)

Aware of the threat posed by Lady Isabel, Miss Mason carefully constructed a letter to Dr. Schofield, whose support as Chairman she badly needed:

"I distinctly set down my foot against the opening of any branch House of Education on Ambleside lines - & both ladies agreed that it would be impossible to secure

elsewhere the elements of our success here and P.N.E.U. must not give sanction to a second-rate product must it?" (36)

With deceptive casualness, Miss Mason waited until the end of her letter before coming to the real point which was that she had set her heart on acquiring the expensive property, Scale How, that year. She explained that the "trustees will not let me have the big house I spoke of unless the Committee will be parties to the contract - at first I utterly declined to propose this - but seeing that the Society derives an income of £100 or more from the students (22 at present) and that there is every human probability of my being able to pay the rent for the seven years' lease, even if our numbers do not increase, I think the Committee might venture to do this for us - rent £150. Could you bring this also before the Committee?" (37)

This essential transaction made Miss Mason more fully aware of the dependence of her position upon the goodwill of the Central Committee. She had finally grasped that she and the P.N.E.U. could not do without an executive body. She would not survive, however, if the work in London and the South undermined her best efforts in the North. Obviously Lady Isabel's wide-ranging plans for the education of parents and governesses had, perforce, to be nipped in the bud. The question of how to secure the resignation of this indomitable lady remained.

9.2.iii Miss Mason's Pyrrhic Victory?

It may have occurred to Miss Mason that Lady Isabel also posed a threat to her intellectual leadership within the Union, which was somewhat precariously based upon "Home Education". Miss Mason had not produced any succinct theoretical guidelines for use by the P.N.E.U. Lady Isabel had been the only person to write a short pamphlet entitled, "What is the P.N.E.U.?" Furthermore towards the end of 1893 The Executive Committee had recommended that this pamphlet should be published regularly in the Parents' Review, in place of the advertisement for "Mother Siegel's Syrup".⁽³⁸⁾ Lady Isabel had begun her pamphlet by stating quite acceptably:

"The P.N.E.U. has arisen in response to a demand from thoughtful people for wisdom and knowledge in 'learning how' - how to know the laws which govern the formation of habit, how to deal with hereditary tendencies, how to give intelligent supervision and guidance, how to develop and nourish the child's threefold nature"⁽³⁹⁾

However, Lady Isabel Margesson went on to link the P.N.E.U. with the "New Educational" approach which appealed to her, as a Froebelian:

"A reproach is levelled against the Parents' Union that it claims to have made a discovery and call 'new' things that were known long ago! This is a misunderstanding. The so-called 'New Education' is only a recognition of the fact that as a child's nature is threefold: physical, intellectual and ethical, so all true education must deal with those three sides of his nature ..."⁽⁴⁰⁾

It was argued, in Chapter 5, that Miss Mason had drawn freely upon the theories of those whom most late Victorians agreed were "New Educationalists" in accordance with Lady Isabel's definition. Apart from the Spencerian influence already discussed, Miss Mason had admitted:in "Home Education":

"Looking for guidance to the literature of education, the doctrines of Pestalozzi and, still more of Froebel were exceedingly helpful to me as showing the means to secure the orderly expansion of the child's faculties ..."(41)

She had also entitled her account of the founding of the Bradford P.E.U. in the Review, "A New Educational Departure".(42) However, in the discussion of the P.N.E.U. approach, which was printed in the first Annual Report, Miss Mason showed that she was trying to link the doctrine of habit-training, somewhat inappropriately, to the "New Education".

"This doctrine of the physiology of habit, hardly as yet common property, promises to give so great an impetus towards 'Progress in character and worthiness' that its recognition is a new departure in education practically "The New Education"(43)

This narrowing of emphasis which must have been confusing to those P.N.E.U. members who had joined because they liked the Spencerian lectures in "Home Education", had, however, provided Miss Mason with a basis for a theoretical controversy with Lady Isabel:

"The situation seems to be this - the Froebel people have got hold of Lady Isabel and are endeavouring to use her, and our Society through her, as a mere agency to advance K.G. principles and work.

For a whole day we contested the point - they were deeply loyal to me because I taught Froebel! The discussion was a little feminine and droll.

At one moment it was - that I had drawn all our P.N.E.U. teaching out of Froebel and was to be honoured as an interpreter of the great sage - the next moment I had not read, did not understand Froebel and that was why I held aloof.....

Lady Isabel conceded that the Froebel Society was more or less a failure - and that the world had outgrown the K.G. but they both cling to Froebel as a mystic who has said the last word on education. In fact I think they rank him with Wagner and Ibsen amongst the "Eternities and Immensities".

We managed to agree to a sentence to be submitted to the Committee: 'Herbert Spencer and Froebel supplemented by the progressive scientific thought of the day...' (44)

Miss Mason commented to Dr. Schofield that, although the statement seemed a viable compromise she would have preferred that

"We boldly claimed to originate our own school educational thought, hanging on not to the educational reformers but to the physiologists of today and the philosophers of all time..." (45)

It appears that Miss Mason decided to fit two strings to her bow, in planning her assault upon Lady Isabel's position. She used Mrs Hart-Davis as her emissary to deliver her shots. First, she wrote a speech which Mrs Hart-Davis read to the P.N.E.U. Annual General meeting in June 1894. It did not

however deter those present from electing Lady Isabel as Hon. Org. Secretary. Miss Mason set herself two tasks in this speech: to denigrate British Froebelianism in the eyes of the upper class P.N.E.U. audience and, secondly, to affirm the originality of the P.N.E.U., notwithstanding an acknowledged dependence upon the "Educational Fathers". The judicious quoting from reputable authorities made her arguments sound convincing. Her smooth style of address and the fact that she was not present in person would have made it hard for any dissentient to pin her down on a particular issue.

In short, Froebel's theory of education concerning the development of the faculties was suitable only for "ignorant or otherwise deficient children" from the poorer classes. She quoted Matthew Arnold to support this view:

"The education of each class in society has, or ought to have, its ideal, determined by the wants of that class and its destination." (46)

Miss Mason, trained in Pestalozzianism, pleaded that most educational theories had been developed for the benefit of poor children:

"Generations of physical toil do not tend to foster imagination. How good then for the children of the working classes to have games initiated for them..." (47)

She claimed that the theory of heredity demonstrated that the "children of the cultured classes" who were the children of the P.N.E.U., began their education at a far higher level. In fact, they were born "with an inheritance of self-developing faculties.....this class question which we are all anxious to evade in common life, comes practically into force in education..." (48)

At this stage, Miss Mason was still a little uncertain as to how best to claim originality for the P.N.E.U. She must have been fully aware of the derivative nature of all her educational ideas and, no doubt, some of the leading educationalists connected with the P.N.E.U. had pointed this out to her. (49)

"We lay no claim to original ideas or methods. We cannot choose but profit by the works of great educators. Such men as Locke and Rousseau, Pestalozzi and Froebel have left us an inheritance of educational thought which we must needs enter upon. Our work as a Society is chiefly selective, but not entirely so. We take what former thinkers have left us and go on from there..." (50)

The task of the P.N.E.U. was to bring "educational ideas into more just relations with each other" and to "advance educational truth". This could not be achieved by "faddism" or by following one educationalist solely, such as Froebel, "the poet prophet of education".

"...We are altogether catholic in spirit and choose to be eclectics in education, free to take of the best whenever we find it, as a bee ranges from flower to flower, but having our own definite ideas on the lines of which we advance..." (51)

Miss Mason's paper on "P.N.E.U. Principles" was skilfully designed to please everyone without upsetting the Froebelians unduly. Two days before the A.G.M., the executive committee had met to discuss the paragraph in Lady Isabel's pamphlet which referred to her interpretation of the first "Object" of the P.N.E.U.:

"1. To assist parents of all classes to understand the best principles and methods of education in all its aspects, and especially in those which concern the formation of habits and character". (52)

Although Lady Isabel's amendment, which had named the relevant "new educationalists", mentioned earlier, was discussed "with some warmth", in fact four members to one, with two abstentions, voted in her favour to retain her pamphlet as a P.N.E.U. advertisement in the Parents' Review (53)

As a result, Miss Mason took legal advice. Fortunately for her position, legal opinion upheld her contention that there was a significant disagreement between the views expressed in Lady Isabel's leaflet and the constitutional "Object" of the P.N.E.U. (54) Not surprisingly, Miss Mason felt confident enough to attend the executive committee, only her third since 1890, which met on July 18th 1894 to accept the resignations of the Margessons, Miss Forsyth and several other Belgravia representatives. In their letter of resignation, the Margessons argued that the "Objects" had been frequently modified since

1890 by the Executive Committee acting alone. However, because they did not wish to made an issue of the way in which "The Founder" had avoided clearly defining "the Principles of the Union", they tendered "their resignation entirely on the ground of "want of unanimity between ourselves and other members of the Committee". (55)

The price of victory was, in a sense, the official death of Miss Mason's erstwhile carefree eclecticism. The confrontation forced her to clarify a distinctive P.N.E.U. philosophy so that "it cannot be said with justice that 'absolute vagueness is to prevail'" (56). The problem was that through her anxiety to disassociate herself from Lady Isabel and the "new educational" theorists, she was obliged to reject the Spencerian teaching in "Home Education". For sometime, as a "looker on", the habit training theories of the nineteenth century physiologists had exerted for her a greater appeal than contemporary naturalism. In her pamphlet, written to support her case against the Margessons, Miss Mason referred to habit training and the presentation of ideas as "that science of education ... which is perhaps the divine revelation given to our day and which opens the most glorious prospects for the elevation of the race..." (57)

However, many P.N.E.U. members did not share Miss Mason's view that "this teaching... is no mere patch on an old garment; it covers the whole scope of Education in every aspect..." (58). Mrs Borrer, who felt that Lady

Isabel "had not been quite fairly represented" said that if there ^{had} really been "a difference of opinion on a matter of principle...so that we were being tied to some hitherto unexplained principle such as the Physiology of Habit being the only point. In your leaflet you did use some rather strong expressions there, we could perhaps not honestly have remained on the Council..." (59). Mrs Borrer had seen nothing original in Miss Mason's views and simply wished to restore the status quo: "Your views...are the views we held long before we ever knew you." (60) Probably few understood that at the heart of the controversy was the threat which Lady Isabel posed to Miss Mason's personal status and that the apparent conflict over principle masked this fact. Miss Mason was faced with the problem of having to conceal her earlier allegiance to the "New Education" which she did by removing all reference to her indebtedness to Pestalozzi and Froebel in the later editions of "Home Education" and the paper, "P.N.E.U. Principles", subsequently republished in "Parents and Children" (61)

Lady Isabel, herself, quickly became absorbed with setting up the "Sesame Club" which was an offshoot of the Froebel Society. It "provided a platform for various forms of progressive education" apparently even including the P.N.E.U. (62). She wrote in a forgiving spirit to Miss Mason:

"My whole soul is burning with the enthusiasm that comes from gratitude to the 'New Education' principles...I could not work freely when I knew the Centre from which I ought to get guidance and help was holding opinions that appeared to me a small portion of the field of education.

I am very sorry to have been obliged to withdraw from the Union. It has been the means of discovering the 'Gospel' to me and I shall always be grateful to you for it. I think the difference of opinion was bound to come sooner or later as the work grew..." (63)

The Great Row of 1894 has been discussed in detail because the outcome proved to be an obstacle to the further development of education for parenthood by the P.N.E.U. The threat to Miss Mason's position, posed by Lady Isabel's influential social standing and brilliantly forceful organising abilities which fitted her for leadership rather than discipleship was, doubtless, the cause of the discord. However, in a very real sense, the final battle was also over educational issues. The vanquished Lady Isabel was the one to emerge unscathed with her principles intact. "Home Education" had been rooted in three educational traditions. Two of these, the "new education" and the "physiology of habit", confirmed Miss Mason as a professional expert. The third, "liberal education" tradition, aligned her with the cultural heritage of the upper classes. As the first two educational methods had to be started soon after birth, education for parenthood was deemed essential to ensure the right all-round development of the child. However, the "liberal education" tradition was linked

to the educational development of the older child who had reached the reading age of self-education. It was only through the combination of one or the other of these "early" educational methods with the liberal tradition that education for parenthood seemed appropriately applied to the latter. The rejected Spencerian "new education" of "Home Education" which had roots in Rousseau's naturalism had combined well with the free "liberal education" tradition. Charlotte Mason was left with the problem of trying to marry her chosen habit training approach with upper class liberal education. They were uneasy bedfellows. Many P.N.E.U. members, doubtless, shared Mrs Borrer's view, that habit training, even if dressed up in modern scientific terminology, was limited and old-fashioned. It was more appropriately applied to the servant classes.

9.3.i. The Mason-Franklin Alliance 1894-1923

The Mason-Franklin alliance was necessary to Miss Mason's survival as the leader of the P.N.E.U. It also promoted Mrs Franklin to a key organisational position within the Union. Immediately following the meeting at Springfield during the early summer of 1894, Mrs Franklin was accepted into the inner fold of the P.N.E.U. She and her husband were elected to the Central Executive Committee at the Annual General Meeting held on 8th June 1894. Mrs Franklin's first committee meeting was on the 27th June where she was

present, with Miss Mason, to witness the resignation of the redoubtable Margessons. (64)

Notwithstanding her confidence in the devoted discipleship of her new young protégée, Mrs Franklin was not destined to achieve the same early meteoric rise as Lady Isabel. It is possible that Miss Mason, who had learnt some painful lessons, managed to impose a curb. Although Mrs Franklin joined the executive in 1894 and, like Lady Isabel, played a leading role and never missed a meeting, she was not elected as one of the four Honorary Organising Secretaries with Miss Mason, Mrs Steinthal and Mr Perrin until 1897, the year of the first P.N.E.U. Annual Conference which she pioneered. She was not appointed sole Honorary Organising Secretary until 1904, the year in which Miss Mason produced the 1904 Synopsis, at Mrs Franklin's instigation. Mrs Franklin remained Honorary Secretary until 1954 and a member of the Council until her death in 1964. Later, in identifying herself so completely with the development of the P.N.E.U. from the early days, she incorrectly claimed to have been appointed the sole Honorary Secretary from 1890! (65)

From the autumn of 1894, the newly constituted Central Executive Committee settled down to the steady, regular, consolidatory organisation that had been needed since 1890. Ironically most of the business: the modifying of the Constitution, the setting up of a

finance committee, the management of the Parents' Review as well as the secure establishment of the central office and secretariat were the same reforms that Lady Isabel had endeavoured to implement during her whirlwind reign.⁽⁶⁶⁾ The difference lay not only in the fact that the new committee was composed of competent people who were prepared to put in the necessary amount of work, but also that Miss Mason had a personal disciple in a position to keep a watchful eye on the proceedings.

