



charlotte

mason

MADE

EASY

How to read Charlotte
Mason's work and apply her
philosophy in 12 easy lessons.

STEPHANIE WALMSLEY



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INTRODUCTION

You have in your hands a book which is the result of my own personal experience over many years of using Charlotte Mason's philosophies to teach and tutor children and to guide and teach parents about Charlotte Mason.

Over the years I have discovered that Charlotte Mason's own work is inaccessible to many modern readers because of its style and length. But relying on what others say Charlotte Mason said can leave too much room for 'interpretation'.

This book is a wonderful compromise; I am able to give you the benefit of my experience as a modern homeschooling mother, alongside carefully selected pages of Charlotte Mason's own work, so that you can read exactly what Charlotte wrote. And if you get a taste for her writing you can challenge yourself to buy or borrow the series of six volumes and read at greater length.

This is a very practical book, with ideas and suggestions coupled with Charlotte Mason's own work, and if you take careful note and read all Charlotte Mason's pages in this book you will learn about Charlotte Mason and her ideas, and you will gain confidence in what you want to do with your children.

In this book:

- I'll be introducing you to a notable teacher called Charlotte Mason.
- You'll learn about some of Miss Mason's philosophy including short lessons, how to make a timetable, narration, nature notebooks, teaching science, outdoor education, history, ideas, habits, and living books.
- You'll be given the opportunity to read Miss Mason's own words on these subjects and really gain an understanding of what she wanted to say.
- You'll have the opportunity and encouragement to apply what you are learning in your own family.

First I will introduce Charlotte Mason herself to you. And

then, starting at Chapter 2, I will show you how you can begin working with your children this week using Charlotte Mason's ideas.

Each chapter has a short introduction to an aspect of Charlotte Mason's philosophy. The idea is unpacked and discussed for you, and this is followed by an assignment. The assignment usually includes reading excerpts from Charlotte Mason's work. These excerpts are included in the supplementary readings following the chapter. This means that you can complete the assignments without having to purchase copies of Charlotte Mason's works.

I recommend reading a chapter a week, taking time to read carefully and to put each week's idea into practice.

CHAPTER 1. MEET CHARLOTTE MASON

I am excited about introducing you to one of my heroines and helping you to see why I admire her so much.

I want to introduce you to Charlotte Mason the teacher. I want you to get a picture of her so that you can relate to her and have an understanding of the person behind the writing and the philosophy.

I want to make her 'come alive' to you, so that she is a real teacher and a real person in your imagination. This way, you can 'sit at her feet' to learn and really understand what she had to say about children and education.

WHO WAS CHARLOTTE MASON?

Charlotte Mason was born on 1 January 1842 in Bangor, North Wales. She was brought up in Liverpool and also spent time in the Isle of Man, which is a small independent island in the Irish Sea between England and Ireland. Her father was a businessman in the busy port city of Liverpool, and Charlotte was the only child of only children, so she had no extended family.



WRITING ABOUT HER CHILDHOOD, CHARLOTTE SAYS:

The first place I recollect was the Isle of Man, Douglas, I think, but I am not sure; we did not talk over things in our house. My mother was delicate and required sea air, so it happened that I was born in Bangor and that my earliest recollections are associated with the sea.

Drysalters were dealers in a range of chemical products, including glue, varnish, dye and colourings. They might supply salt or chemicals for preserving food and sometimes also sold pickles, dried meat or related items. The name *drysalter* or *dry-salter* was in use in the United Kingdom by the early 18th century when some drysalters concentrated on ingredients for producing dyes, and it was still current in the first part of the 20th century.

My father, J. H. Mason, was a Liverpool merchant, a 'drysalter,' and ... a refined and simple man, very fond of books. The Liverpool house did not suit my mother, so we were seldom there. I had no brothers and sisters, and both parents were also only children, so I

had no first cousins, and I think I was rather lonely as a child and got into the habit of not talking much.

I can recall only a few vignettes of our life in the Isle of Man, most of them, I fancy, belonging to my fifth year...

