INTRODUCTION

Rationale

The idea behind this thesis stemmed from discussions with the former Principal of the Charlotte Mason College, Dr John Thorley. As a Trustee of the Armitt where Charlotte Mason’s archives are deposited, Dr Thorley was in a position to advise me with regard to previous research into this educationalist as well as indicating that her work still generated a great deal of interest. Moreover, he considered that there were areas which justified further research. After familiarizing myself with the sixty plus boxes relating to Mason’s life and career it became apparent that she had led a most unconventional and remarkable life. The contents of these archives, much of which had originally been carefully preserved in veneration of Mason, reinforced the impression that she had been loved and respected by her associates. Moreover, together with bibliographical accounts which will be addressed later, a number of recurrent themes which warranted further investigation became apparent, including that of her poor health, lack of money, the importance of networking and evidence of growing ambition.
Historiography

Whilst the literature directly relating to Charlotte Mason is somewhat limited, background reading has included engagement with literature relating to the social and economic position of women in middle and late Victorian society, and a consideration of educational provision for middle-class girls together with educational developments, including those relating to teacher training.

‘Thirty years ago the notion that a well-born woman should belong voluntarily to a profession was repugnant to parents and relations. That a woman should teach or be obliged to earn her living meant that she became an object of commiseration to all who knew of her misfortune.’¹ Miss Gadesden, the headmistress of Blackheath High School during a lecture delivered at the Cambridge University Summer Meeting in 1900, expressed this opinion. This assertion illustrates the great changes which had occurred with regard to attracting middle-class girls into teacher training and suggests that late Victorian society had recognized that an increasing number of middle-class girls would be in a position whereby they would need to become financially independent.

Bryant suggests that demographical changes support this, with delayed age of marriage and migration of middle-class males, and a decline in infant mortality rates

in girl babies, leading to a 16.8% increase in single women between 1851 and 1871. Moreover the census of 1901 revealed a surplus of over one million females with ‘the problem’ more acute in urban areas and amongst the middle classes.² Sara Delamont suggests that the change in educational climate emanates from the importance of the British Empire in attracting single men, thus ensuring that one third of British women would fail to secure a husband.³ Existing educational provision for middle-class girls, which was concerned with producing marriageable and accomplished young ladies, ensured that these ladies were totally ill-prepared to undertake any respectable employment, other than that of a governess, a role at which they were frequently inept. Contemporaries appear to have appreciated that educational reform needed to coincide with improvements in teacher training. Moreover early feminists undoubtedly realized that through improving the training and status of teachers and providing a more liberal education, middle-class girls might benefit by removing one of the many obstacles which prevented entry to further education and the male-dominated professions.

In *Women in Teacher Training Colleges*, published in 2001, Elizabeth Edwards addresses the issue of women’s residential teacher training colleges, suggesting that little attention has been given to these institutions which strove to produce a ‘culture of femininity.’⁴ Whilst Edwards focuses on the establishment of Bishop Otter College (1873), where Charlotte Mason taught for four years, Avery Hill (1906) and

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² Bryant, M *The Unexpected Revolution*, University of London Institute, 1979, p.35.
Homerton College (1894), many of the negative perceptions which she highlights, including the isolation of the colleges, the difficulties associated with an overcrowded curriculum and the power of the principal appear to be equally applicable to Charlotte Mason’s House of Education2). Indeed Edwards suggests that incidences of ill-health, which seem to dominate the life of Charlotte Mason, were a common occurrence amongst principals of women’s colleges. This is supported by the fact that of the five women who guided Avery Hill between 1906 and 1908, three resigned through ill-health within the first year. Nevertheless Edwards pays tribute to the residential colleges, suggesting they played an ‘important role in the wider feminist struggle to provide women with an adequate education.’

Indeed it was the inadequate and superficial nature of educational provision for middle-class girls, well-documented and actively debated from the middle of the nineteenth century, which led to the recognition of the need for a more professional approach to education through the establishment of teacher training facilities. In the political climate of laissez-faire and with the reluctance of any government to establish training colleges for fear of displeasing the Anglican Church, Shorney maintains teacher education had been ‘the victim of sectarian controversy.’ It was in fact the rivalry between the Anglican Church and nonconformists that led to the establishment of teacher training colleges following revelations of the plight of the governess in the 1840s. Concern over the low status and frequent destitution of these ‘gentle’ women was raised in contemporary magazines and periodicals including

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5 Ibid. p.171
Punch, together with novels including Charlotte Bronte’s Jane Eyre (1847).

Religious rivalry led to the establishment of both Queen’s (1848) and Bedford College (1849) in London, which provided lectures to fee-paying ladies, and both Frances Mary Buss and Dorothea Beale, the educational pioneers benefited from this facility.7

The interest in educational history combined with the growth in women’s studies during the 1970s encouraged historians to consider the achievements of the female educational pioneers who publicized the uselessness of educational provision both in the ill-equipped and often extremely expensive schools and by ill-educated governesses employed for their accomplishments rather than any intellectual capacity. Bartley suggests that the Victorian ideal of the perfect educated woman was a ‘decorative, poised and empty-headed companion for a future husband.’8

Prominent reformers included the well-connected Josephine Butler, who in an article entitled ‘The Education and Employment of Women’ actively promoted the need for an improvement in women’s education and employment opportunities. Written in 1868 Butler criticized middle-class parents who educated their daughters for the sole intention of obtaining a husband and the defective training they received, stating, ‘These women cannot teach, because they are so ill educated, and again, they are so ill educated that they can do nothing but teach.’9 Other prominent reformers strove

7 Miss Buss & Miss Beale both attended the Anglican Queen’s College.
9 Butler, J ‘The Education and Employment of Women’ (1868) Victorian Women Writers Project, p.10
to obtain a university education for women, with Emily Davis founding Girton College (1869) whilst Anne Clough played a prominent part in the establishment of Newnham College (1871).

However it is possibly the names of Frances Buss, founder of North London Collegiate (1850) and Dorothea Beale, principal of Cheltenham’s Ladies College (1857) and their contribution to the furthering of the education of middle-class girls through their contribution to Parliamentary Commissions and their promotion of a more liberal education, which has received greater emphasis from historians. They pioneered secondary education for middle-class girls, and it has been suggested that many of the subsequent secondary schools were based on Miss Buss’s North London Collegiate. Writing in 1901 one contemporary maintained that the, ‘whole status of girls’ education has been altered,’\textsuperscript{10} and this had been achieved by Miss Buss and the Council of the Girls Public Day School Company. However whilst the Girls Public Day School Company had established 36 high schools by 1891 and 86 endowed schools for girls had been founded by 1897, these schools were unevenly distributed\textsuperscript{11} and consequently many middle-class girls continued to receive their education at home, and the need for governesses and lessons by correspondence persisted.

This research will suggest that Mason should be regarded as a visionary since she appears to have recognized the demand for an improvement in home education and responded to this need by providing lessons by correspondence through the Parents’

\textsuperscript{10} Gadesden, 1901, p.93.
\textsuperscript{11} Bryant, 1979, pp.101-102.
Review School (1891) and ultimately by training governesses at the House of Education. Evidence would suggest that despite the improvements in schooling for the most affluent, including St Leonards (1877) Wycombe Abbey (1896) and Roedean (1885), many among the upper and middle classes remained unconvinced as to the desirability of educating their daughters in boarding schools where they might mingle with their social inferiors. Carol Dyhouse claims that it was common for the daughters of the ‘prosperous sections of provincial middle-class society’ to receive a large part of their schooling at home until the first world war and refers to the author Naomi Mitchison’s removal from The Dragon School, Oxford on reaching puberty.  

A number of factors ensured that the popularity of home schooling continued to flourish, including the remoteness of many middle-class dwellings and the failure to establish sufficient acceptable day schools. In addition there was the need for educational provision amongst the children of diplomats throughout the empire along with the importance which the Victorians attached to the ‘home.’ Jeanne Peterson also suggests that the employment of a governess was a status symbol, ‘a testimony to the economic power of the middle-class father’ and ‘an indicator of the extent to which a man’s wife was truly a lady of leisure.’

Moreover, whilst articles have been written with regard to the social position of the governess in the Victorian home, referred to as ‘status incongruence’ by Peterson, little attention has been given to the attempts to improve the training which

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governesses received.\textsuperscript{14} However in *Tyrant or Victim – A History of the British Governess* Alice Renton provides a brief account of Mason’s work in Ambleside recognizing the ‘wide and far more stretching curriculum’ and claiming ‘it is no wonder that, even before the House of Education was properly functioning, there were already applications from parents who wanted to employ these paragons of governesses.’\textsuperscript{15}

It is possibly the relative infrequency of home schooling in Britain today, the disappearance of the governess and the remoteness of the ‘House of Education’ which have discouraged historians from addressing the contribution of Charlotte Mason to education and her attempt to improve the status of governesses by the provision of improved training. Despite the scant attention Charlotte has received by historians, two biographical accounts of her life have been written, the first by a former student and later principal. Published during the 1960s Essex Cholmondeley’s hagiography, entitled *The Life and Story of Charlotte Mason*, conveys the deep affection which Charlotte Mason evidently inspired amongst her students and close female colleagues. Much of the material had been accumulated and indeed some of the writing undertaken by Elsie Kitching, who was Mason’s secretary for many years but died before the biography could be completed. Whilst claiming to incorporate passages written by Mason herself for which inaccurate references are frequently

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid. & Maxse, M ‘On Governesses’ in *National Review*, Vol.37, 1901, pp.397-402.

provided, Cholmondeley provides a general although extremely biased account of Mason’s life and work.\textsuperscript{16}

However, Margaret Coombs’ Aston University M.Phil. entitled ‘Some Obstacles to the establishment of a universal method of education for parenthood by the PNEU’ written in 1984 provides a far more critical analysis. Coombs challenges the limited information concerning Charlotte’s early years by pointing out a discrepancy with regard to Charlotte’s date and place of birth recorded in the 1861 and 1871 Censuses, which Drake, a local historian had noticed. This will be addressed later. In view of the extremely limited information available with regard to Charlotte’s early life, together with the documented archival evidence suggesting that correspondence has been intentionally destroyed, it could be assumed that Charlotte was ashamed of her background. Whereas Cholmondeley maintains that Charlotte was the daughter of a Liverpool merchant who lost his fortune and a frail mother, both dying prematurely and leaving Charlotte an orphan at 16, Coombs indicates that Charlotte may have been illegitimate and of Irish descent, and that either of these factors would have had a detrimental effect on any social aspirations. There appears to be correspondence within the archives supporting an Irish connection, which has been overlooked, and this will also be considered in Chapter 1.

Coombs wrote subsequent articles, which suggest that R F Drake, who penned several articles concerning Mason’s time in Sussex, influenced her.\textsuperscript{17} In these later articles

both Drake and Coombs suggest that Mason had been a pupil teacher and a Queen’s Scholar which contrasts with Cholmondeley’s suggestion that Charlotte had been educated at home. The limitations of these sources rest with the inadequate referencing adopted by both Coombs and Drake which makes it difficult to substantiate their theories.\textsuperscript{18}

Describing the Parents’ Educational Union (PEU), which Mason co-founded in Bradford in 1887, as elitist, Coombs portrays Mason as a determined social climber who abandoned her relatively humble position as an infant school teacher and promoted home education in order to enhance her status. In \textit{The Training of Teachers in England and Wales during the Nineteenth Century}, Rich suggests that there was a great deal of dissatisfaction amongst teachers in view of poor pay and lack of sufficient social status, claiming ‘even the arid education of the training colleges was enough to fill the teachers with a desire for a fuller realization of self, which in a great many cases manifested itself in a somewhat crude longing for superior social amenities than had previously been their lot.’\textsuperscript{19} Consequently if Mason was indeed a social climber, she was not alone.

Moreover, whereas some might suggest that Charlotte succumbed to frequent bouts of illness as a means of confirming her femininity, as all respectable middle-class

\textsuperscript{18} Attempts to clarify the situation had not been successful. Unfortunately Drake has died and his notes are not accessible.
Victorian ladies were expected to do, and a practice frequently adopted by Florence Nightingale,\textsuperscript{20} Coombs suggests that as an aspiring young teacher Mason used this to excuse herself from examinations and to hide her shortcomings, thereby detracting from Essex Cholmondeley’s vision of Charlotte as an inspirational teacher plagued by ill-health. Archival evidence, including letters, records of mineral baths, heartbeats and the image of a sofa-ridden Charlotte, suggest she was obsessed with her health. However, as Joan Burstyn suggests there was much support for the idea of the ‘physical delicacy of the human female’ at this time.\textsuperscript{21} Interestingly Dyhouse maintains, ‘Sheer hard work, determination and ambitiousness – all the qualities which might be thought necessary to achieve anything of substance, were regarded as wholly unfeminine. Women’s achievements, if they were to be acceptable to the Victorians, had to come about in an unrealistic, passive way.’\textsuperscript{22} Therefore rather than using her poor health to cover her limitations it will become apparent that Mason may have later utilised her illnesses to convey her femininity, middle-class status and camouflage her less feminine characteristics.

Furthermore whilst Cholmondeley implies that Mason received substantial royalties from her earlier works, Coombs provides publisher’s correspondence which appears to challenge this assumption. Indeed questions relating to finance are glossed over by Cholmondeley. This research provides evidence of some of the financial support

\textsuperscript{21} Burstyn, 1980, p.95.  
\textsuperscript{22} Dyhouse, 1981, p.74.
Charlotte received from her friends and associates, although the extent of this assistance cannot be verified due to the lack of surviving records.

Whilst Cholmondeley’s book and Coombs’ thesis provide a much needed insight into this educational pioneer, they both clearly have their limitations. Evidently Cholmondeley’s account of Charlotte’s life is subjective; it is more of a eulogy than a biography. It was written essentially as a tribute to her former Principal. On the other hand Coombs’ thoroughly researched and exceedingly long thesis appears over critical, detracting from Charlotte’s real achievements. It is the intention of this thesis to provide a more objective account of Mason’s life and career.

**Structure**

This thesis adopts a mainly chronological approach, although there is some inevitable chronological overlap in the topics covered. This is the most logical method because it shows how Charlotte’s views were developing. It provides an indication as to what factors may have motivated her at various stages of her life as well as portraying her development from an insecure infant school teacher into a respectable, confident and self-important educational guru firmly ensconced in Scale How.

A number of factors have influenced the structure and content of this thesis. It is not within the scope of this research to consider Charlotte’s educational philosophy or its
present relevance in great detail as this has been adequately covered by a number of educationalists.\textsuperscript{23} Indeed J Carroll Smith’s thesis, which was submitted in April 2000, provides an account of Mason’s educational theories as well as considering their usefulness in American schools in the 21\textsuperscript{st} century.\textsuperscript{24}

Consideration has therefore been given to areas which have received scant consideration in the past or where additional material has been acquired. This is particularly evident with regard to the role of the other educational pioneers. Whilst Cholmondeley says that Mason sought their advice and that Dorothea Beale visited Charlotte at Ambleside, no consideration has previously been given to the correspondence which she engaged in with either Dorothea Beale or Anne Clough. It will become apparent that the role of the female educational pioneers in the expansion of the PEU/PNEU was significant and that they provided Charlotte with a sense of aspiration as well as the conviction that ambition, if discreetly applied, was acceptable.

Another area warranting further consideration was the establishment of the Parents’ Review journal in 1890. Executive Minutes revealed the existence of the Parents’ Review Company which had received no mention in Cholmondeley’s biography. However, it will become apparent that Charlotte’s decision to launch this journal


\textsuperscript{24} J Carroll Smith, ‘Charlotte Mason: An introductory analysis of her educational theories and practices.’ Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University University of April 2000, unpublished PhD thesis
provides a great insight into her character as well as evidence of the networking which was so vital to her success. Furthermore it will be shown that disputes over the management and control of this journal were a contributing factor to the PNEU split in 1894. The acquisition of further primary source material has enabled a greater discussion of the PNEU split and its consequences, which was previously skimmed over by Cholmondeley.

This research aims to impart a greater insight into Mason’s character, motivation and provide a better understanding of the nature of her achievement. It intends to modify our understanding of Charlotte through focusing on areas which have received little attention previously, identifying recurrent themes including the significance of networking to Charlotte’s achievements and providing a greater insight into her complex personality.
Acknowledgements

In attempting to establish details concerning Charlotte’s early years a number of individuals and organisations have provided valuable assistance. Lancaster and Morecambe Church of Latter Day Saints obtained various microfiches and films enabling searches of parish records and censuses. The Reverend David Slater of Kilrea Parish Church was most helpful in providing copies of parish registers as well as confirmation records. The General Record Office in Southport, the General Registry in Douglas, Isle of Man, the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI), the National Archives in Dublin and Liverpool Record Office all responded to my enquiries.

Melissa Lane at the British & Foreign School Society Archive Centre (BFSS) was most helpful in answering questions and copying material including a number of the Educational Papers published by the Home and Colonial which confirm Charlotte’s attendance at the college as well as providing a valuable insight into the ethos of the institution.

Richard Childs, the County Archivist at West Sussex Record Office, dealt efficiently with my numerous enquiries, providing scanned images of the Bishop Otter Practising School log-book, searching catalogues and indexes and recommending further contacts including Martin Hayes, the Principal Librarian at Worthing Library.
Mr Hayes provided printouts of the 1861 and 1871 Census Returns for Worthing relating to Charlotte and her associates as well as copies of the Broadwater & Worthing Missionary Association Reports, which provide an insight into the Davison Infant School. Enquiries with Della West, the headmistress of the Davison School, confirmed that Mason’s log book was still held by the school and she kindly agreed to Dr Thorley copying this with a digital camera, thereby ensuring that the Armitt now holds further material relating to Charlotte’s position as an infant school teacher.

With regard to Charlotte’s relationship with the educational pioneers, the following personnel have been most helpful: Jane Claydon from St Leonards School, Anne Thomson and Dr Gill Sutherland at Newnham College. Maxine Willett at the Women’s Library; Mrs J Murray at North London Collegiate School; and Janet Johnstone at Chelthenham Ladies College kindly sent copies of relevant material.

Carol Greenwood at Bradford Central library responded to my queries and kindly provided information relating to Emmeline Steinthal. The Public Record Office (PRO) provided copies of documents relating to the Parents’ Review Company. LSE Archivists kindly photocopied material relating to Sesame House. Probate Registry responded efficiently to my requests providing copies of various wills. Mark Bateson at Canterbury Cathedral responded helpfully to my enquiries and provided me with a number of contacts with regard to the involvement of the church hierarchy. Hampshire Record Office provided an incomplete copy of Lady Margesson’s 1894 Pamphlet; the British Library provided the remaining pages together with additional
contemporary articles. Locating this additional material has been facilitated by internet search engines including Access to Archives (A2A) and the Historical Manuscripts Commission.

I would like to express my appreciation of Dr John Thorley who agreed to become one of my supervisors and I am indebted to him for his continual encouragement, enthusiasm, advice and support. I am grateful for all the support that I have received from the History Department at St Martins, particularly my other supervisor, Dr Bob Pearce for his constructive advice, guidance and encouragement. I am also grateful to the staff and volunteers at the Armitt in Ambleside who have been most accommodating during my weekly visits. Finally I would like to extend my appreciation to my supportive family, particularly my parents who visited Northern Ireland in an attempt to solve the enigma of Charlotte’s parentage.
CHAPTER 1

EARLY YEARS

This chapter focuses on the available evidence surrounding Charlotte’s birth and family, highlighting the lack of reliable information, suggesting that Cholmondeley’s account has been at least partly fabricated, and providing reasons why this unconventional aspect of her background warrants consideration. Utilizing the only letter within the archives relating to Charlotte’s year at the Home and Colonial Teacher Training College in London, together with additional primary source material relating to this institute, consideration will also be given to this brief period in an attempt to discover how it may have impacted on the development of her educational philosophy.

Charlotte’s Parents

Extracts from In Memoriam, an anthology of tributes written about Charlotte following her death in 1923, suggest that she was indeed reluctant to disclose details concerning her early life and this leads to a degree of speculation. Allegedly she immodestly advised her secretary of thirty years, Elsie Kitching:

My dear, my life does not matter. I have no desire that it should ever be written. It is the work that matters and, I say it with all reverence, it
will someday (not in my lifetime) be seen to be one of the greatest things that has happened in the world.\textsuperscript{25}

In ‘Some Reminiscences’ 73 year old Fanny Williams, who had known Charlotte since her student days at Bishop Otter College in 1876, and became Vice-Principal at the House of Education in 1898, recollected how efforts were made by Charlotte’s close associates to provide for her comfort by avoiding unnecessary conversation. ‘Miss Mason was so absorbed in her work that she spoke but little of her own life. For many years those that lived with her tried to save her as much as possible from the fatigue of conversation; we always read to her in her few leisure hours.’\textsuperscript{26}

Nevertheless, correspondence between a college friend Elizabeth (Lizzie) Groveham and Elsie Kitching, her secretary and initial biographer reveal that attempts to delve into Mason’s early life were originally made by the latter in the years following her death. These letters reveal an attempt to discover information relating to the marriage of her parents and an indication that this may have taken place in Dublin, Bangor or Liverpool, with a preference for the first.\textsuperscript{27}

It is unclear what information Elsie Kitching was able to glean from the many personal letters, which Lizzie Groveham sent to her, because of the stipulation that they should be destroyed and were not suitable for publication.\textsuperscript{28} However, the

\textsuperscript{25} *In Memoriam*, PNEU 1923, p.118.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid. p.56.
\textsuperscript{27} Postcard written by Lizzie Groveham (hereinafter Lizzie) to Elsie Kitching, PNEU Box 2
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid. Letter dated 14.06.1923. It is not clear how many letters were sent to Elsie but it is likely that there were more than are now contained in the archives.
destruction of these letters encourages speculation. There is the possibility that Miss Kitching believed the information she acquired, if publicized, might appear detrimental to the memory of her good friend and consequently decided not to reveal any details relating to her early life. However, it could also be feasible that even Lizzie was unaware as to certain details surrounding Mason’s early years.

Cholmondeley’s biography claims that Charlotte was born in Bangor, Caernarvon although there is no evidence to support this despite the introduction of compulsory civil registration of births, marriages and deaths in 1839. Moreover it would appear that Charlotte was not entirely sure of her place or even date of birth. The 1861 Census Return suggests Charlotte was born in the Isle of Man and was aged 20. Ten years later the Census maintains that she was born in Bangor, Caernarvon and was only 29.

Additionally Charlotte allegedly claimed that she was orphaned at the age of 16, her father dying shortly after her mother. In view of the anonymity of her mother burial searches are not feasible. The information relating to her father is also limited. Cholmondeley maintains that Mason’s father was J H Mason, a Liverpool merchant. A search of death indexes between 1857 and 1860 failed to locate the death of a J H Mason in Liverpool. Moreover, although during her research Coombs located a

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29 Cholmondeley, 1960, p.1. GRO confirmed (22.05.2002) that Mason’s birth was not recorded in Bangor or Liverpool between 1840 & 1843.
30 General Registry, Isle of Man confirmed (08.01.2002) they have no records of her birth. Worthing Census Returns 1861 & 1871, West Sussex Record Office.
31 Cholmondeley, 1960, p.1. Gore’s Liverpool Directory of 1835 does not contain any reference to a J Mason either under the addresses or under the list of dry-salters.
‘Joshua Mason’ in Birkenhead, no ‘Joshua’ appeared on the death indexes relating to the above-mentioned years.\textsuperscript{32} A number of genealogical searches have been undertaken utilizing the varied and vast resources of the Church of Latter Day Saints, Birth Marriages and Deaths sites together with census abstracts. However, searching for Mason’s parentage has been hindered for a number of reasons including the popularity of the name ‘Mason,’ uncertainties with regard to forenames and the incompleteness of the records. The inability to locate a record of Charlotte’s birth in England or Wales supports the supposition that she may have been born in Ireland.

In Cholmondeley’s biography it is suggested that both of Mason’s parents were without siblings. Lizzie attempts to support this in a letter by maintaining that throughout Charlotte’s time at the Home and Colonial Institute her holidays were spent in college.\textsuperscript{33} However, documentary evidence suggests that Mason may have deceived her friend. An oral interview with the 81-year old Lizzie in 1923 refers to a Mr Huston to whom Mason was ‘very much attached’ and with whom she ‘kept up her acquaintance.’\textsuperscript{34}

Within the archives three letters from a William Huston suggest a more familial relationship; the first two letters in 1865 and 1866 address the recipient as ‘Dear Niece’ and are signed ‘Your affectionate uncle’ whereas the final letter of 1876 is


\textsuperscript{33} Cholmondeley, 1960, p.1. Letter from LG to Elsie Kitching, 07.05.1924, PNEU Box 2.

\textsuperscript{34} Notes taken by Elsie Kitching, 1923, Ibid. Corporation of London (11.09.2002) confirmed it is not possible to ascertain when Huston came to England.
more formally addressed to ‘Miss Mason.’ With reference to the health and 
extension of family in Ireland, mutual friends, the delicacy of Miss Mason’s health, 
her employers and friends, there can be little doubt that William Huston is indeed a 
relative; possibly he was the brother of her mother.

Whilst a copy of William Huston’s will failed to name Mason as a recipient it did 
provide the names of two of his sisters, Ann Huston and Elizabeth Hunter, together 
with the name of a parish in Londonderry, Kilrea, where the family resided. It was 
situated on the banks of the River Bann, and the Ordnance survey for the parish of 
Kilrea in 1830 notes that the town contained 134 houses and some 900 inhabitants 
and occupied only four streets. The London-based Mercer’s Company owned much 
of the land and amenities; the townsfolk were predominantly Church of Ireland and 
Presbyterian, reflecting their Scottish and English ancestry. One of Mason’s few 
recollections of her mother was her ability to swim, not particularly common at this 
time but undoubtedly useful if brought up by a large river!

Attempts to verify the connection between Charlotte and Huston have been thwarted 
for various reasons. Enquiries made with the GRO in Ireland reveal the difficulties in 
tracing records prior to 1845 when non-catholic marriages were first recorded by 
government. It was not until 1864 that civil registration was extended to include

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35 Letters from William Huston to Charlotte Mason (hereinafter CM), Ibid. The contents of these will 
be considered in Chapter 2.
36 Copy of William Huston’s will.
37 Ordnance Survey Memoirs of Ireland, Parishes of Co.Londonderry VIII, 1830, 1833-37, 
38 Cholmondeley, 1960, p.4.
births and deaths.\textsuperscript{39} Moreover, surviving Parish records are available for only one third of the parishes and are frequently incomplete.

A search of the 1831 Kilrea census returns together with the Kilrea Parish Records of Baptisms (1829-1861), Marriages (1829-1849) and Deaths (1829-1862), in addition to marriages within the neighbouring parish of Lower Cumber (1806-1845), has returned limited information.\textsuperscript{40} The census of 1831 suggests that the Huston family originally lived in the neighbouring townland of Tamlacht O’Crilly. Enquiries with PRONI and Canon Stewart, who is currently responsible for this parish, indicate that the registers relating to this smaller church have not survived and therefore it is not possible to verify whether Charlotte was born there.\textsuperscript{41} Whilst surviving records indicate that William Huston had a number of siblings the destruction of the 1841 and 1851 Irish Census Returns during the troubles of the early twentieth century make it impossible to investigate this family further.\textsuperscript{42} Whilst it has not been possible to locate a marriage between a Huston and a Mason during this period, records held at Kilrea Parish Church record the confirmation of both a Maria and a Jane Mason in 1849. Whilst Mason was not a popular name in Ireland it was clearly used in this area.\textsuperscript{43}

\textsuperscript{39} Correspondence with G.R.O, Dublin (11.01.02)
\textsuperscript{40} Latter Day Saints (hereinafter LDS) Film nos. 0908817, 0597160 & 883748. Northern Ireland Marriages by Zara Mettam, Film no. 824282.
\textsuperscript{41} Conversation & letter from Canon Stewart (26.03.2004)
\textsuperscript{42} The 1831 census shows one family belonging to the Church of Ireland in Tamlacht O’Crilly named Huston, the head of the household being Francis Huston with three other males and four females noted.
\textsuperscript{43} Confirmation Records dated 26.07.1849, Kilrea Parish Church.
Nevertheless from the evidence reviewed there are reasonable doubts concerning the accuracy of the details which Mason revealed about her early life. Evidence does not appear to support her given birth place in Caernarvon. It is most probable that she was born in Ireland and although William Huston could have been the brother of her mother, he could equally well have been the brother of her father. It seems at least possible that she was illegitimate and that the name ‘Mason’ came from a later stepfather. Charlotte’s failure to reveal the existence of any living relatives could be due to embarrassment over her birth, her possible illegitimacy or her Irish parentage. Indeed Irish migrants were continually ridiculed in the press and journals, especially *Punch*. Furthermore Lizzie Groveham’s suggestion that had Mason had relatives she would have stayed with them during vacations can be challenged. The 1871 census indicates that William Huston was a 60-year old single Scripture Reader lodging in London.\(^{44}\) Whilst it has not been possible to ascertain whether he was living in London whilst Mason was a student at the Home and Colonial, in his circumstances it would not be appropriate for a young lady to spend her vacations with him.

The pitiful information concerning Charlotte’s mother suggests that the ‘recollections’ Charlotte allegedly noted were indeed fabricated to provide a more conventional image. Charlotte allegedly wrote that her mother was ‘delicate and required sea air’ conjuring up the image of the ‘sofa-ridden mother.’\(^{45}\) It should be remembered that Charlotte was growing up when the Victorian ‘Ideal of Womanhood’ was at its peak. Women were expected to act as the weaker sex. The

\(^{44}\) 1871 Census, PRO RG10 237.  
\(^{45}\) Cholmondeley, 1960, p.1.
following contemporary advice, which Mason appears to have adhered to since she lived to the age of 81 or 82, depending on which census is referred to, is illuminating:

Though good health be one of the greatest blessings of life, never make a boast of it, but enjoy it in grateful silence. We so naturally associate the idea of female softness and delicacy with a correspondent delicacy of constitution, that when a woman speaks of her great strength, her extraordinary appetite, her ability to bear excessive fatigue, we recoil at the description in a way she is little aware of.46

In her research into femininity Dyhouse comments, ‘A remarkable proportion of the women who have left us accounts of their upbringing seem to have shared the experience of having sofa-ridden mothers at some stage of their youths, and even if some of these were suffering from maladies imaginaries, their neuroses, as much as the physical symptoms of weakness and ill-health, must have had a marked impression on their children.’47 These women included Anne Clough, Eleanor Sidgwick, née Balfour (the first two principals of Newnham College) and Constance Maynard (Mistress of Westfield College). Indeed the similarities between Anne Clough’s background and Charlotte’s alleged background are quite profound. Interestingly Clough’s father had been a Liverpool merchant who lost his fortune in the 1840s and subsequently died leaving his daughter, through financial insecurity, to enrol at the Home and Colonial College in London. Following her training she opened a school in Ambleside for several years prior to her involvement with Newnham College, Cambridge. Evidently her father’s losses did not hinder her acceptance or progress in Victorian society at a time when a woman’s respectability

46 Burstyn, 1980, p. 74.
was dictated by the status of her father. This raises the question as to whether Charlotte might have been tempted to falsify her own recollections to ensure her own acceptance into society.

**Home and Colonial**

In 1860 Mason secured a place at the Home and Colonial Training Institute in Gray’s Inn Road, London.\(^{48}\) The Chaplain and later Principal of this pioneering women’s teacher training college was the Rev. James Joyce Evans.\(^{49}\) Drake claims that Mason obtained her place by having passed the Queen’s Scholarship Examination following a period as a pupil teacher at Holy Trinity National School, Birkenhead.\(^{50}\) Coombs claims that Charlotte obtained 141\(^{st}\) place in the second-class division.\(^{51}\) Attempts to corroborate this have not been successful.\(^{52}\)

However, the likelihood of Charlotte having been a pupil-teacher is supported by Frances Widdowson’s research into elementary teacher training. Stressing that the training was ‘physically tough and socially degrading’ Widdowson suggests that

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\(^{48}\) It was founded in 1836 by John Reynolds. Influenced by the work of Dr Charles Mayo and his sister in adapting the principles of Pestalozzi for older pupils, Reynolds thought such principles might be applied to infant training.

\(^{49}\) He became College Chaplain in 1848 and Principal in 1874 until his death in 1881.

\(^{50}\) Drake, 1989, p.11. The pupil teacher system was introduced by Kay-Shuttleworth in 1848. At 13, pupils entered a 5-year apprenticeship receiving an initial stipend of £10 which rose by increments to £20. They sat the Queen’s Scholarship examination for admission to a training college.

\(^{51}\) Coombs, 1992, p.11.

\(^{52}\) Cheshire Record Office (01.10.02) confirmed they have no records of this school. Wirral Archives records date from 1863. Liverpool Central Library Record Office confirmed there was another Holy Trinity in Liverpool but records date from 1863. The Church of England Record Centre (04.09.2002) do not have records of Queen’s Scholarships. The Department for Education and Skills (13.09.2002) confirmed they do not have a list of Queen’s scholars. BFSS Archives (23.08.2002) do not have a list of Queen’s scholars c.1859. National Archives (21.01.2004) consider it unlikely that government records would include information on Queen’s scholars.
without some form of formal tuition a middle-class girl was unlikely to pass the Queen’s Scholarship.\textsuperscript{53} Furthermore ‘the image of the elementary teacher in the 1850s is of a bright, but lower-class person, whose intellectual and social pretensions roused middle-class hostility, and who thus could scarcely be regarded as a fit associate for the middle-class.’\textsuperscript{54} Middle-class girls did not become associated with elementary teaching until the 1870s.

It is apparent that Charlotte must have been a competent scholar to secure one of the places at the college since competition was clearly fierce.\textsuperscript{55} The Educational Paper published by the college in 1859 referred to this over-subscription; ‘still we must disappoint many, much to our regret.’\textsuperscript{56} Referring to the ‘failure of a large number of pupil-teachers to obtain Queen’s Scholarships, and consequently admission into training colleges’ the writer lamented ‘It is no exaggeration to say that there will next year be at least three pupil-teachers for every two vacancies in a training institution.’\textsuperscript{57} However, the apparent preference of students to train as teachers of older children was noted at a ‘Teachers’ Meeting’ in August 1858 and this implies that it was indeed less difficult to secure a place as an Infant School Teacher and this could account for Charlotte choosing this easier option.\textsuperscript{58}

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid, p. 17.
\textsuperscript{55} Records indicate that 140 students entered in the ‘Government classes’, the majority being Queen’s Scholars, 15 governesses, 30 pupils below the age of 18, 11 teachers for army schools and 16 teachers for ‘short periods and country schools.’ \textit{The Educational Paper of the Home and Colonial School Society}, (hereinafter Educational Paper) April 1860, p.63.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid, 1859, p.108.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid, p.25.
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid, p.41. The minutes of this Teachers’ Meeting note ‘the number of Infant-school teachers is increasing very slowly as compared with other teachers … for some years to come, therefore, Infant-
The founder of the Home and Colonial, John Reynolds, was a firm advocate of the pupil-teacher system and recognised that teaching was ‘really hard work’ and consequently ‘must be done by those who have served an apprenticeship as pupil-teachers.’ Failure to have served such an ‘apprenticeship’ was, he suggested, ‘the difference between volunteers and the regular army.’

In her research into the establishment of Whitelands College Widdowson argues that although ‘genteel orphans’ were expected to become ‘private governesses’ some did become elementary school teachers, and this she attributes to the absence of a patriarchal figure, which would therefore have liberated the students from some of the restrictions imposed by middle-class conventions. Therefore Charlotte’s failure to complete her course may stem from the fact that she had never been a pupil-teacher, although this seems unlikely. She clearly lacked the means to pay for the training, which was free to Queen’s scholars, and it is probable that she did indeed hold such a scholarship. Moreover, if Charlotte had been a fee-paying student it is far more likely that she would have trained to become a private governess rather than an infant school teacher.

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60 Widdowson, 1980, p.25.
61 Queen’s Scholars received free training for up to 2 years. Self-funding infant school students paid £15 for one year’s training. Those wishing to teach in mixed or older schools paid £20 for one year, governesses or teachers of ‘superior schools’ paid £20 for 6 months. Ibid, January 1859, p. vi.
Arguably Charlotte’s failure to train as a ‘governess’ is indicative that she lacked the gentility and ‘accomplishments’ expected of a governess at that time. An article published in the pioneering feminist *English Woman’s Journal* in 1858 concerning governesses maintained ‘The unmarried female members of the small merchant’s family enter the profession from natural necessity.’ ⁶² This suggests that if Charlotte’s father had been a merchant it would not have prohibited her from becoming a governess in a private family. Moreover, it is evident that although the Home and Colonial considered itself to have ‘a special mission’ to train teachers of ‘schools for the poor,’ it was ‘not unmindful of the wants and claims of the upper classes, and of the importance of training governesses for their daughters and younger sons.’ ⁶³ Records indicate that six students entered private families as governesses in January 1861. ⁶⁴

**The Educational Papers**

Perusal of the *Educational Papers* published by the Home and Colonial School Society is most illuminating. They provide information concerning the success of the students, offering an insight into the ethos of the college and an illustration of contemporary educational concerns, as well as offering some insight into the possible origins of the PEU and *Parents’ Review*. Charlotte’s appointment at the Davison Infant School, Worthing, is recorded along with the success of her contemporaries in

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⁶³ *Educational Paper*, July 1860, p.58. Educational Papers offer an insight into the type of schools where the students end up including Infant schools, Girls’ schools, Mixed, and Private.
their examinations. Elizabeth Pendlebury (later Groveham) is recorded as having obtained a first class in her first year whereas Selina Healey (later Fleming) obtained a first class in her second and final year. \(^{65}\) Clearly Charlotte’s closest college friends heeded the advice of Reynolds, who in 1858 had recommended ‘all teachers who can do so to remain in this institution two years.’ \(^{66}\) The longevity and importance of Charlotte’s friendships with these two ladies is significant. Charlotte would spend holidays with Lizzie in Bradford and with Selina at Ambleside, where the latter secured a position with Anne Clough. Moreover, both would provide temporary accommodation for Charlotte; Charlotte resided ten years with Lizzie before dwelling with Selina prior to establishing the House of Education in Ambleside in January 1892. Cholmondeley also refers to the friendship she formed with Sally, the future wife of John Coleman, a Wolverhampton doctor. Evidently Mason visited Sally and her family on several occasions and consulted her husband with regard to her frail health. \(^{67}\) 

It is possible that the origins of the Parent’s Educational Union (PEU) which Charlotte was instrumental in establishing in Bradford in 1887, and the monthly journal, the *Parents’ Review* founded in 1890, emanated from ideas espoused in *Hints to Parents*, a series of educational tracts published by the Home and Colonial in 1860. The titles of these tracts included ‘Parental Affection’ and ‘Praying Mothers’ and

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\(^{65}\) *Educational Paper*, April 1861, p.iv notes Selina obtained a ‘prize for proficiency in Drawing.’  
\(^{66}\) Ibid, April 1859, p.40.  
\(^{67}\) CM Archives contain a letter from a colleague of Dr Coleman, Dr Foster whom Charlotte consulted in January 1878. PNEU Box 2. No correspondence between CM and Sally Coleman has been located. The 1881 Census records Sally and her husband living in Wolverhampton with their 3 young sons. Sally’s health was more troublesome than Charlotte’s. The 1901 Census lists John Coleman as a 69 year old widower.
were aimed at ‘mothers who are thoughtless or careless, but at the same time intelligent.’ The reviewer of these tracts advised, ‘Whilst we labour to educate the children, we should, at the same time endeavour to get hold of the parents; any success with them makes the work, in relation to their children, much easier, and more rapid.’

Therefore the need for greater parental involvement was clearly recognized by the Home and Colonial although it is not clear how well received or successful these tracts were.

The Influence of Pestalozzi & Froebel

Educational Papers offered guidance to students with regard to planning lessons and their moral duty, reinforcing the religious zeal of the institution. This is illustrated by the following advice offered by Reynolds:

‘Let every infant school teacher remember that she has it in her power thus to gratify and delight the Christian philanthropist, and let her bear in mind the responsibility she incurs to God and man if she gives not her best energies and her warmest affections to this all-important work.’

Moreover, in ‘A letter to Infant School Teachers’ Elizabeth Mayo appears to have summarized contemporary attitudes towards the education of the poor, reinforcing the

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68 The Educational Paper, Jan 1860, p.31.
69 Ibid, April 1859, p.29.
religious nature of education, ‘let your chief endeavour and desire be to win souls for Christ.’

However, the Mayos had been very much influenced by the educational philosophy of the Swiss educator Pestalozzi, who taught between 1798 and 1828, and this was the philosophy espoused by the Home and Colonial. Pestalozzi believed in the training of the child, not merely imparting a collection of facts, and that children should be stimulated with material appropriate to their stage of development. Importantly, in summarizing the significance of Pestalozzi, his biographer, Morf, maintained ‘The exchange between teacher and pupil, and particularly school discipline must be based on love.’

The Mayos contributed regularly to the Educational Papers, illustrated by Elizabeth’s article, ‘The Educational Principles of Pestalozzi’ This stressed the need to develop the physical, intellectual and moral aspects of a person, argued for the principle that children receive as much stimulation as they can digest, and emphasized the need for a mother’s love, insisting that coercion was evil. The Educational Papers refer to an ‘excellent article’ showing ‘thorough knowledge of Pestalozzian principles’ written by the Rev. Charles Mayo, published posthumously, on the teaching of mathematics. It is apparent that the writer expected female teachers to struggle with this subject and

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70 Ibid, April 1861, p.36.
71 Peterson, ADC A Hundred Years of Education, 1952, p. 73.
72 Educational Paper, January 1859, p.7.
this is reflected in the following observation, ‘The subject may not appear very attractive to female teachers.’

