

THE HOME
EDUCATION SERIES

VOLUME 1

HOME EDUCATION

CHARLOTTE MASON

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Home Education

PART I

SOME PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

NOT the least sign of the higher *status* they have gained, is the growing desire for work that obtains amongst educated women. The world wants the work of such women; and presently, as education becomes more general, we shall see all women with the capacity to work falling into the ranks of working women, with definite tasks, fixed hours, and for wages, the pleasure and honour of doing useful work if they are under no necessity to earn money.

Children are a Public Trust.—Now, that work which is of most importance to society is the bringing-up and instruction of the children—in the school, certainly, but far more in the home, because it is more than anything else the home influences brought to bear upon the child that determine the character and career of the future man or woman. It is a great thing to be a parent: there is no promotion, no dignity, to compare with it. The parents of but one child may be cherishing what shall prove a blessing to the world. But then, entrusted with such a charge, they are not

free to say, "I may do as I will with mine own." The children are, in truth, to be regarded less as personal property than as public trusts, put into the hands of parents that they may make the very most of them for the good of society. And this responsibility is not equally divided between the parents: it is upon the mothers of the present that the future of the world depends, in even a greater degree than upon the fathers, because it is the mothers who have the sole direction of the children's early, most impressible years. This is why we hear so frequently of great men who have had good mothers—that is, mothers who brought up their children themselves, and did not make over their gravest duty to indifferent persons.

Mothers owe 'a thinking love' to their Children.—"The mother is qualified," says Pestalozzi, "and qualified by the Creator Himself, to become the principal agent in the development of her child; . . . and what is demanded of her is—*a thinking love*. . . . God has given to thy child all the faculties of our nature, but the grand point remains undecided—how shall this heart, this head, these hands, be employed? to whose service shall they be dedicated? A question the answer to which involves a futurity of happiness or misery to a life so dear to thee. Maternal love is the first agent in education."

We are waking up to our duties, and in proportion as mothers become more highly educated and efficient, they will doubtless feel the more strongly that the education of their children during the first six years of life is an undertaking hardly to be entrusted to any hands but their own. And they will take it up as their profession—that is, with the

diligence, regularity, and punctuality which men bestow on their professional labours.

That the mother may know what she is about, may come thoroughly furnished to her work, she should have something more than a hearsay acquaintance with the theory of education, and with those conditions of the child's nature upon which such theory rests.

The Training of Children 'dreadfully defective'—"The training of children," says Mr Herbert Spencer—"physical, moral, and intellectual—is dreadfully defective. And in great measure it is so, because parents are devoid of that knowledge by which this training can alone be rightly guided. What is to be expected when one of the most intricate of problems is undertaken by those who have given scarcely a thought to the principle on which its solution depends? For shoemaking or house-building, for the management of a ship or of a locomotive engine, a long apprenticeship is needful. Is it, then, that the unfolding of a human being in body and mind is so comparatively simple a process that any one may superintend and regulate it with no preparation whatever? If not—if the process is, with one exception, more complex than any in Nature, and the task of ministering to it one of surpassing difficulty—is it not madness to make no provision for such a task? Better sacrifice accomplishments than omit this all-essential instruction. . . . Some acquaintance with the first principles of physiology and the elementary truths of psychology is indispensable for the right bringing-up of children. . . . Here are the indisputable facts: that the development of children in mind and body follows certain laws; that unless these laws are in some

degree conformed to by parents, death is inevitable; that unless they are in a great degree conformed to, there must result serious physical and mental defects; and that only when they are completely conformed to, can a perfect maturity be reached. Judge, then, whether all who may one day be parents should not strive with some anxiety to learn what these laws are."¹

