

weeks of observation at school. Parents frequently judge of the natural fitness of their own children for the various callings in life very badly; and the assistance of the skilled teacher in deciding such matters would be of inestimable value.

By the skilled teacher I now mean the one who is an expert diagnostician of powers, and especially of natural leanings in which heredity plays so very prominent a part. How often is the college teacher, who regards the mistake in the choice of a profession or career as fatal, pained when dealing with certain of his students who plainly should be somewhere else.

Yet it is hard for him to tell a young man that he is out of place. This should all have been settled long ago.

In the course of some lectures on education, given at the Johns Hopkins University several years ago, Dr. Stanley Hall, the eminent psychologist, drew attention to what he called a "life book."

In this a record as impartial as possible of such sayings and doings of each child of a family from infancy to adolescence is recommended to be kept as may be a guide to real tendencies.

Teachers may widen their sphere of influence by making this recommendation according to discretion to at least some of the parents with whom they come in contact. Dr. Hall lays stress on recording the exact words of the child, and on stating everything with extreme accuracy and impartiality, as the fond parents are very apt to put a flattering interpretation on sayings and doings and fail to record the indications of weakness or evil.

It is interesting to paste in also the first letter, first story, first rode sketch, etc., indeed anything that will give a clue to the real nature of the child.

But, as before indicated, the teacher may discover in a visit to the home what may have escaped even the parents.

I know myself of a born artist having been discovered in the very depth of poverty by a physician who was making a professional call. That child has since developed into a distinguished man. Whether innate genius was sufficiently strong to have forced him through and above his environment apart from such early discovery and encouragement, I cannot say. At all events it would in all probability have been a case of devious ways, diverted energy and lost time, if not final, partial or complete failure but for this early recognition.

No doubt the difficulties in the way of meeting all the parents, in the case of a large class in the city school, are considerable, and it may not be feasible to visit all, though much is gained in more ways than one by ascertaining the home environment as well as the hereditaries of the pupils.

When once the teacher has made a somewhat complete and reliable estimate of the tendencies, good and bad, of any pupil and their relative strength, a large part of the problem of development is already solved.