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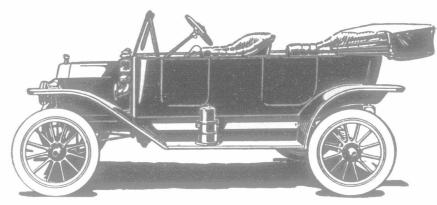
positions do not begin to realize their opportunities and their responsibility. It is an absolute fact that ideas and impressions given in childhood "stick," use a word that expresses the thought more forcibly than any other. Children don't like to be lectured to or harangued, but they are wonderfully responsive to suggestion,-to the word dropped here and there in chance conversation, to the lesson carried in some story, to the influence of some magnanimous action done before them. If the whole atmosphere by which they are surrounded tends to "look up; not down," they are fairly sure to become very good climbers. If, on the other hand, they hear nothing expressed but how to make money, how to dress best, how to "get ahead of the other fellow" in any way, socially or otherwise, they are just as fairly sure to grow up thinking only of self, arrogant, less fine and big than they might be. Mistaken ideals of life and the universe, mistaken ideals of the great human family, forced upon children, how these have clung to people, contaminating their lives, perhaps for all their days! Broader experience may, it is true, bring light; later contact with big and noble and broad-minded people may cause utter revolt against the narrowness of early teaching, well meant though that teaching may have been, yet the struggle is just so much the harder, and the start is made just so much the later. It is a positive fact that people innumerable as the sands of the sea spend the last half or three-quarters of their lives getting rid of ideas poured into them in childhood. Pity that so much time should be wasted, that life should not be, from start to finish, the happy, generous thing it should be were all ideas and ideals, from babyhood up, just what they should be.

It is not impossible, in these days, for parents and teachers, even in the remotest districts, to get abreast of the broadest and most modern thought and interpretation. As a rule, the greatest thinkers have perpetuated their thought through the printed page, and books are not so very costly. The one trouble is that erroneous thinkers have also committed themselves in this way, and the puzzling question is to know what to buy, or what to choose from the shelves of the public library. Farm folk have comparatively little time for reading, and do not want to spend too much time on literature that can only prove unsatisfactory.

Perhaps the best aid to selection is a good magazine which makes book reviewing—in the hands of a reliable critic—a specialty, "The Bookman," for instance. Two or three of such magazines should be on the tables of every public library, and in as many homes as possible. They point the way to the character of the new books that roll forth from the presses every year in endless tide, and it remains for the reader to choose, to weigh, to assimilate, and to reject.

It is not necessary to agree with all that one reads; the reader who is simply a sponge can never develop. The point is that one should come into touch with powerful thought, learn the opposite point of view—if there is one—then bring in the good balance of Commonsense to choose between the two. So one can stand a chance of being fairly right,—so one can become qualified to teach those who may be dependent upon one for teaching.

To return, then, to our subject: Conscious effort may help to promote optimism. Things are going on to-day that show that the world is terribly wrong, but if we make up our minds that we must, by hook or by crook, get hold of right ideals ourselves, that we must try to help others thereto, or let others help us, as the case may be, we can scarce but realize that something worth while still remains to live for. If it were possible for the whole world-every unit in it-to so determine, there could be no war, for no one, no person and no nation, could provoke another person or another nation greatly to wrath. Everyone would know that the thought life is the real life,—that to serve is better than to be served,-and, for material things, everyone would know when he had enough. After all, down at the very base, somewhere, it is the great game of grab that provokes all private jealousies, and all public ones, even all national



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