Evidently aware of the intended introduction of Robert Lowe’s Revised Code in 1862, the Home and Colonial were quick to denounce this measure and highlight what they perceived to be shortfalls of this legislation.\textsuperscript{74} This is illustrated by Elizabeth Mayo’s article, ‘The Bearing of the New Educational Code on Infant Schools.’\textsuperscript{75} Miss Mayo asserted that ‘The training children generally receive in the homes of the indigent is most wretched. It follows, then, that in the present state of society good Infant-schools are indispensable.’ Stressing Pestalozzi’s concerns that education should concern the hand, head and heart or physical, intellectual and moral,\textsuperscript{76} she considered the Revised Code, which was concerned solely with the 3Rs, was only a ‘small branch of education.’ Clearly in her opinion the legislation eliminated the opportunity of assisting children to develop their faculties and subjected them to undue pressure. Evidently Charlotte shared this opinion.\textsuperscript{77}

Indeed the importance of teachers encouraging their pupils to develop their faculties and think for themselves is repeatedly emphasized in articles of this time:

\textsuperscript{73} Ibid, April 1860, p.41.
\textsuperscript{74} Implications of the Code are mentioned in Chapter 2. It stemmed from the Newcastle Commission into elementary education in 1861. The Code aimed to encourage better attendance and results. Failure to achieve them led to reduced government grants. This led to a concentration on the 3Rs, a narrow curriculum, cramming & pressure. It was not popular.
\textsuperscript{75} \textit{Educational Paper}, October 1861, p.93.
\textsuperscript{76} E.g. hand/physical- exercise important for healthy development; head/intellectual – lessons should be appropriate and command attention; heart/moral – school should have a homely feel with a kind and just teacher.
\textsuperscript{77} Charlotte’s ideas will be discussed in Chapter 3.
If we do not lead you, my friends, to exert your faculties, and to think, our teaching in reality is of very little value; and if you in your schools do not also lead the children to exert their own faculties, and to think, they might almost as well be at home.\textsuperscript{78}

There can be little doubt that Charlotte was deeply affected by the principles of Pestallozi which became so familiar to her during her short course. Moreover, references to the Model Infant School run by the College indicate that the ideas of the German educator and pupil of Pestalozzi, Friedrich Froebel, were gradually seeping into the institution in the form of the ‘occupations’ in the Kindergarten including clay modelling and action songs.\textsuperscript{79} This indicates that it was at the Home and Colonial where Charlotte received an insight into the work of this German educator.\textsuperscript{80} Indeed by 1893 the Home and Colonial Society had become incorporated into the National Froebel Union.\textsuperscript{81} Mason would later incorporate parts of Froebel’s ideas and suggestions including the craft activities but would criticize and reject other ideas. For example Mason disliked the idea of a ‘Kindergarten’ since she considered it hindered the individuality of a child and they were ‘apt to become stereotyped and wooden.’\textsuperscript{82}

\textsuperscript{78} Educational Paper, April 1859, p.50.
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid, January 1859, p.5.
\textsuperscript{80} Froebel worked with Pestalozzi at Yverdun for two years. They both regarded the mother as the most important educator and infancy the most significant period of education. Froebel opened the first Kindergarten in 1837. The first Kindergarten in England was established in 1851. Froebel died in 1852 but the popularity of his ideas spread twenty years later with the establishment of the London Kindergarten Association by the Shirreff sisters and Mary Gurney.
\textsuperscript{81} ‘History of the Froebel Movement in England’ by Woodham-Smith, P in Friedrich Froebel and English Education, ed. Evelyn Lawrence, 1952, p.34.
\textsuperscript{82} Mason, C, Home Education, 1905, p.181.
A Struggling Student

A regular contributor to the Home and Colonial quarterly journal was Robert Dunning. Dunning was the well-respected Master of Method and Lecturer on Education at the Home and Colonial, and it is his letter to Charlotte, undated but clearly written late in 1860, which provides an insight into Charlotte’s inability to complete her course and gain her certificate. Unable to give the required criticism lesson Charlotte did not sit her examinations alongside her contemporaries but was found a position in Worthing. Her failure to complete this task evoked the sympathy of Dunning:

I was very sorry indeed this morning when I found that giving a lesson was too much for you. When I saw you first I was exceedingly pleased thinking you were better & strong & not nervous in giving a criticism. Indeed I felt as if you had lost all fear of me as a critic and regarded me as a friendly genius sitting there to do you a good turn. But oh you naughty girl it was your own spirit & resolution that would not give way even before disease – that would discharge a duty whatever it might cost you. You must not attempt another ... I trust the good Lord will spare your life & permit you to work in his vineyard a while here ... Do you love the saviour dear Miss Mason & if so to behold his face will be glorious.

Clearly Dunning was not optimistic with regard to the likelihood of Charlotte reaching full maturity and this could be the result of the loss of several of his daughters as well as contemporary opinion that a woman’s health was fragile. It would appear that Charlotte suffered from a complete lack of confidence and

83 E.g. October 1859, p.94, April 1860, p.48.
84 Undated letter from Robert Dunning to CM c.1860, PNEU Box 2.
insecurity, and that her health issues were mental rather than physical at this stage. Whilst his words were hardly encouraging they did suggest to Charlotte that others would be sympathetic to her ailments; and this would be another well-documented aspect of her life. Moreover, her future employers do not appear to have been perturbed at the idea of employing an uncertificated teacher. Charlotte would later have another opportunity to achieve the certificate. In the meantime the salary she received reflected her uncertificated status thereby saving the school from excessive fund-raising.\footnote{This is addressed in Chapter 3.}

This chapter has reviewed available evidence concerning Charlotte’s background and early life, providing fresh evidence, which further challenges the account provided by Cholmondeley. Attempts to ignore or falsify details concerning her upbringing are understandable given the contemporary nature of Victorian society, demands for respectability and the danger of being shunned if one failed to conform. An understanding and knowledge of the unconventional aspects of Charlotte’s background makes her achievements more remarkable. Charlotte’s year at the Home and Colonial has also been considered to indicate how it may have helped to develop her own ideas with regard to the teaching of infants and how it enabled her to meet two ladies who provided emotional, physical and probably occasional financial support for a number of years.
CHAPTER 2

THE WORTHING AND CHICHESTER YEARS

This chapter concerns the period of almost twenty years that Charlotte spent in Sussex, (1861-1880), initially as an infant teacher in Worthing, (1861-1873) and later as a Mistress at the newly reopened Bishop Otter teacher training college in Chichester (1874-1878). Utilizing correspondence within the archives together with additional primary and secondary source material this chapter considers Mason’s experiences as a young schoolmistress, her friendship with the affluent Brandreths, and how these, together with the few years she spent in Chichester, may have impacted on her future actions. This chapter will also consider whether the people with whom Mason became associated during this period could have provided the finance necessary to establish the ‘House of Education’ at Ambleside in 1892. Various aspects of Mason’s character will be highlighted including her insecurity, her frail health and her growing social aspirations.

Contrasting Emotions

In 1861 nineteen-year-old Charlotte was found a position at the Davison School in the coastal town of Worthing. Unlike many of the schools at the time, a schoolhouse was not provided and Charlotte was found lodgings with a 70-year-old widow, Mrs

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86 The Davison Infant and Girls’ School opened in 1851 as a tribute to William Davison, Perpetual Curate of the Chapel of Ease.
Redford. The school was managed by Mary Read, the 29-year-old daughter of the Rev. William Read, the Chaplain of the Chapel of Ease, and catered for mixed infants aged between two and four and girls up to the age of seven. In charge of the whole school Mason worked with a mixed class which provided her with a much-needed insight into the characteristics of both young boys and girls.

Initial correspondence with her former college friend Lizzie Groveham (née Pendlebury) highlights her early enthusiasm, excitement and pride in her new position:

Allow me to inform you, my dear E. that I am at present bearing a higher honour than you can ever hope to receive. I am the mistress of the first infant school that was ever established in the British empire. How I wish you could see my children. Some are such sweet cherubs, and some such noble little Washingtons, and some such tiresome little monkeys … I should like to send you one of my children to London in a bandbox. She would be like a week in the country to you all, she would refresh you so much. She gives herself the name of ‘itta Looi’, and is the most lovable little lisper that I think I ever knew.

Another letter offers a brief insight into the dated facilities, her fondness for the children and an indication of how she taught her monitors.

It is extremely interesting to have the different stages of educational progress in the old books and old apparatus. All that Mr Dunning has ever told us about the history of education is exemplified here. I am happy in my work, I have some such interesting children. There is

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87 Worthing Census 1861, West Sussex Record Office.
88 In 1866 there were 161 children on the school register. Hetzel, V ‘A History of the William Davison Church of England High School for Girls, Worthing’ 1975, p.37, Box 47.
89 Letter from CM to LG, March 1861. Lizzie was still at college.
one, a dear little baby, just two years old; then there is my monitors’ class consisting of twelve children whom I teach in the dinner-hour. They are all such nice children; you don’t know how soothing and comforting I find this.  

However, evidence suggests that Mason like many young, inexperienced teachers found it difficult to settle into her new environment, a possibility that the Home and Colonial’s quarterly journal recognized:

> It is a serious thing, at the age of twenty or twenty-one, to be placed in a public position, in a new neighbourhood, at a distance from friends, with no guidance or advice at hand, and be required to organize a new school, or to reconstruct an old one, under circumstances which seem strange and exceptional, and which no previous education seems exactly to have anticipated or provided for.  

Mason was deeply affected by her change in surroundings. Indeed her struggle to overcome her initial loneliness and her insecurities are evident in her correspondence with Lizzie:

> I am all alone here; there is no one with whom I can seek that sympathy which is such a craving of my nature. I live within 5 minutes of the sea, and yet, until this evening I have not even been there. I had no one to go with and could not summon courage to venture alone in a place so strange to me. This evening however, old Mrs R took the matter in hand, and after a great deal of persuasion, succeeded in getting me to try the experiment.

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90 Ibid. quoted in Cholmondeley, 1960, p.7.  
91 *The Educational Paper*, April 1861, p.47.  
92 Letter from CM to LG, undated c.1861 - transcribed by Lizzie. PNEU Box 2. Mrs R is Mrs Redford, Charlotte’s landlady.
A subsequent letter suggests that Mason intended studying for her certificate whilst teaching and thanked her friend for advice ‘respecting my studies. I will try to follow it as closely as possible; though, as you will easily believe, studying for a certificate after a hard day’s teaching is not without its difficulties. With one hour’s intermission, I teach from 9 till 4. But yet, I am happy in my work & should not let its being hard, prove a hindrance to me.’

Moreover, a letter from Dunning suggests that Mason also confided in her former lecturer with regard to the difficulties she was experiencing in her new situation. Dunning clearly sympathized with her, but pessimistically reminded her that she was ‘an orphan, alone & and stranger & a woman too.’ On a more hopeful note he commented, ‘I do hope dear child that your mind is more at ease & comfortable than it was when you wrote in August.’ The letter implies Mason had confided her anxieties with regard to taking the teacher’s certificate and he kindly reassured her, ‘is it not better to work without a certificate than to possess a certificate & be unable for work afterwards.’ This reflects the idea that some contemporaries had little faith in the female constitution and that they believed that over-exertion could lead to irreparable damage. Indeed as late as 1913 Mrs Archibald Colquhoun claimed: ‘It is no exaggeration to say that the path of modern education is strewn with the dead, mutilated or devitalised bodies of women whose physical well-being has been sacrificed before the Moloch of competitive examinations.’

93 Letter from CM to LG, undated c. Spring 1861. Lizzie had obtained a first class in the Christmas examinations in 1860, which Mason was unable to sit. The Educational Paper, April 1861, p. iv.
94 Letter from Robert Dunning to CM, 22.10.1861, PNEU Box 2.
95 Digby, A in Educating the Victorian Middle Class, 1981, p.17.
Interestingly a letter written by Charlotte to Lizzie in December 1861 when she was studying for her examinations advises her friend to ‘trust in the Lord’ and ‘struggle against a weary body & still more weary mind … strong in the strength which God supplies.’\(^{96}\) It is unfortunate that Charlotte’s faith does not appear to have assisted her own studies and this is supported by her failure to sit her college examinations with her contemporaries.

In her decision to share the contents of a number of the letters covering these ‘Worthing years’ Lizzie offered the following caveat to Elsie Kitching: ‘They are of so intimate & personal a character, that much of their contents would hardly be suitable for publication. I mean in this way. As a girl she [Charlotte] was ever spiritually minded, and the letters reveal the earnest striving of the soul, for the light which in after days she found in full measure.’\(^{97}\) Evidently these letters may have provided a greater insight into Charlotte’s vulnerability and lack of confidence at this time, and their absence from the archives could be regarded as evidence of attempts to suppress the likelihood of any disclosures, which might tarnish the image that her associates strove hard to create.\(^{98}\)

\(^{96}\) Letter from CM to LG, 08.12.1861, Ibid.
\(^{97}\) Letter from LG to Elsie Kitching, 31.05.1923, Ibid.
\(^{98}\) A letter from LG, 28.05.1923 informs Elsie she has ‘carefully preserved every letter’. A letter, 10.06.1923 refers to the ‘confused mass of partially faded and undated letters’ Lizzie would send a selection but some ‘must be for your eyes alone’. Ibid.
The Davison School

Whilst surviving letters offer only a limited insight into Charlotte’s time as an infant school teacher, extracts from the log book which Mason was responsible for maintaining provide a greater understanding of the difficulties which she faced in her post, including maintaining order in the large classes, unauthorized absences, as well as an indication of Charlotte’s moral and educational concerns. One of the requirements of the Revised Code introduced in 1862 was the compulsory keeping of a log book; some of the other requirements and how they affected Charlotte are apparent in the entries.

Difficulties in coping with the large classes are illustrated by an entry on 12th June 1863 which states ‘three monitors absent in the afternoon. Children disorderly.’ Ten days later the entry notes ‘pupil teacher absent with leave. Miss her greatly.’ Indeed the shortage of staff provoked Mason to complain on the 8th September: ‘feel more and more, every day, the need for another teacher.’ Moreover, entries record occasional problems in sustaining the interest of teachers when ‘neither children nor teachers show much energy.’

The log book highlights the difficulties in ensuring attendance and punctuality. ‘A regatta held of the beach – found it necessary to give a holiday as scarcely any

99 Extract from Log-book, 28.07.1863. (CM Archives) An entry, 09.08.1863 prior to the holidays, notes ‘teacher and children seem fairly tired out and little disposition for work.’ ‘Teacher’ evidently meaning ‘Monitor.’
children came to school.’ On 19th April 1864 Mason commented: ‘find that the fine weather has tempted one or two little ones to play truant.’ Another entry illustrates why it was financially important to pursue truants, ‘Sent after absentees on Monday – many here today. Some debts paid.’

Moral concerns which would play an important part in Mason’s educational philosophy are also apparent with an entry for 23rd June 1863 complaining about the trouble caused by local boys breaking into the playground to steal apples and how Mason intended to ‘speak to police officer lest the bad example affect the school.’ This reveals that trespassing on school grounds is not a recent phenomenon.

In order to ensure order, entries indicate that Mason resorted to ‘a good deal of marching and drilling.’ Clearly it was difficult to inspire the youngsters and Mason comments about them being ‘listless’, with ‘little disposition for work.’ Evidently she had a low opinion of her pupils’ abilities. An entry dated 21st January 1864 laments: ‘the prospect of success at the coming exam. seems rather a poor one.’ A later entry indicates why, since Mason had been ‘giving considerable attention to Mental Arithmetic in the Girls’ School. They seem powerless to do anything that is not mechanical.’ Another entry reinforces the emphasis placed on needlework at this time, which historians have commented on. ‘The girls have been kept 1¼ hour

100 Ibid. 02.08.1863. Another extract 27.07.1863 states ‘several children absent under the impression that school had broken up. Sent after them.’
101 Payment of school pence was not removed until free elementary education in 1893.
102 Extract from log-book 01.06.1863. An entry, 30.07.1863 notes ‘children very wild. A good deal of drilling, marching, etc.’
103 Ibid. 29.07.1863 & 03.08.1863.
104 Ibid. 24.02.1864
beyond time to practise needlework. This must be continued throughout the summer.' The Revised Code stipulated that 2s.8d. be deducted for failure of the reading, writing or arithmetic examination and that the grant could be withheld if the inspector was not satisfied with the plain needlework which the girls produced, thereby adding to Mason’s anxieties.

Missionary Association records provide an indication of how the Davison Infant School expanded during Mason’s time there and how this expansion may have made Charlotte’s position more stressful. Plans for expansion are evident in the report ending July 1862, which refers to a ‘contemplated addition.’ The report notes ‘It is proposed to add a new classroom, and to convert a portion of the present building into a house for the mistress: this will considerably increase the comfort of the mistress, and will lessen the present annual expense by £10. The sum required for the object is, I believe, about £300.’ The report also refers to a ‘fund for repairing, altering, painting, and furnishing’ the Davison school with £79.4.0 of the estimated cost of £130 having been raised. Whilst the plan to erect a school house was not implemented and Charlotte continued to reside in lodgings, the school does appear to have grown and this is supported by an increase in school pence. Receipts for

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105 Ibid. 04.06.1863. In ‘Women and Education’ McDermid suggests several reasons why an emphasis was placed on needlework in the elementary schools including, to ‘imbue them with middle-class notions of femininity,’ to prepare them for possible domestic service, & ensure they would ‘accept their station in life.’ Women’s History Britain, ed. Purvis, J, UCL, 1995, p. 108.
108 Ibid. p.6.
109 Worthing Census of 1871 reveals Charlotte was lodging with Elizabeth Goble, a widow with three daughters along with Ann Sims, a 60-year-old annuitant.
school pence in 1860/61 were recorded as being £40.9.8 and this had risen to £72.11.0 in 1869.\textsuperscript{110}

However, whilst the number of infants attending the school nearly doubled in less than a decade it would appear that the number of staff did not increase accordingly. The Missionary Reports provide an interesting insight into the staffing and salaries of the staff as well as providing a comparison with other local schools. The report ending 1861 evidently concerns the employment of Mason’s predecessor who received £42.13.0 a year, and 12s travelling expenses, with an Assistant Mistress paid £15.15.0 and Monitors totalling £3.0.8.\textsuperscript{111} The report dealing with the arrival of Mason reveals that in employing a newly trained yet uncertificated teacher the school provided a salary of £35.00 together with an annual lodgings allowance of £10. An Assistant Mistress received £19.10.0 with monitors receiving £3.15.10 and first year pupil teacher £10.\textsuperscript{112} By 1869 the Mistress’s salary had increased to £65 with a lodgings allowance of £20.\textsuperscript{113} However, there is no longer an Assistant Mistress despite the increase in the number of children, with monitors paid a total of £27. This placed Mason under greater pressure since she lost the benefits of having an additional adult teacher and had a greater number of monitors to instruct.

\textsuperscript{110} 8\textsuperscript{th} Annual Report, 1860, p.4 & 16\textsuperscript{th} Annual Report, 1869, p.5.
\textsuperscript{111} Ibid, p.4.
\textsuperscript{112} 9\textsuperscript{th} Annual Report, 1862, p.4.
\textsuperscript{113} This could reflect the fact that Mason had received her certificate.
This report also indicates that the school received a government grant of £52.18.6 and had a deficit of £12.19.8.\textsuperscript{114} Moreover, it would appear that the financial problems of the school escalated and this is highlighted by the receipts for the Davison school for 1870/71 recorded as £167.8.5 whilst the expenditure was noted as £230.4.1.\textsuperscript{115} Inability to balance the accounts is revealed in the accounts for 1872, which reveal receipts of £208.3.9½ with expenditure recorded as £263.19.6.\textsuperscript{116} However, the other local infant school, Christ Church, does not appear to have had this problem.\textsuperscript{117}

Possibly in an attempt to conceal the fact that this was indeed a school catering for working-class children, Cholmondeley insisted the school had ‘no connection with the Government.’\textsuperscript{118} However, the above evidence contradicts this; Mason was required to keep a log book as stipulated in the Revised Code and the Davison School clearly received grants from the government even prior to the Education Act of 1870.

Nevertheless the parish appears to have been determined to limit government involvement in the local schools. Missionary Reports highlight the religious zeal of the Rev. Elliott who had secured Charlotte’s position, and highlight contemporary Anglican resentment of Roman Catholicism. Published in 1869 prior to Forster’s Education Act, Elliott’s address contains sixteen pages of criticism of Catholicism.

\textsuperscript{114} 16\textsuperscript{th} Annual Report, 1869, p.5
\textsuperscript{115} 18\textsuperscript{th} Annual Report, 1871, p.4. The report claims ‘details of these accounts are published in the Report of the Chapel of Ease by Rev. W Read.’ Worthing Record Office suggest it is unlikely these records have survived.
\textsuperscript{116} This deficit suggests school was penalized for failing to adhere to the stipulations of the Revised Code. The government grant to schools was reduced by £190,000 a year. Curtis, 1957, p.261.
\textsuperscript{117} 19\textsuperscript{th} Annual Report 1872, p. 9. Receipts/expenditure of Christ Church Infant School was recorded as being £105.9.11.
\textsuperscript{118} Cholmondeley, 1960, p.6.
and warnings to his Anglican congregation.\textsuperscript{119} It is not surprising that this parish would ensure the government did not need to ‘fill the gaps’ following the introduction of compulsory elementary education.\textsuperscript{120} The Report for 1872 expresses the Rev. Elliott’s relief that the Anglican Church had made adequate educational provisions so they would not have to witness the establishment of a Local School Board, with the sum of £2054.6.0 having been raised by parishioners to ensure that the local children, ‘as far as man can foresee, will remain under the liberal influence and the loyal and Scriptural teaching of the Church of England.’\textsuperscript{121}

The Brandreths

It was through her work at the Davison School that Mason became acquainted with the highly respectable and charitable Brandreth family. Liverpool-born Thomas Shaw Brandreth (1788-1873) was a former barrister and magistrate.\textsuperscript{122} Records of the Broadwater and Worthing Missionary Association provide details of the philanthropic nature of the family. Thomas Brandreth’s financial contributions towards educational provision in the district are well-documented; he is recorded as being a subscriber to both the Girls’ and Boys’ National Schools.\textsuperscript{123} Brandreth’s wife and daughter Emily were also engaged in philanthropic activities. Both were involved in the local Dorcas society with Emily on the committee, and both subscribed to the Society for the

\textsuperscript{119} 16\textsuperscript{th} Annual Report, 1869, p.iii-xix.
\textsuperscript{120} The 1870 Act made provision for the government to ‘fill the gaps’ by establishing Board Schools in areas where Church schools were not erected.
\textsuperscript{121} 19\textsuperscript{th} Annual Report 1872, p.3. Rev. Elliott refers to the parish being ‘possessed of one enlarged and of two new schools.
\textsuperscript{122} Lucy’s Worthing Director 1870-1873 lists Brandreth as a ‘Magistrate’ and ‘Trustee and Manager of Worthing Provident Bank.’ Worthing Library.
\textsuperscript{123} 8\textsuperscript{th} Annual Report, 1860-1861, p.1. He subscribed £1.1.0 annually to each.
Propagation of the Gospel in foreign parts and the Girls’ Evening School. Emily Brandreth was twelve years older than Charlotte and a spinster. Financially secure Emily was able to respond to the Rev. Elliott’s plea in 1861 for middle-class ladies to take an interest in education:

In our five schools some 700 children are taught. Towards their support many of my readers kindly contribute, but very few add to the contributions what is still more costly, and what is very greatly needed, - personal help. The respective Masters and Mistresses stand, at the present moment, too much alone; they need encouragement in their up-hill work, and no greater encouragement can be given, than by friends occasionally assisting in the school, thus showing practical evidence of interest in the work of Education.

Emily’s contribution was in the form of assisting with needlework, and during her visits she was probably impressed by Mason’s abilities in the classroom and/or her manner with the children. Emily was responsible for the well-being and education of her nephews and niece during the prolonged absence of their parents and clearly considered that her charges might benefit from contact with Charlotte. Lacking any training herself the assistance of this young enthusiastic teacher would have been most welcome. Spending time with these middle-class home-educated children provided Mason with a vivid insight into the merits and disadvantages of such an education. Her association with these children possibly reinforced the benefits of some form of training for those that had responsibility for the children’s education.

124 At Dorcas meetings middle-class women produced garments etc. to be distributed amongst the poor.
125 9th Annual Report, 1861-1862, p.v.
126 Emily’s brother Ashton was an officer in the British army stationed in India. The children were Thomas, Harriet, Samuel & Edgar.
Moreover, it provided her with an insight into children from more cultured homes and it was towards such children that her educational philosophy was initially targeted.\textsuperscript{127}

Additionally, from a social point of view the association with the Brandreths would have a great impact on a young lady eager to climb up the social ladder. Mason was happy to accompany Emily Brandreth on her visits to Europe, which instilled a love for travel which an average infant school teacher would not have had the opportunity to discover. Indeed Mason enjoyed a number of visits to the continent including Switzerland and France, presumably at Emily’s expense because Mason’s salary would not have supported such travel. It is possible that in forming her association with the Brandreth family Mason was heeding the advice provided to new teachers in the quarterly journal published by the Home and Colonial in April 1861:

> Be very careful in your choice of associates. A great deal of your influence, and more of your happiness, will depend on the associations you form, and the company you are known to keep. A schoolmaster, or mistress, is a public character; and the movements and private life of such a person are more likely to be watched and criticised than those of others. It is essential, therefore, that you should exercise much caution on this head.\textsuperscript{128}

Evidently this relationship provided Mason with the respectability that young ladies needed in order to maintain or improve their situation in Victorian society. However, the full influence of the Brandreth is perhaps yet to be realized. It is intriguing that in later years Mason would add ‘Shaw’ to her name. The census returns for 1861, 1871

\textsuperscript{127} Mason referred to her experiences with these children in later writings including the posthumously published \textit{An Essay Towards of Philosophy of Education}.

\textsuperscript{128} \textit{The Educational Paper}, April 1861, p.47.
& 1881 list a Charlotte M Mason. However, the 1901 census and legal
documentation including her Will refer to Charlotte Maria Shaw Mason. The lack of
evidence concerning Mason’s early life encourages speculation, and some form of
connection with the Liverpool-born Thomas Shaw Brandreth cannot be entirely
discounted.129 Indeed as a patron of the Davison School and firm friend of the Rev.
Elliott, Brandreth could easily have been responsible for securing Mason her position
at Worthing. Furthermore it is feasible to suggest that he welcomed her into his
home, tolerated the friendship she formed with his daughter and grandchildren
because she was some kind of poor relation.

Following Thomas Shaw Brandreth’s death in June 1873, which resulted in Emily’s
temporary but prolonged departure from Worthing, Mason resigned and took a
position at Bishop Otter.130 A contributing factor to Mason’s decision to leave
Worthing could lie in a letter written by Emily from Lucerne, unfortunately undated
but probably from the summer of 1873. In this letter Emily refers to her brother
taking his children to India, ‘they propose taking their chicks for 4 years.’ Possibly
Charlotte recognized that she would play no further part in the upbringing of the four
children.131

129 CM was not a beneficiary in Brandreth’s Will. Brandreth’s estate was valued at £40,000 indicating
that he was an extremely wealthy man. Emily inherited the house at 15 Steyne, Worthing.
130 Drake noted that Mason showed the ambition that some of her contemporaries clearly did not. Miss
Nichols the mistress of the local Broadwater Infant School also resigned in 1873 but this was after
having worked there for 37 years after having been a pupil teacher and assistant mistress. Miss Bailey
retired in 1886 after 55 years teaching, 52 of which had been spent in the same school, Chapel Street,
131 Undated letter from Emily Brandreth to CM. PNEU Box 2. This is the only letter from Emily
Brandreth in the archives. Attempts to locate material relating to the Brandreths including A2A, HMC
and West Sussex Record Office have not been successful.
It is possible that Charlotte did learn a little more about her background during this period and this is reflected in the way in which she changes her year and place of birth in the 1861 & 1871 census. It seems likely that William Huston was responsible for providing this information. As previously mentioned, three letters from William Huston exist within the archives dated between 1865 and 1876; the earlier two being addressed to ‘Dear Niece’ and signed ‘Your affectionate Uncle.’ However, the final letter is addressed to ‘My Dear Miss Mason’ although the content and tenor of the letter are still fairly familiar. Perhaps Huston felt that it was appropriate to refer to Charlotte as ‘Miss Mason’ now that she was in her thirties and working at a training college. The letters suggest mutual acquaintances and shared kin, ‘all other members and branches are as well as usual.’ Furthermore one implies that she was of Irish birth, ‘I ask after your health and you leave me to judge of that by your work and success in it and then, Irishman like, answer by the question returned.’

Evidently Mason did not confide in any one about the true nature of her relationship with William Huston. Extracts from Huston’s letter in October 1876 are illuminating, revealing how Mason had been visiting Selina Fleming in Ambleside, indicating that

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132 The 1861 Census lists Charlotte as 20 years old, having been born in the Isle of Man whereas in 1871 she is listed as 29 years old, having been born in Bangor, Caernarvon. Charlotte may have added the Caernarvon herself to detract from the possibility of it being assumed, probably correctly, that the Bangor was in fact in Ireland and not Wales.

133 The letters imply they corresponded frequently but only 3 have survived.

134 Letter from William Huston to CM, 23.10.1876. Also letters 04.09.1865 & 05.04.1866. PNEU Box 2.

135 Ibid. 05.04.1866.
he was aware of how important Charlotte’s acquaintances were to her as well as conveying his fondness of her.

I will have no reason to complain of your slowness in reply when I have let your note from Ambleside in August remain unacknowledged until now … I was very pleased to hear from yourself and the friends that are so justly dear to you and if you will just favour me with the same now it will be very pleasing to me and it will tell me you are not quite angry with me for my neglect.\textsuperscript{136}

Attempts to discover more about the relationship have not been successful. However, Huston clearly returned to Ireland before October 1879. He died at the age of 69 in May 1880 in Kilrea, Londonderry, and did not make any mention of Charlotte in his Will.\textsuperscript{137}

A Contented Infant School Teacher?

This chapter has provided some indication of the pressure and difficulties Mason faced in Worthing. However, she appears to have been content to add to these responsibilities by becoming involved albeit temporarily both in a night school and in another attempt to provide education to older girls. This implies that she was not entirely fulfilled as an infant teacher. Correspondence with Lizzie at this time suggests that Mason considered it her ‘duty’ to work in Worthing and that through her work she might help raise the moral and intellectual standards. The following extract

\textsuperscript{136} Ibid. 23.10.1876. The letter informs Mason that his tardy reply was due to his having been in Ireland.

\textsuperscript{137} Huston’s Will was made in Kilrea, Londonderry in October 1879. His personal estate, valued at less than £200, was divided between his two sisters, Ann Huston & Elizabeth Hunter.
is illuminating and suggests that the Brandreth’s philanthropic zeal may have rubbed off on Charlotte:

My duty lies here at present. There is a work to be done in Worthing that I feel it is possible for me to do … The tone of intellect & feeling here is very low … The trades people being almost the only class resident, give tone to the town, & that tone is narrow, coarse and illiberal. Well dear we know that if the young women of any district be elevated they will raise the rest. So, pet, my work is by means of our school for tradesmens’ daughters to refine & cultivate the young women.138

This conveys the idea that Charlotte was very much a visionary and that she adhered to the opinion that through education moral standards could be raised and respectability ensured. It reflects contemporary opinion that a ‘refined’ woman would be able to improve the prospects of her family through instilling in her children more respectable values. By appearing to distance herself from the people of Worthing this extract also illustrates Charlotte’s social aspirations. Mason would later optimistically claim to have started a pioneer church high school.139 Details are scarce but Drake’s research indicates that the attempt was not very successful and short-lived.140

It seems likely that the inspiration for this ‘pioneer church high school’ stemmed from Mason’s attempts to re-establish an evening school. Whilst this decision may have arisen from a philanthropic desire to instil culture and education into the

138 Letter from CM to Lizzie Groveham, undated c.1864, PNEU Box 2.
140 Drake maintains the experiment commenced in 1865 but was abandoned in February 1867 following poor arithmetic results. Drake, 1988, p.13.
uneducated masses it could also reflect a desire to supplement her wages. The Missionary Association Reports for the year ending July 1862 refer to a Girls’ Evening School’ which was ‘connected to the Chapel of Ease.’ Subscribers included Miss Brandreth who contributed 9s6d. The Mistresses’ salary was recorded as £10.10.0 with school pence £5.10.0 and 14s ‘received at door the last meeting.’

An undated letter to Lizzie refers to having ‘recommenced our night school & got a few fresh pupils’ but on a more pessimistic note adds, ‘I am having a terrible struggle to get my school under foot. I am in hopes I shall succeed.’ It is not evident when the night school ceased to exist but there is no mention of it in the Missionary Association Reports after 1868.

Correspondence between Lizzie and Charlotte indicates that Lizzie attempted to lure Mason to Bradford and that at one time the two friends were considering opening a school together. However, it would appear that Mason was reluctant to commit herself at this stage. This appears to have been prior to her attempts to start the ‘pioneer church high school’ and Mason’s decision not to join Lizzie could stem from the Reads’ support for her experiment. Nevertheless Mason advised her friend to go ahead with the scheme claiming she would do it ‘nobly and well’ and ‘I long to know that there is a Middle School in Bradford conducted by you.’ Evidently Lizzie did

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141 Receipts and Expenditure were recorded as £23.4.5. The names of the mistresses are not recorded. 9th Annual Report 1861-1862.
142 Undated letter from CM to Lizzie Groveham, PNEU Box 2.
establish some kind of girls’ school in Bradford although she was unsuccessful in enticing Charlotte to Yorkshire.\textsuperscript{143}

Evidence indicates that Charlotte sought the advice of her ‘affectionate Uncle’, William Huston, with regard to the advisability of leaving the Davison School and that he was clearly aware of his niece’s ‘frailty’:

Your health not the manner of Mr & Miss Reid should be the great consideration. The god of providence has given you such health as he knows is best for you and it’s a must which it becomes your duty to use in whatever way you know is best for it. If you were sure that it would not be improved by the change then every consideration would be in favour of you remaining.\textsuperscript{144}

If Mason’s health was such a cause for concern it seems unlikely or at least unwise that she would consider taking on further responsibilities like her ‘pioneer church high school.’ It appears more likely that she was reluctant to leave Worthing probably because of her acquaintances and therefore used her ‘poor health’ as an excuse to remain there.

The failure of her experiment in teaching older girls could have encouraged her to subsequently confide in Lizzie that she had again been considering a change in

\textsuperscript{143} Letter from CM to LG, PNEU Box 2. c.1863. Attempts to locate records connecting Lizzie to the Bradford Middle School have been unsuccessful. Bradford Libraries (10.02.2003 & 09.12.2003) located a prospectus of Bradford Middle Class School which opened in January 1867. The principals were listed as Mr D & Mrs D Inman. It is unlikely this was the same school.\textsuperscript{144} Letter from William Huston to CM, 04.09.1865, PNEU Box 2. A subsequent letter, 05.04.1866 suggests Mason has informed him of the ‘success’ of her ‘pioneer church high school’ since he tells her he is ‘very glad to hear of your great success.’ Huston advises Charlotte to ‘keep striving after advancement in usefulness.’
position. The following extract gives the impression that Charlotte lacked the confidence to make her visions a reality.

I did think of making a grand change at xmas. I thought that instead of teaching school any longer I should try how it would answer to go about from school to school in Brighton & the other places around here teaching nothing but the English language … I promised Mr Lewis I would wait a year first and I think it will probably end as it began.¹⁴⁵

This indicates that Mason herself recognized that she was unlikely to pursue her dreams; possibly she lacked the ambition and drive at this stage. Possibly it is further evidence that she was reluctant to leave the coastal resort where she had become acquainted with the respectable Brandreth family. Interestingly when she decided to leave Worthing in 1873 following the death of Mr Brandreth and the temporary departure of his daughter, Emily, Charlotte advised her friend that she would not be joining her since ‘I do think one such excellent teacher as yourself is quite enough for the B.M.S. It would be coals to Newcastle for me to come.’¹⁴⁶ However, this seems to be another excuse to defer her departure from Sussex. Thwarted in her attempts to instil culture and education amongst the older girls and young ladies of Worthing it is conceivable that Mason would be tempted to try her luck elsewhere. Indeed Mason’s decision to remain in Sussex at this time probably stems from her desire to continue her acquaintance with Emily. Emily had

¹⁴⁵ Extract of a letter from CM to LG. Undated but after 1868 when the Rev. C S Lewis, the Vicar of St. George’s Church, East Worthing had become involved in the Davison School. PNEU Box 2.
¹⁴⁶ Letter from CM to LG undated c.1873. Ibid.
inherited the family house in Worthing and her failure to sell this could have convinced Charlotte that her return might be imminent.

**Charlotte Mason at The Bishop Otter College**

The demand for elementary schools teachers became more pronounced following Forster’s Education Act of 1870 and this assisted campaigners including Louisa Hubbard who worked relentlessly for middle-class girls to be trained as elementary teachers. Hubbard’s efforts were rewarded in the re-opening of the Bishop Otter College in Chichester in February 1873. The first principal was Sarah Frances Trevor whose decision to forego her annual remuneration of £100, may illustrate contemporary resentment of self-supporting middle-class women as well as her determination to maintain her status as a lady.

Very little material concerning Charlotte’s time in Chichester has survived. Cholmondeley claims that Mason was offered the position of lecturer in education, hygiene and physiology along with the position as Mistress of Method in the Practising school. However, this has been challenged. In his research into Bishop Otter College, McGregor briefly mentions Mason’s contribution noting that she was appointed as Senior Governess at £75 per year. The following passage is illuminating:

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147 A Diocesan Training School for Masters had opened in 1840 as a memorial to William Otter, Bishop of Chichester 1836-1840. In 1872 Louisa Hubbard wrote an article ‘Work for Ladies in Elementary Schools’ & campaigned relentlessly to encourage middle-class girls to teach in elementary schools. Bishop Otter reopened in 1873 with 26 students.
Cholmondeley attributes her breakdown after four years to the strenuous nature of the work at the college and the enthusiasm she gave to it, adding that she was eventually appointed Vice-Principal. There is no evidence in the college records for either of these claims, and the records show that it was not until 1886 that a post of Vice-Principal was established. The annual reports and committee minutes for her first three years at Bishop Otter make no mention of Miss Mason nor is her departure anywhere recorded in the minutes.  

Drake suggests that the College Log Books do not support the idea that Charlotte played a substantial role in the Practising School. Nevertheless the recollections of Rosa Westmorland, a student between 1877 and 1878, suggest that Charlotte made an impact on her students. Rosa provides brief yet useful comments: ‘I can remember her personally quite well – her wonderful kind face – her lecture on training children, were I feel sure very helpful, especially her classes in the Practising School – I do not think she was at Otter college during the whole of my two years – I think she must have left for more appreciated work?’ This suggests that Rosa considered that Mason was not held in particularly high regard at the college, but this was written after she had become a distinguished educationalist. However, it could also provide an indication as to why Bishop Otter seemed to witness a succession of mistresses during its early years. Drake’s research provides evidence of staff turnover with three mistresses involved with the Practising School staying less than six months. Indeed in view of the short time that some of the mistresses spent there Mason’s four years

149 Letter from Rosa Westmorland to Elsie Kitching, 04.02.1924, Box 51.
seems indicative of her tenacity. The failure to inspire staff loyalty could be due to several factors including the difficulties in teaching large numbers of ill-prepared middle-class girls whose gentility did not make up for their educational deficiencies or the inadequate preparation that the mistresses had themselves received. Additionally it could reflect the problems the mistresses had in satisfying the demands made of them by the formidable Miss Trevor. The absence of any correspondence between Charlotte and Miss Trevor suggests that the two women were not close. However, Miss Trevor’s willingness to provide financial assistance to Mason’s educational magazine, the Parents’ Review, in 1890 implies that their relationship was not hostile.

The College Log Books provide evidence of the presence as students of Frances Epps (néé Hall) and two ladies who would contribute to the success of Mason’s own college, Fanny Williams and Margaret Hodgson. Fanny Williams, who enrolled as a student at Bishop Otter in 1876, was impressed by Mason’s teaching and followed her both to Bradford and Ambleside, where she became Vice-Principal in 1898. Fanny was evidently one of those genteel ladies who sought training through financial necessity. Describing the twenty-two years she spent at the House of

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150 Drake, 1989, p.7. Drake maintains that in the first four years the college was opened mistresses only remained for an average of six months. The first two Governesses appointed in 1873 had both resigned within a year.
151 This will be addressed in Chapter 5.
152 An extract from the log book dated 17.03.1876 notes that Miss Hall, a student was in the Practising School. Worthing Record Office. Mason kept in touch with Frances after her marriage to Dr Washington Epps.
153 An entry, 10.11.1875 lists Miss Williams, a student as being in the Practising School.
154 Miss Hodgson is recorded as Assistant Mistress in the Practising School on 31.01.1876. She left Otter to teach in the House of Education in 1892.
Education as ‘the happiest years of my life,’ Fanny would later modestly recollect the impact which Mason had on her thinking.

Unlike her, I was not a born teacher. I was simply anxious to do some useful work and help my family (my father was a clergyman and an invalid and I wished to help him retire). Under dear Miss Mason’s teaching, my view of life changed; I saw that teaching might be a noble profession instead of a mere trade, and I too longed to put her theories into practice. I am sure that many old ‘Otters’ would gladly testify to the help and enlightenment they received from Miss Mason’s lectures on education.¹⁵⁵

Evidently Fanny Williams was not the only former student to be impressed by Charlotte; both Fanny and Margaret Hodgson would ensure that the Bishop Otter College served as a recruiting ground for two of the most long-serving mistresses at the House of Education.

Mason would later suggest that it was through her position at the college that she acquired a sound knowledge of educational theory, and that the benefits of helping others digest such material became apparent, providing the groundwork for her writings, the establishment of the PEU and ultimately the House of Education.

Some years ago before the PNEU was thought of and in giving lectures to ladies preparing to teach in elementary schools, the extraordinary leverage which some knowledge of the principles of physiological-psychology gives to those who have the bringing-up of children, was brought home to me … During the following years, years of educational work, literary and other, a single idea was gradually taking shape and forcing itself into prominence, becoming, in fact, a life-

¹⁵⁵ In Memoriam, 1923, p.58.
purpose … What if these two or three vitalizing educational principles could be brought before parents?\textsuperscript{156}

‘Infirmity’

Records indicate that Mason resigned from Bishop Otter in 1878 due to her poor health. A letter from a Birmingham-based doctor dated 31\textsuperscript{st} January 1878 noted that she was ‘suffering from the effects of overwork’ and ‘her condition requires absolute rest for some months, and I am quite unable to sanction her doing any educational work for the present.’\textsuperscript{157} This reflects contemporary concerns regarding the health of women who did not adhere to the Victorian ideal of womanhood, women that were educated or worked. In her research into women’s health Barbara Harrison comments ‘It was noted that some educated and occupationally employed women were often ill and childless.’\textsuperscript{158}

However, correspondence between Charlotte and Lizzie suggests that her health was not necessarily the primary factor in her decision to leave Bishop Otter. An undated letter indicates that Charlotte was struggling to cope with her demanding position, ‘I find the work at the college too trying & have settled to give it up at xmas to take a rest.’ It is unlikely that the twelve years she had spent as an infant teacher had prepared her for the role of training young ladies for elementary schools. Moreover,\textsuperscript{156}\textsuperscript{157}\textsuperscript{158}

\textsuperscript{156} Mason, C quoted in Kitching, E ‘The History and aims of the PNEU,’ 1899, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{157} Letter from Dr Foster, PNEU Box 2.
the letter suggests that she had considered leaving Chichester to take up a position in a Chester High School but had abandoned this idea when, following a visit to Chester, she had ‘felt very poorly’ and had sought the medical opinion of Dr Coleman and subsequently Dr Foster.\(^\text{159}\) This implies that Mason was not content at the college and was considering a career move prior to her ‘illness.’

