Source

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Education

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Education

Editorial

In the Christmas 1994 issue of *Province Life* (newsletter of the European province) Radegunde Flaxman wrote

> [T]he Society was not founded for education but to be God's mercy in the world . . . [E]ducation was the means, not the original inspiration nor the fundamental end in view.

What this issue of Source with its focus on Education amply demonstrates is that education, in its strictest sense and in its widest application, continues to be an effective and challenging "means" through which the Society and those who share its charism in every province fulfil that call to be "God's mercy in the world."

In this issue there are articles reflecting on the education of the smallest children and of the most mature adults; articles by members of the Society and by friends and colleagues who share our inspiration and our aspirations. Education is perhaps a singularly appropriate theme as we look towards the Society's celebration of its 150th anniversary: "As a Society," the Constitutions state unequivocally, "we are committed to christian education."

The two issues of *Source* planned for the jubilee year will mark the anniversary by exploring the themes "The Spirit of the Society" and "Discernment." If you wish to contribute to either issue copy for the first should reach the editor by September 1995 and for the second by February 1996.

We continue to hope for new subscribers to Source. A subscription in any currency is acceptable; we ask at least £6 or $12 or 50 naira or 2,000 cedis per annum. If you know of anyone who would like to subscribe (or anyone who could not afford to subscribe but would be pleased to receive a copy of *Source*) please contact one of the editors.

Judith Lancaster SHCJ

The Spirit of Holy Child Education: Actions Not Words

Lorna Bowman

THERE IS a great deal written today about women writing women's lives.[1] Albeit they are different books with different foci, when I read Radegunde Flaxman's *A Woman Styled Bold* and Caritas McCarthy's *The Spirituality of Cornelia Connelly* I meet not only Cornelia but also Radegunde and Caritas. In my own work I perceive Cornelia through the lens of my life experience and my understanding as a (religious) educator.

During this past year I have heard about Cornelia at a meeting of educational historians in Australia, spent time in the SHCJ archives in Rome and at Mayfield, chatted with John Marmion about Cornelia's theology of education over a bottle of wine in Liverpool, and interviewed Holy Child alumnae regarding their schooling in Nigeria and Ghana.[2] After such a rich year I am led to ask again:

> How can we understand the spirit of Cornelia's educational legacy for today's world?

For a long time I have been struck by Bronowski's depiction of Albert Einstein, born the year Cornelia died:

> Einstein was a man who could ask immensely simple questions. And what his life showed, and his work, is that when the answers are simple too, then you can hear God thinking. [3]

So, perhaps the answer to my question is not difficult.

We know the story well. Cornelia and Pierce first visited Rome in 1835. It was a happy time as the young couple discovered the riches of their new-found faith. Cornelia studied music and immersed herself in the cultural life afforded by this European centre of Christendom.

Eight years later the story was very different. Cornelia and Pierce, with Frank and Adeline, arrived in Rome on 7 December 1843 exactly five months after Cornelia's and the children's departure from Grand Coteau, Louisiana. Almost immediately, on 17 December, Adeline became a boarder with the Society of the Sacred Heart at the Trinita dei Monti.

Cornelia was just thirty-four years old. Her eldest son, Mercer, was at school at Oscott in England; her two youngest children lay buried in the cemetery at Grand Coteau. She could only visit Adeline at the Trinita once a week. Her husband sought their permanent separation; other family members were in America. Few of their Roman acquaintances knew the real purpose of their journey.

We perceive Cornelia through the lens of our life experience

Today we are apt to comment on the level of stress in Cornelia's life. Amidst all the competing claims on her person we marvel at her stamina. How was she able to make sense of her life? What gave it meaning?

We know that Cornelia and Pierce met with Pope Gregory XVI before the New Year regarding the possibility of their future separation — necessary if Pierce were to become a priest. Early in March, before Pierce submitted his formal petition to the Pope on the 15th, Cornelia made a laywomen's retreat at the Trinita.

During this retreat with Fr Zulani SJ Cornelia's notebook[4] shows that she used the Spiritual Exercises to re-examine the call to religious life she had experienced while still at Grand Coteau. She deals as realistically as she can with the competing claims of her family responsibilities. At the end she thanks God for the "light and strength" she has received in her retreat and responds in total commitment to God's will as she understands it. [5]

Following the "contemplation to attain love," from the fourth week of the Spiritual Exercises where Ignatius counsels that "love ought to express itself in deeds rather than words",[6] Cornelia concretizes what this means for her in her own life at this time, then moves to the implications for her life in relation to others.[7] She concludes her retreat with the expression *Actions not Words*, a phrase from the classical literature of Rome, *Facta non Verba*. This personal motto was to become that of the Society.

It strikes me that if we want to understand Cornelia's charism, or her spirituality, or the spirit of the Society, or the spirit she nurtured through her educational philosophy we would do well to reflect on how this maxim played out in her life and teaching.

From as early as the 1850s we find illustrations done by the pupils at St Leonards in the front of their drawing books of the Society's emblem emboldened with Cornelia's motto "Actions not Words" along the lower edge and "Society of the Holy Child Jesus" along the other two sides.[8]

The emblem draws attention to Cornelia's response to the mystery of the incarnation in her own life. It was here that she found consolation on the tragic death of John Henry. In her notebook we find the words: "Fell victim on Friday . . . suffered 43 hours and was taken 'into the temple of the Lord' on the [feast of the] Purification."[9] Cornelia's confidence was fostered by her relationship with God and nurtured by the *Spiritual Exercises*. But its heart is a simplicity in which she allows herself to love and be loved by God. It is the love of the incarnation and leads to a love for all creation, a respect for God's self-revelation/communication wherever it is found, and the loving service of others.[10]

The strength of character which such practice moulds — so important in the work of education — is a sense by individuals that such love finds expression in all of one's actions. This is the spirituality behind all Cornelia's educational enterprises. And, if one reads her carefully, one finds that she is always about the fostering of intentionality — in one's thoughts, one's attitudes, one's endeavours. "Be yourself but make that self just what God wants it to be."

There are a number of qualities that we have come to associate with Holy Child education — the primacy of the spiritual, mutual trust, respect for the individual, development of one's gifts, a capacity for love, desire for truth, joy and happiness, and appreciation of beauty, a realistic outlook on life. Cornelia told her sisters that in the work of education

> we have to learn to make strong women who, while they lose nothing of their gentleness and sweetness, should yet have a masculine force of character and will.

educate so that individuals can choose their own way in love

She was writing a new script for Victorian women[11] based on her own life experience: such women would become leaders in their society.