How Parents usually proceed.—The parent begins instinctively by regarding his child as an unwritten tablet, and is filled with great resolves as to what he shall write thereon. By-and-by, traits of disposition appear, the child has little ways of his own; and, at first, every new display of personality is a delightful surprise. That the infant should show pleasure at the sight of his father, that his face should cloud in sympathy with his mother, must always be wonderful to us. But the wonder stales; his parents are used to the fact by the time the child shows himself a complete human being like themselves, with affections, desires, powers; taking to his book, perhaps, as a duck to the water; or to the games which shall make a man of him. The notion of doing *all* for the child with which the parents began gradually recedes. So soon as he shows that he has a way of his own he is encouraged to take it. Father and mother have no greater delight than to watch the individuality of their child unfold as a flower unfolds. But Othello loses his occupation. The more the child shapes his own course, the less do the parents find to do, beyond feeding him with food convenient, whether of love, or thought, or of bodily meat and drink. And

¹ Herbert Spencer, *Education*.

here, we may notice, the parents need only supply; the child knows well enough how to appropriate. The parents' chief care is, that that which they supply shall be wholesome and nourishing, whether in the way of picture-books, lessons, playmates, bread and milk, or mother's love. This is education as most parents understand it, with more of meat, more of love, more of culture, according to their kind and degree. They let their children alone, allowing human nature to develop on its own lines, modified by facts of environment and descent.

Nothing could be better for the child than this 'masterly inactivity,' so far as it goes. It is well he should be let grow and helped to grow according to his nature; and so long as the parents do not step in to spoil him, much good and no very evident harm comes of letting him alone. But this philosophy of 'let him be,' while it covers a part, does not cover the serious part of the parents' calling; does not touch the strenuous incessant efforts upon lines of law which go to the producing of a human being at his best.

Nothing is trivial that concerns a child; his foolish-seeming words and ways are pregnant with meaning for the wise. It is in the infinitely little we must study the infinitely great; and the vast possibilities, and the right direction of education, are indicated in the open book of the little child's thoughts.

A generation ago, a great teacher amongst us never wearied of reiterating that in the Divine plan "the *family* is the unit of the nation": not the individual, but the family. There is a great deal of teaching in the phrase, but this lies on the surface; the whole is greater than the part, the whole contains the part, owns the part, orders the part; and this being so, the

children are the property of the nation, to be brought up for the nation as is best for the nation, and not according to the whim of individual parents. The law is for the punishment of evil-doers, for the praise of them that do well; so, practically, parents have very free play; but it is as well we should remember that the children are a national trust whose bringing-up is the concern of all—even of those unmarried and childless persons whose part in the game is the rather dreary one of 'looking on.'

I.—A METHOD OF EDUCATION

Traditional Methods of Education.—Never was it more necessary for parents to face for themselves this question of education in all its bearings. Hitherto, children have been brought up upon traditional methods mainly. The experience of our ancestors, floating in a vast number of educational maxims, is handed on from lip to lip; and few or many of these maxims form the educational code of every household.

But we hardly take in how complete a revolution advancing science is effecting in the theory of education. The traditions of the elders have been tried and found wanting; it will be long before the axioms of the new school pass into common currency; and, in the meantime, parents are thrown upon their own resources, and absolutely must weigh principles, and adopt a method, of education for themselves

For instance, according to the former code, a mother might use her slipper now and then, to good effect and without blame; but now, the person of the child is, whether rightly or wrongly, held sacred,

and the infliction of pain for moral purposes is pretty generally disallowed.

Again, the old rule for the children's table was, 'the plainer the better, and let hunger bring sauce'; now, the children's diet must be at least as nourishing and as varied as that of their elders; and appetite, the craving for certain kinds of food, hitherto a vicious tendency to be repressed, is now within certain limitations the parents' most trustworthy guide in arranging a dietary for their children.

That children should be trained to endure hardness, was a principle of the old regime. "I shall never make a sailor if I can't face the wind and rain," said a little fellow of five who was taken out on a bitter night to see a torchlight procession; and, though shaking with cold, he declined the shelter of a shed. Nowadays, the shed is everything; the children must not be permitted to suffer from fatigue or exposure. That children should do as they are bid, mind their books, and take pleasure as it offers when nothing stands in the way, sums up the old theory; now, the pleasures of children are apt to be made of more account than their duties.

