Your Child: Today and Tomorrow

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YOUR CHILD TODAY AND TOMORROW

SOME PROBLEMS FOR PARENTS CONCERNING

PUNISHMENT REASONING
LIES IDEALS AND AMBITIONS
FEAR WORK AND PLAY
IMAGINATION SOCIAL ACTIVITIES
OBEDIENCE ADOLESCENCE
WILL HEREDITY

I. YOU AND YOUR CHILD

Housekeeping, in the sense of administering the work of the household, has been raised almost to a science. The same is true of the feeding of children. But the training of children still lags behind, so far as most of us are concerned, in the stage occupied by housekeeping and farming a generation or two ago. There has, indeed, been developed a considerable mass of exact knowledge about the nature of the child, and about the laws of his development; but this knowledge has been for most parents a closed book. It is not what the scientists know, but what the people apply, that marks our progress.

"Child-study" has been considered something with which young normal-school students have to struggle before they begin their *real* struggle with bad boys. But mothers have been expected to know, through some divine instinct, just how to handle their own children, without any special study or preparation. That the divine instinct has not taught them properly to feed the young infant and the growing child we have learned but slowly and at great cost in human life and suffering; but we *have* learned it. Our next lesson should be to realize that our instincts cannot be relied upon when it comes to understanding the child's mind, the meaning of his various activities, and how best to guide his mental and moral development.

Mistakes that parents—and teachers—make in dealing with the child's mind are not often fatal. Nor can you always trace the evil effects of such mistakes in the later character of the child. But there can be no doubt that many of the heartbreaks, misunderstandings, and estrangements between parents and children are due to mistakes that could have been avoided by a knowledge of the nature of the child's mind.

There are, fortunately, many parents who arrive at an understanding of the nature of the child through sympathetic insight, through quick observation, through the application of sound sense and the results of experience to the problems that arise. It is not necessary that all of us approach the child in the attitude of the professional scientist; indeed, it is neither possible for us to do so, nor is it desirable that we should. But it is both possible and desirable that we make use of the experience and observations of others, that we apply the results of scientific experiments, that we reënforce our instincts with all available helps. We need not fall into the all-too-common error of placing common-sense and practical insight in opposition to the method of the scientists. Everyone in this country appreciates the wonderful and valuable services of Luther Burbank, and no one doubts that if his method could be extended the whole nation would benefit in an economic way. Yet Burbank has been unable to teach the rest of us how to apply his shrewd "common-sense" and his keen intuition to the improvement of useful and ornamental plants. It was necessary for scientists to study what he had done in order to make available for the whole world those principles that make his practice really productive of desirable results. In the same way it is well for every parent and every teacher—everyone who has to do with children—to supplement good sense and observation with the results of scientific study.

On the other hand, there is no universal formula for the bringing up of children, one that can be applied to all children everywhere and always, any more than there is a universal formula for fertilizing soil or curing disease or feeding babies. Yet there are certain general laws of child development and certain general principles of child training which have been derived from scientific studies of children, and which agree with the best thought and experience of those who learned to know their children without the help of science. These general laws and principles may be profitably learned and used in bringing up the rising generation.

Too many people, and especially too many parents, think of the child as merely a small man or woman. This is far from a true conception of the child. Just as the physical organs of the child work in a manner different from what we find in the adult, so the mind of the child works along in a way peculiar to its stage of development. If a physician should use the same formulas for treating children's ailments as he uses with adults, simply reducing the size of the dose, we should consider his methods rather crude. If a parent should feed an infant the same materials that she supplied to the rest of the family, only in smaller quantities, we should consider her too ignorant to be entrusted with the care of the child. And for similar reasons we must learn that the behavior of the child must be judged according to standards different from those we apply to an adult. The same act represents different motives in a child and in an adult—or in the same child at different ages.

Moreover, each child is different from every other child in the whole world. The law has recognized that a given act committed by two different persons may really be two entirely different acts, from a moral point of view. How much more important is it for the parent or the teacher to recognize that each child must be treated in accordance with his own nature!

It is the duty of every mother to know the nature of *her* child, in order that she may assist in the development of all of his possibilities. Child Study is a new science, but old enough to give us great help through what the experts have found out about "child nature." But the experts do not know *your child; they have studied the problems of childhood, and their results you can use in learning to know your child. Your problem is always an individual problem; the problem of the scientist is a general one. From the general results, however, you may get suggestions for the solution of your individual problem.*

We all know the mother who complains that her boys did not turn out just the way she wanted them to—although they are very good boys. After they have grown up she suddenly realizes one day how far they are from her in spirit. She could have avoided the disillusion by recognizing early enough that the interests and instincts of her boys were healthy ones, notwithstanding they were so different from her own. She would have been more to the boys, and they more to her, if, instead of wasting her energy in trying to make them "like herself," she had tried to develop their tastes and inclinations to their full possibilities.

How much happier is the home in which the mother understands the children, and knows how to treat each according to his disposition, instead of treating all by some arbitrary rule! As a mother of three children said one day, “With Mary, just a hint of what I wish is sufficient to secure results. With John, I have to give a definite order and insist that he obey. With Robert I get the best results by explaining and appealing to his reason.” How much trouble she saves herself—and the children—by having found this much out!

A mother who knows that what we commonly call the “spirit of destruction” in a child is the same as the *constructive impulse* will not be so much grieved when her baby takes the alarm clock apart as the mother who looks upon this deed as an indication of depravity or wickedness.

[Illustration: The impulse to action early leads to “doing.”]

Some of the directions in which the parents may profit from what the specialists have worked out may be suggested. There is the question of punishment, for example. How many of us have thought out a satisfactory philosophy of punishment? In our personal relations with our children we all too frequently cling to the theory of punishment that justifies us in “paying back” for the trouble we have been caused—if, indeed, we do any more than vent our temper at the annoyance. It is not viciousness on our part; it is merely ignorance. But the time is rapidly approaching when there will be no excuse for ignorance, even if it is not yet time to say that preventable ignorance is vicious.

How many mothers, for example, realize that the desire on the part of the child to touch, to do—to get into mischief—is a fundamental characteristic of childhood, and not an indication of perversity in her particular Johnny or Mary? How many know that these instincts are the most useful and the most usable traits that the child has; that the checking of these impulses may mean the destruction of individual qualities of great importance in the formation of character? How many know how wisely to direct these instincts without thwarting them?

How many mothers—good housewives—know anything at all about the imagination, that crowning glory of the human mind? They admire the poet's flights of fancy; but when, on being asked where his brother is, Harry says, “He went off in a great, great, big airship,” they feel the call of duty to punish him for his *lies*!

Many of us have realized in a helpless sort of way that there is need for expert knowledge in these matters, and have comfortably shifted the responsibility to the teacher. Parents are often heard to say, when a troublesome youngster is under discussion, “Just wait until he begins to go to school.” It is not wise to wait. There is much to be done before the school can be thought of, or even before the kindergarten age is reached. Indeed, a child is never too young to profit from the application of thought and knowledge to his treatment.

Of course, the training value of the school's work is not to be underestimated. The social intercourse that the child experiences there, the regularity of hours, the teacher's

personality, all have their favorable influence in the molding of the child's character. But neither must we overestimate the powers of the school. The school has the child but a few hours a day, for barely more than half the year; the classes are unconscionably large. We all hope that the classes will be made smaller, but they never can be small enough, within our own times, for the purpose of really effective moral training. The relations between teacher and pupil can never be as intimate as are those of parent and child. The teacher knows the child, as a rule, only as a member of a group and under special circumstances; the parents alone have the opportunity to know closely the individual peculiarities of the child; they alone can know him in health and in sickness, in joy and in sorrow, in his strength and in his weakness. The parents can watch their child from day to day, year after year; whereas the teacher sees the child for a comparatively short period of his development, and then passes him on to another.

The time was—and for most of our children still is—when the teacher had to know nothing but her “subjects”; the nature of the child was to her as great a mystery as it is to the ordinary person who never learned anything about it. She was supposed to deal with the “average" child that does not exist, and to attempt the futile task of drawing the laggard up to this arbitrary average and of holding the genius down to it. The effort is being made to have the teacher recognize the individuality of each child; but the mother is still expected to confine her ministrations to his individual digestion.

In a dozen different ways the effective methods in the treatment of children, at home or in school, in the church or on the playground, depend upon knowledge and understanding, as is the case in all practical activities. Instincts alone are never sufficient to tell us what to do, notwithstanding the fact that so much really valuable work has been achieved in the past without any special training.

It may be true that in the past the instincts of the child adapted him to the needs of life. It may also be true that the instincts of adults adapted them in the past to their proper treatment of children. We should realize, however, that the conditions of modern life are so complex that few of us know just what to do under given conditions unless we have made a special effort to find out. And this is just as true of the treatment of children as it is of the care of the health, or of the building of bridges. It is for this reason that the results of child study are important to all who have to do with children—whether as teachers or as parents, whether as club leaders or as directors of institutions, whether as social workers or as loving uncles and aunts.

It is impossible to guarantee to anyone that a study of child nature will enable him or her to train children into models of good behavior. Knowledge alone does not always produce the desired results; nevertheless, an understanding of the child should enable those who have to deal with him to assume an attitude that will reduce in a great measure their annoyance at the various awkward and inconsiderate and mischievous acts of the youngsters. Such a study should make possible a closer intimacy with the child. And, finally, it should make possible a longer continuance of that intimacy with the child, which is so helpful for those in authority as well as for the child himself.

II. THE PROBLEM OF PUNISHMENT

Picture to yourself a dark hallway. Behind the door stands an indignant mother with a strap in her hand. It is past the dinner hour and William has not yet returned. But here he is now. He comes bounding up the steps, radiantly happy, and under each arm a pumpkin. He bursts into the house. His mother seizes him by the shoulder and proceeds to apply the strap where she thinks it will do the most good. The little boy is William J. Stillman, and the story is told in his autobiography. He tells how just an hour before dinner a neighboring farmer had asked him to go to his field to shake down the fruit from two apple trees. William was so glad to do something for which he would receive pay that he allowed the work to trench upon his dinner-time. The two large pumpkins he brought were his pay, and he knew that they meant a great deal to his needy family. Stillman, in writing of the incident, continues: “It is more than sixty years since that punishment fell on my shoulders, but the astonishment with which I received the flogging, instead of the thanks which I anticipated for the wages I was bringing her, the haste with which any mother administered it lest my father should anticipate her and beat me after his own fashion, are as vivid in my recollection as if it had taken place yesterday.”

While I hope that not many of us are guilty of such flagrant abuse of our power as is described above, still I am certain that on many occasions we punish just as hastily, without giving a chance for explanation and with as little thought as to whether “the punishment fits the crime.”

I have often been impressed by the great interest that mothers take in uses of punishment and in kinds of punishment. It has sometimes seemed as if the most valuable thing which they could carry away with them from some child-study meeting was a new kind of punishment for some very common offence. I have frequently felt as if the only contact some mothers have with their children is to punish them, and that punishment constituted the chief part of the poor children's training.

Now, punishment undoubtedly has a place in the training of children, but only a *negative* place. The proper punishment, administered in the right spirit, may cure or correct a fault; *but punishment does not make children good*. If children are punished frequently, it may even make them *bad*.

We can all remember some of the punishments of our own childhood. How unjust they seemed then, and do even now, after all these years to heal the wounds! How outraged we felt! Into how unloving a mood they put us!

The history of punishment for criminals shows us three stages. With primitive peoples and in early times the first impulse is to “get even" or to “strike back.” “An eye for an eye”—nothing less would do. Then comes a stage in which punishment is used to frighten people from wrong-doing and as a warning—a deterrent for others. Gradually, very, very slowly, as we become more civilized and develop moral insight—develop a love for humanity—we come to recognize that the only legitimate purpose of punishment in the treatment of offenders is to redeem their characters, to make them *positively* better,

not merely frighten them into a state of apparent right-doing—that is, a state of avoiding wrong-doing.

It is said that each individual in his development lives over the experiences of the race. How each of us passes through the three attitudes toward punishment is very interestingly shown by a study that was made some years ago on 3000 school children, to find out their own ideas about punishment. Miss Margaret E. Schallenberger sent out the following story and query and had the answers tabulated:

Jennie had a beautiful new box of paints; and in the afternoon, while her mother was gone, she painted all the chairs in the parlor, so as to make them look nice for her mother. When the mother came home, Jennie ran to meet her and said: “Oh, mamma, come and see how pretty I have made the parlor.” But her mamma took her paints away and sent her to bed. If you had been her mother, what would you have done or said to Jennie?

In the answers the most striking thing is the range of reasons given by the children for punishing Jennie. There are three prominent reasons.

The first is clearly for revenge. Jennie was a bad girl; she made her mother unhappy; she must be made unhappy. She made her mother angry; she must be made angry. A boy of ten says: “I would have sent Jennie to bed and not given her any supper, and then she would get mad and cry.” One boy of nine says: “If I had been that woman I would have half killed her.” A sweet (?) little girl would make her “paint things until she is got enough of it.” Another girl: “If I had been Jennie's mother, I would of painted Jennie's face and hands and toes. I would of switched her well. I would of washed her mouth out with soap and water, and I should stand her on the floor for half an hour.”

This view was taken mostly by the younger children.

The second reason for punishing is to prevent a repetition of the act. A thirteen year old girl says: “I would take the paints away and not let her have them until she learned not to do that again.” When a threat is used it is with the same idea in view: “I wouldn't do anything just then, but I would have said: 'If you do that any more I would whip you and send you to bed besides!'“ All trace of revenge has disappeared.

The third stage of punishment is higher still. Jennie is punished in order to reform her. In the previous examples the *act* was all-important. Now Jennie and her moral condition come into the foreground. None of the younger children take the trouble to explain to Jennie why it was wrong to paint the parlor chairs. A large percentage of the older ones do so explain.

A country boy of fourteen says: “I would have took her with me into the parlor, and I would have talked to her about the injury she had done to the chairs, and talked kindly to her, and explained to her that the paints were not what was put on chairs to make them look nice.”

A girl of sixteen says: “I think that the mother was very unwise to lose her temper over something which the child had done to please her. I think it would have been far wiser in her to have kissed the little one, and then explained to her how much mischief she had done in trying to please her mother.”

We can see from this study that the children themselves are capable of reaching a rather lofty attitude toward wrong-doing and punishment, yet these children when grown up—that is, we ourselves—so frequently return to a more primitive way of looking at these problems. In punishing our children we go back to the method of the five-and six-year-old.

What is the reason for our apparent back-sliding? Is it not plainly the fact that we allow ourselves to be mastered by the animal instinct to strike back? When the child does something that causes annoyance or even damage, do we stop to consider his motive, his “intent,” or do we only respond to the *result* of his action? Do we have a studied policy for treating his offence, or do we slide back to the desire to “get even” or to “pay him” for what he has done?

Sometimes a very small offence will have grave consequences, while a really serious fault may cause but little trouble.

Here, for instance, is Harry, who was so intent upon chasing the woodchuck that he ran through the new-sown field, trampling down the earth. He caused considerable damage. If your punishment assumes the proportion dictated by the anger which the harm caused, he certainly will be dealt with severely. Knowing that he had not meant to do wrong, he cannot help but feel the injustice of your wrath. Of course, he has been careless and he must be impressed with the harm such carelessness can cause. Whether you lock him in a room or deprive him of some special pleasure, or whether you merely talk to him, depends upon you and upon Harry. But one thing must be certain: Harry must not get the notion that you are avenging yourself upon him for the harm he has done, or for the ill-feeling aroused by his act—he must not feel that “you are taking it out of him” because you have been made angry.

This brings us to the old rule: *Never punish in anger*.

On the other hand, while we must allow every trace of anger to disappear, we must not allow so much time to elapse as to make the child lose the connection between his act and the consequence. A little boy at breakfast threw some salt upon his sister's apple in a spirit of mischief. The mother sent him out of the room and told him that he would have to go to bed two hours earlier than usual that night as a punishment for his misdeed. Now we all know that “the days of youth are long, long days,” and the many events of that day had completely crowded out of the little boy's mind the trivial, impulsive act of the morning. The punishment could not arouse in him any feeling but that of unjust privation.

This particular case illustrates three other problems in connection with punishment. In the first place, nothing that is considered desirable or beneficial should be brought into

disfavor by being used as a punishment. Sleep is a blessing, and, it may be said in general, no healthy child gets too much of it. By imposing two hours of additional sleep upon the child the mother discredits sleeping. It isn't logical. It is as unreasonable as that once favorite punishment of teachers, now rapidly being discarded, of keeping children after school. On the one side they are told how grateful they should be for this great boon of education, and for being allowed to come to school, and then they are told: “You have been very bad and troublesome to-day; as a punishment you shall have an extra hour of this great privilege.”

The second point is that no punishment should ever deprive a child of conditions that are necessary for his health or impose conditions that are harmful. And, finally, it is not wise to exaggerate the importance of trivial acts by treating them too seriously. The little boy tried to be “smart” when he threw that salt. With nearly every child it would be sufficient, in a case like this, to make him feel that it was really very silly and that he had made himself ridiculous in the eyes of the family.

Very often the seriousness of a child's offence is greatly exaggerated. We must not waste our ammunition on these small matters; if we use our strongest terms of disapproval for the many little everyday vexations, we shall be left quite without resource when something really serious does occur. Children are very sensitive to such exaggerations, and their attention is so much taken up with the injustice of making a big ado about such trifles that they overlook what is reprehensible in their own conduct.

Some of the greatest authorities believe that a child should be allowed to suffer the consequences of his deeds. We should borrow from nature, they say, her method of dealing with offenders. If a child touches fire he will be burnt, and each time the same effect will follow his deed. Why not let our punishments be as certain and uniform in their reaction? To a certain extent this plan can be followed. If a little girl stubbornly refuses to wear her mittens, it is all right to let her suffer the consequences, the natural consequences—and let her hands get quite cold.

But this principle cannot be consistently applied as a general method. If a child insists upon leaning far out of the window it would be foolish to let him suffer the consequences and fall, possibly to his death. Part of our function is to prevent our children from suffering all the possible consequences of their actions. We are here to guide them and to protect them.

To abandon the child to the natural consequences of his moral actions would be even more harmful, for very often we must separate the child from his fault. This is true in a double sense. In the first place, we are concerned chiefly in removing the child's faults, as a physician seeks to separate a patient from his sickness. But we must also avoid the error of identifying any fault with the fundamental nature of the child; that is, we must keep before us the character of the child as distinct from the wrong acts which the child may commit. If a child lies, that does not make of him a liar, any more than does his failure to understand what he has just been told make of him a blockhead. Yet the natural consequence of lying, for instance, is to be mistrusted in the future—to be branded a liar.

This, however, is one of the worst things that can happen to a child, and one of the surest ways of making him a habitual liar. Many children pass through a stage in which they naturally come to have the feeling which is expressed in the saying: “If I have the name, I may as well have the game.” We must show the child that we have unbounded confidence in him, otherwise he will lose faith in himself.

It is clear, then, that the “natural” method will not work in such cases, for the impulse to condemn the child after he has committed a wrong deed, instead of condemning the *deed*, may merely help to fix upon him the habit of committing similar deeds in the future.

In Nature, too, the same punishment invariably follows the same offence. If we try to imitate that method, the child soon learns what he has to reckon with. If the child knows that a certain action will produce a certain result, he often thinks it is worth the price. Then the child feels that he has had his way, and, having paid the price, the account is squared; so he feels justified in doing the same thing again. In following this course we defeat our own ends, as this kind of punishment does *not* act as a fine moral deterrent.

Scolding as a punishment is also not efficacious. We are justified in having our indignation aroused at times and in letting the offender feel our displeasure. There is something calm and impressive about genuine indignation, while scolding is apt to become nagging and to arouse contempt in the child.

When we consider the many difficulties of finding a punishment exactly fitted to the offence in a way that will make the offender avoid repetition, we are tempted to resort to sermonizing and reasoning, for through our words we hope at times to establish in the child's mind a direct relation between his conduct and the undesirable consequences that spring from it.

In doing this, however, we should not speak in generalities, but bring before the child's mind concrete examples of his own objectionable acts from recent experience. It is useless to tell John how important it is to be punctual and let it go at that; it is not enough even to tell him that he often fails to be on time. If you can remind him that he was late for dinner on Wednesday, missed the letter-carrier twice last month, and delayed attending to an errand Monday until all the shops were closed, you have him where he can understand your point. Mary will listen respectfully enough to a homily on being considerate, but it will have little effect upon her compared to bringing before her a picture of some of her actions: how, instead of coming right home from school the day you were not feeling well, and helping you with some of your tasks, she had gone to visit a friend just that afternoon.

But reasoning with a child often fails to accomplish its purpose, because the child's reasoning is so different from that of an adult. Unless there is a nearly perfect understanding of the workings of the child's mind, reasoning is frequently futile. A seven-year-old boy who had received a long lecture on the impropriety of keeping dead crabs in his pockets said, after it was all over: “Well, they were alive when I put them in. You are

wasting a lot of my precious time." These little brains have a way of working out combinations that seem weird to us grown-ups.

Only with a child of a certain type and a parent able to understand the workings of his mind may the method of reasoning work satisfactorily in correcting faults and establishing good habits and ideals.

No discussion of this subject would be complete without a word on corporal punishment. It is impossible here to present all the arguments for or against it. I am sure, however, that the most enthusiastic advocates of it will admit that it is not always practised with discretion and that it is in most cases not only unnecessary but positively harmful. Children that are treated like animals will behave like animals; violence and brutality do not bring out the best in a child's nature. It would seem that intelligent parents do not need to resort to such methods in the training of normal children.

As suggested by our veteran novelist, William Dean Howells, we have clung to the wisdom of Solomon, in this respect, through centuries of changing conditions. Solomon said: "Spare the rod and spoil the child"; Mr. Howells suggests that we might with profit spoil the rod and spare the child. In the small families of to-day there is no need to cling to the methods that may have worked well enough with the Oriental, polygamous despot, who never could know all his children individually, and it is therefore hardly necessary to use Solomon as our authority.

It is plain, then, that it is impossible to recommend any punishment as *the correct one*, or even to recommend any one infallible rule. This must depend upon the parent, upon the child, and upon the circumstances. But there are certain definite principles which we must keep in mind and which will do much toward making our task of discipline more rational:

We must never punish in anger.

We must consider the *motive* and the *temptations* before the *consequence* of the deed.

We must condemn the *deed* and not the child.

We must be sure that the child understands exactly the offence with which he is charged.

We must be sure that he sees the *relation* of the *offence* to the *punishment*.

We must never administer any *excessive* or unusual punishment.

We must not *exaggerate* the magnitude of the offence.

If we keep these principles in mind we may not always be right, but we shall certainly be right more often than if we had no policy or definite ideas. But, above all, we must recognize that punishment is only a corrective, and that it is our duty to build up the

positive virtues. Let us expend our energy in the effort to establish good habits and ideals, and the child will shed many of the faults which now occupy the centre of our interest and attention.

In a family where the proper spirit of intimacy and mutual understanding and forbearance reigns punishment will be relegated to its proper place—namely, the medicine closet—and not be used as daily bread. For punishment is a medicine—a corrective—and when we administer it we must do in the spirit of the physician. We do not wish to be quacks and have one patent remedy to cure all evils; but, like physicians worthy of their trust, we must study the ailment and its causes, and above all must we study the patient. The same remedy will not do for all constitutions. Therefore the punishment must not only fit the crime, but it must also be made to fit the "criminal."

Love and patience are the secret of child management. Love which can fare from the chilliest soul; patience which knows how to wait for the harvest.

III. WHEN YOUR CHILD IMAGINES THINGS

Johnny was playing in the room while his mother was sewing at the window. Johnny looked out of the window and exclaimed, "Oh, mother, see that great big lion!"

His mother looked, but saw only a medium-sized dog.

"Why, Johnny," replied the mother, "how can you say such a thing? You know very well that was only a dog. Now go right in the corner and pray to God to forgive you for telling such a lie!"

Johnny went. When he came back, he said triumphantly, "See, mother, God said He thought it was a lion Himself."

This poor mother is a typical example of a large class of mothers who fail to understand their children because they have no idea of what goes on in the child's mind. To Johnny the lion was just as *real* as the dog was to the mother. And even if the dog had not been there for the mother to see, Johnny could have seen just as real a lion.

Every mother ought to know that practically every healthy child has imagination. You will have to take a long day's journey to find a child that has no imagination to begin with—and then you will find that this child is wonderfully uninteresting, or actually stupid.

You can easily observe for yourself that as soon as a child knows a large number of objects and persons and names he will begin to rearrange his bits of knowledge into new combinations, and in this way make a little world of his own. In this world, beasts and furniture and flowers talk and have adventures. When the dew is on the grass, "the grass is crying." Butterflies are "flying pansies." Lightning is the "sky winking," and so on. This activity of the child's mind begins at about two years, and reaches its height between

the ages of four and six. But it continues through life with greater or less intensity, according to circumstances and original disposition.

It is not only the poet and artist who need imagination, but all of us in our everyday concerns. Do you realize that the person to whom you like so much to talk about your affairs, because she is so sympathetic, *is sympathetic* because she has imagination? For without imagination we cannot "put ourselves in the place of another," and much of the misery in the relation between human beings exists because so many of us are unable to do this. The happy cannot realize the needs of the miserable, and the miserable cannot understand why anyone should be happy—if they lack imagination.

The need for imagination, far from being confined to dreamers and persons who dwell in the clouds, is of great *practical* importance in the development of mind and character. Imagination is a direct help in learning, and in developing sympathy. As one of our great moral leaders, Felix Adler, has said, much of the selfishness of the world is due, not to actual hard-heartedness, but to lack of imaginative power.

We all know the classic example of Queen Marie Antoinette, who, when told that the people were rioting for want of bread, exclaimed, "Why, let them eat cake instead!" Brought up in luxury, she could not realize what absolute want means. She had no imagination.

The world has progressed, but we still have among us the same type of unfortunate persons who are unable to put themselves in the place of others. I recently heard of a woman who, on being told of a family so poor that they had had nothing but cold potatoes for supper the night before, replied:

"They may be poor, but the mother must be a very bad housekeeper, anyway. For, even if they had nothing but potatoes to eat, she might at least have fried them."

Like her royal prototype, this modern woman had not the imagination to realize that a family could be so poor as to be in want of fuel.

But being able to put yourself in the place of another is of importance not only from the strictly moral point of view. You can easily see how it will affect one's everyday relations, how it will be of great help in avoiding misunderstandings of all kinds—as between mother and child, between mistress and maid, etc.

If parents would only realize this importance of imagination, and not look upon it as a "vain thing," they would not merely *allow* the child's imagination to take its own course; they would actually make efforts to cultivate and encourage it. In this way they would not only aid the child in becoming a better and more sympathetic man or woman, but would also add much to the happiness of the child.

