WHAT SORT OF MIND HAS YOUR CHILD?

By HELEN JOHNSON KEYES.

The test of good teaching to-day is to interest the child. I love to think how many children from generation to generation have been too bright, too intelligent, too spirited to endure patiently the deadly dullness of lessons which had no relation to anything which had ever entered into their lives or ever would do so. How often, in the past, life made the boy of whom the school master despaired into a genius. Schools are becoming more like life. There are no dunces' caps in them any more, and by and by we shall find that there are few heads on which they would fit. Then schools, like life, will develop geniuses and recognize them.

There is always some way of interesting a normal child and of teaching him a number of valuable things. In the elementary grades, it is true, there cannot be a wide choice of subjects to suit the individual child, for all youngsters must learn the three R's and a little geography and history. But although there is not a wide variety of subjects to offer the pupil, there is a wide variety of ways in which these subjects can be taught, so that every pupil will have his interest aroused. The teacher with the ability and opportunity to find out which way suits which pupil is the real teacher. She it is who will have in her classes at the end of the term the smallest number who could wear dunces' caps.

How Their Minds Work.

A few children learn readily from text-books. They can concentrate their attention and remember accurately without requiring to be interested by special methods. More children, however, need to have something personal put into their lessons, something related to themselves and their homes, in order to fix their attention and memory. To do this is not the same thing as making their tasks easy: they may have to work exceedingly hard over them, but they are glad to do so because the problem seems real and useful, and to concern not life in the moon, but their own experiences. Contrary to general belief, children can work very hard, and for long stretches of time, if their interest has been excited.

We have discovered that there are three different ways in which children remember things:

Some remember by making pictures of things in their minds and recalling these pictures. When they try to spell, they see the words; when they do arithmetic, the figures pile themselves into certain forms in front of their memories, suggesting the answer by the relation of one number to another in this mental table. Likewise, geography and history are recalled in the form of maps and pictures. These children should be shown things instead of merely told about them. The most perfect spellers and the great mathematicians seem to belong to this visual-minded class.

Some remember by hearing in their minds the lesson which has been read to them or which they have learned in any other way. The sound of the word is their guide in spelling it; and in the case of English, with its irregular pronounciation, this is not as accurate as the sight image. Arithmetic goes to a sort of tune, in which "seven and five make twelve," "six times six are thirty-six," "eight from twelve leaves four," return like familiar airs. Much repetition aloud helps these children.

Others remember by driving the facts in on their minds by muscular exertion. They know how to spell a word only after they have written it, and when they must spell it aloud after a lapse of some hours their muscles seem to write it out for them invisibly; as they speak, their hands and wrists move as if forming the letters. These children ought to be given a great deal of written work, and should have opportunity to make things which illustrate their studies, like maps, blobes, flags, and simple pictures.

To these three classes ought to be added, perhaps, a fourth—which, in reality, is the one to which most of us belong—where all these three types of memory work together. However, it will be found, even so, that one type rules over the others, and is the surest approach to our understanding.

Even in an ungraded school there is no reason why these three types of children should not be taught each in the manner which helps him to remember best. At first it may appear to complicate the work of the overtaxed teacher, but the results are likely to be so good that she will be saved much going back over the same ground in the effort to bring slow minds up to grade.

After some experimenting she can determine to which type each pupil belongs, and the method of preparing lessons can be suggested to each individually. For instance, one group, the visual-minded, may study their spelling in silence from the book; another group, those depending on sound-memory, may be sent as far out of earshot as possible—into a second room, if the school has one—and read their words aloud together in a low voice.

The motor-minded children—those depending on muscular exertion—can copy their words on paper over and over again. The same idea is applicable to other lessons. In the case of geography, for instance, the motor-minded children will need to fix their places in their minds by drawing maps of them, whereas the visual-minded will see imaginary maps in their minds automatically as soon as they read or hear about places, and will not need for the sake of memory the exercise of drawing them, although for manual skill, neatness, and accuracy the exercise remains valuable to them also.

The child who remembers by sound will learn by heart readily, but such tasks as map-drawing are important for him—not for the purpose of preparing him for a good recitation, but in order to preserve him from his great danger, a parrot-like repetition of what he has not understood or thought about. These are the pupils who make the most brilliant records in school, but often amount to nothing in life.