I remember my clothes quite well - a little ugly silk frock, which I somehow knew was one of my mother's dyed (so I suppose money was getting scarce), but to play on the beach this was covered with a holland overall, and there was a big flopping hat. Two little pelisses I remember, with little capes which were a joy to me; one was yellowy green and one was lavender, and the material was very soft; white frocks too, but I think they were too usual to be remembered...

I think I was a dull, silent, uninteresting and not very observant child; people used to like to pet me, perhaps because I was rather pretty. Anyway, my father used to say later that I was pretty as a child but grew plainer every day...

My mother wore long curls at each side of her face, and I can recall her coming to kiss me good night before going out in a low dress with a bertha and the curls tickling my face.

Bertha A wide, flat, round collar, often of lace or sheer fabric, worn with a low neckline in the Victorian era and resurrected in the 1940s.

There was a broad window-seat on a landing where my mother

used to play with me at making dolls' houses, with lovely little snail-like shells that I have not seen elsewhere. I do not recollect any toys, but some beautifully made real fire-irons, which the little girl of the laundress gave me, and which my mother caused me to return, as they were rather valuable.

Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake, baker's man must belong to an earlier age, but I remember my glee when my mother got to 'Mark it with P and put in the oven for Popsey and me.' But later some lady friend said such a great girl should not be called Popsey, but by her proper name, so I was Charlotte henceforth."

(Pages 1 and 2. *The Story of Charlotte Mason* by Essex Cholmondley (pronounced, "Chumly"))

I think this gives us such a vivid picture of the 'little girl', Charlotte, doesn't it? I can really see her mother with the curls, and the little dresses that Charlotte was wearing.

LET'S HEAR MORE ABOUT HER CHILDHOOD...

... On account of my mother's delicacy we used to live a great deal in the Isle of Man, which was within easy reach of Liverpool, and one or two recollections of those quite early days have been of great use to me. One day my mother was lying down and reading, and with the idle curiosity of a child of four or five I asked what she was reading. She looked up with a smile and said 'Pope's Homer's Odyssey' in the way in which we give answers to children which it amuses us to know how little they will understand. I think the subject was never referred to again, but I found out then, though my mother did not tell me any tales of Ulysses, that strange names offer no difficulties to children, and today I know that small children in elementary schools will talk glibly of Nausicaa, Telemachus, Agamemnon; that in fact they never turn a hair at the most difficult names associated with interesting ideas.

One other memory I got from seaside life which has affected my general trend of thought. I was being bathed from the shore one day, and somehow my father fell and I was dropped in. My mother was swimming at a distance and swam to the spot where no doubt I was all right by then, but the beauty and desirableness of swimming and all athletic exercises have influenced my thoughts of education.

The years '48 and '49 proved disastrous for my father, as for many another, and for some years we lived in small furnished lodgings. But all the time my parents read, and the first book I remember as a book was the big volume of Layard's Nineveh. The text was nothing to me, but the strange, monstrous pictures opened a new world, a sort of Milky Way of knowledge, and I think this little incident has led me to the conclusion that the whole field of knowledge should, as far as is any way possible, be opened to children.

Gifts were few in our family of three because for years we were very poor, but my eighth birthday brought me a gift of Robinson Crusoe. Meantime my parents, who were glad of the occupation, educated me (with some lessons from outside), father taking some subjects, my mother others...

But about this time came my vocation. ... [One day I saw] a tall lady with a dark shawl thrown scarfwise across her shoulders, a bonnet whose black strings floated, and a whole train of tiny children holding on to her skirts and following her.... this was the mistress of a girls' school near by.

The idea did not take shape at the time, but somehow I knew that teaching was the thing to do, and above all the teaching of poor children like those I had been watching. We got to know this lady. I found that her graceful appearance did not belie her. She took me to her school now and then, and I sat beside her on what was called a monitor's box and was all ears for the teaching of the great girls. And then came to me another fertile idea. The girls of the first class ranged between fifteen and seventeen, I should think, girls who would now be doing great things at a high school. They belonged to the professional classes, girls who wore watches and, sometimes, rings, and who read English history out of a miserable little book a quarter of an inch thick and entirely uninteresting.

