

THE CHILD WHO IS TO BE TAUGHT.*

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IT is a difficult task to understand a boy or a girl; and it is strange indeed that so few people take any interest in it. When we bear in mind that geographies and grammars and arithmetics are all made for the child, and not the child for them, we ought to see and feel the necessity of studying the *child* as well as the *books*. For if we do not in some way grasp the relation of the text to the child's development, and know how its content is to enter into the inner build of his own living being, our mere machine-work will return unto us void, and our own time and that of the child be frittered away.

When the child first comes to school, his mind is not a blank. It has a vast amount of capital—material at hand already provided—that must be worked up from its natural base into conscious ethical significance in the formation of character. This work—this building from within—the child must do for himself. All that the teacher can do is to aid him; and how can he aid him except as he comes to know him, and lead him onward in the great work of realizing the capital which he has to start with, and put out on interest the talents which otherwise he may hide in a napkin and bury in the ground?

There are forces which enter into the life of the child from behind his own conscious existence, and which in various ways condition his physical, psychical, and spiritual growth. For these he is not responsible; but he is responsible for the use he makes of them.

Race is one of these broad antecedent forces, which manifests itself not only in bodily peculiarities, but in the deeper mysteries of mind and spirit. Psychically the Indian differs from the negro fully as much as he does physically; and it would be as vain to attempt to make the two alike metaphysically as physically.

Nationality is another broad force of kindred character. The peculiarities of the Frenchman, the German, the Spaniard, go deeper than the face or the language. These differences themselves depend upon a deeper characterization below them which finds utterance in these more outward forms. You all can feel at a glance the difference between the children of the Celt and the Teuton, and you are compelled to recognize it in your teaching.

Family is another force, less broad it is true, but equally significant. The child bears the marks of parent and grandparent, and the various members of one family have their common features that all can recognize.

Sex also enters into the structure of life, covering not only the physical but also the intellectual and æsthetic. I do not say that boys and girls should not be educated together, but their training must be different, if it is to be from within and not from without. Even in the family, where they are in most intimate communion, they rapidly segregate themselves, the boy riding a stick, while the girl nurses her doll. The inner play of phantasy at the very outset asserts itself differently, and they get farther apart as they go on, until soon, too soon perhaps, brother and sister are not so

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