

growing a crop of eager and skilled learners all ready for our use. Even that much misunderstood class, gifted children, require a little help before they become experts in learning. That precocious boy, Alexander Pope, could hardly have dared to cast aside the tutor's leading strings at twelve and take his education into his own hands, but for the scholastic training he had already received. And as for your undistinguished average child, what would become of him if his intellectual sustenance and growth were made to depend on the keenness of his own stomachic promptings, and on the natural degree of perfection of his powers of scenting out suitable knowledge, cropping and masticating the same, and so forth?

The truth is, that though possessing some natural strength of desire, and some rudimentary powers in respect of learning, the child left to himself is far from being as ardent or as competent a learner as we should like him to be. To begin with, his interest in knowledge is limited, capricious, sporadic, not wide, sustained, and fruitful of valuable results. The desire to gain information about things, to understand the world he lives in, the life and thoughts of his race, is largely a product of education itself. How little it belongs to the uneducated condition may appear in the sluggish condition of incuriosity in which the majority of the species are content to remain to the end of their life.

Hardly less important as showing the necessity of the teacher here is the fact that the same indolence of mind which chokes curiosity is apt to breed a complacent conceit as soon as a little knowledge is acquired. I said just now that knowledge generates a desire for further knowledge; I must now add the limitation, in an active vigorous mind. Unhappily there are many minds of an inactive

drowsy habit, and here a little knowledge is wont to become a dangerous thing morally as well as intellectually. We see this conceit of knowledge begetting an indifference to new ideas, and even an imperviousness of mind in relation to them, in the narrow-minded uncultivated adult. And we meet with it in the young also. The so-called home training sometimes tends in this direction, fostering a ludicrous self-complacency in the matter of knowingness, and disposing the boy or girl to despise the idea of learning as something beneath the dignity of cleverness.

For these reasons, then, I hold that the teacher is needed in order to foster and strengthen the desire for knowledge, so as to bring it to the rank of a constant and dominant impulse of life. But this is only one reason why his services are needed as a factor in the formation of the learner. He is wanted not only to strengthen and intensify the promptings of curiosity, but also to control their direction. A child may have strong impulses towards knowledge, but these may happen to take wrong directions. Thus children's uninstructed questions, as we all know, have not unfrequently to be left unsatisfied, for the good reason that there is no answer available, at least none that the questioner could take in and understand. Not only so: as was pointed out before, childish curiosity is apt to be light and flitting, like the movements of an impatient bee that lingers nowhere long enough for a good substantial take of honey. The curiosity that helps to make the learner is on the other hand a firm consolidated impulse; it is a strong soul-possessing desire to gain knowledge about this particular subject, leading to the concentration on this of the whole mind. The development of this absorbing interest in particular domains of knowledge is