CONTINUING our attention to the subject which affords our title, we come more and more to realize the importance of setting before children examples of good form and color. We recognize that we should preserve unformed minds and undeveloped senses from the contact of the vicious in art as well as from the vicious in morals; raising before them ideals of the beautiful and the true, to the end that they may ignore and despise the ugly and the evil.

It would seem further that the same methods should be pursued in building character and in educating the aesthetic faculties: that the object in each case, should be to surround children with good influences; at the same time, to develop their judgment by careful training and explanations; by indicating to them qualities to be admired and errors to be avoided; by proving to them the value of certain objects and results, and the consequent worthlessness of their opposites.

The force of good example and influences is recognized almost to the point of a cult in the moral world. It is no less just that it should be acknowledged in the world of art. But there, it is, as yet, for the most part, honored only tacitly, even ignorantly; since we constantly find the results of such example and influences treated as the outcome of some fortunate chance or miracle. To illustrate this point we might say that a child who, in the public schools, shows a high sense of honor, who is refined in manner, or correct in his use of English, is remarked at once as one who has enjoyed cultural advantages in his home; while the child who displays taste and accuracy in drawing, is too liable to be regarded as a sporadic case of talent. But were the latter instance judged with the same insight and logic as the former, distinct and continuous influences would be recognized as the sources of the happy result. The artistic ability of the child in question need not have been fostered in an atmosphere of luxury. His parents may be poor people, or, at least, persons whose lives and necessities have given them small opportunity for acquiring a knowledge of art in its accepted sense. But investigation will show some strain of family or racial blood, some tradition of order, cleanliness, and appreciation of beauty to be the underlying cause of the child's development.
ture does not proceed by leaps, but rather by slow and even steps, whose traces are as discernible in the immaterial, as in the physical world, where they are imprinted in stone, the most imperishable of substances. The son of a gardener or of a joiner, the daughter of an expert laundress, may inherit ability, which on new surroundings, is translated into a new form of expression; for the school can do nothing but make active powers which already exist in the latent state.

It is evident that the closest relations should exist between the home and the school, the one supporting and supplementing the ac-

tion of the other. But such a condition is far from prevailing, and can only be regarded as a distant ideal, toward which to direct our course. Still, the ideal is more than worthy of the attempt, and, although it be elusive at times, it always remains concrete and well-defined. To-day, the average school room is far from being the place of beauty that it should and can be made; while the home, in too many cases, is but a whirling eddy of opposing currents of life, too confused, too unstable to serve as a place of development. Trained educators there must be in the schools, who have made a comparative study of systems, and are in position to recognize and to employ the

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best. But these educators must be aided by the parents and elders of the children: persons who, although without great technical knowledge, more than compensate this lack by their interest and sympathy; who, so to speak, prepare for the educators the crude mental material which they are to shape into usefulness. And in both preparation and shaping much respect should be had for the material; no quality of it should be perverted, and no portion wasted, or lost. Enthusiasm should govern the work, and the system be made sufficiently elastic to fit individual children, whose faculties now, without the visible fault of any one concerned, sometimes are cramped, or again are strained to fit the merciless rack of a plan adapted to average cases. The more prosaic and positive studies must not be disturbed from the important place which they occupy in the school course, but room must also be made for art, as the most powerful means of beautifying life; as the means also of largely assuring the happiness of the men and women of to-morrow. But the most desirable results to be obtained from this study are not the ability to recognize the "historic styles," the authorship of a statue or picture, or even the power to copy by pencil, brush, or modeling-tool more or less well, or yet to make attempts in original work. The best of all is the power to feel, to judge, to take advantage of simple means; through this power, developed in the child, the poor home will become more cleanly, orderly and attractive, the middle-class home less ugly, and the luxurious home more simple and refined in its elegance. The appreciation of art is not shown, as a recent French writer has well remarked, by having a few pictures upon one's walls and a few bibelots upon one's chimney-piece. For often the presence of such objects testifies to the lack of taste of their owners; while the real love of art is displayed in the choice of the form, color, and arrangement of the objects devoted to the daily uses of life. The eye insistently demands aesthetic gratification; so the trained and experienced must select that gratification for the untrained and the undeveloped. Vigilant care constantly exercised by parents and primary educators over their charges, can not fail to produce important results, growing out of what would seem to be trivial precautions. Instances of successes so obtained might be adduced in great number, if space allowed, but one case in point may be mentioned as a typical example. This occurs in a municipal ordinance of Florence, Italy, which provides for the preservation and
the education of the musical sense of the people by subjecting all instruments to be played in the streets to a rigorous test of pitch. Such an illustration goes to prove that the success of an enterprise or object is furthered by carefully watching over that which is ordinary and of frequent occurrence; from this again the inference may be drawn that to attempt the extraordinary is not only to use means whose effectiveness is unassured, but it is also to bring those in whose behalf the measure is taken, in contact with the unfamiliar, and so to retard their progress. It can not be too strongly insisted that art for the child should consist in common things translated into pictorial terms; the essentials of the presentation being simplicity and correctness of principle. To offer to the child’s mind complexity of form is like placing before him an involved problem in mathematics, when he is barely capable of adding and subtracting. To set before his eye false drawing and badly combined color is to vitiate his perception of beauty, as surely as his musical sense would be debased, were he habitually to listen to instruments falsely pitched and discordant one with another.

