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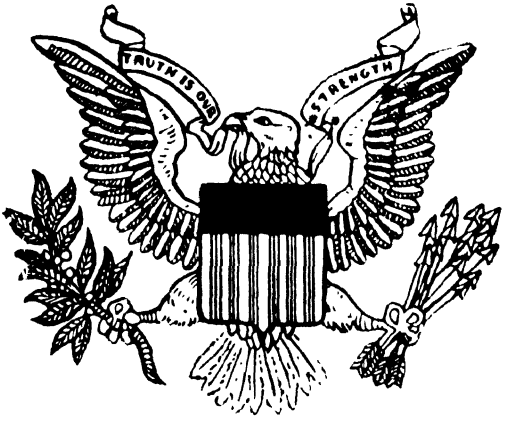

THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE

OF

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

THE HAPPY HOME:
A Guide to Family Living

A Guide to Family Living

THE HAPPY HOME

By
AGNES E. BENEDICT
and
ADELE FRANKLIN

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New York

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To families we have known whose courage, ingenuity, and skill are making the home once more the happiest place to be.

INTRODUCTION

Now that I have read this exciting book I'd like a chance to live my childhood and parenthood all over again. It's about the things a family can do together, and how they can get along together. It isn't a sermon, it's more like an invitation. It's bulging full of hundreds of practical suggestions for all us parents whose spirits are willing but whose imaginations are tired.

A few generations ago most of our schools were rather cheerless places where children were made to learn what was considered good for them. Then the great leaders of education discovered that children *want* to learn, even faster than anyone ever tried to make them, if their curiosity and enthusiasm are stimulated, with subjects that fit their ages. They forge ahead in co-operativeness with a sense of responsibility if they are given an active part in planning and carrying out their work.

What Agnes Benedict and Adele Franklin have done in this book is to apply to family life the great discoveries in education. There is a clear discussion, for example, of how differently a child is affected by passive amusement, such as he gets in the movies, and by an absorbing occupation like carpentry. There are valuable suggestions about the wrong and the right kinds of tools to buy, how to care for them, what jobs will appeal to children of various ages, and how the parent can really help the child to progress.

There is a wonderfully wise chapter on children's parties that will help you to understand why some of the parties you

still remember from childhood were so disappointing and others were so thrilling. The chapters on household chores and on music lessons, if applied with fair success, should sweeten some family atmospheres beyond all recognition and save countless gray hairs. The chapters on nature study, arts and crafts, sciences, and family excursions made me itch to get started.

As I read the book I kept making remarks to myself such as, "If I had only done that with my children!" or "That's just the kind of thing inexperienced parents need to know with their first child" or "What a difference that would make in a large family!" I feel I can say, like a patent medicine salesman, "Parents, this book is good for whatever ails you. And if you are feeling fine it will keep you that way."

Benjamin Spock, M. D.

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Part I

LIVING TOGETHER

Chapter 1

THE ADVENTURE

JOURNEY FOR THE SMITHS

Mrs. Smith's face was troubled as she sat waiting to see the principal. So she had a difficult child. She winced as the teacher's words came back to her. "Jimmy's not as happy as he used to be." Not *happy* . . . "And—he's not working to capacity either. He's pretty scrappy with the other children. And he's getting rebellious about rules; he's even rude to me sometimes. It's not serious," Miss Price had assured her. Mrs. Smith's face tightened. Not serious *now* . . .

She sighed. Well, face it. Yes—Jimmy was just like that at home. Why hadn't she noticed it sooner? It came so gradually. They called him "The perfect baby . . . a sunny, well-adjusted little boy, really." How it crept up on you. Not till he was nine. Mrs. Smith smiled wryly. Well, it was her fault, hers and George's. It was always the parents' fault. What had they done? Were they stupid? She was sure they knew as much about child training and psychology as their friends who had children.

But Mrs. Rhodes, the principal, a gray-haired woman whose keen blue eyes had a twinkle in them, showed little inclination to talk about Jimmy's difficulties beyond adding her assurance that they would be straightened out. Instead she began to talk in a very general way about modern psychology and how much it had to contribute. And when Mrs. Smith agreed, but said with snapping eyes that the rules just didn't always work

out in practice, Mrs. Rhodes only replied by mentioning certain books—she called them "my specials." When Mrs. Smith said she had not heard of them, she offered to lend them to her for summer reading.

Then the conversation naturally turned to vacations, and Mrs. Rhodes asked about the Smiths' summer plans. Mrs. Smith said she and her husband were going to have a real vacation at last—that they were going for a camping trip on horseback somewhere in Colorado. They both loved riding and roughing it. Jimmy was going to a fine camp in the Berkshires.

When Mrs. Smith finished, the principal looked away. Then she turned and said slowly, "I wonder if you'd consider changing your plans and taking Jimmy with you?" Before Mrs. Smith could answer, Mrs. Rhodes whipped out a large sheet of paper from a pile on her desk. It was a painting—a crude, but startlingly lifelike pinto pony was bucking high with his cowboy rider. Across the dazzling blue sky at the top of the picture lurched the black-lettered words: SANDY AND ME. Mrs. Rhodes pointed to the pony. "Horses," she said softly. "What they mean to him right now. They're life itself . . . friends, adventure. . . ."

Mrs. Smith stared at the picture. "That *is* good, isn't it? Funny," she went on musingly, "I never knew he was so crazy about horses."

"No?" returned the principal dryly. "Well, there's proof." Suddenly her voice softened and became winning. "Really, Mrs. Smith, Jimmy wouldn't be a bit of trouble on that trip. On the contrary, he'd be most companionable."

Mrs. Smith stared at her, then smiled. "He might, at that. Well, I'll speak to George. In any case, may I have the books?"

The principal reached over to her bookcase, saying casually, "I guess none of us can ever know quite enough about principles of child training." She laid the books on the table and settled back in her chair. "Your speaking about rules not working reminds me of the time I tried to grow some grass in a

little yard outside a city apartment. I was most enthusiastic. I got a book and followed all the rules about planting, weeding, and watering." She shook her head. "But my grass didn't grow very well. You see I'd overlooked one thing. The soil." She darted a sharp glance at the other woman. "The soil wasn't right for my grass. So—the rules didn't work."

Mrs. Smith smiled, but her eyes were serious. "I see. And you believe this kind of vacation would change the soil for Jimmy?"

"I'm positive it would—for all of you." Mrs. Smith rose and picked up the books. "Oh yes," called out the principal as Mrs. Smith started toward the door, "if you should decide to take Jimmy with you, pack a few books, some crayons, and games. It rains sometimes, even in Colorado."

Mrs. Rhodes' suggestion was followed. And the prescription seemed to work rather well. Mrs. Smith returned the principal's books in the fall, pronouncing them splendid; in fact, she planned to go on with her reading and might even join a child-study group after Christmas. "And that trip!" Her eyes shone. "I saw what you meant about changing the soil all right, and about principles working. . . ."

Then, noticing the serious expression on Mrs. Rhodes' face, she said quickly, "Oh, I know. Now our job's to change the soil *right here* in a two-family house."

"A large order?" asked the principal, smiling.

"Rather. But—oh, exciting and lots of fun. Because—well, that trip showed us a lot. Most of all it showed George, Jimmy, and me how much we could *enjoy* each other."

The principal smiled again. "Take it easy," she said. "Go slowly. You'll make it!"

ANOTHER JOURNEY

The pages that follow are intended to be a kind of journey. It will not extend very far in space. For this is to be an adventure in family living in the home itself, not on a Western

ranch. Its protagonists will be the entire family: father, mother, children. In fact, the family will become in a sense a single personality, a living organism made up of separate parts, which have lives of their own and are developing in their own ways, but which at the same time are synthesized.

Abstract principles of growth and guidance will not be forgotten. They will be with us continually, like the books the Smiths took along in their suitcases. But some of these principles will apply to adults as well as to children. Certainly no more will be said of children's interests than of those of parents, no more of the rights of children than of the rights of adults. There will be some discussion of abstract principles, but for the most part theory will be very close to practice. For what are principles after all—words, sentences, symbols? Reality is very much down to earth—it is a house and the way it is arranged, it is sweeping, sharing scooters, splashing in water, chatter at the table, walks, picnics, reading aloud, planning; it is looks, tones of voice, feelings passing between people —it is living. So, for the most part, real situations and problems will be considered here. The destination of the journey will be the building of a home favorable to growth, a home that is rich and fertile and life-giving. The goal will be an environment where principles can be put into practice and where personality can thrive and grow strong.

Are not families everywhere feeling an urge to be moving, an urge toward the new? Are not parents seeking to develop a new kind of family living today? In spite of all that our homes possess, we know that something is missing from them, something our earlier homes—those of our parents and grandparents, and even our own childhood homes—possessed. And that something is strength, cohesiveness, solidarity. While we are keenly aware of our many benefits, while recognizing that parents and children should have separate interests and spend some time away from each other, still, we miss a sense

of closeness. And we know only too well that the children are missing it too. Parents are not dismayed by having to be responsible for their children, but they do want more companionship with them. They do not resent having to be their children's guides and protectors, but they feel the accent is falling too heavily on this responsibility. Like the Smiths, they want to enjoy them more.

Many parents are also troubled about their children. They wonder uneasily if they do not detect a certain softening of the fiber of character, reflected in irresponsibility and a lack of consideration, above all, in a lack of discipline.

Certain reasons for these weaknesses in our homes seem only too clear. We are so rushed. Where, we wonder ironically as we hurry from one activity to another, is all the leisure we hear so much about? Jobs are so demanding, and often mothers as well as fathers are working—many times because they must. Good citizenship now demands a good deal of time-consuming community work. There are the claims of social life, much of which is formal, and which is to some degree a professional necessity. Then there are the claims on children: the claims of school, often of the play center, sometimes of camp. There is practicing; there are the doctor, the dentist, the "gang," the "club," and later the "set." We are conscious of the small size of our dwellings and the lack of space around them, which make it necessary for families to seek amusements outside the home.

As for the lack of discipline, we are inclined to believe that modern theories of child rearing are responsible. Many parents feel they have been swept into accepting these modern techniques against their own better judgment, simply because everyone else seemed to be doing so. They are afraid that the sterner, more authoritarian discipline of "the good old days" would be better for the children.

SETTING OUR COURSE

After some reflection, therefore, our way seems to lie both backward and forward. Our task is to recapture, in this modern, breathless age, some of the positive qualities our earlier homes possessed. There is no question but that we can do this under the average conditions of life today. The Smiths found their answer while on vacation in Colorado. The books the principal loaned them were very important, because they were practical and extremely helpful. But the external circumstances of their lives during this period were in themselves comparatively unimportant. Mrs. Rhodes urged all of them to take this trip together simply because she believed a change of scene would facilitate a change in orientation. Because in Colorado they were able to capture elements which could be transferred to any setting, anywhere, the Smiths' trip was valuable, not only to them, but as an example to all parents.

The Smiths discovered that parents and a nine-year-old child can find real companionship in recreation for days, even for weeks on end—that is if it is recreation that is active, not passive; if it is constructive, challenging; if it brings a broadening of horizons and a mastery of new skills. As later chapters will show, our modern homes, whether they are large or small, and wherever they are located, can provide this kind of recreation. In fact, over a long period of time, the potentialities of most homes are far greater then those of any camping trip. For in the home we can broaden our horizon in many directions, not only in space. In the home parents and children can acquire many more skills than those of riding and camping. And perhaps most important of all, in the home the family can have access to a world that was closed to the campers —the world of creative art.

The Smiths found that a family can share more than recreation—that they can actually share *living*—that a nine-year-

old can to some degree help his parents make plans for the whole family, that he can help decide the places they will visit, the things they will see and do, and also help to plan the work. The Smiths also discovered the deep sense of strength and solidarity that accompanies co-operative living. Every family can achieve this strength and solidarity. All we need do is to open a little wider to children the door of their homes—the door that swings inward.

THE MATTER OF DISCIPLINE

Mrs. Smith said that principles of child guidance seemed "to work better in Colorado," meaning, of course, that Jimmy gave less trouble, that he was more obedient, independent, and responsible. The books Mrs. Smith read cleared up one most important point for her, the point about discipline which was referred to earlier and which is troubling so many parents today. Modern psychology does not advocate, and never has advocated "soft" discipline or a *laissez-faire* attitude with children. In addition to causing disruption in the home and making parents tense and anxious, this kind of discipline is definitely injurious to children, for it undermines their confidence by requiring them to show more wisdom and maturity than they possess. Parents must always maintain control in situations which concern matters that children are not old enough to comprehend. They must exercise the necessary firmness, so that the children will not feel doubtful about what is expected of them. But this control has really nothing to do with discipline itself, which is a power of self-mastery. Consequently the goal is a golden mean. Parents must strive to retain control while permitting the children freedom to exercise responsibility and to think and act independently in matters they can comprehend. As they grow older, the children's own share of responsibility should be gradually increased if they are to develop strong personalities and not remain helplessly dependent on someone else.

Mrs. Smith was convinced of the soundness of this idea and proceeded to put it into practice. If principles worked better in Colorado, it was not because the boy was indulged. Nor was the setting so idyllic that Jimmy's every wish was granted, making him happy from morning till night. Camping is a rather strenuous business for anyone, especially for a small boy who has been brought up in the city. But Colorado was a setting which for that length of time was favorable to the growth of a boy of nine. It met certain definite needs of his nature—the need to explore and to satisfy curiosity, the need to move, to utilize his tremendous and restless energy in constructive ways, to do things that seemed to him worth doing, things that were real and important to him. And above all it enabled him to do these things with people he cared for and who cared for him. He belonged, he was part of an enterprise, and he was given all the responsibility he was capable of assuming. Consequently he obeyed more readily, not because he either liked obeying or understood the necessity for obedience any better than before, but because obedience now seemed to be part of a total job that was worth doing, a total job in which he played an active part. As we expect to show, a similarly successful environment can certainly be provided by any home.

FINDING TIME AND SPACE

What about the matter of time? The Smiths devoted some weeks to their trip to Colorado. We are expecting to develop this integral kind of living month in and month out, while parents are working and children are in school, as well as during vacation. Probably both parents and children could give up some of their own activities, though we must face the fact that most activities are more or less essential. But in some homes at least a good deal of time could be saved through greater efficiency in the management of the household. Certainly parents are running homes, not businesses. Since time

is costly, however, the application of some administrative principles now used in business will not make a house less homelike, but more so. And even in the busiest homes there is some time left over, some time that parents and children spend together. The solution of family difficulties and tensions lies in the way that time is spent. As we shall try to show. there is enough time to build the kind of family life we desire.

What about space? Certainly we cannot extend the walls of our homes or place private yards around most of them. But by means of very careful planning we can find ways to expand the space that is allotted to us, if we first decide what is really important to us.

At first thought it may seem as though all these statements are only glittering generalities, fine theories that will break down immediately when they are put to the test of practice.

But these theories are actually working; they are being applied in hundreds of homes, in a large number of which mothers as well as fathers have outside jobs. And the result is not to increase the burdens of parents, but greatly to decrease them. It will be noted that more companionship between parents and children is urged; it is not recommended that parents necessarily spend more time with children; new activities are suggested, not additional activities; new methods of guidance are proposed, not more guidance.

It is acknowledged that changing family living, like changing a job, does require an initial outlay of energy and time. But this is truly a case of "the longest way round is the shortest way home." For to some extent this will be like an outlay of money to procure a labor-saving device. Furthermore, much of the work, once done, does not have to be done again. When attitudes are really modified they remain so. When habits are firmly established they become routine and as automatic as brushing one's teeth.

Furthermore, no sudden or wholesale change in family living is recommended. On the contrary, the advice is that

given to Mrs. Smith by the principal—"to take it easy . . . and to go slowly," to be relaxed. Parents are strongly advised to proceed as gradually as they would in completely refurnishing their home, and to begin only with the few changes that they most want to make.

After all, the real burden of life is not work—it is worry. It is the feeling of not being at peace with yourself or in harmony with those around you. It is the gnawing thought, "Am I doing right, after all? Is all well with them—the ones I care for, the ones I am responsible for?" Work is really easy. Nagging, quarreling, complaining, brooding—these are hard. To the same degree that this book helps to eliminate strain, it reduces the burdens not only of the parents but of the entire family. And like the Smiths, American parents are not averse to change and to experimentation. After all, change and experimentation are part of their tradition.

RECREATION THAT MEANS GROWTH

As we have indicated, we advocate a certain substitution of activities in the home. We propose a replacing of some—not all—of our passive recreation—the motion picture, the radio, the automobile, as well as baseball games, plays, and concerts —with active recreation which we ourselves seek and grasp and make our own. And this is exactly what leading authorities everywhere are telling us the American people are longing consciously or unconsciously to do. They explain much of the tension and restlessness found among us today by the fact that neither our work—which is largely mechanical or sedentary—nor our play, which is so passive, meets the deepest needs of our nature. Lawrence P. Jacks expresses it this way:

Man is a skill-hungry animal, hungry for skill in his body, hungry for skill in his mind, and never satisfied until that skill-hunger is appeased. . . . No amount of ready-made pleasures purchased in the market, no intensity of external excitement, will ever compensate for the loss of the creative impulse, or for

the starvation of his essential nature as a skill-hungry human being.

We do not mean to belittle our ready-made pleasures; we are fully aware of all they have done to enrich human life. We know very well the degree to which many of them are stimulating and informing, as well as restful and refreshing and diverting. But we are convinced, with Mr. Jacks, that no one, whether or not he has a family, will ever be really contented if all his work is routine, executive, administrative, or professional, and all his play is provided for him. And the reason he will not be contented is that he is not growing. Powers within him are not liberated, capacities are undeveloped. He is not as confident or creative in any line as he should and could be.

What we are advocating is recreation pure and simple. As was the case with the Smiths, the object is enjoyment. Conscientiousness, in the sense of straining after results, or of learning anything at all because you ought to learn it, or of doing anything you really do not want to do, is definitely absent. But on the other hand, this type of recreation is not aimless. It is carried on in accordance with the principles of growth, and it involves both concentration and absorption. In a word it is real recreation, *re-creation,* or the restoration of strength through the use of energies in new ways.

The present volume is a *guide* and not a *manual* because instead of giving formulae and rules, it sets forth basic principles which can be applied individually. It offers no pattern of recreation, but rather presents suggestions with the intention that families should decide for themselves which ideas appeal to them at a given time.

STRENGTH THROUGH SECURITY

When we consider the kind of home parents are seeking to build today in relation to those of the past, must we just

go back generations to find the qualities we prize? Must we rather not go back centuries? Was it not the first American home, the home our ancestors founded in the wilderness which had the real strength we seek? What was the source of strength in that home from which so much greatness came? Did it not lie in the fact that it was truly a shared enterprise, that, like the Smiths' brief camping trip, it was a family enterprise? In this crude shack a family was doing a job together, earning its living together, so to speak. And the work each person did—the spinning of the grandmother, the log-splitting of the father and older boys, the weaving, soap-making, and sewing of the mother and older girls, the planting and animal-tending of the younger children, down to the fetching and carrying of the three- and four-year-olds—this labor was an invisible bond, strong as steel. It made of individuals a single united group. It made them able to say, and to mean, "This is our home. We have created it."

Today our families cannot share gainful work. Our children must forever be denied that kind of participation, and their parents must be denied that kind of companionship with them. But they have another job to do, the job of developing themselves and each other, of living together, and of so living that they mature wisely. The importance of the colonial family's job lay in the fact that it met fundamental physical needs. The modern family is exactly as important, for it meets personality needs which are also fundamental. Now, as then, each member has his special work to do, the contribution he alone can make.

THE OBJECTIVE

The average modern home offers greater potentialities for co-operative living than a vacation in Colorado or anywhere else. It has infinitely greater potentialities than the colonial home or indeed any homes that have ever existed before it. For aside from our many material advantages, we have the

cultural advantages. We have knowledge. To the knowledge about physical health and growth we have added a body of knowledge about personality growth. Recent discoveries in this field have been epoch-making. They parallel in significance the most important discoveries in the field of medicine.

The time has come to apply this knowledge positively. We cannot ignore the existence of problems and difficulties. We cannot blind ourselves to the fact that at times these may be both persistent and deep-rooted. When this is the case, parents or children or both should seek professional help if it is available as naturally as they would seek medical help. But we can and should emphasize the prevention of problems. We can focus on achieving the kind of home which capitalizes on every positive quality in human beings.

Such a home is not a Utopia. It will have its trials and difficulties; there will be quarrels and tensions, nagging and punishment. There will be drab days. But these will be kept at a minimum. For such a home is a haven. And it is more than this. It is an exciting place. It is alive. There is a lift in the very air. For things are happening, moving. Here there is what William James calls "the tingle and zest of reality."

Every family has experienced this kind of living. Perhaps you and the children have gathered around the piano and sung together. Perhaps you have stood with your five-year-old boy and silently watched a steam roller at work or have looked at a sunset with your ten-year-old daughter. You may have rigged up a telephone from house to garage with your fourteen-year-old boy. Or you may have been talking with a seven-year-old boy or girl when suddenly an invisible curtain lifted and both of you seemed to see each other for the first time. Perhaps you have made a decision as a family. Your child has made suggestions you followed—perhaps it was where to put a chair or how to arrange some flowers. You have accepted a gift for the home, perhaps hung a painting by one of the

children, or placed a crude little ornament of clay on the living-room table.

During these times a family not only *is* together; its members *live* together, because they think, act, feel together. And this is the meaning of security. Most of us know children's great need for security, but we hear too little of parents' need for it, which is also great. And they need security in relation to their children. Without it, they are like trees without branches. These experiences bring security because they deepen understanding, and so deepen love. At these times children think, "Mother does know how disappointed I was. Dad is patient, and will help me after all." We discover that for all his swaggering, Bobbie is really a very sensitive little boy, that Kate, who seems so timid, has her own brand of courage, that giggly Sue has amazingly sensible ideas tucked away in her head, that stubborn John can yield, that Esther, who seemed sweet but "not too bright," has some undiscovered power that takes our breath away.

These experiences make family living the most satisfying thing on earth. For parents become more than parents—they become friends—and find children are the most delightful companions in the world. They find that no occupation is quite so fascinating as guiding their own children, no picture so amazing and wonderful as that of their unfolding minds and maturing personalities. From homes like these, families reach outward to their communities and beyond them to the world.

We believe that these invaluable experiences are too often casual and fleeting, coming and going almost by chance. They should be extended; they should be permanent; they should be one with the total fabric of family life. It is with the extension of these meaningful experiences that the succeeding chapters of this book are concerned.

Chapter 2

SOCIAL GROWTH

SOCIETY BEGINS AT HOME

The statement that members of a family who really share their lives will reach out to the community and the world is not a fanciful hyperbole but a sober statement of fact. Another way of expressing the same thing is to say that a democratic home is the foundation of a democratic state. For it is the things human beings feel deeply about that shape personality. They are like the river's strong, swift current, the others are like its lesser eddies. Of course the relations parents have with people on their jobs are very important. Children's relations to their teachers and to their classmates in school have far more to do with developing character than is generally understood. And other relationships outside of the home may influence both parents and children profoundly. But in general, the tie that is formed within the home circle—between husband and wife, parents and children, and brothers and sisters—most strongly affects our general social relations.

Relations in the home mean something quite different to the social growth of parents and of children. For children this is growth at the roots. The experiences which come first to people are those which form the very core of character. So if a child's father and mother and brothers and sisters really care for him and for each other, he will tend to be warmly responsive to everyone he meets. If those who are so close to him believe in him, he stands as on a rock of confidence, and

it is very hard indeed for anyone else, however critical, however cruel and destructive, to destroy this confidence.

The person who is sure of himself does not have to rival other people, or to emulate them, or to dominate them, in a vain effort to prove his worth. Nor does he have to yield to them meekly, in a continual effort to win their esteem. The child who has truly become part of his family group readily becomes part of other groups in which he finds himself. Children learn lessons of co-operation in the home with the heart as well as with the head, and these lessons are never forgotten. And lastly, if a child has had a real chance at home to develop into an individual, if he has been able to develop in his own way, then he will have independent powers of thought and action which when he is older will develop into leadership, either overtly or subtly exercised.

But parents who are mature and reasonably well-adjusted do not stop growing simply because they are adult. You never become "a democratic person" in any fixed and final sense. Democracy is rather a continual state of becoming. Being generous and self-controlled in relation to husband or wife, sharing with children and guiding them wisely—these experiences develop qualities of strength, understanding, and skill which show themselves in work and social relations.

The basis of democracy in the home is affection. But the members of a family may care for each other deeply and still the home may be undemocratic; it may be a despotism, although a benevolent one, or an anarchy without rule. In a democratic home affection is given tangible expression through what might be called democratic government, were it not so simple and informal. We might perhaps call it democratic procedure.

A FAMILY ENTERPRISE

We said earlier that the strength of the colonial home lay in the fact that it was in a literal sense a co-operative enter-

prise. We also said that the modern home is a joint enterprise by virtue of another co-operative job the members of the family have to do, and if they undertake to do this job together, again the home is jointly owned. The simple fact of being born makes each child *ipso facto* part possessor of his home and of all it contains, even though he does not contribute one cent to it.

Children who have been made part owners of their homes usually speak of "our house"; while the others say "my house." But the possessive pronoun does not stand for a reality in their minds: they are repeating a phrase they have heard their parents use.

Possession immediately carries responsibility. If this is *our* home, then we must plan for it, work for it, take care of it together. If we have made living a joint enterprise, then all of us must have a part in that job. We all must decide about rights and privileges and responsibilities, and we must plan our work and play from day to day.

There may be some resistance to this idea of the children's actual sharing in the physical possession of the home instead of having them enjoy it as something the parents provide for them and which will eventually be theirs. Some may oppose the idea of giving children as large a share in making decisions as we may seem to have indicated. We may seem to be proposing to hand over to the young and inexperienced a power they are not equipped to use, with the result that they will become willful and headstrong and demanding. Or too much responsibility might seem to work the other way and make children old before their time by burdening them with responsibilities that belong to grown-ups.

Such resistance would be based on a misconception. It must be remembered that great emphasis has been placed on the importance of combining control over children in certain matters with giving them independence in others. However small the degree of independence granted to children,

it means everything to them, and we are not merely referring to making them happy. Independence is important to children because only in this way do they grow up. So it helps the four-year-old more than we often realize simply to decide what hair ribbon to wear on a certain day, just as it helps the six- or nine-year-old to ponder with his parents on whether it would really be better to take a certain trip by train or by bus, or the thirteen-year-old to make up his mind about whether he wants a pet badly enough not to burden the family with the care of it. Furthermore, there is quite a difference between giving children total responsibility and giving them partial responsibility, even in matters like these, and they can be made to understand this difference quite clearly.

LEADERSHIP IN THE HOME

Parents are the leaders in the democratic home. While this point will be taken for granted, it must be emphasized. If at any time the parents fail to exercise leadership or if there is the slightest doubt in the children's minds about the matter at any time confusion will result. But democratic leadership in the home is in a sense unique. We might call a group of democratically governed adults a total democracy, while this is a partial democracy. Furthermore, the different members, being at various stages of maturity, are allowed different degrees of independence and are gradually given more and more liberty, as they show themselves capable of using it wisely.

In regard to such matters as routines related to the children's health and safety, major financial expenditures, and so on, the parents alone must make the rules. While they should not be harsh, they should certainly be firm. Long-winded arguments about the hour for going to bed, endless nagging for another piece of candy, insisting on knowing why play in a certain street is forbidden help no one. The matter of exercising control over children will be discussed

throughout this book. Therefore, we shall not emphasize it here, except to say in general, that it is important to begin very early with children. Gentleness should be combined with firmness. It is well to compromise to a certain point, but not beyond it. We must remember also that children of different temperaments have to be handled in different ways and require different treatment at different times.

But democracy in the home really begins at the point where the children themselves take over responsibility, either wholly or in part. And since this is also the point where the growth of the children begins, no aspect of parenthood is more important than knowing when to give children independence and how much independence to allow them. Also this side of leadership in the home is decidedly the most challenging and interesting, and it is certainly very satisfying. But it is not always easy. In general, the tendency is to be too authoritarian with children. This is natural. In the first place, having to be authoritarian in certain matters makes us feel we must be firm in almost all matters.

For example, to a mother who feels so responsible about seeing that Eddie keeps his sweater on in cold weather, the idea that he should be partly responsible for choosing the sweater seems rather incongruous. To parents who have pondered some time before deciding that Hilda can have music lessons, it seems equally incongruous to give her some say as to when she is going to practice. And affection and the longing to spare children even the little pain or disappointment they will suffer from making wrong choices often leads us to think we have to make the choices for them.

Undoubtedly we are influenced by other factors as well. One of these is the need to give children a great deal of physical protection today, which makes them seem in general more helpless and irresponsible than they are. And there can be no doubt that their complete economic dependence still further strengthens this feeling about them.

"My father didn't talk me down so much during the war," said a boy. "I was only sixteen then—but I was earning thirty-five bucks a week."

Sometimes, of course, authority is exercised quite overtly and harshly. In other cases the children are controlled quite subtly and gently, but no less definitely; they are also given the forms of freedom of choice without the reality. This is the case, for example, when a child's father decides to teach him the value of money by giving him an allowance; then tells him he is to have so much money each week to use exactly as he likes, but at the same time makes him feel he will disappoint his father terribly if he does not bank half of it!

The feeling that children have to be "looked after" in every little thing is very hard on parents. It weighs them down with a sense of continual obligation. "I shall never forget the unutterable relief I felt," said a mother, "when I told Ruth she was a bright girl and quite old enough to decide for herself whether she really wanted to stop dawdling in the morning or whether she would rather face her teacher's anger. It seemed as though a weight rolled right off my shoulders. And, oh, how much more peaceful the mornings were—no more nagging on my part, and fussing on hers, the minute the alarm rang. Of course, she came around after a few mornings, and I had no more complaints from school."

Certainly having too much control is really even harder on children than on parents. Often, like Ruth, they rebel; sometimes they comply. But in either case they are being denied the chance to become mature; they are kept more childish than they should be. It is far better for them to endure some suffering because of their own mistakes if the suffering is not too prolonged or too serious and if by suffering they learn.

To administer a home democratically, however, parents must have faith in children. We mean a great deal by these words. Just as you need to believe in yourself, so children

need your faith in them—in their intelligence, in their innate fairness, their consideration, their capacity to act wisely. Exactly like adults, they rise to situations when things are expected of them. And we must be absolutely frank with them; they must know exactly what is to be decided for them and what they are to decide for themselves. When we do help them decide, we must decide *with* them, not *for* them.

It seems worth while to give two illustrations of democratic leadership at this point, though of course the subject will be discussed concretely, not only in this section of the book but throughout all the chapters. Six-year-old Mary needed a new winter coat. One Saturday afternoon her mother, who found herself feeling not only a little weary of housework but somewhat depressed as well, decided it would cheer her up to go shopping for the coat, especially if Mary went along and they had the fun of picking it out together. Mary was delighted with the idea. They had a great deal of fun going to the different stores, and the mother's depression lifted. Finally Mary spied a light green coat and promptly fell in love with it. She liked a darker coat in the same store too, but not as well. Her mother told her immediately that she could not have the coat she wanted. But she also told her why. She would have to wear the coat to school next year, and it was too light to be practical. She asked Mary if she did not think that dirty light clothes were pretty ugly, and the child agreed. At last, with some reluctance, Mary reconciled herself to the darker coat. That shopping trip must have meant a good deal, both to Mary and her mother. For though Mary is a woman now, and though her mother died many years ago, she often speaks of the fun they had that day. And she also speaks of how tired and blue her mother had been before they started out, and of how the shopping trip had rested and refreshed her.

She mentions how she loved the dark coat after she decided to take it. In fact, she attributes her meticulousness about

keeping her light clothes spotless to the talk with her mother that afternoon.

The parents of fourteen-year-old Bob decided the boy ought to have a good deal to say about the high school he was to enter the following fall. Bob had been attending a private school and badly wanted to go to a private high school because his best friends were going there. But he was told this was impossible for financial reasons; he would have to go to public school now. There were several to choose from in the large city where he lived, and his father suggested he get a list of them and find out all he could about them. He did this, and with his parents' help narrowed his choice to two. Then his mother went with him to visit these schools. He talked with the principals, went over the buildings, and even sat for a while in some of the classrooms. Then he came back and made his final decision after talking the whole matter over with both his father and mother.

In this way children of different ages can be given partial responsibility for decisions. As we shall see, these decisions need not always affect only the children. Sometimes they may affect other members of the family as well. Sometimes they may affect the whole family group. The age of the child does not alone decide how much self-direction he can be given. His maturity or lack of it must also be taken into account, particularly his maturity in relation to the particular decision to be made. Thus, in the matter of suggesting a suitable menu for dinner, a nine-year-old girl might be far more dependable than her ten-year-old brother, or a mother might be able to trust an eight-year-old boy to get in his ball game without slighting the sweeping, while his older sister would have to be told she could not play hopscotch until all the dusting was done. Contrary opinion notwithstanding, children do not become jealous of one another when they are handled differently—if the handling is wise. On the contrary, it is invariably identical demands on children of dif-

ferent temperaments and capacities that give rise to jealousy.

The fact that they are leaders of the family group does not in any sense mean that the parents are not also its members. If the household is not run entirely for them, neither is it run solely for the children. The parents have to exercise more self-control than the children. They have to be more understanding, tolerant, and patient. But the children must show these qualities as far as they are able. The parents' interests count for exactly as much as the children's—their comfort, their peace of mind mean exactly as much. Their faults, even their foibles, must be borne with along with those of the children. Where interests clash, the relative importance of each must alone be the factor in deciding which interest must be sacrificed. This is not only because the parents are the providers and protectors; it is their due as human beings.

A SHARING OF AFFECTION

Democracy in the home means more than the sharing of interests, responsibility, and happiness. It also means the sharing of love. It is sometimes said that for some families this kind of sharing is not always possible, even though they may badly wish to do it. This is not the place to consider the deeper aspect of this all-important matter, which is inextricably related to that of general adjustment.

Nor can anyone say how far it is possible for well-adjusted parents to share their own, or their children's affection. But every human being is born with a capacity for love. Knowledge is not love, but knowledge does help normal parents to realize that potentiality. Knowledge of every child's great need for love causes parents to respond with love—for the one who is not handsome, the one who is not brilliant or outwardly appealing, as well as for the ones who are. Knowledge can provide children with the kinds of homes in which they are at their best, most interesting, and unselfish—and therefore most lovable. The understanding by each parent of

the other's need for the child's love will make it difficult for either to monopolize affection. It is also harder to withhold affection from a child when you realize that children of all temperaments and abilities have an equal chance to succeed in the world and have something to offer to society.

A parent who knows how difficult it is for an older child when a new baby arrives will inevitably try to show him more affection and attention at this time, in order to help him adapt himself to the new circumstances. A parent may even share the baby with the brother or sister. A mother once told her three-year-old that a new baby was coming and that it would be "our baby." So when she returned home from the hospital, Kathleen, having been told that the baby was to be partly hers, ran to the mother and asked for it. Then and there the mother told the child to sit down, and very gently she placed the baby in the little girl's arms. The child's expression as she gazed down at the baby was indescribable. This mutual exchange of children's love will do more than all the devices yet discovered to prevent childish rivalry.

RELATIVES

There is no doubt that relatives may have different interests from those of the immediate family. They may also have different viewpoints, particularly in relation to the upbringing of the children. These conflicting viewpoints may give rise to problems, even where the members of the family are well-adjusted and happy together. The most serious problems usually center on divergent opinions about how much responsibility a relative should assume in relation to housework or to the care and guidance of the children.

Experience has shown that frankness on both sides is very helpful. For example, a grandmother who for many years lived very happily with her children and grandchildren announced as soon as she came to live with them that she expected to enjoy being with the family very much, but that she

did not propose to bring up a second set of children, or to do a great deal of housework. The husband and wife readily accepted this decision, for she had been left a widow when her own children were babies and had literally slaved to provide for them and to bring them up. As a result, the grandmother accepted a reasonable amount of responsibility, but she was not overburdened. She shared some of the family's interests, but not all of them. The various members of the family, in turn, felt quite free to express themselves about the importance of making all major decisions about the home themselves.

A second point relates to the family's general attitude toward all older relatives who may be living with them. Discoveries in the field of psychology and of medicine are fast revolutionizing our attitude toward old age. Older people do not have to be laid on the shelf. You can have new interests, new friends and take up new activities at almost any age. Except with people who have always been maladjusted, crankiness, crotchetiness, and selfishness are not necessary accompaniments of old age. They rather result from loneliness, the feeling that a person no longer has a place in the world, and the fear of sickness and death. This does not mean that elderly relatives have to interfere with the lives of the other members of the family. It simply means that they should be encouraged to give what they can give, without interfering. It is also a tremendous help to these people not to be held down because of their age. Encourage them to be as active as they possibly can, to go about independently, to join groups of elderly people, if these happen to be available. It also helps them if you do not feel or show anxiety about their physical condition. Remarkable results both in the general health of older people and in their dispositions have resulted simply from their living in a favorable environment.

SERVANTS

Servants are friends of the family whose rights are respected. Select servants who are steady and even-tempered and who really have a love of children. Parents can help the servant to use their own methods of guidance by making suggestions as situations arise rather than by lengthy discussions beforehand. It is also very helpful to call their attention to the results of different methods in the behavior of the children.

If a servant has responsibility for housework and also for the care of the children, she should understand that the children's interests come first. This means that if the parents come home to find the house not looking its best, but the children saying they had a lovely afternoon—it is certainly not a good plan to complain about the house. For in that case, she will probably let the children go next time, and concentrate on cleaning the house.

THE FAMILY GROWS

A home where the children come first is favorable to the social growth of all the members of the family. As parents check off inches on the doorjamb, so they will be able to check in less tangible but no less definite ways this increasing stature in the personalities of the children. There will be periods, sometimes long periods, of backsliding. But with well-adjusted children these periods only mark a form of growing pains and are nothing to worry about. If the children are handled on the basis of the way they are behaving, but without rancor, they will come around. And over longer periods they will steadily become more unselfish, more dependable, more capable, more resolute and strong. Though the parents are so much older, they too will gain along similar lines, and the gain will be reflected in a steadily increasing ability to adapt to other people, wherever they are.

Perhaps nothing is of greater practical value to anyone

than this ability to get along with other people. A recent study of the work experience of a group of persons who had been failures showed that in 80 per cent of the cases failure was not the result of inability to do the work but of inability to adjust to others, their superiors and co-workers. At the other extreme, a vice-president of one of our largest corporations once said that he must admit that he knew very little about the product his firm manufactured. "But one thing I think I do know something about," he said, "and that is about human beings."

But we do not think of social growth chiefly in terms of material success. Its greater importance lies in the satisfaction you experience when you feel really close to other human beings. We think of what we can receive from them, above all of what we can give to them. We live in what is indeed in a physical sense one world. Only when we have made it one world in a human sense also, will we have solved the major problems with which society is grappling today. A truly democratic family will do more than any other single thing to help effect that unity.

Chapter 3

OUR HOUSE

WHAT MAKES A HOME?

Family living begins with the house itself, and it is in a literal sense *ours*. While commonly the last thing with which a home should be compared is a public building, in one respect—as an outward manifestation of a collective personality—they should be identical. Just as a serene New England church, a many-windowed high school in Kansas, or a rambling stucco community house in California reflects its community—its need, its tastes, its aspirations—so the home should express the family.

A real home then is the very antithesis of the famous abode of Craig's wife. It does not express the personality of a single individual, but the combined personalities of a closely knit group. It does not express human loneliness, maladjustment, and frustration, but happiness and growth. Since the family is too sure of its own worth to have to prove it by continually impressing others, its home does not exist for purposes of display, but for everyday living.

It will require some thought and planning to create this kind of home, especially when neither space nor money is plentiful. The all-important point is for the family first to decide what their fundamental values are and exactly what they want of the house. Naturally they must give some attention to appearances. Neatness, cleanliness, and order are essential. Esthetic considerations are basic—they want the

home to be as lovely, gracious, and harmonious as possible. And real beauty means individuality.

