CHILD MANAGEMENT

By
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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR,
CHILDREN'S BUREAU,
Washington, January 27, 1925.

Sir: Transmitted herewith is a bulletin on "Child Management," written for the Children's Bureau by Dr. D. A. Thom, director of the habit clinics of Boston and director of the division of mental hygiene in the Department of Mental Diseases of Massachusetts.
Respectfully submitted.

Grace Abbott, Chief.

Hon. James J. Davis,
Secretary of Labor.
CHILD MANAGEMENT

HABITS

The health, happiness, and efficiency of the adult man and woman depend, to a very large extent, upon the type of habits they acquire from their training and experience during early life. Any information which gives the interested parent a better idea of the mental life of the child, methods that may be utilized in developing desirable habits, and suggestions for overcoming undesirable habits may be considered well worth while.

“Habit” is such a common, everyday sort of term, with which everyone is more or less familiar, that it hardly seems necessary to discuss it at all. However, it is in this very fact—that habits are so commonplace and ordinary in the minds of the great mass of individuals—that the danger lies. All too frequently the fundamental importance of forming right habits in early life is minimized or overlooked altogether.

Without any attempt to give a strictly scientific definition, it may be said that habit is the tendency to repeat what has been done before. One develops not only habits of acting but habits of thinking and feeling in certain ways. Habits in regard to the care of the body—eating, sleeping, eliminating, bathing—are easily formed and vitally affect health. Our manners are a collection of habits; we do a rude or a courteous thing almost without stopping to think. If we did not learn the muscular movements which become habitual through repetition we could never play the piano, run a typewriter, or gain skill in athletics. Of course, children must learn the simpler motions first—the use of knife and fork, the buttoning of buttons, and the tying of knots. The morals of most of us are, to a large extent, the result of habits of thinking formed in early life—our attitude toward the drinking of alcoholic liquors or the taking of others’ property, or the problem of sex, as well as our attitude toward other people, whether sincere or deceitful, friendly or antagonistic. Most of our prejudices are the outcome of habits of thinking formed in childhood. Many persons as children develop a feeling about racial and religious differences which may lead in later life to intolerance and hatred toward their fellow men. This same attitude of mind is seen in children toward their playmates who have the misfortune of being orphans, or the child whose mother is a scrubwoman, or whose father is a garbage collector, or who is boarded under the care of a child-placing agency. Care should be taken to see that children are early taught kindness and consideration for those less fortunate, for unconsciously they will form their attitudes from the home atmosphere.

All these tendencies toward thinking and acting in certain ways, which are called habitual, are the outgrowth of training and expe-
rience. They are not inherited. We begin to form habits at birth and go on through life, forming them quickly and easily in youth and more slowly and with difficulty as the years advance. The
together the act is repeated or the thought is indulged in the more lasting the habit becomes. Since habit formation begins early and is more or less constant throughout life it is of great importance that emphasis be placed upon establishment of desirable habits.

A young child has certain characteristics that make the acquiring of new habits easy. For one thing, he is suggestible; that is, he accepts without reasoning about it anything which comes from a person he looks up to. "My father said so" or "My mother did it" makes a thing absolutely right for a little child. Again, a child naturally tends to imitate the words, actions, and attitudes of the people around him, and this makes it of the greatest importance that older people furnish him the kind of models they want to have copied. Furthermore, a child wants to please those he loves and wants to have them say so. At first it is only father or mother or some one in the immediate family whose good opinion he wants. Then it is the kindergarten or school teacher. Finally, at 9 or 10, the praise or blame of his playmates or of the gang leader concerns him more than anything else. When this stage is reached parents should not be disheartened and think that their boy is developing into a black sheep. It is a perfectly natural stage which children pass through and which calls only for greater care in the selection of wholesome companions.

This attitude of concern regarding what other people think is a force that parents may use in developing right conduct. Rarely is a child found who does not care for the approval of some one, and training should make a child realize that it is to his advantage to win approbation for desirable acts. Praise for unselfishness, kindness, and general consideration for others tends to perpetuate that type of conduct.

Some parents play upon a child's natural sympathy for others until it becomes like a worn-out elastic band which has been stretched till it is useless. "Don't make a noise; mother's head aches," may make a child sorry for mother at first, but if it interferes with every bit of happy play he has he soon learns to be hard-hearted about it. On the other hand, real sympathy for others, which is one of the finest qualities of personality, may be developed by training and form the basis of a habit of kindness and understanding which will last throughout life.

Plasticity, which, as William James states, means "the possession of a structure weak enough to yield, yet strong enough not to yield all at once," is a mental characteristic in a child's life which permits him to adjust himself to the numerous and varied changes necessary during the early years of life. It is the same characteristic which permits the adaptations in adult life that promote happiness and efficiency. It is this plastic state of the child's mind which prompts him to develop new methods of reacting from day to day. It is the characteristic that is absolutely essential to the formation of new and the giving up of old habits. It is this instinctive tendency with which the child is born that facilitates habit formation.

A child must be thought of as something more than arms and legs which are always tearing clothes and getting into trouble, eyes and
C H I L D M A N A G E M E N T

Cars which are seeing and listening when it is inconvenient for adults to have them, and a stomach and other internal organs which get out of order sometimes. A child has a mental life far more delicate and complex than his physical body, far more difficult to keep in order and much more easily put out of adjustment. A child lives a real mental life, full of hopes, ambitions, doubts, misgivings, joys, sorrows, and strivings that are being gratified or thwarted much the same at 3 years of age as they will be at 30. The home is the workshop in which the character and personality of this individual are being molded by the formation of habits into the person he will be in adult life.

T H E P A R E N T

In the discussion of habits in general and a few of the outstanding problems that concern the child during early life emphasis has been placed upon the importance to the child of the home and the community in which he is reared.

Though father and mother alike play important roles in the development of the child, the discussion so far has been addressed chiefly to the mother, in appreciation of the fact that the greater part of her time and energy is spent in the actual care and supervision of the child. Interest and love alone on her part are not enough to assure success in handling the innumerable problems met with in the management of children. The very love of the mother for her child may be the "stumbling block" that prevents her from successfully fulfilling the obligations of her parenthood. This love is invariably associated with excessive worry, anxiety, and, at times, definite fear which prevent the most intelligent approach to many problems of childhood. Over-solicitude on the part of the parent or parents may put the child in an entirely new setting. Children may become self-centered and develop innumerable imaginary complaints simply because illness is looked for and any existing ill health is exaggerated. We are all familiar with the marked changes in behavior which often take place in children who have met with an accident or undergone some illness. Suppose the boy returns from the hospital or begins to convalesce at home. Everything centers about the younger, everybody is subservient to his demands. Under such conditions is he not apt to become selfish and domineering? His whole personality may so change as to cause worry and anxiety to his parents, who erroneously and unfortunately attribute the change to the illness rather than to the changed attitudes in the home. The same situation is repeated in a lesser degree but over a longer period of time by the unreasonable fears and anxieties of the oversolicitous parent. Not infrequently children exploit their illness to avoid an unpleasant duty or to gain extra attention.

