

THE UNDER FIVES

Day Nurseries for the Under Fives
Gave happy hours to many lives.
Instruction seldom was ' Severe '
But taught us mountains to revere.
Before the age of Climbing Schools,
The work and play with simple tools
Was quite enough at first to please
The simple souls of Twos and Threes ;
Till Mummery, just rising Four,
Climbed aiguilles never climbed before,
And one Young prodigy survives
Who made ascents that trouble Fives.
We've schooling now for Five and Six,
The pupils do their monkey tricks
In *étriers*, and in suspense
Hang poised in situations tense
Above the void ; a boarding school
For those almost as tough as Buhl ;
Six days they pin upon the Dru
A way that tempts not me—or you ?
Who found a day of fifteen hours
Upon the snows and rocky towers
Was quite enough to make a feast
That satisfies, till limbs have ceased
To take us high.

No envy mars
Our admiration of the Stars,
Who study with the Upper Fives
And Sixes bold, who risk their lives
To raise the standard higher still
Of what equipment and the will
Can do to win on beetling rocks
The way that stubborn Nature blocks.
Is the end near ? To those who fix
The human limit Upper Six,
The man who claims the grade of Seven
Will seem a trespasser in Heaven !
In fifty or a hundred years,
With Journals' editors in tears,
When the last overhang is climbed,
And Everest ascents are timed,
There'll still be mountains that survive
To satisfy an Under Five.

R. L. G. IRVING.