

**LB**

1115

W5

**A STUDY OF THE  
LITTLE CHILD**

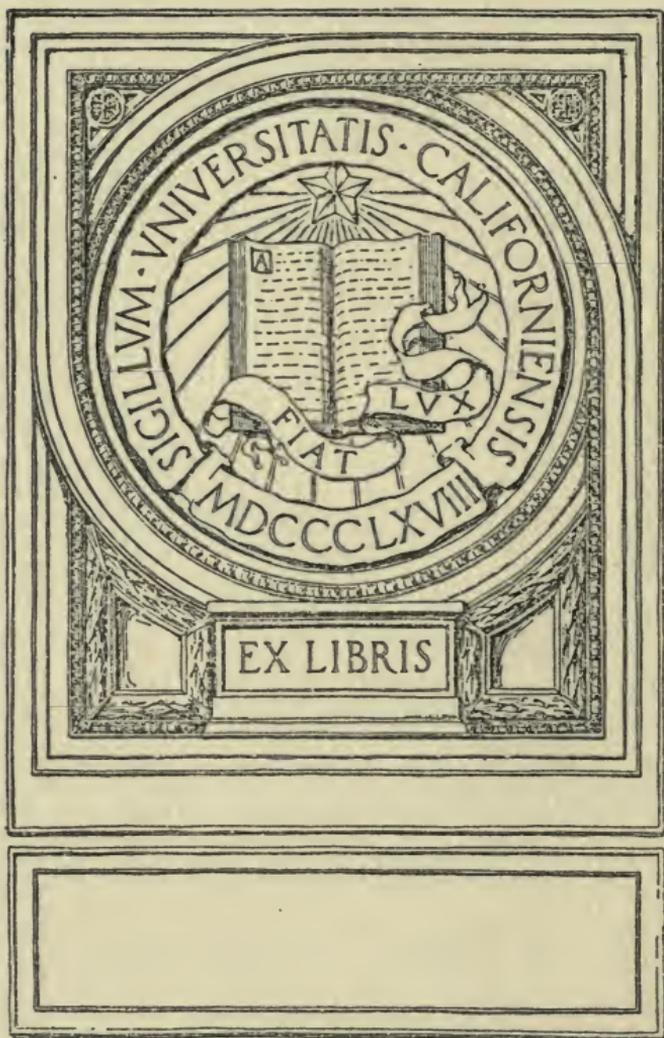
**MARY THEODORA WHITLEY**

UC-NRLF

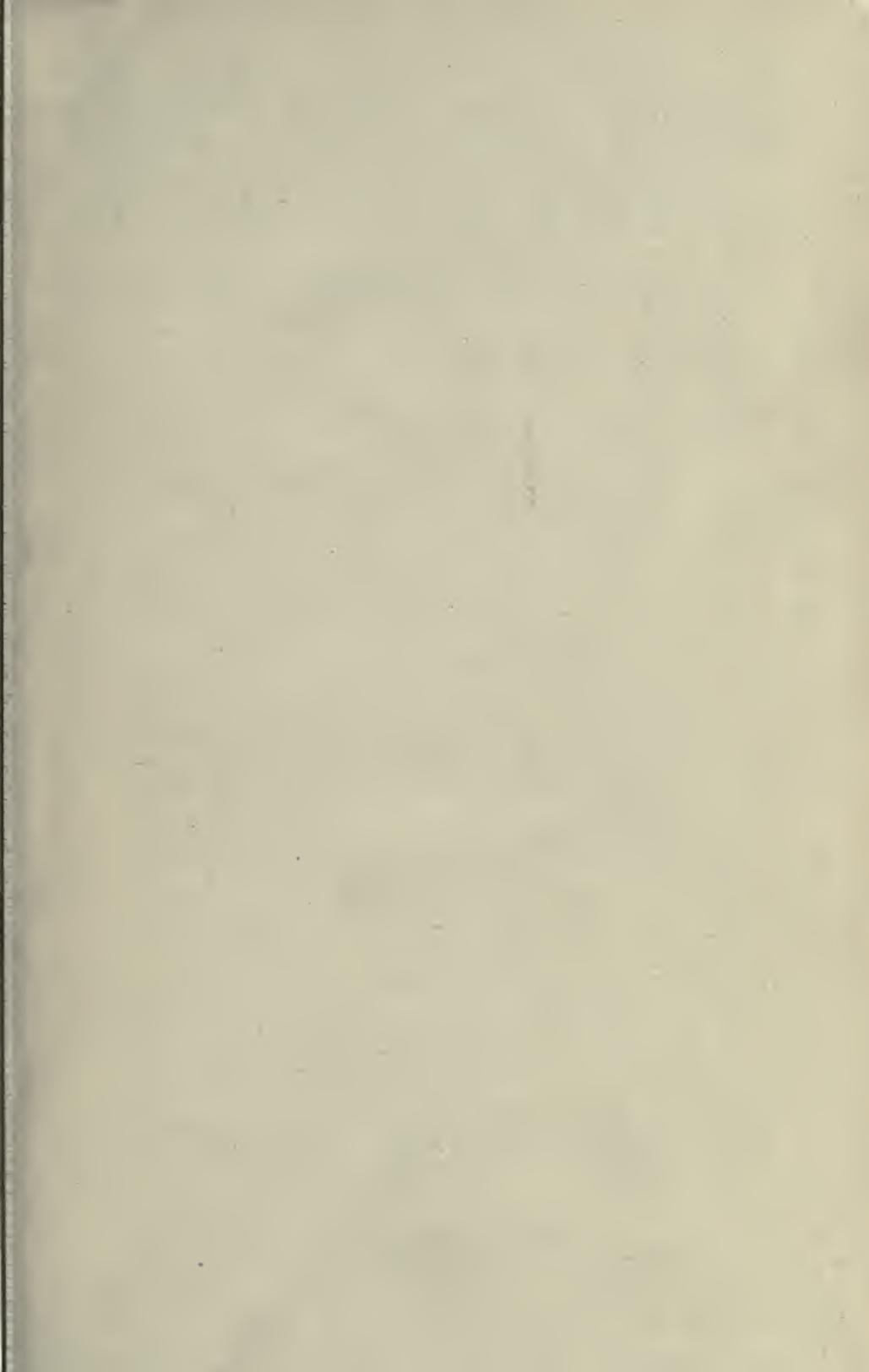


QB 284 866

YA 07932



EX LIBRIS





Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2007 with funding from  
Microsoft Corporation

# A STUDY OF THE LITTLE CHILD

FOR TEACHERS OF BEGINNERS

By

MARY THEODORA WHITLEY

A textbook in the Standard Course in Teacher  
Training, outlined and approved by the Sunday  
School Council of Evangelical Denominations

THIRD YEAR SPECIALIZATION SERIES

Printed for  
THE TEACHER TRAINING PUBLISHING  
ASSOCIATION

by

THE WESTMINSTER PRESS  
PHILADELPHIA

LB1115  
W5

TO THE  
AMERICAN

Copyright, 1921, by  
MARY THEODORA WHITLEY

G. E. P.

# CONTENTS

---

CHAPTER	PAGE
Editor's Introduction.....	5
I. What They Are as They Come to Us.....	11
II. What They Bring to Us.....	23
III. Ways They Feel, and What They Want to Do.....	35
IV. Response to New Atmosphere and Relationships....	42
V. Changing Physical Powers.....	52
VI. Need of Mental Satisfaction.....	60
VII. Reveling in Imagination.....	69
VIII. Attitudes Toward People.....	78
IX. Modifications of Character.....	87
X. Religious Growth.....	98

484354

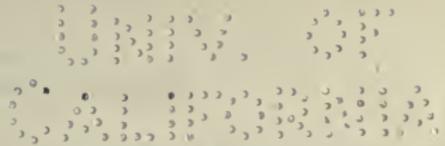
SUNDAY SCHOOL COUNCIL STANDARD COURSE IN  
TEACHER TRAINING  
THIRD YEAR—SPECIALIZATION

*Beginners and Primary Units*

Nos. 1 and 3 separate for each department.

	<i>Periods</i>
1. Specialized Child Study (Beginners and Primary age)	10
2. Stories and Story Telling.....	10
3. Beginners and Primary Methods, Including Practice Teaching and Observation .....	20
	40
<i>Junior Units</i>	
1. Specialized Child Study (Junior age).....	10
2. Christian Conduct for Juniors.....	10
3. Junior Teaching Materials and Methods.....	10
4. Organization and Administration of the Junior Department .....	10
	40
<i>Intermediate, Senior, and Young People's Units</i>	
Separate for each department.	
1. Study of the Pupil.....	10
2. Agencies of Religious Education.....	10
3. Teaching Materials and Methods.....	10
4. Organization and Administration of the Department .....	10
	40
<i>General Course on Adolescence.</i> Same subjects as above but covering the entire period, ages 13-24, in each unit.	
<i>Adult Units</i>	
1. Psychology of Adult Life.....	10
2. The Religious Education of Adults.....	10
3. Principles of Christian Service.....	10
4. Organization and Administration of the Adult Department .....	10
	40
<i>Administrative Units</i>	
1. Outline History of Religious Education.....	10
2. The Educational Task of the Local Church.....	10
3. The Curriculum of Religious Education .....	10
4. Problems of Sunday School Management.....	10
	40

Full information regarding any of these units will be furnished by denominational publishers on application.



## EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

### SPECIALIZATION COURSES IN TEACHER TRAINING

In religious education, as in other fields of constructive endeavor, specialized training is to-day a badge of fitness for service. Effective leadership presupposes special training. For teachers and administrative officers in the Church school a thorough preparation and proper personal equipment have become indispensable by reason of the rapid development of the Sunday-school curriculum, which has resulted in the widespread introduction and use of graded courses, in the rapid extension of departmental organization and in greatly improved methods of teaching.

Present-day standards and courses in teacher training give evidence of a determination on the part of the religious educational forces of North America to provide an adequate training literature that is properly graded, and sufficiently thorough courses and textbooks to meet the growing need for specialized training in this field. Popular as well as professional interest in the matter is reflected in the constantly increasing number of training institutes, community and summer training schools, and college chairs and departments of religious education. Hundreds of thousands of young people and adults, distributed

among all the Protestant Evangelical churches and throughout every State and province, are engaged in serious study, in many cases including supervised practice teaching, with a view to preparing for service as leaders and teachers of religion or of increasing their efficiency in the work in which they are already engaged.

Most of these students and student teachers are pursuing some portion of the Standard Course of Teacher Training prepared in outline by the Sunday School Council of Evangelical Denominations for all the Protestant churches in the United States and Canada. This course calls for a minimum of one hundred and twenty lesson periods including in fair educational proportion the following subjects:

- (a) A survey of Bible material, with special reference to the teaching values of the Bible as meeting the needs of the pupil in successive periods of his development.
- (b) A study of the pupil in the varied stages of his growing life.
- (c) The work and methods of the teacher.
- (d) The Sunday school and its organization and management.

The course is intended to cover three years with a minimum of forty lesson periods for each year.

Following two years of more general study, provision for specialization is made in the third year, with separate studies for Administrative Officers, and for teachers of each of the following age groups: Beginners (under 6); Primary (6-8); Junior (9-11);

Intermediate (12-14); Senior (15-17); Young People (18-24), and Adults (over 24). A general course on Adolescence covering more briefly the whole period (13-24) is also provided. Thus the Third Year Specialization, of which this textbook is one unit, provides for nine separate courses of forty lesson periods each.

Which of these nine courses is to be pursued by any student or group of students will be determined by the particular place each expects to fill as teacher, supervisor, or administrative officer in the Church school. Teachers of Junior pupils will study the four units devoted to the Junior Department. Teachers of young people's classes will choose between the general course on Adolescence or the course on Later Adolescence. Superintendents and general officers in the school will study the four Administrative units. Many will pursue several courses in successive years, thus adding to their specialized equipment each year. On page four of this volume will be found a complete outline of the Specialization Courses arranged by departments.

A program of intensive training as complete as that outlined by the Sunday School Council necessarily involves the preparation and publication of an equally complete series of textbooks covering no less than thirty-six separate units. Comparatively few of the denominations represented in the Sunday School Council are able independently to undertake so large a program of textbook production. It was natural, therefore, that the denominations which together had

determined the general outlines of the Standard course should likewise coöperate in the production of the required textbooks. Such coöperation, moreover, was necessary in order to command the best available talent for this important task, and in order to insure the success of the total enterprise. Thus it came about that the denominations represented in the Sunday School Council, with a few exceptions, united in the syndicate production of the entire series of Specialization units for the Third Year.

A little more than two years have been required for the selection of writers, for the careful advance coördination of their several tasks and for the actual production of the first textbooks. A substantial number of these are now available. They will be followed in rapid succession by others until the entire series for each of the nine courses is completed.

The preparation of these textbooks has proceeded under the supervision of an editorial committee representing all the coöperating denominations. The publishing arrangements have been made by a similar committee of denominational publishers likewise representing all the coöperating churches. Together the Editors, Educational Secretaries, and Publishers have organized themselves into a voluntary association for the carrying out of this particular task, under the name *Teacher Training Publishing Association*. The actual publication of the separate textbook units is done by the various denominational Publishing Houses in accordance with assignments made by the Publishers' Committee of the Association. The enterprise as

a whole represents one of the largest and most significant ventures which has thus far been undertaken in the field of interdenominational coöperation in religious education. The textbooks included in this series, while intended primarily for teacher-training classes in local churches and Sunday schools, are admirably suited for use in interdenominational and community classes and training schools.

This volume, *A Study of the Little Child*, intended for teachers of Beginners, is one of the five units prepared for teachers of children under nine years of age.<sup>1</sup> Doctor Whitley's name is a sufficient guarantee for the accuracy of its psychology. But the great value of this work lies in the fact that, while it gives a most scholarly presentation of the little child as he is, it does so with a charming simplicity of style and in language unencumbered by technicalities. As a textbook this work cannot fail to interest as well as render valuable service to all teachers engaged in the religious education of the tiny children who are just beginning to learn the great truths of life.

For the Teacher Training Publishing Association,

HENRY H. MEYER,  
*Chairman Editorial Committee.*

For the Westminster Press,

JOHN T. FARIS,  
*Editor.*

---

<sup>1</sup>The others are the companion to this volume, *A Study of the Primary Child, Story Telling for Beginners and Primary Teachers*, and separate books on method for the two groups.



## CHAPTER I

### WHAT THEY ARE AS THEY COME TO US

Ten, fifteen, twenty or more little people brought into the Beginners Department, and all of them so different! Not only in the more obvious things such as size, coloring, shyness, talkativeness, but in the more hidden things of mental make-up, disposition, ability to learn are these children absolutely separate and distinct. Let us see what some of the reasons for this individuality are.

There is first of all the big fact of heredity; then whether a child is a boy or a girl; then whether he is just four or nearly six years old; then the kind of training he has had, chiefly at home, but also on the street. We will consider heredity first.

**Heredity.**—A good way to take stock of the children is to find out all you can about their parents. No child is exactly like either father or mother of course, but nearly nine tenths of his intellectual power and temperamental peculiarities comes from his ancestry. It has been said that to know a child so as to be able to do anything worth while with him one ought to begin with his grandparents. It would be helpful, indeed, if you could know not only both parents but all four grandparents, for from these six people comes about three quarters of all a given child's original make-up. The other quarter comes from all the previous ancestors,

whom you may call up in your mind's eye stretching back four, five, six generations, each individual contributing his or her share to the traits and possibilities which that little four-year-old has inherited.