The study of one little girl seen a short time ago demonstrates this point clearly:

Mary, at 7, dominated the entire household. Mother faithfully fulfilled her slightest wish, fearing to cross her lest she become ill. Her sisters patiently shouldered her share of home duties and quietly gave way to her at every point in order to avoid, if possible, the almost inevitable outburst of temper which was so upsetting to
the household. Her ready excuses for all occasions were "You
mustn’t mind what I do; you see I’ve been sick," or "I’m not strong
enough to do that ‘cause I’ve had paralysis."

It is true she had lived through more than her share of illness and
was accustomed to admiration and interest from doctors to whom
she was frequently shown as an unusual case.

Her “alibi” of ill health helped her over many difficult places in
school, and at home special concessions were made for her and she
was excused at every turn. Her whole life seemed built about this
desire to hold the center of the stage.

Through a radical change of attitude on the mother’s part this
little girl, who was fast developing into a chronic complainer, has
now become a hearty, normal youngster, gayly competing with her
sisters in “helping mother,” trying each week to learn to do one
new task independently, and striving toward an ideal of robust
good health rather than desiring the rôle in life of “interesting
invalid.”

After a little judicious neglect and ignoring, the alarming physi-
cal symptoms which so greatly troubled the mother vanished. The
marked tremor of Mary’s hands, which made it seem necessary that
the mother feed her each mouthful she ate, disappeared, as also did
the tremor of voice. After determination by physical examination
of the child’s actual condition an appeal was made to her ambition
and pride. Her desire for attention and wish to excel were turned
away from the goal of ill health. With encouragement on the part
of the physician and her mother and with faith in her ability to
make good she is now taking her part in home and school, standing
on her own feet, and learning to face life as it is.

Some parents greatly fear that their children will get hurt (which,
by the way, is not an unreasonable fear in the crowded tenement
sections) or that they will associate with children of undesirable
neighbors and perhaps pick up profane or obscene language. Even
so, it may be better to take a chance than to cripple a child’s life
by allowing him no opportunities to learn independence and develop
initiative. The child who is closely tied to mother’s apron strings
is deprived of all chance of really learning how to live with his
neighbors. When the time comes to break the home ties and enter
school he is lacking in strength, courage, and resourcefulness. This
lack may handicap him through life.

There is so much real joy for most mothers in the affection they
receive from their children that there is grave danger that the child
may be “babied” too much. Perhaps in the heart of every mother
is reluctance to see her child develop independence, and there may
be more satisfaction than she is willing to admit in the fact that he
clings to her so tenaciously, that he refuses to eat unless fed by her,
and that he refuses to go to bed unless she lies down with him.
This present enjoyment for the mother will have to be paid for later
by the child. It is the normal, natural thing for a child to assert
his independence and assume the full limit of responsibility at the
earliest possible age. Let him try and fail, if need be; he will learn
by mistakes. Often it is easier to do the things for him which he
is slow in doing or finds hard, but wait, give him time. The habits
of dependence which are fostered by parents often make it well-nigh
impossible for the boy or girl to stand alone in years to come.
Very early in life the child must learn that things cannot be his simply because he desires them. Do not try to give him everything he demands or wishes; he must develop the habit of foregoing certain of his wants, of giving when he would like to take, and of dividing and sharing his toys. He will not understand why he should do these things, but even a little child can appreciate that such acts bring approbation and praise and make other people happy. In this way he will grow to manhood with courage to face the disappointments and failures of everyday life.

Always avoid bribing and do not make promises which you know you can not or do not intend to keep. So often we hear, "Now, Johnny, be a good boy and mother will buy lots of candy," or "Do this and mother will give you a penny." Soon Johnny will no longer be satisfied with one penny, and you must give him two and then three. A child with a little determination can easily work this method to his advantage. Or again, if a reward has been promised and the little girl or boy has made a great effort to do as asked, do you carelessly disregard the just demand for the reward?

A child is quick to realize it if he is being cheated or deceived. Frequently parents will misrepresent or lie to a child to keep him quiet or to gain a desired result. Often this is done quite unconsciously; then, suddenly, without realizing how it has happened, the mother awakens to the fact that her child has no regard for the truth and has lost confidence in the statements of others.

Threatening a child is a common method of setting out to obtain control. It is, however, useless and inexcusable. The simple statement of what will follow if a child persists in disobeying can not be considered a threat if the promised results really follow. But many parents indulge in meaningless threats. "Be good or the doctor will cut your tongue out," "Stop or I'll go for the policeman," "Be quiet or I'll lick you," or "The old man with the bag picks up little girls who don't mind their mothers, and they never come home again"—these and many others are in everyday use, with one of two results. Either the child is controlled by terror, which may have a far deeper and more disastrous effect than is apparent, or he senses the fact that none of the promised happenings takes place and develops an utter disregard for them. Either result is unsatisfactory and should never be brought about.

To the child the parent should be companion, friend, and confidant. The parent whose little child brings all his troubles and doubts to him for solution has established a relationship of tremendous value. This can never-be brought about if the parent's attitude is cold and repelling. A mother who is too busy to bother with a little child's nonsense will never be bothered by his real problems.

You may be sure that each event of the day is receiving consideration by the child. The interpretation he is giving the simplest doing may not be known to us and may be far from the correct one. Don't further confuse him by talking "over his head" in partially disguised language about things he should not know. Few parents realize how much children understand of what they hear. Don't talk about him in his presence or laugh at him. Self-consciousness is quickly developed. He may be hurt by the laughter which he does not understand, or it may create an unwholesome desire to "show off" and attract further attention.
A child should be treated with as much courtesy as an adult. Children have affairs and plans of their own which they are following. These plans are frequently utterly disregarded by the "grown-up." If they must be interfered with, let it be with some explanation and consideration for the children.

The small daughter of a young couple was playing contentedly on the hearth by her father's feet when her mother called from upstairs for her to come to bed. Two or three minutes more and Betty could have completed the task she had in hand and, had mother known this, she would have waited before calling her. With a quivering chin and eyes filled with tears Betty turned to her father saying, "But, Daddy, I don't want to go. I want to finish." Father could see the little girl's point, and his answer was, "That's too bad, Betty. Mother didn't know how near through you were, or she would have let you finish; but never mind, 'orders is orders,' so run off to bed." And off she went. In this way he showed that he sympathized with her in her disappointment and that he expected her to meet it bravely, and he also upheld the mother in her request—all in a considerate, understanding way.

It might here be said that one of the fundamental rules of child training should be that parents present a united front to the child. If differences in judgment occur, let them be settled in private.

There is no finer or more important job than being a parent. This generation or the next will not handle it perfectly. There is a great deal to learn, but much will be accomplished if the approach to the problems of childhood is not blocked nor impeded by anger, fear, oversolicitude, or the idea that being a parent means at all times being obeyed. Kindness, common sense, and an effort to understand the child's own attitude toward his difficulties will do much to bring about an intelligent solution for most of the problems.