Secondly, there is the matter of the use to which the house will be put. It must be comfortable and cosy. Domestic convenience and efficiency are essential. The home must also make ample provision for the activities of the family.

There are other equally important needs which are far less often considered. One is the necessity for what we call "separateness." A family is not only a family, it is John and Mary and Bill. And what John has and does are continually affecting what he is. Unless personalities are to be stifled and the members of the family are to become carbon copies of the one who is most aggressive, the physical arrangement of the home must provide for individual growth and activity. There must be in every home some spot, however small, which is the outward symbol of each individual's inner, developing self. If it is only a corner or a shelf, this spot must be "my castle"—the spot over which I alone have control, which I arrange and use as I wish, and which no one else is free to use unless it is offered. Each member of the family needs some chance for privacy. He needs some place to go to when his nerves are on edge, when he is overwhelmed and confused, a place where he can wait alone in silence until he has gathered himself together again.

Of course there is need for togetherness. Every home needs at least one room in which all the members of the family can remain comfortably and for long periods of time. No room should be so grand that its doors must always be barred.

Ideally there should be no conflict between these two aspects of the home, its appearance and its use. Where space is plentiful and money no object, there need be no real conflict. But usually some sacrifice is necessary on one side or the other. The mother's bedroom will not look quite so lovely if she keeps that battered sewing table she loves. The living-room floor will not gleam quite so brightly if the family

dances on it often. The house cannot be ready for visitors every moment of the day if children play there very much.

We all know only too well how easy it is to err on one side or the other. We know the home where we stumbled over roller skates on the living-room floor, and found a lollipop tucked into our best hat, and where the parents' response to this was, "But children have their rights!" We also know the home which is like a showcase, where the parents live in continual anxiety for fear the three-year-old will break something, where the father's fishing tackle and the adolescent's tripod have to be relegated to the farthest corner of the closet, and where the growing children continually hear, "Don't bring that awful looking thing into the house!"

To sacrifice either aspect of the home to any such extent as this is to sacrifice personality; it is to sacrifice living. But it is possible to achieve that golden mean wherein there is no sacrifice of essentials.

As we shall see, it will require some planning, thought, and time to have a home which is neither a showcase, a recreation hall, nor a workshop, but which is really a place to live. This is no "extra" added to family life; it is as important as the parents' choice of an occupation, or a school for the children. What do time and effort count compared with not really feeling cramped in your home, with having the chance to do the things that mean life, with knowing that children are not blocked and frustrated, but busy and happy?

WE PLAN FOR IT

It is evident that since the furnishing of the home involves the expenditure of considerable money, the parents must take responsibility for important decisions. But it is also evident that since this is literally a joint possession, the expression of everyone's opinion should be invited and considered. Where the children are too young to know their needs or to express their tastes, the parents will plan for them.

It is most probable that the children will have less to do with planning in connection with the appearance of the home than with its use. Sometimes they will have very little interest in the esthetic side, and certainly there is no need to make them say whether they would rather have a blue or a green rug, or whether they like papered or painted walls before they are at all interested in such things. But by all means give them a chance to express any real interest they do have. And they may be quite interested and have some amazingly good ideas. A nine-year-old girl came back from a visit with a glowing description of the way the family had arranged their living room. At her earnest suggestion her family decided to try out a somewhat similar arrangement, and they found they preferred it to the one they had had. The miniature furniture sets which are sold to enable people to try out different effects are expensive. You or the children might love to make some furniture of balsa wood, which you could use for this purpose.

The children's preferences can be consulted indirectly. The parents can make a point of knowing the colors, shapes, and textures they like. And it may be possible to meet their desires in small ways—in the choice of a cherry-colored sofa cushion, a rectangular-shaped lamp shade, or chintz drapes.

Since this chapter does not purport to be a treatise on interior decoration, we simply mention again the point of having an individual home. It is very helpful indeed to read about interior decoration, to look at pictures and model apartments, and to notice other people's homes. But others can only suggest. Slavish following of fashion or of "rules" about matching colors and so on may produce a home that has a certain kind of beauty. But it invariably has the coldness of a decorator's window. Only as the members of a family accept or reject ideas, and modify and adapt them to suit their own taste will they produce a home that is warm and vital and really lovely. The children will be quite articulate in expressing opinions about the use of the house, though even here decisions must

often be made for them. For example a six-year-old who has been using his play table to paint on may not realize how very much he would like to have an easel.

A nine-year-old may have to realize that he is not to use his new desk for scientific experiments, even though this means that he has to wait to use the kitchen table.

When it comes to the use of the house, each person's needs and desires have equal rank. Age, youth, brilliance, aggressiveness, charm or appeal—these in themselves give no member the right to take precedence over another. The parents' interests do not come first because they are older. Those of the children are exactly as pressing. Nor do the children's come first because they are young and growing. The parents are also growing, and their most fruitful years may lie decades ahead. Each member has the same inalienable rights, for the potentialities of each are limitless—limitless and unpredictable. While the parents pay for the home, the children contribute as much to it. So a play table ranks with a sewing table, a record of Beethoven with one of Mother Goose, and *Popular Mechanics* with *The Atlantic Monthly*. When choices have to be made, the only question is, "How much does this mean to his growth, to our growth?"

ENOUGH ROOM TO LIVE IN

While every home has enough room to live in, fortunate indeed are those families who live in fairly large, detached houses, with cellars or yards. For here is ample space for living. But even here some planning will help very much to make life happier for everyone.

In the interests of separateness it is wonderful for each child to have his own room. Actually this is far more important than for the family to have a guest room—the children can double up when guests come. And every child can express his individuality in his own room, exactly as the parents express theirs in their room or rooms. Though the young child

cannot express his preferences, he certainly does have them. So often the rooms of the two- three- or four-year-olds are really an expression of the parents' taste. In such rooms the accent is usually on gaily painted borders; perhaps entire walls and ceilings are covered with large pictures. There are many frills on curtains and bedspreads, toys are arranged with the handsomest to the front; the toy box is full to overflowing.

The child may love some of these things, but on the whole such a room is too elaborate to please him. Nor is it a room anyone would care to live in day after day; it may be definitely overstimulating. If you want your room to express your child, make it soft, homelike, and very simple. Often it is well to dispense—not only with large figures on walls and ceiling but even with the border of Mother Goose or the circus—for these never change. Even if you keep the border, place some pictures on a level with the child's eye. He can indirectly exercise some choice in relation to these. For the parents will know what he likes, will know his passion for dogs or horses, or policemen. It will mean everything to him if you will cut them out of a magazine—if he is old enough, let him cut them out and then fasten them to the wall or to a screen with Scotch tape. No harm will be done to the room, and the pictures can be changed with the child's changing interests. Of course some of his own paintings will be hung also, and he may want to have a few little clay objects about, if he is using clay.

Since the mind of a small child cannot take in many things at once, he is likely to become confused by having a great many toys about, and may show this by becoming bored with all of them. So keep the supply of toys down; leave out only a few at a time, and put the rest away, to be brought out when he is tired of the ones he has. And let him have the best loved ones near him, whether they are new and handsome or battered and ugly. And let him have them just where he wants them, even if to adult eyes they look much better somewhere else.

Part of this room is to be used for play, which means that to him it is to be a workshop. It cannot then be so crowded that there is not plenty of space for such important activities as painting, block-building, and playing house. These activities will demand as much as half the room. And a linoleum floor is far better than one which is covered with a carpet. Rugs over linoleum are ideal, for they look soft and pretty and can be moved about to suit the child's needs. The placing and care of various kinds of toys and art materials will be discussed in later chapters. This kind of room may not meet decorator's standards, but it has the indefinable charm of childhood. And it will spell home to *your* child.

While every growing child is certainly not necessarily deeply interested in the appearance of his room, he will greatly appreciate it if his parents know how much he does care, and will give him the kind of lamp, wall paper, or desk he prefers, provided it is practical. A child will certainly care about the use of the room, will want a place for the baseball bat, or doll's trunk or bed. And he will very probably want a shelf for the books he likes, as well as someplace in which to keep his precious colllections. The collecting urge is very strong in growing children, and it is one of the ways in which they grow and learn. Things that seem unsightly to others may be lovely to them. A satisfactory compromise can be reached by placing the ugliest ones—a rusty horseshoe, a defunct clock—behind a screen or on a shelf under a curtain.

As the girls grow older they may or may not show the approach of adolescence by expressing a desire for some particular piece of furniture like a vanity. They should certainly have one if they want it. And you do not have to go to the store and buy one. A mother delighted her ten-year-old daughter on her birthday with a vanity she had made out of packing cases, rags and newspaper stuffing, and some cretonne.

The adolescents, both boys and girls, will certainly have

more interest in the way their rooms look, and when there is any redecoration, they should have some part in it. The girl will respond early to the chance to furnish and decorate her room herself, with help from the parent. And this is a splendid experience for adolescents. It meets their need to feel they are growing up and are approaching the time when they will be decorating their own homes; it also gives them a most valuable training in home decoration.

But these boys and girls will certainly need guidance and help from their parents. They can talk things over together, visit stores, and bring home samples. A fourteen-year-old girl once startled her mother by announcing that she wanted a pink-and-blue room. But the mother decided that if Dorothy wanted this color scheme, she could have it. She pointed out to her, however, that she would have to live in this room for many years, and asked her whether she might not get tired of looking at vivid shades of blue and pink for so long a time. Dorothy agreed that she might, and when they began to shop they found they could select soft shades that would harmonize very well. The result was a really attractive room. What is more it was a room that looked very much like a fourteen-year-old girl, and in particular like Dorothy.

In rooms of this kind children can really develop a sense of possession and freedom. It is not difficult to help children develop a pride in the appearance of their rooms and habits of order in the care of their possessions if they are handled gently but firmly from their earliest years. Guidance in relation to these matters will be discussed in more detail in a later chapter dealing with housework.

It is wonderful if the house is large enough to allow a play-room for the children. While this room also should be kept in order by the children, some things, like easels, should be left standing, so that the children can use them when the spirit moves. And the elaborate block structures of the six- and seven-

year-olds should remain on the floor until they have been completed and until the children have had plenty of time to play with them.

By all means have a carpentry shop in the cellar, where there will be plenty of space for bench and tools and where the noise will not disturb the rest of the family. The space under the porch is invaluable. The children can keep not only their bicycles and scooters there but also those delicious mud lamb chops or pies, battered tin dishes, or oily machinery which cannot be brought into the house, but whose value is beyond rubies.

Even a tiny yard means so much, if all of it is not made into a lawn. Parents and children may like to grow flowers and vegetables in part of it. And some part of it should be set aside for the children's play. The department and toy stores sell play equipment like slides, wading pools, and climbing apparatus which is not very expensive. And the father may be able to make some equipment. It is certainly easy to put up a swing. And a sturdy ladder fastened between two vertical posts gives the children a fine chance to climb, and it is wonderful to play on. In any case the children need things like large, hollow blocks, lengths of board, wooden packing cases, and if possible some empty nail kegs.

THE SMALL APARTMENT

Unfortunately most families do not live in dwellings with enough outdoor space, but in relatively small apartments. These are the homes which present the challenge.

Even where two or more children share the same room you can meet the need for separateness, at least in part, by giving to each one a little place—like a single shelf, or a few shelves, or a tiny cabinet, or a painted orange crate—for his own. And this should be covered with cretonne or chintz, not only to insure further privacy but also for the sake of appearances. If this is to mean anything to him, he must be permitted to

arrange his things in any way he wishes, and they should not be disturbed unless he has been consulted beforehand. It is to be taken for granted that people do not pry into a child's shelf, any more than they walk into other people's houses without ringing the bell. And even though the children do not have separate bedrooms it can be assumed that each member of the family will go to some room in the apartment when he needs to be alone.

In the arrangement of the apartment literally inches count. Changes like the addition of shelves or brackets to walls, transferring large bags with many compartments to the inside of closet doors, placing rolling chests under beds, and using suitcases for storage extend space amazingly. It also helps to put up hooks or brads in convenient places. Large manila envelopes can hold children's paintings, paper dolls, scrapbooks, or the stories they write. Shopping bags can hold toys and other things. You may have no garden, but you can grow many kinds of plants in window boxes or flower pots.

Where there is a great dearth of space the family will be very wise indeed to use the kitchen and bathroom for play purposes at times when they are free. In this case it must be definitely agreed that the children are to take out all their toys when they are through and are in general to leave the rooms as they found them. After all this is not much harder for them than to clean up the other rooms they have used. And if they have had a wonderful time they can surely be expected to do a little extra work. These are not as large as the other rooms, but they are certainly "someplace to play." And their washable walls and floors and the availability of water make them better than the other rooms for certain activities, like water play, scientific experimentation, painting, and developing pictures. Two small boys who were confined to a hotel room with slight colds, spent many happy hours making cardboard boats and sailing them in the bathtub.

Naturally individual differences affect the physical arrange-

ment of the apartment. For example, father and children who have a deep interest in carpentry should manage to have someplace in which to keep their bench and tools, even if these objects detract from the beauty of a bedroom. In short, all needs should be met if it is humanly possible—provided the interest is not lukewarm, but intense, and if it is not fleeting, but lasting.

SHARING THE HOME

But space and facilities are by no means enough. Quite as important as providing them is the careful planning of the ways in which they are to be used. For while the members of the family have many needs in common, they also have quite different, and sometimes conflicting, needs. In general, the parents have far greater need for quiet, relaxation, and privacy, and for the formal and informal entertainment of their friends, while the children's special need is for activity, noise, and the chance to play with their friends. And just as the parents have to be able to prevent some jumping, running, and banging, so the children cannot continually be told, "Keep still!" or "Go outside!" For they are at an age when keeping still is not only actual torture, but is also injurious. They should and want to be outside a great deal of the time, but if they are continually sent there, even in good weather, they come to feel much as the father would feel if he had to go to his club to find peace and quiet.

The solution as always in cases of this kind is a compromise. It is a compromise about times when parents and children are to use various rooms in the house and the ways in which the children are to use these rooms. It will help everyone if these matters are talked over at the family conclaves, which are to be discussed in a later chapter. At certain times the children will understand that they have the use of the common rooms such as living and dining room. At other times, they must play in their bedrooms or outside. They are not

to do certain things. They are not to jump on overstuffed furniture, or to throw anything, or to bring water into the living room, and so on. Usually in emergencies the interests of the children will have to give way. But there is no reason always to insist on this. For example, if an unexpected visitor arrives on a day when the children have planned some special activity it may be less upsetting for the parent to take his guest to a bedroom than for them to give up their plans. Of course there should not be rigid and inflexible schedules which operate for any long period of time. Rather, parents and children can talk the matter over and come to a general understanding. After that, matters should be decided from day to day.

So often we are afraid to take children into such plans for fear they will "go the whole way." We expect them to make exorbitant demands and to forget when they are playing, and to abuse the house. But this is to underestimate them. Though they are immature, they are reasonable. Though they need guidance and occasionally patience and firmness, they are responsible. It is amazing how they will respond when adults meet them halfway. It is also amazing how much self-control they will exercise when we expect it of them. This arrangement is working out perfectly in many families. Children can play violently in a formal living room and injure absolutely nothing. They will need some reminding. You may have to go slowly with them, but they will adjust. And in the end the parents will find that this kind of planning relieves them quite as much as the children. For when children are too confined physically, or if they feel themselves in some subtle way to be shut out—they cannot tell you so, but they will show the effects by restlessness, nagging, fussiness, and general irritability.

The particular needs of very young children have to be met in very special ways. To insure everyone's peace of mind breakable things should be put away until children are older,

and tippy tables or fragile lamps should be eliminated from the house during these years. Books are a particular problem with these children, and one family solved the situation by placing a wooden lattice across the bookcase. If you do this, however, keep the children within the family circle by giving them their own low shelf for their picture books and old magazines.

These homes *are* practical. In that of the Whitmans', for example, the casual visitor may drop in to find the entire family ensconced on the floor and roaring over a shadow-puppet show or to be pulled upstairs by Roddy to inspect his elaborate collection of sea shells. Or small Hannah may have taken over the kitchen, while Mark is developing pictures in the bathroom. But the formal visitor who is expected invariably finds a charming, dignified, gracious home.

Whether they are large and elaborate, or very small and simple, these dwellings are homes. They are the material foundation for real family living. And they are the only dwellings families love. Their very shortcomings—that cramped closet, that uneven floor, that stubborn window sash—are endearing. Parents experience an ever-deepening satisfaction in such homes as they grow older. Children come back to them joyfully at holidays and remember them all their lives with nostalgia. Visitors feel relaxed and happy there. For these dwellings, like the inmates, have personality. They have about them the atmosphere, the flavor, almost the taste of the family —of the Wrights, the Jones's, the Wilsons. And it is the flavor of *all* the Wrights, Jones's, and Wilsons.

Chapter 4

CONVERSING TOGETHER

YOUNG CONVERSATION

The way families talk together determines to no small extent the kind of home life they are able to achieve. Of course this consideration of family conversation as such does not mean that it can be separated from the rest of their living. It is one with all they do and think and are.

Nevertheless, it is a fact that children and adults use words very differently, and a knowledge of these differences increases understanding immeasurably. When in addition to a knowledge of the nature of "young conversation" is added a knowledge of the individual child, the result is not a flow of words back and forth but a meeting of the minds. Then adults do not strain to be "kiddish," nor do children strain to be adult; they speak as equals, as friends.

A mother and her four-months-old baby were conversing together. It was clearly a private conversation. But from the point counterpoint of smiles, and the way the baby, who was lying beside his mother on a blanket, arched his body over toward her and wiggled himself down to his toes and from the varied and delicious sounds made by both it must have been rather wonderful. And they continued to converse in this way for quite a while.

Sign language is common to all mothers and fathers and babies. But such close communion as this is rather rare. If mother or father leans very near to the baby, nods and smiles,

and then waits, he will be rewarded by more than a fleeting smile or coo. And when you share all the baby's experiences—his delight in his bath, and in reaching, grasping—it may repay you to do a little more watching and waiting, to do a little less talking yourself. Follow his lead more in finding ways to make him happy. When the mother is alone with the baby in the daytime, both she and he may enjoy it if now and then she talks to him about what she is doing and about the way she feels. For though babies do not understand, they have an uncanny power to sense and to return the feelings of those they love.

This interchange between parents and babies is emphasized because of its deep meaning for both. It is basically an expression of love. And if it represents to the parent a fulfillment of emotion growth, to the child it holds all of its promise. He is born an egotist, not even aware of anyone in the world but himself, conscious of no needs but his own. The first social emotion he knows is his mother's love, the first emotion he himself feels is a return of that love. This exchange of affection at the dawn of life turns the child's emotional drives outward, away from himself.

CONVERSING WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

Then come the words. Affection no longer expressed by sign language is transformed, because it is so much more individual. After Helen's mother had told her she loved her, the child replied, "I love you so much, Mommie, I lose my words," meaning, of course, that she had found them. Though parent and child will speak of many other things now, do not have any inhibitions about showing affection, regardless of what you happen to be talking about. Both of you need it as you needed it before. And again talk to your child about yourself sometimes. This occasional conversation not only brings you closer, but it is like an arm reaching out and gathering

him into the family circle. No matter how tired or upset you are, or how irritating he is, never let your voice be harsh when you speak to him. For he depends on your affection as his tower of strength, and he receives much of it through your voice.

Many parents show a wonderful understanding in speaking directly with young children. They speak clearly and distinctly, use simple words, and short sentences. And knowing that the child loves to repeat words and phrases from time to time, they do this. They make allowances. Realizing that the child is naturally egocentric, they speak a great deal about him. He is often the hero of the little stories, which deal with his everyday life. And since his attention span is very short, they put no strain on him by trying to hold him to one point for any length of time.

The most common mistake made by parents in connection with children's conversation is to apply to it standards which are too adult. In their natural longing to help the child to have a large vocabulary, to speak fluently, and to grasp ideas on a mature level they try to send him ahead faster than he can really go. They teach him many words before he knows anything about the things for which they stand, and make explanations he cannot understand, because his experience has been too limited. But children are very clever imitators and badly want to please their parents, with the result that they repeat what they hear, and their conversation sounds amazingly clever. In a real sense, however, it is hardly conversation at all. It is more a juggling of sounds.

For example, a mother and her three-year-old were looking at a picture book about cats. At first the child was interested in the cats and asked eager questions about each picture. Then his mother started telling him the names of the different breeds, "That is a Persian, that is a Siamese," and so on. The child repeated the words after her and soon lost all interest

in the cats, turning the pages rapidly and demanding to know the names. Plainly this child was really performing like a poll parrot.

A six-year-old was entertaining two adult visitors with a learned "lecture" about boats. He gave the names of many well-known liners, told the speed of each in terms of knots, compared their speeds, and named their ports of call. One of the visitors was delighted with this exhibition. The other visitor looked at some blocks that were on the floor and asked Eric if he would not like to build the *Queen Elizabeth*. He set to work immediately, and when he finished his *Queen Elizabeth* was the kind of crude rectangle that did not even suggest a boat and that showed the immaturity of a three- or four-year-old. Eric had memorized information without gaining any idea of the concrete reality.

Let the young child work his way into words, so to speak, by associating them with something he really knows. Let him rely on his own resources. Tell him no words he is not himself struggling to find, give him no verbal explanation he is not himself seeking. When your answer plainly satisfies him, do not continue.

When the child does not ask a question, or even when he does ask, it is better not to set him straight about something that confuses him, but rather to help him to set himself straight by letting him see, feel, or touch. For example two three-year-olds were playing with some farm animals. Bertrand had a barn, and his cow was furnishing milk to Malcolm's family. When Malcolm asked if the cow would give him some cream, Bertrand answered, "No cream from cows! Cats give cream!" The mother said nothing at the time, but a little later, when she was in the kitchen, she let the children watch her pour some cream from the top of the milk bottle.

It is useless to try to develop fine qualities of character by urging young children to be generous or brave, since they cannot possibly understand these abstractions. Rather suggest

that they share their toys and encourage them to stand their ground against an aggressor. Young children do not learn manners by being told they must be "polite," or by being compelled to say "Please" and "Thank you." Such commands make them lose confidence and poise, for they come to associate them with having to do something which seems to them quite senseless. Instead, say "Please" and "Thank you" to the child, and for him. Thus he will associate the words with a sense of confidence and eventually with the feelings for which they stand. Also, instead of telling him to follow you through a door, simply form the habit of preceding him whenever it is safe to do so. Since handshaking and saying "How do you do" are merely forms after all, it is a good idea to make a game of them with young children.

"That," announced a three-year-old, "is the peak of my career!"

It is surely hard not to be excited when a child comes forth with a remark like this. But it is surely better not to show excitement when you are with him. It is fine to think your child is wonderfully clever, but it is certainly too bad for them to begin to think so. Therefore, try to accept his remark as casually as it was made and save him from the danger of becoming self-conscious about words.

Ideally, as the child grows older and gains greater command of words, as his understanding of the adult world deepens, he and his parents should draw ever closer in conversation. But the unvarnished truth is that this does not usually happen. On the contrary, at no period is it harder for adults and children to find a common meeting ground in speaking together than during the middle years.

Nevertheless, parents and children can find a common meeting ground in conversation. Those who have found it know its singular enchantment. This leggy, toothless, restless being can give you a companionship you have never received before and will never receive again. His groping efforts to be a person

are so fascinating, his longing to reach you so touching, his sympathy so comforting. "Judy's been a tower of strength to me ever since she was six," said her mother. Judy is by no means an "old" little girl, nor is her mother flighty and irresponsible. Every parent can know as close a companionship with his growing child as this.

Understanding the nature of their conversation will not alone achieve this companionship, but it will surely help to achieve it. The growing child is garrulous certainly; he rattles on about things that are inconsequential to us, but this is because his early childhood is not far behind him. His conversation is in itself no less appealing than it was. It is losing its appeal simply because his voice is now so loud and because it is no longer wonderful that he can speak at all. So we tend to ignore it, not even to hear much of it.

And the child is now so large and strong and uses words so fluently that it is easy to expect more of him than he can give. His time sense is still not too good. He lives largely in the present. There are still many abstract ideas he cannot grasp. He is still egotistical.

It is also easy to misunderstand his boisterousness, his strut, and his swagger. Though they seem so babyish, they are a sign of growing maturity. The "middle-aged" child is one who has eaten of the tree of knowledge. He realizes what he could not realize before—his own helplessness in relation to the adult. "I used to be a baby," remarked a four-year-old. "I'm a big man now!" You will never hear an eight-year-old say this. He says instead, with a weary sigh, "I'll never be grown up." His strut and swagger are his defenses. In the same way, a short man tries to compensate for his size by a pompous manner. Far from being insensitive, this child is actually pitifully sensitive, fearful of seeming weak and ridiculously stupid in the eyes of adults. This is why he often closes up, or acts as though he does not care.

Such facts about child growth explain the peculiarities of

young conversation. The adult who understands him will reach him. When he rattles on endlessly about who made the team, who runs fastest, about Superman and the movie hero, do not bother to be all ears. Let much of what he says flow past you, but *accept* his conversation, be near him in spirit, for he is talking about his life. Only then will you know him, for only then will he dare to be himself. And recognize the fact that these self-revelations do not announce themselves. They come suddenly, as if from nowhere; they come and go as quickly. It may be a comment so wise as to reveal almost adult intelligence, it may be a sudden feeling of tenderness for the weak, or a story that cheered him mightily or discouraged him deeply, or an announcement of a longing so deep that eventually it will dominate his life.

A ten-year-old boy who was strolling down the street with his father once said, "Blackie didn't eat his breakfast this morning. Wonder if he's sick. Poor Blackie." He turned and looked gravely into his father's face. "I'm going to be a doctor. I'd rather die than not be a doctor." He jumped up and caught at a branch of a tree. "Say, Dad, will you bring that chocolate bar? Will you? You promised."

If you are aware that the most important things children say come in snatches, you will not only understand your child better, you will also know how badly he may need you at that moment. He may need comfort, sympathy, praise, or guidance. If he gives forth with a fine idea, tell him it is fine, but without undue acclaim. Do not pity him openly, though you could weep. Adult patronage is torture to him. If he is at sea it may be better to let him think it over a bit. In any case, do not hand down advice he is bound to follow. Work it out with him, a step at a time. Remarks like these will start him thinking: "Did you think of this?" or "I wonder about trying so and so," or "Paul was in that fix once, and he did so and so, and it worked pretty well."

Before reprimanding children for things they say, before

you think them hard and unfeeling, take account of those limitations in understanding, and of that shell with which they so often try to cover their emotions. One evening ten-year-old Jean was reprimanded by her mother for being querulous and demanding at dinner. "After Cousin Belle took you to the circus, and bought you that lovely wooden bear," she added. But Jean's time sense, like that of all growing children was not too good. For her the afternoon was over. Now she was tired and strung up and found herself with adults who forgot her and expected her to do nothing but sit and listen to them talk about world affairs. But she did feel grateful, and she showed her feeling. She showed it when she clung to her cousin at leaving, and when she begged to be allowed to come again. She showed it still more plainly on another day when she went to the cousin's office and willingly helped her to straighten up her desk and shelves.

Timothy lost his dog. His aunt mentioned it, and with a shrill laugh Tim said, "They chopped his head right off! Nah, they didn't. They gave him gas." His aunt remarked that she felt so badly when they were going to put her dog to death that she asked a friend to go with her. When she finished speaking of this incident, she darted a glance at Tim's face and saw the stark agony in his eyes. In a low voice he said, "I didn't know they were going to do it. I wasn't even there."

Never make children ashamed of their feelings. When they say they "hate" someone, or want all kinds of dreadful things to happen to him, they are often simply saying that this person is annoying them. Tell them it is quite natural to feel this way, that you understand it perfectly. If children are well adjusted, these feelings are neither very intense nor of very long duration. Find the reason for children's remarks and make every effort to remove the cause.

Parents and growing children have many things to talk about, aside from the things they are doing together. Parents need not be afraid that the teacher will think they are interfer-

ing if their interest in school is not limited to a glance at the monthly report card or a visit when the child is in "trouble." The child will love to talk about school if the parent does not press for information, but simply inquires whether his teacher is nice, whether he likes arithmetic, and who his friends are. The teacher will welcome this interest, the child can never tell you what it means to him.

Relationships between adults and children, like those between adults themselves, are never one-sided. If parents understand children, and so come close to them, they will receive a response. You will discover that you too are opening up, are speaking of things that please or trouble or annoy you, and of the way you feel. Children should not be told too much by parents. They should be protected from undue anxiety, such as that about finances, or about differences with relatives. Nor should they be encouraged to puzzle their heads over matters they are too young to understand. There is always a special temptation to burden only children in this way.

But aside from these matters, there is no aspect of their lives that parents cannot share with their growing children.

How splendid it would be, for example, if children knew more about their parents' jobs than most of them do. Of course if you are a banker or a lawyer, you cannot enter into the intricacies of your job, but you can tell the children that you keep people's money for them, or that you settle their quarrels. Children can understand a great deal about other kinds of work, especially about skill or unskilled labor, like that of the postman, fireman, or policeman. Tell them about advances, about a promotion or an increase in pay. You will find that their pride in you will mean quite as much as the advancement itself. No experience they will ever have can do more to build the character traits you want them to have, than knowing that you, their idol, possess these traits.

Older children, like younger ones, learn courtesy, not by hearing lectures on "manners," or by being obliged to go

through a kind of ritual, but by seeing it exemplified in the family. They learn it by observing that the father and mother are careful not to interrupt each other, or them, that they always say "Excuse me" to each other and to them. Build up a feeling of confidence about manners by making boys proud to take off their hats in elevators and to observe the other courtesies of social life.

THE ADOLESCENT

It has been said that ideally at the close of adolescence "the parents have lost a child and have gained instead a rare companion." The parent who has sought his son's or daughter's friendship now will find it richly rewarding. The adolescent has so much to give. Mentally he has reached, or soon will have reached, his fullest development. His consuming interest now is in your world, the grown-up world, and his part in it. The range of his interests is perhaps broader now than it ever will be in his life. He is concerned about such varied fields as community affairs; the government of city, state, and nation; international relations; labor and capital; art. If he attends a good school he is learning a great deal and is a stimulating conversationalist. He can give, as well as receive, counsel. His point of view is fresh; it is objective. He has not lost his idealism.

In one sense, however, the boy or girl is steadily withdrawing from his parents. The adolescent's job now is to grow up. He has to free himself completely and forever from the need to depend on parents for advice and even from feelings of guilt because he must sometimes go against their wishes. It is a difficult period for him, perhaps the most difficult period of his entire life, and the most critical. What your protection meant to him when he was younger, your whole-hearted desire that he should grow up means now.

The adolescent at this time may seem to turn from his parents. They may find that he is going to someone else for

advice—to an uncle, or teacher, or family friend. He is really not turning from the parents, but from the dependence they have so long represented to him. If the other counselor is a good one, encourage him to go to that person. If you are sympathetic and show him in every way that you want him to be independent, he will undoubtedly seek your guidance, at least occasionally, though more and more rarely. Intelligent guidance means steadily exercising decreasing control, until the time comes when he is able to make up his own mind as independently as a mature adult. The parents can help by suggestions and by pointing out that choices are not irreparable. The adolescent both wants and needs to talk about himself sometimes. He needs help in understanding himself, in looking at his assets and liabilities quite frankly.

Do not say of the adolescent, "He will only be young once, all he should have now is a good time." He does want a good time, but he does not want only this. He wants to share the responsibility of the home and to feel his parents trust him to assume some part of it. Where there is a wide age range among the children in the family, take him into your confidence about the younger children and solicit his co-operation.

SOCIABLE MEALTIMES

Mealtime can mean so much in the life of the home, since it offers almost the only opportunity for the family to talk together, either as a whole or in smaller groups. An atmosphere of ease and relaxation is basic. It is amazing what a little planning will do to help create this feeling. Naturally parents and adolescents need a little time to rest before dinner. Sufficient time should be allowed for the preparation and serving of all meals so that no one will feel rushed or flustered. It is most important to give the children plenty of time to tidy themselves up. If they are absorbed in doing something, by all means do not jerk them away suddenly; give them a little warning. They may be in the act of putting a sick baby to

sleep, or they may have suddenly discovered how to mend a broken airplane. It is better to delay the meal a few minutes than to have them come to the table feeling tense and upset.

When the entire family comes to the table, mealtime will be far happier if the conversation is shared. It is certainly not too pleasant to have the children monopolize the conversation, or to have them sit silent most of the time. To prevent either of these extremes, begin very early to guide the conversation so that part of the time it is of a general nature. Sometimes let the children express themselves. Then again the parents should have an opportunity to speak. The children should certainly realize that when guests are present they are not to do so much talking.

In general, it is better for children to eat their dinner by themselves on week nights, until they are eight or nine years old. Sometimes, when mothers as well as fathers are working, the mother may prefer not to serve two separate meals, but experience seems to prove that it is the better arrangement. This is the time when the parents are most in need of quiet and repose. They should not be surrounded by the atmosphere of restlessness and activity that younger children inevitably engender, especially if they, too, happen to be tired after a strenuous day. But the children will certainly not enjoy eating alone. Moreover, they do not like just having the servants with them. Nor will the parents really find this arrangement satisfactory. The mother, the father, if he is at home, or perhaps an older girl, or even a boy, may like to sit and chat with the younger children as they have their dinner. But whoever stays with the children will certainly have a better time if he really shares their interests. Recently a mother asked another mother why her boy had become so cross lately. "Both his father and I are working," she said, "but we spend all the time we possibly can with him. We even hurry home every night to be with him while he eats his sup-

per." "What do you talk about then?" asked the friend. The other laughed ruefully. "Well—now that you speak of it, we do take that time to discuss family finances with each other!"

HUMOR

Where families are relatively humorless, we earnestly recommend that they do not merely yearn for humor, but that they do something about developing it. You can cultivate a sense of humor, exactly as you can cultivate kindness and generosity. Humor accompanies these qualities. Just as the body builds up certain natural immunities, the personality has developed ways of resisting threatening psychological influences. One such means of resistance is the power to see the ridiculous. Every human being has at least the makings of a sense of humor. Babies smile before they talk. Young children express pure joy and even a general feeling of well-being through laughter.

A sense of humor, however, can be lost. A lack of humor in adults is usually the result of childhood experiences. Parent's very often stifle the humor in their own children.

Two little girls were giggling on a bus. It was a fine morning. Probably they had had a nice breakfast. Anyway they were feeling as happy as could be. Suddenly it struck them as killingly funny that people should get on to busses only to get off again! The mother, obviously preoccupied with the shopping she had to do and with the job of piloting the children about, saw nothing remotely humorous about this point and cast reproving glances at them. But she could not dampen their ardor, and they left the bus in gales of laughter. On the street she spoke to them sharply. The older child's face sobered immediately. But no one could take from the younger child her right to laugh, and, laughing merrily, she went down the street.

Surely this mother would have been far happier if she had been able to share the children's rather silly joke. It would

have made her feel less worried about what lay ahead. And it will help all parents to share the somewhat crude humor of their children. Every parent can at least *accept* children's humor. If you cannot laugh with them, you can at least be glad with them. Increasingly you will then catch the contagion of the children's high spirits and will find eventually that your own more subtle humor is reasserting itself. And if it is encouraged the children's humor will become less crude as they grow older. Spontaneous laughter will not be heard only occasionally in the home, but will be a regular accompaniment of family life, adding sparkle and zest, oiling the machinery, and smoothing the rough places.

We need to consider briefly the nature of children's humor. Their humor is certainly crude compared with ours, though when we think of certain comic strips and radio programs, we realize that the contrast is not so great after all. Except for this fact, however, basically it is exactly like ours. Like us they laugh at discomfiture. They love to see the person in authority made ridiculous and to have the weak triumph. We must understand their humor and be tolerant of their tendency to laugh too loudly and too long, or, in their ignorance, at the wrong time. We must be tolerant of their tendency to laugh often at us, since even though they love and respect us, there is a little of the buck private about them and of the stern sergeant about us. Do not reprimand them for making the same joke over again—if you thought it very funny the first time—for it is still funny to them, and they hope for praise again. Use humor to relieve tensions, but be sure the children do not develop the habit of taking all discipline lightly.

Adults, for that matter, can certainly laugh at the wrong time. Be sure when you tease that you are not really hurting, for ridicule is torture to children. Be quite sure also that you know why your child is laughing, for even well-adjusted children, like Pagliacci, sometimes cover pain with laughter. When the laughter is too shrill, or when the mouth smiles

but the eyes are grave, then do not laugh yourself. Rather find out the cause and see what can be done about it.

TALKING ABOUT SEX

Despite our knowledge about sex education, despite all that has been written and spoken on the subject, it remains a cause of anxiety among many parents. Yet children are born completely free in relation to sex. They can retain that freedom, or if they lose it, can regain it.

In her book on art therapy Margaret Naumberg describes the case of a ten-year-old boy, a major cause of whose disturbance was ignorance and feelings of fear, shame, and guilt in relation to sex. After therapeutic treatment these feelings left him, and gradually his entire attitude changed. He came to identify sex with creativity, with the endless renewal of life. He gained a deep sense of pride with the realization of his own creative power. He appreciated the beauty and rhythm of the birth cycle; he became objective about sex. He could be free, natural, even gay about it.

PARENTS' ATTITUDES ALL-IMPORTANT

This is the attitude every parent wants his child to have. And with good reason. Every psychotherapist will tell you of sick and unhappy adults whose emotional disturbances had their origin in childhood, when they were made to feel guilty and ashamed about one of the most important aspects of human life. A person who steadily harbors these feelings is moving through life like a man carrying a heavy secret burden. Other fears are frequently in reality only this fear in a different guise. Other weaknesses are reflections of this confusion. When he rids himself of these feelings through treatment, he realizes ineffable relief.

Nor is this merely relief in relation to sex. In one respect emotional suffering is like physical suffering—when it becomes intense it is not localized. The sufferer is not conscious

of where he suffers—he is suffering all over. Parents can spare their children this.

They can only do so if they themselves have kept, or regained, their freedom. Where they are unable to be free and natural about sex, it will help them to read such books as *The Wonder of Life,* by Milton I. Levine, or *Growing Up,* by Karl de Schweinitz, or many of the works of Frances Bruce Strain. If reading does not provide sufficient help, it is suggested that they join a study group if one is available in their community. Parents who are really unable to overcome their embarrassment are advised to leave sex education to someone else—a teacher, relative, or close friend, who is better fitted to guide the children.

It is not possible to lay down many fixed rules about sex education, for success depends on each parent's handling the matter in the way best suited to him and to the child. Certain general principles are helpful however. The first and most important is *to speak with children about sex exactly as you speak with them about everything else.* As you do not set aside special times to talk about generosity or honesty, so do not set aside special times to talk about sex. Rather wait for the right time. The right time is when the child is curious and interested. It may be when your four-year-old asks you a question on the street, when your ten-year-old makes a remark in front of a statue in the museum, or when your adolescent daughter feels like being confidential after a dance. Just as you are not shocked by any other form of curiosity, so do not be shocked about this. Just as you give frank and honest answers to other honest questions, so give honest answers to these.

One of the most common mistakes made by parents in relation to sex education is to tell children more than the children want to know or can possibly understand. In part, this is a natural swing away from the old reticence. In part such a tendency results from an eagerness to be sure that the chil-

dren know all that they should know about sex. But neither interest nor understanding can be forced upon children. If children are handled in this way, they become bored and confused about sex. A mother worried greatly because four-year-old Patsy had not asked a single question. At last came the usual, "Where did I come from?" With great relief the mother sat down and launched forth on a long explanation about the bees and the flowers. Patsy listened, looking unutterably bored. When the mother finished, she said anxiously, "But Patsy, you didn't care about this wonderful story." "Oh, Mommie," protested Patsy. "You never did tell me. George comes from New Jersey. I wanted to know where I come from."

FIRST QUESTIONS

The curiosity of very young children does not usually go beyond wanting to know the simplest facts, such as the physical differences between boys and girls and where babies come from. A sentence or two usually satisfies them completely. Later they may remain casual or, on the other hand, they may become quite preoccupied with sex. At this stage and for quite a while, they can understand only its biological aspects. If when they are about six they do become preoccupied with sex, there is no reason to be in the least disturbed, for this is a phase many normal children go through.