In Europe and North America we have recently commemorated the end of the second world war and the

Shoah, the Jewish Holocaust. Victor Frankl wrote of the individuals who stood out in the concentration camps where he was detained:

> We who lived in the concentration camps remember the men who walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of bread. They may have been few in number, but they offer sufficient proof that everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of his freedoms — to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way.[12]

Cornelia fosters intentionality: "Be yourself but make that self just what God wants it to be"

Suffering in our world continues. We are overwhelmed by its manifestation: pandemic AIDS; ethnic/religious wars and the slaughter of men, women and children; extortion and terrorism; famine; disease in epidemic proportion . . .

How would Cornelia respond? To live justice with compassion we must have individuals educated in a manner that will enable them to choose their own attitudes, in any given set of circumstances, to choose their own way in love.

Then we shall see the spirit of Cornelia's educational legacy: *Actions not Words*.

Notes

1. See Carolyn G Heilburn, *Writing a Woman's Life* (New York: Ballatine Books, 1988) and Sara Alpern, Joyce Antler, Elisabeth Israels Perry, and Ingrid Winther Scobie, eds., *The Challenge of Feminist Biography* (Chicago: University of Illinois, 1992).
2. In addition to interviewing over twenty Holy Child alumnae I was also present at the Zonal Meeting of Holy Child Past Students in Calabar, and the day-long Launching of the Endowment Fund leading up to 1996 Golden Jubilee Celebration in Ghana. I heard much about Holy Child education!
3. J Bronowski, the *Ascent of Man* (London: BBC, 1973) p 256.
4. CC 21:19-31, Rome 5-12 March 1844.
5. CC 21:26-27.
6. *The Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius*, Image Book edition, intro. Robert W Gleason, trans, Anthony Mottola (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1964) p 103.
7. See also Caritas McCarthy, *The Spirituality of Cornelia Connelly: In God, For God, With God* (Lewiston and Queenston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1986), pp 60-61.
8. The emblem is reproduced in Plate XXXII, *Positio III*. CC's use of the term "emblem" is cited *Positio II*, p 692.
9. CC 21:5, Grand Coteau, 2 February 1840.
10. See Elizabeth A Johnson, *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Discourse* (New York: Crossroad, 1992) pp 165-166, for a discussion of how the use of the female figure of Sophia as personified Wisdom in the person of Jesus "unties the knot of sexist Christology" and brings to the fore our relation to the cosmos, respect of other religious traditions, and need for solidarity with the oppressed and suffering. This approach is, I believe, consonant with a contemporary Ignatian spirituality.
11. Heilburn develops the theme of how women in the twentieth century "have broken through to a realization of the narratives that have been controlling their lives." op cit pp 60-75. I suspect that Cornelia became quite aware of this in her own life.
12. See Victor Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning* (New York: Washington Square Press 1963) p 104. This book is the basis for Frankl's work in logotherapy where he focused on neuroses resulting from the failure of those who suffer to find meaning and a sense of responsibility in their existences. Through his own experience in a concentration camp he found "the salvation of man[*sic*] is through love and in love." Ibid. p 59.

Cornelia's Ideals in Practice: An Experience of Holy Child Education 1942-49

Maureen Crook SHCJ

CORNELIA CONNELLY'S wisdom in the field of education clearly had its source in her life as a mother and in the contemplation of the Holy Child to which this led her. In 'the Child', the Son as he grew to manhood, she found the 'key', as she called it, to reality, to true life.She pondered the bond of filial love which gave direction and simplicity to his choices; she gained understanding from his belief in the innate goodness and dignity of each individual; she saw his ability to call forth new and unexpected responses by his respect and trust, his high expectations going hand in hand with loving patience and the forgiveness of weakness, a mercy so 'boundless' that it embraced even the cross to attain its purpose.

In the education of her own children she followed his example, creating in her family a happy environment with a holistic concern for the well-being of her children.Her sister's description of life in the Connelly household revealed it as full of warmth and love, a place of joy and fun. In that atmosphere Cornelia was able to convey to her children a sense of their own value and loveableness; she saw them learn to trust life and enjoy open, affectionate relationships, growing gradually, with much necessary encouragement and support, towards a happy integration and autonomy. Like any young mother, she discovered that human development can never be hurried or 'added' from the outside; that each child has gifts and weaknesses to which she had constantly to adjust, and a pattern of growth which she had to serve.

In the loss of Mary Magdalene and in John Henry's terrible accident and agony, she learned a deep compassion for human pain and vulnerability and an awareness that life can demand a self transcendence and sacrifice so crucifying that only in faith can strength be found to bear it. This was a lesson that the events of her later life would constantly drive home.Within deep suffering she found resurrection, an identification with God's word of abiding, merciful love. This was the gift which unified all her life-experience and which became the bed-rock of the Society's charism and its apostolate of spiritual mercy, exercised primarily, according to the need of that age, in the work of education.

I was one of those fortunate enough to enjoy the educational system which incorporated the fruit of her experience. At the age of eleven I went as a boarder to Layton Hill, Blackpool, a school founded by Cornelia and strong in the traditions she established. My abiding memory of seven years there is one of happiness.Education for Cornelia was rooted in reality, in truth. There was no affectation or superficiality, but rather a spontaneity, a directness, a liberty of spirit, which allowed for individual differences and served them. Cornelia's words, 'Be yourself, but make that self what God wants it to be,' were presented as a serious christian undertaking, involving high ideals, moral courage and a call to generosity — AMDG. This was balanced by real warmth and humanity, a sense of humour and an encouragement not to take ourselves too seriously.

I remember many fun occasions shared with the nuns — outings, picnics, celebrations. I can see us gathered round the bonfire on Guy Fawkes night, as the community sang Michael Finnegan for us, faster and faster, till we all collapsed in laughter.I recall the everyday recreation times, when the member of staff was always surrounded by relaxed, chattering youngsters, completely at home. A Sacred Heart sister once said to me years later: 'I always thought that you had a much closer relationship with your girls than we had,' and this she attributed to the fact that Cornelia had been a mother.