A child may be apparently unlike his parents but show some characteristic handed down from some one further back in the line. A child of pure racial breed may show his lineage very clearly, be it Scotch, Swedish, Irish, Italian. The more mixed ancestry there has been, the more variability we are likely to find among the children in one family, or the more conflicting tendencies in one child. It is less easy, then, to know what to expect from a child two or three generations after there has been intermarrying of stocks than it is from a child whose family lines are relatively pure.

**Get to know the parents, however.**—A nervous, excitable child may be better explained that way, so also the stolid, seemingly stupid one, and the quiet observant one, the timid weak one, the sulky one, the stubborn one, the doggedly persistent one. Remember that, after all, at four or five years old, all the various traits a child has inherited do not show; some will develop later, especially in the teens, and most are only in the budding stage. Some that a child shows in a raw sort of way have probably been considerably transformed in the parents' characters.

**Personal variations.**—Boys and girls are already a little bit different from each other even at four years old. The boys may seem a little bit more independent, able to stand pain rather better, will be interested in constructive work rather than wanting to have things

look pretty, may notice and know colors less well than girls, and will, age for age, weigh slightly more and be just a little taller than girls. Also the child who seems most different from the group, brightest or dullest, will more often be a boy than a girl.

Five-year-olds have all the advantage over four-year-olds that an added fifth of a lifetime can bring. There is so much more that they can do, so much more they have learned in the way of ideas and words, so many more times they have had the chance of being helpful, of being with other children, that usually it is better to have them in separate groups in the department. Otherwise, if the methods and ideas are really adapted to one set of children, the others will be a misfit.

**Environment.**—Another big cause of the differences among children is the kind of environment they come from. You cannot expect the same sort of behavior from children who have had a small portion of time from a busy mother of the day-laborer, or professional, or business-woman type, as you would from children who have had almost the whole of their mother's time and attention. Those who spend most of the day on the streets in charge of a sister a little older, or in no one's charge, will not be the same as those who have been in the keeping of "hired help" of various grades, nor as those kept under mother's watchful eye the whole time. Neither will children living on a farm, in the country, in remote mountain regions, small towns, villages, city suburbs, crowded city districts, be alike. Their common, everyday knowledge, their independence, their sociability, their assurance, their self-

assertion, their sympathy, are all conditioned somewhat by the kind of environment in which they live. So, then, it is wise to know not only the parents but also the daily surroundings of the children, especially the neighborhood in which they live.

**Physical, mental, and spiritual nurture.**—Vital statistics show that more babies die in the first months of life than at any other age. The child who lives past his second birthday has passed the first great critical period of existence, and has an increasingly good chance to survive. But there are so many dangers threatening these young lives that it would be strange, indeed, if all the children in the entering class were perfectly strong and healthy. In addition to the peculiarities of constitution they have inherited, these babies have to run the risks of improper feeding, poor training in hygienic habits of all kinds, developmental disorders of various sorts, and ever-present infections. No two children will be alike physically at four years old. The age between two and six is sometimes called the neglected age, for the reason that while the maternity center and baby clinic may give help and advice for the wee ones, and the public-school authorities will oversee the health of those of school age, there is nobody specially to care for those in between. True, if a child is actually ill, a doctor or a nurse will help; but it is in the preventive and constructive work that we have as yet not realized the social need in the care of children from two to five or six. Yet this is an important period for building healthy bodies for healthy minds to live in. In a district where the population is dense, or is com-

posed perhaps of many foreigners, it may become the privilege of the Sunday-school teacher to assist mothers to a better physical training of their little ones. Not that poor or immigrant parents are the only ignorant ones by any means, but sometimes the need is more striking. It gives a chance for the church to get in touch, through its mothers' club, with the less accessible mothers, and give some much needed help for this age.

Although two children may be just four, or four and a half, it does not follow that they are alike in development. The physiological age of the two may be quite different, meaning by that the general maturity of the body, especially the hardness of the bony structures, the protectedness and use of the nervous system shown in the control a child has of coördinated movements. Neither need the mental age be the same. Depending chiefly on heredity, one child may easily be half again as intelligent at four as the one in the next little chair. Starting thus unequally endowed, the child with the superior mental inheritance will probably also have reaped the benefit of training which the parent or parents above the average in intelligence have given him. He will also have been able to gain more from his environment than children with average or inferior mental inheritance. Some day we shall do in all our public schools what the best experimental private schools are now doing—admit a child to school on the basis not of which birthday he has passed, but on his physiological and mental age combined, as determined by suitable tests. Certain it is, we ought to grade them, and pro-

mote them, once in school, by the use of intelligence and educational tests as our more progressive public-school systems are now doing, and not hold blindly and rigidly as so many Sunday schools do to the physical age alone.

If you are in a large city where it is highly probable that before 1924 all children can easily be tested for true mental age, a simple way of placing a child in the group where he rightfully belongs will be to find out in what grade he is in the week-day school, and with what age children he prefers to play, then grade him correspondingly. Otherwise, be on the lookout for those who give evidences of good intelligence in the course of ordinary teaching. As later chapters will indicate, some special signs to look for are: a large vocabulary, the use of relatively more adverbs, and relational words with better constructed sentences, quickness in learning something new, power to remember over a longer period of time, ability to give more sustained attention. The fore-exercise suggested for the next chapter will reveal some clear differences between children as well as the typical reactions for the age; it may help single out the unusually bright ones. When promotion time comes, see that those of undoubtedly superior ability are placed perhaps as high as the second grade if they can understand the work there; and do not push ahead the very dull ones even though they may be six years old.

If the entering group are markedly different in things physical and mental, they are equally unlike in social development. Here the biggest factor has been the environment, chiefly the personalities in the family.

Here is a child whose father is just as much interested in his training as the mother, who has made himself jolly companion as well as strong protector. Here is another who knows father only as some one who is home on Sundays, who can't stand noise, who will be told of the naughty things done. Here is one child who knows God as a word to swear by; another who has been taught nothing at all about God or Jesus; another who has had Bible stories told him since before he can remember. Here is one who singsongs "Now I lay me" to the accompaniment of athletic exercises; another who is admired by visitors as she kneels and begs "Pity my simplicity"; another who has never been taught any prayers or been prayed with; another who sits or kneels unwillingly while father rattles off a lot of unintelligible sentences; another who talks freely to a heavenly Father in his own words; another who proudly gabbles a list of his family, relatives, and acquaintances prefixed by "God bless"; another who has been taught a formula for use at meal times, but is not sure of either words or pronunciation—and so it goes. Here is one in whose home there is constant, natural referring of actions, hopes, gifts to God; another who has been sent to school "to be taught religion" as well as to get him out of the way for a while on Sunday. All these, and so many more variations in conditions you may find.

**Family life.**—In one home of wealth parents and children may be almost strangers, while servants and governesses wait upon the children and regulate their daily life. In another the mother may be capricious,

haphazard, and variable, thinking more of her own convenience than of what the children are learning. She will promise, or threaten, but fail to carry out her word; be roused one day to amusement, another day to irritated punishment by the same act on the part of the children. In another home a wise mother may have realized her responsibilities from the earliest hours, seeing to it that good impulses were fostered and rewarded, that undesirable impulses and questionable conduct never went disregarded and always resulted unpleasantly. In one home the parents are not in harmony as to their aims and methods; what one forbids the other will permit. One gives in to wheedling and coaxing; the other does not. Can you guess at the differences in the children these types of homes will produce?

Except for the little unfortunates of the tenement house whose play place is the street and whose mothers are overly busy all day, it is safe to say that the influences of the family have been the biggest factor in the development of children up to four or five years old. Father and mother, brothers and sisters, occasional grandparents, uncles, aunts, have been the dominant personalities in their acquaintance. What goes on in the home, the way each member of the household treats the others, the kind of talk at mealtimes, idle gossip, complaining, intelligent discussion of affairs, the "atmosphere," be it of faultfinding, loving interest, mean teasing, quick generosity, sarcastic jealousy, humorous enjoyment, avaricious money-getting, loyal honorableness—all these have molded the little children at their

most plastic age, leaving lines of beauty or ugly scars never to be entirely effaced.

All our most recent psychology emphasizes the importance of early emotional impressions. It is extremely serious for children under three or four to be thoroughly frightened, badly repressed, or so treated that they conceive a violent dislike for some one. Such experiences may have a lifelong effect; indeed, in children with a weak or unstable nervous inheritance they become a sort of poison center with all sorts of abnormal results emotionally, mentally, or morally breaking out from them in adult life. Less striking, but equally true is the outcome of poor, or delayed training in obedience, in learning not to cry, to wait for a coveted pleasure, to give up one's own way, all of which are foundations of self-control. Homes differ so much in these respects that it is well-nigh impossible to explain a given child's behavior without some observation of the way he is treated in the family, and the kind of atmosphere there is there.

**Companions.**—Yet another thing that accentuates the difference between two children even from the same family is the effect of being with other people. If their dispositions are not alike to start with, they will frequently have met such treatment from those around them as will tend to increase that difference. A shy child gets neglected where a self-assertive one has won attention. A whining child or one with a bad temper has been so disagreeable that people have given in to him and so fastened bad habits on him more securely. A sly child has gained pleasure or avoided blame and so

learned to be more sly. A very selfish child with no companions his own age may never have learned to share. And so it goes.

As a matter of fact, children of four seldom do have companions their own age unless they live in a very populous neighborhood. Other children in the same family separated only a year or so in age are considerably removed from them in interests. From two and a half to four is an enormous distance when measured in terms of development; so also is from four to nearly six. Children of over five are likely to be going to kindergarten, so do truly meet a similar aged group with more equalized capacities. An only child is particularly handicapped, but less seriously so than at eight or nine years old. He may now appear a quaint little grown-up in many ways, with tricks of speech and manner caught from his adult companions. He may show excessive aloofness or blatant aggressiveness to cover up the shyness when brought into contact with other children. Look out for these, as well as for other timid unwilling ones on their first day in the Beginners Department. There are sure to be some.

Whether a child is the first, or fifth, or last born may make a difference in his general make-up, partly from the state of health and vigor of relatively young, mature, or older parents; partly from the different treatment a child gets according to his numerical position in a family. One who at four years old is the oldest, with younger ones toward whom sympathy is shown, for whom little acts of service have been done with mother's guidance, may be much more ready to assume re-

sponsibility than another child the same age who himself holds the position of baby in the family. But this latter often gets the benefit not only of the training the parents give him directly, but of that previously given the older ones which they pass on, and which has created a social tone in the home with regard to things permitted, forbidden, encouraged, found amusing, and so on. There is less experimenting necessary, as it were, and frequently a more ready acceptance of the standards set up since there are several others conforming to those same standards by habit.

To sum up then. Find out all you can about each child's parents, grandparents, size of family, home life, neighborhood influences, previous physical conditions, any peculiarities, in order that you may know better why he acts as he does, and make allowances for him accordingly. It is absolutely false that all are born equal either physically, mentally, or socially; and we must take into account just what capital a child has to start out with. Of him who has little, less may be expected; to whom much is given, of him more must be required.

### EXERCISES

1. If you can conveniently do so, spend a morning in a day nursery, watching children about four years old. Or arrange a party for fifteen or more little ones and observe them in the same way. Look for the differences among them as shown in their play occupations, in the way they respond to the person in charge, to a visitor, to the announcement that a meal is ready. What differences in training do they show in matters of

cleanliness, table manners? Are there any fights? If so, what caused them?

2. Look up in a health book or encyclopædia the most frequent age for scrofula, rickets, whooping cough, first infection of tuberculosis. What are some of the after effects of infections such as scarlet fever, syphilis, measles, meningitis? What does this suggest?

3. Make up a list of questions you would like answered about each child's background, covering the points suggested in this chapter. It might be well to plan the arrangement of a card 7 x 5 to be kept on file showing concisely all the information gathered as to the individuality of each child.

4. What are children who are herded in orphan asylums likely to be like? Why?

5. Give illustrations of any of the things sketched in this chapter.

## CHAPTER II

### WHAT THEY BRING TO US

#### FORE-EXERCISE

1. Get a colored picture with plenty of action in it, and show it to several four-year-olds, saying these words (and nothing else), "Tell me what you see in this picture." Write down *exactly* what they say.

2. With a four- or five-year-old, say "You have seen a pencil, you know what a pencil is, tell me, what is a pencil?" Write down *exactly* what he says. Try also for the meanings of spoon, ball, story, blue.

Bring to class the results of your experiment. Show them to the instructor, and compare with what others have found.

[In the discussions that follow some notice will be taken of three-year-old children's capacities; for although they do not rightfully belong in the Beginners Department they may sometimes be found there, unless the school is large enough, and well organized enough, to have a Cradle Roll class. Besides, sometimes we can understand four-year-olds better by thinking of the years before four which have helped to make them what they are.]

So far we have emphasized the differences between children; from now on we must think rather of what is true of the majority. Suppose we picture a group of fifteen children of each age; then in discussing their abilities, interests, and tendencies the facts stated will be true more or less of eight or nine of them. Two or three of the fifteen will have less ability and one will be noticeably less well endowed; two will be more ad-

vanced than the majority group, and one quite superior. Sometimes we shall be able to indicate roughly what the limits of variation are; more often it means observing the children carefully, reporting exactly what they say, what they do, how quickly or how often they do it.

**Acquirements.**—Children much under four may seem inattentive when spoken to, but ordinary four-year-olds should be able to attend willingly and listen to simple requests in language they can understand. It is a safe rule to make sure that you do get their attention, however, when you are going to give any directions, otherwise you cannot be sure they have taken in what you say.

Three-year-olds can repeat short sentences of four or five words after you, four-year-olds sentences nearly twice as long. The oldest of the five-year-olds can generally carry in their memory simple commands involving two or three different things to be done in order, such as "Put this box on the table, then pick up that chair that has fallen, then bring me that book over there." Some would forget one of the tasks, or do them in the wrong order; but the older ones could carry similar directions out pretty well provided they listened attentively and had them repeated a second time. For younger children you should give but one thing to be done at once.

In getting names and ages even for the Cradle Roll class you will find most three-year-olds can tell you their full name; some of the four, and pretty surely the five-year-olds will know how old they are, but it might be safer to get the birthday from the parents, certainly

for the younger ones. A few of the older group will know the names of the primary colors without having been taught them directly, but you cannot be sure of this with the younger ones. This does not mean they cannot *see* the difference between blue, yellow, red and green, but it does mean speaking of one "like this" rather than calling for "the blue" if you want a particular color used. Similarly for shapes such as triangle, circle, square. If you show them pictures they will seldom speak of the colors in them. The smaller children, when asked what they see will call off a few objects, such as "a baby, a man, a horse"; the brightest of the five-year-olds may tell you what is being done in the picture thus, "The baby is crying; a man on a horse." The common-sense attainment of four-year-olds is shown by their knowing what is the right thing to do if one is sleepy, or cold, or hungry.