When they are around nine or ten, children often seek very full information about the biological side of sex—about how the mother is fertilized, about pregnancy, and birth. Of course, the parent should answer every question they ask. The child's initial questions and the later interests, as well as your own interest, should determine the general approach. It is as absurd to shut out plant and animal reproduction as it is invariably to begin with it. Charts and line drawings of the kind found in the books cited above will be very helpful. If the children want to draw, paint, or model nude figures of

men and women, accept them as you accept their other art work.

Children of this age may ask direct questions about the sexual relations of their own parents. And the fear that these questions will arise explains the hesitancy of many parents to discuss sex with them at all. But the fear is really unnecessary. Answer the general questions frankly, and if they start to pursue the matter further, you can usually divert their interest and bring them back to the general aspects. Should this be impossible, it is advised that you simply tell them this is something all parents want to keep to themselves. Both older and younger children will accept modesty naturally enough if the parents themselves do not show any embarrassment and if they simply say, "We don't do this or that."

Unfortunately the traditional attitude that sex is "wrong" is still so prevalent in this country that children who have been handled wisely at home and also in school, often develop unfortunate attitudes through the way others—children, servants, or perhaps prudish relatives—speak to them about it. It is sometimes difficult to counteract these influences. The mother of four-year-old Sophie had been able to keep her completely free of false notions about sex. But one day she overheard a strange nursemaid call "Shame!" to the child. After that Sophie reddened and looked down when before she had been as natural about this as about everything else. Do all you possibly can to protect your child from these experiences.

Parents often do not know when children are exposed to these influences. But if a child's attitude, like Sophie's, suddenly changes, you can take it for granted that another child or adult is responsible. Lead them to tell you about it. Help them by telling them very firmly that these people were mistaken, that they do not understand.

HELPING THE ADOLESCENT

The child who has been so handled approaches the period of puberty well prepared to meet the difficult problems that invariably accompany it. He will probably question you exactly as he did before. He may be frightened and upset by the strange new feelings he does not understand. You can reassure him by telling him these sensations are not strange in the least, that the strange thing would be not to have them. Most parents worry greatly about the way their adolescent boys and girls will conduct themselves with members of the opposite sex. If their guidance has been wise before this time —not only in relation to sex, but to other matters as well— there is no reason to worry. If you show understanding of their own attitudes and interest in relation to sex, if you meet them halfway, they will respond.

Adolescents care very greatly about making themselves attractive to the opposite sex, and for the very good reason that they want to be able to select the right husband or wife. They also want to be popular with the crowd and to form firm friendships with members of the opposite sex. Do not feel or show the least concern if for a time the only thing that seems to matter to them is grooming, wearing the right clothes, having the proper manners, and developing "a good line." On the contrary, show them that these matters are important to you as well as to them, and give them help—if and when they seek it. Do not hurry these boys and girls into discussions of parenthood. They are not yet ready for these. The principal of a certain girls' high school once decided that the students needed a course in baby care and accordingly organized one. He was somewhat crestfallen to find that they showed very little interest in it. The school psychologist heard about the failure and suggested that he start with a course in ways to dress attractively, the use of cosmetics, hairdressing, and so on. He followed her advice, with highly successful results.

On the other hand, your teen-age boy or girl may seem to be interested in marriage at an age when he seems absurdly young. If this is the case, he needs to give the matter serious consideration. This means that whole problem of boy-and-girl relations, especially petting and premarital experience, must be seriously discussed. Each generation approaches these problems differently, but every well-adjusted adolescent is really puzzled by one thing—how to reconcile idealism about sex with strong physical urges. He is also disturbed by the fear that unless he does "like all the others" he will be unpopular.

Avoid preaching on the one hand or sentimentalizing on the other. Adopt a common-sense attitude. Let your advice be based on experience; but do not draw your examples from the experiences of older people, who seem worlds removed from adolescents, but from that of young people, and the younger the better. It would help a great deal, for example, if, without any prying on your part, you happened to know the attitudes of the boys in your daughter's set and, in particular, how they felt toward certain girls, and the reason. It is all-important to show adolescents the hard, practical reason for premarital chastity—that emphasis on the physical aspect of sex weakens the capacity ever to know its real meaning.

Chapter 5

WE DECIDE: FAMILY CONCLAVES

DEMOCRACY IN THE HOME

"More than anything else home to me meant those Sunday nights," said a woman. "All of us sitting around in the living room—planning something together: a picnic, a party, who would do the dishes. Nothing ever seemed quite so important —*I* never seemed so important. We never laughed so loudly." She chuckled. "Our furnace wasn't very good. But the living room always seemed warm on Sunday nights."

These simple words describe more eloquently than any theoretical discussion could possibly do what conclaves mean in the home. If the dwelling itself is the material foundation for family living, the conclave is its very heart. Security is more than four walls and a roof. It is the feeling of being needed and that no one else will do. It is being allowed to give—of your experience and wisdom and skill in leadership, of your patience and generosity. It is being allowed to give though you are still egotistical, though your brains are undeveloped, your movements clumsy, your efforts feeble. Affection is more than words and caresses. It is a sharing of life.

How can this be done except when the family comes together as a group and plans the running of the home? The conclave is the family's instrument of democratic government. It is their town meeting, the time when each person speaks his mind, and when he also listens with respect to what others have to say.

The word *conclave* is used rather than *meeting* or *forum* because it is more comprehensive and allows for individual differences. Some families prefer a more formal meeting, others an informal get-together. Both settings add up to the same thing. The family comes together as a group at regular times, and talks things over.

Though, as we have said, the home is a partial, not a complete, democracy, this does not mean that any matters need be excluded from group discussion. The difference is rather in the degree of responsibility which can be given to the various members of the family when it comes to making the final decision. As in any democracy, decisions on major matters which affect all members are made by all—"government by consent of the governed." Among such decisions are: allowances and the way they are spent, housework, the family's recreation, the use of joint possessions, like the radio and the family car.

It must be admitted that co-operative discussion, which we hold to be so basic to the family's growth and happiness, is found in relatively few homes today. This is not because of any aversion on the part of parents to applying democratic principles to the running of the home. Certainly no father or mother wants to be a despot. On the contrary, objections to conclaves are based on purely practical grounds. In the first place, parents hold them to be both unwarranted and unnecessary when a group is so small and when its members live together in such close and continued proximity. Furthermore, they hold that many, many matters can be settled democratically with individuals as they arise. They point out that the conclave would complicate the machinery of running the home and create an additional burden, when they are already carrying all they can.

There is no question that the leadership of a family conclave is a job in itself. But it is a question of relative values. Making any decisions affecting members of a family is a job. In the beginning, the running of conclaves demands extra

time, planning, and effort. But this is a matter of months at most, a very short time in the family's total experience of living together. In the long run the conclave does not complicate the machinery of running the home, but vastly simplifies it. If proof of this statement were needed, we have it in the fact that no family who has really tested having conclaves could be induced to give them up.

"It's a plain matter of organization," declared a father who is an important executive in a large organization. "When my wife was sick one time I discovered just what a job it is to run a house with three children. It won't run smoothly without some planning and some system." A mother who was listening agreed heartily, and added, "And, oh, the nagging it saves us! I used to say all the time, 'I told you that before! I said *no* last week!' We're not any of us perfect by any means, but we're really learning to settle some things once and for all." "And can't matters be brought up at the most awful times," put in the father. "Last week Dennis and Kay started to needle me about allowances just as I was rushing off to a meeting. The relief of saying, 'Hold it! Wait for Friday night!' "

Saving friction makes for efficiency as well as for happiness. No one is perfect, but everyone is surely far more amiable about abiding by rules that he himself has helped to make. A little boy was once discovered energetically mowing the lawn. When asked about his work, he drew himself up and said, "We talked all about it. *We decided.* This is my job for now."

You know the havoc grudges play in family relations. Sometimes they reflect serious maladjustments between the various members, but not always. Even parents can unconsciously harbor them. For example, a mother may conscientiously clean every closet in the house each week because her husband's mother has always done this, and he feels it simply has to be done. She may even manage to be pleasant about the job, while inwardly she resents it. Her resentment may

show itself in the strangest ways—by begging her husband to do repair work when he is particularly busy, for instance. Children are especially prone to harbor grudges, because in spite of the fact that they seem far from reticent about what they want, they do keep many things to themselves for fear of looking ridiculous or stupid in the eyes of adults. Over and over again, edginess and flying off the handle are due to the fact that they think it's downright mean for junior to have all that money when they can't even buy a walkie talkie, or for sister to get to go to the movies whenever she wants, while they can only go once in a while. The fact that these injustices are wholly imaginary does not prevent them from rankling. Conclaves save so much of this wear and tear, for grudges can be brought out in the open and explained or adjusted.

Conclaves can thus be a great help in meeting the problem of sibling rivalry. It is most natural for children to feel aggrieved at unequal distribution of joint possessions. But they can far more readily reconcile themselves to affairs if the matter is discussed with everyone present. Patsy was told by her teacher to listen to a certain late afternoon educational radio program which related to her social studies work. Barton and Craig were furious at her monopoly of the radio every Wednesday when they were crazy to hear "The Lone Ranger." Finally the mother decided that this difference must be taken up at the next conclave. The mother's theoretical explanations meant less to them than the father's whole-hearted agreement with her. For Dad was their special companion in radio listening.

Even though the family is together a great deal, it is really not practical to try to settle such important matters in a casual fashion. A steering committee of adults made up of three members who see each other a great deal socially would not try an enterprise in this fashion. Such a group would set aside special times for gathering together, and they would know exactly what is going to be brought up at each meeting. Usually when

things are left to chance, the most important ones are forgotten.

It is strongly advised, therefore, that every family who does not have conclaves at least try them out. Progress will probably be slow at first. It will be slow even though the members of the family are very fond of each other. For although affection helps to achieve group feeling, the two emotions are quite different. Affection is a feeling for people, while what we call here group feeling centers around common objectives. But like affection, group feeling does not come overnight. It is a gradual growth. Almost always, certain personality adjustments are necessary if co-operation is to be achieved. People have to overcome shyness or selfishness or the desire to hold the center of the stage. It is very hard for children to overcome these tendencies, since they are both immature and egotistical. Even though parents may be skilled democratic leaders of groups outside the home, they will find they must almost begin over again, both because of the youth of the members of this conclave and because the members are in different stages of development. The more democratically the home has been managed before the conclaves, the more rapidly will success be achieved.

EARLY CONCLAVES

It is well to begin with something simple, something pleasurable, and something in which all or most of you can have a part. This might, for example, be a party which the nine- and ten-year-olds are going to give. It might be a picnic or a visit the family is going to pay. The party will serve as the present illustration. The parents will need to give some thought to the matter in advance. Do not plan out arrangements carefully beforehand. But think plans over, and be ready with suggestions. For where people are concerned situations have to be met as they arise. And it will help to think about each child and the ways in which he may react to group planning,

as well as about possible ways to help him. Reflect that Tony is impetuous, that Ben makes up his mind slowly, and that Sally can always be depended on to pour oil on troubled waters. Approach the meeting exactly as you would approach any democratic meeting which one of you is to chair. As in the committee meeting, the goal is to find out "what is your pleasure?" This, however, must be a reality, not a form. Parents must be ready to exercise more control than over a committee meeting, but only when the children waste too much time on trivial matters, when they make fantastic demands, when they heckle for the sake of heckling, or otherwise make it impossible to conduct the meeting in a reasonable way. Remember, too, that this is far less formal than a committee meeting, and the spirit must be kept relaxed throughout.

Where there is only one child in a home, the tone of these meetings is entirely different. In fact, they are so completely informal as to be talks rather than conclaves. It is necessary to go slowly in this case, since one child who is trying to decide something with two adults is likely to feel overwhelmed. Also be especially careful to see that decisions are really jointly arrived at, that the child is not entirely given his way on the one hand, or swept into agreeing with you on the other.

Suggest to the children that although the mother and one or two others have always done all the planning and work for the party before, this time it might be a good idea for everybody to be in on it. Then pick a time when the family is naturally together and when they feel relaxed. After breakfast on Sunday morning might be a good time, or on Friday evening. Of course you can talk better if everyone is comfortable, and if members of the family who want to knit or sew, do so. It may be that the younger children will prefer to play somewhere else. If they would rather stay and know what is going on, they should certainly be welcome, but they must play quietly.

The parents will certainly begin the talk in any way that seems natural to them, but the all-important thing is for the children to sense their parents' sincerity from the very beginning, for them to know that everyone is really going to join in on this. A mother once faced her beaming children with the remark, "Now we're all going to share in this party, and your share will be to put your toys away!" The light went out of their faces as though someone had turned a switch. This was to be something so special, and here all they could do was to put away their toys! It would be far better to say that since this is to be something special, it seems nicer to have everybody pitch in and help with the regular jobs, and then for everyone to share the more interesting ones, too.

If the children have previously had some real responsibility in their lives, the idea of thinking and working together will not only seem thoroughly sensible but will please them enormously. But if they have had basically an authoritarian home the children will be a little at sea, for the proposal will not fit into any pattern with which they are familiar. So they may be uncommunicative, waiting for their parents to make the first move. Or they may not say what they really want to say but what they think you want to hear. Thus Kenny may say he doesn't think this ought to be an expensive party, or Christine may primly announce that she guesses she'd better keep out of the kitchen. In this case, it will not help summarily to tell the children to "be themselves." Rather accept these remarks, but tell Kenny that they can have either cookies or cake, and ask which he prefers. Say to Christine that since everybody is going to help this time, she will be pretty busy, and how would she like to make the lemonade? Do not push children who are stiff and shy like these. Accept their answers at face value. Show each one that his choices matter to you, and are going to matter to everyone. If as they feel more at home, they suddenly tell you that they don't want what they just said they wanted, but something quite different, do not

show the least surprise, but register the second as the real choice.

Ask the children to make suggestions about things to do at the party. Probably they will have some good ideas. If their ideas do not seem too good, tell them why you think so, and offer others. Perhaps there is a seven-year-old, who, they announce, always hangs around at their parties and gets in the way. It might be suggested that he stay for part of the time and help serve refreshments. Since all this is not too easy for the younger child at best, it will comfort him greatly to say he will have a party for his friends quite soon and that everybody will pitch in and help him then. If the father wants to do something, he might offer to help fix up some special game, make some decorations, or hang lanterns. It is urged that if possible both father and mother plan to come to the party, even if both of them cannot remain the entire time, for their presence will mean a very great deal, both to the children and to them.

Refreshments should be discussed thoroughly, with each child telling what he would like to have and why. Perhaps there is something the children would like to help cook; if there is an adolescent girl she may want to do a good deal of the cooking. You can share the fun of choosing, or even of making, the table decorations.

This conclave will probably go quite smoothly. If one child is shyer than the others, the parents must take the trouble to ask what he thinks. If another rattles on a good deal, it will help if he is not summarily hushed up. If the children begin to beg for things that are too expensive, tell them frankly they cannot have them. But try to have the conclave end on a happy note. And be sure to have the children understand the plans as clearly as possible. If changes have to be made, talk these over with the children or explain the reason for them. Otherwise they will doubt whether you really meant it when you told them everyone was going to have a say.

TALKING IT OVER AFTERWARD

There should certainly be a second conclave to talk about the party afterward, both because of the pleasure of doing it and because of what it will mean. Ask what each one thought of this arrangement, whether it wasn't fun. Praise everyone for something he did especially well. Mention Ann's fine cookies or Dad's cardboard rabbit. Speak of how clever it was of Don to notice that the fruit punch didn't have much taste, and how obliging he was to dash out and get some more grape juice.

Of course, everything did not go perfectly, and you will all make a note of things that could have gone better and of how to correct mistakes next time. There may be some recriminations, and it will help the children if they are not forbidden to criticize each other. If there is a long dispute about what actually happened, it can best be ended by saying that since the party is over no one can really prove which person is right and that there is no use in arguing any longer. If you see humor in the situation, and the children can be helped to see it also, by all means laugh about it. You can admit that so-and-so did something wrong, then make a counter-suggestion. The children may criticize something the parents did. You may, for example, refer to some unconscious rudeness on their part, and they may come back at you by saying you did the very same thing, or something like it.

This criticism of parents by children is one of the most disturbing things about family conclaves. "Why try to have democracy in the home," said a mother after the first two or three conclaves held in her family, "when you can't maintain the right relation with your children?" But being criticized by your children does not injure the relationship. Rudeness in any form need not and should not be tolerated. The example of being courteous toward the children will mean as much as insistence on courtesy from them. But the way to handle criti-

cisms they make is to behave exactly as you would with an adult. If the criticism is unfounded, explain this fact. If it is justified, acknowledge the mistake or oversight. Make clear why it was made, that it should not have been made, and that you will guard against a recurrence. There is no greater misconception than the idea that children lose respect for any adult—their parents included—when they frankly acknowledge that they are human.

THE NEXT CONCLAVE

Though there may have been difficulties attendant on these first two conclaves, if the parents have really faced the challenge, the pleasure of planning and working together will far outweigh them, and the family will be really eager to have more. Do not hold them at regular times in the beginning, but wait for things to come along which, like the first, are easy to manage and pleasurable. After a while, getting together in this way will become a habit.

There will only be progress as the parents have goals clearly in mind. Work for very frank expressions of feelings on your part as well as on the children's. Avoid "lectures" about fairness, but encourage a sense of fair play by the example you set, particularly about the way decisions are made. Encourage objectivity simply by dismissing personal elements as unimportant and time-consuming. Encourage different opinions, but show by your manner that you think it is rather babyish to grow angry. Yield if you think you ought to, and stand your ground when you know you are right. Suggest compromises whenever possible, and show that you expect the same reasonable attitude from the children.

It is suggested that eventually you choose as the subject of a conclave, not some happily anticipated event but the settling of something that has been bothering everybody, some bone of contention. But do not select a veritable bête noire. Perhaps there is a moderate amount of trouble about the use

of the bath or the radio, or about the serving of breakfast on Saturday morning.

This kind of conclave presents far more of a challenge, both to parents and children. The parents will have to take more responsibility for guiding the discussion and do more of the talking themselves. The goal is to help the children come to realize that everybody will enjoy the home more if each gives up something. But any progress is very important, even if it means no more than that small Bill has realized why teen-age Marjorie needs to spend more time in the bathroom than he does or an agreement on her part not to take quite so long. Families are continually making these sacrifices for one another, but how often they are made under external compulsion. The compromises achieved at family conferences may be very slight but they are made willingly and with an understanding of the reason for them.

IT BECOMES AN INSTITUTION

Sooner or later the conclave will have become an institution in the family. Some families—usually the larger ones—will like to organize a regular "family meeting," with a chairman, voting by show of hands, and an agenda. Others may feel a little self-conscious about these formalities and may prefer the purely informal council. But in any case you will certainly want to set aside a regular time for the conclave.

As the weeks go by you will bring up more and more matters at these meetings. You will talk over so many things—an outing, the way to plant a garden, the way to spend a holiday. The parents will be able to help individual children in many ways. Perhaps a sister will look up so much to an older brother that when outings are suggested she always chooses "What Mike wants to do." In this case it will not help the sister to urge her to voice her wishes. Rather help her outside of the conclave. Encourage her to develop her own interests to the point where she will want to speak up. Where young children

are timid, draw them out gently. Find out their opinions ahead of time, and then say at the conclave, "Ginny told me she thought so and so, didn't you, Ginny?"

When the children want to do something you are sure is a mistake, handle the matter as you would in any democratic meeting. Do not immediately exercise your authority and forbid it. Discuss it with them from every side, with no more attempt to force, cajole, or entice them into doing as you wish than you would make with adults. Perhaps some information is lacking, like the cost or dependability of something they want to buy. In such a case, ask the children if they do not want to get this information themselves. When they have learned more, they may change their minds. In this, as in any matters which are not too serious, the children should make their own decisions—and face the consequences. Nothing anyone could possibly say would convince them so effectively of the need for being more cautious next time.

THE ART OF CO-OPERATION

It is a wonderful thing for a family to learn together the art of co-operation in this way. It is thrilling for the parents to watch the children grow, to see them learning how to control themselves, how to present their point of view convincingly to others, how to place the group's interest above their own.

Practicing this art in the home produces a sense of security and of belonging which will indeed warm the coldest living room. A family who held regular conclaves suddenly decided to go abroad one summer. In their conclave the members of the family had reached the conclusion that the trip would be a lot more fun if everyone knew as much as he could about the places they would visit. Consequently, after the fashion of a group of sensible adults, they divided up the things they wanted to find out about and each one chose a subject to read about and report on to the family. The trip was six

weeks away, but there was so much to do that they planned their days week by week very carefully. During one of their meetings the doorbell rang and ten-year-old Margaret answered it, then came running back with shining eyes. "Daddy, Esther's here!" she cried. "She wants me to go to the movies. Can I?" "Certainly, Peggy," he answered. "Here's the money." He laughed. "Only don't forget now. Last week you wanted me to be sorry for you because you hadn't had time to do your reading. Now I can't be sorry for you if you haven't done it this week. You know what you've planned to do this week, and when you plan to do it. If you want to go to the movies, it's fine."

Margaret stood like a statue for a moment, her brows drawn together. Then she turned on her heel and walked slowly to the door. Her voice rang out clear, resolute, happy. "Sorry, Esther," she said. "I'd rather not go tonight. Maybe Wednesday, if I've finished something I want to do. O.K.?"

Margaret's father had put no pressure on her, had made no sentimental appeal. And she was no prim stay-at-home; she had many friends. But in that instant she saw a family picture —and she decided she wanted to be part of it.

Chapter 6

SHARING WORK: HOUSEHOLD CHORES

"I declare," said a tired mother of three at the end of a day's cleaning and cooking, "Heaven must be a place where chores do themselves." Perhaps it is. At any rate, there is no escaping the fact that housework is one of the problems of family life. While some adults do like certain parts of it, most of us do not find it either inspiring or too pleasant to wipe off the same tables or to scour the same pots day after day.

And most children over the age of about five find even less joy in the monotonous chores and more drudgery in the mechanical ones. We would find it unnatural for them to feel otherwise. There seems to be something positively wrong with a boy who would rather bring in wood than play football on a November day, or with a girl who would rather wash dishes than go roller skating in the spring.

But if housework will never be unmitigated delight in the home, neither need it be an unmitigated bugbear. It can, in fact, be a blessing. If it is not the gold that glitters about family life, it is the iron that gives strength. It is not moralistic but realistic to say that hard jobs toughen character, if they are not performed merely through fear or the hope of reward, but because the reason for them is understood. Nor is it being "Pollyannish" to say that sharing work unites families as nothing else could possibly do. Furthermore, families who emphasize the positive side of housework, and who make a co-operative job of it do not find that all of it is drudgery. They feel that some chores are interesting and that all of

them offer some chance for fun and companionship, as well as for work.

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT IT?

"Do stop fussing about that dusting, Betty, and go and do it!" cried a mother to her eleven-year-old daughter. But not ten minutes before she had been confiding to a friend that all this cooking and cleaning would be the death of her! Children usually do more fussing about chores than their parents, and they do more forgetting and crawling out from under, but basically their attitude, like Betty's, is a faithful reflection of that of their father and mother. If the parents feel put upon, the children complain loudly. If the parents are grimly resigned, they try to grit their teeth and bear it, and if the parents accept chores realistically, they are relatively amiable about them. What the children reflect is the real feeling, the feeling underneath. For children are emotional conductors in relation to those they love.

Thus there is no single thing which will do so much to help children become co-operative about housework as for the parents themselves to be able to come to terms with this side of homemaking. You can cultivate right attitudes toward it, as parents who could never endure it before their marriage or who were brought up in luxury and never touched a broom have plainly proved. Some of our resistance is the result of tradition. Without realizing it, we cling to the outworn notion that physical labor is degrading. Fortunately the growing realization of the dignity of labor (as well as the scarcity of servants) is fast dispelling this notion.

But it certainly does not help to tell yourself that you like the routine and mechanical jobs. Routine chores do have one advantage, however—that of providing a certain relief from mental strain. You can work off many grudges on a dirty floor. You can rest a very tired head by cleaning a closet. It is also possible to stress the interesting side of housework, especially

the cooking, more than many people do. It is fun and very little more work to try out new dishes, new flavors, new sauces. A little appreciation of the results of your efforts helps a great deal. Pause now and then long enough to admire your sparkling glasses or gleaming silverware. Appreciation by parents of one another's efforts and of those of the children is certainly helpful. But as unfortunate as feeling bitter and aggrieved about housework is allowing yourself to become its slave. When standards become so high as to interfere with the family's growth and happiness, it is time to lower them. All in all, the parents' attitude means so much in relieving friction and tension in the home that it should be placed even above good management in the achievement of happy family living.

HOUSEWORK AS A BUSINESS

But management is certainly important. While homes are not businesses, it is impossible to be too businesslike in trying to save every particle of time and effort spent on the purely mechanical side of housework. In fact, families would do well to imitate a factory owner in this respect. They should be as alert as he to the development of new labor-saving devices, and as quick to find out the costs and dependability of operation. They should also be as ready to scrap old tools and old ways of working in favor of better ones.

For example, every family knows about large machines like dishwashers and washing machines, but every family does not know how practical they are. Many cannot afford these, but they can afford better tools, like a sponge mop which, for certain kinds of kitchen and bathroom floors, saves literally hours of time in a single week and an equal amount of work. Improvements like detergent cleaners for woodwork and floors as well as for laundry work are as valuable. The new felt-and-rubber window cleaner of the type professional window washers use is on the market, and after one trial you will never use a cloth again. Everyone can afford paper sheets

which polish silver in the twinkling of an eye. And everyone can afford small gadgets like plastic graters, which are cleansed by a quick rinsing, and efficient rotating can openers, which do away with the old pounding and jabbing. Money spent on keeping floors in good condition will repay owners many times over, since the work of cleaning them is greatly reduced.

Care in the selection of times for doing certain kinds of work can mean everything to the family. For example, many mothers say they do not know why housewives crowd into grocery stores after five o'clock, when people who are returning from work have to market. If they would do their shopping before three, they could accomplish it in half the time, and with far less strain. Fit the mechanical chores around other, more important work which can be done so much more quickly when you are feeling fresh.

AS A PARTNERSHIP

But the blessing of household chores lies in the fact that they give the family a chance to share work. Business methods must be applied in moderation here, for children are partners in this business. Nor would it be quite desirable to do otherwise, since for some indefinable reason the moment a home runs "like clockwork" some human quality seems to go out of it.

While your two-, three-, or four-year-old cannot do a great deal in the way of planning with you, he and his mother can share the work itself. Watch for the time when around the age of two he begins to make feeble efforts to imitate you when you are doing housework. These efforts mark a milestone. They are his first groping attempts to move into your world. So much depends for both of you on the way these efforts are received, not for the help they give, which is really nothing, but for the spirit behind them. If you welcome them casually but warmly, gradually he will try to do more and more. When

he is around three he will start to pick up his toys with you and begin to talk about "helping Mommie." He is still far from helpful—the mother may have to do over again something he has done. Do it unobtrusively or wait till he is not around, so that he will not feel hurt.

Like your casual conversations together the act of helping is drawing him closer into the circle of his home. No affection you give him, no gifts you shower on him can ever take the place for either of you of this one thing, this chance to give his labor. Make the trip to the supermarket a joint adventure. Let him carry the empty shopping bag. And when you get to the store, let him take down cans and boxes from the shelves and put them into the basket. Chat with him about what you are buying, about what you see in the shop and on the street.

Often mothers who have handled young children in this way say, when the youngsters reach the age of six, "But what good did it do? Where is my little helper now? All he can see is school and play and his friends." This cooling off toward housework with the approach of middle childhood is normal and natural. In the first place, the routine actions have now been mastered and therefore offer little challenge. The other new and wonderful world is opening up. But this does not mean that either mother or child have lost, or ever will loose, what they gained then. The child will always keep some of the urge to help and the sense of belonging through his work that he will never lose.

CONCLAVES ON HOUSEWORK

Housework is, of course, one of the things to be planned after conclaves have become an institution in the family. And the chances are that the family cannot progress very quickly with this rather difficult and complicated undertaking. It is very important for everyone to have the chance to express his feelings and his opinions quite frankly. While children

simply cannot see reasons for chores in the same way that adults do (their sense of values makes other things seem far more important than to have a clean house or to serve meals at regular times) nevertheless, it helps for the parents to explain in a general way why it makes things more pleasant for everybody. In any case, they need to understand very clearly that housework is one of the things that must be done, and that everyone is going to do his share.

A JOB OF ONE'S OWN

The first plan is only a trial, and this fact needs to be explained to the children. The children should know that the original plan will be modified and, as far as possible, changed to suit everybody.

Basically, of course, the only child in the home should be expected to do his part in relation to housework exactly as two or more children are expected to do theirs. The fact that there are no brothers and sisters to help him, however, does create a tendency on the part of the adults either to give him too much to do, or in the desire to protect him from overwork, to give him too little. Also, since only children do not have the companionship of other children in doing the chores, they may in some cases need to do more work with their parents. The only way to plan housework is on a job basis—by assigning certain jobs to certain people, jobs for which they are definitely responsible. Both parents and children will greatly prefer this arrangement. The parents will prefer it because it is so much more efficient than doling out work piecemeal, with the attendant uncertainty about getting things done. The older children and adolescents will be able to see the sense of this arrangement, and they will also take to the idea of individual jobs because it makes them feel grown up and self-respecting to have a job, something that is one's own. This is the best possible way to help children develop a sense of responsibility. But it is necessary to give the

child a real job, and not the appearance of one. "Why don't you help with the housework any more, Cynthia?" a mother asked her daughter. "Don't you remember how good you were about putting out the milk bottles when you were six?" Cynthia thought a moment, then said, "I guess it's because everything had to be done your way."

Allow the child as much leeway as possible in relation to his job, so that he can work it out for himself and take real pride in it. Rules about time have to be made, but things do not have to be done on the second. Work has to be done properly, but there can be variations. For example, in homes where there is an ample supply of hot water it does not matter very much in what order silver, glasses, china, and pots and pans have to be washed. Nor, in these homes, does it matter whether the dishes are washed in a pan or under the faucet. Both procedures are leftovers from the time when hot water was scarce.

Yet it makes an amazing difference, both to children and to adults, to be able to do these things in their own particular ways. But we all know very well that many adults—parents included—make a kind of ritual of the ways in which everything is done. This habit goes back to our childhood, and as a result we feel almost a compulsion to do things in the way in which we were taught when we were very young. If parents can rid themselves of this feeling, there will be far less fussing about housework, for doing things as you happen to want to do them is almost like being able to move freely.

By all means let the children know that if they are quick and finish their jobs early the time left over is going to be their own to do with exactly as they wish. And carry out your promise. How utterly cheated you feel to have someone grudge you time you have rightfully earned, even if you chose to sit and look out of the window. Plan to have everyone expect to be asked to help out now and then, but make it clear that you will ask, not order.

The family can consider each member's needs and desires; they are of equal importance. There will be Bobbie's homework—if he has any—Mother's committee meetings, Lucy's club, Joe's gang, Dad's golf. There are the extras—perhaps music lessons, a speech Dad is writing, a play Rita is practicing for, a sick friend Mother is visiting, the appointments with the doctor or dentist. There are all the things the family is planning to do together. As far as it is humanly possible, the jobs should leave time for all these activities.

Often children not only prefer, but can perfectly well undertake, more difficult jobs than are given them. "I always have to wipe the dishes," said a twelve-year-old sadly. "I'm just crazy to polish the glasses. I *know* I wouldn't break them. Mother never lets me try, even once." Children around six can become deft and dependable dish washers, and usually much prefer dish washing to dish wiping. If they are clumsy and slow, it will pay to let them start with meals when the stack of dishes is small and to give them a little help. Children of six, seven, and eight love to do simple cooking and, with a little help, can learn to make dishes like apple sauce and plain cake. While the younger boys and girls will enjoy cooking, the boys' interest in it will probably wane as they grow older. The girls, however, will usually like it better and better. By the time she is twelve or thirteen your daughter will love to cook and serve an entire meal if the menu is not too elaborate and if she can do it in her own way. The family will be proud of her, and what she makes will taste especially good.

It will simplify matters considerably if individual preferences are consulted. For example, Mother may have always detested ironing, while seventeen-year-old Ann, who rather enjoys ironing, would be glad to take on some of it.

A word about errands—a special bête noire of housework. It certainly helps to keep a pad on the kitchen wall and to buy supplies ahead so the family will not get down to the last egg or spoonful of coffee. Whoever is responsible for the buying

should certainly give the errand-runner as sizable a list as possible. The reason for saving the time and energy of the parents and adolescents is obvious. But the children need to be considered too. If nine-year-old George is going out on his bicycle anyway, he may be as happy to ride over to the fruit store as anywhere else. But if he is simply crazy to make a boat, or to read a book, he will loathe having to take two or three trips in an afternoon. What he really minds is that members of the family are showing how little they care about his time or what he is doing. Therefore, talk over errands before jobs are decided on, and point out that requests will be kept to the minimum.

After the plan has been in operation the family will probably see faults and together will arrange to make changes. The revised plan is also on a trial basis. In remaking the plan, help the children to develop independence by suggesting that they introduce their own changes. For example, if Don falls down badly on some job, he may say he would rather get up early in the morning to do it than wait till after school. His father and mother may point out that he seems to find it pretty hard to get up anyway. But if he insists that he is going to change his routine, do not bother to argue with him—let him try it a while.

After a reasonably satisfactory schedule has been worked out, have someone print or type it out, and place it where everyone can see it. But let it be understood that it always remains only a tentative schedule, not a rigid pattern. People will change jobs as they want to; people will help each other out. Father may wipe Alice's dishes for her when she has a long poem to learn for assembly, and she will take over his job when he and Mother want to go out. Sometimes there will be a special reason why everyone will pitch in and let somebody off his work entirely. People will try swapping jobs, either for a while or permanently.

Since all of us are human, and especially since children are

children, this is never going to work out 100 per cent perfectly. The children will need careful guidance. What helps them most of all is the parents' faith in them. "Why are your twins so fine about chores?" a father and mother were asked. "I guess it's just because we expect it of them," answered the father. Warm praise for honest effort helps too. A six-year-old who has faithfully emptied the wastebaskets feels pretty flat if no one even notices it. In fact, he feels about the way his mother does if after a hard day of cleaning father comes home to a spic-and-span house and asks absent-mindedly if she has had a restful day!

But the children will most certainly fall down occasionally on their jobs. If they are feeling well, not working very hard in school, and not upset about something, the parents must keep after them. But reminding is less of a strain on everyone than nagging. When reminding fails, be firm. The parents or brothers or sisters may not mind doing a child's job for him a few times. But they should certainly have consideration for themselves and not continue to do it. If the parents become tense and upset about backsliding, if they complain about having to do all the work, the children may become so tense and irritated themselves that the entire plan will fail. Without showing the slightest rancor, say quite definitely that no one can go to the movies tonight since you had to do Alfred's job all week and are too tired to go. Or tell Emily that you haven't time to do her dusting and that since the house looks pretty dirty, she can't go out to play today till the job is done. Your entire plan will fail unless you see these things through.

But when the children are tired or upset, they need leniency. Eight-year-old Wilbur had become a really dependable and reasonably amiable helper. His parents were congratulating both him and themselves when suddenly he began to grow slovenly and careless and then forget his jobs. When called to account he became petulant and irritable. One afternoon when he was alone with his mother, he burst out a long

tale of woe. He had gotten into mischief in school. The agonizing part of it was that as punishment he and his special pals were forbidden to play baseball in the school yard for three weeks!

When children's backsliding is due to strain, it is as well not even to see the things that have been left undone. And these periods may last for some time—in fact, the parents may come to feel that the children have lost all they had gained. And with children as with adults, if the strain is prolonged, something should be done to remove it.

Of course, the family must never reach the point of allowing the schedule to run it. Sometimes, when you suddenly feel like going somewhere—to a fine movie down the block, to the airport to surprise Uncle Bill, or to any other place—leave the dishes in the sink and the dust on the furniture, and go out and have a good time!

Chapter 7

HOLIDAYS AND FESTIVITIES

It will now be taken for granted that all holidays and festivities in the home are interpreted as family affairs in fact as well as in name. Naturally holidays and general festivities belong to everyone. This means that not only does everyone enjoy them, but also that each one who is old enough to use his hands contributes something concrete to make the occasion happier for all. Affairs given by individual members are very much those persons' own, but other people in the family are not shut out from them entirely. On the contrary, they both want and are given some chance to help as they can and so to enjoy the affair with the hosts.

There is no need to dwell on what holidays—especially Christmas, Hanukkah, and Thanksgiving mean to families. Despite the effects of over-commercialization, material things which justifiably count for a great deal still mean less than the intangibles. Homes which are warm and bright on other days of the year assume on holidays an almost unbelievable radiance, while into those which are cold and bleak some softness temporarily steals. "My father used to sit in his room every night," said one woman. "He never liked to eat most of the things we did. But on Christmas he stayed downstairs all day. And he would even enjoy some of the chocolates my sister used to make."

But often holidays can be made to mean more than they do, even in the happiest homes. They would undoubtedly be happier if more steps were taken to guard against overexcite-

ment and overfatigue. A mother who looked tired and drawn after Christmas was asked about how the festivities had gone. "Oh fine!" she said, then added with a wan smile, "but I'm afraid Albert and I are pretty shot." She laughed. "Trudy and Jonathan are recovering."

The excitement and joys of anticipation mean a great deal, but when these feelings are whipped up for long periods of time, the final release on the day itself usually becomes a little too much for everyone. Besides, no matter how much is done for the children, if they have been overstimulated beforehand, it can seldom measure up to expectations. In fact, part of children's "whooping it up" on Christmas is the result of an unconscious sense of having been let down.

On the other hand, while people often start to anticipate Christmas too soon, many of us tend to delay actual preparations so long that added to the general excitement is the strain of rushing at the last minute. All in all, it will help greatly if you make or buy presents as soon as you conveniently can. It means so much to children to make at least some Christmas gifts, and it is not enough for them to make all of these in school. While things to make will be discussed in a later chapter, it should be pointed out here that it is important to plan ahead with the children about festivities so that the parents will not have to be burdened by keeping after them. Experience has shown that in general two weeks is enough time to allow for planning and for actual preparations.

And in the case of most children under the age of about eight, two weeks is also enough time in which to feel stirred up about the holiday. Of course Christmas gets into the air shortly after Thanksgiving, and parents could not keep the older ones from becoming excited if they tried. But they can refrain from adding to the excitement. Put off lengthy conversations with, "Oh yes, it's coming, but we have plenty of time," or "It's a long way off." When December comes, the older children's excitement will mount. But parents can

manage to see that the younger ones are not swept into the current. It will help to talk the matter over with the older children and enlist their co-operation.

THE MEANING OF HOLIDAYS

Despite all that is said about keeping the spirit of the celebration, it would appear that in many families very little is done about it. Often the parents rely on the school in such matters, but children want to hear about things which have such deep meaning in their homes. The story of Thanksgiving can be presented in a way which will thrill most children, and often the adolescents do not know too much about it. The family may greatly enjoy reading aloud from a book like Governor Bradford's account of the founding of Plymouth, which is simply and powerfully written. *The First Thanksgiving,* by Lena Barksdale, will interest the entire family.

Families will make up their own minds about ways to interpret religious holidays to the children. While they will certainly mean something very different to those who are religious and to those who are not, there can be no doubt that people without religious faith can deeply appreciate the beauty and significance of the days. Thus many families may want to read aloud, not only from religious books but also from stories like Dickens' *Christmas Carol, The Story of the First Christmas Tree,* by Hertha Pauli; and *The Story of the Other Wise Man,* by Henry Van Dyck; also stories from collections like *Christmas Tales For Reading Aloud,* edited by Robert Lohan. *Hillel's Happy Holidays,* by Mamie G. Gamoran, and *The Story of Jewish Holidays and Customs,* by Dorothy F. Zeligs not only describe Hanukkah but other Jewish holidays as well. Perhaps Christian or Jewish children will have painted religious pictures at school or at home, and if so, the family will surely love to hang them at these times. The children will like to recite verses they have learned. A crèche will mean a great deal to Christian families.

