

marily a psychologist's problem. He abstracts out from a total situation this one problem and pays well nigh exclusive attention to it.

But it is not so with the teacher. The teacher faces what I have called the broad problem of method. Consider a boy learning a poem. During the half hour that he spends on this poem he is learning many other things; for instance, more or less of how to memorize, how to attack his task; he is fixing in himself certain habits of study, perhaps of alertness, perhaps of the opposite; he is building more or less of an appreciation of the poem, either a like or a dislike, and similarly for literature itself and also for the teacher and the school; he is also building in himself the presence or absence of self-respect and confidence. The experience of studying a poem thus includes many more learnings.

Now these concomitant learnings are often more valuable than the thing directly sought. Moreover they are absolutely inevitable. A boy does learn, for good or ill, to like or dislike teacher, school, books, duty, and the teacher is responsible, as far as the teacher by taking thought can change the results. It is strange and a misfortune that we grade children and ordinarily promote them on knowing the poem which may be the least important of all learnings. So far as we are able to say, purposeful activity promises best to bring us these attendant learnings. From every point of view, then, the presence of purpose means the best of learning, whether we consider any item of learning taken separately, whether we consider any complex instance of learning, whether we consider all of the manifold learnings that accompany it. The purpose, in the degree that it is present, enlists the whole boy and means most in all the possible learnings. This broader problem of method is one that you and I as teachers must face and face squarely. On no other basis can we measure up to our duties and our possibilities.

Books are the legacies that a great genius leaves to mankind, which are delivered down from generation to generation. — JOSEPH ADDISON.

THE EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF THE HOME

A vision of the finer quality and enlarged quantity of mental accomplishments that might result from a helpful collaboration of parents and teachers in the training of the child

AS a result of economic and social conditions, the average American home plays a small role in the formal education of the children. They are sent to school as soon as they reach the required age and too frequently come under the tutelage of young and inexperienced teachers, who use the class-room as a means of livelihood to bridge the time between maidenhood and marriage.

Education naturally begins with the relation of parents to children. The human infant is physically and mentally the most helpless of all creatures and has in proportion thereto the longest period of infancy. Children are born with minds as a "tablet rassa,"—all of the knowledge of language, of science, of social customs, and even of ethics and morality must be acquired by the individual. The infant begins life in total ignorance, having only a potentiality for acquiring knowledge, and in some way that potentiality must be transformed into actuality. That is really the function of education—to harmoniously develop all the inherent powers of the individual to the end that he may become masterful in his environments and aid in the formation of a good character.

The home naturally becomes the source from which the infant first obtains his knowledge; and because of the long period of infancy, the pedagogical relations between parents and child are of vital importance. It is inevitably true that a child learns more of fundamental value in the first six years of life than in all subsequent years. The simple rudiments of living, the axiomatic truths of life, and the basis of morality, which are inculcated during these first years, will remain with the individual and shape his character for all his remaining years. The child regards the tenets of its own parents as infallible truths. What children learn in the

home thus comes to have an unchallenged authority over their thought and lives.

A REFORM IN EDUCATION

No greater reformation in education is possible than in re-establishing the custom of parental instruction. There is no reason why the average American family should not be made the most efficient and economical agency of elementary culture.

In previous times, when the home was the only source of primary education, the colleges and institutions of higher learning received students with intellects more keen, and reasoning faculties more alert, than they are now receiving from many of our public schools. Their sum total of facts perhaps was less, but their power of reasoning had become more developed. The ability to think and reason was paramount, and education was more a matter of quality than quantity.

The American people are spending millions of dollars every year for the instruction of children in certain practical vocations that should be learned in the home and with greater ease and proficiency than in the schools. Girls are being taught the rudiments of domestic science, while at home their mothers are cooking the family meals and replenishing the wardrobe. The school can not take into account the finances of the individual family, with the result that when the girl attempts to carry out her school instruction on a small family purse, she is disappointed. She does not know the economy and frugality as practiced by her mother, because her instructors have not taken these factors into account.

It is an anomalous state of affairs for boys to depend on technical instruction to acquire the elements of successful farming or kindred vocations. The average farmer does not possess the vast store of tools and implements in possession of an Agricultural School, with the result that he must depend upon his ingenuity to make one tool perform many tasks.

The farmer lad learns many things from practical experience which serve him in the hour of need. The small child making his own wagons and toy houses, occasionally supervised by his father, is acquiring a vast store of practical experience which can not be measured by days or months in college. He is learning to use a hot iron to make a

hole if he does not possess an auger, and an ax to smooth a board if he does not have a plane. His finished product may not be as smooth and neat as if he had a more elaborate supply of tools, but he has learned to think—to meet the problems of life and to solve them with the materials at hand.

