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ROMULUS
OR
THE FUTURE OF THE CHILD

TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW

*For the contents of this Series see the end
of this Book*

ROMULUS

OR

THE FUTURE OF THE CHILD

BY

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TO ROSS
WITH ALL APOLOGIES DUE
FROM A FATHER

" Maxima debetur puero reverentia "
JUVENAL (Sat. xiv. 44)

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ROMULUS

OR

THE FUTURE OF THE CHILD

INTRODUCTION

The future of the child is the concern of both the parent and the state, between whom the responsibility must be shared. The parent has entire responsibility so long as the child is entirely dependent upon the mother, that is until the age of two. From two to six, the responsibility has been shirked by the State, and though some degree of provision is made for the "toddler" it is generally true, as we shall see later, that during this period, the onus falls entirely on the parents' shoulders.

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The State, realizing that an open shirking of its duty during these precious years would be akin to cruelty, opens the door, not so much to provide entry for the child, as to make escape easy for itself. Nursery schools are *permitted* by the Board of Education. The Education Act of 1921, Section 21, states: "The powers of a local education authority for elementary education shall include the power to make arrangements for (a) Supplying or aiding the supply of nursery schools (which expression shall include nursery classes) for children over 2 and under 5 years of age, or such later age as may be approved by the Board of Education, whose attendance at such a school is necessary or desirable for their healthy physical or *mental* development; and (b) Attending to the health, nourishment, and physical welfare of children attending nursery schools".

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The State thus shifts the burden of responsibility on to the shoulders of the Local Education Authorities with what result we see in the few authorities who have opened these schools. Further, as such schools *may* be provided if it is "necessary for their healthy, physical or *mental* development", it may be assumed that children at such schools are from necessitous homes. The position then is that while the State realizes the responsibility it throws the onus of the provision of these schools upon the local authority who in turn shirks its duty, leaving the pre-school child to the parent.

Sentimentalists will regard such conditions as favourable, granting exception only in those cases where poverty and general home conditions are such that they must obviously work for the harm of the child. For to the large body of people, the slogan, "The child's place is the home",

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during these critical years is an accepted truism.

But what of these early years, these pre-school years from 2 to 6. Are they important years in the development of the child, and if so, is the parent a fit and proper person to take control of the guidance?

Of the importance of the pre-school period, all psychologists agree. "In these years are formed the main '*character trends*'. These will have *set* or modified in their permanent moulds, by the end of this time; and nothing that we can do, later in life, will ever undo the harm that neglect and faulty environment and harmful influences have wrought during the first plastic years. . . . It would be almost impossible to find one scientist who would take issue with this statement of the importance of the influences brought to bear upon the child during

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these earliest 'pre-school' years".¹

The future of the child then, lies in the influences brought to bear on it during these all important years, and as to-day the State throws the responsibility upon the parent, then an inquiry into the ability of the parent to carry out the task is an essential to the inquiry into the future of the child.

¹ *Parenthood and the Newer Psychology*, Richardson. Putnam.

THE PARENT AND THE CHILD'S FUTURE

One is apt to fall into the fallacious belief that the problem of the child is an old one, solved by countless generations of parents whose accumulated experience through the ages, handed down from mother to daughter, has made the way easier for the modern parent. It is far more true however, to say, that tradition has been, in this matter of child rearing and guiding, a brake on the wheel of progress. The influence of the mother-in-law on family life is an accepted jest which is the essence of comedy. When the mother-in-law becomes a grand-mother, eager to revel once again in the pleasures of maternity without having to endure its inconveniences, then comedy merges into tragedy.

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And why? We are all blind to progress. The world moves forward either so slowly or so rapidly that we are unconscious of its movement. Our own parents see in the problems of our children, the problems of our own childhood. We are apt to make the same mistake ourselves. "How can the problem be different?" we ask. "Growing up to-day is the same as growing up a generation ago".

The problem which the child has to face is the difficulty of adapting himself to the society into which he is thrown. He has to fit himself into the home, and *his* home and the home of our own childhood are two very different places. The problem is a new one from the very beginning. He has to adapt himself to a home, and home life which present problems unlike any which we ourselves had to face.

The Englishman's conception of home

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is a sentimental one. Home means more to us than perhaps to other nations. We pride ourselves on having a word for which there is no exact equivalent in any foreign tongue. The word calls up no very definite picture in our minds but rather creates an atmosphere of sentimentality, born of age-long tradition, handed down from those days when the home was more than a domicile, when it was a defence, an occupation and a possession for the goodman and his family. In this vague picture which the word conjures up, we are conscious of the fragrant scented roses round the door, and are purposely forgetful of the noises round our own, which, thanks to the modern builder, opens on to the turmoil of the streets.

Home and home life are changing, and have changed since our childhood days, and we must not be blinded to the facts by this traditional picture.

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We must become conscious of the changes and the new problems which these create.

The architect of to-day is responsible for more than the shaping of bricks and mortar. He is one of the most potent influences at work in shaping our characters; for in defining the limits to our homes he is shaping our mentalities, determining the size of our families and, above all, marking out the destinies of our children. Psychologists of the future will classify mankind according to the homes they have made for themselves. They will speak of the semi-detached mind, the detached, the maisonette personality, the villans and the flats. Stone walls do not a prison make if there are magic casements opening on to seas. When the space limitations of the house make birth control a more necessary study than that of parent

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hood, then shutters fall over our magic casements.

Wiseacres look askance upon the young married couples of to-day. They cry out about selfishness and love of pleasure, and point a finger of scorn to the declining birth rate. The fact that 1,500,000 married couples are childless, and 2,500,000 have but one child is not due entirely to the selfishness of the new husbandry. There is, perhaps, an element of selfishness underlying these conditions, but it is a selfishness created by new circumstances, circumstances which those who criticize have never had to endure.

The business of rearing children to-day is far more exacting than it was a generation ago, when domestic labour was cheap and servants were only too glad of a good home with a family. Then homes were expansive enough to make birth control an unnecessary study, for accommodation

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was a matter of little consideration.

The young couple of to-day realize that with the arrival of their first-born come shades of the prison house. For years man and wife may be unable to go out together. Domestic help they cannot afford. Friends in these days of decentralization are rarely their next door neighbours, and hence man and wife have to seek their pleasures separately. The unity of family life is broken from the start. This may at first seem exaggeration. But look round among your friends and compare the lot of those who have a child or children with those who are childless. How many young parents can enjoy the liberty which was possible twenty-five years ago? Before we condemn the childless couple, let us try to appreciate the circumstances in which they find themselves. Therein we may find explanation if not excuses.

And these conditions, while serious

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enough for the adult, are all important for the child for whom the influence of the family and the home is so important. The modern home is not, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, a place suitable for the rearing of children. Semi-detached villas have a danger of becoming detached if youngsters are allowed to delight in the riotous freedom which is theirs by divine right. Walls and floors that are not sound proof enforce their own especial discipline, and the "man next door" or "the people below" become their mentors. The size of the rooms defines the child's activities, and what play is possible in a garden which is synonymous with "space for garage". Such a garden is poor substitute for the field and hedgerow which was our prerogative. It defies even the ingenuity of the child to climb without interference a garden fence only one side of which is his parents'.