The desirability of a change of scenery could have been influenced by the frequent absences of Emily Brandreth and the sudden death of Mary Read in 1877, which curtailed Charlotte’s social life.\(^\text{160}\) Mason’s letter informing Lizzie of her decision to leave Bishop Otter proceeded to explain how she was recovering from her bout of ill health by travelling in Europe with her old companion, Emily Brandreth, and that Mason was ‘very well when I am doing nothing, but knocked up by the least effort.’\(^\text{161}\) A further letter indicates that she was now residing with Emily Brandreth in Worthing and that her host was ‘taking the most delightful care of me – nursing me up & spoiling me in the most kind way.’\(^\text{162}\)

Mason appears to have spent a considerable part of the next two years being pampered by or acting as a companion to Emily Brandreth before her removal to Bradford in 1880, and utilized this period of rest to embark on her first educational book, a geographical reader, \textit{The Forty Shires}. Evidently Elsie Kitching attempted to

\(^\text{159}\) Dr Coleman was the husband of Sally Coleman, a student at the Home & Colonial with Mason.
\(^\text{160}\) Letter from CM to LG, c.1877. Mason informs Lizzie that she ‘counted Miss Read among my dearest truest friends’ and ‘now that she is gone I cared for her even more than I thought.’ PNEU Box 2.
\(^\text{161}\) Ibid. c.1878. Another letter written from Lucerne in May 1878 provides details of the scenery and their travels but then informs Lizzie ‘But I must not write you a long letter now dear as letters are an effort beyond me.’
\(^\text{162}\) Ibid. date not legible, c.1878.
establish further details concerning Mason’s whereabouts during this period and this is illustrated in her correspondence with Denis Smart, the nephew of Jane Smith, a school teacher in Alton, Hants. The letter provides additional evidence of Mason’s ‘infirmity’ at this time with Smart maintaining, ‘I have vivid memories of my aunt’s admiration for her courage as she was ill at the time and was working on her book whilst lying on the sofa.’  

However, there are a number of inaccuracies in the letter, with Smart suggesting that his aunt and a Miss Acons had established a ‘private’ school in Alton and had become acquainted with Mason at Whitelands Training College. Census Returns for 1881 refer to the school as a National school. Moreover, Mary Acons is recorded as being an Assistant Mistress at the Davison School with Mason in 1864 and this indicates that the acquaintance was the result of Mason and Acons working together rather than Smith and Mason being college friends. Nevertheless, this extract does provide evidence that Mason sought comfort on a sofa, a tendency which would later epitomize her existence at Scale How.

One of the objects of this research is to establish how Mason acquired the capital necessary to establish her college in Ambleside. This chapter has indicated that the Brandreths and Reads were supportive of Mason. Indeed a letter from the somewhat

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163 Letters from Denis Smart to Elsie Kitching, 03.11.1947 & 19.10.1949.
164 The 1881 Census records Mary Acons aged 37, headmistress with Jane Smith aged 32, mistress, both residing in the National School House.
165 Davison School Log Book.
166 They did not even attend the same training college.
frail Rev. Read written in December 1880 concerning the imminent publication of the early geographical readers, illustrates his continued support, and implies that he may have recommended the publisher to Charlotte, as well as providing an indication of the high regard in which he clearly held her:

I was much pleased to receive your kind letter and especially so, to find from it, that you have entered upon another and highly important sphere of public utility. Your proposed undertaking promises to be of great usefulness and I am delighted to find that you have secured Mr Stanford’s always valuable co-operation. Be sure, that I will not fail, at every possible opportunity, to express my favourable opinion of whatever you propose to effect; for I am sure it will be very satisfactorily performed. I am sorry to report unfavourably of my state of health. It will always give me pleasure to receive any communication from you.\textsuperscript{167}

However, a copy of his will indicates that he did not make any provision for Charlotte on his death in 1884.\textsuperscript{168}

In view of the friendship which Mason appears to have established with Emily Brandreth it would seem feasible that Emily may have provided further support to Charlotte. Census returns for 1881 show that Emily had moved to Berkshire where she resided until her death in 1894. Charlotte was not a named beneficiary in Emily’s will.\textsuperscript{169}

\textsuperscript{167} Letter from the Rev. Read to CM, December 1880, PNEU Box 2.
\textsuperscript{168} William Read’s will reveals that his estate was valued at £4870. It was shared between his surviving children and grandchildren.
\textsuperscript{169} Emily Brandreth’s estate was divided between her nieces, nephews and godchildren.
However, surprisingly the archives do not contain any letters between the two ladies following their departure from Sussex. This could be an indication that the friendship was far more one-sided than Mason liked to admit. Charlotte had undoubtedly been a useful travelling companion and welcome assistant with the Brandreth children but possibly Emily grew weary of her sofa-ridden friend. Interestingly the 1881 Census lists a Maria Drolrey, a 44-year-old retired mission worker as residing with Emily, and Charlotte refers to the presence of ‘sister Maria’ in a letter to Lizzie during her European travels. Possibly Mason had been usurped and the withdrawal of Emily’s financial support persuaded Charlotte to accept Lizzie’s long-standing invitation to join her in Bradford.

Through analyzing surviving correspondence this chapter has provided an insight into Charlotte’s mixed emotions as a young insecure yet enthusiastic infant teacher. Her visionary nature and lack of confidence have been highlighted and both of these may have been affected by her relationship with Emily Brandreth. Furthermore it has eliminated the possibility that the finance necessary to establish her own college emanated from the individuals she met during this period, although the encouragement and support of some of these acquaintances including the Rev. William Read, Fanny Williams, Miss Hogdson and even Miss Trevor would impact on Mason’s subsequent actions.

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170 1881 Census. Letter from CM to LG, c. 1878, PNEU Box 2.
This chapter concerns the establishment of the Parents’ Educational Union (PEU) in Bradford in 1887 and the subsequent expansion resulting in the Parents’ National Educational Union (PNEU) in 1890. The movement stemmed from Mason’s *Home Education* and therefore her educational philosophy will be considered to ascertain how contemporaries had been attracted to her ideas. One of the purposes of this research is to understand how Mason profited by the process of networking. This is very much evident with regard to the formation and subsequent expansion of the PEU/PNEU. The role of some of the key individuals will be considered and why they became involved.

**Mason in Bradford**

By 1880 after possibly having outstayed her welcome with Emily Brandreth, Charlotte appears to have reconciled herself to the idea of residing with Lizzie Groveham in Bradford and undertaking some teaching in her friend’s school. Post Office Directories for 1881 confirm the existence of a ‘Ladies Boarding School’ at 2 Apsley Crescent, Manningham, the Groveham’s residence. However, the census in that same year lists only two ‘scholars’, one being Lizzie’s 16 year old daughter.

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171 Bradford Archives have no records of this establishment, 05.07.2002.
Anne, implying that this was a day school with boarding facilities.\textsuperscript{172} Charlotte, along with a former student at the Bishop Otter College, Fanny Williams, are listed as ‘School teachers.’\textsuperscript{173} Cholmondeley suggests Mason undertook some lecturing to the ‘older girls,’\textsuperscript{174} but given the lack of boarders in this ‘boarding school’ her commitment as well as her income would surely have been quite minimal. Following the publication of \textit{Forty Shires} in 1880, Charlotte appears to have utilised this time to continue with her writing career by embarking on a series of geographical readers.

Cholmondeley implies that the success of Mason’s writings relieved her financial pressures. However, correspondence with Messrs Stanford suggests that the royalties were not immense; Mason received a 5\% royalty on the sales of her five readers. The 5\% in 1882 amounted to £5.14.5, rising to £9.12.6 in 1884 but reducing to £7.5.10 in 1885.\textsuperscript{175} Therefore it seems likely that for much of this time she relied on Lizzie’s hospitality, offering occasional assistance in her school.

A review of the first geographical reader published in the \textit{Journal of Education} in 1882 noted ‘it has some good diagrams, and one or two really charming pictures.’ More importantly the review recognized that ‘the author has aimed at giving children solid notions of the world and its various parts’ as opposed to ‘presenting the

\textsuperscript{172} 1881 census.
\textsuperscript{173} A letter from Lucy Williams (Fanny’s mother), xmas 1881 sends ‘abundant thanks for all your loving care of my dear daughter.’ PNEU Box 2.
\textsuperscript{174} Cholmondeley, 1960, p.14.
\textsuperscript{175} PNEU Box VI.
complete theory of them.¹⁷⁶ This is an indication of how Mason considered the purpose of education was to plant ideas which children would subsequently develop.

Further evidence to indicate that the readers were not as successful as Cholmondeley maintains is reflected in Mason’s correspondence with Thomas Godolphin Rooper, the HMI of Schools for Bradford. After receiving her fifth book in 1884 Rooper wrote apologetically: ‘I am sorry that I have not been more successful in introducing your previous books into this district. It is, I am afraid, the tendency of bad books like bad coin to drive out good.’¹⁷⁷ Nevertheless, Rooper’s support for Mason continued and he played a prominent role in the establishment of the PEU and in assisting Charlotte to fulfil her ambitions, as will become apparent.

Cholmondeley suggests that Mason was involved in both cultural and philosophical activities in Bradford, epitomized by her involvement with the Philosophical Society, the Browning Society and her local church. Given her piety and desire to emulate middle-class ladies, it is quite feasible that she would have been engaged in the philanthropic activities of St Mark’s in Manningham. A pew receipt within the archives indicates that she participated in the middle-class practice of purchasing her pew annually.¹⁷⁸ The opportunity to reshape her life would come through the church; the Reverend Wynne’s attempts to raise funds for church repairs led to Mason offering to undertake a series of lectures in 1885-86.

¹⁷⁷ Letter from T G Rooper to CM, 25.10.1884. The readers were reissued as the Ambleside Geography Books.
¹⁷⁸ 5 shillings for ‘one sitting in pew no. 35.’ PNEU Box 2.
Evidently the Reverend provided Charlotte with some feedback on her lectures. This is conveyed in a letter written in March 1886, ‘Many thanks for giving me the pleasure of perusing your lecture on the Will & Conscience. I am delighted with it. It is full of noble thoughts expressed in simple and beautiful language.’ Wynne informed Mason that he was ‘satisfied that the publication of these lectures would be an immense boon to the cause of Christian education.’ On his death in 1892 Mason acknowledged his contribution, ‘The lectures on “Home Education” which originated the whole scheme, were given under his kind auspices and to help a parochial work.’

**Home Education**

This series of eight lectures given to the ladies of Bradford during 1885 and 1886 evolved into *Home Education*. Contemporary reports suggest it was well received when published by the Rev. Charles Kegan Paul in 1886. *The Pall Mall Gazette* claimed ‘it is difficult to speak too highly of these admirable lectures’ which were ‘full of sound sense’ and that ‘every candidate for the holy estate of matrimony could be compelled to undergo a preliminary examination in these excellent lectures before they were permitted to undertake the responsibility of rearing the citizens of the future.’ *The Queen* echoed this praise suggesting ‘the book is one to be read and digested by parents, and it has our cordial commendation.’ Moreover, even the

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179 Letter from Wynne to CM, 31.03.1886, PNEU Box 2.
somewhat misogynistic *Saturday Review* referred to the ‘good sense and sobriety of judgment’ contained within the publication emphasizing the ‘definite practical value, which is what cannot be said of nine-tenths of our theoretic literature on the science of education.’

*Home Education*, which claimed to describe ‘a method of education resting upon a basis of natural law’, dealt primarily with the training of children under nine years of age and provided the basis from which Mason’s educational philosophy evolved. The following paragraphs provide a brief indication as to why some parents and educators might have been sympathetic towards this book. Mason stressed the advances in science and the revolutionary effect which these had for education, emphasizing the importance for a mother to have ‘more than a hearsay acquaintance with the theory of education,’ and the mother’s vital role for direction during a child’s ‘early most impressionable years.’

Mason’s philosophy was based on the idea of the child as a person at a time when the adage ‘Children should be seen but not heard’ was prevalent. Born with all the powers he would ever need, the child lacked only knowledge and experience. Just as a mother fed her child to ensure his body grew, she would need to feed his mind to enable that to grow. Mason considered that a curriculum confined to the 3R’s or

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181 Reviews, Box 51.
183 Ibid. p.3.
184 *School Education* 1904 : ‘We take the child as we find him, a person with many healthy affinities, and embryonic attachments, and we try to give him a chance to make the largest possible number of these attachments valid.’ p.218.
merely accomplishments failed to provide that nourishment. Critical of contemporary
teaching practices, particularly oral teaching, cramming\textsuperscript{185} and a reliance on dubious
text-books, Mason advocated a wide curriculum which encouraged physical,
intellectual, moral and religious development.\textsuperscript{186}

Mason would later adopt Arnold’s adage that ‘Education is an atmosphere, a
discipline and a life’ as the PNEU Motto and these concepts are very much evident in
\textit{Home Education}. By the term atmosphere or environment Mason was not advocating
a child-environment but that consideration should be given to the home environment,
making the most of circumstances and that education needed to be enjoyable.\textsuperscript{187}

Discipline implied the formation of habits concerning both the mind and body, taking
account of scientific developments with regard to the functioning of the brain. The
theory that education is ‘a life’ implied that intellectual and moral sustenance were as
important as physical sustenance, hence the need for a far-reaching curriculum since
the mind needed a proper diet to digest.

With regard to physical development Mason suggests that parents needed to be
acquainted with the principles of physiology and moral science.\textsuperscript{188} Mason offered
advice with regard to providing a suitable and varied diet for children in order that
their brain received adequate exercise, rest and nutrition since ‘It is upon the

\textsuperscript{185} Mason quoted Ruskin: ‘They cram to pass, and not to know; they do pass, and they don’t know.’
\textit{Home Education}, 1905, p.155.
\textsuperscript{186} Pestalozzi regarded education as training a child not merely imparting factual knowledge.
\textsuperscript{187} Mason, C, ‘Some Suggestions for the curriculum of girls and boys under 14,’ 1906, p.5. Box 48.
‘There is no such thing as the child-mind …. We do not peptonise or dilute their intellectual food, but
offer it to them full of substance and vitality.’
\textsuperscript{188} \textit{Home Education}, 1905, p.40.
possession of an active, duly nourished brain that the possibility of a sound education depends.' Similarly adequate ventilation and regular access to fresh air were seen as essential, for both physical and mental development.

Like other educational pioneers including Rousseau and Pestalozzi, Mason adhered to the concept of nature as the educator, and during the first six years of their lives, ‘growing time’, children should immerse themselves in the out-doors discovering for themselves: ‘They must be let alone, left to themselves a great deal to take in what they can of the beauty of earth and heavens.’ Mason referred to the ‘unequalled mental training of the child naturalist’ who gained ‘powers of attention, of discrimination, of patient pursuit,’ and offered advice with regard to activities and outdoor games.

The idea of education as a discipline stemmed from the theory that habit was ‘the instrument by which parents work,’ because ‘the formation of habits is education’ and ‘education is the formation of habits.’ In Mason’s opinion children were not progressing because of poor training but anything could be accomplished by training, the cultivation of persistent habits. Mason maintained, ‘The boy who has been accustomed to find both profit and pleasure in his books does not fall easily into idle ways because he is attracted by an idle schoolfellow.'

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189 Ibid. p.96.
190 Ibid. p.44.
191 Ibid. p.61. Mason recommended keeping a nature notebook, ‘for the evil is that children get their knowledge of natural history like all their knowledge, at second hand.’
192 Ibid. p.97.
193 Ibid. p.111.
Moreover, the role of the mother in the formation of habits was vital, since ‘Every child has its branch roads, its good or evil outcome and to put the child on the right track … is the vocation of the parent.’ Failure of the mother to ensure habit formation could be disastrous, since ‘The mother who takes pains to endow her children with good habits secures for herself smooth and easy days, while she who lets their habits take care of themselves has a weary life of endless friction with the children.’ Furthermore a mother needed to be consistent and confident in her authority and ‘never give a command which she does not intend to see carried out to the full.’ With regard to punishment Charlotte suggested this was seldom necessary if children were brought up with care. She did not agree with Herbert Spencer’s theory that children learnt through punishment and was opposed to the physical punishment administered fervently in contemporary schools. It is understandable how young or desperate mothers might be attracted to such ideas. However, they also indicate an element of idealism. Mason was not a mother and therefore she would not be able to completely empathise with mothers. Whilst she was able to conjure up an image of an idealized perfect mother it is questionable as to how successful mothers were in implementing these ideas.

194 Ibid. p.109.  
195 Ibid. p.164.  
196 Ibid. p.148.  
197 Parents and Children 1896 offered advice concerning defects, discipline and character formation.
The religious aspect of education features strongly in the book, illustrating Charlotte’s piety. No doubt Mason was amongst those who were fearful of the secularization of education. *Home Education* stresses the parents’ role in helping to establish the child’s relationship with God; it was vital for them to ‘present the idea of God to the soul of the child.’ Bible reading was essential, since ‘Knowledge of God is the principal knowledge,’ therefore ‘Bible lessons are their chief lessons.’ For the Church hierarchy who were concerned by the growing apathy towards religion at this time, and disillusioned by attempts to secularise education, Mason’s advocacy of religion as an essential element in an educational philosophy must have been a relief and worthy of support.

Similarly the importance of morals features cogently and the responsibility of the mother in cultivating moral qualities is evident. For example, with regard to a ‘bad tempered child’ a mother should ‘hinder the formation of ill tempers, to force that of good tempers.’ Rather than believing that a child was born either good or bad Mason considered that a child was born with the capacity for either, and therefore through changing a child’s thoughts, replacing evil with good, it was possible to elevate the character.

Mason stresses the need for parents to take an interest in what their children are taught and to be involved, since ‘Nothing does more to give vitality and purpose to

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198 Mason later published *Saviour of the World* illustrating the importance of her faith.
200 Ibid. p.251.
201 Ibid.p.167.
202 Mason developed these ideas in *Ourselves*, 1905.
the work of the teacher than the certainty that the parents of his pupils go with
him.’\textsuperscript{203} This conveys her belief in the need for co-operation between parent and
teacher, a view shared by many of the female educators.

In Mason’s opinion, a suitable curriculum had to take into consideration the need for
sufficient knowledge, since, like the body, the mind required ample nourishment; that
knowledge should be varied to stimulate curiosity. One of her criticisms of the home
schoolroom was that, whereas school timetables were usually ‘drawn up with a view
to give the brain of the child variety of work,’ … ‘no such judicious change of lessons
is contrived’ in the home, thereby encouraging weariness in the child.\textsuperscript{204} Furthermore
this knowledge needed to be communicated in appropriate language, since children
respond to what is conveyed in literary form.\textsuperscript{205}

Mason proposed a much wider curriculum than was normal. Lessons, which Mason
believed should begin at the age of six, should be short, provide ‘material for mental
growth’, ‘furnish with fruitful ideas’, ‘exercise powers of mind’ and afford ‘accurate’
and ‘interesting knowledge.’\textsuperscript{206} Indeed Mason suggested that ‘any teaching which
does not leave [the child] possessed of a new mental image has, by so far, missed its

\textsuperscript{203} Mason, C, \textit{Home Education}, 1905, p.170.
\textsuperscript{204} Ibid. p.24.
\textsuperscript{205} Lesson books were criticized as ‘too apt to be written in a style of insufferable twaddle, probably…
written by persons who have never chanced to meet a child.’ Ibid, p.229. \textit{School Education}, 1904, ‘a
school-book should be a medium for ideas and not merely a receptacle for facts.’ p.216.
\textsuperscript{206} Mason, \textit{Home Education}, 1905, p.177.
mark.’

This contrasted sharply with the notion of cramming, which was a feature of both elementary schools and those catering for the more affluent.

To ensure that lessons met her requirements Mason proposed a timetable with definite work to secure attention, and attractive, varied, connected lessons to secure motivation. Moreover, lessons should be suitable, since ‘A child should execute perfectly- no work should be given to a child that he cannot execute perfectly.’

Opposed to the rewards in the forms of marks and prizes which were a feature of many contemporary schools, Mason believed that rewards should take the form of additional leisure and that children should be rewarded for their conduct as opposed to cleverness, thereby ensuring that recognition was within every child’s reach.

The importance of reading suitable material or ‘living books’ is very much apparent and is one of the most significant features of her philosophy. ‘Once the habit of reading his lesson books with delight is set up in a child, his education is – not completed, but – ensured.’ Mason popularized the concept of narration whereby

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207 Ibid. p.173.
208 Holcombe, *Victorian Ladies at Work*, 1973, p.24. ‘Girls memorized and parroted inferior textbooks, quoting without any understanding of their application and facts without any knowledge of their logical connection or significance.’
209 Like Froebel, Mason believed lessons should be linked. This helped with recollection. Home Education, 1905, p.158.
210 Ibid. p.160.
211 Ibid. p.144.
212 Ibid. p.229. *An Essay Towards a Philosophy of Education* 1923: ‘The best thought the world possesses is stored in books, we must open books to children, the best books.’ p.26.
children retold a passage after only one hearing, thereby developing powers of concentration and assimilation, another important aspect of her philosophy.213

Whilst Mason’s curriculum was clearly not confined to the 3R’s it is evident that it was primarily aimed at middle and upper class children. The following observations reinforce this point. With regard to the teaching of French, Mason recommends that it be acquired ‘as a living speech’ since ‘all educated persons should be able to speak French.’214 Furthermore with respect to history she asserts: ‘The children of educated parents are able to understand history written with literary power, and are not attracted by the twaddle of reading-made-easy little history books.’215 Recommendations that children familiarize themselves with cultured activities including the study of pictorial art, the piano and singing reinforce the point that this curriculum was initially aimed at the more affluent classes.

The original version of *Home Education* included two extra ‘lectures,’ namely ‘Lecture VII, The Relations between School life and Home life’ and ‘Lecture VIII, Young Maidenhood – The Formation of Characters and Opinions.’216 These chapters provide an indication of Mason’s attitude towards the role of women as well as an indication why the educational pioneers, the clergy and parents of older daughters might be attracted to her views.

215 Ibid. p.281.
216 *Home Education*, 1st proof, 1886, Box 51. Lectures VII & VIII were incorporated into *Some Studies in the Formation of Character*, 1905, p.177-269.
Lecture VII lists what Mason perceives as the main weaknesses of middle-class schools. Whilst she recognized that school education had improved she considered schools hindered the individuality of children and were ‘mechanical and incessant’ with little leisure,’ lacking ‘more delicate moral training, the refining touch which a man of superior parts should bestow upon his pupils.’ She considered the role of the parents in supplementing these deficiencies to be paramount, suggesting parents should ‘take the good the schools provide and be thankful; take count of what they do not provide, and see that the culture and moral training which the schools fail to offer is to be had in the home.’ Indeed the continuing importance of the parents in the ‘education’ of their children is emphasized in the following extracts. ‘The duty of the parent to educate their child is by no means at an end when he enters upon school life, because it rests upon them to supplement what is weak or wanting in the training of the school.’ Furthermore, ‘day schools can seldom undertake to make full provision for the physical development of the girls, and therefore, that duty falls back upon parents.’

The chapter proceeds to advise parents how they can fulfil their obligations. This includes advice on Sunday observances and the intellectual culture from family readings. Providing details of suitable reading material Mason suggests that a further advantage gleaned from this activity was that it allowed parents to correct provincialisms since, ‘However anxious all may be, on historical grounds, to preserve

\[217\] Ibid. p. 70/72.
This suggests that it was common practice for parents to attempt to eradicate any local accents their children may have adopted and this is supported in a comment made by James Bryce, a Taunton commissioner for Lancashire in 1868. ‘When a Lancashire merchant or manufacturer sends his sons from home, he desires as often as not to send them a long way off, partly that they may lose their northern tongue, partly that they may form new acquaintances, and be quite away from home influences.’

Lecture VIII discusses parental obligation in ensuring that favourable characteristics are developed. Pursuits of ‘self-culture’ are detailed, including needlework, household duties, music, reading, and walks. Philanthropic activities including Sunday school teaching and cottage visiting are encouraged and regarded as duties and evidence of service to others, ‘for it is only in doing that we learn to do; through service, that we learn to serve: and it is more and more felt that a life of service is the Christian, and even the womanly ideal of life.’

The idea that a woman’s duty was to ‘serve’ was a dominant feature of Victorian society.

The chapter concludes by considering what to do with the girls who had a ‘craving for a career.’ Mason refers to these young women as the ‘girl of the period’ who ‘deserves more consideration than she gets.’

Clearly ‘The worst of it is, these homebred daughters are not being fitted to fill a place in this work-a-day world at any

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218 Ibid. p.234.
220 Mason, C Home Education, 1886, p. 271.
221 Ibid. p.273.
future time. Already, amateur work is at a discount; nobody is wanted to do work she has not been specially trained for.’ Mason proceeds to offer advice to families with grown up daughters, suggesting that dressmaking, cookery, etc., were not enough and they should receive ‘recognized training for some art or profession.’ Furthermore parents ‘owe this to their girls as much as to their boys.’\textsuperscript{222} Whilst as previously mentioned these last two chapters do not appear in the revised editions of \textit{Home Education} they had an impact on the audience and would have attracted the interest of the female educationalists and parents with concerns over the future of their daughters. Indeed the seeds of the House of Education may have emanated from these observations.

In an article aptly entitled ‘The Little Manual Called Home Education’ Coombs discusses the concept of the originality of Mason’s work, providing evidence to suggest that she was clearly influenced by the scientific observations made by Dr William Carpenter and the educational ideas of Herbert Spencer.\textsuperscript{223} A revised version of Dr Carpenter’s \textit{Mental Physiology} was published in 1874,\textsuperscript{224} whilst Herbert Spencer’s essays \textit{On Education} had been published in 1861. It is not clear how many of those touched by \textit{Home Education} were familiar with the work of these men although Lady Aberdeen was familiar with Spencer’s essays.\textsuperscript{225} Whilst it is not within the rationale of this thesis to consider in great detail either Charlotte’s educational

\textsuperscript{222} Ibid. p.275.
\textsuperscript{223} Spencer (1820-1903) wrote on Psychology, sociology and education, criticizing rote learning and classics, promoting science.
\textsuperscript{224} First published 1839.
\textsuperscript{225} Lady Aberdeen allegedly informed Henrietta Franklin that Mason’s \textit{Home Education} was ‘sensible’ and ‘rather on the lines of Spencer.’ Gibbon, M, \textit{Netta}, 1960, p.113.
philosophy or indeed the originality of her ideas, since these topics have been well researched by educationalists, the following observation is warranted. Quoting from Herbert Spencer, Mason recognized the minimum preparation with which parents entered their parental responsibilities:

For shoemaking or housebuilding for the management of a ship or of a locomotive engine, a long apprenticeship is needful. Is it then that the unfolding of a human being in body and mind is so comparatively simple a process that any one may superintend and regulate it with no preparation whatever?  

Moreover, whilst Spencer had lamented this shortcoming, Mason was prepared to do something about it. Possibly the importance of Home Education at this particular stage was in taking a subject which would have been beyond the comprehension of many of her intended audience and making it more understandable and readable.

Evidently through her work as a lecturer at Bishop Otter Charlotte had gained a sound insight into educational theory. Mason’s style has been criticised particularly for its repetition. In her research into British governesses, Alice Renton suggests Mason’s ‘sensible ideas were often cloaked in the cloying phrases typical of women writing in her time.’ Additionally her style is often ‘conversational’ but this is understandable in view of the intended readership. This was not intended for educational philosophers and was arguably more attractive to the parental audience at which it was aimed; particularly mothers whose own education may have been questionable and who lacked a sound knowledge of educational theory which would be necessary to comprehend the scientific arguments, terminology and concepts contained in other

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226 Quoted in Home Education, 1905, p.3.
available material. Indeed the lack of suitable literature was recognized and highlighted by Mason several years later:

There is a literature of its own for almost every craft and profession; while you can count on the fingers of one hand the scientific works on early training plain and practical enough to be of use to parents. There are no colleges, associations, classes, lectures for parents, or those of an age to become parents; no register of the discoveries – physical or psychological – in child-nature, which should make education a light task.\footnote{Mason, C in ‘The History and Aims of the PNEU’, 1899, p.9.}

Formation of the Parents’ (National) Education Union (PEU/PNEU)

Among the audience profoundly affected by these lectures was Emmeline Steinthal,\footnote{Mrs Steinthal’s Obituary in the \textit{Ilkley Free Press} and \textit{Gazette}, 12.08.1921 refers to her as ‘one of the most prominent educational and social workers in Wharfedale.’ She was Honorary secretary of Ripon Mother’s Union between 1903 & 1913. With Mrs Arnold-Forster she founded the Loan Training Fund to help needy gentlewomen train for various professions. Bradford Central Library} wife of a wealthy Bradford industrialist, Francis Steinthal. Her daughter Dorothea, would later recollect how the PEU had been formed:

Mother wrote to Miss Mason after reading an article in the paper, only to find the author and she were both living in Bradford. They met, and decided to hold a drawing-room meeting for parents who would be interested, who could form a society to carry out Miss Mason’s ideas on education. This meeting was held in our home … a committee was elected, the name Parents’ Educational Union was chosen and the first programme arranged.\footnote{Letter from Dorothea Steinthal to E Kitching, 16.01.1950, Box 51.}
Mason’s involvement with the Steinthal children is reflected in the following passage, which also indicates that Emmeline was one of the first mothers to put Mason’s theories into practice:

We loved ‘Aunt Mai’ with her slow smile and gentle voice, and every Christmas brought a batch of books with a personal inscription for each of us. A light-coloured, illustrated ‘Chaucer for Children’ and another ‘Queen Victoria’s Dolls’ I remember specially. We moved to Wharfemead Ilkley in April. Soon afterwards mother began to teach us under Miss Mason’s guidance.²³¹

Allegedly incorporating Mason’s words, Elsie Kitching noted that the object of the society was to study the Laws of Education as they related to moral training, religious upbringing, bodily development and intellectual work through a programme of lectures and discussion.²³² With regard to membership it was agreed that the society should be open to parents of all classes,²³³ and that fathers were encouraged to participate. Given the patriarchal nature of Victorian society this appears to be a wise decision!

Furthermore Elsie’s paper indicates that the inaugural meeting of the PEU was held at Bradford Grammar School where 80 members enrolled.²³⁴ The venue for the inauguration of the society was made possible by the interest shown by father of six,

²³¹ Ibid.
²³² Kitching, E, ‘The History and Aims of the PNEU’, 1899, p.4.
²³³ It was unlikely that those from the lower classes would feel comfortable at these meetings.
²³⁴ Ibid. p.7. Elsie Kitching’s paper suggests 200 cards were sent out following the drawing room meeting.
the Rev. Keeling, Headmaster of Bradford Grammar School. The Reverend Keeling and his wife took an active interest in the success of the association, both becoming Council members. It is feasible that Keeling’s interest in the PEU was initially aroused by Rooper and likely that they both had attended Mrs Steinthal’s drawing room meeting.

Whilst Mason does not appear to have listed the ‘dozen present’ at this meeting it is highly probable that it included Edith Forster, the wife of the wealthy manufacturer Edward Arnold Forster who was the adopted son of the late W E Forster, the liberal MP responsible for the Education Act of 1870. The Forsters took an active part in the growth of the organization, both serving as Council members. Moreover, they had a London residence and friends in the capital which ensured they could play a useful part in encouraging the fledgling society in the south.

Although the PEU was initiated in Bradford several of the early members were not local including the wife of the Reverend Hart-Davis from Dunsden Vicarage in Berkshire. After reading Home Education, mother of eight Mary Hart-Davis felt compelled to write to Mason to advise her that, ‘it has given me inspiration, strength of purpose, guidance and courage which has made a real difference to me in health.’

The letter emphasizes the difficulties faced by those living in remote rural areas, ‘We are far away from High Schools and many modern advantages are quite out of our

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235 West Yorkshire Archives (03.06.2003) have no material concerning Keeling’s involvement with the PEU/PNEU.

236 W.E. Forster served as MP for Bradford 1861-1886. His wife Jane was the daughter of Dr Arnold, the headmaster of Rugby School.
reach, but your book has made me feel what can be aimed at and accomplished in
“Home Education” - and every hour of the day I try how near I can come to your
ideal. A further letter illustrates contemporary debate concerning the value of
both home and school education, highlighting the practical, including financial
difficulties, in providing a satisfactory education to a large family:

If we were within easy distance of a high school I should have no
doubt it was the best education – but we are 4 ½ miles from Reading-
and the “boarding out” system I cannot bring my mind to accept –
besides which I suppose the expense for 3 or 4 at once is far beyond
us. So we go on with a German governess whose general influence is
quite excellent, and I try to supply all she does not possess. But then I
say to myself sometimes “What if in after life the girls should desire
definite careers? May they not then feel totally unequal to any thing
like competition with others – all together behind in any special
subject – or will the general intelligence & width of mind caused by
constant intercourse & conversation with their father & me enable
them to make up for what they otherwise do not acquire- I do find
practically that they are ahead of other children in receptiveness –
knowledge of the meanings of words – power to enter into any
subjects, politics, science or literature which may be talked of before
them … But put against this number of things they are not achieving
which others are, and the scale is heavy on the other side. No one
governess can give all one wants. One child with a special turn for
figures is standing still at reduction at 12 years old for want of higher
teaching, another with a turn for drawing gets no free hand training for
the eye. Another at 9 years old has not begun French. Theory of
music, history, botany, can only be done “when mother has time.” …
How can I be like a trained teacher I feel utterly unequal to it at times?
… The larger the family the greater the difficulty for the mother and
governess to supply all they want – and yet, the greater when they
grow up the absolute importance that they should each be “fit for
something”

237 Letter from Mary Hart-Davis to CM, 06.11.1887, PNEU Box 2.
238 Ibid. 11.11.1887.
Evidently Mary Hart-Davis recognized that the possibility or even desirability of all seven daughters making suitable marriages was limited, as was the likelihood of being able to provide financial security for them. Consequently they required an education, which would enable them to take advantage of the professions and more respectable opportunities, which were gradually opening to educated women. Undoubtedly this vicar’s wife was one of those who would have been able to relate to Lectures VII and VIII. Correspondence between Elsie and one of the daughters suggests that several of the daughters were successful in the field of science although their careers were shortened through early death or indeed marriage, ‘Katharine died unfortunately of colitis before she could finish her training to be a doctor at the Royal Free Hospital. She was at one time on the staff of Reading University in the Botany department under Dr Keeble … Mary took her science degree at Newnham College & taught until she married.’

Whilst this illustrates how women were entering the scientific professions, it also demonstrates how respectable women were expected to curtail their careers on marriage. This convention that women should revert to domesticity on marriage helped to reinforce opposition to higher education for women on the grounds that it made no economic sense.

Furthermore it is evident where Hart-Davis’s interest in education comes from. She advises Mason that her father was the 11th Baronet, Sir Thomas Acland. A letter written to her parents in 1879 suggests that the whole family were concerned by educational provision and receptive to new ideas. Considering the School System as

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239 Letter from Helen Hart-Davis to Elsie Kitching, 1951, Ibid.
240 Sir Thomas was MP for West Somerset 1837-47 & 1885-86, & North Devon 1865-85.
'stereotyped’ Mrs Hart-Davis wrote, ‘but still every fresh expression of opinion does good.' Mrs Hart-Davis evidently encouraged her elderly father to correspond with Mason on educational matters, and Cholmondeley suggests Mason later visited him in Devon in addition to reprinting some of his articles in the *Parents’ Review.* He wrote to Charlotte in 1896 expressing his ‘gratitude for the very kind notice of his little book in the Parents’ Review of this month.’

Moreover, it is most likely that Mary Hart-Davis was influential in persuading her London-based sister, Mrs F H Anson, to participate in the expanding movement. Mrs Hart-Davis would play an important part in the running of the PNEU, as a Council Member, a contributor to *Parents’ Review,* and she would prove to be a staunch supporter of Charlotte during the PNEU Schism of 1894. Whilst Mrs Anson would also maintain an interest in the society as a Council and Executive Committee member, her loyalty would be questioned by Henrietta Franklin, Mason’s formidable advocate.

Another influential early member was Mrs Boyd Carpenter who was married to the Bishop of Ripon, William Boyd Carpenter. Cholmondeley maintains that Mrs Boyd Carpenter wrote to Mason for advice in 1887. Both the Bishop and his wife played

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242 Cholmondeley, 1960, p.19 - date not recorded.
244 Cholmondeley, 1960, p. 19. This has not been located.
an important role in the expansion of the PEU. Mrs Boyd Carpenter became a Council member whilst her husband became a Vice-President in 1890.  

The formation of the PEU was enhanced by the patronage of Lord and Lady Aberdeen who became Presidents of the association. Lady Aberdeen wrote to Mason in 1887, ‘Will you allow me to send you a line of sincere thanks for your book “Home Education”. It cannot fail to be most helpful & to be productive of much good. May I also venture to ask if you know of any governesses, either foreign or English who is imbued with the ideas about children expressed in this book … one too who would wish to work with the mother.’ The encouragement of such a distinguished lady evidently helped to persuade Mason that there would indeed by a demand for governesses trained in her methods when the House of Education was established. Moreover, the letter indicates that at least some aristocratic ladies were eager to be actively involved in the education of their children.

Furthermore Lady Aberdeen actively sought the support of other members of the upper classes and was instrumental in aiding the expansion of the society in London. A further letter invites Mason to speak at a meeting at Hamilton House, the residence of Lord and Lady Wimbourne. The letter advises Mason to send the names of the ladies she would like invited and, ‘pray do not cut down the list; we should try to get

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245 William Boyd-Carpenter was Bishop of Ripon between 1884 & 1911. British Library hold some material, but enquiries (28.08.2002) suggest it does not include material relating to his early involvement in the PNEU.
246 Lady Aberdeen was the daughter of Dudley Coutts Marjoribanks, an ardent philanthropist. Haddo House Estate (06.08.2002) maintain they were unable to “establish any immediate reference” to Mason or the PNEU. The National Library of Scotland hold material relating to Lady Aberdeen spread throughout their collections. (08.07.2002)
247 Letter from Lady Aberdeen to CM, 12.12.1887, PNEU Box 2.
as many as possible to come, for I am sure that your suggestions to mothers of the upper classes will be most valuable.'

Evidently an invitation from Lady Aberdeen would be more acceptable than one from an aspiring educationalist. However, the PEU was only one of the many commitments of this philanthropic lady who did not hesitate to turn down invitations to address the Bradford organization. ‘I feel that I have already undertaken too much in this direction ... If I can see any prospect, later on, of taking a Wednesday in one of the winter months, I will let you know.'

**Expansion**

Mason would later claim that she sought the advice of influential educationalists and ‘leaders of thought’ prior to the expansion the society, and many of these agreed to become Vice-Presidents of the now London-based expanded society, including the Archbishop of York, and the Bishops of London and Wakefield. Initial Council members reveal the diverse appeal of the movement; how it attracted professional men and women including the pioneering female gynaecologist Dame Mary Scharlieb, Judge Gates QC, the psychologist Professor Sully, the novelist L T

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248 Ibid. 18.05.1888.
249 Ibid. 05.10.1888.
250 E.g. Former Bishop of London, Rev. J C Welldon, Misses Beale, Buss and Clough, Sir J Fitch, Professor Sully, & Canon Liddon. Mason’s relationship with the female educationalists is addressed in Chapter 4.
251 Other Vice-Presidents included the Earl and Countess of Meath, Archdeacon Blunt, Misses Beale, Buss and Shirreff.
252 Scharlieb studied at the London School of Medicine for Women. She corresponded with the constitutional suffrage leader, Millicent Garrett Fawcett and Dorothea Beale. Influenced by Social Darwinism, she contributed articles to the *Eugenics Review* criticizing the emphasis on games/sports in Girls’ High Schools, which she considered caused irreparable damage to adolescent girls.
253 Author of *The Teachers Handbook of Psychology* (1886) Sully was considered an authority on psychology.
Meade, \(^{254}\) educationalists including Robert Herbert Quick, \(^{255}\) and Oscar Browning \(^{256}\)
as well as concerned, affluent parents including Lady Isabel and Mortimer Margesson. \(^{257}\)

In January 1890 a Provisional Executive Committee was established in London and a summary of the minutes is shown in Appendix 1. Early Executive Committee Meeting minutes indicate that a number of branches were being established in London and elsewhere. \(^{258}\) At the inaugural Annual Meeting of the PNEU held in June 1890, the educationalist Canon Daniel, the first Chairman of the Executive Committee, summarized what he considered to be the object of the union. \(^{259}\)

Those interested in the formation of this Union felt that the so-called school is only one of a large number of schools, of which the most important is home, and that the so-called teacher is only one of a large army of teachers, the most important of which is the parent. Home education must precede school education, go on concurrently with it, and follow it … It is hoped that persons familiar with education of children will show how home can best co-operate with school, and that medical men will occasionally give addresses to parents bearing upon physical education. \(^{260}\)

\(^{254}\) Elizabeth Thomasina Meade wrote a number of novels including *Wild Kitty & A World of Girls.*
\(^{256}\) Oscar Browning had been a Master at Eton (1860-75) prior to becoming a Cambridge Don. He corresponded with CM, and later acted as an Inspector of the House of Education. King’s College, hold 79 letters which Mason wrote to Browning between 1888 and 1913.
\(^{257}\) Minutes of Provisional Executive Committee, High School, Pimlico, 18.01.1890. Box 34.
\(^{258}\) Lady Margesson started Belgravia & Westminster, Miss Sharland Addison Road & West Kensington, Mrs Steinthal and CM ran Bradford and Fanny Wynne was responsible for Forest Gate branch. Executive Minutes, 30.05.1890, Box 34.
\(^{259}\) He was Principal of St Johns, Battersea.
\(^{260}\) Canon Daniel quoted in ‘The History and Aims of the PNEU, by Elsie Kitching, 1899, p.17.
As the General Honorary Secretary, Charlotte undertook lecturing tours to assist with the expansion of the PNEU,\(^{261}\) and through these she was able to secure the support of prominent ladies including that of Lincolnshire-based Frances Dallas-Yorke, who was prepared to offer Mason hospitality during her promotional visits. ‘My province can only lie in the serving of tables for either luncheon or tea but anything I can do for you in those lines will always be a pleasure. I see you speak at Hull on 1\(^{st}\) Oct. If I have an opportunity I shall hope to make your acquaintance.’\(^{262}\)

The Report of the Central Council of the PNEU in 1892 records that Mrs Dallas-Yorke provided a venue for one of Mason’s promotional lectures at her London residence.\(^{263}\) Furthermore this report mentions the hospitality provided by Frances’s daughter, the Duchess of Portland.\(^{264}\) It was in the Duchess’s Drawing Room in London that many of the prominent London members would become affiliated to the organization, including the mother of two young daughters, Mrs Whitaker Thompson.