**Vocabulary.**—It is difficult to make any generalized statement as to the number of words children know, for four reasons. In the first place, children from three to five talk so continuously that it takes an expert to record accurately all the words they use. In the second place, they learn from four new words a week to perhaps a hundred a month, by fits and starts. In the third place, it makes considerable difference whether they learned to talk early or late in infancy. In the fourth place, it depends not only on their native intelligence, but very much on the kind of homes they come from. We must remember, too, that they can understand a larger number of words than they use in their own talk. Several studies show that the average num-

ber used by three-year-olds is 1,400, by four-year-olds over 1,800, by five-year-olds over 4,000. However, these are reports from children in cultured homes who were probably superior in intelligence. There are records of 900 for a four-year-old, and 1,500 for a five-year-old, both of whom were late in learning to talk. Stenographic reports for a whole day show one four-year-old to have used 731, another 859, another 999 different words out of a total used during the day of from ten to fourteen thousand. There were barely five consecutive minutes in the day when these small people were not talking. One child asked 23 questions an hour, another 33 on the average. The word "mama" came about 40 times an hour for one child, the pronoun "I" once in every ten words for another.

About four fifths of all the different words they use are nouns and verbs; then come adverbs, adjectives, and pronouns, and, a very long way last, prepositions and conjunctions. The year from five to six shows a large relative gain in the last three kinds of parts of speech. We see, then, that children's main interest is in things and actions, and that their power of expressing logical connections, or, indeed, any relationships, is very limited. People, objects, and actions having to do with personal daily life are named first; descriptive terms are few in number. Words learned from objects in pictures or from stories heard are more often and more easily forgotten than words learned by direct experience with things. If asked what the meaning of words are, the reply will be something like, for *hat*, "That is papa's hat. He puts it on"; for *chair* "to sit on," for less con-

crete ideas such as *town* it may be "to go in." Words like *high*, *big*, *close by*, may be understood, but *deep*, *narrow*, *lean*, *near*, are samples not usually in the vocabulary. So, too, children are likely to say *biggest* rather than *bigger*, *highest* instead of *higher*. Asked which of several objects they like best, they may point to each in turn saying, "I like this best, and this best, and this best," showing no real grasp of the abstract idea of comparison, though they may make no errors in picking out the biggest, or heaviest of some easily distinguishable objects.

Three-year-olds' sentences are short and generally with errors in grammar and pronunciation. Four-year-olds' sentences will contain from four to ten words; they are simple, lacking dependent clauses since the use of connecting words, even relative pronouns, is so limited. "The kitten which I saw in the garden did not come in although I called it" is not a child's sentence in form or word usage. Five-year-olds' sentences are longer and better put together; also the difficulties with pronunciation are mostly conquered.

Most untrained visitors to either the Beginners or Primary Departments make the mistake of employing language and style quite beyond the range of their audiences—a great strain on anybody's attention. Is it any wonder they complain of poor order while they are talking?

**Content of knowledge.**—Children's ideas of distance are good when it is possible for them to judge by using muscular actions such as reaching; but when it comes to distances which cannot be so measured their

ideas are very vague. Comparisons of familiar landmarks such as "from your house to the grocer's on the corner," "as far as going from the church here to the bridge" will be of use, but it is no help to speak of the distance one could walk in twenty minutes, for ideas of time are still more dim. Time cannot be seen or felt, you see. Some children think it lives in the clock, some look to see where it "passes." Expressions such as "time to get up," "dinner time," are understood, because of the action involved; but terms like *yesterday*, *last week*, *to-morrow*, *hours*, are a great puzzle for most four-year-olds. If they understand "last Sunday," it is because different things to do, places to go, people to see, clothes to wear have helped make a definite connection. Because this sense of time is so undeveloped it is difficult for children of four to recount an experience in detail; they can neither date things accurately in the past nor recall the order in which they happened. Also, as we have seen, they cannot narrate connectedly. Patient and skillful questioning may help bring back a number of details, however.

Children of three or four have little idea of number. Pointing to objects and counting as far as four is within the ability of most five-year-old children, but that need not involve a real comprehension of what the numbers mean. It is the rhythmic act of counting even up to high numbers that is part of its joy; and this pleasure finds exercise in memorizing a deal of rhymed, rhythmic material of the Mother Goose order. Here, curiously enough, the words and ideas may be unintelligible or nonsensical, the sentence structure may be long and

complex—it matters not to the little declaimer, who, half hypnotized by the swing of the meter will reel off thirty or forty lines with very little assistance from pictures or prompting.

Allied to this verbal memorizing, but less rhythmic, is the familiarity with favorite stories. The adventures of Peter Rabbit can be told verbatim by many a small person who cannot read; and woe be to the adult who varies the language in retelling a well-worn favorite tale to closely attentive critics of four or five. Even when they cannot themselves repeat a story they can correct alterations in the reading of it; whereas sometimes they cannot retell anything unless they recall the exact words for use.

An obvious danger here is that you may suppose they understand what they rattle off so glibly. A probing into their actual knowledge would warn you that it never pays to take for granted that even common, everyday facts are known by little children. You must take into account, too, that city children will not understand about sheep, gardens, mountains, the sea, grain fields, if you want to bring these into your Bible stories. It has been found that even at six years old many city children did not know such things as where the sun rises, where their hearts were, where milk, eggs, apples, potatoes come from other than the grocer's. Things outside constant daily experience will seldom, if ever, be understood; and abstract words, for even such well-known emotional states as joyful, sad, are not appreciated. Particularly is it true that an abstract thing is never thought of when a concrete object is looked at;

thus a flag does not signify loyalty, nor a circle perfection, nor a sphere unity, as our symbolists would urge. Indeed, one object never means another object for a child unless both are known. A block may be a house, a person, an animal, or anything else chosen in the make-believe game so long as there has been actual experience with that something else.

It is right here that we may make big mistakes in teaching, using symbols in the way of words, marks, or signs which have so long held meaning for us that we do not appreciate the absolute barrenness of little children's understanding. You, with a mental content for *mountain*, can interpret instantly two slanting lines on the blackboard; but what will they mean to Beginners who have never seen mountains? Even if they live by them, they would never draw them so; and hardly till seven years old would they take two curved, parallel lines to mean a river. Better confine your drawings to include people, houses, horses and other familiar animals, cars, perhaps boats, and, very rarely, flowers, and trees if you would escape the trap of unintelligible symbolic marks.

Our choice of hymns and little prayers, too, should be equally careful. Many of the latter, intended for good-night use, dwell upon the thought of death and discourse about the soul; or else the wording obviously reflects a sentimental adult's thoughts *about* children rather than expressing a normal child's thoughts and attitudes of praise, thanks, requests, or anything else.

**Ideas of right and wrong.**—Children find which actions pay and which do not by the way other people

treat them. A fundamental law of learning is that we tend to repeat an act that brings satisfaction, and to refrain from repeating one that brings unpleasant results. Thus, a child grabs for food, finds it tastes good, and is more likely to grab again. Another teases and whines for something he finally gets, and will repeat those successful tactics another time. In both cases the children form habits which pay them in tangible results. If the thing grabbed is hot or tastes unpleasant, if the whining brings reprimand and never is rewarded by gaining the coveted object, then in both cases the actions which do not pay will be dropped. If saying "please" is rewarded by smiles and getting possession of the desired food, if using pleasant tones and courteous words bring social approval and probably compliance with the request, then those habits will be formed, since they pay. The right, then, is that which works out well in approval and other pleasant results; the wrong is what works out badly, in disapproval and other unpleasant results. Conscience is not born, it is made. Watch a child look inquiringly at those around for signs for approval or not when he is in doubt over a new form of action.

If a child is scolded for getting his clothes soiled, but laughed at admiringly when he is pert and rude, he will come to feel the first wrong and the second right. If a lie brings escape from feared consequences, if efforts to help mother are a sure way to her praise and reward, then both are learned as right. If eager questions meet sarcasm or impatience, if disobedience brings certain punishment, then both are learned as wrong. To know,

then, what a particular child's ideas of right and wrong are you must find out the kind of training he has had. A few words such as *naughty, bad, nice, good, careful, brave* will have helped clarify ideas as they are applied to conduct with a tone of voice showing which is commendable and which is not.

Virtues that three- to four-year-olds may begin to appreciate are some control of crying, patience in waiting for things, cleanly control of the bodily functions, obedience, tidiness, some courtesy forms, kindness, and courage. These are thought of in specific ways, such as minding mother, not spilling things, putting toys away, and so on. The older five-year-olds may be expected to have added some control of impulses to handle things that are not theirs, some voluntary control of temper, more cleanliness, in general, "more" of the things mentioned above. Obedience is probably the paramount virtue, one of the sure foundations for all the self-control that is to come.

#### QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. What mistake did the teacher make who said to a Beginner, "Use the cylindrical blocks, not that one for the tower of the church you are building"?

2. Change the following so that the average four-year-old could understand:

"All through the day I humbly pray  
Be Thou my guard and guide."

"We are little children, weak and apt to stray."

“Lord, a little band and lowly  
We are come to sing to thee.”

“I want you to draw a figure just like that.”

3. Make a list of the words in The Lord's Prayer that are not in the vocabulary of the five-year-olds.

What words would you use to explain them? What stories would you tell to give a concrete meaning to any one phrase?

4. Explain why the children probably got the following ideas in connection with The Lord's Prayer:

(a) That we are telephoning to God.

(b) That God doesn't like us to have cake or butter.

(c) That God gives us our best dresses.

(d) That we shouldn't go to the railway station.

5. Criticize carefully the selection of hymns and songs for use in your Beginners Department. How far is the wording really suitable for children of four and five? How far does it represent adult sentiment only? Would you include the following, quoted in part, here?

“Jesus loves me, loves me still,  
Tho' I'm very weak and ill.  
If I love him when I die  
He will take me home on high.”

“When he cometh . . . to make up his jewels,  
. . . precious jewels, his loved and his own.  
Like the stars of the morning his bright crown adorn-  
ing,  
They shall shine in their beauty, bright gems for his  
crown.”

“I would be thy little lamb, Saviour dear.”

6. [Quoted from Kirkpatrick, *Fundamentals of Child Study.*] A little girl who carefully covered a younger sister who had fallen asleep was, upon the return of her parents, given ten cents by her father. The next time her parents went away she got her little sister to lie down and be covered. . . . Why?

7. What is the moral effect of offering candy as a reward for punctual attendance?

## CHAPTER III

### WAYS THEY FEEL, AND WHAT THEY WANT TO DO

#### FORE-EXERCISE

1. Do you know of any little runaways? Do they always go to the same place?

2. If there are one or two children about four with whom you can conveniently spend an hour, construct a little shelter where they can see it, by draping a rug over two chairs, or turning a packing case on its side, etc. Watch what they do.

3. Recall any early experiences of your own when you were frightened. What caused it? Did you have any haunting fears as a child? When and how did you outgrow them?

**Physical activity.**—"She is never still a minute." "He is into everything all the time." Such expressions show one marked characteristic of children of this age. It is literally true that they do not and cannot keep absolutely still, in the sense of being motionless, for more than a few seconds at a time. But, more than this, there is incessant movement comprising wriggings, flinging the limbs about, squirming, twisting, even when sitting down. When not restricted in any way children do not remain seated, or in any position for long, but climb about, walk around, run, crouch, squat, move in all possible ways. Their bodies need this exercise in order to develop properly just as truly as they need food and air. The impulse to move is so strong

that to be checked is unpleasant, not to say annoying; and the opportunity for greater freedom after a modified restraint is always a welcome relief.

Beyond these spontaneous, fidgety movements of the whole body are those made with objects. Large ones serve chiefly as pieces of gymnastic apparatus. Small ones are more like tools, clutched, pounded, shaken, rubbed, pulled, twisted, treated in every imaginable way. Little crevices seem to be fascinating too; watch the way fingers have to be poked into little holes. By these activities children develop muscular control in handling things and in balancing the body, and start on the long road leading to physical skill. By them, also, the hands aid the learners to satisfy their curiosity with regard to things they see. During the investigating process children do not mind how much dirt they acquire; but if the hands get into anything slimy or even very sticky, there is distress, and a tendency to wipe them off on anything handy, usually the clothing over the thighs.

**Interest in food.**—Another strong desire at this age is for sweet, pleasant-tasting food. Earnest inquiries about the kind of dessert that is coming, or emphatic announcement that they are going to have thus and so are very frequent. Many of the mothers' difficulties at this time arise from the children's dislike for some dishes they should eat and craving for others they see. Many are the little schemes children work out to get possession of the particular dainty they want. All sorts of devices may be seen—coaxing, teasing, crying, sulking, refusing to eat, grabbing others'

supplies, bolting their share to get more—the list is endless. Children often cram their mouths overly full of sweet things to get the biggest possible feeling, as it were. To fail to get a coveted article of food, or not to get a large portion of it, or a second helping of it is a big tragedy for a small person.

**Likes and dislikes for places.**—If you followed the suggestion in the second of the fore-exercises to this chapter, you probably found that your shelter was adopted, by the girls especially, as a little house. Any structure open on one side seems to have a great fascination for small folk, who will creep in and sit down with every evidence of enjoyment. This delight is changed to uneasiness if the opening is hidden when they are inside, and may speedily develop into a wild terror if the means of exit from the cramped space cannot be found.

The desire to explore often shows at about three years old in wandering off to new scenes. It is partly their new-found independence, too, that makes them do this, partly the same instinct that leads birds to migrate, tramps to “hit the road,” and perhaps ourselves to long to travel to new places for our vacation. The chief joy may lie in defying mother, running away from home, anywhere at all; or it may lie in visiting some specially interesting place such as the bridge, the fire-engine house, the gate-tender’s at the railway crossing, and other localities alarming from mother’s point of view. This tendency may fade out by itself in a few months, to reappear some years later in a slightly different form.

**Some strong dislikes.**—Even a tiny baby shows fear of falling, and of sudden loud noises; and long before children are two years old they have probably come to be afraid of many other things. Fears of the dark, of noise, of thunderstorms, of the approach of strange animals, of strange people are very common, and we must be on the lookout to reassure children when such conditions of fear are likely to happen. The effect of a bad fright is about the same for the nervous system as an extensive burn is for the body; it leaves a scar which will spoil the beauty of development, and is visible many years afterward, either as continued unreasoning fear, an aversion, or some form of eccentric behavior. Fortunately, it is possible with expert skill to educate people out of fears; but it is a long process, and it would be very much better to avoid occasions of great fright in these impressionable years.

Another deep-rooted dislike is of having the bodily activity, described above as so constant, interfered with, however gently. Recall the frequent sight of a child being held when he wants to get down, how he will squirm and struggle, push, kick, hit out, and probably roar with anger though he is not being squeezed or hurt in any way, only prevented from moving as he wishes. If he is running and something gets in his way, or somebody else shoves against him, again there is resentment shown by pushing and hitting. If, when he is busy with his own concerns, some one seizes him, or shakes or slaps him, there is pretty sure to be some angry fighting aroused after the first shock of surprise. If, in his play, he hurts himself slightly against some

object, the probability is he will wreak vengeance on it, calling it names, striking or kicking it. If he is using some article and some one snatches it and makes off with it, the chances are he will object noisily, give chase to the offender and fight him if he is anywhere near the same size. In other words, it is not so much taunts that provoke rage at this period as concrete acts of interference with one's bodily self or one's recently acquired possessions. We do not lose these tendencies altogether; witness a crowd at the bargain counter, trying to get in and out of a narrow doorway—witness our own feelings toward the chair or stone that tripped us up.