**FEEDING**

One of the first tasks which confronts the mother is that of supplying proper nourishment to the newborn child. Because of the delicate organism which must be dealt with and the close relationship between the emotional and the physical life of the child the problem may be best handled by a physician who is skilled in the treatment of children's diseases. Not infrequently difficulties regarding the feeding of the child and the child's attitude toward his food can not be explained on any physical basis. It may be that diagnosis, treatment, and cure have taken place with regard to some physical condition which might well have been the cause of a given feeding difficulty, and still the problem is unsolved. It is with this group of cases in which every physical basis for trouble has been eliminated that this discussion is particularly concerned. The common complaints in these cases are absolute refusal of food, refusal to swallow, the sucking of food after it has been taken into the mouth, and vomiting if the child is forced to eat. Experience has shown that many of these habits are easily explained by situations in the home. The attitude of the parent toward the child, unwise selection of food, making the meal too important, or creating scenes to which there is attached unpleasant emotion—all increase the difficulty.
In the minds of many parents poor appetite is associated with poor health, and it is therefore only natural that a poor appetite in a child should arouse worry, anxiety, and oversolicitude in the parent. In the type of cases under consideration there is frequently no relation between faulty food habits and poor appetite; in fact, it is quite noticeable that many of these children with faulty feeding habits are by no means poorly nourished, underweight, anemic individuals. The problem usually resolves itself into the quality of food taken, the method of taking it, and the necessary outlay of energy and effort on the mother's part to force adequate nourishment upon the child.

One of the most common mistakes the mother makes is brought about by her preconceived notions that every child requires the same amount of food and that every child must necessarily eat every meal. With this idea in mind she becomes fretful and emotionally upset if the child fails to meet her standards. Notwithstanding the fact that the state of nutrition is one of the most important indicators of the child's well-being, it does not hold true that all children require the same amount of food, that they must necessarily be of the same height or weight at a certain age, or that any particular harm will follow if they miss a meal or two. It is frequently this undue anxiety on the part of the parent that tends to make the meal hour an event rather than an incident in the daily life of the child. This is seen clearly in the case of a bright little girl of 6. Her mother died of tuberculosis, and the father is haunted by a fear of the child's having contracted the disease. His one desire is to see her fat and rosy. Three large meals a day are forced upon this child by an overwrought father who in his anxiety creates such a tense atmosphere in the home that Sally loses all appetite or bolts her food in fear of the wrath to come, or, in a different mood, waits to be coaxed and bribed to swallow a single mouthful. Instead of being a simple routine, mealtimes offer an opportunity which the child sees and grasps for staging a little drama in which she is the principal figure, the object of solicitude and concern. The meal itself has lost importance and all depends upon the child's wishes.

Who does not like to feel his own importance and power? Small Tommy, by eating or not eating, can pretty well control his parents and make them bow to his will. Mother herself may unconsciously defeat her own desires. She may start the meal by reminding Tommy that he did not eat his breakfast. There may follow a period of teasing and coaxing or threatening and bribing, all of which, if Tommy has a will of his own, may make him determined not to give way, or he may compromise and eat if mother will sit down to feed him, even though he can well perform this task for himself. Then, the meal over, Tommy hears the whole situation reviewed to a neighbor who drops in and to whom mother turns for sympathy. Most people like to be "unusual" or "different," and according to mother, Tommy is decidedly so. Is there any wonder he should strive to maintain the rôle?

The relation between functions of digestion and emotional states of mind is a close one. Desire for food is greatly affected by feelings of anger, jealousy, sorrow, or joy. As the emotions in children are much more unstable and more quickly aroused than in later
years, it is easy to understand why a child who has been forced to eat some particular article of food for which he had no desire, or to eat more food than there was a physiological demand for, should reward his mother for her efforts in feeding him by rejecting the entire meal.

This habit of vomiting food may start as a purely physiological process, as described. If, however, the act produces on the part of the parent undue care and attention, it may be repeated on other occasions for quite a different reason; that is, as a definite demand for attention.

Every effort should be made to have the child in a calm and cheerful state of mind at mealtimes. If he is tired or sulky or greatly excited, he probably will show a lack of appetite, and food may be distasteful to him.

Until good habits of eating are well established, have the child eat alone where, without an interested audience, he may learn to feed himself and slop and spill if need be while he learns. In this way there will be less to distract him, and he will not see and desire things which are provided for the adults and which he is better off without. If mother sits with him for company, she should have something to take up part of her interest—some sewing, for instance. The child will not then feel her entire interest focused on him. Nothing can be worse for the child than to feel that it is of vital interest whether or not he eats his food. Conceal your anxiety, and treat the meal hour as a pleasant but incidental part of the day's program.

If for some reason the child can not or will not eat the meal before him, do not force him or talk the matter over before him. There is grave danger of arousing an antagonistic attitude toward a particular type of food by insisting that it be eaten the first time it is presented. There is probably a certain resentment on the mother's part if her command is disputed, and perhaps there is some feeling, though it is entirely unjustified, that if she can not make Johnny eat spinach or carrots the first time they appear on the table he will never eat them. As a matter of fact, there is more danger in creating an unpleasant scene which will recur to the child when next he sees these foods, and so prevent his eating or enjoying them.

Dainty serving of food goes a long way in arousing appetite. A small table and chinm “all his own” or being allowed to sit in mother's place at the table may have a great appeal. Let the child know that when he learns to feed himself in a quiet, efficient manner he may then come to the table with the “grown-ups.” This may give him incentive to strive for perfection. Occasionally consult the child's preference about his food, but never let him feel he is free to dictate as to what he will and will not eat. Teach him that certain foods are required if he is to grow big and strong and rugged like the “Daddy” he adores. Do not insist on pushing him; lead him once in a while. Little harm will result from his missing a meal now and then. There are times when food is repulsive to children for no apparent reason. There are other occasions when their mood is such that they enjoy arousing anxiety, worry, and solicitude in the parent. You will find when this is the case and the child says he does not want any lunch that it is
wise to reply that it is quite all right and if he is not hungry he may run out to play. You have thus removed every resistance which he hoped to battle against, and if this is just an emotional attitude it is unlikely that he will take any chances on missing a meal in the future.

Remember that children are quick to copy and if, for instance, grandma is on a limited diet and can not eat this or that, or if father frankly emphasizes his likes and dislikes, the child is apt to become finicky and particular in his eating. The child who early learns to eat with a good appetite whatever is set before him will be saved much discomfort and embarrassment in later life.

Of course, the child should have plain, nourishing, easily digested food that is well cooked and served in small quantities. Regularity in serving meals is of great importance, not only for physiological reasons, such as keeping the intake of food evenly regulated in order that the digestive apparatus may work smoothly, but for other reasons as well. Obviously, if a child learns that food is available at any hour of the day he will not be greatly concerned in eating at any definite time. It should be understood by the children and strictly adhered to by the parent that if the youngster does not eat at the allotted hour he gets nothing until the following meal.

Care must be taken, however, that he is not fed between meals by other members of the family or supplied with pennies with which he can buy sweets to appease his hunger during the interval. The child should not be hurried during the meal, nor should he be given sufficient time to play and dabble with his food. The ordinary meal for a child should not require over 30 minutes at the most. If by that time he has not finished remove the food without any comment. And again, remember, the meal hour must not be at a time when the child has an opportunity of "putting himself across" as an individual of importance because of his attitude toward taking his food.