Formerly, they were brought up in subjection; now, the elders give place, and the world is made for the children.

English people rarely go so far as the parents of that story in *French Home Life*, who arrived an hour late at a dinner-party, because they had been desired by their girl of three to undress and go to bed when she did, and were able to steal away only when the child was asleep. We do not go so far, but that is the direction in which we are moving; and how far the new theories of education are wise and

humane, the outcome of more widely spread physiological and psychological knowledge, and how far they just pander to the child-worship to which we are all succumbing, is not a question to be decided off-hand.

At any rate, it is not too much to say that a parent who does not follow reasonably a method of education, fully thought out, fails—now, more than ever before—to fulfil the claims his children have upon him.

Method a Way to an End.—Method implies two things—a way to an end, and step-by-step progress in that way. Further, the following of a method implies an idea, a mental image, of the end or object to be arrived at. What do you propose that education shall effect in and for your child? Again, method is natural; easy, yielding, unobtrusive, simple as the ways of Nature herself; yet, watchful, careful, all-pervading, all-compelling. Method, with the *end* of education in view, presses the most unlikely matters into service to bring about that end; but with no more tiresome mechanism than the sun employs when it makes the winds to blow and the waters to flow only by shining. The parent who sees *his way*—that is, the exact force of method—to educate his child, will make use of every circumstance of the child's life almost without intention on his own part, so easy and spontaneous is a method of education based upon Natural Law. Does the child eat or drink, does he come, or go, or play—all the time he is being educated, though he is as little aware of it as he is of the act of breathing. There is always the danger that a method, a *bona fide* method, should degenerate into a mere system. The *Kindergarten*

Method, for instance, deserves the name, as having been conceived and perfected by large-hearted educators to aid the many-sided evolution of the living, growing, most complex human being; but what a miserable wooden *system* does it become in the hands of ignorant practitioners!

A System easier than a Method.—A ‘*system* of education’ is an alluring fancy; more so, on some counts, than a *method*, because it is pledged to more definite calculable results. By means of a system certain developments may be brought about through the observance of given rules. Shorthand, dancing, how to pass examinations, how to become a good accountant, or a woman of society, may all be learned upon systems.

System—the observing of rules until the habit of doing certain things, of behaving in certain ways, is confirmed, and, therefore, the art is acquired—is so successful in achieving precise results, that it is no wonder there should be endless attempts to straiten the whole field of education to the limits of a system.

If a human being were a machine, education could do no more for him than to set him in action in prescribed ways, and the work of the educator would be simply to adopt a good working system or set of systems.

But the educator has to deal with a self-acting, self-developing being, and his business is to guide, and assist in, the production of the latent good in that being, the dissipation of the latent evil, the preparation of the child to take his place in the world *at his best*, with every capacity for good that is in him developed into a power.

Though system is highly useful as an instrument of

education, a 'system of education' is mischievous, as producing only mechanical action instead of the vital growth and movement of a living being.

It is worth while to point out the differing characters of a system and a method, because parents let themselves be run away with often enough by some plausible 'system,' the object of which is to produce development in one direction—of the muscles, of the memory, of the reasoning faculty—and to rest content, as if that single development were a complete all-round education. This easy satisfaction arises from the sluggishness of human nature, to which any definite scheme is more agreeable than the constant watchfulness, the unforeseen action, called for when the whole of a child's existence is to be used as the means of his education. But who is sufficient for an education so comprehensive, so incessant? A parent may be willing to undergo any definite labours for his child's sake; but to be always catering for his behoof, always contriving that circumstances shall play upon him for his good, is the part of a god and not of a man! A reasonable objection enough, if one looks upon education as an endless series of independent efforts, each to be thought out and acted out on the spur of the moment; but the fact is, that a few broad essential principles cover the whole field, and these once fully laid hold of, it is as easy and natural to act upon them as it is to act upon our knowledge of such facts as that fire burns and water flows. My endeavour in this and the following chapters will be to put these few fundamental principles before you in their practical bearing. Meantime, let us consider one or two preliminary questions.