You will want to listen to music appropriate to the holidays; but to sing the songs as a group will bring a greater feeling of closeness on these days.

The children will very probably have friends of another faith. If so, they will surely refer to various holidays and religious feasts, and you can talk the matter over with them. Many parents know the book, *One God and the Ways We Worship Him,* by Mary Florence Fitch. Read it aloud. By methods like this families have not only increased their own faith, but also their respect for that of others. And the experience is especially important to the children. A sense of brotherhood can be developed in no better way than by giving them an understanding of their own holidays and a respect for those of others. Then later appeals to prejudice are fruitless because they say, "*We* do not think that way."

Jewish families must also make up their minds as to whether or not to allow the young children to believe in Santa Claus. But where children do believe him, they certainly love him very much, so why not protect him from the realists until they are really ready to give him up? Some parents look forward a little anxiously to this time. But where children are secure and well adjusted there is no real cause for worry. You can simply say to them, "We thought it was a nice game." And then you yourselves will simply slip into Santa Claus's place. As the children grow older they may be touched to think that the parents remained the anonymous givers.

The holiday is certainly something to be talked over and planned for in the conclave. Bring up everything from the menus for the dinner to the decorations of rooms and table. Talk about everyone's favorite dishes. If relatives or friends are going to share the holiday with you, mention the things each person especially likes, if you happen to know them. As far as budget and time permit, grant each one's wish, if not in the main dishes, then in side dishes, or in sauces. It will please everybody.

It is urged that everyone share in making the decorations as well as in arranging them. Naturally this will not mean that you will always buy decorations. You may prefer to use decorations made by the family exclusively. Those made by the children will be cruder than the others, but they will be bright and gay. In any case they should not be used unless all the adults present will both appreciate and admire them. For they are made to be admired; they are the children's best. They are their special gift to the holiday. Their real value is not material; they are tangible evidence of a united effort. All their lives the children will remember the times you sat around the big table and worked together.

One of the loveliest decorations for any occasion is a "tissue-paper snowball." [1] A simple tissue paper flower is also very effective.[2] Old Christmas cards make lovely decorations for a tree. Simply have the children cut off the picture, crayon or paint the back, and run a wire through it. It is often more effective to cut out the design. Children can paint or crayon bright and effective ornaments for the tree, and if no construction paper is available, the backs of old Christmas cards can be used. The children can color the paper on both sides and cut it into various shapes or make pictures. "Icicles" can be made by winding a ½" piece of silver paper around a knitting needle, pasting it at one end, and gently removing the needle. Cranberries or painted spools can be strung by the very young children. The colored-paper chains of the kind made in kindergartens are also charming.

Some families may like to have the children make place

[1] Cut tissue paper into thirty pieces, approximately 3" by 4". Fold each piece diagonally twice, and thread the resulting triangle at the apex on a piece of green wool or twine 4" long. Press all the triangles together in the center of the string, and the ball is ready to hang.

[2] Cut a piece of tissue paper, colored or white, into 4"-by-4" squares. Place six or seven pieces on top of one another and fasten together in the center with wire from milk bottles, leaving enough wire to form the stem. Then crush the inner pieces of paper, shaping the outer ones around them.

cards, especially for informal gatherings. If you do not want to pay for ordinary-sized blank cards, buy regular index cards and fold them so they will stand up. The children can crayon pretty colored borders and carefully print in the name, using different colors for each letter. Sometimes they can make a little rabbit, turkey, or Christmas tree. If these seem too crude, they will love to paste seals on plain cards. Do not have them trace or copy anything—it will not be their own. And when the decorations are in place and the family gathers under the Christmas tree, or beside the Hanukkah candles, or when they sit around the Thanksgiving table and look from these little things to the faces of the makers, holiday happiness has a new meaning.

PARTIES

Parties for very young children and even for babies seem such lovely occasions that we sometimes overlook what they can and cannot mean to those for whom they are given. Anything more than a cake with candle or candles and a few gifts is simply too much for the minds of most children under the age of about three to take in or for their hearts to enjoy. And before they are about six, or even older, they can really enjoy only the simplest affairs, those which simply add more festivity to their everyday lives. Since at this age meeting people in any numbers is overstimulating, ask only the friends who know and play with your child all the time—at most eight or ten. The feeding schedules of young children should not be disturbed, so instead of serving refreshments, have an unusually festive supper—something they especially like, such as chicken and baked potato, and, of course, ice cream.

Typical children's games are too difficult for very young children. They will enjoy playing with blocks, dolls, and other toys, exactly as they play every day. They can sing together if they all happen to know a song or two, and can listen to some records or hear a story told or read aloud. Generally they will be

much happier if things do not become too exciting. The party should be over in time to allow them to get home and to bed at the usual time.

But growing children love regular parties with special games and refreshments. There are an endless variety of games, and none is more enjoyed than the old reliables and their variations: pinning the tail on the donkey, musical chairs, treasure hunts, bobbing for apples, potato races, and blindman's buff. If you have a potato race, be sure to give the younger children very large spoons. A favorite variation of blindman's buff is to fix a candle firmly to a piece of metal, light it, blindfold someone and have him come forward and try to blow it out. Another modified blindman's buff is "piggie grunt," in which children form a circle around one who is blindfolded and he tells different ones to "piggie grunt," then tries to guess the "pig." Variations of the tail-pinning game are pinning toys on Santa's pack, eggs in the Easter basket, and an arrow through a heart. Treasure hunts can also be adapted to the season; jelly beans are good treasures for Easter, and nuts for Halloween. A variation of this game is to take a number of objects like a lipstick, a paper clip, a dollar bill, and place them around the room so they are not actually hidden but camouflaged, then have the children try to find all of them. Use only about four objects for the younger children, from six to eight for the older ones.

A fascinating game for growing children and adolescents is to place a number of familiar objects on a tray under a cloth, remove the cloth for a few seconds and see how many things they can remember. The number of objects will vary according to the ages of the children—five or six is enough for the younger ones. For older children a splendid idea is to cut about twenty-five pictures of objects from magazines and paste them on a large piece of cardboard. Hold the cardboard before the children for about thirty seconds. Then see how many of the names of objects they can give. A popular game with

older children and adolescents is "Gossip." They whisper something to one another and compare what the last one heard with the original "secret." It is important to point out that growing children do not always have to do everything together at parties—have a game or two like parchesi or checkers lying about, which a few can play if they want to.

Reflection shows that the giving of expensive and elaborate prizes is not the way to make parties a success. From the standpoint of the party as a whole this causes more pain than pleasure. Most of the children soon drop out and have no part in the main event. The final contestants, fully conscious of the value of the prize, work feverishly to "beat" one another; the one who wins is as proud as a rooster; the one who loses is equally discouraged. The harmful effects of this kind of competition—which are most serious in the case of competitive sports—will be considered later. But, in general, authorities advise very simple favors or toys for all the children and only the simplest of prizes, like lollipops. Emphasize the good time rather than the souvenirs.

Sometimes, when invitations are given out, it is hard to keep from hurting someone's feelings. If the children attend a large school, they cannot ask the entire class. For this reason invitations should not be given at or through the school, unless the class can be asked. You may have to invite children who are not especially good friends of your children, either because they are relatives or because they live near you. In planning for the party, talk over the fact that these are to be your guests and encourage your children to see that they have a good time. But do not be surprised if they forget. Children are still egotistical at this age and care very much about the kind of time they themselves are having. The parents or adolescents who attend the party can help see that the less well-acquainted children are drawn into the fun.

Sometimes parents feel they do not want the excitement of holding a party at home. In this case, if the child's class is

not large, they might suggest to the teacher that they send a cake and some ice cream to school. Children love these school parties.

When children are between the ages of about eleven and thirteen the mores of the community as well as their own maturity affect the kinds of affairs they want to have. Even though the girls mature more rapidly than the boys they may want to have parties together. Sometimes the parents need to show some tolerance of the boys, who may be more childish and even rougher and readier in their behavior. While certainly too much wildness cannot be allowed, severe criticism of the boys' behavior may be definitely harmful, both to them and to the girls. For it has already been pointed out that boys and girls are extremely sensitive at this age even though they often do not show it. Adult condemnation may wound them cruelly. Their confidence in relation to members of the opposite sex may be seriously, perhaps permanently, undermined. "My mother laughed at every boy I brought to the house," said a woman who had not married and who had never made friends with men.

With children of this age it is often helpful to vary the entertainment. They are likely to want to dance, at least part of the time. Some of the games they will probably enjoy have been described earlier. They also like charades and treasure hunts, if the hunts are quite difficult and if there are directions leading from place to place. In the suburbs it may be practical to send them for quite a distance from the house. These children like many kinds of guessing games and quizzes, like those about popular music. A good way to break the ice is to play the game, "Who am I?" Pictures of animals, people, and objects are pinned on the children's backs when they arrive. They then ask questions in an effort to find out who they are. The affairs older adolescents like best are formal and informal dances.

Where good relationships exist in the family the boys and

girls will want the parents at least to greet their guests and will certainly be glad to have them help with the preparations. They may not seriously object if the younger ones want to put in an appearance. Since the development of boys and girls is uneven during these years, there will be some variation in the desire and ability of individuals to take responsibility for the formal entertainment of their friends before they are about fifteen or sixteen. After this time well-adjusted adolescents will definitely want to assume full responsibility for the entertainment, and should most certainly be allowed to do so. It will mean a great deal to them to be sure you are positive they will carry things off well.

We cannot overestimate the importance of the family's attitude toward the adolescent's clothes and grooming on these occasions, or when they are invited to other affairs. As was implied in an earlier chapter, sensitiveness about appearance is as normal a part of growth at this age as becoming taller. Often the boy or girl seems to have lost the power of forming any rational judgments about his appearance. Slight blemishes become hideous defects; defects become almost monstrosities. Dressing—looking "like the rest"—is absolutely momentous.

Avoid any teasing of adolescents about these matters, and encourage the younger children to do the same—continued ridicule may have serious and lasting effects. Instead, build up the boy or girl in every way possible. Within budgetary limitations help him to look his absolute best and not markedly different from the others.

If the adolescent is basically secure and has been wisely handled from infancy—not only in relation to sex but in general—the parents will not have to worry about the way in which he will conduct himself. For he will be socially mature, at home with others of the same age. He will have some understanding of himself. Standards about boy-and-girl relationships will have meaning to him. And when he realizes he needs adult guidance he will seek it.

Usually children's participation in formal affairs given by their parents is limited to having them put in an appearance for a very short period. Sometimes, as at buffet suppers, the older boys and girls can help with the serving. This is not only a great help to their parents, but also a very valuable experience. It includes them in the older group at an age when they are growing up, and helps them acquire confidence and poise.

It is pleasant sometimes to bring the baby in for a moment if everyone wants to see him, and if he is not the kind of child who is overstimulated by meeting strangers. Whether or not the other children should come in and greet the guests depends on the extent to which this gives real pleasure to both. Where they know and are fond of each other, they will certainly want to see each other for a little while. It is nevertheless a fact that some adults are simply not deeply interested in children. It is also true that even well-adjusted children differ in the ease with which they meet formal social situations at a relatively early age. Some of them fairly blossom out at these times, but most of them do not. They can acquire as much confidence and poise as the others, but not if they are forced into situations too early.

Thus it is helpful all around not to make a fixed rule that the children are always to appear. Certainly there should be no showing off, "putting them through their paces" as to what they can say or do. In the case of rather young children there should be no set forms of greeting, since these are meaningless to them. With some children it would be better for the guests who know and like them to spend a few minutes with them beforehand.

But do enlist the children's help with preparations for formal and informal affairs. Let them get the house ready—some can furbish up the silver and brasses; the older ones might help to arrange the flowers or place cards. All can help with food preparations. The younger ones can do things like cracking the nuts; perhaps the older ones can contribute some

specialty in cooking. This is a tremendous help to the parents, and the children are very proud and happy to feel grown up enough to do it. In addition the act of helping with formal entertaining—even in these ways—makes it seem far more natural to them than always to be excluded from it.

Chapter 8

FRIENDS OF THE FAMILY

THE OPEN DOOR

Selma Lagerlof writes of her home, "Marbaka,"—"Hominess, so to speak, met one with open arms at the threshold." Every home can be like this in spirit, if not in appearance. Every home can open its doors and its life and welcome people within. Where a family is happy together, where its members are developing, it will. A family without friends is like an individual without friends. They are ingrowing, narrow, even lonely. They lack the stimulus of other points of view, the experience of getting along with other people in a purely social relationship. They miss the chance to give and to receive as only friends can give and receive.

Do not say "We have neither the time nor money for many friends." Do not say that some people—adolescents, parents, or growing children need friends but not the others—everybody needs them. The problems of time and expense are very real; sometimes they are serious. But there are ways in which they can be met. One method is to exercise care in selection. Friendship is so much an individual matter that specific advice would not be helpful. But there is no doubt that many parents and children can reduce the number of purely perfunctory relationships in their lives with great benefit all around. Certainly people should not be wounded by the abrupt termination of friendships, and often it is most desirable to hold on to those of long standing. Nevertheless, it is

a fact that where relations have always been, or have become, meaningless, neither party is hurt, and both are rather relieved when they are tactfully terminated.

People can also make a conscious effort to make the most of the time they do spend with friends. Of course "Efficiency" with a capital *E* should not be introduced into friendship, nor should there be a brusque interchange between friends. Often the busiest people have the largest number of real friends. They are not abrupt; they concentrate. A fifteen minutes' telephone conversation with them means as much as afternoons spent with someone else. They have simply learned.

The introduction of greater informality in social relations would do an amazing amount to help solve the problem of expense and time. This would represent to some extent a departure from present-day mores—especially in cities—and a return to an older tradition of simple neighborliness. But there are signs that this change is coming, and it is surely long overdue. We are becoming heartily sick of the formality with which we have surrounded our lives.

"I had such a lovely visit with the Bradfords the other day," said a woman. "I wish more people entertained the way they do. They went to no fuss at all. We spent Sunday the way they always spend it—chatting, strolling through the country, listening to the radio, talking with friends who dropped in. They apologized for being so informal—and I don't know when I enjoyed a visit so much!"

A few specific suggestions may be helpful. The house can be neat and clean when visitors come, without always having to be a showcase. It will relieve a great deal of tension if parents do not feel humiliated if a visitor happens to find a package on the davenport, or chagrined if arriving early he finds one of them running the vacuum cleaner. Reduce both work and expense on meals. Every meal when guests are present does not have to consist of three or more courses; the family does not always have to serve expensive cuts of meat.

It helps to use as few dishes as possible, and even to use paper ones for large, informal gatherings. Most guests dislike to have the maidless hostess invariably close the kitchen door after dinner, and say she will wash up the dishes in a trice later on. They know only too well she will probably be up until twelve o'clock, and they would much prefer to pitch in and help, for then the dishes will really be done in a trice, and with very little work for anyone.

It is obvious that parents and their friends should spend most of the time of the visit alone together, or if they cannot do this, should be as free from interruptions as possible. If the children monopolize the visit, the friend leaves feeling cheated, and the parents have missed as much. You may, however, have no choice but to keep the baby or very young child with you during the entire visit. In this case, give him something to do which is as absorbing as possible, and which is also quiet. Crayoning, clay modeling, or playing house are useful resources at times like this. Have a supply of various toys and play materials on hand. Your child may not need to be near you all of the time. But all of you will have a far better time if you accept the fact that if he is with you in body, he will to some extent have to be with you in spirit. So let him come to you with something he has made or to ask a question. If he is at loose ends, quietly suggest something to do, or give him something to play with. If he hurts himself or is upset, devote yourself entirely to him until he feels all right again. In this way, well-adjusted children will interfere very little with the pleasure of a visit; often they add to it.

It will also add to the family's general happiness if the adolescents and older children do not feel that they can never have a moment of their parents' time during a friend's visit. If something quite important has happened, or if they need to ask something, they should be able to come in quietly and call the parent aside for a moment. The matter may turn out to be trivial, but it is surely better to tell them to wait until

later than to have them feel like outsiders when visitors come.

Children should be handled in this way when they themselves go to visit the adult friends of their parents. A mother and her two-year-old daughter follow an excellent plan and one recommended to all parents. When they visit, they take a few of Doris' favorite toys along. These not only guarantee that Doris will be busy, but also that she will feel more at home wherever she goes.

These are some of the best ways to provide for "separateness" in relation to the parents' friends. But all parents care a great deal about what people who come to the house think of their children. The children may seem indifferent about Father's and Mother's friends, but they are really very far from indifferent. It matters terribly to them to make a place for themselves with these important grown-ups; if they seem indifferent, it is only their way of trying to hide how much they care. They are right. This contact with his parents' friends, even if it is very brief, is a child's induction into the adult world beyond the home. Because early experiences have so much to do with shaping personality, the child's future social confidence and poise may depend on how successfully they are managed. "I've never been able to conquer a fear of meeting strangers," said a woman. "And it goes back to my agonies of embarrassment at meeting my parents' friends before I was ten years old." On the other hand, many adults' assurance in social situations is a result of the fact that they always confidently met their fathers' and mothers' friends.

If you want to develop social poise in your child, let his responses to your friends be a natural outgrowth of those in the home. Children's warm, outgoing responses to outsiders are a steady extension of feelings of love between members of the family. As everyone knows, however, the fact remains that even basically well-adjusted children may feel awkward and timid when they meet adults, particularly those who are strangers, or whom they do not see often. Help to establish

a natural bond between the children and the friend who is coming. Tell them a little about the person beforehand. If they have never seen him, mention for example that Mr. Simpson has a beautiful setter dog, that Mrs. Hill has a lovely new baby, or that Miss Parks teaches school. If they do know the visitor, speak of something interesting that has happened since they last saw him. Perhaps he has taken up some fascinating sport, or has had an airplane ride, or visited some place they know about. Take even more pains in the case of an only child, who is naturally more inclined to feel out of it.

When he meets the visitor nothing helps the child as much as your complete ease and confidence. Do not have the slightest fears about what he may say or do—even if the friend is an authority on children. "I used to be on edge every time our school psychologist came over," said a mother. "Then I said to myself, 'He knows children have faults.' And *I* know mine are pretty good all in all." Do nothing to embarrass the children. Avoid remarks about their appearance or physical awkwardness. If your visitor, not understanding children, says something like "My, Kate's getting to be a regular giant," or "Phil's still a little midget," turn it off in some way without giving offense. "Olga's going to be taller than you are soon," said a visitor. "*We* like being tall," answered her mother quietly.

Let the child's lapses in manners slide when visitors are present. They are undoubtedly caused by shyness. Reprimands not only wound the child but lead to further lapses. If the child says something you wish he had not, treat it lightly —it is probably not as serious as it seems. If your young child greets the visitor by demanding to know where his present is, do not be upset or scold him, for he is only behaving naturally. Tell him he cannot always expect gifts, and tell the visitor that it is good for the children not to have presents every time someone comes to the house. If the visitor does bring a pres-

ent, give it to your child when he will most appreciate it, which may not be immediately. Say *thank you* for him, if he does not say it, and call attention to the attractiveness of the gift. Then you and he are thanking the visitor in words he can understand.

Do not expect children to be at their best with visitors if they are tired, excited, or upset. But deliberate, conscious rudeness should never be permitted. You have to put a stop to it immediately by telling them they are not grown up enough to be with you. Children can readily understand that behavior which is not tolerated when there are no visitors will not be acceptable when they are present. Young children do not benefit by deferred punishment that is given after the visitor has gone.

With young children, dispense with formalities like handshaking, which as far as they are concerned are little more than senseless gestures. If they are playing when your friend arrives, encourage the visitor to watch them a minute, then to go over and say something about what they are doing. By the time children are seven and eight they can stop and come over and shake hands and greet the visitor. Since this may be a real job, however, do not spring it on them suddenly, but tell them beforehand that they won't be too busy today to come over and talk with your friend for a little while. If the visitor does not understand children well enough to be able to make a natural contact, bring up some matters of common interest, exactly as you would do with adults, actually this is even more important in the case of children than of adults, for few children have much ability to make small talk. If the child can do anything to help the guest to be more comfortable, like bringing a chair, or lighting a cigarette, suggest that he do so.

Do not be surprised if your poised and confident child becomes an awkward and flustered adolescent, for shyness is usually an accompaniment of growing up. It is often caused, or emphasized, by physical awkwardness, since these boys and

girls cannot manage their rapidly developing bodies. As a child, Ernie was the most popular boy on the block, not only with the other children but also with the parents of these children. Now and then he would go to their homes and offer to run errands for them. But as he approached adolescence, Ernie began to shoot up; when he was fifteen he towered over his father. He also showed signs of the emotional conflicts common to all adolescents. A change came over Ernie. He was no longer the friendly boy, but a morose, grouchy teen-ager. His physical awkwardness was almost unbelievable. "Ernie never comes to our house without breaking something," declared a neighbor.

The boy's parents handled him wisely. They reduced his social contacts with adults and ignored his awkwardness. Relationships with boys and girls were fostered. He loved baseball and since he could not make the school baseball team, he joined a neighborhood boys' club, and became captain of the club there. And as he grew older he became his old self.

As they mature, often adolescents can develop sufficient poise in social situations to be of great help to their parents.

These boys and girls, like the growing children, should not always play a subordinate role with relation to their parents' friends. Encourage them to discuss matters of mutual interest. One evening some friends were having an interesting talk with a father and mother about secondary education. "Wait a minute, I'll call Linda," said the mother. "She knows lots more about high school than we do." And fifteen-year-old Linda certainly knew a great deal. When they had talked together for a while, she excused herself and went quietly back to her room. It is important to bear in mind that both children and adolescents vary greatly in their rates of social growth, and each one must be handled individually in accordance with his social maturity.

It may be that your friend becomes the friend of your child. But the friendship cannot be hurried. With young children

both the parent and the friend must proceed slowly. Joyce is a reserved little four-year-old, whose warm responses to people she likes break through in a glowing smile. Joyce took to Miss Platt from the moment they met. But at first neither the child's mother nor Miss Platt made the slightest effort to push the relationship. Joyce stayed close to her mother, who answered for her when Miss Platt asked questions. And before long Joyce was speaking up for herself. During the second visit Joyce looked into her friend's face, and said softly, "Will you and your pussy cat come to my birthday party?"

Follow this principle with relation to growing children and adolescents. It may fit in with the family arrangements to leave the boy or girl alone with your friend for a while. Being left together often helps them become acquainted.

THE RENDEZVOUS OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD

The homes of an earlier generation were in a sense more than homes. They were children's club houses. They would come trooping home from school to find someone's mother there. After she had given out the bread and jam, they ran off to play, and she was very busy, but still she was there. This was more than a mere physical presence; it gave them a sense of nearness.

Most children and parents cannot share this security today, but they can have an experience which is very much like it. In the discussion which follows it is assumed that the mother wishes to spend some of her afternoons at home and that both she and the father want to spend a good deal of time over week ends and on holidays with the children, also that both will greatly enjoy having some companionship with their children's friends at these times. In this connection emphasis should be placed on how much the father can enjoy his children's friends, and how much he can give, both to boys and

girls. It is regrettable that more of them do not have a larger share in this side of family life.

Parents of well-adjusted children who have brothers and sisters seldom have to do anything about seeing that they have enough friends; this problem takes care of itself. If yours is an only child, however, you may have to make some special effort in this direction, because these children often tend to become too dependent on their parents for companionship. Each parent must decide for himself, in terms of his and the children's needs and desires, how much time he will devote to becoming the companion of his own children and their friends. Such companionship is not "an exacting job," however, but a most pleasurable activity. It will make no more demands on the parents' time or energy than it did on those of our grandparents, since it is carried on within the framework of the adult life of the home. There is no "hovering over" the children, no "keeping them amused," no continual direction of their play.

It is simply a matter of becoming, in a sense the children's base, the persons they can turn to, the ones they count on. It means giving occasional help. There is guidance, but it is a very loose kind of guidance. And, incidentally, though this guidance is loose, it offers quite a challenge to your powers, including those of the intellect.

Most parents will find that this experience is deeply rewarding. They will be watching one of the most fascinating aspects of human growth, children's growth through play. They will be part of that growth. Through caring for other children they will experience a fulfillment of their own parenthood. Through observing other children they will gain a far better understanding of their own. And they will be rendering a community service. How much we hear about the need for community work with children. How seldom does anyone speak of the service rendered by parents who open their homes and their hearts to neighborhood children.

The children will surely show their appreciation of the parent who becomes their companion in this way, though usually not in words. They will show it by the way their faces light up when you come around, by the problems they bring you, by their occasional confidences, their trust. Nothing is more flattering than to be taken in by a group of children.

If you are to enjoy the children's friends, you must really open your house to them. This is partly a matter of caring for them, and it is also partly a very practical matter. Things must be planned so that the children's presence inconveniences everyone as little as possible. Plans about the use of the house can be made during your conclaves. The growing children will undoubtedly want to be out of doors a good deal of the time, and if the neighborhood is safe they will usually go off by themselves. If the home is small the family may have to make a rule that only a certain number of children can come into the house at one time. A family of five had almost decided they would have to give up having the children over until they made this rule. Of course it is far better if the house is large enough so that such restrictions do not have to be made.

While your children's friends are in the house they will have to abide by the rules you and your children have made for yourselves. It is not the parents' responsibility, but the children's to pass these rules on to the guests, but help them to make the latter realize that these rules are by no means empty words. Sometimes the parents have to intervene. If a visitor ignores rules, and informs you that "I can go to our icebox whenever I want to," answer that such may be the custom in his house, but that you have different arrangements. If he persists, tell him he must stop coming until he is more grown up. There will be less hurt feelings if you do this than if you suffer from trying behavior until matters reach the point where friends have to be forbidden the house altogether.

The children will need some material things. They will need something to munch on, also some toys and play materials. The food you give them should require a minimum of work and should also be inexpensive. The subject of the right kind of toys and play materials will be considered only briefly here because it is discussed in detail in later chapters. In general, however, they should be flexible rather than rigid things—things they can themselves change and adapt to their needs at the time. Among these are blocks, paints and paint brushes, dolls, scissors, and paste, cars, boats, and trucks, sewing materials, old blankets, and lengths of cloth. They often delight in very inexpensive things, like corks and pebbles, old pots and pans, stocking dolls, and discarded kitchen gadgets like egg beaters.

ON THEIR OWN

This is to be an account of the more general aspects of the guidance of children's play, with emphasis on social relations. Fuller accounts are given in later sections of the book which deal with special activities.

This time is peculiarly the children's own; just as parents will have special times for themselves and friends. As the children would put it, "It's our show." A great deal of the time the children are entirely on their own, the parent does not even know what they are doing. When he does come into the picture, it is only as helper.

In the beginning, when the parent is not too busy, it is a good plan for him simply to drop what he is doing and watch the children, remaining completely out of the picture. This will be interesting for the parents who have always felt so responsible that they have been denied the chance to observe the way their own children react when they are in groups. If the children are healthy and wide-awake, it will become very evident that they certainly do not need a "manager." They are self-starters, full of ideas, brimming over with energy.

Furthermore, as you watch the children and recall your own childhood, you will realize how badly they need to be left alone. It is so easy to forget how much the world closes in on children. We who were made to conform long ago do not remember what conformity means to children in our complicated culture. Children are born with an irresistible longing for freedom, a resistless drive to go, come, eat, sleep, be dirty, wriggle, destroy, make a mess—at will. Needless to say, they have to conform, but science has indisputably proved that it is very easy indeed to make so many and such rigid demands that they carry buried resentments through life. It is also easy to want them to be "good" so badly that they become really weak. In these cases it is almost as though the real self becomes lost.

For all these reasons, now—when it will do no harm at all—leave the children free. See how eager and alert they are. The youngest trot here and there, reaching, grasping, holding, dropping, climbing, sliding. Later they build and pretend, and if you will come very close you will realize that in one sense this is not play but the enactment, on a child's level, of life itself.

As you watch the older children, let the memories come back, memories of a breathless chase, of sitting regally enthroned on a chair, of peering behind the flap of your tent (a blanket), of selling lemonade on a battered box, of rigging up a chariot with roller-skate wheels and a board, of dressing up in a long skirt or long trousers and parading around. Were you ever happier than then? Is anything you do now more important than those amazing activities?

It is harder to watch the adolescents because they are so grown up that they want to be left almost entirely to themselves, just as you want to be left alone with your friends. But you will have a general sense of what is going on, and again will recall your own adolescence. They long to dance—do let them use the floor for this purpose. If they can have a radio

and record player of their own, give them these. They will certainly do a great deal of talking, about school, "dates," friendships, romances, and the state of the world.

It will be clear that all of these boys and girls—even the adolescents—do not quite want to be left alone. The younger children need to have the parent with them, even though he goes right on with his own work or the entertainment of visitors. But the growing children, and even the adolescents, gain something indefinable but real by sensing that the parent is around. Keep the road always open between you and them. This is so easy to do—the tone of your voice, your smile, your wave from the window, the way you listen after baseball or roller skating—these will hold you and the growing children together. Your manner as you pass through the room where the adolescents are gathered (with an apology if they are earnestly conversing), the way you pause to chat with them at their invitation—these factors will bind you to the adolescents.

And the children, sensing this nearness and affection and interest, will respond to it, and eventually you will become "one of us." Your presence will produce no sudden sense of restraint. In fact, it will not cause the slightest interruption. They will begin to come to you—the little ones often, the older ones more rarely, the adolescents very infrequently. But you will mean as much to all. They may now and then need help when they are at loose ends. With the younger ones this will often mean simply suggesting that they play with different toys. More often it means warm praise and encouragement and a lift over the hard places. These children need the kind of occasional guidance which will be discussed later. This simply means helping them to do something they themselves are trying to do.

When growing children run out of ideas, they will welcome suggestions. Consider the children and the kinds of things they have been doing; think of some idea they once

had but never carried out. If one parent has some special skill, like sewing, knitting, or carpentry, he may offer to teach the children. If the kitchen is free, they may like to cook something. More important than this is to find the way in which they can carry out their own ideas. How many fine enterprises have failed because someone said, "We have nothing to use," or "We haven't room for that!" They really need so little. Give them a scarf for the princess, a pirate hat, or a stick for a sword; let the Indian have some paper headgear. Let them turn up the tables and chairs to make a train; let them put the chairs in rows for the audience to sit on; make room in the yard for their circus. The children's boundless ambition may have to be curbed a little, but beyond this, try to say "yes."

The relations among the children will be quite as fascinating as the play itself. How important is the group, "the gang," the club. What rules they make, how they whisper secrets!—just as you did. It seems as though they draw away from grown people and form a battalion of youth. Like you, they fairly glory in defying adults about matters like being neat and clean, about using slang, and about dress. It is less important to be very late for dinner than to betray a gang's secret.

They are indeed forming their own battalion. For now they are aware, as they were not aware a short time before, of their own helplessness in relation to the adult world, of the utter futility of trying to be grown up. Knowing this, they turn to others of their own age for security. Being members of that battalion gives them a feeling of greater strength, a feeling no adults, however understanding, can give them.

Again recalling your own childhood makes it possible to meet these children's great need, which is for tolerance. Maintain certain standards. They must not be allowed to upset family routines to the point of causing real annoyance. They must present themselves at meals with clean faces and hands, with their hair combed. If their suits and dresses are dirty, they

must change them. They cannot disturb the neighbors in any way. Meet these children halfway. But do not be too strict. Then when the children are in a jam they will come to you. And let them talk it out with you. Often the father can help the children greatly by saying that his lodge or his fraternity had a problem very much like this one, and that they did so and so.

In time you will come to know individual children: Joel who is bossy, Lucille who can't stand teasing, Rudy "the scared cat," Jenny, the meek. As you come to know individual children you will find yourself dropping casual remarks that are very helpful, such as "You don't have to do it just because Bill says so," or "Why should Hannah do all the fetching and carrying, why not let her play a while?" or "They tease you because they know it's worrying you." If the children are over nine or ten, and you think their parents might resent this kind of guidance, often you can talk things over with your own children and suggest ways in which they might take responsibility. The younger children need the same general type of guidance, adapted to their level of maturity. If children can possibly stand up for themselves encourage them to do this rather than to run to you for protection. Insist that the very young children take turns since this is something they cannot understand at this age. Do not expect those under the age of about five to play together very much, for they are still too egotistical. Even at five they will play alone a great deal, or in very small groups, and will flit quickly from one thing to another.

It is far better to make very definite rules about fighting than to prohibit it altogether. The children will simply do it anyway when you are not around—and they will probably care little how they do it. There is to be no fighting with anything in the hands, no biting or scratching, no throwing of anything. Large children should not attack smaller ones, nor should numbers of children attack a single child. With the

younger children it is useless to argue—you simply have to make it quite clear that these things are not done. Now and then when fighting becomes almost savage, you may have to intervene, but a severe reprimand will not be as helpful as to wait until they have calmed down, and then to talk it over. It is surprising how little real fighting there is when children are busy and happy; much of their physical combat is really only a kind of puppy play and quite harmless.

The adolescents and their friends will not benefit from guidance unless they seek it. They will seek it occasionally, however, if you are sympathetic and do not try to dictate. These young people will very much appreciate having you look on them as almost adults, which indeed they are. They will also appreciate having you accept *their* battalion, which has its own standards and codes. With secure and well-adjusted boys and girls these differences are not important; they are purely superficial and concern largely matters like ways of dressing, what happen to be the right social amenities, and using the right slang at the time. As with the growing children, it will mean everything to the adolescents for the parents to respect their feelings and to be as lenient in these matters as they possibly can.

FROM FRIENDS TO COMMUNITY

It was said that having friends was a necessary part of the family's growth. They do more than enrich the life of the home. Knowing and caring for them broadens and deepens social emotions; friends turn the family's interest away from themselves, outward to the larger scene. Thus they serve as a link between home and community. The proof of this statement is that no real citizen is without many and close friends.

Part II

WIDENING HORIZONS

Chapter 9

THE JOYS AND BENEFITS OF EXPLORATION

"SOMETHING HIDDEN: GO AND FIND IT"

Rudyard Kipling expresses the urge to explore in this way:

> Something hidden, go and find it,
> Go and look behind the ranges,
> Something lost behind the ranges,
> Lost and waiting for you—go!

That something does not only wait for the family behind mountain ranges. It waits for them in the streets of their town or city, in its markets, its docks; it waits in the stars, the lightning, in the water in the faucet, in the stones, in trees and animals.

This exploration of the family's community and of some of the wonders of science and nature is simply recreation. We are not thinking of work or study. We are thinking of activities like going to an ice-cream factory, or watching sound travel over a cord stretched between paper cups, seeing seeds under glass put forth roots and stems. This kind of exploration is no more set and painstakingly planned out than a row on the lake, no more obligatory than a trip to the movies.

It is not carried on as a continuous program, but casually, almost haphazardly, when the family happens to feel like it. You may accept only one suggestion given in the following

chapters, or you may accept all of them. None of them makes additional claims on your time. They are rather a very nice way to spend the time.

There is no doubt that the last statement may not be readily accepted. Parents commonly think of activities of this kind as something *they* do *for* children, as something a little beneath adult intelligence. There is no greater delusion. Have you ever watched a child as he gazed at a steam roller in operation? Have you ever, on a clear night, held him while he looked through a telescope at the moon? Have you seen his eyes when a butterfly shed its chrysalis? Was he the only one who enjoyed these experiences? Were not your feelings at these moments closely akin to his own?

Whence comes the notion then, that adults do not enjoy exploring the material world they live in? Whence this lurking feeling of shame about it? If you are observant, you will notice that while adults will not seek the chance to explore, when it comes their way they seize upon it with avidity. Consider, for example, the "sidewalk superintendents," those adults who stand in wrapt absorption watching road repair or building construction. It has become a standing joke that fathers like their sons' electric trains as well as or better than the boys themselves. Recently some mothers whose children attend modern schools have been acting as teachers' aids, and have accompanied teachers and children on excursions around the community. They are invariably enthusiastic, not only about what the children are gaining but also about what they themselves are gaining. Over and over again, they make remarks like, "Why I never dreamed this town was so interesting till I started going around with the children!" The same enthusiasm is displayed by teachers-in-training whose course of instruction includes excursions. What father is not as thrilled as his son at the sound of the fire engine's siren? Parents' love of nature is shown by the popularity of gardens, by

the garden clubs and flower shows; often they are as fond of family pets as the children.

It is by no means difficult for parents to rid themselves of this false notion which deprives the whole family of much happiness. It results chiefly from our emphasis on efficiency. As children we were told not to dawdle and waste time. Later we heard, "Stick to business!" and "Keep your eye on the ball!" As a result, from earliest years we have developed a gnawing sense of guilt about any activity whatever that was not directly related to "the work in hand." While play was accorded some place in our lives, so strong were our Puritan consciences that it has always been a kind of frivolous step-daughter of humanity, charming certainly, but only tolerated because we could not seem to do without it.

While no one would question the importance of efficiency, every generation is obligated to adapt its sense of values to changing conditions. The traditional idea of efficiency is not suited to the age we live in. Today an average man's business amounts to what would have been a hundredth or even a thousandth of a man's business generations ago. So we are fast coming, as someone has humorously put it, "to know more and more about less and less." Being efficient today almost amounts to being one-track-minded.

Science and technocracy, which created specialization, have also created the means to escape from its limitations. We do not have to spend nearly as much time in gainful labor as our ancestors had to spend. It is true that we have filled the remaining hours to overflowing and that much of our time is spent in passive amusements. Nor do we feel a sense of guilt about passive recreation, since we have always accorded some-place to play. In addition, these forms of recreation are highly commercialized, and interest in them is continually being accelerated by high-pressure advertising.

We have, therefore, a paradoxical situation with relation

to recreation today. A father who would feel a little ashamed about sharing his nine-year-old's enthusiasm for magic writing feels not the slightest compunction about chuckling with him over the comics each week. Parents who would smile deprecatingly if discovered going off with their children to the docks or to take a ferry ride would start proudly with them to a baseball game. While the pleasures derived from these forms of recreation are quite different, one is surely no greater than the other.

EXPLORATION AND GROWTH

This broadening of horizons, undertaken simply in a spirit of fun and adventure, brings deep and lasting rewards. It causes members of the family to become better informed and, consequently, more interesting people. It is sometimes amazing to what practical use we can often put knowledge gained in a purely casual way.

But the real value of exploration lies in its effect on personality. Security is developed through the release of energies which would otherwise remain stifled, perhaps through the discovery of abilities which never had a chance. A second way in which security is developed was expressed by Commander Byrd when he said of the late Amelia Earhart, "She was a gallant lady, at home in the universe and unafraid." We need not soar through the skies to develop some of this gallantry. We too can know the greater confidence which comes from clearing up some of the mysteries about the world we live in. Our cities can cease to be collections of buildings and become places where human beings live and work. We can know more than we do about universal laws, about the drama of the heavens and the curious and intriguing ways of growing things.

Exploration develops mental powers; it sharpens the senses, makes us more critical, more ingenious, surer in our judgments. And we can use these powers in everything we do. Then curiosity grows by what it feeds on. The widening of

horizons is never ending. Exploring makes us more alive, more eager and interested in everything.

Parents and children have so much to give each other by finding things out together. It is not for a moment suggested that parents become teachers in the conventional sense, but when they understand the fundamental ways in which interests are awakened and carried forward, they become educators or "guides" in a larger sense. They have something unique and priceless to give the children. Heinrich Pestalozzi, the great educator, who addressed his first book not to teachers but to mothers, knew what this special gift was. He knew the place of affection in relation to learning. He knew how high is the learner's courage, how powerful the urge to move forward when he is learning hand in hand with the person he cares for most deeply. And fathers have exactly as much to give as mothers.

The children give as much. And they are so fresh and eager, so full of enthusiasm and wonder, for almost everything is a "first time" for them. We have only to open the doors of our hearts to them and they will pass their enthusiasm on to us as surely as a lamp radiates light.

