

1900

Shop Windows: An Address Delivered Before Mother's Department of the Chicago Kindergarten College

Elizabeth Harrison

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.nl.edu/harrison-writings>

Part of the [Pre-Elementary, Early Childhood, Kindergarten Teacher Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Harrison, Elizabeth, "Shop Windows: An Address Delivered Before Mother's Department of the Chicago Kindergarten College" (1900). *Elizabeth Harrison's Writings*. 19.
<https://digitalcommons.nl.edu/harrison-writings/19>

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Archives and Special Collections at Digital Commons@NLU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Elizabeth Harrison's Writings by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons@NLU. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@nl.edu.

SHOP WINDOWS

ADDRESS DELIVERED BY
MISS ELIZABETH HARRISON

BEFORE MOTHERS' DEPARTMENT
OF THE CHICAGO KINDERGARTEN COLLEGE
DECEMBER 12, 1900



CHICAGO KINDERGARTEN COLLEGE
10 VAN BUREN STREET

The Lakeside Press
R. R. DONNELLEY & SONS COMPANY
CHICAGO

SHOP WINDOWS.

“Having eyes to see, ye see not ; having ears to hear, ye hear not.” There is perhaps no saying of the Master which shows deeper insight into human needs than these words. There is an *outer* and an *inner* eye, an *outer* and an *inner* ear, an *outer* and an *inner* life, and it is the lack of consciousness of this *inner* life which shows itself upon the vacant, tired and miserable faces which we see so often upon the street or in the street cars ; faces which tell of hungry hearts and souls, more pitiful to him who discerns their real meaning than any deformity of body or disease of organs can be, for life is rich or poor according as this *inner* world is full or empty. Half the people of the world pass through life without knowing what is the matter with them, blind to great opportunities, deaf to deep relationships, unconscious of the wonderful revelations which are unfolding about them every day.

I remember one summer spending two weeks in Dresden for the sake of studying the Dresden gallery. Day after day I stood before the Sistine Madonna and drank in her beauty, her courage, her love, her fearless trust ; day after day I turned

from that to the marvelous "Holy Night" of Correggio, and stood in hushed reverence before its mystery; day after day I yearned in sympathy for the great work which the mother-hearts of the world are called upon to perform as I looked into the face of the Holbein Madonna. The hours were too short, the days too limited for the riches and inspiration which came pouring upon me. While hurrying through one of the outer rooms one morning, I chanced to meet a Chicago acquaintance, a man who had accumulated a fortune at home. A look of relief came upon his face when he recognized me, and after the usual greeting of acquaintances, exchange of hotel addresses, et cetera, he said, "Isn't it a bore to have to go through these picture galleries; don't you get awfully tired of them?" Then added, "I suppose we all have to do it, but it is stupid work; the finest thing I have seen in Dresden is the former king's carriage; it is gold leather, lined with brocaded satin, and the harness is inlaid with jeweled glass; it's fine, you ought to see it!" He little knew that he was telling me of the pitiful fact that he had allowed the call of the outer world to so engross him that he could not hear the inner voice of things. He had looked so long upon the outside of life that the eyes of his inner self were blinded like those of the fish in the Mammoth Cave, having lost their power to see by not being exercised for seeing. What did his bank account amount to with the starved and hungry soul within him restless and craving light?

On the other hand, I spent two weeks one summer at one of our Wisconsin lakes with a family of seven other persons, a mother and her three children and three young lady boarders. The entire sum for their week's expense was \$20. Eight people living upon \$20 a week! Yet I have rarely ever in my life spent two richer, more enjoyable or more profitable weeks. We were up in the morning with the early dawn, taking a hurried cup of coffee, and then a long tramp through the woods, around the lakeshore, or perchance a row across the lake to catch the sunrise, coming home with a boatful of pond-lilies, always with our arms full of some manifestation of nature's beauty with which to decorate for the day the tumble-down old house which gave us shelter. Later on during the day there was reading from some inspiring book under the shade of a huge oak tree; then came the frolic of dinner-getting; afternoon sketching in the open air, and of practice of some music for the evening concert (one of the young ladies played upon the violin and another upon the piano; though having to leave many comforts behind, they had both instruments with them). After a quiet, simple supper, oftentimes of merely bread and milk or porridge, plenty of it, but easily prepared, then came an hour out upon the starlit porch with games, conundrums and funny stories, or the recapitulation of the day's experiences. Sometimes when the evenings were spent indoors, tableaux or charades were worked up for our own amusement; our last hour