Unless we have given special thought to this matter, most of us grown-ups do not appreciate how very real the child's world of make-believe is to him, and how essential to

his happiness that we do not break into it rudely. When one of my boys was two and a half years old he was one day playing with an imaginary baby sister. A member of the household came into the room, whereupon he immediately broke out in wild screaming and became very much agitated. It took some time to quiet him and to find out that the cause of all his trouble was the fact that this person had inadvertently stepped upon his imaginary sister, whom he had placed upon the floor. Before him he saw his little sister crushed, and great were his horror and grief.

I know from this experience and many others that if we do not enter into the child's world and try to understand the working of his mind we will often find him naughty, when he is not naughty at all. In the example given it would have been very easy to follow the first impulse to reprove the child for what seemed very unreasonable conduct on his part. And such cases arise constantly.

How completely the child throws himself into an imaginary character is shown by an incident which occurred recently. A little boy of four, who had been accustomed to speak only German at home, was playing “doctor,” and was so absorbed in the play that when dinner-time came he was loath to abandon the role. His mother, to avoid delay, simply said, “I think we will invite the doctor to have dinner with us,” and he promptly accepted the invitation. When the maid came in, he said in English, “What is her name?”

“Marie,” the mother replied. “Isn't that Mary in English?” the child politely inquired. “You see, I cannot speak German, for my mother never taught me.” And although this little boy never spoke English to his parents nor his parents to him, as “doctor” he spoke English throughout the meal.

Many parents enter spontaneously into the spirit of their children's games, and make believe with the best of them. They pity poor Johnny when he screams with terror at the attack of the make-believe bear, and take great joy in admiring the make-believe kitten. If we but realized how all this make believe helps in the development of character and in the gaining of knowledge, *all* parents would try to develop the child's imagination, and not only those who have the gift intuitively. It is the child's natural way of learning things, of getting acquainted with all living and inanimate objects in his environment. It sharpens his observation. A child who tries to “act a horse,” for example, will be much more apt to notice all the different activities and habits of the horse in his various relations than a child who merely observes passively.

A child with imagination, when receiving directions or instructions, can picture to himself what he is expected to do, and easily translates his instructions into action. To the unimaginative child the directions given will be so many words, and he cannot carry out these instructions as effectively.

Again and again teachers find that pupils fail to carry out orders, though able, when asked, to repeat word for word the instructions given them.

The plaintive inquiry, “What shall I do now?” is much more frequently heard from the child who is unimaginative or who has had the play of his imagination curbed. For the child can *be* whatever he wishes, and *have* whatever he likes, his heart's desire is at his finger's end, once his imagination is free. The rocking-chair can be a great big ship, the carpet a rolling sea, and at most a suggestion is needed from the busy mother. A few chairs can be a train of cars and keep him occupied for hours. A wooden box is transformed into a mighty locomotive—in fact, give an imaginative child almost anything, a string of beads, or a piece of colored glass, and out of it his imagination will construct great happiness.

A normal child does not need elaborate toys. The only function of a toy, as someone has well said, is “to serve as lay figures upon which the child's imagination can weave and drape its fancy.”

Although parents have not always understood what goes on in the child's mind when he is so busy with his play, our poets and lovers of children have had a deeper insight. Stevenson, in his poem “My Kingdom,” shows us how, with the touch of imagination, the child transforms the commonplace objects of his surroundings into material for rich romance:

Down by a shining water well I found a very little dell,
No higher than my head. The heather and the gorse about In summer bloom were coming out,
Some yellow and some red.

I called the little pool a sea: The little hills were big to me;
For I am very small. I made boat, I made a town, I searched the caverns up and down,
And named them one and all.

And all about was mine, I said, The little sparrows overhead,
The little minnows, too. This was the world and I was king: For me the bees came by to sing,
For me the swallows flew.

I played there were no deeper seas, Nor any wilder plains than these,
Nor other kings than me. At last I hear my mother call Out from the house at evenfall,
To call me home to tea.

And I must rise and leave my dell, And leave my dimpled water well,
And leave my heather blooms. Alas! and as my home I neared, How very big my nurse appeared,
How great and cool the rooms!

Some children do not even need *objects* as a starting point for their imaginative activity. They can just conjure up persons and things to serve as material for their play. Many children, when alone, have imaginary companions. One little boy, when taken out for his

airing, daily met an imaginary friend, whom he called “Buster.” As soon as he stepped out of the house he uttered a peculiar call, to which Buster replied—though no one but he heard him—and he would run to meet him and they would have a lovely time together, sometimes for hours at a stretch.

Another little child received a daily visit from an imaginary cow. There was a certain place in the living-room where this red cow with white spots would appear. The child would go through the motions of feeding her, patting her, and bringing her water.

In these two cases the “companionship” lasted but a few months, but there are children whose imaginary companions grow up with them and get older as they get older.

[Illustration: Imagination supplies this two-year-old a prancing steed.]

In some instances there is a group of such imaginary companions, and their activities constitute “a continued story,” of which the child is a living centre, although not necessarily the hero.

It seems to me that the power to create his own friends must be a great boon to a child who is forced to be alone a great deal or has no congenial companions.

There need be no fear—except perhaps in very extreme cases—that such activity of the imagination is morbid. A little girl who plays with her dolls is really doing the same thing, only that she has a symbol for each of her imaginary companions.

But although an imaginative child is much easier to teach later on, and although he does not trouble you with the incessant nagging “What shall I do now?” the mother whose idea of good conduct is “keeping quiet” will find the unimaginative child much easier to care for. He is very much less active and therefore “less troublesome.” This explains why this priceless gift of imagination has so often been discouraged by parents and teachers. But they did not know that they were actually *harming* the child by so discouraging him, or, let us hope, they would not have chosen the easier way. For, after all, we are not looking for the easiest way of getting along with children, but for the best, and the best for them will prove in the end to be the best for us.

It must certainly try your patience, when you are tired, at the end of a day's work, to have Harry refuse to come to be put to bed because you called him “Harry”; and he replies, perhaps somewhat crossly: “I am not Harry, I told you. I am little Jack Horner, and I have to sit in my corner.” But no matter how hard it may seem, do not get discouraged. Once you are fully aware of the importance of what seems to be but silly play, you will add this one more to your many sacrifices, and find that it will bring returns a hundredfold. And, after all, as in so many other problems, when you resolve to make the sacrifice, it turns out to be no sacrifice. For, once you approach the problem in an understanding spirit, the flights of the child's imagination will give you untold pleasure.

Another reason why imagination has been suppressed by those who are in charge of children is the fear that it will lead to the formation of habits of untruthfulness. It is very hard to realize, unless you understand the child's nature, that the child is not lying when he says something that is manifestly not so to you and the other adults. I have heard children reproved for lying when I was sure that they had no idea of what a “lie” is. In one family an older boy broke a plate and, when charged with the deed, denied it flatly. His little brother, however, confessed and described just how he had broken it. Now, the older boy was telling a falsehood consciously— probably from fear of punishment. The little fellow, however, was not telling an untruth—from his point of view. He really imagined having broken that plate. He had heard the event discussed by the family until all the incidents were vivid to him and he pictured himself as the hero.

Up to a certain time it is impossible for the child to distinguish between what we call *real* and his make-believe. Both are equally real to him, and the make-believe is ever so much more interesting.

Until about the fifth year a child does not know that he is imagining; between the ages of four and six the imaginative period is at its height, and there begins to appear a sort of undercurrent of consciousness that it is all make-believe, and this heightens the pleasure of trying to make it seem real. Gradually the child learns to distinguish between imaginary experiences and real ones, but until you are quite certain that he *does* distinguish, do not attach any moral significance to his stories. Should an older child be inclined to tell falsehoods, you may be sure that this is *not* because his imagination has been cultivated. There are then other reasons and causes, and they must be studied on their own account.

After you come to a clear appreciation of the value of imagination in the child's development you will, instead of suppressing his feelings, look around for ways of encouraging this activity of his mind. You will see a new value in fairy tales and fables and a new significance in every turn of his fancy.

IV. THE LIES CHILDREN TELL

None of the petty vices of childhood appears to shock adults so much as lying; and none is more widespread among children—and among adults. As we are speaking of children, however, it is enough to say that all children lie—constantly, persistently, universally. Perhaps you will be less grieved by the lies of your children, and less loath to admit that they do lie, if you realize that *all* children lie. The mother who tells you that her child never lies is either deceiving herself or trying to impress you with the superiority of her off-spring. In her case the untruthfulness of childhood has not been remedied.

However, although lying is so common, that is no reason for ignoring the lies of children. They have to be taught to know the truth, and to speak it and to act it. And they can be taught. The Psalmist said, “All men are liars”; but he spoke hastily, as he afterward learned. All of us are probably born with instincts that make it easy for us to acquire the art of lying; but we have also the instincts that make us love the truth and speak it.

Indeed, a child may acquire a hatred of untruth that is so keen as to be positively distressing; and this condition is just as morbid and undesirable as that of the other extreme, which accepts lies as the usual thing.

As in other problems connected with the bringing up of children, the first and the last aim should be to understand the child, the individual, particular child. Will your child become a habitual liar, or will he simply "outgrow" the tendency toward untruthfulness, as he will leave other childish things behind him? It is impossible to tell; but for the vast majority of children a great deal depends upon the kind of treatment given. If you do not treat the lies of your children *understandingly*, there is the danger that you will bring out other characteristics, perhaps even more undesirable ones—such as cruelty, vindictiveness, or even *actual deceit*.

We must recognize that there is no general faculty of lying. It is very easy for us to class as *lies* every word and every act that is not in complete harmony with the facts—as we understand them. But there are many kinds of lies, as well as many degrees of them. A child that is branded a liar has undoubtedly given abundant occasion for mistrust, and has lied aplenty; but undoubtedly also he has specialized in his lying, and would be incapable of certain kinds of lies that are common enough with other children. As we are the judges of our children in all of their misdeeds, we must preserve not only a judicious attitude, but we must really be *just*. And to this end it is essential that we take into consideration all the circumstances that lead to a lie, including the motives, as well as the special traits of the particular child.

The first thing that we should keep always in mind is that the moral character of the child is still unformed, and that his standards of truth, like his other standards, are not the same as those of the adult. Indeed, this fact is at the same time the hope of childhood and the source of its many tragedies. It is the hope because the child is *growing*, and acquiring new vision and new powers; the child of to-day is the adult of to-morrow, and most of the children of to-day will be at least as developed, in time, as the adults of to-day. The tragedy arises from the fact that as we grow older we forget the outlook of the child, and misunderstandings between the parents and the children are almost inevitable.

Whatever the prevailing morality of a community may demand, the fact remains that practically all children up to a certain age consider it perfectly legitimate to lie to their enemies if they but tell the truth to their friends. Children may lie to the policeman, or to the teacher, or to anyone with whom they are for the moment in conflict. This is a relic of the time when our savage ancestors found it necessary to practice deceit in order to save themselves from their enemies. So ingrained is this instinct that many a child will stick to a falsehood before the teacher or other inquisitors, only to retract and "go to pieces" when obliged to answer his mother. It has been shown over and over again that children even well along in the teens consider it quite right to tell one story to a teacher or to another child who is disliked, and a different story to one that is liked. This attitude probably arises not so much from a desire to deceive as an outcome of natural cunning and adaptability.

This is illustrated by the little girl who used to throw the crust of her bread under the table, to get more soft bread. The child was too young to deceive anyone; she could not possibly have the idea of deceit or of lying. She had simply come to dispose of the crust in this way because she had associated the arrival of more bread with her empty-handedness; to throw the bread under the table was a direct way to the getting of what she wanted. The question of truth or untruth never entered the little mind. To treat this child as a liar would not only be unjust, but would be apt to make the child conscious of the idea of deceit. Later in his development the child may still use the same kind of cunning in getting what he wants or in escaping what he does not like, without the intention to deceive. And a lie, to be a lie, must include that intention.

All students of child nature agree that a very young child—say before the age of four or five—does not lie consciously. Later, the child may say many things that are not so, but gradually he comes to recognize the difference between what he says and what is really so; he may need help in coming to see the difference, but this aid should not be forced upon him too soon. A little boy of five who was very imaginative became acquainted with some older children in a new neighborhood who had little imagination and therefore were greatly shocked by Herbert's "stories." They proceeded to inform him that he was lying, and to explain to him what a lie was. The boy was very much impressed. After he came home he discovered that there was a great deal of lying going on. He asked his little brother, "Are you older than me?"—to which the little one answered in the affirmative. Herbert came running to his mother to report that the baby had "told a lie!" For several weeks everything that was said was subject to the child's severe scrutiny; every slightest mistake was at once labelled by him as a "lie." Richard said *this* is my right hand, that is a lie; Helen said I may not play with the hammer, mother said I may, so Helen lied; the maid said it was time to go to bed, but it is only five minutes to seven, so the maid lied. And he would delight especially in asking the baby brother leading questions, to trap him into saying lies. This experience did not result in making Herbert any more scrupulous in his own speech, for his imagination created interesting and dramatic situations, which he described with zeal and enthusiasm, for a long time after he had discovered "lies."

The young child is really incapable of distinguishing between his dreams and reality on the one hand, and between reality and his day-dreams or imaginings on the other. A little boy came home from kindergarten a few days after he had entered, and, when the experience was still full of novelties to him, he described the workshop: each little boy had a pair of overalls with the name across the bib in black letters; there was a little locker for each child, with the name on the outside; each had his set of tools and his place at the bench. Day by day he narrated his doings in "school" and reported the progress he was making with a little "hair-pin box" that he intended for his aunt's birthday. On the birthday the mother came to the school to see how the boy was getting on; and she asked about the hair-pin box which he was now to bring home. It then appeared that there was no shop, no overalls, no lockers, no tools. The whole story was a creation of the child's imagination, and all the details he had invented were real enough to him to be described repeatedly with such vividness that no one suspected for a moment that it was all a fabrication. To call such stories "lies" would be worse than useless. If scolding or

preaching could make a child merely stop *telling* such stories, there would be no gain; if they stopped a child *thinking* such stories, there would be a decided loss.

Gradually the child may come to recognize the difference between the make-believe and the reality, and he may be helped. When at a certain age you think your child ought to distinguish more clearly between his imagination and cold facts, it would be all right to explain to him that, although there is no harm in his enjoying his make-believe, still he must not tell his fancies as if they were real, but must tell them as "make-believe stories." That will achieve the desired result without making him feel hurt at your lack of understanding in treating him like an ordinary liar whose prime intention is to deceive. But it is not wise to force this development, even at the risk of prolonging the age of dreams.

With some children lying is caused by their esthetic feelings. It is much easier for them to describe a situation as they feel it should have been than to describe it as it actually was. Many children "embellish the facts" without any trace of intent to deceive. Although we recognize that what they say is not strictly the truth, we must further recognize that it is their love of the beautiful or their sense of the fitness of things that leads them to these "exaggerations." It is the same sort of instinct as shows itself in our love of certain kinds of fiction. We know that some of the happy endings in the plays and in the novels are often far-fetched; but we like to have the happy endings, or the "poetic justice" endings, or the "irony of fate" endings, just the same. When the child makes up his endings to fit his sense of justice or beauty, we must not condemn him, as we are often tempted to do, by calling his fabrication a "lie," for that at once puts it in the same class as deliberate deceit for a selfish purpose. There is really no harm in this class of lies, unless, as the child grows older, it becomes apparent that he lets his wishes and preferences interfere with his vision of what is actually going on. In such cases the remedy is not to be found in the denunciation of lying, but in giving the child opportunity to experience realities that cannot be treated untruthfully. To this end various kinds of hand work and scientific study have been useful. It is impossible for the child to cheat the tools of the workshop or his instruments of precision; it is impossible to make a spool of thread do the work of two or three; or one cannot make the paint go farther by applying the brush faster. It is concrete reality that can teach the imaginative child reality; in the things he learns from books there is no check upon the imagined and the desired—one kind of outcome is as likely and as true as another. But in the experience of the workaday world causes and consequences cannot be so easily altered by a trick of words.

Investigation has shown that the sentimental or heroic element is one that appeals to children so strongly that it may often lead to what we adults would call lies, or it would seem to the child to justify lying. The confession to a deed that he has not committed, for the purpose of saving a weaker companion from punishment or injury, seems to be a type of lie that appeals strongly to most children. Again and again have boys—and girls, too—declared stoically that they were guilty of some dereliction of which they were quite innocent, to shield a friend. And most children not only admire such acts, but will seek to defend them on moral grounds, even when they are old enough to know what a *lie* is. The explanation for this is to be found in the fact that the child sees every situation or problem

as a whole; he has not yet learned to separate problems into their component parts. A situation is to him all wrong or all right; he cannot see that a part may be wrong, while another part is right. Now in the case of the self-confessed culprits, the magnanimity and heroism of the act stand out so prominently that they quite overshadow the trifling circumstance that the hero did *not* do the wicked deed.

An excellent illustration of this trait of child nature came out in an inquiry that was made a number of years ago. A child replied, in answer to the question "When would a lie be justified?" that if the mother's life depended upon it one would have the moral duty of saying that she "was out, although she was really in." That is, it would be one's duty to make the great moral *sacrifice* of speaking an untruth for the sake of saving the mother. Any child will tell you, as did this one, that it would be wicked to tell a lie to save his own life!

This suggests another type of lie that is quite common. Most children feel their personal loyalties so keenly that they would do many things that they themselves consider wrong for a person they love or admire. A little girl was so much impressed with the moral teachings of her Sunday-school teacher that she was determined to get her a suitable Christmas present. Now, the family had not the means to supply such a present, and Mary knew it, and was greatly distressed by the fact. However, where there is a will there is a way; and Mary found the way by cunningly stealing a moustache cup from a store with the inspiring legend "To dear Father" and beautiful red and blue roses and gilt leaves. Mary had learned that it was wicked to steal and to lie, etc., but her heart was set on getting something for the teacher, not for herself, and she very unselfishly risked her moral salvation for the person she loved and admired.

It is probably better for the child if we do not push the analysis of acts and motives too early, for there is more danger at a certain age from morbid self-consciousness than from acquiring vicious habits. If we recognize that many of the lapses from the paths of truth arise from really worthy motives, we must make sure that these ideals become fixed before we attempt to separate the unworthy act from the commendable purpose.

The cases so far given show how important it is to retain not only the affection but also the confidence of our children; and how important it is to have right teachers and associates. The child will do what he can to please those he really likes or admires; but the kind of thing he will do will depend a great deal upon what those he admires themselves like to see done.

There are some lies that are due to faulty observation. We do not often realize to what extent we supplement our sense perceptions in relating our experiences. Lawyers tell us that it is very difficult to have a witness relate *exactly* what he saw; he is always adding details for completing the story in accordance with his *interpretation* of what he saw. This is not lying in any sense, but it is relating as alleged facts what are in reality conclusions from facts. One may be an unreliable witness without being a liar; and so may the child tell us things that we know are not so because, in trying to tell a complete story, he has to supplement what he actually saw with what he feels *must* have been a part

of the incident. Defects of judgment as well as delusions of the senses or lapses of memory may lead to misstatements that are not really lies. Some delusions of the senses, especially of sight and of hearing, undoubtedly have a physical cause.

Another source of comparatively harmless lying is the instinct for secretiveness. Children just love to have secrets, and if there are none on hand, they have to be invented. A child will tell another a secret on condition that it be kept a secret; but when the secret is told it turns out to be a falsehood—perhaps even something libellous. Now, the child cannot feel that he has done anything wicked, for to his mind the big thing is that Nellie promised not to tell, and she broke her promise! If she had not broken her promise to keep the secret, it never would have come out, and no harm would have been done. Perhaps we have not yet sufficiently driven secrets from our common life to demand that the children shall be without secrets. When we set the children an example of perfect frankness and open dealing in all matters, we may perhaps be in a position to discourage the invention of secrets by the young people. Secretiveness leads naturally to deceit; but it is not in itself serious enough to make much ado about. Healthy children in healthful social surroundings will outgrow this instinct; where the atmosphere is charged with intrigue and scheming and dissimulation, this instinct may survive longer, but its manifestation is in itself not a trait that should give its concern.

Some children lie because they are inclined to brag or show off; others for just the opposite reason—they are too sensitive or timid. And a lie that comes from either side of the child's nature cannot be taken as a sign of moral depravity; the treatment which a child is given must take into consideration the child's temperament. Charles Darwin tells of his own inclination to make exaggerated statements for the purpose of causing a sensation. “I told another little boy,” he writes in his autobiography, “that I could produce variously-colored polyanthuses and primroses by watering them with certain colored fluids, which was, of course, a monstrous fable, and had never been tried by me. I may here also confess that as a little boy I was much given to inventing deliberate falsehoods, and this was always done for the sake of causing excitement. For instance, I once gathered much valuable fruit from my father's trees and hid it in the shrubbery and then ran in breathless haste to spread the news that I had discovered a hoard of stolen fruit.”

For the vaunting lie it is usually sufficient to defeat its purpose by showing that the boast cannot be carried out. The braggart is made to descend from the pedestal of the hero to the level of the fool.

How the other extreme in disposition may lead to a “lie” is shown by the little girl who was sent to the store for a loaf of bread and came back saying that there was no more to be had. The mother was very sure that that could not be, but soon found out, on questioning, that the child had forgotten what she was sent to get and was then afraid of being ridiculed for having forgotten. Here the cause of the lie was timidity. To punish this child would only make her more timid. In a case of this kind the mother should try to cultivate the self-confidence of the child instead of punishing her for untruthfulness.

Perhaps the most common kind of lie is the one that a child tells in order to escape punishment. It is often chosen as “the easiest way" without realization of any serious wrong-doing. And even when a child is taught the wrong of it, it is still too helpful to be entirely dropped. As a little boy once said, “A lie is an abomination to the Lord, and an ever-ready help in time of trouble.” The first lie of this kind that a child invents comes without any feeling of moral wrong-doing. He has only an instinctive shrinking from pain. To cure a child of this kind of lie, we must take his disposition into consideration; there is no one remedy that suits all children. In some cases it has worked very well to develop the courage of the child, so that he will fearlessly accept the consequences of his deeds. We all know of cases where children can be physically very brave and stand a great deal of pain if they are made to see the necessity for it—as when they are treated by a dentist or physician. Children of that type surely can be taught to be brave, also, about accepting the consequences of misdeeds. With another type of child the desired result can be obtained by making him see that he will be happier and that his relations with others will he pleasanter if he always tells the truth. In some children the sense of honor can be very easily aroused, and they can be made to see how truthfulness and reliability help human beings to get along with each other in their various relations. A great many temptations for this kind of lie can be entirely avoided if your child feels from earliest infancy that you always treat him justly.

Yet a child who is neither afraid of punishment nor inclined to deceive may often be tempted to lie when his wits are challenged. There is something about your tone of voice, or in the manner of asking “Who left the door of the chicken-house open?” that is an irresistible temptation to make you show how smart you really are. You think you know, and your manner shows it; but you may be mistaken, and your cocksureness arouses all the cunning and combativeness of the child. There is a vague feeling in his mind that he would like to see you confirm your suspicion without the aid of an open confession—and the result is a “lie.” Indeed, any approach that arouses antagonisms is almost sure to bring out the propensity to dissimulate or even to deceive. In such cases the mother should learn how to approach the child without a challenge, instead of trying to teach the child not to lie.

The worst kind of lies are those caused by selfishness or the desire to gain at the expense of another, or those prompted by malice or envy, or the passion for vengeance. Although such lies often appear in the games of children, the games themselves are not to be held responsible for this. Indeed, the games of the older children, when played under suitable direction, are likely to be among the best means for remedying untruthfulness. Yet it may be wise sometimes to keep a child from his games for a time, not so much to “punish” him for lying as to give him an opportunity to reflect on the close connection between truthfulness and good playing. Special instruction may sometimes be needed as a means to arousing the conscience. The lies of selfishness are bad because, if continued, they are likely to make children grasping and unscrupulous. But it is in most cases wiser to try to make the child more generous and frank than to fix the attention on the lies. If he can be made to realize that his happiness is more likely to be assured through friendly and sincere relations, the temptation to use lies will be reduced.

One type of lying that is very irritating and very hard to meet is that known as prevarication. This consists in telling a part of a truth, or even a whole truth, in such a way as to convey a false impression, and is most common at about twelve or thirteen years. When a child resorts to prevarication he is already old enough to know the difference between a truthful statement and a false statement. Indeed, it is when he most keenly realizes this that he is most likely to prevaricate, for this is but a device by which the childish mind attempts to achieve an indirect purpose and at the same time keep his peace with his conscience. It is when he already has a certain fear of lying, and is not yet thoroughly sincere and truth-loving, that he will come home from the truant fishing party and ingeniously tell you that a "friend of Harry's" caught the fish, instead of saying that he himself did it. His conscience is quite satisfied with the reflection that he *is* a friend of Harry's. In this stage of his career the child is quite capable of understanding a direct analysis of what is essentially a deception, and a good heart-to-heart talk that comes to a conclusion is about the best thing he can get.

I hope you will not think, from what I have said, that I have been trying to justify lying, or that I do not consider lying a serious matter; nor, on the other hand, that you will consider a single application of the remedies suggested sufficient to make any child truthful. Thoroughgoing truthfulness comes hard and generally comes late. But for the majority of children truthfulness is attainable, although it will not be attained without a struggle. The finer instincts often enough lead to violations of strict veracity; but they may be made also to strengthen the feeling of scrupulous regard for the truth.

I have tried to show that what we call a lie is *not* always a lie; and that some of the very methods we use in training our children themselves produce lies. The inflicting of severe punishments is one of the chief of these, and the most common lie is that which is due to fear of punishment. Lies that arise from bad habits should be treated by an attempt to remedy the bad habit. Lies that arise from ignorance should be treated by attention to necessary knowledge.

Even more important than the right kind of treatment for untruthfulness is the necessity for an atmosphere in which the spirit of truthfulness is all-pervading. Some day watch yourself and notice how often you tell untruths to your child; how often he hears you tell so-called "white lies" to your neighbors; how often he hears you prevaricate and exaggerate. If you will keep track of these things you will realize that it is a trifle absurd of you to expect your child to be a strict speaker of the truth. Part of our campaign against the lies of our children must therefore consist in our attempt to establish truthful relations among adults, and between adults and children.

V. BEING AFRAID

The heroes of history and the heroes of fiction whom all of us like to admire are the men and women who know no fear. But most of us make use of fear as a cheap device for attaining immediate results with our children. When Johnny hesitates about going upstairs in the dark to fetch your work-basket, you remind him of Columbus, who braved the trackless sea and the unknown void in the West, and you exhort him to be a man; but

when Johnny was younger you yourself warned him that the Bogeyman would get him if be did not go right to sleep. And it is not very long since the day when he tried to climb the cherry tree and you attempted to dissuade him with the alarming prophecy that he would surely fall down and break his neck.