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Where to-day can the youngster make his see-saw? True enough he can run to the recreation ground close at hand, where he will find one of solid iron, strongly pivoted and fall proof. But what delight is there in that, compared with the joy in discovering a branch of a tree and a mound of earth? The joy of discovery and creation has been taken out of their play, and with these one of the most important processes in education.

Perhaps it is sufficient to realize for the moment that some of the difficulties which confront the child and parent of to-day are new, and that they require new solutions.

Parents as a body are not qualified for the delicate work of child guidance. It has always been so and still is, but the effects were not so apparent in the past, because children in their own realm counteracted the parental influence. To-day when the world

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is comparatively childless, when the family of one is the rule, rather than the exception, the unqualified parent is a very potent danger.

There are however signs of progress, especially in the direction of infant care. Perhaps at no period of our history has the baby been better cared for physically. It is clothed wisely, fed sensibly and given that degree of fresh air and sunlight which science has proved essential. Indeed, this realization of the value of fresh air has increased the difficulties of the young mother. Where a generation ago babies were left to crawl about in stuffy rooms, over-clad and over-heated while the house work went on, the young mother to-day has so to arrange her household duties that the greater part of the morning and afternoon can be spent in the open with her child. This additional duty has thrown a very heavy extra burden on the home,

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but one which is gladly borne by those who realize that fresh air and sunlight are essential to the child.

Further, some of the progress in these matters must be put down to the entry of man into a field which was once closed to "ladies only". Man has taken much of the sentimentality out of motherhood. In many ways, with his supreme selfishness, man proves the best mother. Man is not a nurse and the wholesome neglect which he displays is of sound educational value to the growing child. Further we must admit that the greater part of the research in child study has been in the hands of men who have shown clearly the follies of past methods. Man it is who has sawn the rockers off the cradle and shown that the hand that rocks the cradle can wreck the world.

He has proved that there is no lull in the lullaby which was never a

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soporific but rather a children's hour of the pre B.B.C. era. Our grandmothers and grandfathers who crooned over the rocking cot are responsible for much. Perhaps we may trace in their influence the joy of the night club revellers who are in reality no decadents but rather grown-up babies, still hankering after the lullaby, unwilling to go to bed unless the strains of music echo in their ears.

Where then is the modern parent at fault? The modern parent and the parent of the past are and were quite unqualified in that field which we term the mental hygiene of the child. Rarely if ever was it considered in the past. Child training was reduced to a physical matter. The fact that the child had an impressionable mind was ignored and an impressionable body received the attention. The head was but a storehouse for knowledge, and not always true knowledge, but know-

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ledge as censored by an over-scrupulous parent who prided himself in disguising the truth and reducing the mystery of birth to something like a Maskelyne and Devant illusion which took place beneath a gooseberry bush or among the cabbages.

And it was a deception that deceived them in turn. It threw upon the child the onus of finding out facts for himself and at the same time of keeping his discovery secret from his parents.

A story told by one of our leading educationalists to young teachers of a generation ago well illustrates the position.

A father sent for his younger child aged five and explained that early in the morning the gardener had found a lovely little baby sister among the cabbages. "Now write to your brother Jack" (his elder brother at boarding school) "and tell him what a lovely baby sister the gardener has found for you both."

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The child with a face of innocence went and wrote his letter, sealed it up and later handed it to his father for posting. The father, being curious, thought he would see what the child had said. The message was indeed terse and illuminating. It read :

DEAR JACK,

You owe me a bob. It's
a girl.

FRED.

This matter of sex is perhaps handled in a more sensible way to-day by parents who, forced into an amateur study of obstetrics because of their birth control interests, are better acquainted with and consequently less ashamed of, their own anatomy. But still we find parents who dare not answer the child's natural questions truthfully, who confuse modesty with shame and lead the child to believe that his own body is not clean. " Later they will learn ", they say. But the

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effect of the lie remains, even when it has been found to be a lie. Only recently a little girl (aged six) when asked if she would like to help in bathing my boy aged four, answered, " Oh no, mother says it's dirty ".

The first impression that child has had of the body of a member of the opposite sex is an unpleasant one. That impression is going to colour her whole life. It will affect her attitude to men and make love when it does come a disturbing emotion with something wrong or sinful underlying it.

It is in such matters that the parent is unqualified because the development of the child mentally has not been thought out by them or by their forebears. In the past the effects, while extensive, were not so apparent. To-day when conditions have become so artificial, when children are few and the influences are concentrated, the chances of working evil are much greater.

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Parents may take unkindly the statement that they are as a body unqualified for their job, yet it is a condition to which they confess with surprising candour and regularity. " I don't know what to do with him. I can't understand him at all. He sulks so. I can't manage him. He is a difficult child ", are all phrases uttered without any idea that the speakers are failing in the work of parenthood which they have taken on so lightly. They are happily unconscious that the fault is their own. The child presents problems which they cannot solve. They have not the knowledge of child psychology which is required for the solution and they have not the time while rearing children to undertake the study.

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Such will always be the case until the apprenticeship for parenthood is extended beyond the normal nine months of pregnancy. It is of little use attempting to teach parents their business when they are parents. Problems should be anticipated, otherwise they cannot be solved, because solution so often lies in removing the cause. Once a difficulty arises then the more likely is it that it will arise again, with greater acuteness. To prevent the possibility of the difficulty is the work of the skilled parent.

It is a curious fact that any suggestion that the parent is not qualified for the task of parenthood is met with protest. Yet the ability to beget children is no qualification in itself. Parents assume the responsibility of training children with equanimity. Yet were they suddenly called upon to breed and rear pigs their first thought would be for expert

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guidance. Some training would be recognized as a necessity. Conditions would be carefully considered, habits and requirements of the animals studied. There would be none so poor as not to do the pigs reverence.

It has not yet been accepted that training for parenthood is essential. For motherhood, yes. There are lectures on maternity in plenty. But for the study of parenthood in its fullest sense few opportunities exist. The number of fathers and mothers who can say that for one year prior to the conception of their child they studied to make themselves fit for parenthood would, if a census were possible, be exceedingly small.

And the result is that the mother, having sacrificed herself unstintingly to her child during the first two years cannot cope with the difficulties which she has not anticipated. Solution must come as the problems arise.

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She falls back on the methods applied by her own parents, methods generally psychologically unsound, methods borrowed from another age and quite unsuited to the solution of problems which have arisen from conditions which never existed in the days when they were formulated. The child, faced with the one great struggle of adapting itself to the artificial world into which it has been thrown, has to fight in addition against guidance which is itself at variance with the desired end.