together was given to music, and always ended with the gentle evening hymn, "Abide with me, O Lord, fast fall the evening shades." There was no effort, no set plan, no straining and striving for effect, but simply the generous, joyous pouring forth of lives that were rich within.

Let me again illustrate my points by giving the experience of a school-teacher friend of mine. She had occasion to purchase a ready-made pedestrian skirt, and the selection had to be made after school hours; as she was going into the store she almost ran into a customer who was leaving, owing to the fact that she was so intent upon the planning of the next day's lesson, having succeeded in lifting her class to a point beyond what she had anticipated; the joy of the conquest was still upon her when she turned to the saleswoman who was waiting on her and explained that she had a long street car ride each day in all kinds of weather and wanted a very durable skirt. "Are you a teacher?" asked the saleswoman. She replied "Yes." Then in a tone of deepest commiseration the woman said, "How I pity you! What a hard, thankless lot a teacher's is!" Having eyes to see with, she saw not the glory, the opportunity, the satisfaction, and inspiration which comes to the true teacher.

Will I weary you if I give you one more illustration of the need of seeing into things? At the time of the World's Fair, when all Chicago was lifted to its highest by that marvelous revelation of what art means, I met a chance acquaint-

ance to whom I put the accustomed question, "How are you enjoying the Fair?" "Oh," she replied, "I have only been there twice." When I uttered an exclamation of astonishment, she added by way of explanation, "Oh, it is all right for people who do not live in the city, but for us who can go at any time to Marshall Field's it does not really matter much. We can get about the same things there." *Get, get, get!* that was her trouble; all wealth meant to her merely more getting; she had not yet learned the great lesson of joyful participation in the beauty of nature or of art, without any thought or hope of personal getting. Having eyes to see with, she saw only the outer, objective side of things, not their deep, inner meaning.

So our shop windows may be to us merely spots where merchants exhibit their merchandise, which they hope we will purchase, or they may be great illumined volumes filled with illustrations of the processes of the industrial world and the world of art. In them are to be found whole chapters on anthropology, evolution, sociology, morals, ethics and poetry, illustrated true to life. Which shall they be to you and your children?

Let us take a stroll down one of our busy thoroughfares and see if we can contemplate with our inner eyes these marvelous manifestations of the meaning of modern civilization. Man's conquests over matter, time and space are all told in these illumined pages of industry. Look at these inventions which our store windows display! Here are

the steps of transition made by puny man from his condition as helpless savage fleeing from the wild beasts, battered by the storm, swept away by the floods, or starved by the drought, on up to man as the mighty master of Nature, subjugating the animals to his use by these weapons, traps and fowling-pieces, subduing and domesticating them as proclaimed by these harnesses and domiciles for animal life, transfiguring and using them as symbols as hinted to us by these statues and pictures.

In hammer and tongs, chisel and plane, we read the record of his conquest over the forests, of his building for himself habitations which defy the heat and the cold, the wind and the rain. Yonder window filled with stoves tells us of his mighty conquest over that all-devouring, all-destroying element of fire.

