

October-November 1960  
10 Steele's Road, London N.W. 3

My dear Friends,

I have just arrived home from a quite wonderful tour. First of all I drove over to Gammel Praestergaard in Denmark with Bishop Sir Hugh Sykes and his wife and Mrs. Doris Groves. We went all the way by car, crossing to France in an aerial bridge, a special plane built to take cars. Then we drove through France, Belgium, Holland and Germany, taking three days to get to Denmark. I believe the Summer School at Praestergaard was first initiated by Captain and Mrs. Ransom. It is adapted from an old farm and minister's manse. The Danish General Secretary, who lives there all the time, is a celebrated painter, so the building is full of his pictures. It is also the home of M. and Madame Valvanne. She is also a painter and her husband is the Finnish ambassador to China. A little time ago he was the ambassador to India, and Mrs. Valvanne has written a charming book about her experiences there called "In Love with India". She is now writing one about China. We were all housed in the transformed buildings and had our meals in a large place outside. Nice college girls waited on us, and we began proceedings every morning by running up the flags of all the nations represented and singing their National anthems. Felix and Eunice Layton represented the United States, and I was numbered amongst the English. There were no printed programmes. Proceedings were arranged from day to day, which is quite a good idea. There was folk dancing led by Eunice Layton, and one night the young members entertained us with impromptu acting and dancing. There was a wonderful atmosphere of friendly happiness the whole time, and I shall always remember it as the Summer School where an extraordinary amount of hugging took place! Everybody hugged everybody on arriving and again on departing.

Then, instead of going home again, Mr. John Coats took me on to Sweden in his car, to attend a Swedish Summer School. The Summer Schools were all on islands, connected by great bridges or by boats. Both Sweden and Denmark seem to be a tremendous collection of little islands. The way in Sweden led through wonderful pine forests starred with great lakes, and inhabited by elks, a deer something like the moose of America. I wanted to see one, but in order to do that one must start about five in the morning, for they stay hidden during the day. After the School we came back to Stockholm for a day or two and I talked in the Lodge there. One has to have an interpreter, going sentence by sentence, as many members do not understand English.

Then we came back to another Danish Summer School, this time at Besantgaarden, near Tillitse, the home of Bishop and Mrs. Viking. Next year it is proposed to hold a joint Summer School in Norway. We were only a day or two in Besantgaarden, but it was so nice to see again some of those from Praestergaarden, and Mrs. Anna Viking who was recently with me in Adyar.

Next John and I went to the German Summer School at Rensburg near Hamburg. That was held in a very nice College used in term time by young women. I called that the laughing Summer School for we did a tremendous amount of laughing. I found John could lecture in German and also French which must be a great asset for the Chairman of the European Federation. He often appealed to us to think of ourselves as Europeans and not of separate nationality.

Then John and I went on to Holland, to the International Week at St. Michael's, Huizen. We drove all day, and picked up boy hikers all the way. I saw one boy with a big placard on him saying he wanted to go to England. I hope some one took him.

At St. Michael's all were expecting the arrival of Rukmini Devi and Sankara Menon, as well as Peter Hoffman and his tiny Indian bride. One evening little Mrs. Hoffman gave us an Indian dance recital, and another time the young people, of



whom there was a large camp gathered, gave us an impromptu entertainment. Rukmini spoke more than once. I greatly liked what she said to us. She did not wish to be considered a Head; we were all working together. She spoke of her work for the animals and about children. Some teachers, she said, loved education but not the children. We cannot successfully teach children unless we love and understand them and not the method. We must let the children teach us how to teach them.

I remember how I saw that wonderfully myself once. Never having been to school or college, when I set out to earn a living I found myself confronted with a little boy of five who had never had any lessons before. "How shall I teach Charlie?" I asked myself. Then I got the idea: I will let Charlie teach me how to teach him. The results, slow at first, were simply marvellous. In six months that little boy could read any book, do mental arithmetic even with money sums, and what is more loved his lessons. He came bouncing down to greet me with joy when I came, and his mother told me that after I had gone he taught his Teddy bear what I taught him. He had phenomenal powers of concentration. I once asked him a problem in mental arithmetic, and as he did not answer at once, repeated it. "Oh! Mith Codd," he wailed in his baby lisp, "don't do that. Now you have made my head all woolly!" I do not believe it when people tell you that children cannot concentrate. They have a wonderful power if you truly interest them. I will not embark on the subject of education, for I have a sore feeling about that. I think that the majority of children are just ruined by what we call education. But we are improving, thanks to that splendid genius, Madame Montessori. A child is really grown up inside. I can remember wondering why the queer, powerful creatures called grown-ups had such blind unreasoning power over one. I have also wondered over the fact that Indian and Chinese children are so much quieter and happier than ours. I think it is because they are always with their elders and share their daily work. Western children often suffer from an intolerable boredom. They have expensive toys which do not call out their creative imagination. I remember a poor little rich boy wailing to me one day "Oh! Auntie Clara, tell me what to do!" I spied the young footman cleaning windows. "You help James clean the windows," I said. Wasn't he happy doing that! Animals and birds are wiser than we are. The devotion of an animal mother to her young cannot be excelled. But when they begin to grow up she knocks them out of the nest.

I am sorry to report that it rained hard through most of the Summer Schools. Many people at Huizen were living in tents. I think they were heroes. I was glad I was in the house. St. Michael's is a very lovely spot, and has a very potent atmosphere. There are three great Centres of our work in the world. A "Centre" is a spot which has been accepted by the Hierarchy as a physical plane centre of Their magnetism. Adyar was the first and may be described as channelling the influence of the First Ray. The Manor at Sydney, Australia, was the second, and focuses the power of the Second Ray. The third is St. Michael's at Huizen, Holland, and is the focus point of the remaining five Rays under the guardianship of that great Official called the Mahachohan.

Your affectionate friend,

Clara Codd

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