II.—THE CHILD'S ESTATE

The Child in the Midst.—And first, let us consider where and what the little being is who is entrusted to the care of human parents. A tablet to be written upon? A twig to be bent? Wax to be moulded? Very likely; but he is much more—a being belonging to an altogether higher estate than ours; as it were, a prince committed to the fostering care of peasants. Hear Wordsworth's estimate of the child's estate:—

“Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
 The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
 Hath had elsewhere its setting,
 And cometh from afar;
 Not in entire forgetfulness,
 And not in utter nakedness,
 But trailing clouds of glory do we come
 From God, who is our home:
 Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
 * * * *
 Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie
 Thy Soul's immensity;
 Thou best philosopher, who yet dost keep
 Thy heritage; thou eye among the blind,
 That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,
 Haunted for ever by the eternal mind—
 Mighty Prophet! Seer blest!
 On whom those truths do rest,
 Which we are toiling all our lives to find;
 Thou, over whom thy immortality
 Broods like the day, a master o'er a slave,
 A presence which is not to be put by;
 Thou little child, yet glorious in the might
 Of heaven-born freedom, on thy being's height”—

and so on, through the whole of that great ode, which, next after the Bible, shows the deepest insight into

what is peculiar to the children in their nature and estate. "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." "Except ye become as little children ye shall in no case enter the kingdom of heaven." "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" "And He called a little child, and set him in the midst." Here is the Divine estimate of the child's estate. It is worth while for parents to ponder every utterance in the Gospels about the children, divesting themselves of the notion that these sayings belong, in the *first place*, to the grown-up people who have become as little children. What these profound sayings are, and how much they may mean, it is beyond us to discuss here; only they appear to cover far more than Wordsworth claims for the children in his sublimest reach-

"Trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home."

Code of Education in the Gospels.—It may surprise parents who have not given much attention to the subject to discover also a code of education in the Gospels, expressly laid down by Christ. It is summed up in three commandments, and all three have a negative character, as if the chief thing required of grown-up people is that they should do no sort of injury to the children: *Take heed that ye OFFEND not—DESPISE not—HINDER not—one of these little ones.*

So run the three educational laws of the New Testament, which, when separately examined, appear to me to cover all the help we can give the children and all the harm we can save them from—that is, whatever is included in training up a child in the way he should go. Let us look upon these three

great laws as prohibitive, in order to clear the ground for the consideration of a method of education; for if we once settle with ourselves what we may *not* do, we are greatly helped to see what we *may* do, and must do. But, as a matter of fact, the positive is included in the negative, what we are bound to do for the child in what we are forbidden to do to his hurt.

III.—OFFENDING THE CHILDREN

Offences.—The first and second of the Divine edicts appear to include our sins of commission and of omission against the children: we offend them, when we do by them that which we ought not to have done; we despise them, when we leave undone those things which, for their sakes, we ought to have done. An offence, we know, is literally a stumbling-block, that which trips up the walker and causes him to fall. Mothers know what it is to clear the floor of every obstacle when a baby takes his unsteady little runs from chair to chair, from one pair of loving arms to another. The table-leg, the child's toy on the floor, which has caused a fall and a pitiful cry, is a thing to be deplored; why did not somebody put it out of the way, so that the baby should not stumble? But the little child is going out into the world with uncertain tottering steps in many directions. There are causes of stumbling not so easy to remove as an offending footstool; and woe to him who causes the child to fall!

