

HOW MUCH ? ARE YOU INTERESTED ? IN YOUR CHILD

by L. N. BRIGGS

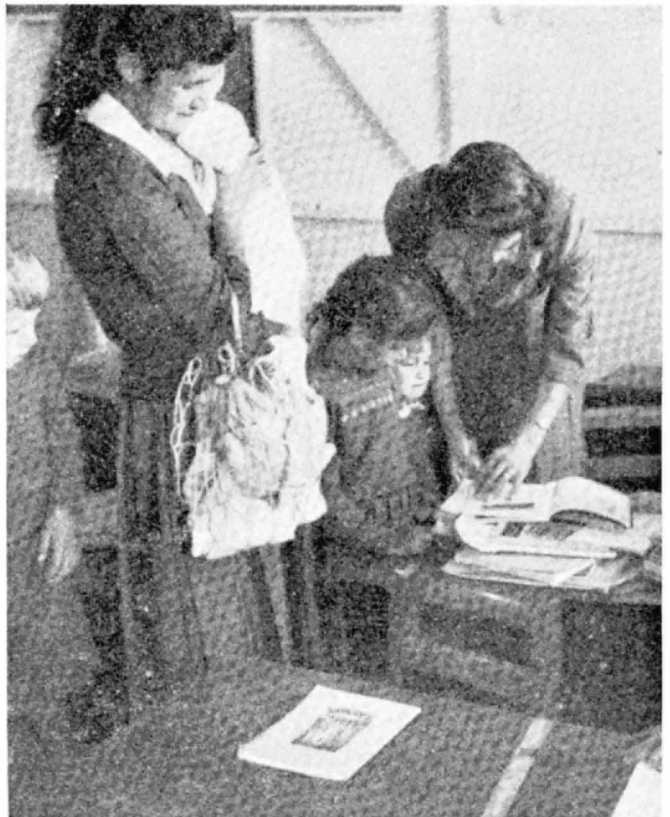
To my way of thinking, there is nothing more interesting in life than life itself. Now I do not mean that there is nothing more interesting in life than being alive, although we all seem keen to remain in this state as long as we can.

What I really mean is that a tree, which bursts from a tiny seed into a living thing of great beauty and usefulness, to be fed by Mother Earth and Father Sun, is much more interesting than a fence or a rock. (Provided, of course, one is not a bride-to-be and the "rock" is not a diamond.)

I am sure that most of you will agree that a soft, fluffy puppy which wriggles in your arms and looks to you for a bone and a game is even more interesting than a tree, because he has the power to move about with you and to express his likes and dislikes in so many different ways. Furthermore, he can be taught to do many interesting things which he would never think of doing, if he did not have you to teach and guide him. Of course, if you don't care much about your puppy and just let him go his own way, without worrying about how he looks or how he behaves, he will probably become just a nuisance to everyone and get himself and you into all kinds of trouble.

If a tree is so interesting because it is alive, beautiful, and useful, and a puppy more interesting because he can move and learn a few tricks, how much more interesting is that chubby little human child whom God places in your care and keeping. Not only does he have the power to move and learn a few tricks by patient training—he has the power to reason and has, or will have, the ability to express his reasoning by speech. His mind is so great, so wonderful and so delicate that everything which is done or said to him causes him to change just a little bit, or perhaps a big bit. It may be so little that nobody can notice it, or it may be so big that everybody can notice it.

For the first year or two of his life, he is going to be much more dependent upon you than a seedling tree or a baby puppy could possibly be; but, if you provide him with all his needs and train him in a proper manner to be clean in body and in mind, to be kind in his thoughts and deeds toward others, and to prepare himself for a happy life of fellowship and service in the community, you can have the great pleasure of seeing this marvellous creation in your own flesh and blood develop into a being so wonderful and so useful to the rest of mankind that your heart will overflow with pride and joy every time you think or say, "He's mine."



Mrs. Susan Russell and Mrs. Marion Simon visit their children's school at Taree during Education week.

Of course, if you don't really care much about that child of yours, and if you can't be bothered giving him the home-life and training he so badly needs, he can become just a useless nuisance, like the neglected puppy.

What kind of care and training do you provide for your child? I do hope you are not like one case I was called upon to investigate. The children of this family were reported to be neglected. When I spoke to the father about them he became quite annoyed.

"What are you worried about?" he said. "The kids get plenty of tucker. They've got enough clothes to keep them warm. They've got a roof over their heads at night. There's nothing to stop them going to school if they want to."