One of these days I am going to write a fairy tale of man's conquest over the genii of the earth; first of all he is to meet and fight a huge giant clothed in flaming reds and oranges and yellows, with a smoke-colored cloud encircling his head like a turban; and possessing power to dart forth a tongue from any part of his body, a stinging, burning, malicious tongue which can wipe out of existence man's home almost in the twinkling of an eye or can lick up within a few hours huge forests which have been a hundred years in their growth. This gorgeously arrayed giant, could he seize man himself, would hold him to his breast for a brief moment and then drop him to the earth

a charred cinder. Then I will tell of all the courage and intelligence that it took for puny man to conquer this mighty fiend; then shall come the subjugation of the fiery giant, and of his being chained to the spots where man wishes to keep him; how man puts him into his house to cook his food and to warm his family; how he puts him into his field to burn up the stubbles for him; how he forces this giant clothed in fiery tongues to take hold of other huge giants and master them for him. Then shall come the struggle between the fire-giant and the giant of iron—a great clumsy creature clothed in dull blacks and grays, who crushes everybody who comes near him, who stands defiant and indomitable until encircled by the arms of the fire-giant; then how he melts into flowing liquid and assumes any shape that the hand of man may dictate. Even the dirty earth-giant, who runs away every time the flood comes, or who lifts himself up into the air in fretful protest that the wind whirls over him, stinging the eyes of men and filling their mouths with his own substance—even so unstable a giant as this shall be conquered by the fire-fiend and made into building material by means of which man can make for himself buildings which shall rise majestically ten, fifteen, twenty stories up into God's sunshine and air! Then the story will go on to tell how the great giant of iron bent himself into plow-shares and pruning-hooks, and the sullen giant of earth was made to bring forth food when and where man chose, and in abundance for his needs,

and so on and so on. All these giants in their conquered and domesticated forms are shown in our shop windows if we will but see through the tools and instruments displayed to the process that made them; back of the process to the mind that conceived the process. Then these shop windows will bring their silent but most significant message to us of how the spirit of man has transcended the mightiest forces of the natural world!

Do not the furs and blankets speak of his conquest over cold? The umbrellas and electric fans of his conquest over heat? The mosquito-nets and wire screens of his conquest over the pests of insect life? The plumber's tools tell us of his victory over the poison of sewage, and the bringing of pure water from a distance. Candlesticks, lamps and electric light globes tell us of his destruction of darkness. Here, too, we find drugs for ailments, ointment for bruises, bandages for dislocations or broken limbs; even ear trumpets, spectacles and crutches are here to tell us of the reinforcing of the declining bodily powers of man by the ingenuity of his mind.

Of what do the grocery stores tell us? Is it not how man has said to nature, "I will not be dependent upon you and be deprived of my food at the end of a dry summer, I will be master of your seasons!" So he has conquered and confined the daintiest products in prisons of glass and tin and ice, and now he enjoys all the year round the vegetables of the spring, the fruits of the summer, the nuts and grains of the autumn. The beautiful

art-lock of iron which we see to-day is simply an evolution from the stick and leathern strap of the olden time; the idea has been elaborated, that is all. These are but a few of the conquests of mind over matter as pictured by our shop windows. Some go so far as to furnish us with the steps of the process all in one window, *i. e.*, the wood out of which pianos are made, the wires, felt, the skeleton of the work and the full melodious instrument.

One of the interesting things in this study of man's evolution as given to us by our shop windows is, that the *eternal verities* of the past remain. The follies which are there displayed are those of to-day. Those which embodied the caprice or wrath of man in the past, such as powdered wigs, curved, semi-circular toes to shoes, poisoned arrows, instruments of inquisition, et cetera, have all died their natural death. They may be found in museums or curio collections, but they are not to be seen in our shop windows of to-day, whereas every desire to give to the world a valuable invention or contrivance, every noble expression, by the means of marble or pigment, every true thought, has been handed down, either preserved as given or enlarged and amplified. Time winnows the chaff from the shop windows. There was once an era when the puny life of man was short and all of his influence ended with him, but now he says, "That will not do; I am immortal, and I want all that is of value, all that is immortal

in the past." What has he done? Over there on State Street you will see books which bring to us the thoughts of Plato, Aristotle, Homer, Dante, and countless others; you will see the reproductions of great painters and sculptors, brought down and preserved for us; for that matter, we may go farther back into the past, as it is told us by the Assyrian and Babylonian tiles; all the works of the great musicians are ours; the great handwriting of the ages is saying, "Man has transcended time; man shall make himself immortal!"

