

detaches itself from the maze of undistinguished things; and by and by a stage is reached when things begin to excite attention by their *unfamiliarity*, when a strange face, for example, will even make the child cry. Everyone, I am well aware, understands all this after a fashion, but the practical lesson which it is designed to teach is in general but feebly realised. That lesson, I take it, is this, that the great business of the mind is to watch for, and take note of, the uniformities of nature, and that any education that does not promote this habit is useless, or worse than useless, for intellectual purposes. How far our systems of education have been from keeping this great principle steadily in view, may be judged from the fact that the majority of people, instead of loving especially to dwell on the uniformities of nature, instead of wishing to narrow the realm of chaos, and extend that of ordered knowledge, show tastes and dispositions of a precisely opposite kind. They run after the marvellous; they love to hear of an effect produced without a cause, or of a cause that failed to produce its effect. The more extraordinary the story you tell them the less exacting they seem to be in the matter of evidence. One would think that the human race had an interest in escaping from the reign of law, and making chance, or some arbitrary inscrutable will, the controller of its destinies. From one point of view all this is very ridiculous; but from another it is nothing less than sad. Here is nature, the great nurse and teacher, to whose fostering care and incessant monitions we owe our whole physical and mental development, and who offers us every hour and every day the true bread of life; and yet we turn from her with impatience to pursue the unholy charms of some lawless mystery. Can we do this without hurt to ourselves? Never; in some way

or other we are sure to suffer for the despite done to the truth of nature. Perhaps the fancy we are pursuing is one that seems to entail no practical consequences of any kind; but if we are pursuing it out of simple love of the marvellous, or in a spirit of antagonism to law, we pervert our own understanding, and, in some unlucky moment, we shall reap the reward of our folly. We see one another's errors better than we do our own; and I need hardly ask whether we are not all cognizant of lives that have been shadowed, of careers that have been spoilt, of infinite mischief that has been wrought, as the result of intellectual infirmity, as the result, we may say, in one word, of some want of respect for law.

I say, therefore, and I say it with all possible emphasis and earnestness, that whatever we teach we should try and plant the feet of youth on the everlasting foundation of natural law. Whatever they may do, they are environed by law, and cannot escape its action. Surely, therefore, no duty can be more obvious than that of opening their eyes to a recognition of their true position. Once take cognizance of these laws, and resolve to have them on your side, and not against you, and the chances of life, if chances they may still be called, are all in your favour. But remain ignorant of them, or, perceiving them, flatter yourself that they were not made for you, that, by a little finessing, you can at least gain the odd trick in the game of life; and your position is a most perilous one. In modern life there is an enormous deal too much of this gamester spirit; and what its results are the newspapers are every day telling us. It is a terrible thing to cast away the sure methods of nature and to make chance your ally and dependence. Could so many do this if the same amount of energy which is now expended in teaching various matters of