The community is fortunate which has a teacher who is able to instruct her pupils individually, according to their dispositions. When, however, her burdens are too heavy for her to make this effort, a mother may help her children in the work in which they are slow, by the use of games suited to their types of mind and related to their studies. After the games are once learned they will not need her assistance in playing them, although if she can spend ten minutes a day to be their comrade in this occupation it is worth while to do so.

BUILDING A HOUSE

An Arithmetic Game

One child is a builder and is putting up a brick house. He draws the framework and indicates doors and windows. Then, along the base of the house, let him draw small oblongs for bricks. In each brick he puts a number, anything from two to a large numeral, according to the grade he is in. He and the children with whom he is playing build upward by adding bricks in turn, one by one, putting a figure in each one as they lay it in. This figure must be one in which the number at the base of the entire row will go evenly.

In laying the roof, the shingles or tiles may begin with rather a large number, and diminish regularly by some given amount. For instance, the first shingle may be numbered three hundred and sixty-one and the next one four less, making three hundred and fifty-seven, and so on.

The chimney we will make of fractions, and only when enough of these are put together to make a whole, as eight-eighths or sixteen-sixteenths can the next brick be marked with a whole number. Thus, if it is to be built of eighths, eight bricks must be laid before the number two appears above the number one. If it is built of sixteenths, sixteen bricks must intervene between each whole number.

This game will help every child's memory. The visual-minded will learn the relation of numbers to one another by the manner in which the bricks and shingles increase and diminish; the youngsters of sound-memory will hear the numbers humming in singsong fashion as they build up the house; the motor-minded will have the satisfaction of drawing the bricks and writing in their numbers.

Some tiny prize for the one who makes the fewest mistakes will add to the children's interest.

It will help very little children who are having difficulty with sounds in reading to try to think of all the objects they can which begin or end with a certain letter or a certain combination of letters. Let one child be "It" and ask the others in turn, one for five words beginning with "th," another for five ending in ing or tion. They must answer within a given time, say while "It" counts sixty. Those who fail, after the game is over must perform any odd trick which "It" demands of them, such as hopping across the room with legs tied together, or turning a somersault.

The same game may be played as an exercise in grammar by designating the part of speech which shall begin or end with the chosen sound.

WHAT AM I?

A Geography Game

Each child takes the part of some feature of the country which he is studying: It may be a river, a mountain, a mine, a forest, a desert, or the cornfield next door.

The River, without telling what he is, must describe his birth from springs, his deepening, widening waters, the changes in his shores and the crops which grow along them; his falls which give power to factories and cause the growth of a city. The Mountain must describe the varying vegetation upon its slopes, the changes at the timber line and at the snow line, the birds, the beasts. The Mine, may describe the building of the shaft, the character of the ore and its uses, the lives of the miners. The Cornfield may tell what clover or alfalfa did for its fertility, and how the farmer tested the seed corn, and what its yield was.

After each story is finished the children guess what the object is which has been described. The child giving the most complete and most truthful account of the object which he has impersonated receives some toy, such as a top, which he keeps until he loses it to someone who beats him in a future contest. The child who keeps the trophy at three contests becomes its owner.

Mrs. Winnifred Sackville Stoner in her book, "Natural Education," has built up a whole system of education through games. She recommends ball-tossing between two people as an assistance in learning poetry by heart. One throws, saying, for instance: "In days of yore, the hero Wolfe," and the other, returning the ball, continues, "Britain's glory did maintain." In this exercise, it is important to keep the ball going steadily. If it drops and is scrambled for, the pause interferes with the memory lesson, which depends on the unbroken rhythm of the throw and the throw-back corresponding with the lines.

For a motor-minded child this is particularly helpful.

Conserve the Moisture.

A good deal can be done to save moisture in the way the land is handled. Fairly deep plowing opens up the soil so rain can soak in more readily. Plenty of vegetable matter helps hold moisture. Plenty of available plant food enables the plant to make more growth with a given amount of moisture. This fertility and vegetable matter are furnished in the best form of manure. Weeds use up a lot of moisture and the weeds grow all the time, they must be kept out. A good way to accomplish all this is to put one-third of the plowed area of the farm in corn, potatoes or summer fallow(must be kept clean and plowed in June), and the other two-thirds in grain. Corn or potatoes are preferable to the summer fallow; they give a crop and leave the soil in nearly as good a condition.