Mrs Franklin presumably suffered some social insecurity as a result of her Jewishness. She also appears to have had little confidence in her literary and intellectual powers outside the committee room. She took up Miss Mason's cherished ambition to make the P.N.E.U. into a prestigious and influential society, well-known both nationally and overseas. Experienced in "schwärmerei", in an age dominated by the cult of "hero worship", she believed that the Union needed a figurehead in Miss Mason, billed as an original educational thinker.⁽⁶⁷⁾ She worked indefatigably to spread the P.N.E.U. influence among the branches as described in Chapter 6. She sought alliances both with the aristocracy and professionals. Co-operation between upper class and educated parents was perhaps best expressed, during Mrs Franklin's régime at the annual P.N.E.U. Conference which she inaugurated in 1897. It

provided a forum for both parents and teachers and a meeting point for Branch Representatives. The meetings were always graced by a distinguished array of well-known speakers from educational, medical, public health or other key child care fields as well as P.N.E.U. speakers. For example, Reginald Bray, author of "The Town Child" (1907), Benjamin Broadbent, the Infant Welfare Pioneer and former Mayor of Huddersfield and Sir Michael Sadler from the Board of Education's Special Educational Inquiries Department, were among the varied and knowledgeable speakers.⁽⁶⁸⁾ There can be no doubt that these conferences not only helped to publicise the P.N.E.U. but conferred professional prestige. Although absent in person, Miss Mason's influence was invariably acknowledged at the Conferences. She produced a new paper to be read, each year.

Although the Mason-Franklin alliance ratified feminine leadership within the Union, a mutually satisfactory division of labour between Ambleside and London was constantly being put to the test. At first, Mrs Franklin's inexperience in public life was doubtless reassuring to her "Guru". However, she learnt quickly, was competent and intelligent. It may be inferred that Miss Mason was never free from anxiety about the insecurity of her intellectual and professional status. The judicious withdrawal from P.N.E.U. public life after 1897 was designed to mask her professional difficulties. Both

kept a watch on the other. They used go-betweens such as Dr Helen Webb or Ellen Parish. Frequent letters also passed almost daily between "Guru" and "Chela". (69)

While one part of Miss Mason doubtless rejoiced in Mrs Franklin's expansionary programme, the other part dreaded that control would pass out of her hands and that she would lose face in competition with more successful rivals. (70)

The timing of Miss Mason's warmest expressions of affection in her letters to Mrs Franklin lead one to suspect that she used these methods to exert a hold on her susceptible disciple. The following letter suggests this argument. Miss Mason may have been anxious about the effect the first Conference would have upon her position:

"Thank you dearest, for your sweet letter... I have been thinking much of my 'child' and wish to make you promise to run down to me once a month or six weeks for the soothing and calm of this sweet world and of your friend's love; yes I feel rich in the possession of you dearest, but you will find me very exacting, not at all in the way of affection, that goes without saying, still less in the way of having you evermore and more God-fulfilled, ever more and more of your best beautiful self. I could not let you be less than yourself. Happily, you are, like me a woman lover and you have lovely friends and one at least who holds you very close, but will probably not tell you so again but will expect you always to trust her.

The Conference was just lovely... How splendidly you managed everything... I have volumes to say but only time for one thing more. I want to send you a student who will be a friend in the house with you all the time...

Goodbye, darling, always yours C.M." (71)

It was much harder for Mrs Franklin, who was a busy woman with a family and staff to supervise, to keep a comparably close check on her elusive "Guru", immured by illness and watchful disciples in the Ambleside fortress. She had been deliberately excluded from knowledge of Miss Mason's past so that her consequential understanding of her thoughts and actions was limited. Miss Mason was careful not to let her come too close. However, it suited Mrs Franklin, a true matriarch, to hold the organisational reins in her hands and she may have secretly welcomed Miss Mason's withdrawal from public propaganda after 1897. What she needed from her "Guru" however, was the definitive statement of P.N.E.U. philosophy that had been so badly needed at the time of the 1894 crisis. Mrs Franklin had been obliged to have Mrs Clement Parsons' chatty little review of the P.N.E.U., delivered during the International Congress of Women in 1899, published as the only explanatory pamphlet suitable for distribution in the branches. (72)

She pleaded with Miss Mason to produce something more early in 1900:

"Dearest!

...I am so grieved to hear that you are unwell and worried... As regards P.N.E.U. teaching is it not always that we ask, no faddists, but we accept the best we can get from the real thinkers. Surely many articles in the Review are not P.N.E.U. teaching and there is seldom a Branch lecture given,

but what I long to say (and often do) this is what Home Ed. says, this is what we think...I wish so much that you would feel that what matters is that you should keep your strength, not so much for the students, or even the parents, but to give forth the educational thought for those who can be inspired to take the work out.....(73)

Miss Mason did not at first respond. Although she was probably well occupied with writing longer works such as "Ourselves", the fact remained that she seemed unable to produce the concise, definitive P.N.E.U. philosophy required. One interpretation is that she was caught in a trap of her own contrivance. Was the P.N.E.U. philosophy to follow "Home Education"? Or did it merely consist of the post-1894 mix of habit training with liberal education? She failed to respond to Sir Michael Sadler's request for a special report on the P.N.E.U. for the Board of Education. Mrs Franklin had to write it instead. The latter produced a succinct summary of "Home Education" and also reviewed the broad curriculum outlined in Miss Mason's recent pamphlet "Some Suggestions for the Curriculum of Boys and Girls under Fourteen". (1900)(74)

It was a hard act to follow. Writing in a simple, straightforward manner by "going straight to the mark" was precisely what Miss Mason always avoided, presumably to mask the sources of her ideas.⁽⁷⁵⁾ She became even more vague and indirect so that her own paper on the P.R.S., read at the P.N.E.U. Conversazione in June 1903

was firmly criticised by both Mrs Franklin and Mrs Clement Parsons. They found it lacking "clearness and adhesion... burdened with quotations... distinctly" without "form and style" (76) Towards the end of 1903, Mrs Franklin wrote of the educational disagreements between herself and Mrs Anson on the Executive Committee and begged Miss Mason, once again to "make a little statement for me to voice". She wished to quell the rising opposition to avoid a repetition of the Lady Isabel fracas which, as she cleverly revealed, was often a matter for discussion. Lady Isabel was still a well-known figure in educational circles and had even been invited to speak to the Birmingham P.N.E.U. earlier that year. (77) Miss Mason's dormant paranoia was aroused. It seems that, by referring to the unmentionable summer of 1894, Mrs Franklin had discovered the spur to goad the acknowledged Founder of the P.N.E.U. into the necessary action of producing a definitive statement of P.N.E.U. teaching.

9.3.ii A Short Synopsis of Educational Theory (1904) (78)

"Dearest, here is goodness and virtue! A long synopsis of our teaching...that is what your last letter has produced. Now you will have a foundation for any talking or writing you may have to do..." (79)

The 1904 Synopsis was not merely intended to make life easier for Mrs Franklin and the P.N.E.U. speakers as they talked to teachers or visited the Branches. It was not primarily composed in response to the

contemporary "Rights of Children" movement which culminated in the 1908 "Children's Charter Act" sponsored by Mrs Franklin's first cousin, Herbert Samuel. It was also, not solely intended as the theoretical base for the planned outreach of the P.R.S. curriculum in both private and State schools although it was subsequently used for this purpose. It was, in fact, designed to establish the acknowledged Founder of the P.N.E.U. securely in a central position as the fount of an original educational philosophy to silence once and for all, any further discussion of the secession of Lady Isabel Margesson in 1894.

Charlotte Mason seemed transformed by the publication of the 1904 Synopsis. Whatever she privately believed, she made a determined effort to proclaim its originality to the P.N.E.U. world as the series of letters she wrote during the early months of 1904 suggests. For example:

"It is a great thing when others see eye to eye with you... As for those who differ I understand and respect their position. When there have not been a dozen original thinkers upon education in the world; when England has hardly had 3 or 4 how can the P.N.E.U. believe that one of these has fallen to its share? Indeed I can hardly believe it myself and am continually comparing and enquiring to see if I am offering anything worthwhile. The answer always seems to be 'yes' but I am truly willing to leave it to the 'modesty of time'".(80)

This Synopsis, subsequently published as a P.N.E.U. pamphlet and also in the Introductions of all five books in the "Home Education Series", provided the structural

framework for her final work, mainly an anthology of her articles: "An Essay Towards a Philosophy of Education" (1925). The "modesty of time", backed by devoted discipleship, has ensured that the 1904 Synopsis has been respected as Miss Mason's definitive statement of philosophy within the modern P.N.E.U. movement. (81)

There are two important points to be made about the 1904 Synopsis, which is reproduced in Appendix VI. It began with the phrase, "Children are born Persons". Thus a chord was struck in harmony with the mood of the new "Century of the Child". (82) However, in proclaiming that "the Child as a Person will be the very crux for our crusade", Miss Mason was quite explicitly rejecting the original raison d'être of the P.N.E.U., which had been the education of the parents. (83) Therefore, the 1904 Synopsis symbolically sounded the death knell of the P.N.E.U. branches.

Synopsis

Secondly, the 1904 was conceived in protest against the "new educational" stance of Lady Isabel Margesson and her friends. This meant that the substance of the Synopsis had to be based solely on the habit training and liberal education lectures in "Home Education". To cover her tracks, Miss Mason wrote to the Committee to claim, incorrectly that,

"the P.N.E.U. was designed as a tacit protest against the (new education) philosophers mentioned... It is quite true that at the date of the rupture

that I protested against the use of the name and definitions. I have tried for years to hide behind the phrase, 'P.N.E.U. thought' but we make little headway as an educational power in the country and we lay ourselves open to the charge brought against us by the malcontents of '94 that 'absolute vagueness' is to prevail... So it seems to me well to draw even an inadequate statement of what we teach and... that this teaching must be protected by the name of the Originator or everyone who speaks for P.N.E.U. has a right to say, 'I think' and call it P.N.E.U. Teaching..." (84)

Ten years after the Great Row, Charlotte Mason had found the courage to claim the philosophical leadership of the Union. She was not, however, prepared to take risks. When Mrs Franklin wrote to ask for the source references for the guidance of those undertaking P.N.E.U. reading courses, Miss Mason retreated into an Old Testament prophetic role. Like the great Isaiah, she implied that her teaching, like biblical truth, was not to be questioned: "... Chapter and verse - NO, best of Friends! - because it is all in the nature of line upon line, precept upon precept - every bit I think in Home Education but unfolded and unfolded until the last pamphlet - but what I am doing is to make a careful table and contents, which shall guide people in their studies, that is if any one does study." (85)

Most of the Synopsis was in Home Education. The Locke-Carpenter perspective on behavioural, intellectual and moral habit training was retained. The phrase, "Education is an atmosphere, a discipline, a life",

adopted as the Parents' Review motto and attributed to Matthew Arnold, was used as a new framework to bind habit training and liberal education together. Miss Mason had borrowed the "authority-docility" principle and the statement that "Education is the Science of Relations" from Rousseau's "Émile".⁽⁸⁶⁾ The mention of J.H. Herbart (1776-1841), who was not featured in "Home Education", presumably because R.H. Quick had not included him in his "Essays on Educational Reformers" (1868) may be viewed as a red herring. It was also a topical response to Herbart's contemporary popularity, in the British educational world at the turn of the Century.⁽⁸⁷⁾ The overall message of the Synopsis was the importance of the coming generation. The child was similar to the adult, apart from being smaller and less experienced. He did not pass through the developmental stages, outlined by the "new educationalists", but required intellectual, moral and behavioural habit training to enable him to make reasoned judgments about what he should do, or think once he reached the age of independence. The child was a self-regulating being. The 1904 Synopsis was hardly a progressive educational theory. It was representative of the evangelically orientated "early Victorian" pre-Darwinian view of children, as the Hon. and Rev. Dr. Edward Lyttelton subsequently indicated in 1925.⁽⁸⁸⁾

Miss Mason may have expected criticism of the Synopsis. To forestall adverse comment from Mrs Franklin she sent copies to all the members of the Executive Committee simultaneously.⁽⁸⁹⁾ However Mrs Franklin's response was very favourable:

"Dearest! You are really wonderful!... It is excellent and what we wanted..."⁽⁹⁰⁾

Mrs Franklin was afraid that she would have a "stiff job" in getting it accepted by the Committee. However, her "half-hour harangue" before the members of the Executive Committee, combined with the reading of Miss Mason's sheaf of letters on the subject, won the required vote of confidence.⁽⁹¹⁾ Mrs Franklin's "Hurrah!!!" was not merely for the recognition of Miss Mason's "Living Philosophy and Definite Aims". In backing Miss Mason's obscure set of precepts, she had strengthened rather than weakened her power over the Executive Committee in the year in which she was chosen to be the sole Honorary Organising Secretary of the P.N.E.U. Furthermore, her part in the proceedings had been fully acknowledged: "God bless you sweet friend, for all you have done for our great cause."⁽⁹²⁾ For Mrs Franklin, doubtless, the chief merit of the 1904 Synopsis lay in its focus on the education of children which was appropriate to the P.N.E.U. development in schools for which she was strenuously working at that time.