**Social likes and dislikes.**—A growing like, at about four years old, so different from a year or two earlier, is for the presence of other children. Harold, who lives alone, wants to go to see John down the road. Betty must take her doll to visit Jessie's. Susie wants a tea party with Freda and little brother Jim. Bob will wiggle under the fence to talk to Junior next door. They may not play well together—too many occasions arise for squabbling for that, but they do seek out each other's company. Harold wishes to show off his skill on the new tricycle; Betty must display her doll's new dress, and give it an airing in Jessie's baby carriage. Sue's mother will provide crackers and sugar-water for the feast; Bob is transformed temporarily by his Indian suit. But John would also like to ride; Jessie doesn't want to lend her baby carriage, and prefers digging in the sand to admiring the doll's dress. Freda drank all Jim's share, and Junior, alas, has no Indian suit. So

heart-burnings arise, and some one comes home crying with a grievance before long.

Notice, though, how responsible Susie looks as she helps little brother down the steps, also how she loves to "boss" him about. John, too, may be quite sympathetic when Harold gets a nasty tumble. Betty will sit and croon her doll baby to sleep, and tenderly cover that same baby for the night before she can go to bed herself. Junior's horse must be carefully stabled. Along with the less desirable forms of self-display and jealousy are also these affectionate, motherly tendencies to care for others.

**How to treat these instincts.**—Our problem is, how shall the good tendencies be perpetuated, and those not so good be made to disappear? The usual way in the home is to show approval or otherwise reward a child who acts in a desirable way, and by showing disapproval, disappointment, sorrow, anger, or by punishing the child when his actions are undesirable. On the whole, this is a fundamentally good method, since everyone tends to repeat acts that result in pleasure, and to refrain from acts that bring discomfort.

There are other ways of training, though. One is to provide a great many things which will be natural stimuli for the behavior we want, or to see that the child often meets the same stimulus. Thus, we find other children for an only child to play with; we have a load of sand delivered to the play yard; we awaken interest by bright pictures, rhythmic games; we stimulate imagination by telling stories. The converse of this method, spoken of above in the case of fears, is

to prevent those things happening, if we can, which are likely to bring the undesired behavior. The mother who does not get her child's attention when she speaks, but impatiently catches hold of him and shakes him, has only herself to thank if he acts like a little wildcat at the time, and later shows an irritable disposition.

Still another way is to show a child a better way of acting than the way he is taking, and then see that he gets plenty of opportunity to practice the new way, and is commended when he substitutes the preferred behavior for the old. Thus, cramming the mouth so full must give way to more polite manners; and the rough handling that broke the toy or hurt the puppy must be replaced by quieter movements. Further, we teach children to be afraid, not of the loud noise, but of running in front of the automobile that is making it. Fear, not of the dark, but of doing those things that will not bear the light of our fellows' knowledge, is what we aim for.

#### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How could training in control of the appetite for foodstuffs be made of moral value?
2. Give some suggestions for dealing with a tendency to be cruel.
3. Of the three methods, disuse, substitution, punishment, which is best in the long run? Why?
4. Give illustrations of adults carelessly fostering undesirable instincts in little children by their own behavior.
5. How much opportunity for physical activity is arranged for during the Sunday-school session in your Beginners Department?

## CHAPTER IV

### RESPONSE TO NEW ATMOSPHERE AND RELATIONSHIPS

#### FORE-EXERCISE

1. In what sort of circumstances have you ever been bashful? What helped you feel at ease?
2. What is your natural reaction when your long-cherished plan is thwarted by others? What have you learned to do on such occasions? How did you learn it?
3. What is your natural impulse when some one interferes with you physically by getting in the way or removing something for which you were reaching? How did you learn to control that impulse?

**Feeling.**—The first day in the department! Can you remember how your very first day at school felt? Everything so strange and unfamiliar, none of your own family around to turn to for reassurance, and so many, many people. For many little children the whole experience is so bewildering that they are awed into a species of paralysis. They will sit mute, unable to make any response to well-meant advances, watching the others but declining to share in any activity. It is wise not to try to force such shy ones to speak or take part. That has about the same effect inside the child as the gradually increasing horror of a nightmare has for us, till it feels as though something must give way. Picture it. A buzzing confusion of unaccustomed sights and sounds out of which nothing comes very in-

telligibly—but the child finds himself on a little chair perhaps. To that he seems anchored; leave it he daren't and can't till mother appears again. Leave such a child alone, be busy near him doing something he will be interested in, tell a story to the group including him, and gradually the frozen numbness will thaw and he will begin to respond.

Another kind of shy child who is more assertive may cry dismally and refuse to be left alone by mother or older sister. Singing may help these little folk, or some petting and cuddling; but the safest way is to have enticing things to be done by them which you or some of the others are already doing. If you are thus busy and suddenly need a little assistance, many is the disconsolate person who will be drawn into self-forgetful activity. The Sunday school may not compare with the day-school kindergarten in possessing such features as a big slide, live animals, dolls, simple gymnastic apparatus to help distract attention from personal woes to outside interests; but what equipment there is should be as attractively displayed as possible.

Besides the shy children there are the restless, inquisitive ones who want immediately to touch and investigate everything new that they see. Then there are those who are overanxious to make some kind of display, and who are delighted if there is a "welcome" ceremony for their special benefit. There are the little chatter-boxes used to talking almost all the time, who cannot understand the requirement of being quiet while others talk. There are others coming from homes where they have been the only child, and who cannot

understand why they are not the center of attention now as heretofore. Almost none of them have been called on to do things with a group of others like themselves, and they are not used to actions involving everybody at the same time. However, as in adjusting themselves to their family's demands, they have found that mother's arrangements sometimes interfere with their doing what they want just when they want, there is the basis for the new kind of behavior they will have to learn.

**Absorption through the senses.**—Shy ones and self-assertive ones alike are all very busy taking things in. Even for the bewildered ones some things stand out sharply, and as the confused feeling subsides some one or two objects in the new surroundings will attract interested attention. It may be the clothes the next little girl is wearing, it may be the chair she is sitting on, or the picture they are given to hold, or the face of the teacher at which newcomers will gaze admiringly. A school with a separate room for the Beginners, and equipment including a piano, small tables, building-blocks, pictures, crayons, a sand table, and the like will offer much of immediate interest. With little urging the gazing turns into touching and doing things. The small building serving for church and school both, with but one corner curtained off for the weest ones, offers less, of course, for their immediate delight. Here it is more than ever necessary that the teacher should know how to appeal to the eyes, ears, and fingers of her group.

Hands are a most important agency in helping children of his age to learn. Merely to see an object at a

distance does not mean very much to three- and four-year-olds. They need to get hold of it, feel it, pass their hands over it, turn it about if it is small, clamber over it if it is big. In a sense their hands are another pair of eyes to them. Just as we, when our eyes do not see very well or when we are not sure of what they tell us, help ourselves out by touching things, so little children need to do this the greater part of the time. In this way they get to understand differences in texture, size, contour, temperature, flexibility, and scores of similar attributes of objects.

Gestures which they see may be minutely copied. Many a child who sits apparently absorbed in listening to some one's talk is in reality watching him, and will, later on, mimic characteristic movements with startling fidelity. Sounds, which cannot be touched to be understood, must also be copied. Sometimes children seem to be almost little echoes of what they hear, giving back intonations, the last word or two of a question instead of answering it, also noises made by animals, whistles, automobiles, machinery, and so forth. Particularly are *new* sights, movements, and sounds of interest, needing a period of lengthy investigation, a sort of watchful waiting with reproduction at intervals till the children are well acquainted with them and play with them as familiars. This is their way of reflection, not thinking over things so much as, literally, mirroring what they find around them.

**Response to new authority.**—One of the new things to be examined, watched, listened to, and “reflected” is the teacher. The child apparently unrespon-

sive at first to what the teacher is saying may be so struck with the novelty of her appearance, gait, gestures, facial expression that he cannot yet attend through his ears. He actually does not hear. Patience, and slow, gentle, but insistent repetition will win through to his consciousness, however, and give you access to his mind in another way.

Most children once so reached are quite ready to do as the teacher asks them, even the timid ones when the first strange feeling has worn off. Little children believe and act upon what they are told, being very suggestible and answering rapidly to the emotional tone. Irritation will breed nervousness, joyfulness will propagate itself. Anxiety, hope, fear, friendliness, impatient hurrying, calm control—all these are quickly felt and spread the so-called atmosphere of the classroom.

Some few children may be in the stage we call contra-suggestible, when the fact of having one action suggested seems to make them want to refuse to do it or to choose the exact opposite if possible. This is a phase many children go through, lasting for a few weeks or several months. It really is one way of discovering their own personality, of achieving a greater independence, an intoxicating realization that they can oppose their wills to the wills of others. They try out their degree of social independence somewhere about three or four years old just as their bodies tried out physical independence during the second year of life by meeting and overcoming obstacles. Wisely handled, they may quickly learn to overcome the difficulties of

their own less desirable impulses and gain a stronger character thereby. Poorly handled, they experience nothing but a series of collisions with adults in which they either get away successfully with their own defiance or are outraged by some punishment at the hands of exasperated authority.

Undoubtedly, a child in this stage is not easy to deal with when first he becomes a member of the Beginners Department. Try to avoid issuing a command which risks a flat refusal. If your invitation or suggestion is frankly declined, leave the child alone sooner than wheedle or coax him; but see that he gets no pleasure whatever from his abstaining, rather that he comes to feel left out of things and ignored, till he feels ready and willing to comply. Then praise him for his at last being able to do as he was asked, make it worth while to him in ways he can enjoy so that on the next occasion he is likely to conquer himself more quickly. Of course you will be careful that neither directions nor requests are in the form, "Don't do" thus and so; for that simply presents an idea of an undesired act to the children, leading them to think about it and tend to do it.

Some adults, unused to children of this age, adopt an artificial way of talking down to them which brings unsatisfactory results. Though it is true, as was emphasized earlier, that the words used must be simple and within the range of their understanding, there is no need for baby talk nor for skittish playfulness, nor for the sentimental patronizing air which some people assume. What might succeed with a ten-months'-old infant is

an insult to the intelligence of a child of four. Though he cannot tell what is wrong he instinctively feels the sham of the assumption, and shows his resentment by sturdy ungraciousness. More constant companionship with little children will help cure an adult of this mistake and bring a genuine attitude of respect for their individuality. But once the confidence of a child is lost, it is difficult to regain it. By a complete cessation of artificiality and a serious way of going about the business for the day the mistrusted adult may be restored to favor.

**Response to the rights of others.**—The chief difficulty for four-year-olds in the new environment is getting used to so many other children. At home there are only a few people and perhaps more adults than children. If there are no others near their own age, they have probably been used to a good deal of care and attention. Johnny has his own crib, his chair, the place where his clothes are kept, his own place at table, his particular books and toys. This new world is densely populated with children and a few grown-ups who allow him no special rights. There are many chairs, many hooks for clothing, pictures, and some other things in common. At home when Margaret chatters or shows off, or plays make-believe, there are few to interfere and one or two to appreciate. Here everybody else wants to make a display too. The "see me do it" does not always find any spectators; indeed, the call seems to be rather to take a passive rôle. Harold's make-believe does not fit in with Molly's. When Billy wants to do one thing Warren wants something

different, and Eleanor wants the same thing to use at the same time, and is likely to snatch it from Billy. Is it any wonder there are clashes when there are so many different personalities, each with desires, imagination, curiosity, none used to being together, much less working together?

This problem of coöperation represents, after all, the highest social achievement. Toward its solution humanity is laboriously striving in its families, cities, nations, with so many mistakes in the course of its efforts. To learn where individual rights are justly limited by the needs of a larger society requires long experimenting. Here are these young members of the race beginning some of these very experiments. They must learn that when two want the same object at the same time one must give way, or else some compromise plan be found. They must realize that all cannot secure public attention equally, nor all the time, nor all at the same time. They must find out that their fellows may look coldly on schemes which are of delightful warmth to them. They must sometimes take part in working out the idea another originated even when they do not like it at first. They must discover that hitting out at others is likely to result in being hurt oneself.

Disappointments, temper, jealousies, resentments—all these are likely to play their part in this learning process as the little individualists become more adjusted to group relations. To show these feelings is not a proof of inherent wickedness, but simply an instinctive reaction of the developing self. Naturally, Owen's

wants and interests are more important to him than are those of anyone else. Without this self-seeking, this reaching out, wanting, and taking in everything possible it is difficult to see how a big self could be made. Even a plant has to grow by the same method. In the end, the bigger self there is the richer he will be for society's use of him. The church needs big men and women, strong and active for its work, not empty, flabby weaklings who do not understand how to fight for the right.

Other types of emotions—sympathy, pity, the generosity that wants to share—are there, too, but are relatively less developed. It is these which the teacher will emphasize and the happiness that comes from playing together, taking turns so that all get a chance, the multiplied joy from singing or listening together to a story. Helping, giving, and sharing are interesting as well as getting. To have it brought home to them what others want, and to find a way of satisfying those wants without altogether neglecting their own is a growth into wisdom and moral stature we want our children to attain.

#### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What sort of objects have you for little children to handle that will have a teaching value for the things you want them to learn in Sunday school?

2. What is the special danger of a drawling, whining, nasal, or harsh intonation on the part of the teacher?

3. Give illustrations of adults who do not "get on" with children. Try to analyze the reason for it.

4. Two children have seized the same object and

are fighting for possession of it. What would you do—separate them? Let them fight it out? Take away the thing from both? Give it to one? Give each one? Express surprise at their behavior? Reprove them? Or what? Why?

## CHAPTER V

### CHANGING PHYSICAL POWERS

#### FORE-EXERCISE

1. Measure the height from the floor to the door handles in your home, to the pew seats in the church.

2. Take a book with fine print. Select a page that is not much broken into paragraphs. With your left hand draw pencil lines as quickly as you can between the rows trying not to touch the print. How do you feel emotionally at the end of the task?

3. Try to tie two ends of string in an ordinary bow-knot without using either thumb or index finger.

4. Watch a child of four throwing a ball. How does he use his arms?

**Limitations.**—Of course we know that four-year-olds are short; but we probably have forgotten how it feels to move about among things that were built for people nearly half again as tall as ourselves. The average four-year-old is only 38 inches in height, the five-year-old 40 or 41, less than two thirds the stature of the average woman. Of this total height a larger proportion of it is trunk, and a smaller proportion of it legs than is the case with adults. If a grown-up person's trunk were relatively as long and his legs as short as the four-year-old's, he would look a squat, misshapen monstrosity. Yet these small legs have to climb upstairs, step off curbstones, dangle from seats made for people of entirely different size, not to mention

work at top speed to keep up the travel pace when going for a walk with daddy. Imagine yourself living in a world of Brobdingnagian furniture, the seats of all the chairs higher than the ordinary office stool, the table-top on the level of your nose, the door handles above your head, and you may appreciate the difficulties three-year-olds encounter. Better still, sit on the floor awhile and see how unattainable some objects appear. Add to this the fact that for small arms not only are things large but also solid and unwieldy. Children must deal with weights relatively as heavy for them as are the overfilled suitcases you so gladly relinquish to the porter.