Thus our training consists of countless contradictions: we set up noble ideals to arouse courage and self-reliance—when that suits our immediate purpose; and we frighten with threats and warn of calamity when the child has the impulse to do what we do not wish to have him do. This at once suggests the effect of fear upon character and conduct. We instinctively call upon courage when we want the child *to do* something; we call upon fear when we want to *prevent action*. In other words, bravery stimulates, whereas fear paralyzes.

The human race is characterized by an instinct of fear. Very young infants exhibit all the symptoms of fear long before they can have any knowledge or experience of the disagreeable and the harmful effects of the things that frighten them. Thus a sudden noise will make the child start and tremble and even scream. And all through life an unexpected and loud noise is likely to startle us. An investigation has shown that thunder is feared much more than lightning. Children will laugh at the flashes of lightning, but will cower before the roaring thunder.

The feeling of fear is closely associated with what is *unknown*. It is not noise in general that frightens the children, but an unexpected noise from an unknown source. Indeed, the children like noise itself well enough to produce it whenever they can by heating drums, or barrels, or wash-boilers. The frightful thing about thunder is that the cause remains a mystery, and it is frightful so long as the cause *does* remain a mystery, if the child lives to be a hundred years old. During a thunder-storm children will picture to themselves a battle going on above. Some think of the sky cracking or the moon bursting, or conceive of the firmament as a dome of metal over which balls are being rolled.

[Illustration: Neither are girls afraid to climb.]

The influence of the unknown explains also why that other great source of fear, namely, darkness, has such a strange hold upon children. Fear of darkness is very common and often very intense. There are but few children who do not suffer from it at some time and to some extent. This fear is frequently suggested by stories of robbers, ghosts, or other terrors, but even children who have been carefully guarded sometimes have these violent fears that cannot be reasoned away.

In order to discover what it is about the darkness that frightens children, a large number of women and men were asked to recall their childish experiences with fear, and from the many instances given the following may be used to illustrate the various terrors of the dark.

One woman described her fears of “an indistinct living something, black, possibly curly,” which she feared would enter the room in the darkness from somewhere under the bed.

Another could see dark objects with eyes and teeth slowly and noiselessly descending from the ceiling toward her. One little boy, when he had finally overcome fear, said to his father that he thought the dark to be “a large live thing the color of black.” A girl of nineteen said she remembered that on going to bed she used to see little black figures jumping about between the ceiling and the bed.

It is well known that the feeling of fear is often very intense among children; and where it is due to ignorance it is not right to laugh it away. Doing so affords no explanation. The ridicule may cause the child to *hide* his fear, but will not drive the feeling away. Since the feeling of fear is so closely connected with the strange and unknown, the only way that it may be directly overcome is by making the child familiar with the objects that cause such feelings.

In the case of young children with whom we cannot reason it is best, wherever possible, to remove the cause or gradually to make the child familiar with the darkness, or whatever it is that makes him unhappy. One very young child became frightened when he was presented with a Teddy bear. Every time the Teddy bear was produced he would cry with terror. The mother was perplexed about what to do. Now, as the Teddy bear is not a necessary part of the child's surroundings, there is no reason why it cannot be removed altogether and produced again upon some future occasion, when the child is old enough to be indifferent to it. Very many children are frightened by the touch of fur, or even of velvet; but this lasts only a short time, and they soon learn to like dogs and cats.

The fear of darkness is different; we cannot eliminate darkness from the child's experience, and we must patiently try to help the child to overcome his fear, since he will suffer greatly so long as it lasts. The help you give him will also constitute one more bond of sympathy between you and your child, and we cannot have too many such bonds.

One mother got her boy used to going into a dark room by placing some candy on the farther window and sending him for that. Here the child fixed his attention on the goal and had no time to think of the terrors of the dark. After making such visits a few times the boy became quite indifferent to the darkness.

Another ingenious mother gave her little daughter who was afraid a tiny, flat, electric spotlight which just fitted into the pocket of her pajama jacket She took it to bed with her, slipped it under the pillow, and derived such comfort from it that the whole family was relieved. The child soon outgrew her timidity.

A child who from infancy has been accustomed to going to sleep in the dark and suddenly develops a fear of it ought to be indulged to the extent of having a light for a few minutes to show him that there is nothing there to be afraid of. It may take a few evenings and several disagreeable trips to the child's bedroom, but in the end he will be victorious and you will have helped him to win the victory.

A child that is not in good health is likely to be possessed by his fears much longer than one who is well. In the latter case there is a fund of energy to go exploring, and the child

thus becomes more readily acquainted with his surroundings, and as his knowledge grows his fears vanish. Again, the sickly child has not the energy to fight his fears, as has the healthy child. Indeed, the high spirits of the healthy child often lead him to seek the frightful, just for the exhilaration he gets from the sensation.

The period of most intense fears is between the ages of five and seven, and while imaginative children naturally suffer most, they are also the ones that can call up bright fancies to cheer them. Robert Louis Stevenson must have had a lovely time in the dark, seeing circuses and things, as he tells us in his poem which begins:

All night long and every night When my mamma puts out the light I see the circus passing by As plain as day before my eye, etc.

Although fear is a human instinct, it is not universal, and once in a while we find a child who has no instinctive fear. If such a child is not frightened he may remain quite ignorant of the feeling for many years. I know a boy who, at the age of five, was unacquainted with the sensation of fear, and, never having been frightened, also did not know the meaning of the word “fear.” He had heard it used by other children and knew that it was something unpleasant, but when one day at dinner he said to his mother, “You know, I think I am afraid of spinach,” meaning that he did not like it, it was evident that the feeling of fear was quite foreign to him.

Many parents have a feeling of helplessness in the face of a trait that is said to be “instinctive,” as though there were some fatal finality in that classification. But, while it is true that fear is instinctive, it is equally true that it can often be successfully fought by having recourse to other instinctive traits. Thus the instinct of curiosity, which is more widespread even than the instinct of fear, may be used to counteract the latter. Since fear rests so largely on ignorance, curiosity is its enemy, because it dissipates ignorance. A little boy who had a certain fear of the figures in the mirror that were so vivid and yet so unreal used to try to come into a room in which there was a large mirror, and steal upon the causes of his curiosity unawares. His double was always there as soon as he, and caught his eye; but the child lost his fear only after he became familiar with the characters in the looking-glass. In the same way curiosity will often compel the child to become gradually so well acquainted with the source of his fears as to drive the latter quite out of his experience.

We must be careful to avoid confusing fear and caution. Fear arises from ignorance, and is not necessarily related to any real danger. Caution, on the other hand, is a direct outcome of the knowledge of danger. Two little boys were watching a young man shooting off fire-crackers. Whenever a bunch was lit the older boy stepped away, while the younger one held his ground. Someone taunted the older boy, saying, “You see, Harry is not afraid, and you are.” To which he very sensibly replied, “I ain't afraid neither, but Harry doesn't know that he might get hurt, and I do.”

Therefore, while we do not wish our children to be cowards, neither do we want them to feel reckless. Caution and courage may well go together in the child's character.

Constantly warning the child against possible danger does not develop caution; it is more likely to destroy all spontaneous action. Too many mothers are always saying to their children, “Don't do this, you might hurt yourself,” or “Don't go to the stable, the horse may kick you,” and so on. If a child is properly taught, he will get along with the ordinary knowledge concerning the behavior of things and animals that might be injurious, and he will learn to be careful with regard to these without being constantly admonished and frightened.

The fear of being considered afraid has its evil side as well as its good side. While it may often make the child “affect the virtue” when he has it not, it does, on the other hand, make many a boy and girl, especially in the early teens, concede to the demands of prevailing fashions in misconduct, when the conscience and the knowledge of right and wrong dictate a different course. The taunt “you dassent” is stronger than the still small voice saying “*thou must not*.” And so Harry plays truant for the first time not so much because he is tired of school, or because the smell of the young spring allures him, as because Tommy “dares” him to go swimming on the risk of getting caught and licked. Harry yields for fear of being called a “cowardy custard.”

It is important to guard against the moral effect of fear when it is directed against the judgments of others. By always referring the child to “what others will think” of him, we are likely to make moral cowards. A child can be taught to refer to his own conscience and to his own judgment, and, if he has been wisely trained, his conscience and judgment will be at least as effective guides in his relations with human beings as his attempt to avoid misconduct for fear of what others will think or say.

The use of fear as a means of discipline is being discarded by all thoughtful parents and teachers. We have learned that authority maintained by fear is very short-lived; when a child gets past a certain age, the obedience based upon fear of authority is almost certain to turn into defiance. The fear of punishment leads directly to untruthfulness and deception; parents who rely upon affection and good-will to assure the right conduct of their children get better results than those who terrorize them.

Fear and hatred are closely connected, and in cultivating fear we are fostering a trait that may in a critical moment turn to hatred. The only things that we should teach our children to fear are those we should be willing to have them hate. Let your children learn to fear and hate all mean and selfish acts, all cunning and deception, all unfairness and injustice. But even better than teaching them to hate these vices, teach them to love and admire and to aspire to realize the positive virtues.

When we observe the undesirable physical effects of fear, such as the effect upon the heart and blood-vessels, the effect upon the nerve currents, etc., we can hardly expect it to have a beneficial effect upon the mental or moral side of the child's nature. Fear always cramps and paralyzes; it never broadens or stimulates. All the progress made by our race has been accomplished by those who were *not* afraid: the men and women of broad vision and independent, fearless action. Every mother has lurking in some corner of her heart the fond hope that her children will in some way contribute to the advancement of

humanity, to make our life here better worth living. To contribute in this way, our children must be without fear.

VI. THE FIRST GREAT LAW

When you have had a scene with your disobedient Robert, you are apt to wonder how Mrs. Jones ever manages to make her children obey so nicely. If all secrets were made public, you would know that Mrs. Jones has often wished that she could make her children mind as nicely as do yours. For we always imagine that making children mind is the one thing that other mothers succeed in better than we do.

Why is it that we consider obedience of such great importance in the bringing up of our children? Is it because obedience itself is a supreme virtue which we desire to cultivate in our children? Or is it because we find it convenient to receive obedience from those with whom we have to deal?

That obedience is a virtue cannot be denied. But it is a virtue only under special kinds of human relationship. The obedience required of a fireman or a sailor is of the same kind as that which we demand of a child exposed to a danger that he does not see. The work of the fireman and of the sailor is such that these people must be constantly prepared to obey instantly the orders given by those in authority over them. The life of the child, however, is such as to make his work or his safety depend upon his obedience only under exceptional circumstances. To justify our demand for *habitual* obedience, we must find better reasons than the stock argument so often given, namely, that in certain emergencies the instant response to a command may result in saving the child from injury or even from death.

The need for obedience lies closer to hand than an occasional emergency which may never arise. In all human relationships there come occasions for the exercise of authority. There is no doubt that in the relations between parents and child the parent—or elder person—should be the one in authority, on account of his greater experience and maturer judgment, quite apart from any question of sentiment or tradition. But if you wish to exercise authority, you must make sure to deserve it. Laws and customs give parents certain authority over their children, but well we know that too few of them are able to make wise use of this authority.

Not only from the side of our own convenience, but also from the side of the child's real needs, we must give the young spirit training in obedience. The child that does not get the constant support of a reliable and firm guide misses this support; the child is happier when he is aware of having near-by an unfailing counsellor, one who will decide aright what he is to do and what he is not to do. But when I say that the obedient child is happier than the disobedient one, I do not mean merely that the latter gets into mischief more frequently, or that the former receives more marks of affection from the parents. There is involved something more important than rewards and punishments. The young child would really rather obey than be left to his own decisions. When he has no one to tell him what to do, or to warn him against what he must not do, the child feels his helplessness.

And there is valuable tonic for the child's body as well as for his will in the comfortable consciousness of a superior authority upon which he can safely lean.

As the child becomes older he begins to assert his own desires in a more positive fashion, and at about two and a half to three years the problem of obedience takes on a new aspect. For now the child has had experience enough to enable him to have his own purposes, and these often come in conflict with the wishes of the mother. Should obedience be now demanded? And should it be insisted upon? There is more involved in this problem than the convenience of administering the household, or the immediate safety and well-being of the child. There is involved the whole question of the child's future attitude toward life. Shall the child become one who habitually obeys the commands of others, without questioning, without resisting, and so perhaps become a pliant tool in the hands of powerful but unscrupulous men? Or shall he be allowed to go his own way and over-ride the wishes of others, to become, perhaps, a wilful victim of his own whims and moods, presenting a stubborn resistance to overwhelming forces that will in the end crush him?

In the case of the very young child absolute obedience must be required, for the reason that the child is not in a position to assume the responsibility for his conduct. The will of the mother must be followed for the child's own safety and health, for the child has no intelligence or experience,—that is, judgment,—or purpose to guide him. He has only blind impulses that may often be harmless but are never reliable. So the first need is for training in regularity, and this is possible only under the guidance of the mother or nurse, who *knows* what is to be done, or not done, and whose authority must be absolute. So the child must first of all learn to obey. Later he must learn what and whom to obey.

Recognizing, then, in full the value of obedience, we must be careful not to exaggerate it and consider it a cardinal virtue. Obedience is far from being a fundamental virtue. On the contrary, once established as a ruling principle in the household or anywhere else, it is easily carried far enough to become a source of positive harm. To obey means to act in accordance with another's wishes. To act in this manner does not call upon the exercise of judgment or responsibility, and too many grow up without acquiring the habit of using judgment and without acquiring a sense of responsibility. They are only too willing to leave choice and decision to others. Decision of character and habitual obedience do not go well together. Moreover, it is now coming to be more fully recognized that the progress of society depends not upon closer obedience to the few natural leaders, but upon the exercise of discretion and judgment on the part of an ever larger number of those who are not leaders.

There may be a still greater danger in requiring so-called implicit obedience of every child. We have learned from modern studies of the human mind that *doing* is the outcome of *thinking* and *feeling*. When we constantly force children to do things that have no direct connection with their thoughts and feelings, or when we prevent actions which follow naturally from their thoughts and feelings, we are interfering with the orderly working of the child's mind. We force children to act in ways unrelated to their thoughts and feelings, and as a result we have many men and women of fine sentiment and lofty

thought who never let their ideas and sentiments find expression in effective action. In other words, the effect upon the mind of "thoughtless minding" is not a healthy one.

A large amount of disobedience arises from the fact that the child's attention and interest are so different from an adult's. The little girl who is said to have given her name as "Mary Don't" illustrates this. Mary does a great many things in the course of a day, impelled by curiosity and the instinct to handle things. Most of her activities are harmless; but when she touches something that you care about, you command her to let it alone. This is quite proper. Very often, however, she is told to stop doing things that are quite indifferent, and that satisfy her natural craving for activity without being in the least harmful. Being interfered with constantly, she soon comes to consider all orders arbitrary and— disobedience results.

The other side of the problem is seen when a child is told to do something when he is preoccupied with his own affairs. You may tell him a second time; very likely you raise your voice. The third time you fairly shout. This is undignified and it is also unnecessary. For Bobby has *heard* the order from the first; but he has not *attended* to your wishes. In such cases there is no primary disobedience; but a frequent repetition of such incidents can easily lead Bobby to become quite indifferent to your orders; then disobedience is habitual. The child that has acquired the habit of ignoring the mother's wishes will not suddenly begin to obey orders when the emergency comes.

From these two cases we may see that it is important to get first the child's habit of attending to what is said to him—by making everything that is said to him *count*. In the second place, the child must be taught to feel that what he is directed to do is the best thing to do.

For getting the child to obey we must keep constantly in mind the idea that we are working for certain habits. Now, a habit is acquired only through constant repetition of a given act or a given kind of behavior. The first rule for the parent should therefore be to be absolutely consistent in demanding obedience from the child. If you call to the children in the nursery to stop their racket (because father is taking a nap) and fail to insist upon the quietness because father just whispers to you that he is not sleeping, you have given the children practice in *disobedience*. If they are to be allowed to go on with the noise, this should be because you openly permit them to go on with their noisy fun, and not because they may heedlessly disregard your wishes. Direct disobedience is not to be overlooked under any circumstances. It is true that parents often give orders that had better not be carried out; but the remedy is not in allowing the children to disobey, but in thinking twice or thrice before giving a command, or in agreeing with them upon a course of action without giving commands at all. By giving no orders that are unnecessary or that are arbitrary, the child will come in time to feel that your interferences with his own impulses are intended for his own good.

[Illustration: Only a good reason can warrant calling an absorbed child from his occupation.]

We frequently tell the children that we want them to obey "for their own good." If this were true, we should have little difficulty in obtaining obedience, for most children instinctively follow orders and suggestions. It is only when we abuse this instinct by too *frequent* and *capricious* and *thoughtless* commands for our own convenience that the children come to revolt at our orders.

There are great differences among children in the readiness with which they adopt suggestions or follow orders. Some children are easily dissuaded from a line of action in which they are engaged. Their attention is not very closely filed, and they are easily distracted, and may be sent from one thing to another without resenting the interruptions. Such children quickly learn to obey, and some seldom offer resistance to suggestion; but they deserve no special praise or credit for their perfect obedience, neither do their parents deserve special credit for having "trained" such children. On the other hand, there are children who set their hearts very firmly upon the objects of their desire, and who cannot easily stop in the middle of a game or in the middle of a sentence just to put some wood in the stove. Such children will appear to be "disobedient," although they are just as affectionate and as loyal and as dutiful as the others. When you see a child that is a model of obedience, you cannot conclude that he has been well trained; nor is frequent disobedience an indication of neglect on the part of the parents. But the majority of children will fall in the class of those whose obedience or disobedience is a matter of habit resulting from the firmness and consistency and considerateness of the parents.

Unless a child has become altogether submissive, he will not obey all orders with equal readiness. Alice, who is not very active, does not display any great virtue if she sits still when you tell her to. On the other hand, sitting still means to Harry a supreme effort as well as a great sacrifice; to demand this of him we should have a very good reason. I know children who are models of obedience in most matters, but who scream with protest and resentment when it comes to taking medicine or even to being examined by a physician. On the other hand, a little boy I know, to whom obedience in general comes very hard, has such respect for the wisdom of physicians and for the helpfulness of medicines that he will undergo a thorough examination and will swallow the bitterest of drugs without even making a wry face.

If you will look about among your acquaintances, I think you will find that those who get really intelligent obedience from their children are the ones who make the least ado about it, and perhaps never use the time-worn phrase, "Now you *must* mind me." It is the weak person who is constantly forced to make appeals to his authority. It is the weak person who is constantly threatening the child with terrible retributions for his disobedience. Yet none are quicker to detect the weakness, none know better that the threats will not be carried out, than those very children whose obedience we desire thus to obtain.

Many of us get into the habit of placing too many of our wishes in the form of commands or orders to do or not to do, instead of requesting as we would of an equal. Wherever possible we should suggest to the child a line of conduct, so as to make the child feel that he is making a choice. You may say to Johnnie, "Go and get me a pail of water." Or you may say, "Johnnie, please get me a pail of water." Or you may say, "Johnnie, mother

needs a pail of water." You will perhaps get just as good service in one case as in another; but the ultimate effect on Johnnie may make the difference between a man who finds work a necessary evil and one who finds work a means of service.

From men who have been successful in managing industries and from women who have managed large households with the least amount of friction we can learn that there is a way of obtaining obedience without imposing upon the minds of those under our authority. Whenever you wish to depart from the usual routine, there is a good reason for the change, and in most cases the reason can be stated with the request. When this is done the order loses the appearance of arbitrariness. If you say to Mary, "I wish you would go out without me this afternoon, as I have some important sewing to finish," you will most likely meet with ready acquiescence. If, however, you say, "You must go alone this afternoon, I can't go with you," and if when Mary dares ask "Why?" you say, "Because I tell you to," you will certainly sow the seeds of rebellion. No self-respecting child will accept such a reason. If at least you make an appeal to your superior judgment, and say, "Mother knows best," there would be something gained. For now you are shifting the basis of the child's conduct from your position of power over her to the highest authority within our reach, namely, good judgment. The child is thus learning to obey not a *person*, but a *principle*.

Expressing your wishes in the form of a request, modified wherever possible by a reason, does not mean that you are to give the child a reason for everything he is asked to do; for if the child has respect for you and feels your sympathy with him, he will do many things that are requested without understanding any reason, but confident, when he does think of the matter, that you have a good reason. In other words, where there have been close sympathy and habitual obedience the parent becomes, in the child's mind, the embodiment of those ideals or principles toward which he feels loyal.

In the same way men and women who give arbitrary commands may get from their assistants formal obedience, but they never get hearty and intelligent cooperation. Indeed, it is no doubt because we still cling to the traditions of earlier times, when personal loyalty and military types of virtue were so prominent in the minds of men, that we are so slow to learn the need for cooperation in modern times. The need to-day is for leaders who will inspire their fellows with enthusiasm for cooperation, who will wisely guide their fellows in effective service; and of the corresponding virtues in the followers obedience is *not* the first.

And yet we must recognize all the time that there are occasions when a person must do what he is told to just because he is told; and it were well for one who has to take orders to be able to do so without fret and bitterness. The child should, however, come sooner or later to distinguish between those commands that arise out of real necessities and those that arise from the passion or caprice of other persons. To the former he must learn to submit with the best possible grace, with an effort at understanding, or even with a desire to assimilate to himself. To the latter he should submit, when forced to, only under protest, and with the resolve to make himself free.

That confidence is a strong factor in obtaining obedience is well illustrated by many boys in every village and town. These boys are notoriously disobedient at home and at school, but on the baseball field they will follow the orders of the captain without question. They feet that his commands are not arbitrary or thoughtless, that they are not petty and personal, but really for the greatest advantage to those concerned. If we can inspire in our children such confidence in our motives, we shall have little worry about the problem of obedience.

In the training of the child we often forget that the child will some time outgrow his childishness. We must consider not only what is the best kind of behavior for a *child*, but what kinds of habits it is best for a child to develop in view of his some day becoming an adult human being. We want men and women to develop into free agents, that is, people who act in accordance with the dictates of their own conscience and their best judgment. With this aim in view, how much emphasis should then be placed on the matter of obedience?

Since the infant has no will, he must be guided by others for his own safety and for the development of his judgment. But we do not wish him to retain his habits of obedience to others long enough to deprive him of his independence of thought and action. The growing child must learn to repress his own many and conflicting impulses, and to select those that he learns to be best. But if he obeys always, he cannot acquire judgment and responsibility. He learns through obedience to value various kinds of authority, and eventually to choose his authorities; his final authority being his conscience or principle, not impulse or whim. He learns also by questioning the principle of obedience to persons, and comes to guide his conduct by principle or conscience, and not by custom or convention.

We do not wish to train our children for submission, but for judgment and discernment. We must, therefore, respect the child's individuality. We are, however, not obliged to choose between blind, unquestioning obedience and the undignified situations which arise from habitual disobedience. Obedience to persons as a settled habit is bad. The ability to obey promptly and intelligently when the commander's authority is recognized, —to respond to suggestion and guidance,—is desirable. Obedience is a *tool* the parent may use with wisdom and discretion. It is not an *end* in discipline or in life.

We should educate *through* obedience,—that is, cultivate the habit of intelligent response,—but we must not educate *for* obedience,—that is, the habit of submitting to the will of others.

VII. THE TRAINING OF THE WILL

After all, what is there about a person that really counts? All experience and all philosophy agree that it is the character; and the central fact in character is the *will*. Yet the will is not something in the soul that exists by itself, as a “faculty” of the mind. The will is a product of all the other processes that go on in the mind, and can not be trained by itself. Neither can the will of the child be expected to come to its own through neglect.

Indeed, although the will can not be trained by itself, its training is even more important than the training of the intellect. The great defect in our moral training has been that we have generally attempted to train our children too exclusively through precepts and mottoes and rules, and too little through activities that lead to the formation of habits. The will depends upon the intellect, but it cannot be trained through *learning* alone, though learning can be made to help. There are, as we all know, only too many learned men and women with weak wills, and there are many men and women of strong character who have had but little book learning. The will expresses itself through action, and must be trained through action. But action is impelled by feelings, so the will must be trained also through the feelings. All right education is education of the will. The will is formed while the child is learning to think, to feel, and to do.

We judge of character by the behavior. But our behavior is not made up entirely of acts of the will. Hundreds of situations occur that do not require individual decision, but are adequately met by acts arising from habit, or even from instinct. The experience of the race has given us many customs and manners which are for the most part satisfactory, and which the child should learn as a matter of course. It is thus important that the child should acquire certain habits as early in life as possible. These habits will not only result in saving of energy, but will also give assurance that in certain situations the child will act in the right way. If it is worth while to have a person knock on a door before entering an occupied room, or if it is worth while to have people look to the left and to the right before crossing a thoroughfare, the child can acquire the habit of doing these things always and everywhere without stopping to make a decision on each occasion.

But we must remember that in guiding the child to the formation of these habits, example and practice are far more important than precepts and rules. Example is more important because the child is very imitative; one rude act on the part of some older member of the household will counteract the benefit of many verbal lessons in politeness. Practice is important because it is through constant repetition of an act that it at last becomes automatic, and is performed without thought or attention. In fact, this is the only way in which a habit can be formed. Having acquired habits about the common relations of life that do not call for new adjustment every time they are met, the mind is left free to apply itself to problems that really need special consideration. Imagine how wasteful it would be if we had to attend to every movement in dressing ourselves! You can easily see that there are a great many acts that bring us in relation to others and that should be as mechanical and automatic as dressing and undressing.

It is when we pass from the routine acts which are repeated every day that we come to the field in which the will holds sway. There is nothing more helpful in the training of the will than the frequent performance of tasks requiring application, self control, and the making of decisions. The routine of fixed duties in a large and complex household furnished to our grandparents, during their youth, just the opportunity for the formation of habits in attending to what needed to be done, without regard to the momentary impulse or mood. Many of our modern homes are so devoid of such opportunities that there is great danger that our children will have altogether too much practice in following their whims and caprices—or in doing nothing.

It is just because the modern home is so devoid of the opportunities for carrying on these character-building activities that provision must be made in that other great educational institution, the school. All the newer activities of the school, the shop work and the school garden, the domestic science and the sewing, the recreation centres, the art and the music—all these so-called "fads and frills" against which the taxpayer raises his voice in protest— these prove to be even more important in the making of men and women out of children than the respectable and acceptable subjects of the old-fashioned school; for these activities are but organized and planned substitutes for the incidental doings of the childhood of other days. They are the formal substitutes for the activities by means of which a past generation of men and women acquired that will-training and that insight into relations which distinguished their characters.

[Illustration: Habits of careful work furnish a good foundation for the will.]

All systematic and sustained effort, whether in organizing a game or carrying a garden through from the sowing to the harvest, whether in making a dress or a chest of drawers, has its moral value as training in application, self-control, and decision, quite distinct from its contribution to knowledge or skill.

