

## THREE GREAT PROBLEMS.

BY JAMES M. GREENWOOD.

**I**N all ages of the world the child has ever been an object of the deepest solicitude, and the idea that it was not studied, its wants and its desires catalogued and commented upon, is to deny the very strongest precepts inculcated by the wise and thoughtful men and women of all ages. As an evidence of this fact, the Bible bears testimony of no uncertain kind, as the following quotations, picked up at random, show: "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child." Certainly the Apostle carried himself back into his child-life, and he was conscious of a continuous growth from that period in his existence to the time when he uttered the sentence here attributed to him.

Again, was not this query propounded nearly nineteen hundred years ago? "What manner of child shall he be?" Is not this the same question that trembles to-day on the lips of every mother in the civilized world? Although we are perhaps wiser than Solomon, yet he had studied child nature so thoroughly that he says: "He that spareth the rod hateth his son, but he that loveth him chastiseth him betimes." But it is needless to multiply quotations from the literature of ancient and modern times to establish a fact so well known.

My object is to call attention to a popular fallacy that is now palmed off by many writers and lecturers, who imagine that they have entered upon a field that had lain fallow through all the past. The child's life is only one segment of its life as a human being, and the assumption that there is nothing to be learned of human nature except from the study of the

child, is a proposition so at variance with experience, that it has only to be stated in order to expose its shallowness.

Out of all the mass of heterogeneous material that has been collected, and partly published, bearing upon Child Study, a few material facts of value to teachers are emerging into prominence. Only a small portion of the data yet given to the world, in one form or another, possesses any educational value, yet from the vast mass of accumulated experiments, some few very valuable results have been reached, which may be stated as follows:

1. The large vocabulary of spoken words possessed by the child at the age of six years. Instead of having only a hundred or two hundred words it can use, it may have from one to two thousand words, and it knows the meaning of a great many more words.

2. All hand and arm work of young children should exercise at first the larger muscles of the hands and arms instead of the smaller and more delicate muscles. This overturns a great deal of the finer kind of work done in the kindergarten school, as well as the small handwriting in the very lowest grades in the ward schools.

3. That systems of drawing based upon points and lines are not adapted to the wants or likes of children before the ninth or tenth year.

4. That the eyesight and hearing of children should be tested when they enter school, or at any subsequent period in their school life. Many supposed mental defects are purely physical.

5. A greater interest in the children themselves, and a keener insight