

have natural aptitudes for doing certain things. The new-born duck does not need to be taught to swim. He takes to the water naturally. Benjamin West, the great American painter, at the age of seven painted his first portrait—his baby sister asleep in her cradle. His colors were made from berries and his brush was made from hairs stolen from the cat's tail. Daniel Webster, one of our greatest orators and statesmen, when a boy committed to memory the Constitution of the United States, printed on a handkerchief, and practiced his oratory in his father's barn with the cattle in the stalls for his audience. Little Tom Macaulay, stretched on a rug before the fire with a slice of bread in one hand and a book in the other, later became Lord Macaulay, the most noted historian; and Jimmy Watt watching curiously the lid of his aunt's teakettle move up and down in after years was James Watt, the inventor of the steam engine. Michael Angelo neglected school to copy drawings which he dared not bring home. Pope wrote excellent verses at the age of sixteen. Madame de Stael was deep in the philosophy of politics at an age when other girls were dressing dolls.

In choosing a career natural aptitude should receive consideration, but most boys and girls are just average, with no special capacity or tendency in any one direction; steady, intelligent, honest, with moderate energy—the kind that plod along and keep pegging away. There are thousands of cases where a parent might as well tell a son to weigh 200 pounds as to be eloquent; to have a Roman nose as to be graceful, or to write like Shakespeare as to bow politely.

There have been remarkable changes made in our system of education within the last half century. In the old system the minds of the boys and girls were crammed with isolated facts which they were required to commit to memory in the words of the book. This method of teaching is made prominent in the 28 schools of which Charles Dickens tells in the novels that he wrote. He gave his views on education and educational methods not in the form of the ordinary text-book on pedagogy, but in the form of object lessons in interesting stories, that is, in his novels. In our day we are emphasizing essentially the practical, we are training the hand as well as the head. Fifty years ago the head received the training almost entirely.

It is in "Dombey and Son" that Dickens exposes most vigorously the evils of cramming, the verbal memorizing of words without any attention being given to the thought. Dr. Blimber, teacher in this school, undertook the care of only ten boys, yet he had always enough learning for 100, and it was his delight to gorge the unhappy ten with it. This system of forcing had its disadvantage. It was said that the doctor had over-done it in the case of one boy named Toots, who had completed the course, and that when he began to have whiskers he left