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"On Educating Children in the Plastic Arts," Cecilia Beaux

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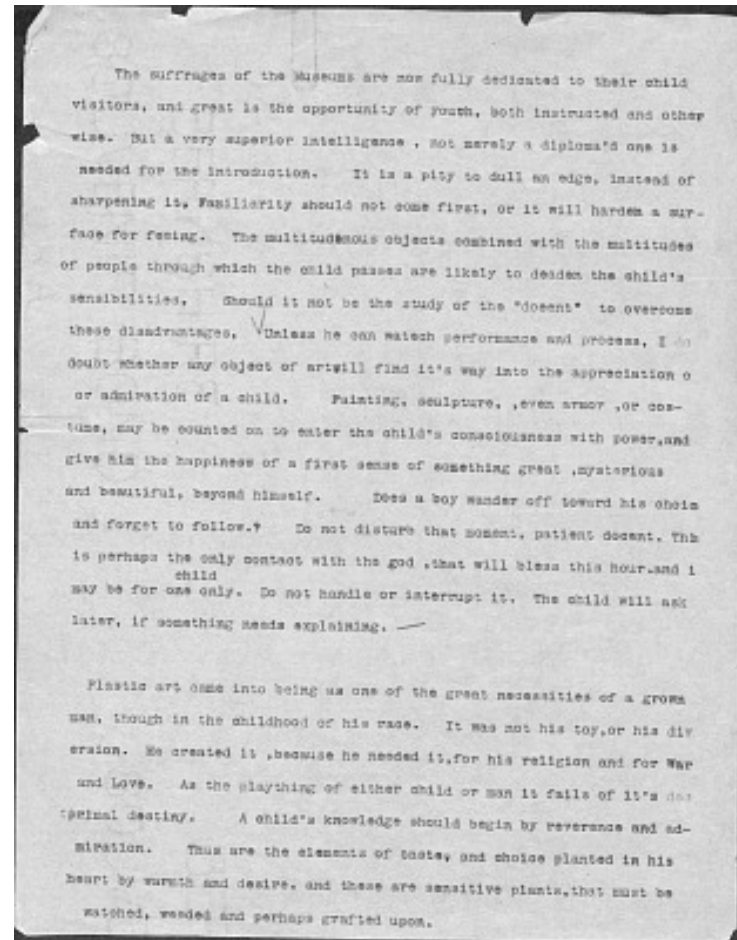
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The suffrages of the Museums are now fully dedicated to their child visitors, and great is the opportunity of youth, both instructed and other wise. But a very superior intelligence, not merely a diploma'd one is needed for the introduction. It is a pity to dull an edge, instead of sharpening it. Familiarity should not come first, or it will harden a surface for feeling. The multitudinous objects combined with the multitudes of people through which the child passes are likely to deaden the child's sensibilities. Should it not be the study of the "docent" to overcome these

disadvantages, ^[[Unless he can watch performance and process, I doubt whether any object of art will find its way into the appreciation or admiration of a child. Painting, sculpture, even armor, or costume, may be counted on to enter the child's consciousness with power, and give him the happiness of a first sense of something great, mysterious and beautiful, beyond himself. Does a boy wander off toward his choic and forget to follow.? Do not disturb that moment, patient docent. This is perhaps the only contact with the god, that will bless this hour, and i may be for one child only. Do not handle or interrupt it. The child will ask later, if something needs explaining. ^[-]]

Plastic art came into being as one of the great necessities of a grown man, though in the childhood of his race. It was not his toy, or his diversion. He created it, because he needed it, for his religion and for War and Love. As the plaything of either child or man it fails of it's primal destiny. A child's knowledge should begin by reverence and admiration. Thus are the elements of taste, and choice planted in his heart by warmth and desire, and these are sensitive plants, that must be watched, weeded and perhaps grafted upon.



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