I found out from that lesson how necessary it is that children should have books, good books, considerable and well-written books, for notwithstanding Butters we read books at home and at the time I was reading the Waverley novels. How our friend contrived to get the little children about her I never found out, but probably they were attracted as I was.

Charlotte's father suffered heavy financial losses in his business while Charlotte was growing up. Following this

financial crisis, his wife died in 1858. Mr Mason never recovered from his wife's death and he died soon afterwards, leaving Charlotte a penniless orphan at the tender age of sixteen.

This detailed background to Charlotte's early life helps us to understand her vocation and passion, which was teaching and children.

EARLY ADULTHOOD

Charlotte stayed with friends until she was 18, when she went to a teacher training college for a year.

In 1864, Charlotte was photographed during her first visit to the village of Ambleside in the English Lake District. She was twenty-two. Her friend described her like this: *'Her hair was of the darkest shade of brown, almost black. Her eyes were blue-grey, her height five feet four inches.'*

Charlotte began teaching in Worthing on the south coast of England. Under her management the school became very well known in the neighbourhood. It is said that *'perfect order was maintained without any severity and the pupils worked with intelligence and eagerness'*. No wonder Miss Mason made many friends in Worthing and was recognized as an



authority on education. She taught there for 12 years before moving to Chichester where she was a lecturer for four years.

BRADFORD

In 1880, when Charlotte was in her late thirties, she moved to Bradford in the north of England to teach in a school kept by

one of her friends and also to get some time for writing about education. In Bradford she gave a series of lectures to ladies on “Home Education”. These lectures were so popular that they were published under the title of ‘Home Education’, which is the first volume in Charlotte Mason’s ‘Original Home School Series’.

Although Charlotte didn’t enjoy very good health, she had a lot of friends and travelled to Continental Europe most years. She liked walking, and nature, and wrote geography books for children. She joined clubs and societies and visited her friends around the country. It’s said that she was an inspiration to everyone she met, and she was certainly very popular and well loved.

MOVING TO AMBLESIDE

In 1891, when Charlotte Mason was nearly fifty, she realised a long ambition and was able to move to the small Lake District village of Ambleside, where she founded a college of education which she called “The House of Education”.

We have first hand accounts of people who met and knew Charlotte. They always speak with respect and affection about her. And for me, this is inspirational because Charlotte Mason the teacher becomes a heroine to me, as much for the way in which she conducted her life, as for her teaching methods.

In 1894 Charlotte Mason was able to acquire a large Georgian house called Scale How. This was to be the hub of the college and remained so until recent times.



Scale How in the 1890s

THE TIMES SHE LIVED IN

Charlotte Mason lived in a time of great change, spanning the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It was a time of Communism, Fascism, Darwinism, Eugenics, Determinism. (Lots of *isms*)

It was a time of Van Gogh, Impressionism, Post Impressionism and the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood in art; Romanticism and Gilbert and Sullivan in music; Thomas Carlyle and John Ruskin in writing.

It was a time of Freud, Montessori, John Ruskin, Rudolph Steiner who started Waldorf schools and the expansion of philosophy and psychology...

There was lots of discussion about the role of ‘nature versus nurture’ in how a child grew and developed. Some people believed that ‘nature’ ruled all. That is to say that a child was born good or bad and no amount of upbringing could change the character or personality of a child. To see this played out, just consider the story of “Oliver Twist” by Dickens, written in 1838. In the story, the little boy, Oliver, is of noble birth, and no amount of temptation or training will persuade the child to do evil things.

Others believed that ‘nurture’ ruled and that upbringing was everything. Just because a child had wicked parents, didn’t mean that the child was destined to a life of wickedness too. And, in fact, that the right upbringing could guarantee a certain result.

Charlotte Mason addressed this very issue in a unique way. She said that each child is born with the possibility of good



A photograph of Scale How taken in recent times by Stephanie



Charlotte Mason in 1920

and evil in him. That we need to train a child to make good choices.

