

EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF DRAWING SHOWN

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STRATFORD-ON-AVON, England — A conference on new ideals in education held at Stratford-on-Avon recently concluded with addresses by Mr. Tunaley, formerly H. M. inspector of drawing, and Mr. Carpenter, head master of Rochdale School of Art. F. R. Benson was the chairman.

Mr. Tunaley spoke on "Recent Developments in the Teaching of Drawing." All systems were wrong, he held, because they tended to become rigid. Give a child a range of color in a suitable form, and a suitable paper, and let him express his own ideas. It did not matter what the technique was. The moment they set out to teach a child technique, they failed. Let the child put down what he thought he saw, and if the result was unsatisfactory, let them make it their business, Mr. Tunaley said, not to improve the technique, but to improve the child's power of seeing correctly. In this way the pupil was trained to exercise his own intelligence, and drawing was made a powerful aid to thought. This method of teaching would bring bright and happy thoughts to children, and help to establish peace and contentment. Children were allowed to bring, select, and arrange their own objects for the training of their perceptions, and the ideas that were gradually formed were carried out by girls in needlework and embroidery, and by boys in woodwork and metalwork.

In an address Mr. Carpenter said it was his fortune or misfortune to work in a busy Lancashire town, where everything was sacrificed to utility and mechanism. Some time ago a young man from Somerset was brought into the town as a member of a football team, and had to be provided with work. He was a carpenter, and when he was first brought into the workshop all the men who worked with him were amazed at the marvelous technical skill he showed. His skill was particularly demonstrated when any fine piece of saw work was required. It was the custom of most of the men, on such an occasion, to run down to the worker of the circular saw who got the work done for them. But to their amazement the new man did the work at his own bench with his own saw, and did it not only in less time than the circular saw, but also with greater accuracy. This was an example of the old-fashioned skill of hand which England once had and was now doing its best to destroy. It was this old-fashioned skill they wanted to recover, and through the medium of drawing as a developer of the power of accurate observation, lay the possibility of success.

Many head masters did not yet realize that drawing had anything to do with real development. Observation was not enough. Merely to make a child observe a whole series of unrelated facts was like leaving a boy to play with a dictionary and expecting him to learn a language without anything else. The observation must be orderly and methodical. The power of correct observation thoroughly acquired in childhood became of the utmost value in every phase of human action.