

made melodious. The far away chanting of voices with the grand undertone of harmony melted into and formed part of rather than disturbed the silence of Friends' meeting. Then followed from those who have long and earnestly sought guidance in all things, and who professedly and conscientiously walk in faith with the Spirit and Comforter, testimonies to the sufficiency of the heritage of Christ's disciples. The meeting closed as the First-day school had done without reference having been made to Easter or the resurrection. In the afternoon a walk in the little park adjoining our meeting house chanced to bring me before Saint George's church, just as the children were being dismissed from the Sabbath school. Scores—yes hundreds, for there are, I have been told, more than two thousand names enrolled—came out, each fondly carrying a flower-pot; and from behind each plant peeped flower faces reflecting the golden ray of God's best sunlight which had brightened for them, at least, one day of the year. My class in the morning had been smaller than usual in consequence of the attraction of music and flowers. Naturally I pondered on my way home from this little glimpse of Easter in the church across the way.

Childhood is the song time of life, the season of rhymes with more of music in them than of reason. Natural law, in the spiritual as in the physical and intellectual worlds, evinces the same grand foundational principle of development. The plan of creation is growth—natural, spontaneous, untrammelled and unforced. It seeks a development of spirit or of morals as gradual as that of mind or physique. Premature development in any direction promises only deformity or death. We have learned, or are learning, in our schools not only that cramming is barbarous, but that the office of the teacher is to protect the inborn intellectual impulse of the pupils, and that the judicious fostering of natural talent is wiser than arbitrary priming.

The same Power which has endowed the tiniest plant with the impulse we call growth, and which has implanted in insects the instinct of self preservation has not less evidently provided for the development and preservation of that gem of life which we term Spirit—that spark of Divine fire with its inherent possibilities of flame.

The little one has need for only light, wholesome, easy digested food for nourishment of body, mind or soul. It has enough to do in simply growing as the flowers do, and natural growth is the Divine ordering of all things. Given air and sunlight with their adjuncts of a happy environment, and it is as the lilies of the field, and like them thrives better in natural soil than in a pot of medicated earth.

Religious doctrines are drugs for which the child has absolutely no use, and a surfeit of moral formulas may be almost equally bad. The sin-sick soul may require moral physic, the normal child does not. So far as I may judge, the Friends are generally clear of premature instillation of doctrines; but I wondered as I saw that garland of flowers at our neighbor's door if there were not a little shutting out of the sunlight from our wee ones. Is there not a suggestion for us in the records of the Elder Brother? He blessed little children, but we have no account of His ever having preached to or even taught them. Practically He said: "Let your own lives be your children's ministers," but He added: "Whatsoever ye do unto the least of these, my little ones." I have been somewhat afraid that a tendency to austerity in the religious teaching of Friends may be instilling a drop of insidious poison. A few days since I came upon two lines, in a bit of child's verse which seemed to illustrate this thought. It read thus:

"Doing your duty most always  
Means something you'd rather not do."

Now do we wish thus to emphasize the attractiveness of wrong doing? Is there to be no real and palpable sunshine of