

is an organism for reacting on impressions; his mind is there to help determine his reactions, and the purpose of his education is to make them numerous and perfect. *Our education means, in short, little more than a mass of possibilities of reaction, acquired at home, at school, or in the training of affairs.* The teacher's task is that of supervising the acquiring process.

This being the case, I will immediately state a principle which underlies the whole process of acquisition and governs the entire activity of the teacher. It is this:

*Every acquired reaction is, as a rule, either a complication grafted on a native reaction, or a substitute for a native reaction which the same object originally tended to provoke.*

*The teacher's art consists in bringing about the substitution or complication, and success in the art presupposes a sympathetic acquaintance with the reactive tendencies native there.*

Without an equipment of native reactions on the child's part, the teacher would have no hold whatever upon the child's attention or conduct. You may take a horse to the water, but you cannot make him drink; and so you may take a child to the school-room, but you cannot make him learn the new things you wish to impart, except by soliciting him in the first instance by something which natively makes him react. He must take the first step himself. He must *do* something before you can get your purchase on him. That something may be something good or something bad. A bad reaction is better than no reaction at all; for, if bad, you can couple it with consequences which awake him to its badness. But, imagine a child so lifeless as to react in *no* way to the teacher's first appeals, and say how you can possibly take the first step in his education.

To make this abstract conception

more concrete, assume the case of a young child's training in good manners. The child has a native tendency to snatch with his hands at anything that attracts his curiosity; also to draw back his hands when slapped, to cry under these latter conditions, to smile when gently spoken to, and to imitate one's gestures.

Suppose now you appear before the child with a new toy intended as a present for him. No sooner does he see the toy than he seeks to snatch it. You slap the hand; it is withdrawn, and the child cries. You then hold up the toy, smiling, and saying, "Ask for it nicely—so!" The child stops crying, imitates you, receives the toy, and crows with pleasure—and that little cycle of training is complete. You have substituted the new reaction of "asking" for the native reaction of snatching, when that kind of impression comes.

Now, if the child had no memory, the process would not be educative. No matter how often you came in with a toy, the same series of reactions would fatally occur, each called forth by its own impression: see, snatch; slap, cry; hear, imitate; ask, receive. But, with *memory* there, the child, at the very instant of snatching, recalls the rest of the earlier experience, thinks of the slap and the frustration, recollects the asking and the reward, inhibits the snatching impulse, substitutes the "nice" reaction for it, and gets the toy immediately by eliminating all the intermediary steps. If a child's first snatching impulse is excessive, or his memory poor, many repetitions of the discipline may be needed before the acquired reaction comes to be an ingrained habit; but in an eminently educable child a single experience will suffice.

One might easily represent the whole process by a brain-diagram; but such a diagram would be little more than a symbolic translation of the immediate