Cornelia's wisdom in the field of education had its sources in her life as a mother

Cornelia called on her sisters to be strong women — to 'love in strength rather than too much sweetness' — but also to use their feminine gifts to nourish and mother the children, whilst avoiding sentimentality.Concern for the individual was expressed in so many ways, including a hug when needed. At Layton Hill, the head mistress, busy with a school of some 500 girls (100 of them boarders) and the responsibility of providing for them in war-time, still found time to take under her own wing those girls, both of whose parents were involved in war-work. She took them shopping for clothes and herself adjusted the purchases, turning up hems etc.

an educational system which incorporated the fruits of Cornelia's experience

The staff gave generously of their free time to help in class projects, or to give extra tuition. They ran craft clubs and provided optional activities such as folk-dancing in the hall on wet dinner hours.That particular example comes to mind, because as a teacher elsewhere I was to see girls crammed into the corridors and stairways on wet days, while the classrooms were locked; or shut out in the cold with little to do, while the staff, complaining that they were paid to teach their subjects and were not beholden to the girls otherwise, supervised them from the windows.What a contrast to my own childhood experience!

There was good discipline, but it was not at all harsh or repressive; it was based on openness and trust, on what at school we called 'honour'. The extensive library was not supervised, yet silence was well-maintained, the older girls helping to ensure that the trust was not abused. It was always a tradition that if the staff were absent, it was incumbent on us to be better behaved than when they were there.Considerable responsibility was delegated to the older girls, culminating in the feast of St Teresa when the nuns had a holiday, keeping completely away from the school, and the sixth form provided whatever supervision or tuition was necessary. In these ways we were taught to take responsibility and to carry through whatever we undertook, whether it was popular or not.

My head mistress, S M Frideswide Helm, whom I regard as one of the best educators the European province ever had, spoke often of moral courage and in this way presented to us Cornelia's teaching on simplicity, purity of intention and fidelity, though she never used those terms. She also stressed what Cornelia would have called 'attention', keeping our eyes open for need, especially for anyone being left out. According to the motto of the school, Cornelia's 'Actions not words', we were encouraged to take the initiative and not wait for others to act. We felt that we were all responsible for creating a good, cooperative spirit, and though I am sure we often failed, I remember no bullying or persistent unkindness.

There was a real family spirit, a '*cor unum et anima una*' (Cornelia's words engraved on the nuns' silver crosses). I was struck as a pupil by the head mistress' friendship with her lay staff and the unity and dedication of all the teachers. The PE teacher, a non-catholic, who worked at Layton

Hill for many years, was possibly the most dedicated and truly 'Holy Child' person I ever met.I was reminded of this shared sense of purpose when one of my own staff said to me years later that she enjoyed working in a Holy Child school because 'It is so wonderful to be free from political manoeuvring in the staff room.' The lay sisters were part of this family too, the home makers, and we loved spending time with them. Their kindness and sympathy made them a natural refuge for those a little down or in trouble — and not a few tit-bits came our way from the parlour teas!

At the heart of the school life was the inspiration and practice of a deep christian faith.The school was in Lancashire, a very catholic area, so most of the girls had received a good spiritual foundation at home. I remember the day-girls going to Mass on the way to school during Lent and being given breakfast on their arrival. As it was war-time most of us had family members in danger and felt the need to pray.

It was a period when devotion to the Sacred Heart flourished and brought a deep attachment to the person of Jesus.This attachment was fostered in many ways: 'watching' in the night during Quarant Ore or at the altar of repose; staying on after term to join with the community in Tenebrae and the other Holy Week liturgies; 'visiting' the Blessed Sacrament during morning break . . . .

What must we preserve as we search for what is relevant today?

We knew from the example and teaching we received that religious practices should lead to an awareness of God's abiding presence and should find expression in daily living, especially in concern for others. The wider church became real to us as we watched our own teachers leave for the comparatively new missions in Nigeria and Ghana, visiting us in their white habits before they went and sending back photographs and letters. It is not surprising that vocations flourished and the girls took high ideals and a strong faith to many walks of life.

In general, the school had good academic standards; the teaching was thorough and well-prepared; and we were expected to use our minds to seek out the truth, not to be afraid to express our own opinions, and to be ready to learn by listening to others. There was certainly plenty of discussion. At the same time the importance of accurate facts and of intellectual honesty was stressed. We were

immeasurably enriched by being given time and freedom to use our own initiative, to organise our own work and to explore the excellent library available to us.

The creative arts were encouraged in every way. The school excelled above all in music, with two orchestras, several choirs and many exceptional instrumentalists. There were classes in musical appreciation for all; great classical works were studied, themes copied out and everyone learnt to read music. There was also a high standard of art, and we were introduced to the history of art and the appreciation of paintings; a wide variety of crafts were undertaken and each year there were exhibitions, both in the community and the school, of beautiful needlework. From the beginning drama was central in Holy Child schools and Layton Hill was no exception. There was always one production or another in progress, whether for Christmas, the end of the year or an occasion such as the head mistress' feast, when each class produced a play which they had chosen and prepared themselves.

In her concern for the whole person, Cornelia always endeavoured to provide the best possible environment. Layton Hill, with its farm, its extensive fields, its gardens and its wonderful sea air was an ideal place in which to grow up. (The early morning Rogation Processions, blessing the orchards and crops, remain a vivid memory.) Cornelia understood that physical well-being was central to a child's development. She had a great appreciation of the body as a beautiful gift to be cared for and respected as the servant of the whole person. Her own marriage had been a happy one, both fulfilling and fruitful, and she must always have remembered the wonder of holding her new-born children for the first time. These positive attitudes, which she established in her schools, eliminated prudery or a jansenistic fear of relationships or sex. The enjoyment of physical gifts was encouraged and energy, grace, co-ordination and agility found expression in sports and gymnastics.

But no matter what the educational ideals, there are always areas where teachers can introduce into a Holy Child approach attitudes which are foreign to the original spirit of Cornelia. Sometimes these are the social attitudes of the time — snobbery, elitism; sometimes they spring from a more rigorous upbringing or narrower educational experience; and there is always the danger of changing the search for excellence into excessive competitiveness, or of high expectations being transformed into a subtle moral pressure. Layton Hill was not completely free from such

shadows, but they did not for me outweigh the positive aspects of the education I enjoyed.

Some thirty-five years later, when I was part of the Upholland Seminary Team, I heard someone holding forth in the bar one evening about the wonderful education she had received and the extraordinary happiness of her school. It turned out to be a person two years younger than myself who had also been a boarder at Layton Hill; I remembered her as a 'naughty' girl! But it was great to know that she shared my memories of that time and that they were for her, too, such happy ones.

Of what relevance, you may be asking, is the recording of such memories today? Why turn back to a time which has past when we should be looking forward?

