

THESIS.

Subject: *Interest*

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The term interest may be used in a wide sense as including the effect of impressions, generally in rousing the attention.

The term refers oftener to the rousing effect of an object through the medium of feeling. From this fact we may infer that when we are interested in a thing we are affected by it either pleasantly or painfully.

It is true, however, that in a certain sense we are more interested in those things which are connected with our particular sensibilities, tastes, and habits of thought.

For example, a devoted parent is especially interested in a highly moral deed of a son; a person having an ear for music is especially interested in a good tune, ^{and} a person with a fine aesthetic taste is especially interested in all works of art.

While, however, anything which touches us on the side of feeling, whether in a manner pleasurable or unpleasurable, is said to be interesting, in this interest usually refers particularly to the attractive force of pleasurable impressions.

This special reference to the term

interest as pleasurable points us
to the superior importance of volunt-
ary attention.

A thing which fully interests us
excites the will to an deliberate con-
centration of the power of attention
with a view to get rid of or avert
some pain.

The positive end of voluntary ac-
tion is pleasure or happiness, and
the term interest now points us to
those objects, related activities and
pursuits which are immediate en-
joyment or have a bearing on
these.

The importance of arousing

The interest of a class of children is so great that the results, obtained by the teacher who endeavors to make the performance of every task, more pleasurable than its omission, cannot be over estimated.

A goodly portion of our interest in things is connected with their intelligibility. This is especially true of our intellectual interests.

If we are familiar with the mechanism or mechanical movements, the motion of complicated machinery pleases the eye, or in other words presents an interesting scene, but, on the other hand a

dull scene if we do not appear familiar with the same.

We only see with interest and enjoyment what we are prepared to see by experience and knowledge of previous inspections. We are not interested in a hearing an unknown tongue; we are interested in a voice that is familiar to us.

Again, we are interested in a friend with whom we have not been permitted to converse for a long time; we are familiar with the sound of the voice and the manner of the person but we expect to hear at any moment some

thing that will delight us.

In every branch of study the pupil must have an interesting side turned toward him and every lesson he is made to recite must have its special degree of interest.

Some incident may be related and associated with every fact making the learning of it a rare pleasure.

We can only devote our undivided attention to one thing at a time profitably. We cannot listen to a sermon and a song at the same time and appreciate both we cannot write and talk easily at the same time because

we cannot possess enough of interest to be so aroused that sufficient attention may be given to two objects, without which we are incapable of accomplishing anything by way of comprehension. Hence, we may be surrounded by vast numbers of stimuli of equal interest and be regardless of the capability of any to survive.

Since we are easily drawn off by a new stimulus, or by the introduction of some novelty, the teacher should exercise a great deal of care in the presentation

of stimuli, such as may be needed to arouse the pupils to take an interest in the lesson, lest the interest be drawn from one thing to another before the former is fully comprehended by the pupil. For example, the ambitious pupil should not be introduced to an advanced subject or even a chapter or topic in advance until he shall have mastered all the preceding. The new stimulus may attract all his interest and he will continue to pass from page to page, from chapter to chapter.

and ultimately fail to understand the subject matter on account of being too hastily drawn away by a new stimulus.

We cannot resist turning toward a beautiful melody sung within our hearing. This arises from the interesting character of the stimulus — predominant stimulus — and it takes its place midway between the mind and the melody; it is a clear case of non-voluntary interest.

The will seems to introduce itself here and seems to show an

essential mental quality, but loses a portion of its positive force when we regard it only as that power which gives action to the mental operations.

This will cannot produce a calm and settled state of concentration. There must be some interesting phase back of this simple process of mental adjustment.

No teacher can compel a young mind to cordially embrace and appropriate by an act of concentration, an unsuitable and uninter-

esting subject

Therefore, attention is not removed from the sway of interest. Interest lying back of attention and concentration, and thus again lying back of perception, conception and thinking, is the underground work of the highest mental operation which may be performed. Interest in the affairs of life is the ground work or foundation of life's success.