ENLIGHTENED EDUCATION

While anxiety and distress afflict so large a part of the present political scene it is a relief to turn to events at once important and constructive which are taking place at home. This week's two announcements from the Ministry of Education may well mark a period in the educational history of Great Britain. The scheme for grants to students to enable them to go to the Universities has attracted most attention; but it is a subsidiary aspect of this scheme, and the pronouncement on examinations in secondary schools, which are likely to be of the greatest practical and psychological importance in forming the citizens of the future.

The scheme, by which any student who wins an open or State scholarship will receive financial help to enable him to take it up, sweeps away the hampering and exhausting system by which the poorest students were often faced with the necessity of taking several examinations in order, piecemeal, to acquire the necessary number of grants to defray the expenses of their career. Examinations are not an infallible test, though they are the only one which can be devised, and they impose on the student, often at the most sensitive period of development, a strain on the nerves and on the memory—by no means the most important quality of the intellect—which may have very bad consequences indeed for the general development of the pupils from studying and fulfilling the individual potentialities of their pupils. The School Certificate, too long the essential passport to many forms of employment, is to be virtually abolished and replaced by an internal examination which could clearly be worked out in much closer relation to the needs and aptitudes of the pupils. This turning away from the examination system is a really important educational change and may well have widespread effects in producing what we most need, a more widely cultured, that is, humanly developed, generation, and one which will be mentally and even physically healthier.

There is, however, still a heavy cloud on the horizon. The shortage of teachers and the drastic shortage of places at the Universities is an undermining factor in all new educational schemes. The post-war bottleneck at the Universities will presumably right itself with time, but the time may be years and meanwhile the bottleneck holds up the whole stream.

It is possible that constructive reforms, of which we have had two such impressive examples this week, may have a reviving effect throughout a profession which is suffering perhaps more than most from the prolonged extra strain of war and which continues to under-recruit for the supply of its growing needs. The sad fact has been proved that it is not until the isolation of the individual has been partly lifted that work of any importance can be done.
CLAP YOUR HANDS

British Fairy Origins: Lewis Spence. \textit{Watts}. 10s. 6d.

It could have been safely assumed that when Mr Lewis Spence made up his mind to investigate the origin of the belief in fairies he would no book on the subject unopened. The problem has pixilated hundreds of eminent scholars, and there are opposing schools of thought whose questions Mr Spence exhaustively tackles in chapters with such headings as ""Wrote Fairies a Reminiscence of Aboriginal Races?'""; "Are Fairies Derived from Godlike Forms?"; "Fairies as Totemic Forms?"; "Vestiges of Cull in Fairy Tradition". His conclusion is that the fairies of Britain (with whom he is almost exclusively concerned) are a traditional recollection of a very ancient belief that the spirits of the dead awaiting reincarnation in human form dwell in communities. British fairies are gregarious; they are as much human as spiritual; they reveal an association with that early doctrine of spirit which held that the spirit-body of man had a certain material and ponderable quality.

In his journey towards this conclusion Mr Spence's argument sometimes moves stiffly, slowed down by adhesions of erudition in the text and hampered by footnote references, but time can be taken off for consideration of the evidence not for the belief in fairies but for the very existence of fairies. There is the matter of their size. Bessie Dunlop, an Ayrshire woman tried for witchcraft in 1556, declared that the Fairy Queen who visited her was a stout woman who sat down and "asked a drink at her". Andro Man, tried at Aberdeen for sorcery in 1597, said he had been the husband of the Fairy Queen for many years and had had children by her. Whether or not these Fairy Queens were identical, it can be inferred that they were of human stature. And the Fairy King described in 1677 was man-size—like "'ane large tall corporal Gardman, and ruddy.'"

Against such disillusions statements can be set the account of a fairy caught at Zennor—"not more than a foot long"—aid the elf at Rothley—"about the size of a child's doll." Shakespeare's fairies are generally regarded as diminutive, yet the adults and children that disguised themselves as fairies to torment Falstaff in

\textit{The Merry Wives of Windsor} took no reducing mixture.

As for the disposition of fairies, it was by no means uniformly beneficent: even friendly fairies could be capricious; they could never be depended upon not to indulge in practical joking. The theory that they were Fallen Angels, "not good enough to be saved or bad enough to be lost," may explain their inconsistencies of conduct. Yeats could believe in

\begin{quote}
  \textit{The land of faery,}
  \textit{Where nobody gets old and godly and grave,}
  \textit{Where nobody gets old and crafty and wise,}
  \textit{Where nobody gets old and bitter of tongue.}
  \textit{It is not of this world, which must be too full of weeping for fairies to understand. Anyhow, no belief nowadays is wide enough to wrap a fairy in.}
\end{quote}

\textit{DANIEL GEORGE}

\section*{POETRY}

\textbf{A Map of Verona:} Henry Reed. \textit{Cape}. 3s. 6d.