To choose then expressions of art which shall at once gratify and develop the very young is a difficult task; since few masters have created from the child’s point of view, the same as comparatively few
writers have reached the child’s heart, and appealed simply and strongly enough to the developing imagination—that first of all faculties to be awakened: stating the essential only, and leaving the detail to be supplied by the young mind, which struggles for experience, as a fledgling bird tries its wings in the inspiring air of spring. That which is simple in lesson, story, or picture, leaves, as it were, space which the childish mind can animate with dream-people and fanciful circumstance, constantly changing to suit its changeful moods; while that which is complex discourages the child from the first, repels him, and denies play to his imagination.

The masters in art able successfully to portray children, have always been and are now much less numerous than the corresponding writers; most of the portrait-artists, justly celebrated for their “fair children,” having presented solely picturesque external charm; while a painter like Mlle. Breslau, capable of sounding the soul of the child, of recording its bitter griefs and its ecstatic happiness, arises scarcely once in a generation.

But these geniuses, although choosing children as their subjects, appeal to their equals in understanding and experience. They can, therefore, be understood as forming a larger class even than those who, from the child’s point of view, yet with a master’s power, deal with the things of art.

Among these distinguished few, the French painter and illustrator Boutet de Monvel, occupies a unique place, which, it may be said in passing, is not one of his own choosing; his desires always pointing him to a more ambitious field of labor. And yet the Biblical explanation of the nearness of heart and treasure was never clearer and truer than in his case. His sympathy with children has been lifelong, having been awakened in his early home, in which, as the eldest of an exceptionally large family, he was called upon to watch and tend, to direct and arbitrate. It is said that no irritable baby ever refused to be soothed by him, and no older child ever denied his power to attract and amuse. He thus unites qualifications which come from the heart and can never be supplied by the intellect, to a high degree of technical skill, accompanied by that peculiarly French gift of “style,” which the rest of the world envies. This last, perhaps, is a result of subtle penetration into the essence of things, a seizure of what is characteristic and individual, a subordination of all else to the
one vital and personal principle. At all events, this would seem to be true in the case of Boutet de Monvel, whether we form our judgment from the study of his works, or accept his own recorded testimony, which, as a piece of art criticism, valuable to educators and students, is worthy to be widely known. In explanation of his methods as an illustrator, he has written:

"Having at my disposition a means so limited (that of the pen), I have learned that there is one all-important element which we must seek in everything which we would reproduce, and which, for want of a more definite word, we may call the soul, the spirit, of the object represented. A rude stick, planted in the ground, has a particular character and interest of its own, and if we make of it a drawing which is commonplace, it is because we have failed to grasp its spirit. No other stick would have the character which belongs to this particular one, and that which is true of the rude stick, applies the more as we ascend the scale of creation. This is the lesson taught me by the necessity of expressing much with the encircling line of the pen, and everything is there. In comparison with this sense of individual character in anything which we try to represent, all else is unimportant."