Two or three generations ago no thought whatever was given to the child's point of view; the authority of parents was absolute, and there were many unhappy childhoods. To-day we wish to avoid these errors, and by studying the child we hope to adjust our treatment to his nature and his needs.

But we must be on our guard against the danger of going to the extreme of attributing to the child ideas and instincts which he does not possess. In former times it was considered one of the mother's chief duties to "break the child's will"; to-day, realizing the importance of a strong will, we are in danger of assuming that a child's stubbornness or wilfulness is a manifestation of a strong will, and we hesitate to interfere with it.

This is an entirely false assumption. In the first place, a child up to the age of about three years has no will; he can only have strong desires or impulses, or pet aversions. During this period the mother's will must be his will, and there can be no clash of wills. But, to be his will, the mother must guide the child in accordance with *his* needs, *his* instincts,—that is, in accordance with his nature, and not in accordance with her convenience or caprice. She must bear constantly in mind that the child is not merely a miniature man or woman, but that each stage in his development represents a distinct combination of instincts, impulses and capacities. If, for example, your little girl is digging in the dirt—a very *natural* and healthful activity—and you stop her for no better reason than that she will soil her hands or clothes, you are unduly interfering with her, and if you continue in that way, you will either make a defiant, disagreeable youngster or a servile, cringing slave to arbitrary authority. On the other hand, if Johnny should wish to play with a knife or a box of matches, it manifestly devolves upon you to take these objects away from him, no matter how strong his desire to have them may be. But it also devolves upon you to see that such harmful objects are not very easy for him to obtain and to see to it that plenty of other harmless things are provided for him.

This suggests a common mistake parents and loving friends often make in meeting the uncomfortable assertions of the child's will. When the child cries for the moon, you try to get him interested in a jack-in-the-box; and when he wants a fragile piece of bric-a-brac — you try to substitute for it a tin whistle. With a very young child, that is about all you can do. But a time comes when the child is old enough to know the difference between that upon which he has set his heart and that which you have substituted for it in his hand. At this time you must stop offering substitutes. The child is now old enough to understand that some things are *not* to be had, and that crying for them will not bring them. To offer him a substitute is now not only an insult to his intelligence, but it is demoralizing to his will; it makes for a loose hold upon the object of his desire—and it is the firmness of this hold that is the beginning of a strong will. It does not take the child long to learn that he is not to have a knife or a lighted lamp; nor does it take him long to get into the way of scattering his desires, so that he has no will at all.

In the second place, the assumption that stubbornness is a sign of strength is false, even for older children. Stubbornness is, in fact, a sign of weakness. It indicates that the child is either incapable of adjusting himself to the appeal that is made to his judgment or feelings, or that his weakness will make it impossible for him in the presence of his immediate desire to recognize the superior judgment and authority of his elders, at home or in school. It takes much more will power to give in than to carry one's point. But we must always make sure that *we* are not the obstinate and wilful ones. If you have a very good reason for not wanting Helen to go to the dance—even if she is too young to understand that reason—you are perfectly justified in carrying your point. If your reason is a wise one, she will come to see it in time and will honor and respect you all the more for not having given in to her impetuous and immature desire. If she gives in gracefully, because she can understand the reasons, or just out of respect for your wishes, having found your guidance wise before, hers as well as yours is the triumph. The only thing of which we must make sure is that we are right to the best of our understanding, and that we do not insist upon having our way just because,—oh, well, just because we have a right to have our way, being in authority. As G. Stanley Hall, the father of child study in this country, has so well said: “Our will should be a rock, not a wave; our requirements should be uniform, with no whim, no mood or periodicity about them.” Having made sure of ourselves, we need not fear that training our wilful children will weaken their will.

We must not neglect to consider the very close relation that exists between the health of the body and the health of the spirit. A strong will, showing itself in ability to concentrate its efforts on a chosen purpose, is not to be expected in a child whose muscles are flabby and whose nerves quickly tire. Since the will expresses itself in action, it can be best cultivated in a body capable of vigorous action.

The young child is not only a bundle of bones and muscles; it is also a bundle of impulses. And some of these impulses lead to actions that are quite desirable, while others lead to actions that are indifferent, and still others to actions that are decidedly undesirable. But, so far as the child is concerned, he has no means of discriminating between one kind of impulse and another. He would just as soon carry poison to his

mouth as good food; he would rather grasp at a flame than at a harmless rattle. One of the essentials then becomes suitable knowledge. As the child grows older he should gradually learn that knowledge is necessary to wise choice. It is not so much the knowledge of what is commonly called "good" or "evil" as the knowledge of relations and needs that will enable him to choose ends, and to choose effective means toward those ends. Yet we cannot begin too early to have such considerations as "It is right," or "It is best," rather than "I want it," influence the conduct of our children. But, in order to do the right, we have to *know* the right, and the children who get these moral lessons in their homes are fortunate indeed. It is here the child should acquire his feeling of loyalty to duty, for such lessons learned in the home are the most impressive and the most enduring. We must also make certain that children all through their lives at home are given opportunity for choice and decision.

In this matter of making decisions there is a great deal of individual variation, and even distinct types of persons have been described, according to the way they reach decisions. At one extreme is the child—or the grown person—who apparently without any effort balances the reasons that may be given on the opposite sides of a problem, and makes his choice solely on the strength of the reasoned argument. Herbert Spencer tells in his Autobiography how, when a young man, he wrote down, as in a ledger, all the advantages and all the disadvantages he could think of in regard to the married state. After checking off the items on the two sides of the account, he found a balance in favor of remaining single. Later in life he had his doubts as to whether the decision was a wise one, but it was the best he could make under the circumstances, for he made use of all the knowledge at his command and stood by his reasoned decision.

At the opposite extreme is the person who resolves to do what is right (although he may have no systematic means of discovering what is right), and carries out his resolution at the cost of frequently painful effort. To such persons there is a kind of association between what is easy and what is wrong on the one hand, and between what is difficult and what is right on the other. Our early Puritans were men of this type, and there is much to admire in the sturdiness with which they crushed their impulses in the resolve to carry out their ideals of the right.

Almost complete lack of will is shown by those who reach their decisions—by not reaching them. That is, there are those doubting, hesitating souls who postpone making a decision until action is forced upon them by some accidental event. These let other persons or the course of events make their decisions for them. There is such a delicate balancing of the desires—usually because all desires are equally weak—that none stands out to dominate the choice of a line of action. George wanted to go to the circus, and had saved enough from his weekly allowance; but he was saving up to buy a rifle, and he was undecided now as to whether he would go to the circus or add to his savings and get the rifle so much the sooner. The sight of some other boys on the way to the circus made the decision for him. This decision was not a reasoned one, but an accidental one.

Similar in its weakness is the will that reaches no decisions except as the balance is upset by later impulses from within. The girl or boy who allows a slight headache or a tired

feeling to make important decisions cannot be said to have much strength of character. On Saturday Mabel was to have gone on a steamboat excursion—or on a visit to a friend, to stay over night. When she went to sleep Friday night she had not yet made up her mind; but she finally went to visit her friend because she had over-slept and was too late to join the excursion party.

Children that have not acquired habits of making definite decisions will find themselves badly adrift when they reach the adolescent period, with its rapid changes of mood and the masses of frequently conflicting impulses. To be able to restrain each impulse to action as it arises, and to hold it in abeyance until all the alternatives have been canvassed, is a power that comes only after years of thought and practice.

However, it is not enough to be able to refrain from doing what one is impelled to do. Many mothers think that they are training the child's will when they prohibit the taking or handling of various things about the house. It is true that the child should learn when quite young to avoid certain objects. But if the prohibitions are too general the child will be frequently tempted to break the rules, and then he will fall in his own esteem; or he will observe the rule and have too little outlet for his activity and initiative. The will does not thrive on what the child is *prevented* from doing, but on what the child *actually does do*.

The child's need is for practice in doing and in choosing what he will do. When activities or games are suggested to a younger child, it is best to give him a choice of two or three. When the children are older they can be consulted about the purchase of their clothes, and they ought gradually to assume their share—a small one at first—of the responsibility of the household. As early as possible they should have their own money to spend, as in no other way can they learn the use of judgment and decision in the spending of money. In the households wherein children do not have such opportunities, but in which the parents rule everything with a high hand, the children grow up very inefficient in managing their time and their money; they have become accustomed to being ruled and flounder helplessly when called upon to decide for themselves.

The will, which is at the heart of moral conduct and which is so much in need of training, cannot, as we have seen, be trained as a thing by itself. All training and all education must contribute to the training of the will. Still, there are some definite points that we can profitably keep in mind when we are concerned with the child's will:

First of all comes sound bodily health.

Then there must be sound habits for most of the everyday activities, that the will may not be dissipated upon trivial matters, and that the common duties and virtues may be assured.

There must be constant practice in sustained effort and concentration upon useful tasks, in order to fix the habit of holding the attention upon the chosen purpose.

We must not confuse wilfulness with strength of will; and, finally,

There must be constant opportunity for making decisions that the child may feel responsibility in making of decisions as the highest type of conduct.

VIII. HOW CHILDREN REASON

"Those children will not listen to reason," said a friend whom I discovered in an agitated state of mind one afternoon, when I came to make a call; and she was by no means the first to make this observation. Indeed, it is one of the characteristics of children that they will not listen to reason,—that is, *our* reason. Which is not, however, saying anything against the children's good sense, for people with much more experience have refused to listen to reason—the children's reason.

Margaret told me her troubles. Her sister had rented a farm near the city for the summer and had offered to let Walter spend his vacation with her in exchange for such bits of help as he was able to render. But Walter had made up his mind to go to work in an office that summer, and, although he loved the country and had always wanted to drive a horse and go fishing, his mother's attempts to convince him of the wisdom of her choice were without avail. He would not listen to her reasons. She pointed to the health argument, to the opportunities for play, the free time, the driving, the fishing, and the fruit without limit. Knowing Walter as I did, I could not understand why it was so hard to convince him.

But every story has at least two sides to it, and of this story I had heard only one. The mother was so concerned with giving her son her good reasons for going to the country that she never even thought of finding out his equally good reasons for going to the office. Presently, however, Walter came in, and my first leading question brought out the true secret of the disagreement.

"What is there about working in an office," I asked the boy, "that you care so much about?"

"Oh, it isn't working in an office that I care about; I just want to earn some money. I never did make any money myself, and now I have a good chance and mother won't let me."

This was really too simple; here two sane persons had spent several days on the problem without coming to any solution. By placing Walter's services on the farm on a financial basis and making him pay for his board he managed to spend his vacation, healthfully and happily and profitably in every sense; and everybody was satisfied.

Over and over again we are impressed with the fact that most disagreements between people—whether between adults or between children, or between children and adults—are due to misunderstandings. As soon as parents resolve not to treat their children arbitrarily,— that is, on the basis of their superior strength and authority,—they adopt a

plan of “reasoning” with them. This plan might work very well, if the parents only understood the children's way of reasoning, if they but realized that the child does not reason as do adults, that he reasons differently in each stage of his development.

Our manner of reasoning depends very closely upon our language. But every significant word that we use has a distinct meaning in the mind of the individual, depending altogether upon his experience. As the experience of the child is very meagre, compared to that of the grown-up person, it is no wonder that our everyday remarks are constant sources of misunderstanding to children.

The little girl who had been frequently reproved for not using her *right* hand came to have a positive dislike for her other hand, which she naturally understood to be *wrong* hand, and she did not wish to have anything wrong about her person. A boy was trying to tell his sister the meaning of “homesick.” “You know how it feels to be seasick, don't you? Well, it's the same way, only it's at home.”

Children are apt to attach to a word the first meaning that they learn in connection with it. Only with the increase of experience can a word come to have more than one meaning. Moreover, the child will apply what he hears with fatal exactness and literalness.

Two little girls were at a party and the older one found occasion to slap her sister's hand. The hostess reproved her for this, whereupon the little girl asked, “Isn't she my own sister?” The hostess had to admit that she was. “Well, I heard papa say that he can do what he likes with his own.”

Doing what we like with our own meant to the child exactly what the words said, without those qualifications which we naturally put in because of our greater experience.

Children learn with wonder that mother was once a baby, and that father was once a baby, and so on. Dr. Sully tells of the little girl who asked her mother, “When everybody was a baby, then who could be the nurse if they were all babies?” Thus shows real reasoning power; it was not the child's fault that she had no historical perspective, and so could not see the babyhoods of different people in their proper relations in time.

A little boy who was beginning to read deciphered a sign in a grocery store, “Families supplied.” He asked his mother whether they could not get a new baby there.

When Herbert was passing through the scissors stage he cut a hole in his father's coat. The father scolded him for spoiling his suit; Herbert calmly replied, “I did not cut your suit; I only cut the coat.” He resented this accusation, which in his mind was not merely an exaggeration, but entirely false, since a suit is a suit and a coat is a coat.

A little girl, while out with her nurse and brother, got lost by separating herself from the nurse's side. When she was at last found she was reprimanded for running away from the nurse. She felt that she was being unjustly treated, for she said, “I did not run away; I only *stood* away,” meaning, she had stepped around the corner to look in a window. If

she had been scolded for getting out of sight of the nurse, she would have felt justly reproved; but, accused of doing something she never did and never thought of doing,—that is, running away,—she naturally resented this.

Those who have to deal with children in an intimate way cannot be too scrupulous about how they use their words.

The logic of children often appears to us all wrong until we take the trouble to see how they come to their queer conclusions.

The story is told of a boy who was sent to the circus in the neighboring town by his uncle, who gave him an additional quarter "so you can ride back in case it rains." Well, it did rain, and Howard came back riding on the top seat, next to the driver, wet to the skin. Now, any grown-up person knows why he was to ride back "in case it rains"; but to Howard the association of ideas was directly between raining and riding, and not between riding and coming home dry.

This illustrates a very common difference between the reasoning of children and that of adults. We *select* ideas from a situation and combine them and come to conclusions. The child combines ideas, but he does not make any selection, and the simple explanation for this lies in the fact that the child has not enough experience to enable him to select what is significant. Thus a little girl, who had been too boisterous in her play, was called in by her mother and made to sit quietly in a chair for about ten minutes. At the end of this time her mother asked her whether she would "be good now." The child promised that she would, and was told that she might then go out to play again. As she arose she affectionately turned to the chair and said, "Thank you, dear chair, for making me so good." Having been declared "good" after sitting in the chair, she attributed the beneficent change in her behavior to the chair; and, being a polite little girl, she thanked the chair.

Very often these simple types of reasoning have their humorous aspects and we do not take them seriously. One winter a little boy who had always gone to bed regularly (he was four and a half years old then) began to call for some one to come to him after he was supposed to be asleep. He wanted to sit up and play, he wanted to get dressed, and he wanted something more to eat. This continued for several evenings, and it seemed impossible to get him back into his good habits. At last he was asked, "*Why* do you want to get up now?" and he answered at once, "Because it is winter now."

"Yes, it is winter now, but it is time for you to be asleep," he was told.

"But it says in the book that I must get up," he insisted.

"Which book?"

"I will show you," and he took from his shelf a copy of Stevenson's "Garden of Verses," and turned to the picture opposite the poem that begins:

In winter I get up at night And dress by yellow candle light.

To him this meant that in winter, after going to bed, *at night*, one must get up and dress. It is very likely many children who have had this delightful poem read to them have interpreted it in the same way, but probably very few parents have taken the pains to trace their children's unaccountable "misbehavior" at bedtime to such a source.

This same poem produced in another child quite a different train of reasoning, for "Why did the little girl get up at night and sleep in the daytime?" he asked, "Was she a trained nurse?" It then became necessary to recall that an aunt of the child's, who *was* a trained nurse, often slept at home during the day, after having worked with some patient at night.

There is no doubt that many of the crotchets and "perversities" of a child have their origin in chains of reasoning that are perfectly legitimate, in view of the past experiences of the young mind, although not in harmony with the reasoning of more mature minds. The parent spends much time and energy, and much heartburning, sometimes, to overcome these whims. What is needed is a patient and sympathetic attempt to discover how the child has come to his queer ideas and desires.

The annoyance that children cause us with their questionings is due very largely to the fact that we cannot answer their questions, since the reasoning that prompts them is too searching. A little boy shocked and vexed his grandmother, who was trying to teach him the elements of theology, by asking "Who made God?" It is very likely that every normal child has asked the same question in one form or another. This attempt to reach back to the very beginning of causes resembles in many ways the speculations of the mediaeval metaphysicians, and should certainly not be discouraged. We need not, on the other hand, make the effort to answer every question a child may ask, for at a certain stage in his development he will get the habit of asking questions without really caring for the answers. But the questions are worth hearing, in most cases, just to help us understand how the child *does* reason. Some of the questions indicate a great deal of reasoning of a very valuable kind. When the little boy asks, "Why don't I see two things with my two eyes?" or when the little girl looks up from her dolls and asks, "Am I real, or just pretend, like my doll?" they show that they have been thinking. When a child has passed through the metaphysical stage of reasoning, he will be more interested in animals and other objects of Nature; and his questions will have to do more with the operation of processes —how he grows, and how fishes breathe in the water, and how birds fly. Later, he wants to know how things work, what makes the locomotive go, how the noise goes through the telephone, how the incubator makes chickens come out of eggs. The reasoning of the child may lead to weird conclusions, but it is real reasoning, and can be improved not by being ridiculed, nor by being suppressed, but by being sympathetically understood and encouraged.

Perhaps the most serious phase of the peculiarities of children's reasoning appears with older children when it comes to reasoning about right and wrong conduct. Professor Swift, of Washington University, has made a careful study of this subject, from replies given by many men to questions about their ideas as boys. It seems that men who are

irreproachable in their moral standards pass through a stage in which they consider it legitimate fun to rob orchards or to commit petty thefts.

Children draw fine distinctions between *wrong* acts and acts that are *not very wrong*, though they may not be *quite right*. One man says, “I distinguished between *taking money*, *real stealing*, and *taking fruit*.” Another says of fruit taking, “I only partly regarded it as stealing.” One man writes, “When a close-fisted employer refused to let me have my clothes at cost, I pocketed enough of his change to bring my clothes down to the cost mark.” Few regarded taking money from their parents as “very bad,” and distinguished between such stealing and taking money from strangers.

A boy of fifteen was reproved for holding his ear to the keyhole of a room in which his mother and sisters were having an animated discussion. The appellation “eavesdropper” did not disconcert him in the least. On the contrary, he undertook to justify his conduct on the ground that he was being discussed, and as he had no “dictagraph” he was obliged to do the listening in person. The fact that the dictagraph had been so frequently used for getting information that was later used in court was to him a sufficient justification of his conduct.

It is well known that all children pass through the stage illustrated by these cases, in which they have the savage's conception of right and wrong. For most children the difference between going to the reformatory or jail and turning out decent men and women is one of wholesome and sympathetic environment. Undue severity, no less than bad example, confirms many a youth in these habits—which should represent but a passing stage in his development.

Adults should not read their own ideas of morality into the acts of their children and then catalogue them as right or wrong. Most children's acts are neither right nor wrong: they are merely expressions of feelings and ideas peculiar to the stage of development. With young children ideas of right and wrong divide themselves into acts which are permitted and those which are forbidden. They have no conception of right and wrong beyond that.

Many an act that a boy commits, which we consider wrong, is but the expression of the instincts of his age. Our duty consists in helping him to pass through that stage without making permanent habits of these temporary impulses. This help must not be given through branding the acts as wicked or criminal, nor is moralizing itself generally effective. Help must come through providing adequate opportunities for play and games and work that will use up surplus energy both of mind and body. Above all, help must come through the healthy examples and the constant manifestation of high ideals in the home.

Every normal child will in time respond to these influences. There are, unfortunately, some children that will not develop beyond this stage of primitive, savage instincts; but such abnormal children are rare and we cannot deal with them here.

With the problem of reasoning, then, as with all other aspects of child training, it is a question of understanding, of being in close relations with one's children, and being able to fathom the workings of their minds.

IX. WORK AND PLAY

All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. And it is this same lack of play that produces so many dull men and women; for the spirit of play is the spirit of youth and spontaneity and joy. Yet work and play have so much in common that it seems unfortunate indeed that all of us have not learned to retain our youth when work becomes necessary.

I trust that there are few to-day who still believe that play is wicked. If we desire our children to grow up into healthy and joyful and moral men and women, then must we consider play a necessity of life. For play is more than merely a pleasant means for passing the time; it is a school of life, it is a means for physical, mental, and moral education.

The young child, before he is old enough to play horse, or to imitate other activities he sees going on around him, gets his play from handling a rattle or a ball, from random movements of his legs and arms, or from playing with his fingers and his toes. He derives satisfaction from the sensations of touch and sight and sound, as well as from the feeling of freedom and the sensation of his active muscles. But this infantile play is not only satisfying to the child; it is a means for learning the use of his little hands and arms and legs. When the baby learns to crawl, and later to walk, he derives pleasure from the exercise of his newly-acquired arts, and at the same time attains perfection in the use of his limbs and in the correlation of his muscles. He is also gaining strength with his growth, for these muscles will not gain in strength unless they are exercised. Of course, the child does not know about these advantages of play; but the mother should know and give the growing child every opportunity to exercise himself in every possible way; for thus alone can he gain in strength, in endurance, and in confidence.

When the child is a little older his play takes on new forms, for he is now deliberately *making* things: the chairs become wagons and animals, the corner of the room may be made into a lake, a pencil or a button-hook is quite long enough for a fishing pole, and a handful of beans may be converted into all kinds of merchandise, coins for barter, a flock of birds, or seaside pebbles. That is, as the child's experience broadens, he finds more to imitate, he exercises his imagination more, and combines into more complex plays the materials he finds about him. But all the time the child is *working*, as much so as an artisan at his task; and all the time the child is *learning*, more rapidly probably than if he were at school; and all the time the child is *playing*, that is, enjoying the outlet of his impulses.

[Illustration: Work is play.]

Play has been called the ideal type of exercise, because it is the kind of exercise that occupies the whole child, his mental as well as his physical side—and later, also, the moral side. In play the exercise is regulated by the interests, so that, while there may be extreme exertion, there is not the same danger of overstrain as is possible with work that he is forced to do. In play the exercise is carried on with freedom of the spirit, so that the flow of blood and the feeling of exhilaration make for health.

When children begin to play at work their activities are not entirely imitative, although the kind of work they choose will be determined by the kinds of activities that go on about them. The child has real interests in work; and these should be encouraged and cultivated. The chief interest is, perhaps, the growing sense of mastery over the materials which the child uses. He can make blocks take on any form he pleases; although the first houses he tries to build are apt to be just a random piling of his material, there follows a growing deliberation and planning, so that he comes at last to make what he has *intended* to make, and not merely produce an accidental result.

The earlier plays of the child are not at all in the nature of games; there is not at first the need for a companion. There is no special order in which the various acts of his play have to be carried out. When he plays horse on a stick, or is a parade all by himself, or plays house in the corner, a few simple movements are repeated until the child is tired of them, or until something occurs to shift his interest. Nor is there in these early plays a special point that marks the end of the interest. In games, however, these three factors are always present: it takes two or more to play a game; there is a definite order or succession of events, and there is a definite finish or climax. And as we watch the children at their games we can see their whole mental and moral development unfold before us, for nothing is more characteristic of a child's stage of development than the games in which he is interested.

While we are content to let the younger children play as much as they like—because very often the more they play, the less they annoy us—we are all inclined to expect of the older children an increasing share of work and a declining interest in play. Some of us are even inclined to discourage the play instinct as the children grow older, because we have come to think of play as something not only frivolous and useless, but even a harmful waste of time. Now, the educational value of play keeps pace with the development of the child. That is to say, the child outgrows interest in games about as fast as these lose their educational value. The new games that the child takes up year after year always have something new to teach him.

[Illustration: Let them romp in winter as well as in summer.]

The plays of the early period develop his sense perceptions, they give practice in seeing and hearing and touching with quick discernment. Then for four or five years play gives increased mastery of the child's own body, and over the objects and materials with which he plays. Running and jumping are for skill and for speed; the competitive instincts drive each to do the best he can for himself. Later the games give exercise in the adjustment of the child not only to his material surroundings, but also to other children; in other words,

he learns to take his place among other human beings. From the games in which the children take their turns at some activity the timid child learns that he has equal rights with others, and acquires self-confidence; whereas the child disposed to be overbearing learns the equally necessary lesson that others have rights which he must respect. Every child learns from these games how to be a good loser as well as how to be a good winner. Just those qualities that make an adult an agreeable associate in business or in social dealings are brought out by these games as they can be by no ordinary form of work which the children have a chance to do.

It is only in very recent times that we have begun to notice that the work required of the children in the schools is of a kind that either ignores the development of the social instincts or actually hinders them, so that the moral or social effect of successful school work is frequently very undesirable. When a child is set to do some work by himself, even if the work is not too difficult for him, there is no exercise for the social instinct, and the work must be very interesting indeed to hold his continued attention. As the child grows older there is increasing need for social stimulation of the cooperative kind and less of the emulative kind. Where the experiment has been tried of having the children approach their school work as they approach a game, with the feeling of getting at an interesting goal, with opportunities for each to do his best for the whole group and to help the others, the work becomes as interesting as a game, and acquires the same educational value as a good game well played. In the home we might often get the necessary work done with more expedition and with better spirit if we recognized the child's need of constant outlet for his emotions, and if we recognized the depressing effect of routine and solitude and monotony. One of the chief reasons why working girls prefer to go to shops and factories, as against domestic service, lies just in this natural instinct for society. The work of the household has much more variety than the work of a factory; but most of it has to be done in solitude, without the stimulation that comes from the companionship of others doing the same thing, or at least working within reach of the voice.

[Illustration: In their games they should learn to lose as well as to win.]

The truly wonderful transformations in character that have been worked in girls and in boys by means of well-organized play have taught us the moral value of team-work for the older children. In these games, which come at a period when the child has already acquired considerable skill and strength, the chief interest is in doing the best for the team, so that the individual learns the importance of subordinating himself to a common purpose. He learns the joy of contributing his best to his “side” without considering his individual glory or gains. In this way he acquires that negative but very important side of self-control which consists in the ability to *avoid* doing what the impulse would drive him to. He learns also the importance of dreary drudgery, in his practice work, for acquiring special skill, and a boy will spend hours in such dull practice, animated by the desire not to excel some other individual, but by the desire to help his team win. He learns not only to take his place in the game, but to judge his companions by their special ability and by their value to the group, rather than by clothes or personal feelings or other outward and incidental facts. All these things the team game teaches as no mere *instruction*, whether in school or home, can teach.