As a matter of fact, the internal organs develop more rapidly than do the muscles until four years old; and the years from four to six, when there is such constant motion as we have seen, are a preparation stage for the more rapid development of the muscular system which takes place from five or six to nine. Although children are more "sensory" and less "motor" now than in the next three years, and more content than their older brothers and sisters to play quiet games, they live out what they learn through the senses in some motor expression. We have emphasized how the hand movements clarify the ideas gained through the eyes; and we shall see later how in the larger movements of dramatic play children "learn" the actions and characteristics of people around them. To prevent children's perfect freedom of movement in these early years, then, is to run the risk of stunting them both physically and mentally.

**Degree of dexterity.**—Investigation shows us that those muscles develop power and skill first which originated first in embryonic life. Roughly, that means the larger muscles lying nearer the central nervous system, for instance, shoulder muscles before upper arm, and these again before lower arm, wrist, and fingers.

Three-year-olds' adjustments are coarse and crude, the bigger muscles move clumsily and rapidly, accomplishing a movement by a sort of hit-or-miss method. In an attempt at a delicate task they tend to put too much force into their efforts to succeed, so that tumbles for themselves, breakages and scratches of the objects are likely to ensue. Tasks requiring fine coördination should not be given to children under five; to do so will tend to produce a nervous condition. They cannot, for instance, profitably do the interlacing of slats and fine weaving that used to figure in our kindergarten occupations. More modern schools provide larger, but easily handled, light-weight objects for children to manipulate. They cannot tap fast with their fingers, nor tie two ends of string, nor without great difficulty thread a large needle. Even an effort to keep still brings symptoms of nervous irritation, and their movements are only partly suppressed.

Between three and six there is a decided gain in steadiness of control; but even so, the fingers are less well controlled than are the arms as a whole. It is interesting to note that girls show superior ability to boys in this. In general bodily control of complex coördination a six-year-old may have acquired about half the ability he ever will, but in control of the fingers

he has less than one fifth the skill that adults have.

In strength, too, there is gain during this period, till at six boys have about one fifth of the strength of average sixteen-year-olds as measured by the grip of the hands. Here again girls have made a greater relative gain by six; though, as a woman's strength is so much less than a man's, this statement only means that girls at six have a greater proportion of the strength they will ultimately attain than boys have, not that their hands are stronger than boys' hands.

In the skill necessary for learning to sing, most four-year-olds can keep time to a simple two-beat measure. More than half the girls can sing the major scale in tune in imitation of somebody, and by five years old nearly three quarters of them can. The boys are not so good at this, it has been found. In remembering songs, singing them unaided from memory, the girls are again better than the boys, though the boys do this more successfully than reproducing the scale in tune.

**Muscles, nerves, and eyes.**—The body does not grow at a uniform rate; there are years of rapid, and years of slower growth. Some months, those of fall and winter, there is greater gain in weight, while in the spring and early summer there is more increase in height. Three-year-olds, although over half the height they will eventually be, are only one sixth to one fourth their adult weight. They average thirty pounds, less than one pound for every inch of height. In three years they add approximately fifteen pounds in weight and eight inches in height, on the whole a greater gain relatively in weight.

Besides this gross difference every organ and every group of muscles seems to have its own rate of growth. More than that, each part also has its own rhythm of growth, increasing rapidly for awhile, then making but a slight gain while it is the turn of some other part to make a spurt. Thus, though the liver is comparatively large in infancy, it is much less in relative weight at five years old, partly because that is a period of slow growth for this organ, partly because it coincides with a time of more rapid growth for other parts. Until four years old the muscles of the thighs are increasing in girth quickly, after four comes the turn of the muscles in the calf of the leg. Similarly, the upper arm had its greater development before the lower arm. All through the period we are discussing, the arms have much less growth and development than do the legs. An infant's head is large for its body and as wide as the shoulders; but after three the bones of the shoulder girdle grow rapidly, and the shoulders stand out from the trunk.

We may mark three stages in the development of any part. First, rapid growth in the sense of enlargement, a preparation for the later stages, a sort of vegetative condition mostly taking in nourishment. In the second stage the part needs exercise to strengthen and increase its growth. In the third stage the part is nearly mature, and soon will grow no more. It can now endure more strain of hard work without injury. In the baby under eight months the leg muscles are in the first stage. Crawling and walking mark the beginning of the second stage which is continuing in the years we are interested in. The incessant trotting

about provides the very necessary exercise needed for vigorous growth. The muscles crave exercise, and a large amount of it—but in short periods only, and at frequent intervals. A child of four or five may easily cover ten miles in the course of his running about during the day; but we could not take such a child on an unbroken ten-mile walk without serious fatigue and probable injury. In their spontaneous play you will notice that the heavy muscles of the legs are used more than those of the arms, agreeing with what was said above as to the earlier development of the lower limbs. The arms, too, tend to move as a whole from the shoulder in movements such as waving, pounding, pushing, showing how the fore-arm is less well advanced than the upper arm, and, as was stated before, how the muscles called “fundamental” are better controlled earlier than those called “accessory.” The finger muscles have not yet acquired much independence, and are not at all ready to execute complicated movements.

The brain follows the same laws of variation in growth. Most of its weight is gained before birth; by three years old it has gained about seven ninths of its adult weight and about nine tenths at six years old. Its period of mere growth then is slackening, but the exercise of it is very important. The simpler parts of the brain develop first. Those parts which have to do with receiving sensations mature before those which help control movements. If in this exercise stage of growth of the sensation brain centers children do not get enough sense training, they may be permanently underdeveloped in this respect just as the body as a whole

may be stunted for lack of exercise and nourishment at the right time. Those parts of the brain which have to do with the highest type of thinking grow more slowly and mature much later than any other part. We cannot expect complicated reasoning out of problems by little children, not only because their experience is so limited, but also because their nervous systems are not matured sufficiently to permit controlled brain action of the kind required for that sort of thinking.

Both muscles and nerves need rest periods alternating with exercise periods. The best kind of rest is, of course, in sleep. Three-year-olds are still in need of a daytime nap; and four-year-olds would be the better for it too. Their night sleep should be twelve hours, if possible, eleven for the five-year-old. During the day quieter occupations should follow periods of active exercise physically. After periods of active attention-giving should be opportunity for more relaxed spontaneous attention to something different. Children vary a good deal more. Ten minutes may be all one child can enjoy without change; another, busy with some fascinating project of his own, may put in an hour and a half quite comfortably.

The eyes at this period are well along in the exercise stage of growth, but they are not ready to stand much strain. Even if five-year-olds can read we should not let them do it for long, nor can they use fine print with any safety.

This is the smallest size print we should present to them.

The act of reading involves a great many fine, complicated eye movements apart from the strain of focusing on something rather close to the eyes for long.

To sum up, then, there is a natural, physical basis for the eagerness to look at, listen to, taste, touch, and handle things. There is a law of growth behind the fact that children want to move about frequently, that they fidget if asked to keep still. Forced, monotonous, or prolonged movement will soon tire them; what they need is many exercise periods but varied, and interspersed with other occupations. They need plenty of sleep. We must not expect skill or delicacy of control in the smaller muscles either of eyes or hands.

#### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What would you suggest as comfortable seats for Beginners if they have to meet in the auditorium of the church?

2. Give some reasons why children of this age need help with their clothing, in opening cupboards and drawers? Why do they so often tear their picture books?

3. Is jumping the rope a frequent favorite game of four-year-olds? Why, or why not?

4. Would having a "rest period" of five minutes during the Sunday-school session be a desirable thing for the Beginners' Department? Why, or why not?

5. What sort of use of crayons is within the power of three- and four-year-old children? Does your lesson system demand too much from them in this?

6. How many hours of sleep does each child in the department get?

## CHAPTER VI

### NEED OF MENTAL SATISFACTION

#### FORE-EXERCISE

1. During two separate hours spent with a child of four, write down every question asked. Later, group them into questions about objects, about actions seen, about purposes of actions, about causes of natural phenomena, about mechanics, about number.

2. Can you recall any curious erroneous ideas you had at an early age? Can you trace how they originated?

**Gaining new ideas.**—"The world is so full of a number of things" for little folk, who are veritably hungry to find out about these same things. One important method they use is, as we have seen, by touching what they see, getting as much sense impression as possible, and enjoying as many forms of it as allowed. Another method is by copying the actions seen and the sounds heard, finding out what it feels like to do things themselves. Another method is by asking older people the words for the names of things and their attributes.

What is it they so constantly say from three years old on? "What is that? What are they doing? Why? What is that for? Why? How do you do that? Why? Who did that?" They are veritable animated interrogation points, exhausting the information of the most erudite adult, whose patience, alas, fre-

quently gives out, too, when the children are bidden to "stop asking questions!" Such an attitude, or one that deliberately gives foolish or false replies makes an enormous stumblingblock in the path these little ones follow to life and knowledge. If the years preceding three are all-important for the healthy unfolding of the emotional nature, these years before six are the crucial ones for formulating the outlines of a crude system of philosophy which may shape their thinking for years to come.

This avid curiosity is directed first to the sensory qualities of things around. Hence the first hand, persistent investigating. As the objects become familiar the attention is turned to parts specially interesting, or to similarities. Children should be encouraged in this sort of discrimination, for out of it grows the scientific method. Interested Frances remarks of the words *butter* and *brother* written in large script that "they both have the same little pipe at one end" (the letter b). Sharp-eyed Ruth notices that the frill on auntie's underskirt is made of the same goods as the waist she wore yesterday. This relating of experiences marks an important step in the development of intelligence. Either by the presence of new things in the surroundings, or by the discovery of new relationships among old ones all knowledge is advanced.

To get clear ideas, however, requires that the learners have expression in language for what they see. Thus, most of their first questions are "What is that?" By this means they acquire their stock of nouns, which we saw was relatively so large. "What are they do-

ing?" gives them their verbs. "What is that for? Who made that? Why?" so frequent in the fourth year evidences the search after the causal relation, hidden connections, origins of things, explanations of natural phenomena. Children will attack any problem, propounding queries that have puzzled our wisest philosophers. "What makes the fire burn? Where does the wind go? How far is it to the sky? What is my chin for? Why does pussy have fur? Who made God? Why do people have to have mothers? Why doesn't my hand make a hole in the water?" are samples of eager questions. With the knowledge of adjectival words children inquire about their limitations thus: "What is the hardest thing in the world? Are things that run like water wet?" In verifying their knowledge they tend to make statements with a query at the end, thus: "Warm can melt cold things, can't it? Nobody can do that, can they? That's a blue one, isn't it?" This need for reassurance at every step mentally is analogous to the baby's grasping at helping hands when he begins to walk.

Sometime before six comes the interest in counting, in learning the number names and saying them over. Not at first is the comprehension of what five is, or that one less than five is four, but there is a delight in repeating the syllables as such, partly, perhaps, on account of the rhythm involved. During the years from four to six there is a tremendous growth of interest in number, shown not only in counting up to hundreds, but in measuring objects, in questions about cost, eagerness for little problems involving number. "How long

is six feet? Is a thousand dollars a lot? Did the soldiers have hundreds of guns with them?"

**Enjoying old impressions.**—Along with this quest for a new experience and for the words in which to talk about them is the deep satisfaction of returning again and again to familiar objects, stories, places, people. The old picture book is pored over till its loosened and dog-eared pages bear witness to their frequent use. Judith likes her new doll, but the real heart's treasure is that battered, decrepit object, loved so hard that its first beauty has long since departed. After the comparative strain of listening to a new story, notice the lighting up of the faces, and the sigh of satisfaction as a well-known tale is begun.

Maybe we give our four-year-olds new stories too often, in the Sunday school. Why forty different ones for forty Sundays? Why even thirty? Why not twenty or fewer, but these told over and over till they are thoroughly known? Remember, the smallest Beginners cannot appreciate complex or long stories, and that their attention easily shifts. With vivid tales, full of action, told in simple language, we shall not confuse them by having a short one and a longer one in one day's session. In the second year in the department one third to one half the stories may profitably be old ones, with plenty of opportunity for repeating the new ones. As has been pointed out before, the very same wording of the tales is expected by the audience. To them the words *are* the story very largely; and the complaint, "You're telling it all different," voices their resentment at the disguise of an old favorite. After a good deal

of retelling, the fourth or even the seventh repetition, there will be some among the four-year-olds who are ready to help tell parts of the story—either the high spots, or to say over any little recurrent phrases of the “I’ll huff and I’ll puff and I’ll blow your house in” order. By and by they may want to play the story. Here we must be careful to avoid forcing our adult ideas, drawn from studying the drama and visiting the theater, upon their spontaneity. They want to interpret the story more fully to themselves, not to impress spectators—to enjoy the emotions aroused by going through the actions, not to present to someone else an æsthetic, unitary whole.

Another way in which liking for the habitual may show is in their happiness with a fairly fixed order of doing things, a certain song to be sung just now, a regular way to march round the room, perhaps. Whatever little routine or ritual you introduce comes to be felt as the Thing to Do. The same feeling accounts in part for the fondness of visiting places time after time, also for the species of home-sickness that attacks little visitors not yet adjusted to new surroundings. People, also, are hailed as accepted phenomena in Things as They Are. The lady-in-the-house-with-flowers, My-policeman-on-the-corner, Mr.-Robinson-next-door are fixtures in the four-year-old’s world. What wonder that it takes time to get used to the new teacher, so many new children, a new room, new things to do, when all are introduced at once.

**Comparing new with old.**—Every new thing learned becomes in its turn a possible means of acquir-

ing something fresh. What children take in does not rest a passive, inactive part of them; rather is it so digested that it forms part of a living mental stuff which reaches out and gathers in still newer material. This new presentation, if an object, is attended to because it is at the same time like something they know and yet different. Harry sees Randolph's bed, which is not like either his own or his daddy's, though all have sheets and pillows and are used to sleep in. Harry has a better idea of what a bed is by seeing these different sorts than he would have had if all had been alike. Watch children comparing toys, clothing with each other. Listen to what they say, apparently bragging about what they have or do "at my house." It is simply using the natural basis for a comparison. If the new presentation is in language alone, it must be brought into line with ideas already in use. Hence the questions which help interpret the new in the light of the familiar. If there is no one to explain hard matters to children, they will invent an explanation for themselves. Five-year-old George answered a younger sister's query, "What makes it snow?" by "It's God doing this," pantomiming the act of scattering.

Since what is known is the only basis by which to apprehend the unknown, it follows that proper understanding of new ideas is conditioned by what chances to be known, also by what is thought of at the time, sometimes even by what happens to be before the eyes at the time. Very often, then, peculiar interpretations are made, since the previous knowledge is so limited. Frank, who heard the church called God's house, looked

for the bedrooms and dining-room which he felt ought to be there; small May, inquiring what a teetotaler was, hearing something in the reply about using water and chancing to look at the big water pipes of the heating system meanwhile, supposed for years that a teetotaler was a person who used big pipes like those in her house. Dorothy, from a vague jumble of texts heard, visualized God, with Jesus beside him, sitting in the back pew of their church, his feet propped on a high hassock of earth. Little Sarah, from a home where drunken brutality made life a fearsome thing, did not find the thought of a heavenly Father a helpful one.

The similar sounds of words will often mislead children. On investigation, many thought that butterflies made butter, bees gave beans, ants and aunts were somehow connected, with other weird analogies.