The Sunday School

INTERNATIONAL LESSON JUNE 22

Lesson XII. Love—I. Cor. 13. Golden Text, I. Cor. 13: 13.

1-3. Charity. The Greek word is better translated "love," as in the Revised Version. Without love the other gifts are vain—speaking with tongues, prophesy, knowledge, faith, self-sacrifice. Love gives reality and power to them all, makes them significant, great and beautiful. Teaching, preaching, healing, giving to the poor, giving life itself—all are of little account and profit ourselves and others nothing without love. Harnack says that this passage is "the greatest, strongest, deepest thing Paul ever wrote." And let us remember that he was writing to the Corinthian Christians who had split up into factions, and were at strife and enmity with each other. See chapters I and 3. They needed, and we need to-day, this fundamental lesson in Christian ethics. If we, after strenuous years of united and heroic effort, fall back into old ways of party strife, of international and racial hatred, and of class division and jealousy and self-seeking, the sacrifices and achievements of war will, for us at least, have been in vain. It is love that will unite the warring races, reconcile classes, rebuild the shattered nations, and bring in the reign of peace and good will.

4-7. Love "suffereth long." Love is very patient and kind and gentle. Love does not envy those who have better or greater gifts, but rejoices in their joy. Love is not self-conceited or boastful, but is courteous, mindful of the feelings and desires of others, preserves an even temper, and does not bear grudges. It "thinketh no evil," that is, "does not keep account of evil done, so as to remember it and get even for it at some future time. Love is purely optimistic, bears the present indignity or injury, is ready to believe the best and to hope for the best, and in spite of discouragement and disappointment will keep on believing and hoping. And this is not the weakness but the great strength of love.

"Love, an everlasting crown receiveth,
For she is Hope, and Fortitude, and Faith,
Who all things hopeth, beareth, and believeth." —Ruskin.

8-13. Love "never faileth." Other gifts and virtues fail, but love like God is eternal. Other graces and attainments are parts of the perfect life, but love is the perfect life, itself in the glory of full manhood. In other ways we see, but see dimly; love sees face to face with God and truth. When we love we know God even as He knows us, and we become like Him. "The greatest" is love, "The Greatest Thing in the World."

John Wesley, in his Journal, warns Methodists against "an unloving, unholy faith." Is not that warning still necessary? From press, from pulpit, and from platform, too often from the popular evangelist, we hear words of bitterness, hatred, and railing accusation, directed against church, or school, or college, or any and all of those who may hold different views about something. The large-hearted wisdom, gentleness, and patient love of Christ is always best, and always strongest to accomplish a good work and to advance the cause of truth. Let us beware of unloving and unlovely zeal, and unloving, unholy faith.

Poultry

It takes less time to close a colony house door and lock in one hundred chicks than to close eight or ten brood coops. When the chicks are in the colony houses they are more protected from storms and thieves of all kinds. On rainy days the colony house chicks have a warm place to stay and there is plenty of chance to serve them with clean rations, both in hoppers and in the litter. When the days are rainy it is difficult to give chicks in brood coops good care, as the floors of the coops become more or less muddy and there is no scratching place where the grain can be scattered.

Keep plenty of fresh water before the growing stock at all times. Note the thirst of a house full of broilers after they have been denied water for a few hours. It proves that their systems needed water and their owner lost poultry money by feeding a thirsty flock. Clean water is the cheapest element in the poultry ration and sheuld never be neglected.

A huge market for Canadian farm produce exists in Great Britain where according to the Trade Commission our imports only amount to 1½ per cent. of the eggs consumed; 2½ per cent. of the butter; and 2¼ of the beef.

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Mending Bags.

A quick and very easy way to mend bags, and one which the men can do as easily as the women, is as follows: Turn the bag wrong side out, cut patches large enough to cover well the holes and weak spots. Make a medium thick paste of flour and water, spread on patch, and press with a hot iron. The patches will last as long as the bag and can be put on in less time than it takes to sew them.

In this era of cheap, woven-wire fences there is no excuse for a nasty, ill-smelling hogyard near the house, where disease is bred, and the best fertilizers dissipated into the air.

A far greater trade in Canadian farm stuffs is done in our own cities and towns than is done abroad. This fact is mentioned by the Canadian Trade Commission, not to minimize exports but to show the unrecognized importance of our home markets.

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