We have learned from the results of these play activities with all kinds of children in the city and in the country, of rich and of poor, that the spirit of the game is not only capable of stimulating the growing boy and girl to a tremendous amount of exertion, but also of organizing his or her feelings and ideals into effective moral and social standards. And when the same spirit is applied to work, we can get the same valuable educative results, with the addition of a higher appreciation of work as work than usually comes from an early experience with doing necessary but disagreeable tasks. For example, in one city the shop work of classes of boys was organized on a cooperative basis. The boys worked in teams for the making of desks or cabinets. The results, as measured by finished product or by the quality of the workmanship, were far ahead of what the same instructors could get from the same boys when the attempt was made to stimulate the workers by means of prizes and individual rewards. Children can learn to work together as well as to play together. If you have noticed that two workers very often do half as much work in a given time as one worker, it is because they have not learned to work together—they have been denied the opportunity of learning this, and now take occasion, when they do get together, to do almost everything but work.

There are many opportunities in the ordinary household to teach girls and boys to do useful work in a spirit very similar to that which they put into their games. It may not be possible to make all the necessary work as interesting as games, but the remoter purpose of the work, whether it is to accomplish something whose need is recognized by the child, or the hope of some reward, should make for close attention to the task in hand. For example, after a certain age, sweeping and other household tasks lose their play interest; but if the girl has become skilful enough to do the sweeping without tiring, her recognition of the necessity of the work or her thought of what she wants to do when the task is accomplished should make it possible to get through with this work without a feeling of hardship. Some educators approve of allotting definite tasks to the girls and boys, and compensating them in definite amounts. This gives them not only a measure of the value of their service, but makes them feel the responsibility of each contributing toward the maintenance of the establishment. The main thing is that the children shall not look upon work as a cruel imposition; and to this end we should develop the spirit of helpfulness and cooperation—and to transfer this spirit, already developed in play, to the work that has to be accomplished.

One form of the expression of the play instinct has come lately to arouse a great deal of public interest, and that is the dance. Books have been written about the history of the dance, the esthetics of the dance, the technique of the dance, the symbolism of the dance, and many other aspects. What concerns the parent chiefly is to know that the dance is at once a healthful exercise, an important aid to social adjustment, and a valuable safety-valve for the emotions.

With the rapid growth of our cities we have come suddenly to realize that nearly half of the nation's children have no *place* in which to play, since the open fields and vacant lots have been invaded by warehouses and factories and tenements. And so the playground movement has gained rapid headway. Playgrounds have been established, and placed in charge of competent and enthusiastic leaders, who are teaching the children something

they never should have unlearned. But at the same time we are coming to realize that the children in the country and in small towns, although they have plenty of space, have not really had the opportunity to get the most out of their play activities. It would seem that even the instinct of play can be made to work to better purpose when it is intelligently directed. It is our duty, then, to provide not only play space and play time, but also play material and, where possible, play direction. It is our further duty to keep alive in ourselves, as far as possible, the spirit of play; for there is no one thing that will do so much to keep us young and in sympathy with our children as the ability to play as they play, and to play with them.

Excepting only the infant when playing with his fingers and toes, the child must play with some *person* or with some *thing*. The selection of suitable toys becomes a more serious problem than is commonly realized, when we once recognize the great influence of play upon the child.

Stepping into the toy shop, we are confronted by a multitude of objects, the variety and quantity of which are distracting. Everything that the ingenuity of man could devise is here presented to our astonished eyes, and children gaze upon the great spectacle and are delighted. If we go to the store just to be amused or to buy *something*, a very indefinite something for a child of a certain age, we are quickly satisfied. But if we have in our mind some idea as to what is really good for the child who is to receive the gift, it is just as hard to find the right thing to-day in the immense, up-to-date toy store as in the little general store that "also keeps toys." The manufacture of toys has grown to a tremendous industry, but with no ideal behind it, no guiding educational principle. Toys are made to sell,—having fulfilled that function the manufacturer is not further concerned. Consequently, toys are made to attract the eye; durability, use, and need from the child's point of view are rarely considered.

In selecting toys we must not consider what would amuse or entertain its, but solely the child's need, and this need will differ at the various stages in his development.

[Illustration: Don't forget how to play with the children.]

For the little child who has no skill, we want to get toys that exercise the large muscles; he should have blocks that are large. It is a common mistake to suppose small toys are suitable for small children; within certain limits just the opposite is true.

Young children can also use toys that merely need to be manipulated without having much significance. Things that can be taken apart and put together are enjoyed and are very instructive.

A child should get from his toys a bare suggestion of the object, and not a lifelike representation that will be of interest to the critical adult. Refinement of finish and realistic representation are entirely wasted on the child. A massive wooden dog or bird is better than a furry or feathery one. It is enough of a dog or bird, so far as the child is concerned, and if it can stand rough handling, so much the better. For the little boy or girl

an animal that can stand up or be drawn about by a string is quite satisfactory; but before the age of three years is reached the animal must have movable parts, so that it may be put into various positions, be made “to do things.”

At about three years of age the child also comes more and more to see things in relation to each other and no longer as isolated objects. At this time, if he has a cow, he wants also a stable in which to keep her, the doll calls for a carriage and bed, and so on. This is something to keep in mind in planning our purchases.

Children like to reproduce in their plays the processes which they see going on around them or about which they hear. This is in a way their preparation for the activities of adult life. If the little boy or girl wants to play farm, or menagerie, or laundry, or grocery store, it is not necessary to buy the whole outfit at once. The child will probably not be ready for it, and if he gets more than he can comfortably use, he will be overwhelmed and many objects are likely to be neglected.

Let us say, for instance, that your little boy has received a milk-cart and horse for his birthday and he has exhausted the possibilities of play with them. Now here is Christmas, and you can give him or make him a nice, substantial barn and someone else can give him a cow. Immediately the possibilities for play are greatly multiplied. He can take the cow to pasture, bring her into the barn to be milked, take the milk to market and store away hay for the winter, and so on indefinitely. In time he can have a well-equipped barnyard, build pig-sties and chicken-coops with his blocks, and spend many happy and instructive hours. A great advantage in having toys grouped about some central idea is that several children can play at the same time and each particular toy stays in use much longer than it would otherwise.

I have spoken of your little boy as the manager of the toy farm, but in these days, when women are entering every profession, there is no reason to suppose that it is not your little girl who will need those things. Still, although we know that, in spite of traditions, little boys like to play with dolls and little girls like to play with other things, we shall, for the sake of convenience, stick to the traditions and discuss the little girl in connection with dolls.

There is nothing that will give your little daughter greater pleasure and at the same time be more instructive than an opportunity to run a whole doll house. By this I do not mean the elaborate constructions that are sold in the large shops under that name. No, a packing case, painted and divided into four parts, will serve the purpose far better. Gradually the different rooms can be furnished, and in the meantime there is plenty of fun and much development in trying to maintain the family of dolls under pioneer conditions, calling for all sorts of clever makeshifts.

There are numberless things that will go to make up the little girl's doll house, and her activities can be extended over the entire period during which she cares to play with dolls. At first she will be satisfied with handling her baby and putting her to sleep. Later she will want to dress and undress it. Before long she will have a whole family of dolls

and will want to prepare their meals for them, sew and wash their clothes, and keep the house in order. These growing needs on her part are just as real as the needs adults feel, and it would be just as unwise to get her a new doll, when she needs most of all a wash-boiler for her kitchen, as it would be to buy for yourself a picture, when you really need a pair of new spectacles.

All the different articles needed for the running of the doll's house can now be bought separately. In buying the different articles, the things to keep in mind are usability, simplicity, and durability. The furniture that you buy or make must be able to serve the ostensible purpose of doll's furniture. It is better to get one chair that is of the right size for the doll, well proportioned and strong enough to stand the handling of the owner, than a whole set of “pretty” and flimsy and useless furniture that you can buy in a gay box for the same price.

Of course, it is understood that the principles of usability, simplicity, and durability apply to the dolls themselves. It is now easy to obtain dolls with indestructible heads and with jointed bodies made of durable material. The little baby will love the doll with a felt head. It can stand being loved hard without losing some of its features. To give a little girl a doll that is so finely dressed and so daintily constructed that she is permitted to come out of her box only on state occasions is a violation of every sound principle of child training and fair dealing.

I have mentioned, as examples of the kind of toys that can be bought singly and grouped about some central idea, the farm and the doll's house, but, of course, there are many other things—railroads with their equipment, dairies, stores of all kinds, etc.

Besides the toys that are related to various lines of activity, each child, as soon as he is old enough, wants the opportunity to work with materials and tools. The youngest children can have beads to string, mosaic blocks with which patterns can be made, etc. For the older children you can get materials for sewing, painting, parquetry work, and the like. There are boxes containing wooden and iron construction strips out of which bridges, houses, airships, and all sorts of exciting things can be made.

For the growing boy nothing is more appropriate than some carpentry tools of his own. Here again we must remember that it is better to buy a few good tools and gradually build up an equipment than to buy a set that looks well enough in the store, but goes to pieces under real usage.

A printing-press or well-constructed toy typewriter, a camera or scroll saw, will afford hours of helpful amusement and instruction.

Musical instruments are always acceptable. The metalophone is one of the simplest from which you can get real music. The cheapest is just as usable as the more expensive, although, of course, it does not have so wide a range of notes.

It is impossible to enumerate all the indoor group games that are offered, but in selecting a game you must make sure that it really has some sense in it, and that it does not stimulate the gambling spirit, as do so many of the games with dice or a spinning wheel as a part of the equipment.

All toys that encourage healthy outdoor sports are worth while. A great deal of the progress in toy-making has been along mechanical lines, until we are confronted with the most intricate mechanical contrivances. They are interesting at an exhibition, and most likely the child will be attracted by them and will want them, but only to look at and own. He will tire of them much more quickly than he would of the simple, usable toy. In this respect the children of the rich are to be pitied. They are overloaded with these expensive, mechanical toys which overstimulate them at first and later bore them. The educative value of simple games with sticks and stones, or anything the child may happen to pick up, is far greater and calls for more exercise of imagination and ingenuity and the other qualities we desire to foster than is that of the elaborate mechanical toys.

It would be very desirable if all the skill and enterprise that is devoted to the development of the toy industry were applied to making toys simpler, more durable, and cheaper, instead of making them more elaborate, more realistic, and more flimsy. However, the desirable kinds of toys will not be manufactured in larger quantities until an enlightened parenthood both demands them and refuses to buy the glittering heart-breakers that look so charming in the shop, but go to pieces in the child's hands.

It is far better to have fewer and better toys than more of an inferior quality. The thing to keep in mind is that a toy is neither an artistic model, an aesthetic ornament, nor a mechanical spectacle, but should be a stimulus to call forth self-activity, invention, ingenuity, imagination, and skill.

X. CHILDREN'S GANGS, CLUBS, AND FRIENDSHIPS

“What a plague boys are!” sighed Mrs. Brown. “That White boy has been getting our Harry into all sorts of mischief, and I can't make Harry give up that gang.”

Mrs. Green agreed that boys were a plague. Her Jack went with a lot of boys, too, and they were always up to some sort of tricks which she was quite sure *her* boy would never do if it were not for those other boys. And Mrs. Green was right. Any boy will do things when he is with the gang that he never would think of doing alone— and that he wouldn't dare to do alone, if he did think of them. Even your boy—and mine, too, I hope. That's the way of boys.

What we mothers will have to do is to stop fretting about the other boys in the gang who spoil our boys, and about the mischief and noise and dirty boots and staying away late for meals, and get down to a practical way of making all the boys in the gang as we find them into a lot of decent young men. We shall have to stop trying to make boys do what it is impossible for them to do; and we shall have to stop trying to keep the boys from

doing what it is absolutely necessary that they should do, if they are to develop into the decent young men we have in mind.

The modern way, the efficient way, of treating children is to find out their instincts and then use these almost irresistible forces of nature as a means of directing their development. And that is what we shall have to do with the boy and his gang, and that is what we shall have to do with the girl and her set. The boy is a more serious problem because, under the promptings of his instincts, he soon becomes indifferent to the attractions and amusements of the home and seeks the companionship of boys of his own age, and he seeks activities that cannot, for the most part, be carried on in the home. The girl, on the other hand, remains much longer subject to the will of her mother and to the conventions and standards of the home; she remains for a longer period satisfied with the kinds of activities that can be carried on at home.

We have been told over and over again that the instincts of childhood are all for activity, and a few of us have trained ourselves not to expect the children to *be still* all the time. Of course, there are times when we simply must have them be still, and, of course, we allow the teachers to insist upon the children being still in school. But we recognize that they must play and romp and run and shout, and we are willing even to spend public funds for playgrounds. This shows that we can learn, and that we can make use of our knowledge. It is necessary only that we extend our knowledge of the instincts of our children just as fast as we can make use of more.

Up to the age of about ten, boys are apparently satisfied to play games by themselves, or to play with others in ways that let each look out pretty much for himself. At this age, however, a change begins to appear. Now the boy tends to associate himself with others of the same age, and before you know it your son “belongs” to some “gang.” Every street in a town and every corner in a city has its gang. And if your boy has red blood and hard grit in him, he is a member of one of these gangs. He can't help it. He does not join because it is the fashion, or because he is afraid to keep out, or because he has social ambitions. He joins because it is his instinct to join with others in carrying on the activities to which other instincts drive him. If you stand in the way of the gang, you are fighting against one of the strongest forces in human nature.

Now if you feel the way Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Green felt about the gangs, I do not blame you. But you must not stop there. Let's try to find out first what the gang means to the boys and what it means to the race. When a boy joins a gang, he does not discard his instinct for play or for running and shouting. He simply takes on a new relation to the world about him. As a member of the gang, he still runs and plays and shouts; but now he has become conscious of his place in the world, and that place is with his fellow-members, surrounded by all sorts of enemies and dangers and obstacles to his well-being. In his gang he finds comfort and support for his struggle with the outside world. Here he finds opportunity for satisfying exchange of thought; here he finds sympathy and understanding such as he can get nowhere else.

The gang, without a written code in most cases, without formal rules, without very definite aims, even, nevertheless has a moral scheme of its own that every boy understands and lives up to as earnestly and as devotedly as ever man followed the dictates of conscience. The gang demands of the boy unfailing loyalty, and—what is more—it usually gets it. Of how many other institutions or organizations can as much be said? The gang demands fair play and fidelity among its members, and it usually gets these. The gang demands devotion and self-sacrifice of its members, and the boy who cannot show these qualities becomes more effectually ostracized than any defaulting bank official or corrupt politician. These fine virtues, then—loyalty, honor, devotion—are cultivated by the gang just at the time when the instincts for them are strongest, and at a time when no other agency is prepared to do the work.

For you will realize, when you once think of it, how much we coddle the baby when he is cute, how we shower him with toys far in excess of what he can use or enjoy, how we fuss and fondle him, and how much thought we give to every possible and impossible want; and how, on the other hand, we neglect the boy when he enters upon that most unattractive, but very critical, age in which he finds other boys more interesting than his sister and her dolls, when he cares more for other boys than he does for his mother and her parlor, when he thinks more of the "fellers" than he does of his teacher and her lessons. Just at this time, when the boy is beginning to wonder vaguely and to long just as indefinitely, we abandon him to his own resources and to Mrs. White's Bob, the leader of the gang.

The problem that confronts us is: How can we save and strengthen the fine qualities which this spontaneous association with other boys produces without encouraging the lawlessness and the destructiveness and the secretiveness of the gang? First of all, we mothers must recognize not only that the boy cannot be happy without his associates, but also that the social virtues will never be developed in him at all if we keep him at home away from the others or restricted to one or two play-mates—which we may like to select for him. Then, when this is perfectly clear to us, we will take the next step, which will be to use all the resources of the homes and of the community to change the antisocial gang into a club. The difference between a gang and a *club* is not a matter of clean clothes and "nice" manners. It is a difference in mental attitude. The gang has rules and it has power. The club has put its rules into form and it *knows* what it can do and what it wants to do. In other words, the gang is a casual, random group that drifts about in the village or in the city, subject to every passing influence, whereas the club is a deliberate, purposeful organization with definite aims and developments. Both meet the needs of the growing boy for association; both give the social instincts and virtues suitable opportunity for exercise.

This problem of giving the boys a chance to get together and do what their instincts drive them to do is not one merely for the mothers who can provide for their boys little or no supervision, and whose boys play in the streets and vacant lots. The problem is just as great in the case of the well-to-do, who provide constant supervision for their children. Indeed, it is a serious question whether the condition of the children of wealthier families is not in this respect more dangerous than that of the less wealthy. With the boys of the

street the problem is how to divert the activities into suitable channels; with the closely-guarded boys of the wealthy the problem is how to develop the spirit of loyalty and self-sacrifice and honor, which have been suppressed by the restricted and artificial associations of the solicitous home. Both kinds of boys must be left free to form their own associations, but the groups must be so directed in their club activities (without, however, suspecting that they are being directed) as to connect their interests with lawful amusements, civic needs, and social relations. The great danger is that when adults take a hand in these matters they fix their attention upon the civic and moral virtues and overlook the instincts of activity and sociability which call the gang into being, and the club degenerates into a preachy Sunday-school class.

[Illustration: The boys need a chance to get together.]

In organizing clubs, or rather in presenting opportunities for the organization of clubs, we must recognize that bodily activity, taking the form of athletics, or of workshop effort, or of camping, hunting, etc., is a fundamental condition of healthy growth for the boys and girls. As every group must have its meeting place, this should be first provided, and it should be of a nature that allows gymnastics and hammering and boxing to go on without any restrictions beyond those required by the nature of the little animals. That is, there is need for sleep and rest and meals—and perhaps certain definite hours for school and church—but beyond such disagreeable though necessary interruptions the meeting place of the club should be a busy place at all decent hours. We are tempted to force literature and debating upon our clubs; these things usually come later, and appeal at best to but relatively few boys. Literature and debating are good, but they can never take the place of parallel bars and boxing gloves and hammer and saw.

We are also tempted to pick out the boys for the clubs that we are interested in. This is a serious mistake. It is this sort of thing that causes the failure of so many well-meaning attempts to redeem the children of the “slums” or of the street. We must let the groups form spontaneously; the boys' instincts are keener in detecting the sneak and the coward and the traitor than yours are, and if the club has the right start, the undesirable citizen will either adopt the morals of the club or be squeezed out. And the right start is chiefly a good meeting place. It is here that the church and the school and the home can cooperate. In the larger cities the settlement has pointed the way by carrying on practically all of the work with children through the medium of clubs.

It is not necessary for every parent to furnish a suitable meeting place; indeed, each club needs only one meeting place. But every home can contribute something. If you have not the suitable garret or barn or shed, you can supply the baseball outfit, or the Indian clubs, or the work-bench, or some of the tools. You can lend your homes for those not very frequent occasions when the boys are quite satisfied to have a quiet evening of table games or theatricals, or imitation camp-fire with chestnuts to roast and songs to sing. You can make up lunch-baskets for fishing or tramping trips, or you can sew tapes on the old pants for “uniforms.”

It does not matter so much *what* you do, so long as you do as much as you can, and, above all, if you show an "interest." The bond of sympathy and intimacy that comes from such an understanding and from the hearty cooperation of the home with these natural instincts of the children is an immense gain to the individual parent, as well as to the individual child. Instead of friction and opposition of forces, there results a cooperation of forces that all make for good.

As for the community, the village or town that can provide meeting places for all of its groups of young people, under the direction of those who understand them and sympathize with them, with suitable equipment for physical activities of all kinds, can make no better investment of the money that such a venture would cost. For it is in such association that the boys and girls learn to be members of a group, and eventually of the larger group that includes us all. The good citizen is the one who has developed the instincts of loyalty and devotion and self-sacrifice and honor, and has directed them toward the community. The bad citizen is the one in whom these virtues were never developed, or one in whom these traits remain in the gang stage.

In the attempts that have been made to direct the instincts of children we have given the boys much more attention than the girls, for the simple reason that the boys have given us more trouble. Still, the girls should not be neglected. They are entitled to all the advantages that can be derived from organized opportunity to associate with one another and to develop the social virtues. They should also have the opportunity for physical exercise and development which the boy gets because he makes violent demand for it, but which the girl needs just as much.

It has been found unwise to have mixed clubs of boys and girls in the early years, and even later, when girls and boys could profitably associate together, they like to have their separate groups for special activities. For the strictly sociable times, however, boys and girls may be brought together at any age.

Apart from the other advantages to be gained from the club, the girl or boy will be saved from his friends. There is a real danger that children who do not get into larger groups will take up with a single chum or intimate. While it is true that many lasting and valued friendships start in these early years, the danger is nevertheless a serious one. Chums or intimates, in their tendency to get away from other people, may do nothing worse than carry on silly conversations; but they may also read pernicious literature and develop bad habits. Activities in a group are more open and less likely to be of a secret nature.

Intimacies at this early age will spring up for all kinds of superficial reasons. In a study made some years ago these were some of the reasons given for the formation of friendships: "We were cousins," "He taught me to swim," "We had the same birthday," "She had a red apron," "Her brown eyes and hair," "Neither of us had a sister." A large proportion of the children who were questioned gave as the only reason for their intimate friendship the fact that they "live near each other." However absurd these reasons may appear to us, we are compelled by what we know of the child's mind to respect these

attachments. But if there is any danger in the intimacy—and there often is—the only remedy is encouragement of association in a large group. “There is safety in numbers.”

So, whether we are more concerned with the mischief done by the gang, or with the danger of intimate chums, whether we care more for the development of good citizenship in boys and girls, or merely to make the children happy while they are growing up, it is necessary for parents to use all the means at their disposal to organize and encourage the social activities of the young people to the fullest extent.

XI. CHILDREN'S IDEALS AND AMBITIONS

When you take pains to instruct your children in the way they should go, it is because you have in mind certain standards of what a child should do, or of what kind of an adult you wish your child to become. In other words, you look to your ideals to guide you in the training of the child. We all appreciate more or less vaguely the importance of ideals in shaping character, and for this reason we value ideals, although it is considered smart for adults to sneer at ideals and idealism—which are supposed somehow to be opposed to the “practical" affairs of life. But in a way there is nothing more truly practical than a worthy ideal.

Where there is no vision the people perish; and that is just as true of the individual as it is of a nation. Moreover, it is the *youth* who shall see the visions and draw from them the inspiration for higher and better things. Fortunately, every normal child develops ideals. It is for more experienced people to provide the opportunities for the formation of desirable ideals, to guide the ideals after they are formed into practicable channels, to use the ideals to reinforce the will in carrying out our practical purposes in the training of the child.

You no doubt find it easy enough to recognize and to encourage ideals that are in harmony with your own, or that seem to you worthy and likely to have a favorable influence upon your child's career or character. When five-year-old Freddy says that he wants to become a lawyer or a doctor, you encourage him. You say, “That's fine, my boy,” and in your mind's eye you see him climbing to fame and fortune. But when Freddy says that he wants to be a policeman and marry the candy-lady, you laugh at him, and you certainly do *not* encourage him. But in Freddy's mind doctor and lawyer mean no more than policeman; they involve no more important social service, they mean no more dignity in personal position, they suggest nothing more of anything that is worth while. For whatever it is that Freddy wants to be at any moment is to him the sum of all that is to him worth while—and that is just what an ideal ought to be.

This is not a plea to cruel parents in behalf of smoothing Freddy's path toward the coveted post—or the course of his courtship of the candy-lady's daughter. It is simply an effort to point out how important it is to avoid shattering early in life that precious mirror in which alone visions are to be seen. When you have ridiculed the policeman out of further consideration, you are likely with the same act to have weakened Freddy's faith in ideals—and to this extent you have loosened one of the safest props of his character. We

need not be afraid of the crude and short-sighted ideals of the young child. With the growth of his experience his ideals will expand. We should fear rather to infect him with the vulgar disrespect for all ideals.

In a few years Freddy has his heart set on charting the blank spaces on his geography map, and he has never a thought for the girls. It is the same Freddy, but he has in the meanwhile roamed far from the home neighborhood—in imagination—and has discovered new heroes and new types of heroism. The policeman and the candy-lady are still at their old posts, but Freddy ignores them because his ideals have grown with his experience and his information, as well as with his bodily growth and development.

Study of thousands of children in all parts of this country, in England and in Germany, has shown that the young people begin to form ideal images of what they consider desirable, or beautiful, or right rather early in life. They form ideals of virtue as well as ideals of happiness, and these ideals reflect their experiences and their surroundings to a remarkable degree. Thus, there are differences between the ideals formed by country children and those formed by city children, between the ideals of poor children and those of wealthy ones, between the ideals of English children and those of American or German children. But, aside from all these differences, it is found that the ideals vary with the sex of the child, and also with the age, so that each child passes through a series of stages marked by characteristic types of ideals.

As early as the age of nine years children have expressed themselves as looking forward to “doing good” in the world, or to making themselves “good.” The age at which this impulse to service or to personal perfection may take form must depend upon many things besides the peculiar characteristics of the individual child. Jessie's ideals concerning “being good” will be shaped by what she hears and sees about her. If you speak frequently about the foreign missions, she may think of being good as something that has to do with the heathen. If the family conversation takes into consideration the sick and the needy, Jessie's ideal may be dressed like a Red Cross nurse. If you never speak of the larger problems of community welfare, or of social needs, or of moral advance in the home, where Robert has a chance to hear you, he can get suggestions toward such ideals only after he has read enough to become acquainted with these problems and the corresponding lines of service for himself.

Answers received from hundreds of girls and boys would seem to show that virtue and goodness are desirable to children at a certain stage of their development chiefly, if not solely, because they bring material or social benefits. Virtue is rewarded not by any internal or spiritual satisfaction, but by freer access to the candy supply or to the skating pond. The right is that which is allowable, or that which may be practiced with impunity. The wrong is that which is forbidden or punishable. Of course, this attitude toward moral values should not continue through life. We should do what we can to establish higher ideals of right and wrong. How soon this change will come must depend very largely on where the emphasis is laid by those around the child. If, when you give Robert a piece of candy, you always impress him with the idea that this is his compensation for having been “good,” he will retain this association between virtue and material reward long past

the age when he can already appreciate the satisfaction that comes from exercising his instinct to be helpful, or from doing what he thinks is right. If, however, the idea in the home is that all goes well and all feel cheerful and happy because every one is trying to do the right thing, the various indulgences and liberties will mean to the child merely the material manifestations of the good feeling that prevails, and not rewards of virtue. So far as possible, rewards and punishments should be directed toward the *deed* and not the child. The aim should be to make the child derive his highest satisfaction from carrying out his own ideals of conduct, rather than from the reward for that conduct. The approbation of those he honors and loves should gradually replace the material reward.

To the child the ideal of success may mean two entirely different things. At one stage it may mean the satisfaction of accomplishing a set task, whether selected by himself or imposed by some one else. Later, it comes to mean excelling some other child in a contest. Even a child of four or five years gets a great deal of satisfaction from contemplating a house he has built out of his blocks, or the row of mud pies. This satisfaction gradually comes to be something quite distinct from the pleasure of *doing*, and is an important element in the ideal of workmanship. As the child grows older the ideal of successful accomplishment grows stronger, and, if it is retained throughout life, it contributes a large share toward the individual's happiness.