Such clear statement of truth, expressed in the artistic language of line, forms no doubt largely the basis of the attraction residing for children in the art of Boutet de Monvel; since sincerity is always recognized by them and its opposite quickly detected. Little critics, in turning the pages of a picture-book illuminated in more senses than one by the designs of this master, feel that they are playing with real children: merry, mischievous, active and wilful—in all points like themselves. They see the spirit of childhood made visible in a few lines and touches, and they respond to it, as they would, were it manifested in actual life—in the street, the school, or the nursery—instead of being confined to the printed page. In the past, the child has been robbed of adequate representation in art, and it would now seem as if the French master and several of his contemporaries—among whom may be named the portrait artists, Sargent, Mlle. Breslau and Cecilia Beaux—had arisen to right a great share of the wrong. As we cast our glance over historic art and literature, we are surprised at the small part held in either by the child. Among the Greeks, with whom the idea of harmony reached a cult, child-life was simply an
imperfect stage of existence, in which the mind was immature and the body unsymmetrical. During the Middle Ages, the worship of a single Divine Child spread over the world, but in all His visible presentations to the people He was given maturity and sadness of countenance as a symbol of coming suffering. In the art of the Renascence the child was a winged genius, a type without individuality, an ornament, pure and simple, scarcely more important than the bird figuring in the arabesque, or the flower in the garland. Della Robbia indeed portrayed the bodies of children so truthfully that they appeared almost capable of walking, but this was the work of the skilled anatomist, comparable with that of a class of old Greek sculptors who rendered the human frame perfectly—bone, muscle and adipose—while they left the head without a mark of personality and equally well adapted to all statues of a single type. Perhaps Sir Joshua Reynolds may be noted as the first artist to seize and render the pathos of child-life; not as he expressed himself in "Penelope Boothby" and other portraits of children favored by fortune, but rather in his "Robinetta" and his "Strawberry Girl," who show the pinch of poverty and the
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want of love. Still, it remained for the age of kindergartners and sociologists, for the age of capital, with its sharp distinctions between working people and people of leisure, to understand, portray and appeal to the child.

Among such artists none has embraced with a more sweeping, sympathetic glance all sorts and conditions of children than Boutet de Monvel. In his portraits he renders to the life the imperiousness of the household pet; sometimes veiling the tyrannical quality with soft persuasiveness, as he does in the full-length portrait of the toddling daughter of Mme. Réjane, the actress, in which a gesture of the chubby hand is more eloquent and accurate than a whole volume of detailed description.

In his illustrations he is less cosmopolitan than in his portraits, and therefore consistent in his treatment; since it is said that racial characteristics tend to disappear in high life, while they persist with great tenacity among the people. The boys and girls of the illustrations are thoroughly French: the boys ranging through the entire scale of the gamin and the polisson; the girls showing in the very outlines of their figures something of that patient endurance and submission which characterize the humbler daughters of France. But, if in spirit they are thus national and consequently somewhat restricted, as drawings, they pass all limits of style and mannerism, standing as models of action and expression stripped of superfluity, showing the utmost economy of means and the maximum of effect. If we examine only the picture-books illustrated by the French artist, we shall regard him as a master of comedy and caricature; but if we pass on to the history of Jeanne d’Arc and the humble romance, “Xavière,” we shall find him to be master of that sweet and simple pathos of rural life to which the French alone have the key. His spirit is revealed in the dedication of his Jeanne d’Arc, when he writes:

“Open this book with reverence, my dear children, in honor of the lowly peasant girl who is her country’s patron saint, as well as its martyr. Her history will teach you that in order to conquer, you must have faith in the victory. Remember this in the day when your country shall have need of all your courage.”

Once again it can not be too strongly insisted that M. Boutet de Monvel unites in himself the qualities of heart, brain and hand necessary to produce the master; consequently, that his drawings are fit to
be offered to children as their daily artistic food. They can not fail to be instructed by his faultless line, by his delicacy of execution, his vigor and grace. They will be unconsciously inspired by his accuracy and ease; interested and charmed by his indication of a turn of a head or wrist, by the way the little figures stand on their feet, march or dance. Older critics will observe, in order to discuss, the delicate outlines filled in with flat tones of color, sometimes subdued and delicate, at others, gorgeous in wealth of strong primary tones, and applied with the precision and daring of a Japanese. But these fine points will not fail of their refining influence upon children, whose artistic sense, nourished and developed by such principles, will afterward reject the false and the complex, in favor of this simplicity which is so difficult to attain, because it approaches perfection. Nor will the lessons be lost, even if they are presented in black and white; since the French illustrator adjusts his scale of light and shade so delicately that the absence of color is scarcely felt.