Exploration promotes social growth. Every activity—taking a ferry ride, caring for a pet, growing some bulbs in a window box—is a family enterprise. And through these enterprises independence and responsibility are developed. Social growth is fostered in another, larger sense also. As the members of the family explore their community they become more aware of community needs and of ways of meeting them. Intercultural understanding is fostered as they come to know more about different racial, religious, and cultural groups. We cannot say that exploring the wonders of science and nature promotes social growth as we ordinarily use the term, but it does give a greater sense of the universal pattern, the great design.

The fact must be faced that despite the pleasures and bene-

fits derived from exploration in the home, it has often been attempted with wholly unsuccessful results. Over and over again parents have, with high hopes, procured things like fascinating books, bulbs to plant, or toy electric motors only to say, "Oh they did a little with them, but they didn't really care. These things stayed on the shelf most of the time."

Failure is due in part to the point already made that these have not been family explorations, that the parents have tended to take the position of outsiders. But there is another reason. You may decide to undertake exploration as a family, even be eager to embark on it, and simply find yourselves unable to enjoy it. The failure was not the result of the activity itself, nor was it anyone's fault. It was a result of the time at which the activities were suggested and the way they were both introduced and carried on. The all-important factor of interest was overlooked.

Since interest is so vital to exploration, it will be discussed briefly, and much of what is said will apply to all the remaining chapters. The vital point about interest is *that it comes from within* the individual; *it is not imposed from without.* You can no more make a person interested in something than you can make him laugh. We often think we make people laugh, but actually we do not really do so. Where our efforts to produce laughter are successful it is because we know the kinds of things that this person finds amusing or we make a lucky guess. Furthermore, the process of awakening interests involves growth—interests develop from previous interests as surely as a flower develops from a bud. Anyone who would awaken or foster a family's interest must know the kinds of things in which its members are already interested.

Thus, for example, where the children did not use the books or the electric motor it was because they were introduced "cold," so to speak. Such an abrupt introduction is exactly like trying to ignite a log of wood from burning paper without the use of kindling. A boy who knows nothing about electricity

and who at the time happens to be deeply concerned about failure in arithmetic cannot become really interested in an electric motor. But if this boy has become interested in electricity through playing with a magnet, then through rigging up a bell with his father, the motor would be a treasure beyond price.

To cite another example, a father who is an engineer may be eager to go and look at a new bridge which has recently been completed in his community. If the family has done no real community exploration, and if in addition the children are not particularly interested in bridges, they will probably receive coldly the proposal that they accompany him to look at the bridge. On the other hand, they would hail the suggestion if mother and children had already come to know a good deal about the father's interest.

Interests always grow as the individual himself has the fun of discovery. Thus any experience will be enjoyed by the family, as by any group of people, to the degree that every one of them shares in it. When you really have a good time, your interests move along together as you move together on the street. Now some get ahead, now others fall behind, but when they become too far apart, those who are ahead wait for the others to catch up with them. Usually, since the parents' interests are ahead of the children's, they are the ones who do the waiting. For example, if you notice something unusual, like an odd plant in a store window or a strange kind of truck, do not call everyone's attention to it immediately, but wait a moment for the others to discover it too. If you are performing some simple scientific experiment or planting something, it will be more fun if everyone who can do so lends a hand, than if the leader does everything. And this keeping together applies to understanding why things happen or the way they work. The family cannot keep together if the more advanced ones tell more than the others really want to hear or can understand. Therefore, discourage "lectures,"

and encourage everyone to limit explanations to answering questions. You do not have to wait for the verbal question, however. The eyes may ask it, or the eager, bent head, or the busy hands.

AFFECTION AND INTEREST

Reference has been made to the place of family affection in the awakening and development of interest. Children can absorb the interests of their parents as naturally as they breathe. Did you love your mother, and did she love poetry? Then it is reasonably certain that you also loved it. Was your father kind and just and affectionate, and was he given to peering at liquids through a microscope? Then it is safe to say that you too did this. But the children will not really care unless the parents are anxious to share their interests. A mother who is herself a poet once said, "I sent Stephen to a good school, but one thing I blame it for. He never liked poetry until he went to college." Had she really wanted to share her interest, he would certainly have cared for poetry.

If you would share your own interests with your children, first of all share theirs. When they are younger, welcome a wide range of interests. And when they reach adolescence, if they choose some special field of interest which is not yours, and even one you would not choose for them—nevertheless respect it. While being glad to share your interest, never try to impose it. The children should not interfere with you, but let them be around you sometimes when you are at work, and speak to them about what you are doing, showing your feeling quite plainly in words they can understand. If you try to impose interest, they will simply show enthusiasm out of affection or to win your approval. They may even react against what you want them to like, as a way of asserting themselves. Simply introduce your hobby or work as something you believe they may like, and they will surely accept it.

Very often parents' interests are also awakened through those of the children. A gift of a Chinese doll may lead the family to become intrigued with modern China, and finally send all of them to the museum. Or the children may be spilling over with things they are learning about in school. While textbooks are often a deadly bore, there are numbers of children's books on the market today dealing with science, nature study, and history, which the entire family will find irresistibly appealing. It is certainly unfortunate that so often "helping children with their school work" is limited to hearing their spelling or working arithmetic problems for them.

Since interests develop from previous ones, nothing is so helpful as an attitude of readiness. Think a little about your interests. It is easy enough to recognize the ones you have. Consider how you might share them with the children. And think about the ones you might have. What do you notice when you go about the street—the dwellings, bridges, the people? What questions do you ask, perhaps not aloud, but to yourself? What did you formerly like, what subjects attracted you in college, which was the one you majored in? Did you once have a dream, and for some reason give it up? Did you start your science course eagerly, only to have a stern instructor tell you flatly that "you don't have the mind for science"? Did you accept the judgment, though sadly, and have you since sometimes wondered if he was really right? Did you love to tinker about the house and think you might become an inventor till your father told you that inventors always starved?

Parents can keep abreast of the children's interests. Children's play reveals their interests very plainly. Some young children were taking a trip on an ocean liner they had constructed of blocks and boards. A storm came up, and the boat began to sink. "SOS!" screamed the children at the top of their lungs. "Why do you scream?" asked the mother when

the children paused for breath. "So another boat will hear us and save us!" they answered. This remark led to an interesting talk about the use of the radio on boats.

Notice what children talk about, what they ask about. Children's questions are sometimes deceiving. Often they do not ask in order to hear an answer but simply to direct the parents' attention to them. In such a case, the question should be treated lightly. But if the child needs you, then the sound of your voice or the feel of your hand on his shoulder will mean more than the answer. If the child wants more than this, questions will persist. In general, where possible, avoid answering children's questions didactically. Often the best reply is, "Let's find out," or "Why do you suppose?" Never be afraid of saying, "I don't know." Like frank acknowledgment of mistakes, admission of ignorance does not lessen children's respect for adults, but rather increases it.

As important as choosing the right ways to awaken interest is the avoidance of methods which tend to destroy it. We do not always realize how easy, how tragically easy it is to do this. Interests can wither and sicken in earliest childhood. The words "Don't touch!" "Keep away!" "Put that down!" are like a cold blast of air, or even a blow on the face. Do not take your two-year-olds away when they are looking at something unless you absolutely must. Do not take anything out of their hands unless you are very sure they will harm either the object or themselves.

Fear of being dirty is one of the deadliest enemies of children's urge to explore. While certain standards must be maintained, some dirt is as necessary to exploration as to happy play. When a child runs to you with something, look from the object to his face. You cannot then say, "Throw it down!"

It tends to destroy all interests for people to be hurt when their proposals are rejected. If you introduce an idea and it is met with "Ah, why do that?"—be good natured about it. Since no one can automatically feel interest, there is no need

to be in the least affronted if other people do not respond as you think they will. If you feel inclined, go on with the discussion, if not, let the matter drop.

It will be helpful to consider the time element in relation to children's interests. Since their attention span is shorter than adults', activities will not hold them for long periods of time. Since everything that happens is so much newer to them, they are more easily distracted. Under most circumstances, the younger the child the shorter is his attention span. Sometimes adults do not quite realize these differences. For example, a child will be terribly excited when a particular activity is proposed, then seem to lose interest so quickly that the adult is discouraged. Often if the idea is brought up again later when his mind is free, he will be as eager as before and will carry through.

For these reasons, when an experiment involves rather lengthy preparations, if the parent is interested in doing a good deal of the work it is better to depart from the principle of sharing activities and assemble some of the materials beforehand, or even to start the experiment, so that the child's interest will not flag before he can see results.

Many activities will be undertaken by the family very casually, on the spur of the moment, when there happens to be time. Others, like gardening or bird walks, may continue for weeks or months. It is possible, however, for a family to remain interested in one particular activity for many weeks when another would be even more interesting, at least to some members of the family. One family devoted whole summer vacations for many years to sailing. All of them loved it, but the teacher said that one of the boys needed a broader experience during the summer. This boy showed a deep interest in architecture in school. The family, who owned a car, went for their vacations to New England, to a region which abounded in old churches and homes. He borrowed the car and spent many happy days visiting these. Perhaps his

family missed something by not learning to share his interest.

Sometimes the road to discovery leads far. One of the leading anthropologists of this country owes his interest in this field to the Saturdays he and his parents and brothers and sisters spent digging for Indian relics in Inwood Park in New York City. A woman whose paintings are considered remarkable by art critics started to paint at fifty years of age, when she bought some paint and brushes for her son. But, after all, the uncovering of a talent, wonderful though it is, is not the reason for exploration. The family is not concerned with results. The important thing is to learn to do things for the joy of the doing.

Chapter 10

TRIPS AND EXCURSIONS

FROM PLEASURE EXERTION TO PLEASURE EXCURSION

It is assumed then that parents share "the itching heel," the hankering after exploration with their children. It is taken for granted that if the average parent will allow himself to do so, he will be as fascinated as his nine-year-old son or daughter by whatever his community may have to offer—a streamlined train gliding over its track; a monstrous ocean liner motionless as a waiting Titan in the dock; a freight yard at night, with flashing lights, fabulous as a fairy tale; a suspension bridge swinging in the air; an absurd old gingerbread house three blocks away; a busy dairy farm; cows grazing in a field; streams of passengers hurrying through a railroad station.

The idea of parents' sharing children's interests in the community may not be readily accepted. It is easier to accept the possibility of sharing children's enthusiasm for science and nature. Furthermore, while the urge to share the children's ordinary interests is present and far from being a sign of immaturity—it is the mark of an alert, intelligent, adult mind—we have so suppressed it that it has become dormant and deeply buried.

Therefore, we suggest that those who doubt the possibility of learning to share their children's community interests take a few excursions with their children. The experience of numbers of parents indicates that a few trials honestly made

will be quite sufficient. Parents invariably come back from these outings having enjoyed themselves quite as much as the children if not more. In time you will find you are actually discovering your own community. The usual, the formerly everyday and commonplace, will seem different and meaningful and important. In time the old "family outing"—what many call, "a pleasure exertion"—will change. Much of the "exertion"—the dragging sense of weariness and boredom, and the frayed nerves—will be gone; pleasure will predominate. Parents will not be going *for* the children, but *with* the children. You and your children will know a closeness nothing else can give you.

BEGINNING GRADUALLY

It is well to start gradually. Wherever you go, try to cultivate the habit of noticing the new, different, and interesting. If most of your outings have been to places like the zoo or the amusement park, try going a new way. Whether or not you change your route, be sure to look about you. Perhaps there is a housing project, a tunnel, a ramp, or a bridge. You may find trains in your vicinity, and speculate on their starting point and their destination. Or you may pass a body of water and some docks. You may go through a residential neighborhood where there are some very new houses or some very old ones. If you pass isolated houses, you may observe that the condition of the grounds reflects the inmates' civic pride or lack of it. An old church may stand out, looking odd on a twentieth-century street. Its lines may strike you as unusually graceful. Other beauties may hold you: the colors of the sky, the pattern of shadows, leaves drenched in the sun, even the iridescent rainbow made by the firemen's hose. Start to notice the people more. Look at the expressions of their faces, perhaps their way of walking. Notice interesting groups. Begin to attend more closely to sounds: the deep-throated whistle of the ferryboat, the rhythmic *ding* of the bell buoy, the shrill

voices of children on the playground, even the rumble and squeak of heavy trucks.

These excursions are described as "family outings." But this does not mean that the children's or the parents' friends will not share in them. Where there is only one child, it is, of course, especially desirable to invite his friends to go along. There is no special way to handle these friends. If they are well-adjusted, they will fit into the party perfectly.

Gradually you will develop the habit of noticing more when you go about generally and not just on outings, especially if the children are with you. To observe will take a little more time; see if you cannot accomplish it without sacrificing anything more important. When the children are with you, if you have hitherto felt you had to take the lead, start to let go a little. Let yourself be more relaxed and passive. Watch and listen more to them; even let them lead you a little here and there around the street. It will be rewarding. Your ten-year-old girl may pull you over to look at some tiny gleaming glass animals in a store window. Your eight-year-old boy or girl may stop you to watch a crane heave a piano to an upper window, or a steam shovel taking bites of sand. Even the four-year-old may stop you and point to coal rumbling down a shute, or a repair worker in a manhole.

Keep giving way to them, keep attending to them. As you do this, you will begin to feel a sense of mounting eagerness, of heightened vitality. Their eagerness and vitality, their wonder at something wholly new is passing over to you. Remember how you felt the baby's wonder and delight the first time he discovered his own feet? And as you did not hide your feeling then, so do not hide it now. If you simply behave naturally, you will be in no danger of appearing gushing and silly.

If the children do happen to be noticing things eagerly, there is nothing in particular for the parents to explain. For this eagerness will indicate that they are being guided by their

unerring inner urges. You do not have to press them to see or hear anything, for they are absorbing what they are ready to take in. They are on the prowl for the kind of mental and emotional nourishment they need, exactly as animals go prowling for food. If they ask questions, answer them exactly as you would those of an adult, giving them as much information as they request, no more. Comment casually on the things that interest you—if they ignore you, let it go.

The younger the child, the more certain will be his interest in this kind of exploration. If the older children or the adolescents seem uninterested, it is because, as with adults, their natural urges have been suppressed by a sense of duty. Being freer and having less sense of pressure to hurry along will mean a great deal to them. Your interest will eventually prove contagious, and they will start to observe of their own accord.

Sooner or later something will especially hold the family's interest on these trips. You may be fascinated by a suspension bridge. The children may be very curious to know exactly what makes it hang there and how it is being held up. You may pass some statue or historic site that looks interesting and want to know more about it. In this case, you may suggest looking up what you want to know after you get home. The father may suggest that he and the children make their own suspension bridge. When you get home, the chances are that sooner or later the children will ask you to keep your promise. If they forget, bring the subject up yourself when the time seems right and you yourself feel like discussing it. Ask if they do not think it would be fun to find out about what they saw on the trip. Eventually both parents and children will become more and more observant and will find they are making less and less effort to seek what is novel. It will begin to come to meet them. They will start to relate what they see to their own lives inside and outside the home, with things they are doing, with books they are reading.

Parents will realize with growing fascination how much of this experience can be shared, and at the same time what very different things it is meaning to each one, how responses vary with age, maturity, temperament, and interests. If details escape the younger and less mature members of the family, their excitement and delight with large things, brightly colored things, and things that move is a thrill. They may not know baggage cars from passenger cars, but watch their eyes as the train pulls out of the station. Hear their comments, the whispered "My train! My favorite streamlined train!" And how much more the older ones can see, hear, and comprehend, how endlessly varied are their responses. Eight-year-old Bill may be able to spot airplanes better than his parents; his older brother may have picked up some interesting information about the lobster pots you see on the beach. The adolescent daughter may have something to contribute about an old house because of her history course in school—in fact, both she and her teen-age brother may know almost anything.

No response is more "important" than another. Interests may shift and grow, sometimes very rapidly. The mother and father will make their special contributions; probably the father can answer more questions about machinery, the mother can answer quite as many along other lines. Adult interests also may change. Trips may be the means of awakening very real avenues of experience along wholly new lines. Undoubtedly the entire family will become more "community conscious" than they were before—more alert to the advantages and the needs of their neighborhood and town.

THE EXPERIMENT

The time will come when the family might like to try an experiment, a different kind of outing, a trip to some neighborhood they have never visited, to the docks, or the freight yard, to a factory or perhaps to a near-by farm. If you feel of

two minds about this, if, while you feel a certain pull to do it, but wonder if it really seems very attractive after all, remember that no one would go to Paris without visiting Montmartre or the Latin Quarter. Perhaps there is a comparable section in your community. Not twenty blocks away there may be a little Italy or a little Greece you never saw. And the docks or the freight yard—if you have these in your community—may have as much to offer. These are, of course, merely suggestions about places to visit. The particular one that you select will depend on the community and your own desires.

By now the parents will be sharing more with the children as they go about, and it is suggested that they plan to take this trip with the children from beginning to end, and to save their private visiting for another time. If your child has no brothers or sisters, you may sometimes have to make a special effort in this direction. For he is likely to be so quiet that it is easy to forget him and become lost in your own conversations. He may ask an eager question about something you pass, and be met with, "Not now. We're busy. Later—later." And "later" may be too late—for the object has vanished forever.

The results of this complete companionship with the children will be striking. Everyone will be more relaxed when "interrupting" is no longer a bugbear. The parents will catch the contagion of the children's enthusiasm more completely. And as for the children—do you remember how you felt some time when you marched along beside a certain adult who in some subtle fashion made you his equal, and particularly how you felt if this adult was your father or mother? We doubt if anything you will ever do for your children will mean a great deal more to them than simply giving them the sense that you are really *with* them for this period of time. It is something no one can ever take away from them, as long as they live. It makes them surer of your affection—surer, even, of being worthy of that affection. "Much of my childhood was un-

happy," said a man. "Probably that's why I've forgotten a great deal of it. But one thing I will always remember—the walks I used to take with my father."

A few procedures are suggested, not as iron-clad rules, but simply as ways to make the trip not only more pleasurable but also more beneficial. It is a good idea to talk about it a little with the children beforehand, to speak of where you are going, of some of the things you expect to see, perhaps of where the place is and of how you will go. The matter of the children's clothes is really important, and they should wear old ones, or at least sturdy ones—they are such naturally restless beings; they so badly need to move about freely and to explore. If they live in the city and attend formal schools, they may be compelled to submit to a degree of restraint that is none too good for them at this age which Howard Lane calls "the age of baby leashes." Going in old or sturdy clothes means that they enjoy freedom in this respect at least. And it frees the parents as much, frees them from the nagging anxiety about scuffed shoes, rumpled suits or dresses, and even a little dirt. It is really amazing what a difference this one thing can make in a family's sense of relaxation during a trip. It seems as though almost invariably the most unhappy families you see in the park are those whose children are constantly being warned to look out for their clothes.

Children can be given freedom in other ways. While the line has to be firmly drawn at disturbing other people, it will mean much to them if no one reproves them when they start to run a race through an almost deserted street, or when they chortle away in the bus or streetcar. In fact, it helps to tell riddles or stories on long rides and even to bring along some quiet games, like pocket checkers. The need to let off steam is probably especially great when the children start out and are likely to be "feeling high." Far from minding this kind of thing, the other passengers will undoubtedly enjoy the children.

The matter of time is also important. This particular trip, being the first of its kind, should not be very extensive. Allow enough time so that no one feels the least bit rushed, and so that you will be home reasonably early. If the destination does not matter greatly, it will help to mention this fact when the trip is discussed beforehand. Be prepared not to reach the place you planned, if something more interesting comes along. And there is the matter of guarding against fatigue, which affects not only physical health but emotional health as well. Very often children do not respond to fatigue by feeling any urge to rest, but by becoming increasingly keyed up. And since they are unable to control themselves as adults do, they show their fatigue by being generally difficult, by restlessness, whining, nagging, quarreling, and by stormy refusals to do what is expected of them. They may become somewhat tired in spite of the most careful planning, and some quick reinforcement in the form of an ice-cream treat or a few sweets from your pocket will help a great deal. They will undoubtedly require some forbearance on your part when you return—when, in addition to being somewhat tired, they also feel let down. If you expect to be back about mealtime, plan a meal that can be prepared quickly, and encourage the children to read or do something quiet. It may happen that they will be sleepy enough to rest completely, but if not, urging them to do so will probably only make them more restless.

Finally it is most important that parents remain calm and relaxed during the trip, especially in regard to safety. Though you may have to act quickly and be very firm in emergencies, do not shout or scream, or scold the children for getting into danger. Never say things like, "Look out! Do you want to be run over?" or "You almost killed yourself!" Children do not want to get into danger—they only do it because they are so interested that they forget, and because, having had no experience with accidents, they have no conception of what they mean. One incident of this kind may be enough to throw a

pall over an entire trip. And its effects may be far more serious. Because children are so young, and therefore so impressionable, the effects may be lasting. As has already been pointed out, a strong sense of fear, aroused in one direction, becomes general, and the child tends to be afraid not only of this particular thing but of life itself. And the fear may persist long after the incident that caused it has been forgotten. A year-old child went visiting and sat down on a very coarse-fibered rug. Twenty-four hours later she refused to stand on even soft rugs, and when she was held over them, drew up her legs like a frog's. So deep an impression does experience make on personality. Both parents and children will be far better off if the children are handled, in general, as you handle a baby who hurts himself. If the hurt is real, children should have sympathy and affection, if not they need humor and diversion.

The children can share with their parents responsibility about safety, even though they cannot take ultimate responsibility, and alertness on the part of the parents is naturally always necessary. It will be a relief to everyone if the children understand very clearly exactly what the procedures are about crossing streets, wandering away, and so on, if there is consistency in relation to them, and if each one knows definitely what his responsibilities are. No absolute rules can be laid down about giving children responsibility on trips, for this depends both on previous handling and on the individual child. Certainly no child can have freedom unless you can rely on him absolutely. He should be given responsibility gradually. But the more responsibility he can assume, the more grown up he will be. Independence in such affairs will be a great help to him in every way. Parents will, of course, keep the younger children more closely with them; by the time a normally bright and mature child is nine he should have learned to take short and simple trips, involving only a crossing or two, by himself, and he should be given a corresponding degree of freedom when he is with his family. The older

children can learn to help share responsibility for the younger ones. It will give the children great joy, and also help them learn to take responsibility if they carry the family carfare and take turns paying it. All the children can learn to be considerate of other people while on trips. They learn consideration best through the attitude and example of their parents, and through the quiet suggestions that are made to them.

Taking trips in this way makes them increasingly pleasurable to the family. In a new neighborhood they will find a new life. Perhaps the children never saw clothes waving on a line before, or other children sitting with their mothers in the streets. They may enter a new kind of church, they may visit a busy fish or vegetable market. That miraculous Chinese baby, the old Greek man, or the peddler may make an impression on them that they will never forget. In the freight yard they may find out about the system by which trains are operated, or about refrigerator cars. At the docks they may embark on a ferry ride that is like a miniature voyage. Perhaps they may tour the boat, or sit and watch the many kinds of craft that steam by them.

The family may make new, if passing, friends, may chat with the pushcart man or ask questions of the trainman if he does not seem to be busy, or of sailors on the dock. As a matter of fact, people who work with their hands are always glad to talk with those who are really interested, especially to children.

THE HORIZONS WIDEN

If the first trip is really enjoyable, there will be others like it, and in time the family will make a custom of these outings. They will go to all the places other families visit, but will also discover some places for themselves. Like everybody, they will go window shopping, but they will also visit department stores, not to buy but simply to look at things like textiles, household gadgets, and perhaps pictures. They will ramble

through the financial district, looking at the buildings. They may go to the railroad station simply to see the people. Perhaps they will sit watching them for some time, even imagining stories about them. On week days or during vacation, if they are in town, they will certainly go through some factory. They may follow the milkman's route, spend several hours looking at newspaper or printing presses, visit the markets.

The old outings will mean more than they used to. In the park they will see more than stretches of grass and trees, at the beach more than sand and water. Often there will be some reason for going to these places: the desire to watch unfolding water lilies in the park lake, or to see cherry trees in blossom. On the beach, gulls and shells and seaweed will become familiar; they will watch and talk about the tide. They will know well what changes of season do to a park, and a sunset to an ocean. Their passing friendships will be many.

These families are always devotees of the museum. And because the museum is so important and can mean so much, it is worth while to consider certain ways to make it more enjoyable. First of all, if you have any unpleasant memories of museums, forget them. Forget those old "guided tours," the long-winded explanations you listened to and never remembered, the tired feet and aching head. Certainly a museum will mean nothing to you if there is the slightest feeling of obligation about visiting it. There is not a room that must be visited, not a label that has to be read. There are only chain armor and Indian tepees, spinning wheels, dinosaurs, and the treasures of the Indies to be looked at or passed by, as fancy dictates.

If the parents have this attitude, and if in addition they are to some extent allowing themselves to be guided by the children as well as guiding them, the first trip to the museum is likely to be rather a strenuous affair. For the children are likely to want to see everything at once, and usually the best thing is to let them wade in as they like. This, therefore, is

likely to be one of the times when they will become really tired. If there is an ice-cream parlor or drugstore near at hand, a visit to it when you come out of the museum will give everyone a needed pickup. The advantage of the rather strenuous first visit is that it gives you an over-all view of the place which will help you to know what you especially want to see the next time. The museum, which is usually free to visitors on Sundays, is certainly a place to be visited again and again.

If you come under its spell, the museum will undoubtedly invite, even compel, some reading. There is a wide selection of helpful books including Howard Pyle's *Stories of the Round Table,* or *Climbing Our Family Tree, Hitty, The Messenger of the Pharaoh, Blue Pigeons* (an enthralling story of Greece). Frequently it is a good idea to start to read aloud to the children before a museum trip. In time the rooms of the museum will become enchanted places—suits of armor will hold tilting figures, shadowy grandmothers will sit behind spinning wheels, mummies will seem to breathe and dinosaurs to walk.

Trips do not end when you return home—usually this is the time when in a sense they really begin. Gradually what has been seen and heard becomes part of the family's total experience, continually enriching and vitalizing it. The younger children will be bound to start to reproduce with blocks some of the things they have seen. All of them will have to draw, paint, perhaps model them. It will be fascinating to see how different events, real or imaginary, are woven into play. If the family has access to tools and any kind of bench, the father will want to help the children make things like boats or airplanes out of wood; the mother and daughters may begin to sew some costumes for the dolls; the adolescent boys and girls may acquire hobbies like photography. And, of course, the reading will continue.

In enterprises such as these, as in everything else, it is most important not to press for anything at all. Simply let it happen

or not as it will. Do not be in the least surprised if the children show no inclination to talk about the trips for a while, perhaps for some days, after you have taken them. Their silence does not denote lack of enjoyment. It may simply be that they are thinking over all that their young minds have taken in. They feel as you might after your first day in Paris. Remember, your own community is as new to them as Paris would be to you. They need a little time to digest what they have seen. Sooner or later they will show in some way what the experience has meant to them.

When outings have become a regular institution, the family will want to do some planning together about them. It always helps to encourage complete frankness. Each member of the family should be expected to say what place he would most like to visit at a particular time, what he would like to do, and why. And the final decision should meet, as far as possible, the wishes of all.

Unless the circumstances are unusual, no one interest needs to take precedence over another. Six-year-old Betty's longing to see the giraffes at the zoo, Father's vote for a television broadcast, small Peter's passion to see the B-29's at the airport, older sister's preference for the museum, Mother's urge to see the botanical gardens—all these various choices can be laid out on the table for consideration. It may be that two places can comfortably be included in one trip. Or it may be that one visit takes precedence over another for reasons of expediency—for example, the botanical gardens may be in full bloom now, or this may be the only chance to hear the broadcast. But if it is necessary to disappoint anyone badly, a promise to do what he wants to do next time will keep him from feeling too upset. Or it may be that the family will split up. Mother and daughter may go to see an old house that has been turned into a museum, while father and the boys may visit a factory.

It will also help very much if some planning is done in

relation to time. If the family wants to spend a long time in a certain place, let your plans be understood definitely before you start. But if reaching your destination is not too important, then expect to be leisurely and follow any promising bypaths, but accept the fact that you may have very little time after you arrive. In fact, you may not reach your destination that day and have to put it off for another trip. It is amazing how helpful this kind of planning is in saving everyone, especially the children, from disappointment. Trips should not crowd out other things you want to do, like going to the movies. How often or when trips are taken depends entirely on the family's inclinations and interests.

One of the jolliest and most meaningful of trips is one without destination, where you simply go out to see what you can see. A father once described this kind of trip. The family happened to own a car. "We got up early," said the father, a responsible business executive, "and drove slowly. When we got out of town, Dick spied some cows in a pasture near a huge barn. Then I saw that the farmer was milking them. We stopped and waved to him and he waved back cheerily, so I asked him if we could have a drink of water. While we were drinking, the boys began plying him with questions about milking. He seemed to take to them right away, and to like to talk. It ended up with his taking us all over that farm!" The high-pressure businessman's eyes sparkled. "What a place he had! What a garden! We petted a little calf. The boys went wild when they saw a sow and six little pigs. They climbed trees and jumped in the hay."

This, it seemed, was the first installment. "We went on," continued the father, "till we came to a small railroad station, where Mother saw some Queen Anne's lace growing. While we were picking it, a mile-long freight train rolled in, and the boys had to inspect it from stem to stern. The engineer proved to be as chummy as the farmer had been. And, believe it or not, before he left he promised he'd take the boys

and me for a ride in his engine if we'd come back Wednesday. And he did! What a ride! He let the boys put his cap on their heads! We blew the whistle ourselves!"

The unplanned trip, like every trip, proves the truth of the old saying, "You take from any experience exactly what you bring to it," or of the lines, "All the world's a masquerade, when Shakespeare passes by." And you do not have to be Shakespeare to find that masquerade. Like all experiences that really influence development, this mutual exploration is not something static. It is forever changing, growing more rich, more meaningful, more exciting. And correspondingly it is forever broadening and deepening other experiences.

Chapter 11

THE WONDERS OF SCIENCE

Like exploration of the community, the discovery of some of the wonders of science brings its own special pleasures, its own rewards. Ours is a scientific age; we live in a laboratory. We are making use of scientific information at every moment. Not to know anything about basic scientific principles is to be out of step with the times.

Nevertheless, many people keep aloof from science, and when they do, it is because they have far too narrow a view of it. The scientist has come to be typified by men like Albert Einstein who are possessed of vast stores of information the average man could not hope to obtain in many lifetimes; a laboratory is a kind of forbidding foreign country. But science can be as complex or as simple as we choose to make it. Your private laboratory can be your kitchen, your bathroom, a strip of woods, a brook that runs past your house. You can observe certain facts, satisfy yourselves that certain things always happen. You can find out the reasons for certain phenomena—and stop there. You can use or dispense with technical terms as you choose.

In a broad sense everyone, even a small child, can be a scientist. For everyone can observe facts with his senses, classify these facts, and base conclusions on them. A two-year-old watched his mother carry a hot plate with a pot holder. When he found the cereal too hot to eat he covered the dish with the holder and tried again. This was on his own childish level a true scientific experiment. Some six-year-olds had been

doing quite a little simple experimentation and had played with toy steam and electric engines. One day they asked which engine would go faster. After a good deal of guessing a boy said, "There's only one way to find out. You'd have to have two engines as much alike as you could make them. You'd have to have two sets of tracks, exactly alike; you'd have to give them the very same load to carry. Then start them out—and you'd know."

One afternoon two women friends and some children were enjoying themselves together rigging up an electric bell. "Well," declared one of the women after the children had gone. "This is the first time I ever did anything like this and it was actually fun!" You need absolutely no special gifts to become a scientist. A mother who is not "mechanically minded," who, in fact, knows nothing about machinery, a sister who is poetically inclined, a brother who is headed for business—all can explore this world together.

Finally, as pure recreation, this kind of activity can hardly be surpassed. For it holds the thrill of a mystery drama of grand proportions; the protagonists are universal forces. Furthermore, those who perform the experiments are the producers of the drama, the ones who make things happen.

THE HABIT OF NOTICING

Exactly as with exploration of the community, scientific discovery will be enjoyed to the greatest degree if the family cultivates the habit of being a little more observant of things in and out of the home. Notice things in the kitchen—the trembling lid of the tea kettle, the smooth, swift action of the can opener, the revolving wheels of the egg beater. Observe that you lift the handle of the stopper in the lavatory basin instead of lowering it to send the stopper down. Children on a seesaw move back and forth and adjust their weights to balance themselves, so the parents move a load of dishes on a tray, or adjust dishes and silver on a wire basket, to prevent

their toppling. One paper airplane flies bravely down the entire length of the yard, another falls crazily after a few feet.

When some new appliance comes into the house, such as a toaster, vacuum cleaner, or washing machine, do not think only of how convenient it will be. Stop and look at it a moment. In the same way consider some unusual happening, like a long distance call from Father. One morning you go into the kitchen to find that the milk is frozen in the refrigerator; perhaps the water bottle has broken. It will take very little time to call the children and let them look at what has happened.

If you are excursion-minded, be on the lookout for the material things around you, for what they are made of, for the way they behave. Notice different kinds of roads, the different kinds of stones of which buildings are made. Stop and look at processes like the mixing of cement, building wrecking, building construction. If you are out in the open country, look upon everything—brooks, hills, rocks, trees—not as static, but as eternally restless, as forever moving, changing, forever acted upon and acting. When you come upon such old clichés as "You can't make bricks without straw," or "Nature abhors a vacuum," stop and consider them.

If the family has plenty of time, over and over someone, often the children, will call attention to things. If the parents happen to notice them first, it will be especially interesting if they wait a moment or two. And then, instead of saying, "Look at that!" throw out something challenging like, "Do you see what that boat's doing?" or "What a strong tree that must be!" Let the children make the observation themselves. "Why, the boat's tilting right out of the water," or "The skinny little tree's split that big rock in two!"

Then from someone will come the inevitable question, "Why did that happen?" Children often ask it of parents. It may seem like straining at a gnat to say that parents should seldom ask it of children. But this point is not trivial; it is

crucially important. For failure to ask the question means that the vital spark of interest is lacking. So do not worry about the children at these times any more than when you are on excursions. If both parents are interested, it is a good idea if they exchange remarks themselves instead of following the natural inclination to direct their remarks to the children. This way of speaking will show the children immediately that you are genuinely interested in what is happening. And the chances are that their interest will catch fire from yours.

When the whole family wants to know answers, you can investigate thoroughly in the appropriate books. It is hardly necessary to say, however, that the only books to be used by the family who become scientists should be those which help them to find out through experimentation. For the difference between reading and experimentation is the difference between being told how an apple tastes and eating an apple.

The field of simple scientific experimentation in the home is so broad, and families' interests, as well as their circumstances, differ so greatly that we can do no more in this chapter than show certain general directions in which curiosity may lead. The family who wants to do further exploration will be referred to many excellent books which are readily available. And it should be re-emphasized that always the experiment itself is no more important than the situation which gives rise to it. Actually, it is the situation which determines whether you are going through a series of meaningless motions or doing something thrilling.

WHAT AIR CAN DO

It is safe to say that every family is intrigued with airplanes. To tell one another that the propeller holds the plane in the air may seem like an explanation of how a plane operates, but it is a rather vague one. Perhaps the older boy or girl will begin to talk wisely about "air pressure" and "buoyancy," but he can show you what he is talking about by putting a

piece of cardboard over a glass full of water and turning the glass upside down, showing that the water will stay in the glass. It is obvious that the air is pressing up against the cardboard. The glass can also be held in a horizontal position and the cardboard will continue to press against it and to hold the water inside. This shows that air presses sideways as well as upward.

A very simple stunt will show the downward pressure of air. Crush a paper napkin in a dry glass and lower the glass rim down into a basin of water. The air already in the glass presses downward with sufficient force to keep the water out of the glass. As a result the napkin remains dry.

These simple experiments will convince you that air presses in all directions. You may want to discover that air also has weight. Suspend a yard stick crosswise, or a leather belt so that it hangs freely and evenly. Take two identical balloons. Hang a deflated balloon on one end of the stick. Blow up the second balloon and hang it on the other end of the stick. You will notice that the balloon containing the air is heavier than the empty balloon.

Everyone has felt air in motion and knows how hard it is to walk on a very windy day. But few of us have stopped to figure out how air in motion affects air pressure and makes flight possible. Ask one of the children to cut a strip of paper about two inches wide and eight inches long. Have him hold it at arm's length while he runs across the room with it. Notice how the paper floats out. Next have him walk, to see how it hangs down. After this, take a piece of writing paper about two inches wide and seven inches long and paste the two ends together to form a loop that resembles the wing of an airplane. Hold the pasted end close to your lips, blow along the top of the loop, and watch the paper wing "take off."

When you produce a rapid stream of air by running or blowing, the air moves away from one area, and there is less air pressure there. The air then rises into this low-pressure

area and lifts the paper. In the case of the airplane, the whirling motion of the propeller drives the air from around the plane, creating a low-pressure area. The atmosphere below the plane rushes into this newly created low-pressure area and causes the plane to rise. This same principle can be further illustrated by attaching a strip of cloth or paper to the wire guard of an electric fan. When the blades are motionless, the paper will hang down limply; as the blades begin to turn, the paper streams out at right angles to the fan.

You can perform many other interesting experiments that will illustrate these laws. Hold a lighted match in front of a card about two inches from your mouth. Then blow. The flame of the match is carried toward the card as the atmosphere in front of the card tries to enter the low-pressure area which is created by your blowing against the card.

Experiments for younger children will be found in *Let's Find Out,* and *Now Try This,* by Herman and Nina Schneider, as well as in other volumes listed at the end of this book. Carleton Lynde's *Science Experiences With Home Equipment and Science Experiences With Ten-Cent Store Equipment* will be challenging to the older members of the family, and the suggested experiments will interest everyone.

Your six-year-old may notice that milk or juice pours more easily if two holes are punctured in the can. One of the older children will realize that the air pressing against the single hole prevents the liquid from pouring forth, and that the second hole admits air into the can. The air entering the can presses the liquid out. When your child sucks his milk up through a straw, he will one day realize that air pressure is forcing the milk to rise in the straw. The action of sucking draws the air out of the straw. Immediately, the liquid rises in the straw because of the air which is pressing down on the liquid outside of the straw.

The roads of science lead in so many directions. The family may want to study more deeply air pressure as it is employed

in machines, or some members may want to find out more about its use in sailing as well as in flying. In such an event, the airport or the beach will become your laboratories.

FROM AIR TO WATER

Experiments with air pressure may naturally lead to experiments with water. Or, on the other hand, interest may develop from the children's water play. A six-year-old floating his toy boat in the bathtub may notice that if he places a cargo in the center of the boat, the boat will carry quite a large load, while if he arranges his load unevenly, the boat will list and sink. If he begins to ask questions about why some things float while others sink, it will be fun to float the cover of a coffee can on the water, then crush it and watch it sink.

The weight of the cover is the same in both cases, though some children will insist on weighing the cover first flat and then crushed, because, as a seven-year-old remarked, "Maybe you wrapped up some air in that cover when you crumpled it." It is apparent that the distribution of the weight has some relation to an object's capacity to float.

A kitchen or letter scale and some paper cups will help you to find out why some objects float and others sink. Take a large uncovered tin can and pierce a small hole near the top, into which you can insert a soda straw. Fill the can with water up to the opening, but do not let any water leak out through the straw. Weigh several small, heavy objects, such as paperweights and eggs. By means of a string, lower one object into the can of water. Be sure to do this so carefully that only the object itself goes into the can. Catch the water that rises above the opening in the can in a paper cup, and weigh the water. (The cup is so light that its weight can be disregarded.) Try the other objects. Then try a piece of wood. You will find that only those objects float which displace a weight of water equal to their own weight. The flat cover floated because it displaced its own weight in water. When you crumpled the cover you

reduced its volume so that it displaced less water and consequently sank.