9.4.i. The Parents' Union School

The change of name from the Parents' Review School to the Parents' Union School, after 1904, marked the change of orientation within the P.N.E.U. from the home to the school. The seeds which produced this change had been sown in 1894. Mrs Franklin had regretted the prohibition on the use of kindergartens by P.N.E.U. members, which had been one side-effect of the quarrel with the "new educationalists". Believing that her children required company from an early age, she wrote to the Review during the summer of 1894 proposing a London P.N.E.U. class. She deplored the shortage of preparatory schools run on "natural lines" in the towns where the children might attend daily.⁽⁹³⁾ She felt that "boys in particular require the extra zest and discipline only obtainable in a class or school".⁽⁹⁴⁾ As already noted, her little school was opened in Bayswater later the same year, for girls and boys aged seven to ten, taught by two House of Education governesses.

From the beginning, the teaching profession had shown interest in the P.N.E.U. At first however, as described in Chapter 6, Miss Mason had gone to some pains to demonstrate her alignment with the parental perspective. However, it seems likely that under Mrs Franklin's influence, the P.N.E.U. began to seek

alliances with teachers. In 1896, Miss Mason was invited to address London School Board teachers. This meeting may have disposed her to reverse her ill-considered denigration of school education and book-learning published in the 1894 annual report, (quoted in 6.4.iii). In the 1896 Report she stated that it was "desirable that... a forward movement should be made... in identifying the P.N.E.U. with National Education generally... Very little has hitherto been done in the Elementary Schools by the P.N.E.U." (95)

However, the P.R.S. (later the P.U.S.) was destined to reach the private sector first. The 1897 annual report stated that Wootton Court, a new boys' preparatory school would be opening on the lines of the P.R.S. This move was followed by applications for the programmes to be used in some classes of private schools. By 1904, Miss Mason and Mrs Franklin had set up a register of these schools for the guidance of P.N.E.U. parents. It is not clear how long this was maintained. After 1904, certain decisive steps were taken to foster the development of the P.U.S. in schools. An advertisement of the P.N.E.U. published regularly in the annual reports stated:

"Parents and teachers are now aware that they must to some extent neutralise each others' work and weaken its results, unless they take counsel together.

The Union aims at giving opportunities for the study of Educational problems and a meeting ground for intercourse between parents, teachers and all who are interested in Education..." (96)

In 1905, Miss Mason produced "School Education" as the third volume in the "Home Education Series". Significantly, the book was dedicated to Henrietta Franklin, thus symbolising her acknowledged preference for school education for children.⁽⁹⁷⁾ In 1906, the Parents' Review was changed from being a magazine "of home training and culture" to one for "parents and teachers". Two important Conferences were held at Ambleside in 1906 and 1907 for H.M.I.'s, the heads of State elementary schools, preparatory schools, boys' and girls' public schools as well as the heads of two training colleges. The P.U.S. non-competitive examination papers were displayed as proof of the children's command of language and power of expression. In Miss Mason's view, this concrete evidence validated the 1904 Synopsis and completely eliminated the possibility of criticism. She was so far vindicated, in that nineteen of those present at the Conference, agreed to sign a letter which was subsequently published, stating that her methods of work were original in relation to the teaching of "English subjects".⁽⁹⁸⁾ It was announced, shortly afterwards, that 500 home schoolrooms were using the P.U.S. programmes. Furthermore, 23 girls' schools, 6 boys' schools and 7 mixed schools had joined the P.N.E.U. schools register.⁽⁹⁹⁾

Mrs Franklin and Miss Mason had also hoped to spread the P.U.S. methods through the House of Education students. Mrs Franklin wrote:

"...I always feel that it is because I believe less than you in 'parents' that I want to believe a very great deal in the possibility of the students' work".(100)

It is not known how far the "unrecognised" status of the House of Education proved a setback. Theoretically it would have been possible for the students to have obtained posts in elementary schools, as even by 1914 only just over half the women, who predominated as teachers in these schools, were trained and certificated. (101) However, as it was still believed in P.N.E.U. circles that such work was too arduous for the gently nurtured, it seems unlikely that many students sought these posts. It is not known how many students worked in privately run P.N.E.U. schools, like Burgess Hill, which was founded in 1906.

The lack of published figures makes it difficult to assess the trend. In 1917, when figures were supplied, it was reported that 34 classes were working in the P.U.S. In spite of the problems of War time, this seems a rather small number in view of the massive propaganda campaign undertaken earlier. Clearly the formation of P.N.E.U. Area associations which were set up at the end

of the War to support new P.N.E.U. schools was an essential development to keep the private school work afloat. It also seems likely that the two residential children's gatherings held in 1912 and 1920 as well as the P.N.E.U. Annual Conference in 1917, devoted to the work of the P.U.S. were all measures designed as much to attract newcomers to the P.U.S. as to unite existing participants. (102) Could the P.N.E.U. have survived without the Liberal Education for all Movement?

9.4.ii The Liberal Education for All Movement (1914)

"I would seem a far cry from Undine to a 'liberal education' but there is a point of contact between the two; a soul woke within a water-sprite at the touch of love; so I have to tell of the awakening of a 'general soul' at the touch of knowledge." (103)

"The idea did not take shape at the time, but somehow I knew that teaching was the thing to do, and above all the teaching of poor children like those I had been watching." (104)

For Charlotte Mason, the Liberal Education for All Movement was to bring her the warm glow of reconciliation and reform, during the last decade of her life. Although not in the front line, as at Worthing, Miss Mason was at the heart of the movement. She was safely enthroned and holding out the Book, like St. Thomas Aquinas at the centre of her beloved frescoes expressing "educational harmony", on the walls of the Spanish Chapel of the Florentine Church of Santa Maria Novella. (105) In

offering literary "food" to mentally starved working-class children in the war-time elementary schools she was reconciling her present cultured life-style with her former experience in the elementary system and with the Pestalozzian ideals she had learnt from Mr Dunning. By opening up the exclusively upper class circles of P.N.E.U. endeavour she also became reconciled with Lienie Steinthal who had provided the motivating force behind the reformist ideals of the P.N.E.U. Lienie had cared deeply about the poor and had given up most of her P.N.E.U. responsibilities between 1901 and 1914 to support what she believed to be more universally far-reaching work undertaken by the Mothers' Union.

The novelty of the Liberal Education for All movement lay in the application of an upper class culturally oriented home education to large classes in the elementary schools. Miss Mason was in the rare position, shared only by a few nineteenth century H.M.I.'s such as Matthew Arnold and Thomas Rooper, of having an intimate knowledge of the working of these two systems. By bringing them together she would not only be "gentling the masses" but simultaneously proving the soundness of her educational ideas. The low status of science subjects and the public school "humanities" orientation of Morant's 1902 Education Act favoured a literary emphasis in elementary education.⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ Civil unrest and unionisation among the working classes also fostered Sadler's opinion

that "all education really involves the question of conduct and of moral aims."⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ Great literature was expected, as Plato had argued, to inspire the young with high ideals. Furthermore, the "claims of the coming generation" and the general interest shown in children's needs and rights, at the beginning of the century, promoted the view that children could be treated as a class separately from their parents. A few decades of elementary education for the majority had shown that environment rather than heredity exerted a powerful influence. In other words, the school education could be used to transform the children and through them the home lives of the illiterate and degraded.⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ Such a transformation was a crucial "Basis of National Strength" for a physically and morally weakened nation on the brink of war.⁽¹⁰⁹⁾

In 1912, the Liberal Education for All movement was heralded by six letters written by Charlotte Mason which were published in "The Times".⁽¹¹⁰⁾ Two basic points were made. First, that children required knowledge presented in literary form, as much as they needed food, and that they would be more content if they were given it. Secondly, if their minds were tempered by great thoughts they would be able to avoid making fallacious judgments. This would lead to social contentment. Her chosen method of "narration" of passages read from books was both suited to large classrooms, dependent upon the oral tradition, and also involved children at all levels of ability.

Lienie Steinthal actually initiated the movement. Lienie had taught art in the elementary system and had held classes for teachers. In 1914, "there was a memorable little meeting of elementary and council teachers" in Bradford. Miss Ambler, the head of the elementary school at Drighlington, a mining village near Bradford, agreed to try the P.U.S. with her 350 pupils. Lienie Steinthal donated the necessary books. (111)

"It was felt that the child of the working man started life endowed with the same mental powers as the child of more leisured parents, and that both ought to have the same intellectual food offered them". (112) Two years later the scheme was pronounced a success. It was claimed that the children involved had become alert, focussed and fascinated by their lessons. (113)

Following this success in Yorkshire which encouraged other local schools to try the experiment, a concerted propaganda campaign was initiated from Ambleside. To Miss Mason it must have been like the heady early days of setting up the P.E.U. Mr H.W. Household, the Education Secretary for Gloucestershire was one of those introduced to the scheme through the Ambleside pamphlets. (114) He decided to take it up because, "the great want of Elementary schools has been good books. The one hopeful method seldom or never tried...is reading aloud and that the scheme suggests". (115) "...Early in 1917, I obtained my chairman's permission to provide

five picked schools with the necessary books. The following year I selected twelve more, and after that the new methods spread, as if by some beneficent infection, making their way from school to school until there were only thirty that had not adopted them when I retired in 1936". (116)

Household first met Charlotte Mason at Ambleside in 1919. In June of the following year she herself, after more than twenty years' professional seclusion, travelled to Gloucestershire to talk with the teachers involved. Household fell under Charlotte Mason's impelling power:

"When she talked with you she brought out the best that was in you, something that you did not know was there. That is a rare gift...She caught you up to her level, and for the time you stayed there...She had given you new light, new power. She expected much of you, more sometimes than you knew that you had in you to give. But always she was right; you had it and you gave, and of course, gained by giving..." (117)

Such was her power, that Household believed that the "Mason Method" influenced the findings of the Committee set up to investigate "Literature and the Nation" under the chairmanship of Sir Henry Newbolt, the poet (1921). Miss Parish submitted evidence on behalf of the P.N.E.U. The Report linked the P.N.E.U. contribution in "English subjects" to Ruskin's exhortation that if you have read "ten pages of a good book, letter by letter, that is to say with real accuracy, you are forever more in some measure an educated person". (118) The

Committee noted that the P.N.E.U. methods had been adopted in more than a hundred schools and that one headmaster had reported great satisfaction with the results. However, unlike Miss Mason, the Newbolt Committee members argued that the personality and competence of the teacher was of crucial importance in the application of this method.

The Liberal Education scheme was primarily taken up in Yorkshire, Gloucestershire and Leicestershire. By 1924, the year following Miss Mason's death, it was reported that the elementary schools using the scheme had increased from 211 in 1923 to 366. The secondary schools had similarly risen in number from 118 to 136.⁽¹¹⁹⁾ Within four years, however, some disillusionment had set in. The methods were, in fact, only introduced "where the circumstances were favourable and the Heads keen".⁽¹²⁰⁾ This had the unlooked-for effect of conferring prestige, which was the secret behind the "beneficent infection", because the adoption of the P.N.E.U. approach became the hallmark of a good school. This was doubtless the reason it survived so long in Gloucestershire.⁽¹²¹⁾ M.L. Jackman criticised the limitations of the method.⁽¹²²⁾ Household, himself, believed that the methods demanded properly trained and qualified teachers. In a report, made to the Board of Education, on the House of Education, he confessed that

he was appalled at the "parrot-like repetitions" and the "inevitable cramping of thought" which arose when these methods were used by the "untrained" girls at Scale How. He noted the resistance to criticism:

"The attitude there towards religion is the attitude towards the teaching mission. Any element of doubt and you are in peril... And if we hinted that the twentieth century demands other methods they would say, but see what these young girls have done for five and twenty years. After all they have educated their pupils; or rather books so handled have educated them. Have you done more or so much?..." (123)

As L.C. Taylor later put it, after the Second World War, "the P.N.E.U. ^{improbably} continued, but only in sequestered reserves". (124)

Miss Mason was kept unaware of any disillusionment. She lived long enough to see the whole P.N.E.U. movement joined in a concerted effort to take her own educational ideas into the schools;

"Now we have an office with a most devoted staff, ready for all our work, ample P.N.E.U. funds at our disposal and an organisation that touches every country in England, and here we are, active at the moment when all the world is crying out for education and does not know how..." (125)

P.N.E.U. Area Associations for the promotion of schools were formed. Under Mrs Franklin's leadership the whole of the P.N.E.U. effort was channelled into the schools, apart from the few independent branches like Birmingham. In 1927, Miss Parish commented:

"...The time of what used to be called 'P.N.E.U. work' is practically over. The educated mothers get their information from books, the working class mothers from baby clinics etc and though possibly the time again may come when Miss Mason's teaching will be valued at its true worth in pre-schoolroom days, it is rather in the background, and our work at present lies in trying to meet the demand for trained teachers..."(126)

Organisational unity was promoted by the outgoing work in schools which involved all categories of P.N.E.U. membership.

9.5. Conclusion:

This chapter began with dissension and has ended with institutional harmony. The price paid was the education of the parents. Miss Mason's life-long search for a "unifying principle" which she imposed upon the P.N.E.U. which nurtured her, was reflected in the organisational transformation of the Society from the Parents to the Child.⁽¹²⁷⁾ In the exhilaration of the early years of the Liberal Education for All movement, she believed that both the head and the body of the P.N.E.U. were working together harmoniously "For the Children's Sake".

The Great Row of 1894 had painfully crystallised differences and disunity. The spinster-professional and the mother-matriarch were in conflict. Exclusivity was at war with openness both in theory and practice. Miss Mason attempted to solve disunity through excluding

dissentient opinion, forming alliances and closing ranks. The problem had lain in her failure to discover a unifying theory which would confirm her status and unite the diverse groups involved with the P.N.E.U. Under pressure from Mrs Franklin she found this in her 1904 catchphrase, "Children are born Persons". Parents, governesses and teachers could work together in the service of the Child. However, the literary orientation and even the useful technique of narration had insufficient novelty for those teaching orderly classes of children from cultured families for the P.N.E.U. methods to become widespread in the private schools. Furthermore, many of these schools were committed to preparation for public or entrance examinations. Mrs Franklin's solution to this problem was to set up specifically P.N.E.U. schools supported by Area Associations of parents.

