

T H E S I S .

Subject, *Child-Study: What Can the Teacher
Do?*

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Much is being said in this age of educational and scientific advancement, in educational and scientific circles, about the subject of Child Study. Child-Study has a two-fold purpose. It adds value and interest to scientific research along the line of psychology or mind development. It also enables the teacher to better understand the nature and capability of the child whom she is called upon to teach. To have either end in view would be sufficient reason for pursuing a course in the line of this most interesting subject. But as we are most interested in its value to the teacher and how she may best study childhood we shall confine

our thoughts to this phase of the subject.

At first, Child-Study was confined to scientific circles, and it was not until within the last few years that it found its way into the ranks of the common teaching profession. Now no one is considered capable of teaching who is not somewhat acquainted with child-nature and who is not awake to the peculiarities and possibilities of the children entrusted to her care and guidance. The teacher who does not possess these qualifications is not capable of developing to the greatest possible extent the possibilities found latent in the

in the personalities of her pupils no matter what her other qualifications may be.

Many a child has been a martyr to the ignorance of his teacher who did not know what his individual needs were and how to provide for them. Many a boy or girl has been doomed to everlasting and irredeemable dullness on account of some physical defect which the teacher failed to notice and overcome. Some children have been kept in school at critical periods in life when a cessation of school work would have saved them from direful results which were a curse to them during life. If the teacher

it had been in proper relations with the children and parents these might have been avoided.

It is the duty of the teacher to be fully acquainted with every physical condition of the pupil in her care. She may make herself so by careful observation and tests of the child in his ordinary school work. She should also have the co-operation of the parents who will be able to give much valuable information along this line.

The child is a potentiality. He is made up of latent possibilities. Some of these must be cultivated and developed, others must be suppressed in order

to produce the highest possible type of man or woman. It therefore behooves everyone who assumes the responsibilities of the high calling of a teacher to study carefully the possibilities and peculiarities of the boys and girls entrusted to his care.

The child should be studied carefully in his relations to the school, his attitude towards his schoolmates, both in the school room and on the playground. The things to be noticed are his habits, his emotional nature, and temperament, his attitude toward your instruction and reproof, his ideas of right and wrong and their reward or punishment, his interests, likes and

dislikes, his ambitions and motives, his physical condition, and many other things which will suggest themselves to the wide-awake teacher as valuable to the end in view. If any inclination to dullness is noticed she should endeavor to determine the cause and remedy it. A note should be made of every observation and in a short time the teacher will have a valuable treatise on the individual nature of each child.

The teacher should also study the child in his home environment. This may be done by the teacher's placing herself in the proper relations with the parents and thus

securing valuable information concerning the child, & at the same time study and become better acquainted with the parents themselves. That parent does not exist who could not and would not give information that would be instrumental in aiding the teacher to better educate his child.

This line of Child-Study would be instrumental in bringing about a closer relation between the home and the school. Indeed it would be a God-send to education if it contained no other benefit than to establish the proper relation between parents and teachers, the home and the school.

The child and the wide-awake, interested teacher compose all the apparatus necessary to a systematic and practical study of the child. Much might be learned by the use of more elaborate methods and apparatus which would be valuable from a scientific standpoint, but it would not be practical with an ordinary teacher's work. The study may be conducted according to some outline, syllabus or methods best suited to the teacher's purpose and circumstances.

When the teacher is fully acquainted with the child and his possibilities she should arrange his his seating and pos-

ition in class and his work and her methods to suit his needs. But the teacher should guard against being led by the caprices of the child. She should direct his energies and caprices in proper channels so as to develop his possibilities to the greatest extent. The teacher should always have the child's welfare in mind in order to secure the desired results and should not devote time to the study of the child which should be used in enriching the child's mind.

In conclusion we would say that the teacher can place herself in proper relations with the child and the home and

by so doing learn a vast deal that will render her valuable aid in developing a human soul to its greatest possibilities. This is the noblest work which can be performed by human skill.

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