Most of the school activities of our children lay too much emphasis upon the ideal of successful rivalry, and too little upon the ideal of high achievement. The ideal set before the children is not frequently enough that of doing the best that is in them, and too frequently that of doing merely better than the neighbor—which may be poor enough. Some of the work done with children in clubs, outside of schools, has brought out the instinct for an ideal of achievement in a very good way. Richard came home quite breathless when he was able to report that he could start a fire on a windy day, using but a single match! In some of the more modern organizations, for girls as well as for boys, graded tasks are assigned as tests of individual proficiency or prowess. Every girl and every boy must pass these standards, without regard to what the others do. The result of encouraging this ideal is likely to be an increased sense of responsibility, well as an increased self-respect; whereas the ideal of “beating” others may in many cases keep the girl or boy at a rather low level of achievement, compared to the child's own capacity.

This competitive ideal is illustrated by the girl who is ambitious to stand at the head of her class, and receives encouragement enough. But we give very little thought to the child whose ideals are for service to others or to the community. It is very often the same child that at one time glories in successful emulation under the encouragement of our approval, and that later fails to develop the germs of altruistic ideals because we fail to recognize, or at least to encourage, them. We cannot expect from the schools an early change of emphasis from the competitive type of ambition to the ideal of cooperation or service, although the teachers who have tried to encourage the latter have found the school work to proceed more satisfactorily than it does under the spirit of emulation. But in the home it should be much easier to encourage these higher types of ideals, for we do not have to set one child against the other, and there is greater opportunity for individual service on account of the greater differences in the ages and attainments of the children.

It is interesting and significant that, of the thousands of children who have given expression to their ideals and ambitions, a very small number—less than one in every hundred—have appeared to be quite content with themselves and with their surroundings. The normal child craves for some thing better, and roams as far afield as his knowledge and opportunities let him in his search for the best. It is during the years from the tenth to the fifteenth or sixteenth that this search is keenest, and during this period we should present to the children every opportunity for becoming acquainted with what has been considered best in the history of the race. The reading that the boy or girl does at this time is perhaps the most important source of ideals.

The selection of suitable books for the young is in itself an important problem, and one that many of us are apt to neglect. It is impossible to judge of the desirability or suitableness of a book from its appearance, or from its price, or from the standing of its publishers, or even from the repute of the author. Many attractive-looking books are not only worthless, but positively objectionable. If it is not possible for you to examine carefully each book that you consider buying, you should make use of an annotated list, or seek competent counsel in some other form. Through libraries and various associations it is now possible to obtain carefully prepared lists that will be helpful in selecting books for children of all ages.

An interesting point that has been brought out by studies is the fact that degrading ideals are practically wanting in children. You were no doubt shocked to discover that Eddy was planning to become a burglar, or a pirate chief, or a tramp, or an ordinary highwayman. But a careful analysis of the motives and experiences of the boy will show that the particular feature that Eddy admires in his hero is far removed from the ones that shock you. The boy is dreaming of travel and adventure, of the excitement of chasing or of being chased, of trying his ingenuity in conflict with the professionally ingenious minions of the law, of being brave in the face of danger, of testing his fortitude in the time of trouble, of the loyalty of his comrades to himself as leader, or of his loyalty to his chief when the latter is beset by his enemies. But courage and loyalty and fortitude and ingenuity are no more degrading ideals than are material possessions and intellectual accomplishments. Only it happens that many boys find these particular ideals embodied in heroes and personalities that we feel we must disapprove for various reasons. Robin Hood appeals to the children not because he violated the laws of the land or because he deprived people of their property, but because he was brave, and clever, and just, and kind to the poor.

In comparing the ideals of children raised in the city with those of children raised in the country, interesting differences appear. The city children are in general less inclined to be altruistic than country children at the same age. On the other hand, city children draw upon a wider range of characters from history and from fiction for their ideals. In the matter of future occupations, city children were often satisfied to mention some preference from the various occupations of which they had heard, without elaborating the details, whereas the country children, although they did not select from so wide a range, frequently described special features of some occupation as the interesting elements leading to a choice.

From the various studies that have been made we may see that the kind of ideals that a child is likely to have depends a great deal upon the *people* with whom he becomes familiar, upon the *ideas* with which he becomes familiar, and upon the *activities* with which he becomes familiar. The child should have an opportunity to discover the best that is available in his immediate environment. His earliest heroes should be his parents; then the acquaintances near home should furnish the qualities that will arouse his interest and admiration. It is a mistake to thrust upon the child ideals ready made and imported for the purpose. A hero thrust upon the young imagination may do service for a while, but is likely to be discarded later when that particular hero's virtues really need to be kept before the child much more than they did in the earlier period. George Washington and his hatchet have furnished us a legend that is a good illustration of this. The hero is dressed up to be attractive to children of nursery age, and endowed with nursery virtues. When the children grow up and so outgrow their nursery ideals, they discard interest in and admiration for George Washington: this is a serious loss to our national idealism.

The results of the studies also indicate how significant is suitable literature in the formation of ideals. A comparison of returns from girls with those from boys throws an important side light on this problem. In nearly every group of answers received it was evident that most girls, when they get to a certain age, adopt ideals that are decidedly masculine. The explanation of this seems to lie in the fact that the characters of history and of literature with whom they become most familiar are those showing distinctly masculine qualities. There are real differences between the mind of a girl and the mind of a boy, and these should be taken into consideration in their training. There is great need for the clearer recognition and sharper definition of distinctly feminine ideals. It is not enough to transfer some imitation masculine ideals to the minds of our girls.

We should make a special effort to discover our children's ideals, for several reasons. First of all, by knowing what the girl or boy has nearest the heart we shall be able to enter into closer sympathy with the child, we shall be able to understand much of the conduct that would otherwise baffle as well as annoy us. In the second place, by watching the rise of ideals we shall be better able to direct the child's playing and his reading and those other activities that are needed to supply the experiences and ideas that seem to be lacking, or to discourage tendencies that seem to us undesirable. In the third place, if we know our children's ideals we can make use of these as motive forces in helping us to carry out our larger plans. It is when the boy is in the military stage of his ambitions that we should try to make the virtues of the soldier habitual parts of his character. It is when the girl is ambitious to make a fine garden that we should try to make her fix the habits of orderliness, regularity, and attention to details. Of course, not every girl will want to have a garden, and many a boy never cares to be a soldier; but at every stage there are ideals that can be called upon to fix the heart upon certain virtues until the latter become habits.

It is very easy to ridicule the ideals and ambitions of children when they seem to us too high-flown or futile. But a person's ideals stand too close to the centre of his character to be treated so rudely. It is better to ignore the many trifling flights of fancy that are not likely to have any permanent effect, and to throw the child into circumstances that will force the emergence of more deep-seated or far-reaching ambitions.

There is another danger in the ease with which a child's faith in ideals is destroyed, when these happen to interfere with our own immediate comfort and desires. When a boy has gotten into some mischief with his friends, and is the only one caught, we are tempted to bring pressure to bear upon him to make him tell who the other culprits were. Joe is ready to take his own punishment, and that of his fellow malefactors, too, rather than “snitch.” But for some reason we feel that “justice” demands the conviction of every individual involved. The conflict is not between our sense of justice and the boy's stubbornness or wilfulness; it is rather a struggle between our demand for retribution and the boy's ideal of loyalty. If, through threats and cajolery or more indirect methods, we at last succeed in finding out that it was Mrs. Brown's Bob who was responsible for the whole affair, we have at last broken down Joe's inclination to act according to certain ideal standards. Joe has fallen in his own estimation beyond calculation. It is better to let Bob go “unpunished” than to make Joe go back on his principles.

One important outcome of a study of our children's ideals and ambitions should be the direction of their vocational choices. We have read of Benjamin Franklin's father, who took his boys about to various shops with a view to helping them make up their minds as to what kind of trade they should follow. Nowadays we should consider this method rather crude; but for a variety of reasons most of us do not do even this much for our children. A study of children's plans and hopes for their future work brings out the fact that the desire to “earn money" as a motive in the choice increases up to the age of twelve years, and then declines rapidly. This may be taken to mean that, apart from the enlarged range of interests that comes with increased experience, there is also an efflorescence of the fancy that leads to increased concern with ideal ends. This is confirmed by a comparison of the choice made by children of well-to-do families with those made by children of rather poor people. The children of the poor, in tragically large numbers, appear to accept the fact of working as a necessity of life; they accept this doggedly as a matter of course. The children of more prosperous families, on the other hand, though frequently expressing preferences for the same kinds of occupations, have their hearts set on the joy of achievement, or on the ideal of service, or on the fun of *doing*, in much larger proportions.

From answers written by English children in a factory district these examples are typical:

A boy of eight: “I should like to be a Carpenter. Because my mother says I can be one.”

A girl of twelve: “I should like to go out when I am older to earn my own living.”

Another girl of twelve: “I think it would be nice to go out to a situation.”

In contrast with these are the answers given by children of the same ages who came from homes of culture, if not always of wealth:

A boy of eight: “I would like to be like Major ——because I like carpentering very much and he carpenters beautifully. Once he bought a box for his silver and there was one tray to it and he wanted to make little fittings for the silver so first he painted some names on

some paper of all the different things he had; then he cut them out and supposing he wanted to put knives and forks quickly he would have a little name written down where they ought to go and he made the fittings most beautifully quite as well as any shop would."

A girl of thirteen: "One thing I should like to do would be to be a very clever naturalist, and to know everything about everything alive or in the country world."

A girl of ten: "I should like to be a piano teacher, when I grow up, for then I shall be able to learn to play many pieces of poetry."

A part of this difference is no doubt due to the fact that in many families there are traditional ideals of the obligations of privilege, which the children readily imitate; or to the fact that these children do not have to think about the necessity of earning a livelihood, and so give their attention to the enjoyments that can be derived from various kinds of activity.

The subject of vocational guidance, which has come into great prominence during the past few years, includes so many ideas that are confusing and misleading that large numbers of people have become alarmed and are fighting the movement. In the first place, the title itself is misleading. Most people do not enter upon "callings" in the true sense of that word; they get into some kind of occupation or business, but could just as readily have adjusted themselves to any one of a thousand other occupations. Then the matter of *guidance* is misleading. It is impossible for anyone to-day to undertake to guide young people into their occupations. All that can be hoped for is that children may be given an opportunity to find out about the different types of work that need to be done, and about the different human qualities that are of value in the various occupations.

The question that concerns the parent is: What special inclinations has the child that can be utilized in a future occupation? It is not so much a question of making full use of your child's talents as it is of giving him an opportunity to do the kind of work in which he will be most happy. Society at large is interested in conserving all the different kinds of ability, but the individual child is concerned with realizing his own ideals, with living, so far as possible, his own life. At the same time, the evidence which we have on the subject —not very much, to be sure—shows that there is really a close connection between what a child likes to do and what he can do well. It is, of course, true that one can learn to do well what at first comes hard, and then learn to like it. But we must not forget that strong inclinations must be carefully considered when future work is being decided upon.

Our children are so imitative that a child with marked talents will occasionally not reveal these in surroundings that lay emphasis on qualities unrelated to these talents. So many a boy with high-grade musical ability will fail to show this where music is looked down upon as something unworthy of a man. In the same way children will develop ideals in imitation of what goes on around them. Every child is likely at some time in his career to look forward to money-making as the most desirable end in life; but most normal children will pass beyond this ideal before adolescence. If, however, the atmosphere in

which the child lives is one of money-getting, the child without strong tendencies toward other ideals is likely to allow this ideal to persist into adolescence and young manhood or womanhood. In such cases the ideal becomes fixed without indicating that the individual is "by nature" of an avaricious temperament or materialistically inclined.

The same principle of imitativeness would, of course, apply to other ideals. This explains to us why the recurrence of certain ideals or modes of life in successive generations of a family leads to the supposition that there are "hereditary" elements at work. It is also a good reason why we should guard against the contaminating influence of unworthy ideals. It is impossible for us to carry about imitation virtues and fool our children into imitating them.

Children begin to form their ideals early in life, and their first standards are derived from the people and the things about them that contribute to their pleasures—sweets and parents and the heroes of the fairy tales.

As the child's experience broadens he borrows ideals from new acquaintances and the characters he meets in his reading.

The child absorbs from his surroundings, from his acquaintances, and from his reading, as well as from the instruction that he receives in school or in church, materials for building a world of what *ought* to be. And in this world he himself plays a very important rôle. We must therefore make sure that the materials for ideals which are within our control shall be of the best.

Loose conversation, cynicism, open disrespect for the noble things in human character, lack of faith in human nature cannot be exhibited to the child day after day without having their sinister effect. It is true that some children, here and there, will resist these unfavorable influences, and will come out of the struggle strong and self-reliant, with faith in their own ideals and with faith in mankind. But we cannot afford to treat the developing character of the child on the theory that it needs exercise and temptation as a gymnast needs exercise and trying tasks. The temptation that becomes a habitual stimulus to wrong doing or wrong thinking has no moral value. The child is only too ready to follow the path of least resistance, and the temptations will come aplenty after the ideals begin to form.

High ideals in the home, and not merely good words; loyalty to ideals and a spirit of confidence in the children, are needed to give the children that confidence in themselves which they need to make them loyal to their own ideals when these are out of harmony with vulgar fashion.

XII. THE STORK OR THE TRUTH

"Mother, where do babies come from?"

Some day you will be asked this question by your little girl or your little boy—if you have not already been asked. What will your answer be?

Even if you have been accustomed to giving frank answers to your children's questions about all sorts of subjects, you are likely to hesitate when it comes to this. You will be tempted to say what you were probably told yourself, under similar circumstances. You will perhaps say that the doctor brings babies in his satchel, or that the stork brings babies in his bill. Or perhaps you will feel impelled to tell Harry to go out and play, and ask you again a few years later when he will be old enough to understand.

The telling of a myth like the stork story is harmless enough for the time being. We have entertained Santa Claus for ages without undermining the morals of our children. And we shall continue to retell the fairy stories, for, although they are not, strictly speaking, "true" stories, they have their place in the life of the child. Why can we not go on, then, as we have done in the past, leaning upon the stork?

The difference between the story of where babies come from and the story of Santa Claus or Mother Hubbard is a very important one. Santa Claus and Mother Hubbard represent ideas and interests that are but passing phases in the child's development, whereas knowledge about reproduction is something that grows in interest with the years and reaches its deepest significance just at the time when you can hardly, if at all, regain your hold upon your child, once you have lost it. It does not matter much who disillusions your child about Santa Claus. The disappointment is brief, and soon the child can look upon the legend as a joke. But it does matter very much who tells your child that the stork story is all a lie, and *how* he is told.

It is well for mothers to realize that the embarrassment which they may feel when this question is first asked is quite foreign to the child, for the child at this time has no knowledge whatever of sex. To him it is simply a question for satisfying his momentary curiosity. Later on, when the child has become aware of the idea of sex, he is not likely to ask his mother embarrassing questions, or, if he should ask them, the situation would be equally embarrassing to both—unless you have in the meanwhile kept in close sympathy with your children, and they feel that they can come to you with any question and be answered frankly. And the way to keep them in close sympathy is by meeting frankly every question as it arises. It is not necessary to answer every question by telling everything you know; it is necessary merely to tell enough to satisfy the child's immediate need. Not only, then, does your frank answer tend to keep the child in touch with the mother, but you protect him in this manner against going for his information to sources that are frequently contaminating. The information that boys and girls give one another about sex matters is often something appalling, not only in its distance from the truth, but in the amount of filth with which it is encrusted. It is the desire to keep his mind clean, then, that should prompt the mother to tell her child what he wants to know when he wants to know it. A third consideration is found in the fact that many children, when they do not receive satisfactory answers to their queries, will reflect and brood about the subject to a degree that becomes morbid. This is especially likely to happen where the

subject of the child's inquiry is treated as though it were an improper or a wicked one to speak about, so that the child dares not ask others for enlightenment.

That the early answering of the child's questions may offset both morbid curiosity and the danger of resorting to filthy sources of information is illustrated by the story of a seven-year-old boy who was invited by an older boy to come to the wood-shed for the purpose of being told an important secret. “If you promise not to tell any one,” the older boy began, “I will tell you where babies come from.” “Why, I know where babies come from,” replied the second, not greatly interested. “Oh, yes you do! I suppose you think that a stork brings them? Well, you're 'way off there. The stork ain't got nothing to do with it,” the instructor continued breathlessly, for fear of being deprived of his opportunity to impart his precious secret. At last the secret was out; but the younger replied, coolly, “That's nothing. My mother told me that when I was four years old.” Since the matter had ceased to be a secret, and since the story even lacked novelty, all opportunity for the elaboration of details was destroyed.

But what can you tell to a child of four or five? For that is the age at which the question is likely first to present itself. Remember that the child is not asking a sex question, but one about the direct source of himself, or about some particular baby that he has seen. You can say that the baby grew from a tiny egg, which is in a little chamber that grows as the baby grows, until the baby is big enough to come out. This will satisfy most children for a considerable time, but some children will immediately ask, “Where is that little room?” To which you may reply, “The growing baby must be kept in the most protected place possible, so it is kept under the mother's heart.” Or, you may say that the baby grew from a seed implanted in the mother's body, that it was nourished by her blood until it grew large enough, when it came out at the cost of much suffering. Of course, you will tell the story as personally as you can, about your particular child, and in as simple a way as you can.

If you tell the little girl or boy this much you have told him all that he probably cares to know at this time; you have told the truth so that you have nothing to fear about his being disillusioned either as to the story or as to your own trustworthiness; and you have avoided arousing the suspicion that certain subjects are unworthy of understanding. And then you will find that this new conception of his relation to you, as truly a part of your being, will deepen and strengthen his natural feeling of affection and sympathy. It is also well with the first telling to impress the child—in so many words, if necessary—with the idea that he must always come to you for anything he wants to know, and that you are always glad to tell him.

As the child grows older his knowledge of life must grow also. In the country and in small towns the child becomes familiar with many important facts about life without any special effort being required to inform him. He learns that chickies hatch out of eggs and that the eggs have been laid by the mother hen. He learns that the field and garden plants grow from seeds and that the seeds were borne by the mother plants. He learns about the coming of the calf and the colt; and even city children can learn that kittens and puppies come from mother animals. It is a comparatively simple matter for a child with such

knowledge to get the further information that the baby brother developed from an egg that mother kept near her heart during the hatching time. Much of this knowledge that the country child acquires incidentally must be brought to the city child through special efforts and devices, in the school as well as in the home, that he may acquire the fundamental facts of bearing and rearing young, in plants as well as in animals, and that he may look upon these facts not as strange or disconcerting marvels, but as natural happenings.

Miss Garrett, one of the most successful teachers of sex and reproduction, tells the story of some city boys who had been taught these things, and who had decided, in their club, to raise rabbits. The selection of a father rabbit and a mother rabbit was too important a matter to leave to a committee, so the whole club went in a body to attend to these preliminaries. The care the boys took of the mother rabbit during her pregnancy was in itself an education. Later Miss Garrett saw the leader of the club—who had been the "toughest" of the gang—with another boy on the street, while a pregnant woman was trying to cross with a heavy basket. "Come on, Jim," he called, "let's help her across." This same boy but a few months back would have ridiculed the poor woman in her plight.

Every child can learn what Jim and his companion learned. He can learn to respect motherhood and to be considerate of mothers as mothers. It is very interesting to see the great differences in this regard between families in which the fact of motherhood is a secret, and those in which it is a matter of common knowledge. I was visiting a friend whose six-year-old boy knew that another baby was expected, and he was very careful to avoid annoying his mother. Of course, the attitude of the other members of the family also had an influence upon the conduct of this child. But another mother complained that she received very little consideration during pregnancy from her oldest son—a boy of fourteen—although all the other members of the family were as careful and as thoughtful as could be desired. This second mother, however, had allowed her older boys to grow up on the assumption that sex and reproduction had nothing to do with life, or, at any rate, were of no concern to them and were not suitable subjects to know about; so that her boys did *not* know that something unusual was in the air, or that something special was expected of them.

The important thing for the mother to do during these growing years is to retain the confidence of the children, and to give them an opportunity to become acquainted with the everyday facts about plants and animals. The questions that come to the child's mind will be questions of motherhood and babyhood, chiefly, and not questions of sex or fatherhood. When these questions do at last arise, as they are sure to almost any time after twelve years, and sometimes even before, you have a great advantage if your child brings his questions to you instead of to his casual acquaintances of the school or street, even if you are not prepared to answer all the questions for him. The girl will come to her mother, and the boy will come to his father, if they have acquired the habit of coming with frankness and confidence. Then, if for any reason you are not qualified to tell what needs to be told, you may just as frankly say so and refer the child to the right instructor, who may be a teacher or the family physician. Older children may even be sent to suitable books. But the most desirable condition is that in which the parents have

prepared in advance to answer all the questions themselves, and even to anticipate some questions.

[Illustration: In the country children become acquainted with the facts of life.]

The child should receive instruction along these lines at various stages in his development, even up to young manhood or womanhood, corresponding to his physical development and to his mental development, which normally proceed in close relation to each other. The girl should be informed how to care for her health. The boy should be instructed about the sex life of the opposite sex to know what they have a right to expect, or rather what they have no right to demand of the other. Boys during the adolescent period, which has been called the "age of chivalry and romance," are keen to appreciate the rights of others and their own duties to the weak; it is at this time that we are to appeal to their sense of honor in establishing ideals of purity, and the sense of responsibility as bearers of the life stream. The standards of sex morals are established during this period, for girls as well as for boys. Their strength to time of temptation will lie in the ideals which now become fixed. We want our girls to grow up demanding purity of the young men they will meet, not pretending that they do not know the difference. And we want our boys to grow up with faith in the literal truth of that fine line about Sir Galahad:

His strength is as the strength of ten, because his heart is pure.

The parents who wish to prepare themselves with a knowledge of what to tell their children in place of the old stork fable; of when to tell, instead of postponing to a dishonest "some other time"; and of *how* to tell, instead of in the embarrassing, half-expressed vagueness, would do well to read some of the abundant literature on this subject that has been issued in recent years just for our help: Some of the best titles are given below.

The following titles, with comments, are taken for the most part from "A Selected List of Books for Parents," issued by the Federation for Child Study:

BIOLOGY OF SEX. By T. W. Galloway. A concise and reliable statement of fundamental sex facts.

GIRL AND WOMAN. By Caroline Latimer. Very helpful in understanding and dealing with the physical, mental and moral disturbances of girlhood and early womanhood. Some of the recommendations, particularly regarding physical aspects, are open to question.

MARRIAGE AND THE SEX PROBLEM. By F. W. Foerster. Emphasis is laid upon the religious and spiritual sides of the emotional life, upon training for self-control and the mastery of moods and instincts.

SEX. By Patrick Geddes and J. Arthur Thompson. The biological aspects of sex and also interesting chapters on sex education, the ethics of sex, and sex and society. Good bibliography.

SEX EDUCATION. By Maurice A. Bigelow. Covers the problems of sex education and of criticisms of sex education.

SEX EDUCATION. By Ira S. Wile, M.D. An excellent little volume for the purpose of assisting parents to banish the difficulties and to suggest a plan for developing a course in sex education. The chapter on terminology is most helpful.

THE SEXUAL LIFE OF A CHILD. By Dr. Albert Moll. An exhaustive study of the origin and development in childhood and youth, of the acts and feelings due to sex. Indispensable to anyone interested in sex education.

THE SEXUAL QUESTION. By August Forel, M.D., Ph.D., LL.D. Translated from the German by C. F. MARSHALL, M.D., F.R.C.S. A comprehensive and reliable study of the subject from biological, historical, social and hygienic viewpoints.

TRAINING OF THE YOUNG IN LAWS OF SEX. By the Hon. E. Lyttelton. A brief presentation, from a lofty point of view of the many phases of the sex problem as it confronts the boy.

The following books on sex education were written for children. They are listed here, not to be put into the hands of the young, but as a help to parents in supplying methods of approach and a usable vocabulary:

THE RENEWAL OF LIFE. By Margaret W. Morley.

THE SEX SIDE OF LIFE. An Explanation for Young People. By Dr. Mary Ware Dennett (Pamphlet, published by the author, New York.)

THE SPARK OF LIFE. By Margaret W. Morley.

THE THREE GIFTS OF LIFE. By Nellie M. Smith, A.M.

Special studies in many parts of the country, especially during the war, have made it clear that girls in the adolescent stage are definitely aware of the need for clean and trustworthy instruction on matters pertaining to the relations between the sexes, to the control of the emotions, to the care of the body during the menstrual period, and to other problems arising from the facts of sex.

It is pathetic, is it not, to have a high-school girl write: “Some parents are ashamed to tell their girls everything, so that is why I think they should be told in school.” Whose parents had she in mind?

Another writes: “There are many girls with no mother or very near female relation that can tell them all they need to know, and if anything should happen in a girl's life, she does not think it proper to speak to a male, even if it is her father.” Are the girls who have mothers or “very near female relations” to be none the better, or happier for it?

I hope that mothers will not continue in the future, as most have done in the past, to hesitate about giving such information to their children. If you are perhaps tempted to feel that you would like to preserve the child's innocence as long as possible, you have but to realize that innocence is not the same as ignorance. We are apt to forget how young we ourselves were when we had obtained one way or another a large mass of information about reproduction, and even about sex. The question is not whether a young child should have this information or not; the question is whether he shall have correct and pure information, or false and filthy information. For one or the other he is sure to get. True knowledge is the best mantle of innocence.

Much misery is caused, not only for girls, but also for boys, by the lapses from the path of virtue. If the young man who has gone astray is in a position to say, “Had I but heeded!” instead of saying, “Had I but known!” it will make a great difference in the way he will later feel toward the one person from whom he had a right to expect protecting knowledge. It is true enough that knowledge alone is not a sure protection against wrong-doing; but you can have no moral training without knowledge, and knowledge is the least you can give.

There is no reason why parents should think of enlightening their children on this subject as a disagreeable necessity, instead of as one of the important means through which to be of real help to their children, and at the same time to help themselves to retain their hold upon the children.

XIII. THE GOLDEN AGE OF TRANSITION

There comes a time in the life of every boy and every girl that brings a maximum of trials and worry—to the other people. This time is the golden age of transition from childhood to manhood or womanhood, the age of adolescence. If you have had annoyance and hardship with your infants, if the children have perplexed you and tried you—as you thought, to the limit—you may be sure that there is more in store for you. For the age of adolescence brings with it problems and perplexities and annoyances that will make you forget that it's any trouble at all to look after younger children.

