

with a view to bringing the criminal to justice. A number of youthful District Inspectors and Cadets had been summoned to the Castle and with whatever reluctance made any further doubt impossible by their revelations; matters were in this posture when the solitary compromising sentence in *United Ireland* changed the half-convicted criminal into the protagonist of Dublin Castle against a hated foe. French was informed that he would be summarily dismissed unless he brought an action for libel against *United Ireland*, and to make the threat the more effective he was suspended from duty until he had successfully prosecuted his suit. In the meantime the official investigation was dropped by those who alone could have induced the witnesses of his guilt to break silence, and the burden was thrown upon those who (it was calculated) must absolutely fail to do so. In any event, whether Cassio killed Roderigo, or Roderigo killed Cassio, or each did kill the other, the Dublin Castle lags would have their consolations.

(To be continued.)

## The Madhouse and the Nursery

(By G. K. CHESTEREON, in the *New Witness*.)

The much criticised criticism of nursery rhymes, which was recently uttered by Mrs. Barnett, was but part of a current cant generally uttered less courageously. Mrs. Barnett's surprise on discovering that a nonsense rhyme was nonsensical is only the logical application of a criticism now turned against all natural things, and therefore especially against all childish things. Our grandfathers made a child dress like a grown-up person; but they allowed him to think as a child and feel as a child, and did not prematurely or impatiently require him to put away childish things. It is true that St. Paul says that when he became a man he put away childish things; and, with all reverence, I think it is perhaps one reason why popular Christian tradition has preferred St. Peter. But we do not wait until little Paul has become a man. People a hundred years ago dressed him like a mute at a funeral; but they allowed him to go on bowling a hoop to the verge of manhood. We dress him like a fairy in a pantomime, and then ask his opinion upon Relativity and the League of Nations.

For instance, there are new schools where children are taught to play at being politicians. They are no longer left to play at being pirates; that infinitely more honorable trade. They are assembled in little parliaments to vote on amendments, and move the previous question, and draw the Speaker's attention to the fact that there are not forty members present, or whatever are the terms of the oligarchical tomfoolery which their elders endure. The child also will have nothing to add to what his right honorable friend told the house on April the first, 1901. The infant also will discover that it is not in the public interest to state whether the Germans have landed in Kent. If this were all, indeed, the training of the rising generation in Parliamentary politics would be merely elegant and external. But I presume that they are taught the realities as well as the ritual. A charming comedy is enacted when little Tommy toddles across to little Willy, and offers him a coin or counter representing a financial share, in return for his support for a Government contract. Even more exciting would be the scene in which Polly aged six boldly attempts to blackmail Peter aged seven, and threatens to cover the nursery wall with posters (in colored chalks) revealing his naughtiness, unless he hands over an adequate amount of toffee. Nor must we forget the occasion on which Tommy buys his toy coronet for two thousand acid drops; or the responsibility of the two infants who act as Party Whips, and have to carry all these sweets secretly in their pockets until they have dispensed them in various forms of corruption for the good of the Cause. These are all operations requiring skill and training; and as it is obviously impossible to imagine modern parliamentary politics being conducted without them, it naturally follows that we shall carefully equip our young politicians with them. For the older and more experienced politicians perpetually tell us that the anomalies and abuses we criticise are inevitable and inseparable from all practical politics; as when Mr. Balfour said, of the Marconi case, that poli-

ticians must judge each other differently from the judgment of the cold world without; or Mr. Bonar Law said it would be useless to audit the Party Funds, apparently because politicians are so passionately resolved on secrecy that they would start another secret fund to evade the audit. So that if these things are a part of parliamentary politics, and if those politics are to be taught to the little ones, we must certainly lose no time in teaching them the safest and most delicate methods of concealment and corruption.

The truth is that all our educational experiments are in the wrong direction. They are concerned with turning children, not only into men, but into modern men; whereas modern men need nothing so much as to be made a little more like children. The whole object of real education is a renaissance of wonder, a revival of that receptiveness to which poetry and religion appeal. Instead of turning the nursery or the infant school into an image of the political meeting or the stock exchange, there would be a far better case for turning the senate or the market into an imitation of the nursery. It would do the masters of bureaucracy or big business a great deal of good to be governed as children are governed, and taught to amuse themselves easily as children do. Those aristocrats who suffer the charge of inhumanity, when they hunt the fox, would be wisely limited until they had learned to hunt the slipper. Those financial magnates who are never happy till they have made a corner would have to be content with puss-in-the-corner. Their only ring would be poetically described as a ring of roses; and they would play at honeypots instead of moneypots, as in the ordinary sense of making pots of money. I am not prepared to say how far such a saturnalia of simplicity can be regarded as being within the sphere of practical politics. But I am quite serious when I say that this should be the direction of all education; and that nearly all modern education is a wild waste of money and time, because it is working in the opposite direction. It is trying to sophisticate the people who are simple; or in other words to pervert the only people who are right. When I was in America, for instance, some lunatics were actually trying to teach children to take care of their health. In other words, they were teaching babies to be valetudinarians and hypochondriacs in order that they might be healthy. They were even proud of their half-witted and wicked amusement; and one of them actually boasted that his schoolchildren were "health-mad." That it is not exactly the aim of all mental hygiene to be mad did not occur to him; but surely such teachers have everything to learn, I will not say from healthy children, but from all the naughty children who ever fell into the river, and possibly got drowned, before they could grow up into maniacs.

If anyone thinks this a merely violent form of words, I refer again to the example in which the words themselves were used by the people themselves. In America some educational enthusiasts did really announce with pride that the children in a particular school were "all health-mad." This meant, it really and truly meant, that the infants were in an intense state of vigilance and concentrated excitement on the problem of the preservation of their own bodily health; on how to forsee indigestion or mark the stages of a cold. And the man meant, he really and truly meant, that this was a condition on which they were to be congratulated. So that, instead of toy helmets or toy swords, they would have toy goggles and toy respirators; possibly little toy bottles of disinfectant or even a toy hypodermic syringe. That anybody should be mad on anything is not exactly the goal and ideal of all mental science. That anybody should be mad on health is always of all things the most unhealthy. That children should be mad on health is something so horrible that one would hardly dream of it, outside some such torture-chamber as the tale called "The Turn of the Screw"; where children are possessed of devils. Yet I repeat that I read the boast with my own eyes in an American paper, as a report of the success of a hygienic educational campaign. It was some silly stuff about sending a clown round to give serious advice on hygiene, enlivened with jokes; I bet the jokes were not so amusing as the serious remarks.

I have noted more than once that the modern world is too ridiculous to be ridiculed. If we have grown so ignorant of the very shape and posture of Man that we do