In our own lives it is only in retrospect that we recognise experiences which were valuable and life-giving, and separate them from those which seemed good at the time but which were perhaps ill-motivated or destructive. The same is true for the Society. By looking back to the Layton Hill of fifty years ago we can begin to recognise the essentials of our charism and distinguish them from their temporary expression in the schools of that time.

What must we hold on to, seek to express in new forms today? What must we preserve as we search for what is relevant now? Where was there a mistaken conformity to fashion in those days? Where may we be mistaken today?I offer this article as a contribution to this enquiry.

The Four R's

Christine Mary Austin SHCJ

AS I LOOK back over the past forty years in the teaching profession (most of it spent as a class teacher of 4-6 year old boys and girls, and currently in London in classes of thirty) I am aware that there have been many peaks and troughs one way and another. But there have always been times when the effort and daily grind have been worth while: the breakthrough with a particular child when the light of understanding has dawned; the look of delight and surprise when a child finds it can read a new story on its own; the success of tying your own shoe-laces for the first time after many struggles; of using a pair of scissors with accuracy (not cutting off the heads and hands of Jesus and Mary for the home-made crib); of writing your own name (and even your surname and address!); the delight of parents when their children have performed well at a concert or class assembly; the pressure to be first into class at 9.00 am; to have one of the magnifying glasses to examine the treasures on the project table; to show off new shoes; or show where a tooth has just come out.

Occasionally a secondary school child or older brother or sister or parent makes some small remark that shows the worthwhileness of it all: 'I've still got the crib I made in your class, Sister.' Once or twice there have even been letters of thanks from parents of graduates, though usually the past is too distant for recognition like that.

As I reflect on the basics of education, the four R's (reading, writing, arithmetic and religion), I realise that it was chiefly the thought of having a captive audience to lead to God that made me choose to join a teaching rather than a nursing order. It has been a great joy to guide these young, receptive minds and souls to God. Often by their questions ('Who made God?') and by their prayers and drawings, they have shown their thoughtfulness about all they have heard and experienced.

Teaching children to read has always been high on my list of priorities: the sooner they can read the better they can educate themselves. Starting school myself during the first year of World War II and enduring many disruptions in my early education, I was a slow reader and suffered much in consequence all through my school days. So I have always done my best to hear each child's reading individually, every day. It is the constant drip on the stone that achieves results.



I've seen teaching aids and methods come and go:ITA (Initial Teaching Alphabet), for instance, with its strange shaped letters and phonetic spelling. When I had the reception class at Combe Bank a visiting teacher introduced me to this new method of teaching reading, and I was so taken with it that I sent off a couple of ideas for craft work with infants to the *Child Education* magazine to make some money to buy the books we needed to try it out. By the time the money came I'd changed my mind! It might be good for some children (who would learn in spite of you); it might be helpful even to the majority of the children; but some would always have to slave away at it come what may.

Another craze was Cuisenaire rods, an excellent teaching aid still seen in many classrooms but not really used. I'd never understood the value of algebra myself until I met this method of teaching maths. I read of a six year old who had discovered a way of writing a hundred using four nines. See if you can do it. The answer is at the end of this article. It's not to do with algebra but with fractions!

One of the methods I have used, amongst others, to teach writing in recent years is 'developmental writing'. Here again the stress is on encouraging children to get their thoughts down on paper. We have ten minutes of silent writing with no one asking for spellings and the teacher also using the time to do some spontaneous writing. Children tend to copy what they see others doing, and many children never see adults writing. At the end of ten minutes I often read out what I have written, and then they have turns at reading out what they think they have written. To

begin with their efforts are up and down zig-zags, then initial letters of words appear, next the last sounds and finally some of the middle letters. The teacher helps the children write out a second draft with traditional spellings.

So teaching aids and styles come and go, and I suppose there is nothing much new under the sun except that now we all have calculators and computers in our classrooms. Nothing takes the place of constant practice, usage, practical experience and what these days is called 'hands on'. Experience is all:

Religious education is caught not taught.

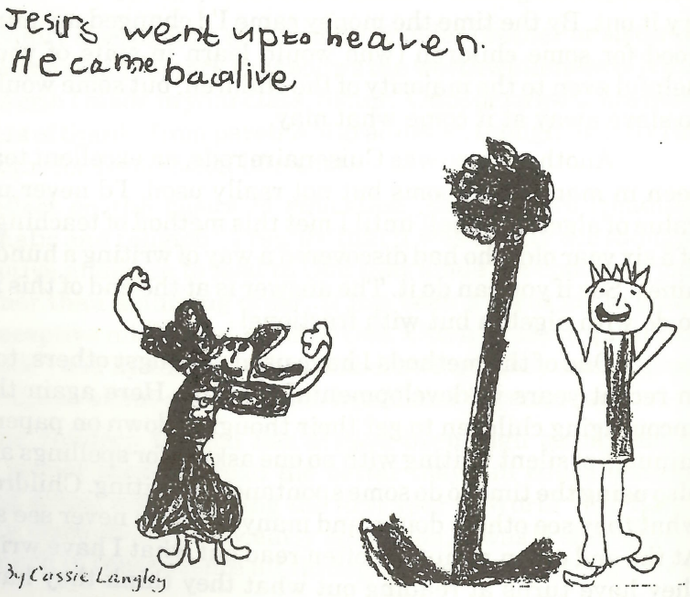
A baby learns to talk by talking and being talked to.

A child learns to read by reading (daily) and seeing and hearing others read.

Writing is learnt by writing.

The constant drip on the stone wears it away or builds up a stalagmite: it depends on the drip.

(*Answer to how to make a hundred using four nines is — 99 %*)



Actions Not Words: The Inculturation of Holy Child Education

Lorna Bowman

ONE MORNING last October shortly after 8.00 am Sr Amarachi dropped me off at the National Museum at the Old Residency, Calabar. The early hour meant that there were not many visitors and I was free to roam at will. In one room I found the following:

> In 1930 three Catholic sisters, led by the American Cornelia Connelly, took an active interest in education work and by 1954 the 41 sisters were supervising three teachers' colleges, four secondary schools and fifty five elementary schools in the area of the Old Calabar Province.[1]

Albeit the facts were not quite correct I knew that Cornelia's spirit had found its way to Calabar![2]

For many years I have heard of the professional and educational achievements of Holy Child alumnae in Nigeria and Ghana, and my purpose for being in Calabar was to meet and interview some of these women. My morning expedition provided an important historical context for what I was to hear.