JEALOUSY

Few emotions are experienced by man which from a social point of view are more important than jealousy, and perhaps no emotion is so dependent upon early environmental conditions for its development. It arouses anger and frequently hatred toward the object of jealousy. It causes the jealous individual to feel disregarded and inferior to his friends and neighbors, it damages his pride, and it lowers his self-respect. This may produce a desire for revenge and retaliation or may cause him to withdraw and hide his true feelings under a mask of indifference.

We are all familiar with one or more of our friends or acquaintances who have what we call a jealous disposition. Not only are they jealous in reference to their love and friendships, but also of good fortune which falls to others. Pleasure and happiness can be only temporary for this type of individual. Their satisfaction with life is constantly being interrupted by their attitude toward the achievement and happiness of others.

One of the most common situations which stimulates jealousy in the child is the birth of a new baby. This is not surprising when quite suddenly and unexpectedly this child of 3 or 4 finds his
mother devoting practically all her time to the intruder. It may be that the child has been through a period of worry and upset. Often the older child is sent away during the mother’s confinement. This may be the first time he has ever been away from home, and adults can little appreciate what this may mean to him, even though he be with the most well-meaning of relatives. His entire world is in upheaval. How can he know that it will ever come right again? He puzzles his little head over this, is told time and again that he is going back to mother and daddy, but when he gets there he appears to be supplanted. Or it may be that he stays at home, and mother is taken away to the hospital with little or no explanation to him. Again he is faced with an upset world. Why has mother left him? Will she really come home again? Then she comes, but not with undivided attention for him. Mother’s love and attention must be shared; small wonder that feelings of hatred for the baby are aroused.

However, this attitude toward the newborn baby can invariably be overcome if the older child is confided in and told that he may expect a new little brother or sister. He then awaits its arrival with interest and pleasant anticipation. Handled wisely, what might be a most unpleasant event in his life becomes a real pleasure which will mean companionship and a new playmate, some one to care for and protect. This sense of responsibility will work out to the advantage of both children. If, in the course of events, the older child does become jealous of the baby, never foster this attitude by teasing or encouraging it, or by looking upon it as something that is “funny” or “cunning.” The emotions of childhood are far too dangerous to be toyed with in this way. Intelligent parents will find numerous ingenious ways to convince the child that he is still just as much loved and as important a member of the household as he was before the “usurper” arrived. It is simply a matter of giving the older child a little more time and attention and a little assurance that he still holds the affection of those he loves.

Often a child will become markedly jealous when the parents show affection for each other or for children outside the family circle. Unfortunately parents not appreciating the gravity of such a demonstration are frequently flattered by the child’s resentment. This interesting and unusual display of emotion appeals to them and they term it “cute,” making every effort to perpetuate and exaggerate it and even arousing it for show purposes when visitors come in. In one case the daily delight of the father of a little girl of 2 was to incite her to wrath on his return from work by cuddling the baby sister and ignoring the older child. This continued treatment has so warped her outlook that at 5 she stands at odds with the world, disliked by family and playmates, defiant, belligerent, and frequently making vicious attacks upon the sisters by whom she feels she has been supplanted. This, of course, is an exaggerated instance, but situations of this sort are far more common than most people suspect.

Again, jealousy is aroused in one child by the constant praising and holding up of brother or sister as a model or persistently pointing out shortcomings and defects in the child who is inclined to be jealous. Nothing is more disastrous than playing the merits and abilities of one child against those of another. It causes feelings of
bitterness, resentment, inferiority, and inadequacy. No family is big enough to play favorites or show partiality.

In order to avoid as far as possible the development of jealousy in the child it is necessary to deal with that common characteristic of childhood called selfishness.

The child must learn that he has certain obligations toward his family and later toward the community in which he lives. As early as possible he must begin to think of what he does and what he says in relation to other individuals and how his words and acts affect them. He will be repeatedly told that such and such an attitude in a given time or place is right or wrong. He will live in an environment where he can see that his pleasures and those of others are being considered by each member of the household. Thus, long before he can reason why, he will have acquired certain habits, developed largely through suggestion and imitation.

The jealous child is apt to be one who in early life has not had the opportunity of developing interests outside himself. The only child is in a position to become self-centered. This is especially true if this child has been brought up in a crowded section of the city where he is confined to limited quarters with no companionship except that of his mother. He is, to be sure, monarch of all that is within his reach, but his field is far too limited. He has no knowledge nor chance to gain knowledge of the interests and activities of other children.

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The same holds true in a greater or less degree with a child who, by illness or accident, has been prevented from making early contacts with other children and has had only the companionship of an oversolicitous mother. He, too, becomes impressed with his own importance. Not infrequently one child in a family is especially favored by one parent or the other, being protected not from experiences but from the natural consequences of those experiences. Such children in later life are of the type who fail to recognize superiority in others and are intolerant and resentful toward authority.

It is fairly safe to assume that if a child can be taught habits of unselfishness in the home, where his personal attachments are strongest and where he would naturally have more provocation to jealousy, and can learn to meet successfully the situations which develop there, he will encounter little or no difficulty from this emotional handicap when he gets outside.

If it so happens that there are no other children in the home every effort should be made to bring the child into association with children outside, even at the risk of physical dangers in the street and the chance of picking up some of the vocabulary of the alley.

The child should be taught to share his toys and playthings, his candy, books, and pennies with other children. In games he must learn to strive for the good of the group and not for personal achievement. If defeated, he must learn to acknowledge better playing and take it with a smile. Children should learn to play many games with fair ability rather than to excel in one particular game. There is a great tendency, not only on the part of
children but on the part of adults as well, to cling to the things they do exceptionally well and retire from the field of activity where they do not excel. Unselfish conduct should always be rewarded by commendations and occasionally by something of a material nature. There is certainly no disadvantage in the child's learning from experience that unselfishness is a paying proposition.

It is the jealous child who becomes the jealous man or woman. As a child he encounters innumerable difficulties in getting on with his playmates. Because of this he develops a sense of failure and shame which is a tremendous handicap. He feels wronged and neglected; he has missed a “square deal.” His self-centeredness becomes more marked, and he draws away from his playmates and the activities of life thoroughly discouraged; or he may become domineering and pugnacious in an effort to gain attention for himself. Later in life this emotion causes an inability to share in the joys of others and makes it impossible to see others succeed without manifesting open resentment. The jealous person becomes an object of dislike. Often he develops the idea that he is unjustly treated or persecuted, and all too frequently this idea causes uncontrolled resentment and disastrous results.

Study your child. Find out why he behaves as he does. Is he aggressive, belligerent, and defiant? Is he sullen and resentful, or does he explode in outbursts of temper which clear the atmosphere? Or is he shy, quiet, and always a model of good behavior, letting life slip past him without taking an active part. Think the thing over; try to see his reasoning. Remember that the attitude he is showing may be the very opposite of what he really feels. Aggressiveness and defiance may be a mask for feelings of failure and discouragement; passive indifference may cover deeply wounded feelings. On the other hand, the child's conduct may be only the result of limitation and may be patterned after an admired “grown-up” or child with whom he comes in contact. Take time to know your boy or girl; it will prove in later years to be time well spent.

