

atrophied and almost paralysed, not to say broken; and that then it would suffice to read to them wonderful stories of clowns, acrobats, champion boxers and wrestlers, to fire them by such examples with the desire and the power to emulate these feats. And yet we do something of this kind when in order to educate the child's will we first of all attempt to annihilate it, or as we say, "break it," and thus hamper the development of every factor of the will, substituting in all things *our will* for that of the *child's will*. He is kept motionless in his seat not by his own will, but by ours; it is we who make him act, we who choose and decide for him in almost every little detail. And then in order to make his character all it should be we think it sufficient to treat him to a lecture on the necessity of a strong and flexible will; and for his emulation we tell him tales of heroic men—giants of will! And strangest part of all we then marvel at our own lack of success in gaining the desired result.

Perhaps it is in the domain of the will that we are apt to do our children the greatest wrong of all. We can find around us in plenty people of intelligence and of imagination, but alas, how many also do we find wasting their powers of mind or body, wrecking, or at least lessening their own happiness and usefulness, as well as that of others, simply because they have not the power to make right decisions at the right moment.

Like the man in the Gospel who sold all he had to obtain the pearl of great price, we should be prepared to make any sacrifice, to introduce methods into our teaching which will afford the right training and sufficient exercise for the will. We all know instances of persons almost illiterate who are yet more truly educated and more useful members of society than many of their intellectual superiors simply because the force of circumstances or a good home training has developed in them decision of will and a good practical judgment.

IMAGINATION.—It is a very common belief that the young child is characterised by vivid imagination, and that therefore a special education should be adopted to cultivate this valuable gift of nature. It should be remarked however, that the tendency of the child to wander into the fascinating worlds of unreality is simply due to the immaturity of his organism, and it is in fact a tendency markedly characteristic to savage and primitive peoples. Far from developing this savage or immature state, or keeping the child therein, the educational training of the imagination consists, above all, in bringing the mind of the child back to the *realities* of the world around him. We are told that Michelangelo would spend entire evenings gazing up into the vault of Heaven, and when asked at what he was gazing, he replied, "I see a dome." It was after this form so marvellously created within his mind that the famous cupola of St. Peter's in Rome was fashioned. But it could never have been born, even in the mind of Michelangelo had the intensity of his imagination, instead of being fixed on the wonderful reality above him, been dissipated in a world of sterile fancies. It has been said that nothing would sooner reform Christendom than to train people to exercise their imagination on the realities of their every-day life. The insane and the delirious talk of fantastic things, but we do not therefore say that they have a great deal of "imagination." The true basis of the imagination is reality, and its perception is related to exactness of observation.

Genius has been described as the capacity to take infinite pains; hence the metaphors of our great writers are profuse and marvellous, simply because every great writer and every lofty orator perpetually links the fruits of the imagination with the observation of fact; and then we say he is a genius and that his thought is clear and vital. Our Lord Himself continually illustrated His teaching by what He saw around Him. We, however, suppose that we are developing the imagination of children by making them accept fantastic nonsense as reality. There are indeed men who really take a tree for a throne and issue royal commands; others

who imagine they are kings or great personages; and quite logically we say they are mad.

The custom prevalent in many countries of representing Christmas as an old man coming down the chimney with toys is supposed to obtain its value from its appeal to the child's imagination. Now, either the child does believe it or he does not. If the latter is the case, his mind instinctively accuses us of untruth; but if the former is the case, it is the child's credulity and not his imagination that is being exercised. It is we who imagine; the child believes. It is we who are amused by the illusions, the ignorance, and the errors of the immature mind. We are like the fine lady who took a superficial interest in a hospital for poor children, but who kept on declaring: "If there were to be no more sick children I do not know what I should do." It is the living among real possessions of his own which really develops the imagination of the child and assuages those desires which consume his precious powers in the vanity of illusions. The child who has nothing is the one who dreams of things the most impossible of attainment; but he who has something attaches himself to that which he possesses to preserve and increase it reasonably. The destitute dream of millions, a person without employment dreams of becoming a prince; but an assistant teacher in a school dreams of becoming a head master, and the prosperous farmer dreams of becoming still more prosperous. The child who has a table or desk of his own, who possesses pottery, soap, dressing tables, and furniture, is happy in the care of all these things. His desires are moderated, and the peace he derives from them opens up a life of expansion to his internal creative activities. How much time and strength man has lost and is losing because he has not been directed to develop the powers of his imagination on truth and reality. Just as vice, which is an exercise of function without purpose, wastes the body until it becomes diseased, so imagination unsustained by truth consumes the intelligence until the mental balance is lost.

The great change in the face of the modern world was brought about, when, under the influence of the positive researches of science, the mind of man turned from the world of mere speculations to the living realities around him. We all know the story of Volta's marvellous discovery of electricity, which is literally as well as figuratively "the gleam of an immense progress." He was hanging up some dead frogs on the iron bars of the window when he noticed that their legs contracted. Laying due weight upon a little fact such as that of a dead being having moved, considering it soberly without any fanciful conditions, and refusing to believe but that the movement was due to some natural cause, in other words was caused by some *reality*—such was the lengthy process by which one of the greatest conquests of civilisation was achieved. Akin to this was the result of Galileo's observation of the oscillations of a hanging lamp in the Pisa Cathedral. How simple, too, is the story of Newton, whose imagination stirred by the sight of an apple falling to the ground, eventually discovered the theory of the gravity of bodies and that of universal gravitation. Similar instances of the wonderful effects of training the imagination to exercise itself on its surroundings could be recounted indefinitely. When in ordinary life someone praises us for qualities we do not possess, or distorts or exaggerates our true attributes, we are repelled and disgusted. But if the compliment is founded upon our real qualities we feel legitimate satisfaction, because what has been said is relevant and we conclude that the person has *observed* us. We accordingly think of such a person as being subtle and intellectual.

I shall relate one more incident relative to the necessity of basing all our teaching on absolute truth and reality. Two girls of noble family had been brought up in great seclusion, and to safeguard them from the seductions and vanities of the life for which they were destined it had been impressed upon them that the world is full of deceit and that when people praise us, if we could but conceal ourselves and listen