She also talked about treating children as people, short lessons, narration, habits, nature journals, living books, and ideas. These are the main topics that Charlotte Mason is remembered for today.

LATER YEARS

Charlotte Mason spent the rest of her life in Ambleside. She died in January 1923.

VISITING AMBLESIDE TODAY

I grew up about 50 miles (80 km) from Ambleside and have made countless visits there over the years. Ambleside today is a small Lakeland town with narrow streets, stone buildings, slate roofs, and plenty of tourist shops. The house, Scale How is still there; out of the town, on the road to Rydal Water. And until very recently, it was still a place of learning.

On my last visit to Ambleside, I visited Scale How and Charlotte Mason's grave. The inscription on her grave is very moving, and quite long. It seems very tender to me. It reads:

*"In loving memory of
Charlotte Maria Shaw
Mason, Born Jan 1
1842, died Jan 16 1923,
Thine eyes shall see
the King in His beauty.
Founder of the Parents
National Educational
Union, The Parents
Union School and The*



House of Education. She devoted her life to the work of education, believing that children are dear to our heavenly Father, and that they are a precious national possession. Education is an atmosphere, a discipline, a life. I am, I can, I ought, I will. For the children's sake."

PEOPLE WHO KNEW CHARLOTTE MASON TELL US ABOUT HER

What follows are some reflections about Charlotte Mason from people who knew her. They will help to enrich your understanding of who Charlotte Mason was. Hopefully, you might even start to view her as a beloved teacher to you.

From Violet Parker, one of the first students at the House of Education: (from *The Story of Charlotte Mason* by Essex Cholmondley. pp 37-38)

*My first recollection of Miss Mason was in January 1889 when my mother and I were invited to meet her at the vicarage, Forest Gate. Our friends the Rev. Edward and Mrs Wynne had lately moved from Manningham, Bradford, and Mrs Wynne had told us how Miss Mason, in order to raise needed funds for their church there, had given a series of talks on educational matters. These had appeared in book form as *Home Education*. A year or two later the 'House of Education' was opened. Three other girls and myself were the first students.*

How well I remember that night of 15th January 1892. A cold but lovely drive by coach from Windermere to Ambleside: trees heavily laden with snow on one hand-a black lake on the other, a mysterious and wonderful fairyland to our delighted eyes. At the end of our journey-on arrival at Ambleside there was a warm welcome from Miss Mason who so soon won our hearts. Whatever our surroundings might have been, we should have been happy merely to be with her!

We were at Fairfield House 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.

At Springfield Miss Mason's room was the large one at the top of the stairs on the right. I loved being there and so enjoyed

the yellow poppies which came up everywhere. It was such a pretty walk over the stile across the fields to church. Miss Mason took Miss Beale that way. Dr Schofield also visited her there.... In those days Miss Mason devoted nearly all her time to us and we spent our mornings with her at Mr Fleming's Lecture Room 1 in the village where were excellent classrooms for our purpose; 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. She usually went with us to Mrs Firth's weekly 'picture talk'-so much appreciated. How we delighted in everything, but Miss Mason was far from strong and often greatly overtaxed herself for the work's sake. Upon more than one occasion she had to fight serious illness but I cannot remember her ever referring to herself.

As I look back what impresses me most about Miss Mason was, I think, her extraordinary power of getting the best out of everybody and of making 'the lion lie down with the lamb.' She seemed by some magic to eliminate causes of discord, but these seldom occurred in the atmosphere of peace and content which she created. By her presentation of the good, that which was bad and ugly simply ceased to exist. I think Miss Mason's outstanding quality was her intuitive understanding . . . she was often almost uncanny in her 'judgment of character.... But her humility (in spite of her power), combined with her urgent desire for the person's good, brought out the best in those who were associated with her.

