

Church, School & Home

The Way of the Cross The practice of devoutly retracing the Via Dolorosa, the steep, rough way up which Christ carried His Cross to the top of Mount Calvary, is of great antiquity. It is probable that the Blessed Virgin and the Apostles frequently revisited the scenes of this sorrowful journey, thus establishing a custom which was imitated by the early Christians. The places along the way where the principal incidents of the journey occurred were marked by tradition, reverently cherished, and their sites transmitted to succeeding generations of the faithful.

Since then, millions of devout pilgrims have followed the bloodstained way up which Christ went to His crucifixion. After the Holy Land fell under the power of the infidels, and it became almost impossible for Christians to visit Jerusalem, the idea originated, of setting up paintings in the churches to commemorate the principal incidents of the Way of the Cross. In 1342, the Franciscans were made Custodians of the Holy Places. Having obtained the approval of the Holy See, they erected Stations in many of their churches to arouse greater interest in their new work. After this, the devotion spread rapidly, though it was not until 1731 that the number of stations was fixed at fourteen by a decree of Clement XII. Five years previously, the indulgences of the Stations had been extended to all the faithful.

The Way of the Cross has been richly indulged. It is impossible to give an exact list. However, those who make the stations gain, among others, all the indulgences granted to pilgrims who visit the Holy Places in person. No special prayers are prescribed; all that is required, is to go from station to station, pausing before each to think on the scene from the Passion, there represented, and at the end, to say some prayers for the intention of the Holy Father. A good practice is to say an Our Father and a Hail Mary before each station. It is not commonly known that the real stations are the wooden crosses placed over the statues or pictures. The scenes themselves are intended

only as helps to meditation. The side of the church on which the Stations should begin, is not prescribed, but is generally determined by the design of the pictures.

Lent is dedicated in a special manner to the memory of the Passion of our Saviour, and for that reason, the Church recommends the faithful to make the Stations frequently during the holy season. Many are unable to fast, or to attend daily Mass, but surely there are few who cannot spare the few minutes required for this devotion. Moreover, the Way of the Cross will teach those who practice it devoutly, the great secret, too often forgotten in this pleasure-mad age, the lesson Christ preached by word and example, that "There is no health of soul nor hope of eternal life, but in the Cross."

Child Development The notion is generally prevalent that the child's education does not begin until he enters school, and that it is rigidly confined to the work of the class room. This is false. Education is nothing else than development. Since the child's development begins at birth, his education begins at the same time. Those to whom the early care of the child is committed, must see that this development is properly directed. To discharge this obligation intelligently, some knowledge of a new born infant's endowments is necessary.

The question may be asked—What start has the child in life? What does he bring with him into the world? The answer to the question depends upon the angle from which we view it. In the way of ideas absolutely nothing. He has no capital for traffic. But, as a living organism, he must have some equipment when he begins, otherwise he will never get beyond the starting point. His mind, by its native energy, is self-active and without inner limitations. Its boundaries can be fixed only by its environment. It is possessed of capacities, abilities and powers, which are the principle cause of its own development. Evidently, in its natural constitution, it brings the requisite preparation for commerce with its environment.

Birth brings with it, for the infant, new physiological conditions, new surroundings; new opportunity for sensation; since now the child is placed in the presence of stimuli which are able to call forth responses. The mere fact that the conditions are favorable for production of sensation, shows that his education

has already begun. At this incipient stage the endowments of the child are merely potential. There is present indeed a number of reflex actions, but it goes without saying that the later reflexes are not there from the beginning. There are instinctive actions in the earliest stages, such as crying, and particularly sucking, all of which are essential to the life of the babe. The first activities are non-voluntary. During the first few weeks movement is more or less confined within the organism, and is occasioned not so much by external stimuli, but rather due to internal bodily conditions. Now all such actions, of whatever type they may be, serve very useful purposes. They aid the development of muscular control, help in the work of coordination of the nervous impulses and muscular changes, and enable the muscles to move in response to nervous stimuli. Thus during these preliminary stages, although we do not encounter such things as voluntary actions, nevertheless there is a development going on, insensible as it were, and in such a way as will later make voluntary actions possible.

Once the incipient period has been passed the child progresses very rapidly in the matter of speech. When walking has been mastered, facility in speaking waxes apace. In the third year, he is endowed with all the faculties of adulthood, and with the exercise of them, at least in an imperfect manner. He cannot be called a small man, either from the organic or from the material point of view. But he will become a man, that is, there is potentially in him that which will manifest themselves later on in life.

In other words the child is not born educated. His whole mental content is made by education—by the education he receives, and the education he gives himself by personal experience. His start in life is meager, nevertheless, the talents, of which he gives evidence in adult life, were inborn. They were in embryo, to be developed in due course, and under natural conditions of a healthy environment. Social inheritance and environment largely figure in character development. But whether education bestows power, or merely gives freer and more varied action to original endowments, is a question of words. At least it brings the faculties into play and provides the conditions for self-activity, and this is the keynote of all development.

The Sure Refuge There are few who do not suffer from the disarrangement of daily life, and whose minds are not unsettled when thrown among the general run of mankind, and out of the habits of regularity. The minds of those so withdrawn from the eye of those who know them, or from the scrutiny of public opinion, are commonly left a prey to their enemies, until the proper adjustment can take place. This is especially true of youth who, for no matter what necessity, must leave the protection and guidance that home supplies.

The natural place for youth is in the home, and they are forlorn and sad when torn from it. They have then left the sure refuge of helpless childhood, that pines away and is famished when not sustained by others. Not yet knowing how to cope with temptation, they abandon the providential shelter of weakness and inexperience. Their backs are turned on the God-given school of training and individual trial, that alone can teach them the important but simple lessons of life. The anchor is weighed, and they begin to drift from the shrine of their best affections. The birth-place of their fondest recollections, a stay for the world weary mind and soul to the end, now becomes but a memory—or a hope.

When the young must leave the parental roof, whether the reason of their going be educational or economic, that they should find a home away from home is of the utmost importance.