FEAR

Fear is perhaps the most common emotion which human beings experience, yet it is extremely doubtful if the child has any inherent fears at birth. Most fears are produced by some experience through which the individual has had to pass in early life.

In dealing with children we are very prone to speak of their foolish fears, yet they are foolish and unreasonable to us as adults simply because of our inability to understand how certain experiences have left upon the mind of the child impressions and feelings which govern conduct for a long time. A large number of parents frighten children either as a punishment or as a means of obtaining desired conduct, and perhaps only a very few parents take the fears experienced by their children seriously enough. They do not make inquiry into their cause nor make efforts to eradicate them by careful explanation.
There appear to be two distinct types of fear—what might be called objective and subjective fears. The first are fears of things which can be seen or heard, like animals, policemen, doctors, lightning, guns, and high places. The subjective fears are more intangible, and the causes are very hard to find. They are based on the feelings and attitudes of the child to something which he has heard and upon which he has brooded without daring to express his fear.

Objective fears are usually more easily recognized and comparatively easy to overcome. Sometimes the child has forgotten the experience with which the fear was associated in the first place, but if it can be recalled the fear can be taken out of it by a straightforward explanation.

Some children are afraid of anything new or strange, but they soon become accustomed to it if they are allowed to do so gradually. It is a mistaken notion that a child should be pushed into a situation where he is afraid in an effort to “train him.” A little child who cries at his first experience of bathing in the big ocean is not helped by being thrown in, but on the contrary gets an experience of dread and fear of water which may not be easily overcome.

Fear of animals may occur at a very early age but usually passes off as soon as the child becomes accustomed to the sight of them, unless he has some especially unfortunate experience in being frightened either by the animal itself or by threats that the animal will get him if he is not a good boy.

Many children are threatened with the policeman or the “bogie man.” Sometimes mother speaks to the ragman and asks him to take a naughty boy away in his bag. It is particularly unfortunate when mothers use a threat of the doctor to frighten their children into obedience, for the time may come when a child’s life may depend on a doctor’s being able to get him to take treatment without crying or struggling. “The doctor cuts the fingers of little boys who touch things” is not good preparation for such an emergency.

Often fears are due to unpleasant experiences for which the parents are in no way to blame, and may even extend to things which are merely associated with the unpleasant experience. For instance, a child who has been hurt in a doctor’s office may be afraid to enter any place which looks like a doctor’s office. A book agent, with his black bag, may be a terrifying figure to such a child. This is a very different thing from fears that are produced in the child’s mind by threats. The fears based on a real experience can be overcome by gradually associating pleasant things with the same situation or by appealing to the child’s courage to face his fears bravely.

Children quickly adopt the attitude of their parents, be it one of bravery or fear. Many mothers wonder where their children get their fear of lightning or animals, forgetting that they themselves have shown fear when they thought the children were not noticing.

Such was the case with little Ellen. Her mother thought the child inherited from her a fear of the dark and everything strange. Ellen would awake screaming at night, saying some one was climbing in at the window. Her mother compared this in the child’s hearing to her own fear of being left alone of an evening when she thought...
every sound meant a lurking marauder. The mother had heard many ghost stories in childhood, and though she denied that she had ever told them to Ellen, she talked quite freely about them in her presence. It is not hard to see where this child's "inherited" fears originated.

If the child develops a fear of loud noises and flashes of light, such as thunder and lightning and firing of guns, he can overcome it only with the help of intelligent suggestion from the parents. He must see from their attitude that there is no occasion for fear. The mother who is terrified by these situations and whose fear is openly demonstrated before the child can be of no assistance to him. Imitation clearly plays an important part in the development and control of fear. This may be seen, for instance, if things go wrong at sea and a ship is in danger. One panic-stricken person may start a stampede for the lifeboats, whereas one calm and fearless officer can quell the impending panic and control the situation.

The subjective fears are very hard to trace back to their cause and to overcome. They are often so vague and intangible that an adult would not dream that a child could be thinking of such things. As Victor Hugo says in his Recollections of Childhood, "But a thing once said sinks in the mind; that which has struck the brain often, from time to time comes back again, and in the breast of simple infancy lives unexplained full many a mystery."

For example, vague and poorly formulated ideas about death are the basis of more mental anxiety in children than is generally supposed. To one child death meant being buried in a hole, another child had a fear of being buried alive, and many children are disturbed by the line in the evening prayer which is familiar to most children, "If I should die before I wake." It would be impossible to state all the vague fantasies of childhood about this ever-present problem of death, but it should not be difficult to give the average child a conception of death and the hereafter which will do much to allay the common fears surrounding this mystery.

Another common fear which children have is that of being deserted by their parents. This undoubtedly is brought about in many instances by their having been told at some time or other that if they were not good their parents would go away and leave them. Some parents even wrap them up and say they are going to give them away. One mother, who had to go to a hospital for a week's treatment, told her little girl, 3 years old, that she was going out to buy a loaf of bread. The child watched at the window for her mother to come back, and when hour after hour passed she became terrified. Once she was taken past a huge building where she saw her mother in a bathrobe sitting at a window but could not speak to her. Weeks later, when mother was at home and well, this child could not sleep at night fearing that her mother would go away again if she closed her eyes. Fear of being deserted is not often expressed in words but more often in the attitude of the child toward the mother, so that separation, even for a moment, produces an unpleasant scene. A child with this hidden dread may give up games with other children in order to stay close to mother's side, and, even up to the age of 10 or 12, may return home frequently to make sure that mother is there.
Things said in jest may cause great anxiety to a little child. A man, now a college professor, relates how he suffered for weeks in boyhood because some one told him that if he ate bread and molasses horns would grow on his head. He at once gave up eating that delicacy without explaining to anyone through fear that he would be laughed at. Then he imagined that he had lumps on his forehead. In a frenzy of anxiety he asked his mother if she could feel the horns, and she, thinking it was a part of some game, said, “Yes, I believe I do.” The grown man still feels the pain of that experience.

Fear is a driving force in human conduct. It makes us do things; it keeps us from doing them. It protects from danger, and without a reasonable amount of fear mankind could not live. It is useless to talk about eradicating fear, but in training the child every effort should be made to see that fear does not become a curse instead of a means of protection. A child should fear punishment, danger, loss of the approval of those he cares for, and, when he becomes old enough to appreciate it, loss of the approval of his own conscience. He should not have to spend his early years weighed down by fears which make him nervous and sleepless at times, afraid to play happily or work with enthusiasm, all because some one found it convenient to get him to obey through fear or failed to help him by wise understanding and explanation at the right time to get rid of the scars of unpleasant experiences.

ANGER

Anger is an emotion which practically every individual experiences from time to time. It is an intense emotion and one which often leads to undesirable conduct. This is particularly true in children who, because of their limited training and experience, have not developed adequate self-control and are therefore apt to show a vicious attitude toward the object which has aroused their anger. Anger is frequently stimulated when any of the instinctive tendencies are thwarted or obstructed. How often the little child is seen to turn in wrath on the blocks that will not stay one on another or the train of cars that will not go. He strives to break and destroy them because he can not construct or operate them as he wishes. Again, the child, and the adult too, is seen to show anger when personal wants are obstructed or pride and self-importance are injured. Fear, with no outlet for flight or escape, may arouse anger, as in the animal at bay. It is produced, therefore, by innumerable causes that may operate in the environment in which the individual is living, and it may express itself in many different ways.