The mother can anticipate almost daily the development of the child during the first year. She knows what it will do at six months, eight months, thirteen months. But ask her what toys interest a child of three, what books a child of four and what should a child of five know and she is at a loss. We claim that this is not part of her duty. Her duties as a mother

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and wife are sufficient without having added to them the difficult question of child guidance. Yet as things are she has them thrust on her. She has to combine with the duties of housewife, the duties of educator, two entirely different professions, each requiring long experience and long training. The dual task is well-nigh impossible. In poor districts economic necessity forces the mother to relinquish both duties in order to earn. The middle class woman bravely struggles to combine both. It is an heroic effort doomed to failure with lasting results upon both parent and child.

As we have said, the child's own problem is to adapt itself to its surroundings, and to adapt the surrounding to its own needs. This is obviously an Herculean task which should not be complicated in any way. Help however kindly it is given, if it but

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serves to confuse the issue and increase difficulties is harmful.

Few parents realize that their child is not the father or mother in little. It is another being already, with its own experiences. We adults tread the paths of the past. Our future is the child's present, the child's future a promised land which we shall not see. He is already in sight of it and fitting himself for that land. He accepts things as facts which to us are a mystery. They see the solution where we have seen but the problem. I am by no means an old man, but I recall having holidays at school in order to catch a glimpse of the Roe brothers flying twenty feet high. Yet I have taught classes of children in the open with aeroplanes flying over and not one head has been turned from their books to gaze up at what to me is still something of a miracle. My miracles have already faded into the

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light of common day for them. Their miracles are beyond my wildest dreams.

As parents our first duty is to realize our position in relation to the child. Their thoughts are theirs and it is not our right to give them ours. Their bodies are our care, but their souls are their own. We are not the mould which shall determine their personalities, their whole education is a breaking away from our own lives. We must not expect them to live a life determined by our yesterdays, neither can we determine for them how they shall live through to-morrow for the real to-morrow we shall never know.

“ Honour thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long in the land ”, points out but half the moral. If we but honour our sons and our daughters then shall our days be long in the land, for through them we shall live the to-morrows. But to demand of the child honour, often translated

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into terms of service in this practical age, is not the right of any parent. Have we right to expect thanks from any child for bringing him, without any request on his part, into a world where disease, strife, war and hate hold sway? Let us translate our welcome to the newborn into fact. Let us welcome him into the world where one out of every ten dies of cancer, where every day the great god of traffic claims his dozens of victims, where rheumatism spreads its ravages amongst the youth and the aged and where, with all our cleverness, this world of parents has little solace to offer but the fact that they are striving, and without avail, against the forces which he in turn must fight. Not until he has been able to see what life has given him can we expect his thanks or his curses, and by then, fortunately, we shall be beyond the appreciation of either.

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We have shown that many of the problems which arise to-day in connection with children are peculiar to this age. We often hear the answer that Nature will provide her own solution, those making the suggestion failing to realize that Nature provides solutions where conditions are natural. We shall see how nature fails in her work if we consider that new being, the only child, the special creation of the present age.

There are 2,500,000 only children in the country at present. These figures are misleading, for in fact the number of only children is considerably more. Conditions to-day make a breathing space between the arrival of children necessary. The period is often a long one for the coming of the first child often necessitates so many expenses, such as removal from flats, house purchase, etc., that economic conditions alone force the postpone-

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ment of the arrival of another. Often the one child is five before another comes. And though for purposes of statistics he ceases then to be an only child, psychologically he remains one, for at that age he is incapable of reacting to the new emotional situation. For five years he has adapted himself to a society where he in his realm held supreme sway. His emotional reaction to his father and mother are the reactions of an only child and these emotions have become fixed both in quality and direction. The coming of a brother or sister can have little effect upon him unless to confirm these strong characteristics which he has developed during the emotional period.

And so we see that our figure of 2,500,000 must be increased considerably if we wish to estimate accurately the number of "only" children who are presenting a new psychological problem.

Nature does not find a way out for

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the only child. The natural inclinations of the parent are its worst enemy in fact. Women by nature are meant to have children in numbers. The maternal instinct is so great that the love for children that springs from it makes no sacrifice too great.

The mother of the only child then finds herself in the position of being able to lavish on the only child a love which was meant for many. Her tendency is to retain her baby as such long after the baby period. She treasures him excessively because his loss would mean the loss of all. She cares for him in matters which should be his concern and his only. She anticipates his difficulties and his dangers, she tries to be the other child for him, his playmate. Mother love becomes smother love.

The sensible parent realizes that this is not working for the child's good and with the coming of school

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the influence of the mother and father is considerably reduced. But very often this sacrificial attention to the only child is carried on throughout adolescence with lasting and evil results upon the individual and upon society.

There is the question of affection. Father and mother cannot give equally, and the result is that the eternal triangle enters the home with the consequent emotional disturbance. It cannot be avoided.

“ Why must the triangular relationship be normally unsatisfactory to the small child? Cannot a father and mother live together in love, and the child live with them, loving both, and indifferent whether the parents are fond of each other or no? The answer must be in the negative.

“ What normally happens is that the baby has no sooner had time to distinguish the father from the mother and to develop intense love towards each and hatred towards each because of jealousy, than the new baby arrives ;

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there is normally a big emotional disturbance, but the child grows up with the healthy deep-down knowledge that the parents feel towards each other, and effectually. If the new baby does not arrive till two years later, and the child is nearly four years old, then the disturbance, still normal, will be much greater. For all this time the child has been more intensely interested than is generally recognized in whether a baby is coming or no. The fantasy that the one parent has substituted the child for the other parent in his love or her love has become a reality. In the love of her father, or of the father idea projected into suitable substitutes, the little girl has symbolically and in games many times arrived at a more or less satisfactory relationship. In his love towards his mother the little boy has had ample opportunity for imagining that he has control over his mother to the exclusion of his father.”¹

¹ Dr Donald W. Winnicott in *The Mind of the Growing Child*. (Faber & Gwyer.)

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Few parents are willing to admit that the child is eager to usurp the position of one of them, that in his play and his dreams he has solved his problem by mentally killing the father or the mother. When such is the child's attitude, then the influence of the one parent becomes excessive. The mother, administering to every want of her only child, feeds his desire for her love to such an extent that growing up presents to him the danger of losing her affection. While he wants her, she is willing to minister to him. While he can make her necessary to him, then she is his. He will soon develop into the habit of regarding her as a necessary support. He realizes that inability to perform a task calls her to his side. The inability which was first a pose becomes permanent. He develops an inferiority complex for in this inferiority lies his strength, his power

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to absorb the affection which he wants and of which he is so jealous when this is shared with the father.

