

in. We may well wish the schoolmaster strength to take a line of his own.

I believe that the problem is not an insoluble one after all. All that is essential can, I think, be got into something less than the customary time. But, to manage this, we have to begin gently, and to bring the boy over to our side; that means study of his nature, and adaptation of our methods to his strength and weaknesses.

I will not in this paper propose a single important change which has not been actually tried with good results. It would be pure waste of time to describe methods which have never been put into practice. Nor will I speak of methods which have never been tried on large classes and under school-conditions. Many of the suggestions here made are drawn from the settled practice of foreign schools, and are unfamiliar to English teachers merely because we have so little curiosity about what our neighbours are doing.

Suppose that at eight years of age the boy passes out of the preparatory school and begins book-learning. Take a good look at him before you start and notice his curly head, his "shining morning face," his restless hands and feet. I want you to realize that he is an absolute child still. He has curiosity and activity; he is quick to imitate grown-up people. But he has little perseverance; he cannot sit still long together; he cannot think continuously. Such a child must learn a little at a time. He must learn from spoken words rather than from printed books. He must have plenty of easy, varied, childish occupations, which exercise hand and foot and tongue. Don't forget that he has many things to do besides his lessons. He has to grow, to play, to prosecute a thousand private activities. His imagination is likely to be strong; his notions of accuracy and duty weak.

Watch him at his games. See how ready he is to combine and organize, how quick to imitate real life.

These qualities of the boy are your opportunities or your obstacles, according to the way in which you treat them. Try to screw him down to the Latin grammar. He will resist or evade you. If at last you carry your point, it will only be by weakening his natural force and treating him as a conquered enemy. Try to interest him in a piece of real and necessary work. He is willing but awkward and soon tires. He is good for little as yet—a colt, that will be ruined if you harness him to the cart before he is fit for it. If you are content to work him gently for a time, to begin with the things that he likes