In breaking out of the stranglehold of educated class exclusivity, through the Liberal Education for All movement, Miss Mason's methods not only held greater appeal for book-deprived elementary schools, burdened with large classes, but also re-united her with Lienie Steinthal who had all along wanted the P.N.E.U. to be an agent of motherly concern for those in need of educational reform. Parenthood had not really been Miss Mason's subject. It had not been part of her experience or professional expertise. Furthermore, the

vindication of her educational methods restored her professional confidence which, in view of her early experiences and the twentieth century trend to teacher professionalism was perhaps even more important to her than social or intellectual standing. The matriarchal members of the P.N.E.U. branches were not, due to Mrs Franklin's efforts, excluded from this new development. If strong, as in Birmingham, they were permitted to keep the branches functioning. Otherwise they were encouraged to support new private P.N.E.U. schools.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 9

1. Those present at the College of Preceptors Meeting included: Mrs. Boyd-Carpenter (Vice-President P.N.E.U.), Miss Mason (Hon. Sec.), Mrs Hart-Davis, her sister, Mrs. Anson. Rev. W. Keeling, Mortimer Margesson etc. P.N.E.U. Exec. Comm. Mins.
2. P.N.E.U. to Oscar Browning 5.12.1889
The A.G.M. of the P.N.E.U. in Parents' Review Vol.1:
No.6, 1890 pp 469-470
3. Ibid
4. P.N.E.U. Exec. Comm. Mins. 9.5.1890, 9.7.1890;
5. Ibid 23.4.1891
6. C. Mason to O. Browning 7.7.1891
7. Parents' Review Vol. 3: 1893 pp 639-640
P.N.E.U.
Exec. Comm. Mins. 8.4.1893
8. P.N.E.U. Ann Report 1892 p13
9. Dr. A.T. Schofield "A New Education"
"The Girls' Own Paper" 1892
10. Dr. A.T. Schofield "The Mind of a Woman" London,
Methuen, 1919 (hereafter Schofield, 1919 p93
11. Ibid pp15-16

12. Ibid. p44, also pp6, 18-19, 34-38
13. Schofield, 1928
14. Exec. Comm. Mins. 18.12.1893
Dr. A. Schofield "Hygiene as an Integral Part of a Normal Education" Parents' Review. Vol. 3: No. 5, 1893 pp396-399
15. P.N.E.U. Notes : A.G.M. of P.N.E.U. in Parents' Review Vol. 3: No. 6, p478
16. P. Woodham Smith in E. Lawrence (ed) 1969 p78
17. P.N.E.U. Ann. Reports : 1892 pp3, 15-16; 1893 pl4; 1894 pl6; 1914 pl6
18. P.N.E.U. Ann. Reports 1893 ppl4-15; 1894 pl6
Lady Isabel Margesson "Training Lessons to Mothers" Parents' Review Vol. 4: No.1, 1894 ppl7-24
19. P.N.E.U. Ann Rep. 1893 ppl4-15
20. Ibid.
Lady Isabel Margesson op. cit p24
21. Ibid. pl8
22. There was talk of affiliation with the M.U. and the Norland Institute.
Exec. Comm. Mins. : 9.12.1892; 7.3.1894.
23. Exec. Comm. Mins. 21.4.1893

24. C. Mason (E. Kitching's hand) to Dr. Schofield
16.5.1894
25. Exec. Comm. Mins. 18.12.1893;
Cholmondeley 1960 pp48-52
26. The meeting was held at Miss Patterson's house in
South Audley St.
27. Exec. Comm. Mins. 18.12.1893; 19.1.1894
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.
30. Exec. Comm. Mins. A.G.M. Report 8.6.1894
31. Exec. Comm. Mins. 1.2.1894
32. Ibid and 24.2.1894
33. Exec. Comm. Mins. 18.4.1894
34. Exec. Comm. Mins. 1.2.1894
C. Mason to Dr Schofield 16.5.1894
35. Ibid
36. Ibid
37. Ibid
38. Exec. Comm. Mins. 18.12.1893
H. Perrin (B.J.B's hand) to C. Mason 19.12.1893

39. Lady Isabel Margesson "What is the P.N.E.U." n.d.
c. 1892-1893
40. Ibid
41. C. Mason 1899 p76 When Home Education was edited for re-issue in the 1904 "Home Education Series" all reference to the "new education" was deleted. C. Mason, 1942 p.99
- The Passage was altered as follows: "Looking for guidance to the literature of education I learnt much from various sources, though I failed to find what seemed to me to be an authoritative guide...."
42. C. Mason 1890 (P.R.) p69
43. P.N.E.U. Ann. Report 1892 p9
44. C. Mason to Dr. Schofield 16.5.1894
45. Ibid
46. Matthew Arnold, "A French Eton" in G. Sutherland (ed) 1973 p137
47. C. Mason (The Editor) "P.N.E.U. Principles" (read at the A.G.M. 1894) Parents' Review Vol. 5: No.6, 1894-95 pp426-431 esp p. 427
- The thesis is incorrect. This paper was published a month after A.G.M. and not a year later
48. Ibid p428
49. M. Pentland 1952 p72

50. C. Mason 1894 op. cit. pp426, 431
51. Ibid
52. P.N.E.U. Constitution P.N.E.U. Ann. Report 1896
53. Exec. Comm. Mins. 6.6.1894
Miss Mason's pamphlet. "Ambleside" 9.7.1894 (hereafter
C. Mason 9.7.1894)
54. Ibid
55. Exec. Comm. Mins 18.7.1894
56. C. Mason 9.7.1894
57. Ibid
58. Ibid
59. Mrs F.G. Borrer to C. Mason n.d. c.1894
60. Ibid
61. Cholmondeley 1960 pp53-54.
Compare C. Mason 1894 (P.R.) p426 with C. Mason n.d.
c. 1904 pp228-229. Compare C. Mason 1899, p76 with
C. Mason 1942, p49
62. P. Woodham Smith in E. Lawrence (ed) p78
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CHAPTER 10

Conclusion; Beyond the Image of Madonna and
Child. Alliance and Rivalry in the Strategic
Adaptations of P.N.E.U. Womanhood.

10.1. INTRODUCTORY:

"The events at the turn of the century caused the new century to be represented as a small naked child, descending upon the earth, but drawing himself back in terror at the sight of a world bristling with weapons." (1)

In unconscious anticipation of Ellen Key's fears for the coming generations, Charlotte Mason's P.N.E.U. had been founded as a reconciling force of cultured parents and teachers. They were to be united against the perils of social anarchy which threatened the vision of a sacred harmony encircling domestic family life and the upbringing of the children of the nation within it. Education, which was the central purpose of both home and school, offered a common unity of aim and the key to necessary social transformations. (2) Mothers were to be educated to fulfil their responsibilities not only more beautifully but also with modern professional competence. Children were to be trained both for effective future citizenship as well as for traditional cultural fulfilment. Girls, in particular, were to be prepared for their expected duties as mothers, or as the servants of Motherhood. Standing benignly above this harmonious dream, was the educated father, absorbed in his daily duties of breadwinning in the service of his family and the Nation. Individualist striving had no obvious part to play in this vision of corporate service to the family and the race. The hidden alliances and

rivalries, integral to the exercise of power, were not considered suitable topics for this drawing-room, "children's hour" perspective on the interplay between the family and society.

The study of education for parenthood supplied the motivation for this thesis. The education of the fathers and mothers, from all social classes, also offered the topical trigger mechanism for the launching of the P.N.E.U. in the year of the Golden Jubilee. However, education for parenthood and the upbringing of children have opened up a wider debate. As the research has shown, the "sweetness and light" of this universalist educational vision, comparable to the contemporary ideology of Motherhood, was as much in danger of masking the variety of uses to which the P.N.E.U. was put, as it was of concealing the harsher realities and tensions of the family life of the Victorian and Edwardian "educated classes". The thesis has been dealing as much with image as reality. Universalism is the hope of the "looker on" rather than the actor. It is also a perspective which owes much to the idealism of childhood rather than to the enforced realism of parenthood.

"'The Older Man: The next century will be the century of the child, just as this century has been the woman's century..'"(3)

The central themes of the thesis have reflected this patriarchal perception of the nineteenth century

issues of women's emancipation. In the P.N.E.U. drama of emergent womanhood, the child, notwithstanding his contemporary elevated status as a "prince committed to the fostering care of peasants" merely had a small walk-on part. The thesis has been concerned with the ways in which variously situated women: the spinster, the mother and the matriarch interacted in using the P.N.E.U. to gain power over the different elements of constraint in their lives during a transitional period of shifting influence from the home sphere to that of the outside world of work and school. Education for motherhood served a purpose but was, in a sense, incidental to this central struggle for power without protest.

The problem faced by the unprotected spinster, accustomed to revere the status of marriage and motherhood, was how to gain a secure foothold in the outside world where the domestic order had little power over the steady advance of work and patriarchal professionalism. What definitions of woman's true work were appropriate for the spinster? How could the domesticated mother influence her husband and children intellectually and morally, as ordained by Ruskin, when the objects of her supreme work, duty and sacrifice were absent from her watchful eye for the greater part of each day, at work or school, and she lacked the appropriate

education to share in their pre-occupations? Even the beautiful ikon of Madonna and Child, presumably a masculinist construct, held too little power to make the "educated" mother feel that she was where the action was, given the contemporary dangers of childbirth and infant mortality, at a time when birth-rates for this class were falling.⁽⁴⁾ Matriarchy was one solution to the problem of powerless domesticated motherhood. Matriarchy depended upon an industrious, absent pater-familias to provide her with material security, the children who were her raison d'être and the freedom to engage in more or less independent activity. Matriarchy represented the extension of maternal government from the domestic hearth to the outside world. It wielded considerable power, despite the lack of political franchise, for the emotional reasons suggested in 1.4. and because the matriarch was independent of external sources of remuneration. The ideal, gentle, loving mother who cared for her family and perhaps engaged in unobtrusive forms of social caring was thus caught in the crossfire between the new breed of career-seeking spinster looking for alliances with patriarchy and the married matriarch wishing to extend her small domain. Motherhood which, in the popular ideology of the day, was viewed as woman's true career, offered in the various ways exemplified by the P.N.E.U. material, the essential stepping stone to more publicly competitive endeavours.

In this sense, through a complex interchange of strategies, alliances and rivalries, the different categories of P.N.E.U. womanhood attempted to adjust to a changing world and, in so doing, placed obstacles in the way of developing a universal method of education for parent-hood.

In this chapter, these themes will be discussed more fully in relation to each of the three parts of the thesis. Part I explored the upward career of Charlotte Mason, an archetypal Victorian spinster and her womanly strategies for survival in a patriarchal world. In Part II, the ideas in "Home Education" which informed the founding of the P.N.E.U. were examined in juxtaposition to the social realities of upbringing and education confronted by the members of the P.N.E.U. branches. Finally, in Part III, it was argued that, through a process of rivalry and alliance, the different interests and aims of the spinster, the mother and the matriarch converged to effect the transformation of the P.N.E.U. emphasis from the home to the school, during the early twentieth century.

10.2. Charlotte Mason; A "Picture Study" of Victorian Virtue.

"A Child will play all day at what he'll
do, -

'When I am big!
'Great hunter will I be!
'That field I'll dig
His parents look on smiling while he plays,
And with bewildering changes shapes his days." (5)

Charlotte Mason, her problems and her strivings have played a central part in this study. She represented the quintessence of the ideal of Victorian womanhood, stereotyped in the literature. She exemplified all the usual strategies adopted by eminent unprotected or independent spinsters. Her philosophy and style of life in her later years, by which she has been remembered, were an expression of the most well-known aspects of the Victorian cultural tradition mediated, for example, through the writings of John Ruskin, Matthew Arnold or Lord Acton. She also lived out the classic Victorian precept, "Servants talk about people; Gentlefolk discuss Things".⁽⁶⁾ The last phase of her life, at Ambleside was characterised by myth and symbol. She was detached from the practical social realities of life and yet she was able to exert immense power over those whose lives she touched.

Whether, or not, the story of her childhood was a complete fabrication, she developed the survival mechanisms appropriate to someone deprived of the normal protections of family upbringing. Her responsiveness to "Victorianism" may have been a consequence of her search for models to guide her in the life-long task of

taking care of herself. Charlotte Mason was both strong and weak. Her strength was born of the desperate need to survive. Her weakness was a response to the motherly caring offered by devoted friends. If she had, in reality, been brought up respectably by two refined, intelligent and caring parents, her dependency needs would have been less marked and her search for models less intense. She would probably have been a less complex and interesting phenomenon.

The biographical data suggest that she belonged to the working classes and that each stage of her life marked a step up the social ladder of the Victorian class structure. If she had been a "reduced gentlewoman", as it were stepping down, the influence of Mr. Dunning and the blend of Pestalozzian education tempered with evangelical Christianity which characterised the "Ho and Co" training, would probably have exerted less influence over her subsequent life and educational thinking. Her willingness to remain at Worthing, notwithstanding her failure to complete her training course, suggests that even noisy classroom life was an improvement on her former existence. In Sussex she learnt something of the subtleties of class distinctions and strategies for personal mobility upwards through education and culture. Her appreciation of the moral and intellectual skills of "well-brought up" children from the educated classes made her critical of parental

inadequacies among the poor.

