

formed. States of body and of mind which at first are very trying and offensive, may, by persistent effort, become enjoyable and finally result in an over-mastering taste. The use of tobacco is a familiar example of this sort. In most cases the first use of it produces very unpleasant experiences, yet by persistent use these unpleasant experiences are entirely overcome, and a taste is formed so strong that it is almost unconquerable. The taste for tobacco is not exceptional either in the manner of its formation or in its strength. If we turn to the use of alcoholic liquors we find examples of the power of taste equally marked. And not only so but, if we pass from tastes that are dependent upon induced states of our physical organism to tastes that pertain almost exclusively to the mind, we find examples equally if not more marked. Instances are not wanting, for example, where a taste for a certain class of pernicious reading has been developed to such an extent as to be quite as unconquerable as the taste for tobacco or alcohol. And more, when tastes of this sort are formed they are not only as unconquerable, but their indulgence is almost, if not altogether, as destructive of the healthy action of both body and mind, as the indulgence of the taste for narcotics and alcohol.

The formation of tastes such as the use of narcotics and alcohol illustrates will be readily conceded by all. But observed facts compel us to concede much more than this. The law of formation illustrated by these examples holds true of every active and receptive power of the body and mind. The continuous exercise of such powers, under proper conditions, results invariably in forming a relish or taste for such exercise. So true is this and so powerful is the influence of this law that men and women are, through acquired

tastes of the most unnatural kind, degraded below the level of the beast of the field. And more, this powerful influence is felt not only among those who give themselves up to degrading practices, but also among the most refined and educated classes. It is the principal channel through which extravagances and vices of all sorts are introduced into social life and even into literary circles. Vitiates the tastes, social, literary or otherwise, of any community, and you have thrown wide open the flood gates of destructive influences. It is said that "knowledge is power." This may be so; but knowledge is verily weakness in the presence of natural and acquired tastes. The power of knowledge, and even of reason and sound judgment, vanishes before the power of our tastes like the morning dew before the rising sun. Physicians, for example, may tell us of the destructive consequences of the diet so commonly served upon our tables, and we may sincerely believe them. But what of that, our tastes will have the mastery. They are stronger than our knowledge, reason and judgment. We will indulge even although the fatal consequences of a wrecked physical constitution stare us in the face, or have already been partially experienced.

Thus far we have considered taste in the sense in which the word is most commonly used. We have represented it as an attractive force, which affects our conduct and character for good or evil. As such, the power of taste cannot be over-estimated. The teacher's work stands intimately related to taste in this sense. But, perhaps, a more intimate relation exists between his work and taste in the sense of judgment, nice perception, the power of discriminating and appreciating beauty, order, symmetry or whatever constitutes excellency in nature, in human conduct, in the fine arts, *belles-lettres*, etc. Taste in