Then, too, we see in these poems of commerce the record of man transcending space. Once man could only go as far as he could walk, touch only what he could reach, see only as far as his eyesight permitted. But the spirit of man said, "I must go beyond that; am I not the master of the world?" So we have displayed for us in these shop windows traveling satchels, valises, trunks, vehicles and all the paraphernalia of transportation telling us of the speed with which this wonderful "wishing carpet," upon which man seats himself, can carry him to the uttermost parts of the earth. The old tale tells us that all the Mohammeden caliphs who possessed the wishing carpet had to do was to sit down on it cross-legged and it rose through the air, carrying them where they wished. We have not yet reached the full realization of that vision of the Orient, but our genii of iron has laid us smooth passageways across the prairie and the desert, and we seat ourselves in comfortable chairs, when, presto! twenty-four hours, and

we have left the bleak ice and snow of the Chicago winter and find ourselves in the genial climate of Arkansas, basking in its springlike sunshine. Or, perchance, by throwing a few more hours into the magic wishing carpet we are in the midst of the orange groves and summer heat of Southern California. All this and more the shop windows tell us. Would the merchantmen fill them with means of transportation if man did not demand it? Again, in another form, we have this same mighty conquest over space illustrated for us; the coffees of Java, the teas of Ceylon, the spices of India, the cocoanuts of Africa, the dates of Arabia, the olives of Greece, the figs of Spain, all proclaim his triumph. The furs of Alaska, the leathern jackets of Siberia, the wool of Russia, the plaids of Scotland, tell the same story. Stand in front of any large shop windows and you may count a dozen different parts of the globe which have contributed to this triumphant song of conquest over space.

More than this, they are telling us also of that deeper spiritual conquest whereby man is learning the brotherhood of the race. The swarthy Ethiopian gathering his cocoanuts knows that there are other men somewhere who will receive them. If there is a famine in India, our spice markets register the same for us. Commerce is telling not only of man's mental conquest over the face of the earth, but also of that slow, but mighty banding together of the human race, made all in the image of the one God. This is verified as

we stop in front of a window filled with stationery and writing materials; not only do we depend upon each other for our food, clothing and shelter, but the exchanges of thought, of sympathy, of love, and of consolation, are poured forth upon the sheets of paper folded into the concealing envelope and sent to our loved ones with perfect safety, by that all-unifying institution, devised by man, commonly called the postoffice. When we realize how much safety and security are granted by our postal system, how, if necessary, the whole United States army can be called out to defend and transmit any message of yours and mine, we look upon the postoffice building almost as a temple, if not for the worship of God, for the glorification of man's ethical consciousness of his kinship to his brother. All this is hinted by the stationery window.

Even as they tell of our human needs and uses do these shop windows tell us of our power to transcend out of space, when on a starlit evening you pass a man on the street corner calling out that for ten cents you can get a view of the moon or of Jupiter; is that all he and his instrument are saying? Is he not calling once more to come and see the powerful genii which we have captured which enables the weak human eye to transcend space and go into the farthest part of the solar system and ascertain what there is there to be found for man to conquer? Pass by an optician's window and what are those microscopes and lenses saying? Such an one can be bought

for \$1.50? Such another for \$7.50? Another for \$65? Or \$100? *Is that all?* No. They are telling us that the mind of man has taken the sands of the seashore and compelled them to yield up to him their inner secrets, until he could pierce to the center of the crystal world, or to analyze for him the heart of the tiniest flower, to give to him the marvelous geometric structure and indescribable beauty of coloring which the minutest air-pore of the leaf has concealed beneath its shining green surface.