Often it is that we find the father having this influence upon the daughter, the mother upon the son. Each has a "fixation" on the other, for in the child they see the birth of a new affection, another channel for the emotion of love. The father sees in the daughter his ideal woman, because in her there is much of himself. Further, in her training he can make her all the things that her mother is not. So too the mother. Conscious of the shortcomings of the husband, she tries to add those virtues to her son which are lacking in the spouse. The efforts react on each. There is a father and daughter alliance or a mother-and-son alliance, each having lasting effects upon the life of the children. The affection for the parent when cultivated to an excessive degree colours

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the affection which is due later to a wife or husband. The daughter for whom the father has been the ideal during adolescence will look for a husband approximating to the standard which the father has set up. She will not look for those qualities which are essential to a good husband but rather for those which typify a good father. The only son, accustomed to the care which a mother has lavished upon him will, if he decides to marry, seek that same attention from his wife which in fact he has no right to expect. Generally however he finds in his own home and with his own mother a degree of comfort which he is unwilling to throw aside for the risks of matrimony. The independence of the womenfolk with whom he comes in contact make him still more conscious of the sacrifices of a mother. He becomes the grown-up baby, the mother's boy unfitted to take his

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place in society or to contribute his just share to its development.

“ We see in the boy or girl fixated at the stage of mother-love pre-emption, an individual marked for some of the unkindest experiences that can be presented by fate. Extreme sensitiveness, overwhelming home-sickness at the slightest provocation, persecution at the hands of the sturdier little rascals with whom the child is thrown while at school and play, are some of the least of his troubles. Such an individual will never be able to consummate a happy marriage, the biological end for which every individual was foreordained, and the emotional acme of human experience. For such an one never has learned to love ; he is absolutely lacking in the ability to love, in the self-forgetting and self-sacrificing way in which mature love functions.” ¹

The influence of family life on the child has always been claimed to be

¹ *Parenthood and the New Psychology*. Richardson. (Putnam).

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of supreme importance and the claim has been made with an element of pride. Psychologists will admit that the influence has been so important in the past that the majority of breakdown cases which come their way both of children and adults can be traced back to these family influences, influences which were exerted often in the spirit of sacrifice and with the best of intentions.

The trouble has been that the influence has been too haphazard. There has been no definite plan of campaign on the part of the parents who have assumed that parental love is a sure safeguard.

We must realize that the attitude of the child to the father and mother defines largely his attitude to the world later in life. His first experience of authority is in connection with his parents and generally his father. If authority in the home is unjust and

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harsh or haphazard and slack, then he will come to regard all others placed in authority in the same way and show to teachers and employers a spirit which was developed not much later than his first year. The child's conception of God is first that of a "great big daddy". If the daddy on whom the child's mental picture of God is based is a jealous and cruel daddy then the God he will later worship will also be a jealous God and harsh, and his worship will be tempered accordingly.

All this goes to prove that parenthood is a serious and difficult profession for which preliminary training is essential and which demands a mind capable of appreciating the importance of the task set and the difficulties that lie in the way of the child. How few parents are fit and proper persons for their job, if child guidance is an essential part of it?

SPARING THE ROD

The dictionary in defining discipline emphasizes its double function, the building up of serviceable habits and the breaking down of unserviceable habits. Few parents appreciate this double function, regarding discipline as synonymous with punishment and confining it almost entirely to the breaking down of those habits which do not suit those with whom the child comes in contact. The cane has long been its accepted symbol, and discipline has consequently been more concerned with "don't's" than "do's".

The proportion of "don't's" to "do's" is excessively high. The parent in dealing with the child waits as it were until something which attracts the child places him in danger of

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hurt or causes annoyance and then begins the process of disciplining by prohibition and prevention.

“ A child’s life is one great complicated web of vetoes and prohibitions, among the mazes of which we expect his stumbling little feet to move without a falter or a false step. How can any mortal child live up to the impossible standards we set up for it? ¹”

The child has an inborn resentment at having its desires thwarted, a very valuable attribute which prevails throughout life and without which the coming generation would be a weak-kneed race. The adult should appreciate what his own reaction is to negative injunctions, as for example when he is faced with some such notice as “ Keep off the Grass ” or “ No Parking Here ” or the words, “ Time Gentlemen, please ”. His

¹ Dr H. Crichton-Miller in *The Mind of the Growing Child*. (Faber & Gwyer).

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attitude is a challenging attitude ; these injunctions are a reflection upon his own common sense or an unjustifiable interference with his freedom. Reason may offer some balm to his irritation. A rational person will realize that the prohibition " Keep off the Grass " works for the good of all. But this does not prevent a desire arising to walk on the grass, the natural result of a childhood of prohibitions the majority of which were unnecessary and unjustifiable. The thousand and one things which we were not allowed to do and which appeared to us reasonable amusements, have developed a challenging attitude to all prohibitions and the authority that imposes them. And when we see a government attempting to impose prohibition on a nation, that nation takes a pride in proving that the power that imposes it is ineffective and glories in the fact that it has " got

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it on the hip " and thus feeds fat the ancient grudge which authority has aroused.

The child, brought up in an atmosphere of " don't's " soon begins to regard everything as permissible which is not prohibited. A field, without the warning that " Trespassers will be prosecuted " is looked upon as common property. Such a condition explains the conduct of a boy at one of our public schools who thrust a white mouse down the neck of the French master, notorious for the wide collars he wore. After an introduction to a French vocabulary of more practical use than that usually given in French lessons, the culprit was marched off to the Head.

" And why did you do such an outrageous thing? " asked the astonished Head. " I read through the rules ", replied the boy, " and there was nothing forbidding it."

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When we utter a " don't " we should have determined first that it is necessary. How often do we make a child put down a knife on the ground that it will hurt itself? This is a typical example of a prohibition that has become mechanical, handed down from those days when a knife cut, to ours when knives are the most innocuous of the table furniture. We rarely suggest to the child that the fork will harm him. Yet of the two it is by far the more effective weapon were the child to run amok.

There is a conflict ever waging between the child's demand for freedom and the community's demand for discipline, but the parent should be careful to weigh his demands and ascertain that the demands he makes are for the good of the community and not to satisfy his own personal whims and comfort. While obedience is at first personal, the child should

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gradually realize that it is an obedience exacted of all. To ask the child to act one way and act another oneself is unreasonable.

We often hear children made to say the word "please" before every request. Even "May I have the jam?" is not accepted. "Please" must be inserted and the request repeated. A moment later the mother with quite good breeding says: "Pass Mary the bread", the very tone implying the word "please". Under such conditions the word "please" becomes a symbol of childhood and the youngster will long for the day when he shall put this aside with other childish things. He will delight in those occasions when the omission of the word passes unnoticed.

As a teacher I automatically exacted the "please" until the following incident. I was trying to explain to a very dull boy that in such a sentence

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as "Take this pen", the subject "you" is understood. I went to my desk and said to him, "Bring me that book on your desk". He came with the book. "Now what's the little word I have missed out, that all-important word?" "Please" was the answer.

Too often the parent rushes into prophecy forgetful that the prophet is without honour in his own country and especially in his own home, where a false prophecy does much to shake the child's faith in those placed over him. "Don't do that or you will hurt yourself." "Don't eat those sweets, you'll be ill", are typical negative commands accompanied by the reason for the commands and a suggestion as to what the results of disobedience will be. A child, worthy of its salt, will some day take the risk. And then, either openly or secretly, he will give you the lie direct. "It

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hasn't hurt me", or "I'm not ill." Each time that happens faith in the advice of the parent is weakened. When the time comes for a very necessary warning, as for example in the case of poisoned berries, the child is apt to believe that here again is another unnecessary prohibition.