\textbf{The Isles of Scilly:} Geoffrey Grigson. \textit{Routledge}. 5s.

\textbf{ULTIMATELY,} there is only one way to review poetry—by quotation, for, as Mallarmé reminded Degas on the famous occasion, poetry is written not with ideas but with words. No matter what theories may be fashionale, the test of a poet is still how he uses words. This is how Mr Reed uses them:

\begin{quote}
  \textit{Day breaks: the isle is silent, under the sun,}
  \textit{Which ponders it as though to interpret its silence.}
  \textit{I have changed my mind; or my mind is changed in me.}
  \textit{Unalterable of cliff and water.}
  \textit{The vast ravines are violet, revealing sea.}
  \textit{Here they are close together, the singing fragments}
  \textit{Which gods and men arrange, a chorus of birds and gardens.}
  \textit{The god departs, the men remain, day breaks,}
  \textit{And the bow is ready and burnished.}
  \textit{The arrows are newly fledged with the sun's first feathers.}
  \textit{It is the last stillness of the morning}
  \textit{Before the first gull screams.}
\end{quote}

\textbf{Sampson Low}

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TIME AND TIDE 25 MAY 1946

Glistens like coral in all the neighbouring gardens,
And today we have naming of parts.

This is the lower sling swivel. And this
Is the upper sling swivel, whose use you will see,
When you are given your slings. And this is the piling
swivel,
Which in your case you have not got. The branches
Hold in the gardens their silent, eloquent gestures,
Which in our case we have not got. . . .

They call it easing the Spring: it is perfectly easy
If you have any strength in your thumb—like the bolt,
And the breech, and the cocking-piece, and the point
of balance,
Which in our case we have not got; and the almond
blossom
Silent in all the gardens and the bees going backwards
and forwards,
For today we have naming of parts.

It is as though Jules Laforgue had suddenly appeared
in a conscript army.

Limitations of space alone prevent one from indulg-
ing in the pleasure of writing about A Map of Verona
at length. No better first book of poetry has appeared
for many years and it would be foolish to expect
another comparable for as long. It may be pointed out
that the price puts it in the reach of everyone who has
regard for writing that combines profound imagination
with beauty of expression.

After Mr Reed it must be admitted that The Isles of
Sully seems pretty thin. There are two Mr Grigsons,
Mr Grignon with the acutely observant eye and
wonder of expression, deriving from the Imagists,
and Mr Grignon who is on Christian-name tennis
with Gerard Manley Hopkins. The first Mr Grignon
seems at his best in lines like the following:

Green leaves: and in the cold entry of the cave
Green light which turns to a darkness:
Green water from the bellowing dark, here still;
Yet forward flows to turn no green-wheeled mill.
It sinks under its antique pebble-studded bed,
And carves rock shiningly and cleanly into curves;
Gives back no eyes but mine, No sifter of sun, or stars,
Floats down no seedling from the gamboge-throated
flowers.

Writing such as this has its own virtues and its own
magic. That of the other Mr Grignon has little of either:

Turgenev, who saw the stars through mist,
Balzac, who knew greed's intricate and iron growth,
Leskov, who knew no man must be loved,
Hölderlin, serene, who heard the jackal howling in
the stones,
Palmer who wildly flew
And soared, and reached the doors of bliss,
Coleridge, who knew green calm among the blackest
clouds—
I give you this . . . .

I call it big of Mr Grignon. And what of: "And
healthy Lewis, seeing, capturing, and destroying. In an
absolute phrase"? "Monk", Sinclair, C.S., Alun, P.
Wyndham, D. B. Wyndham, C. Day? Not, by any
chance, "Kid" Lewis?

WALTER ALLEN

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fairly, and certainly the baffled, well-intentioned
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himself; the tragedy of his story is in reality built up in
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C. V. W.

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provincial gas company which has the neck to incor-
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scroll which tops their quarterly accounts. Other
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petition entries the word SPECIAL should be printed
in the top left-hand corner of the entry. Where a word
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dbury Street, W.C.1. Results will be published in our
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Competition continued on page 500

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