

where the children themselves arrange and care for the exhibits. Most of the larger museums run lecture courses for children outside school-hours. The American Museum of Natural History in New York runs a lecture and a film programme for children every week in winter, and in the summer nature rambles are often arranged.

The U.S. school system as a whole allows considerable scope for individual rates of progress. Grade school usually begins at six, though children often attend morning kindergarten before this. There is a tendency now not to begin the teaching of reading and writing till the child is seven, as some authorities consider that there is a risk to the child's eyesight before this. After the eight grades have been gone through there are four years of High School (capped by a graduation ceremony which for most American children is the culminating point of scholastic life), then four years of college. The more specialised professions (such as law and medicine) do their four years' general college course before attending medical or law school, and psychiatrists are required to do a further four years after obtaining their ordinary medical degree.

Value of Co-education

Mrs. Murphy does not find our girls' school uniforms easy on the eye, and is a firm believer in co-education. "I have noticed that some of your young girls are inclined to be shy, and are a little lacking in self-confidence. You don't notice this nearly as much in children who have been to mixed schools. No, I don't think there is much threat to the serious business of learning in the flutterings of adolescent romance. On the other hand, there may be real danger in sending a girl out into the world emotionally immature.

"I must confess myself a believer in liberal rather than technical education," said Mrs. Murphy. "I notice there's a certain amount of homecraft being taught to girls in New Zealand, but I can't personally feel it's such a vital subject as it sounds, because the mechanics of home-making seems to me only a part of the business of marriage and motherhood. I remember one of your school people saying to me, 'What good will all this French and German be to Mary when she marries and has children?' But I'm convinced it's as important as laundrywork or dressmaking. I have always felt that a healthy mind is as important for motherhood as a healthy body, and that dull mothers bring up dull children. Possibly the ideal is the well-kept mind in the well-kept house, but if it came to the pinch I'd sacrifice the house."

—M.B.

Former-Playwright

"I CAN milk a cow, and believe me, that's a much more important achievement than writing a play. Seriously though, I do regard my farmhouse home as a big thing in my life, even if it's only ten acres with a few cows, pigs, chickens, and geese. That sort of life keeps your feet on the ground and helps you to hang on to a sense of proportion."—Esther McCracken, the well-known playwright, being interviewed by the BBC.

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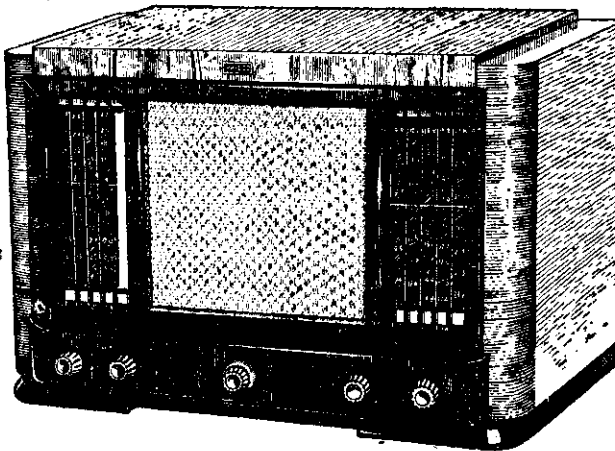
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