Most children notice that certain water bugs seem to walk over the top of the water. If they are given to questioning things, this phenomenon will arouse their curiosity. They will notice that as the bug skims over the water he seems to leave fleeting impressions, like gossamer footprints. These impressions are made because water and other liquids have a tendency to form a strong film. This film tends to contract to the smallest possible area. The contraction of the film is illustrated by the fact that water forms in drops, and by the way in which you can "pile up" water in a glass. Because of this film formed by the contracting force of the water, a dry safety razor blade can be made to float on the surface, although the blade is eight times as heavy as water. The contracting force of water is called "surface tension."

Liquids have different surface tensions. If you want to prove this point, take a clean plate and fill it with cold water, then sprinkle it lightly with talcum powder. Touch the edge of the water with a cake of wet soap and watch the powder shrink to one edge. The soap has decreased the surface tension of the water and the pure water (which was untouched by the soap) contracted to the smallest possible space, taking the powder with it. You can also notice the way in which surface tension causes a film of water to form over a sieve or holds two match sticks together as tightly as though they had been glued.

If you are experimenting with liquids and find the milk frozen some morning, you may be led to discover the ways in which cold and heat affect some liquids. The force of freezing can be shown by putting a tightly screwed bottle of water in the ice pan of the refrigerator some night. In the morning the expanding water will have cracked the bottle. When a bowl full of ice is melted you can easily see how much less space water occupies in a liquid state than in a solid. And after

you have discovered the property of water to expand and rise to the surface when frozen you may be interested to consider how this preserves fish and other creatures that live in water.

When heated, water turns into steam. It is always intriguing to see how heat produces evaporation, and to note how much faster a pan of water will evaporate on the radiator than on the table. If you hold a cold tray (using a pot holder) in front of the nose of a boiling tea kettle, you can easily see that steam is really water, not smoke.

You have already noticed that water expands when it freezes and contracts when it melts. The mercury in the thermometer expands as it becomes warmer, and rises in the tube. Mr. and Mrs. Schneider describe a very simple experiment in their book, *Let's Find Out,* which shows that other things contract when heated and expand when cooled. They suggest that you tie a piece of uncovered picture wire to the back of a kitchen chair. At the other end of the wire, tie a screw driver about one inch from the blade and let it hang down directly under the bottom rung of the chair. Heat the wire with a lighted candle, catching the drippings in an old saucer to protect the floor. The handle of the screw driver will dip down as the wire grows slowly longer. Now let the wire cool off and watch the screw driver slowly ride up again. Some things expand and contract more rapidly than others. This is why you can unscrew the top of a jar under running hot water. The metal top expands more rapidly than the jar, and no longer fits so tightly.

Consequently the next time you go out on the street you will probably discover what so many people never even stop to consider—why there are cracks in the sidewalk. And when you are on an outing you will draw the parallel between the street and the railroad track, with its spaces between the rails, and you will also know why bridges are made in separate blocks.

SOUND: ELECTRICITY

One of the most fascinating of modern gadgets is the telephone, and one of the most popular of children's toys is a toy phone. In fact, these are so much a part of our lives that we forget what wonderful fun it can be to rig up a telephone of our own. While the homemade phone is not externally as realistic as the toy that you buy, it does give you the chance to find out what actually makes a telephone work. All you need is a large darning needle, or pin, two firm paper cups, and a piece of strong thin cord. Pierce a hole in the center of the bottoms of the cups. Run the ends of cord through these holes. Knot the cord inside of each cup so that the cord can be drawn taut without tearing or breaking the cups.

Each cup is both mouthpiece and earphone. When speaking, the person holds the cup to his mouth, when listening, he holds it to his ear. Always remember to keep the string taut. With this phone, one member of the family can speak with another in different rooms or at opposite ends of the same room. Someone will be sure to notice that when you are talking the string vibrates slightly and that the moving string makes the bottom of the cup vibrate.

Young children will be sure to want to try using the telephone in different ways. Let them have plenty of time to play with it. They will also like to talk to each other through a long hollow tube. If you have a musical instrument, they will like to feel the vibration of the wood when a string is plucked or a note played on the piano. They will love to fill glasses with different amounts of water and to strike them so as to get different sounds. This is, of course, also a valuable musical experience.

The vibration of sound can also be seen in another way, with the aid of a shallow pan or dish of water and a silver fork. Be sure the water is still in the pan. Strike the fork against a wooden table or with a heavy wooden stick and bring the fork

to the edge of the water. The vibration of the fork will cause the air to vibrate, and the vibration of the air will be strong enough to produce ripples in the water.

The family's interest in electricity may not develop through the telephone, but through one of the numberless electrical gadgets in the home. Sometimes you can make your own gadgets. For example, it is more fun to make a flashlight than to buy one. Wind some wire around a flashlight battery with adhesive or bicycle tape and make the contact by means of a second piece of wire. You can easily understand the necessity of completing the circuit to generate a current, because there will be no light unless the bulb touches the metal center of the battery at the same time that the two pieces of wire are in contact.

A toy magnet given to one of the children may become a point of departure to a variety of experiments in which the entire family takes part. At first you will have great fun trying to pick up all kinds of things, seeing how many of them the magnet can hold at one time. Then you might sprinkle some iron filings or carpet tacks on a sheet of heavy paper or thin cardboard, then move the magnet about under the the paper or cardboard. The results will be even more striking if you have two bar magnets. The tacks or filings move around as if alive; they bound toward each other or away from each other, as the like poles of the magnet are brought together and repel, or as the unlike poles attract.

A fascinating experiment can be performed with a bar magnet, a darning needle, and a small cork. Pierce the cork with the darning needle, and float the cork in a basin of water. Rub the needle on one end of the magnet as though you were stropping a razor. Then place it in the water and watch the needle turn about. It will not come to rest until it points in a north and south direction.

It will also be fun to make an electromagnet that will attract metal to itself as does any other magnet. Simply wind

bell wire around an iron nail and attach each end of the wire to a pole of a dry cell. Detach the wire ("break the circuit"), and the nail will drop its load. Some members of the family may want to make further discoveries in this field. The electromagnet you have made can be put to use in making a telegraph set. Both Carleton Lynde's book, *Science Experiments With Home Equipment,* and Alfred Morgan's *Things a Boy Can Do With Electricity* will show you very clearly how to make a complete set. You can rig up a very simple telegraph, however, with only some bell wire, a few nails, some tacks, and a piece of copper or tin, which you can obtain from a tin can.

Drive a large nail (about ¼′ long) into one end of a small piece of board at right angles to the surface of the wood. Drive a smaller nail into the board allowing the head to protrude about half an inch above the board. Cut your piece of copper or tin into a strip about half an inch wide and two inches long. Make a double bend in the strip of metal, so that the strip forms a step. Hammer the lower edge on to the board and allow the upper edge to rest just above the second nail. Attach one piece of bell wire to one of the poles of a dry cell and attach the other end to the metal strip at the point where it is fastened to the board. Make an electromagnet with the aid of the large nail. Allow enough wire so that one end of it will reach the second pole of the dry cell and the other end will reach the nail under the metal strip. When the wires are connected, the metal strip will be drawn to the nail; when they are disconnected, it will jump away. You can get the characteristic click of the telegraph keys. You can elaborate this crude set in many ways—and can construct a key so that it is possible to make or break the circuit without having to connect or disconnect the wire.

There is no need to call in an electrician when you want an electric bell from one room of the house to another, or from house to garage. The bell and push button can be bought in any electrical or hardware shop, and these and some dry

cells and bell wire are all you need. If you have made the telegraph set you will know how to connect your battery from bell to battery, and from bell to push button. Be sure to examine the bell, and notice the electromagnet. Before you hang up the bell and adjust the push button, set the bell up so that the children can see how it operates. You can buy the parts of an electric motor which you can assemble into an excellent working model.

NO MYSTERY ABOUT GEARS

Whether or not the family owns a car, there is great fun in clearing up the mystery of gears. All you need to do is to go into the kitchen and take out the eggbeater. All of you will notice that one turn of the handle causes the metal loops that do the actual work of beating to revolve several times. And then you will discover the small cog wheels between the loops and the handle. When you have seen how these work you will have discovered the principle of gears. Because of the cog arrangement, the small wheels revolve several times while the large wheel makes a single revolution. It will be fun to beat one egg with a fork and another with the beater, and so actually to watch the greater efficiency with which this simple gadget operates. And if you buy one of the new can openers which fastens onto the wall, one of the children will certainly discover the gears and the lever. Then it will be very interesting to discover the many, many kinds of gadgets and appliances in which gears and levers are used in different ways.

The family is again referred to the many books on science which are to be found listed at the end of this volume, and particularly to those of the Schneiders, which show the way in which the principles of gears are constantly being applied in the construction of things we use every day.

Someone may want to make a model gearshift which will show how gears operate in an automobile. You will need two round wooden disks, with brads driven into the outer rim of

each. One disk is attached flat to a board, the other is set vertically, so that the teeth (the brads in the rim) of one catch those of the other. Drive nails into a strip of wood at the same intervals as those on the wheels. The "force" is applied by running the strip of wood back and forth over the vertical wheel.

HOMEMADE MACHINES

It is not for a moment assumed that all the members of the family will want to become mechanics, or will even become seriously interested in the subject. But many parents and children may tremendously enjoy making some simple models of machines in a home workshop, and through doing this, some of them will undoubtedly develop a deeper interest. For example, a suggestion from someone might lead to the construction of a hand-driven derrick or an elevator with pulleys.

There is, of course, no one way to make any machine. The fun lies in letting your imagination carry you along. After all, it is not the finished product with which we are primarily concerned, but with gaining information about processes. Simple construction is always best. Thus a working model of an elevator can be made in an orange crate with pulleys and some dowel sticks. The elevator itself can be made in a cardboard or wooden box, with the shaft cut to fit into the central shelf of the crate. The pulley ropes are wound on a spool, which is fastened outside of the box to raise or lower the elevator.

Space prevents a consideration of the many avenues of scientific exploration that are open in the field of chemistry. Many fascinating experiments are described in the books listed.

THE ROAD TO REASON

Those who make even very simple discoveries, like those described here, will inevitably find that they are not merely applying the scientific method to the material world around

them. They will find they are acquiring the scientific habit of mind, the habit of reasoning, of having objective grounds for opinion, of being sure. And this will mean that they will tend to apply the scientific methods to solving every problem which confronts them. They will be less easily led by glib and persuasive talkers, less swayed by their own groundless emotions, less bound by their prejudices. There are those who contend that science has no contribution to make to certain realms of human life—notably those of art and religion. There are art critics who insist that science will not help one to enjoy a picture or to model a statue. And a minister said, "Write the word LAW ever so plainly above the door of your laboratory; beneath it will glow the word MIRACLE." Each family must make up their own minds on these points, but no rational person today questions the contribution which science makes to the realm of demonstrable fact. Thus families who become scientists are helping to free both themselves and the world from the blight of ignorance.

Chapter 12

THINGS THAT GROW

CHILDREN OF NATURE

There is no need to plead nature's cause with the family—she herself does this quite eloquently—and with her the painters, poets, sculptors, musicians, and now the psychologists. It is well, nevertheless, to recall briefly, some of the benefits of making friends with growing things. For while most people accept these benefits in theory, we tend to discount them in practice. As Wordsworth said, "The world is too much with us." We believe we have no time for close, intimate contact with nature, but, as with science, we can take as much or as little as we choose. And even a little means a very great deal.

For the most part, the advantages of "getting back to nature," or, as the late Florence F. Noyes, the dancer, expressed it, "getting back to source," cannot and need not be explained; they simply exist. Everyone knows it to be a fact that human beings gain inner strength and emotional release from physical contact with the earth. Nor need we question why we like to live on intimate terms with growing things. To plant anything at all—a single bulb, a patch of oats in an inch-square pot, to carry home a puppy—these bring a satisfaction you must experience to understand. Of course a love of beauty is cultivated through association with nature.

NATURE IN THE HOME

All of us know Longfellow's verse:

> Nature the old nurse took
> The young child on her knee,
> Saying "Here is a story book
> Thy father hath written for thee."

The supreme teacher is nature herself, and her book is not a printed one. Wonderful as they are, neither books nor pictures can mean what hearing, seeing, and touching can mean. A picture of a Bird of Paradise is a wonderful sight, but you will forget it. Will you ever forget that little gray chickadee who flew closer and closer to you as you whistled his own song back to him? Amazing tales of the behavior of animals in foreign parts seem remote and shadowy beside watching your own cat cuff her kittens when they misbehave.

Thus it is best to start with realities, and in particular, if possible, with living things in and around the home. And if you do happen to start with a book, it will mean more if you can actually come into contact with something that even approaches the things described. Thus if you are reading the books about Africa by Osa Johnson, take a trip to the zoo; if you are thrilling to William Beebe's accounts of sea life, go to the aquarium, and if possible keep a few goldfish as well.

Every family cannot have a real garden, in the sense of one that is large or elaborate. And some families who might have a garden do not care to give the time or energy to cultivating it. But all can and will greatly enjoy having something growing around them, in the yard if they have one, if not in pots or window boxes in the house.

If the family has never grown anything, do not begin with the actual planting, but simply with the enjoyment of those plants and cut flowers which are brought into the house. Like everything else, these flowers belong to all. The children will

love them on sight as much as the parents do, and will quickly absorb your respect for them and your desire to care for them, if you take the pains to show your feeling. Even the young children can have some part in taking care of them, filling vases or bowls, changing water, and cutting stems. Everyone can offer ideas about where they look best, and how to arrange them.

When children have come to know and love flowers in this way, and from noticing them in florists' windows and elsewhere, then if the parents decide they would like to have the family grow some themselves, the idea will surely be received with enthusiasm. If you do have a yard, and expect to plant an outdoor garden, you will want to talk it over in your conclaves. It is assumed that the parents will know about gardens beforehand so that they can explain to the children something of what is involved. And the children should understand the work and responsibility involved, as well as the pleasure to be derived from having a garden.

If the garden is really to be enjoyed it must, like the house, express to some extent the preferences of each member of the family, and each must have definite responsibilities in connection with it. The fact that the children cannot appreciate adults' conceptions of elaborate and formal gardens does not mean that the parents cannot express their own taste if they want to. Part or most of the ground can become Mother's or Father's garden, or can belong especially to both—and the children can do their planting in a spot where it will not interfere with the symmetry of the main design. Too, the family may want to grow some vegetables.

The fact that the very young child cannot understand anything about planting need not shut him out from the enterprise. Do give him a plot, however small, where he can dig and squeeze the earth, and pat and mold it, for this means to him exactly what real gardening means to the rest.

The three- or four-year-old will surely want to plant, and

there is no need to worry yourselves, or to scold him if he runs out every now and then and pulls up his plants to see how they are coming along. See to it that he respects everyone else's plants, and explain to him that his will not grow if he does this. Before long he will discover the importance of leaving them to themselves. The older children can usually be trusted to look after their plants quite well, with some reminding and a little help. But should they really be neglectful, we hope the parents will not be so concerned about the appearance of the yard that they will burden themselves with the children's work.

Because children's interest is relatively short-lived, it is well to have quick-growing plants for them, so that their enthusiasm will not wane before they see results.

Potted plants, window boxes, and miniature rock gardens are lovely for the home. And have you ever seen bird seed growing in painted eggshells that are filled with sawdust? The parents will be enchanted with them, and the children thrilled beyond measure. Most people think that the terrarium, or "garden under glass," is more beautiful than anything that can be planted indoors, and that plants grow more successfully there. You can plant the garden in an aquarium tank, a fish bowl, a jar, or a glass globe. The foundation must be made with some care, but the arrangement and planting are wonderful fun. You can have moss, many kinds of plants, and a miniature pool. Animals like frogs, toads, salamanders, and small turtles thrive in these surroundings. The garden does not require a great deal of care.

Among the books which the family will find especially helpful are: *The Gardener's First Year,* by Alfred Bates; *Very First Garden,* by Dorothy Gould; *All About House Plants,* by Montague Free. Bulletin Number 1, of The School Nature League, New York City, for September, 1934 (Room 206, The American Museum of Natural History, New York City, N.Y.) gives very full directions for the planting of terraria.

There are a few very simple experiments which will greatly interest the family who are growing plants. For example, place seeds on a blotting paper between two panes of glass, and watch the roots grow away from the light, and the stems toward it. Plant seeds in the dark and in the light. See how the former develop into pale plants, while the latter have color. Someone will raise questions about soil; probably the children will think that dirt is dirt, and that plants will grow in anything by that name. Instead of contradicting them, try planting seeds in broom sweepings, and let them see what happens. Then it will be interesting to plant in different kinds of soil—sandy soil, clay, and rich loam.

Each family will decide for itself whether or not to have a pet. They certainly mean so much in the home. In addition to their value to individual members, they do a great deal to promote family solidarity. Anything loving and lovable, anything helpless and dependent that belongs to all forms a living bond among people.

The universal favorites are dogs and cats, particularly the former. While there may be a dispute as to whether adults or children care more for dogs, they do meet a special need of childhood. "Something to follow me," as Jody expressed it in *The Yearling*, something that is mine, something that worships me—me that am so unimportant in the grown-up world. Jody was an only child. All only children need pets more than the others, whose brothers and sisters give them more of the close, constant companionship they crave. But the well-adjusted boys and girls and those with brothers and sisters also need them. And well-adjusted boys and girls have periods —like those after long illness—when they may tend to become lonely and withdrawn, and then a dog may mean a very great deal to them. While a cat cannot be quite as close and adoring a friend, he can help to fill an empty place.

Often where parents themselves do not particularly warm to the idea of having a dog or cat, they nevertheless give one

to the children, and sometimes surprise themselves by becoming devoted to it. Sometimes parents would very much like to have these pets, but feel they would be too much care. With some initial guidance, however, children can assume a good deal of responsibility for the care of animals. In addition, anything that meets a great need of children will inevitably relieve the parents of a burden, for they will be happier and less difficult to handle.

It is far better to have a puppy or kitten which can grow up with the children. Dogs can be brought into the home when they are from two weeks to three months old; a kitten any time after about the eighth week. The training of the animal is as important as his care, and means a great deal to the peace of mind of the family. Normally intelligent dogs or cats can be trained not only to keep off furniture, but also to keep out of certain rooms. Because children are out of the house so much, they cannot housebreak an animal. But by the time they are ten or eleven they can assume most of the responsibility for his care. Before this time, however, this care must be a joint responsibility, like the housework.

Exactly as with housework, it is vitally important to agree on jobs beforehand, and for the parents to be very firm about seeing that the children do their share. It is so easy to slip into the habit of doing the children's work for them, not only because you are fond of the pets, but also because you cannot have them suffer from neglect. But since the children should feel their responsibility, and since the parents should certainly not be burdened, it is advised that the children be made to understand very definitely that their pet cannot stay unless they do their part in looking after him. Furthermore, if you mean what you say they will soon realize it. Children who really want a pet can usually be depended on if they are reminded occasionally and are given a little help.

The parents will find the following books helpful: *The Care And Handling Of Cats,* by Doris Bryant; *Know Your*

Dog, by John H. Hickey; *So You're Going To Get a Puppy,* by S. P. Meek; and *All About Pets,* by Marjorie Bianco.

Everyone who has lost a beloved pet knows what a tragedy this is. Since growing children are often very sensitive about showing grief, it will help them tremendously if you take their emotion for granted, and help them to realize that there is nothing to be ashamed of about expressing their feelings quite openly. If an animal has to be put to death, it is better simply to tell the younger children that he was sent away. But do not try to hide the facts from the older ones, who are bound to know better. But children or adolescents should not be suddenly confronted with the fact that an animal has been killed, for this is too great a shock for them. If they beg for another pet, of course they should have it. Otherwise it is better to wait, for these pets are such close friends that it may wound the children deeply to feel you could imagine they can be so easily replaced.

Should parents decide against a dog or a cat, they can choose from among many other kinds of pets—birds, goldfish, turtles, rabbits, and white mice. Though very few families would dream of harboring a snake, one family kept three, and found their habits most interesting. The leaflet, "Care of Nature Room Material," prepared by the Department of Natural Science and Conservation of the American Museum of Natural History (New York City, N.Y.) lists numbers of pets of this kind, and gives full directions in regard to their care. Families will receive reliable information about both plants and animals by writing to their state departments of agriculture.

A great many families manage, at some period of their lives, to have a mother animal which gives birth to, and rears, its young. While this is easier to manage on a farm or in a suburb, it is not impossible in a city apartment. If you cannot have a mother dog or cat, you may be able to have some smaller animal. The entire family will find this an interesting experience,

and in the case of the children it is an excellent supplement to talks about mating, reproduction, and parenthood.

Children are not born with a fear of familiar animals who are friendly. When they show these fears it means that some person or some unfortunate experience is responsible for them. If a well-adjusted child has developed a fear of this kind, never scold, ridicule, or shame him in any way. For fear is invariably increased when it is associated with a sense of guilt or shame. It will help the child to have you read to him about the animal he is afraid of. But, above all, make a point of having him meet friendly animals belonging to people you know, and very gradually, by your own example, show him that they are amiable.

THE OUTDOOR BOARDERS

If you live in the suburbs or on a farm you can have a wonderful experience with wild birds all the year round, by inviting them to become your outdoor boarders. Give them a place to bathe, if not in a regular bird bath, then in some old pan which is sunk in the ground and filled with water. If you do not want to pay for a feeding station, scatter crumbs or bird seed in some special place. If you have trees, bushes, or long grass near the house, a few of the birds will surely take up their abode with you, and the life of birds at close range is a fascinating drama. The book, *How To Attract The Birds,* by R. S. Lemmon is heartily recommended to families who want to have some outdoor boarders.

NATURE BEYOND THE HOME

Whether or not you are growing things in your home, be on the lookout when you go walking on the beach, in the park, or in the woods. Thrust a magnifying glass into your pocket, and if you have them, hang some field glasses around someone's neck. Move along slowly, and pause when you feel like it. When you see something that holds you, do not feel

that you have to learn its name immediately. For, as with people, the names of plants and birds do not mean very much before we know them very well.

What will the family see and hear? We could not even hint at a thousandth of the possibilities. For example, you may pass some common daisies. If you take out your magnifying glass and look at one of them, it will become transformed. That dark brown mass in the center separates and becomes a collection of individual flowers, each one perfect, beautiful. Idly watching a hill of earth, you may suddenly see that it is alive with ants. If you have picnicked here and left some crumbs about, see how they help one another to drag the heavy loads. Worms wriggle out after rain. There is an amazing spiderweb, three feet in diameter. That elm is wearing a skirt of leaves, the one beside it has none—lady and gentleman. The members of the family may start to attune their ears to bird songs—to note striking differences, liquid contraltos, piercing, flutelike notes, catlike calls, chirps, harsh dissonances. When a bird is near you, look at it through the glasses. Even if it is inconspicuous, it will be interesting. It may be breathtakingly beautiful—scarlet and black; sky blue with earth-colored breast; gold and black. Parents and children will pick up things—a nut, a gleaming shell, a puff ball, a pine cone.

Questions like the following may occur to the family: What other flowers are shaped like the daisy? Why were the worms stifling? What is that "society of the ants"? What principles of engineering do spiders use? Are there really male and female elms? If the family becomes sufficiently interested in nature to do some reading, everybody will enjoy these books: *Out Of Doors in Spring, Out Of Doors in Fall, Out Of Doors in Summer,* and *Out Of Doors in Winter,* by C. J. Hylander; also *Holiday Hill, Holiday Meadow,* and *Holiday Pond,* by Edith M. Patch; *Beginner's Bird Guide,* by Leon Hausman; *Along the Shore,* by Eva L. Butler; *American*

Trees, by Russel L. Limbech; *Now for Creatures,* by Shelley Shackelford; *Egg to Chick,* by Millicent E. Selsam, as well as Maeterlinck's classic, *The Bee.* Of all the poems about nature, none are more beautiful than those of Walt Whitman and William Wordsworth.

Fictional works about animals are almost numberless. Some of the favorites are: *The Voice of Bugle Ann,* by Mackinley Kantor; *Lassie* and *Lassie Come Home,* by Eric Knight; *Wild Animals I Have Known,* by Ernest Thompson Seton; *Just a Mut,* by Roark Eldon; *The Call of The Wild* and *White Fang,* by Jack London; and *A Treasury of Cat Stories,* by Era Zistal. As you read the books, you will surely enjoy seeing motion pictures based on them if they happen to be playing in the neighborhood.

Thus reading and observation continually make nature more interesting. The family will begin to discover more trees and flowers, their shapes, characteristics, and the way they grow. They will have found out more about bird, insect, animal, and marine life.

Eventually you will want to know some of the names of things that grow, not in order to become learned about nature, however. As one nature lover put it, "It's just a matter of being introduced."

THINGS TO DO

Those who have become fond of nature will certainly bring things home with them from their walks. If you bring some autumn leaves, try having the children press the grease of a candle over them with a hot iron. They will love doing it, and the leaves will make a beautiful decoration all winter long. Or buy them a roll of blueprint paper from the local photographer (it is quite inexpensive). Cut the paper to fit the leaves, lay the leaf on its blue side, and cover with pieces of glass (bind the edges of the glass with tape, to protect the hands), and place them either in the sunlight or in strong

electric light. When the paper around the leaf looks grainy, place them in a pan of water. Then let the paper dry on a piece of newspaper. The results are beautiful. The children also love to make "spatter prints." Place the leaf on a piece of paper, dip an old toothbrush in a jar of paint, and rub the brush back and forth on paper and leaf. The results are surprisingly beautiful.

Part III

DEVELOPMENT THROUGH CREATION

Chapter 13

ART AS AN INSTRUMENT OF GROWTH

CREATIVE EXPRESSION IN THE HOME

What does art mean in the home? This question can best be answered by parents and children who have introduced it into theirs. A father, a real estate broker, looked over at a small painting of the open sea he had made during his summer vacation and sighed. "If I could afford it," he said, "I would give up business tomorrow." Another father said, "When Barbara, our second daughter, died, I honestly can't tell you what all of us would have done without my wife's playing." And three-year-old Jane, sitting on her mother's lap and gazing at the moon through the window, crooned softly, "The moon comes down and goes to sleep on the window." Father and mother looked at each other across her head, then followed her eyes.

It is our belief that art represents, in a sense, a culmination of family living. Its possibilities as an instrument of growth are limitless and unique: it is that universal language through which members of families speak to one another when words fail. Man has used it to express thought and emotion down through the ages.

The family's appreciation of art will not be considered here, though it will be discussed in succeeding chapters which deal with different mediums of art. For while the importance of art appreciation would be generally accepted, very few families would grant either their capacity or their need to

express themselves through art. Satis N. Coleman says ". . . it is only in the creation of any art that we truly taste the essence of it." Just as families say they are not scientists, so they say they are not artists.

Both ideas are equally erroneous. Every man is an artist, in that every man has within him the longing and the power to create art. He may not be a Da Vinci, a Shakespeare, or a Van Gogh, but though a daisy is not a rose, still it is a flower. And as both flowers need water to develop to their fullest beauty, so the small and the great of the world need to create in order to realize their fullest potentialities as human beings.

So psychologists and educators, who are also artists as well as scientists, and who are concerned with the fostering of human growth, do not in their professional capacity even see a picture, a poem, a statue—but a human being, the one behind it, the one who made it. In judging it to be good, bad, or indifferent, they say only, "What did the act of making that thing do to change the creator?" And in this sense the little picture that hung on the wall of the real estate broker would be judged to rank along with very great pictures.

What, in general terms, does art mean to those who bring it into being? To answer this question we must ask, What are the destructive forces in human life? What are the causes of unhappiness, the roots of weakness? Most of us feel we are bound. "So free we seem," said the poet Browning, "so fettered fast we are." We are bound by other people: by "the higher ups" on the job, by the teacher, the social leader. We are bound by social convention. Like Amy Lowell's lady in her garden, we go "up and down the patterned paths," up and down, back and forth. We are discouraged and afraid. We cannot quite measure up, cannot quite find our niche on the job, cannot quite be what the teacher expects us to be. And because we are bound, we are lonely. We cannot see each other behind the mask, cannot reach out and touch each other.

Art frees human beings from this bondage. It is creative.

No artist follows blindly. The things he fashions come from himself; the disciplines he obeys are self-imposed. In paint, in wood, in verse or story or clay—he dares to speak out. He pours out all those hidden feelings—triumph, longing, confusion, hopelessness, pity, hostility. And his audience, sensing that the mask is gone, realizing that the person himself is there, draws close to him, and he is no longer lonely. From this joy confidence is born—it infuses the personality with an inner glow, with a sense of strength.

Nor is art merely a temporary refuge from the ills that plague us. For every important thing you do changes you forever. Creating makes you creative. Expressing bottled-up feelings is healing. Reaching across to one person acts like a bridge that carries you to other people.

Though this conception of art is relatively new, its effects have already been far-reaching in this country. It is transforming our schools, where art now ranks with the three R's in importance. All the children, not only the supposedly talented ones, are painting, modeling, dancing, writing creatively. Art classes for adults are being introduced into the programs of community groups, like settlements, parents' associations, and adult education associations. In enlightened homes everywhere we find increasingly the tools and materials of art beside parents' sewing tables or desks, and beside the dolls and other toys of children.

The deeper understanding of the process of creation which has been responsible for this democratization of art is also radically changing methods of instruction, not only in homes and schools but also in classes for the gifted few. The traditional approach to the teaching of art is authoritarian. The goal held before the pupil is to please someone else—chiefly his teacher. The teacher himself is also a follower. He follows standards which have been imposed on him, and he himself has previously tried to please his teacher.

Thus the aim of the authoritarian approach is really to

press the pupil into a mold. The emphasis is on forms and the mastery of skills. In the beginning techniques are taught practically exclusively. The pupil starts with note reading, with practicing scales, with grammar and punctuation, with accuracy and "correctness." Since the mastery of skills seems meaningless to the pupil, and is therefore a drudgery, he is told of the great satisfactions he will derive later. Since this means little to children, who cannot think so far ahead, they are often urged, cajoled, exhorted, and punished to force them to practice, dance, or paint. For the mastery of skills is held to be the backbone of art, the foundation on which the structure is built.

In keeping with the authoritarian approach to art, there is a constant pressure on the pupil toward imitation. Adults and children imitate the steps of the dancing teacher. Young children trace outlines of cardboard figures, or fill in lined drawings with color; later they copy pictures. Pupils try to copy the style of great writers. They hear the piano teacher play selections and try to play them in as nearly an identical way as possible. The dramatic coach plays a part, and they try to copy his way of walking and speaking.

These methods are predicated on the assumption that art, like any interest, is something imposed on the learner from without, that it is something someone—the person who knows —gives to the one who does not know. Modern methods are based on the assumption that art is not imposed from without, but that it is already *there,* in the individual, and that teaching is primarily helping to release it. The aim of teacher and pupil is not that the latter should please others, but that he should express himself. The importance of hard work, of skills and techniques, is fully appreciated, but these elements are not the backbone of art. They are its tools—they are like the bird's mastery of the skill of flying, which serves no purpose but to transport him somewhere. As the great educator, Caroline Pratt, expressed it, "One does not make a box in order

to learn to use tools, one learns to use tools in order to make a box."

If we can speak of a backbone of art, in the sense of a be-all and end-all, it is the creative urge, the compelling, even irresistible urge to express deep feeling through some medium. This urge is born of experience, of something the artist has lived through, something which affects him so powerfully that it almost seems as though only in those moments does he come alive. He loves the art and feels that he cannot express himself in any other way. As Samuel Alexander says, "The poet's poem is wrung from him by the subject that excites him."

The subject that excites any artist has nothing whatever to do with techniques. While he is creating they are banished from his consciousness. Surely when Paderewski played a Beethoven sonata, the last thing he was thinking about was the position of his hands. If he had been thinking of this he would never have moved his audiences as he did move them. The artist is using techniques just the same, using them to wrest from that recalcitrant material the form he must achieve. He may struggle with techniques for months and years—may strive to gain the muscular power in his fingers to produce the exact nuance of sound he wants to hear. He may wrestle with words in the same way. But his aim is not to become a better technician, but a better artist.

While the artist is creating he thinks of nothing and of no one—himself included—except what he is striving to achieve. But when the work is completed, then he turns to his audience. For the thing he has produced is in a sense himself, and unless it finds favor somewhere, unless someone respects and cares for it, then he shrinks as from a blow, for he feels that it is a judgment on himself.

The modern methods of teaching art are the direct antithesis of the traditional ones. In fact, the old methods are held to be so destructive of the creative impulse as to be worse than

no instruction at all, and this applies to talented as well as to untalented pupils. The good instructor would far rather teach a pupil who had had no previous training than one who had been trained in the traditional ways.

An individual cannot be creative if he feels a steady pressure to please someone and to imitate other people. He is not very likely to love an art if he always associates it with meaningless drudgery. It is now agreed that gifted artists do not succeed because of these methods, but in spite of them. And how many potentially great creators have been lost to us by the endless pounding of scales and the copying of strawberry boxes, we shall never know. Certainly less talented persons—with whom this book is largely concerned—are not as likely to survive these methods.

In modern guidance certain experiences which have seemingly little to do with art are considered of crucial importance. The creator should have experiences which are vital, zestful, exciting, so that he will feel deeply, and remember, and care. He must first of all have the chance to love the art by freely enjoying it—by singing, or experimenting with paint, clay, words—and in his own way, by appreciation of the works of others, but never by imitating.

The relation between teacher and pupil is held to be all important. There must be a kind of communion, a liking and a feeling of mutual trust in relation to art. The teacher should encourage the pupil to produce in any way that has meaning to him. "Begin by painting anything," said a very successful teacher. "A spot if you want to. If it is really yours, then it is important." With very young children and with adults and older children who are timid and fearful about their work, praise can be warm and constant, because it is both justified and needed. With pupils who are quite sure of themselves, there may be severe criticism, but there should never be harshness or sweeping condemnation.

Art experiences today start when children are very young, at

the age of about three. This is not so that they may "produce well." This is really—from the standpoint of growth—the golden age of art expression, since it is the age when the individual is most completely free and spontaneous, before he has learned to be afraid. It is also the time when the individual's interest in art is broader than at any other period of his life. Now, and for the next few years, children usually both enjoy and express themselves in almost every form of art. As the child grows older, other interests may increasingly supplant those in art. But he will never lose what he gained in those early years. "I painted and modeled before I was six," said a high school student. "Now art is part of my life."

Even the young child is expected to learn certain very simple disciplines of art, and to respect his materials, but he is given no techniques, and is left to experiment quite freely. As he grows older he becomes increasingly dissatisfied with his work, a sign that he needs and is ready for techniques. Methods are not explained to him didactically; rather as the occasion arises, he is helped to discover them for himself. Standards are continually upheld. The child is always encouraged to do his best. But "best" means what is best for him.

PARENTS AND CHILDREN EXPERIENCE ART

Everyone who has accepted this conception of art earnestly wishes to see it introduced into every home. It belongs there; it should take root and grow there. No group can enjoy art as parents and children can enjoy it. No group can share the process of creation more completely. In the warmth and intimacy of this circle, parents and children can throw off the restraining influence of traditional methods of teaching. They can forget the deadly compositions, the rap of the teacher's stick in singing, and the endless tracing and copying which

made them powerless to create, and eventually killed their love of art.

Parents, adolescents, and older children differ in their approach to art. Parents can, if they wish, develop a catholic taste in art, but in general their interest is more specialized. If they want to take up some form of art, they will probably need special instruction. This is also true of older children who are highly gifted. But it is a mistake for parents to say, "How can I teach my children art? I'm not an artist." You can give your children a wonderful experience, especially if you will do a little reading. The names of helpful books will be given in later chapters. Parents need to love and understand their children, and to love the art. More important than reading is the chance to express themselves in some way, even if it is not through what is commonly called a medium of art, but any outlet which, like photography or weaving, gives some scope to originality. Just as you cannot help a child to endure pain unless you too have suffered, so you cannot help him to create, unless you have yourself created.

In fact, parents are peculiarly fitted to be their children's guides in art. The parents' role in relation to their children's learning has already been discussed. Their role is almost more important in relation to art expression, which is a revelation of personality. As the child can tell things to his mother and father which he could tell to no one else—so he can sing beside them, paint beside them, dance before them more freely than he can with others.

This is a magic world. It is a land of Arcadia, a world where there are no "don'ts," no nagging, fussing, or complaining. There are only joy and beauty unfolding. Through observing young people's artistic expressions, parents can come to know their children as they can in no other way. They can discover interests and facets of personality which even they never dreamed existed. Through his art expression, your child

may tell you that he is lonely. He may tell you how badly he wants a pet. He may show how irked he is by adult authority, or that he is happy or unhappy in school.

And the children give so much. They show how hard a person will work with no outside pressure whatever, simply from the drive to achieve. They give parents freedom because they themselves are free.

Sometimes parents are afraid to introduce arts into the home for fear the materials will be dirty and messy. But with proper care art work need be no messier than anything children do. And they can be taught not to daub the walls or track materials through the house exactly as they can be taught to go to bed on time. From the standpoint of convenience alone, there is no more effective way to keep children busy and happy and out of mischief than to let them express themselves through art.

Parents cannot but sense the ways in which art expression is strengthening the personalities of children. A parent cannot measure this strengthening process externally, but he will inevitably realize that art experiences are at least partly responsible for the child's growing confidence and poise, his quickening esthetic sense, his more original approach to life. And, since very deep needs of his nature are being met, he will be more even-tempered, amiable, and co-operative.

If parents have been trained in the traditional methods and have subscribed to traditional standards, then a complete shift in point of view is necessary. It is not overstating the facts to say that this change is so radical as to mean a rebirth in relation to art. You must forget the pretty pictures that seemed like weak carbon copies of someone else's, the laboriously rhymed verses, the charming little "steps." You must look for something bold, different, perhaps startlingly different. You must expect crudeness, for children cannot possibly gain sophisticated effects without imitating, nor can adults or adoles-

cents achieve accuracy and finish in the beginning. But when boy or girl, adolescent or parent, begins to create, when the personality begins to show itself through paint, dance, wood, sound—then comes the reward.

Chapter 14

PAINTING: MODELING: CRAFTS

APPRECIATION

"Nature I loved, and next to nature, art." One of the best ways for families to invite a love of painting, sculpture, and craft work is to find beauty in reality. And there are so many subtle beauties around us—the flowing grace of the trunk of a tree, the intricate patterns of leaves and flowers, the angles of buildings, the tracery of grillwork, the endless variegated changes in sky and water. Many artists know the beauty in the faces of people not conventionally considered to be lovely—old people, simple people, hard-working people. The grace of a cat as he leaps from a fence is almost breath-taking.

Those who are sensitive to beauty in the real world find it easily in art, often without having to look for it. The reproductions of great works of art—sometimes the originals—are often to be found in department-store windows, in libraries, in public buildings and parks, in illustrated books and periodicals, in gift shops. Particular aspects may appeal, perhaps only line or color, the vigor of the treatment or the way objects are grouped. After the family comes to love these aspects of art they will want to make an effort to search for them in galleries and museums. They will also find that they are relating art to other interests—to reading, nature, jobs, or schoolwork.

Parents need not feel the slightest obligation about cultivating children's taste. For you will already be doing this by

exposing them to the beautiful, and by encouraging them to create themselves. So speak with them—if not as learnedly—at least as freely and frankly as you would speak with adults, voicing your own feelings and opinions, and respecting theirs.

Then you will find that quite a delightful interchange is developing among members of the family. The younger children will naturally choose brightly colored and realistic paintings of things they know. Even their judgments may show a startling degree of maturity, however. A four-year-old gazed a long time at a surrealist painting which a friend of the family had brought to the house, then shook her head. "Can't be nothing," she said at last, with a sigh. "Must be something!"

No one can predict what the older children will like. We might think they would prefer scenes with a great deal of action, like the paintings of Rousseau, Frederick Remington, or Rosa Bonheur, and statues of athletes and men on horseback. But if they are left quite free to form their own opinions, they may choose something very different. We know many children who are devoted to Van Gogh, Georgia O'Keefe, Da Vinci, Donatello, and the bronze doors of Ghiberti. Where children have painted and modeled themselves, the sensitiveness of their judgments often surpasses that of adults. Among the most interesting books on art appreciation we know are *The Arts* by Hendrik W. Van Loon, and *Painting and Personality,* by Samuel A. Lewisohn.