Not only do we see evidences of man's conquest over nature, but we are led to look for and to find whole volumes on the deeper relationships of man to man in these same shop windows. They are the poor man's university. You say to me, "If I could travel I would know the world; if I were educated I could understand my fellowmen, but, alas, I am confined to my home, my school-room, my desk, my counter; I have no opportunity for study." Whereas these wonderful shop windows bring not only the material world to us, but subject-matter also for the deepest studies in sociology and ethics; more real culture may be derived from the right use of our city shop windows than from any week of opera, theater or lecture course. The business manager of one of our large dry goods stores once told me that the window-dressers pondered each week their displays as much as did any manager his coming opera. This I have been led to verify many a time. A good illustration of the sermon which a shop win-

dow display may preach was to be seen at the time of the G. A. R. encampment in Chicago; most of the shop windows were gorgeous in red, white and blue bunting, with various arrangements of our nation's flag, guns, cannon, soldiers and sailors, all speaking in their silent way of the triumph of war, until unconsciously I found myself keeping time with the multitude to the tramp, tramp, tramp of the soldier's march; suddenly my attention was arrested by one window different from the rest. The background was a cool, soft green; in the middle of the window stood the tall, stately form of an angel, clothed in white, with the spread wings gently drooping in the attitude of protecting love; beneath her feet was a cannon overgrown with ivy; at its side sat a little child apparently playing with a rusty cannon-ball as with a toy; gently flying through the air were arranged two or three white doves as if ready to spread the tranquil message of peace to the farthest ends of our land. The whole was so simple, so pure, and so tranquil, that I felt the din of war hush and heard the silent voice of conscience saying, "The triumphs of peace are greater than those of war; the heroes in life are mightier than those of the battle-field." There was no possible misunderstanding of the lesson taught, of the song sung by this window, "Peace on earth! Good will to men!" And many another comes with its message of man's social conditions and needs, though not always so beautifully portrayed as in this particular window.

The sociological problem is thrust upon us inevitably as we observe side by side the beautiful and ugly, the useful and the useless, the rare and the commonplace things, which tell us of traditions which still shackle mankind and womankind (as, for instance, the gun and the corset, and those which free him or her, the spyglass and the carpet-sweeper). Here we see the poor man's needs and the rich man's luxury, and a whole world of sociological study opens out before us as we see the useless, foolish extravagance on the one side, the pinch and poverty and lack of management on the other.

The degree of luxury to which any city has attained, as well as its standard of beauty, may be seen by its shop windows. In fact, the civilization of any era may be read by its shop windows as fully as by its historical statistics. It would indeed be an interesting study of social conditions could we have a stereopticon lecture illustrating the shop windows of a Siberian village, a Turkish capitol, a Parisian boulevard, and an American Broadway. We would see in them the gradual unfolding of man's wants and desires, increasing as his power to supply them increased.

These same windows give to us a psychological study of supply and demand. A few years ago I was asked by a friend to invest a certain sum of money in presents for her children. Wishing to do the most possible with the money, I made a tour of a number of our large Christmas displays of the toy departments. What do you suppose

were the gifts I found there displayed, ready for women purchasers to present to their fathers, husbands, sons, or lovers? Pipes, cigar holders, ash trays, and various other appointments of a smoker's outfit. On the other hand, with equal emphasis, was told the chief demand by womankind in the abundant supply of manicure and other toilet articles. Knowing the inevitable law that it is the demand which creates the supply, there is but one conclusion to be drawn, viz.: That women, when they wish to please men, give them gifts of self-indulgence, and men, when they desire to gratify women, give them gifts demanded by their vanity; and the great shadowy lesson stands out in the background, what do our boys most need in their training, what is the great lack in the education of our girls? Is it that our gifts should supply the demands of self-indulgence and vanity? Is it not more self-control for our sons and deeper aims and purposes in life for our daughters?

But to return to our subject. In this study of the shop windows we come across that other psychological truth, that supply sometimes creates demand. Let one of our dry goods store windows be filled with attractive-looking golf capes, and half the women who pass that store will come to the conclusion that they really need a golf cape, though they may have any number of jackets and coats hanging up at home. The sight of an attractive object is well known by dealers in merchandise to create a desire for the same.