Early Missions

Missionary activity in South-Eastern Nigeria dates to the early nineteenth century with the arrival in the Old Calabar area of Jamaican Presbyterian missionaries of African origin, members of the Church of Scotland. By 1892 the Methodists were centred at Oron, the Church Missionary Society in the Niger Delta and the Roman Catholics at Onitsha.[3]

The Efik established relationships with the Portuguese when they arrived in the fifteenth century, and then with the Dutch, the French, the Germans and the British as they appeared, becoming the dominant trading group and controlling access to ethnic groups in the hinterland. The openness of the rulers and chiefs of the port region of Old

Calabar to the various mission boards was due to a desire for technological training. In return they guaranteed land for mission settlements and protection, and were willing to concede some of their traditions.

A natural outgrowth of these missions was the work of education. By 1856 200 children attended mission schools daily in Calabar. In fact

> The missionary penetration in South-Eastern Nigeria was a case of the Cross (missions) leading the Flag (British colonial government) in the interior of the country, since the missionaries were the first foreigners allowed to settle on land.[4]

Motivated by the rich resources of the country the British colonial authorities implemented a policy of "indirect rule" in 1901 in an effort to control the newly acquired hinterland. The Efik chiefs and traders were not happy with this encroachment into their trading territories. Furthermore, the British hierarchical mode of governing was foreign to most of the ethnic groups of the southeast where power was shared in the community. Nevertheless, the British established "native courts" made up of individuals appointed from among the local mission-educated men.[5] Issued official certificates of recognition or "warrants," they became known as "Warrant Chiefs". This artificial institution superimposed on local tradition for the purpose of political consolidation by the British gave way to corruption and abuse.

The European missionaries and colonisers focused their attention on the evangelization and education of men envisioning them as the future religious leaders and governmental aides. Most efforts by missionary women were directed at the marginalized — the mothers of twins, replaced women and slaves. At times they taught village women skills related to the care of the home and children.

But it is the women's culture of South-Eastern Nigeria during this period that is so often overlooked.[6] As an economic force women were extremely powerful. Not only were they the primary agricultural workers but they also dominated trade and the local markets in many areas.

British Educational Policy

In March 1925 a document entitled "Education Policy in British Tropical Africa" was adopted by the British parliament for use by directors of education and missionary bodies.[7] The work of an advisory committee on African education, it outlines the relationship between the needs of the colonizer and educational policy in all the British "colonies, protectorates and mandated territories in East and West Africa, particularly the Gold Coast, Southern Nigeria and Uganda." Members of the advisory committee visited Africa in the process of developing education policy; there were, of course, no women on the committee. A cursory reading of the document leaves one unsure as to whether it is meant to apply equally to the education of females and males.

Two concerns motivate the document: the economic development of the British African Dependencies and "the fuller recognition of the principle that the Controlling Power is responsible for the moral development of the native population." The advisory committee, concerned that there be educated men to meet its purposes, recognize that "clever boys, for whom higher education is expedient, must be able to look forward to educated mates." Women's education is for the sake of the men who will be educated for the purposes of the Controlling Power.

Cornelia's spirit had found its way to Africa

A section on the "Education of Girls and Women" betrays the perplexity of the advisory committee. They write:

> It is obvious that better education of native girls and women in Tropical Africa is urgently needed, but it is almost impossible to overstate the delicacy and difficulties of the problem. Much has already been done, some of it wise, some of it — as we now see — unwise. More should be done at once . . . but only those who are intimately acquainted with the needs . . . , while experienced in using the power of education, can judge what it is wise to attempt . . . [8]

The primary reason for education was to train African men for participation in the colonial economy and administration. This provided a means for men to gain stature and power in the new colonial society. Rural life was undermined with absentee husbands; in the larger administrative and trading centres women were relegated to menial tasks in the labor force. No provision was made for traditional family life or the role of African women as leaders in their society and culture.

South-Eastern Nigerian Women and the Great Depression

The years leading up to the Great Depression were felt by the British colonies and protectorates. In April 1925 the Ibibio and Efik women joined in protest of market tolls implemented by the colonizing government.

They refused to pay, drove off the laborers building a fence around the Marina market, disrupted the activities of the Bush Market (Urua Watt), closed all European factories on the river front and assaulted Europeans and police.[9]

As the economic depression grew, so did the effect upon the people. In 1929 a protest started at Oloko village, Owerri province, when "a woman clashed with a mission teacher conducting tax assessment." The women banded together and demanded the trial of the local warrant chief forcing the district officer to sentence him to prison.

The women were organized: folded palm leaves were sent to neighboring villages as a signal and women all over southeastern Nigeria started spontaneous demonstrations against the colonial political and economic rule and attacked establishments symbolizing the British presence — warrant chiefs, native courts and trading factories.[10]

The most dramatic events took place in Calabar Province. Government troops were called in to quell the riots. Eighteen women were killed and nineteen wounded at Utu Etim Ekpo on December 14th and thirty-two killed and thirty-one wounded at Opobo.

The "Women's War," begun as a protest against taxation, developed into a rejection of the entire colonial structure with the demand that "all white men should return to their own country, so that the land in any area may remain as it was many years ago, before the advent of the white man."[11]

On the insistence of African members of the legislative council two commissions of inquiry were held:

> As a direct result of the women riots, taxes were reduced and tax collection in some areas cancelled. The warrant chiefs system was discarded and replaced by native authorities, consisting of the village elders, and intensive anthropological research was started to find out the indigenous political government.[12]

European interpretations of these events vary. Some accounts blame the riots on fear by the women that they would be taxed when the poll tax was meant to apply only to adult males. "[P]rices for palm oil were low, and in any case for a people with very small cash income [it] presented considerable hardship."[13] Other authorities indicate that Indirect Rule was a disaster in southeastern Nigeria because "decisions and judicial processes were traditionally applied by consent among groups of senior men." At the time of the Commission in March 1931 *The Nigerian Daily Times* reported that the colonial government should not have introduced a system of direct taxation "without first completing a survey of [local] social organization." [14]

Southeastern Nigeria was not England with its well-defined separate spheres for male wage-earners and female home-makers. A tax on adult males affected the women directly. They, in turn, brought about significant change in an alien institution that exploited their people.

This was the context which greeted the first Holy Child sisters in South-Eastern Nigeria in September of 1930.