In dealing with this emotion in children it is necessary not only to be sure that a certain act was an expression of anger but to determine, so far as possible, how the anger was aroused. For example, a solution is sought for the problem of a child who for two weeks has been breaking window glass. Among other things investigation may show that he was always angry when he broke the glass. The next step of importance is to find out the circumstances and conditions of the environment which produced this
emotion of anger. In this particular case it so happens that it was the result of jealousy, but it might well have been stimulated by many other feelings, such as resentment at receiving punishment which the child felt was undeserved, or failure in school or at games.

The reason for the anger is particularly important in dealing with the problems of children when anger colors the picture. The vital thing is not the anger; this is only a danger signal which warns us to look deeper for the fundamental cause from which it arises.

The emotion of anger is dependent for control upon the development of certain inhibitions or restraints, and if the child is to grow into a self-controlled and useful adult it is essential that they be established early in life. The important thing for him to learn is that the natural tendency to react to this emotion by retaliation does not at all times work out to his advantage.

One of the common manifestations of anger in children is the so-called temper tantrum, an uncontrolled outburst of kicking and screaming, which is a dramatic physical demonstration of the child's resentment. On the other hand, some children when angered become sullen and moody. Of the two attitudes the latter may result in more harm to the child. It frequently leads to brooding and unhealthy fantasy formation of a revengeful nature, which gradually may cause the child's interests to "turn in" and his energy to be wasted in living a "dream life" of things he would have and not as they really are. A temper tantrum, however, may result in undesirable conduct for the moment, and then the atmosphere may be cleared until the next occasion for anger arises. In a great majority of children the emotion shown is not out of proportion to the stimulation, is of short duration, and is a normal, healthy reaction. In fact, it might be said that there is something wrong with the child who never becomes angry. However, the child who meets all difficult situations in life with chronic irritability or a temper tantrum is in grave danger of developing other personality defects later which will make him an unhappy, inadequate individual in adult life.

Almost invariably one learns that the temper tantrums manifested by children work out, either directly or indirectly, to their advantage, for the moment at least. It may be that the child is determined to have his own way or craves attention, no matter how it is gained, or feels that he can obtain a bribe if he holds out long enough. The demonstration the youngster makes of his anger is so spectacular and impressive to those who have denied him his desires that they surrender and agree to his demands in order to avoid further unpleasant scenes. It is quite amazing to see the acuteness with which a child can choose the time and place where giving in to him will seem almost a necessity. In this way the child quickly learns that he can partly control his surroundings. Soon the tantrums which originally were produced by situations calling for intense emotion are produced to dodge any situation requiring submission to the will of others. The temper has become out of all proportion to the demands of the occasion, and the child will as readily stage a violent tantrum if the mother has brought him home a red lollipop when he desired a green one as he would if the tantrum were the result of some real grievance.
One small boy of 4 cleverly used this method to gain attention from the family whenever he felt slighted or left out. If corrected or if things did not suit him the response was immediate. First, Johnny would burst into tears; then would follow piercing screams; if this failed to bring results he would cast himself on the floor kicking and striking whatever came in his way. By this time the family, as a rule, relented, knowing what would follow. If, however, they held out Johnny was not discouraged. He had a final card to play. The kicking and screaming would stop; he would become rigid: because he held his breath he would begin to turn blue about the mouth. That was the end. He had brought them to his feet. Wet cloths were dashed in his face, and he was comforted and promised whatever he desired, however impossible. Having achieved his desires for the moment he would return to his own affairs. To one who is not familiar with these outbursts this may sound exaggerated, but it is not. They are truly terrifying, and it requires a cool head and strong determination to hold out against a child under such conditions.

These are only a few of the most obvious causes of temper outbursts. It must be remembered that there are more subtle reasons for them which may not always stand out so clearly. Suppose, for instance, the boy in his play is quietly following out a line of action he has planned and is eager to finish. At a word from an uninterested "grown-up" all his plans and efforts must be stopped or be tossed aside, whether he can see any reason for this or not. Is there any cause for surprise that he should show his resentment in the most emphatic way possible to him? Or it may be that these temperament al youngsters are but a reflection of the instability of their parents. Do you lose your temper? Does it make you angry when your child misbehaves? Do you endlessly say, "Stop!" "Don't!" when there is no real need to do so? Don't try to gain obedience by shouting at the child, as many parents do; it only irritates him and makes him more excitable and therefore harder to control. It does not take a child long to learn his parents' limitations and to measure with great accuracy the amount of kicking, screaming, and yelling necessary to bring about the desired ends. If the parents are ready to take a firm and united stand and if they have the courage to admit, if such be the case, that they, too, may need to learn self-control then the battle is soon won.

In the first place, the child who has these explosions of temper is likely to be emotionally unstable by nature, the type of child who is not capable of withstanding the average amount of stress and strain without undue fatigue. Temper tantrums are only one of the many symptoms of nervous fatigue in childhood. They are often preceded by restless sleep, capricious habits regarding food, faultfinding and complaints of being "picked upon" by playmates and unjustly treated by parents and teachers. This means that the child needs more rest and sleep as well as more energetic play during his waking hours. He should not be confined to the house and cut off from playmates, a situation which, in itself, makes him self-centered, cross, and hard to please, and keeps him in a chronic state of tension, ready to explode at any moment. Neither should he be dragged on shopping trips, or taken to the movies, or to parades where he will be excited and overstimulated.
Temper tantrums in each instance must be considered in relation to the exciting cause and the personality of the child. If they represent an unconscious protest against the thwarting of some fundamental desire, every effort should be made to determine the cause and remove it or alter the child's attitude toward it. On the other hand, if they have become habitual—that is, a crude method of gaining an end—or if they are utilized to attract attention or obtain bribes then it must be definitely decided that they will no longer work out to the child's advantage. Once a definite stand is adopted it will not take the child long to see that his former methods of gaining his ends are no longer tolerated, that he is making no material gain and is losing approbation by his conduct. When once he senses this the temper tantrums will be discarded.

Anger is not always expressed by such explosive reactions. There is a group of cases in which the individual is so overcome by anger that temporarily action is quite impossible. Common expressions such as "being paralyzed by rage," and "so mad I could not speak," convey well the idea. This type of reaction is not so common in children, yet it does exist. Frequently the emotion is pent up and repressed from day to day until it reaches the breaking point. Then suddenly and without apparent reason or perhaps for some trivial cause the explosion takes place, and it is quite beyond those with whom the child comes in daily contact to understand how this hitherto quiet, reserved youngster could suddenly have produced such an outburst.