A letter which Blanche Thompson wrote to Mason in July 1892 is evidence of both the impact which *Home Education* made on such ladies as well as the importance of networking to the expansion of the PNEU.

Since the meeting held at the Duchess of Portland’s, which I had the good fortune to be asked to attend, I have been deeply interested in the work of the PNEU and am trying my utmost to spread the knowledge

\(^{261}\) Eg. Mason’s diary for 1890 reveals on 03.01.1890 she arrived in London, by 05.01.1890 she was at Bournemouth, returning to London on 07.01.1890. Made a number of visits prior to attending the Provisional Executive Meeting on 18.01.1890. On 23.01.1890 Mason was in Leicester. Box 2.

\(^{262}\) Letter from Frances Dallas-Yorke to CM, 25.09.1890, PNEU Box 2.


\(^{264}\) Winifred Cavendish-Bentinck, Duchess of Portland (1863-1954) was Mistress of the Robes between 1914 & 1923. Nottinghamshire Archives (10.07.2002) confirmed her correspondence has not been deposited with them.
of it among my friends. I hope to induce several mothers to become members like myself & to take in the Parents Review … I have already sent in some names, both through Mrs Hallam Murray & Mr Perrin of mothers, anxious to join but feeling so deeply interested in your book which I am now studying & in the Parents Review I am impelled to write to you myself & claim an introduction on the ground of sympathy with your valuable work & high appreciation of the counsel & teaching I am gaining from ‘Home Education’ … It is with many apologies that I trespass this upon your valuable time but I should like to be allowed to share in spreading the knowledge of your work & having a married sister with a family living in Ottawa I think I might be able to stir up some interest there should you be anxious to establish a colonial branch in Canada as well as is already done in Sydney. Some of the names of your Council are very familiar to me, as personal friends notably Judge Gates & Mrs Gates & Mrs Symes Thompson & Mrs Arnold Forster. 265

Blanche Whitaker Thompson became a Council and Executive Committee member and is a prime example of the importance of networking to Mason’s success since among those whom she introduced to the movement was Henrietta Franklin.

The PNEU Report for 1891/92 reveals how the association had been successful in attracting the support of further Vice-Presidents and Council members. 266 A number of bishops were involved including the Bishop of Durham, B F Westcott, who became a Council member and the Bishop of Wakefield, Dr Hime, who became a Vice-President. 267 The Bishop of London, Dr Frederick Temple, was approached to

265 Letter from Blanche Thompson to CM, 10.07.1892 in PNEU Box 2.
266 Additional Vice-Presidents included the Bishops of Winchester and Hull, Sir Frederick and Lady Hogg & Archdeacon Farrar. Additional Council members included Dr Helen Webb & Alfred Herbert Tubby an orthopaedic surgeon. PNEU Report 1891/92, p.3.
267 He was Bishop of Durham between 1890 &1901. The Deputy Chapter Librarian, Durham Cathedral (13.08.2002) Geoff Trelor, MacQuarie University (13.08.2002) & Durham University Library (14.08.2002) cannot locate material relating to CM or PNEU.
endorse the PNEU, becoming a Vice-President and allowing the Union to hold their annual meetings at London House to illustrate his continued support.

Whilst the patronage of those among the church hierarchy is recorded in PNEU Reports and lists, attempts to provide written evidence of their involvement has not been successful. Elsie Kitching attempted to locate correspondence concerning the involvement of the church hierarchy and the reply she received from Bishop Welldon highlights the difficulties in verifying the nature of their involvement: ‘I was a great admirer of Miss Mason; but I am not sure that I can lay my hands upon the letters which she wrote me a good many years ago.’

This chapter has provided reasons why Mason’s attempts to create an association of parents was successful, has illustrated the importance of networking in this and has provided an insight into her educational ideas. Publication of *Home Education* and the establishment of the PEU/PNEU illustrate that she recognized the importance of making this knowledge accessible to lay people. The expansion and longevity of the association suggests that her theories were well received and viable. In Mason’s obituary published in *The Times* it was claimed that ‘the loyalty which she inspired was more than could be accounted for by the mere weight and force of her

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268 Guildhall Library (14.08.2002) confirmed they have no records directly relating to CM or the PNEU. Lambeth Palace Library (19.08.2002) advised catalogues concerning the Bishops of London do not include correspondence with CM.
269 E.g. Reported in the *PR*, 1894/5, p.329.
270 E.g. Minutes of the Provisional Executive Committee (18.01.1890) lists the Archbishop of York, Bishops of London, Ripon, Wakefield, Archdeacon Blunt, & Canon Capel-Cure as Vice-Presidents. Box 34.
271 Enquiries with Hampshire Record Office (17.08.2002) relating to the Bishop of Winchester, reveal no mention of Mason or the PEU.
272 Letter to Elsie Kitching from Bishop Welldon,10.09.1923, Box 51.
educational philosophy.\textsuperscript{273} This is not a criticism of her educational theories but a testament to her personality and her charisma, which clearly helped convince others to support the fledgling organisation.

\textsuperscript{273} The Times, 17.01.1923.
CHAPTER 4

CHARLOTTE AND THE FEMALE EDUCATIONAL PIONEERS

In the expansion of the PEU Mason sought the advice and invited the criticism of some of the most respected women in the field of education including Anne Clough, Dorothea Beale, Frances Buss and Emily Shirreff. These women had actively campaigned for improvements with regard to the education of middle-class girls. Both Beale and Buss had given evidence to the Taunton Commission in 1865, which had commented on the superficiality of the educational provision for middle-class girls. Shirreff and her sister Maria Grey were prolific writers and instrumental in founding the Girls’ Public Day School Company in 1871, which established fee-paying High Schools. Clough, who together with Josephine Butler had established the North of England Council for Promoting the Higher Education of Women in 1867, was involved in the founding of one of the first colleges of higher education for women, Newnham College Cambridge in 1871.

These unmarried, independent women did not adhere to the Victorian ideal of womanhood and had faced much opposition in their endeavours. Respected doctors had insisted that girls’ health would suffer from serious study. Parents had feared that their daughters might be radically transformed and unmarriageable; others had expressed concern for the future of society. Whilst Mason was a struggling elementary school teacher, these pioneers were successfully implementing reforms,
which provided the groundwork for subsequent educational developments. Their efforts assisted in the development of a more enlightened attitude towards education, thereby providing an atmosphere in which Mason’s philosophy might find some sympathy. It was important for Mason to establish a relationship with these revered ladies since their patronage would facilitate the expansion of the PEU and provide it with respect. This chapter addresses whether their contribution was substantial or merely cosmetic.

Anne Clough

The support of Anne Clough was valuable not only to the expansion of the PEU but also with regard to the establishment of the House of Education. Mason appears to have many shared interests with Clough. Both were allegedly the daughters of Liverpool merchants who experienced business difficulties and an early demise. Similarly both were pupils at the Home and Colonial Training Institute and therefore influenced by the work of Pestalozzi and Froebel. However, whilst with the support of her family Clough was able to establish a school for 20 to 30 middle-class children paying 30 shillings a quarter in Ambleside in 1852, Mason taught a mixed class of infants in Worthing. Interestingly it was to Clough’s school that Selina Healey, one of Mason’s colleagues at the Home and Colonial came as an assistant in 1861. Evidence within the archives suggests that Mason occasionally visited Miss Healey in Ambleside and even assisted in the school but this was after Clough’s departure in 1862. Mason later recalled: ‘Miss Clough was naturally among the first of those

\(^{274}\) Clough, B. A, *A Memoir of A J Clough*, Edward Arnold, 1897, p.89
\(^{275}\) Elsie Kitching, ‘Notes’, Box 44.
leaders of thought to whom I wrote, not only on account of her position as Head and Foundress of Newnham, but because I held her in high honour, though I had not yet the privilege of knowing her personally. However it is possible that Mason used the acquaintance with Selina Healey and her knowledge of the Ambleside School, as a means of approaching this educationalist.

An advocate of day schools, Clough published *Hints on the Organization of Girls’ Schools*, which highlighted what she perceived as the shortcomings of home education:

> This may be very good … especially when the help of good masters is added, which … renders it very expensive … There are fewer appliances for study and more distractions than at school; there is a want of the excitement and interest created by companions and variety of teachers, joined to the deficiency of the system, for among governesses many begin without much experience; nor are they in a good position for gaining it, since they have no opportunity for comparing themselves with other teachers and thus obtaining ‘useful hints.’

Whilst critical of home education it is suggestive that Clough would be receptive to progressive societies. Her assistance in the establishment of the University Association of Assistant Mistresses (1882) and the Cambridge Training College for Women (1885) supports this impression. Moreover, she became a Vice–President of the PNEU and participated in the early meetings. Following her death in 1892, Blanche Clough, contacted Mason with regard to the biography she was writing on

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276 *PR* Vol.8, p.51.
277 Clough, 1897, p.113.
her aunt. Mason produced an article, which was printed in *Parent’s Review* and provided reasons why Clough was approached as well as an insight into her contribution to the society.

Mason regarded Clough as being supportive of parental involvement.

I knew that she, almost alone I thought amongst educationalists, had very strong sympathy with parents … She understood and believed in parents of the sort who educated their children quietly on the lines of *Evenings at Home* etc … from her I felt I should get real and active sympathy in a movement intended to bring parents to the front, as recognized educators of their children, at a time when the extraordinary ability and force of character of many head-masters and mistresses had a tendency to throw the educational (in the sense of training) work of parents into the background.278

This passage reflects Charlotte’s concern that parents felt intimidated by the dominating personalities of head teachers and consequently considered their own contribution to their children’s development as secondary. She clearly considered that Clough shared this opinion.

Within the archives several letters written by the 70-year-old Miss Clough during 1890 suggest that she was a source of inspiration and indeed aspiration to Mason, since they appear to emphasize her continued importance and contribution to Newnham College despite her age. In a letter dated March 1890 from ‘Clough Hall’ it is evident that Clough has written an article for the fledgling *Parents’ Review*, a journal Charlotte had launched in February 1890 to propagate the ideas of the

278 *PR*, Vol.8, p.50
PNEU.\textsuperscript{279} It is equally clear that she has other priorities and is a somewhat reluctant writer, ‘I am sending the paper, I could not write any more for I am just now extremely busy and it was very difficult to get it done.’\textsuperscript{280} This is further illustrated by a subsequent pessimistic letter dated 8\textsuperscript{th} October 1890: ‘We are very busy with our College affairs - I cannot help about setting up a meeting, and at present I do not think there is any prospect of setting up a society. There is a private one that will probably go on and would not join with yours.’ On a more positive note Clough suggests that if Dr Butler was willing to organize the meeting ‘I will try to bring 2 or 3 friends but this is all I can do … If I can see them I will mention your wishes to have a meeting – but anyhow it had better be deferred – unless Mrs Butler can attend to it. She of course knows every lady in Cambridge.’\textsuperscript{281}

These letters also illustrate the advice which Clough allegedly gave Mason with regard to the expansion of the PEU, advising that the society should be local, small beginnings, with new branches formed in response to local demand and by local effort. Clearly Clough recognized the importance of networking and therefore the advisability of obtaining the support of the wife of Dr Butler who ‘knows every lady in Cambridge.’ Dr Henry Montagu Butler was one of the respected educators whom Mason had approached. He had been the Head Master of Harrow (1860-1885) a position he resigned on securing the post of Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, becoming Vice-Chancellor between 1889 and 1891. The patronage of this couple was useful and it is implicit that Clough helped to secure it. The PNEU Report of

\textsuperscript{279} This is discussed in Chapter 5.
\textsuperscript{280} Letter from AJ Clough to CM, 04.03.1890, Box 44.
\textsuperscript{281} Ibid, 08.10.1890.
1892 lists Dr Butler as a Vice-President with Mrs Butler recorded as a Council member.

Mason refers to Clough’s ‘practical kindness and considerateness’ illustrated by a £5 donation ‘entirely of her own accord.’ Aware of the substantial costs incurred in travelling and propagating the society, Clough was prepared to provide financial support too. Evidently visits to Cambridge during this time proved fruitful to Mason, providing a further opportunity for her to witness how a Ladies’ College could be successfully run and possibly an incentive to establish her own. Mason observed the ‘tender deference’ of Clough’s friends and associates, the ‘extreme friendliness’ shown to each student by the ‘revered principal.’ Dyhouse suggests that Clough deliberately adopted a ‘maternal’ approach towards her students and was determined to ‘preserve an intimate, familiar atmosphere.’ Mason would later adopt a similar protective and maternal approach and was possibly inspired by Clough. In addition, an insight is given into the way in which Clough lived. In establishing the House of Education Mason claimed she wished it to be a model of ‘great economy and perfect efficiency.’ Was she influenced by Clough’s living accommodation, which she referred to as a ‘little sanctum, furnished with the plainness of an anchorite’s cell?’

Furthermore whilst Clough was a ‘reluctant’ writer for the Parents’ Review, she contributed a poignant article, ‘Thoughts and Suggestions on Early Education,’ in

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282 PR Vol.8, p.50.
283 Ibid, p.54.
which she discussed the need for ‘classes’ to ‘instruct young girls who wished to be
nursery governesses or nursemaids.’ Clough stressed this training should entail a
‘class for the elder girls in which, the principles and the way of dealing with children
theoretically, as well as practically could be taught.’\textsuperscript{286} She evidently recognized the
lack of adequate training for those wishing to care for the very young children and in
publicizing this problem may have helped convince Mason that her attempts to
establish a training college would meet with the approval of this eminent
educationalist. It is therefore quite possible that whilst others including Lady
Aberdeen, initially planted the idea of her opening a college, her association with
Clough made this a reality. Clough’s achievement in establishing Newnham as a 52-
year old lady was clearly a source of inspiration to Mason who was of a similar age
when she established the House of Education in 1892.

Mason makes a most interesting comment with regard to Clough’s attitude to men. ‘I
noticed this attitude of deference towards all the University authorities, as if, having
contended for the prize of an equal education for women as for men, she was anxious
to receive it rather as a boon conceded than as a right successfully claimed.’\textsuperscript{287}

In her research Dyhouse has established that many involved in the campaign for the
expansion of higher education ‘retained an intellectual timidity, a deference to male
academic values and intellectual authority,’ which she perceives as being a reflection

\textsuperscript{286} Ibid. Vol.1.1890 p.183.
\textsuperscript{287} PR, Vol.8, p.50.
of the ideas of ‘feminine modesty’ and ‘male precedence’ inculcated since childhood.\textsuperscript{288}

Evidently Clough advised Mason of the problems she experienced in the early days of Newnham with five students, relating an incident when the actions of the female students were closely monitored and how ‘Cambridge was greatly scandalized that the Newnham ladies carried their tennis racquets into King’s College Chapel when they attended Evensong.’\textsuperscript{289} Whilst the deeply conservative and patriarchal nature of the early higher educational institutions has been frequently commented on it is interesting to observe that not all of the young female students were able to adhere to being the picture of perfect femininity all the time. Furthermore in relating the ‘fracas’ Charlotte mentions that Newnham College opened with just five students, only one more than the House of Education! ‘Small beginnings,’ another of Clough’s recommendations which would be successfully implemented.

\textbf{France Buss}

Mason’s visits to Cambridge were also important in establishing contacts with other educationists and it was through Clough’s hospitality that she met the London-based Frances Mary Buss, who also actively encouraged the expansion of the PEU. Having benefited from evening classes at Queen’s College in 1848 and supported by her family, Buss opened the North London Collegiate School for Girls in Campden Town

\textsuperscript{288} Dyhouse, 1981, p.35.
\textsuperscript{289} \textit{PR}, Vol.8, p.55.
in 1850. For a quarterly fee of two guineas in a neighbourhood ‘thickly inhabited by professional men,’ girls enjoyed a useful curriculum with music, painting and dancing relegated as ‘extras,’ in the afternoon.

A number of factors would have made the PEU attractive to Buss including the importance of the mother in education. Buss believed that a mother needed to be religious and intelligent and that home influence was imperative. Lessons took place in the mornings in order that the afternoons could be spent at home. Consequently Buss considered a large day school preferable to a boarding school, which in her opinion, ‘destroyed home feelings.’ She maintained, ‘I have no liking for large boarding schools. My ideal of education is large, well-conducted day schools, with all the life and discipline that numbers alone can give.’ In addition she advocated adequate preparation for school, a belief reinforced when she considered the entry examination results of the lower middle-class girls entering the Camden School, which she established in 1872. The results indicated that 31 girls failed to provide a correct answer in any subject causing Buss to claim, ‘the ignorance of the children is beyond belief.’

With regard to the existence of a relationship with Buss evidence is rather limited. However the archives of the North London Collegiate School contain a letter from Mason to Miss Ridley, a teacher at the school. The letter dated October 1889

290 Kamm, J How Different from us – Miss Buss and Miss Beale, 1958, p.41
291 Holcombe, 1973,p.27
292 Kamm, 1958, p.170
concerns arrangements for fourteen meetings being held throughout London to promote the PEU. Mason acknowledges the practical and financial contribution of Buss who was ‘being extremely good undertaking all the trouble and expenses of securing a large audience in the Hall of her school,’ and had agreed to incur printing costs. The letter concludes by asking Miss Ridley to act as the organizing secretary and consider undertaking the secretaryship of the North London Branch, illustrative of Mason heeding Clough’s advice in utilizing local people in the establishment of branches. It is interesting however that Mason writes to Ridley and not to Buss. Whilst this could imply that Mason did not wish to trouble her with ‘minor’ matters it could also be an indication that Mason’s relationship with Buss was quite distant and the lack of correspondence between these ladies in the archives appears to substantiate this.

Buss evidently participated in a variety of associations including the Association of Head Mistresses, which she had founded and presided over since 1874. As a Vice-President of the PNEU and despite her failing health, Buss attended and participated in the Council meetings until her death at the age of 67 in 1894. In addition the PNEU Annual Report for 1893/94 records Buss as serving on the committee of the Hampstead & St John’s Wood Branch. Evidently her financial and practical contribution to the establishment of the PNEU was valuable. However it is possible that she had an impact on the development of the House of Education. Her actions with regard to relinquishing her control over the North London Collegiate after 21

294 Letter from CM to Miss Ridley, 12.10.1889, North London Collegiate School Archives.
years to Trustees and a governing body may have persuaded Mason to value her own independence. Kamm indicates that it was a decision that Buss may have regretted on occasions. Whilst she was generous in giving up the profits of the school for a fixed salary she lost her freedom of action by becoming responsible to the School Board and ‘to a woman who had been independent for so long this was a painful sacrifice; it was one which she was never entirely reconciled.’

It is feasible that when Charlotte was contemplating whether to relinquish some of her own authority in order that the College Certificate might receive Government recognition, she may have considered Buss’s action years earlier.

Evidently Buss was content for her staff to become actively involved in the PEU/PNEU. A letter from Henry Perrin, an Organizing Secretary confirms that Miss Ridley did participate in the society, offering hospitality: ‘Friday was a great success. The Misses Ridley made perfect arrangements for our comfort, and their house is admirably adapted for the purpose and so beautiful as to be sufficient entertainment in itself … and the evening cannot fail to have done much to unite the members and keep up their interest. I should strongly recommend every branch to have a similar gathering once a year.’

Other staff members from the North London Collegiate including Sophie Bryant, who became Buss’s successor, engaged in evening lectures. The PNEU Report of 1892 reveals that she lectured to the Hampstead & St John’s Wood Branch.

296 Kamm, 1958, p.102
297 Letter from Henry Perrin to CM, 01.11.1891, PNEU Box 2.
298 PNEU Report 1892, Box 23.
Dorothea Beale

Among the various lecturers listed in the Report of 1892 was Dorothea Beale lecturing on ‘The Science of Time’ in February 1891, and her contribution and continued interest in the PNEU is most evident. Letters written between 1890 and 1904 suggest that the most enduring relationship amongst the female educationalists was the association Mason formed with Beale. Born in 1831 Beale was the daughter of an eminent London physician. Her initial education was traditional involving an incompetent governess, boarding and finishing school. Her experiences in a deficient home schoolroom had a profound effect on her opinions since she would advise a contemporary that, ‘a good teacher can scarcely continue so when condemned to the monotony of the ordinary private school-room.’ Assisted by her brothers and financed by a liberal father, Beale became an early student at Queen’s College, her proficiency in both mathematics and Latin rewarded by serving as a member of staff for seven years. After a brief, unsatisfactory period as head teacher at the Clergy Daughters’ School at Casterton, Beale became the second Principal of Cheltenham Ladies’ College, a position she would hold for over 40 years. As the highly respected Principal of such a prestigious institution attended by a socially elite clientele it is apparent why Beale’s advice and support would be important to Mason.

A number of factors would have made an educational union involving parents and teachers acceptable to Beale, several of which are illustrated by observations within a

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300 Whilst Casterton had admirers (one cleric insisted he ‘would rather have built this school and church, than Blenheim or Burleigh’) its reputation suffered following Charlotte Bronte’s experience there; it provided the basis for Lowood in *Jane Eyre*. Turner, 1974, p.76.
paper given by her in 1865. Beale maintained, ‘we must endeavour to give them, while young, such habits, studies, and occupations, as will brace the mind, improve the taste, and develop the moral character.’

A deeply pious lady, she would have undoubtedly been sympathetic to the deeply religious and moralistic tone adopted in *Home Education*.

Primarily however, an organization encouraging greater co-operation between parents and teachers appealed to Beale who recalled the problems she encountered when as a 27 year old she had attempted to reform the curriculum of a struggling Cheltenham Ladies College in 1858. Cheltenham was far more select than most other educational establishments with the credentials of prospective parents carefully scrutinized to prevent daughters of ‘trades people’. The curriculum, which omitted mathematics and science, reflected the contemporary attitude that girls were, in the words of Marie Grey, ‘not educated to be wives, but to get husbands’.

Beale later wrote:

> The very name ‘college’ had an intimidating sound to parents, who were fearful that the girls ‘would be turned into boys’ … the curriculum, simple as it was, was considered too advanced and complicated. A mother, who removed her daughter at the end of one quarter, complained bitterly that it was all very well for the girl to read Shakespeare, ‘but don’t you think it is more important for her to be able to sit down at the piano and entertain her friends?’ … The teaching of arithmetic was suspect. ‘My dear lady’ a father grumbled, ‘if my daughters were going to be bankers, it would be very well to

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302 Delamont, 1978, p.135
teach arithmetic as you do, but really there is no need.’ He sent his daughters to another school.  

Correspondence with Mason suggests that the need for improved relations was an ongoing concern. A letter dated October 1890 refers to a paper she had delivered. Whilst details are scant, it is clear that Beale believes a newspaper had misinterpreted her, ‘He has aggravated me by making out that I think all teachers right and parents wrong.’ Beale explains that the article had caused quite a stir and offence to some ladies and that one ‘who stands very high in India’ advised her that it had created such a ‘sensation’ that ‘people sent it to her to induce her not to send her daughter.’  

A subsequent letter suggests that not all mothers had been scandalized by the article; one mother living in Madras had written to inform Beale of her intention to send her daughter to Cheltenham. Beale’s willingness to include such material in her correspondence offers an insight into the relationship, which developed between these two ladies, revealing a noticeable rapport. Beale does not patronize Mason and seems prepared to accept Charlotte as an equal.

Beale’s interest and contribution to the Parents’ Review is most apparent. An article entitled ‘Parents’ Educational Union’ which appeared in 1890 is illuminating. Stressing the need for a better relationship between parent and teacher by suggesting they should be ‘fellow-workers,’ She also claimed that a child should be regarded as

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303 Kamm, 1958, p.55. Beale had earlier expressed her desire for greater co-operation in an article ‘Home Life in Relation to Day Schools’ Journal of Education, June 1882, no.155-no.52, p.174. ‘There can be no real opposition between parents and teachers if both wish the children’s good … If children are to be educated as they ought, parents must work heartily together for their good.’  
304 Letter from Miss Beale to CM, 01.10.1890, PNEU Box 2.  
305 Ibid, October 1890.
the ‘foster child of the particular parent’, a view espoused by Charlotte. The following extract provides an indication of what Beale hoped the PNEU could achieve: ‘I do think that such an association as ours might do something to solve what is a very pressing question of our time, viz., “What are the relative duties of parents and children?”’306 In a letter dated January 1891 her commitment to this journal is illustrated when she advises Mason how despite being confined to her room for a fortnight with a cold and ‘a great deal of College business to attend to’, she had not neglected the *Parents Review*.307 Moreover, she provided financial assistance to help sustain the journal.308

Archival evidence suggests that Beale took an active part in establishing a PNEU branch in Cheltenham. A letter dated October 1890 refers to her taking the necessary measures to secure an audience for Mason’s address to parents and local residents.309 Moreover, the letter confirms that various other ladies involved in schools, including the headmistress of Bedford High School, Miss Belcher, would also be staying as guests. This is indicative of the interest in the PNEU, which she, as the Principal of Cheltenham Ladies College, could kindle amongst her contemporaries.310 Undoubtedly the expansion of the association benefited greatly from Beale’s recognition of the importance of networking.

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307 Letter from Miss Beale to CM, January 1891, PNEU Box 2.
308 Beale and Clough are listed as shareholders in the Parents’ Review Company established in June 1890. This is addressed in Chapter 5.
309 The Agenda is in PNEU Box 2.
310 Letter from Miss Beale to CM, October 1890, PNEU Box 2.
Beale demonstrated her support for Mason by visiting Ambleside in 1895, lecturing to the students on geometry. Later correspondence reflects a continued interest in Mason’s health and work, together with suggestions to enhance the lecture programme, ‘I hope you are better and your work flourishing, I see from accounts that it is.’ Bearing in mind the importance of hygiene and health to the PNEU Beale enquires whether Mason was familiar with a certain lady who, ‘is so charming and puts things so delicately that she does not make girls angry and she does make them feel the importance & the privilege of the happiness of doing all in the home, as perfectly as one can.’

This also offers an insight towards contemporary attitudes, reinforcing the prudish nature of middle-class Victorian society.

Turner suggests Beale was frequently shown to be an ‘insufferable prig’ with narrow views and that she perceived the aim of a teacher to be to discover ‘what seems to be the right means of training girls, so that they may best perform that subordinate part in the world to which I believe they have been called.’ However, whilst she was regarded as a somewhat conservative reformer, Digby stresses that she did not advocate the ‘cookery and needlework and enough arithmetic for accounts’ which traditional headmistresses espoused.

PNEU Annual Reports illustrate Beale’s participation in meetings. During a speech at the Annual Meeting of 1893 she ‘spoke of the great importance of co-operation between parents and teachers; of the necessity of a religious basis for education, and

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311 Ibid, July 1904.
313 Digby, 1981, p.3.
of the great help the Union had been.314 Whilst Beale undoubtedly participated in a variety of associations, evidence suggests that she became more selective, declining an invitation to join the committee of the Women’s Institute in 1897 because, ‘I constantly refuse to join Committees etc. upon which I cannot act.’315

Frances Dove

However, whilst the above educational pioneers accepted and actually promoted active parental participation in the education of their daughters, not all of the pioneers were convinced of this necessity. One notable exception was Jane Frances Dove. Dove was one of the first beneficiaries of the extension of higher education to women, leaving Girton in 1874 after three years to teach under Beale at Cheltenham Ladies’ College. With the opening of St Leonards in 1877 she was appointed as one of the first mistresses, rising to Principal in 1882, relinquishing this position to establish Wycombe Abbey in 1896. At such establishments emphasis was placed on academic and sporting achievements. Similar to the reformed public schools for Boys emphasis was also firmly placed on the ‘Victorian Value’ of duty. Writing in 1952 on the popularity of the reformed girls’ public schools Winifred Peck maintained, ‘It was an age of philanthropy, of social work, of church work, of the stirring of the suffrage movement. The more serious society ladies were amongst the leaders … they began to feel that their daughters well disposed of at boarding schools would leave them freer for their activities, and that girls in a school like Wycombe

314 PNEU General Annual Report, June 1894, p.15.
315 Letter from Miss Beale, 17.05.1897, The Women’s Library.
would learn to carry on the torch and devote their lives to public service even more wholeheartedly than their elders. Whilst this illustrates the importance of duty it also suggests that parental participation was neither expected nor encouraged in these boarding Schools. Furthermore it implies that some affluent parents were preoccupied either in their philanthropic activities or in contemporary politics and content to relinquish involvement in their daughters’ education.

The Honorable Henrietta Franklin who came to prominence in the PNEU in the mid-1890s was an exception, and courageously though futilely attempted to promote the work of the PNEU on a visit to St Leonards. This is recorded in a biography written by Monk Gibbon entitled *Netta*:

> It was sixty-seven years ago and I was very shy. I began nervously to say something about the Parents’ National Educational Union. But I had no sooner reached the word ‘parent’ than back came the crushing rejoinder, ‘Don’t talk to me about parents. I can’t bear them’.

Evidently it can be assumed that a society which, encouraged greater participation of parents in the education of their children, would not be kindly received by Dove. Correspondence with the archivist at St Leonards seems to substantiate this point and suggests that Dove may have established a precedent since, ‘I think it is likely that she would not have expected parents to be involved. As recently as the 1970s the parents of girls here were not encouraged to be involved with the school or the

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houses. Neither Charlotte Mason’s archives nor those at St Leonards contain any material to suggest that Mason and Dove corresponded or indeed actually knew each other.

Emily Shirreff

The relationship with Emily Shirreff is somewhat ambiguous. Shirreff’s impressive contribution to the promotion of educational reform would have been clear to Mason. Born in 1814, the daughter of a rear admiral, she wrote extensively and frequently in collaboration with her sister Maria Grey. Early works including *Thoughts on Self-Culture Addressed to Women* in 1850 argued for a more useful curriculum. Shirreff was on the Council at Girton College, played a role in the foundation of the Maria Grey Teacher Training College in 1872 and became President of the Froebel Society. Later works reveal her interest in Froebel including *Principles of the Kindergarten System* written in 1876 and *The Kindergarten at Home* written in 1884. She also contributed to the *Parents’ Review*.319

However the archives do not contain any correspondence with Shirreff. Evidently the PNEU initially appealed to her as she is recorded as a Vice President in the 1892 Report and evidence suggests that, despite her age, she was eager to play an active role. Her presence at the Central Council Meeting in February 1890 is minuted.320

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318 E-Mail from J Claydon, St Leonards Archivist (19.02.2003)
319 E.g. ‘By the way’ *PR*, Vol.1, 1890, p.313.
320 PNEU Minutes, Box 34.
However in July 1891 it is noted that she asked for her name to be withdrawn from the Executive Committee. Whilst it is possible that the 77-year-old lady found her commitments to the PNEU to be too exhausting, this may be simplistic. She did not curtail her involvement with Girton College at this time. As an exponent of the Kindergarten it is more probable that as the organization took shape Shirreff realized that it might not be a suitable vehicle for promoting Froebel’s methods. Chapter 6 deals with the rupture of the PNEU in 1894 when a few members including Lady Isabel Margesson, a relative of Emily Shirreff through marriage, disagreed with Mason over the principles and future of the organization.

This chapter has attempted to establish the nature of the relationships which Mason enjoyed with some of the most respected and influential female educators of the time. Whilst they provided the PNEU with respect, and practical and financial assistance, they arguably provided Mason with a sense of aspiration. The involvement of these pioneers who were concerned with both day and boarding schools, infant and higher education illustrates the broad appeal of the PNEU in its infancy.
Associations adopt a variety of means to propagate their work and it seems feasible that the *Parents’ Review*, which appeared in February 1890, was launched to promote the principles of the PNEU. Aimed at parents the journal cost 6d and claimed to be ‘a monthly magazine of home-training and culture’. Mason, who edited the journal, described its object as being to ‘keep parents in touch with the best and latest thought on all matters connected with the training and culture of children and young people.’ Whilst there were a number of journals aimed at educationalists, including *Journal of Education*, which published articles written by educationalists including Dorothea Beale, and provided book reviews like that given to Mason’s *The Forty Shires*, there were no journals aimed specifically at parents relating to educational matters. The *Parents’ Review* contained articles some of which were written by eminent educationalists and general advice on educational issues. Notable contributors to the first volume included Oscar Browning, Dorothea Beale, Anne Clough and Emily Shirreff. Early volumes contain articles concerning Froebel and Kindergartens, demonstrating the broad appeal of the PNEU in its infancy and how it disseminated various educational views.

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321 *PR* Vol.1. no.8, p.561.
322 Cholmondeley, 1960, p.28.
324 Ibid. February 1882, no.151-no.48, p.58.
325 *PR* Vol.1, 1890.
Utilizing letters and minutes within the Archives together with records held at the Public Record Office, this chapter addresses the launch of the *Parents’ Review*, which has only been selectively considered previously. Acknowledging that the Bishop of Ripon regarded this ‘new venture’ as ‘an anxious undertaking,’ Cholmondeley claims, ‘but Charlotte persisted in spite of the risks and difficulties’.\(^{327}\) This chapter will consider these difficulties and the assistance Charlotte received in overcoming them, illustrating the importance of networking and highlighting key individuals who provided staunch practical and financial support. Moreover, this chapter will suggest that the domination of the *Parents’ Review* by Mason and her Bradford associates played a contributory factor in the schism within the PNEU in 1894.

**Initial contributors**

Early contributors included Frances Epps, the former Bishop Otter student, who wrote an article entitled ‘Work for Gentlewomen as Elementary Schoolmistresses.’ Concerned by bitter class divisions Epps commended the role of Bishop Otter in training ‘gentle’ young ladies to teach in the elementary schools which she considered provided ‘a legitimate opening for the energies of earnest and capable workers, who are doing what they can towards the great end of drawing the unhappily still divided “classes” together.’\(^{328}\) Whilst rather optimistic it does reflect contemporary opinion that it was becoming acceptable for middle-class girls to teach in elementary schools

\(^{327}\) Cholmondeley, 1960, p. 27.  
\(^{328}\) *PR*, Vol. 1, 1890, p.513
where it was hoped they might provide moral guidance and elevation, and the College had re-opened as a women’s college to encourage this trend. Moreover, encouragingly for Charlotte, the article suggests her associates endorsed the idea that potential teachers required more sophisticated training and could no longer rely on gentility and accomplishments.

Eager to use material contributed by established educators Mason included papers given by the Master of Method at the Home and Colonial, Robert Dunning. An article entitled ‘Characteristics of Childhood’ which suggested that the ‘mental food’ given to children must be ‘suitable to their taste and power of assimilation’, illustrates the influence of her former Lecturer.\textsuperscript{329} Dunning had been a regular contributor to \textit{The Educational Paper of the Home & Colonial Training Institution}.\textsuperscript{330} This quarterly educational journal had been aimed at supporters of the Home and Colonial Society, and subscribed to by teachers and former students. No doubt Charlotte would have received it following her departure from the Institute and this possibly gave her the idea later to encourage students of the House of Education to receive the \textit{Parents’ Review} following their departure, and was an easy way to expand readership.

Ardent support for the \textit{Parents’ Review} came from T G Rooper, the Inspector of Schools for Bradford who had been most supportive of Mason’s Geographical Readers. Rooper recognized the difficulties in establishing the journal, and writing just prior to its launch, offered advice and encouragement: ‘The foes are apathy, self-

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{329} \textit{PR}, Vol.4., 1893, p.53.
\textsuperscript{330} E.g.\textit{The Educational Paper}, no.6, 1860, p.48. & no.9, 1861, p.10.
\end{footnotesize}
conceit, jealousy and spite, in face of which progress must be made laboriously. “Hold on” must be the motto. ³³¹

Up until his death in 1903 Rooper contributed regularly to the journal. ³³² The archives contain a number of letters written to Mason detailing his various inspections, lectures for the PNEU and articles which he had submitted for inclusion. A humorous letter in 1897 mentions his recent inspection of Swanley Horticultural College, advising Charlotte: ‘I think a paper on it would be useful in the Review. I am not clear that it offers a good opening for women. To be a female garden-boy at Kew seems to me a poor position at a pound a week & even the prospect of a “lodge in a garden of cucumbers” at 30 £ (without Adam) seems poor look out for a daughter of Eve’. ³³³ In an article which appeared following his death Mason paid tribute to his steadfast support, referring to his written contributions as ‘marked by wisdom, literary charm and profound philosophic teaching,’ and describing him as ‘a wise counsellor, an unsparing helper and a staunch friend.’ ³³⁴ Rooper’s involvement with the Parents’ Review appears to justify her comments.

In addition to writing articles Rooper went to great lengths to find others who might contribute, especially if he considered their inclusion might extend the readership. A letter dated November 1894 enquires as to the suitability of an article written by Mrs Gurdon, ‘a sister-in-law of one of Gladstone’s secretaries and a lady of some

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³³¹ Letter from T G Rooper, 09.1.1890, PNEU Box 2.
³³² Rooper was transferred to Southampton in the 1890s.
³³³ Letter from T G Rooper 08.03.1897, PNEU Box 2.
³³⁴ Mason, C, Ibid.
influence in the eastern counties. She is also sister to Ld. Carysfort by marriage. Doubtless her circle would interest themselves in the mag.\textsuperscript{335}

The importance of utilizing connections is further illustrated in a letter dated October 1890 in which Rooper advises Mason that he has been attempting to interest a Mr Kennedy, a Poor Law Inspector who had asked for advice concerning his sons’ education. Rooper ‘showed him the P.R. which he took away being struck with it.’ Moreover, aware of the relationship between Mason and the Principal of Cheltenham Ladies’ College, he encourages her to ask the educationalist whether she might approach Lady H Russell to contribute an article since ‘she was a Cheltenham Scholar’ and ‘a successful student’ who ‘worships Cheltenham & Miss Beale.’\textsuperscript{336} Another letter mentions that he had been soliciting the support of the Lords Spiritual and ‘have secured the service of the very ablest of them all. I am sure this number ought to help the Review immensely.’\textsuperscript{337}

Rooper evidently wanted the \textit{Review} to be successful, was aware of apathy amongst some parents and even offered an opinion as to how the contents might extend the readership. In June 1891 he commented: ‘I fear that the West Riding is not a part of England which is much in touch with the rest of the country. I met people at Bournemouth who were much interested in the \textit{Parents’ Review}. I always think it ought to succeed. The thing that the “cultivated” mothers are most in doubt about is

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{335} Letter from T G Rooper, 05.11.1894, Ibid.\textsuperscript{336} Ibid, 30.10.1890.\textsuperscript{337} Ibid, 21.09.1890.}
religion … If you could get a paper on the type of Christian character at a modern public school … I think it would be a success.338

Rooper appears to have been impressed by some of the essays including a ‘capital article’ on Professor Thomas Hill Green, the educationalist and philosopher, which he claimed was ‘the best thing which I have seen written about him. It might have come from his widow’s pen … An article like that ought to clear the field of any hazy impression of ecclesiastical narrowness in the Union.339 Green had been a lecturer at Balliol and Assistant Commissioner to the Taunton Commission in 1864. An advocate of the liberalization of the universities Green welcomed the gradual removal of the ‘ecclesiastical barrier’ and ‘barrier of cost’ which hindered the expansion of higher education and advocated reforms of grammar schools in order that they might feed the universities rather than the public schools monopolizing this service. He later claimed, ‘We are drawing to Oxford young men of promise from classes outside those which we are used to … it is the day scholars … that are bringing hopeful new grist to our mill.340 This is indicative of the reforms taking place with regard to the education of middle-class boys at that time which some historians regard as a prerequisite for the development of higher educational opportunities for middle-class girls.341

338 Ibid, 14.06.1891.
339 Ibid, 07.10.1890.
341 Bryant, 1979.
The article had in fact been contributed by Fanny Green\textsuperscript{342} who had informed Charlotte, ‘I shall be pleased to contribute to the “Parents’ Review” at any time.’\textsuperscript{343}

Clearly her offer was accepted and a composition entitled ‘Our daughters at Newnham and Girton’ appeared shortly after. In this article the writer provides an insight into the organization of these early women’s colleges, suggesting that higher education should be more readily available for women; even those unlikely to embark on a career since, ‘There can be no better preparation for the social duties of a wife and mother than the cheerful companionship, out-of-door recreation, and healthy food for the mind which the higher education of women, moderately pursued, implies.’\textsuperscript{344}

However, bearing in mind that the fees for Girton were one hundred guineas a year with Newnham charging slightly less; attendance at these colleges was beyond the means of a considerable number of middle-class parents. Furthermore Green could be attempting to placate readers concerned by the perceived negative effects of excessive education, e.g. effects on health or becoming unattractive in the marriage market. The suggestion that higher education would benefit an aspiring wife was unlikely to find support among the more radical feminists advocating more independent roles for women.

A frequent contributor to the early volumes was Lady Victoria Welby (1837-1912)\textsuperscript{345} who was interested in science and linguistic philosophy. An inventory of her papers reveals that she corresponded with a number of educationalists including Dorothea

\textsuperscript{342} Fanny was not Thomas’s wife but may have been his sister.
\textsuperscript{343} Letter from Fanny L Green, 06.08.1890, PNEU Box 2.
\textsuperscript{344} PR, Vol.1. 1890, p.664.
\textsuperscript{345} Ibid. p.852; Vol.2, 1891,p.12 &p.91.
Beale, Sophie Bryant\textsuperscript{346} and Herbert Spencer. In addition the inventory refers to correspondence between Welby and Frances Dallas-Yorke who, through her contacts and enthusiasm, had played a significant role in the expansion of the PNEU. The correspondence dates between 1880 and 1911 and both of these ladies had a residence in Lincolnshire.\textsuperscript{347} This appears to be further evidence of networking, with Dallas-Yorke using her contacts to assist Mason in finding material for early editions.