INDIVIDUAL INSTRUCTION

The home in its relation to the training of children has fallen into a stultifying lethargy. It was once the custom of parents to give instruction in both secular and religious subjects; but many mothers have become so engrossed in social matters, and fathers so bent upon pleasure-seeking after the hours of labor, that little time is left for the children. Some parents, however, are doubtless inevitably intellectually incompetent to care for their children's education and of necessity must send them elsewhere to be taught; but that is no excuse for not taking an interest in the child's welfare.

If parents could be properly enlisted in the instruction of their children a new and intense bond of sympathy and mutual interest would be established. The estrangement which often exists between father and son would disappear; the parents would come to know the real needs of their children and become better able to aid them wisely in all things. They would become the worthy guides and leaders of their children's minds and in turn furnish them with more intimate, systematic, and effective instruction than is possible in any other way.

Parental instruction would make possible individual instruction, which is the ideal means of education. By this method, the individual mind is allowed to unfold and progress in a normal and natural way without undue stress or restraint. Under such instruction the mind of the child may dwell as long as necessary upon any given point until it is thoroughly mastered, and this is impossible in the group system of our public schools. Individual instruction in the home gives the child the right to advance normally and naturally, and this will ultimately result in better mental achievement. In the end the progress would be more rapid because of the thorough mastery of the antecedent steps and rudiments of any subject. A firm foundation would be builded before an additional superstructure was

placed thereupon. This makes possible far greater achievements by the individual than in any other way, for where confusion enters, there mental disaster begins. A thorough mastery of each step is the only assured way of mental progress. No mind has a right chance, except by moving forward naturally when fully prepared in the prerequisite stage of any given subject. In the schools, some pupils must be urged forward beyond their real ability or qualifications at the time and others held back from advancement in accordance with their normal possibilities.

THE JOY TO PARENTS

To parents who understand the real meaning of parenthood and are willing to accept its responsibilities, there should be no pleasanter task than to guide the gradual unfolding of the child's mind. Parents could spend many pleasant and profitable hours with the children if they could have a vision of the great work they were doing.

The parental supervision of children would also intensify the spiritual life of the family and thus make it a more ideal environment for the child. The intellectual improvement of the home is almost sure to result in moral improvement; and in nothing perhaps is our present system of education failing so greatly as in the moral outcome.

To train parents to become efficient teachers of their children is a herculean task, but with patience and persistence it could be accomplished. A long time might be required to attain the goal, but it certainly ought to be done unless we are to supinely admit that one of our most fundamental and potent agencies of education shall remain entirely neglected. If the helpful collaboration of parents with teachers could be secured under the present regime of things, many burdened teachers would be relieved from painful anxiety in relation to backward students. It would make possible a finer quality and enlarged quantity of mental accomplishments in the schools,—an end certainly greatly to be desired.

JOHN J. BIRCH

Beginning with September, 1924, the minimum professional training of teachers in secondary schools accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools will be 15 hours in education.

WHAT VIRGINIA HAS DONE FOR THE EDUCATION OF THE DEAF AND THE BLIND

VIRGINIA was one of the first states to take a step toward the education of the deaf and of the blind.

The first school for the deaf in America was established in the year 1812, at Cobbs, near Petersburg, Virginia, by Colonel William Bolling, a descendant of Pocahontas. Colonel Bolling had two deaf brothers and a deaf sister, who had been educated at Edinburg, Scotland, in the latter part of the eighteenth century. He also had two deaf children, one of whom was William Albert Bolling, who was born at Cobbs, February 21, 1799, and died in Goochland County, Virginia, October 30, 1884, and who was the first pupil of the first school (Cobbs) for deaf mutes in America.

In 1838, following an exhibition by pupils of the Massachusetts School, the General Assembly of Virginia passed an act providing for the establishment of an institution for the education of the deaf and of the blind of the State, and providing for the appointment of a Board of Visitors, charged with the erection of suitable buildings and the general government of the school, known as the Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind. The State has since provided for its maintenance and growth by regular appropriations.

A site for the school was selected in the eastern part of the City of Staunton and the first, or main building erected. Without waiting for the completion of this building, teachers were employed, and, in rented buildings, the joint schools were opened in November, 1839, with an enrollment of eighteen pupils, only five of whom arrived on the opening day. In the eighty-two years since its establishment approximately fourteen hundred children have been educated; about one-third of these were blind, it is estimated, and about two-thirds, deaf.

The school is situated in a grove of fine elms and oaks, and within five squares of the center of the business district of Staunton. The Valley of Virginia has long been noted for the beauty of its scenery, its delightful and invigorating climate, its good water and