These analogies and interpretations may burst forth in children's minds at what seem to the teacher inopportune moments. Or, if the teacher cannot see for herself the cause of the analogy she may regard the remarks as wholly irrelevant interruptions. For instance, Denny was reminded by the gesturing of the teacher's hands as she described the flight of a dragon fly of the way the elephant he had seen waved his trunk, and promptly contributed an observation anent the length of elephants' "noses." Many teachers would be not a little disconcerted by this sudden transition from dragon flies to elephants, and either have ignored Denny or reproved him for this long-distance connection, missing the eye-compelling short circuit effected by her gesticulations. Wisely, this teacher capped his remark

with one of her own, also about elephants' noses, when, after a pause, Denny demanded a continuation of the story. When you are confronted with apparently extraneous matter introduced, do not "shut the child up" incontinently, but try to find the connecting link, if possible. In any case, be sympathetic with the point of view; work always to find that which *is* known, and relate the new to it by easy and striking comparisons.

We see from this that children cannot appreciate the absolutely new—they simply ignore it, since they have nothing within by which to reach it. It is only by slow steps that knowledge is acquired, we cannot expect them to progress by airplane leaps. The relationship between known and unknown is the bridge by which they pass, and it is the teachers' work to see that the connections are true and firm.

Of what use is it to present abstract truths in symbolic form, when the objects used as symbols, let alone the truth they are to convey, are unfamiliar? How can little children realize adult motives and aspirations, adult emotions and concepts as expressed in our prayers, our hymns, or some Biblical passages which they hear? Let us give them mental food suitable to their stage of development, capable of being properly assimilated.

#### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What elements of repetition make the story of the calling of little Samuel a favorite?
2. Get samples of lesson courses for Beginners from four or five different published lesson systems. Compare them for:

- (a) Number of stories included for a year's course.
- (b) Identity of stories selected.
- (c) Little prayers, if any, to be taught.
- (d) Number of hymns or song texts to be taught in a year.
- (e) Hymns with refrains or choruses.

3. Would Beginners understand the 23d Psalm by being shown pictures of sheep and having an Oriental shepherd's methods described? What words in this psalm are not in a five-year-old's vocabulary? What ideas are not within his experience? What emotions, what motives or desires?

4. Illustrate other points made in this chapter.

## CHAPTER VII

### REVELING IN IMAGINATION

#### FORE-EXERCISE

1. Visit a kindergarten, if possible, and note exactly what the children do in the free-play period. Are the activities mainly for the enjoyment of motion; for acquiring skill; to construct something; to represent something? Do the children act out stories they have heard? If so, is it with words or actions chiefly?

2. Show a child of four a new picture book. What does he want to know about the pictures? What questions does he ask? What stories will he tell you about them? What stories will he tell about the familiar pictures in an old book?

3. Did you ever have an imaginary companion? If so, at what age? Was it a child, an adult, of your own sex, human, or fantastic?

4. When you played horse, or car conductor, or with dolls at about five, did you copy what you had seen adult drivers, conductors, mothers do, or did you invent something new?

5. Did you then play in a group with other children, or mostly by yourself?

6. What do you notice on these last two questions in the play of children four to six years old? What difference might it make to a child that age to be the youngest of several in a family? The oldest? An only child?

**The dramatic play period.**—Some people have called the age from three to six *the* play period, not meaning by that, of course, that children of other ages

do not play, but that there is some predominant feature of the activities of this period that makes it different from the others. Let us see what personal reminiscence and casual observation will disclose concerning these same activities.

If your memory will carry you back to when you were somewhere about five years old, recall what were the interests that stood out most sharply. Ask yourself the questions at the head of this chapter and see if you can get any clear answers to them. Ask several people the same, and pool your results. Watch little folks at play out of doors, too, and see what they are doing. Four or five hours spent in this way at different times ought to give a sympathetic insight and appreciation of the interests of this period; and for good interpretations in books, you will do well to get hold of: Lee, *Play in Education*; Fiske, *Boy Life and Self-Government*; Ella Lyman Cabot, *Seven Ages of Childhood*, and see what those authors have to say about children from four to six.

In the first place, you will remember or see that, apart from the necessities of eating and sleeping, the one great business of life just then is to play. Not yet are felt the responsibilities of set tasks; not yet has come the social life of the schoolroom; not yet is the demand that learning shall be from books. Children now enjoy a good deal of freedom in the bestowal of their time, especially as they have somewhat outgrown the more constant supervision given the two-year-old toddler; and all of their time, practically, is spent in play.

**Play is individual.**—In the second place, children are rank individualists in their play. Even in company with other children four-year-olds really play by themselves. True; they may coax daddy into tossing a ball, or into being the bone which the “dog” will eat; or they may be coerced by an older sister into holding and turning the rope for her to skip, or playing baby when she plays house. But it is *their* game in which daddy will serve a turn, or sister’s game part of which is enjoyed. There is not the collaboration nor the group spirit which will be natural later. They do not know how to give and take, how to wait their turn, how to share their toys. All these things they will learn, in part at least, before they are six, especially as they meet little groups their own age in kindergarten; but the learning will come hard very often with many occasions of smarting jealousy, greedy desire, thwarted purpose leading to tears, slaps, storms. How gentle and sympathetic we older folks need to be when these early difficult lessons in the art of living together come! Just here is the foundation of such morality as fair and honorable acts, ready sympathy, real generosity. Only as children realize by first-hand experience what they *do* want done to them, and how their fellows—not the folks in the grown-up world, but their fellows—act when they don’t do to them what is desired, can they get the concrete meaning of what we later sum up for them in the words of the Golden Rule.

**Rhythmic play.**—Such group games as are enjoyed at this age are largely those played in a ring, with singing, walking, or skipping round, simple actions re-

peated in concert by all. Words and movements are both strongly rhythmic, and generally work up to a surprise climax, such as stamping, tumbling down, pirouetting, shouting, chasing some one, or whatever special action the words suggest. The whole sequence is gone over and over perhaps a dozen or more times with every evidence of delight, whether the words are understood or not, so long as there is marked rhythm. Even in solitary play children enjoy rhythmic movement. Notice how the feet are swung, or little chants are sung, or there is a passion for being in the swing.

**Imaginative play.**—In the third place, children are, as we have seen, hourly gaining new information in their questing eagerness, and acquiring new words and meanings to clarify their ideas and help them express themselves. Experiences are being stored up, and, as soon as convenient, brought out and examined for better acquaintance. Things done and seen and heard, also those heard about, are better remembered than ever before; added to which is the pleasure in the power of bringing back these happenings at will, thinking them over in imagination, imitating them from memory when they are no longer visibly present to be copied. This thinking over, this examining, is as definite as possible, is, in fact, acting the experience over again in dramatic play. Literally, they re-present things. Only in this way can children make real to themselves the true inwardness of what they see and hear. They must live over again and again in imitative way what such things as horses, dogs, boats, trains, the wind, the stream, firemen, policemen, mothers actually do. Thus they begin

to understand what these are by being each in turn. Not through books but through impersonation is the learning done.

Through pictures and stories they are introduced to such characters as fairies, kings and queens, Indians, bears, wolves, giants, and so on, not to mention Peter Rabbit, Red Riding Hood, and similar heroes and heroines. These too must be learned by entering vividly into their lives, acting as they acted, feeling as they felt. From this, it is but a short step to either being one of them for days and weeks at a time, or making up a character which is new and different. Indeed, even before this age many children, particularly first or only children, have had an imaginary companion. This slave of the lamp coming at imagination's call has the outstanding virtues of absolute obedience to his creator's slightest wish, acceptance of disagreeable responsibilities, willingness to supplement any conversation, share any activity, with no reproaches for neglect.

Now let us consider first of all the possible dangers in all this, then the mistakes grown-ups may make, then some of the values to child life of this dramatic, imaginative play.

**Possible dangers of undirected imagination.**— There are some few points to be guarded against in this period. First is the danger that the world of fancy may become so engrossing that children's attention is given too seldom to objective things, and so the power to tell real things from fancied things does not get trained as it should. The glamour of invention sheds a false light on matters of fact, hiding their reality, till

children do not see, or believe, or remember things as they are. Second, in the vivid world of make-believe, things are made to happen as the little actors wish; and they try to extend this delightful control to happenings in the world of ought-to-believe, till they run the risk of not distinguishing what actually happened from what they wish had or had not happened—much to the distress of the mother sometimes, who thinks her child is a confirmed liar. Third, responsibility for deeds may be easily shifted to the shoulders of the obliging imaginary companion, children thereby missing the logical relation between conduct and consequences, promises and performance. One other result, partly of the first danger, partly of their suggestibility and credulity of the stories told them, is that many children suffer from fears of things which have no real harmful existence, or no proximity. Who cannot recall the agonies of terror at the bogy man, the Thing under the bed, the Devil, the black bear, jerking shadows, and so on?

**Remedy for the dangers.**—The way to counteract these dangers is to give more and more opportunity for contact with real things; to know by touch and sight and movement more about dark corners, and shadows, to reassure by daily experience that witches and wolves do not get into our houses. Another way is to distinguish always whether it is a true or a “pretend” story you are telling, and to be sure the children do the same; also to let them have a chance to tell both. This will help too in learning what a truthful report is. They should be practiced in doing something and telling exactly what was done, where a thing is, who did it first,

what they saw. There should also be the pleasure of deliberately inventing a story to tell, which both narrator and audience know is a product of fancy. Also, responsibility must be learned by being held to account for small tasks, for obedience, for remembering to do things a certain way, to put things in a certain place, by being trusted with little commissions. Reliability in deeds must be rewarded, and untrustworthiness must miss a reward or meet some displeasure. Reliability in words and in interpretations will thus be trained without crushing the spirit of the young artist inventor.

**Adults' mistakes.**—There is first the error of thinking children are willfully lying when they indulge in romancing, as above mentioned. Unless there is intent to deceive or a cowardly escape from blame, there is no real lie in the wonderful reports they will bring. The remedy is, as indicated, in a careful distinction by both adults and children of when and where to stick to facts, and when fancy is permissible. Second, there is the failure to enter at all into this colorful world, but to see only a purloined umbrella where they see swords or hobby horses; to hear only an irritating noise when a hyena or fearsome dragon should be recognized; to speak to a little boy or girl when it is really the grocer or Goldilocks who should be addressed. Thrice blessed the adult who can transform his prosaic attitude, become even as a little child, and share the play. Another error is in reading into the children's spontaneous actions any desire to show off, or create an effect upon an audience. Rather is the tendency, as we have seen, to explore, to find out, to gain control of ideas, to share

intimately the feelings of the things and people they see and hear about. Any attempt to criticize the performance, to make children self-conscious, to rehearse effects for others to approve, is a violation of their nature. So also is it a mistake to provide very elaborate, realistic toys as stage accessories. The simpler these things are the more children's imagination can do with them, the more varied parts they can assume, the more serviceable they are. A small chair, for instance, may be a cart, a boat, a throne, a castle, a bridge, a horse, a bear, as the players wish, whereas a perfect model engine is much more limited in its possibilities. Similarly, a simple doll, or block of wood is to be preferred to a mechanically perfect contrivance that will function in one way only.

**Values to child-life.**—One great opportunity, or perhaps necessity arising from this imaginative play, is to see that the children have good models to imitate, worthy of being lived over and absorbed. The selection of stories told, and characters familiarized which provides the stock of material from which the players will draw must be carefully made. Interest in all sorts of people and things may be aroused by telling about them, showing pictures of them, supplying details of what they do, what they use, what they say, telling the same thing over and over till the children are so full of the impressions that they spontaneously start to express themselves in slight imitative form or in more extended play. Through this too comes the beginning of true sympathy with other lives, acting and feeling as others act and feel, entering into their spirit. Along with it

too comes the opportunity to name actions brave, honest, kind, fair, careful, polite, and the like, and by attitude to convey approval of them and disapproval of their opposites. Thus a concrete meaning is given to these terms for the children, and also a knowledge of the social sanction or disfavor for such conduct.

#### QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. How could you tell the story of Miriam and the baby Moses so as to present interesting models of value to children?

2. Collect samples of dramatic episodes provided for Beginners in the ordinary Children's Day, or Christmas service. Criticize them from the point of view of:

(a) Those that are educative.

(b) Those that violate child nature at this age.

(c) Those that are silly.

(d) Those designed to appeal to the spectators rather than to express child thought and feeling.

3. In what ways has play at this age a moral value?

## CHAPTER VIII

### ATTITUDES TOWARD PEOPLE

#### FORE-EXERCISE

1. Recall what was said in Chapter II about ideas of right and wrong, and in Chapter IV about response to new authority. What does that suggest with regard to the topic of this chapter?

2. Find out from the parents of the Beginners what, if any, little responsibilities are intrusted to the children in the home.

**Imitation.**—We have seen how children in their play will reveal what has been interesting and attractive to them by copying the movements, making the sounds, and, in general, acting as the model acted. We know too, that at first they reproduce chiefly what they have seen and heard at first hand, and less frequently, during these early years, will they include in their repertoire the unseen characters from the stories they are told about soldiers, giants, fairies. Some unimaginative children never wish to imitate these hearsay people. Other overimaginative children prefer them, or else rôles which they invent for themselves, to mimicking any objective, outside-in-the-world person. One little girl still under two developed two imaginary companions from a simple game of house, nurse, and mother, and thereafter, till well over six, spent most of her waking hours telling herself a continued story and

acting it out, with relatively little of observation which might have led to more varied imitations. We may almost divide children into "inside" and "outside" types so far as their imagination is concerned. The former are likely to be underdeveloped in observation at this period, and probably in a social way later. The latter appear more active and pick up more information.

Besides this purposeful imitation for the fun of knowing how it feels to act as letter carrier, car conductor, mother, carpenter, we have to reckon with the unconscious imitation of people lived with daily. Phraseology, voice modulations, gestures, facial expressions, all are picked up readily; and, all unknowingly, the mother finds her habitual ways of speaking revealed to the community through her child. Jean begins her pieces of information invariably, "Now, listen, Miss K——, are you listening to what I say?" showing how her own attention is secured. Ralph, whose mother drawls when she tries prolonged coaxing rather than quiet, incisive request, has developed a sing-song nasal whine of expostulation in an argument to get his own way. Alan reflects the cheery atmosphere of his home in making light of bumps and in smiling as soon as possible after any little mishap.

**What they are because of what they imitate.**—Whether deliberately or unconsciously the four- and five-year-olds are fashioning themselves day by day on the pattern of those around them and of those presented in a striking way to their imaginations. It is obvious that it is exceedingly important to have models that are

worth while. Now are impressed upon the plastic material of the child mind attitudes that are self-seeking, actions that are dishonest, thinking that is low and common, talk that is coarse, or their opposites of conversation that is pure, refined and informative, thinking that is high and noble, living that is honorable and trustworthy, attitudes that inspire to social service. Now may be formed definite ideals such as Sally Smiles, the Jolly Goops, mother's brave boy, Jesus' helper. Now is the time to differentiate between the strange little girl who pouts and our own Laura whose mouth turns up at the corners. Thus we use the imagination definitely to shape efforts, holding up a desired characteristic in personalized form to help control conduct.