\textbf{Financial Difficulties}

Early issues contained appeals to increase readership and this extract indicates the publishers held a considerable amount of surplus stock.

Do our readers recognize that the Parents’ Review is passing through a period of anxiety at the close of a year? And that though efforts will be made to maintain it at all hazards (so great is its acknowledged usefulness), our readers must make strenuous efforts to increase the circulation in the coming year. The publishers will kindly supply a bundle of back numbers, gratis, to any friends who will undertake to distribute them in likely quarters. Perhaps the best way to get subscribers is to canvass from house to house.\textsuperscript{348}

The precarious finances of the journal are apparent in the PNEU Report of 1892, which claimed that the journal ‘has recently emerged from a crisis in its history, and has not yet reached that enviable stage in its career when it becomes self-supporting.’

\textsuperscript{346} Buss’s successor at North London Collegiate
\textsuperscript{347} Ken Hernden at York University, Canada advises the letters are too fragile to be copied.
\textsuperscript{348} \textit{PR}, Vol.3, 1892, p.876.
Furthermore the Report recognized the difficulties in financing a journal with limited appeal ‘because it occupies an advanced outpost in educational thought, not tempting to publishers, not tempting to capitalists, not tempting to the general public, but possibly demanding the strenuous support of all who are in sympathy with such teaching as it affords.’

Mason’s struggle to meet production costs is supported by archival evidence, which suggests a variety of methods were adopted, including asking for donations from prominent individuals. The 1892 Annual Report recorded: ‘The capital of the founder was exhausted, and the circulation did not pay the publishers. It became necessary to raise a subsidy of £150 for the publishers to secure them from loss during the current year.’ One of those approached was PNEU Council member Anna Swanwick (1823 – 1899), a translator and mathematician who had been involved in both Queen’s College and Bedford College. Swanwick’s response is illuminating. ‘I am much pleased to hear of the success, from the educational stand-point, of Parents’ Review.’ However, it is clear that she has other more pressing interests, ‘My times being fully occupied, in other directions, I forwarded my copy, on its arrival, to a mother in Gloucestershire, by whom it is, I believe, fully appreciated.’ Swanwick advises Mason that ‘appeals for assistance are over-whelming’ on her ‘limited means’ and consequently she is unable to offer a ‘more liberal donation’, enclosing a cheque for £3. The final paragraph reflects Swanwick’s mathematical skills, casting doubt on Mason’s, but illustrates the audacity adopted by the editor in an attempt to secure

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349 PNEU Report 1892, Box 13.
350 Ibid, p.22.
351 Letter from Anna Swanwick c.1891, PNEU Box 2. Donation acknowledged in PNEU Report 1892.
funds for her ailing magazine; ‘You tell me that eight friends have promised £10 each, on condition that fourteen other such promises have made. As the sum required is £150, it seems to me that seven additional promises of £10 each would be sufficient, & most sincerely do I hope that you may succeed in finding the required amount.’

The PNEU Report of 1892 reveals that £150.19.6 had been obtained with generous donations from patrons including Lord and Lady Aberdeen (£20), Francis Steinthal (£10), Mrs Dallas-Yorke (£10) and Judge Gates (£10). Through acknowledging these donations to the Parents’ Review Fund in the Annual Report it seems likely that the people concerned assumed that the Review was instigated to propagate the work of the PNEU.

The Parents’ Review Company

A number of sources suggest that the journal was founded as the ‘monthly organ of the PNEU.’ Charlotte allegedly claimed: ‘The Society struggled into birth without its own magazine … such a society must obviously have the means of communicating, month by month, with its scattered members.’ The PNEU Annual

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352 Ibid.
353 PNEU Annual Report 1892, p.21, Box 13.
354 Ibid, p.22.
Meeting in June 1892 stated that the journal was ‘certainly a most valuable paper’ and ‘had been issued by the Union.’ However, this latter suggestion is incorrect.

An examination of Executive Minutes reveals an ambiguous relationship between the PNEU and the Parents’ Review. The first mention of the Parents’ Review occurs in the Executive Minutes of 9th May 1890 when, ‘The secretary was directed to write to Miss Mason and ask her to send an estimate of the cost of appropriating a quarter, half or whole page each month in the “Parents’ Review” to be filled by the executive committee with PNEU reports & notices.’ It appears incomprehensible that the PNEU would have to pay to contribute to its own journal.

Minutes of the Executive Meeting on 4th June 1890, suggest that whilst Mason was evidently associated with the Parents’ Review the majority of the Executive Committee were not. ‘Miss Mason be requested to convey to the directors of the “Parents Review” Company an acknowledgement of their reply concerning terms for appropriating space in their magazine and to ask them to be so good as to report the public meeting held June 3, free of charge.’ The reply ‘received through Miss Mason from the Directors of the Parents’ Review Co.’ confirms that the Parents’ Review was not in fact the journal of the PNEU. ‘The Directors of the Parents’ Review Company are so entirely in sympathy with the objects of the Parents’ Nat.Ed.Union, that they will be glad to afford space for the Society’s Reports, notices etc. at the rates of 20s/-

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356 PNEU Annual Meeting, 17.06.1892, p.11.
357 Executive Minutes, 09.05.1890, Box 34
a page, 15s/- for half a page, and 8s/- for a quarter of a page.\footnote{Ibid, 04.06.1890.} A comparison with the rates charged by the \textit{Educational Record} published by the British & Foreign School Society, which sold at 2d per copy in 1889, suggests that the \textit{Parents’ Review} rates were inexpensive.\footnote{The \textit{Educational Record} charged £3.00 for 1 page, £1.12.6 for ½ page, 17.6 for ¼ page, no.167, Vol.XIII, October 1889, BFSS Archives.}

This is the first reference to the Parents’ Review Company. Records concerning the Company deposited at the PRO indicate why Rooper was so anxious for the journal to be a success; he is listed as one of the Directors. The other four were the Reverend William Keeling, Head master of Bradford Grammar School, Francis Steinthal, the Bradford industrialist and husband of Emmeline who was so influential in the foundation of the PNEU, William Muller, a Bradford merchant, and Arthur Burrell, the Classics Master at Bradford Grammar.\footnote{PRO ref: BT31/4800/31788 - 112357} Initial Subscribers included Robert Elliot Steel, the Senior Science Master at Bradford Grammar, Alexander Assenheimer, a Bradford merchant, Edward Arnold-Forster, the Bradford industrialist and William Byles, the Bradford newspaper proprietor. It was Byles Printers that initially published the \textit{Parents’ Review}.\footnote{West Yorkshire Archive Service (22.05.2003) advised that William Byles & Sons were also proprietors of various local newspapers.}

The Memorandum of Association relating to the Parent’s Review Company dated June 1890, refers to an agreement made between Mason and the Directors in May 1890 concerning the ‘purchase from the said Charlotte Maria Shaw Mason of the
“Parents’ Review” magazine and all interest therein.”362 This suggests Mason tried to launch and finance the journal herself initially but unsuccessfully. The archives do not contain any reference to this agreement and unsurprisingly Cholmondeley has overlooked this episode. However, extracts from Charlotte’s sporadically kept diary for January 1890, indicate the measures she took to launch her magazine prior to the involvement of the Bradford industrialists. An entry dated 3rd January 1890 refers to Charlotte ‘leaving Ambleside’ to ‘sleep in London’ prior to visiting a bookseller in Warwick Square along with W H Smith in the Strand. An entry dated 8th January 1890 states, ‘saw Smith’s man’ who advised her ‘I have no doubt we shall take the first no. Depends on the look of it. Must negotiate through publishers.’ A further entry dated 20th January states ‘last proof sent off’.363 It should be remembered that the launch of the journal coincided with the expansion of the PNEU and Charlotte was travelling nationally to promote the Society. Diary entries for January 1890 substantiate this. Possibly the difficulties which she encountered persuaded her that she might require assistance, not least financial.

The Memorandum of Association of the Parents’ Review Company refers to capital of £2000 divided into 2000 shares, which the flotation was expected to raise on the assumption that this would enable the journal to struggle on. However, the number of shares taken by the listed initial subscribers only amounted to 106 and great efforts were needed to secure sufficient shareholders.364 Mason campaigned relentlessly to help raise the capital, but not always successfully. Among the shareholders listed

362 PRO Ref: BT31/4800/31788
363 CM’s Diary, Box 2.
364 Memorandum of Association, 24.06.1890, PRO REF: BT31/4800/31788
was Joan Ford, the wife of a Brighton solicitor, with ten shares.³⁶⁵ A letter suggests she had been invited to procure further shares; ‘I should like a few more shares later on if any are left … just now my expenses are very great indeed … Perhaps it will be better for me just to take my chance of any remaining shares when I have some money to spare.’³⁶⁶ Records indicate she did not expand her portfolio.³⁶⁷

In Cholmondeley’s account of the founding of the Parents’ Review she maintains that ‘obstacles were overcome, personal friends came to the help of educational allies’ but no mention is made of who these people were, although she acknowledges that the journal ‘owed its name to Mrs Steinthal, who gave the magazine constant encouragement and help, contributing a series of articles under the title of “Aunt Mai’s Budget”’.³⁶⁸ However, the financial contribution of Mr Steinthal and his ability to persuade a number of influential Bradford industrialists to risk their capital is not acknowledged. Several of his associates were prepared to put substantial sums into the venture, including two Bradford merchants, Alexander Assenheimer with one hundred shares, and Rudolph Delius who acquired two hundred shares.³⁶⁹ Steinthal’s business partner Gustavus Hoffman purchased twenty-five shares. Shareholder lists reveal Steinthal’s influence was not confined to Bradford and the surrounding industrial towns of Yorkshire. He clearly had a number of contacts including Alfred Booth, a 28-year-old sheepskin and leather merchant from Liverpool, who lived with his sister, had neither wife nor children and therefore would have been unlikely to

³⁶⁵ Shareholders, 30.10.1890, PRO Ref: 112357
³⁶⁶ Letter from Joan Ford, 20.06.1890, PNEU Box 2.
³⁶⁸ Cholmondeley,1960, p.27.
³⁶⁹ Shareholders, 30.10.1890, PRO Ref: 112357
purchase twenty shares because he was attracted to a magazine aimed primarily at parents. It is more likely that being a businessman he enjoyed speculating and was not afraid of taking risks. There can be little doubt that without the assistance and networking of Steinthal and his bold business associates and friends the Parents’ Review would have had little chance of success.

Therefore the establishment of the Parents’ Review Company illustrates how important networking was to Mason’s success since she was able to persuade others to gamble on the ultimate success of this magazine. Whilst this is indicative of her personality and ability to charm, it also reflects her reliance on others and this has been played down in Cholmondeley’s hagiography.

PRO records indicate that the legal work in connection with the establishment of the Company was undertaken by the Bradford Solicitors, Gordon, Hunter & MacMaster. Gordon was the son of James Gordon, the Bradford banker who acted as Treasurer of the PNEU in its infancy. It was an association that would last for many years with the same solicitors’ firm being responsible for dealing with Mason’s estate on her death.370

Evidently the major shareholders of the Parents’ Review Company were Bradford-based. However, it was not only industrialists who were willing to risk their capital, a number of educationists also purchased shares. The involvement both as Directors and shareholders of several masters of Bradford Grammar School has already been

370 It has not been possible to locate the files of these Solicitors.
mentioned. A number of female educationalists were also supportive of this venture including Dorothea Beale with five shares and Anne Clough with ten shares. Margaret Hodgson of Bishop Otter, who became a mistress at the House of Education in 1892, procured ten shares and by 1895 the former Principal of Bishop Otter, Sarah Francis Trevor, had acquired ninety shares. The patronage of the aged Miss Trevor is significant because she had been the respected Principal of a successful teacher training college and through purchasing a substantial number of shares it would appear that she bestowed her approval on her former staff member. Furthermore it suggests that Mason had enjoyed a good relationship with her former Principal, challenging Drake’s assertion that ‘there was a lack of any overt interest by Miss Mason in the College which was reciprocated.’

A frank letter from Arthur Burrell, a Director with ten shares, dated December 1890 suggests negotiations had begun to acquire another publisher. Burrell was surprised by the interest shown by Kegan Paul, maintaining, ‘there are always two sides to a bargain and I admit I do not understand their eagerness to take up the Review as it stands.’ Kegan Paul replaced Byles as publisher in 1891. The Annual Report of 1892 lists the Reverend Kegan Paul and his wife as Council members and therefore his willingness to take on this fledgling journal could be regarded as a philanthropic gesture. It certainly would not have been regarded as a financial investment!

371 Miss Trevor retired in 1895.
374 PNEU Annual Report, 1892, Box 13.
A subsequent paragraph in Burrell’s letter confirms that his astonishment at Kegan Paul’s interest stemmed from what he considered to be the poor quality of the articles. Whilst acknowledging the success of ‘one or two articles’, he adds, ‘I do not remember anything sticking in an ear. For instance, the papers of mine which you wished me to receive money for would have been refused over and over again by magazines & through no fault of ours, we have been unable to get good work.’ Indeed the dubious calibre of some of the early articles is supported by a letter from a German teacher who thanked Mason for accepting ‘my poor papers on Education.’ Whilst this could merely be an indication of the writer’s modesty, a reference to having sent an article to the Journal of Education, ‘but have not yet heard its fate’ could indicate that the established journal was more rigorous in selecting material than Mason in her capacity as Editor.

The PNEU and the Parents’ Review

Records suggest that the total number of shares sold did not exceed 1435, ensuring a shortfall of anticipated capital.\(^{375}\) Since Charlotte was unable or unwilling to pester shareholders further, alternative forms of finance were sought including subsidies by the PNEU, highlighting the ambiguous relationship between the journal and the PNEU further. The first indication that the PNEU was subsidizing the Parents’ Review appears in the Executive Minutes dated 23 January 1893 when ‘the question of the subsidy to the Parents Review was discussed’.\(^{376}\) It would appear that

\(^{375}\) List of Shareholders, 10.05.1895, 11.01.1901, & 31.12.1902, PRO Ref: 112357.

\(^{376}\) Executive Minutes, 23.01.1893, Box 34.
subsidizing the magazine was depleting the scarce finances of the PNEU. Minutes from an Executive meeting held in April 1893 suggest that the PNEU held £87 but ‘the secretary explained that this balance was only sufficient to provide the copies of the PR for which he had received payment till Feb 1894 and that there was nothing in hand for the printing of the Annual Report, and for the expenses of the meeting.’

Evidently in view of this subsidy Executive members began to consider the desirability for greater involvement with the Parents’ Review. Minutes of a meeting in April 1893 refer to the secretary being ‘directed to correspond with the publishers further, with a view to the establishment of satisfactory arrangements for the future publication of the magazine.’

Clearly the journal was still struggling to become financially viable, supply outweighing demand and the publishers Kegan Paul requesting the sum of £17.3.10 for March, April and May editions in 1893 but ‘the committee did not consider that, according to the agreement made with the publishers and assented to by them in their letter of Feb.13th last, any money was now owing, and decided to take no notice of the application.’ Unfortunately this agreement does not appear to have survived.

A PNEU Sub-Committee appointed to consider the position of the Parents’ Review reported in January 1894:

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377 Ibid. April 1893.
378 Ibid. 21.04.1893.
379 Ibid, 13.11.1893.
380 This agreement has not been located within the CM archives. Enquiries with UCL who hold the Kegan Paul archives have not been successful.
We have communicated with the directors of the ‘Parents Review’ Co. limited and have obtained from them a guarantee of £100 to cover any loss on the working of the proposed office for the first year, and recommend that an office we have selected in Victoria Street, Westminster be taken for one year at a rental of £45; that Miss Forsyth be appointed secretary at a salary of £75 for the first year, and 25% commission on all advertisements obtained by her for the “Parents Review” and travelling expenses, & that the publication of the Parents Review be taken over by the committee, and that after payment of office expenses, the society shall pay a dividend to the shareholders of the Parents Review Company Limited to the extent of 5% on their capital of about £1200. We further recommend that an additional fund of £100 be raised by an appeal to the branches towards which the Belgravia Branch promise £30.  

This would imply that the reason why the PNEU took offices in London was primarily to secure the continuation of the Parents’ Review and to enable greater involvement by the predominantly London-based Executive Committee. It also suggests that Ethel Forsyth would have a prominent role. She had been the principal of the Forsyth Technical Training College for Ladies, was a capable organizer and associate of the influential, well-connected Lady Margesson.

Evidently during the early 1890s the PNEU was becoming more focused on London; minutes provide examples of how the original Bradford members were losing their positions. Minutes relating to the expansion of the Executive in July 1890 suggested that ‘preference shall be given to London residents, or to those living within easy reach of London;' 382 whilst minutes of 24th February 1894 refer to the bank account

381 Minutes of Sub-Committee, 19.01.1894, Box 34.
382 Executive Minutes, 09.07.1890, Box 34.
being transferred to London, James Gordon, the Bradford Banker being replaced as Treasurer by Mr Hallam Murray.\(^ {383} \)

Possibly Mason began to feel as if she had been usurped. She was now (from 1891) living in Ambleside and had withdrawn somewhat from the increasingly London-dominated PNEU. Her reluctance to attend regular meetings could be attributed to a number of factors including her health, travelling difficulties, her involvement with establishing the House of Education, and her dislike of such occasions. Possibly she felt insecure amongst the eminent people who dominated Committee meetings or she disliked and consequently distanced herself from mundane administrative matters. Moreover, it could indicate that Mason recognized she would be far more effective editing the *Parents’ Review* in Ambleside. She appears to have used her editing power to ensure that her own philosophy was promoted and this is highlighted in an article entitled ‘P.N.E.U Philosophy’ which appeared in 1892.\(^ {384} \)

Both Lady Isabel Margesson and her husband were active members of the Executive committee playing a prominent part in the attempt to take over the *Parents’ Review*. An article written by Lady Isabel entitled ‘Training Lessons to Mothers’ describing the lectures given by Mrs Walter Ward (née Emily Lord) associated with the Norland Institute and an ardent supporter of Froebel, appeared in the journal in 1893. It seems to have been well received by Mason who in her editorial capacity claimed, ‘the Editor earnestly hopes that “Mothers’ Training Classes” on this delightful pattern will

\(^{383}\) Ibid, 24.02.1894.

be established in many centres.

However, Mason’s attitude towards Lady Isabel appears to have changed and evidence suggests she thwarted attempts by Lady Isabel to have her writings published. This is illustrated by the Executive Minutes dated 18th December 1893 which stated, ‘the Secretary was desired to convey to Miss Mason the opinion of the committee that Lady Isabel Margesson’s pamphlet “What is the PNEU” should appear in the Parents’ Review in place of an advert which now appears on the front page.’ This indicates the Executive Committee were not impressed by Mason’s actions and illustrates why they sought greater involvement with its running.

Following the proposal of January 1894, the PNEU Executive Committee on the 18th April 1894 accepted the proposal of Mortimer Margesson that there should be a legal agreement ‘if possible free of cost’ between the Parents’ Review Company and the PNEU for ‘taking over of the Review.’ Minutes of a meeting in June 1894 indicate that an agreement had been reached with a further sub-committee appointed to deal with the arrangements.

However, there are no details of what this agreement entailed and reading from Executive Minutes at this time it appears the future of the Parents’ Review became a secondary consideration in view of the PNEU split in July 1894, which will be covered in Chapter 6. Clearly Mason’s editing of the Parents’ Review and the

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386 Executive Minutes, 18.12.1893, Box 34.
387 Executive Minutes, 18.04.1894, Box 34.
388 Ibid, 06.06.1894.
reluctance of the Bradford-dominated Parents’ Review Company to allow the Executive Committee a greater input into the magazine, which they were subsidizing, created tension and this was a contributing factor to the split. Indeed the letter circulated by Lady Isabel and her associates who also resigned in July 1894 cites the ambiguous position of the journal:

The Parents’ Review was regarded as the organ and mouthpiece of the PNEU. But the Review was the property of, and was entirely under the editorial and financial control of individuals who acted with Miss Mason; and it was therefore obvious that at any time the Review might cease to represent the views of the Committee, or the best interests of the Union. We were strongly of opinion that the Union, through the Committee, should have control of its own organ, and that the financial or other interests of individuals should not be allowed to stand in the way. If the owners of the Parents’ Review, acting within their rights, were unwilling that it should become in any true sense the mouthpiece of the Union, then, in our judgment, the Union should have made arrangements for the publication of a Magazine that would satisfy this condition, and we could not consent to become parties to the agreement which it was proposed to execute, whereby the Union would undertake the publication of the Review without retaining any effective control of its management.389

This passage reveals that the agreement had been unacceptable to those who broke away in July 1894. Clearly the management of the journal remained in the hands of the Parents’ Review Company, whilst the editing remained under the control of Mason, and in their opinion this was not representative of the PNEU. Subsequent Executive Minutes confirm an agreement was reached and endorsed by the Parents’ Review Company in December 1894 and by the largely replaced Executive

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389 Circulated letter from Lady Margesson, 25.07.1894, Box 34.
Committee in April 1895.\textsuperscript{390} No details of this agreement have been located although given the prominence of Henrietta Franklin by this time, and the departure of Lady Isabel Margesson, the terms would have been favourable to Mason.

In an effort to reduce costs the PNEU terminated their contract with Kegan Paul and the journal was published by the PNEU using Ipswich-based S.H. Cowell Printers, who would continue to print the journal until 1929.\textsuperscript{391} Without the support of an established publisher, the Executive Committee went to great lengths to publicize the journal and increase readership. This included advertising in other publications, illustrated by the Executive Minutes in February 1896: ‘The secretary was instructed to write to Miss Yonge and offer an exchange of advertisements in the Parents’ Review. Also to Mrs Woodley Bookseller, Hastings and accept an offer of ½ page adv. in Library catalogue for 10/-.’\textsuperscript{392} Moreover, one particular advertisement in 1895 would appear to support the suggestion that the schism in the PNEU was due far more to a personality clash between Mason and Lady Isabel than to educational differences. Executive Minutes refer to the ‘desirability of advertising the PNEU & PR in Miss Shirreff’s Book on “Kindergarten”.’\textsuperscript{393}

The Annual Meeting in June 1895 reported that the ‘Review increased nearly 50% in the last six months,’\textsuperscript{394} although this does not necessarily mean that sales were increasing by the same figure. Measures to stimulate circulation were proposed by

\textsuperscript{390} Executive Minutes, 14.11.1894 & 24.04.1895, Box 34.
\textsuperscript{391} Correspondence with Ipswich Record Office (12.07.2003)
\textsuperscript{392} Executive Minutes, 15.02.1896, Box 34.
\textsuperscript{393} Ibid, 16.01.1895.
\textsuperscript{394} Annual Meeting, 27.06.1895, Ibid.
Mrs Anson, the sister of Mary Hart-Davis, who suggested that ‘members of the Union should be allowed to apply for free copies of the Review to be placed in waiting rooms, doctors & dentists waiting rooms … The secretary was instructed to supply 50 copies for this purpose, on trial, for 3 months.’

The role of the *Parent’s Review* as a propaganda tool is further illustrated in the following suggestion made by Mrs Franklin: ‘A notice should be put into the PR each month mentioning places where branches are in process of formation or are likely to be formed and that all members having some friends in such places should communicate with them and send their names to the secretary as probable members.’ In anticipation of a response to their efforts the Executive Minutes suggested that ‘100 more Parent’s Reviews should be printed in January and succeeding months if necessary.’ These references to the organizational and administrative abilities of these Victorian women illustrate how middle-class women were acquiring such skills through their philanthropic activities. Whilst these measures may reveal an element of desperation, it is evident they realized the potential for propagating their Society, which waiting rooms etc. afforded and the continued practice of advertising in such places suggests that it had proved to be an effective means of advertising.

The General Annual Report for 1896 describes the *Parents’ Review* as ‘increasing in literary value, intellectual force and practical usefulness … we earnestly hope our

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395 Executive Minutes, 11.03.1895, Ibid.
396 Ibid, 24.06.1896.
members will make great efforts to increase the circulation of the Magazine,’
advising readers that ‘The prosperity of the Union, both financially and educationally,
dePENDS very much upon the Review’. 398 Though hardly a disinterested source, this
extract recognises the journal as a useful form of propaganda. Furthermore the
Review had at last after extensive efforts, become profitable. An audited Balance
Sheet dated March 1896 lists the Parents’ Review as contributing £415.2.8 towards
PNEU accounts with expenses to the value of £370.15.3.399

Archival evidence suggests that the magazine was successful in recruiting interest in
the society. Unable to pinpoint what had attracted her to the movement, Mrs
Whitaker Thompson cited the journal as one of the factors, describing it as ‘a
magazine of Home Training and “Culture”- magic word!’400 Moreover, Dr Schofield,
an authority on Hygiene and Child Culture who became Chairman of the Executive
Committee in 1891, attributed his involvement to a ‘casual introduction to a number
of the Parents’ Review.’401 Furthermore the journal provided a platform to launch
both the Parents’ Review School in 1891 and the House of Education in 1892 and
these will be considered in Chapter 8.

Whilst the PNEU took over the publishing of the journal the Parents’ Review
Company was not wound-up until July 1903 with Francis Steinthal listed as the

399 Ibid. Balance Sheet of Central Office 19.03.1896.
400 Thompson, W in In Memoriam, 1923, p.38.
liquidator. \textsuperscript{402} However the list of Shareholders for December 1902 reveals the prominence of Henrietta Franklin, who had become the PNEU Honorary Organizing Secretary in 1895. In previous returns despite her greater involvement with the PNEU there is no mention of her as a shareholder. Listings for December 1902 reveal that of the 1435 shares in the Company, 825 had been transferred to Henrietta, thereby giving her a controlling interest.

Executive Minutes indicate why the shares were transferred although it is not clear why they were put in Henrietta’s name and not in the name of the PNEU.

Mrs Franklin read a letter addressed to Miss Mason by Mr Steinthal in which he stated that a time had come for some new arrangement with regard to the PR Co. \textsuperscript{403} Mrs Franklin explained that she had suggested to Miss Mason & Mr Steinthal that a collection should be made to buy out the shareholders of the PR Co. and present the magazine to the Union … Mrs Franklin announced that several shareholders had already promised to forego their claims and that Mrs Winkworth had given £50 to the fund. \textsuperscript{404}

This indicates that Mason was content for Henrietta to make the necessary arrangements for the transfer of the shares and, in doing this Henrietta revealed her immense organizational skills. Executive Minutes in February 1902 imply that her persuasive personality may have been influential in ensuring that the money needed to be raised was not excessive since they noted, ‘all shareholders to whom she had written (except two, one of whom she fancied had died) had given up their shares and

\textsuperscript{402} Liquidation of Parents’ Review Company, 07.07.1903, PRO Ref: BT31/4800/31788.
\textsuperscript{403} Executive Minutes, 7.11.1900 reported that Mrs Steinthal had resigned as an Honorary Secretary & editor of ‘Aunt Mai’s Budget.’
\textsuperscript{404} Executive Minutes, 15.01.1902, Box 34.
that all the money to be collected now was £250. To do this she proposed sending out a lithographed letter to all branch secretaries to send to their members. ¹⁴⁰⁵ A PR Purchase Fund Sub-Committee, which met at the Franklins’, confirms the journal was profit making, since ‘it was proposed to devote the ½ profits of 1901 viz £44.10.2 and the profits (estimated roughly at £80) of 1902. ¹⁴⁰⁶

Evidently Charlotte confided in Henrietta with regard to editorial problems and this is conveyed in the correspondence between these ladies, providing an insight into her editorial technique. A letter written by Mason during a visit to Copenhagen with her ‘capital travelling companion’ Miss Armitt maintains,

I am again suffering editorial pangs, after leaving everything fully edited for the holiday months, I hear that your friend Mrs Yorke has failed to send her proofs corrected and I fear Cowell may have kept back the “Review” for them. However, I have arrived at bearing such matters and believing that the world will still go on. ¹⁴⁰⁷

This conveys the concerns that Mason experiences when she has to rely on others for the successful publication of the journal and reveals an element of arrogance, implying that hiccups are inevitable in her absence.

A letter dated 1st September 1900 implies that she was able to be more selective with regard to the articles which she included in the journal. Moreover, it reveals her

¹⁴⁰⁵ Ibid, 12.02.1902.
¹⁴⁰⁶ PR Purchase Fund Sub-Committee Minutes, 13.05.1902, Box 34.
¹⁴⁰⁷ Letter from CM to Henrietta Franklin (hereinafter HF), 08.08.1897, Box 50.
dislike of undertaking extensive revisions to articles and readiness to reject contributions, which warrant such attention.

Miss Matzke’s paper; the very bad English is the difficulty … The doctoring of such a paper is an awful task, one would much rather write a paper, so unless you really care very much about the matter, I should rather not undertake so troublesome a task. ‘No space’ is a sufficient answer. Certainly that is true for October and I think November.408

A subsequent letter indicates that Henrietta became increasingly involved in the publication of the journal with Mason offering advice with regard to standardizing the length of articles and on editing, as well as conveying Mason’s optimism that the *Parents’ Review* would continue to thrive after her death.

A magazine or review must not develop into a pamphlet, but must consist of a certain number of articles, no one greatly exceeding the rest in length. Now, PR has a distinguished literary character to maintain. It is unique in all languages and all times, as an educational magazine of a literary character not professional or technical. Therefore, we must play the game and not edit in an amateurish way. When both you, and I are gone the PR will be long quoted and made much of in the annals of education.409

Several factors illustrate that the *Parents’ Review* was appreciated by its readers including numerous letters of support. One in particular should have encouraged Charlotte greatly, a letter from Miss Hubbard, a promoter of Bishop Otter College.

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408 Letter from CM to HF, 01.09.1900, Box 44.
409 Ibid. 16.05.1911.
Louise Hubbard had played an active part in the women’s movement editing the *Englishwomen's Year Book and Women’s Gazette.*

I have often wished to write to tell you how much interested I have felt in the wonderful progress your parents union seems to have & in much that I have read in stray numbers of your magazine. I must confess that I never expected parents would prove so docile or so anxious to be taught how to manage their children, but I am very glad to find myself in the wrong, and I hope that future generations will bless you … I am not often in town, but I should like greatly to attend your annual meeting if you have one … I was at Otter last week and found Miss Trevor so ill – though of course we are all getting older than old.410

This extract reinforces the difficulties which Mason had to overcome in launching a magazine which aimed at offering parents assistance with what had been regarded a private matter, the education of their children. However it is clear that she had only read ‘stray issues’ and it is difficult to ascertain how she had gauged the reaction of parents to the journal. Nevertheless Miss Hubbard obviously considered that Mason had been successful and her decision to write in support of her achievements, thereby endorsing both the PNEU and *Parents’ Review,* is undoubtedly an indication that Mason had been recognized as an authority on education by at least one of her contemporaries.

This chapter has illuminated various aspects of Mason’s character. In launching the periodical Mason revealed her impetuous nature, determination, a willingness to take risks, and arrogance in assuming others would risk their capital by participating in her venture. Mason’s charisma is also evident however since she was able to attract and

410 Letter from Miss Hubbard to CM c.1894, PNEU Box 2.
maintain the support and loyalty of a number of influential people who were instrumental in both the establishment and continued success of the journal.

Furthermore it also indicates that Mason was aware of her limitations. Unable to directly control an expanded PNEU, as Editor of the *Parents’ Review*, a position she held until her death in 1923, Mason was able to exert her influence through publicizing her own philosophy, controlling the content of the magazine, promoting the House of Education and the Parents’ Review School and thereby ensuring her position as an educational guru.
In 1894 a small number of influential people abandoned the PNEU. Utilizing correspondence within the archives together with primary sources from other archives, this chapter addresses the reasons for the split together with the consequences. Whilst Cholmondeley has played down the significance of the schism, the implications, including the establishment of an alternative association of parents as well as a re-evaluation of PNEU philosophy, warrant consideration since the incident illustrates the great interest in the early education of children, as well as the fervour with which different ideas were being debated at the time.

A great deal of effort was made in the preservation of the archives, to ensure a unity of purpose, playing down apparent disputes. This is evident with regard to the ‘disappearance’ of Miss Sharland, who resigned as an Honorary Secretary in May 1891. The PNEU Annual Report of 1892 claimed she had retired in view of ‘her removal to Devonshire.’ However, an apparently misfiled letter from the Reverend Wynne challenges this interpretation. Mrs Groveham had advised him of the ‘worry

411 PNEU Annual Report, 1892, p.20, Box 13.
and trouble’ Charlotte had endured from the Committee concerning the *Parents’ Review* magazine.

I have just received the enclosed & strongly suspect it to be a missive of the same character. I should be glad if you would let me know how the case stands as I would make a point of being present at the next meeting & try to see that right is done. This circular has a very suspicious look, as if Miss Sharland’s object is to crush the union. Put me in possession of the facts of the case & I will make a fight for it. It is too bad that those who profess to be the warm friends of education should allow petty jealousies to influence them & try to thwart a movement that has been so successfully inaugurated.  

Since this ‘circular’ has not been located its content is open to speculation. The letter suggests that there may have been differences with regard to the *Parents’ Review.* Possibly Miss Sharland was opposed to the publication which, as evidenced previously, struggled initially and pressurized PNEU finances; or she may have been critical of Mason’s role as Editor. It is obvious that Mason’s position is vulnerable at this time and she relies on the loyalty of others. Wynne was clearly willing to assume the role of protector. In view of Miss Sharland’s low profile this episode has been overlooked. However the crisis which led to the 1894 split has not been so easy to ignore, particularly since it led to the departure of several influential members.

The most prominent member to resign was Lady Isabel Margesson and Cholmondeley would later suggest that her departure was ‘a bitter blow to Charlotte’ and a number of factors support this. As the daughter of the second son of the 6th Earl of Buckinghamshire and sister of the 7th Earl, Lady Margesson (née Hobart-Hampden) was an extremely influential lady. She was also related through marriage.

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412 Letter from Wynne 01.07.1891, PNEU Box 2. He had moved to Forest Gate.
to the educational pioneering Shirreff sisters and had achieved a very prominent role in the organization of the PNEU in London, being an Honorary Secretary, running the Belgravia Branch and taking an active role in her capacity as an Executive Committee member. Her dominating and persuasive nature was recognized by Mrs William Borrer, who advised Mason that Lady Isabel had ‘urged’ her and her husband to become Central Council members and ‘after some questioning we gave in.’ Mrs Borrer recognized her organizational skills: ‘...‘I who know her working strength & have before been helped by her organizational power.’ PNEU Reports convey how pioneering and active Lady Isabel’s Belgravia Branch was, whilst Minutes confirm that she was not averse to chairing meetings.

When the PNEU President, Lord Aberdeen, presided over the General Meeting in 1892, he claimed, ‘When the movement was set on foot there was a fear that the objects of the society were somewhat too vague for practical purposes’. This statement seems prophetic given the differences of opinion which simmered and finally erupted in 1894. In attempting to understand how the PNEU splintered it is necessary to remember that the organization had been formed as a means of promoting discussion and ‘affording’ parents ‘opportunities for co-operation & consultation’. The broad appeal of the association is illustrated by a reference within the Executive Minutes to the distribution of 2000 invitation cards for the

413 2 Letters from Mrs Borrer to CM c.1895, PNEU Box 2.
414 It established a Natural History Club & Lending Library & organized lectures ‘much appreciated and well attended’, PNEU Annual Report June 1894, p.16.
415 Minutes, 19.01.1894 record her taking the chair. Box 34.
417 Executive Meeting 18.01.1890, Box 34.
General Meeting to ‘branch secretaries, teachers’ guild, HMI London school inspectors, members of Froebel society, headmistresses of high schools, editors of leading papers’. This implies the PNEU was not espousing any particular educational philosophy and would therefore consist of people with differing, even conflicting, educational beliefs.

Lady Isabel’s Pamphlet

Utilizing her position on the Executive, Lady Isabel, who was deeply sympathetic to the ideas of Froebel, evidently believed that the PNEU needed to define its philosophy more clearly and considered herself as the appropriate person to do this. Executive Minutes suggest that she had support amongst the members present in April 1894, since:

The draft of proposed new leaflet for distribution & advertisement in Parents’ Review was submitted. Lady Isabel Margesson suggesting that some more definite statement of principles was necessary to meet such objections as had been made at Cardiff & elsewhere. The leaflet was read aloud & passed & the secretary instructed to send it to the printers forthwith.

This implies that some considered that Lord Aberdeen’s fears had been realized and that recruitment to the society was hampered by lack of definition. Moreover the support of the majority of the Executive Committee in attendance suggests that to

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418 Ibid, 09.05.1890.
419 Ibid, 18.04.1894.
some of the London-based members the views of the PNEU and of Charlotte Mason were not necessarily synonymous.

Perusal of Lady Isabel’s pamphlet ‘What is the Parents’ National Educational Union’ within the archives suggests that there may have been another draft which has not survived because the objects of the society which Mason refers to in her circular dated 9th July do not correspond with the objects mentioned in the pamphlet. It seems likely that Mason’s disquiet was increased by the publication of a 1s.6d. forty-five page pamphlet by Lady Isabel in 1894 entitled, ‘The Principles and Practical Working of the New Education’. Certain passages and extracts from Mason’s correspondence indicate that the pamphlet was available prior to the schism in July 1894, although it is not clear how widely read.

Firstly the pamphlet advises readers to contact the secretary, Miss Forsyth, who resigned at the time of the split. Secondly the tone of the pamphlet implies that Lady Isabel was still a member of the PNEU, publicizing the Parent’s Review, the Parents’ Review School and the House of Education and recommending Home Education as ‘of great practical help, and an excellent introduction to the science of education.’ Furthermore Minutes of a Finance Meeting in June refer to the payment of £3.19.11 to George Philip, indicating that the PNEU paid for the pamphlet. This

420 Resignation recorded in Executive Minutes 18.07.1894, Box 34.
422 Finance Committee Minutes 06.06.1894,Box 34.
A letter addressed to Dr Schofield, the Chairman of the Executive Committee, in May 1894 and marked ‘Quite confidential’, implies that Mason had read the pamphlet and was alarmed by the possibility of division within the PNEU. The letter describes a ‘most pleasant visit not unaccompanied by hot discussion’ to Ambleside by Lady Isabel and the Secretary, Ethel Forsyth.

Lady Isabel is charming her ardour & enthusiasm a pure delight – but the rush with which she takes things is appalling. I well understand it must leave the Committee panting. The situation seems to be this – the Froebel people have got hold of Lady Isabel & are endeavouring to use her, & our society through her, as a mere agency to advance K.G [kindergarten] principles & work. For a whole day we contested the point – they were deeply loyal to me because – I taught Froebel! The discussion was a little feminine & droll. At one moment it was – that I had drawn all our PNEU teaching out of Froebel & was to be honoured as an interpreter of the great sage – the next moment, I had not read, did not understand Froebel, & that was why I held aloof! I think the talk did some good. Lady Isabel conceded that the Froebel Society was more or less a failure - & that the world had outgrown the K.G. but they both cling to Froebel as a mystic who has said the last word on Education … I trust all to the Committee – only we must be on the alert – I like Miss Forsyth much – she is a lady – refined & enthusiastic, & personally a credit to us – but she is easily led - & at present Lady Isabel is her Committee & her PNEU!

In this extract Mason seems to patronize Lady Isabel and inaccurately portrays her as impetuous and inconsistent with regard to the Froebel movement. However, Lady Isabel’s pamphlet does not contain any indication of her disenchantment with Froebel.

423 Letter from CM to Dr Schofield 16.5.1894, Box 51.
methodology. On the contrary, the pamphlet advocates the adoption of Froebel’s methods: ‘For now the principles so earnestly advocated and pressed on the attention of the English people have been recognized as the only sound basis of education.’

Moreover, ‘I began to teach our little girl when she was three years old … My husband and I were convinced that the Kindergarten methods were the only methods we should wish to use for instructing our children.’

Such statements clearly concerned Mason highlighting the differing views over the purpose and direction of the PNEU. Moreover, Mason was aware of the magnetism of Lady Isabel and her request to Dr Schofield to ‘be on the alert’ is indicative of her realization that she was a powerful figure within the PNEU. There is some support for Mason’s suggestion that the kindergarten people were using the PNEU to advance their own methodology. However whilst the leaflet within the archives ‘What is the Parents’ National Educational Union?’ refers to the ‘New Education’ it fails to mention Froebel specifically. Therefore Mason’s belief that the Froebel movement were attempting to infiltrate the PNEU surely stems from Lady Isabel’s pamphlet.

However, the idea that the PNEU might be utilized to promote the ideas of Froebel must have stemmed from the broad nature of the society at the start. Possibly Mason’s willingness to include articles promoting Froebel in the Parents’ Review helped to promote the idea that the PNEU could be used as a tool to promote certain

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424 Margesson, 1894, p.4.
425 Ibid. p.18.
philosophies. Moreover, the first edition of *Home Education* lacked the criticism of the Kindergarten which featured strongly in later editions. Indeed the PNEU would have been unlikely to acquire the endorsement of Emily Shirreff, a tireless promoter of Froebel’s methods, if Mason had criticized the Kindergarten system so deeply in her original volume. These criticisms will be addressed later.

It is significant that Lady Isabel’s pamphlet is not held within the Charlotte Mason archives nor is there any mention of it. Interestingly a copy of the pamphlet, omitting the pages concerning the PNEU, was located in the archives relating to Lucy Ogilvy and the Wickham family; the missing pages were obtained from the British Library.

**Division within the Executive Committee**

It appears that Dr Schofield was not the only Executive member with whom Mason discussed the possible threat to the society, and this is illustrated by Mrs Hart-Davis’s resolution in support of Mason at the Executive Meeting on 6th June when she declared ‘the central principles, objects & rules of the society shall not be amended, altered, abrogated or added to without the consent of the majority of branches, who shall have full and due notice of any such proposed alteration and the opportunity to send delegates to confer with the central council.’ Indeed it was on the issue of altering the wording of the objects of the society, and the implications this had for the Constitution, that Mason and her supporters publicly challenged Lady Isabel and her fellow ‘malcontents.’ (Appendix 2).

