

THESIS.

Subject: *Interest as a Factor in Education.*

Name: *W. F. Peairs.*

Education, when defined in its widest sense, is a general expression that comprehends all the influences which operate on the human being, stimulating his faculties to action, forming his habits, moulding his character, and making him what he is.

The term interest may be used in a broad sense as including the effect of impressions generally in rousing the attention. More usually the term refers to the rousing effect of an object through

the medium of feeling. While, however, anything which touches us on the side of feeling, whether pleasantly or unpleasantly, is said to be interesting, the term usually refers to the attractive force of pleasurable impressions. Most people are interested in their homes, business, country, and favorite art, these things are a source of pleasure to them.

Let us look at the teacher. In order that he may present his teaching in an interesting way he must be interested.

It is useless to expect children to love and push on in their work if the teacher does not give them the lead. Children, with fresh, young natures are powerfully affected by sympathy. Unconsciously they feel as the teacher feels. If they know that he is deeply interested, if they see and feel that he attaches great importance to their learning - that he loves his work, and is happy when they succeed and pained when they fail, in short - if they see that every day he has

his whole heart in the school life, the spirit becomes infectious, they catch the inspiration and are interested too. Such a teacher feels every morning that the work has grown more important than it was yesterday, that a new field is about to be opened which he only saw in the distance before, and for the working of which he must put forth the best that is in him. But as soon as one day is but a repetition of that preceding it, let him beware, there are breakers ahead.

There are many impractical men in the teachers' profession. No one can doubt the statement. The causes are not difficult to find. The profession has long been made the house of refuge for those who fail at every thing else; others seek it as a stepping stone to something more (?) honorable.

Considering the motives actuating many of the teachers, the only wonder is that they accomplish as much as they do. To succeed in teach-

ing there must be labor, skill, and interest. Yet how many teachers do not look upon the schoolroom as a glorious field. Some teachers see nothing attractive in the growth of mind, the glow of pleasure that lights up the countenance of a child as it grasps each new truth. They do not take sufficient interest in their work to behold the elements of future greatness in their pupils.

The parents are not interested in the success of the

schools, as they should be. In the employment of teachers, money influences them more than qualifications. What man would think of employing a novice to take care of his fire flooded stock, or train his choicest flowers? But they think nothing of employing a mere boy or girl, without any preparation to shape the character and destiny of their children! This lack of interest seems to drive some of the best teachers from the profession, for they

cannot compete with the unskilled when the sole criterion is money.

How is this state of things to be changed for the better? Public sentiment must be educated to take a deeper interest in education. Now in many places the people realize that where the interest of their children is concerned the best is the cheapest.

The first thing to be aimed at, then is to excite the pupil's interest. What are the facts which we remember?

Those in which we feel an interest. In considering a teacher's qualifications, the source of exciting interest in his school should not be overlooked. Some teachers may talk for an hour upon an interesting topic in the presence of children without commanding their attention. Bear in mind that interest and attention go hand in hand. Awaken the interest of the pupil, and you will arrest his attention. Continue the interest of a pupil, and you will hold his attention.

Then take another teacher, give him a common place subject, and he can secure for any length of time an all absorbing interest in every word, and thus, "It will be engraven on his mind as with a pen of iron and there it will remain unchanged and unchangeable forever."

We see then that a pupil, before he can throw energy into study, must find that study interesting in itself, or in its results.