Charlotte Mason's inner sense of being a special "person", which has emerged from her letters to Lizzie Groveham, eventually propelled her into an intellectually and socially more demanding role as a Senior Governess at the Bishop Otter teacher training College for Ladies. The unspecified difficulties and ill-health which ended this phase of her career, after only four years, suggest that she had a tendency to crippling anxiety when faced with situations which alarmed her, as at the "Ho and Co". This found expression in the classic Victorian disease "Overpressure". Released by illness from the degradation of being a "woman worker", she experienced in Miss Brandreth's care, the comforts of independent, cultured spinsterhood. She elected to become a lady writer of children's school reading books which was an ambition appropriate to her skills and experience.

There were no safety nets in Victorian times for a woman without a family who no longer felt able to earn her living. Genteel survival depended upon the support of kindly friends. Lizzie Groveham's longstanding devotion is illustrative of Charlotte Mason's ability to win friends to her cause. The move north opened up a whole new range of possibilities. Perhaps the bracing moorland air surrounding the industrial "Worstedopolis", the brusque north country informality, the exposure to the social realities of urban living, or powerful feelings

of competitiveness with her exact contemporary over whom she had endeavoured to assert her superiority in the past, gave her the impetus to succeed. Whatever the cause, Charlotte Mason not only successfully launched herself from Lizzie's house in Bradford, as a published writer, but also as a professional expert on "Motherhood", the co-founder of a national educational movement and the editor of a cultural magazine for home education. She also developed the ability to mix with apparent confidence in the company of men and women from all ranks of society.

It would seem that the entry into public life and secure membership of the "educated classes" conferred through the P.N.E.U., gave Charlotte Mason the confidence, nurtured by financial need, to fulfil her old dream from the Worthing days of founding her own educational establishment. Single-minded determination and the help of her friends enabled her to become the gracious mistress of the elegant Ambleside mansion, Scale How, and the head of an educational training college for private governesses as well as the distant fulcrum of the P.N.E.U. Safely ensconced in the care of devoted disciples, she set about leading the life of a great intellectual lady, modelled on a combination of the busy invalidism of Florence Nightingale and the spiritual leadership of Dorothea Beale. She

had acquired this enviable position of independence through her various forms of service to the cause of "Motherhood". She had also succeeded in her ambitions without protest against the dictates of benevolent patriarchy.

"When looking at that sweet grey-haired old lady it was strange to think that she held in her hands the working of schools all over the world and that she had brought parents, teachers and children into one happy band of love and work and service." (7)

In the eyes of her public, Charlotte Mason's life-style at Ambleside assumed a symbolic significance. Both in public and in private it was played out in accordance with her interpretation of cultured Victorianism. The conversation confined to "Books and Things", the travelling exclusively by "Victoria", the annual trips to the fashionable German health spa, Bad Nauheim, and the invariable reading of "'some Scott', the last thing" were all part of an idealised vision she was able to translate into reality. (8) Her students, pupils and visitors were amazed by her gracious and gentle condescension because they had been well-schooled in belief in her intellectual and cultural greatness. The myth was sustained by a certain cool detachment which enabled Charlotte Mason to hold her most devoted admirers at a distance and to control each meeting by a creative use of her various maladies. Few, if any, were permitted to peep behind the façade of her idealised image,

romantically portrayed in the misty drawing by Fred Yates, commissioned by Mrs. Franklin.

However, this inspiring vision of "sweetness and light" which entranced both male and female visitors alike, was only made possible on the basis of the practical hard work undertaken by her many disciples, notably Elsie Kitching who rushed about in her service from morning till night. Netta Franklin may have been chosen as a leading disciple because her Jewishness was a necessary foil to Miss Mason's symbolic conception of cultural perfection. There was a split in the organisation of the P.N.E.U. Hellenism prevailed at Ambleside. London was dominated by conscientious Hebraism:

"To get rid of one's ignorance, to see things as they are, and by seeing them as they are to see them in their beauty, is the simple and attractive ideal which Hellenism holds out before human nature; and from the simplicity and charm of this ideal, Hellenism, and human life in the hands of Hellenism, is invested with a kind of aerial ease, clearness and radiancy; they are full of what we call sweetness and light. Difficulties are kept out of view, and the beauty and rationalness of of the ideal have all our thoughts." (9)

But, as Arnold pointed out, "it was the Hellenic conception of human nature which was unsound, for the world could not live by it." The P.N.E.U. organisation also crucially depended upon Mrs. Franklin's Hebraic ability to face up dilligently to "the difficulties which oppose themselves to man's pursuit or attainment of that perfection...." (10) Charlotte Mason was, doubt-

less aware that mankind has a tendency to live by symbols. Plato had reserved his highest acclaim for the Hellenistic "lover of pure knowledge". Organising abilities are not the substance from which myths are made. Twenty years after her death, the modern P.N.E.U. movement has largely forgotten Mrs. Franklin's tireless contribution. Miss Mason's timeless Hellenism has been preserved by a Society apparently in need of a figurehead.

The Charlotte Mason myth not only served the function of unifying a small closely-knit society devoted to the spread of her educational principles, but may have been crucial to her personal psychic equilibrium. All negative feelings were banished from the Ambleside image. There was no outward hint of a personality torn apart by anxiety, jealousy or fear. Karen Horney (1885-1952) has argued, on the basis of clinical psycho-analytical experience, that an idealised image may be imposed as a neurotic solution to internal conflict. The idealised image masks the split off bad aspects of the personality, such as a crippling lack of self-confidence or competitive jealousy of others' achievements.

"If the neurotic's interest lies in convincing himself that he IS his idealised image, he develops the belief that he is in fact the mastermind, the exquisite human being, whose very faults are divine."(11)

If so, it was a neurotic tendency well-suited to the Victorian age of hero-worship. In a sense, as Dr. Horney

recognised, the idealised image was one expression of an age and social class unable to admit to the negative undercurrents beneath the façade of cultured respectability. Badness in children, for example, was often split off and blamed on to the proverbial uncouth nursemaid.

However, cultural definitions do not fully explain Charlotte Mason's passionate ambition to be first which appears to have powered her strenuous and sometimes reckless endeavours to launch her various P.N.E.U. enterprises. She could brook no opposition. Both Karen Horney and Melanie Klein (1882-1960) recognised the driving power behind the desire to reconcile the conflicting forces within the personality. Klein traced the sources of the psychic war between good and evil far back into early childhood. She described adult neurotic responses to this conflict in terms of failure to move satisfactorily from a destructive, greedy, envious stage to a loving awareness of others and a wish to make reparation in gratitude for their goodness. (12)

Once she had settled safely at Ambleside, Charlotte Mason devoted considerable energy to keeping both persecutory anxieties as well as real threats to her position at bay. She was also the centre of attention and constant cosseting care like a small baby. There

appears to have been an impelling urgency about her requests which was comparable to the cry of a hungry infant. Paradoxically her independence as the head of an institution gave her the freedom to indulge a need for constant care, attention and the reassurance that she was truly a great intellectual leader.

"I always felt that Miss Mason had something of the fairy, of the Robin Goodfellow, of 'Lob' in 'Dear Brutus'. She was so young and so whimsical in her (to me) never changed body of the elderly lady." (13)

Charlotte Mason had endured life as a spinster, ("Not 'Mrs.', only 'Miss'"), without a family or children during the age of reverence for the ideals of patriarchal family life and Motherhood. (14) The research suggests that she used the P.N.E.U. as her own idealised substitute family to reflect back a good image of herself as a gracious Victorian lady and original educational pioneer. Although, to her followers, she appeared securely established as the head of a non-paterfamilial household, it is arguable that she devoted most of her creative energies, unimpaired by age, to suppressing unresolved early conflicts and in looking after the childish part of herself. A life of exemplary order and regularity in the classic Victorian mode was designed to keep anxiety and "overpressure" at bay. As Dr. Schofield was symbolically banished from the P.N.E.U. executive in 1905, for publicising his belief in the unconscious

mind, so Charlotte Mason endeavoured to shield the unacceptable parts of herself from a world whose love and admiration she sought. (15)

She had children, but they were public children who belonged to others. Furthermore, her children were idealised by distance. The "Bairns" at Scale How and the children from the "Practising School" always remained the same age. Charlotte Mason was not therefore subject to possessive feelings about children, nor to the forcible modernisation process which children, growing up in a family, impose upon their parents and relatives, in one form or another. Consequently her view of parents, children and family life glowed with the nostalgia, idealism and traditionalism which was also integral to Victorianism. She had approached parenthood from the critical perspective of a childhood, experienced half a century earlier. She was, therefore, ill-equipped to respond to the changing needs of the parents in the branches and to adjust to alarming psycho-analytic theories of childhood emotions, sexuality and unconscious motivation which habit-training had been designed to suppress. She was no longer able to resolve the newly defined tensions between the psychological sciences and the religiously oriented view of ideal and orderly family life. In this way her personal experience and chosen life-style proved to be obstacles to the further

development of creative education for parenthood by the P.N.E.U.

"Charlotte Mason who died in 1923 was one of those undoubted educational pioneers who somehow never achieve the fame they deserve....She herself was a deeply spiritual woman, a mystic, a scholar and something of a saint..."(16)

Some interesting lines of further enquiry have been raised by the analysis of Charlotte Mason's involvement with education for parenthood as well as that of the "new educational" fathers who inspired some of the "Home Education" lectures. Does the prime motivation behind such initiatives invariably stem from a generalised latent desire to put right the wrongs of childhood and, according to the Klein-Winnicott view of emotional development, from a wish to re-create the world of childhood perceptions in a more desirable image?⁽¹⁷⁾ If so, what are the underlying implications of an exclusively child-centred perspective on education for parenthood which has characterised much twentieth century endeavour? How does the educator for parenthood adjust to the tensions between traditionalism and modernisation?

10.3. The P.N.E.U. and the Social Realities of Child Upbringing.

"Home Education" (1886) evoked a response from parents belonging to the fluid social group known as the "educated classes". The lectures offered a way of mediation between the dictates of tradition and

progress, religion and science, by showing recognition of the need to maintain discipline whilst simultaneously responding to the modern naturalistic approach to child development. The P.N.E.U. was founded to give expression to this contemporary juxtaposition of ideas through the universal education of both fathers and mothers, from all social classes. The research has shown that the P.N.E.U. failure to resolve the conflicting aims of social reform versus mutual self-help resulted in exclusivity and smallness. The additional studies of the Liverpool artisan-class branch and Birmingham has suggested that the P.N.E.U. was used to foster "sisterhood" and to provide a public platform for the unfranchised domesticated mother. The Birmingham study, taken through to the closure of the branch in 1984, further indicated that the P.N.E.U. was used to extend matriarchal power through the union of family and neighbourhood based networks and to keep the coming generations of children within this enclosed family and social class related group.

It has been argued that there were inherent problems in the use of "Home Education" as a text for universal education for parenthood, comparable to Dr. Spock's best-selling "Baby and Child Care" (1946). Not only had the lectures been addressed to ladies, but the whole tenor of the discussion related to the needs

of "educated" mothers who had the wealth and freedom to save the "best hours" of the day for their children. The Lectures were also focussed upon child education. The minutiae of child-rearing were ignored. Secondly, despite the acknowledged support of the physiological sciences, habit-training was, in many respects, outmoded. It is true that such methods have remained popular with certain schools of twentieth century experts, such as Watson or Truby King who may not, as was certainly true in the latter case, have been much exposed to children. However, some doubts must be cast on Charlotte Mason's assumption that habit-training could be used efficaciously by P.N.E.U. mothers in the style of the rigorous training programme exemplified by Susannah Wesley. Naturalism became easier as families grew smaller in size. Would Richard Jefferies' "Bevis" (1885) have been able to give expression to his creative island empire-building tendencies if he had been too rigorously habit-trained as a small child?⁽¹⁸⁾ E. Nesbit, too, went to some pains to demonstrate that even a thorough training in "The Conscience" and "The Will" did not equip the Bastable children to act in accordance with adult wishes, when they were faced with new and unpredictable situations.⁽¹⁹⁾

These considerations not only raise questions

about modernity and the effect of traditional practices upon contemporary scientific professionalism, but also about the process of matching such dictates to the variable needs of parents and children, even within a fairly small, uniform society. The success of "Home Education" appears to have been directly related to its ability to build on to the liberal educational and cultural traditions of the educated classes to whom it had been addressed.

It has not been possible to assess the efficacy of P.N.E.U. education for parenthood. There is no way of knowing if the lectures in the branches transformed attitudes to upbringing, although clearly some lectures and courses were appreciated and enjoyed by mothers, children and some fathers. After the early years, the ordinary domesticated mother was concealed from view in the P.N.E.U. attempt to influence public opinion over the "best" approach to upbringing. Therefore, notwithstanding the universalist "Aims and Objects", the P.N.E.U. developed only within a limited social class grouping and was resistant to reformist enterprise among the poor. Fathers were relegated to the background. The Society, which was ruled by feminine government, both centrally as well as in the branches, seemed incapable of making more than token gestures of goodwill across the social divide separating the upper from the lower classes as well as the fathers from the

mothers. The research has suggested that these limiting factors were caused by the strategies selected by P.N.E.U. womanhood to extend their influence in the non-domestic sphere. As the Liverpool and Birmingham studies have indicated, the branches were used for the promotion of matriarchy and feminism rather than simply as a means of education for motherhood.

In the context of this research, the matriarch is defined as a mother who used her domestic sphere as the base from which to extend her maternal authority into the public patriarchal world. She had little intention of upsetting the domestic order and the doctrine of separate spheres which gave her personal freedom, because a wealthy, successful husband not only conferred status, and perhaps a gracious life-style, but also offered opportunities for the unobtrusive exercise of feminine influence amongst his colleagues. These privileges were denied to the matriarch's poorer working class sisters, who sought more radical solutions. Organisations devoted to the cause of Motherhood or child upbringing offered scope to the matriarch, as well as the spinster, to engage in leadership and organisation because these areas were regarded as women's true work. Thus, as the P.N.E.U. studies have suggested tentatively, the P.N.E.U. offered a focal meeting point for the establishment of sisterly neighbourhood networks and opportunities for public activity. In Birmingham the

P.N.E.U. also co-ordinated independent social reform.