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Executive Minutes dated 6th June 1894, a meeting which Mason did not attend, reveal the extent of the division and give the impression that Charlotte was fortunate to overcome the challenge to her influence and position. Minutes record the ‘Objects’ of the PNEU being ‘discussed with some warmth,’ and a ‘further discussion arose as to whether this committee had any power to withdraw the leaflet.’ Lady Isabel proposed ‘the leaflet stand as it was & the secretary be instructed to continue its insertion in the Parents Review & its distribution’ until ‘settled by the majority of the executive committee.’ Schofield had been obliged to leave the meeting and this could account for Lady Isabel’s suggestion being carried by a majority of 4 to 1.427

The serious nature of the division is further demonstrated by Mason’s actions, firstly in coming to London and participating in the heated discussions, and secondly in issuing a circular to rally support. Executive Minutes dated 27th June record that Mason proposed ‘All advertisements relating to the Educational Union & which purport to set out its objects, shall set out those objects as contained in rule 3 of the society without alteration.’ It was clearly intended that this would be applicable to Lady Isabel’s pamphlet too. Mason received staunch support from Dr Schofield, who ‘read a legal opinion … as to how far the executive committee had power to alter the rule 3 … & that the executive had no such power & that therefore the discussion of the question was out of order.’428 Evidently and presumably correctly, Dr Schofield

427 Executive Minutes 06.06.1894, Box 34.
428 Ibid. 27.06.1894.
considered that the Central Council needed to be involved and that the Executive Committee lacked the power to amend the objects of the society.

However Ronald McNeill took exception and ‘pointed out that according to the constitution of the PNEU no procedure was possible by which any council or general committee had power to do more than “advise as to new departures”, the carrying out of these would necessarily be delegated to a sub-committee which presumably would be the existing executive committee.’ Ronald McNeill had only joined the Executive Committee on 8th June, benefiting from the Executive Committee tampering with the Constitution in replacing six members whose attendance had been poor. This highlights one of the deficiencies of the 1890 Constitution: it failed to define clearly the powers and limitations of the Central Council and Executive Committee, leaving their roles open to ambiguity.

Dr Schofield’s attempts to thwart Margesson and her supporters by emphasizing the limitations of the Executive Committee, is illustrated by an amendment which claimed that the committee ‘has no power to deal with the changes’. The failure of this was minuted and in failing to endorse Schofield’s proposal the Executive Committee was apparently exceeding its powers.

Minutes also refer to an amendment proposed by the newly appointed Mr Shand, which appears to tamper with the illegally altered objects further by suggesting.

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429 Ibid, 06.06.1894. Those leaving included the Rev. & Mrs Keeling, new members included Mrs Franklin, Alex Shand & Ronald McNeill.
‘after the names Pestalozzi, Herbert Spencer, Froebel; the words be added “and other educational philosophers.”’

The meeting concluded by confirming the continuation of the Secretary, Miss Forsyth’s, engagement at a salary of £100 per annum. The above proceedings reveal Mason and her supporters were in a precarious position with a somewhat hostile Executive Committee who had exceeded and were continuing to exceed their powers.

Mason’s Circular

Mason’s determination to prevent Lady Isabel from usurping her position within the PNEU and her resolution to prevent the PNEU from becoming submerged within the Froebel Society is evident. The failure of the Executive Committee to curtail the Margessons and their associates necessitated swift action. One of the measures taken by Mason was to emphasize the eminent educationalists who had been actively involved in framing the constitution.

The “objects” of the society, which have been in force for six years were constitutionally framed by an able committee & afterwards ratified, with some modifications, at a meeting of the Central Council held at the College of Preceptors under the presidency of the Rev. Canon Daniel. Amongst the Educationalists present on this occasion were Miss Clough, Miss Shirreff & Dr Quick. Pains were taken to frame “objects” within which educationalists of whatever school might work freely & to avoid all such definiteness & minuteness as would be a limitation in the future in so progressive a science as education.

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430 Ibid. 27.06.1894. Also illustrated in CM’s Circular 09.07.1894, Box 51.
431 Undated unaddressed postscript filed with letter to Dr Schofield, 16.5.1894, Box 51. Refers to meeting of 27.06.1894.
By stressing the role of these revered individuals Mason implies that to attempt to alter the objects of the PNEU is to criticize those who had used their ability and experience to produce an acceptable constitution. The limitations of these educationalists in drafting a workable Constitution will be addressed later. Interestingly this passage reinforces the original purpose of the organization, as a means of promoting discussion, with a broad appeal, and encouraging greater parental involvement in educational matters. Whilst the PNEU in the form in which it would emerge from this episode, still sought parental involvement, it would become far less accommodating of other educational philosophies.

Mason’s determination to prevent the views of Lady Isabel prevailing within the PNEU and to reassert her own authority is illustrated by the issuing of a leaflet on 9th July, which may be regarded as a desperate attempt to rally support for a hastily summoned meeting on the 18th July. The 6½ page leaflet outlined her objections to Lady Isabel’s circular and inserted a legal opinion, which suggested that if ‘fresh objects are sought to be introduced or the old ones varied the present Union should be dissolved, and a new one formed.’ This implied that any change in the Constitution necessitated the termination of the society. The leaflet advised that the ‘science of education has been absolutely revolutionized, not by educationalists, but by Physiologists, who have made the brain their speciality’. Consequently the ‘doctrine of Heredity, the physiological culture of Habit, the potency of the Idea’ were the ‘factors of education’ and ‘the new wine which cannot be put into old

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bottles.’ Mason stated ‘We delight to honour the names of the older educationalists’ for their ‘suggestion and inspiration’ but ‘it is manifestly impossible that these should have indicated the principles and methods of that science of education which is yet in its infancy.’

The following extract illustrates why she regarded the ‘docketting of the Union with any given name or names’ as ‘the most serious of hindrances.’ ‘We hold that Education as a science must ever maintain a tentative attitude. The moment she frames a stereotyped creed represented by any given name or names of the past or present, she becomes formal and mechanical rather than spontaneous and living.’

This circular, which stressed the illegality of Lady Isabel and her colleagues in altering the Constitution, was instrumental in persuading a sufficient majority to support Mason and her associates. Given the influence which Lady Isabel could clearly exert, and Mason’s vulnerable position at this time, it was a vital and ultimately successful attempt to safeguard her own position within the PNEU, and make the position of her ‘opponents’ untenable.

The Executive Committee Split

Mason attended the meeting on 18th July when the Chairman’s motion confirmed the withdrawal of Lady Isabel’s leaflet. Executive Minutes report the resignations of

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433 Ibid, CM.
434 Executive Minutes 18.07.1894, Box 34.
the MacNeills, Mrs Guy Pym, Mr Shand, Miss Franks and the Margessons; a letter from the latter was read giving reasons for their resignation.

We are much surprised at the objection raised to the leaflet … the wording of the “objects” set forth in it was intended briefly & clearly to express the lines on which, for the past five years, we have understood the PNEU to be working. Now that we find we are at variance with the founder & her supporters on the need for defining the principles of the union clearly & definitely we are of opinion that we should be trying to hold an untenable position if we continued to work on the lines & principles set forth by Pestalozzi, Herbert Spencer & Froebel, whose educational philosophy is recognized and understood. It appears to us that the technical point of whether the committee has power to deal with this matter is not the real point at issue. The constitution has been frequently & without question altered by the committee since it was first drawn up by a provisional committee, & we hold that the point at issue is not a merely legal point.435

This extract indicates that the Margessons and their colleagues were not impressed by the legal argument put forward by Mason and her followers: firstly that the Executive Committee lacked the power to deal with the issue; and secondly by stating how the Constitution had previously been altered without such protestations. However, it is also apparent that the Margessons could have made the schism far more damaging than it actually was. Though the departure of seven Executive members may have been temporarily damaging it would not destroy the PNEU and few Council members appear to have abandoned the Union at this time.436 It is possible that members found Lady Isabel’s ambition and domineering nature unattractive especially when

435 Ibid. 18.07.1894.
436 E.g. Mrs Ashton Jonson, a close friend of Lady Isabel’s.
contrasted with the more discreet leadership of Mason.

Following their resignations those who left issued a circular justifying their departure. This suggested that Lady Isabel had attempted to define the principles and methods recommended by the PNEU because of the expansion of the society, which meant that oral promotion was insufficient. This is possibly a criticism of Mason’s leadership, implying that she failed to provide efficient leadership. The circular refers to the ‘vital need for some degree of definiteness in the statement of our objects’ maintaining that ‘Miss Mason on the contrary desired the old vagueness still to prevail.’ The circular proceeded to refer to the Parents’ Review as ‘a further difficulty.’ This issue was addressed in Chapter 5 and illustrates the tension, differences of opinion and power struggle, which contributed to the split.

Lady Isabel clearly under-estimated the influence which a threatened Mason in remote Ambleside could exert. Thwarted in her attempts to increase her influence in the PNEU through dominating the Executive Committee, the ambitious Lady Isabel had little alternative but to resign. This episode forced the ‘malcontents’ to recognize that they possessed a different agenda to Charlotte and that they would only be able to realize their agenda when they resigned from the Union.

Mason was alarmed at the possible detrimental effect which the loss of the Margessons might have on the PNEU. A letter from Lady Isabel to Mason in August

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437 Circular issued by the Margessons, Ronald McNeill, Maud Gurney Fox, Fanny Franks & A Shand, 25.07.1894, Box 51.
1894 implies that Charlotte may have questioned whether Lady Isabel’s withdrawal from the Executive Committee necessitated her withdrawal from the PNEU, since ‘I have only not resigned my post as Honorary Secretary of the Belgravia Branch because all our members (but one or two) are out of town.’ Furthermore ‘To stay in the Union and work in the Branch would be an almost impossible position to hold. It would surely be undesirable to continue to spread the principles of the “New Education” as those of the Union when I had been obliged to withdraw from the Centre on account of those principles!’ Expressing her gratitude for the Union which had been the ‘means of discovering the ‘gospel’, she refers to the ‘difference of opinion’ which ‘was bound to come sooner or later’.

Lady Isabel had evidently believed that she was in a position to influence the philosophy of the PNEU but failed to take into consideration that as far as Charlotte was concerned, the philosophy of the PNEU was determined by her alone.

Sesame House

The archives contain little mention of the consequences of the schism but a letter written by Mrs Borrer, a Council member and friend of Lady Isabel, to Mason conveys the anxiety felt by her, through lack of information as well as offering an insight into the factors which she believed had determined the split. The letter advises Mason that after some probing by Mrs Borrer, Lady Isabel had sent ‘a queer note saying there was a real difference of opinion on matters of principle with you.’ Mrs Borrer unsuccessfully sought clarification from Mason, ‘I felt I was right to

438 Letter from Lady Isabel 08.08.1894, Box 51.
appeal to you to ask what? If it existed I felt we ought to know & now you cannot explain it!’ Clearly Mason had not provided an adequate answer. Interestingly the letter conveys the impression that the writer was unconvinced there had been a real difference of opinion and implies that the schism was due to a power struggle, since ‘Some people are not spoiled children & can bear an overthrow – some are not!’ As an acquaintance of Lady Isabel, Mrs Borrer recognized both her friend’s ambition and that she would be envious of the influence which Mason continued to exert over the PNEU.

Moreover, it is evident that Mrs Borrer’s sympathy lies with Mason and she is aware that Lady Isabel might seek to expand her new organization at the expense of the PNEU. This is illustrated by the following: ‘I wish you could go & see Lady Louise Loder … she is going to be a mother soon … Lady I is trying to get her & we must recognize she does put things to people against PNEU … Send her a copy of your book. I’ll pay for it.’ The loyalty which Mrs Borrer demonstrates in this letter and which is further evidenced by ‘we certainly do not intend to leave the Union – we never did,’ must have been a source of comfort to Mason for several reasons. Firstly, as the Borrers were both Council members it indicates that the tension did not spread to the Central Council and was confined to the Executive Committee. Secondly, it reveals that Lady Isabel’s actions had not been well received by all of her acquaintances, indicating that some may have found her domineering nature repugnant. Furthermore, the General Annual Report dated June 1895 confirms that Lady Louise Loder was persuaded to join the PNEU and is recorded as being the
president of the Southdown Branch with Mrs William Borrer listed as the Honorary Secretary. Moreover a ‘well attended’ meeting was held at Abinger House, the home of Lady Loder, where ‘Mrs Walter Ward gave a most interesting account of the Norland Institute.’ Given Mrs Ward’s advocacy of Froebel’s methods this would suggest that the threat to the Union had come from Lady Margesson personally and not from any serious objection to Froebel’s ideas.

In addition, the letter refers to a ‘Club’ established by Lady Isabel, the Sesame Club. Describing the Sesame Club as ‘like a daughter of the Union’ Mrs Borrer advised Mason that she had ‘wished the Sesame Club success’ since Lady Isabel had informed her that ‘it was not founded on a spirit of opposition.’ Moreover, Mrs Borrer advised Mason that she ‘much coveted’ Lady Isabel’s ‘position as unpaid head of the new office where all her power would be used.’ This would indicate that Lady Isabel’s attempts to utilize her power in the PNEU had been thwarted by Mason forcing her to seek an alternative venture. The reference to being ‘unpaid’ conveys the respectability and status of Lady Isabel.

The Margessons and several of their disillusioned PNEU associates, including Mr & Mrs Ashton Jonson, Mr & Mrs Ronald McNeill, together with Claude Montefiore, started the Sesame Club in 1895. Utilizing her immense organizational powers and connections, Lady Isabel acquired premises initially in Victoria Street and

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440 Letter from Mrs Borrer to CM c.1895.
441 Claude Montefiore was associated with the Liberal Judaism movement along with Lily Montagu, sister of Henrietta Franklin.
subsequently in Dover Street, Piccadilly, where a variety of drawing-room meetings and lectures were organized, which attracted eminent speakers including Professor Earl Barnes, Patrick Geddes and Mrs Walter Ward. By 1901 the society claimed to have over 1000 members. Notable members included Miss B.A Clough,\textsuperscript{442} the Earl and Countess of Buckinghamshire\textsuperscript{443}, Sir Clements Markham,\textsuperscript{444} Mrs G. Bernard Shaw and Lady Wimborne.\textsuperscript{445}

Within four years those instrumental in the establishment of the Sesame Club had opened a training institution, Sesame House. Arguably the origins of Sesame House can be seen in the contents of the letter which Mason wrote to Dr Schofield prior to the schism.

> I think the new scheme for a school of Housewifery under Miss Forsyth a capital idea & one which should strengthen the hands of the Society – I strongly counseled a year’s delay to get our present work (office, Review etc) in order - & also I doubt if Miss Forsyth can undertake the two things, but the “rush” seems inevitable & the Housewifery School might prove a safe outlet for energies.\textsuperscript{446}

This passage is illuminating for various reasons. Firstly the suggestion that Mason advised caution and the successful establishment of the PNEU office etc. and that she complains of the ‘rush’ seems rather hypocritical when only several years previously she had herself acted impetuously with regard to launching a periodical when the

\textsuperscript{442} Anne Clough’s niece.
\textsuperscript{443} Lady Isabel’s brother who inherited the title in 1895.
\textsuperscript{444} Author and President of the Royal Geographical Society
\textsuperscript{445} She had held drawing room meetings to assist with PEU expansion. It is not clear whether she was still involved with the PNEU by 1900.
\textsuperscript{446} Letter from CM to Dr Schofield 16.5.1894, Box 51.
Society was being reorganized. Secondly Mason patronizes these ladies by suggesting that founding a Housewifery School might ‘prove a safe outlet for energies.’ This implies she would be content for them to pursue such a scheme rather than interfere in the philosophy of the PNEU, which she considered to be her domain.

A former patron of the PNEU, the Marchioness of Ripon, opened Sesame House Training College, allegedly planned on the lines of the Pestalozzi-Froebel Haus in Berlin, in July 1899 in St John’s Wood. Also known as the House for Home-Life Training, Sesame House aimed ‘to fit girls and women more fully for the woman’s life’. For those needing to earn their own living as certificated lady-nurses, Kindergarten teachers, and nursery governesses, Sesame House strove to help prepare girls for ‘a sheltered and refined life’ offering ‘larger opportunities of out-giving and of general self-development than the mechanical life of a bookkeeper or a shorthand writer.’

Moreover the Report of the First Year’s Work states that the institution opened with twenty students, many more than the House of Education had in 1892. This would suggest that the ideas it was promoting were acceptable amongst contemporary society, particularly those who still adhered to the ‘ideal of Victorian womanhood’. At this time a great deal of emphasis was being placed on the need for women to be ‘domestic goddesses’ and run their households efficiently. McDermid suggests that fears of social disintegration caused by the adverse effects of industrialization and

urbanization, and social Darwinist concerns for the healthy continuance of the British
race, helped to create a climate in which the educational provision for working-class
girls was geared towards women as mothers.448 This is certainly supported by the
fact that childcare, housewifery, cookery and laundry lessons dominated the
curriculum.449

Such ideas were not however always approved of by contemporary educationalists.
The idea that some of the new high schools catering for middle-class girls seemed
reluctant to teach domestic science for fear that it might restrict their academic studies
is illustrated by the following statement made by Miss Gardiner, Headmistress of
Blackburn High: ‘The intellectual birthright must not be sold for skill in making
puddings.’450 However, the Headmistress of Manchester High, Sara Burstall,
established a housewifery course in 1900 ‘intended for the girls who were going
home and had no intention of following a profession,’451 implying the idea of
producing the ‘perfect middle-class wife and mother’ still received support.
Nevertheless it was possibly the perceived lack of commitment to domestic science in
the middle-class schools which encouraged Lady Isabel and her associates to open
Sesame House. It is worth noting that Lady Isabel was a Eugenicist.452

449 Levine, P, Victorian Feminism 1850-1900, 1987, p. 39. In 1878 domestic science was made
compulsory for girls in elementary schools.
451 Ibid.
452 Lady Isabel is listed as a member of the Eugenics Society Council between 1909 & 1911. British
Eugenics Society Archives.
Mrs Ashton Jonson evidently recognized how the establishment of the ‘House for Home-Life Training’ in ‘these modern days of strenuous womanhood and of agitation for political rights’ might be regarded as a ‘step backward.’ Mrs Jonson maintained that the ‘centre of the home is the child’ and that Sesame House should not be regarded as a ‘mere school for housekeepers’ or a ‘training home for nurses’ but that ‘every branch of domestic work, every moment spent in the Kindergarten, has its underlying principles linking it to the Froebel idea of unification.’ This is illustrated by an extract from an article written by Sesame House Council member, Mrs Hirst Alexander:

> In order to give the experience, which shall enable a woman rightly to recognize and take her true place in the home, the care of the child is made the central point of the training. The little child is set in the midst, and round him, in the house, in the kitchen, and in the child garden, is the training and development of the students built up. In this it differs from those schools of domestic training, where lessons are given without the home-life surroundins and the human element.

Records indicate how Sesame House expanded in the early part of the twentieth century. The ‘Seventh Year’s Record of Sesame House’ claimed ‘Each term the houses have been increasingly full; and intending students are invited to enter their names at least a term in advance.’ Moreover the ‘Eleventh Year’s Record’ refers to the Child-garden catering for the ‘poorer children of the neighbourhood’ along with the children of a ‘few well-to-do parents.’ This suggests that the Kindergarten

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453 Seventh Years’ Record of Sesame House, 1906, p.3. LSE Archives.
454 Mrs Hirst Alexander, The Sesame Club in London, 1901, Ibid.
455 Seventh Years’ Record, 1906, p.1. Ibid.
456 Eleventh Years’ Record ,1910, p.1.Ibid.
movement was less socially exclusive than the PNEU, and indicates that those trained at Sesame House were being prepared for working with children from all classes. Furthermore, records also indicate the type of employment which students secured following their training. These included ‘Children’s Nurse’, ‘Head of Kindergarten’, ‘Head of School’, ‘Child Welfare Work’ and ‘Hospital Nurse’, and demonstrate the growing awareness for a more professional approach to the instruction and care of young children.

Whilst the curriculum offered by Sesame House and the House of Education differed significantly and Sesame House should not be perceived as a rival to Mason’s establishment, it certainly could be regarded as a source of irritation. Interestingly the ‘Sesame House Association Leaflet’ of 1921 lists Laura Epps as Honorary Treasurer. Laura, a nursery governess, was the daughter of Frances Epps, a former Bishop Otter Student. Cholmondeley claims that Mason stayed with Mrs Epps and her family whilst conducting research for *The Forty Shires* and ‘spent peaceful days reading and enjoying the company of Mrs Epps and her four children.’ Mrs Epps had also been instrumental in interviewing prospective House of Education students. Mason must have been mortified when Frances enrolled her daughter as a student at Sesame House in 1913.

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457 *Sesame House Association Leaflet No. 7* 1921, pp.18-23. Ibid.
459 *Sesame House Association Leaflet No. 7*, p.19.
Re-evaluation of PNEU Philosophy

In an article written in 1952, Woodham-Smith suggested that the object of the Sesame Club was to provide a rallying point for parents interested in the new method of education. Through lectures, debates and papers it provided a platform for progressive education including that of Mason.\footnote{Woodham-Smith, 1961, p.78.} Bruce Watson, an authority on Froebel, regards *Friedrich Froebel and English Education* in which the article appeared as ‘a very authoritative source’, adding ‘I would be surprised if the Sesame Club did not provide a platform for Miss Charlotte Mason.’\footnote{E-Mail from Bruce Watson (25.09.2002)} It was possible to be a member of both organizations.\footnote{Eg. Lady Welby, Lady Hastings, Mrs Anson} Moreover, Executive Minutes suggest that relations between Sesame House and the PNEU were cordial: ‘A letter was read from Sesame House expressing thanks for tickets sent for nurses lecture at the conference.’ Moreover ‘Mrs Anson reported on behalf of the Sesame Club the offer of the Ruskin Room for meetings of the PNEU. She was asked to express the thanks of the Committee and to accept the offer so kindly made.’\footnote{Executive Minutes 11.06.1901 & 20.11.1901, Box 34.} These extracts support the theory that the split of 1894 was primarily due to a personality clash between Mason and Lady Isabel rather than irreconcilable philosophical differences.

However, this alleged harmonious relationship between Mason and the Sesame Club which Woodham-Smith promoted, can be challenged. Clearly if Mason had indeed belonged to the Sesame Club she would have been included in the list of members
like the individuals who contributed papers of educational interest or provided articles for circulation including Patrick Geddes, and Sir Clements Markham. Neither the list of members for 1900 nor a supplementary list in 1902 contains Charlotte’s name.\textsuperscript{464}

Furthermore, whilst Cholmondeley makes no mention of either the Sesame Club or Sesame House, the existence of both does appear occasionally in the correspondence between Mason and Henrietta Franklin, albeit in a derogatory manner. In a letter in March 1900 Mason advises, ‘Indeed the PNEU is a wonder to me. It is only by the Grace of God, working through this fealty that we have been able to keep a platform, devoted to steady leaverage in a given place, instead of to the oscillations and vagaries of, let us say, the Sesame Club, which represents very faithfully the spirit of the day.’\textsuperscript{465}

Moreover, Henrietta occasionally refers to the split of 1894 in an attempt to persuade Mason to provide statements or indeed to advise caution and this is evident with regard to the publication of the Synopsis in 1904. In one letter Henrietta refers to a ‘tussel’ with Mrs Anson ‘who is really not one of us & who though really powerless is inclined to stray into a “command platform” … One gets told too that we let Lady Isabel go because she wanted to stereotype & bind us to a name etc … If you have time in the next month to make a little statement for me to “voice” it will be nice.’\textsuperscript{466}

\textsuperscript{464} Hampshire Record Office Ref: 38M49/E12/19.
\textsuperscript{465} Letter from CM to HF 09.05.1900, Box 50.
\textsuperscript{466} Letter from HF to CM 17.12.1903, PNEU Box 2. Mrs Anson is listed as a member of the Sesame Club in 1900.
Describing the Synopsis as ‘excellent and what we wanted’ Franklin recognizes that the publication might prove problematic in view of the split in 1894 since,

I fear I shall have a stiff job though, a movement grows after its initial conception & people will say or may say that this close defining is just what Lady Isabel M. went off for & her faction. You remember we said “no shibboleth, no names etc” & people may contend that any closer defining of our position may clash with (b) in objects. Of course I don’t think so & I am not sure that except Mrs Anson any one is sufficiently keen in their objections to make any fuss. In fact except her I am pretty sure of carrying the committee when I talk to them.  

In a letter to Henrietta dated 12th February 1904 Mason attempts to justify her decision to clarify the position of the PNEU.

Lady Isabel Margesson & some other members of the Committee left us in 1894 because we could not receive their amendment pledging us to the “New education” as set forth by Pestalozzi, Herbert Spencer, Froebel & other Educational Philosophers. As a matter of fact the PNEU was designed as a tacit protest against the fundamental principles of the Philosophers mentioned … It is quite true that at the time of the rupture I protested against the use of names & definitions. I have tried for years to hide behind the phrase “PNEU thought” but we make little headway as an educational power in the country & we leave ourselves open to the charge brought against us by the malcontents of ’94 that “absolute vagueness is to prevail” as regards the best principles & methods of Education as understood by the Union. As people grow earnest about education they will either neglect us as amateurs or require to know, what our platform is. So it seems to be well to draw up an adequate statement of what we teach; also it seems necessary that this teaching must be protected by the name of the originator, or every one who speaks for PNEU has a right to say “I think” and call it “PNEU teaching”.  

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467 Ibid. 10.02.1904.
468 Letter from CM to HF 12.02.1904, Ibid.
This indicates that Mason now regarded herself as a significant educational philosopher and was prepared to clarify the philosophy when it suited her. Consequently Mason was willing to define the philosophy of the society when she was assured that the views espoused were her own. By 1904 Mason’s position was far more secure than in 1894. The House of Education, the *Parents’ Review* and the Parents’ Review School were all well established. Lady Isabel and her followers had been replaced by those who were prepared to give Mason the respect which she desperately sought. This statement also implies that Mason will not tolerate any one else defining the philosophy of the PNEU.

Mason demonstrated her desire to determine the philosophy of the PNEU by revising *Home Education*. An article entitled ‘PNEU Children’ which was published in the *Parents’ Review* in 1902 provided the basis for significant alterations to the chapter ‘Lessons as Instruments of Education’. Perusal of the article suggests that it was written after the publication of an article469 which had perceived the Kindergarten as ‘the only rational method of training our infants, forming their character, and preparing them for future life.’ Such a statement necessitated an editorial response, ‘as by publishing this statement we would seem to endorse it, it becomes necessary to enter our caveat.’ Possibly the implication that some readers of the journal were still very much influenced by the kindergarten prompted Mason to evaluate the PNEU attitude towards kindergartens.

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469 The article was written by Constance Barnard. *PR*, 1902, p.195-208.
The first edition of *Home Education* written in 1886 prior to the launch of the PEU/PNEU was positive with regard to the Kindergarten movement, maintaining ‘On the whole we may say that the principles which should govern kindergarten teaching are precisely those in which every thoughtful mother endeavours to bring up her family; while the practices of the kindergarten, being only one way amongst others of carrying out these principles, may be adopted so far as they fit in conveniently with the mother’s general scheme for the education of her family.’$^{470}$ It is clear from such a statement that the society formed in response to the publication of *Home Education* would have attracted those sympathetic to Froebel, like Emily Shirreff, since it is by no means critical of the German educator. However, later editions are far more judgmental: ‘while the practices of the kindergarten being only ways, amongst others, of carrying out these principles, and being apt to become stereotyped and wooden, are unnecessary, but may be adopted so far as they fit in conveniently with the mother’s general scheme for the education of her family.’$^{471}$ This indicates that Mason’s views had developed and it is likely that this was due to the schism of 1894. Indeed the revised chapter contains an additional seventeen pages in which Mason criticizes various aspects of the kindergarten.

Initially Mason acknowledges Froebel’s contribution to education:

> We, too, reverence Froebel. Many of his great thoughts we share; we cannot say borrow, because some, like the child’s relations to the universe, are at least as old as Plato; others belong to universal practice and experience, and this, as the writer in question properly observes,

$^{470}$ Mason, C, *Home Education*, 1st proof, 1886, p.46, Box 51.
shows their psychological rightness. Froebel gathered diffused thoughts and practice into a system, but he did a greater thing than this. He raised an altar to the enthusiasm of childhood upon which the flame has never since gone out.\footnote{PR, Vol.13, 1902, p.284 & Home Education, 1905, p.185.}

However Mason then proceeds to berate certain aspects of Froebel’s work. Firstly Mason considers that the Kindergarten could stifle a child’s individuality. ‘The first care of the PNEU is to preserve the individuality, give play to the personality of children. Now \textit{persons} do not grow in a garden, much less in a greenhouse.’\footnote{Ibid.}

Secondly Charlotte questions whether the Kindergartnerin undervalues the intelligence of children ‘if the little people were in the habit of telling how they feel, we should learn perhaps that they are a good deal bored by the nice little games in which they frisk like lambs, flap their fins, and twiddle their fingers like butterflies.’

Thirdly the kindergarten is berated for not providing room for spontaneity since ‘everything is directed, expected, suggested.’ Fourthly the system is criticized for producing the risk of supplanting nature. ‘The educational error of our day is that we believe too much in mediators.’\footnote{Ibid. p.289.} Mason perceived nature as the mediator and warns about the ‘danger of personal magnetism’, of the teacher imposing her personality on the child.

To support her argument for ‘natural development’ as opposed to a ‘too carefully organized system’ Mason quotes from the autobiography of the deaf, dumb and blind, Helen Keller. Suggesting that her tutor Miss Sullivan sought to ‘liberate the

\footnote{PR, Vol.13, 1902, p.284 & Home Education, 1905, p.185.}
\footnote{Ibid.}
\footnote{Ibid. p.289.}
personality’ of her pupil and not impose her own, Mason inserted Miss Sullivan’s view on education.

‘I don’t want any more Kindergarten materials … I am beginning to suspect all elaborate and special systems of education. They seem to me to be built up on the supposition that every child is a kind of idiot who must be taught to think, whereas if the child is left to himself he will think more and better, if less showily. Let him go and come freely, let him touch real things, and combine his impressions for himself, instead of sitting indoors at a little round table, while a sweet-voiced teacher suggests that he build a stone wall with his wooden blocks, or make a rainbow out of strips of coloured paper, or plant straw trees in bead flower-pots. Such teaching fills the mind with artificial associations that must be got rid of before the child can develop independent ideas out of actual experiences.475

In addition Mason quotes from a paper by Mr Thistleton Mark entitled ‘Moral Education in American Schools.’ In this paper, which questioned whether a system developed for the education of peasant children was still applicable for the ‘modern city child’, the author referred to the findings of Dr Stanley Hall. Dr Hall appears critical of the ‘very crude poems, indifferent music and pictures, illustrating certain incidents of child life believed to be of fundamental and typical significance. I have read these in German and English, have strummed the music, and have given a brief course of lectures from the sympathetic stand-point, trying to put all the new wine of meaning I could think of into them. But I am now driven to the conclusion that, if they are not positively unwholesome and harmful for the child, and productive of anti-scientific and unphilosophical intellectual habits in the teacher, they should

475 Ibid. p. 196.
nevertheless be superseded by the far better things now available.”

These criticisms are significant and by quoting from ‘eminent sources’ Mason adds weight to her argument that education is spontaneous and needs to take account of scientific advances.

The PNEU Constitution

Undoubtedly both Elsie Kitching and Cholmondeley played down the significance of the split of 1894. In ‘The History and Aims of the PNEU’ a collection of Mason’s papers and articles compiled by Elsie Kitching the schism of 1894 is minimized with the positive outcome highlighted.

It was a time of sifting. Our principles were called into question, investigated, re-affirmed, and most cordially embraced by many who had, in the first instance, accepted them somewhat as a matter of course. We came out of rather painful experiences, strengthened and refreshed, with enthusiasm quickened and numbers increasing, and what is more, the addition of some of the most enthusiastic and successful workers on our executive committee.

Indeed this passage was used to introduce Henrietta Franklin as a replacement for Lady Isabel. Ironically Henrietta owed her position on the Executive to Lady Isabel’s attempt to replace the six Executive members whose attendance was poor. This illustrates how the Executive Committee had changed the Constitution prior to the

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476 Ibid. p.198.
477 Mason, C in ‘The History and Aims of the PNEU’, 1899, p.23, Box 48.
478 Executive Minutes 18.04.1894 state ‘that six members of committee showing lowest attendances shall retire by ballot taken at the next Executive Committee before the Annual Meeting.’ Box 34.
schism, adding weight to the argument in the Margessons’ letter of resignation.\footnote{Ibid. 18.07.1894.}

Possibly Mason’s objection to a further change of the Constitution should be considered with this alteration in mind since it does appear to indicate that Lady Isabel was increasing her power at the expense of Mason’s support. Evidently those who attended least were predominantly Bradford-based who might find it rather arduous to attend on a regular basis. However, if this was Lady Isabel’s intention, it clearly backfired with the arrival of Henrietta. Whilst Henrietta would prove to be a dominating lady herself, she was very much influenced by Charlotte and rather than being a threat like Lady Isabel, she would prove to be a formidable advocate.

The original PNEU Constitution of 1890 can be regarded as a cause of the schism, and the revised Constitution of 1895 was a consequence of the schism. Whilst Mason had placed a great deal of emphasis on how the Constitution had been formulated by such highly admired educationalists, they were not lawyers and they had created a Constitution with no provision for alteration, and with hindsight it is clear that there would be problems. This lack of means of altering is recognized in the legal opinion reported in Mason’s circular in July 1894.\footnote{‘If fresh objects are sought to be introduced or the old ones varied the present Union should be dissolved, and a new one formed.’ Box 51.} It was with regard to the issue of the legality of the Executive Committee’s actions in producing the leaflet, which in effect endorsed the alteration of the society’s objects, that Mason and her associates were able to successfully overcome the challenge posed by Lady Isabel. Moreover it is evident that measures would be implemented to prevent such a recurrence, illustrated by Mr Perrin’s proposal following the multiple resignations when he ‘spoke in favour
of a meeting of Central Council to re-form the Constitution and make rules & bye-laws.  

The re-vamped Constitution of 1895 was a significant improvement on the previous one. Whilst the objects of the PNEU remained the same there were changes to the organisation of the society, which in effect limited the potential power of the Executive Committee members. This is illustrated by the organization now being ‘under the control of the Central Council’ with an Executive Committee annually elected by the Council. Furthermore, safeguards were introduced to prevent a repetition of individuals seeking to exert undue influence. Item no. 17 stated that ‘no alteration shall be made in the rules, except by a two-thirds majority of those present at a Council meeting specially convened for that purpose.’ Item no.24 reports that ‘the Executive Committee shall have power to make, alter, or revoke bye-laws for the management of the society, provided always that such bye-laws be not contrary to the principles or rules of the society. Item no.22 states that ‘nine members shall form a quorum of the Council; five of the Executive Committee.’ Consequently whilst the revised Constitution offers the possibility for further revision the procedure is clearly defined with the ultimate power resting democratically with the Central Council. This in effect helped to secure Mason’s position further, eliminating the likelihood of an Executive Committee member imitating Lady Isabel’s quest for greater power.

481 Executive Minutes 18.07.1894, Box 34.  
482 Revised Constitution 1895, Ibid.
This chapter has suggested that, given the broad appeal of the early PNEU and the deficiencies of the early Constitution, disagreements were inevitable. By opposing the attempt of the ‘malcontents’ both to define the PNEU philosophy and indeed to enhance their position on the Executive, Mason forced a confrontation and the ultimate resignations of her adversaries. A decade later, Mason’s position was undeniably more secure and she felt confident enough to provide a Synopsis of the PNEU philosophy which she had been reluctant to undertake previously. This indicates that Mason’s objections to ‘labelling’ the PNEU in 1894 concealed the prime factor in the schism, the power struggle.

Various aspects of Mason’s character have been highlighted in this episode including confidence and determination, ambition and pragmatism. Mason’s confidence is conveyed through considering herself established enough to comment on a system developed by a distinguished educational philosopher. Ambition is revealed through her being prepared to lose support in order to mould the PNEU into an organization which espoused her own philosophy. Determination is conveyed in her steadfast resolution that the PNEU would not be used to advance other educational philosophies. Both of these characteristics are apparent in her attempts to thwart the equally ambitious Lady Isabel. Moreover, Mason was not averse to defining the PNEU when it suited her, revealing an element of pragmatism.
One of the longest and most intense relationships which Charlotte Mason enjoyed was that with the Honorable Henrietta Franklin. This chapter focuses on the importance of Henrietta to both the PNEU and to Mason. Brief biographical details will be provided to illustrate her social standing and how she could exploit this to advance the PNEU. Consideration will be given to her contacts, further revealing the importance of networking to Mason’s success. Furthermore Henrietta’s organizational skills will be illustrated. Perusal of the correspondence between Mason and Franklin provides an insight into the personalities of both of these ladies and the importance of their friendship.

**Henrietta’s Background**

Henrietta was a daughter of Samuel Montagu, a wealthy Jewish banker who became a liberal Member of Parliament and was rewarded with the title 1st Baron of Swaythling in 1907. Montagu pledged allegiance to full suffrage, free trade and House of Lords reform. Henrietta’s siblings appear to have been touched by a strong social conscience and a desire to perform some form of public duty. This is illustrated in

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483 Montagu had 10 children.
the life of Lily Montagu, who along with Claude Montefiore, launched liberal Judaism in England, whilst Edwin Montagu, later became Secretary of State for India.\textsuperscript{484} Having successfully passed the senior Cambridge and College of Preceptors examination Henrietta married her wealthy cousin, Ernest Franklin in 1885. A feminist, who had requested that a female doctor deliver her five children and a female surgeon amputate her cancerous leg, Henrietta was an early member of the Executive Committee of the National Council of Women, and became involved in the National Union of Suffrage where her friend Millicent Fawcett was President.\textsuperscript{485} Henrietta came to prominence in the PNEU in 1894 and held the position of Honorary Secretary over 70 years until her death in 1964 having been awarded the CBE in 1950.

Meeting with Mason

Evidently Henrietta’s social and charitable commitments were responsible for introducing her to the PNEU. An extract from a letter written by the philanthropic Lady Aberdeen in 1887 suggests she had drawn Henrietta’s attention to Mason’s work: ‘I am very pleased with a new book Home Education by Charlotte Mason; really sensible, rather on the lines of Herbert Spencer.’\textsuperscript{486} However, Gibbon’s biography \textit{Netta}, indicates that Franklin’s involvement with the PNEU developed

\textsuperscript{484} Edwin (1879-1924) was Secretary of State for India 1917-1922.
\textsuperscript{485} Louise Aldrich Blake amputated Henrietta’s leg in 1909 when a sarcoma was discovered.
\textsuperscript{486} Gibbon, 1960, p.113
through her association with Mrs Whitaker Thompson, thereby further illustrating the importance of networking. 487

Henrietta was 27 and Charlotte 51 when they were introduced and Henrietta later recalled their first meeting:

We stayed at Lowood [July 1893] and I made my pilgrimage one afternoon to visit Miss Mason. Years afterwards she used to say, ‘I looked out of the window and saw a young person in a Holland frock approaching the hall door’… I had found the ‘guru’, or sage and teacher, of whom I stood so much in need. I can only give you a faint idea of the inspiration of her personality. She was quite small, rather frail, obliged eventually to plan her life as carefully as an invalid. But she burned like a clear flame. 488

The image of a frail, sofa-ridden invalid is typical of the impression which Mason was content for her contemporaries to associate her with.

Henrietta’s biographer indicates that she was not averse to forming relationships with women in positions of authority. A passage concerning her childhood illustrates this as well as highlighting contemporary attitudes towards the education of girls. Gibbon relates how Henrietta wanted to learn Latin and algebra like her brothers and that her headmistress advised her to hem a shirt exquisitely for her father to convince him that learning algebra would not detract from her femininity. Furthermore, Gibbon refers to the great admiration for her headmistress’s ‘partner’ who taught her Latin.

487 Whitaker Thompson was introduced to the PNEU at a meeting at the Duchess of Portland’s London residence.
In fact my schwamerei, or ‘pash’, was such that nowadays it would not be encouraged. I would stand long at the window, regardless of rules, in the hope of seeing her pass on the way to church. She was a High Anglican, and, later on, after I was married, when this grande passion, if it were a grande passion, had come to be more on her side than mine, she told me one year that it was her custom to give up something that she cared for greatly in Lent and that therefore she would give up coming to tea each week with me! Shortly afterwards she appeared at tea, and I learnt to my amusement that she had decided to give up sugar instead.\footnote{Ibid, p.7.}

By 1897 Henrietta’s admiration and affection had very much been drawn towards Mason as the following extract implies.

I thank you for your love and friendship. It is only one who loves you as I do & who knows the sacredness of friendship that know what this means … I cannot say more, but I can dedicate to you a life of loving, humble service in your work and a constant prayer that I may become worthier of you.\footnote{Letter from HF to CM, 1897, PNEU Box 2.}

This would appear to be in response to a letter Charlotte had sent to Henrietta in which she seems to be laying down the foundations for their future relationship.

I feel rich in the possession of you, dearest, but you will find me very exacting, not at all in the way of affection, that goes without saying, still less in the way of exclusive affection which thing is not lovely, but in the way of having you ever more and more God-fulfilled, ever more and more of your best beautiful self. I could not let you be less than yourself. Happily you are like me, a woman lover and you have lovely friends and one at least who holds you very close, but will
probably not tell you so again, but will expect you always to trust her.\textsuperscript{491}

One of the most striking aspects of the many letters written by Mason to Franklin is the language adopted to imply a most intimate association. Mason incorporates a number of sentimental phrases to express her feelings. A letter dated May 1901 maintains ‘I feel like drowning you under a perfect waterfall of love and blessing.’\textsuperscript{492} Another letter advises Henrietta to ‘take care of yourself, Queen of Hearts.’\textsuperscript{493} A further letter informs Henrietta ‘I am hungry for you.’\textsuperscript{494} Moreover, such phrases are not reproduced in Mason’s surviving correspondence with other associates, including that with Lizzie Groveham, with whom she corresponded regularly for a considerable number of years.

In her research into the establishment of women’s colleges, Edwards touches on the sexuality of the female principals, referring to the ambivalent attitude towards close relationships between women from the 1870s. Edwards suggests it is difficult to decode the nature of these relationships since, ‘The prevailing discourses of middle-class femininity, and particularly that of feminine respectability, would have precluded women principals from engaging in relationships with their own sex, in which physical sexual satisfaction rather than emotional intimacy was the primary

\textsuperscript{491} Letter from CM to HF, 31.05.1897, Box 50. References to attractive women appear in their correspondence; a letter from CM, 20.05.01 states ‘stick to your pretty chairwomen, dear; I am very weak about pretty women and love the look of us on the platform.’
\textsuperscript{492} Letter from CM to HF, 20.05.1901, Box 50.
\textsuperscript{493} Ibid, 02.04.1902, Box 44.
\textsuperscript{494} Ibid, 11.05.1902. A letter 12.6.1911 addresses Henrietta as ‘my beloved.’
Furthermore Edwards suggests that the unmarried female principals needed ‘to express their femininity as ordinary women, and to be loved and to love for themselves within the intimacy of a close personal relationship.’ Clearly Charlotte’s friendship with Henrietta provided her with some form of emotional attachment, which she had not found elsewhere.