PAINTING IN THE HOME

These remarks about appreciation are based on the assumption that there is some artistic creation in the home. For only as people create does art become part of personality. Then beautiful objects have deep reality, for the individual looks at them from the inside, so to speak.

It would be an excellent plan, before introducing paints to your children, to pay at least one visit to some really good children's painting classes, if there are any in your vicinity. It

will be very helpful to observe the methods of guidance used, but it will mean even more to look at collections of the children's paintings, especially if you have not seen a great deal of work of this kind before. If they are not what the traditionalists call "pretty pictures," they are fresh and vital and exciting. They suggest the primitive in their crudity and their naïveté. But they are not primitive; they are childlike, which is quite different. The breadth of children's horizons is reflected in the endless variety of subjects they choose, a variety which will extend from a single flower to a hockey game in a mammoth arena. The pictures are as intense as children, as their laughter, their anger, their sobs. They reflect children's power to ride sublimely over what they consider nonessentials, and to grasp for the things that count. "But your dog hasn't any ears," said a visitor, looking at the painting of a four-year-old. "Why didn't you give him ears?" he inquired. "Because he's looking! He's not listening!" answered the child. Concentration on particular aspects of objects characterizes all children's art work. So without perspective a boat will loom on the horizon in all its tremendous power. Anatomically faulty men and animals will run, jump, fight. And these paintings are creative—no single picture is like any you ever saw before or will ever see again.

Thus the parent who would introduce painting to his child starts fresh. This is nothing in the least "special"; it is part of ordinary, everyday life. It is something the child does as he runs, climbs, eats food, and learns responsibility and cooperation—in a word, it is part of normal, healthy growth.

The capacity to paint is *there,* in the child. The parent need not worry in the least about this point; his concern is to bring it out. Nor is this in any way difficult. There are two needs which must be met. There must be freedom of the spirit—not freedom to destroy, waste, and fritter away time, only freedom for a human personality to express itself in its own way. The slightest effort of recall will show what this

means. Did not a parent once give you something and say, "This is yours. All that I ask is that you take care of it?" And did it not almost seem as though restricting bonds were loosened from around your body? So parents can free young children to paint. The brush, the paints, the paper are the child's. No one will tell him what to put on that piece of white paper, no one will guide his hand, no one will touch his work. How often the adult falters before such a challenge. Not the young child. He goes straight to work—he knows. It is that sublime courage that he must keep.

The second need of the child is for encouragement. Again think back—recall the time when you stood looking half hopefully, half fearfully into a pair of eyes above yours, saying to yourself, "I did my best; is it any good?" And when the eyes smiled, and the answer came, "Lovely!"—then did it not seem as though you had wings? In the same way the parent's warm acceptance of the young child's paintings, his praise of honest effort, send him onward. The following account of procedures is based on these all-important principles.

It has proved simpler for the three-year-old to "paint" a while with water before having real paints. Simply give him a three-inch brush, a pail of water, and something like an old box or a garden wall to "paint." He will love it as much as making mud pies. Give him freedom from the very beginning, and let him "housepaint" in this way until he has learned for himself that he can do better if he does not wave the brush around by the tip, grasp it down by the bristles, or slop the water about. Then let him have one or two bright colors.

First a word about paints and their care. It is very important to follow the simple directions given below. Care will make the difference between whether painting is to be a simple and orderly occupation or a trying and difficult one. It means more than this. Often when children's interest in painting falls off for no apparent reason, the real reason is simply that brushes were stiff and colors muddy. Also take the pains and time to

show the children how to care for their materials. When they are three they can help pick up the newspapers from the floors, and three-year-olds have even learned to wipe up spilled paint. Later they can learn to wash the brushes and the jars, and by the time they are six they can do everything but reach for large jars on closet shelves and pour paint from them into the smaller ones.

Parents should most certainly be firm about not allowing children to daub anything but the paper, but accidents will happen. And when they happen, do not scold the child, or become upset yourself. Buy washable paint. But even if there is a spot somewhere it is less tragic than to have a child in whom a sense of fear or guilt has suddenly killed the urge to paint.

Paints— Poster paints in liquid form are recommended.

Paper— Newsprint paper is best for children's work, but wrapping paper is satisfactory, if wrinkles have been ironed out.

Surface— Start with the children's play table, though the parents may decide to buy an easel immediately. You can secure one which fastens to the wall, or if you are handy with tools, you can make one. Then the easel will take up very little space. Protect the floor around table or easel with newspapers.

Brushes— Flat, ¼″ or ½″ brushes are best. There must be a brush for each jar of paint. Brushes must be washed at least weekly, those of younger children oftener.

Keeping the Paint— Keep the large jars on a closet shelf. Pour a little of the colors the child is to use into a container with a wide mouth, like a jelly jar. When the paints are left overnight, or for long periods of time, add a little

water to the paint, and cover the jar. Keep the jars that are being used in something with a rim—a cheese box is splendid.

It need hardly be said that the child does not need to have his mother (for it usually is the mother who is with him when he is painting) watch him continually while he is at work. He will be better off if she keeps on with her sewing, cleaning, or whatever she happens to be doing. On the other hand, the child will not paint very much if he is left entirely to himself. Just as when he is playing he needs to feel you are there, as he runs from you, always to run back again, so he needs to be able to show you something now, and to be sure that you will be glad to see it. He needs to have you speak to him now and then, to have you drop your work occasionally and come over to him and look over his shoulder. Ideally painting materials should be readily accessible, so that the child can paint whenever the spirit moves. But this is often not practical in the home—and if it is not, save painting for rainy days or times when you can give him a little attention.

Unless he is interfered with the child will probably begin painting by covering his paper with solid color, exactly as he covered the box or the wall with water. And he may do this for a long time, perhaps for weeks, since he will not paint every day. The only technique that needs to be shown him is to touch his brush against the side of the jar, to avoid getting too much paint on it. Do not be afraid that the child is "getting nowhere" because he is only scrubbing in this way. By manipulating these new and fascinating tools he is finding out how to use them.

After some time the mother might sit down beside the child, and on another piece of paper—not his—begin to use another color and to make some strokes with her brush. It may seem an unimportant point, but do not call attention to what you are doing, even if he ignores you at first, for this means that

he is not yet ready to paint in a different way. Simply continue whenever you have the time, and before long he will start to make strokes also, and will call for another color. When he is using two colors, show him that he must let one color dry before he paints beside it or applies another coat.

Simply watching the child now will show plainly what painting means to him. His face will be completely absorbed as the color flows from his brush onto the paper before him. He will experiment with movement as he gains control of the brush and bends it to his will. He will chuckle as the paint drips down the paper, and may try to stop it with his finger. He will cock his head over, as he tries laying one color beside another, or makes different shapes. And for weeks and months he will paint in this way, making what to us are blind and shapeless things: rude squares, bulging circles, dots, slanting lines, zigzags.

Then one day, without a word from anyone, he will suddenly paint a picture. To his mother what is on the paper may not bear the faintest resemblance to the person or object whose name he calls in such breathless excitement—to him it will be a speaking likeness.

"That is pretty," said a mother, pointing to a single black spot. "I think so too," answered the child. "It's you." And week after week, with no other guidance but never-failing sympathy and encouragement, he will steadily progress. Objects will become recognizable. He will use more and more colors, and will begin to gain effects which are pleasing and interesting, even to adults. Slowly he will grope his way toward design, making patches of color here and there about the paper, perhaps with a larger patch in the center.

What the child says during or after painting may reveal the intense realism of this experience. He may show you a house, and say, "There's a mother in there. She says to her little girl, 'Don't you go out in the street!' " He may paint a boat race, telling you as he paints which boats are ahead, which

behind, and which is the winner. You might ask him sometimes if there is a story about his picture, but since there may be none, do not urge him. And it will make him feel as deflated as if he were adult for you to look at a picture and ask, "What on earth is that?"

When the child is around six, or perhaps earlier, the mother, who knows his work and what he is trying to achieve, can give him—not direction—but a few helpful suggestions. For example, if his picture lacks life, you might suggest that he paint his automobile going down the street, or his airplane in flight. If he is repeating himself, you might ask him if he wouldn't like to paint something else. Always judging a work by what it means to him and how good it is by his standards, you can be more judicious in your praise. Never give harsh criticism or wholesale condemnation. This principle applies to all children's art, and to that of adults also, for that matter. The remarks that help children most are those which are provocative and offer him something he can grasp for himself.

DEVELOPMENT IN MIDDLE CHILDHOOD

If the parent continues to be interested in the child's work, he may paint with great joy for some years. Or he may paint for periods of time, drop it, and return to it later on. But often he will find other things more interesting and ignore painting. In this case there is no reason to press him to continue.

But if he really wants to continue with painting, his work will show wonderful development, and by the time he is eight or nine will have acquired maturer qualities. About this time a change will occur. The child's creative urge will not weaken, but another impulse will grow steadily stronger —the urge to improve. You will hear phrases that sound strange from his lips: "Wrong!" "Looks funny!" "Not real!" Stung by self-criticism he will work harder and harder. He is

now seeking techniques, and, if he can lay hold of them without losing his spontaneity, this will be a flowering period of his art.

The parent may now wish to send the child to a good art class, if there is one in the community. You can give him a great deal yourself, however. Talk his work over with him as with a sympathetic and very understanding friend, always as one who realizes that everyone sees, feels, and paints in his own way, and as one who would help him to paint as *he* wants to paint. If he has brothers and sisters they may also help him, especially if they too are painting. Then, as you talk together, he will himself come to see some of his weaknesses, and the reasons for them—also his strengths. Here the trouble is with the grouping of the objects, or the picture is confused, there the colors are drab. Others are better in one respect or another.

Where things are not real, you can help the child to find out why. For example, if he has painted something as seen from the top of a building, and is dissatisfied with the scene, go with him to the top of a building, so that he can see how vertical distance changes things. If his people are unreal, let his brothers or sisters take positions before him, but of course he is not to copy them. If he is troubled about perspective, suggest that he arrange some cans in front of one another and study them, but again, without any idea of copying.

OVERCOMING INHIBITIONS

Older children, also adolescents and parents, who begin to paint in this way for the first time are like strangers entering an unfamiliar land. They are bound by traditional conceptions of art. They are blocked by the fear as to how "things will look." They are inhibited by a long-established feeling that they will never paint. They lack ease and freedom in handling materials.

But it need hardly be said that if they feel the slightest in-

clination to paint creatively they should certainly try to do so. The parents and adolescents may care to join an art class, and if none is available they would render their community a real service if they would join with other like-minded people and organize one.

Parents can do a great deal to help the children. They may even themselves want to try out some of the methods suggested here, to see how they feel about painting. Approach painting now with no thought of results whatever, merely as something to try out, as something that might be fun. Often it is better not to begin with pictures, but as the very young child began—with experimentation. And these children do need help. For example, the parents may suggest holding the brush in different ways—painting sometimes with the tip, sometimes with the flat of the brush. Or you might simply draw a line across the paper, and ask the children to draw other lines they think look well. They may begin painting dots, or slanting lines of rain.

Some excellent teachers say it helps these children greatly to paint quickly, so they do not have time to fret about what they are doing. Furthermore, they should be advised to fill the entire paper, so their work will not be "tight." These specialists do not advise the continual use of finger paints for children, because of the ease with which results can be obtained. They often help, however, to loosen up inhibited beginners. While there are not many books on the teaching of painting to children, there are some which are extremely helpful. *The Arts In The Classroom,* by Natalie R. Cole, is addressed to teachers, but it will be stimulating and valuable to parents also. Other books are Victor D'Amico's *Creative Teaching In Art,* and *Creative Expression,* edited by Gertrude Hartman and Ann Schumaker.

CLAY

A mother of a six-months-old baby looked around her three-room apartment with a speculative eye. "We can keep the clay in that cupboard," she said. "Clay—here?" asked a friend. "Isn't that a little strenuous? If you had a house in the suburbs now . . ." The other laughed. "Of course we'd have it then," she said. "But just because we live in a tiny apartment in the city—I couldn't deny her that."

More and more parents are feeling, like this mother, whether or not they themselves take up clay modeling it belongs in every home where there are children. Like painting, modeling is one of the most creative of the arts. It also helps the child to gain control of his body. And in one respect modeling is unique—no material yet found offers the same opportunity for physical and emotional release. There is something infinitely satisfying about handling this soft, yielding stuff, about squeezing, pressing, patting, molding it. This is the reason why clay is universally recommended by psychologists for anyone, young or old, who is tense, restless, or repressed. Often when well-adjusted children are upset, there is nothing better to give them.

Give your child clay then, as you give him paint, from the time he is three years old. You can begin to teach him to be neat about clay very early, but the parents must assume responsibility for keeping it in condition. This material must be kept moist to be usable, and a stone crock is the most satisfactory container. If the clay becomes hard and dry, it should be moistened, then kneaded to restore the smooth texture and remove air bubbles. It is ready for use when it has the consistency of butter at room temperature.

When you give clay to your three-year-old, it will be fascinating to watch the uniformity in the growth process, for the child's progress in the use of paint and clay will be closely parallel. First, he will simply manipulate the clay, then will

come the wonder and delight of making real things—clumsy cakes, long worms, airplanes and boats that are little more than lumps of clay. At this time the child will need to be shown nothing at all.

Later objects will become more recognizable. The child may make different parts of his object and join them together, or may start with a solid piece of clay, and whittle it down. If he uses the first method, show him how to join the parts so firmly that they will not fall off immediately. He draws a few lines crossing each other with a toothpick or the end of a lollipop stick on each part at the point of joining. Then he joins them firmly, having placed a drop of water on one of them. And if he is making something like an elephant, part of which is heavy and projecting, the weight of the clay will cause that part to collapse unless he places a small lump of clay beneath it. The support can be removed when the object is dry.

If the children continue to enjoy using clay after they are older, their work will have the same crudeness, strength, and originality as their painting. You may see a prancing horse, a little girl with dainty ruffles, a monk kneeling in prayer, a sheep whose wooly coat has been made very realistic by the addition of little lumps of clay.

Some lovely and useful things can be made by children in the home, either for themselves or to give away. A bowl is one of these. Begin by having the child take a lump of clay about two inches in diameter and flatten it evenly till it forms a circle which is about half an inch thick, and which has no cracks. Then he should roll another lump of clay into a "snake" about a fourth of an inch in diameter. He will need a very smooth surface for this work, and if you have no plaster board, we recommend an old bread board.

Next the child coils his snake around the base of the bowl, using his fingers to smooth the coils so that it is not possible to see the line where they are joined. The fingers should be moistened from time to time, so that the clay will remain

supple. He may wish to have his bowl wider at the top. If so, he places each coil farther and farther toward the outer edge of the one below, though not so far that the bowl will lose its shape. On the other hand, if he wishes to narrow his bowl toward the top, he places the coils toward the inner edge. Making a bowl is by no means as difficult as it sounds. With practice, children often become expert in building with coils.

Children can also make lovely tiles. Have them first decide on the size, then flatten the clay, and cut it, carefully measuring it with a ruler. Or it may be easier to make a frame for the clay. The frame should be of wood and very much like a picture frame. Tiles can be decorated by making line drawings of pictures or designs, and an orange stick or a lollipop stick is a very satisfactory tool for this purpose. More elaborate tiles can be made by drawing the picture or design, then scooping out the clay in the background, to give the effect of a bas-relief.

Unless a kiln is available, clay objects cannot be glazed, but if they are covered with clear shellac when thoroughly dry, they will hold their shape for some time. Clay teachers advise the use of shellac instead of paint where glazing and firing are impossible, for paint spoils the quality of the clay.

Plasticine, a commercial product made of clay mixed with linseed oil, is greatly enjoyed by young children because it is such fun to manipulate. But it does not lend itself as well to creative work as clay, and because of the oil, it never becomes hard.

If the family becomes deeply interested in clay modeling, you will certainly want to make a wider variety of objects, and to be able to use color. In this case you will need more facilities, such as a kiln, plaster bats to hold the objects until they are dry, and a potter's wheel.

If you have a cellar you can easily have your own kiln. You may be able to use the facilities of a community center, or of the school your children are attending. With them you can

make many things—jars, tea pots, various kinds of bowls, plates, and dolls; and you can have wonderful fun with color.

CRAFTS

The various crafts—weaving, puppet and mask making, sewing, working in cardboard, and so on—these activities are by no means on a par with painting and clay modeling, either in the joys or the benefits they bring. For the craftsman is not a completely free agent; he must follow a pattern and obey directions. The artist is bound by nothing but his tools and materials. Thus his work is indeed a creation—it has been evoked wholly from within himself. So craft work, unlike painting and modeling, does not have to be taken for granted as a necessary part of the life of every home, and it is not essential to the children's development.

This, however, is not to minimize what crafts can mean to the family. In the first place they are not wholly uncreative. Many of them allow great scope for creativity in variations in shape, color, and design. We have only to think of the crafts of our own ancestors, or of people living today to realize the truth of this statement. Surely a fork made by Paul Revere, a real Navajo rug, a piece of Irish embroidery, these are, in a sense, real works of art.

And the element which limits the importance of craft work also gives it a unique value—it is useful. We must and should buy most of the things we use. But occasionally we should make a few of them with our own hands. A doll's house you bring home to your child may be more elaborate than the one he makes out of cardboard, but the latter will be his. The house you bought may have windows of glass, but the windows of the cardboard house will be placed exactly where he wants them. Many times crafts enable you to have things you could not afford to buy. Some of these are lovely and ornamental, others add more to the fun and jollity of the home than you could ever imagine unless you made them.

Puppets are great fun to make. A grandmother said that when her children were small the family used to put on puppet shows together. The shows represented a gradual evolution of family interests. "My husband worked in a bank," said the grandmother, "but I believe he had a secret longing to act. He began to read and tell stories to the children when the youngest was almost a baby. By the time she was four he was making simple hand puppets. I'll never forget the children's faces when he made that first puppet out of an old sock. From that time on, all the things they talked and read about—the cat and the fiddle and Little Red Riding Hood and all the rest—came to life. And the children themselves played with the puppets, and then began to make puppets themselves.

Like this father, you and the children can make puppets out of old socks, old gloves, even out of paper bags. They can be made most realistic by adding a bit of cotton or braided wool for hair, a policeman's helmet, or a nurse's cap. The book, *Play Centers For School Children* by these writers, contains full directions and diagrams for making paper bag, stocking, and peanut puppets. Shadow puppets are very simple to make. The children draw figures on oak tag or heavy paper. These are then pasted onto light cardboard. Even though color will not show, the children like to make the figures more lifelike by crayoning or painting them.

The puppets can be worked by means of sticks which are attached to the backs. If you want parts of the body to move, however, cut out those parts separately and attach them to the body either with McGill fasteners or with string tied in a French knot. To use the puppets, hang a sheet in a doorway or between two screens. Place a one-hundred-watt light behind the screen. The children can make scenery or properties by cutting silhouettes from their own paintings or drawings. They may develop little stories and give a real show, but it is wonderful fun simply to manipulate the figures.

A very simple marionette can be made even by the younger children. Full directions for making marionettes are found in the booklet, *Puppetry and the Curriculum,* issued by the Board of Education of New York City, as well as in numerous volumes listed at the close of this book.

You have only to recall the days when you were very young to realize the endless fun that masks afford to children. Like puppets, they give them a chance to express their love of the fantastic and the ridiculous, not only on Halloween, but also any day of the year. Mask making is among the more creative of the crafts. Even young children sometimes make lovely ones. A twelve-year-old girl worked for days on a devil's mask. The features were beautifully modeled. The sardonic grin was most lifelike, and the brilliant vermilion color was exactly right. She took it to school, where it was used in a play, and later it was hung on the wall of her father's den.

Masks can be made of papier-mâché. To make papier-mâché, soak strips of newspaper in two quarts of water into which a tablespoonful of fox paste and half a cup of flour have been dissolved. Masks are made by molding the form of the mask on the back of a saucer. Place the saucer, bottom up, on a piece of oilcloth or on several thicknesses of newspaper. If it is allowed to dry thoroughly, the mask will become firm and hard, and can be painted or decorated in other ways.

No toys you give children will afford them more pleasure than the structures they make themselves out of the cartons in which your groceries are delivered. Buy a keyhole saw at the ten-cent store. The children should fasten the pieces of cardboard with ordinary straight pins and strengthen the joints with gummed paper. They can cut windows and doors, and will love to paper the rooms to suit themselves, either with samples of wall paper, or with paper they have painted or crayoned. The boxes can become houses, stores, garages, or railroad stations. Wonderful cardboard furniture can be made from milk containers. Directions for making it can also be

found in *Play Centers For School Children,* mentioned previously.

THE USEFUL AND THE ORNAMENTAL

It is fun to make things to wear and use and ornament the home. If these objects belong to the maker, he wears and uses them proudly. It is even more fun to make things for other people. Though wonderful gifts can be bought in the stores, they can never be quite the same as those the giver has made with his own hands. Those made by hand will always be more personal, more intimate. Giving money will never mean as much as giving thought, time, and labor. A great orthopedist saved a woman from being crippled for life; she made him a miniature altar, and at its foot placed a tiny crutch. A painter had reason to be grateful to the management of a summer hotel; he painted a picture for the hotel lounge. It was exactly appropriate for the space above the fireplace. Colors and design harmonized perfectly with the furnishings of the room. You cannot buy such things in any store.

Making gifts has a special value for children. If theirs is a truly democratic home, they can express their fondness for people through things they buy, if they give thought to the purchase. If they do not have a sense of joint ownership of money, giving can mean a great deal to them if they save from their allowances. But they are still too young to know what money really means. It is hard for them to realize that it is not heaven-sent but an outward manifestation of toil. It is consequently more perfunctory for them to buy presents than for adults. Encourage them to make presents. But do not be arbitrary about it. The gift must express a real feeling. And it must be useful. Children are more sensitive and intelligent about these things than we often realize. A mother said, "My Celia makes most of her presents. But we've seen to it that they're things people really want. I was determined she shouldn't make the things I made—flimsy calendars, sleazy

potholders. I knew those things would go right into the waste-basket. Her friends come to the house wearing the little lapel ornaments and pins she gave them. She sees her pot holders in their kitchens."

There is no need to elaborate on the commoner activities, such as sewing, knitting, and crocheting. Almost anything made in these ways—wash cloths or argyle socks, aprons or dresses, scarves or table mats—is both attractive and useful. The activity connected with making these things has a great advantage. It does not interfere with conversation and can be carried on anywhere and at any time. In addition, the work is relaxing and restful. Attention should be called, however, to the things children can make. Young children have to use large stitches, and patterns must be cut out for them, but both boys and girls like to make aprons for themselves. Girls love to make dolls' clothes if you will give them the pattern and help them a little. And children can knit wash cloths and straight scarves.

Cooking can be rather routine and perfunctory, or it can be a craft. It takes no more time, except in the beginning, to make it so. Space does not permit a discussion of cooking, for the field is limitless and there are plenty of cook books. You can also find excellent recipes in periodicals and newspapers. When young children begin to cook, do not start them out without talking with them for a while about what they are going to make and the ingredients they believe should go into it. Explain the reasons for their mistaken ideas. If you have been carrying on any scientific experiments which will assist them in understanding why foods behave in certain ways, help them to draw a parallel. Let them do everything themselves with a minimum of help. If their products taste good, take the trouble to tell them so.

Weaving is a less well-known craft. Woven bags are not only beautiful but can match the user's costume. Woven mats are lovely. And more than one ambitious parent has made wonder-

ful rugs for the home. Many children love to weave. Though weaving is not at all difficult and can be done even by young children, the directions are too lengthy to be included here. It should be pointed out, however, that the family can easily make its own looms. Directions for simple weaving are included in the books listed in the Bibliography. The Arts Co-operative Service, 519 West 121st Street, New York City, also furnishes full directions and sells equipment and materials.

Attractive lapel ornaments can be made by hand, and with no cost whatever, by using discarded pieces of felt. Many people do not know that handmade jewelry is often as lovely as that which is bought.

If you want to make metal jewelry, buy copper or other sheet metal, a pair of metal shears, and either etching fluid or enamel paint. Begin by experimenting with very simple designs on paper. But develop your own designs—avoid the stereotyped ones. For example, you might draw a rectangle and then place the outline of a four-leaf clover within it. You may or may not want to separate the leaves and dispense with the stem. You can fill in the space around the clover by drawing lines of various kinds. Having decided on your design, trace it on to the metal. Lovely effects can be gained by pounding the metal with a nail so that either the design or the background is outlined in small holes. This work is too difficult for most children under the age of ten.

Delicate and lovely pins and earrings can be made of shells. These shells, which are sold by supply houses, resemble the petals of flowers and come in beautiful and varied shades. There is real scope for creativity in the choice of colors and the ways in which the petals are placed to form the flower. Pins for metal or shell jewelry can be bought and fastened to the backs with rubber or airplane cement.

Plastic pins, bracelets, and belts are very attractive. Full directions are given with the plastic. In general, these are not

so much fun to make, however, as there is less scope for creativity.

The following books give clear directions for making things of this kind: *Things to Make From Odds and Ends,* by Jessie Robinson; *Let's Make Something,* by Harry Zarchy; *What to Do Now,* by Tina Lee.

If your child attends an up-to-date school, he will certainly be learning many crafts. In the course of his school career he will be learning many things which his parents and brothers and sisters would enjoy doing as much as he. Do not shut these experiences out of the home. Ask him to share his knowledge with you. Ask him to teach you how to cook some delicious dish or to work in leather or metal. This will benefit him as much as you, for the act of teaching you will fix the processes more firmly in his mind.

Often crafts mean a great deal more fun if, like exploration, they develop naturally from things the family is already doing. Therefore, make puppets while listening to or reading stories, or when you have just attended a puppet show. Make a gift when you badly want to give something special to a particular person. Make your first mask at Halloween or when the children are giving a party in which a mask is needed. And try fancy dishes on a birthday, or when for some reason you feel especially festive yourself. This is not an inflexible rule, but in general it is the best way to know the full delights of crafts.

Chapter 15

BOOKS AND CREATIVE WRITING

WHEN BOOKS SPELL HOME

In an article entitled "Reading Children's Books," Frances Clarke Sayers, Superintendent, Work with Children, of the Public Library of New York City, writes:

> To one of the children's rooms in a public library, there recently returned a battle-scarred sailor. He had been a cook on a destroyer and the ship had blown up as he stood over the stove. There were scars of burns on his boyish face. What did a professional cook seek in a children's room? He sought what many another returned warrior has sought, the roots of his childhood, for in these roots are to be found the security, the happy recollections, the warmth of association from which he might well derive strength.

The sailor must have remembered more than books. Surely he remembered a voice reading, laughter mingling with his, perhaps an arm around him, a shoulder to lean against. And reading spells home to many people, as it did to this sailor. Is it not because this is such a sociable, as well as such a delightful thing to do? The voice that reads holds the group together; it creates an invisible circle, within which are warmth and a sense of safety and security.

But reading can be so much more important a part of family life than it frequently is. The way books can enrich the family's experiences in exploration and art has already been shown. In addition, parents and children can often share their

work interests through reading. There are many simple and popularly written books about the professions that older children can enjoy, like *The Horse and Buggy Doctor,* by Arthur Hertzler; *Country Lawyer,* by Bellamy Partridge; *Successful Women and How They Attained Their Success,* by Isabella Tavies; *Amelia Earhart,* by Doris Garst; *Inside the F.B.I.,* by John J. Flaherty; and *Florence Nightingale,* by Jeannette C. Covert. Most of us have no idea how much parents and children can enjoy books which are related to the children's classroom experiences. We defy any adult not to like such books as the following: *The Gift of the River,* by Enid Meadowcroft; *The Life of David Livingstone,* by Jeanette Eaton; *The Magic Tunnel,* by Caroline Emerson; and *Journey Cake,* by Isabella M. McMeekin.

But books should certainly not always be read merely because they are directly related to other experiences. This is being far too rigid and "set" about reading. It would be like carefully setting aside certain times in which to see dear and wonderful friends. It would subordinate one of the greatest of the arts and make it a kind of handmaid to the others. Books must have their own independent place in family life.

Reading for its own sake has been called a form of escape. In part, it is, but no more so than enjoying the other arts. Human beings, for whom reality is often a severe strain, need some escape. When they are worried, sad, perplexed, or upset, they need to laugh, be diverted, uplifted, taken out of themselves. All reading of this kind is certainly not escape. Books give us strength to live by, knowledge to use, thoughts that are eternal; they stimulate and broaden sympathy for our fellow men.

Experience indicates that most families do not begin to realize the extent to which the different members can share the delights of reading for its own sake. As with exploration, we assume that when we read to young and growing children we are doing something *for them.* We may have some fun

doing it, but there is always that sense of duty, always the feeling that it would be a little babyish to enjoy it very much ourselves. This fact explains the lack of care with which children's books are so often chosen. We have the idea that children's standards of judgment are wholly different from ours, and much lower. Thus it often seems that where children are concerned, "any book will do," as long as it is a story and has plenty of lively illustrations.

Fortunately, however, this attitude is far less prevalent today than formerly. Forward-looking parents, like good teachers and critics of juvenile literature, now test a children's book by the question, "Do I like it myself?" And modern writers of juveniles are unanimous in insisting that no readers are more severely critical in their judgments of a book—of its delineation of character, plot structure, atmosphere, ideas, even of its authenticity—than children. Many modern writers are submitting their unpublished manuscripts to school children, not only to ascertain whether they will be popular but for objective criticism.

This does not mean that parents and children can live entirely on the same literary fare. It merely means that the standard of children's books is so high today that the good ones —even those of young children—will be really enjoyed by parents. Among the young children's books of this kind are: *The Here and Now Story Book,* by Lucy S. Mitchell; *Down, Down the Mountain,* by Ellis Cradle; *Gone Is Gone,* by Wanda Gag; *The Taxi That Hurried,* by Irma S. Black; and *The Golden Egg,* by Margaret Wise Brown. These are a few of the stories for growing children and adolescents which the parents will like: *The Wind in the Willows,* by Kenneth Grahame; *The Uncle Remus Stories,* by Joel Chandler Harris; *The Jungle Book,* by Rudyard Kipling; *Miss Hickory,* by Caroline Baily; *Rufus Redtail,* by Helen Garrett; and books by John Tunis and Lavinia Davis.

Usually adolescents understand the books their parents read

for pleasure, and often their tastes are identical. And there are also some books whose appeal, like that of music, is universal, and which will delight the entire family except perhaps the young children. A woman in her middle forties was suffering deep sorrow from bereavement. A friend sent her a copy of Selma Lagerlof's *Wonderful Adventures of Nils* with a card saying, "Nothing helped me so much as this book when I lost someone dear to me." The book did prove of inestimable comfort. Some years later the woman gave it to a friend, a ten-year-old girl, who was visiting her. The child devoured the first volume in a few days and begged for the second. Many families will feel the same way about the Lagerlof classic.

There are literally hundreds of books, some of which are classics, and all of which are vividly and well written, whose appeal is also general. The following very brief list simply indicates their range: *The Jungle Book* and *The Just So Stories,* by Rudyard Kipling; *Drums Along the Mohawk,* by W. D. Edwards; *Captains Courageous* and *Treasure Island,* by Robert Louis Stevenson; *My Sister Eileen,* by Ruth McKinney; *Jane Eyre,* by Charlotte Brontë; *Mama's Bank Account,* by Kathryn Forbes; *The Sherlock Holmes* stories, by A. Conan Doyle; *The Laugh Parade* and *The Laugh Roundabout,* by Stephen Leacock; many of the novels by Edna Ferber, Booth Tarkington, and Alexander Dumas. Parents and adolescents will like these books; some children over seven and all those over nine will love them. And there are poems in countless anthologies, like Palgrave's *Golden Treasury,* as well as those by Walt Whitman, Carl Sandburg, and John Masefield, which will be loved by the family.

Perhaps the greatest difficulty the family will encounter in broadening reading interests is that of maintaining independence. Adults and adolescents want to know about the books their friends are reading, and to read the best ones. But to limit yourself to this kind of reading is to miss most of the pleasure of literature. Not to have your own opinions and to

express them frankly is to lose independence of thought and also to be an uninteresting conversationalist. Half of the fun of discussions about books is in the friendly clash of opinion.

This is the reason why it is advised that you do not begin with the books but with yourselves and with the kind of literature you feel would interest you at the time.

You can find out very easily what current literature has to offer. Reviewers, advertisements, and the book clubs will tell you that. And do not overlook the reviews of children's books or lists that are published by public libraries and organizations like The Child Study Association of America. But these will not tell you about any books that appeared even a few years ago, and they completely ignore the classics, which alone have stood the test of time.

You have to investigate a little for these treasures. When you are waiting in people's living rooms and libraries, do not look upon the books merely as decorations, but study the titles, and take down one that seems interesting. A short period of browsing in a public library will yield much more. A good librarian or reader's adviser will serve as a helpful guide to literature. And published guides, like *Poole's Index* and the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature,* are very easy to use. If you like one book, make a point of getting hold of others by the same writer. Anthologies are a tremendous help if used intelligently. If you are not a slavish follower of literary fads, you will find that one of the best ways to come to know books is through conversation with friends. Make a point of keeping abreast of the books your closest friends are reading; you will probably like them, and they may now and then tell you of one that changes your entire outlook on life, or that answers hitherto unanswerable questions.

COMICS AND MYSTERY STORIES

A much mooted question today is, What to do about children's comics? And surely adults' mystery stories fall within

the same category. If by these questions we mean should we or should we not forbid children to read the comics and ourselves to read mystery stories we are discussing academic niceties—they are published, and they will be read. And it seems only reasonable to grant that publishing businesses like these, which reach such tremendous proportions, must meet a real need. In this case, the need is for change, excitement, and the challenge of solving a puzzle. The drawbacks of these books are also very evident. By and large, they are characterized by poor style, poor illustrations, and remoteness from reality. But we cannot condemn all of them. Some detective stories, like those of Agatha Christie, show great adroitness of plot construction and clever character delineation. Some comics, like "True Comics," are well written and depict real-life situations, past or present. Nor do many psychologists, pediatricians, and educators feel that even the poorer comics are entirely harmful. The harm comes when they are read to excess and to the exclusion of other books. If parents and children are leading interesting lives, and if a great deal of good literature is brought into the home, the comics and mysteries will not exclude it.

There is also some discussion about fairy tales, which also depict unreality. The same principle applies here. Fairy stories definitely have a place in children's lives. But to feed them little else would be a grave mistake. There is quite as much thrill for children in things that happen as in those that can never happen. It is important, when reading fantastic stories to young children, to help them realize what are "pretend" and what are "real" stories, for otherwise they will become confused.

READING ALOUD

We used to be afraid to read aloud very much to children, for fear we would discourage them from reading to themselves. We know now that the opposite is the case. Reading to

children stimulates them to learn to read for themselves. And since their ability to comprehend far outstrips their mechanical power to read, unless adults read to them they are deprived of a great deal of pleasure.

How often you will indulge in family reading depends, of course, on your own inclinations. But some families enjoy it so much that they have made a practice of doing it every week or so. They say that Friday nights or late afternoons on week ends are the best times for reading. And they often do a good deal more in bad weather and on vacations.

One family has developed a very satisfactory plan. The members of this family, who live in a suburb, have been reading aloud every Sunday night for years. And they plan their reading together, as they plan other things. Consequently the bill of fare varies. Sometimes the book will be one they all like, sometimes it will be one the children are particularly fond of, and again it will be the special choice of the parents. Since they have many week-end guests, their interests are considered also. There is nothing formal about the occasion. Sometimes the children listen intently, sometimes they go to the corners of the room and play quietly. But they never seem to want to get quite out of reach of that circle of warmth.

Aside from speaking clearly and distinctly, there is only one secret of good reading. It applies also to storytelling. This principle is to forget both yourself and your audience and concentrate entirely on the book or the story. The rest will take care of itself. Now and then the family will enjoy having one of the children read aloud. He will seldom read an entire book, but will simply want to share some particular page or paragraph from a story he liked, or some short story or verse that he himself has written. In this case he will see the point of preparing it ahead of time, so everyone will be sure to enjoy it. And he might welcome a little help. Just as with an adult, his attention should be directed to what he is reading. Do not read the passage to him with any idea that he is to

imitate you, for then his reading will sound lifeless. Enjoy it with him, pronounce any words that are hard for him, chuckle over the funny passages, and praise him when things sound very real. If his voice is low, do not make him self-conscious by dwelling on this fact, but say the people won't hear him unless he speaks louder.

There can be too much reading, for while we do need escape, the purpose of this method of recreation is to enable us to return to reality with renewed strength, not to withdraw from it. The danger of too great a withdrawal is especially great in the case of children. You want children to make friends with people in books, but not to the exclusion of friends of flesh and blood. You want books to stimulate their thinking, but not to do their thinking for them. Above all, they should not find so much satisfaction in this fictional world that it weakens their capacity to stand up to the real one. Discourage any tendency on their part to become bookworms. Encourage them to read all they like, as long as they have plenty of friends and plenty of play.

On the other hand, you may be troubled because your child does not read enough. He may not really hate to read, but simply not care much about it. Make absolutely no effort to force or even urge this child to read. Since interests cannot be forced, nagging will only turn the child more definitely against reading. You can, however, give him a little casual and indirect help. You can encourage a more friendly feeling for books by reading aloud to him, and by having books for him to read by himself. But make a very special point of getting books that are along the lines of his special interest. Books about airplanes or animals or boats might satisfy the interest aroused by his favorite hobby. And if a child does not care for reading, he probably does not read very easily. Therefore, books that are given to him should usually be those given to younger children. But do not let him know that they are

books for younger children or you will undermine his confidence in his ability to read.

Try giving him a picture dictionary, like the *Golden Book Dictionary*. Your child may not care for it in the least, then again he may love it, for many fascinating pictures illustrate the words in these dictionaries. If he is interested, you might then suggest that he make his own dictionary, cutting out pictures from old magazines.

When you read to this child, invite him to sit close to you and follow you with his eyes. Now and then, when you are called away, you might leave the book in his hands. When you come back, you may find that he is reading, or at least looking at the book.

Invite the child to read to you from his books. But if he reads badly, make absolutely no reference to the fact. What this child needs most is confidence, the belief that he can read, and he will learn to read better. So encourage him and praise his efforts. Never be harsh with him. When listening to him, bear in mind that the best incentive to learning to read is the urge *to get the sense* of what you are reading. You want the child to grasp the general flow of the thought rather than to pronounce or to understand single words. Forget particular words, therefore. Never stop him and make him pronounce a word or tell you what it means. His progress will be from the general to the particular, not the other way around.

THE CREATIVE USE OF WORDS

A three-year-old said,

> I have to draw stripes.
> Do you know why I have to?
> I have to draw wrinkles of water.

It was Tennyson who wrote of "the wrinkled sea."

This verse was written by a nine-year-old:

Sleep

If sleep were sold hour by hour
For silver and gold
How many people would weep and weep
Because they could not afford to sleep.

An eleven-year-old wrote this:

Black

A black crow flying
Through the blue air.
A black shadow creeping
A black stallion leaping
A black panther sleeping
Outside his lair.

Though these children do have some talent, their teachers do not consider any of them to be outstandingly gifted. Yet their words are magical. They seem to reach out and touch the reader, touch him somewhere deep down.

But here, as always, it is not the products that matter, but the people who created them. It must have meant a great deal to these children to gain such mastery of the universal tool of communication between men. Originality must have been fostered through such expression. The older children must have exercised real self-discipline to be able to use words with such simplicity and restraint. They must have experienced great joy in the freedom to be themselves.

Every child can derive these benefits from the use of words. Every parent can sit beside him or listen to him speak and watch that unfolding. As the child grows older, his interest in the creative use of words as such may not be as strong as it was in the earlier years, but he will use them effectively, both in writing and in speaking. And the parent can guide and help him from the beginning, and through this guidance may

even increase his own ability to use words. In fact, he may discover a great interest in writing.

