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EXHIBITION OF
CREATIVE ARTS
OF
CHILDHOOD

METHOD OF
PROFESSOR F. THETTER
VIENNA, AUSTRIA

HALL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE
A Century of Progress
1 9 3 4

CREATIVE ARTS OF CHILDHOOD

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THETTER'S METHOD
VIENNA, AUSTRIA

These are the works of children between the ages of six and fourteen years, made:

Without any training in the theory of painting, sculpture, etc.;

Without the use of stories or other means of stimulus;

Without suggestion of any definite object to be drawn;

Without the presence of any object to copy.

Not until these children were thirteen years old did they first begin to visit museums and exhibitions. In spite of this, their work is similar to the art productions of primitive peoples. Those of the young children correspond to the works of the Egyptians; those of slightly older children resemble those of the Middle Ages; those of yet older children resemble works of the Renaissance, the Baroque Period, and so forth, up to present forms of Art.

What lies behind the course of this development?

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A child learns much from its own personal experience. For example,—Place a ball in a child's hand. After a little time the child will learn the law of gravity, through his experience in throwing the

ball. Furthermore, the child will derive much pleasure from doing so. It is not a teacher who has taught the child how to throw and catch the ball; the *play itself* is the teacher. *Every child, not merely the talented child*, learns to play easily with a ball or hoop. And, in the same way, every natural child responds to a piece of wood, a paint box, colored glass, clay, etc., as also to the elements of speech and to numbers. A child can, therefore, develop in this way not only with respect to the production of art works, such as these exhibited here, but also with exceptional results in languages or mathematics. But this can only be done under one condition, namely, one must let *the child be a child* and not try to make a "little adult" of it, as parents and teachers generally do nowadays. Anyone who thinks this over will see, then, that the seemingly impossible claims of Thetter's Method are, in fact, possible.

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The child lives in a different world from that of an adult. Anyone who knows this and is able to project himself into the child's mind can call into being the child's creative ability, latent in every individual. The child has the courage to express life as he himself sees it, and this must not be hindered. This quality must be recognized and valued as the most precious thing in man.

To look at these pictures is to see the pure joy and the originality which lay in the creative power behind them. These works express the elementary force of Nature. This power to fashion shows itself as an elementary force, as in Nature herself, *whose creative power culminated in man.*

This creative power, when understood in the right way, manifests itself not only in an elementary way, as in Nature, but also in man in an *harmonious organization* of its parts, as in a symphonic composition. To be a human being means: To have the capacity to translate one's own inner self in a large or small way into objectively organized expression.

Thus, each child's development represents a recapitulation of the psychic history of the race. In the various phases through which he passes are exemplified the successive cultural periods in the development of mankind. This creative capacity, which is characteristic of all human beings, can be set free, not only in certain exceptional men, but in every child who is free from the influence of conventional education.

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From what are modern people suffering? They are not able to develop their own human and individual capacities. They are suffering, as it were, from an emptiness of the mind; too stark a realism; too many inhibitions; an "inferiority complex;" repressed mental complexes; no inner sense of freedom even though they live under good economic conditions. They suffer from a denial of life which leads to its own destruction.

Every criminal is a productive being whose energies are misused.

If the creative capacities of children were recognized and fostered in childhood, these energies would reach a normal development in mature life, and could then be turned into productive channels, to create a richer, freer human life.

Throughout the year Professor Friedrich Thetter holds in his Vienna Studio practical courses in-

“Creative Art Work With Children”
for English speaking visitors.

For information about the program of the Courses, Fees, Living expenses in Vienna, etc., apply to the Austro-American Institute of Education, Vienna, I. Elisabethstrasse 9, Austria.