

## AS TO "MOTHER GOOSE."

From a Private Letter.

You ask me what I think about nursery rhymes for little children.

We have to distinguish between nursery rhymes and nursery rhymes. There are some, especially among the very modern ones, which are amusing or clever or sentimental, without having much value. There are some among the older nursery rhymes, which, however, you may not find in any ordinary collections, which are not of much value and may be even coarse. In large collections of nursery rhymes, especially those gathered as a matter of folklore, you will find many that have political origin that would be of no use in our own nurseries, and you will find some which should become obsolete with the advance of refinements. But any good collection of nursery rhymes which includes many of the older well known ones, it seems to me has great value for our children.

For one thing, these little rhymes tell stories in very brief form. Before the child can take the complications of the longer fairy story it can grasp the distinguishing features of the little rhyme. The best of these rhymes are very condensed dramatic pictures of the life the child knows—the life that it is in contact with, with its mishaps, its adventures, and its satisfactions. Things tumble down, little animals get lost, there is a plum in the pudding, little boys fall asleep at the side or around the haystack. There are ecstasies in which impossible things are done, as the cow jumps over the moon. All these things are vivid pictures presented to the child in language that it can understand, with plenty of color and with delightful climaxes. There are kings and queens, just as in fairy books, but these ideal personages like eating bread and honey in the kitchen and counting their money, giving a glamor and a charm to our common life—to the things that later will become the expressions of greater idealism. At first the little child is right up against the floors and the chairs and the tables and the haystacks, and so on.

With our excessive daintiness we often try to talk to the little children simply about certain very lovely things. We are a little sentimental about it. We talk about the little lambs as if they always just had little blue ribbons about their necks and gamboled on the green. The nursery rhyme tells us about the little lambs running away. That is a good healthy dramatic act. The trouble with the kindergarten is that it is too often sentimental and goody-goody in its connotations. I think the Montessori system gives the intellectual counter-irritant. But both of them leave out, it seems to me, the simple dramatic values of our common life, and the appeal that they make to the imagination. Our sentimental preferences and logical analyses are not adequate for the child's demands.

The fact is that the whole of life is good. The children must run up against it all sooner or later, and we must begin while they still sit on our knees to stimulate an interest in the whole of it. I believe very much in beginning quite young with the great stories of adventure, of enterprise that have been told in all ages,—the Homeric stories, the Sagas, the Hindu stories, if you please. They appeal to the child's imagination, and they give a oneness to the human life and a brilliancy to it. They give radiance to the great enterprises of our own life, and finally to the great joy of our own life and to the great last adventure.

ALICE THACHER POST.



## THE PROGRESS OF PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION.

The recent final passage of the House of Commons of the Irish Home Rule Bill, which provides for the election of the entire Irish Senate and of some of the members of the Irish House by proportional representation, is only one of many recent events showing that the reform is rapidly making its way round the world.

In *Holland* a Royal Commission, recently appointed to consider the matter, has reported unanimously in favor of applying P. R. to the election of both chambers of the Dutch Parliament and also to that of the councils of the "communes" or local governments.

In *Denmark* the Minister of the Interior introduced into the Lower House in April a bill for the election of that House by P. R. It is said that the bill has passed through all its stages in that House and is now, or very recently was, before the Danish Upper House.

In the *Transvaal* a recent vote of the Provincial Council has restored to Johannesburg, Pretoria and Roodeport-Maraisburg the privilege of using P. R. in the election of their municipal councils. The reactionary decision of the Provincial Council that is thus rescinded, which was made towards the end of 1912, was due solely to the desire of the Provincial Council, of which reactionaries were then in control, to prevent the Labor Party from electing its proportional share of the members of the municipal councils in question. The reactionary decision was received with disfavor generally by the press of all parties throughout South Africa.

In *Switzerland*, nine cantons of which already use the proportional system in the election of their cantonal legislatures, a vote is to be taken in the autumn, under the provisions of the Initiative, on the question of applying P. R. to the election of the National Council. The measure will probably carry by a very small margin. The reason why about half of the voters are expected to vote against the measure is that about half of

them belong to the Radical Party, which, as it now governs the country, is naturally loath to approve a measure, however just in principle, that is likely to result in leaving it in a minority.