A wise parent exerts his authority only when necessary and when it is proof against doubt. The time must come when the child will test the authority of the parent.

The late Sir Edmund Gosse, in *Father and Son*, a book which all parents should study, tells how his father explained to him that his God was a jealous God, who would wreak his vengeance on all those who bowed down to wood and stone and worshipped them. The son, not so much interested in the vengeance of God, determined to test his father's knowledge and nightly bowed down and

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worshipped a chair in his bedroom. After the first occasion he looked in fear for the vengeance of God that never came. It was not faith in God that was destroyed, but the faith in the God of his father and faith in the father himself. If in such a matter which consumed his father's whole thought he could be wrong, how much easier would it be for him to be wrong in smaller things.

Again we should carefully weigh our right to exact obedience from our children and the methods we apply to enforce this obedience. What exactly do we mean when we speak of a well-disciplined man? We mean one who is in complete control of himself, who is not carried away by the persuasion of others, who can weigh up the rights and wrongs of a certain action and decide for himself the course to follow. What however do we often mean when we speak of a well-behaved

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child? Is it not very often a child who has been drilled into passive obedience so that he can mix with adults without any inconvenience to them? In other words, he has had all the instincts of a child subdued, his natural desire to rebel has been stifled and he is in fact a living lie. He dare not challenge authority and later will be but a tool in the hands of others who will lead just as his parents have led him.

Discipline should always be tempered with the thought that it is guiding a character for a state other than that in which the child finds himself at the moment. In disciplining the child we are disciplining the man or woman. Though the child who challenges our authority and our right to make him act as we want may seem a confounded nuisance at the moment, he is perhaps displaying that

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very individuality which we commend in the adult.

There is the story of the father of one of the Russian novelists. He took a kitten a few days old and showed it a mouse. Annoyed that the kitten did not attack the mouse at once, he smacked it. Each day the same thing happened until the kitten at the sight of a mouse would try to escape. Even when it was a grown cat the appearance of a mouse filled it with terror.

Smacking and thrashing as a means of obtaining obedience are rarely if ever necessary. Though, like all parents, I have indulged in it to a small degree myself, I am convinced that on each occasion it has done more harm than good. It arouses hate in the child, for such punishment must appear an injustice. The inequality between the power of those asserting it and that of the child is so great that to the young mind there can be no justice in it.

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It must also create the desire to avenge himself upon authority in the same way and when in authority himself as with a child a few years younger, he will accept it as a means of displaying that authority. Many parents feel that the child, after a thrashing, returns to them contrite, loving, forgiving and full of regrets. But the love and hug that comes at the end of such emotional outbursts is not the love which the parent wants. The child during the process of thrashing develops a hate towards the parent which carries him to the excess of desiring even the death of the punisher. His normal state is, "How happy I could be with either". Under such stress he thinks how happy he could be without this giant who is imposing his will by physical force. There follows that period of hate and hateful thoughts which the parent does not know. And then, remorse in the child,

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not for his misdeeds so much as for the excesses of hate to which he has been carried. And because of that self-remorse, which must degrade the child in his own eyes, we have the reaction of apparent excessive love for the persecutor.

The discipline which is effective, which is educational in its effect, is that which is exacted in the Montessori schools.

“As to punishment, we have many times come into contact with children, who disturbed the others without paying attention to our corrections. Such children were at once examined by the physician. When the case proved to be that of a normal child, we placed one of the little tables in a corner of the room, and in this way isolated the child; having him sit in a comfortable little arm-chair, so placed that he might see his companions at work, and giving him those games and toys to which he was most attracted. This isolation almost always succeeded

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in calming the child ; from his position he could see the entire assembly of his companions, and the way in which they carried out their work was an *object lesson* much more efficacious than any words of the teacher could possibly have been. Little by little he would come to see the advantages of being one of the company working so busily before his eyes, and he would really wish to go back and do as the others did. We have in this way led back to discipline all the children who at first seemed to rebel against it. The isolated child was always made the object of special care, almost as if he were ill. I myself, when I entered the room, went first of all directly to him, as if he were a very little child. Then I turned my attention to the others, interesting myself in their work, asking questions about it as if they had been little men. I do not know what happened in the soul of these children, whom we found it necessary to discipline, but certainly the conversion was always very complete and lasting. They showed great pride in

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learning how to work and how to conduct themselves, and always showed a very tender affection for the teacher and for me.”¹

This is true discipline, the socialization of the individual. It is possible in the Montessori school because the child is adapting itself to childhood. In the home it is too often asked to adapt itself to the adult.

¹ *The Montessori Method* (Heinemann).

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We are unfortunate in the word we use to characterize the most serious activity of childhood. Play to us implies amusement, an alternative to work. To the child, however, play is work and work is play. So it should be with the adult, but the majority of us have not chosen that occupation in life which satisfies our whole being and in addition earns our daily bread. We see the fusion of play, as we conceive it, and work in the occupations of the artist, the musician and the author. And we have come to regard them as the eccentrics. They are in fact the true grown-up children who, like the child, find complete expression in their work or play. The child must express himself through play. It is his whole existence. His instincts prescribe his play actions and his

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play actions induce growth. He grows physically and mentally through play.

We must realize that play is not an amusement but an occupation. To deny the opportunity of expressing himself through play is to make a discontented idler. The child who has never learned to play and the man who has forgotten how are to be numbered among life's failures.

The full explanation of the play impulse cannot perhaps be found in any one of the four theories advanced, but each, to some extent, explains the function of play. The Surplus Energy Theory regards the activities of play as the outlet for the excess of energy above that necessary for the sustenance of life. The Recreation Theory finds in play a relief from fatigue, mental and physical, which man experiences in gaining his livelihood. Groos ¹ who advanced the Prac-

¹ Groos, (a) *The Play of the Animal* (Appleton) ;
(b) *The Play of Man* (Heinemann).

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tice Theory, finds in play an instinctive basis. "Children do not play because they are young; they are young in order that they may play." In their play activities they develop those qualities which will be of survival value in maturity. The playground is their school of vocational training.

Stanley Hall¹ in the Recapitulation Theory sees in the play of children the repetition of the experiences of the race. The child in its play lives the life through which the race has passed. In the chasing games, for example, he emulates the activities of the hunter. However the theories may differ, there is this common fact accepted by all, that play is a preparation for life in so much as growth comes through play. Play may not determine the child's future work, but it will fit him or unfit him for his future work.

¹Stanley Hall, *Adolescence* (New York).

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“ Man’s cardinal qualities, the activities through which he is to make and hold a place in the world’s competition, are given in his leading instincts; and these instincts take charge of him in plastic infancy and mould him to their ends.