Here are a few quotations taken from a book of collected writings about Charlotte Mason. The book is called, "In Memoriam". It is out of copyright and you can read and download the whole book here:

<http://www.archive.org/details/inmemoriamcharlo00pareuoft>

From the Times Educational Supplement January 20 1923

A Personal Tribute

A correspondent writes:—Charlotte Mason was that rare combination, an original thinker and philosopher and at the same time, a wonderful organiser and business woman. She was wise and witty, keenly interested in the things of the world, birds and flowers, books and people, but with an inner vision

for the beyond, and the graciousness of manner and selfless consideration for others which marked the grande dame of a passing age. She treated the smallest child with courtesy. She was gracious to the youngest member of her household just as she was to the great of the land who were among her disciples. Her students and all who came under her influence caught the fire of her enthusiasm for her educational principles together with her single-mindedness and humility.

She never allowed her methods of teaching and philosophy of education to be called by her name, but by that of the society she founded to spread them. Thus her work will continue and be ably carried on by those she has trained and appointed for the task. She was at work up to four days before her death, and personally superintended the many arrangements for accommodating the ever-increasing number of students wishing to enter her college. Her end was the passing of a great spirit. With all her powers of mind and heart fresh and keen, memory and apprehension unimpaired, she fell asleep after many days spent for the good of humanity. Her teaching has spread to almost every part of the globe; the pupils of her correspondence school are to be found in home schoolrooms, in private and council schools, and many generations of happy children filled with the joy of living and of learning will rise up and call her blessed.

From I.B.S. Whitaker Thompson.

...I resolved to seek the earliest opportunity of making Miss Mason's acquaintance and this fortunately happened in the autumn of [1887]. She was staying at Highfield, Ilkley, a house which was a favourite resort for intellectual and poetic natures in holiday time, high up on the edge of the moor, and as I was in the neighbourhood I ventured to write and ask her to allow me to go over one afternoon, and met with her usual kind response. Accordingly I climbed up from the station at Ben Rhydding one hot August day and there in the sunshine and the heather I spent a happy and memorable hour with the sweet and gentle person for whom I had acquired such an inward respect and veneration.

Her encouraging manner and quiet simple talk disarmed all nervousness and made me entirely at ease; her understanding and sympathy, her love of children and confidence in the good in them, her ideas of developing their tastes and talents, of avoiding

the stumbling blocks put in their way by injudicious elders, her respect for the efforts of well-meaning parents ignorant of their own inefficiency, and her earnest desire to help them, her estimate of the value of early environment, example and training, the formation of habits, the love of Nature, the freedom of leisure, the atmosphere of truth that should surround these tender little ones whom none may despise, the ultimate goal of character, all these and many other ideals inspired me with noble ambitions, though with a despairing sense of shortcoming; for what mother could suffice for these things? Later glimpses, all too short, but always a privilege, came in meetings at Bad Nauheim, where the grave heart trouble that affected her for so many years, caused her to spend several weeks each summer following the cure, which happily brought invariable benefit. The wonderful patience and cheerfulness with which she bore her physical frailty and limitations were a living testimony to that Faith which was her 'sure foundation' and inspired the optimism and calmness of spirit, the wise and steadfast philosophy that made her such an unfailing counsellor to others in difficult ways, and gave pause to realise she tapped the Source that makes "quietness and confidence your strength."

A Few Recollections by Helen Webb.

It was at a drawing-room meeting at the London house of the Duchess of Portland, in the year 1892, that I first met Miss Mason and heard her speak. I have always remembered the impression then made up on me by her gracious personality, and great charm of voice and manner.

The title of the address is forgotten, but it concerned her gospel of education and from that day others, besides myself, must have realised that they had seen a new vision. That was the beginning too of a friendship which has been for 30 years one of the greatest privileges and pleasures of my life.

A little later in Florence I came upon Miss Mason and her friend, Mrs. Firth, standing by Giotto's Tower, and together we studied his beautiful medallions. I shall always especially associate with them that of the woman weaving on the loom which Ruskin copied when he revived hand-weaving in the Lake country.