In view of these qualities so admirably developed and so useful in an age when art is so necessary, we should be glad of the painful experiences described by M. Boutet de Monvel, when he writes:

"I went from publisher to publisher in search of orders for illustration, but in vain. I was thoroughly discouraged, when I received a 'Child's History of France' to illustrate. Afterward, came some work on a French edition of St. Nicholas. I had never before drawn or painted children, but I did then."

So, as in the majority of instances, the artistic success with which we are here concerned, grew out of pressing material needs; while certain exquisite qualities were developed under the requirements of mechanical reproduction, in allusion to which the artist again writes:

"I aimed at methods of drawing which should come out well when my pictures were printed. I advanced by a process of elimination and selection. I came to put in only what was necessary to give character."

In the pursuit thus described, accuracy of line, strength, and style were early possessed by the illustrator, if they were not his already at the beginning of his struggle. But the one point which long conquered him and still longer threatened his success, was his tendency to over-blacken his shadows, as was natural for a pupil of Carolus-Duran. Gradually, however, he freed himself from this, his great
fault, by the use of the light tones and the unaccented silhouettes demanded in the printed reproductions of his drawings.

At last, he stood apart, higher than any of his compatriots in a special field of work, interesting and fertile. Yet, with true human perversity, he was not content. His aspirations were those of a portrait painter and mural decorator, in both of which capacities he has attained distinction, particularly in the latter, through his scenes from the life of Jeanne d'Arc, painted on the walls of the church at Domrémy, the Norman village which was the birthplace of the virgin martyr. But it is always true that man proposes and God disposes. The mural paintings, sympathetically conceived, finely grouped and executed, the portraits of adults, remarkable for their grace and distinction, will not be M. Boutet de Monvel's highest claim to remembrance; since that resides in his incomparable rendering of children and child-life from the point of view of the subjects represented: work executed with a simplicity, gratifying alike to the ingenuous whom elaboration does not yet attract, and to the experienced who have rejected it as useless and insignificant.
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In the interest therefore of the art movement which would extend mural decoration to the school-room and the nursery, and for the reasons already advanced, a number of adaptations of the drawings of the French illustrator are here presented. As may be learned by comparison, four out of the five pictures are either only slightly changed from the originals, or are combinations of two drawings; while the remaining one is an original composition remotely suggested by a ship-frieze which occurs among the earlier drawings of the artist.

The first decoration, intended for the walls of a school-room, is a fine example of what may be called constructive design. It is literally built of lights and darks, and represents architecture as fully as if it were possessed of the three required dimensions. Its rhythm and balance resulting from a happy combination of the most simple elements, produce upon the eye an impression similar to that experienced by the ear at the sound of a rich, full musical chord. Its structural qualities should be explained to the children whose school-room walls it may decorate, as an example of the economical use of artistic means.

The second decorative scheme, equally appropriate to the home and the school, is intended as an elementary lesson in the development of the sailing vessel. Beginning at the right of the picture, one sees an outline model of the Viking boat, now preserved in the University of Christiania, Norway, and supposed to be similar to the one in which Leif Ericsson landed on the shores of New England, fully a thousand years ago. Its swelling keel, so made to increase the strength of the boat and its steadiness of motion, shows the beginnings of the yacht which, in its latest development, is seen at the end of the series, at the left of the door; the intervening vessels being the “Santa Maria” of Columbus, according to the model owned by the Spanish Government, and a merchant ship of the seventeenth century belonging to the Germanic marine guild, or Hansa. From these notes it will be seen that the forms employed are authentic, and, that in this case, truth lends its self easily to the picturesque.

The soldier-frieze, only slightly changed from the Boutet de Monvel drawing, differs from the latter principally in showing soldiers of various nationalities, instead of the original French figures. It proves that the humorous may reside in line alone, as may be
learned from the swinging rhythm of the feet, which needs no comment to excite the laughter of children.

The sheep frieze, designed for a girls' nursery, with its suggestion of quiet, and its elementary indications of different levels, will please the young occupants of the room, especially by its crude conventions of hill and valley, which are the same as they would adopt in their own drawings.

The illustration chosen to complete the series is one in which the simple outlines are softened by the attitudes and gestures common to musicians. By reason of this variety and undulating quality, it is fitted to serve in a child's bedroom, where it will invite that fixed attention which is conducive to rest and sleep.