

**A COURSE OF LECTURES ON THE  
GROWTH AND MEANS OF  
TRAINING THE MENTAL  
FACULTY: DELIVERED IN THE  
UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE**

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A Course of Lectures on the Growth and Means of Training the Mental Faculty: Delivered in the University of Cambridge by Francis Warner

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DELIVERED IN THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

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## PREFACE.

THE following Lectures were delivered in the University of Cambridge in 1888-89. When asked by the Teachers' Training Syndicate to give a course of lectures on the scientific observation and study of pupils in school, I gladly availed myself of this opportunity of putting forward those methods of making exact observations, and giving accurate descriptions of children which I have formulated after some years of careful study. A body of physical signs suitable for observation under the proposed conditions is here presented to the student.

It appears to me that the best way of imparting such knowledge is by carrying on the student-teacher from his studies in Physiology and Natural History, to the observation of children by similar scientific methods. The first chapter of this work is accordingly devoted to the study of natural objects in the same way as I would have you examine a child. The catalogue placed at the end of the volume gives further illustration on this subject.

Educational work presents so many practical difficulties that it is well to see what help we can get from the study of Nature, and the physical forces which control growth in all living things. A general knowledge of Natural History, Biology and Physics, is now so widely diffused as to render it possible to make these branches of science the basis for studying children as seen by us.

It is thought by many that the time has come when it is advisable that School Teachers, and others concerned in education, should acquire a more accurate and scientific knowledge of children of different kinds, and of pupils under different conditions—it may then be advisable that some systematic instruction on this subject should be provided, and included as a part of the pupil-teacher's curriculum and examination. A short course of instruction of this kind would render previous studies in science, psychology and school-management more practical, applying the whole to the daily routine of the duties of the school-room. The materials upon which the teacher works are the child's brain and body, whatever method he may use, and it seems likely that a general and continuous observation of the facts seen in pupils may help to remove some of the present defects in educational arrangements.

The doctor, in busy practice, finds each year a certain number of cases of "consumption" in his district, he would not know whether this disease were more or less prevalent in his locality than in the country at large, if means had not been taken to ascertain the general average of this condition, and its distribution among the population. A school may contain a considerable number of

"nervous children," this fact may be attributed by some to the management of the school, but at present we do not know the average of this condition and its distribution among the school population. This kind of knowledge would be very useful, and would help to settle some educational problems; some defective conditions are frequently charged as produced by education which may be due to other causes.

It would greatly aid our knowledge of the school population, and the solution of problems dependent thereon, if an examination of, say 50,000 pupils in various selected schools, were made and a report issued.

The ideal of perfect mental function, which should be constantly before the teacher's mind, is only to be known by observation and study. The student-teacher needs training in quick perception, visual and auditory, and in ready description of conditions seen in children. In visiting schools it is not difficult to recognise the apt and able teacher by his ready and accurate account of the children in his class. To gain this special aptitude is one reason for urging these studies, when once the faculty of observing and describing has been acquired by teachers they have a power in their hands of the highest professional value, and may accumulate an experience that will assure success in management and skill in training their pupils.

Teaching has become a highly honoured and very important profession.

When we consider that about one sixth of the population is under school training, and that more than 6,000,000 pupils are under the daily influence of school teachers, we see at once their enormous power and the