In September 1894 I paid my first never-to-be-forgotten visit to Miss Mason at Ambleside. ... The day after my arrival Miss Mason took me across the road to view the big house on the hill which she thought of moving into, so as to have all her students under one roof, and make a worthy home for the House of Education. As we walked up the drive the sun shone brightly, and in front of the house we stopped and turned round to gaze on Loughrigg and Wansfell, with Windermere between and said to each other, "Just think, Wordsworth stood here and looked at all that!" for his niece Mrs. Harrison (nee Wordsworth) had lived at Scale How in his life-time and till 1892. We went all over the house, up and down and into every corner, and decided with Mr. Curwen, the architect, who met us there, about the few alterations and improvements which would be needed. Altogether we planned for a beautiful future, nearly 29 years of which, with its fine record, now belong to the past.

Another day Miss Mason took me to Keswick on the top of the mail coach. It was a good old fashioned coach with four horses, a leisurely vehicle from which one had plenty of time to see everything. That day I had a wonderful lesson in "sight-seeing," as Miss Mason understood it. And what delightful fun we had, and how much enjoyment out of all kinds of little everyday trifles!

Shortly after this time when Miss Mason had to realise the physical limitations due to ill-health, she had the great wisdom to order her life in such a way that every available grain of energy could be given to the work which was so dear to her, so that in the many future visits which I paid to her our excursions did not go beyond the beautiful daily drives in the near neighbourhood.

These were taken in her little Victoria, driven by her faithful man Barrow. Here we looked for red-starts, and there to see if the daffodils were in flower, and some days we went round by Grasmere and bought ginger-bread from old Sarah Nelson.

I wish I could give a clearer picture of it all. Those who were at that delightful Conference at Ambleside last May will always carry with them some idea of the charm of Scale How under its dear Mistress.

Miss Mason's Love of the Country Drives by T. H. Barrow (Coachman)

Having served my late dear Mistress for 24 years, I should

like to make known her love of, and interest in, all that moved or grew along the lanes or moors, for it was Miss Mason's delight to seek the quiet lanes and bits of moor away from the noisy motors, and only quite recently, using her own words, have they begun "to poach on our private drives."

From 1898 for a good many years Miss Mason would take the tea-basket on her drive, when with the late Miss Armitt, or the Hon. Mrs. Franklin or others. If the weather was hot, in the woods by the lake towards the ferry; if cool Miss Mason enjoyed the hillside between Chapel Stile and High Close, where unrivalled views could be obtained of river, lake and mountain.

We could take at least twenty different drives, or circles, very rarely covering the same road on return except for a little distance from home. Each drive had its own peculiar charm. In September, the autumn tints were best on one. In October, another would be more brilliant. Then November brought the bracken on the mountains to the warm russet colour, Miss Mason's delight. A cold blast in December brought the Redwing to their favourite haunts for shelter, and then we knew a storm was brewing. In December, January and February, we usually saw the different species of wild duck on Elterwater, Loughrigg Tarn, or Rydal Water. The end of February and early March saw the Wild Goose going back to the breeding ground on the Scottish coast. Barnegates being a favourite crossing place for them. It was on this drive in 1920 Miss Mason saw a pair of Waxwings quite close at hand and on a former occasion three Redpolls. Towards the latter end of March we saw the Curlew by Barnegates come to look up his nesting ground. April brought Redstart and Wheatear. Though small birds, Miss Mason's watchful eye seldom missed them even in 1922.

Each drive seemed to yield something of its own. One snug corner produced Hazel Blossom, another Coltsfoot flowers; some drives were profuse in Wild Roses and Honeysuckle; another in Bog Bean and Bog Myrtle' another in Grass of Parnassus; and even the small Milkwort did not escape Miss Mason's keen eye.

Very often did we follow nature's ways in evading the storm. Sometimes, when quite calm at "The House of Education," (sheltered from North and East winds) on reaching the open we found a boisterous wind and it was then we had to follow the cunning of the fox and hug the sheltered side of Loughrigg to

Selfish Bridge, thence to Barnegates, and with back to wind could get our little circular drive without discomfort.