The rise of public matriarchy depended upon paterfamilial absenteeism and the delegation of parental responsibilities. In this way it proved an obstacle to the development of co-operationist education for parenthood, shared equally between the fathers and mothers. One may speculate that the fathers were deliberately excluded from decision-making to inhibit a patriarchal take-over of woman's sphere.

Children also proved to be an obstacle to P.N.E.U. universality and sisterhood between upper and lower class mothers. The research suggests that children were important to the "educated class" matriarch, not merely for their own sakes, but as symbols of her successful role as the saviour of family continuity and class solidarity. The Birmingham study, in particular, has illustrated that P.N.E.U. exclusivity had the effect of keeping the children securely within the prescribed orbit of family and neighbourhood networks, by passing on membership down and across the generations.

A threat to this matriarchal enterprise was posed by an ideology of Motherhood as a symbol of caring for those in need and the concept of "The Child" as a "Public Trust". These ideologies opened up the family to public scrutiny. Therefore, the inward-looking

tendencies of the P.N.E.U. may have been given an added impetus by the interventionist educational programmes organised under the auspices of the national Infant Welfare movement after 1900. "The Children of the Nation" was used as a slogan in the warfare against the bogey of maternal ignorance and fecklessness believed prevalent among the poorer classes. Education for motherhood became entangled with issues of public welfare and State support. It served no useful purpose to the educated matriarch for her children to be classified as "The Child". They were a private, not a "Public Trust". Furthermore, they were not being educated and fed at the public expense. The cause of matriarchal influence was better served by the closing of ranks, by home education followed by monasterial seclusion within privately financed schools.

The research suggests that these pre-occupations informed Mrs. George Cadbury's address of welcome to the 1909 P.N.E.U. Conference in Birmingham. She wondered, "whether the child of today is not too much observed". For her own part, she claimed:

"The members of this Union, I think, desire to strike a higher note; the reason of our care and observations and study and discussion is that we may be helped to educate our boys and girls to be good, upright citizens who will fight successfully against the temptations to self-indulgence and greed, who will live unselfish lives, who will take their part worthily in the work of the world, and give their contribution to the enrichment of the race..England asks for strong men and women..." (20)

One justification for matriarchy was the production of subsequent leaders of men. The hand that rocked the cradle of a P.N.E.U. child was destined to rule the world, albeit indirectly. The problem for the matriarch lay in striking the balance between the new non-domestic power she sought in response to the women's emancipation movement while at the same time keeping her hands on the reins of the considerable degree of power she already possessed through her husband and children.

This part of the study has raised some fundamental questions about the different sources and operation of maternal power and its relationship to issues of child upbringing. The debate which has been opened about the socially divisive influence of matriarchy upon schemes of universal education for parenthood points to the need for further exploration. The relationship of matriarchy to absentee paternalism requires deeper analysis. The research also suggests that concepts of the "Public" child and the "Family" child are relevant to future social-class related studies of education for parenthood.

10.4. The Spinster, the Mother and the Matriarch;
Alternative Perspectives on "The Child, the
Family and the Outside World".

"Perhaps when the war of women against women becomes the rule, the women's rights women will

see that the problem of women's work is more complicated than they imagine. They have continued to look at it till now only from the point of view of a woman's right to take care of herself. Perhaps they will then understand that individualism, apart from the feeling of solidarity leads to social conflict, class against class, sex against sex, unmarried against married. So it will be seen that only in the transformation of the whole of Society can a woman attain her full rights without impairing through her advance the rights of others..."(21)

In Part I, the social and psychological consequences of the unprotected spinsterhood of Charlotte Mason were perceived to inhibit the expansionist development of education for parenthood by the P.N.E.U. In Part II, the limited focus on mothers' problems, the exclusion of the poorer classes and the relegation of the paterfamilias to the periphery were linked to the influence of matriarchal pre-occupations. In Part III, it was shown that the interweaving patterns of alliance and rivalry between the three representatives of P.N.E.U. womanhood eventually led to the transformation of the P.N.E.U. emphasis from the home and the parents to the school and the children. Charlotte Mason was the representative spinster, Lienie Steinthal, the Mother and Netta Franklin, the archetypal matriarch.

The P.N.E.U. was initiated with the reformist ideals of educating the fathers and mothers of all social classes with especial emphasis on the needs of mothers. Charlotte Mason and Lienie Steinthal joined

forces to found the Union as a shared service to Motherhood. Charlotte Mason, at that time, showed great sympathy for mothers and listened patiently to their problems. Her three Ambleside educational schemes, while they indubitably offered her much-needed financial support, were all intelligently designed with the range of needs of mothers and spinsters from the educated classes in mind. The P.R.S. offered educational guidelines for either the unassisted mother or governess. The House of Education offered genteel employment for insolvent single women from the educated classes, as well as a home education service for the children of wealthier mothers. Finally, the Mothers' Education Course offered further education for the inadequately schooled, as well as reasonably intelligible guidance for the home upbringing of children at all levels of the social class continuum.

However, as shown in Chapter 9, various discords bedevilled unanimity and the expression of the universalist aims of the P.N.E.U., from the outset. The main conflict was over the issue of exclusivity versus open-ness. Members seemed relatively untroubled by paternal absenteeism which afforded more scope to the women. Lienie Steinthal, the open-hearted mother, joined with representatives of the teaching profession in advocating social reform. It was doubtless believed

that the "sweetness and light" of the P.N.E.U. approach to upbringing would exercise a "gentling" effect upon "those whose lot" was "cast within narrower lines". While such attitudes were coloured by the belief that the working classes required guidance in the matter of training their children's characters to render appropriate service to the Nation, there was also present an element of wanting to share the good aspects of cultural life with those in need.

Charlotte Mason was professionally insecure as a teacher and sought status through access to the cultured classes. This led to an alliance with matriarchy which fostered exclusivity. The Great Row of 1894 with Lady Isabel Margesson was not only about who should lead the Union into the Twentieth Century, but also over Charlotte Mason's perception of the issue of open-ness versus exclusivity and ownership of "The Child" of the educated classes. One might argue that a little Spencerian naturalism and "wholesome neglect" was appropriate to a carefree middle class home education, but the label "New Education" was perilously close to "Child Study" and its implications for a critical approach to matriarchal upbringing. After 1900, as "The Children of the State" were becoming standardised in the public education sector, this line of argument suggests that Miss Mason defined P.N.E.U. children as "Persons" because they belonged to the family. The concept of

family was dear to the heart of an unprotected Victorian spinster.

Netta Franklin shared the concerns of the matriarchs of the Birmingham P.N.E.U. It was essential for the matriarch seeking to extend her influence in the outside world to enjoy a little freedom from the cares of upbringing and education. For Netta Franklin, the solution lay in the extension of school education on the P.N.E.U. lines of cultured exclusivity. She was thus united with Charlotte Mason in resistance to openness.

It has been suggested that Charlotte Mason's search for a unifying educational philosophy was a response to the internal psychic warfare engendered by unresolved discords. The tension between the autonomous branches and central authority, the conflicting claims of Motherhood and Matriarchy and the need to form useful alliances with influential Patriarchy inhibited unanimity of purpose throughout the P.N.E.U. It rendered the formulation of an adequate theory of education for both parents and children virtually impossible. Charlotte Mason sought unity through discipleship, focussed on her production of what she sincerely believed to be a universal theory of child education, always her first concern. The ensuing unanimity within the P.N.E.U. which centred on Charlotte Mason and her ideas, suited Netta Franklin's

matriarchal preference for exclusivity. Within the diffuse grouping of the educated classes a more closely-knit inner circle was formed and united by study of the Mason Method of education.

Paradoxically the achievement of an unified educational theory through the 1904 Synopsis, which had the desired effect of drawing the P.N.E.U. family more closely around its fragile leader, released Charlotte Mason from the need for exclusivity. Reconciliation and alliance with the loving motherly figure of Lienie Steinthal, who had been with her from the beginning, caused the important initiation of the Liberal Education for all movement in 1914. The P.N.E.U. achieved widespread public recognition through the movement for a time. It also conferred professional credibility upon Miss Mason and her educational theories. She had achieved social status but professionalism had been denied to her since her failure to realise her ambitions at the "Ho and Co", sixty years earlier. The movement healed the division between her early Pestalozzian passion for reform and her desire for social status, exacerbated by the hierarchical Victorian class order, without removing her from her chosen pedestal.

However, the Liberal Education movement made no direct contribution to the cause of matriarchy, educationally excluded by the growing professionalism

of the teaching profession. Netta Franklin's response was to draw capital from the public acclaim the movement had engendered, to unite the P.N.E.U. in a drive to extend P.N.E.U. school education to preserve and spread the tradition of exclusivity and matriarchal influence over the "family" child. Her foundation, Overstone (1929-1979), the first P.N.E.U. public school for girls was an expression both of her matriarchy and her feminism.

The argument suggests that the P.N.E.U. was transformed in emphasis from the home to the school not merely from motherly concern for the intellectual development of those most in need, but to enable the spinster and the matriarch to give fuller expression to their various individualist aims and ambitions. Changing attitudes to children and educational professionalism evoked different responses from the spinster, the mother and the matriarch, advancing from and retreating to, the domestic sphere during the Twentieth Century. What has happened to matriarchal power in relation to the emergence of new forms of feminism? Has the rise of the independent, single career woman, enjoying a degree of partnership with professional patriarchy caused a decline in matriarchal influence? How far are social class issues still crucially relevant to the twentieth century education for parenthood debate in view of the exclusion of the middle classes from most programmes?

10.5. Conclusion:

This thesis has been based on a study of the growth and development of a middle and upper class society for the education of parents during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It has included a re-appraisal of the remarkable career of Charlotte Mason and the circumstances which led her to found the P.(N).E.U. in Bradford with Emeline Steinthal. The nationwide spread of the P.N.E.U. branches, with some international connections, their educational work and the additional Ambleside schemes for children, mothers and governesses have been described. Although small, the P.N.E.U. was influential and the branches remained nationally active for over thirty years. However, the study has shown that, within fifteen years from its foundation, a process of transformation was begun which changed the orientation of the Society from the education of the parents and guidance on the home education of children to promoting Miss Mason's educational ideas in schools.

To explain this transformation, the descriptive study was set within an analysis of the obstacles to the development of a universal method of education for parenthood by the P.N.E.U. There were three parts to this analysis. First, it was suggested that Miss Mason's personal experience led her to build a career on her acknowledged expertise on the subject of Motherhood.

It was argued that she subsequently used the P.N.E.U. organisation, united in discipleship, to translate her vision of herself as the originator of a unified educational philosophy into practical reality. Secondly it was shown that, despite much hard effort, propaganda and negotiation, the P.N.E.U., which had no affiliation with any larger bodies, failed to grow into a sizeable society and that the educational work among the parents in the branches was limited. The fathers were relegated to a background, supportive role. An exclusive membership policy prevented all those unable to claim that they belonged to the "educated ~~and~~ classes" from sharing in the various educational programmes offered through the P.N.E.U.

Thirdly, the obstacles to the development of universal education for parenthood were explained in terms of the transformation of the P.N.E.U. as an institution. It was suggested that, initially, three categories of P.N.E.U. womanhood were served by making a career out of Motherhood through the Society. These were the Spinster, the Matriarch and the Mother. Of these, only the purposes of the first two were promoted by the transformation of the P.N.E.U. emphasis from the home to the school. Spinsterhood in the P.N.E.U. was represented by Charlotte Mason and the staff and students at the House of Education. They used the P.N.E.U.

to engage in genteel work appropriate to the Victorian domestic ideology, which opened up a variety of opportunities for making the transition from home to school education, in response to twentieth century national trends. Secondly, it was argued more tentatively, that the Matriarchs, defined as dominant P.N.E.U. women leaders, used the P.N.E.U. to extend their spheres of non-domestic influence, in response to the movement for women's emancipation, by fostering union between those who desired to retain a maternal power base in the home through absentee paternal support and by securing the children within defined family and class boundaries. The transition from home to private P.N.E.U. school education preserved the class and family dynastic hold over the children, fostered additional paternal absenteeism through the extra work required and offered independence to the Matriarchs, who were thereby released from confining domestic responsibilities. Thirdly, the P.N.E.U. was used by mothers seeking to become more professionally competent in their duties and service to the coming generation. Professional motherhood was inhibited by the alliances of spinsterhood and matriarchy with educational professionalism and by the emphasis on "The Child" to which the P.N.E.U. succumbed. The publicisation of "The Child" as a phenomenon, separate from the family, gave career-seeking spinsters and patriarchal professional

experts access to children which had been denied them in relation to private "family" children. Thus, the transformation of the P.N.E.U. from the home to the school was unable to prevent the erosion of non-matriarchal maternal authority. Lienie Steinthal's solution was the extension of motherly concern and service into the schools. It has been concluded that the ambitions of the Spinster and the Matriarch, interwoven with the institutional changes within the P.N.E.U. in response to the trend to educational professionalism, proved to be the main obstacles to the development of a universal method of education for parenthood by the P.N.E.U.