In *France* proportional representation has been one of the leading issues for several years. Though two bills providing for the election of the French Parliament by P. R. have passed the Chamber of Deputies, in each case by a majority of over one hundred, the reform has met defeat each time at the hands of the Senate. The results of the recent general election in France, however, has been a "great victory for P. R. Estimates of the attitude of the new Chamber towards electoral reform state that its supporters number 352 as against 202 declared opponents, while the remaining 48 members of the Chamber are classed as indeterminate. No doubt the action of the French Senate in rejecting on two different occasions the very conciliatory measures of proportional representation sent up by the Chamber stimulated popular resentment and helped to secure this overwhelming verdict.

"The opposition of the Senate may be a source of gain to the cause of P. R. in more ways than one. The last project submitted by the Chamber fell far short of what the more ardent proportionists desired, and they offered it at a considerable sacrifice in the hope of gaining at least a partial recognition of their principle. Henceforth they intend to renounce compromise and accept nothing less than the full measure of reform. In view of the elections, a spirited manifesto was issued by the organizations working for P. R. and placarded throughout the country, calling upon the elector to give reality to the principle of universal suffrage by the adoption of the proportional system of election. It was signed by the office-holders of the five P. R. associations—*Bureau de Groupe Parlementaire* (M. le député Chas. Benoist, President); *Comité Républicaine de la R. P.* (including men so distinguished as M. Henri Bergson and M. Anatole France); *Ligue pour la Représentation Proportionnelle* (M. le Sénateur Yves Guyot, President); *Ligue Radicale et Radical Socialiste de la R. P.* (M. J. L. Bonnet, President); *Comité Extra-Parlementaire de la R. P.* (M. l'avocat Henry Lémery, President); and by 281 of the outgoing deputies." (The passage quoted is from the June issue of *Representation*, London.)

Since 1906, when P. R. was introduced in *Germany* for the election of 152 of the 160 members of legislative council of Hamburg and for that of 23 out of 92 members of the Diet (legislature) of *Württemberg*, the system has been adopted for certain communal councils in *Bavaria*, *Baden*, *Oldenburg*, and *Württemberg*, for certain industrial and commercial courts, for the representative bodies of the insurance societies (which are welded into a system of state insurance), and for the legally-constituted committees representing the

workmen of certain great industrial companies such as the *New Photo Company* of *Steglitz* and the famous firm of *Zeiss* at *Jena*. A resolution endorsing P. R. for the *Reichstag* itself was barely rejected in 1913 by a vote of 140 to 139.

In *New South Wales* many influential men, including the premier, Mr. Holman, have declared for P. R. In *South Australia* the Liberal Party which declared for the reform when out of power; unfortunately, however, it has done nothing for the reform since it came into power. In *Western Australia* the Chief Electoral Officer, Mr. E. J. Stenberg, has just issued an official report on electoral systems, drawn up after a journey round the world, in which he recommends P. R. for the election of the legislature of his province.

Coming to our own continent, we find that the Liberal Party of *British Columbia* recently declared for P. R. after giving the question thorough consideration at its convention.

In *New York* a State P. R. League was founded on June 3rd. (Temporary Secretary, John E. Eastmond, 175 St. James place, Brooklyn.) In the same state an excellent P. R. bill for the election of members of the proposed constitutional convention was introduced by leading Progressives. In *Indiana* the Progressive Party, at its convention in *Indianapolis* on April 18th, declared for the reform unequivocally in its platform.

Even if no account was taken of the unquestioned success of proportional representation in the countries in which it has been in use some years, including *Belgium*, *Sweden*, *Finland*, *Denmark*, *Tasmania* and nine of the cantons of *Switzerland*, this list of the advances that the system is everywhere making at the present time should convince anybody that the reform ought to be thoroughly looked into by Americans at once so that it can be adopted for the election of our city councils and our State legislatures, our national House of Representatives and our Electoral College, when the first opportunities arise for changes in the election of those bodies.

There is a good deal of information on the subject in a thirty-two page U. S. Senate Document on *Effective Voting* that was printed at the request of Senator Robert L. Owen.

As I have a number of copies of that document here at Tamworth, N. H., I shall be glad to send a copy to any reader of *The Public* who asks me for one.

C. F. HOAG,

General Secretary of the American Proportional Representation League.



## RENT

Written for the Cleveland Singletax Club.

You may tinker with the tariff and may make some simple gains,

You may put on tolls or take 'em off, inducing party pains;