

evidently being given by the arbitrary intervention of the teacher. We find, for example, that when there is any uncleanliness, the teacher calls the children's attention to the fault. They are also shown by the teacher "how to wash their ears and eyes with great care," and their attention is called to "the various parts of the body which they are washing." They are further told the means used to cleanse the parts washed. Nor is this passive conveyance of information felt to be harmful; for we are told that the children *soon become* "accustomed to observing themselves and *take an interest* in their appearance." When, however, the direct instruction thus given by the teacher in the affairs of practical life is found so valuable, one cannot understand why it should be regarded as impossible for the teacher to intervene as an instructor in more didactic exercises, without destroying the active interest of the child. In regard to these exercises of practical life it may be noted further, that the author almost relents in her attitude toward school incentives, for she states that the teacher "*calls attention* with little exclamations to a child who is clean."

It is largely on the results of these practical exercises that the author and her admirers base their claim that the Method of the Children's House should supplant present school practices. Speaking of the wonderful results already achieved the author says:

"Any one who has watched them setting the table must have passed from one surprise to another. Little four-year-old waiters take the knives and forks and spoons and distribute them to the different places; they carry trays holding as many as five water glasses, and finally they go from table to table, carrying big tureens full of hot soup. Not a mistake is made, not a glass is broken, not a drop of soup is spilled. All during the meal unobtrusive little waiters watch the table assiduously; not a child empties his soup plate without being offered more; if he is ready for the next course a waiter briskly carries off his soup plate"; "if we try to think of parallels in the life of adults, we are reminded of the phenomenon of conversion, of the superhuman heightening of the strength of martyrs and apostles, of the constancy of missionaries, of the obedience of monks. Nothing else in the world, except such things, is on a spiritual height equal to the discipline of the 'Children's Houses.'"

These results truly seem remarkable, but, when we examine them more closely we are compelled to ask whether they really proceed from a *spiritual height* attained through *psychic* development, or are not rather the result of assiduous training that is largely physical. Any one acquainted with child nature is fully aware of the seemingly wonderful results that may be obtained through physical training without any adequate corresponding development in the mental life. The Chinese by the direct method of imitation are able to obtain even more wonderful results, for with them the child of twelve or thirteen years of age is able to carry on most satisfactorily the domestic duties of the average American home. And even rats and fleas, through constant physical training, have, we know, been trained to perform wonderful feats.

That the skill manifest in the lives of the children may be largely the result of physical habit is evident also from certain of the author's statements. For instance, she says: "These exercises were the only part of the programme which proved thoroughly stationary." Here, of course, will be found an important and essential condition for the formation of physical habits—repetition without variation.