Many of these periodic and apparently unexplainable outbursts might be avoided if the parents would stop now and then and "take account of stock." Look into the child's general condition. Are there any evidences of nervous fatigue, such as twitching or jerking of the larger muscles or blinking of the eyes? Is he eating and sleeping well, and is his elimination good? What about school and playmates? Is he getting on well? Does he mix well with other children, or do they tease him; and if so, why? Does he play with older or younger children? Is he inclined to be a bully? Does he take his part in games? What are his duties outside of school? Is he being tutored to make a higher grade or to keep him in his class? Does he have too much to do—music and dancing lessons, which keep him from having sufficient outdoor exercise?

Find out what he is thinking about. What are his problems, hopes, and disappointments? If he seems unhappy find the cause of his discontent. He may be jealous or troubled by some ill-defined fear, or worried by the problem of sex. He may feel inferior to others. Help him to see things clearly and in their true light. Appreciate the fact that the obligations of parenthood mean something more than to see that the child has enough to eat and wear and does not steal, lie, or set fires. The big task is to see that the boy or girl is happy and that he or she is learning how to meet the problems of everyday life successfully.

SEX INSTRUCTION

A large percentage of all mental conflicts and abnormalities in adults and children either are directly caused or are colored by unfortunate attitudes or experiences with the ever-present force
called sex. There is no force in all mental life that is more urgent in its demands for some form of expression and none that society, the family, and the individual will allow less freedom.

The very fact that sex as a subject for discussion is always tabooed in the presence of the child accounts for the intense curiosity which many children develop at an early age regarding the subject. All too frequently the child's natural desire to be enlightened on this subject just as freely as on any other is met by cold reserve, a sharp rebuff, or a dishonest answer from one who in all other ways is a considerate and wise parent. It is therefore not surprising that the child soon learns to keep to himself the knowledge he has gained from his own investigations or has gathered from some more sophisticated playmate and soon becomes as self-conscious about his sex life as the parents are themselves.

A little child quickly senses a tense atmosphere and embarrassment on the part of the adults when faced with his eager questions, and because of this he is apt to follow one of two lines. This way of disconcerting those with whom he comes in contact may please him, so that he will continue his questioning at most inopportune times, or he may be made so ill at ease and self-conscious that he determines never to be placed in such a position again if he can help it, and therefore ceases to bring his puzzles and problems to his parents, who should stand ready to help him over the hard places. Because he stops his questioning and seems uninterested is no sign that he is no longer filled with curiosity over these mysterious things which seem to be so shocking. He may be quietly using every means available to find out in other ways the answers which he wants to know but for which he will no longer ask.

The parents must free themselves so far as possible from self-consciousness when the subject is mentioned. Clear, frank answers suited to the child's intelligence and development will satisfy his interest for the moment, whereas emphasizing the matter by "hushing the child up" and telling him it is "naughty" to talk of such things will make him only the more determined to find out why, and what it is all about.

Of course care must be used in educating the child on these matters. Do not rush in and give him a mass of details far beyond his grasp. Go slowly and frankly from day to day, and as the questions arise meet them with thought and consideration. Do not tell the child fanciful tales about the stork and the doctor's bag when the new baby arrives: this will soon become an insult to his intelligence. Instead tell him beforehand, in simple language, that he is going to have a baby brother or sister, and let him take part in the joy of anticipation. It is a far greater mystery to the child to hear the stork story than to be told that a baby lives and grows within the mother just as a flower does that has been planted in the ground; that it takes nine months for the baby to grow, and during this time it is kept warm and well nourished by the mother. Such simple facts are easily and gradually accepted.

One of the most hampering things in regard to early sex instruction is the attitude of society in general to such matters. The parents may be ever so careful and may try to give the child a normal, wholesome view of the subject, meeting him frankly and showing no
embarrassment. If, however, he makes a slip in public their thought-
ful training may be largely undone.

This was the case with a youngster of 6 who had recently had a
little sister. His parents had confided in him and he had taken part
in the preparations and anticipation. He had a clear but simple idea
where babies come from and had no feelings of shame on the subject.
One day, on the porch with his mother and several of her friends, he
said quite clearly, pointing at one of the women, "Mother, don't you
think that lady is going to have a baby, too, pretty soon?" The
group freely showed their consternation and disapproval. To the
little boy this was a most humiliating situation, producing self-con-
sciousness and diffidence with outsiders for some time afterward.

Care must be taken to teach the child that such subjects are talked
over only with father and mother in private, just as many matters
are not subjects of general conversation. At this point there is dan-
ger, however, that the child will associate all matters of sex with
those of elimination. Never tell a child that his questions are "bad"
or "dirty" or "shameful." If he does ask them at an embarrassing
moment quietly say with no show of emotion that you will tell him
all about that later when you have more time to talk with him.

Children may early develop a sensitiveness in regard to their
bodies and a curiosity to see themselves and others nude. Some even
resort to tricks of hiding and peeping through keyholes to gain op-
portunities of seeing members of the household undressing. On the
other hand, they may become overmodest and prudish. Try never
to arouse special interest or attract the child's attention to his body.

One little girl of 3, having just learned the art of dressing and
undressing herself, was experimenting one morning, having nothing
else to do. Her mother, finding her in the parlor with all her cloth-
ing off, was shocked, and because she was shocked impressed upon
the child that what she had done was "naughty" and not "nice" and
that people must never see her without her clothes on. The whole
matter was overemphasized, and the youngster took it to heart and
became sensitive and unduly modest. She would cry if a passing
stranger happened to see her at the window in her nightgown, and
she lost all pleasure in playing about the beach in her bathing suit
if she thought she was under observation. She has been made so
conscious of her body that she is meeting one difficulty after an-
other in regard to the subject when she should have been spared all
thought and worry.

Under the crowded living conditions which at times seem necessary
in these days of high rents and apartment life, the children are fre-
frequently forced to see rather revolting intimacies which may leave
their scars, although at the time little thought is given the matter.
Whenever possible the child should have a room separate from his
parents. Adults little realize how early children begin to take in
what is done and said in their presence. If their curiosity is aroused
by half-disguised conversation over their heads, they will make it
their business to try to learn more and clear up the mystery. Many
a child has "played possum" and pretended to sleep when in reality
he was listening to all that was going on, and he may brood and
puzzle for some time over the things he does not understand.

Often children who have heard much talk of medical matters and
operations, or have spent time in hospitals and have been subjected
to physical examinations, will try out on each other in their play things they have heard or seen. If, when youngsters are found indulging in such experimentation, the situation is ignored and the interest of the children is diverted instead of being focused on the matter by swift and drastic punishment it is far less likely to leave a lasting memory.

There are two important things for parents to remember with reference to the subject of sex. The first is that frequently at an early age—sometimes as early as 6 months—children may become aware that certain pleasurable sensations can be aroused by handling or rubbing the genitals, squeezing the thighs together tightly, straddling stair rails or the arms of chairs, riding on one’s foot, and in many other ways that have been accidentally discovered or have been demonstrated to them by other children or unscrupulous nurserymaids or attendants. Often visits to the toilet are occasions of great interest to the child, and many times it is only then that the child indulges in masturbation. The second point to remember is that this early period of what may be called sex awareness is transitory, unless emphasized by unwise treatment on the part of the adults, and that it should play no more important part in the life of the child than does the early habit of bed wetting. Little children have no thought of wrongdoing when first practicing masturbation, and care should be taken that they are not shamed and severely punished, as this may injure their pride, cause them to become self-conscious, focus their interest, and make them cling tenaciously to the habit.