“ The process may be seen, as well as cause and effect in nature ever can be seen, by anyone who will watch a child at play. There you may see Man the Maker taking shape before your very eyes through building-blocks and the making of mud pies and palaces. Man the Poet born in chanting and dancing games, Man the Nurturer growing through play with dolls and pets and plants and younger children, Man the Scientist evolved in plays of imitation, of exploring, collecting, classifying, Man the Hunter developed in chasing games, Man the Fighter—the Hercules of our nature, addressed to obstacles as such, whose joy is in the cussedness of things—wrought in the hundred games of

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contest, and Man the Citizen in the great team games.”¹

We must not look for specialized interests in the play of the child, but rather the general interest. The boy who pulls a watch to pieces is often thought by his fond parent to be displaying an interest which shows that some day he will become a great engineer. His interest signifies nothing more than a healthy curiosity which later may lead him to inquire into the origin of volcanoes or to trace out the effects on family life of giving an increased rebate for children.

“ The general direction of the reflexes that shall be developed through play is thus prescribed, both in the nature of play itself and in the especial susceptibility of the organism to its purposes. But there is within the scope of these master instincts an almost infinite choice as to method :

¹ Lee. *Play in Education*. (Macmillan.)

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the building, fighting, creative instincts and the rest, have each a great variety of issues. And the adaptive power of the subordinate centres corresponds. A man may hunt with a spear, a gun, a bow and arrow, or hook and line, or he may be a fisher after men. So he may build huts or houses, temples, poems, laws, hypotheses ; the creative impulse gets itself recorded with equal readiness in music, mausoleums, and mud pies. Competition, again, takes on an infinite variety of forms both in play and in grown-up life. We compete in sport and politics, in business, in art, religion, social intercourse, in civic architecture and women's dress. And according to the particular methods in which each instinct gets expressed, especially during childhood, are particular reflexes established and special skill acquired."¹

All investigators into the psychology of play agree upon the supreme importance of this activity of childhood and the necessity for the appreciation

¹ Lee. *Play in Education*. (Macmillan).

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of its importance by the parent and teacher. As we have said, it is unfortunate that the word play has the wrong connotation in the mind of the adult. It conjures up too often the word toys. Parents fall into the error of attempting to satisfy the child's hunger for play by supplying an abundance of toys. Play has become commercialized. It is in the keeping of the toy-makers who have themselves forgotten what play means, who, wise in their degeneration, realize that the parent is the purchaser and so make their toys that they appeal to the adult, rather than to the child. They have erred on the side of realism, knowing that realism appeals to the purchaser. So it does to the child, but the appeal is immediate and not lasting. It delights the eye but leaves the soul still hungry. It leaves no scope for the varying moods of the imaginative being.

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Give a kitten a cork and it will go through all the antics of the cat chasing the mouse. Place before it a clock-work mouse that glides realistically across the floor and it will examine it disdainfully and return to the cork where imagination has full play. The toy approximates too closely to reality to permit of self-deception.

The pre-school child, as things are, must find in the home and with his parents the opportunities and the media for expressing himself in play. The parent should be able to place before him material suited to the various stages of his development. The home in which he finds himself should present no hindrances to these activities. If his soul hungers for the making of mud pies, then he should have mud pies in plenty. But where to-day is mud. The poor inherit the earth, but the rich are given flats and macadamized roads. Mud has become cleansed,

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purified, and commercialized in this Plasticine age. If there is no mess, the mother is the happier. The child has lost something of the delight which was the gutter child's heritage. An instinct cannot find expression, and lies suppressed by the tyranny of the mop and the broom.

In its place the parent supplies the highly finished toys of the modern toy shop. We all know those Christmas mornings when some intricate expensive and delightful toy has been given to the youngster who is unable to work it for himself. Father and mother vie with each other in entertaining the child with it. It may be a train with the wind too stiff for little fingers and lines where adjustment is difficult and intricate. The help of the adult is necessary and the child soon becomes the audience, a step which affects his future attitude to play. Play becomes in his mind confused with amusement.

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Had there been placed before him material which he could piece together in the form of a crude train, he would have found endless delight in the discoveries and satisfied the creative urge which is in every child.

The time is ripe for a revolution in the toys of the pre-school child. The older boys and girls are well catered for ; their constructive toys are a delight and have a sound educational value. But the hunger of the pre-school child remains unsatisfied. They want pieces of wood bright and vary-coloured that fit together in the form of boxes, wheels that will fit into slots, wooden blocks that dovetail one into the other. They want different materials to handle, huge bricks that are light, and small ones that are relatively heavy, objects that give occupations that appeal to the man in the child. The true toys will be found in the Montessori apparatus.

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They do not look like toys to the adult, and they are not toys in the accepted sense. They provide occupation and occupation which fits them for living. Here is vocational training in its finest sense.

Parents should have courage with their children. Let them have hammers and nails, saws and strips of wood. Watch a child nailing one piece of wood across another and discovering by accident that he has made an aeroplane. His joy in the discovery is far greater and more lasting than any he will ever get from the most realistic model. A parent who indulges in smacking will often refuse to allow the child the use of a hammer, not realizing that a bang on the thumb is of far more educational value than the pain caused by his own useless methods of correction.

Then there is that very important function of play which implies play

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with others, the socialization of the individual through play. Group play is a difficult matter for the pre-school child. His play interests in the first place are solitary. He is not interested yet in the "gang" or the team. Nevertheless he can still indulge in his individual play in company with others, who teach him the importance of sharing his toys, or of exchanging one for another, of helping the younger ones in their difficulties. Through toys come the first ideas of property and ownership. He realizes that others can have things which he cannot have and that he is perhaps more fortunate than some of his companions. It prepares him for these differences later. He will learn in the miniature society of the play group the rules of the game of life. Acceptance of these rules comes slowly and often with difficulty but in proportion as he has adapted himself to his young

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friends, and rivals, so he will be able to find his place in the adult world. Play does not come to its final perfection as socializing agent until adolescence, when the *gang* and *team* play such an important part. But the pre-school child who has lived as an individual, as is too often the fate of the only child, never becomes completely socialized later and because of that remains throughout life a misfit.

“ The manner in which a child approaches a game, his choice, and the importance which he places upon it, indicate his attitude and relationship to his environment and how he is related to his fellow men. Whether he is hostile or whether he is friendly, and particularly whether he has the tendency to be a ruler, is evident in his play ; and in observing a child in his play we can see his whole attitude toward life. Play is of utmost importance to every child. . . . Above

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all else games are communal exercises, they enable the child to satisfy and fulfil his social feeling. Children who evade games and play are always open to the suspicion that they have made a bad adjustment to life. These children gladly withdraw themselves from all games, or when they are put on the playground with other children usually spoil the pleasure of the others. Pride, deficient self-esteem and the consequent fear of playing one's role badly are the chief reasons for this behaviour. In general by watching a child at play we shall be able to determine with great certainty the quantum of his social feeling.”¹

Such is the importance of play to the child during this period that it colours the whole of his future life. In this, more than anywhere else, is the child the father of the man.

¹ *Adler. Understanding Human Nature.*
(Allen & Unwin).