The study of the P.N.E.U. has revealed faces of feminist concern for the extension of women's power. Olive Banks has related different approaches to feminism to separate intellectual traditions emanating from eighteenth century developments.⁽²²⁾ In contrast, the P.N.E.U. material suggests practical battlefield strategies devised pragmatically in response to shifts in the power structure between the domestic and public spheres. Power has become a key theme in recent debates on child upbringing during the late twentieth century. Therefore, the obvious theme to pursue in any further research is the effect of different degrees of power, enjoyed by three faces of womanhood which I have categorised, in relation to patriarchy and

fatherhood, "The Child" and upbringing. Towards the end of the nineteenth century both women and children were striving together for access to the outside world. During the twentieth century this alliance has been broken.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 10

1. Ellen Key, 1909, p.1.
2. Matthew Arnold, "Culture and Anarchy" in ed. G. Sutherland, 1973, p.169.
3. Key, 1909, p.45, quoting from a play called "The Lion's Whelp".
4. Napheys n.d., pp. 109-111, Dr. Caleb Saleeby, "Parenthood and Race Culture", London, Cassell and Co. Ltd., 1909, p.xiii, J. A. Banks, 1969, pp.1-11.
5. C. Mason, "In Memoriam", 1923 p.v. from her poem (n.d.) "The World to Come (The Disciple)"
6. Young, 1977, title page.
7. Olive Marchington in "In Memoriam", 1923, p.91.
8. Quoted in Cholmondeley, 1960, pp.63-64.
9. Matthew Arnold op.cit., pp.222-223.
10. Ibid.
11. Karey Horney "Our Inner Conflicts", London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957, p.98.
12. Melanie Klein, "Our Adult World and its roots in Infancy", London, Tavistock, 1959, pp.3-10.
13. Michael Franklin, "In Memoriam", 1923, p.98.

14. C. Mason to O. Browning, 10.1.1980 from 128, Gower St., London.
15. F. J. Sulloway, 1980, pp.538-539.
16. The Church Times, 1.7.1960, A Review of the Story of Charlotte Mason by Essex Cholmondeley.
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18. Richard Jefferies, "Bevis", London, J.M.Dent, 1945.
19. E. Nesbit "The Wouldbegoods", London, Ernest Benn, 1947.
20. Mrs. George Cadbury, "Address of Welcome" to the Birmingham P.N.E.U. Conference, 1909, Parents' Review, vol. 21, no. 1, 1910, p.3.
21. Ellen Key, 1909, p.91.
22. Olive Banks, "Faces of Feminism", Oxford, Martin Robertson, 1981, pp.1-9.

APPENDIX I

*A vivid portrait of a remarkable woman
whose acquaintance is well worth making.*

—The late SIR RICHARD LIVINGSTONE
(Formerly Vice-Chancellor of Oxford)

Netta

(LIFE OF THE HON. MRS. FRANKLIN, C.B.E.)

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London, S.W.1

viii

Advertisement in the P.N.E.U. Journal

Vol. 4: No.5, (New Series) Sept/Oct

1969. p.viii

APPENDIX II



Lienie Steinthal
n.d.



Charlotte Mason in 1864



Elsie Kitching in 1939



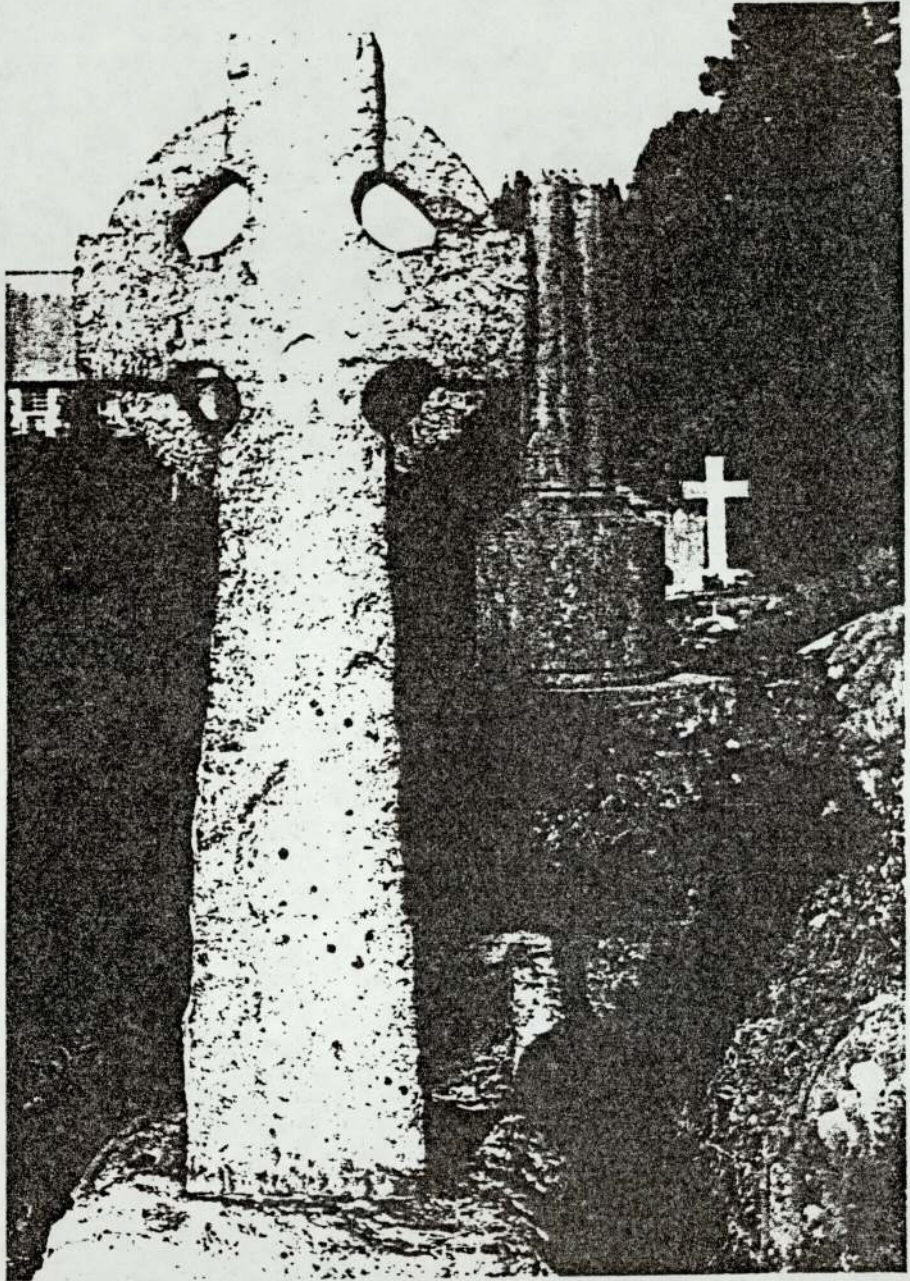
Netta Franklin in 1905



A Drawing of Charlotte Mason in 1901

by Fred Yates

APPENDIX IV



The Grave of Charlotte Mason facing
the Forster Memorial in Ambleside
Churchyard

What is the Best Way to Bring Up a Child?

The Child and the Sugar Bowl—Why the First Trespass Should Not be Allowed to Pass—How to Ensure Orderly Habits—Truthfulness and the Outdoor Life.



"We are a bit sentimental about scattered toys . . . and all the tokens of the children's presence; but the fact is that the lawless habit of scattering should not be allowed to grow upon children."

"The habit of disorder was allowed to grow upon her as a child, and her share of the blame is that she has failed to cure herself."

THE TWO PARENTS—A CONTRAST.



" . . . A careless, rather selfish mother, whose children are her born-slaves, and run to do her bidding with delight."

"It is very amusing; the mother 'cannot help laughing'; and the little trespasser is allowed to pass."



"Too much luxury, too many toys, foolish flattery and servile servants—all these warp the little mind and kill a child's imagination."

APPENDIX V

Illustrations to Charlotte Mason's Popular Articles on Parenthood in "The Daily Mail" 1907



"Fathers are sometimes more happy than mothers in assuming that fine easy way with their children which belongs of right to their relationship."

APPENDIX VI

THE SYNOPSIS OF 1904

'There is nothing between a short synopsis and volumes.'

C. M. M.

1. Children are born *persons*.
2. They are not born either good or bad, but with possibilities for good and evil.
3. The principles of authority on the one hand and obedience on the other are natural, necessary and fundamental; but
4. These principles are limited by the respect due to the personality of children, which must not be encroached upon, whether by fear or love, suggestion or influence, or undue play upon any one natural desire.
5. Therefore we are limited to three educational instruments—the atmosphere of environment, the discipline of habit and the presentation of living ideas.
6. By the saying, 'education is an atmosphere,' it is not meant that a child should be isolated in what may be called a 'child environment,' especially adapted and prepared; but that we should take into account the educational value of his natural home atmosphere, both as regards persons and things, and should let him live freely among his proper conditions. It stultifies a child to bring down his world to the 'child's level.'
7. By 'education is a discipline' is meant the discipline of habits formed definitely and thoughtfully, whether habits of mind or of body. Physiologists tell us of the adaptation of brain structure to habitual lines of thought—i.e. to our habits.
8. In the saying that 'education is a life,' the need of intellectual and moral as well as of physical sustenance is implied. The mind feeds on ideas, and therefore children should have a generous curriculum.
9. But the mind is not a receptacle into which ideas must be dropped, each idea adding to an 'apperception mass' of its like, the theory upon which the Herbartian doctrine of interests rests.
10. On the contrary a child's mind is no mere *sac* to hold ideas; but is rather, if the figure may be allowed, a spiritual *organism* with an appetite for all knowledge. This is its proper diet, with which it is prepared to deal, and which it can digest and assimilate as the body does foodstuffs.
11. This difference is not a verbal quibble. The Herbartian doctrine lays the stress of education—the preparation of knowledge in enticing morsels, presented in due order—upon the teacher. Children taught upon this principle are in danger of receiving much teaching with little knowledge; and the teacher's axiom is 'What a child learns matters less than how he learns it.'

12. But, believing that the normal child has powers of mind that fit him to deal with all knowledge proper to him, we must give him a full and generous curriculum; taking care only that the knowledge offered to him is vital—that is, that facts are not presented without their informing ideas. Out of this conception comes the principle that

13. *Education is the science of relations*; that is, that a child has natural relations with a vast number of things and thoughts: so we must train him upon physical exercises, nature, handicrafts, science and art, and upon *many living books*; for we know that our business is, not to teach him all about anything, but to help him to make valid as many as may be of

Those first-born affinities

That fit our new existence to existing things.

14. There are also two secrets of moral and intellectual self-management which should be offered to children; these we may call the Way of the Will and the Way of the Reason.

15. *The Way of the Will*. Children should be taught:

- (a) To distinguish between 'I want' and 'I will';
- (b) That the way to will effectively is to turn our thoughts from that which we desire but do not will;
- (c) That the best way to turn our thoughts is to think or do some different thing, entertaining or interesting;
- (d) That after a little rest in this way the will returns to its work with new vigour.

(This adjunct of the will is familiar to us as *diversion*, whose office it is to ease us for a time from will effort, that we may 'will' again with added power. The use of suggestion—even self-suggestion—as an aid to the will is to be deprecated, as tending to stultify and stereotype character. It would seem that spontaneity is a condition of development, and that human nature needs the discipline of failure as well as of success.)

16. *The Way of the Reason*. We should teach children, too, not to 'lean' (too confidently) 'unto their own understanding,' because the function of reason is to give logical demonstration (a) of mathematical truth, and (b) of an initial idea, accepted by the will. In the former case reason is, perhaps, an infallible guide, but in the second it is not always a safe one; for whether that initial idea be right or wrong, reason will confirm it by irrefragable proofs.

17. Therefore children should be taught, as they become mature enough to understand such teaching, that the chief responsibility which rests on them as persons is the acceptance or rejection of initial ideas. To help them in this choice we should give them principles of conduct and a wide range of the knowledge fitted for them.

18. We should allow no separation to grow up between the intellectual and 'spiritual' life of children; but should teach them that the Divine Spirit has constant access to their spirits, and is their continual helper in all the interests, duties and joys of life.

APPENDIX VI

Miss Mason added the following paragraphs for the use of teachers when the 'liberal education for all' movement was active. She inserted the paragraphs between Nos. 13 and 14 of the 1904 synopsis.

In devising a syllabus for a normal child, of whatever social class, three points must be considered:

(a) He requires *much* knowledge, for the mind needs sufficient food as much as does the body.

(b) The knowledge should be various, for sameness in mental diet does not create appetite (i.e. curiosity).

(c) Knowledge should be communicated in well-chosen language, because his attention responds naturally to what is conveyed in literary form.

As knowledge is not assimilated until it is reproduced, children should 'tell back' after a single reading or hearing, or should write on some part of what they have read.

A single *reading* is insisted on, because children have naturally great power of attention; but this force is dissipated by the rereading of passages, and also by questioning, summarizing and the like.

Acting upon these and some other points in the behaviour of mind, we find that *the educability of children is enormously greater than has hitherto been supposed*, and is but little dependent on such circumstances as heredity and environment.

Nor is the accuracy of this statement limited to clever children or to children of the educated classes: thousands of children in elementary schools respond freely to this method, which is based on the *behaviour of mind*.

Quoted from Cholmondeley 1960

pp 292 - 295



Charlotte Mason the Liberal
Educationalist n.d.

APPENDIX VIII

Local Assoc.
26.1.89
338
Mormington House. Bradford
Ap. 29th 1889. 1
P. 4
"Parents' Educational Union"

Your Grace

I venture to write to
you upon Lady Aberdeen's suggestion
who thinks it possible that the
above Society - may have some
claims upon your interest.

Feeling that the most
important part of the world's
work must be done by parents,
& that many of all workers, are
left almost totally without

Charlotte Mason's letter to Archbishop
Benson seeking his support for the
P.N.E.U. 29th April 1889

help or sympathy from
outside, we have established
here a 'Parents' Educational
Union', with the view of
bringing before parents of all
classes the best thought on
matters which affect the
home-training of children -
whether physical, moral,
mental, or religious.

Parents have responded in
a surprising way. This

is our second session 3.
here, & we have already two
hundred members of the
richer
better classes (fathers & mothers),
show large meetings of working
mothers, besides the work we
do in connection with the
various Mothers' meetings.
It is the town.

Besides our direct work we
feel that the 'Union' is an
appreciable protest against the

casual way of bringing up⁴
children, & that we have already
succeeded in raising a
lot of public opinion on the
subject of the parent relation.

