
BOOKS

THE MONTESSORI DIDACTIC MATERIAL.

The Montessori Manual. By Dorothy Canfield Fisher. Published by the W. E. Richardson Co., Chicago. 1913. Price, \$1.25 net.

Dorothy Canfield Fisher is well known to a wide public through her book, "A Montessori Mother," a sympathetic interpretation of Dr. Maria Montessori's own book, "The Montessori Method," which is on the way to revolutionize modern pedagogy.

In the course of the year following the publication of "A Montessori Mother," Mrs. Fisher was the recipient of hundreds of letters inquiring for more specific directions for the use of the didactic material devised by Madam Montessori in her system of education of little children. To meet this demand, Mrs. Fisher has written "The Montessori Manual," which consists of a series of brief instructions for the use of each separate piece of apparatus, supplemented by several chapters on the disciplinary management of the child, the phase of the system seemingly hardest to grasp.

That a child, even the youngest, is an individual, a unit, a member of a democratic society, entitled to enjoy its own will, and to be responsible therefor so long as his will does not interfere with the equal right of another's enjoyment—this idea of liberty is so new to some that it is denounced as license. For such persons nothing is harder to conceive than the fact that a voluntary action is much superior to a forced one, and that individual responsibility leads to the development of a higher morality than any system of superimposed ethics. They may admit that the standardization of classes whereby the progress of forty children is determined by the capacity of one, is vicious; but they foresee resulting from the abolition of arbitrary classifications nothing but uncontrollable anarchy. The child must fit into a preconceived mould. How otherwise cope with his vagrancy? That Madam Montessori respects this vagrancy and insists that education must evolve to fit the variations of children, instead of aligning them with established formulæ—this is the fact that is startling and disconcerting to the hide-bound educator.

The Montessori system has no more able exponent in this country than Mrs. Fisher. She is unfailling in her reiteration of the three cardinal principles upon which it is based: (1) That the child is an individual; (2) That it educates itself and cannot, "be" educated; (3) That its interest must be spontaneous. That the system has taken such firm hold upon the world's

best thought in the field of pedagogy is due to the fundamentally democratic principles of liberty ruling in Madam Montessori's world of little people.

The student will find that the Manual is helpful, but that it contains nothing which has not been said—and said better, one must admit—in "The Montessori Mother." Nor can either of these books be considered other than supplements to Madam Montessori's own book, the wonderful influence of which on the attitude of the twentieth century parent towards the child is too well known to need comment.

BLANCHE KLANIECKE.

PAMPHLETS

Pamphlets Received.

Standardization of Salaries of the City of Milwaukee. Report of the Bureau of Municipal Research, November 4, 1913.

The Agricultural Outlook: Live Stock of the United States. Farmers' Bulletin 575; U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

Michigan Copper District Strike. Whole Number 139, Bulletins of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U. S. Department of Labor, Washington, D. C.

Initiative and Referendum in Switzerland. By Carl Schurz Vrooman. Senate Document No. 253. Printed at the Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C. 1913.

Wages and Family Budgets in the Chicago Stockyards District. By J. C. Kennedy and Others. Published by the University of Chicago Press, Chicago. Price, 25 cents, postage 4 cents.

Certain Alleys in the District of Columbia: Hearing before the Committee on the District of Columbia of the House of Representatives. Printed at the Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1914.

Conditions in the Coal Mines of Colorado: Part I: Hearing before a Sub-committee of the Committee on Mines and Mining of the House of Representatives, February 9 to 12, 1914. Printed at the Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C.



Mrs. Kawler—"So you think that Mrs. Jones is in an unfortunate position."

Mrs. Blunderby—"Unfortunate! My dear, I would not be in that woman's shoes for all the wealth of Creosote."—Boston Transcript.



"Babies talked younger in Bible times than they do now, didn't they, mamma?" asked a thoughtful little girl, on her return from church.

"No, I think not, dear," was mamma's casual answer. "I think babies always have begun to talk at about the same age."

"Oh, but mamma," cried the child, after a period of pensive silence, "it seems as if you must be mistaken. Babies don't talk now until they're quite big, do they, and the minister read out of the Bible this morning that Job cursed the day he was born!"—Chicago Tribune.