Correspondence between these ladies gives the impression that Mason was jealous of others sharing in Henrietta’s attention and this envy recurs, skilfully hidden in letters by stressing her frailty and inability to cope with excessive company. A letter dated May 1902 refers to Henrietta’s impending visit: ‘About Mrs Glover, I shall love to have her but after you have gone – the limitation is really vexing to me because I am a hospitable soul on the whole, but I go out a great deal to people and two personalities at once simply drain me. Even you and B.P. are too much for me, how much more anybody else.’

An interesting letter written to Henrietta in March 1898 reinforces the idea of Mason as a frail invalid who finds company tiresome:

Dr Oldham pledges me to invalidism; that is a comfortable position, least possible work, no people, no effort for two or three weeks longer.

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496 Ibid, p.28.
497 Charlotte may have formed other close friendships. Little is known of the nature of her relationship with Emily Brandreth.
498 Henrietta introduced Ella Glover to the PNEU.
499 B.P. (Beloved Person) refers to Dr Helen Webb.
500 Letter from CM to HF, 11.05.1902, Box 50.
when he thinks I shall be fairly myself and, given still a regimen of quietness and idleness, he thinks I may be quite well before May … Mrs Steinthal spent yesterday here, not looking very strong but marvellously full of energy and of various matters and big people. I enjoyed seeing her much but am suffering a little for the pleasure.\footnote{Ibid, 08.03.1898, Box 44.}

A letter written during the following month provides an informative insight into the running of the House of Education as well as further conveying how Mason emphasized the delicacy of her health:

Miss Williams is a delightful success; perfect in the House, rejoiced in by the students and a joy to the Principal. The only worries I can think of at the moment are – a schwermerei between two students, which I think I have reduced to wholesome dimensions – and a deadlock about a dwelling place for the Practising School girls. This sits heavy, but I fear neither you, nor Dr Ransford, can help me – I mentioned these to show you that it is the merest trifles that are capable of bothering just now; but you will be surprised when you see how well I am.\footnote{Ibid, 23.04.1898.}

Records suggest that Mason enjoyed European travel and despite her poor health her overseas visits were not exclusively to the German spa towns.\footnote{E.g. Note books reveal CM toured the Northern Capitals with Sophie Armitt in 1897, Box 1.} In an extract from a letter written to Henrietta from Italy, Mason illustrates the difficulties she encountered and this is further evidence of her placing emphasis on her physical condition; ‘This is an extremely nice hotel and to a person who had not to be carried upstairs an economical one.’ Another letter suggests that a proposed visit by Henrietta was responsible for an improvement in Mason’s health, since ‘I am ever so well, and that after fearing that I must go to some sort of baths this winter to be able
to hold on." This also suggests that Mason had come to depend on Henrietta and the remainder of this chapter provides evidence why.

Henrietta was quick to offer hospitality to Charlotte during her visits to London and this is illustrated by the following extract:

Don’t you think if you come on the 28th we might on the 29th have a few select PNEU to dinner & after dinner ask in all your London friends to see you. You can't [sic] possibly go to every one and if Miss Kitching sends me a list of your ex-students, student’s parents, PR’s children’s [sic] mothers who were in reach of London they would be so grateful for the chance of seeing you. We number 50 now in our branch & I hope to do well.

A subsequent letter reinforces Henrietta’s eagerness to play the perfect hostess as well as suggesting that the relationship was still somewhat formal with Henrietta addressing Charlotte as ‘Miss Mason.’ Furthermore, the purpose of Mason’s visit was not purely social even though it coincided with Christmas festivities.

Dear Miss Mason,

I am confessedly disappointed at the idea of your stay here being spoilt by your lecturing engagements. It is too bad of them to want you also. I hope you are not going to sleep out on the 31st. I think of only asking Miss Webb, Perrins, Coutts & Mr & Mrs Epps for the 29th to dinner. I trust a great many will come afterwards. I suppose you will send a few private invites as well.

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504 Letter from CM to HF, 19.11.01, Box 50. Letter 11.05.1902 states, ‘the conference is almost too much for me. It is overpowering and my only comfort is that you are coming to tell me about everything.’ Box 44.
505 Letter from HF to CM 07.12.1894, PNEU Box 2.
Henrietta’s Contacts

Evidently able to entertain on a large scale, Henrietta had a number of friends whom she introduced to Mason, who would subsequently play substantial parts in the expansion and effective running of the PNEU. These ladies included Ella Glover who would write articles on music in the *Parents’ Review*, Lady Campbell (Nina Lehmann), Mrs Devonshire, a writer and lecturer, and Mrs Clement Parsons. Mrs Parsons was an author and able lecturer and gave an address promoting the PNEU to the delegates of the International Congress of Women in 1899, which was subsequently produced as a leaflet. In this she refers to Mason as ‘the guiding spirit’. Evidently Mason was impressed, informing Henrietta: ‘We have never had anything like it, such power such purpose, such unity of aim; such P.N.E.U.-ism throughout … I long to see Mrs Parsons; she is so truly us. You have made a brilliant disciple.’

It would appear that Mrs Parsons’ opinion was sought with regard to the publication of Mason’s later writings; presumably she was requested to read and comment on the draft, and this is illustrated by an extract from a letter, which Henrietta wrote in 1904:

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507 Henrietta’s home, 50 Porchester Terrace, was known as the ‘Henrietta Arms’
508 Mrs Glover was appointed to the Executive Committee in 1897 at Henrietta’s suggestion. Lady Campbell in 1898, Clement Parsons in 1901.
510 Letter from CM to HF 16.08.1899, Box 44. Also, 02.04.1902, ‘Please tell Mrs Clement Parsons how
You shall have the ‘Reading course’ back tomorrow – Mrs Clement Parsons has it just now … Mrs Clement Parsons thinks those excellent quotations which head the ‘Confessio’ would gain in force if the author was omitted. She says it is now a fashionable habit among female novelists to head their chapters by quotations from obscure writers & that we should gain by not appearing too ‘erudite’… I wish you had heard her yesterday when I showed her the finished thing: ‘This is really perfect, it is the whole educational philosophy one wants, it is the gem & heart of all her writings except ‘Books’, ‘Education Science of Relations’ & ‘Ourselves.’

It appears Henrietta was instrumental in galvanizing the support of the affluent Emma Winkworth who had joined her PNEU branch. She described Henrietta as ‘a most admirable & capable director of all things’ who displayed ‘very able management of our Branch.’ As well as providing an annual Garden Party for PNEU members, Emma Winkworth also provided the finance necessary to publish certain pamphlets and her generosity was rewarded by being made a Vice-President of the PNEU in 1905.

Mrs Franklin reported a proposal made by Mrs Winkworth to print Mrs Clement Parson’s article ‘The only child’ as a separate pamphlet for sale by the union. Mrs Winkworth to advance the cost of printing, which would be refunded by sale of pamphlet & any profits to go to general fund of the union.

delighted I am about the Temple Bar paper. We are safe in her hands, are we not?’ Box 50.

511 Letter from HF to CM 20.03.1904, PNEU Box 2.
512 Emma was related to the author Catherine Winkworth (1827-1878) whose education had been supplemented by Elizabeth Gaskell’s husband, William. She refers to childhood memories of Mrs Gaskell in L’Umile Pianta, January 1899, p.27.
513 Letter from Emma Winkworth to CM undated, Box 50.
514 Council Minutes 15.05.1905, Box 34.
515 Executive Minutes 11.06.1901, Ibid. Minutes, 24.09.1902 report she had presented four new books to the PNEU Library.
Henrietta’s contacts included government ministers\textsuperscript{516} and archival evidence suggests she used her position to promote Mason’s philosophy. A letter addressed to Mrs Franklin from Bryce, who had chaired the Royal Commission on Education in 1894, acknowledges the receipt of three copies of Mason’s pamphlet ‘A Liberal Education’ in 1916.\textsuperscript{517} Moreover, Henrietta was happy to entertain Robert Morant, the Education Secretary\textsuperscript{518} and ‘a few other’ ‘intellectuals’ including Earl Barnes\textsuperscript{519}, and Bonar, advising Mason ‘if you feel up to it I could get Mr Morant to come early & see you first.’\textsuperscript{520} Furthermore it will become apparent in Chapter 8 that Henrietta utilised her acquaintance with Morant to act as a mediator when Mason was considering the possibility of seeking government recognition for the House of Education in 1906. Additionally Henrietta exploited her connections to advise Mason of any Cabinet changes which might affect educational policy, as the following illustrates; ‘Now to a very important point … Mr Morant is probably going to Colonial Office & Mr Sadler going to Education Office.’\textsuperscript{521}

Henrietta also cultivated the support of the headmaster of Eton, Canon Edward Lyttleton. Gibbon notes that Lyttleton was a guest at the Franklins’ and Henrietta took him to a school run on PNEU lines. Canon Lyttleton subsequently informed Charlotte: ‘You are doing a real pioneer work: the evidence of freshness and accuracy is very noteworthy. I trust you will continue to bombard everybody within reach …

\textsuperscript{516} Citing her 1911 diary Gibbon records she dined at the House of Commons with Prime Minister Asquith, John Burns, & her brother Edwin Montagu.
\textsuperscript{517} Letter from Bryce to HF, 07.11.1916, Box 44. ‘I should like to express my admiration for the excellently sound principles laid down by Miss Mason in her lucid and penetrating way.’
\textsuperscript{518} Morant held this position from 1903-1911.
\textsuperscript{519} Earl Barnes was influential in the Child Study Movement.
\textsuperscript{520} Letter from HF to CM, 30.05.1905, PNEU Box 2.
\textsuperscript{521} Ibid. 28.01.1906.
try the Secretary of the Preparatory Schools Association … use my name if you like.\textsuperscript{522} This is further evidence of the importance of networking. Interestingly Canon Lyttleton was asked to write an introduction to Mason’s posthumously published \textit{An Essay Towards A Philosophy of Education}, and subsequently referred to her as ‘a very great lady, a woman of real genius’ during a lecture on ‘Public School and Intellectual Training’ in 1930.\textsuperscript{523} Whilst Mason may indeed have been successful in cultivating Lyttleton’s support for her theories by herself, Henrietta’s assistance would have facilitated in stirring his interest.

\textbf{Henrietta and the Executive Committee}

Henrietta proved to be an ideal Committee member. Perusal of Executive Minutes indicates that her attendance was exemplary and her contribution was substantial. Clearly confident, Henrietta was not afraid to take the chair at meetings, offer premises for the meetings,\textsuperscript{524} or to make proposals, which might improve the efficiency of the organization. One important idea was to improve communication by arranging ‘Branch Secretaries’ meetings’ at her home. Extracts from a Branch Secretaries’ Meeting in 1897 illustrate Henrietta’s organizational powers and desire for efficiency:

\begin{quote}
Mr\textsuperscript{s} Franklin made various representations as to the arrangements of programmes & gave a list of lecturers. She also suggested the
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{522} Letter from Canon Lyttleton to CM, 15.01.1906, Ibid.
\textsuperscript{523} \textit{Landmark}, April 1930, p.221, Ibid.
\textsuperscript{524} Executive Minutes, 1.3.1896 & 17.01.1900 confirm Mrs Franklin as Chair. Box 34.
advisability of placing specimen copies of the Reviews, leaflets etc. on the chair at meetings, & also advised secretaries to send occasional letters to their members asking them to endeavour to attend meetings and to give suggestions about lectures etc.\textsuperscript{525}

Executive Minutes convey Henrietta’s eye for detail and determination that the revised Constitution would be adhered to. One minute, for instance, records ‘Mrs Franklin brought to the notice of the Committee the fact that the Woodford Branch were describing themselves as the “Parents’ & Teachers Union” instead of as the PNEU. The secretary was instructed to write for an explanation.’\textsuperscript{526}

Henrietta was evidently prepared to make a financial contribution to the success of the PNEU and this is apparent with regard to acquiring the Portman Rooms for the Annual Meeting in 1896. Executive Minutes confirm that ‘the money was to be found privately under Mrs Franklin’s guarantee.’ Furthermore, ‘details as to refreshments were to be ‘left to Mrs Franklin.’\textsuperscript{527} Indeed Henrietta went to great lengths to make the Annual Meetings and Conferences more successful and this is illustrated by the introduction of the Conversazione. Using her influential contacts Franklin asked Mr Sadler to speak and Claud Montefiore to take the Chair.\textsuperscript{528}

Moreover, records show that Henrietta actively undertook various lectures to promote the PNEU, thereby enabling Mason to limit the number of arduous promotional tours

\textsuperscript{525} Branch Secretaries’ Minutes, 28.05.1897, Ibid. A Branch Secretaries’ Meeting, 12.05.1899 refers to a ‘discussion as to how to make the Union known. Mrs Franklin emphasized the necessity of plenty of literature at meetings’.
\textsuperscript{526} Executive Minutes, 15.11.1895, Ibid.
\textsuperscript{527} Ibid, 28.4.1896. Minutes of an Executive Meeting, 24.6.1896 suggest that 350 members attended the Annual Meeting.
\textsuperscript{528} Conference Sub-Committee Minutes, 12.05.1899, Ibid.
she undertook. The Annual Report of 1896 indicates Henrietta lectured to the Woodford and Wanstead Branch on ‘Habit’ in February and to the Reading Branch on ‘The Natural History Club as a means of furthering the study of nature’ in March.\(^5^{29}\) Executive Minutes record Henrietta’s visits to branches including ‘Reading, Dulwich & Highgate’ in 1897 which had been ‘successful and well attended.’\(^5^{30}\) However, an extract from a letter suggests that this was not always the case. ‘My meeting at Southend was a failure, the first bad start of a branch I have ever had – 16 in a huge hall & no real interest except in 2 or 3 … it was locally mismanaged.’\(^5^{31}\)

Furthermore, Henrietta’s promotion of the PNEU and Mason’s philosophy was not confined to Britain; she travelled extensively. In 1904 she attended an educational conference in Germany where Gibbon alleges she impressed a Jewish publisher, Mr Knittel, prompting him to then attend the next PNEU conference in London.\(^5^{32}\) Knittel subsequently sought Mason’s permission to translate *Home Education* into German. Records indicate that Mrs Franklin visited Florence in 1907 speaking on ‘Some Educational Theories,’ and Montreal in 1909, Stockholm in 1911.\(^5^{33}\) In addition she visited Rome and witnessed the Montessori School, advising that she

\(^{529}\) PNEU General Annual Report, June 1896. p.27 & 30. 
\(^{530}\) Executive Minutes, 15.12.1897, Box 34. Minutes 18.11.1896 refer to new branches & visits to Folkestone, Dulwich & Hampstead. Minutes, 03.11.1897 record visits to Scarborough, Leeds & Sheffield. Minutes, 10.03.1898 report visits to Chichester & Forest Hill. 
\(^{531}\) Letter from HF to CM, 26.10.1902, PNEU Box 2. 
\(^{532}\) A Letter from CM to HF 10.06.1904 states ‘this is just a line to wish you God-speed dear, may all go well with you at Berlin.’ Box 50. 
\(^{533}\) ‘Notes on the PNEU’, Box 34. Following her return from Canada Mrs Franklin’s leg was amputated.
was not impressed.’\textsuperscript{534} However this is not surprising given Mason’s public criticism of Dr Montessori’s system published in \textit{The Times} in 1912.\textsuperscript{535}

Executive Minutes together with correspondence indicate that Henrietta represented Mason’s interests during the meetings in London. This is illustrated by the introduction of both the Schools Register and Synopsis in 1904 when Henrietta utilized both her organizational and communication skills to ensure that these were successfully launched. Evidence suggests that Henrietta acted as an advisor with regard to establishing a register of schools adhering to PNEU principles. A letter dated December 1903 suggests that Mason was attempting to announce this in the \textit{Parents’ Review} without prior consultation with the Committee, and Henrietta warned that ‘it might upset the Committee putting in anything before even the scheme has been in any way mentioned to them.’ Demonstrating her understanding of committee meetings, Henrietta advised Mason to write to the list of schools and ‘induce them to join (I think three or four of them would & your students’ schools would)’ since ‘it would be very nice to be able to mention this fact at the next meeting.’\textsuperscript{536}

Furthermore Henrietta was able to offer advice with regard to how schools should become associated with the PNEU. A letter written in December 1903 reinforces this. Mrs Franklin suggested a ‘foot-note’ to explain that the PNEU were not able to guarantee ‘anything as to tone, hygiene & the various other arrangements of the school’ warning that without this caveat ‘we may lay ourselves open to great

\textsuperscript{534} Gibbon, 1960, p.114.
\textsuperscript{535} This is addressed in Chapter 8
\textsuperscript{536} Letter from HF to CM, 21.12.1903 in PNEU Box 2.

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difficulties.’ The same letter reinforces the importance of networking in the expansion of PNEU schools with Franklin maintaining that Miss Beveridge of the Ruskin House School was a ‘cultivated woman’ and good friend of Mrs Glover, and ‘I hope we may be able to get hold of her.’\textsuperscript{537} Among those whose interest Henrietta aroused was her friend, Miss Gray the headmistress of St Paul’s Girls School in Hammersmith. Aware of Miss Gray’s ‘vivid interest in our aims’ Charlotte invited her to become ‘a pioneer in our far-reaching reform.’\textsuperscript{538}

Moreover, following Committee approval for the Schools Register, Henrietta appears to have been aware of Mason’s impetuosity and advises caution when finalizing the details:

\textbf{Please} do not print anything without letting me see it first. My idea is that you should send out again ‘Suggestions’ to all schools who seemed interested in it & responded to the last, & to those on the list I made out with you & to any others that may occur to us. I know several more. With it you should issue the exact terms on which you would admit schools – I think we discussed this pretty fully viz. fee, test of one child in each class, promise to make use of books & work set out in all subjects except languages, science & mathematics, for which they would be entitled to be called PNEU schools.\textsuperscript{539}

Therefore it would appear that Henrietta was instrumental in showing Mason that her philosophy, which had initially concerned home education, could successfully be adapted to the school environment. Undoubtedly this was facilitated by Henrietta’s

\textsuperscript{537} Ibid. 10.12.1903.
\textsuperscript{538} Letter from CM to Miss Gray, 02.03.1905, Ibid.
\textsuperscript{539} Ibid, 10.02.1904.
contacts and sound organisational skills and by Mason accepting Henrietta’s counsel.  

Correspondence concerning the introduction of the Synopsis confirms Henrietta’s role as Mason’s advisor as well as providing further evidence of her communicational skills and casting doubt on Mason’s. A letter written by Henrietta dated 10th February 1904 reveals her confidence in being able to obtain the support of the majority of the Executive Committee ‘In fact except her [Mrs Anson] I am pretty sure of carrying the committee when I talk to them’ However, Henrietta proceeds to criticize Mason for her tardiness in supplying the necessary paperwork and adds somewhat sarcastically ‘Do you think you could at your leisure!! send me chapter & verse for each principle … I shall find it most useful in making out a lecture on our principles.’

Executive Minutes dated 17th February 1904 report:

Mrs Franklin read several letters from Miss Mason in which the latter said she felt that the PNEU had somewhat lost its opportunities and instead of being a college of parents spreading educational thought, which had formed the basis of its existence, had become a platform for more or less interesting and diffuse lectures. Miss Mason felt that in addition to this, it would be most advantageous if a body of members could be formed who had studied ‘Home Education’ & ’Parents & Children’ & other books now in manuscript & could be definitely known as having done so. This she did not feel should in anyway clash with the existing arrangements of branches.

540 A letter 30.05.1905 illustrates Henrietta’s cautious advice & Mason’s impetuosity, ‘Your scheme is wonderful but it is too sudden. I feel that to do something with it we must talk it over first.’ Ibid.
541 Ibid, 10.02.1904.
542 Executive Minutes 20.01.1904, Box 34.
This statement indicates that Mason clearly wished to clarify PNEU philosophy in her own terms, based on her original ideas contained in *Home Education*. This could be regarded as the culmination of Mason’s success in discouraging PNEU endorsement of alternative educational philosophies. This derived from the PNEU Split of 1894, the gradual efforts to select more carefully the material for publication in *Parents’ Review* and the gradual distancing of the PNEU from alternative associations including the Froebel Society.\(^{543}\) With the support of the influential Henrietta the endorsement by the Executive Committee appears to have been a formality.

Nevertheless Mason was swift to acknowledge Henrietta’s role, declaring ‘what a splendid Chela you are … I congratulate you on a splendid piece of work.’\(^{544}\) The word ‘Chela’ is of Hindi origin meaning servant or disciple.\(^{545}\) Charlotte modestly expressed her gratitude to the Committee for the ‘very cordial & gracious reception of the little synopsis’ and the ‘delightful readiness with which you have responded to my views.’\(^{546}\)

Clearly Mason recognized how vital the support of Henrietta was to her ambitions. A letter written from Shap Wells Hotel in April 1904 confirms this dependence:

> I have been in a state of nervous overstrain (though very well) since that day last February was it not when you took me out of the slough of despond and set the ideas in motion that have resulted in the school

\(^{543}\) A request by the Froebel Society to organize a joint Conference was rejected by Franklin. Executive Minutes, 24.09.1902, Ibid.

\(^{544}\) Letter from CM to HF, 18.02.1904, Box 44.

\(^{545}\) Chambers gives it as ‘the disciple of a religious teacher.’

\(^{546}\) Letter from CM to Executive Committee, 12.03.1904, Box 34.
register and the synopsis. I want you to realize by way of a birthday gift how far the whole thing is due to your stimulating sympathy, even more than to your efforts … Your one-ness with me in it all is simply a vital thing to me, and now it is all done.  

Following the publication of the Synopsis, Mason advised Henrietta that she was ‘excessively glad of her proposal to organise a course of lectures based on this, since ‘you know there is and never can be but one Chela – who understands perfectly – and is faithful, i.e. does not stick in bits like a caddis worm.’ Charlotte evidently recognized Henrietta’s steadfast loyalty. Moreover, correspondence suggests Franklin was content to be regarded as a true disciple and probably considered herself to be the most significant ‘Masonite.’ She was quick to criticize others who, in her opinion, failed to grasp PNEU philosophy sufficiently. This is illustrated in a letter referring to Helen Webb; ‘Next to me she is absolutely the only member of the committee who knows what we are at.’ The letter demotes other members including her friend Ella Glover as ‘amateurs’…‘not knowing nor grasping.’

Furthermore correspondence between these ladies illustrates the personality clashes which appear to be a feature of the PNEU. However, Mason appears to have been able to distance herself from the discontent through allowing Henrietta not only to represent her interests but also to make decisions, enabling Mason to become more of a figure-head in the PNEU. This is illustrated in the following extract written by Henrietta in 1902:

547 Letter from CM to HF, 07.04.1903, Box 44.
548 Ibid, 10.06.1904.
549 Ibid, 06.06.1902.
By the way will you write to Com. suggesting that her paper should be printed as before as a pamphlet. It is needed to hand to non-members & new members & nurses etc & I don’t want the suggestion to come from me. You don’t know what the presence of a certain personage on the Com. Means. I hope she won’t be re-elected in the autumn. The whole spirit seems altered. She does not take in the Review as she dislikes it, she has no sympathy with our principles on teaching & she is only I think a dangerous spy & has really no right there.

A Friend and Confidante?

Later correspondence between Mason and Henrietta suggests that Mason recognized how successful Henrietta was in promoting the work of the PNEU as well as suggesting that despite being in the middle of a World War the organization was thriving:

What grand things our dear secretary is doing! Three counties (nearly) being converted and new branches and a popular PR (not a bit better than it has always been) and PUS keeping up – no, madam, I don’t think we are ‘in a bad way’ and I do think the elementary school work is waking us all up to recognize that there is ‘something in it’.

Evidently Henrietta took an interest in the House of Education too, and in the students. Miscellaneous archival evidence suggests Henrietta offered employment to various students including Evelyn Flower and E C Allen. This is evidence of

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550 This appears to refer to Mrs Anson whom Henrietta disliked.
551 Letter from HF to CM, 06.06.1902, PNEU Box 2.
552 Letter from CM to HF, 02.02.1917, Box 50.
553 Evelyn Flower was a student in 1895, E C Allen in 1898.
Henrietta taking an active part in selecting suitable candidates for positions in the Parents’ Union School, which she had been instrumental in establishing. A Letter from Miss Flower dated May 1896 refers to the six children she would be teaching whilst a further letter implies that another student, Miss Leney, has also been found a position.\(^{554}\) Interestingly Miss Flower became the Treasurer and Secretary of L’Umile Pianta, the student association formed in 1896. Mason was the President of the association whilst Vice-Presidents included Mrs Dallas-Yorke, Mrs Steinthal, Mr Rooper, Mrs Winkworth and Mrs Franklin.

However, editorials within the magazine indicate that Henrietta’s attempts to offer hospitality to former students at her Bayswater home, which was perceived as ‘a little remote for some who manage to get a Saturday half with great difficulty,’ were not very successful. This implies that the students possibly wished to be more independent with a preference for a ‘Ladies’Coffee Room opposite Victoria Station.\(^{555}\) Correspondence between Mason and Henrietta suggests that the action of the former students was a source of irritation on occasions. In a letter dated 15\(^{\text{th}}\) February 1901 Mason advises, ‘I understand that you are not pleased with the students, dear. Neither am I at all. I have read their “Umile Pianta” and think they have managed to be ungracious as well as ungrateful.’\(^{556}\) Possibly the former students

\(^{554}\) Letters from Evelyn Flower, 24.05.1896 & 16.07.1896, PNEU Box XXI.
\(^{555}\) *L’Umile Pianta*, July 1896, p.30. ‘Ninety invitations to Mrs Franklins “At Home” were sent out. Of these not one half were answered. The secretary feels that the attention of the members of the Association ought to be drawn to this fact, as such a breach of the laws of common courtesy must bring discredit upon the Association as a whole.’
\(^{556}\) Letter from CM to HF, 15.02.1901, Box 50.
considered the formidable Mrs Franklin to be somewhat patronizing and over-bearing on occasions.

However, the ultimate endorsement for the House of Education was in Henrietta’s decision to send one of her daughters, Marjorie, to the institution. Not surprisingly Marjorie achieved a First and this was recorded by Mason in 1908, ‘I am delighted that the dear girl got a First – she has a most thorough knowledge of our principles and would be good for any sort of deputy work for you.’

Correspondence between Mason and Henrietta also provides an insight into contemporary attitudes to certain social issues. A letter dated 26th January 1902 refers to Henrietta’s decision to appoint a new secretary: ‘I have now coming Miss Dyke daughter of an old PNEU member who has been to Girton (classical tripos) & is good at shorthand. Her only fault is she is too rich and so many girls need work so much. However so many can’t spell.’ This is illuminating because not only does it reinforce the exclusivity of higher education provision for women at this time, but also suggests an increasing number of women were seeking employment and probably many were still inadequately prepared for it.

An interesting letter was written by Mason to Henrietta, from Bad Neuheim, Germany, in 1905. This refers to the presence of Mrs Winkworth and Mrs Lamb who had been ‘staying at Hamburg at what appears to be a sort of Sanitorium, chiefly to be

557 Letters within the archive indicate that Marjorie stayed at the House of Education as a child.  
558 Letter from CM to HF, 20.01.1908, Box 50. Henrietta’s daughter, Olive, attended Girton.  
559 Letter from HF to CM, 26.01.1902, Ibid.
dieted. They lie in the garden and read. Mrs W wishes to reduce her bulk and is greatly satisfied with the result. She is certainly much less stout than when I saw her last. This extract indicates that women’s obsession with dieting is not a recent phenomenon. Moreover, it implies that Mason was not immune to a little gossip and trivia, indicating that she was not always so serious, and this is refreshing considering that the majority of the letters within the archives are of a more sober nature.

Correspondence clearly shows that Mason regarded Henrietta as a confidante and she was not afraid to refer to the shortcomings of some of the more eminent members of the PNEU, including the President, Lady Aberdeen. Whilst a letter written in May 1901 commends Lady Aberdeen for ‘being so devoted and nice,’ Mason adds, ‘How nicely dear Lady Aberdeen has behaved all the time. I have no doubt people liked to listen to her though her speech was long and slow. I have never thought her very strong as a speaker.’ This is indicative of the confidence which Mason now possessed; she felt able to criticize an eminent Countess.

Moreover, Mason confided to Franklin her concerns with regard to the precarious finances of the college after World War 1, and her anxiety for the future of the Institution. The desperate financial situation is emphasized in a letter written in May 1920 in which Mason advised ‘Everybody is feeling money pressure now. I always keep out of debt – even the very least – but had overdrawn my banking account by £200 at Xmas and am working under great strain (housekeeping for our number is

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560 Letter from CM to HF, 21.08.1905, Ibid.
561 Ibid. 20.05.1901, Box 44
terrible) and we have no deposits or investments.\textsuperscript{562} A subsequent letter to Henrietta acknowledges the receipt of a cheque for Miss Devonshire which will be offered ‘as your gift towards some little comfort for her own sitting-room. She has come among us during the lean years.’ The letter reinforces the strict economy the college is forced to adhere to since ‘The Committee no doubt know that severe economy (with some importunity!) is the lot of most colleges and schools.’ Furthermore Mason maintains, ‘I hope soon to be able to do better for the dear children, even at the risk of leaving this property to the PNEU with a mortgage not fully cleared.’\textsuperscript{563}

A letter written in March 1917 provides an insight as to what Mason hoped to achieve. However, it is quite clear that she recognized that this was unlikely to happen during her life. It is therefore possibly an indication of the direction in which she wished the PNEU to be steered after her death:

\begin{quote}
There are two things we want for the college and school – one; that the College Certificate should be recognized for elementary schools. I know some of our students would long to teach in them, though alas we are at our wits ends to supply the family demand – indeed we can’t do it. The other thing we want is the recognition of our final V or VI form exam as qualifying for the entrance for certain professions – but these two can wait.\textsuperscript{564}
\end{quote}

Writing to Henrietta in 1902 Mason maintained with conviction ‘I have been cherishing you much of late – partly you, and partly my Chela. I thank God very

\textsuperscript{562} Ibid, May 1920.
\textsuperscript{563} Letter from CM to HF, 06.07.1922,Box 44.
\textsuperscript{564} Ibid, March 1917.
much for you dear, whatever comes of me, P.N.E.U. is safe.\textsuperscript{565} Henrietta would continue to play a dominant role in the PNEU until her death in 1964. Moreover, as a Trustee of the Incorporated House of Education, which Charlotte had established in 1911 to define the nature and future direction of her work, Henrietta took an active part in the development of the College and the Parents’ Union School.\textsuperscript{566}

This chapter has suggested that Henrietta played a significant part in the efficient running of the PNEU. Given her social standing and connections she was undoubtedly a great asset. Clearly Mason came to depend on Henrietta’s skills as a capable organizer, a cautious advisor, a confidante and a good friend. Whilst Mason possessed the educational theories, Henrietta, through her contacts and sound organizational skills, provided the means to implement Mason’s philosophy more thoroughly. Moreover, whilst it is not possible to properly understand the nature of the relationship between these two ladies, certain deductions can be made. Firstly the relationship provides great insight into Mason’s private life, evidence that in the absence of a husband Mason found emotional support and comfort in her relationship with Henrietta. Furthermore this friendship provides an indication as to how Mason was perceived by one of her most eminent contemporaries. In being able to have such a profound influence on such an influential, confident, and assertive lady through a combination of her personality and philosophy, Mason clearly possessed a great deal of charm and substance.

\textsuperscript{565} Ibid, 02.04.1902, Box 50.  
\textsuperscript{566} Trustee Minute Books, Box 12.
Evidently Mason recognized that whilst efforts were being made to introduce a more useful curriculum into schools, little attention had been paid to the large number of children receiving home education. This chapter addresses Mason’s role in attempting to remedy this situation, initially through the Parents’ Review School and ultimately through the House of Education. With regard to the House of Education, a number of areas will be explored including how the early students were recruited, how the college expanded, the purchase of Scale How and Charlotte’s relationship with her students. A brief synopsis of Charlotte’s writings and relationships with contemporary educationalists will be provided, and consideration will be given to her final years as an authority on education.

**The Parents’ Review School**

The Parents’ Review School, later known as Parents’ Union School (PUS), was started in June 1891, providing programmes of study for children between the ages of 6 and 18. The aims behind these lessons by correspondence included securing a ‘common standard of attainment’ prior to entering school (for those who would do
so) and introducing ‘good methods and good text-books’ into the home schoolroom.\footnote{PR, Vol.2, 1891/2, pp.308-315.} Among those to express approval of these correspondence lessons was Jessie Fraser, who advised Mason that there had ‘not been much method’ in her daughters’ education and ‘days sometimes pass without a lesson.’\footnote{Letter from Jennie Fraser, 30.12.1891, PNEU Box 2.} Indeed the problems of home education are a constant theme in the letters of support which Charlotte’s proposals received. Mrs Backhouse, who enrolled three children, commented:

> I have long felt the difficulty in bringing children up at home (which I believe to be much better than a boarding school while they are young) and knowing whether they are properly advanced for their age … I think the tendency in home taught children is that they excel in some branches & are very deficient in others & I hail with pleasure the prospect of having a standard laid down (or set up) by well qualified teachers towards which we can work.\footnote{Ibid. E Backhouse, 08.06.1891.}

Constance Lubbock enrolled two daughters, maintaining ‘Your plan will I think exactly meet the wants of parents who desire or are obliged to have their children educated at home, but who know the danger of the dawdling habits into which the children are liable to fall where there is no competition, and of the desultory methods which are the temptation of the home teacher.’\footnote{Ibid. Constance Lubbock, 05.06.1891.}

Networking is illustrated in Agnes Dyke’s letter, which informs Charlotte that her elder daughters were with Miss Buss, ‘a personal friend of mine’, and she intended
joining the Hampstead PNEU branch where Miss Buss was a Committee member.\textsuperscript{571}

A letter from Mrs Whitaker expressing her ‘gratitude and delight’ at the prospect of the scheme highlights networking as well as the costs, which ensured an elite clientele.

As the busy mother & clergyman’s wife & only lady in a remote country parish, the want of experience & of any means judging whether I am doing the best for my children & giving them the intelligent training I so earnestly wish them to have has been a heavy burden to me & a great trouble … I hesitate about the £5.00, I am so afraid I may not be able to carry it out, & £5.00 to me is a large sum.\textsuperscript{572}

Sir Thomas Acland’s daughters, Mrs Hart-Davis specially have interested me first in your publication … The sense of unfitness & want of training in oneself often presses heavily upon the mothers who wish to do the very best for their children & are so unable & have not the means of procuring better help.\textsuperscript{573}

Perusal of the surviving enquiries Mason received relating to lessons by correspondence suggests that this was quite representative of contemporary concerns. However, it is worth noting that fees were per family not per child, since: ‘there are large families of intelligent, gently-born children whose parents are unable to afford educational advantages for them. We are exceedingly anxious to bring opportunities to the doors of such families, because the larger the family the less money there is to spend on education.’\textsuperscript{574} Within a year some 150 children were working to Mason’s syllabus.\textsuperscript{575} Familiar figures endorsed the scheme including Mrs Hart-Davis who enrolled four of her children. Emmeline Steinthal enrolled her daughter and advised a

\textsuperscript{571} Ibid. Agnes Dyke, 23.10.1891.
\textsuperscript{572} Annual fees for ‘Supervision’ were 1 guinea, for ‘Direction’ 5 guineas.
\textsuperscript{573} Letter from Mrs Whitaker 06.06.1891, PNEU Box 2. She enrolled two children.
\textsuperscript{574} PR. Vol.2.,1891/92, p. 313.
\textsuperscript{575} PNEU Report 1892, p.30.
PNEU Conference in 1897 that her sons had benefited too; her eldest was now ‘doing very well at Rugby.’\textsuperscript{576} The success of the Parents’ Review School evidently persuaded Charlotte that a correspondence course for mothers was viable, leading to the Mothers’ Education Course in June 1892.\textsuperscript{577} (Appendices 3 & 4)

Whilst archival evidence provides an indication as to how Charlotte’s lessons by correspondence were distributed globally, the preserved material relating to the Parents’ Review School (PUS) is hardly impartial. However, \textit{Oleander Jacaranda}, an autobiographical account recollecting the childhood of 11-year-old Penelope Lively in 1940s Egypt, provides an interesting insight into what she referred to as a ‘do-it-yourself education kit.’ Penelope’s ‘governess’ was her nanny, Lucy, who found aspects of the course difficult. Nevertheless Penelope commented ‘Reading it now, I wouldn’t quarrel with many of the sentiments, even if the language seems a touch sententious’ and ‘As a system it was an educational anachronism, but I have a soft spot for it.’ As a ‘fervent reader’ she was content with the emphasis on literature. However, she pointed out that on her return to England she was behind in Maths, Latin and social skills.\textsuperscript{578}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{576} PNEU Conference 1897, \textit{PR}, Vol.8. 1897, p.515.
\textsuperscript{577} The Mother’s Education Course (M.E.C) was a 3 year course & ran for 23 years.
\textsuperscript{578} Lively, \textit{P Oleander, Jacaranda}, Viking, 1994, pp.94-95, 100 & 112.
\end{flushright}
A ‘Gracious Vision’

The archives contain several letters in addition to Lady Aberdeen’s letter of 1887,\textsuperscript{579} which may have inspired Mason to establish a training college. A letter from Mrs Cartwright in 1891 implored, ‘Forgive my asking you if you can recommend a governess, who could train & teach her pupils on your ideas? I am so anxious to meet with a really good woman besides a clever sympathetic teacher … your papers have more than ever made me wish for an ideal governess.’\textsuperscript{580} Possibly the origins of the House of Education stem from Charlotte’s visionary paper, ‘A New Educational Departure,’ which was read in 1887 and printed in 1890 in \textit{Parents’ Review}:

Some mothers amongst us may live to engage nurses from a training home where women of some cultivation are taught the natural laws in obedience to which a child grows up healthy, happy, intelligent and good. More, may we hope to see the day when no mother will engage a nursery governess however ‘nice’ or however accomplished who has not been duly trained in the art and instructed in the science of education.\textsuperscript{581}

Charlotte’s concerns were shared by others including Alfred Pollard, who in an article in \textit{Murray’s Magazine} in 1889 recognised the inappropriate training, inadequate salary and isolation of many governesses:

That governesses may be more respected, they must be better qualified; that they may be better qualified, they must be better paid;

\textsuperscript{579} This letter was mentioned in Chapter 3.
\textsuperscript{580} Letter from Mrs Cartwright, 08.01.1891, Ibid.
\textsuperscript{581} CM, \textit{PR}, Vol.1. 1890, p.72.
that they may be both, they must be better chosen; that they may be better chosen, there must be somebody to choose them.\textsuperscript{582}

Whilst this later extract shows that home education was still an acceptable form of schooling, it provides further insight into contemporary attitudes towards what was perceived as the physical and psychological limitations of many young girls.

It is not likely, and certainly it is not to be desired, that the modern governess system should ever be wholly abolished. Even if the constant supply of new schools for girls tends in some measure to supersede it. In the country the governess is the only alternative to boarding-school; even in towns there must always remain hundreds of girls to whom the associations, the excitement, and the high pressure of the public day-schools will be positively injurious.\textsuperscript{583}

At the Memorial Conference held in London in March 1923, Professor W G de Burgh, an examiner for the college, paid tribute to Charlotte, maintaining ‘by her firm insistence on adequate salaries and conditions of service, she raised single-handed the status of the private governess throughout England.’\textsuperscript{584} This accolade could be regarded as an exaggeration since contemporaries including Mary Maxse commented on the increase of governesses with formal training and highlighted their need for greater respect, suggesting Charlotte was not alone in attempting to raise standards and conditions of work.\textsuperscript{585} Moreover, whilst acknowledging that her principles ‘drew wide attention and respect,’ Renton recognizes that ‘the limited number of PNEU or

\textsuperscript{583} Ibid. p.515.
\textsuperscript{584} De Burgh, W G in In Memoriam, PNEU, 1923, p. 104. He was Professor or Philosophy at University College, Reading.
\textsuperscript{585} Maxse, 1901, pp.397-402.
otherwise trained governesses was matched by an equally limited number of parents who cared about giving their daughters a good education.\textsuperscript{586}

Nevertheless, rather than merely publicizing the ‘plight of the governess’, Charlotte took measures to turn her ‘gracious vision’ into a reality, maintaining: ‘The raw material exists in happy abundance in the shape of good women, refined, educated, capable, doing nothing or doing the wrong thing for them because they have not found their life work.’ A limited number of young ladies would have this opportunity in Ambleside where Charlotte intended to ‘combine very great economy with perfect efficiency.’\textsuperscript{587}

\textbf{The House of Education}

One of the most elusive questions regarding the opening of the House of Education relates to the issue of finance. Mason appears to have led a rather nomadic existence between leaving Bradford in 1891 and establishing her college in 1892 and certainly does not appear to have had a regular income.\textsuperscript{588} Her savings would have been negligible given her financial straits when launching the \textit{Parents’ Review} in 1890. However, by January 1892 she had obtained the means to establish a training college.

\textsuperscript{586} Renton, 1991, p.153. \textsuperscript{587} Mason, C quoted in Cholmondeley, 1960, p.35. \textsuperscript{588} Mason appears to have spent a considerable amount of time travelling, lecturing & promoting the PNEU.
Attempts to locate banking records which would provide details of donations and her finances during this period have been unsuccessful.\textsuperscript{589}

However, the PNEU report of June 1892, which referred to the fledgling institution, reveals an impressive list of patronesses including the Duchesses of Portland and Sutherland as well as a host of other Countesses and Ladies.\textsuperscript{590} (Appendix 5) The impression that Frances Dallas-Yorke was instrumental in securing the patronage of such eminent people is conveyed in a letter to Franklin concerning the defunct position of ‘Lady Visitor’.

You know we began with a whole long list of Lords and Ladies as Vice Presidents etc quite the old fashioned thing which the dear late L.V. [lady visitor] got for me, and when I crossed them out one fine day I left hers in because she knew it was not really official.\textsuperscript{591}

Although it has not been possible to prove that these ladies provided financial support to Mason, they probably did. Without such assistance it is unlikely that Charlotte would have been able to engage the staff or rent the rooms required for teaching. Whilst there are no records of initial remuneration paid to the mistresses it is improbable that the income generated by the first four students would have covered this expenditure.