Our fruit-venders make use of this law by projecting their wares out onto the sidewalk, thus appealing to the sense of touch and smell, as well as that of sight, to create a desire; and a pile of nuts or a box of sweets lying within our reach, almost touching us as we pass, will awaken stronger desires to possess them than if the plate-glass window stood between. I had grocers tell me once that although wire netting saved the pilfering of nuts, it also lessened the sale of them, the sense of touch adding to the sense of sight and smell in creating a desire for the same.

Again, we may study how well these merchants have read human nature when they display "only \$1.00, reduced from \$1.50," "selling for almost nothing." These words appeal, in the most subtle manner, to the public opinion, as it were, concerning the value of the bargain offered; although we know that they have been placed there by interested parties, they nevertheless have their effect. Merchants are as true, if not truer, students of humanity as are the scholars at their desk or the preacher in his pulpit. They know how to appeal not only to the appetite and vanity and public opinion, but to curiosity and to a desire to be with the majority, and also to suggest how attractive such and such a thing would look in your or my home or office. The book lies temptingly open in the window as if just ready to be read; two or three books stand in a row, suggesting to you how they would look on your

book-shelf. The skilled displayer lays the handsomely bound volume carelessly upon a table; it is only the clumsy window-dresser who piles books up as if they were so many bars of soap to be dried. The polished wood furniture has a piece of soft upholstery thrown carelessly over a chair or dressing-case to suggest the right environment of such articles. The hard coal stove has a lamp burning within, that the picture of a fire glowing in your own home may add its appeal to the other argument. A baby's cap and coat are placed upon a blue-eyed, rosy-cheeked manikin; and what mother among you does not whisper to herself, "My baby would look sweeter than that in such a cap and coat?" All sorts of suggestions of home life, of social functions, of business enterprise, are added in the arrangement of furniture, fans, gowns, tools, desks, et cetera. One loses half the poetry of life who cannot see beyond the mere articles displayed in their future environment, and the skilled window-dresser, like the true artist in other lines of life, lends us his skill that we may see the picture aright.

From the standpoint of ethics and law, think of what those frail plate-glass windows mean; how fragile they are, and yet they protect as much as would one half-hundred policemen. They are symbols of the ethical world in which we live. The majesty of the law is proclaimed by them.

An interesting illustration of the difference between the Oriental idea of the security and pro-

tection which law affords as contrasted with that of the Occidental came into my experience not very long ago. I chanced to be passing by one of those small shops containing Oriental goods, and, seeing some crystals in the window, I went in to inquire the price of them. A small almond-eyed Oriental, with a smooth, subtle voice and sinuous bend of body, came forward to answer my inquiries. In a few moments we were engaged in conversation concerning crystals in general and his very fine collection in particular. As my interest in the subject was unfolded, he became more friendly, and finally said, "You seem to have some knowledge of the subject of gems; would you like to see some rare specimens?" I, of course, replied that I would. Then, turning and giving a furtive look around the small shop as if to see that no robbers or brigands were present, he went to a small safe in the rear, and unlocking it with a stealthy motion, took from its recesses a little leather case, upon opening which there came to view the most magnificent amethyst that I had ever seen; its full, liquid, purple depths seemed to tell of that mystery of beauty which belongs peculiarly to the heart of deep gems. My exclamations of delight over it caused him to venture to produce another small leathern case containing a huge topaz, somewhat larger than the ordinary hen's egg. After I had admired the gems sufficiently, he again locked them up in his safe, and then coming near to me, said, in a low, secretive tone of voice, "There are not ten people

in the city of Chicago who know of these gems; I would not dare to let it be generally known that I possessed anything so valuable." After a few words of courteous appreciation of his kindness, I passed on down the street, and within two blocks came upon one of our large jewelry establishments, where, fearlessly displayed in the corner window, blazed a number of magnificent diamonds, worth, in all probability, ten, fifteen or twenty times that of the hidden gems of the Orient which I had just seen. The former merchant had been born and bred in the land of tyranny and despotism; the latter showed by his shop windows that he had breathed the air of freedom and knew the majesty and power of that ethical law of respect for property which becomes an unconscious part of each American child's training.