Beginnings of Holy Child Education

Mother Mary Amadeus, as superior general, spent seven months in Nigeria from September 1930 to April 1931 setting up the first Holy Child mission in Africa. She travelled extensively throughout the Ibibio and Efik lands. Her notes contain reference to continuing discontent among the women due to their belief that the colonial government authorities intend to tax them, that they are holding back money from the people and that they no longer wish to engage in trade. Sr Magdalen Walker, at a catechism class of 200-300, where Mother Mary Amadeus was present, explained that the trade depression was general and that they needed to try to make the best of it.[15]

the women's culture of south-eastern Nigeria is so often overlooked

Although the Holy Child were to build on the earlier efforts of Sr Magdalen in the Calabar area Mother Mary Amadeus conceived of a much larger work to meet the educational needs she found in her extended travels. Having travelled through the greater part of Ibibio country, visiting local towns and villages, her notes reveal that she is "convinced that it is better to uplift the masses than

to give higher education to a few." She also indicates that she wants the Society

> to educate on predominately native lines, beginning from the bottom, to teach the people to *live better*, "to improve the life of the town" (Ikot Epenyong), to counteract disintegrating forces, to support authority of chiefs and heads of families.

This is in keeping with recommended British educational policy, but not for the same reasons.[16] Concerned that the "schemes of education and training of teachers give the impression of having been made by those who only know the towns and who are not cognizant of [the] social conditions of the people . . . framed for a particular [? denominational] college or school and . . . outside the life of the rural native . . ." she states:

> We want to train our teachers to go out to the . . . villages and to be "leaven" of their own people. Even during the course of their training, to go out and give practical experience and then to return at intervals to Calabar to gain further knowledge and formation.

Her idea is that the Holy Child schools will be considered as a whole, "that our teachers may be considered as forming one staff which can move about as need requires. In other words, that we may have *one* staff return, one grant and that our schools be considered as branches of *one* work." It is her hope "by this scheme of 'bases' to get into contact with a great number of people, chiefly women and children, and to help them spiritually and materially. Also to help the country politically."

Realizing the novelty of the plan she decides that "the educational authorities should inspect [the plan's] working and watch the results and at the end of the period give their verdict as to its suitability." When one compares this plan with the document covering official educational policy in Africa (to be followed by all mission bodies) one finds a creative adaptation to the spirit and goals of Holy Child education.

Old Girls & HOPSANS[17]

Dating to these early beginnings there are numerous alumnae of the Holy Child in both Nigeria and Ghana. Opportunity to attend the 1994 zonal conference of Holy Child Past students in Calabar provided me with a glimpse of Cornelia's educational heritage in Nigeria.

Some 75-100 women came together for the weekend to reflect on their shared history, the Holy Child philosophy of education and the

contribution of Holy Child women to the nation. I learned of the esteem and love with which the "Reverend Mothers" of earlier days are held. But oral tradition is also original. As we met on October 15th I also heard that although "the first batch of Holy Child sisters had arrived [in] England earlier, from the United States, it was on the feast day of St Teresa of Avila that the first Mass in the first Holy Child convent in Derby, England was celebrated."[18] The Society's story had become their story!

the Society's story had become their story

For Marcello Azevedo

> Inculturation is the process by which christian faith and life seek to express themselves according to the genius of a culture in its totality, not only in scattered forms. The gospel message becomes an integrative force transmitting the culture from within.

The Holy Child alumnae who met that weekend in Calabar wore "uniform." That is, they wore the special Holy Child cloth they have had designed and printed with the continent of Africa encompassed in the Holy Child emblem. Around the border of the cloth is printed "Actions not words." Anyone who has attended a Holy Child school is considered to be "Holy Child."

These women were grateful for the contribution of the Society of the Holy Child to women's achievements in Nigeria. Mention was made of the early efforts of the Holy Child sisters "in spite of the difficulties in Europe and America in the thirties occasioned by the great depression after the first world war."[19]

The meeting in Calabar also provided opportunity to hear how these Holy Child alumnae see themselves. From the perspective of one Holy Child alumna:

> If I were asked who the Holy Child Woman is, I would very quickly declare what you have already been told by my other sisters. She is that unique personality in many ways who has been carefully and specially groomed and nurtured in those fine feminine qualities by those serene Reverend Mothers in one of those beautiful colleges built upon the foundation of the Lord Jesus Christ himself. I would make haste to add that the Holy Child woman is

trained to imbibe in her personality the requirements of leadership such as careful judgment, sensitivity to the feelings and reactions of others, skill in communication, unfailing sense of humor, loyalty, dedication and zeal for service.

A typical Holy Child woman therefore is a good citizen, a loving christian mother, a dedicated wife, a resourceful teacher, a counsellor, a zealous worker whose very presence is oil to the machinery. She is a model of modesty in dress and fashion so that her total deportment is as fresh as the gentle breeze in a mild harmattan evening. She is a woman of immense skills, capabilities and integrity. Once I met a lady for the very first time, I will not mention names. Something in her comportment and expression gave me the feeling that she was brought up by the Holy Child Mothers. I was to discover in due course that I was dead right. [20]

Sr Amarachi assisted me in setting up the interviews so that the different Holy Child schools would be represented. Even as each of the conference delegates wore the Holy Child cloth designed and fashioned for her personally I found in my interviews another commonality. In the course of my conversation I would ask if there was one value or word or characteristic they would describe as being Holy Child. Without much hesitation the alumna would answer "Yes" and then in one word describe herself unconsciously with a response such as "modesty," "joy," or "strength," and "Of course, we have our motto, Actions not Words." The responses of some of the younger women expressed a sense of community. The common lens that was repeated was Cornelia's admonition "Be yourself but make that self what God wants you to be."

One of the things that I learned on my visit to the Old Calabar Museum is that the women of this region have come together in public protest of perceived injustice on several occasions since at least the late nineteenth century. Margaret Mary Essien drew attention to the fact that "many of the women in [Nigeria] who have broken and are still breaking the political barriers raised against them in the past are Holy Child products." An interesting photograph in the museum of the "Elected Representatives of Calabar Province in the Eastern House of Assembly" [1957] depicts twelve women and three men. It would be interesting to know whom among these women is Holy Child. And, is such high female representation usual?

In my travels to other parts of Nigeria and Ghana I met more strong women leaders among the Holy Child alumnae. [21] In Ghana I was present for the Launching of the Endowment Fund for the Holy Child School at Cape Coast and College at Takoradi in preparation for the jubilee celebration in 1996. These women spoke of "privileged husbands" who had been able to marry Holy Child past students.