Children are born Law-abiding.—'Naughty baby!' says the mother; and the child's eyes droop, and a flush rises over neck and brow. It is very

wonderful; very 'funny,' some people think, and say, 'Naughty baby!' when the baby is sweetly good, to amuse themselves with the sight of the infant soul rising visibly before their eyes. But what does it mean, this display of feeling, conscience, in the child, before any human teaching can have reached him? No less than this, that he is born a law-abiding being, with a sense of *may*, and *must not*, of right and wrong. That is how the children are sent into the world with the warning, "Take heed that ye offend not one of these little ones." And—this being so—who has not met big girls and boys, the children of right-minded parents, who yet do not know what *must* means, who are not moved by *ought*, whose hearts feel no stir at the solemn name of *Duty*, who know no higher rule of life than 'I want,' and 'I don't want,' 'I like,' and 'I don't like'? Heaven help parents and children when it has come to that!

But how has it been brought about that the babe, with an acute sense of right and wrong even when it can understand little of human speech, should grow into the boy or girl already proving 'the curse of lawless heart'? By slow degrees, here a little and there a little, as all that is good or bad in character comes to pass. 'Naughty!' says the mother, again, when a little hand is thrust into the sugar-bowl; and a pair of roguish eyes seeks hers furtively, to measure, as they do unerringly, how far the little pilferer may go. It is very amusing; the mother 'cannot help laughing'; and the little trespass is allowed to pass: and, what the poor mother has not thought of, an offence, a cause of stumbling, has been cast into the path of her two-year-old child. He has learned already that that which is 'naughty' may yet be done

with impunity, and he goes on improving his knowledge. It is needless to continue; everybody knows the steps by which the mother's 'no' comes to be disregarded, her refusal teased into consent. The child has learned to believe that he has nothing to overcome but his mother's disinclination; if she *choose* to let him do this and that, there is no reason why she should not; he can make her choose to let him do the thing forbidden, and then he may do it. The next step in the argument is not too great for childish wits: if his mother does what she chooses, of course he will do what he chooses, *if he can*; and henceforward the child's life becomes an endless struggle to get his own way; a struggle in which a parent is pretty sure to be worsted, having many things to think of, while the child sticks persistently to the thing which has his fancy for the moment.

They must perceive that their Governors are Law-compelled.—Where is the beginning of this tangle, spoiling the lives of parent and child alike? in this: that the mother began with no sufficient sense of duty; she thought herself free to allow and disallow, to say and unsay, at pleasure, as if the child were hers to do what she liked with. The child has never discovered a background of *must* behind his mother's decisions; he does not know that she *must not* let him break his sister's playthings, gorge himself with cake, spoil the pleasure of other people, because these things are not *right*. Let the child perceive that his parents are law-compelled as well as he, that they simply cannot allow him to do the things which have been forbidden, and he submits with the sweet meekness which belongs to his age. To give reasons to a child is usually out of place, and is a sacrifice of

parental dignity; but he is quick enough to read the 'must' and 'ought' which rule her, in his mother's face and manner, and in the fact that she is not to be moved from a resolution on any question of right and wrong.

Parents may Offend their Children by Disregarding the Laws of Health.—This, of allowing him in what is wrong, is only one of many ways in which the loving mother may offend her child. Through ignorance, or wilfulness, which is worse, she may not only allow wrong in him, but do wrong by him. She may cast a stumbling-block in the way of his physical life by giving him unwholesome food, letting him sleep and live in ill-ventilated rooms, by disregarding any or every of the simple laws of health, ignorance of which is hardly to be excused in the face of the pains taken by scientific men to bring this necessary knowledge within the reach of every one.

And of the Intellectual Life.—Almost as bad is the way the child's intellectual life may be wrecked at its outset by a round of dreary, dawdling lessons in which definite progress is the last thing made or expected, and which, so far from educating in any true sense, stultify his wits in a way he never gets over. Many a little girl, especially, leaves the home schoolroom with a distaste for all manner of learning, an aversion to mental effort, which lasts her her life-time, and that is why she grows up to read little but trashy novels, and to talk all day about her clothes.

