

Then, too, I remember a suspicion that came to me very early in my own work as a teacher, a suspicion that I could accomplish most with the boys who had been least in school. This suspicion became so strong that I resolved to put it to the test of actual enquiry. The statistics of a class of high school boys confirmed my heresy. The human promise in the youngsters was inversely proportional to the number of years they had been in school. When they came to graduate some of them had been at school eleven long years and no allurements at my disposal could induce them to undertake a college course. They had an absolute distaste for study and a longing for what they conceived to be the freedom of the outer world. I have talked with clever college boys and asked how much they felt they owed to the lower schools. I have been able to detect only the very lightest of debts.

Last winter, when Professor Geddes was in America, I was talking with him about this same question, and to my surprise, and very probably to my pleasure, he remarked that he had never known an original person whose education had not been in some way irregular. To this somewhat personal testimony I must add the no less striking results to be found in the biographies of the men and women who have delighted their day and generation in every department of human performance. They have been men and women who have been largely let alone and who have come into their own through the working out of the inner impulse.

It is only fair in this connection to mention the other side of the question, the vast army of men and women who have lacked the discipline of the school and have come to nothing in later life. It all depends. If we sift the matter to the bottom, it would seem that the conditions of success are deeper than this mere outward fact of going to school or refraining from going. The conditions involve the atmosphere of the daily life, the sympathy of friends, the influence of books, above all the inner impulse to activity. If the home provides these conditions better than the school, then the home is manifestly the better place for our budding manhood and womanhood. If the home is not of this rare sort, if the school is more ideal than the home, then the school is clearly the place.

In reality, my complaint is not against the idea of the