The Ghanaian alumnae have their own Holy Child cloth. And when I asked them my question about a Holy Child characteristic, their inevitable answer was "service." In Accra the HOPSANS have, for example, adopted an acute psychiatric ward for women. The motto *"Facta non Verba,"* fuelled by a quality of love, was much in evidence in their lives and professional vocations.

These are at best preliminary reflections arising from my brief sojourn in Nigeria and Ghana. What is evident is the fact that the spirit of Cornelia's educational legacy is being expressed from within the respective cultural matrices of women of Nigeria and Ghana. In the words of one Holy Child alumna:

> It is the special love of God which Mother Connelly and her sisters allowed to work through them that has made us become what we are today. Let us, in turn, make our little sacrifice(s) to help others to become. [22]

Notes

1. Reproduced in *The story of Old Calabar: A Guide to the National Museum at the Old Residency, Old Calabar* (Lagos: The National Commission for Museum and Monuments, 1986) p 188.
2. The first Holy Child sisters to go to West Africa were Reverend Mother General Mary Amadeus and Reverend Mother M Genevieve who arrived in Calabar 20 Sept 1930 followed by M M Edith and M M Joachim from the English province and M M Laurentia from the United States on Oct 18th.

3. *Old Calabar* pp 178-181.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid. p 159.
6. The National Museum provides an inclusive approach to the contribution of women to the region's history. In other sources used for this paper the perspective of women is sorely lacking. Michael Crowder, author of *West Africa Under Colonial Rule* (London: Hutchinson & Co Ltd, 1986) thanks only male scholars for reading his work in preparation for publication although his book is considered an authoritative accounting to contemporary historians.
7. *Education Policy in British Tropical Africa* (London: HMSO 1925)
8. Ibid. p 4
9. *Old Calabar* p 161.
10. Ibid. p 162.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. See Crowder, p 228.
14. Jim Hudgens and Richard Trillo, *West Africa* (London: Harrap Columbus, 1990) p 998, and 'Disturbances in the Eastern Provinces,' *Nigerian Daily Times*, 10 March 1931.
15. [Mother Mary Amadeus] "Points Concerning the Education of the African" [1930 or 1931].
16. See "Educational Policy," section titled "Adaptation to Native Life." Here the purposes of education have much to do with the purposes of indirect rule.
17. Women who belong to the Holy Child Past Students Association (HOPSA) refer to themselves as HOPSANS. Since the Federated Holy Child Old Girls' Association meeting in Ibadan in 1993 the HOPSA terminology introduced by Ghana because it is more welcoming to young women is being used in Nigeria.
18. Mrs Patricia Edet Nyambi, "Welcome Address by the President, Holy Child Past Students Association Calabar Zone," Marian Hill Secondary School, 15 October 1994.
19. Ms Margaret Mary Essien, "The Society of the Holy Child Jesus and Women's Education in Nigeria: An Appraisal," Marian Hill, Calabar, 15 October 1994.
20. Mrs Josephine K Ukah, "Holy Child Women in Nation Building in Nigeria," 1994 Zonal Meeting of Holy Child Past Students Association, Marian Hill, Calabar, 15 October 1994. The last point about being able "to recognize" another Holy Child alumna was repeated many times during my travels.
21. These interviews are presently being transcribed in preparation for analysis and publication.
22. M M Essien.

To Achieve is to Dream & to Act

Cecilia Nya SHCJ

SOME OF the Holy Child sisters in Nigeria and Ghana who are involved in school apostolate are now dotted here and there in institutions which were either one-time a Holy Child school but are now directly under the government (or the bishop), or which are straightforwardly government schools with goals and philosophy which nobody would ever take time to acquaint you with. We go into these schools to teach in the spirit of the Holy Child and according to the Society's educational philosophy: the development of the whole person in a journey of discovery involving spiritual, moral, and psychological development as well as intellectual, aesthetic and physical growth.

The formal educational system to which we belong and in which we work has continued to be subject-centred and directed to specified examinations organised by external examination bodies. For instance, the subjects taught in our secondary schools here lead to the examinations conducted by the West African Examinations Council. It is the common experience of parents that the last two years of the primary school are devoted almost exclusively to preparation for the common entrance examination and a host of entrance examinations into secondary schools. Here, great emphasis is placed on success in written examination and on paper qualification.

To many of our children school has ceased to be a pleasure; it is a painful grind. The problems that plague our schools, particularly secondary schools, seem to be clear to virtually everyone. In the Nigerian context:

a the government shows little or no regard for teachers as such; many run away from the teaching profession.

b the attitude of teachers to teaching is nonchalant.

c the syllabus is not workable as the materials needed are just not there.

d some come into teaching because of the lack of any alternative.

e students are determined to succeed in their exams by hook or by crook!

f overpopulated class enrolment leads to children being given "mass communication" type of education.

Finally, in our schools I see largely teacher-dominated classrooms with mostly passive students. This passivity — what Paolo Freire describes as a "banking model of schooling" wherein the teacher makes a deposit and then collects the deposit at the end of the term — does not augur well for developing the kinds of skills that most children today need during the course of their lives.

Now, one may ask the question: what does education mean? To educate comes from the Latin *"educare"* to draw forth. As educators, we are charged by God with bringing out what the child has received in terms of talents, abilities and gifts. We are to help children develop to their fullest potential spiritually, academically, physically, morally and socially. A good question to ask in trying to carry out this awe-inspiring task is: what is in the best interest of the child? Not what is easiest or most expedient but what is best.

What is in the best interest of the child?

As educators, we are dealing with human beings who are unique and gifted differently, who go through different stages of development, capable of learning certain things at certain stages in their lives. And if education is concerned with individual development, then we are called to move away from "mass communication" type education and adopt a personalised approach. And what does this mean to us, in the system under which we are operating?

I feel it is being aware of individual needs and trying in diverse ways to meet those needs, such as giving each child some sense that a lesson is important to them personally, using manipulative materials, or in some cases having a choice-centred programme. We need to be strongly aware of the fact that each human being has an innate

capacity to learn and to become. This awareness brings us then to see as an important part of our job building up our students' ego, and helping them achieve success and develop the feeling in themselves that they can succeed.

