

STUDY OF PSYCHO-GENESIS.

Psycho-genesis or the study of mind development presents historical relations analogous to those of the Darwinian movement. Twenty-five years ago it was the vogue to make extensive collections of specimens to illustrate the teachings of science; which collections, while they served to give adequate information of form-relations, had the disadvantage of being inert and lifeless.

Museums are still useful for elementary and introductory work, but the essential conditions for the advancement of science are the live products themselves, just as they occur in nature. Especially is this true of child-study, which, aside from mechanical devices, requires no other laboratory material than real boys and girls.

The old psychology concerned itself mainly with classifications which, while necessary for the sake of a working vocabulary, are no more the science of psychology, in its true sense than a kit of tools is the art for which the tools are used. Modern psychology seeks to know the genesis and pre-natal conditions of the mental faculties, and aims to trace the natural history of their evolution towards perfection. To distinguish it from the old abstract and metaphysical system, it has been called child-study, which is a branch of the greater science of biology.

Child-study depends for its advancement upon the co-operation of teacher and parent. It thus binds together in reciprocal relations the home, the school and the university; the first two as fields for the observing and collecting of facts, the last as a place for collating and interpreting them.

In France this work has passed beyond the experimental stage, and is incorporated as part of the natural educational system. There is for each district an experienced physician who keeps a health-book of every child; noting down in chronological succession every fact, physical and mental, that may have a bearing in developing its character and shaping its destiny. Parents keep also what is called the life-book, wherein are noted pre-natal influences, and also the hundreds of incidents in the early life of a child, that only a fond father or mother can take note of. This book is presented to the son or daughter on the marriage day. Nor can a more appropriate gift be imagined. In the character of the child is to be found the justification of the family discipline for its bringing up, and the child is thus enabled to profit both by the judicious measures and by the mistakes of its parents, when the time shall come for it to assume the duties of parenthood.

The literature of the earliest years of child-life is not very extensive as yet; but the material out of which to construct such a literature is coming to be enormous. Mr. Preyer's book is a careful record of one child—his own son—during childhood, and is divided into two parts, the physical development and the mental development. Mrs. Moore has given us a similar careful account of the psycho-genesis of her child. The near future is likely to be much more prolific in this branch of psychology.

The methods thus far named may be called the historical, since they proceed in chronological order. A new method—the group or topical method—is being followed in the child-study department of Clark University.

[From "A preliminary sketch of the history of child-study in America," by Sarah E. Wiltse, I cull following items not given by Dr. Hall, but in line with his lecture: In 1881 Dr. Hall printed the first comprehensive syllabus for the study of children, and has since been an active contributor to the

literature of child-study. Among his contributions, many of which have been published in other languages, are the following: "The study of children's lies." "The contents of children's minds." "Children's recollections." "The story of a sand pile," and "A study of fears." During 1894-5, he got out a series of fifteen syllabi, circulated them among the public schools, and received over twenty thousand answers thereto, which are being collated for publication. Here are the subjects: 1, anger; 2, dolls; 3, crying and laughing; 4, toys and playthings; 5, folklore among children; 6, early forms of vocal expression; 7, the early sense of self; 8, fears in childhood and youth; 9, some common traits and habits; 10, some common ambitions, nerve signs, etc.; 11, feelings for inanimate nature; 12, feeling for objects of animate nature; 13, children's appetites and foods; 14, affection and its opposite states in children; 15, moral and religious experiences.

There are perhaps a hundred questions in every syllabus, and then touch every side of child-life. In 1895 a new series was gotten out, and still another in 1896. The generalization to be made from so wide an area of facts cannot fail to be of intense interest to parents and teachers, and will, as Dr. Clark maintains, furnish a new and more scientific basis for a philosophy of education.]

No better way can be named of interesting men and women in the related subjects, childhood and parenthood, than the scientific methods now followed in the study of children. Interest them in the life of children, and you stimulate the instinct which leads to the fatherhood and motherhood. And education can do nothing better for the race than thus to stimulate the source of its perpetuation.

