

GIVE CHILD LIBERTY, SAYS DR. MONTESSORI

Young Must Have Complete
Freedom for Natural Development,
Asserts Educator.

EXPLAINS HER METHODS

Stimuli Offered to Awaken and
Nourish the Inner Self—
Her Last Lecture.

Dr. Maria Montessori made her second and last appearance in New York last night at Carnegie Hall before a large audience, in which there were hundreds of fathers and mothers, and all listened attentively to her exposition of her famous method for educating children between the ages of 3 and 6. The lecture was delivered under the auspices of the Montessori Educational Association, of which S. S. McClure, the presiding officer, is a Vice President. Dr. Montessori spoke in Italian and Miss Anne E. George acted as interpreter.

"The child must grow in liberty if he is to grow well," said Dr. Montessori, "and there is no other way in which his natural development can take place. The primal impulse of the child is to become a man, and he must have liberty to find those conditions, and that help which will enable him to become in his fullest possibilities, the man he was destined to be."

She next criticised the practice of many parents of not allowing their children to touch things on a table or desk, not realizing that the child at this age gains many of his perceptions from the sense of touch, whereas adults have outgrown this stage of development.

Dr. Montessori said that the stimuli she gave the children corresponded to their needs and were just sufficient to awaken, develop, and nourish their inner self. She said that the joyous child was the one which grew strong and sturdy in body.

"Contrary to the statements of psychologists, that between the ages of 3 and 6 a child's attention is very hard to hold," continued the lecturer, "I was first struck with their constancy in the first week of my school at San Lorenzo. There was a child playing with large and small cylinders designed to be fitted one into the other. I tried many ways to distract his interest in the cylinders, even going so far as to have the other children sing and play, but I counted forty-two times after the singing began that the child continued to manipulate the cylinders. Surely, this shows with what intensity a child rivets its attention on something in which it is interested."

Dr. Montessori said that this constancy was the essence of children's spontaneous development and that they should be allowed to do over and over again the work which interested them. As the child's activities increased, Dr. Montessori found, those of the teacher diminished. It often happened, she said, that visitors to the school commented on the fact that the teachers had nothing to do but to give the child what he wanted, and then "take it easy." Once when this comment was made the teacher smilingly replied, "No, I don't even have to do that. The children come in and get their own work themselves."

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