We have just winter Wks.
of the members, (educated & others,
at this session we have been
happy enough to be addressed
by Mr. Carpenter, (Trigon. cos
Bradford president) - the Rep.
of Wakefield - an able local
doctor & lady Aberdeen,

we feel that the Parent's Union⁵³
finds opportunity for much useful
work of a delicate & native kind
people would shrink from under-
taking it - unless backed by a
Society.

We are anxious now that
the P.U. should spread, become
national, with branches here
& there wherever a neighbourhood
is inclined to take it up. And
to this end we purpose a public
Wk in London towards the end
of May, which promises to be
an important gathering.

6
 4, have much hope of your
fraternal sympathy in such
seems to be an important
educational movement.

I hope think well of this
 effort - would you honor
 us with your presence at
 with a short address? ^{London W.C.B.} shows,

Lady Aberdeen suggests that
 perhaps you would be so
 very good as to give
 your name as President

7341
 of the Union in conjunction
 with herself. That would be of
 immense value to the Society -
 not that it is a Church Society,
 but we find here that the Church
 embrace all (in this case) &
 Jewish ladies told me they
 had profited much by the
 Bp. of Wakefield's address on
 the religious training of Jews.

Erasmus Green should see
 your way to give us an hour
 or so of your valuable time.

during May (or early June?)⁸
 perhaps you would be good
 enough to fix the date
 that suits you best.

Hoping you will be good
 enough to excuse this
 intrusion. I am,

very respectfully yours

Charlotte M. Mason -

Hon. Sec.

(Author of 'Home Education'. Hymns & Prayers)

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English Childhood 1800-1914. Harmondsworth, Penguin

Webb B. (1926) My Apprenticeship. London, Longmans Green

Webb Dr. H. (1929) Children and the Stress of Life. London P.N.E.U.

Wells H.G. (1930) First and Last Things. London, Watts and Company

Wells H.G. (1911) Mankind in the Making. London, Chapman Hall

Whitfield R.C. (1980) Education for Family Life; Some New Policies for Child Care. London, Hodder and Stoughton

Whitfield R.C. (1983) "Family Structures, Lifestyles and the Care of Children" Aston Educational Enquiry Monograph No. 9. Birmingham, Dept. of Educational Enquiry, University of Aston

Williams R. (1963) Culture and Society 1780-1950. Harmondsworth Pelican

Wilson E. (1977) 1982. Women and the Welfare State. London, Tavistock

Wiltshire D. (1978) The Social and Political Thought of Herbert Spencer. Oxford The University Press

Winnicott D.W. (1971) Playing and Reality. London Tavistock

Wohl A.S. (1978) (ed) The Victorian Family. London, Croom Helm

- Wollstonecraft M. (1792, 1978) Vindication of the Rights of Women. Harmondsworth, Penguin
- Wollstonecraft M. (1980) Mary and the Wrongs of Women. Oxford The University Press
- Woodham Smith C. (1950) "Florence Nightingale" London. The Reprint Society
- Wright D.G. and Jowitt J.A. (eds) (1978) Victorian Bradford. Bradford City Metropolitan Council
- Wright Mills C. (1978) The Sociological Imagination. Harmondsworth Penguin
- Yonge C.M. (1904) "The Daisy Chain or Aspirations" London, Macmillan
- Young G.M. (1936) (1977) Portrait of an Age : Victorian England. Oxford, Oxford University Press
- Young G.M. (1962) "Victorian Essays" Chosen and Introduced by W.D. Handcock. London, Oxford University Press
- Zimmern A. (1898) The Renaissance of Girls' Education in England; A Record of Fifty Years' Progress. London, A.D. Innes and Company Ltd

A list of the Archives of the Birmingham P.N.E.U. These archives have been housed privately but following the closure of the Branch in March 1984 are to be deposited at the Birmingham Reference Library

7 Minute Books (1894) 1899-1975

- i Oct. 1899-1913 (with notes from 1894)
- ii June 1904-Oct. 1916 (mainly A.G.M.Reports)
- iii July 1917-May 1935
- iv March 1936-March 1952
- v Feb. 1952-Jan. 1960
- vi Feb. 1960-May 1968
- vii July 1968-March 1975

Set of Printed Annual Reports 1903-04 - 1981

2 Address Books c.1940's and c.1960's

Attendance Book 1934 - 63

Black Notebook: "P.N.E.U.Notes" 1936-37

Black Notebook : "P.N.E.U.Lectures"

10th March - 9th March 1953

Variegated Notebook: "P.N.E.U. Lectures"

29th September 1953 - 20th February 1954

Bag containing P.N.E.U. Literature

White Envelope Containing Press Cuttings and P.N.E.U.
Pamphlets

Box containing P.N.E.U. Invitation Cards and Assorted
Annual Reports

Folder containing:

The 1921 correspondence concerning the re-
organisation of Branches

Papers on the amalgamation of the P.N.E.U.
with the Charlotte Mason Foundation, in
November 1960

Copies of Parents' Review March-June 1966

Copies of the P.N.E.U. Journal (new series)
July/August 1969 - April/May/June 1978

Other non-P.N.E.U. materials

The Archbishop Benson Archive: Lambeth Palace Library,
London S.E.1. 7JU. Two letters from C.M. Mason to
Archbishop Benson dated : 29.4.1889 and 23.5.1889

The Oscar Browning Papers East Sussex County Council :
Eastbourne/Hastings County Libraries

79 letters from C.M. Mason to O. Browning c.1888-1913

9 letters from the P.N.E.U. 1892-1910

10 letters from Anne J. Clough 1875-1892

The Charlotte Mason College Archive Collection

The House of Education Proof Prospectus c.1891

Mason C.M. Draft MSS of "A New Educational Departure"
c. 1887

Mason C.M. "An Old Maid's Tale" MSS

Mothers' Education Course Brochure, Registers and Examination Papers. (1896-1914)

P.N.E.U. Reading Course Register 1926-1931

P.R.S. Fees Notebook

Wix Miss H. Letter to S.W. Percival O.B.E. 9.1.1978

File of Mrs Franklin's correspondence re "L'Affair Marofsky".

Notebook recording Miss Mason's heartbeats during baths at Bad Nauheim 1898,

Mineral Baths Bad Nauheim record cards 1899-1914

Miss Mason's Medical Prescriptions and Death Certificate

Notebooks containing misc. poems and writings by Miss Mason

Copy of Miss Mason's Will

Legal correspondence relating to the Purchase of Scale How. 28.12.1910 - 20.3.1911

Trustees accounts 16.1.1923-31.12.1923

Elsie Kitching 1870-1955 "Recollections"

College Photographs

The P.N.E.U. Collection (Unlisted)

Aberdeen Lady to C. Mason 12.12.1887

Anon to Miss G. Bell n.d.

Bell Mr. Memories c.1864-65

Brockington Mr. W.A. Report on P.N.E.U. Methods 1928

Borrer Mrs. F.G. to C. Mason 1894/5

Barnett Canon Samuel to C. Mason 23.3.1909

Bentwich Helen to Mrs H. Franklin 24.4.1937

Brandreth Miss Emily to C. Mason 30.5.1877

Buckley Arabella to E. Stanford 9.12.1880

Burn Mrs. Alice to E. Kitching c.1934

Clough Miss A.J. to C. Mason 8.10.1880

Dunning Robert to C. Mason 1) n.d. c.1861 2) 22.10.1861

Foster Balthazar Medical Note 31.1.1878

Franklin The Hon. Mrs. H. to C. Mason: 10 letters
1894-1906

Franklin The Hon. Mrs. H. to E. Kitching: 2 letters
6.2.1924 and 31.3.1924

"Forty Shires" Book Reviews -

THE ATHENAEUM 26.3.1881

Groveham Mrs. E. to C. Mason 29.12.1922

Groveham Mrs E. 6 letters (and notes from 2 conversations)
to E. Kitching 1923-1927

Hart-Davis Mrs. Mary L. to C. Mason

2 Letters: Nov.1887

Hatchard and Co. to C. Mason 6 letters Feb-June 1880

"Home Education" Book Reviews:

Pall Mall Gazette	13. 6.1887
Reading Mercury	1. 1.1887
Scotsman	4.12.1886
Glasgow Herald	18.12.1886
The Queen	29. 1.1887
Saturday Review	7. 1.1887
Birmingham Post	29.12.1886
Brighton Gazette	23.12.1886
Academy	19. 2.1887
Leeds Mercury	23. 2.1887 etc.

Household H.W. to C. Mason 22.12.1916

Household H.W. to H.M. Richards, Board of Education
c. 1927/28

Huston W. to C. Mason 23.10.1876

Kitching Elsie to Mrs. A.M. Harris 1.1.1921

Margesson Lady Isabel to C. Mason 8.8.1894

Mason C. Batch of letters to the "Bairns" 1900-1917

Mason C. Three letters found in an old blotter
n.d. c. 1863-1873

Mason C. "Ambleside Pamphlet" 9.7.1894

Mason C. to Mrs. H. Franklin. Large collection of letters
from 1894-1922 in various forms

Mason C. "Home Education" Page Proofs. 1886 annotated
by the Rev. C. Kegan Paul

Mason C. 11 letters to E. Groveham from April 1861 -
March 1878

Mason C. Obituary notices in the Press. e.g. "The Times"
17.1.1923

Mason C. Reportage of speech to the British Constitution-
al Association. e.g. Oxford Times 20.17.1907

Mason C. "What is the Best Way to Bring up your Child"
Daily Mail 3-5 April 1907

Mason C. to Dr. Schofield 16.5.1894

Mason C. to Mrs Williams 16.11.1906

Mason C. to Mrs Emeline Steinthal 1914-1916

Mothers' Education Course Correspondence
10 letters from 1898-1904

Morant Robert to C Mason 5.12.1916

Nightingale Florence to Arthur Brandreth 30.17.1879

P.N.E.U. Annual Reports 1892-1926

P.N.E.U. Executive Minute Books 1890-1920

P.N.E.U. "In Memoriam : Charlotte Mason" London,
P.N.E.U. 1923

Parish E.A. to H.W. Household 21.1.1927

Parish E.A. "Notebooks" 1907-09

Perrin Henry to C. Mason (B.J.B's hand) 19.12.1893

Rawnsley Canon H.D. to C. Mason 13.1. n.d.

Read The Rev. William to C. Mason 8.12.1880

Rooper T.G. to C. Mason 25.10.1884

Routledge and Kegan Paul to the Trustees of the late Miss
C.M. Mason 30.11.1923

Russell L. West Notes on the Founding of Burgess Hill
School

Schofield Dr. A.T. "A New Education" The Girls' Own
Paper, 1892

Smart Denis to E. Kitching 3.11.1947

Stanford Edward to C. Mason 23.9.1880; 18.3.1897;
29.2.1904

Steinthal Dorothea to E. Kitching, n.d. 1923
25.9.1924; 16.1.1950

Steinthal Mrs. Emeline Petrie to C. Mason from 1888-1901
Obituary "Ilkley Free Press and Gazette" 25.8.1921

Steinthal Francis F. to C. Mason 31.10.1921

Wynne The Rev. Edward to C. Mason 4.7.1881; 31.3.1888

Unpublished Theses

Heron Alastair "Cultural and Psychological Problems in
Education for Parenthood" M.Sc Dissertation University
of Manchester (1949)

Hetzel Mrs. Valerie "The William Davison School"
Dissertation, Brighton College of Education (1975)

Percival Mrs. Audrey "The Contribution of Charlotte
Mason to the Education and Training of Teachers" B.Ed.
Degree Course Dissertation, University of Manchester
(1975/76)

Stern H.H. "Parent Education and Parent Learning"
PhD Thesis University of London (1956)

Personal Communications

Bailey Mrs. M. talking to MAC 5.12.1981

Cooke David talking to MAC 2.10.1984
 Cholmondeley Essex talking to MAC 28.4.1982 and
 corres. 8.7.1982; 29.12.1983
 Cupitt Don talking to MAC July 1982
 Department of Education and Science Library Record Office
 to MAC 13.7.1982; 22.7.1982
 Drake Robert to MAC (corres. and conversations May 1982-
 September 1984
 Franklin Michael talking to MAC. 13.12.1983
 Harrison Mrs (B.P.N.E.U.) talking to MAC 17.11.1981;
 12.3.1982
 Henson Mrs. (B.P.N.E.U.) talking to MAC 7.6.1984
 Inman Rev. John talking to MAC 2.10.1984
 Joy Thomas (Hatchard's) talking to MAC 26.1.1983
 Kidson C (British Museum Central Archives) to MAC
 25.10.1982
 Longbottom Mr talking to MAC 5.9.1983
 Mumby Philip (Cadbury/Typhoo) talking to MAC 22.7.1984
 Newman Victor, Warden of the Victoria Settlement, 294
 Netherfield Road, Liverpool talking to MAC 1.7.1984
 Pitcairn Leonora (NAMCW) talking to MAC Feb-March 1980
 Potts Mrs. C.L. (Betty) talking to MAC 24.3.1982 and
 12.5.1982
 Pugh Gillian (N.C.B.) talking to MAC 4.9.1984
 Routledge and Kegan Paul talking to MAC 26.1.1983
 Sheila Mary Sister S.S.C. Talking to MAC 27. 4. 1982
 Smakowska C.J. to MAC 13.5.1980

Smith J. (Liverpool Record Office) to MAC 2.3.1983

Walton Mrs. Courtenay (Ge) talking and corres. with
MAC 14.7.1981 - 6.6.1984

Walton Lt. Col. H.C.M. to MAC 10.4.1982; 16.5.1983;
3.6.1983

Wilmott E.M. (Bradford Ref. Lib.) to MAC 6.8.1982

Worley Mrs. J.M. talking to MAC 9.7.1984

Worsley Mrs. Vida talking to MAC 30.3.1982

The Press

This is mainly listed under the appropriate heading in
Archive lists

The Bradford Observer	1885-86
The Church Times	1960
Diocese of Liverpool Review	1926/27
Home Words	1886-87
Illustrated Liverpool News	1970
The Listener	1982
The Liverpoolian	1932
The Sphinx	1906