

mind, are the uses of fiction in education. What I say will refer to stories in general used in one part or another of education up to the age of ten or eleven. Stories enlarge experience by giving descriptions and pictures of the practical working of much that has been observed, and of other matters similar to these; they exercise the imagination and the feelings in a fitting way; and they supply examples and ideals. They can also be used for giving information of many kinds. Stories enlarge and supply, so to speak, the beginnings of experience by illustrating the practical working of some of the simple laws which govern life. True experience can only come with years; but, meanwhile, children need something to guide them. Precepts and dogmatic teaching do not, as a rule, make much impression on them. "We may tell children that certain causes produce certain effects, but the lesson is soon forgotten; if the law, however, is shown in action in a story, the consequences remain fixed in the mind, and, again and again through life, serve as a guide under similar circumstances." Stories show a child other children like himself living and acting together, and so enable him in a measure to make his own self objective, and to form sounder judgments about that self. They, in a sense, widen his circle of intercourse, and so lessen his pre-occupation with his own likes and dislikes and wishes.

Stories exercise the child's imagination—not only receptively and imitatively, but also by supplying him with much material and many useful models for constructions of his own. A very little care in selection will enable the mode of activity to be both simple and suitable. They can be made to exercise all the simpler non-egoistic feelings, and especially sympathy, which has been called "the imagination of the heart"—and this

without the often too keen and confusing excitement of real cases personally present. The child sees the feelings of others at work and so learns still further to observe and realize the feelings of those around him, and to imagine what they will be in cases beyond his experience.

Stories supply examples, of which I have already spoken. They supply also ideals, which are still more important, not only on the ethical, but also on the æsthetic side. A life unstirred by admiration, unlighted by a gradually growing love of excellence, is but the life of bird or beast, but not that of a human being. We must hold firmly by the natural and real, but chiefly that we may reach the spiritual beyond it. Ideals, like much else, are growths; and they must seem to us to be partly realizable by ourselves or they will have no influence on conduct, and will not call the will into play. The ideals we set before the little ones should be children's ideals, which will grow into man's ideals later on. And, in order that their partial realization may seem possible to children, we must clothe these ideals in definite forms and set them doing definite things. From the characters and actions must simply, unobtrusively, almost unconsciously spring the moral maxims which we wish the children to adopt as their own true guides. Dogmatic teaching in this matter is quite inadequate. In no other department are stories so valuable as in this; and in this a high place must be given, I think, to the best of our fairy stories; because they are full of childhood's ideals. If the prison-house of matter of fact must perforce—even for his very health and safety—close around the growing boy, let us at least leave it here and there open to the sky.

Would I, then, you may ask, make stories, and especially fairy stories, the central predominant interest, the