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We have shown, and we hope convincingly, that the home of to-day is not a suitable environment for the education of the child, that it places limitations upon its play and hence its growth, mental and physical: that the parent is not qualified for this highly specialized task of educating and guiding the child in these precious years, neither can the parent be expected to have these qualifications. A nation of only children, each subjected to the influences of the skilled parent-psychologist would have effects far worse than those which ignorance has produced. Wherein then lies the solution to the problem of the child's future?

Every child should have the companionship of many children, wide open spaces for play and education,

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which would become one and the same if suitable materials were before them. The influence of adults should be reduced to that healthy minimum, which we may term guidance, and devoid of the sentimentality which too often is mistaken for motherly love. The poor child should have a sufficient supply of toys, the rich child no more than sufficient. They should be brought together before they have become conscious of the artificial social distinctions set up and worshipped by their parents, and they should have their future assured, as far as it is humanely possible, by careful and regular medical inspection which will detect the seeds before the results have become obvious to the layman. And such conditions, to which few parents can find honest objection, prevail in those few, but highly important, institutions, the Nursery Schools of England.

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Our Nursery Schools provide another illustration of the poor inheriting the earth. They have become, in fact, a little too closely connected with welfare work, and are provided only in a few districts where the conditions of living are such that no one would suggest that they were not a better alternative to home or home conditions. *Our* contention is that the nursery school is as essential to the mental slums of Golders Green as to the more material slums of Deptford. Suburbia will resent the suggestion that its babies should be sent to Nursery Schools, for suburbia prides itself on its high intellectual standard. Even were this standard high, the problem would still remain. The middle-class mother without domestic help cannot effectively combine the work of the skilled educator and housewife. The more fortunate woman, with domestic help, soon becomes involved in a little

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world of social life, which means the handing over of her children to the cares of the domestic, who is no better able to combine the work of cook, servant and nursemaid than is her mistress. Further, she is often forced into such work because of industrial conditions, not because the work is attractive. Visit our parks, watch the processes of education at work, and study the minds of the educators. Picture the homes whence they came and the training they have had, and ask whether they are fit to guide the coming generation. If we are honest we shall admit that the needs of these children are as great, though they may differ in their nature, as those of the slum child. The child of the mother who has to go out and earn her living is in very much the same position as that of the golfing and bridge-playing mother and those who go careering.

The Board of Education permits the

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establishment of Nursery Schools, and, as we have seen, throws the onus of the decision for their necessity upon the local authority. Their provision means something on the rates, which is an imposing argument against them. The fact that their lack means a far greater loss to the nation is less apparent.

The Government still maintains this attitude. Recently in answer to a question in the House whether any steps have been taken by the Board of Education to encourage the provision of Nursery Schools, the President replied that,

“ The Board’s policy in this as in other matters is that laid down three years ago in Circular 1,358, i.e., ‘ to ask all Local Authorities to consider the more immediate needs of their areas in all grades of education and to formulate programmes of action covering a definite period ’. Local

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authorities are now engaged in carrying out their programmes, formulated in accordance with this policy, covering the three years 1927-1930. This policy is based on the principle that each Local Authority is best able to judge the relative urgency of different proposals for the educational development in its own area and that pressure from the Board in favour of particular proposals is more likely to retard educational development than to advance it. Since last year the Board have approved proposals for *three new Nursery schools.*"

It is not often that a Minister in his reply to a question in the House provides such an obvious criticism upon the methods he advocates.

Three new Nursery Schools in a year! Such is the rate of progress. This is the result of leaving the matter to the decision of the local education authorities who are too interested in

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retaining their chairs of office to urge additional expenditure upon what, to the understanding, is a necessity.

That they are a necessity is urged by the Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education.

In previous reports, and particularly in my report for 1916, I have described and recommended the establishment of Nursery Schools which were first recognized under the Education Act of 1918. There are now 26 of them ; 11 established by Local Education Authorities and 15 by Voluntary Committees, with a total accommodation for 1,367 children.¹

It is but the voice of authority crying in the wilderness. The recommendation of twelve years ago has resulted in the provision of but twenty-six such schools, less than

¹ The Health of the School Child : Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education for the Year 1926.

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half of these sponsored by the Board of Education. There are but one and a half thousand places for the two million children between the ages of two and five. And we have the President of the Board of Education saying with some degree of pride that three have been launched in the last year. Progress it is and we must accept it as such. But it is a slow motion picture of progress.

What exactly is a Nursery School and how far is it a school in the accepted sense of the word? The picture of young children cooped up within four walls, drilled into obedience by the teacher, taught things in which he is not interested, comes to the minds of those who knew schools a generation ago. What of the schools to-day?

The purposes of the Nursery School are well outlined by the same competent authority, whom we have already quoted.

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The Nursery School should seek to remedy the defects often inherent in the conditions of home life. It is a species of Montessori or McMillan School with health as its objective. The physical care of these children comprises much more than mere physical exercise, important as that is. It involves provision for free movement, in sunlight when possible, in fresh air always, out of doors or in doors; regular periods for sleep and rest in the horizontal position; training in all desirable bodily habits, particularly personal cleanliness; and arrangements for meals including suitable food at regular times. The games, handwork, and physical exercises undertaken should be to a large extent free and unhampered, though not aimless. The children should be trained to play together, as well as to play alone, to breathe properly, to use their limbs freely with increasing control, to move quietly when necessary. Walking, hopping, skipping, marching, running, and arm exercises are particularly valuable.

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Fullest advantage should be taken of life in the open air, and all those activities for which open air life affords scope, such as cultivation of little gardens, the care of birds and pet animals, the observation of beautiful things in nature, as well as natural romping and playing. The closest possible association should be maintained with the school medical service, for the congregating of large numbers of little children of susceptible age demands the attention and supervision of medical officers, nurses and teachers, skilled to detect early symptoms of disease and ready to take prompt preventive measures against infection. The school should also provide definite training of the opening mind of the child, seek to establish well-formed habits, cultivate alertness and eagerness, and provide for suitable training of the motor and sensory faculties of the child (including hand-work). Much may be done also in sense training ; as regards sight, to teach the child to notice broad rather than fine differences in colour, form

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and size ; as regards hearing, to listen with attention, to respond to quiet questions and to commence to distinguish different sounds and to develop a taste for pleasant sounds instead of noise ; in touch, to enable the child to interpret shape, size and texture through his fingers and to use his hands and fingers for manipulation, such as the careful carrying of articles and the gentle treatment of flowers ; in equilibrium, to acquire balance and easy and graceful movements in walking and running, a rhythm which may be fostered by music and dancing. Ability to help themselves and one another, to co-operate in common aid and mutual help, are important aims. After admission to a nursery school, it is found that children show improvement in quicker, lighter movements, they become more observant and less lethargic, for the result of overcrowded homes leads to the activities natural to childhood becoming cramped and repressed with results injurious both to bodily and mental growth. Little children should be

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able to move freely, and space combined with shelter from dangers of street traffic is essential for their healthy physical and mental development.¹

And again, to quote Miss Margaret McMillan, to whom the Nursery School movement owes so much :

