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SCHOOL-CULTURE OF THE OBSERVING FACULTIES.*

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WHY should children be sent to school? Is it merely that they may learn to read, to write, and cipher? Reading, writing, and ciphering are no doubt very important, but are they all-important, or even most important? The man who reads may be said to hear from the past and the distant; the man who writes speaks to the future and the far away. Reading and writing are indeed important, for they enable us to converse untrammelled by the shackles of time and space. But the man who reads learns only what others already know, and he learns it, mayhap, not even as they know it, but only as they express their knowledge, and as he understands that expression. He looks at things through other men's spectacles, without knowing whether those spectacles magnify, minify, colour or distort. Surely more important than learning

and blindly accepting the opinions of other men is it to be able to form opinions for one's self, and at the same time to know that these opinions have been properly arrived at and are correct.

If a boy is to be a carpenter, it is all very well for him to read about the different kinds of wood he will have to work upon, and about the various tools employed in his future trade, but he will learn to use these tools only by using them; he will learn to distinguish the different kinds of wood and to select the kind and the piece suitable for his purpose in each case, only by actual practice of his trade. And what is true of the carpenter is true, *mutatis mutandis*, of every other handicraft, of every business, of every profession. However much one may learn by reading, it is but little and unimportant compared to what must be learned by actual practice. But even if we desired it we can not, during the short time our pupils are at

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