Let us turn now to the study of some of the means by which the thinking merchant attracts our attention to his shop windows. Activity is one of the chief elements of human consciousness, and therefore, by the law of inner and outer recognition, our attention is called soonest to moving objects. This is a psychological fact well known to students. The merchants have seized upon this, and our eyes are drawn instinctively to the lady's opera cloak or street garment upon the form that slowly and impressively revolves round and round upon its standard. Even an excess of motion is sometimes indulged in, when we pass windows where whirligigs are loudly and harshly calling

for our attention, but in reality distracting it from the objects they would exhibit.

Another psychological fact is used by the merchants in their various displays of scenes of humor. Near here there may be seen a wax image of a little boy stealing jam, and slowly turning his head around to see if his mother is approaching, then turning hurriedly and stuffing his jam-besmeared fingers into his mouth. We, with the rest of the passers-by, stand laughingly before it, the humor of the thing touching an in-born instinct, and the good nature produced by the laugh causes us to feel pleasantly inclined toward that store, and, unconsciously, if we are upon purchase bent, we enter the door standing invitingly open near at hand.

As the holiday season approaches, all sorts of humorous displays are made; sometimes burlesque, occasionally grotesque, and even coarse jokes are put forth in the shop windows, and are sure to draw their audiences.

The invention of electric light has almost revolutionized the decoration and adornment of shop windows, until now an evening walk down one of our business streets at Christmas time reminds one of the jeweled gardens in the story of Aladdin's lamp.

We shall not have time this morning to enter into much detail concerning the æsthetic use of color by our artists; gold or silver ware is placed in cases lined harmoniously with white, pale blue, pink or royal purple satin; dainty white goods

have corresponding backgrounds of pale greens, lavenders and buffs. Strong metal goods and solid furniture have drapings behind them of warm, rich coloring; even windows full of prosaic black umbrellas have dashes of attractive color, splashed upon them, as it were, by means of huge bows of scarlet or orange colored ribbon, giving exactly the high light needed to make the windows attractive. In fact, the use of color as indicating the class to whom the appeal is made can easily be verified by a walk through any one of our cross streets which lead from the avenues of wealth, refinement and culture to those districts where the concert hall is the principal amusement and the hand organ produces the highest form of musical enjoyment. Let us simply observe the millinery windows; they begin with the display of soft roses, made softer still by veils of lace or illusion; warm, rich, velvet hats trimmed with flowers and burnished gold, veritable poems of color; little by little the daintiness and the richness disappear, and plain matter-of-fact combinations in good and substantial colors take their place; farther along, harsh tones of red and purple and green begin to announce the coming discords; when we reach the unfortunate districts where saloons are allowed to place their temptations every third or fourth door, we see the misery, the squalor, and the human degradation shown by the glaring, flaunting, self-assertive colors displayed in the millinery windows, colors which fairly swear at and fight with each other,

the shopkeepers knowing, with a knowledge born of experience, what color will appeal to the inner condition of his purchaser. The pathos as well as the poetry of life is thus shown us by our shop windows.

Last, but not least, within shop windows lie volumes of morals, in fact a whole world of opportunity not only for strengthening the consciousness of the oneness of the human race, but for the disciplining of the moral will, without which discipline no life is of much use. None of us can buy all that the shop windows offer for sale, and but few of us can purchase all that attracts us in the shop windows. So necessarily there comes a choosing, "Shall I buy this thing and do without that?" Or, "Shall I take that thing and leave this untouched?" Thus in the simplest and most material way we see the beginning of that great character-forming activity, the process of selecting, which Emerson has so uniquely set forth in his poem of "The Days":

"Daughters of Time, the hypocritic Days
Muffled and dumb the barefoot dervishes,
And marching single in an endless file
Bring diadems and fagots in their hands;
To each they offer gifts after his will—
Bread, kingdoms, stars, and the sky that holds them all.