\textsuperscript{590} PNEU Report June 1892, p.21.
\textsuperscript{591} Letter from CM to Henrietta Franklin (undated) Box 50.
It seems likely that Eliza Parker, the mother of one of the first students, Violet, was instrumental in providing at least some of the capital necessary to provide boarding facilities. Eliza Parker was the sixty-two-year-old widow of John Lake Parker who had left the sum of £486.16.3 on his death in 1883. The Parkers were friends of the Wynnes who had moved to Forest Gate, and Violet later recalled having met Charlotte during a visit to London in 1889. Her recollections are informative:

We were at Fairfield for three months, then when Springfield became vacant either Miss Mason or my mother took it … My mother furnished it and managed it for some time until she found it too much for her; then Miss Mason bought the furniture and my mother moved to Walton Cottage … In those days Miss Mason devoted nearly all her time to us and we spent our mornings with her at Mr Fleming’s Lecture Hall in the village … She was able to go for walks with us or for excursions by road or lake. I well remember when she came for a row with us … How we delighted in everything but Miss Mason was far from strong and greatly over taxed herself for the works [sic] sake. Upon more than one occasion she had to fight serious illness but I cannot remember her ever referring to herself.

This implies that Mrs Parker probably took out the lease on Springfield and certainly provided the furnishings. It is difficult to visualize a 50-year-old Charlotte in a rowing boat on the lake, and whilst Violet’s recollections of her frailty are more recognizable, the suggestion that Charlotte played down her supposed afflictions is hardly convincing. However, Cholmondeley’s initial recollection of Charlotte was

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592 Will of John Lake Parker.
593 Presumably the Parkers lodged at Fairfield View, a boarding house.
594 Undated notes written by Violet Parker, Box 17.
similar: ‘She was on her couch but I remember the impression she gave me was that of a lively, active person, not of an invalid.’

**Early students**

Violet was one of four students when the College opened in January 1892 and the first to secure a 1st class certificate. The initial prospectus stated that the aim of the institution was to ‘provide for women a special training in the knowledge and the principles which belong to their peculiar work, namely, the bringing up of children.’ At a cost of £50 the year course was aimed at Primary governesses who were required to pass ‘an easy entrance exam’; at Secondary governesses who ideally held a certificate of attainment; and at Ladies wishing to ‘fulfil the more intelligently any guardianship of children to which they may be called.’ The PNEU Report of 1895 indicates that the course had been extended to 2 years whilst the fees had risen to £60 per annum.

Two of the students were recruited locally with the assistance of Selina Fleming’s school at Belle Vue in Ambleside; Florence de Montmorency, daughter of an Irish landowner, and Mabel Hall, daughter of an organist and choir master. The mixed calibre of these young ladies is apparent in Rooper’s Report of 1892. With Violet

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595 Cholmondeley, 1960, p.147.
596 House of Education Report, 1892, PNEU Box 2.
597 PNEU Report 1895, p.32.
598 Florence spent 3 years at an Irish school, 1 year at Belle Vue.
599 Mabel spent 4 years at Belle Vue.
securing a 1st class, Florence 2nd class, Mabel and Mary Culverhouse 3rd class, he commented, ‘Miss Mason is to be congratulated on a very honest effort to make her teachers intelligent, two of them are extremely good and the other two the better for their training.’

Attracting initial students was not easy and this is illustrated with regard to the recruitment of Mary Culverhouse. Frances Epps, who interviewed prospective candidates, informed Mason:

Mrs Culverhouse turned up last week without her daughter but on my representing that you particularly wished me to see her, that young lady turned up this afternoon with an elder sister. The Culverhouses seem sensible & very intelligent people, & Mary herself looks a quiet earnest girl. She assures me that she is very strong in health & is devoted to children … They seemed to be under the impression that the House of Ed. opens in the spring, but I told them I thought it was soon after Xmas. They were anxious to know the lines of education; & I referred them to ‘Home Education’, & the P.R neither of which books they had seen … The girl is not accomplished, & seems afraid of being asked to do much teaching … Have you heard of many students yet? I have sent off all the prospectuses I had to the likeliest people I know, but I haven’t heard of anyone yet.

Evidently the applicant and her family had no previous knowledge of the PNEU and were not therefore attracted by Mason’s educational theories. Implicit is the idea that Mary would not be suited to vigorous training and would have difficulties in entering the more academic establishments. Additionally, given the date of the letter (1st December 1891) inefficiency is evident with the Culverhouses being under the

600 PNEU Report 1892, p.28.
601 Letter from Mrs Epps 1.12.1891, PNEU Box 2.
impression that the College would be opening in the spring, not the following month! A reference to the poor response to posted prospectuses highlights recruiting difficulties.

However, the PNEU connection did prove to be an important source of students. Among the recipients of the posted prospectuses was 51-year-old mother of six, Mrs Mander J Smyth. Letters written in November 1891 advise Mason that she was considering enrolling two of her elder daughters when they returned from the continent. Her concern for their prospects is apparent: ‘Do the young ladies you send out into situations take the position of Nursery Governess? If so, this is hardly what I thought of for my daughters. Such a position is a rather anomalous one, they cannot be treated as servants and yet they do not enjoy the consideration accorded to ladies.’ Nevertheless Mrs Smyth overcame her objections, enrolling her eldest daughter, Sophie, in January 1893. Janet, who enrolled in January 1895, impressed Herbart Geldart the examiner of her nature notebook, who reported, ‘No student has ever before succeeded in painting birds’ eggs as Miss Janet Smyth has done.’ Satisfied with the training, Mrs Smyth enrolled Dora in 1901.

Archival evidence implies that Mrs Smyth’s interest was aroused through the involvement of her cousins, Theodore and Flora Mander who were PNEU members. Letters written to Charlotte from Flora in 1890 reveal their financial endorsement of the PNEU; Flora confirming they would ‘gladly meet’ any ‘expenses connected with

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602 Letter from Mrs Mander J Smyth 30.11.1891, Ibid.
603 PNEU General Annual Report, 1896, p.44.
604 Student Registers, Box 10.
this meeting – printing, travelling, etc.’  

605 Director of Mander Brothers paint and varnish firm, Theodore had a keen sense of civic duty and interest in education.  

606 It is probable that the Manders suggested their ‘poorer relations,’ with the responsibility of securing a future for six daughters, would benefit from receiving the prospectus of the new college.

Amongst the students who enrolled for the second term in October 1892 was Mary Winifred Kitching, the elder sister of Elsie, who met Charlotte in 1893 and became her secretary.  

607 Other notable students in later years included Henrietta Franklin’s daughter ‘Madge’ and a later Principal and Mason’s biographer, Essex Cholmondeley.  

608 Moreover, student registers reveal the entry in 1899 of a young Irish lady whose family name may indeed hold the key to Mason’s elusive background, Clara Brown Huston.  

College expansion ensured that Eliza Parker was not the only housekeeper to benefit from procuring a place for her daughter. Possibly the widowed Mrs Clendinnen who resided at Fairfield View considered the potential benefit to her daughters when she agreed to provide accommodation to some of the boarders. Prior to enrolling in the college between 1902 and 1908, three of her daughters, Lydia, Kathleen and

608 Madge enrolled in 1907 & secured a 1st. Cholmondeley attended the college in 1919.

609 LDS Searches indicate Clara was born in Aghadowey, Londonderry in 1879, which bordered Kilrea. Her parents were Annie & the late Rev. James Brown Huston.
Georgina, attended the Practising School.\textsuperscript{610} To alleviate parental concerns, PNEU Reports indicated that the boarding houses were ‘under the supervision of a responsible lady, who trains the students in careful habits.’\textsuperscript{611}

L’Umile Pianta, the Students’ Association and bi-annual magazine founded in 1896, provides an insight into Charlotte’s relationship with her students as well as an indication of how their careers progressed. Not surprisingly Charlotte was offered the position as President of the association and contributed to the first issue:

\begin{quote}
I greeted your first type-written number with the sort of tender pleasure one has in a grand-child … your deliberate choice of the ‘humble plant’ as best expressing your aims gives me a cheering sense that you realize the meaning of our work and also gives me, for my own part, many helpful thoughts about the meaning of humility.\textsuperscript{612}
\end{quote}

For an annual subscription of 3/- the magazine included letters and essays from old students giving accounts of their work and whereabouts. Each edition included a letter from a resident student.\textsuperscript{613} These letters to the editor illustrate the cultured activities that Mason provided; the first edition noted: ‘Miss Mason has started a literary society, which meets here every alternate Tuesday evening, for the benefit of out-going seniors.’ Furthermore, ‘Miss Mason is giving us a great opportunity of

\begin{footnotes}
\item[610] Lydia had spent 2 years in Practising School, Georgina 5 years. Lydia enrolled 1902, Kathleen 1905, Georgina 1908. Box 10.
\item[611] Annual Meeting of the PNEU 17.06.1892, p. 23.
\item[612] L’Umile Pianta January 1896
\item[613] The magazine was printed in Ambleside by G.Middleton at £5 for 100 copies. Issues were approx. 40 pages, similar to the size of PR.
\end{footnotes}
acquiring French. She has engaged a Swiss lady, who is giving the seniors four hours daily for three weeks.’

A letter to the editor in 1898 indicates how Mason’s poor health had a profound impact on the College, reinforcing the image of a sofa-ridden frail woman:

Other visits we have not had in profusion this year, as Miss Mason has not been equal to much entertaining. We are glad to say that now she is among us again, going about with all her accustomed vigour. It seemed quite a different atmosphere in the house while she was ill so long, and it was sad that the juniors should connect her with a sofa.

Perusal of these journals provides an insight into the careers of students indicating that many secured positions with families, including PNEU members. However, contrary to the original purpose of their training, others found positions in private schools. It was possibly the success of these students that convinced Charlotte that her methods could be adapted to schools. Violet Parker spent a number of years in several private schools in Surrey prior to teaching in schools in Bournemouth, Brighton, Hove and Salisbury before retiring to Hampshire. Mary Culverhouse was found a position in the first boys’ school to work in the PUS, Wootton Court, Canterbury. Mabel Hall is listed as governess to Council member, Mrs Borrer. Winifred Kitching spent a number of years as governess to the D’Arcy family prior to teaching in a PNEU school in London. Clara Huston is listed as being a governess in

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614 L’Umile Pianta, 1896/1901, p.32.
615 Letter to the editor, 27.05.1898, L’Umile Pianta, 1896/1901.
Grimsby but later returning to Northern Ireland, initially to Belfast, and subsequently to Portstewart, Londonderry.

Whilst the Smyth sisters would later all reside in Surrey, only Dora married. Sophie’s employers included Lady Holland, Lady Barbour and Mrs Langworth; whilst Janet found work in a Girls’ School in Uganda in 1910 where she remained until 1938. Dora worked in Southport and Brighton, her career evidently curtailed by her marriage. The Clendinnen sisters of Ambleside appear to have enjoyed varied careers. Kathleen worked as a governess in York prior to teaching at Burgess Hill PNEU School. After several years teaching in South Africa she taught in Middlesborough before retiring to Ambleside in 1944. Lydia’s career included several years as a governess to Captain Browning before working in schools in Yorkshire and Middlesborough; she retired to Sussex in 1944. Georgina is recorded as being in the Convent of the Holy Name, Malvern Link; her duties took her to a Mission House in Sierra Leone for several years.616

Although Mason contributed regularly to the *L’Umile Pianta* offering advice and support, it is clear that she also kept in touch personally with a number of her students and took an interest in their welfare, addressing them as ‘dear Bairn.’ Not immune to the anxieties faced by these young, inexperienced teachers Charlotte wrote: ‘Believe that my “bairns” are much in my thoughts, especially those who are facing

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difficulties.\textsuperscript{617} Among those ‘bairns’ who wrote to Mason was Essex Cholmondeley.\textsuperscript{618}

Expansion

By the time of Rooper’s second report in November 1893 the number of students had increased to 27 compared with 13 at the time of his first report in November 1892. Predominantly aged between 18 and 21, the students were daughters of clergymen, physicians, manufacturers and other professionals. In implementing the broad, cultured curriculum Mason was assisted by a number of staff.\textsuperscript{619} Moreover the curriculum was supplemented by visitors to the college including Emmeline Steinthal, a gifted artist who arranged a scheme of arts and craft work, chair-caning, Japanese curtains and modelling. A Japanese visitor, Madame Tel Sono taught paper-folding. Mrs Firth, ‘a disciple and friend of Ruskin’ gave weekly lectures on pictorial art.\textsuperscript{620} Physical activities were not over-looked, reflecting the growing interest in girls’ sports at this time. Maggie Kitching is reported to have taught the students hockey in 1894 and ‘a field has been hired for the purpose of playing this game.’ The annual visits of the ‘Lady Visitor’ Frances Dallas-Yorke were often accompanied by a gift, the Chambers’ Encyclopedia in 1894, the revamped college certificate in

\textsuperscript{617} Letter from CM to ‘dear bairn’ in PNEU Box 2.
\textsuperscript{618} Letter from Essex Cholmondeley 07.12.1922, Ibid.
\textsuperscript{619} Austin Bull taught languages; Margaret Hodgson taught Natural History, field work, arts & crafts; Miss Stirling taught Human Physiology & Swedish Drill; Miss Huntingdon taught drawing & primary piano. Miss Kitching assisted with Euclid & Latin. Mr Barton taught piano. Mr Redrop taught singing, Mr Dodgson taught Art & Geometry; Mr Chapman taught Clay modeling. A District Nurse gave lessons in bandaging. Mason provided lessons in the theory and practice of education and in psychology. Miss Firth gave talks on Art and the Rev. C J Bailey gave a weekly divinity lesson. PNEU Report 1894, p.30.
\textsuperscript{620} Ibid, 1892, p.26.
1896. 621

Rooper’s early reports provide an insight into the aims of this college. He understood how prospective governesses needed to be able to act as ‘instructor, manager and companion’ to their charges. 622 This was reflected in the Practising School, which was initially held in Mr Fleming’s Lecture Rooms. Instead of taking a class of children of similar age, students taught small groups of boys and girls of various ages. Whilst this was sensible given the fact it was intended that the students would teach in home schoolrooms, mixed gender classes were hardly conventional and this may have caused concern among the more prudish observers. 623

Whilst Springfield supplemented by Walton Cottage and Fairfield View may have eased boarding concerns, by 1894 Charlotte was becoming increasingly aware of the limitations and inconvenience of the college not being under one roof. This would be remedied by the availability of Scale How in 1894. Rooper described Scale How, the former residence of Wordworth’s niece, Dorothy Harrison, as ‘a handsome and convenient house.’ 624 The Georgian property consisted of 21 bedrooms. A former billiard room in the garden which became known as the ‘Beehive’ made a suitable practising school.

623 With the odd exception, e.g. Bedales, middle-class schools were not co-educational. Elementary schools took measures to separate girls from boys. In home schoolrooms children were related or well-acquainted; they clearly were not in Charlotte’s Practising school.
624 Scale How was formerly known as Green Bank.
A letter to Dr Schofield, Chairman of the Executive Committee, sheds some light as to how Charlotte was able to procure the lease of this grand building:

One thing more – the trustees will not let me have the big house I spoke of unless the Committee will be parties to the contract – at first I utterly declined to propose this – but seeing that the society derives an income of £100 or more from the students (22 at present) & that there is every human probability of my being able to pay the rent for the seven years lease, even if our numbers do not increase: I think the committee might venture to do this for us – rent £150. Could you bring this before the committee. The residence in different houses is a most serious drawback.’

This suggests implies that the PNEU Executives were requested to act as guarantors and that Mason lacked the credit rating necessary to embark on a tenancy agreement for such a property. Unfortunately the archives do not appear to have a copy of the contract or the initial lease.

Scale How belonged to William Mason, an architect, estate agent and antique dealer. Correspondence between Charlotte and her landlord indicates that she was eager to expand the property through extension and acquiring further land, reflected in increased rent. Negotiations of a new lease in 1900 revealed an increase of rent to £192 rising to £200 after seven years, which the landlord regarded as ‘fair and reasonable’ considering ‘the demand in the Lake district of late for this class of

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625 Every student paid £5 to the PNEU on obtaining her first position which constituted life membership & was agreed at an Executive Meeting in April 1893. Box 34.
626 Letter from CM to Dr Schofield, 16.05.1894, Box 51.
property.’ It appears that not all of Charlotte’s neighbours benefited by this expansion, particularly Selina Fleming.

Selina Fleming

Mason’s introduction to Ambleside had been the result of her friendship with Selina Fleming (née Healey) whom she had befriended at the Home and Colonial. Charlotte had spent holidays with her friend and occasionally assisted in her school at Belle Vue. The only existing photograph of Charlotte as a young lady was taken in Ambleside in 1864. During a visit in 1887 she clearly impressed one pupil who described her as ‘a very ordinary looking little lady’ with ‘a voice so quiet that one must concentrate if one wanted to listen, a smile that took us all with one sweep into very confidential partnership.’ The writer continued, ‘this was no Dictator – no Lecturer – no Superior Being talking down to us from a height, rather did she seem a fairy God-mother.’

An extract from Charlotte’s diary in January 1890, states ‘leave Ambleside’, suggesting she may have stayed with Selina for the Christmas festivities. Charlotte certainly enjoyed her friend’s hospitality when she moved to Ambleside in 1891 and was able to secure Mr Fleming’s Lecture Rooms to hold lectures when the college

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Notes:
628 Appendix 6
629 PNEU Box 2. It is not clear who wrote this article.
630 1890 Diary, Box 2.
commenced, probably at a reasonable rent.\textsuperscript{631} However, once Mason established the college there is no further mention of this friendship. The idea that correspondence was not necessary because as neighbours this would not be needed is unconvincing because Mason or Elsie Kitching, when Mason was indisposed, corresponded with a number of her neighbours including Mrs Harris of Rydal Cottage.\textsuperscript{632} Charlotte also corresponded with Francis Arnold-Forster, the elderly uncle of Mrs Arnold-Forster, who resided at Fox How and donated copies of the books written by his father and brother to the College library.\textsuperscript{633}

Possibly there is another reason for this termination of Charlotte and Selina’s friendship. Charlotte’s opening of a Practising School, which provided local children with free schooling if their parents subscribed to the \textit{Parents’ Review}, may have had a profound effect on Mrs Fleming’s livelihood. Mason would be attracting those children who would probably have enrolled in Selina’s school. Whilst Bulmers’ Directory of 1891 lists Selina Fleming’s school at Belle Vue, Kelly’s Directory of 1894 makes no mention of a school, merely listing John Fleming as a resident.\textsuperscript{634} This indicates that the school closed prior to 1894 making the supposition that Mason’s Practising School had a detrimental effect on Selina’s business probable.

\textsuperscript{631} John Fleming was an architect.
\textsuperscript{632} E.g. Elsie Kitching wrote to Mrs Harris on 01.01.1921 when Mason was ill. PNEU Box 2.
\textsuperscript{633} 80 year old Frances was the brother of the late Jane Forster, wife of William Forster, MP. Frances’s father was Dr Arnold of Rugby, his brother Matthew Arnold. He donated Matthew Arnold’s \textit{Thoughts on Education} and Dr Arnold’s \textit{Modern History Lectures} written in 1841. Ibid.
\textsuperscript{634} Correspondence with Kendal Record Office, 16.08.02.
Evidence for a strained relationship between these ladies is implicit in what the archives fail to contain. Whilst Cholmondeley and archival correspondence reveals Mason’s distress at the death of her friends, Selina’s death at the age of 72 in 1911 does not appear to have warranted any mention. A letter written in 1921 to Mrs Harris by Elsie Kitching comments: ‘Mrs Steinthal’s sudden death last week was a great shock to Miss Mason,’ necessitating a visit to Llangammarch Wells where, ‘She had two bad days in consequence but the baths have already begun to work their usual magic & today she is looking better than she has looked for many months.’

Cholmondeley maintains that Emily Brandreth’s death in 1893 was a ‘severe bereavement’ which ‘may have contributed to Miss Mason’s illness’ ensuring that ‘a rest of three months was necessary.’

The Purchase of Scale How

Clearly by 1906 Charlotte was considering the long-term future of the college and sought the advice of her confidante, Henrietta Franklin. Henrietta evidently broached the subject with Sir Robert Morant, Secretary to the Board of Education, and related the conversation in a letter to Charlotte in January 1906. Morant suggested the House of Education be made into a trust with Charlotte as sole trustee able to appoint a successor. This Henrietta advised was to ‘give the college a much greater element of permanency’ and enable government recognition, ‘which they cannot do to any

635 Letter to Mrs Harris from Elsie Kitching, 19.8.1921, PNEU Box 2.
636 Cholmondeley, 1960, p.46.
college that is run for profit.’ Henrietta’s awareness that Charlotte valued her independence is apparent:

He wished me to explain to you also as strongly as I could that this would not mean in the least interference on the part of any human being whatsoever, and that even if recognized by government the board is now able to leave the matter quite in the hands of the trustee … Mr Morant’s great appreciation of your work makes him wish that there were, as he says, the absolute certainty of permanency in it, and the certainty of official recognition which he desires for it.637

However this does not seem to be quite correct. Correspondence with her Bradford-based solicitor, William Gordon, indicates that whilst Charlotte had seriously considered seeking government recognition she was not prepared to meet all the necessary conditions. Gordon was preparing a deed which left ‘control and management’ in Charlotte’s hands making government recognition impossible, since in order to receive government grants ‘substantial control should be exercised by an independent body of governors.’638 Articles of association refer to the establishment of the Incorporated House of Education in 1911. This body would be responsible for the House of Education, the PR School and Mason’s publications. At an estimated cost of £100-120 Gordon advised Charlotte that an Incorporated Association would prove to be ‘cumbersome and expensive.’ However, the benefits were notable. As first Principal Charlotte had ‘supreme control’ with the power to appoint her successor. Moreover, Gordon informed her: ‘You will have clearly defined the nature

637 Letter from HF to CM 11.01.1906, Box 12.
638 Letter from William Gordon to CM 09.05.1906, Ibid.
of the work which you wish carried out, and as far as possible the mode in which it is to be carried out.

The purchase of Scale How in 1911 was certainly not the most conventional of sales but the acquisition of such a prestigious building must have been the highlight of Mason’s success. Possibly it reflected her desire to ensure the permanency of the college since she was not prepared to meet the conditions required to obtain government recognition. Correspondence indicates that Mason was prepared to pay over the top to ensure that she secured this property. Once again the question of finance appears. How was Mason able to secure a mortgage for a property that was clearly over-valued? Evidently she would have had to offer some form of security or possibly a substantial deposit.

Whilst the surveyor, John Nicholson, had valued the property at £4600 William Mason was insistent on securing £6600, which he insisted was a ‘reasonable figure and I am not prepared to take less’ Charlotte’s solicitor appears convinced that the vendor was taking advantage of her: ‘I think the landlord knowing you want to purchase, is doing a little bit of what the Americans call “bluffing.”’ Indeed subsequent letters indicate how Gordon attempted to dissuade Charlotte from being ruled by her heart as opposed to her head. His caution is most evident in a letter dated 5th January 1911 when he maintains, ‘If you buy the property for £6600, and you or your successors want at a future date to dispose of it as a private house and as

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639 Ibid. 02.11.1911
640 Letter from William Mason, 04.01.1911, Ibid.
641 Letter from W Gordon, 28.10.1910, Ibid.
land, (without any goodwill in connection with the House of Education attached to it) you will stand to lose £2000 or upwards.’

Moreover, a letter dated 14th January 1911 noted, ‘I quite appreciate your anxiety to get the property, but I feel strongly that Mr Mason has tried to take advantage of you.’

Surviving account records indicate that by this time the House of Education was making notable profits and therefore Charlotte was probably able to put down a reasonable deposit or borrow on the strength of her earnings. Moreover Charlotte extended her assets by leasing and subsequently purchasing Fairfield View. Accounts for 1913 show receipts totalling £4796.13.2 with a net profit £1422.9.5. Figures indicate that through letting out Scale How during the summer months Charlotte supplemented her income by £130. However the war evidently had a detrimental effect on profits. By 1916 receipts were listed as £4003.7.0 but profits had slumped to £355.11.11. This was partly due to Charlotte reducing the fees from £90 to £75 for students entering during the war. Whilst by 1919 receipts had risen to £5199.19.0, profits at £462.8.5 had not risen to the same extent.

Financial difficulties resulting from the war indicate why Charlotte was not able to leave sufficient funds to pay off her mortgages. Accountancy figures show that a £600 mortgage repayment was paid by November 1923. However, for estate duty

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642 Ibid. 05.01.1911. Also letters 09.01.1919 & 12.01.1911. Ibid.
643 Ibid. 14.01.1911.
644 PR, Vol.25, 1914, p.908. Student numbers had increased to 40.
645 Receipts and Expenditure, Box 11.
646 Figures provided by W B Peat & Co. Accountants indicate that the money was paid between 16th January and 30th November 1923, Box 38.
purposes, Scale How was valued at £4000 with a mortgage of £2200 whilst Fairfield was valued at £1200 with a £600 mortgage. A receipt for the sum of £617.16.5 dated 20th November 1923 in settlement of Fairfield View mortgage shows that it was this mortgage that was cleared. Indeed it was not until November 1927 that the mortgage on Scale How was paid off.

An Authority on Education?

Tributes at the time of Charlotte’s death suggest that contemporaries regarded her as an educational guru and in her obituary sub-titled ‘a pioneer of sane education’ *The Times* suggested that ‘her personal influence was probably more widespread than that of any educationist of her time.’ Her writings, correspondence with educationalists and the introduction of her philosophy into a number of elementary schools suggest that she was considered to be a respected educationalist. Charlotte was a prolific writer, publishing a number of books and pamphlets. Her books included *Parents and Children* (1896), *Home and School Education* (1904), *Ourselves* (1904), *Some Studies in the Formation of Character* (1905), *Saviour of the World* (1908-1914) and the posthumously published *An Essay Towards a Philosophy of Education* (1923). Pamphlets included ‘Concerning Children as Persons’ (1911) and ‘Some Suggestions for the School Curriculum of Boys and Girls under 14’ (1906).
However, whilst many reviews were positive several were critical of her style.

Reviewing *Parents and Children* the *Manchester Guardian* commented: ‘The essays contain much sound doctrine, but they would have gained greatly by compression. Much is said that must be obvious to any reflective parent, and the unreflecting parent will scarcely be persuaded to grapple with so formidable a volume.’\(^{651}\) Furthermore the *Listener* was caustic in its review of the republished *An Essay Towards a Philosophy of Education* in 1932, referring to ‘a curious farrago of dubious psychology and shrewd practical sense … the reader is constantly irritated by tedious repetition and by the author’s passion for putting the whole world right.’\(^{652}\) Possibly the latter, written almost a decade after her death, suggests that her writings had lost some of their appeal.

Contemporary acceptance of Charlotte as a respected educationalist is illustrated by her contribution to a study into moral training entitled ‘Women Teachers on the Moral Training given in English Secondary Schools for Girls’ in 1908. Other contributors included Mrs Woodhouse, the President of the Association of Headmistresses, Florence Gadesden, Headmistress of Blackheath High School, and Miss Lawrence from Roedean, Brighton. Moreover, Charlotte wrote ‘The Week’s Message’ which was printed in *The Teacher’s World* in March 1914 in which she was critical of the increase in vocational training, which she suggested enabled children to ‘get the training proper to a beaver or an ant.’ Whilst the response of the journal

\(^{651}\)Review 09.02.1897, Box 51.
\(^{652}\)Ibid. 20.01.1932.
indicates that Mason was indeed a respected figure it also suggests that she was not able to sway all of her contemporaries:

Miss Charlotte Mason … has most decided educational views, and expresses them in a gifted way which has influenced, and is still influencing, the thought of all cultured men and women. We may not be able to agree with everything she says, but her claim to a respectful hearing from all interested in the well-being of their country is beyond question. 653

Mason also contributed a series of letters to The Times in 1912 entitled ‘The Basis of National Strength’. In these letters Charlotte develops the idea that knowledge is the basis of national strength. The letters were well-received and culminated in the ‘Liberal Education for All’ movement.

Whilst Henrietta Franklin had been instrumental in the formation of PNEU Schools catering for middle-class children, Emmeline Steinthal would be a vital figure in ensuring that some working-class children sampled Charlotte’s philosophy. Evidence supports a claim made in Steinthal’s obituary, that she ‘worked untiringly and successfully’ to implement Charlotte’s philosophy in the West Riding Schools where through her philanthropic activities she had made acquaintances with many elementary teachers. 654 Among those teachers was Miss Ambler, responsible for a mixed school catering for 350 children in the mining district of Drighlington. Utilizing her connections Steinthal helped secure the support of Mr Wood, the

653 The Teacher’s World 04.03.1914, no.125. Box 51.
654 Ilkley Free Press and Gazette 12.08.1921, Bradford Central Library.
Yorkshire H.M.I. of schools whom Charlotte invited to Ambleside in October 1913 to ‘take counsel with you as to the possibility of introducing the work we find so successful into elementary schools.’ Furthermore it is implicit that Emmeline secured the interest of Mr Coffin, the City of Bradford Education Officer who wrote to Charlotte in 1916 informing her that ‘our little committee is hard at work hammering out schemes which shall fit the special conditions of the schools, where we shall more or less adopt your methods.’ Charlotte was clearly thrilled by the results of the experiment in Miss Ambler’s school, which she described as ‘triumphantly good’. Moreover she recognized Emmeline’s contribution: ‘Education which is education is open to the people. You have done it all.’

The noted success in the West Riding encouraged Charlotte to contact others in a position to influence local education, including H W Household, the Education Officer for Gloucestershire. A letter from Household dated 13\textsuperscript{th} December 1916 refers to his having received three pamphlets from Charlotte. He informed her: ‘I am afraid that I am generally sceptical about new schemes but this almost convinces me at once for I have so often preached reading aloud to the children from good books.’ Household advised Charlotte that he would send the pamphlets to ‘half a dozen schools where good seed sown generally comes to fruit.’ A subsequent letter reinforces his faith in Charlotte’s methods: ‘The great want of the elementary school has been good books. That the scheme supplies. The one hopeful method seldom or

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{655} Letter from CM to Mr Wood, 15.10.1913, Cheltenham Ladies College Archives.
  \item \textit{656} Letter from Mr Coffin to CM, 15.11.1916, & letter from Emmeline Steinthal to CM ,12.05.1914. Box 44.
  \item \textit{657} Letter from CM to Emmeline Steinthal, 21.01.1915. Ibid.
  \item \textit{658} Letter from Household to CM, 13.12.1916, Box 11.
\end{itemize}
never tried in the elementary school, is reading aloud and that the scheme suggests.659

The archives reveal that Charlotte and Mr Household corresponded on a number of occasions and developed a rapport, with Household contributing to the Parents’ Review and visiting Ambleside. Indeed he was the recipient of her last letter and would become a significant figure within the PNEU after Mason’s demise.660 Importantly Household’s sympathy with Charlotte’s ideas persuaded him to experiment with them in a number of the Gloucestershire elementary schools, the success of which he reported in a pamphlet, ‘Report of the PNEU Experiment in Gloucestershire.’ The report detailed how Charlotte’s theories were initially implemented in five schools and that by 1918 the scheme had been extended to 26 schools.661 A summary of the report referred to the ‘gratifying progress’ made in the schools, since ‘the gain in interest and intelligence is great; the imagination has been stirred; the vocabulary has been enriched in a very striking way; and the power of expression has developed.’662

Attempting to capitalise on the interest which her ideas were creating Charlotte approached the secretary of the Norfolk Education Committee, who advised her

659 Ibid. 22.12.1916.
660 A letter from Household, 03.04.1919 refers to his impending visit. A letter from CM,17.03.1917 refers to his article in PR. Ibid. CM’s last letter, 04.01.1923 refers to a conference paper Household had written. Box 44.
661 Report on the PNEU Experiment in Gloucestershire c.1919. Of the original five schools, one failed. 4 of the 26 schools were infant schools. In a summary ‘Our Liberal Education for All Movement’ Household stressed that Mason considered elementary schools underestimated the abilities of children & aimed too low. He criticised ‘chalk and talk’ & inferior books. Box 11.
662 Household, Ibid.
optimistically: ‘I hope at no distant date to see the Drighlington Council School and the adaptation of your method to elementary school work.’ Furthermore Henrietta’s friend, Canon Lyttleton of Eton College, informed Charlotte of his intention to visit Ambleside in January 1917: ‘My hope is to have a good talk with you and see some of your work on the spot so as to be able afterwards to tell people that I know what I am talking about … I am looking forward to going on from you to Principal Hadow, armed with new and first hand knowledge of essentials, and ascertaining from him what he thought as to securing the better recognition of your methods, and then on to Leeds to talk to Professor Sadler.’

Firmly ensconced at Scale How, Charlotte was confident in her own ideas, and it is interesting to note that she had little tolerance for other educational theories, particularly the Montessori system, which was creating interest in the early twentieth century. Placing an emphasis on the development of the senses, Dr Maria Montessori introduced the teaching of reading between 3½ and 4½ using shapes and movable letters. Montessori maintained that children needed reality not make believe and schools were specially adapted for children with miniature furniture and equipment. An article printed in the Times Educational Supplement in 1912 entitled ‘Froebel: Mason: Montessori’ provided Charlotte with the opportunity to express her opinion concerning this growing movement. Referring to Dr Montessori as ‘that

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663 Letter from the Secretary of Norfolk Education Committee, 15.11.1916, Box 11.
664 Letter from Canon Lyttleton, 16.12.1916.
665 Standing, E., Maria Montessori – Her Life and Work, Mentor-Omega, 1962.
666 The article ‘Froebel: Mason: Montessori’ pointed out all 3 believed in the freedom of the child and passivity of the teacher & suggested Montessori would benefit from dancing, drawing, & poetry. Times Educational Supplement 03.12.1912, pp.143-144, British Library.
gracious Italian lady’ Charlotte was dismissive that the ability to read and write at four or five was education, insisting they were ‘mechanical arts, no more educative than the mastery of shorthand or the Morse Code.’ Moreover Charlotte criticised the ‘elaborate and costly apparatus’ and the absence of ‘ideas.’

Oscar Browning, who had been a PNEU Council member since its inception, served as college examiner between 1909-1913. Referred to as ‘the great O.B’ the former Cambridge don addressed the students in November 1912. Mason’s account of this is interesting:

He lectured to the students on Montessori! (You know he has been living in Rome). They were not a bit convinced, and I think neither was he by the time the lecture was over, though I listened politely.

In his research into educational innovators, W Stewart discusses Montessori’s scientific approach to education and reactions of contemporaries. Stewart quotes from the Rev. Cecil Grant, headmaster of a co-educational school in 1913 who, following a visit to Montessori in Rome, had remarked: ‘I knew that I was in the presence of one greater than Pestalozzi and Froebel.’ Apparently he intended visiting Charlotte at Ambleside ‘whose experimental method was our nearest approach to Dr Montessori’s scientific discovery’ but before he arrange this ‘an enemy had sown

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667 *The Times* 03.12.1912 ‘Miss Mason on the Montessori System.’ Box 51.

668 CM quoted in Cholmondeley, 1960, p.82.
tares in her mind and she became the Dottoressa’s [Dr Montessori] most formidable opponent. 669

Canon Parkes recognized Charlotte’s intolerance in his review of the posthumously published An Essay Towards a Philosophy of Education:

Miss Mason has little that is good to say of teachers who do not use her methods. Most oral lessons, for instance are ‘talky talky’ or ‘twaddle’. It is apparent that there if much going on even in our elementary schools, of which Miss Mason is ignorant, that valuable fruit is being produced by other methods than hers … The book will be worth the irritation produced in reading it. 670

However, Mason’s willingness to criticize, patronize and ridicule other educationists and practices reveals her confidence in her own position. She was no longer the indecisive, vulnerable infant school teacher, or indeed an aspiring educationalist reluctant to publicly offend; she was a self-assured educational guru, close-minded and a little clouded with her own conceit.

This chapter has shown Charlotte as a visionary and opportunist. She had recognised the continuing need for home education and at Ambleside she had provided the means to train young ladies more rigorously to help meet this demand. Assured that her staunch associate, Henrietta Franklin, was running the PNEU effectively after 1894, Charlotte was able to devote her energies to the House of Education, the

669 Quoted in Stewart, WAC The Educational Innovators, Macmillan, 1968, pp.83-84. The school was St.George’s, Harpenden.
culmination of her aspirations. The success and continued expansion of the college, culminating in the purchase of Scale How, illustrate the viability of her plans. In her prestigious surroundings Charlotte had become a respectable middle-class lady. Facilitated by her steadfast friends with their financial assistance, organisational abilities and useful contacts, Charlotte’s ideas originally intended for the home schoolroom were shown to be effective in schools catering for middle-class and working-class children too. Whilst revealing an element of narrow-mindedness, her writings and dealings with eminent educationists illustrate her confidence and self-belief. By her death in 1923 Charlotte had become recognised as an educational authority who had stimulated parents and educators alike.
CONCLUSION

The objective of this thesis has been to provide a more balanced account of the life and work of Charlotte Mason than has previously been provided and to consider the educational and social context in which she worked. This research has suggested that some aspects of Charlotte's early life have been fabricated either by Charlotte herself or by her close associates to provide a more conventional image, which allowed her to be accepted by her contemporaries. Unfortunately the lack of surviving sources indicates that this is an area of Charlotte's life which remains open to speculation, although her achievements seem more remarkable if one is not convinced by Cholmondeley's version of events, that Charlotte was the home-educated middle-class daughter of a Liverpool merchant who lost his fortune, wife and life.

Utilizing the Educational Papers of the Home and Colonial, this research has addressed Charlotte's year (1860) at the pioneering teacher training college, the Home and Colonial in London, where she received a thorough grounding in the philosophy of both Pestalozzi and Froebel and was evidently inspired to care for the moral, physical, religious and intellectual development of her pupils. The significance of the twelve years that Charlotte spent as an infant school teacher in Worthing had previously been largely overlooked. Evidently as has been revealed it provided her with a valuable insight into the educational development of a large number of young children as well as distaste for a narrow curriculum exemplified by the Revised Code of 1861. Log-book extracts from her school in Worthing have conveyed the
difficulties she experienced during this formative period and her ability to remain in her position for twelve years is evidence of her tenacity.

Moreover this research has demonstrated that successful networking was a significant contributing factor to Charlotte's ultimate achievements. She evidently possessed a great deal of charm to be able secure the attention and continued support of a number of influential and exceedingly able associates. Clearly this was one of Charlotte's strengths; she was able to make the most of networking and to choose others likewise inclined. Indeed it has been shown that the establishment of the PEU/PNEU, the Parents' Review journal, and the founding of the House of Education all benefited from this. The significance of Charlotte’s reliance on sponsors and patrons has received scant attention previously. Through persuading a small but influential group of people that her ideas had some substance and were viable, Charlotte obtained the necessary support, including financial, to make her visions a reality. This has been illustrated by her ability to secure the support of educational pioneers including Dorothea Beale, Anne Clough and Frances Buss and a number of prominent and influential women, including Emmeline Steinthal and latterly the Honourable Henrietta Franklin.

Correspondence which Charlotte engaged in with the above in addition to others, including her college friend Lizzie Groveham and Bradford HMI, T G Rooper, has revealed a great deal about her personality and character and provided evidence of her development from a tentative young woman into a confident and ambitious
educationalist. Indeed this research has traced Charlotte's growing ambition, clearly nurtured through her friendship with the Brandreth family and ultimately with the success and expansion of the PEU/PNEU. Charlotte's ambition has been further illustrated with regard to the launch of the Parents' Review journal and at the time of the schism in the PNEU in 1894. Indeed it has been shown, contrary to previous suggestions, that the schism was very much the result of a power struggle between Charlotte and the equally ambitious Lady Isabel Margesson. This thesis has provided evidence of the implications of this schism including the launch of a subsequent association of parents, the Sesame Club, amendments to the PNEU constitution, the prominence of Henrietta Franklin and the opportunity it would provide Charlotte to mould the PNEU and dictate its philosophy.

The culmination of Charlotte's ambition has been revealed in the institutionalisation of her educational philosophy by opening the House of Education in Ambleside in 1892 where she provided her students with a unique system of training. Support for her methods, assisted by successful networking, ensured that Charlotte’s students were able to secure employment, and this has been illustrated. The acquisition and eventual purchase of the prestigious Scale How is evidence of her determination to prove that she had become a respectable middle-class professional woman as well as evidence that she desired her work to be continued after her death by her devoted associates.

This research has also referred to the frequent bouts of ill health from which Charlotte
appears to have suffered. Whilst Charlotte clearly did not possess a strong constitution it has been shown that on occasions she may have made the most of her illness to evoke the sympathy, support or indeed protection of others. The fact that Charlotte was content for her colleagues and students to associate her with a sofa, suggests that she wished to be regarded as a frail Victorian lady, thereby further enhancing her respectable middle-class status.

Moreover, Charlotte's growing confidence in her position as an authority on education has been evidenced. This is notable following the PNEU split in 1894. Evidence of Charlotte's growing self-belief has been illustrated by her decision to produce the Synopsis of 1904, which by detailing PNEU philosophy ensured that it was her own. Moreover it has been shown that in her latter years she became publicly dismissive of alternative educational philosophies thereby illustrating her conceit and intolerance.

This thesis has provided evidence of Charlotte's visionary nature as well as her opportunism. Mason had written *Home Education* (1886) a practical guide to parenting aimed at mothers, which had resulted in the establishment of an association of parents/educators, the Parents’ Educational Union (PEU) in 1887. Careful cultivation of support for this organisation led to its expansion into the PNEU in 1890. She had launched and continued to edit until her death a viable magazine for parents, the *Parents’ Review* (1890). Moreover, aware of the continuing demand for home education, Charlotte had provided a series of lessons by correspondence, the
Parents' Review School (1891). Encouraged by the success of this Charlotte established a teacher training college to inculcate students with her educational philosophy (1892). In later years she became a prolific writer. Her writings and work earned her the admiration of many contemporaries and she witnessed the adoption of her ideas into a number of private and state elementary schools. By her death in January 1923 Charlotte had clearly emulated the success of the earlier female educational pioneers including Anne Clough and Dorothea Beale, although unlike them her substantial contribution to education has not been sufficiently recognized.