And of the Moral Life.—And her affections—the movements of the outgoing tender child-heart—how are they treated? There are few mothers who do not take pains to cherish the family affections; but when the child comes to have dealings with outsiders,

do no worldly maxims and motives ever nip the buds of childish love? Far worse than this happens when the child's love finds no natural outlets within her home: when she is the plain or the dull child of the family, and is left out in the cold, while the parents' affection is lavished on the rest. Of course she does not love her brothers and sisters, who monopolise what should have been hers too. And how is she to love her parents? Nobody knows the real anguish which many a child in the nursery suffers from this cause, nor how many lives are embittered and spoiled through the suppression of these childish affections. "My childhood was made miserable," a lady said to me a while ago, "by my mother's doting fondness for my little brother; there was not a day when she did not make me wretched by coming into the nursery to fondle and play with him, and all the time she had not a word nor a look nor a smile for me, any more than if I had not been in the room. I have never got over it; she is very kind to me now, but I never feel quite natural with her. And how can we two, brother and sister, feel for each other as we should if we had grown up together in love in the nursery?"

IV.—DESPISING THE CHILDREN

Children should have the best of their Mothers.

—Suppose that a mother *may* offend her child, how is it possible that she should despise him? "Despise: to have a low opinion of, to undervalue"—thus the dictionary; and, as a matter of fact, however much we may delight in them, we grown-up people have far too low an opinion of children. If the mother did not undervalue her child, would she leave him to the

society of an ignorant nursemaid during the early years when his whole nature is, like the photographer's sensitive plate, receiving momentarily indelible impressions? Not but that his nurse is good for the child. Very likely it would not answer for educated people to have their children always about them. The constant society of his parents might be too stimulating for the child; and frequent change of thought, and the society of other people, make the mother all the fresher for her children. But they should have the *best* of their mother, her freshest, brightest hours; while, at the same time, she is careful to choose her nurses wisely, train them carefully, and keep a vigilant eye upon all that goes on in the nursery.

'Nurse.'—Mere coarseness and rudeness in his nurse does the tender child lasting harm. Many a child leaves the nursery with his moral sense blunted, and with an alienation from his heavenly Father set up which may last his lifetime. For the child's moral sense is exceedingly quick; he is all eyes and ears for the slightest act or word of unfairness, deception, shiftiness. His nurse says, "If you'll be a good boy, I won't tell"; and the child learns that things may be concealed from his mother, who should be to him as God, knowing all his good and evil. And it is not as if the child noted the slips of his elders with aversion. He *knows* better, it is true, but then he does not trust his own intuitions; he shapes his life on any pattern set before him, and with the fatal taint of human nature upon him he is more ready to imitate a bad pattern than a good. Give him a nurse who is coarse, violent, and tricky, and before the child is able to speak plainly he will have caught these dispositions.

Children's Faults are Serious.—One of many ways in which parents are apt to have too low an opinion of their children is in the matter of their faults. A little child shows some ugly trait—he is greedy, and gobbles up his sister's share of goodies as well as his own; he is vindictive, ready to bite or fight the hand that offends him; he tells a lie; no, he did not touch the sugar-bowl or the jam-pot. The mother puts off the evil day: she knows she must sometime reckon with the child for those offences, but in the meantime she says, "Oh, it does not matter this time; he is very little, and will know better by-and-by." To put the thing on no higher grounds, what happy days for herself and her children would the mother secure if she would keep watch at the place of the letting out of waters! If the mother settle it in her own mind that the child never does wrong without being aware of his wrong-doing, she will see that he is not too young to have his fault corrected or prevented. Deal with a child on his *first* offence, and a grieved look is enough to convict the little transgressor; but let him go on until a habit of wrongdoing is formed, and the cure is a slow one; then the mother has no chance until she has formed in him a contrary habit of well-doing. To laugh at ugly tempers and let them pass because the child is small, is to sow the wind.