In both our curricular and extra-curricular activities, we make use of a variety of modes of self-expression to help develop the whole personality of a child and to develop their self esteem and personal adequacy. In our teaching we try to develop expressive activities designed to show the student that their own expression is valuable (these include arts and crafts activities, oral speaking, writing, reading and other language art experiences).

an innate capacity to learn and to become

Control, not learning, appears to have had a high priority in the traditional teaching model. I would like to call on all Holy Child teachers to stress rather classroom structures and practices that will gradually lead students to take greater responsibility for their own learning, live comfortably with one another and develop a sense of group responsibility. Piaget (1974) agreed that "for a child to understand something, she must re-invent it." Re-invention means that through active and reflective doing the child is helped to develop her own powers of thought. Since we are gifted differently, children need to be educated to see that what is lacking in one person is complemented by the other and so learn to live in collaboration, and not in unhealthy competition, with one another.

Taking into consideration individuals' IQs, various stages of development, intelligence, social background, interests and preferences, we need to organise complex and varied classrooms related to our goals, students and teaching styles. For example, bearing in mind that the beginning of a year is used to diagnose ability levels, problems, interests, and behaviour, to clarify rules, develop routines, and practise types of tasks, one could begin a year with large group activities.

Creating a conducive atmosphere for learning to take place is very important. Children need to feel comfortable in the classroom and find things to do on their own or with the help of the teacher. It is at this time

that the teacher can get to learn more about the children through informal conversation and observations. Could we not even dream of having choice time for the students which might includes a diverse set of learning centred activities in different subject areas such as science and social studies? These choice time activities often complement skills work, providing reinforcing activities for work done at other times.

As educators, it is important for us to realize that the psychological analyses of children are intimately intertwined with their cognitive analyses. So, instead of blaming the children or their homes for what happens in classrooms, we need to experiment continuously with different ways to motivate children and solve classroom problems, constantly figuring out ways to meet individual children's needs, and observing and analyzing clinically what we see. Every effort must therefore be made to understand the students, to motivate them and to help them express themselves.

As Holy Child sisters whose primary goal is to help each individual develop to his/her fullest potential, we must continue to dream as well as act to achieve our goals, no matter the situation in which we may be working. We need to communicate through our actions that Christ does really make a difference. We need to sell Christ who loves and treats each one as a unique individual, shows great respect for the worth and dignity of each one, and nourishes us all with a feeling of our own self-worth. We need to find ways to communicate through our classrooms that everyone is important and has something to contribute for the success of the whole enterprise.

To help develop the total child is a must for us. If we try, we can help God fashion a soul and a spirit worthy of himself, capable of living happily and successfully in this life, loving and serving those she meets.

Mayfield I: School During World War II

Jane Davies SHCJ

MY SCHOOL days at Mayfield coincided with the war, except that I arrived there on 1st May 1939, so I experienced one peace time term. I had come from a small day school and here I was in this, it seemed to me at the time, large school of 120 girls. When we returned in September some girls had already been evacuated to far parts of the world, never to return, and before long the number in the school had dwindled to 60.

By the following year France had fallen, and even after the Battle of Britain there was a real threat of invasion, so Mayfield was not the safest corner of England. There had been the morning in May when we came down to chapel and the novices, in their white veils, were not there. They were always there, and for them not to be there . . . ?

A school of 60 pupils aged 5-18 meant that some classes were very small: one year the whole Lower IV consisted of five girls. I think the largest class during the war years was 12, and most sixth form lessons were taught to only two or three pupils, so we received a great deal of individual attention.

It is difficult, after fifty years, to have an objective view of the education I received. I realise now that it must have been a very worrying time for those in charge: providing for our safety and ensuring we had enough to eat and, with such a small school, financially. In retrospect the rounded education we were offered, in spite of the circumstances, seems very impressive.

The church's year continued to be celebrated in style: carols and nativity plays, candlemas and lent, processions in honour of Our Lady and the Blessed Sacrament. Music was important and, amazingly, concerts were given each year, sometimes twice. The tradition of drama was maintained with class plays, school productions and an annual Caedmon Society play.

So what difference did the war make? First there was the question of blackout: either curtains or blinds had to be pulled each evening when it got dark, and very often there was paper stuck to the window where the

curtains met to ensure that no light escaped; the windows on some passages were painted dark blue or black; the electric light bulbs in many places were of the lowest wattage obtainable, though not where we studied. Then there was a fuel shortage, so periodically there were power cuts, and between 1st April and 1st November there was a ban on central heating.

shrapnel rained down on the roof of the concert hall

We often felt cold during the winter; we sat on the radiators, or on the floor with our backs to the radiator. My great aunt, Mother Mary Francis Tolhurst, found me in this position on several occasions and told me in no uncertain terms that I would melt the marrow in my back; I was willing to risk this to get a little warmer, for I suffered every winter with chilblains on my fingers and toes. Each morning before school we had to run round the school and we were encouraged to do so at break time too.

As soon as we returned in September 1939 we had air raid practices. I remember little about the daytime ones, but at night we had to go under the concert hall where mattresses had been laid out on each side of the passage; it was two to a mattress. When we returned in October 1940 (no school in September for the Battle of Britain was still being fought overhead) three rows of beds had been put in the gym for the seniors and the juniors slept in two rooms close by; Mother M Frideswide, the prefect, slept in the bootroom. There were no washing facilities so we prepared for bed in one of the dormitories, or even in the top private rooms — a terrible trek in the morning!

The school suffered remarkably little damage, but one morning a group woke to find the ceiling down on top of them and windows blown in: there had been a large bomb on the farm at the top of Rotherfield Lane. The V1s — doodlebugs — frequently passed overhead and shrapnel rained down on the roof of the concert hall from the guns of the planes. Once when we were out for a walk a doodlebug came over pursued by one of our fighter planes which was trying to shoot it down — so flat in the field we went.

There was a shortage of food as well as of fuel. We were certainly not starving, but I did not always find such dishes as watery soup very appetizing, and there was nothing we could buy or obtain if we were feeling a little peckish. We did bring a few extras from home; and one

thing that was not rationed was Marmite, when it could be obtained, so I often had a jar in my desk and would find means of treating myself to a taste now and again.

Sometimes our games periods were spent helping on the farm, picking potatoes (back breaking work), currants and other soft fruits; in the autumn we picked hips from the hedgerows to be processed into rose hip syrup.

Sometimes the father, brother or other relative of someone in school was killed and many of us had relatives in the armed forces or lived in towns that were being bombed. In spite of the anxiety and the heartache Mayfield was a happy school; the nuns communicated to us that life was to be enjoyed, as well as taken seriously. They joined in the fun we had and were interested in all we did. I can only be grateful for the good all-round education I received.

a shortage of food and fuel