

# The Educator-Journal.

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## THE CORONATION OF THE VIRGIN—BOTTICELLI.

JOHN L. LOWES.

It is from Luke's gospel that the words are taken which the Virgin writes—the most intensely human gospel of the four; best loved by artists, who have found in it alone the scenes to which they have oftenest returned—the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Nativity, the Adoration of the Shepherds, the Presentation in the Temple, the Boy Christ among the Doctors, the Good Samaritan, the Supper at Emmaus. And its intimate, sympathetic sense of the mystery of motherhood to her who kept all these things and pondered them in her heart, was never keenlier felt, I think, or more reverently interpreted than in this picture, to which, in its inner room in the Uffizi, one turns aside again and again from the more splendid Raphaels and Titians and Correggios of the Tribune. It hangs beside another Madonna of Botticelli's—he painted at least eight—in which, even sweeter-faced child-angels have just paused in singing from their still open books to the same unheeding mother, whose eyes look far away, as if to where she is to stand, the *Mater dolorosa*, by the cross. And beside these two, on the same wall, hangs yet another work of his, the "Fortitude," whose spirit is so finely rendered into words in the third of Ruskin's *Mornings in Florence*; and here again the figure is that of Mary, and the burden of its mystery is somehow like to hers. For the hand that writes, "My soul doth magnify the Lord," and the hand that holds the waiting sword of Fortitude, seem to belong alike, in Botticelli's mind, to one whose soul cries out, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I can not attain unto it." And

the Venus that he painted risen from the sea, greets her new world with the same look, from which "the wonder is not yet quite gone;" and his Pallas, standing victorious beside the Centaur she has tamed, has the eyes of one who dreams of heavy burdens yet to be. Leonardo's women—Monna Lisa, the Madonna of the Rocks—look with eyes that have read all the riddles of the universe. To Botticelli's women, they are all unsolved.

But such a mood as that, you say, is not for children. No, it is not—though I confess I am not sure that deep in childhood there is not a sense to which it does make its appeal, a sense of tears in things, more poignant as it is less understood. But granting that the note of sadness will not speak, and ought not, to a child,—as the scathing satire on humanity does not in *Gulliver*, nor the deeper meaning of the allegory in the *Pilgrim's Progress*, nor even in the Man of Sorrows in the Christ—the picture none the less is steeped with that which does, with an infinitely human tenderness, like that of Luke himself. And for this gracious presence—to be felt, not talked about; for that "modesty of great imagination trained in reverence," which to Ruskin was Botticelli's supreme quality—for these, even more than for the story which it tells, I would have it hang upon our walls.

And yet it tells us much of Botticelli, too—far more than the delightful gossip of Vasari, that old Plutarch of the painters, ever can. The loving care with which the fine embroidery on Mary's robes, the figures on the garment of the angel holding with his hands the shoulders of the

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thoughts; and we'll send you ours. Does such a connection mean more love or more hate? Surely it is a tie that binds.

### FIRST GRADE OPENING EXERCISES.

LULIE DIETZ.

Another day with its possibilities for good or evil confronts the teacher. Forty little individuals are to be brought into a harmonious whole. Forty active lives are to be lifted to a higher type of activity. How shall we, teacher and children together, reach this ideal?

No period of the day is more helpful in character-building than the time devoted to opening exercises. The importance of this early period of a new day can not be overestimated. Therefore the question: "What can I do to make this part of the program more vital to the child?" often confronts the conscientious teacher.

As an answer to this question all haphazard work in opening exercises must necessarily be abandoned. There must be as definite a plan for this period of the program as for any arithmetic or reading lesson. The effort in trying to make such plans that the children will receive a lasting impulse for good has been found very helpful by one teacher.

The following general plan has been used during the first four months of school:

Aim—To secure unity by encouraging a feeling of good fellowship and interest in one common thought.

To help the child in experiencing life lessons by presenting truths concretely and giving him an opportunity for free activity.

To cultivate a love for the beautiful through nature, literature and pictures.

There is no experience which is so close to the little six-year-old as his home life. The teacher who succeeds during his first year in bringing much of the home into the schoolroom has a favorable opportunity for starting the child on a hopeful school career.

During the first weeks, especially, much can be done in the way of making the

school homelike. The children are encouraged to bring their little treasures. One corner of the room is set apart as "the little home" and furnished like a miniature house. Even the photographs of some of our baby friends and several of the timid children regain their power of speech when they discover the picture of one of their own baby playmates.

The morning talks cluster about mother and baby. "What baby can do;" "What mother does for us;" "What have I done for mother," are topics of never-failing interest.

In connection with these talks the beautiful stories about babies of the Bible may be told, and also simple, appropriate Bible quotations. The stories of mothers and babies may gradually lead up to the story of the Christ Child which increases in interest during the Christmas season when the children enjoy picturing the story at the sand table and in various other ways.

Following the same line of thought, George McDonald's poem, "The Baby," may be read. Tennyson's "The Bird and Its Nest," and the little poem, "Only One Mother the Wide World Over," may be used as memory gems.

Several of the family kindergarten songs may be used in this connection.

Simple devices assist in securing unity. The children are always delighted to form a large circle for the morning exercises. Something seems to be gained by simply "taking hold of hands." The little "good morning" games of the kindergarten have too much of the true spirit in them to be discarded in the primary room. The bright faces show how much they enjoy singing to their playmates as they bow to each other:

"Good morning to you,  
Good morning to you,  
Good morning, dear children,  
Good morning to all."

A birthday among the little people is always a special occasion. The one who is celebrating is decorated with a bright flower or badge and stands in the center of the circle while the children sing "Happy birthday to you." This is such a great