Miss Mason was fond of her horse, which was a great help in getting close to birds as they don't fear animals so much as persons. And it was always her first enquiry when staying at hotels during Easter Holidays,—Had I and her favourite little mare Duchess, been made comfortable and well fed? To her friends who asked why she did not have a motor, her answer was,—"I can talk to a horse but not to a motor." To illustrate her contention that it was so, I very well remember when once by Shelwith Falls on a stormy day, Miss Mason wished to return, not feeling well, and she had given me the word to turn again for home. Through the rush of water I had not heard Miss Mason's words, but Duchess had, and when I attempted to restrain her from turning, Miss Mason said it was quite right, Duchess had heard and knew all about it.

Miss Mason's nerve during these later years was marvellous, for we encountered all kinds of motorists, reckless and otherwise. We have even had horse's feet on the motor bonnet. Still she kept calm where many a younger person would have been panic-stricken and probably by leaping out would have caused serious harm to herself.

Miss Mason was always punctual, never kept man and horse waiting and never left her carriage without the kindly, 'Good afternoon' and 'Thank you, Barrow.' And (had our drive been prolific in birds, &c.) "We've had a splendid bag." And I am proud of having had the honour and pleasure, for it was a pleasure, of driving such a kind and noble lady whose like none can excel.

And her end was Peace.

From H. E. Wix. Ex-Student, House of Education.

Perhaps there never has lived anyone who more speedily and lastingly won the friendship of persons she never saw. Teachers who had only known of her for a few months felt the blank of her loss with a curious intensity; so did parents whose knowledge of her was confined to gratitude for her teaching in Home Education and Parents and Children..

...Breadth and balance are perhaps the main marks of Miss

Mason's teaching, so that there are many standpoints from which we may try to study it. Surely few educationists have solved both a theory and a philosophy of education—in its broadest sense—and a practical concrete method of teaching as well. There are these two main sides of her ideal, often separated but not really separable. First, the upbringing of the child, the person; the teaching habit, the training of the will, the gradual evolution of character. Founded on this and on much more, is Miss Mason's theory and practice of education in its narrower sense; how to teach children in their school days.

MY OWN EXPERIENCE OF TEACHING THE CHARLOTTE MASON WAY

I first heard of Charlotte Mason when I was training to be a teacher, many years ago in England. At that time, she was one of a long list of educators we learnt about. And I recognised that I myself had been taught with some of her methods.

I next heard of Charlotte Mason in 1990 when Karen Andreola started publishing her *Parents' Review* magazines. I devoured the journals each quarter and got my own set of *Charlotte Mason's Original Homeschool Series*.

Not many homeschoolers had heard of the name of Charlotte Mason at that time, and to begin with, many equated the name with 'teatime', classical music, picture study and poetry. Some people even had special tea parties with classical music blaring, while they drank tea and read poetry. Obviously a rather silly response to a lot of good ideas. Nowadays I would hope that most of us would be more sensible and enjoy all aspects of a rich, broad education in a measured manner.

As people started to read more carefully and built up an understanding of the depth of Charlotte Mason's work and ideas, so too, did the quality of teaching and discussion improve.

Today a lot of people have heard of Charlotte Mason, and there is a range of top-notch support for those of us who want to follow through in more depth.

The first introduction to Charlotte Mason is usually hearing talk about good books, narration and nature study, but things do go much deeper than that. You will have already seen that Charlotte Mason didn't suggest a narrow curriculum at all. On the contrary, she taught and recommended a very wide curriculum. It's the sort of teaching and learning which lends itself beautifully to homeschooling.

In my own family I have discovered that using Charlotte Mason's ideas can produce a rich and happy lifestyle of learning that can be applied as much or as little as you like.

So many times I have heard of people wanting to apply Charlotte Mason's philosophies, but they are unsure of where to start, or they have tried and had difficulties, or they have got so far, but without success.

I would like to share more about Charlotte Mason's methods and philosophies of education with you, and I invite you to join me in learning, step by step, how to teach your children, using Charlotte Mason's wonderful ideas and methods.



Stephanie at the front door of Scale How