**Keen sense of others' opinions.**—From the constant appeal, "See me do it," "See what I made," we need not infer that children are showing off. Rather is it that they wish someone to share in their own elation over the conquest of some physical obstacle. It is so mighty an achievement to have jumped down that far, so wonderful to have built the tower of blocks so high that some grown person must be brought to swell the triumph. Notice that it is a grown-up person, generally, at this age. By the admiration meted out to them children's confidence in their own prowess is strengthened. Success must be commented on before it is fully felt as success. "See, I didn't spill any, did I, mama?" Since the big folks direct the little folks' actions in so many ways it is natural that actions of all sorts, behavior as well as athletic stunts, should be referred to the habitual court of appeals for judgment.

This is the way their sense of values is developed, by the way others regard the conduct, by the way others treat them. Hence they listen for criticisms—indeed, invite them. “I did that nicely, didn’t I?” “It was good of me to do that, wasn’t it?” “He was a brave man, wasn’t he?” “Isn’t Morris a naughty boy to do that?” Notice too how sensitive little children are to being laughed at. How overwhelmed they can be when an earnest inquiry, funny only to the adults, is greeted with shouts of merriment! How unhappy a ten-year-old tease can make a smaller sister only the little one can tell, and that when she herself has grown considerably older. So responsive are they, opening to the sunshine of friendliness and shrinking at the nipping wind of ridicule, that it would seem a matter of supreme moment to provide the right sort of criticism for these growing plants.

**Desire for praise.**—Not only do children seek others’ expression of opinions, but they will go out of their way to do things in hope of the reward of praise. An instance of the force of this hope in shaping conduct was given in the question following Chapter II. Marian’s mother telling visitors in her presence the smart things she has said will stimulate effort to be yet smarter, with most undesirable results usually. Pat’s mother telling Mrs. Casey over the fence what a help to her Pat is getting to be, is using “blarney” in a wise way.

Both for training their critical thinking and for motivating their conduct we should not hesitate to express approval, and to name certain qualities very

definitely, such as *careful, quick, brave, kind*. These terms may be applied to the children themselves, helping to rank them, in their own thinking, with people who do the same sort of things. In telling stories too we can assist this valuation of conduct by phrases, such as "Robert was a boy who always told the truth, so he said——"; "This giant was so good-natured that, of course, he helped them at once." However, we should avoid naming undesirable qualities, if possible, such as *rude, cruel, a lie*, but use instead the form *not polite, not true*, with appropriate tones of deprecation. If undesirable behavior on the part of the children is to be commented on, we should never fit the adjective on to them, but to their conduct. It is not that Helen is a bad girl, but the act is bad and to be avoided in the future. Grown-up and Helen together consider the act and its bad consequences, and try to discover ways to remember not to repeat that bad act.

After all, this wish for approval is universal in human nature. What our families, our friends, our business or professional associates think of us, and how they treat us in consequence, is of vital moment to each one of us, and a most powerful motive for conduct. The particular thing to remember about the four- and five-year-olds is that they are influenced less by the opinion of their equals in age now than they are by that of adults. It is, then, the golden time to lay the foundations deep and strong of the character that is to be. The instinctive tendencies which lead to desirable habits must be approved in unmistakable terms. There is little danger, at this age, of "spoiling" a child by too much

praise. He may well be encouraged by even exaggerated commendation to further efforts along the same lines. Condemnation should be equally unhesitating, though not exaggerated. In no uncertain tones we should make clear our position with regard to Things that are Not Done. It is thus that we set up an emotional bias against anti-social acts and predispose children to avoid them.

**Dread of disapproval.**—Children of even three have developed sufficiently to exercise some measure of conscious self-control. From babyhood days tumbles have helped them learn to balance their bodies, and bruises have restrained them from hitting at random on hard objects. Besides this accidental training of the physical environment there has gone along more systematic training by the people in the social environment. Displeasure, associated with certain types of acts, has taught them the wisdom of avoiding such. Now that the power to remember and ability to talk about things, and the power to picture things to themselves has developed pretty well, there is possible a control of actions not only by seeing and hearing results of conduct, but by remembering previous occurrences and anticipating them again. By three years old, in other words, there is some slight feeling of responsibility growing. Ada cries when she breaks a cup, remembering what was said and done before on a similar occasion. Elsie may check herself when about to touch the big scissors, not because she has ever cut herself, but because the attempt to touch them before has always been coupled with a firm command to leave them alone. Five-year-

old Jim is afraid to go home because he has lost some of the pennies the grocer gave him in change, and he expects blame. Mildred shows consciousness of guilt when she is found three blocks from home after having been warned to stay in front of the house. She may have been punished before, and she is afraid now. As she develops, the memory of the prohibition will come up, not too late as it did this time, but at the same time as the thought of going round the corner, and the memory of the consequence of disobeying will in time serve to deter her, as in the case of Elsie with the scissors. Wisely treated, she will connect the feeling of discomfort with the wrongdoing itself, not with the person who makes the consequences unpleasant. Unfortunately, all children are not so wisely treated, so that what should be only the in-between stage of fear of being found out remains the final stage. Then the impulse to conceal is, of course, enormously strengthened. Both the timid child and the very imaginative may easily learn the art of subterfuge, though their early attempts at deception are unskillful enough not to succeed, as a rule. For both these types, and the bold, defiant kind, it is of the utmost importance that this impulse to conceal be checked, unless we wish a moral coward or a sly trickster to grow up. It must never pay to deny wrongdoing. The consequences of falsehood must be far worse than the results of the concealed deed would have been. Conversely, emphatic approval must be shown when children, albeit frightened, admit their fault. The fundamental position is, as outlined above, entire sympathy with the little

criminal, wholesome disgust at the act, helpful suggestion for the future.

Fear of not living up to the ideal will work too. As the mental pictures of what a brave soldier does become vivid, Kenneth will help himself conquer his tendency to be a cry-baby by the thought of father's disappointment not to find his soldier-boy to-day. Dick remembers to say "Thank you," and "Please," or else his hostess will think he is not a little gentleman. Louise makes a real effort to come out of the sulks so that mother may not miss her jolly chum.

**Helpfulness, desire to be doing.**—We have seen how eagerly little children touch and handle the things about them, and how faithfully they copy others' action. Left untrained, these traits may develop into destructiveness, or at least bear no fruit of any educational value. Judiciously tended, however, we find here the germs of constructiveness, that may blossom into genuine helpfulness. Fingers that like to tear paper may tear it into picture forms to be mounted with other pictures into scrapbooks. People who like playing visitor may take these scrapbooks to little children who have none, in hospital, day nursery, or orphan home. Hands that are so busy piling blocks may also learn to pile dishes while helping mothers wash them. Little bodies that move about so much may go on errands of simple fetch-and-carry for tired people. In addition to playing the street-cleaner they may be of service in helping tidy the room.

By sharing in the family life in this responsible way, and to the extent of their powers in the community life,

they begin to learn true citizenship where each serves the group for the welfare of all. By doing things with mother for father, with older children for mother, with the teacher and class for other children or old people, the instinctive desire for activity is turned into the direction of experience that is worth while because it develops attitudes of sympathetic understanding and habits of helpfulness.

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Collect illustrations of such characters as Dolly Dumps, the Cheerful Chubbies, the Tidy Tots in literature for children that may be helpful in forming ideals and habits.

2. In what sense is it true that sympathy is a product of imitation? Illustrate.

3. Are we inclined to love people more who do many things for us, or for whom we render service? What does this suggest in awakening love in little children for each other; for God the Father?

4. What schemes are worked out in your Beginners' Department which give opportunity to the children for little acts of helpfulness? What could wisely be introduced?

CHAPTER IX  
MODIFICATIONS OF CHARACTER  
FORE-EXERCISE

1. Look back to Chapter I for causes of individual differences, to II for development of ideas of right and wrong, to III for possible sources of motive, to VIII for results of imitation.

2. Collect from any previous chapters any titles of the laws of learning, or any illustrations of them.

3. Learn some new, simple habit yourself to replace one you already have; for example, use the left hand for the drinking utensil at table; keep some frequently used object in a new place. Keep count of (*a*) the number of times you revert to the old habit before remembering the new; (*b*) how soon you remember just in time to avoid the old habit; (*c*) how long it takes before you can do the new thing without having to attend to it. Compare your notes with others in the class.

We have seen how busy children are between four and six years old learning new things by their eyes and hands, clarifying their understanding by the questions they ask, adding to the vocabulary in which they express themselves, and living over again in imaginative play the actions of those that have most interested them. Now, to learn means to make changes in oneself; and by all they are learning it follows that some of these changes have a big influence on the character they are forming. Character, or what people are in relation to others, is made up of what they habitually do, and the

ideals which control their actions. Let us see how little children are forming ideals and habits during the age period we are discussing. We may consider, first, the factors due to inner growth more largely, as these shape their ways of feeling and thinking, and, second, those due more to environment.

**Individuality.**—The first reason we will notice for character growth is the fact that they become increasingly independent physically. They learn to get along without so much help as formerly from older people in matters of eating, dressing, going out. This alone tends to foster independence in other ways, so that children may often resent any offers of help which seem to them more like interference. It also paves the way for new interests. Every new skill gained leads to greater independence, opens up new possibilities. Every habit learned leaves children's attention that much more free to start learning something else.

Second is the fact that they have a much clearer idea of self than they had at two or three years of age. Up to that time they had to learn that all parts of their bodies, whether felt or seen or heard, really meant "me." Then when beginning to move about they found the joy of making things happen, of being a cause of noises, of shadows, and so forth. Learning to talk, and when to use the pronoun "I" helped in the idea of self, as has also owning certain things in the way of toys or table utensils. Now is the time when they try out the limits of their social selves, as in babyhood they found out the limits of their bodily selves. And as their bodies were defined by meeting resistance, so their character selves

learn too. By finding their interests and purposes now running with, and now against those of other people they discover how far they can go without disagreeable results. Have you never seen a four-year-old half playfully, but determinedly, doing just exactly what he has been told not to do, with a wary eye on authority to see how much he may dare? The difficulty in learning comes in having to stand either the unpleasantness of being thwarted in a purpose, or that of the consequences of running counter to others' purposes. It seems a choice between two evils, and a difficult choice at best. Many fits of obstinacy or sulks are really a sort of prickly hedgehog condition in which children find themselves unable to make this choice between two disagreeables. The more immediate disappointment of being prevented in following out their own inclination generally looms larger than the anticipation of a penalty, so that it tends to produce sulks. The necessity of conforming at once to the purposes of somebody else tends more to what is called obstinacy—really a frustrated, inhibited state. A sudden attempt to enforce conformity, thus interfering with liberty of action, is more likely, as we have seen, to throw a child into a screaming rage. Something depends here on inherited temperament as to which a child most frequently does. Our point is that all three modes are reactions of the self against other selves, by which the boundaries of the sphere of that self are slowly felt out.

A third cause due to inner growth that helps in character forming is the fact that their power to recall experiences is rapidly increasing, and the fact that their

imagination is sufficiently developed so that they can picture what may happen again in the light of what happened before, in consequence of an act. Thus they can profit by past experience in a conscious way, not in the more automatic way of the earlier years. Self-control, then, can be more rapidly developed. There are several well-marked stages of this control in forming a habit. First, the memory of the probable consequences comes *after* the wrong act is complete, too late to prevent it, but in time to arouse fear of a repetition of the former painful sequence, and perhaps to re-enforce the tendency to hide. Second, the memory of the law may come *at the same time* as the chance to break it, when it becomes a battle between the strength of the impulse and the imagination of the consequence. Third, the impulse having been sufficiently often checked loses in strength, and, when felt, is ignored even though the imagination is not consciously called into play. Look back to the illustrations in the previous chapter of children in these various stages of forming a habit. A still later stage is reached when thinking of a result will make children remember something that ought *to be done* in time to do it, instead of simply refraining from an act. Either hope of reward or fear of displeasure may bring this stage, the former motive the more quickly, however.

A fourth factor in their growth, already mentioned, is the imitative and imaginative tendency which leads children to dramatize the occupations around them, and serves as a mirror to reflect the inner feel of the joy of these occupations. Thus children learn to share others'

feelings and find the basis for sympathy, for experiencing in themselves the excitements, the hopes, the fears, the desires that motivate other selves. If we wish, we can draw upon this power by interesting them in all sorts of people's needs, and direct this sympathy into acts of real helpfulness. They may be led to plan actions that will give others pleasure. A Beginners class was glad to go with a first-grade class to take flowers to the Home where many grannies and grandpas lived who didn't have any grandchildren of their own to visit them. This sharing of activities that give joy to others brings its own joy even to five-year-olds, and trains them in being like Jesus who "went about doing good." It also prepares for the somewhat later stage of development when children will think ahead and *give up* doing something they wish because it would harm or grieve somebody else. In between, comes the stage of giving up because it will bring pleasure to somebody else. Our Beginners may well be encouraged to give some of their toys for other children who have none, or to help make little gifts that will bring pleasure.

A fifth factor, due also to better memory and stronger imagination, is the feeling of responsibility that is awakened. Sometimes this is gradual, as when there is habitual care of a pet or a younger brother or sister, and good home training in being held accountable for little tasks. Sometimes it may come rather suddenly, if in an emergency a child is thrown on his own resources. A need for a decision as to the best thing to do, a moral crisis calling for judgment, or an

overwhelming realization of disastrous results of a deed may mark the moment when this feeling of responsibility dawns.

Of course no two children are exactly alike. Just as they do not grow at the same rate physically, so we cannot expect them to grow at the same rate morally. Their physical stature may vary, at five years old, from thirty-eight to forty-three inches; their moral stature is sure to show a similar variation. And as one part of the body takes a spurt in growth while others have a relatively restful period, so their characters may grow piecemeal too, the formation of one set of habits absorbing most of the energy for a while, while others are seemingly neglected. Children grow mentally at differing rates too, let alone the fact that they have inherited very different intellectual capacities. An idea which the majority grasp readily may be beyond the mental reach of some few altogether. A habit quickly formed by one child may take another three or four times as long to learn. The differences in sensibility to fatigue are equally striking; and this affects character modification in that some children are unable to persevere with one occupation a tenth of the time that some others can attend, and so are less vividly impressed, and less able to carry away memories that will be helpful.

In conquering fears, in overcoming shyness, in gaining control of quick temper, in inhibiting the impulse to cry, in these and in many other ways affecting volition, there are very significant differences in rate of growth. By six years old children will be more unlike than at four, because of the interworking of these factors in

their inner growth. Some will be still of the average *social age* of four, we will say, others of the social age of eight. For that very reason it is not really possible to present a picture of "the typical child of five to six" so far as character is concerned, however nearly we may measure the average mental attainment. All that has been pointed out is the variety of factors that have been at work to help development. This must not be interpreted to mean that every child of five will have conquered his fears, formed habits of obedience, become sympathetic, gained self-control. Indeed, when we compare these little ones with those of eight and twelve years old, and think too of our own shortcomings; when some strong instinct, some powerful emotion interferes sadly with our self-control, we realize that they have, after all, done no more than make a beginning in forming the character that is to be. But how important that beginning is, when a slight bend in the wrong direction may mean a crookedness of growth, as in the case of any young tree; while the clean, beautiful symmetry in which we so delight depends on sturdy growth, and a good start in every respect. However, all this growth has been conditioned, of course, by influences in the environment, and we must now consider these briefly.