After years of painstaking attention to all the details of a child's home surroundings, in the hope that this attention will result in distinct gains to the child's character, it must be very discouraging to notice some fine day that Louise is becoming rather finicky about the food—which is just as good as she has always had—and that Arthur is inclined to become rather short in speaking to his mother—not to say impudent. And both are likely to become critical not only about the food but about a hundred other things that they find at home. And both are likely to be something not far from impudent in giving expression to their criticisms. In fact, they will be quite prepared to undertake the education of their

parents, and to tell you with alarming assurance just how and when to do things, both at home and abroad. Fortunate, indeed, are the parents who have come to this critical stage in their education equipped with a sense of humor.

However, these unexpected and mortifying outbreaks of inconsiderateness and bad manners do *not* show that your early efforts have all been in vain. They do *not* show that outside influences beyond your control have perverted your children, or have counteracted your efforts. They show merely that Louise and Arthur are still growing, and have now entered upon that most interesting and most significant period of the new birth.

It is well, first of all, for the mother—and the father, too—to realize that this period is a passing one, for this knowledge can save you many a worried day and many a sleepless night. I do not mean that when the child comes to this dangerous age you are simply to let nature and impulse have their way. I mean only that the problems are to be met with many devices, but not with worry. For we are coming to understand some of the fundamental causes of the great changes that occur in the nature of the growing child at this time, and we are learning, accordingly, better ways of dealing with the troublesome manifestations of these changes. Not that we can lay down rules for the proper handling of all adolescents everywhere, for we can not. Every individual is a problem by himself; but we can learn a better way of approaching this precious problem, a more helpful attitude to maintain toward him or her.

There is a physical basis for the remarkable alterations in the minds and morals of this age. The infant grows very rapidly at first, but with a diminishing rate until about the twelfth year. Then, almost suddenly, the rate of growth increases again, and in four or five years most children have attained nearly their full physical growth. Associated with this great physical growth is the fact that some organs grow much faster than others, so that the proportions of an adult come to be very different from those of a child. In the meanwhile, however, there has been a great strain on the system, because, apart from the demands of the general body growth, some of the organs have not been able to keep up with the special demands made upon them. For example, the growth in body weight and in muscle may proceed more rapidly than the proportionate growth of the lungs or the liver, or the weight may increase more rapidly than the proportionate strength of the muscles. Moreover, the nervous system is developing at a more rapid rate, probably, than the other systems of organs, and this strain shows itself in various ways that are disagreeable to adults with fixed habits and standards.

All of these changes are intimately bound up with the development of the sex organs and with the approach of sexual maturity.

A graceful child becomes awkward and a well-mannered child comes to act rudely and to speak quite unlike his former self. These changes are related to the fact that with the development of the nervous system there arise impulses for hundreds of new kinds of movements which the child can learn to suppress or to control only with the passing of time. This is the age at which the child is exposed to the acquirement of many

undesirable muscular habits, such as various kinds of fidgetings, biting of the finger-nails, twirling of buttons, wrinkling of the forehead, shruggings, swaying the body, rolling the tongue, tapping with the fingers or the feet, and so on. Nearly a thousand of these uncontrolled or "automatic" movements have been described in children of this age. Of course, any of these movements that produce sounds or that catch our eye are very annoying to us, and if we have never nagged before, we are likely to begin now by saying *Don't this* and *Don't that*, for we have never been tempted like this before. But nagging is not what is called for.

Are we then to let them keep on annoying others, or are we to leave them to themselves to make permanent these awkward and disturbing and often hideous movements? We should do neither. We should remember that now of all times the boy or girl needs our friendship and our sympathy; we should let the young person feel that our objections are not based upon our momentary annoyance, but upon our concern for the kinds of habits he will acquire; and we should do what we can to help him break his habit, not insist that he break it for us. Moreover, it is not certain that all of these fidgetings and tappings should be suppressed upon their first appearance. Most of these automatic movements disappear of themselves as the child matures and learns to direct his nervous energy into channels that lead to useful actions, as he acquires skill and self-control through practice in gymnastics or with tools, or musical instruments or at some games. And while there should be every opportunity to play games and musical instruments and to handle tools, etc., we should not be discouraged if, after a whole day of hard exertion in work and play, there is still some energy left for drumming on the table or teasing sister or the cat, or for dancing a jig upstairs and rattling the lamp.

Closely connected with the rapid development of the nervous system is the fact of the increasing irritability of temper. This will show itself every day in a hundred ways. Of course, it is unreasonable, and, of course, the boy or girl is not to be allowed to become rude and impatient and domineering. But with this increasing irritability comes increasing sensitiveness, and it is very easy for you to make him realize that his conduct is not that becoming a gentleman, or that his manner has been offensive. He will not give you the satisfaction, very often, of letting you know that he fully appreciates your point of view; indeed, he will even make a show of disputing your position; he will try to argue out a justification for his conduct, or at least a mitigation. But he knows very well what his offense is, and is thoroughly ashamed of himself; but he has to save his face.

It may be helpful to mothers and fathers, and to others who have to do with girls and boys of this age, to know that what appears to us as impudence is very often but an expression of the child's awkward attempt to hide his discomfiture or embarrassment. This is especially true in the early stages of adolescence. The boy or girl is becoming conscious of himself as a person, and resents being treated as a child; the only way he knows of asserting his personality is by affecting an air of disdain toward those who presume to treat him as a child. This swagger is more likely to be put on when there is a third person present. It is therefore always safer to reserve your discussions and corrections to the time when you are alone with your girl or boy, and can place your conversation on an intimate basis.

Hand in hand with spells of most irritating self-assertiveness, the adolescent is subject to spells of most depressing humility and self-abnegation. Indeed, at every point this period is marked by the most violent contrasts and alterations of mood. Hours or days of seeming indifference to all interests and activities will be followed by keen excitement and enthusiasm. A fit of doubt in his own ability and worthiness will be followed by almost ludicrous self-confidence. A feverish desire for constant companionship will follow a dull and moody search for seclusion and solitude. In general it is perhaps wisest to ignore these changing moods, except where they find their outlet in offensive or vicious conduct. We must remember that it is just as trying to the young person as it is to the older ones; and, while we may not be prepared to yield our comfort and our standards to the whims of the girl or boy, we should seek for adjustment through sympathetic exchange of ideas and sentiments, and not through arbitrary rules. In any case, these changing moods need not in themselves be considered occasions for misgivings and worry about the future development, for they are part and parcel of the rapid changes in the nervous system.

So complex is the character of this stage that volumes have been written about it; it has been recorded in song and in literature, and has been celebrated in religious ceremonials from ancient times. If, then, the mother finds it perplexing, and somewhat beyond her full comprehension, she certainly should not blame herself.

It has been said that the complexity of the individual during adolescence is due to the fact that at this time the brain and the whole body become at last awakened to their manifold capacities, and that the child now is not only capable of doing everything that a human being can do, but feels the impulse to do everything. But manifestly he cannot do all things at once; hence the rapid changes of impulse and mood. There is a sudden increase in emotions, without suitable habits for giving them an outlet. There is vague longing and formless yearning for the child knows not what. Much relief and satisfaction come from physical exertion, especially for boys. There is much satisfaction of the emotions from association with others; hence the growth of the gang and the feeling of kinship.

Adults, with their limited interests and their appreciation of the need for specialization in the practical pursuits of life, are often inclined to look with disfavor upon the growing girl's or boy's “dabbling” in a hundred different directions. Not content with athletics and hunting, the boy will want to collect stamps or birds' eggs, to make a motor-boat and learn telegraphy; to take photographs and try his hand at the cornet; to experiment in chemistry and stuff an owl. Not content with dancing, sewing and cooking, the girl will want to master several poets and make attempts at painting; she will want to become more proficient at the piano and do some singing; she will want her share of photography and athletics, and would try her hand at writing a novel. All these things seem so distracting to us that we fear either that the young person will become a superficial dabbler or will fail to settle down to something serious. But much is to be said in favor of letting every girl and boy do as near to everything he or she wants to do as possible. Expertness can come later when a choice of a specialty has been made. Now is the time for touching life at as many points as possible, for acquiring breadth of outlook and range of sympathy and interest. Now especially is the time for trying out the individual's

capacities— which may lie quite beyond the range of the conventional pursuits of the family or the neighborhood. It is the time for self-discovery, and to this end every bit of help that can come from the home and from the church, from the school and from the community, from direct experience and from literature, should be utilized.

The danger of early specialization is shown to us when we contemplate men and women who have no interests beyond their rather narrow routine occupations, who have no sympathies beyond their rather narrow set of intimates, who have no appreciation of human character and human service beyond the small circle into which they settled in their teens, and from which they can by no possibility be drawn. It is because the formation of new habits becomes increasingly difficult after the sixteenth or seventeenth year that narrow prejudices and biased opinions should be avoided by participation in the broadest variety of activities and associations. Before the conflicting moods and tendencies are finally welded into a consistent whole the girl or boy should make a part of his personality as many sources of enthusiasm, as many kinds of interest, as many lines of sympathy as possible. In a few years the character begins to "set," and the *size* of the character will be in large part determined by the number and variety of emotional, intellectual, sensory, and muscular elements that have been developed during this adolescent period.

One of the characteristics of this age is the tendency to hero worship. It is so difficult to know in advance what types of heroes our children are going to select that we are inclined to feel quite helpless in the matter. But it is safe to say that earlier training is sure to have its effects, although we cannot always measure the effect. A boy in whom a keen sense of honor shows itself before adolescence is not likely to adopt a hero in whom there is a suspicion of anything sneaky. The new flood of emotions brings with it a host of new aspirations and new ideals; and some of these are likely enough to conflict with the older childish ideals. It is therefore of the utmost importance that the reading—which is perhaps the chief source of model heroes for most children—should be of a wholesome kind. This does not mean that the stories must be about paragons of virtue; the villains of fiction and history have their value in teaching life and character, and we need not fear that they will contaminate the minds of the young, for in most children the instincts may be relied upon to reject the allurement of the base character. But fiction that is false in its sentiment, that does not present truthful pictures of life, is likely to give perverted ideas of human relations and false standards of value. City children who have access to the theatre often get their heroes from the stage; and the same thing may be said about the drama as about fiction. It is only the too highly colored and exaggerated melodrama that is likely to be objectionable for the impressionable youth. The moving-picture shows, which are coming to supply so many of the children with their chief opportunity to learn life, have been, on the whole, fairly wholesome; and the movement to secure more adequate censorship of the films will probably leave these sources of instruction perfectly safe, from a moral point of view, so far as concerns the knowledge of life that the adolescent gets. The only real danger from the "movies" and the theatres is likely to be the cultivation of the habit of passive entertainment.

And this suggests another source of puzzles of adolescence. In the alternating moods of excessive exertion and indolence there is the possibility of girls and boys learning the value of alternation of work and play and rest. But there is also the danger of acquiring the habit of resting all the time, and leaving not only the work for others, but also the activity of play. It is much better for children to rest because they are tired than because they are lazy. And, while it is true that the instincts are all for activity, it is easy enough for the growing individual to acquire the habit of passive absorption of whatever amusement is provided. It is better, then, for the young people to get their entertainment out of theatricals than out of the theatre, out of playing games than out of watching games, out of having adventures in the woods and in the water than out of reading about them. And, in every way, the most reliable safety-valve of the period is constant activity, as this is the best outlet for the many and conflicting emotions which are the source of the chief difficulties. When Arthur shows signs of getting restless it is a great comfort to be able to send him off on some errand, or to give him a definite task to do. But it is also a great service to the boy, for while he is at the work there is being used up the nervous energy that would otherwise appear at the surface as another "spell." And this principle is just as true for girls as it is for boys. Only you cannot send the girl to a piece of work requiring great bodily exertion—nor does she need this so much.

Work is not only a satisfactory safety-valve for the emotions in general, but it is especially valuable as a means of diverting the thoughts and feelings from the growing consciousness of sex.

One of the reasons why it now becomes more difficult for even thoughtful and considerate parents to keep in close sympathy with the boy or girl is this outburst of new and varied interests, which clamor for movement and color and quick changes. The parent has in the course of years settled down to a relatively small group of activities and interests, most of which offer no appeal to the growing individual. For instance, you would like to come close to the thoughts and feelings of your growing son or daughter; you suggest that you take a walk together. Now, it is very nice for a middle-aged person to take a walk, alone or with a companion; but the girl or boy sees no sense in taking a walk unless you wish to get somewhere. The ordinary conversation and gossip that a girl is likely to hear when you take her to visit a friend is apt to be very stupid—to the girl. Even where the parents have watched the expanding soul closely on the one hand, and have kept themselves in touch with a variety of activities rich in human interests on the other, they often find that the intimacy with their children is for a time weakened, and fully restored only after the latter have passed through these trying years.

What is likely to be the greatest source of grief on the part of the parent is the apparent lapse of the growing boy or girl from standards of honesty and truthfulness with which she has so solicitously tried to imbue him or her. But this lapse during the critical growing period is so widespread, so common among boys and girls who afterward become fine men and women, that special students of the problem have come to believe that semi-criminality is quite normal, at least for boys, at this age. Now, while some children are perhaps by nature incapable of attaining to a satisfactory moral level, most children will, under suitable surroundings, grow away from this state of lying and

stealing; but under adverse conditions these distressing features of their behavior may become habitual. Suitable surroundings and treatment would here consist of the presence of good models and high ideals, sympathetic help in resisting temptation, and not in a harsh denunciation of each unapproved act as evidence of turpitude and perversion. You need not assume that there *is* perversion until that is demonstrated beyond any doubt. For, if the child is morally redeemable, he should be treated like one who is weak and who needs help until the difficulties are mastered; otherwise you are likely to encourage in him the feeling that he is hopeless, and he will relax all effort for his own self-mastery.

Along with the emotions related to romantic love there is a rapid development of the religious side of the nature, of a consciousness of the race as a whole, of a spirit of chivalry and disinterestedness— all emotions that bear a tremendous motive power which needs to be guided into suitable channels. Never before and never again has the individual the endurance and the energy for such self-sacrifice, for such devotion, for such exertion in behalf of the purest of ideals. At the same time, the increased sensitiveness shrinks from every sneer and every evidence of misunderstanding or unsympathetic reproof. It is therefore unwise to tease the girl or boy about the "friend" of the opposite sex; it is cruel to sneer at their ambitions, and it may be positively demoralizing to ridicule their ideals.

A mother of unusual intelligence, who had devoted herself not only to the routine work connected with her household and the care of her children, but had made special efforts to keep informed on what was going on in the world of thought and practical affairs, and who had a busy life of varied activities, was walking along a city street with her youngest son—just fifteen. The adolescent, who was rather free in his comments on what went on around him, made this pretty little speech to his mother:

"Mother, I think you have a very petty mind. Here you fuss around trying to help out that poor V——family by getting together clothing for the children, and an odd job for the old man once in a while. And you have been trying to raise a fund to complete the education of the W——boy, and all things of that kind. But all you have done does not help to solve the problem of poverty."

The mother, who had indeed been carrying on these various good works, alongside of many other activities, naturally resented the criticism of her son. But what she minded most was the "inconsistency" of the boy when, a few minutes later, they passed a street preacher with a crowd about him. They could not hear what the man was saying, but the wise young adolescent remarked, "I wish I had some money to help that fellow with."

Now, thinks the mother, what do you know about this man's purposes; what is he working for?

The boy did not know; but he wanted to do something "to help the cause." What cause, he did not know—and did not care; for him it was enough that here a man is devoting himself to a cause.

And this incident illustrates nearly everything that makes the adolescent so puzzling and so exasperating to older people.

First of all, he had gotten hold of a large idea, which he could not by any possibility understand in all its bearings; and on the basis of this he criticises the charitable efforts of his mother and, indeed, of her whole generation. Not only does he criticise the prevailing, modes of philanthropic effort, but he condemns these good people as having "petty" minds—because they do not all see what he has seen, perhaps for as long as a day or two. His attitude is not reasoned out, but arises from the deepest feelings of sympathy for the great tragedy of poverty, which he takes in at one sweep without patience for the details of individual poor people. Then the preacher on the street corner, exposing himself to the gibes and sneers of the unsympathetic crowd, appeals to him instantly as a self-sacrificing champion of some "cause." It is his religious feelings, his chivalric feelings, that are reached; he would himself become a missionary, and the missionary is a hero that appeals especially to the adolescent. There is no inconsistency between his disapproval of specific acts of charity and his approval of the preacher of an unknown cause. In both instances he gives voice to his feelings for the larger, comprehensive ideals that are just surging to the surface of his consciousness.

This is the period in which you will one day complain that the young person is giving altogether too much time and thought to details of dress and fashion, only to remonstrate a few days later about his careless or even slovenly appearance. On the whole, however, the interest in dress and appearance will grow, because as the adolescent boy or girl becomes conscious of his own personality he thinks more and more of the appearance of his person, and especially of how it appears to others. There is even the danger that the boy will become a fop or a dandy, and that the girl will take to overdressing. Argument is of little avail in such cases. The association with persons of good taste who will arouse the admiration or affection of the growing child will do more than hours of sermons. If the boy can realize that one may be a fine man without wearing the latest style in collars, or if the girl finds a thoroughly admirable and lovable woman who does not observe the customs of fashion too much, neither ridicule nor protest will be necessary.

In general, the adolescent will give us exercise in patience and in imagination and in ingenuity. He will puzzle us and perplex us as well as exasperate us. But if we cannot remember back to our own golden age, we must try as best we can to believe that even this will pass away.

XIV. HEREDITY AND ENVIRONMENT

With special assistance from BENJAMIN CHARLES GRUENBERG, Ph.D.

The frequent appearance of the "black sheep" in a flock of tolerably white sheep, the frequent failure of the best efforts of parents and teachers to make a fairly decent man out of a promising boy, have led many to question whether, after all, the pains and effort are worth while. We have come to question the wisdom of bothering about "environment"; just as we sometimes question the existence of a principle called "heredity." Every day

some one asks the question, “Do you believe in heredity?” And many times a day people discuss, “Which is more important, heredity or environment?”

These are certainly *practical* questions for parents, since the answers we receive must influence our practice or conduct in relation to the children. If we felt quite sure that heredity was everything and environment nothing, we should reduce our school appropriations and build larger jails and asylums, or we should resign ourselves as best we could to letting “nature take her course.” On the other hand, if we felt sure that heredity was nothing and environment everything, we should proceed at once to double our school equipment, raise the teachers' salaries, convert our penal institutions into reformatories and our armories into recreation centres, and advance the age of compulsory education just as far as we thought we could afford to.

Those who place the emphasis upon heredity, in the attempt to discredit the value of thoughtful and painstaking control of the environment of the developing child, usually remind us that a man like Lincoln achieved power and distinction in spite of what we would ordinarily consider serious obstacles to complete development, whereas thousands of college graduates who have had all the advantages that trained tutors and guarded surroundings can give have developed into mediocre men and women—have even developed into vicious and criminal men and women. They will remind us that from a class of children that had the same teachers for many years has emerged a group of very distinct men and women; they will remind us that brothers and sisters with the identical “environment” turn out to be so different.

On the other hand, those who see nothing in “heredity” will point to the same Lincoln and ask confidently why his ancestors and his descendants do not show the same degree of power and achievement. They will point to the same family of brothers and sisters who had the same “heredity” and ask why they all turned out so differently. The black sheep proves just as much—and just as little—for one side of the argument as it does for the other.

There are, it is true, many people who say that they “do not believe” in either heredity or environment. Such people see the difficulties of the disputants and reject both alternatives. They prefer to say frankly that they do not understand the situation; that life is too complex to be solved by puny human intellects. Or they resort to some equally unintelligible explanation, such as “Fate” or “Nature”—which is but another way of saying that we never *can* understand. On the other side stands the scientist who refuses to shut his eyes to *any* established facts, and insists upon trying to understand as much as possible, though he may never hope to understand all.

But no one is prepared to say authoritatively that either heredity or environment is the exclusive or even the predominant factor in determining the character of the individual. Indeed, the voice of the scientist, which is the only authoritative voice we have in such matters, is telling us very plainly that the whole question of “heredity *or* environment” is not a real question at all: we are confronted in every child with a case of heredity *and*

environment, and the practical question is how to control the latter so as to get the most from the former.

To begin, then, in a modest way to understand what is understandable, in the faith that understanding will grow with thought and observation, is the first duty of those who are not content to fold their hands in resignation or despair. We know that we can control wherever we have real knowledge. The cook knows that she cannot make roast duck out of pork chops; but she knows also that she can make palatable and digestible pork chops by proceeding in one way, and that she can make tough and sickening pork chops out of the same materials by changing her procedure. In the same way the scientific approach to the problem of child training teaches us that, while we cannot make a "swan out of a goose," we can make the gosling into a better goose or a poorer goose by the treatment we apply to it.

A frequent source of doubt and misunderstanding is the universal occurrence of such distinct types among brothers and sisters. The query at once arises, "Have not these children the same heredity?" Brothers and sisters have the same ancestors, but not the same heredity. Recent biological discoveries teach us that the individual develops from a bundle of units derived from the two parents, but the units supplied by a parent never represent the totality of the parents' composition, nor do all the units that are passed on come to manifest themselves as parts of the character. The parent passes on sample units from her or his own inheritance, so that no two combinations are ever exactly alike. It is a commonplace observation that Johnny may have his maternal grandmother's chin, his paternal grandmother's eyes, his father's walk, his Uncle George's lips, his Aunt Mary's sharp tongue, his grandfather's alertness, and his mother's good judgment. Of course, he has *not* his grandmother's eyes or his uncle's lips: these relatives still retain their respective facial organs, and his father still has his quick temper. What Johnny has inherited is a something, perhaps in the nature of a ferment, which *determines* the color of his eyes, a certain something that makes his lips develop into that particular shape, a certain something that causes his brain to respond to annoyance in the same manner as that of his Aunt Mary's. And the various ancestors and relatives have received from their parents similar determining factors that have manifested themselves in similar peculiarities. We do not inherit from our relatives, or even from our parents: we are built up of the same elements as those of which our relatives are built, but each one of us has received his individual combination of factors. Hence, no two brothers or sisters are exactly alike, although they have the same parents and the same ancestors.

While it is universally recognized that no two individuals are exactly alike, we are not at all clear in our minds as to whether the important differences arise from differences in experience or *nurture*, or from essential differences in *nature*. We know that children of the same parents are essentially different from birth, and that no matter how similar the treatment they receive afterward they will always remain different, or even become more different as they become older. It is becoming more clear every day, as a result of scientific study, that every individual is absolutely unique, excepting only "true" twins.

If we accept this individuality of the person as a fact, what, then, is the importance of training or environment? Does not this admission settle at once the contention of those who see no value at all in a carefully-controlled environment? If this child is *born* without mathematical ability, what is the use of drumming arithmetic into his head; or, if he is *born* with musical genius, why should we bother about teaching him music?—he will "take" to it naturally.

The answer to these and similar questions is to be found in the answer to another question, namely, "What is it precisely that the child is born with?" Surely no child is ever born with the ability to dance or sing or to do sums in algebra. When we say that a child has musical genius we mean merely that as he develops we may notice in him a certain capacity to acquire musical knowledge more readily than most other children do, or a certain disposition to express himself in melody, or a certain liking for music in some form, or a certain readiness to acquire control of musical instruments. In other words, the child is born with a capacity for acquiring certain things, from the outside, that is, from the environment—he is born with certain possibilities, which can become actualities only if the suitable conditions are provided. In the same way one child is born with a capacity for exceptional muscular development, and another for exceptional self-mastery. But in every case practice makes perfect, the muscles must be properly nourished and exercised, the will must be trained—and that means suitable environment.

Now, while every individual is unique, not every child is a born genius. The distinctiveness of each child lies in the fact that he consists of a *combination* of capacities and tendencies, each of which varies in degree when compared with other individuals. For example, Evelyn has about the same capacity for physical work as Annie, but she stands lower than the latter in arithmetic and higher in language work. John shows about the same physical power as Henry, when measured by running and jumping and chinning; but John can hit the ball with his bat more times out of a hundred than Henry can, whereas Henry can hit the bull's-eye with his rifle more times out of a hundred than John can. In a thousand details any two children differ from each other, one excelling in nearly half of the points, the other excelling perhaps in about as many, and the two standing almost exactly alike in some matters.

A child that excels most of his colleagues in one or a few points is said to have marked ability in that direction—as the exceptional athlete, or the child with exceptional literary or moral feeling. On the other hand, a child that seems to measure well up to the average in most points, and even to excel in a few, may fall far short in some matters,—that is, may be deficient. Thus a perfectly good child in every other way may be unable to master the ordinary requirements in arithmetic, or a child may have an entirely satisfactory development in every way and be deficient in musical discrimination.

Another kind of difference is to be found in what may be called general capacity. Some children show higher capacity than the average along nearly every line that can be measured or tested, without showing a preponderance in any one direction. Such children are said to be of high grade, or of high "vitality." In the same way many children are below the average in nearly every line, without being particularly defective along any one

line. They can do one thing about as well as another, just as the high-grade boys and girls can do one thing about as well as another; but in the former there is a limit to the possible development which is exceeded in the latter. Among both classes of children the full development depends upon suitable environment, but what is suitable for one may not be suitable for the other.

From a consideration of these differences in degree and difference in kind we may see that there is no course of training or treatment, no method of instruction, no trick for the mother or for the teacher that will be usable for all children under all circumstances, to make them all come up to some preconceived uniform standard. On the other hand, if we consider the differences as worth developing, and even emphasizing, it must be obvious that the training and the treatment should be adapted to the individual child so far as possible. Starting out with essentially different human beings, uniform treatment will not make them all alike, nor will *any* treatment make them all alike. But starting out with a particular human being, we can learn to treat him in such a way as to make him develop into a more desirable person than he would become if he were neglected or if he were treated differently. And that is the main problem, after all.

The relation between heredity and environment may perhaps be made clear by an extreme illustration from the physical side. Here are two full-grown men, both five feet and four inches tall. We observe that they are both short. Now, the shortness of one of them turns out to be the result of heredity,—that is, he belongs to a strain of short people. No amount of feeding or of exercise or of special régime could have made him more than a quarter or half an inch taller. The other man, however, belongs to a race of rather taller men and women: his shortness of stature may be traced to undernutrition, or to overwork, or to sickness during his childhood. It is quite certain that a different kind of environment would have resulted in his being as tall as his brothers and sisters.

Now, the problem of training concerns itself practically not so much with the person who is particularly “long” by nature, nor so much with the person who is unusually “short” by nature—and we may apply “long" and “short” to every other trait as well as to stature. The problem with these extremes is simply to keep the child in good health. The special efforts of the teacher and of the parent are devoted to giving the child who appears somewhat below the average in some particular those special stimulations and exercises and feedings that will bring him up to the average. We find the extremely short too discouraging, and the extremely long do not clamor for our attention; but it is those near the middle-point that we want to help over to the other side of the dividing line. And this is just as true of an undesirable character as it is of a desirable one. We take no trouble to teach honesty to the child that seems instinctively honest; and we give up in despair with the child that convinces us of his utter lack of a moral sense: we concentrate our efforts upon the delinquents whom we catch early, or upon those who are in danger of sliding down if they are not helped along.