V.—HINDERING THE CHILDREN

A Child's Relationship with Almighty God.—The most fatal way of despising the child falls under the third educational law of the Gospels; it is to overlook and make light of his natural relationship with Almighty God. "Suffer the little children to come

unto Me," says the Saviour, as if that were the natural thing for the children to do, the thing they do when they are not hindered by their elders. And perhaps it is not too beautiful a thing to believe in this redeemed world, that, as the babe turns to his mother though he has no power to say her name, as the flowers turn to the sun, so the hearts of the children turn to their Saviour and God with unconscious delight and trust.

Nursery Theology.—Now listen to what goes on in many a nursery:—'God does not love you, you naughty, wicked boy!' 'He will send you to the bad, wicked place,' and so on; and this is all the practical teaching about the ways of his 'almighty Lover' that the child gets!—never a word of how God does love and cherish the little children all day long, and fill their hours with delight. Add to this, listless perfunctory prayers, idle discussions of Divine things in their presence, light use of holy words, few signs whereby the child can read that the things of God are more to his parents than any things of the world, and the child is hindered, tacitly forbidden to "come unto Me,"—and this, often, by parents who in the depths of their hearts desire nothing in comparison with God. The mischief lies in that same foolish undervaluing of the children, in the notion that the child can have no spiritual life until it please his elders to kindle the flame.

VI.—CONDITIONS OF HEALTHY BRAIN-ACTIVITY

Having just glanced at the wide region of forbidden ground, we are prepared to consider what it is, definitely and positively, that the mother owes to her child under the name of Education.

All Mind Labour means Wear of Brain.—

And first of all, the more educable powers of the child—his intelligence, his will, his moral feelings—have their seat in the brain; that is to say, as the eye is the organ of sight, so is the brain, or some part of it, the organ of thought and will, of love and worship. Authorities differ as to how far it is possible to localise the functions of the brain; but this at least seems pretty clear—that none of the functions of mind are performed without real activity in the mass of grey and white nervous matter named ‘the brain.’ Now, this is not a matter for the physiologist alone, but for every mother and father of a family; because that wonderful brain, by means of which we do our thinking, if it is to act healthily and in harmony with the healthful action of the members, should act only under such conditions of exercise, rest, and nutrition as secure health in every other part of the body.

Exercise.—Most of us have met with a few eccentric and a good many silly persons, concerning whom the question forces itself, Were these people born with less brain power than others? Probably not; but if they were allowed to grow up without the daily habit of appropriate moral and mental *work*, if they were allowed to dawdle through youth without regular and sustained efforts of thought or will, the result would be the same, and the brain which should have been invigorated by daily exercise has become flabby and feeble as a healthy arm would be after being carried for years in a sling. The large active brain is not content with entire idleness; it strikes out lines for itself and works fitfully, and the man or woman becomes eccentric, because wholesome mental effort, like moral, must be carried on under the

discipline of rules. A shrewd writer suggests that mental indolence may have been in some measure the cause of those pitiable attacks of derangement and depression from which poor Cowper suffered; the making of graceful verses when the 'maggot bit' did not afford him the amount of mental *labour* necessary for his well-being.

The outcome of which is—Do not let the children pass a day without distinct *efforts*, intellectual, moral, volitional; let them brace themselves to understand; let them compel themselves to do and to bear; and let them do right at the sacrifice of ease and pleasure: and this for many higher reasons, but, in the first and lowest place, that the mere physical organ of mind and will may grow vigorous with work.

Rest.—Just as important is it that the brain should have due rest; that is, should rest and work alternately. And here two considerations come into play. In the first place, when the brain is actively at work it is treated as is every other organ of the body in the same circumstances; that is to say, a large additional supply of blood is attracted to the head for the nourishment of the organ which is spending its substance in hard work. Now, there is not an indefinite quantity of what we will for the moment call surplus blood in the vessels. The supply is regulated on the principle that only one set of organs shall be excessively active at one time—now the limbs, now the digestive organs, now the brain; and all the blood in the body that can be spared goes to the support of those organs which, for the time being, are in a state of labour.

Rest after Meals.—The child has just had his dinner, the meal of the day which most severely taxes