

Now, the life of the child is a part of the whole life of the man or woman. The powers of the child are his own, and they grow into the powers of the adult man just in so far as they are developed in a natural way—in a way that accords both with external nature and with his own inner nature.

In the child we discern the germs of the activities and ideals of the full-grown man; his powers urge him to examine and to know things; to do and to make things, and to know himself in relation to others. But we cannot by any merely external system of discipline or instruction carry out his self-development for him; we may help him to do so for himself; or, on the other hand, we may, by mistaken methods, actually check and thwart, or seriously warp his self-development. If life be one, and if there be a unity of any kind in all human life, the development of the powers of the child cannot be out of accord with mature human life; and, in order that when he is a man he may be able to turn to the fullest account the truths of science, the efforts of industry, and the relations of human society, we must endeavour so to guide him that his early development may be on sound lines; his knowledge of nature should be sound as far as it goes; he should be gradually prepared to play his part in the great movements of human industry; he should have sympathy with human life in the past and in the present; and he should be led to form noble ideals for the future—for himself, for his family, his city, his country, and the race.

But one of our worst faults hitherto as educators is that in our false zeal to make what we regard as substantial progress, we have tried to anticipate, so to speak, in the child the more matured product of adult manhood. No one in his senses would expect a boy of ten or twelve to jump 20 ft. or to run 100 yards in an even ten seconds; yet how often even in progressive (or may I say enlightened?) New Zealand have we expected in the same boy an accuracy and skill in writing not far removed from the ready penmanship of the practised clerk; we have even put into the hands of still younger children that barbarous instrument the steel pen, and have even punished them because their little fingers, being of a different shape and size, were not apt to hold the same instrument in the same position as the aforesaid practised adult clerk—nay, have we not sometimes whipped them, forsooth, because they have inked their poor dear little fingers? Even adults cannot always sit patiently and work for long periods in confined positions; we are all naturally nomads, and dislike imprisonment in any form; but we crib and confine little children of five or six indoors, in galleries and desks, and expect them to be good, and hope mayhap (if we ever think of it) that in consequence or in spite of our course of treatment they may grow up well developed in body and mind. The formal teaching of reading and writing threatens to invade the infant room to such an extent as to crush out of our memories all recollection that such a man as Froebel ever lived. "Unreal arithmetic" in nearly all classes dies very hard; First Standard children who scarcely understand the meaning of "one hundred" are set to add up six lines or more of figures with six columns in each, and Fifth Standard boys are expected to show the same skill in working commercial sums as the adult clerk. The worst of it is that a skilled teacher can succeed in making the children, or a good proportion of them, do these things, but at what a cost of warped bodies and minds?

Have these children no natural activities properly belonging to childhood that call for exercise and expression, that we must anticipate the activities characteristic of manhood? Would it not pay—viewing the child as the germ of the man—to let him grow in a more natural way?

The child has a measure of self-determinism also; the exercise of his powers is one form of self-expression—to the wise teacher the best indication of what those powers are, of what the child is—let us guide him by all means, at each age according to its powers and its needs. The curiosity of the infant to examine into everything (even to pull it to pieces, if necessary, for that purpose) may be directed step by step so as to grow into the trained observation of the man of science. The desire to make and to model things finds expression in handwork, the form of which gradually changes until we have that which calls forth a dexterity of hand and a quickness of eye akin to that of the expert artisan. The child loves to hear stories, and to tell stories, and to act stories; all these aid in producing in him an interest in the relations of human life, which later on is fostered by his studies in literature and history; indeed, when I look back on my experience as a scholar and teacher, and ask myself what was there of value in the teaching of Latin and Greek, I am constrained to answer that it was not grammar or philology or syntax, but interest in the life of the past, in its history and literature. And so, for the ordinary boy or girl, who is not destined to be a grammarian or a philologist, I say that whatever secures this love of the history and literature of the past will secure to him or to her what was most valuable in the older studies.

We must bring our teaching into the closest possible contact with life, with the ideals of life as we now view them. Reform in the subjects and methods of our schools would lead to the identification of the class-room with the average boy's life, as the playing-field is identified with it now. It is sad that the average boy should forgive himself so easily for the sin of habitual inattention or of working at half-power in the class-room. If the schools do not in the best sense fit their pupils for the needs of their future lives, theorists may talk about the culture of this study or that as much as they like, but the schools will have failed, because to the great majority of their pupils the lessons of the class-room have had no relation to the facts of the universe, moral or otherwise. It is on this ground, principally, that I would urge the introduction of what are known as vocational courses into our secondary schools. A vocational course, as thus understood, is not a technical or professional course, nor is it merely externally and immediately utilitarian, as those who are somewhat brusquely termed the bread-and-butter school would have it to be. It is essentially a course of general education, with the English and history, the mathematics, and at least part of the science, and the physical training common to it with the other courses; but a course in which a certain part of the work is brought into close contact with the