Perhaps one reason for the great confusion on this subject arises out of the fact that we have become accustomed to making a sharp distinction between physical characters on the one hand and so-called mental and moral qualities on the other. Every one recognizes

family resemblances in physical features. A particular shape of nose or a peculiarity of the hand appears in every member of the family, sometimes for several successive generations. Facts like these we accept as evidence of "heredity" without any question. We also recognize that the Joneses of Centerville always take the measles "hard," whereas with the Andersons vaccination never "takes." But when it comes to mental qualities, which we are not accustomed to measure or to recognize with the same degree of discrimination, most of us fail to see that heredity is just as common for these as for physical traits. Moreover, mental qualities take on such a great variety of forms that their recognition is made doubly difficult. Thus it may be the same mental traits that make of a certain man a successful lawyer, of his brother an able scientist, and of their cousin a clever criminal. No doubt each of these three men has qualities in a degree lacking in the others; but the point is that they have many qualities in common which are obscured by the different lines of development they have followed.

The old parable of the wheat cast upon the ground may help us. That which falls upon stony ground fails of germination; that which falls upon poor soil will germinate, but will die of drought or be scorched by the sun; that which falls upon good soil will develop into a good plant. The *kind* of plant that may develop is determined by the seed, by heredity; *how* the plant will develop is determined by the surrounding conditions, by the environment. On the physical side these facts are so familiar to us that we never question the connection between development and food, or between development and exercise, or between development and other physical conditions. Of course, we say, an undernourished child will never be strong; of course, an overworked child will never be strong, of course, drinking and smoking and other dissipation will prevent healthy development. And yet, do we not know that of two underfed children, one will show the ill effects more than the other; that of two overworked children, one will survive abuse with less permanent injury than the other.

We must, then, have clear in our minds the idea that everything that happens to a child and that may produce a reaction or an effect is worth considering from the point of view of its influence upon his development. Indeed, instead of discussing heredity *versus* environment, we should try to conceive of the personality of the child as made up of the effect of a certain heredity responding to a certain environment. For example, the child inherits the instinct to handle things. At a certain age this instinct will take the form of handling objects within reach, and of breaking them. We cannot say that the child has an instinct for breaking vases or tearing books; he has simply the instinct to *do* something with material that he can handle. Now, it is possible for the child to exercise this instinct only on material that can be broken or torn; it is also possible for the child to exercise it on material that can be manipulated constructively—as blocks for building, clay for shaping, or, later, tools of various kinds. In one case the child establishes habits of tearing or breaking; in the other the same instincts—the same "heredity," that is—issues in habits of *making*. Or we may take the instinct of curiosity, which every normal child will manifest at an early stage. This instinct may find exercise in wondering what is in parcels or closed cupboards; or it may exercise itself in wondering about the thunder and the flowers and the things under the earth; or it may be quite suppressed by discouragement or by unsatisfying indulgence. Thus the same instinct may lead under different treatments

to different results. This does not mean that every child has the making of an investigator; it means that a perfectly healthy instinct capable of being turned to good use is often perverted or crushed out because we have not learned to cultivate it profitably through control of the growing child's development.

There is abundant evidence that the mental and moral capacities are inherited in the same way as the purely physical or physiological ones. We have, however, much more to learn about how to control the development of the former than about the control of the latter. Yet this point should be clear to every parent and teacher; whatever the child's inheritance may be, the full development of his capacities is possible only under suitable external conditions. What these conditions are depends upon the combination of capacities that the particular child possesses. But to find out what these capacities are we must give the child an opportunity to show "what's in him." This we can do by placing him in an environment simple enough for him to adjust himself to readily, and at the same time complex enough to give every side of his nature a chance to respond. This is the significance of modern educational movements that seek to leave the child untrammelled in his responses to what goes on around him. We have learned that some children will become tall and that others will never reach beyond a certain height; we seek merely to keep them healthy by suitable feeding, exercise, rest, bathing, etc. But in the matter of mental development we have not yet learned that it is impossible for all children to reach the same degree of linguistic or mathematical or artistic development, and we try to bring all of them up to our preconceived standard of what a child *should* do in each line. The thing that we need to find out is what a particular child *can* do; and then we must give him the opportunity and the encouragement to do his best. The things we encourage him to do will be the basis for the habits which he will form, for the skill which he will acquire—and so for the activities that will yield him satisfaction and determine his behavior in relation to others. That is, the things the child learns to do well will determine what kind of a person he will be when he grows up.

But it would be a mistake to suppose that every child is born with a set of special aptitudes that fit him for some particular occupation. Many children do indeed have rather special types of native ability, as the child of artistic proclivities, or the "natural born" preacher. And, on the other hand, many children are born with marked shortcomings in their makeup, although these "deficiencies" need not always interfere with their developing into excellent men and women. For example, a child may be color-blind, or incapable of mastering a foreign language in school, or awkward in doing work requiring great skill—and yet capable of doing high-grade work in other lines. Those children that have strongly-marked proclivities—which usually show themselves early in life and which are commonly associated with strong likes and dislikes—will no doubt do the most effective work along the lines of their native talents. And those with marked deficiencies should certainly not be directed into occupations wherein the lacking talents are essential for success. But the great mass of children vary from each other not so much in the directions along which their special abilities lie as in the degree to which they are capable of developing the ordinary abilities which they do have. For such children the choice of an occupation cannot wisely be made very early in life, nor should a very special choice be made until there has been an opportunity to try out a large variety of

activities and processes. Indeed, even for the child of decided genius it is desirable that there be a chance to try out many kinds of activities, both physical and mental. This is desirable not so much in the hope of counteracting his special bent on the theory of supplying exercise for the functions that are not to his liking as for the purpose of giving him an opportunity to find out *all* he can do, and to give us a chance to find out all he can do well.

Even children who pass as “average” children, however, may be divided into classes according to the variations in their native capacities. That is to say, some children, although not exhibiting any special talents or special deficiencies, are nevertheless more easily adjusted to doing muscular work than others; some are more happy in the manipulation of numbers; some show greater patience; some are more easily fatigued by the repetition of a process; some cannot stand on their feet for long periods without suffering, and so on. These differences should certainly be taken into consideration, first of all, in the treatment accorded them in the school and at home, in what is required of them, in the selection of studies, etc. And, in the second place, these facts should be considered in the choice of general fields of occupation. It would be the height of cruelty and of injustice to insist upon Walter's preparing for and entering his father's business—just to keep up the family tradition—when a little attention to the boy's work in school and to his play and to his personal preferences and tastes would show that he was eminently unsuited for the business, and at the same time well suited for some technical pursuit such as engineering. Untold misery and failure spring from our negligence in these matters, no less than from our direction of the child's development in accordance with the parents' ambitions rather than in accordance with the child's discoverable abilities and disabilities.

How far short our ordinary training falls of giving our various capacities their full development is shown by the exquisite acuteness of touch and of hearing acquired by children who become blind in infancy. The senses of touch and hearing are here developed so far beyond what ordinary persons ever attain that the belief is quite common that one who is defective in one sense has been compensated by “nature” with special capacity in the other senses. As a matter of fact, however, the extreme development is not the result of special endowment or “heredity,” but altogether the result of special training or “environment.”

There is a certain sense in which the idea of heredity impresses one with a paralyzing feeling of inevitableness. When a child is born his sex is irrevocably fixed; the character of his eyes and of his hair, the form of his features and the ridges on his finger-tips are unalterable except through mutilation or disease. But up to a certain limit the child will grow just in proportion to the nurture that he receives. And what that limit is we may not know until we find out through years of patient effort, through endless trying out in every direction. He will grow farther in some directions than in others, and the *limit* in each direction is the element of destiny supplied by heredity. Very few, however, reach their limit in many directions, and no person has ever reached his limit in every direction. The distance we do actually go depends, in practice, altogether upon the kind of environment that is supplied. This environment, so far as the growing child is concerned, is entirely

within our control, and we have no right to give up our efforts and to shift the responsibility to unsatisfactory heredity until we are quite sure that all has been done that suitable surroundings and treatment—suitable "environment"—can do. We must watch and wait, and work hard while we wait and watch.

XV. FREEDOM AND DISCIPLINE

Is it not strange that "school," which we provide for our beloved children for their own good, at so great a cost of thought and money, should be so little appreciated by them? Is it not strange that "school," which is intended to give power and freedom, should be looked upon by the children as no better than a prison—a good place from which to escape?

We grown folks know how valuable school and training and discipline are. Do we not sometimes sigh that we had not more of these blessings in our own childhood? Or that we did not take advantage of the little we had? If the children only knew—perhaps they would not so eagerly seek to escape into what they vainly imagine to be "freedom." Perhaps.

Grown folks who have thought about the matter know, of course, that "freedom" is something different from merely being left alone. They know that freedom is a state to be attained only through effort. They know that freedom results from a discipline which makes a person the master of his impulses, instead of leaving him their slave. They know that the freedom worth striving for is freedom from our own caprices and moods, from our blindness and ignorance and passions. It is for this reason that we value discipline, quite apart from anything that it may contribute to our ability to live harmoniously with others, quite apart from anything it may do to increase our power in an economic sense.

But if discipline is the means for attaining freedom, how does it come about that in the past (and for most people to-day) discipline has appeared as a method of *compelling* children to do the right thing—"until they have the habit"? How does it come about that discipline, in the minds of most people, consists so largely of *restraining* children from doing undesirable acts—until they are well started into the safe age of discretion? The reason seems to be that the need for discipline or training makes itself most quickly felt where children—or older people—infringe upon the rights of others, or upon the proprieties. We miss discipline where a child fails of self-restraint, acts impulsively, or loses his temper. In short, failure of early training is indicated wherever there is lack of self-control, or a lack of proper application to the business in hand. It is therefore natural that discipline should early take the form of commanding and prohibiting.

It is but a short step from this view of discipline to the philosophy that what children do spontaneously, what they like to do, must be wrong. And the complement to this is the feeling that virtue and character can arise only from doing what is disagreeable or difficult.

But the newer studies in the psychology of childhood lead to a totally different theory of character formation. And many experiments made in schools and institutions confirm these new theories at every point. Moreover, if we look about, perhaps even in our own homes, I am sure we can all find abundant support for the modern view.

The new studies have to do with the relation that our emotions bear to our activities and especially to the formation of habits. To learn to do a thing, we have known for ages, we must practise continuously and uniformly. But we did not know that the state of feelings connected with the performance of the act had anything to do with the result. Richard must master the scales in his music study. These scales can be mastered in only one way —he must play them over and over and over again, until he just has them. But suppose Richard does not care to practise the scales over and over and over again? Suppose that he does not care whether he ever masters the scales or not. Well, he can be *made* to practise, at any rate; and perhaps some day he will thank his elders for having thus forced upon him the extremely valuable but unappreciated command of the scales.

But what happens in the course of this forced practise? There is resentment, and antagonism and a growing hatred of scales, of the man who first vented scales, of sloping rows of notes on the page of music. And this resentment is more likely to prevent a real mastery of the task than the enforced practise is to ensure it. The antagonism will, at any rate, counteract the value of the practise to a large degree. The third element in the fixation of habits that we have heretofore too generally disregarded is that of *satisfaction*; this is no less important than regularity and frequency of action.

The absence of satisfaction, to say nothing of the presence of opposite feelings, is of itself sufficient to prevent effective learning, whether of knowledge or of skill. And when the opposite feelings are present, the acquired act or idea tends to be pushed out of the system at the earliest opportunity. It is in some such way as this that many specialists in the workings of the human mind would explain so much of our “forgetting.” They say that we forget either because we really wish to forget—the facts are unpleasant— or because we do not sufficiently care to remember—the facts are not sufficiently interesting, they do not sufficiently concern us.

Out of the psychological facts pertaining to the relation of the feeling state to the learning process and to the habit-forming process, is developed the doctrine of “interest” in education. The very name “interest” suggests to many that this must be some plan for sugar-coating education, or perhaps for giving children only what they like. And this is quite the opposite of the traditional view which is expressed by the humorist who said, “It does not matter much what you teach a boy, so long as he doesn't like it.” But the idea of interest in modern psychology does not mean letting the child have his own way, any more than discipline means doing only what is unpleasant or difficult.

We can see the basic truth at the foundation of this view in the age-long usage of the race, which awards prizes and penalties for “good” actions and “evil” actions, respectively. If you should be asked “*Why* did you reward Maryann,” “*Why* did you punish Henry;" you would no doubt say something like this: If we reward a child for doing what we approve,

he is more likely to do that sort of thing again; if we punish, or impose unpleasant consequences, upon acts that we disapprove, such acts are less likely to be repeated. In other words, we have known right along that *satisfaction* somehow leads the child to repeat the conditions that brought about the satisfaction; and that suffering somehow leads the child to avoid the conditions that brought about the suffering.

What the new psychology does here is to unify what we have known. We say not the performance of an act alone will establish a habit; not the repetition alone will establish it; not the subsequent satisfaction alone. All of these factors must take part, and they must take part in association. The feeling must accompany the act. It is not sufficient that Richard be assured that some time in the vague future he will derive deep satisfaction from being master of the scales; he must somehow be made to feel a present concern either in what he is doing, or a real interest in the outcome. The time that is to elapse between the beginning of his "practice" and the satisfaction he is to receive must not be beyond the child's power to appreciate.

In our actual dealing with children our experience leads us to make use of these principles, often without realizing all that is implied. For example, when the young child by your side shows signs of weariness, and you still have some distance to go, you try to stimulate his interest by telling him of the good things to come at journey's end. If this does not serve your purpose, you draw his attention to the bird on the tree only a hundred feet away, or you challenge him to race with you to the next telegraph post. And if you challenge him to such a race, you are sensible enough to let him win it, for you know very well that nothing will discourage him so much as defeat—that is, the unpleasant feeling of failure; and you know that nothing will stimulate him quite as much as the satisfaction of defeating you. In other words, you set before him one goal after another, each but a small fraction of the main journey, and each within the appreciation of the child, and each offering a satisfactory conclusion that is readily and eagerly seized as *worth striving for*, here and now.

Now it may be asked, what discipline is there in doing always what brings satisfaction? How can the children ever learn to do the disagreeable but necessary tasks that make up so large a part of every-day living? Where will they ever learn that some things must be done, not because we like to do them, but because it is our duty to do them? And these are indeed serious questions. There are two sets of answers. One of them consists of the results actually achieved in dealing with children from the new point of view. The other is a challenge to make clear just what we mean by discipline and task and duty.

To take the latter first, is it not true that one part of our object is in the form of acquired knowledge and acquired skill? Practising the scales, or studying the multiplication table is not an end in itself. We require study and practice because we believe that the knowledge or the skill is worth having. Now it has been shown over and over again that what is learned with satisfaction sticks; and what is learned with pain is thrown overboard the first minute the watchman is off his guard. Are the names of writers with the titles of their books less well remembered by children who learn them through the game of "Authors" than they are by children who might be required to memorize them from a

catalog? Are the sums and products of numbers acquired in keeping scores of games less accurate and less permanent in the mind of the child than the same sums and products learned as school exercises? Is the skill acquired in handling tools—sewing costumes, or making scenery for an amateur play—any less effective or less lasting than the skill acquired in sewing yards of stitches or sawing yards of board just for "exercise" in a class? On the contrary, other things being equal, arithmetic and authors and sewing and tinkering can be made both more effective and more lasting when associated with pleasurable feelings than when performed under strain, compulsion and resentment. If it is only a question of "learning" this or that, there is no doubt that the pleasant way is in every respect the better way.

But, of course, it is not merely a question of learning the specific skill or knowledge. There is also the need for learning application, persistence through difficulties, endurance, and the other hardy virtues that distinguish a disciplined character. And here the contrast between the old attitude and the new is most marked. We can certainly force children to do what is disagreeable; we can hold them to their tasks when they are tempted to abandon the monotonous and wearisome round of uninteresting drudgery. But is this the only way to get for the children experience with such necessary, though unpleasant, work? We are assuming of course that such experience is necessary, since uninteresting work cannot be separated from most important undertakings. A typical experience in a school that has for several years conducted a class along the lines of the newer psychology can answer our question.

One of the difficulties that had to be overcome was the mastery of simple addition. Another was the art of writing; and of course reading is a necessary art of modern life. Instead of the usual drill and practice and exercises, this class passed through the drudgery stage without realizing that school was a prison. This was during the autumn of the Armistice. Food conservation and thrift were in the air. These children were presented with a quantity of garden vegetables, but there was more than they could use themselves, so the suggestion was made that they could have the surplus for future use. The children, under guidance, did all the work connected with cold-pack canning of the tomatoes. This work was not at every point "interesting," in the superficial sense; but the purpose of the entire project was one that appealed to the children, so that they were quite satisfied to do the many essential details. Did they not here learn to clean their dishes and jars as well as they would have done had the cleaning been a "duty" imposed arbitrarily from above? Must drudgery be dreaded to be well done?

Let the teacher who had charge of this class describe what happened, in her own words.

"The success of the first small group in carrying through the various steps ... led to further work of the same sort, as various vegetables were given us. The children also dried apples and lima beans which they gathered themselves at the school farm.

"That the interest in this rather exacting work was sustained for two months was doubtless due to the fact that the children had a genuine purpose in canning a large quantity of vegetables. For early in the work, upon the suggestion of one of the class, it

had been decided to have a sale and use the proceeds to buy milk for a sick baby. Although I had not thought of this plan myself, I was glad to lend it my support.

“The final preparation for the sale occupied a large share of the time for several weeks. The chief consideration from the children's point of view seemed to be who should take charge of the business of selling. They had conducted a play store intermittently during the fall, but, upon testing, it was found that most of the class were ill prepared to act as salespeople.[A] The children readily recognized this fact and willingly went to work to drill on addition and subtraction. The most successful drill was accomplished by means of a dramatic rehearsal of the forthcoming sale, some children impersonating the visitors and the others the salesmen. Real money, correct prices, and the actual jars of vegetables and fruit were used for this play.

[Footnote A: Remember these were second-grade children—most of them seven or eight years old.]

“The need of invitations, of price lists, and of bookkeepers the day of the sale, was also recognized and led to much needed practice in written English. The prices were determined by a study of the latest food catalog, a small group with a teacher undertaking this work. It necessitated the use of an alphabetical index, and in some cases the calculation of the price of pints, when only quarts were listed, as we had used both pint and quart jars.

“Further preparation consisted of the making of labels for the jars and of posters for the room. The art teacher, when called in to advise, taught the children how to make accurate square letters, which they used in various sizes for the labels and posters. The making of fifty or more small labels with half-inch letters proved irksome to the little people, but they showed much persistence in completing the task, because of their interest in the sale. The eight children who made the final large posters did a great deal of intelligent, painstaking work. From the artistic point of view, the posters were not noteworthy, but they represented the children's own suggestions.

“The sale was conducted by the children, who made their own change, kept records of sales and wrapped up purchases. The various duties were agreed upon by the class, in accordance with each one's proved ability to carry them out, and everyone had some share.”

In this simple account of an experimental class conducted at the Ethical Culture School, in New York, under the direction of Miss Mabel R. Goodlander, are many references to drill and practice. But throughout all of the work it was possible to maintain the interest of the children because, apparently, the attention was not on the drill as an end in itself, but upon the special skill or knowledge as a means to a more remote end. And this remote end was not the formal one of “passing,” or being promoted, or getting a good mark, but the vital, urgent purpose of raising money through the sale for a sick baby's milk. Undoubtedly the “motives” of the several children in this class were varied and mixed—like the motives of good citizens who are united in support of a particular candidate, or a

particular platform. But there was enough common purpose to insure cooperation and persistence and effort from every single child in proportion to his ability. The learning of stupid sums and the practice in penmanship are no more attractive to these children than they are to ordinary children in ordinary schools in all parts of the country. But they overcame all internal obstacles, went through with all of the monotony and drudgery, and to that extent triumphed over any disposition to shirk or to loaf or to dawdle or to flit from work to sensation.

And how is it with the learning of responsibility, with acquiring a sense of duty? Many of us have no doubt learned what we have learned of duty and responsibility, through the constant repetition of "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not" by our elders during our own growing years. But results at least as valuable have been obtained in the cases of others through the constant rubbing up against their equals in a free give-and-take atmosphere. Children learn to live with others by living with others. They learn to work with others—to "cooperate"—by working with others. They learn to play the game, to do teamwork, to play fair, to play in good form, to hit hard only by playing according to rule, with others, with worthy opponents, under good supervision. In short, the "discipline" that makes for power and freedom may be quite as easily obtained through the exercise of freedom as through external coercion—nay, more easily, and more effectively.

It is fair to ask whether training for a game is not quite analogous to our idea of training for life; and whether the methods which are found to be effective in the former kind of training are not equally valuable for the latter. Assuming the analogy, would you have a child learn the rules of such games as baseball or tennis from a book before allowing him to handle a ball, or before letting him see a game? Would you expect him to cooperate in teamwork after a long period of drill upon the *rules* governing team cooperation? Would you expect him to hit hard because he has learned the correct answer to the question, How should a player hit?

This may not seem a fair comparison to some of the "training" that has actually been tried. Perhaps a more familiar analogy would be in teaching a child correct movements for the game to be mastered, separated from any experience with real games. Boys are "practicing" for a game, and each one is drilling on some special detail, hitting, catching, running bases, long throws, or what not; each one of them has in mind as part of his moving purpose not only his team's success and glory, but his own individual responsibility. Contrast this with the same boys required to drill at precisely the same movements on the theory that the "exercise" will do them good, or that some time in the future they might have to meet a situation in which a long throw or a swift run would be significant. Do you expect the same enthusiasm and energy to be developed in both cases? And if not the same enthusiasm and energy, can we expect the same results—whether we view the results as so much skill or technic, whether we view the results as so much "training in drudgery," or whether we consider the results from the viewpoint of moral values as so much devotion, self-sacrifice, restraint? The "moral" values that have been for years attributed to athletics appear after all to be the effects of intense, enthusiastic, and interested participation in teamwork—that is, in purposeful and energetic concern with joint undertakings.

The responsibilities we wish to develop, the sense of duty, no less than the application and persistence, no less than knowledge and skill, are types of habits which are best formed under the glow of satisfying experience. Far from assuming a soft life for the child, the idea of interest assumes the most strenuous kind of life. And the experiences of all who have tried it justifies the assumption. The experimental class already mentioned, similar experiments by Mrs. Marietta Johnson at Fairhope, Alabama and elsewhere, experimental classes at the Lincoln School and at the Horace Mann School, at various "play" schools in this country and in England, all show more continuous application of the children to whatever they happen to have in hand, longer periods of intense activity, and no sign whatever of loafing or shirking. The activities selected by the children themselves involve just as much "discipline" as anything that can be selected for them.

In these schools the children never hear the teacher call for "attention," for although everybody knows that attention is an essential of effective work, the attention takes care of itself where the children already feel a genuine concern in the outcome. And this concern insures satisfactory application, since the children look forward to satisfying results. This does not mean, of course, that either the work itself or the result is necessarily "pleasant," in the ordinary sense. Often, indeed, it is quite the reverse, as when the racer is exerting every last reserve of his energy in the final spurt, or when the contestants are in suspense awaiting the decision of the judges as to which is the best cake. And the endless grind of practice and preparation is no more "pleasant" to the child who knows the purpose and approves the purpose of his efforts (having taken part in selecting the undertaking) than similar exertion is to the child whose work is all planned and directed by outsiders; but the satisfactions connected with the exertions are different in the two cases, and the corresponding results are correspondingly different.

The principle of interest as a guide to the training of children can be applied in the home as well as in the school. It means, first of all, taking into account the interests, tastes, preferences of the children. As has already been suggested in earlier chapters, there are many occasions when the child may be consulted or given a choice of action, of amusements, of purchases, and so on—situations in which it is a matter of indifference to older people, but in which the making of a decision or a choice is both satisfying and valuable to the child. Even where the decision is not an indifferent one, our own should not be imposed in an arbitrary manner; when it differs from that of the child, we can get his assent and cooperation, where an arbitrary choice leaves him cold or even resentful.

The games children play, whether by themselves or with other children, are only in part manifestations of tastes: they represent to a degree stages of development. For the reason, therefore, that interests develop, we shall find that what is a favorable time for one child is not necessarily a favorable time for another child to learn a particular thing. This is very well shown by the great differences found among children, as to learning school subjects like reading or writing. In some the interest is aroused very early, and for them this is the best time; with others the interest does not appear until the third or fourth grade, or even later, and for such children this is the best time. There is no one period that is best for all children; by attempting to treat all alike, therefore, we not only waste a great deal of energy and good feeling, but we often defeat our purpose by antagonizing

the children and thus making them resist the very things we want them to hug to themselves. And this is just as true of what we try to do in the home as it is of school teaching.

To discover the interests of the children requires that they be given an opportunity to express themselves. This means in most cases much more freedom than children have heretofore enjoyed. But it means also constant vigilance on the part of the elders, not so much to guard against the freedom being abused, as to guard against the opportunity being wasted. The taste in games or in reading, the choice of companions or of leisure time occupations must not only show themselves to be indulged; they must be seized upon by those who guide the children, as means for giving drive and direction to further development. A child who devotes too much time to athletics and too little to literature, may be drawn to reading through books about athletic contests of the classics, or through modern stories of college life. On the other hand, the boy who is prone to get his satisfactions vicariously and to neglect active participation in games and other activities, must be led through his reading, properly selected and unostentatiously placed under his nose, to more direct concern with producing practical effects in his environment. The interest, once discovered, must be the means for stimulating to greater exertion and to closer unification of the child's activities.

One of the things that presents a difficulty in every generation is the fact that the social and moral ideals change from age to age. We are thus constantly tempted to put into the characters of our children those traits that were valued highly by our parents, without always considering the importance of each item for the days in which our children will play their parts. Thus it comes about that many of the virtues that have a traditional value may be questioned when offered as staples for citizens of to-morrow. Obedience, for example, is a permanent necessity in a society that rests upon the assumption that one or a few chosen men represent the will of the gods on earth, but has only a transitory value in a democracy. As someone has said, obedience in childhood must be considered as a scaffold that is useful while the lasting parts of the structure are being put in place; when the desired structure is completed, obedience is naturally removed as of no further service. Now the kind of discipline required in a democracy calls for an attitude or disposition that makes cooperation with others come as a matter of course; it calls for the making of decisions, or the forming of opinions, on the basis of facts; and it calls for the habit of taking due account of the rights of others. The training for this class of habits is best obtained through methods that take full account of children's interests.

Just as the older outlook turned to “discipline” as a means for obtaining freedom, the new psychology utilizes freedom as a means for obtaining discipline. In both cases the end is of course the same—that is, the liberation of the human spirit and the organizing of the individual's powers to the greatest good. But as our ideas of human relations and of values have changed, science has given us new methods for attaining the final goals that we set ourselves.