**Environment.**—A potent factor in modification of character is to be found in the social environment. Just *what* children will learn depends upon the kind of people around them. Wise training will bring about desirable changes, and at an earlier age than for those children who are brought up by ignorant or selfish people.

As we have noticed before, the members of the family wield the most important influence in shaping the character, first along emotional lines, and increasingly in this period from four to six in ways of thinking and interpreting actions. The attitudes taken by those nearest the children determine their ideas of right and wrong, instill fear of consequences, inspire hope of reward and so supply motives for conduct. Their own behavior too is quickly imitated by the children, serving as a model by which other people's actions are judged. "Daddy says so," "We don't do that at our house," "Mother lets us do that," may be heard frequently quoted when little people go visiting. Seeing others hold to a course of action because of a promise made helps fix the status of the spoken word. Being rewarded for fulfilling a task in the absence of anyone to supervise helps embody the ideal of trustworthiness in deeds. Hearing anyone promptly decline to engage in an activity because it is wrong, or would hurt somebody else, defines an attitude of judging deeds by their outcome.

Along with this goes the greater diversity of experiences that comes from wider social contacts. As their physical independence and their social impulses lead them further from home, they learn different ways of acting from other children in other homes with other standards. Better ways may be learned, and occasionally brought over into home life; but at this age little children do not learn courtesy, obedience, generosity as such in a generalized way, but as specific habits in connection with specific people. Janet will mind Sadie's

mother while she defies her own with impunity. Philip will play happily in company with Jim, but disagree continuously with Andy. Worse ways may be learned too. Often we hear a shocked mother wondering wherever Tommy picked up such ways; bad words seem as contagious as measles, undesirable habits as adhesive as sticky mud.

Contact with other children brings a special type of modification, as we have earlier discussed. These conflicts of self with other child-selves, painful though they may be, lead to the knowledge not only of how to be quicker at snatching at a coveted object but also how to wait one's turn. Not only do children learn how irritating it is when others won't follow their own plan, but also what enjoyment may come from sharing playthings, or following the lead of some other child.

As children move in this wider environment they pick up all sorts of information, some of it correct, much of it interpreted in a queer way. They discover that all they hear is not to be relied on; so that, while a four-year-old is almost completely credulous, a six-year-old is not quite so ready to believe everybody implicitly, particularly if he has met with much teasing of the sort called "fooling" from older children. While he is still unable, from his inexperience, to judge of the worth of the statements themselves, he may have come to look upon certain people as those who can always, or only sometimes, be believed.

Certain principles may be formulated as to how to help children form habits. (1) We must see to it that

they understand clearly just what is to be done. To say "Don't be so rude" does not help toward this clear idea; whereas a few specific, positive directions, such as "Wait for your turn to speak till Mrs. Ellis has done speaking," "Go behind the visitor's chair when you cross the room," "Say, 'Please may I have———' when you ask for something," gives a definite thing to be done. (2) Besides this clear understanding they must be appealed to along the line of an interest that we know is strong. Here we need a close understanding of the interests of this age-period, and of each particular child. Competition, desire for æsthetic products, symbolic significance will not prove strong motives at this period; curiosity, a chance for physical activity, actions that can be copied, will. (3) We must provide opportunity to do the thing immediately after it has been explained and demonstrated, and whenever the interest attaching to it is felt. And, of course, we must see that the thing is done over and over till the children no longer have to be reminded to do it, for "it does itself." (4) If it is a new habit in place of an old, less desirable one, we must be particularly on the watch to remind little children at the crucial moment of what it is that is to be done, to prevent a slip into the old habit. In any case, whether re-forming, or merely forming a habit, there should be this watchfulness, so as to secure consistent practice. (5) We must make the first steps of the new task easy enough so that the first efforts are likely to be successful. Failure might discourage a further attempt. (6) As has been emphasized again and again, the result of doing the right thing must be

very definitely pleasant to the children, so that they are more likely to repeat the act of their own accord.

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Which is more likely to help a five-year-old form the habit of wiping his muddy feet, to reward him for doing it or to scold him for forgetting? Why?

2. Describe the social environment of the children in your Beginners class. What people do they meet? What standards are held up to them?

3. What habits of worship do you wish your Beginners to form? How will you apply the principles formulated above?

4. How may a teacher utilize the love of approbation in helping form moral habits?

5. How can you help a child get more pleasure from being kind and generous than the opposite?

6. Study the change in interests in your group between four and six years old.

7. Discuss the results of the experiment suggested in the third fore-exercise of this chapter. What insight does it give into habit-forming in general?

8. How would you help break up habits of cruelty in a six-year-old? obstinacy? How help form habits of truth-telling?

9. Give illustrations of the sudden awakening to a feeling of responsibility?

## CHAPTER X

### RELIGIOUS GROWTH

#### FORE-EXERCISE

1. Can you recall your early ideas of God? What contributed to make them what they were? What helped to change them?

2. Ask two or three children of five: "When you think of God, what do you think of? What is He like?" and take down what they say.

3. Ask similarly, "Does God speak to you ever?" and report their answers.

**Capacity.**—Have children as young as four and five any truly religious capacity? To answer this we need not only to know the nature of the children, but also to define our meaning of religion. Let us take it as a way of living, with impulse to organize life with reference to values proved true and to a power other than human. The Christian religion has a different concept of this power from other religions, and lays special stress on the social values. Our point will be, then, to find if in children under six there is any idea of God, any attempt to organize living in accordance with values, any growth of the social instincts. We will take up these questions in reverse order.

The chief instincts that function in religious development are fear, curiosity, the sex instinct, the æsthetic group, gregariousness, jealousy, kindness, responses to approval and disapproval, sympathy, the parental in-

instincts. Of these, not all are equally prominent at this age. We have seen already that fear plays a large part in a young child's life, that it has to be redirected into fearing very different things from those which originally cause it. It finds permanent expression in fear of social disapproval, which, with its opposite, love of approbation, has also been discussed as a motive for conduct. Jealousy is very strong, but kindness and tender care also find expression, as does gregariousness, at least in the pleasure children show in each other's company. Sympathy is nascent, and curiosity is rampant.

Other characteristics that help toward forming religious ideas or starting religious acts are their very great credulity and suggestibility, their ready imitation of others' acts, their love of making things happen, and their easy creation of an imaginary companion. Some emotions that help toward a religious experience are the joy in reconciliation after naughtiness, the relief of submission after passionate rebellion, the joy in meeting after an absence, the joy in sharing activity with others, the satisfaction of creative activity, the delight in giving protecting care.

We have seen that there is a growth during this period in self-control, in interest in other children, in learning to share and to take turns easily, in power to help. Good ideals will promote this growth and bring about organization of conduct even when the ideas are not very consistent. We may have truth in deeds before it comes always in words. There will be specific habits of gratitude and politeness formed before there

is much appreciation of the ideals which motivate adults in like cases. We cannot expect grown-up standards to work for little people, but in so far as they can think and feel and act they are certainly starting to organize their ways of living. Inner growth is shown (1) by the capacity to form and carry out purposes, and (2) by the gradually improving quality of those purposes. In both these respects we have undeniable evidence of growth during this period. Though instruction and religious thinking find a bigger place in their lives later on, they are now quite capable of religious feelings and impressions. By the attitude at home and in Sunday-school they may come to join in the social experience of acts of worship, and acts of helpful service. All this answers satisfactorily from the first two points of view whether these young children show any evidence of religious capacity.

**Questionings.**—The need for organizing is shown further in their queries. Upon the replies they get will be founded their ideas, qualified as these must be by the very limited experience which serves to interpret these replies. Here are some more samples of the questions children put: "Where is God?" "Who made God?" "Is God like us?" "Was God ever a boy?" "Does God live in the sky sometimes and in the church just on Sundays?" "Is he on the earth too?" "How can God see in the dark?" "Who helps God up in heaven?" "Is God like the air if he is everywhere?" Problems of life and death, as well as of doctrine, bother the little philosophers: "Who was the mother of the very first baby?" "Who was God's father?" "Does Jesus come

down out of the sky and fetch you when you die?" "Does your soul have wings to go to heaven with?" "If people's bodies are buried, do their heads go to heaven?" Problems of good and evil are felt, too, as shown in: "Did God make the Devil?" "If the Devil says he's sorry, won't God forgive him?" "Does Jesus love bad boys?" "If I wanted to be bad, could God make it that I'd be good?"

**Wonder.**—There is so much around little children that they do not understand, things which cannot be handled, movements the cause of which cannot be seen, such as the wind, the power of heat and cold, that the emotion of wonder is very constantly felt. We do not know, scientifically, whether the tendency to ascribe the cause to God is due to the feeling of mystery surrounding these forces of nature or whether it is only due to answers they may receive, such as "because God makes it do so." Certain it is that primitive man, in like dilemma, posits a supernatural force for things he does not understand, and that superstitions flourish where adequate knowledge is lacking. Children show wonder too at other people's behavior, the key to which is not understood. This is less often put into words, however. It may excite fear as well as puzzlement; but language fails them, other than "Why does he do that?"

**Ideas of God.**—Undoubtedly all their early conceptions of God are acquired from hearsay or from direct teaching, since there is no innate, instinctive idea of deity. Obviously, then, it will depend on what, if anything, a given child has been taught, on what words have been used to give him an idea, just what sort of a

notion he has. His feelings toward God, if he has any, will depend partly on his interpretation of that notion, partly on the relationship he sees others around him have in their attitude toward the Supreme Being. Of course, since he has had to interpret both words and adjustments of others by his own understanding, it does not follow that the idea the parent or teacher tried to convey is the one actually held by the child. We may find Beginners who have had no instruction, no chance to hear anything, who consequently have no idea of God; and there may be much indoctrinated children, with very varying conceptions.

We may enumerate the more common conceptions as follows:

(1) God is one who gives life and makes things grow. There is no further idea of any personal relationship.

(2) God made most things, such as the sun, the wind, the water, the stones, and makes them act the way they do. So far, we have a Creator, perhaps even a sort of magic worker. As the latter,

(3) He may be appealed to, to make things happen conveniently for us, for example, to stop the rain.

(4) Almost invariably, when thought of as a person, God is pictured as a man, probably a very old man with a long white beard and flowing garments. He is frequently gigantic in size, even tall enough to reach up to the sky. Here we can trace the influence of pictures, also a confusion with pictures of Jesus. Hence, too, arise some of the puzzles as to God's omnipresence, his watchful eye, his being in us, etc.

(5) God is an exaggerated bogey man, a dread sort of fate, spying on our actions, lying in wait to punish us, preparing reproof for us constantly.

(6) He is an amiable, unseen sort of genie or fairy or Santa Claus. He will do our bidding, give us wonderful presents, give us permission to do what we most want even if mother forbids it; in short, he can be used by us for whatever we want, at any time.

(Perhaps you know some adults who do not seem to have outgrown these conceptions of God entirely.)

Let us contrast with these a more ethical idea of God, mingled though it may be at times with elements from these other conceptions.

God is an unseen Companion, a Father, a Friend. He can be talked to freely, but always with respect, for he is so great and wonderful. He likes to have us tell him things, for he is always interested in his children. He gives us many things, especially help, so we must remember to thank him. He is sorry, and it grieves him when we do wrong. He has commands for us, just as our parents have; and commands for them too, since they are also his children. He belongs to us all, but does not have favorites, for he loves justice. He has work to do, and asks us to help him in that work; and when we do we are all happy together. Some of his plans we can't understand yet, but as we get older and wiser, and especially as we try to help him as far as we can, we shall understand better. He loves beautiful things and true things, particularly in ways we act.

**Evidence of God consciousness.**—Can we find such ideas in young children? Again the answer is,

Yes. A boy of five said God helped him to fight his bad habit of grumbling. Another explained that God doesn't just make you good; you try your hardest and he finishes the little bit you can't do. One child brought a much-beloved toy to be given to some children in a hospital because God wanted her to, and he mightn't have enough without. A little girl under six knew that God speaks to you in your mind, not in a voice you can hear. Others added that he reminded you when you oughtn't to do things. John doesn't wait to "say his prayers" at night; when he is very happy over something he feels he must tell God at once. Sadie inquires if it will help God if she helps weed the garden bed.

Notice that for this type of idea of God as for the others, the ideas must somehow be given them, the attitudes must be felt and copied. They will not come by chance. How, then, can we develop the idea of God which Jesus sought to give us? After all, merely to tell *about* God does not lead children to direct knowledge. It is only as reaction of some sort is made in awakened emotion and direct activity, that real knowledge comes. Here, as elsewhere, children learn by doing. We must seek, then, to couple the ideas with their impulses to feel, to talk, to move and behave. To act as God acts is one of the chief ways of finding out God's nature. As for us to will to do his will is to learn of the doctrine, so for children to get in line with his purposes and try to carry them out is the way to the interpretation of God. Since God takes care of us, children must have opportunity to care for others more helpless. As he makes many things, and makes them do work,

so they must construct and create, and put them to use. As he works in and through people, so they must share work others are doing. As he bestows gifts so must they too feel the joy of giving. As he fights wrong feelings and deeds, so must they be enlisted in similar warfare. As he shares his beautiful things with us, they must share too. As he brings happiness, so must they plan ways of making others happy. As he is responsible for so much, they too must know what it is to be held responsible. Above all, they must share God's acts of loving.

In communion with our Father we may help them form habits not merely of asking for favors (even the vague "Bless——"), but of thanking, and just telling him our thoughts. This attitude is quite as easily adopted as any other, and less likely to interfere with children's spontaneity. A model in words is often helpful, since we know the difficulties children have in language expression; but, as stressed before, the vocabulary must be comprehensible, and, needless to urge, the thought so clothed comprehensible too. Some children, even at four, will have progressed beyond the use of a model form alone; many others cling to it a year or two beyond six. Individual, original praying cannot be forced, however; children differ very much in this, even with the same home training.

Truly, then, as children of this age have their place in their father's and mother's home, and their little tasks to further the home interests, so they can be about our Father's business along with us older ones, and "of such is the kingdom of heaven."

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What results came from the fore-exercise to this chapter?
2. What might explain the confusion of a child who knows the Christmas story when she is taught to pray to Jesus for help?
3. How would you teach Beginners to pray? Why?
4. Study the home atmosphere of each one of your Beginners. How does it help in the consciousness of God? How does it hinder in the idea you wish to form?
5. Illustrate how the emotions described in the third paragraph help toward a religious consciousness.
6. What is your interpretation of "becoming as little children" to enter the kingdom of heaven?

## A GOOD REFERENCE BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ella Lyman Cabot, *Seven Ages of Childhood*.  
George A. Coe, *The Psychology of Religion*.  
George A. Coe, *Social Theory of Religious Education*.  
G. E. Dawson, *The Child and His Religion*.  
Hugh Hartshorne, *Childhood and Character*.  
E. A. Kirkpatrick, *The Individual in the Making*.  
J. Lee, *Play in Education*.  
D. R. Major, *First Steps in Mental Growth*.  
E. E. Mumford, *The Dawn of Character*.  
E. E. Mumford, *The Dawn of Religion in the Mind of the Child*.  
Norsworthy and Whitley, *The Psychology of Childhood*.  
M. E. Rankin, *A Course for Beginners in Religious Education*.  
J. Sully, *Studies of Childhood*.









60  
part

YA 07932

484354

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

