

TO-NIGHT! "MELTON" of THE MOVIES

FRIDAY EVENING, MAY 8th.
WOMEN'S LITERARY CLUB

Birmingham High School Auditorium

The Merrill-Palmer School Is Explained

Dorothy Holt Vary.

The following is a summary of three articles written by Mrs. Holt Vary, of Park street, on the Merrill-Palmer School idea for the pre-school age.

When the late Thomas Witherell, of the late U. S. Senator and later in Spain, died, he left the bulk of his considerable fortune to a young Lizzie Merrill. On the death of Mrs. Palmer it was found that she will, the proceeds of her estate to be used as an endowment fund for the purpose of maintaining and establishing a school, to be known as the "Merrill-Palmer School of Motherhood and Home Making." After the will was probated a committee of the law approved a plan for the foundation of a million dollar fund was set up for this foundation.

The boards of managers were appointed by the court to administer, under the present conditions were in harmony with the idea of

Mrs. Palmer, the largest sum of money ever given in this country for any special educational purpose.

The first president of the Merrill-Palmer School was Mr. Tracy McGregor, the first president of the women's board was Mrs. Homer K. Safford.

For a time nothing that was at all tangible seemed to happen and the untalented public who had all the time wanted to know what in the name of common sense was meant by a "School of Motherhood and Home Making," began to wonder what these people appointed by the court were doing with all that money any way.

Slowly it became apparent that the committee members, realizing the tremendous educational possibilities of the correct administration of such a sum of money, and their responsibility in regard to this, were making haste slowly in order that the completed plan might be as well favored as possible. Members of the women's committee were touring the country looking for the best available directorship material and studying educational experiments bearing any relation to the solution of their problem.

In 1920 Miss Edna White, Professor, Head of Department and State Ohio State University became the Director of the Merrill-Palmer School. Slowly the plan of work became apparent. A School of Motherhood and Homemaking presupposes a deep and intelligent interest in the welfare of little children. After all that is what we mean when we talk in terms of motherhood and homemaking. In order that mothers, potential mothers and teachers might be instructed in terms of the physical and mental health of little children they must know little children, work and play with them and take care of them. The nursery school as conducted by the Merrill-Palmer foundation for children from the ages of two to five provides an almost ideal opportunity for mothers, teachers and young women interested in child care from universities all over the country to study the development of the young child under expert supervision and an almost ideal environment for those small children, pupils Christ, Plato described a community nursery as a proper part of an ideal state. He was not over-dogmatic in the matter for he has Glauco says to

ment, and constructive play. The nursery school is not a new and radical idea and "a social and educational institution which has sprung up in one form or another in England, Italy, France and the United States must have both meaning and importance. It is too early to predict the course of the nursery school movement, but it is not too early to consider its significance."

In England the new nursery school represents more than the vision and enthusiasm of its leaders. It may be regarded as a self-protection, a phase of a public health movement which recognizes the fundamental development of importance of the pre-school period of childhood.

A century ago Robert Owen, business man, visionary and philanthropist in New Harmony, Indiana, made his unforgettable gesture in favor of pre-school education. But the conception of a nursery school was anticipated at a yet earlier date. Four hundred years before Christ, Plato described a community nursery as a proper part of an ideal state. He was not over-dogmatic in the matter for he has Glauco says to

Socrates: "and concerning the nature children are to have while very young, in the periods between their generation and their education, which seems to be the most troublesome of all, endeavor then to tell us in what manner it should be done." One might wish that Socrates had been more specific in his conversations on the subject because we need some of his wisdom in considering the deeper issues of the nursery school movement of today.

The mother who thinks she knows all there is to know about her job is probably as poor at it as the business man who is laboring under a similar misapprehension. All truly wise mothers realize daily that there is so much to learn about ways of handling little children and particularly their own little children. In the Merrill-Palmer school we have an outstanding example of a successful attack upon the problem. Realizing your good fortune in having a source of valuable information so near at hand, The Birmingham Branch of the American Association of University Women plans to have an open meeting in Baldwin High School Tuesday evening, May 26th, at which time speakers from the Merrill-Palmer school in Detroit and the Merrill-Palmer unit in Highland Park will be present to tell us of their work and to answer our questions in regard to our own needs.

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