In every case where a child is found to indulge in this practice a careful examination should be made to determine whether there is any physical cause, such as irritation, constipation, intestinal worms, local adhesions, or other abnormalities. The urine should be examined for hyperacidity and bacteria which might indicate an inflammatory condition.

The genitals must be kept free from the accumulation of any foreign matter. This entails daily observation on the part of the mother. With the boy, the long projecting skin must be pulled back over the penis and the parts carefully cleansed with absorbent cotton. Equal care must be given to the girl, for local irritation is more often the starting point of masturbation in girls than in boys.

Parents should be sure that the child’s trousers and underwear are well-fitting. Too tight or irritating clothing is a source of much annoyance to children and draws their attention to their bodies.

Know as intimately as possible every individual with whom the child comes in contact. Keep informed as to what is taking place when a group of children is spending long periods of time in the barn, the basement, or the attic. It often happens that a younger child has been initiated into certain sex activities by one of the older children in the family who never has been suspected. Try to keep yourself in touch with all the activities and interests of the children through personal contact. Know the teachers, the neighbors, and the playmates of your child, and above all things win and keep his confidence.

Most young children are not secretive about masturbation. Where they do it openly occupation and diversion are perhaps as useful as any more elaborate methods of treatment, such as physical restraint, rewards and punishment, charts to show achievement, and other
things of this sort. If, when seen indulging in this practice, the child is given something to interest him, a book or pictures to look at, or a definite errand to do, or is told a story, his attention will not be drawn to the habit, and it will soon drop into the background and be forgotten with his lesser interests. Some children when put to bed at night or for a day nap may learn to resort to this habit until sleep overtakes them. If such is the case it may help to give the child a well-loved doll or toy animal to hold after he is tucked in at night or to tell him stories until he falls asleep; with the child of 4 or 5 who is outgrowing his customary day nap and to whom sleep comes with difficulty it may be better to give up the nap and put him to bed earlier at night rather than make him stay in bed when he can not sleep and so give him an opportunity, unwatched, to indulge in this practice.

There is, however, a group of children with whom masturbation is only a symptom of an unhappy state of mind, and the habit comes to represent a retreat when life, with its manifold problems, becomes too complicated and lacking in satisfaction. It may be compared to the situation of the adult who turns to drink for momentary relief. The child who is moody or lonely or who has been punished may resort to the practice for consolation and comfort. If this is the case, the problem is quite different and far more difficult. The personality of the individual needs careful investigation, and no generalization will be of value.

Those in charge of the child must know him well and must understand his moods and their causes. They should know his interests, plans, and hopes, and what brings happiness and satisfaction to him.

Above all things, parents must not allow undue fear and anxiety to sway them and make them give the habit more weight than it should have. The big thing to remember is that the dangers to the physical and mental well-being of the child are more apt to come from the parents’ own attitude and unwise treatment than from the habit itself.

ENVIRONMENT

The question, which is the more important, heredity or environment, has provoked endless discussion. “He’s just like his father, and you can’t do a thing with him.” accounts to some people, frequently the mother’s people, for all the bad traits a child may show. Others are sure that, no matter what his parents may have been, every child starts fresh and the conditions which surround him determine absolutely what he will be. Everybody knows that children from degraded homes who have been adopted by well-to-do families and have been given every advantage have turned out, some disgracefully and some so as to make worth while everything that has been done for them. What made the difference in results? Heredity? Perhaps. As the proverb has it, “You can’t make a silk purse out of a sow’s ear.” Environment? Perhaps, also, some children who were surrounded by bad conditions during their early years were already started in unfortunate habits before they were transplanted. Moreover, the new conditions, supposedly better, may have been better in lodging, food, and clothing only. The child may have been brought up, in fact, by a feeble-minded nurse and
of affection and been seen by his foster mother only when her social engagements permitted her to play with the child for a little while as she might with a doll.

After all it is useless to attempt to settle whether heredity or environment is the more important. Every living being is affected by both. The practical question is what may be done to control both so as to secure the best results, whether we are trying to produce good corn, good pigs, or good people.

Experience in raising corn may be used as an illustration. It is a well-known fact that corn grown in fertile soil—that is, in a good environment—produces a much greater yield than corn grown in poor soil. Also, in a given soil the yield depends largely on the variety of corn used for seed; that is, on the heredity the corn has back of it. There are varieties which in fair soil will yield over 100 bushels per acre; others under the same conditions produce only miserable stubble yielding less than 5 bushels per acre, or even no seed at all. There is no use in arguing which is the more important in raising corn, good seed, or good soil and climate. It is important to make the best choice of seed we can and to plant it in the best soil we can find, or, if either one is necessarily poor, to make the most out of what we have.

Growing boys and girls involve somewhat the same problem. Their heredity is fixed, but the environment can often be improved. The parents are the ones who control the destiny of the child and make his environment to a large extent. Their mental ability, their control of their emotions, their interests, particularly their interest in the child, their ambitions or lack of them, their moral standards—these all determine what the child shall make out of the endowment that nature has given him. Some parents who read to their children or tell them stories and answer their questions in an interesting and intelligent manner, though they do not alter the children's intellectual equipment, do furnish a rich soil in which the children may develop, and thus affect very much the point which their development may reach. Parents can even determine what kind of atmosphere the child's mind shall grow in—one of discontent, wrangling, deceit, and hate, or one of cheerfulness, sincerity, and love.

The importance of a living wage in maintaining a home in which children can be brought up successfully can not be overestimated. Crowded, insanitary quarters may make pale, stunted children, neither physically well nor mentally alert. A poor home drives the child for amusement to the streets and alleys, where he often meets, in the activities of a "gang" bent on mischief, much temptation from which a better home could have protected him. Even within the home, when there is no money to pay rent for sufficient rooms to give the family adequate privacy in sleeping quarters, little children are early aroused to sex interest and experiences, which they should have been spared until their development made them able to meet such experiences in a normal way. Not all children in these poor environments become criminals, paupers, or psychoneurotics, but environment has a great deal to do with the production of these types.

The problems of the home environment in the congested districts are many, and frequently the fact must be faced that for one reason
or another conditions can not be made satisfactory. Fortunately resources outside the home are gradually being developed which are helping to solve the difficulties. The nursery schools and kindergartens are providing a place where little children under the school age may come together and slowly, by experience, learn how to live with the group. The Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Young Men's Christian Association, and Young Women's Christian Association continue for the older boys and girls the opportunity for social contacts and a chance to give and take.

There are also handicaps for children who are brought up in the apartments of the well-to-do. Often the parents' fear of the landlord's displeasure over injury to walls and woodwork and the complaints from neighbors because of noise may cause the children to be continually repressed. As in the poorer districts, there is little opportunity for play and social life. However, the economic pressure is less, and the parents should be free to devote more time and thought to the training of the young ones. Possibly the children of friends may be gathered together in small groups for play or stories or excursions to park and zoo, thus giving a chance for companionship with those of their own age. As the children grow older the community's resources for social activity should be brought into play for these children as well as for those in less comfortable circumstances.