"I in my pleasant garden watched the pomp,
Forgot my morning wishes, hastily
Took a few herbs and apples, and the Day
Turned and departed silent. I, too late,
Under her, solemn filled, saw the scorn!"

It lies "not in our stars, but in ourselves," whether we shall end life with diadems upon our

heads or fagots in our hands! No one who has read Booker T. Washington's autobiography will ever say again that heredity or environment stand unconquerable before the self-activity of the human soul. There we see the man with the hoe slowly transforming himself into a prince among men, by his constant determined choosing of kingdom and stars rather than of herbs and apples.

We are forever choosing, and our choosing makes our living. I once knew a woman whose life was lived on so high a plane that she was able to say that she never had to make a sacrifice. "Because," she explained, "I always weigh up the two conflicting lines of conduct to see which is the higher, and surely to choose the higher is not a sacrifice." She had reached the insight into the true inner meaning of choice.

Froebel well expresses this deep inner significance of choosing, and the sweet, simple way in which it may be guided and developed in the little child, in those two songs in his "Mother-Play Book," entitled "The Toyman and the Maiden," and "The Toyman and the Boy." In Miss Blow's commentary* on the same, she says: "The mart of life has its claims and its lessons. When either a child or a man has become inwardly clear to himself, and has gained the mastery over himself, he may go to this mart with profit. There he will find hundreds of things to be set not only in physical, but in spiritual rela-

* The Mottoes and Commentaries of Froebel's Mother-Play. Mottoes by Henrietta R. Eliot. Commentaries by Susan E. Blow.

tions to himself and to others. In the needs of man, revealed by the products of man, he may behold human nature and human life reflected as in a mirror. Gazing into this mirror, he will learn to recognize his own genuine needs, and grow able to choose for himself both the things which are outwardly useful and those which will edify and gladden his soul. Frequenting thus the great mart of life, he wins from it a really pious joy.

“Such a joy the child is blindly seeking when he longs to go to the market and the shop. He feels its premonitory thrill as he gazes at the motley stalls of the one and the brilliant counters of the other.

“In the rich mart of life, each person may choose for himself beautiful and useful things. Special choices will be determined by age, sex, and vocation. The little girl, the maiden, the mother, the housewife, will desire things which serve and adorn the home, things which lighten the duties and augment the charm of family life. The boy, the youth, the man, the father, will wish to protect his home, and his choices will be influenced by this desire. The woman will prefer beautiful things; the man strong things. Blending in harmonious union, the strong and the beautiful produce the good.

“Understanding that they complement each other, man and woman are transfigured from external counterparts into a spiritual unity, and with their mutual recognition life becomes one, whole, complete.

“A prescient feeling of the inner in the outer drives the child to the market and the shop. He longs to look at life in a mirror, to find himself through looking, and to win from this rich experience the power and the means of embodying his own deep selfhood.

“Hence your child, if he be truly childlike, will not crave physical possession of all the things he sees. His heart’s desire will be fully satisfied by a doll or a cart, a whistle or a sheep, provided only that in and through his toys he finds and represents himself and his little world.”

Mrs. Eliot has translated the mottoes to these two songs into the following suggestive verses, which it would be well for every mother to ponder :

“The child, with prescience of life’s complex joys,
Looks with delight upon the shopman’s toys.
The mother, in whose heart these joys have smiled,
With present gladness looks upon her child.”

“The toyman spreads his wares with skillful hand,
While in the boy’s mind, all unbid, arise
Vague stirrings which he cannot understand—
Strange newborn yearnings towards life’s great em-
prise ;
Yearnings, which, wisely trained, will grow at length
To motive power, still strengthening with his strength.”

And thus we see how the shop windows may become veritable poems.



