

ning to have its special meaning for him. He has begun to distinguish clearly between the natural and the artificial, and definitely to mark himself off from the world around him. So the feeling that his own life is a kind of inner world has arisen.

But as yet we have not considered one important part of the child's life—his imitation of father and mother, brother and sister, in their domestic and business or professional activities.

A two-year old child of a carter accompanies his father and holds the horse's reins with him, firmly convinced that *he* leads the horse, and that it must obey him. A gardener's little son wishes to help his father to pull up weeds, and the father shows him how to distinguish plants by colour and scent. Another child sees his father hammering hot iron, and learns from him that the iron has been softened by the heat; or again, when he sees his father vainly attempt to push the heated bar through a hole into which it entered easily when cold he learns that the heat has expanded the iron.

The value for the child's development of thus joining in the parent's work is incalculable, and it would be yet greater did parents recognize it and make better use of such opportunities. Every craft and occupation gives a starting-point for human knowledge, which afterwards school with its formal instruction either cannot give at all, or gives with much difficulty and at great cost.

Let the parent, then, not repel his child nor be impatient with his many questions. Yet let him tell only what the child cannot discover without being told. Certainly it is easier for the child to be told the answer to his question, even though he only half understands it, than it is for him to seek and to find the answer for himself. But to seek and to find even a quarter of the answer by

his own efforts is of more worth to him than to receive and grasp half of it from the words of another; for that encourages mental indolence. So let the father not answer his child's questions straight off, but, as his strength and experience allow, show him the means of finding the answer for himself.

Let all parents—and especially fathers who are most directly charged with the training of the child just merging into boyhood—consider how great a joy attends the due performance of their paternal duties. The father who has clearly realized this would sum up his rule of training in the words: "The first and most important point in the education of children is to lead them early to think." That they should in early years begin to be active and to work would seem to him too self-evident to need statement. Moreover, the child who learns to think will through that be drawn to diligent activity, and so towards the fulfilment of all domestic and civic duties.

But what is the actual state of things? It is a hard saying, but examination of our intercourse with our children will show it to be a true one, that our dealing with them is dull and dead. Despite our knowledge, our speech to them is almost wholly devoid of meaning and of life. Only in the few instances in which it tells of actual intercourse with nature and life is it itself alive.

But in social intercourse it has no living force; our words are husks without kernel, marionettes without life, counters without value.

Our surroundings are equally dead and deadening. Things are to us merely so much matter. So they do not raise but oppress us, for the life-giving word which alone could fill them with significance is wanting.

Our speech is void of living meaning because it so

largely consists of ready-made formulas repeated by rote, and growing out of neither true perception nor productive effort. It cannot give life, for it does not come forth from life. It is like the book from which we learnt it at third or fourth hand. What we say we do not really perceive, and so we can give no form to it, and our speech is of necessity empty and meaningless. This, and this alone—that our speech does not spring from and express life rich both inwardly and outwardly, both in comprehending and in doing—is the reason why both the inner and the outer life of ourselves as well as of our children is so poor. We hear the sound but we get no vivid idea, we see no movement.

O Parents! let us see that our children get what is wanting in ourselves. Let that creative, life-giving, force which we lack be transfused from their lives into ours. Let us learn from our children; let us heed the gentle monitions of their lives, the tacit demands of their minds. Let us live for our children. Then will their lives bring us peace and joy, then shall we ourselves begin to grow into wisdom.