“ What kind of education will you give in this place to your little ones ? ” Well, to begin with, the new environment is an education in itself. It is stocked with nature’s apparatus. Suppose you want to develop the touch sense ! Lo ! here are a score of leaves, hairy sunflower, crinkled primrose, glossy fuchsia, and the rose. Do you want to compare colours, to note tints and shades ; well, here is wealth a-plenty. The herb garden will offer more scents than anyone can put into a box, and a very little thought will make of every pathway a riot of opportunities. Not, of course, that we do not use type apparatus. Not that

¹ *Ibid, supra.*

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we have not colour tablets here, and also insets. But what are these if they are to be used only in classrooms, and we are to be familiar only with cupboards? No, let us get out while we are little. For the greatest schools—the schools immortal of Syria, of Athens, too, and Venice, and even of Paris—these were roofed only by the sky.¹

Let the parent read these objects carefully and ask whether his home or his training can compete in any way. It is true that Sir George Newman has in mind necessitous areas where conditions verge on slum land. He no doubt realizes that he can but advocate reform where the need of reform is obvious, and the results of his advocacy have perhaps dulled his vision. We feel, however, that he would be in entire agreement with our proposal to provide these Nursery Schools for all.

¹ *Nursery School and the Pre-School Child*—Margaret Macmillan in a pamphlet published by The Nursery School Association.

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But the cost¹! There's the rub. The prophet and the loss account too often go together. That there would be an immediate increase in expenditure is obvious. That in the end this expenditure would be turned into profit and prove a final saving is not so obvious and useless, of course, as a political argument. The mind that will invest for the successor to draw the dividends is too broad for politics.

The one great advantage to the nation of making the Nursery Schools

¹ The nursery school costs less than the infant school. In spite of its long day, its liberal staffing, its meals, and baths, and extras, the cost per head of a child in the largest and oldest nursery school is only £14 3s., as compared with £15 and over, for the infant school. There are various causes to which this cheapness can be set down. To begin with, parents, even the poorest, contribute something to the nursery school. The total fees from this source in one school averages £14 per week, including payments made from doles of Boards of Guardians. Over £12 come entirely from parents. In a fairly prosperous district all the food bills would be paid by parents. Thus, in Dundee, the jute-workers paid the whole cost of food and service in the open-air school at Agnes Road, of which the late Miss Mabel Brydie was the first principal.

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an integral part of her educational system would be that the whole of the coming generation would be under medical supervision. With what result? Let us listen again to the voice in the wilderness.

“We rightly incur a considerable expenditure upon the school medical service and the public health service, yet much of it is necessary because we fail to begin medical and physical nurture early enough. We are involved in heavy costs for the maintenance of hospitals, sanatoria, clinics and other institutions for the treatment of disease, the seeds of which are sown in early childhood. The school medical service has proved beyond question that its heaviest burden is the disease and defect which springs from early childhood. To remedy the defect of young children will, of course, cost money. But it will soon save money. A stitch in time saves nine. *It is therefore both expedient and economical for us to do the most, and not the least, that we can*

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for the young child from one to five years of age. The remarkable reduction in infant mortality in a single generation has shown what can be done when we direct our energies to the particular problem of death in infancy¹ and the maternity and child welfare movement has more than justified itself as a great instrument of Preventive Medicine. Yet the problem of the pre-school child remains. It is incumbent therefore upon us to remove as far as may be the disabilities and restrictions which hinder, and almost seem to check, the full benefits of the nursery movement in its present form."²

These Nursery Schools must become an integral part of our educational

¹ "One third of all the deaths of the nation occur below 6 years. There are ten times as many deaths during the half decade of pre-school life as during the following full decade of school life." Gessell (referring to America) in *The Pre-School Child*.

² The Health of the School Child : Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education for the Year 1926.

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system. They must not be regarded as welfare institutions nor must they come under the authority of the Ministry of Health. They must be in charge of the experienced educationalist and not the matron. And above all they must come into being. Parliament should make it incumbent on all Local Education Authorities to establish Nursery Schools within their areas, for their need is not always apparent to those without vision.

The Nursery School must come in time. Women will realize that while maternity may be their special vocation, child guidance is not part of motherhood. Careers need not be sacrificed, mothers can become mothers of more than an only child if there is provided effective guidance for the pre-school child.

Further the increased leisure of the parent would become true leisure which could be spent effectively with the

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children. We do not wish to reduce home influence to the minimum but rather wish to make it more effective. The mother, relieved of her impossible burdens, could the better become the friend and companion of her children under ideal conditions. The Nursery School does not mean the break-up of family life any more than did the nursery governess régime of the wealthy. It removes strife and conflict from the home, it makes the home a place to return to rather than a turmoil in which to remain and acts as a salutary antidote to the doting parent. And, when we are far-seeing enough to provide them in those areas not coming under the official category of "necessitous", hours will be modified to enable parent and child to enjoy their leisure together.

The national importance of the Nursery School is inestimable. It would raise the health of the nation

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to the A1 standard which we all desire in a generation. It would act as a socializing force far-reaching in its effects, creating a better idea of what a community demands of its members and strengthening the personality of the individual. It would train leaders rather than reactionaries and create that real socialism which respects authority and does not see authority as the enforced will of the minority.

THE NURSERY SCHOOL IN AMERICA

America, until recently, has placed her faith in the Kindergarten Schools which cater for one in ten of her population. She is now turning her attention to the Nursery School proper and paid us the compliment of inviting one of our pioneers, Miss Grace Owen, M.Ed., the secretary of

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the Nursery School Association, to inaugurate the movement in New York. Since then practically every State in the Union has established a separate department of child hygiene.

Nursery Schools will have inestimable effect upon the American nation. Already there is a national consciousness of their importance and the importance of these pre-school years. Such schools provide the melting-pot where the generation of to-morrow can develop its common language and common ideals, where the pre-school immigrant, instead of learning a foreign language from a foreign mother, can become naturalized in more than name.

There is, however, a tendency in America to make their Nursery Schools clinics and research laboratories. She is perhaps in danger of regarding the child as a biological specimen, suitable for dissection and study and an easy

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path to the Ph.D. We read of such alarming researches as an inquiry into the effects of revolver shots fired at varying distances from the month-old infant. There is no justification in creating the abnormal to study the abnormal, neither should the child be sacrificed to make a student's degree day.

America has her own especial problems, natural to a nation that has little or no contact with poverty. Behaviour problems loom large where luxury reigns, and she has set herself the task of finding the causes for the abnormalities before attempting to avoid their occurrence.

We in England are not so scientifically minded. We are more interested in directing things haphazardly towards some better end than in the scientific studies of our failures. Evolution will be more rapid if we pool our experiences with America, and share

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between us the results of our experiments. America has led us in this, however, that she has created a national consciousness as to the importance of these years. Americans realize that the future lies in the children, however much her psychoanalysts delight in tracing in them the lies of the future. And above all we must always remember that we owe her a great debt for providing the world with the patron saint of second childhood, Mr Henry Ford, who has given to the adult world its adult rattle.

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