Not long ago I was traveling in a car in which a number of young lady graduates from a famous female college were returning to their homes. One of them remarked that she dreaded reaching her destination on account of having to live with so many little children. "I hate babies," was the response of her seat mate, whereupon the conversation became general. Judge of my astonishment to find that all shared the antipathy against small children.

Here was food for reflection. What can such creatures contribute to the well-being of mankind? Highly educated though they be, and cultured as the word goes, they will yet exert only a negative influence upon society. Their deadened instincts will act as a blight upon the life of the race. They probably will not bear children; but if they do the case is not much altered; for what good to the race can be expected of unwelcomed offspring. Tear down the female colleges, I say, whatever be its other merits, which uplifts a girl either in capability or in feeling for wifehood and motherhood! (Applause.)

New England today presents a widespread condition of abandoned farms and decadent families. It is extremely common to read, as the closing sentence in obituary notices: "Deceased was the last surviving member of the family bearing his name." Nor is the case much improved in the city. The woman who lives a hotel life, is seldom the woman who loves children.

A movement is being set on foot looking to the control of schools and school legislation by fathers and mothers only. Surely such a law would be just. He who is unwilling to take upon himself the burden of rearing a family is fitted neither by experience nor by sympathy to legislate for those who do take such burdens; for such men are likely to judge educational

growth by mathematical deductions from assumed premises; treating children by the same general attention that young trees in a nursery receive,—than which there could be no more fatal method of procedure.

As has been well said the first right of a child is to be well-born. In that epoch-making-work by Coroni, which is the siftings of hundreds of thousands of cases the best age for begetting children is placed at from 25½ to 35½ years for the woman, and 30 or 31 to 43 years for men. The percentage of deaths increases on both sides of these dates. With immature parents, children are unlikely to live—and if they do live—are unlikely to reach a full maturity of their powers. When parents are old these dangers may pass by the children, but are likely to manifest themselves in the grand children.

The regimen of the parents has much to do with the life and health of the child. Especially is this true of the mother. She should take as much rest as possible during the period of gestation, if she would do the best for her unborn child. She is doing most for it when she spares herself.

Parental conditions and birth have much to do with character and capabilities, but not so much as was once believed. The initial characteristics are no doubt transmitted from the parents are ingrained during pregnancy; but the great field for moulding and shaping characters is after birth.

Nor should the teaching of objects deprat wildly from nature on the theory that art can improve nature. The best teaching is that which brings the child in contact with objects as they actually occur around us.

The race for ages went barefoot, and science now proclaims the healthfulness of it. The best physicians even prescribe the "barefoot cure" for certain diseases of the spine. Children should have unrestricted liberty in obeying the "barefoot" instinct during all seasons when the weather will permit. It will result in vigorous nervous organizations, which are wells of reserve force both for body and mind. Unfortunately for the health of children, fashion has decreed that it does not look well to go barefooted. It is quite probable therefore that they will continue to be sacrificed to custom, even against the dictates of science, common sense, and practical economy.

One of the most interesting branches of child-study turns on the investigation of the nature and significance of children's cries. A number of our students in Clark university went about with phonographs making appointments with mothers to meet their babies about "squalling" time and record such babies' particular variety of this all but universal infantile music. The specimens obtained are exceedingly interesting, and are being studied in connection with the facts of the babies' lives, and generalizations will no doubt be published in due time.

Enough, however, is known of the nature of crying to warrant letting the child take all that it desires of it. The kindergarten or home that boasts of getting along without crying babies deserves a very doubtful compliment. They merely illustrate the fact that nature can be interfered with in this respect as well as in many others. There are few greater mistakes in child-raising than to prevent babies from crying. Crying is nature's way of developing the lungs and voice. Then also reflect for a moment what it is that makes a child red in the face when crying. Nothing else than the vigorous lung exercise which sends the blood surging to all the extremities, irrigating the old cells, forming new ones, and generally invigorating the tissues from the toes to the roots of