It has been said that the only poets are young children. The reason is that they are so free. Unlike us, they have no verbal pattern to follow, so they develop their own. A four-year-old said, "It's snowing so hard the men are leaving their feet behind!" Later he would say the commonplace, "How clear the footprints are in the snow." Another young child said, "As quiet as closing your eyes." And in a few years this might become the old cliché, "deathly still."

The guidance of children in the use of words, then, is simply a matter of helping them to keep the creative power with which they were born. Some of the ways of doing this have already been considered, notably that of not telling them words until they themselves want to know and use them. When they have something important to say, attend to them closely, show your real interest, and indicate how important it is for them to make you understand. Help them as little as possible. Continually encourage them to assert themselves. In this way they will put things in their own language, not yours.

Young children have as much fun with words as with some endlessly fascinating toy. They play with words, experiment with them, try them out, howl with laughter over them. They delight in nursery rhymes, as much for the sound as for the ideas. Puns are simply wonderful. And the parents are not too grown-up to share this fun occasionally. You can laugh with them at "Hocus pocus, hanky panky, Oklahoma, sway back," and—even if you happen to have one—at "headache." You can enjoy the limericks. You may groan over your own puns, but do not hurt their feelings by groaning over theirs. As children grow older, they will discover words that really live and move and paint pictures—"booming, tinkling, scratchy, ghostly, fiery." Enjoy these words with them, but without advising that they be used at certain times or in certain ways.

And when the children make remarks, like the ones quoted above, which seem to stand out like stars in conversation, accept them quite casually, in the spirit in which they were made, but enjoy them. And sometime, when you are telling the child a story, you might use one of his own vivid phrases. In these ways, children become "word conscious," without becoming "self-conscious."

Your young child will probably begin to tell you stories himself. If he does not, wait until you have told him some stories and then suggest that he tell you one. Do not worry if it is only, "I saw a dog; he went 'bow wow.' " It is most important for the parent to write these stories down. Write them in a notebook, but keep this notebook unobtrusively, so that your child will not become self-conscious about what he writes. This book will be the symbol of the importance which you and he attach to verbal expression. Sometimes a child tells stories only to gain his parents' attention, but if he really likes what he has said, he will want to hear it again and again. If some relative or friend has been visiting you of whom he is very fond, you might suggest that he "write" that person a letter, and that he try to make it so real the person will think he is back visiting again.

Where stories grow very long and repetitious, tell the child it would be a good idea to stop now. If he tends to be very realistic, tell him some fantastic or nonsensical stories, and encourage him to do the same. But make it quite clear that both of you know very well which ones are real and which are not.

If you want to help your child learn to use words creatively, do not stop taking down verses and stories to his dictation after he himself has learned to write, even after he writes fairly easily. For, as with reading, the power of thought and expression far outstrips the ability to master the mechanical skill of writing. If you are not able to take his dictation when he wants to create, then it will help him greatly if you tell him not to

worry about how the paper looks, that you will help him to put it into shape later. For his mind should not be diverted from what he wants to say by the arduous task of trying to turn out a neat, well-punctuated paper.

As with clay modeling, the range of subject will be very broad. Growing children love narrative with plenty of action, but by no means do they always confine themselves to this particular type of story. They may write sketches, mood pieces, lyrical verse (usually unrhymed), in fact, almost anything. But they must write about what they feel about, about things that excite and move them.

If both of you really like writing, the child can have no more sensitive, helpful critic, you no more eager, responsive companion. You need no esoteric knowledge about writing. Actually, it is almost better if you do not have too much specialized knowledge. No good critics follow rules. Your honesty, your respect for what a child does, your wanting and expecting his best—these are the things that matter. Show him your feelings about his work. Tell him when his words make you see things, when they make you almost feel like crying, when they make people very real. This is the secret good editors know the world over. It is what inspires writers to bring all of their work up to the level of the best. Increasingly the child will talk about what dissatisfies him, and if you agree, say so frankly. Compare a weaker passage with a more convincing one. Find out why one passage is effective, the other not. Brothers and sisters may be able to help.

As you go over the child's work together and as you read together, he will come to see the reason for punctuation and paragraphing. He will become anxious to use these techniques as ways to improve his work. And when he writes something for a purpose—to send away, to show to someone, or to read aloud to the family—then he will appreciate the importance of a neat appearance and of being careful about spelling.

More mature children of about eleven or twelve can sometimes notice ways in which the rearrangement of a story or sketch will greatly improve it, and so can begin to develop a sense of structure in writing. They may also realize why a good beginning is important, since otherwise characters are not real people and the reader does not care what happens to them later on. He can realize when a story simply stops without having a real ending.

Like older children who never painted creatively, those who never used words in this way before need help in getting started. Often their formal training in school makes them even dread the idea of trying to write. Never press these children to express themselves in words. If they do feel an urge to do so, have them dictate to you, even if they are as old as eleven or twelve. Often it is better not to begin with writing, but with speaking. Older children, like the younger ones, sometimes use vivid and telling phrases in conversation. Do not be as casual about these clever snatches as you were about those of the younger children. Stop and call attention to how good the phrases were, even write them down, if not at the time, then later. Now and then ask the children if they would like to attempt to build up a story around these phrases. Or when a child says something interesting, you might ask, "Why don't you think that over, and write down some of your ideas?"

When children have written, or rather dictated, something to you, their great need is for encouragement. Somewhere on the page there will be a gleam—find it. You will feel a responsive thrill as his eyes light up. If the child says, "My teacher would think that was bum!" simply reply quietly that you think, in fact, you know, that it is good. And continue to encourage until the child is quite freed from self-consciousness, and thoughts and feelings are finding expression in words.

Parents who want to help their children in the creative use of words should certainly read *Creative Youth,* and *Creative*

Power, by Hughes Mearns, and *They All Want To Write,* by Alvina Treut et al.

This simple and easy guidance will make a difference to children all their lives. They will not be among the people who say, "I can talk, but the minute I take a pencil in my hand everything leaves my head!" They will not write those stilted letters that sound like school compositions.

If boys and girls continue to be deeply interested in writing through adolescence, it probably means that they have a special gift for it. And the parent may continue to be their companion as before, though the relationship will tend increasingly to become like that between adult critic and friend. Help this boy or girl to choose writing courses in high school which are given by sympathetic and understanding teachers. Many a budding talent has been blighted by the wrong kind of teaching. And if the aspiring writer does find himself in a class of this kind, it is to be hoped that his foundation of security will be so strong that he will go his way without allowing his own talent to be destroyed.

Chapter 16

CARPENTRY

ESPECIALLY FOR FATHERS

In his book, *Recreation and the Total Personality,* S. R. Slavson describes a father and son who were not very close companions. In fact, they had been given to going their own ways about the home. The father spent the evenings in the living room, the boy in his bedroom. After the boy brought home an attractive corner shelf he had made in the carpentry shop of a neighborhood center, the two developed a common interest in carpentry. As a result of this interest the entire atmosphere of the home was changed.

Of course, it might not have been carpentry which brought father and son together, but somehow it seems appropriate that it was. Some mothers like it, but on the whole hammer, saw, and wood belong especially to fathers and children. Here they see eye to eye and meet on common ground. The fathers do not have to make any effort to "come down" to the children—they are there already, and usually they glory in the fact. A dentist displayed an elaborate bookcase he and a friend had made for his summer home. When asked whether any children had taken part in the work, he answered, "No." Then he added, with a smile, "Because we have no children." He went on quickly, "Say—aren't we acting our age?"

The nature of this activity makes it an ideal way for fathers to come to know their children better. They work away in a world of their own, yet they work together. The movements of

the adult are suited to those of the child. They are constantly helping one another. Insensibly, and without their quite knowing the reason, the gaps between parent and child begin to lessen and invisible barriers break down. When a sense of rapport is established, confidences slip out; sometimes when father and child are working, more often when they rest a moment, or after they are through. When they see each other outside of the shop, flashes of understanding pass between them, as between those who have joined a new and secret fraternity. And before too long the relationship has become close and intimate.

Carpentry, like all crafts, has its peculiar benefits. There is a tremendous pleasure in the sheer activity—in the steady, rhythmic action of hammer and saw. City dwellers, especially children, badly need this physical and emotional release. And carpentry gives back something the machine age has taken from us: the chance to construct, the chance to build. It satisfies eternal skill-hunger.

Carpentry also contributes to general family solidarity. You can make music together, or dance or act together, and, as we shall show, these are wonderful experiences but they are transitory. But that bookshelf you and your twelve-year-old made exactly to fit that space under the stairs, that corner shelf you put over the kitchen sink that Mother "couldn't live without" —these are with you always.

IT IS PRACTICAL

Carpentry need not dirty or clutter up your home, or fill it with continual din. If the family has a cellar there is no problem whatever, even if they do not have a cellar the problems are not unsurmountable. It would be a sacrifice to set up a real shop in one of the bedrooms, but in certain cases it might be worth making. And no sacrifice is necessary for parents and children to have a wonderful time with a few simple tools. Four-year-old Harry kept his tools in boxes under

his bed. He used a simple clamp to hold his wood, and clamped it to an old kitchen chair. If there is a clear understanding as to times when carpentry work is to be carried on, the family need not be greatly disturbed by the noise. With ordinary precautions this can be a safe occupation for children. Even a three-year-old can use an ordinary hammer and a straight saw quite safely.

THE TOOLS AND THEIR USE

So much depends on having the right tools, keeping them in good condition, and using them in the right way. Fancy "carpentry sets" being sold for children today are quite attractive and seem to solve the problem of what to buy. Do not be tempted by them, however. Except for the small ones for very young children, which consist only of hammer, nails, and wood, the tools in these sets are flimsy, undependable, and short-lived. Instead of getting a set for the older children and yourselves, buy your tools separately, as you need them, from a reliable hardware store.

The following tools form basic equipment for ordinary work in the home:

Hammer
Cross-cut saw—twenty to twenty-seven inches
Plane
Screw driver
Brace and bit
Keyhole saw
Vise or C-clamp
A carpentry bench, or an old table to work on. If the family has no table, it is possible to make a cover to fit over any table.
A tool board to hold the tools, or an orange crate or good-sized box.

It is important to keep the tools not only sharp but in good condition. It is easy to see the hazard involved in having

hammers with loose heads. But every good carpenter knows that there is also a hazard in having a dull or rusty saw which catches in the wood or a clamp that fastens loosely. In addition, no workman likes to be hampered by poor tools. Your hardware dealer can tell you where your tools can be sharpened at small expense. Tools only need to be sharpened once or twice a year.

What was said about the guidance of children in relation to the care of other materials applies with special emphasis here. Tools are expensive and should have a long life. The children must learn, from the earliest years, not to mishandle them in any way (for example, by sawing on metal). And whether they have only a few tools or very many, they should keep implements where they belong.

It need hardly be said that young children have to be watched when they are handling tools. Since this is an activity which parents and growing children like to share, and since it is one in which they definitely need the parent's help, he will usually be around when they are working. How much they can be left to themselves, however, depends on the maturity of the individual child. An adult should be in the vicinity when children under the age of about eight are handling tools. As a matter of fact, it is more important to be watchful when two or more children are engaged in carpentry than when a child is working alone. Without rousing fear in the child, teach him a few simple precautions from the time he is three years old. Make him realize that he is never to saw a piece of wood unless it is securely fastened in the vise or the clamp—not to try to hold the wood with his free hand. And teach him to keep his free hand out of the path of the saw. A precaution that is harder for him to learn, because of his love of watching, is not to stand near people who are at work, and especially not to stand in the path of the saw.

Let a very young child simply manipulate his tools. He loves "to make sawdust" and to feel the wood separate through

his own unaided efforts. He will pound away blissfully. He is really something to see, for he is never more intent, exactly like a miniature carpenter. Be sure to draw a line for him on the wood, even though he cannot follow it very well, so that the habit will become firmly established. By taking his arm at first, let him come to realize that the pressure on the down stroke is doing the work and get the sense of relaxing on the upstroke. Later he will begin to hammer two boards together, and will be quite satisfied with the end of an apple box, and shingle, or ten-penny nails.

But as the child grows a little older, these boards, which used to be such fine boats or trains, will no longer suffice. He wants to achieve a definite shape. If he is going to make a boat, his first impulse will be to saw a piece off the side of the board in order to get an angle at the front for his bow. If you have been drawing lines for him with a trisquare, he can probably keep to the line fairly well by now, and you can show him how to make his bow so that the point will be in the center of the board. Let him watch you find the center, and then show you how deep a point he wants. Then hold the ruler and have him draw the lines. Show him how to place the board in the vise and to cut across it.

He may next want to make a box, or a train, or a boat that can really hold something. Do not expect him to cut all four sides of the object before he starts to put them together, but let him nail two sides as soon as they have been cut—for he cannot plan so far ahead. Show him how to drive the nails by laying one piece of wood flat onto the work bench and pounding on the heads until the points begin to show on the under side. Then he can place the board with the nails on the edge of the other piece of wood, which is held firmly in the vise.

Do not give the child a pattern to follow, or expect him to draw a blueprint. Let him show you what he wants to make by building the object with his blocks, and then give him only the techniques he needs. Help him to simplify his ideas so

that he can attain his goal. Otherwise you will not have the pleasure of watching him learn, and he will not have the pride and satisfaction of making something that is really his. Thus, for example, if he is content to push his train along the floor without wheels, do not mention them, but wait for him to ask for wheels. When he does ask he will not realize the need for axles. After the wheels have fallen off a good many times, ask him to look at the cars in the street. Then, after he has discovered the axles, help him to put them on his car. Standards should not be too high for the child to attain, but they should gradually be raised, so that his work continually improves. Thus, for example, when he can saw on a line he should not be allowed to cut haphazardly and then expect to remedy the situation by using plane, file, or sandpaper.

These basic principles apply to helping older children with carpentry. *Let's Build,* by Constance H. Crocker, is a book which will be extremely helpful to parents and children who really become interested in carpentry.

It is amazing how many things growing children can make —both to play with and to use. In addition to boats, trains, wagons, trucks, dolls' houses and dolls' furniture, they can make a box for their toys, a house for the dog, a rabbit hutch, and many other things. These can be painted in bright colors, and will be sturdy enough to last.

When the children are about ten or eleven, they can help their father to make various things you need for the house: as desk, a bookshelf, a plain chest of drawers. And if the interest persists through adolescence, the objects will, of course, become both more complicated and more beautiful. Adolescents or children with unusual skill can make very artistic objects, like many-sailed and elaborate boats, which are real sailing crafts, and which add a great deal to the appearance of a living or dining room. Or they may take up wood carving, which is a highly creative art.

Like the father and son described by Mr. Slavson, you and

your children may become interested in different kinds of wood, or you may want to find out about the lumbering industry. In that case, be sure to read *Your Forests,* by Martha B. Bruere, *Men and Trees,* by Joseph Gaer, and *Tall Timber,* by Stewart H. Holland. Whether or not you take up wood carving, you may want to read the absorbing novel, *The Wood Carver of Olympus.*

Chapter 17

MUSIC AND DANCING

As with nature, no one needs to plead the cause of music. We know its power—its power to uplift, to comfort, to soothe, rest, and refresh the human spirit. We have to be told that every man who wishes to can paint, model, and express himself creatively in words, but no one has to tell us that every man can sing. Nor does anyone have to describe the joy that singing brings. All cannot move creatively to music—but how many are there who do not wish that they could?

Music has been called the most universal of the arts. There is no question about its power to reach across the barriers and unite men. Thus it is peculiarly the art of groups and, in particular, of the family. Parent and infant have been sharing musical experiences from the time the first mother sang a lullaby to her baby. Wait until every member of the family is busying himself with something in the living room, then start to play "Oh Susannah," "Old Man River," or the Beethoven Minuet, and see how long they will remain busy.

And—we *have* music. It was pointed out earlier that though the machine has taken a great deal from us, it has also given us a great deal. One of its greatest gifts to families is that of music. It is literally "in the air" and on the air. This world waits for everyone; to enter, it is only necessary to press a switch, turn a dial, place a record on a turntable. And families can explore so much of it together. Reference was made to the number of books which will delight every member of the

family except the young children. In the case of musical compositions we need not exclude even the youngest.

There is folk music, loved by people of every age. This country alone has produced wonderful cowboys' songs, sailors' chanties, Negro Spirituals. And every nation, every period, has its deathless songs. English, Irish, Welsh songs are wonderful and have their own flavor. There is South African folk music, with its exotic quality, its irresistible rhythm, its humor, its pathos. There are innumerable classical selections that all the family will love: the songs of Schumann and Schubert, Brahms "Cradle Song," and his Hungarian dances, Haydn's *Toy Symphony,* Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf,* Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker Suite,* the music of *Hansel and Gretel.* And, as with paintings and sculpture, the growing children may like music we might have believed they would lack the maturity to appreciate.

There is no need to urge us to extend our love of music. All over this country we are doing this. But there are ways in which we can still further enrich our experiences. Nor does this, any more than other arts, exist only to be enjoyed. If music is really to live in the home it must be expressed there.

THE FAMILY SHARES MUSIC

A word should be said about popular music. For this kind of music is frequently held to be so "bad" by the majority of the initiate that a taste for it is believed to indicate an inability to appreciate anything different. While final judgments about jazz should be left to musicians, a few words can be said in its defense. After all more than one name band leader has stood on the platform of Carnegie Hall in New York City. It is hard to say whether musicians like George Gershwin have composed jazz or classical music. And Fritz Kreisler has more than once performed a current favorite of the teen-agers.

This is not the point, however. Tastes for the two forms of music are not mutually exclusive. As one can care for Ellery

Queen and Romain Rolland, so he can care for jazz and grand opera. Furthermore, like the comics and mystery stories, jazz belongs to this age. Young people, at any rate, like it and will hear it. We must accept this fact, and assume that they may have a catholic taste. Then we should give them an opportunity to hear very different music. Perhaps, like the daughter of the late S. H. Rothafel ("Roxy"), who was handled in this manner, they will come to care deeply for both kinds of music.

The most obvious way for the family to broaden interest in music is through radio listening. Certainly no one should listen to programs he does not want to hear. On the other hand, we can become "one-track" about programs, even to the point of being oblivious to those we would very much like to hear. It is easy to avoid this tendency by keeping abreast of programs from day to day. And be experimental in your attitude about music. Try a program for a few moments to see whether you may not like it.

But the radio is not enough. For it gives you only what *it* wishes to. You have no opportunity to exercise your own taste. A record player, whether elaborate and expensive, or inexpensive and small, is quite as important as a radio, if not more so. If you wish help in building a record collection, you will certainly want to have Paul Affelder's *How to Build a Record Library,* and to read departments on music, like that in *Parents' Magazine,* along with *Relax and Listen,* by John Hallstrom. The great advantage of records over the radio is that they give the family a chance to express themselves musically, both through singing and through dancing. For the urge to express yourself in singing and dancing seldom accommodates itself to radio time.

But the best chance for expression comes when the family owns one or more musical instruments which some members can play. Not only does this give greater flexibility and ease with relation to time and choice of selections, but this music has a warm, human quality which often means more to a

family than perfection of rendition. But too often musical skill is something apart in the home, the possession of the individual alone, or a means of "entertaining" the others at set times. You can take it out of this isolation, however, and make it not an individual, but a family talent. Encourage the musician to play casually and informally, and sometimes at least to play selections everyone wants to hear. Above all, he should use his skill to accompany family singing. If you do not have an instrument like a piano, violin, or cello, you may be able to pick up an inexpensive guitar, mandolin, or banjo. And the strumming of a few chords on these will make all the difference in the world in giving life to family singing.

If two or more members of the family can play different instruments, they will miss a wonderful experience unless they play together, and anyone who has heard a family orchestra realizes what this means in the home. If you have only piano music, all of you can share it more directly if you will play *The Game of Harmony,* in the ways described by Ross Lee Finney, in his book by that name.

Whether or not you have instruments in the home you can sing together, with or without a record player. If you have never done this before but believe you would like to, do not start in some set and arbitrary fashion. Introduce singing naturally. One of the best ways is to sing at holiday times, particularly at Christmas or at Hanukkah. There are lovely records of holiday songs for those who have no instruments. If the parents feel a little inhibited about singing, invite the children to gather around the tree, or the Hanukkah candles, and begin. They will soon rid you of your shyness. Another natural way to start to sing together is to get the music of songs that individuals have heard somewhere and are fond of. Or, if all of you are going around humming some haunting refrain from a play, movie, operetta, or musical comedy, get the sheet music or the record.

Sing together casually, and not always when you are at home

When you are driving and happen to have a clear road before you is an excellent time. It is fun to sing when you have finished your picnic lunch or supper and are stretched out on the ground. When you are beginning to become tired on a hike, singing will pick you right up and carry you along. Then music will gradually become part of your daily life.

With singing, as with reading, relax and forget everything but the song. If your minds are on the music, you will not scream or shout or do anything else to destroy it. But do not worry in the least about the way in which anyone is singing. Above all, do not call attention to imperfections. Sometimes one child's keen sense of pitch or time will make him criticize the singing of another child. And it is very natural for the parents to be so pleased with this revelation of possible musical talent that they encourage criticism, without thinking of its effects. But the effect may be serious and even permanent. As Satis Coleman says, "Discouragement is the greatest handicap that can be placed in the way of singing." She also points out that many children learn to keep on pitch very gradually, and only as they are happy and confident about music. If criticism begins, simply tell Geoffrey not to mind, that Ellen or Grace is quite all right.

You may like to dance, as well as to sing together. Social dancing is not advised for young or growing children, but the older members of the family may enjoy it. And all of you may have a great deal of fun doing square dances.

After you know and love good music, you will want to collect more records and sheet music, and also to do some reading along lines of special interest. One of the best collections of songs now available is *The Fireside Book of Folk Songs,* edited by Margaret Bradford. Other fine collections are: *Songs of Many Lands, Music of Many Lands,* and *Early American Song,* edited by Kinscella; Carl Sandburg's *American Song Bag;* and Downes and Siegmeister's *Treasury of American Song.* For parents and children interested in the composers,

the following by Opal Wheeler and Sybil Dencher are recommended: *Bach, the Boy from Thuringia; Mozart: the Wonder Boy; Joseph Haydn: the Merry Little Peasant; Ludwig Beethoven and the Chiming Tower Bells; Franz Schubert and His Merry Friends; Handel at the Court of Kings;* and *Edward McDowell and His Cabin in the Pines.* If you want to find out more about different instruments, you will certainly like these books: *Tune Up: The Instruments of the Orchestra and Their Players,* by Harriet E. Huntington; *Musical A.B.C.,* by Thomas Laufer. Those who are fond of jazz will like *Esquire's Jazz Book* and *Year Book of the Jazz.*

A few days before Christmas three-year-old Janet sang a Christmas carol for her schoolteacher mother over the telephone during the latter's lunch hour. This was not a ceremony. The mother simply felt like hearing a song while she was having her chat with Janet, and Janet felt like singing. But the expression on the mother's face as she listened showed that few experiences meant more to both of them than the sharing of music. Another mother said, "Larry was fretful the other night. I sang to him, and as he quieted down, I assure you that my favorite opera was not as glorious to me as the sound of my own voice." Neither of these mothers is a musician in the conventional sense. They are not even what would be called "highly musical." One of them plays the piano, as she expresses it, "after a fashion"; the other does not, but uses a record player. But both love young children and the pure, simple music that belongs with them. This is all any mother needs.

Young children are born singers and dancers as they are born poets and painters. For unless someone blocks them, they respond to rhythm and harmony with their voices and their bodies as naturally and spontaneously as they breathe. How well the child knows what we once knew but have forgotten, that music is everywhere, not only on instruments, or pages

of paper. Listen *with him* and you will hear it. You will hear it in words: "ding dong," "toot," "poky old, old local," "hippitty hop." You will hear it coming on the wind, rustling in the grass, rising in the brook. Your ears will catch it when hollow objects are struck, when a glass of water is tapped with a pencil. Play with it together. For example, when your child's train is charging along the track, with a loud whistle, give a faint one, perhaps in a higher key. He may be annoyed for a moment, but if you continue, he will join in, and may say, "Your train is far off."

Encourage him to create music exactly as he paints, when it comes to him. Listen as he sings away to himself—he may be crooning idly, but he may be improvising something of his own that is very lovely. Margaret Bradford and Barbara Woodruff have edited a book which is made up entirely of the songs young children have composed, and which has been illustrated by them. It is called *Keep Singing, Keep Humming,* and every parent and child will love it. If you can transcribe some of your child's songs, by all means do so, for both of you will want to sing them again.

Now and then you will want to improvise a melody with your child, to add a word or two, or a line, as he chants to his doll, to the clay he is rolling between his fingers, or to the moon. And sing with him, songs you both like, and even if you do not like it yourself, encourage him to move his body to music.

Do not be in the least condescending in choosing songs for the young child. Select only what you yourself really like. Then you will unconsciously sing or play with such animation and feeling that he cannot help joining you. He will sing it over and over again, and before you know it, will have learned it, first the tune, then the words. He can learn to appreciate, even now, the discipline of music. Sing softly as well as loudly, and he will enjoy sometimes trying to sing as softly

"Let's sing softly."

Again select times when music is a natural accompaniment of everyday living. Restful, quiet music is a lovely prelude as he can. When he starts to shout or scream always suggest, to sleep. More lively songs make a happy variation when the child has been engaged in a sedentary activity, like painting or modeling. Often a story told or read aloud fairly cries for music. And many times both of you feel like having some songs for no particular reason at all.

As naturally as the child sings he will "dance," or move his body rhythmically, sometimes to music, very often without it. The mother may be able to catch his rhythm, and play music that suits it and carries him along. Or she may play music that is so irresistible to him that he must move to it. Or both of you may like to play little games to music, or throw balloons into the air. He will hop like a frog, lumber along like a bear, rock an imaginary baby, slide, and so on, or he may lie down on the floor and swim like a fish. His movements will not be as graceful as a kitten's, but they will be quite as free and joyous. Encourage him to dance as much as he will. You will be helping him to rid himself of bodily tensions—which develop very early in children—and to feel at peace inside.

Never teach your young child any formal "steps," and children should not take up social dancing before adolescence. For they are not ready for this kind of dancing, either emotionally or physically. All they can do is to make feeble attempts to imitate the adult. This imitation destroys their urge to dance in their own way. In addition, since they are "out of their element," they are ill at ease and awkward. Thus it is a mistake to imagine that learning intricate steps and social dancing at an early age makes children feel confident on the dance floor later on; it has quite the opposite effect.

Parents who are interested in bringing out the music that is in young children should read: *There's Music in Children,* by Emma Dickson Sheehy; and *Your Child's Music,* by Satis N.

Coleman. Two interesting general books on the dance are: *Invitation to Dance,* by Walter Terry; *American Dancing,* and *The Story of the Dance,* John Martin.

Your older children will love to listen to music and to sing, whether or not they have done this from their earliest years. Their preoccupation with physical prowess makes them especially fond of pioneer songs, cowboy songs, and sailors' chanties. They also love music about animals, and fairy tales set to music.

We have spoken of how often the parents' interests can spontaneously develop through the school interests of the children. The whole family may want to learn some of the songs the children have learned in school. Or the countries and people they are studying about may inspire you to want to find out about their music. Music can beautify and enrich —both for you and for them—any period of history and the life of any people. Think of the Indian music, the songs of the pioneers, and of the workers on the Erie Canal, the lovely South American, Mexican, and Chinese music. If the school has a record player, let your child have the pleasure of taking records to school. Many children do this continually, and teachers and children are careful that no harm is done to them. Few books have been written about the older child in relation to music, but the book by Satis Coleman already mentioned deals with these children as well as with the younger ones.

Parents who give their children a chance to dance creatively will certainly be pioneers. It is natural to be afraid that they will become too noisy and disrupt the house. But since children *can* learn to be considerate of other people, and careful in their use of their home, this need not happen. As a matter of fact, there are many small apartments in which children are having great joy in rhythmic dancing today, and where they are injuring nothing. Again, as with dramatics, if you do become pioneers, you will be blazing new trails toward full and harmonious growth. In case the parents themselves feel a little

embarrassed about this kind of dancing, it should be pointed out that if you help your children you do not necessarily need to dance yourself.

An excellent way to begin rhythmic dancing with older children is with some kind of game. For example, instead of having the usual charades, try having "musical charades," in which you express the idea through musical pantomime, instead of through pantomime alone. This will lead naturally to rhythmic dancing. Or, when playing musical chairs, do not have only the usual marches, but try introducing music like a Strauss waltz, or "The Beer Barrel Polka." At least some parents will not want to be left out of this fun, nor will the adolescents. And if the members of the family have enjoyed this, they will later want to forget about the games and simply move to music.

Or you may begin directly with music. Select the kind of music your children most like, also music that strongly invites movement, like Brahms' *Hungarian Rhapsody No. 5,* or Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata,* or "The Songs My Mother Taught Me," then suggest that they listen for a while, rise and move to it, each in his own way. The parent may not speak while the children are moving. If you do speak, your words should not rise and cut across the music, but rather be a kind of accent, both to the music and to the children's movement. The accent should be on encouragement. Children have been made so insecure in relation to their bodies that even the slightest criticism at this stage may be enough to make them never want to dance again.

Do not call a child "graceful," however, or tell him "that is a pretty step." For he is not striving to be graceful. He is feeling music—grace is a by-product. So, with this in mind, you will say something like, "Joan made me feel that," or "Herbert, there is great strength in that," or "Shirley's just like a rag doll." Do not worry in the least if the children act silly at first; it is only their way of showing embarrassment. Concentrate

on the times when the children let go, the times when the music really moves them. Even after the children seem confident, be very careful of criticism in relation to this art; often your failure to show pleasure is all the criticism the children need.

The wonderful thing about rhythmic dancing is the speed with which the children's initial embarrassment leaves them after a few experiences of this kind, sometimes after only one. In most cases, of course, they will not be able to let go, or to move beautifully and easily. There may still be some giggling and silliness. But that dreadful, paralyzing self-consciousness will go. And so deep is the longing for this kind of release that the parents may be amazed at the eagerness with which the children will welcome the chance to dance again. Your children's dancing will not be finished in a technical sense. But unless you have seen children move in this way you have missed a rather wonderful experience. They make you think of nature—of trees, of animals at play. And, for all its imperfections, their dancing has something that of the professionally trained does not.

It is splendid if the mother is herself taking classes in rhythmic dancing. It is fine if she or the father or an adolescent is a brilliant accompanist who knows countless pieces which can be played from memory and has the ability to change with lightning speed from one to another, to suit the moods of the children. But you can give the children a great deal without specialized knowledge and skill. You can do wonders with a record player. Your encouragement and sympathy alone will do more than you could dream to help release these children. Even if you have many theories about bodily movement, they will not mean as much as your encouragement.

After the children feel at home, they will express themselves in many interesting ways. The music may suggest all kinds of movement: of railroad trains, of boats, of machines in a factory, of lions and tigers and elephants; of trees, and the

waves of the ocean. Then they will like to dance little incidents. They will find songs that are danceable, countless books that suggest dancing. It need hardly be said that the parent will not have to tell them "what to dance." The dances will grow and develop from things they are already doing and thinking about. And this kind of movement may lead to dramatics, or in turn the children may want to introduce little dances into their dramatic sketches or playlets.

RHYTHMIC DANCING FOR PARENTS AND FOR ADOLESCENTS

Rhythmic dancing is wonderful for adolescents. As has been indicated, at no period of life is the individual so conscious of his body; at no period is he so afraid of being awkward. Dancing not only helps him to overcome awkwardness, but also develops a more objective and less self-conscious attitude toward the body.

Adolescents like folk dancing very much. These boys and girls both want and are ready for social dancing. This means so much to them now that if they are having any difficulty, they should certainly have plenty of help, either from their parents or from a teacher. The mother also may have become deeply interested in rhythmic, folk, or social dancing through the children, and in this case she will join a class, if one is available.

If you and your family frequently dance this way in your home, you will increasingly feel the effects. You will move with greater ease, will be less conscious of your bodies, less often tired. There will be fewer hunched shoulders, outthrust chins, and stiff or peculiar gaits. The benefit of this dancing will be reflected in a lessening of inner strain. You will not say, as so many people do, "In another incarnation I will be a dancer!" For you will have known something of that ecstasy here on earth.

MUSIC LESSONS

Parents and children are indeed fortunate if they can afford to give the children music lessons under a really good teacher. It is best for most children to begin formal lessons when they are around eight years of age.

Since this is not to be "an accomplishment," but a means of enriching the child's life and of bringing pleasure to others, the child's own attitude toward it is most important. If lessons are not imposed on the child suddenly or arbitrarily, but are offered to him and come as an extension of his love of music, usually he will be very glad to take them.

So often "music lessons" are synonymous with piano lessons. And it is natural for parents to want their child to play an instrument which they themselves play, or to acquire a skill which they do not possess but which they always longed to possess. Since individuals differ so greatly, however, consider every instrument which may be available to your child. Perhaps the violin, the flute, or the simple recorder may be far more suited to him than any other. Consult his wishes as far as you possibly can. A little girl whose refusal to practice the piano was a bone of contention in her home used to stand wide-eyed at the door of the room in which other children were playing the violin. On the advice of her teacher she was allowed to change instruments, and practiced with avidity.

Good modern teachers do not stress the acquiring of skills to the exclusion of the enjoyment to be derived from playing an instrument; they hold that the best incentive is a longing to play. Nor do good teachers emphasize practicing scales and exercises, but they give the children plenty of opportunity to play music from the beginning. The fact must be faced, however, that a certain amount of practicing is none too pleasant to most children, and that, like learning the multiplication tables, it simply has to be done. Nor can the child, whose mind is on the present, fully appreciate the need for work. And this

means that responsibility for practicing has to be taken jointly by parents and children.

When you first talk over music lessons with your child, explain to him that they will mean a certain amount of steady, hard work. Plan with him the ways in which this can be made as easy and pleasant for all of you as possible. Probably the teacher will feel that fifteen minutes a day is all the child needs in the beginning. Arrange the time with him. He may prefer to practice as soon as he comes home from school or, if he is an early riser, before breakfast. It may be that he will say he would rather stop playing fifteen minutes earlier, and do it before dinner. In planning the time, the interests of the other members of the family also must be considered. And help them to realize how discouraged the child will be if he hears continual complaints about how he is annoying people.

Encourage the child to concentrate when he works. "Most musicians practice too much, and think too little," said Fritz Kreisler. How long your child spends with the instrument means very little compared with what he does when he is with it.

And there is no question that parents will have to do a good deal of reminding, especially when the child starts to practice. If you are firm, and do not become tense and irritable, you can help him establish regular habits. And as he grows more mature, he should assume more and more responsibility himself, until he reaches the point where he has to face the teacher's reproaches when he has not done his work. And nothing helps the child more than to be encouraged to share his talent with the family as soon as he possibly can.

Chapter 18

DRAMATICS AND DRAMATIC PLAY

If we accept a broad interpretation of the word *drama,* then drama, like music, is "in the air" today. Thanks to the radio and motion picture, every family in this country has ready access to it, and it is coming to us from many parts of the world. While no one would question the many and serious limitations of much of this drama, only the intellectually snobbish would deny that much of it is very fine, and that its quality is steadily improving.

But other developments in the drama—notably the inclusion of dramatics in the programs of many community groups, schools, and colleges, as well as the little theater movement—are quite as heartening to those who believe in the democratization of art. For they show that we are coming to realize that every human being—even you and I and our neighbors—can act. And their aim is not "to put on a show," but simply to have fun and to grow. The best performances are not "theater" in the conventional sense, but the acting is often deeply moving. School children and college students have moved adult audiences to tears. Plays given weekly by guests in a summer hotel have filled the hotel auditorium to overflowing.

What is the peculiar appeal in this form of recreation, what explains its rapid growth? Like every art, acting gives people the chance to be themselves, to stand up and proclaim their feelings without hindrance. But this is distinctive among the arts in that it permits expression through projection into liv-

ing situations. Paradoxically self-revelation comes through concealment. It is not really a king, or a coward, or a fighter whom the actor is portraying, it is himself, his own longing to be kinglike, his own hidden fear, his own lurking animosity. The peculiar reality of this experience explains the indescribable sense of release that accompanies it. Portraying positive qualities helps you to attain them. "When I've played the part of a very good person," said a fourteen-year-old girl, "I want to be like that person. And I try. . . ." Revealing unacknowledged emotions is healing. It is a form of confession, and is "good for the soul." These great benefits of acting explain why psychologists universally recommend it for the emotionally sick and the emotionally healthy alike.

Another particular appeal of this art is the fact that it helps to broaden sympathy or, to put it differently, it helps us to learn about our fellow men. The simplest illustration will prove this point. We might read about the Dutch and their wooden shoes, but what would this mean as compared with wearing a pair of wooden shoes for five minutes, or even with moving our feet as though we were wearing them? This element in acting gives it special value for children, who cannot be transported bodily to distant times and places.

Unfortunately, with very few exceptions, this art has not yet reached the home. Recalling Jo's wonderful play in *Little Women,* we might rather say it was once there, and has been sent away. The reason for the absence of drama in the home is that, with all the elaborate performances we can see and hear, there seems to be no need of it. But we do have need of it. In your own living room, without scenery or costumes, your children, even you yourselves, can know something the stage, screen, and radio can never give you.

THE FAMILY ENJOYS THE DRAMA

But the family does have ready access to these forms of drama, and there is every reason to enjoy them to the full. You

can so easily broaden your interests. As with music, it is possible to become one-track in relation to pictures and radio performances. We sometimes fall into the habit of going to the movies on certain nights of the week, regardless of what is playing, or of going to see certain stars, when we might have a better time if we based choices on the excellence of the picture as a whole. Or we may become so attached to certain kinds of radio programs that we do not take the trouble to find out others we might enjoy more. We would in particular call attention to radio dramas given by experimental workshops, to foreign films and revivals, and to excellent programs based on children's classics. Many parents worry about the influence of certain movies and radio programs upon children and young people. It is possible to exaggerate these dangers, however. With some of these programs, as with certain comics and mystery dramas, the danger comes when they claim too much time and attention. On the other hand, certain programs are harmful, and the children can learn from their earliest years that they cannot go to every performance, just as they cannot do other things. It is obviously important for parents to keep abreast of movie and radio programs, and guides like those published in *Parents' Magazine* and other periodicals are very helpful.

Of course the "home dramatics" here described do not remotely resemble *plays,* in the ordinary sense of the word. They are simple, spontaneous sketches, playlets, or improvisations, which are acted with very few appurtenances, or with none. Such dramas are truly "home made." Their themes are family interests. The actors, parents, or children, possibly with friends, write, or more often simply compose, the lines. In their complete naturalness and spontaneity these performances are closely akin to those little skits with which high-school and college students entertain one another. Because of the nature of this drama, it includes the simple dramatic play of young children, that wonderful activity we call "pretending."

This pretending of young children *is* wonderful. It is not as aimless and trivial as it seems to be. Like any actors, these children are expressing themselves, their joys, hopes, longings, fears, anger, grief. Like them, they are living their parts—they *are* the characters they portray, who are not fairies and goblins, but real people: fathers, mothers, policemen, storekeepers, engineers, firemen. And finally, like other actors, the children are striving to find out about a life they do not understand —the life of adults and children in this complicated, modern world.

Where they have any guidance and help, the play of these children is absorbing, purposeful, and vital, and it steadily progresses from month to month and from year to year. Those children who attend nursery schools and modern primary schools receive a great deal of help there, but all children need some guidance at home, and from their parents. Nor should parents be deprived of the delight of being their children's companions and guides in one of the most important activities in which they will ever engage.

If you do decide to become your child's helper in dramatic play, be sure first of all that he has the things he needs. He must have materials with which to build. For outdoors he needs large hollow blocks, or, if these are lacking, lengths of board, and the kinds of things described in Chapter 8. For indoors he needs blocks—not the alphabet kind, but the Caroline Pratt blocks—with which he can make the buildings he needs, and also structures like bridges, tunnels, docks, ramps. He needs people—either wedgy or standpatter dolls or those made of pipe cleaners. If you cannot provide the Caroline Pratt blocks, give him the cardboard structures described in Chapter 14, for his people simply must have some place in which to live and work. And he can use many of his toys, such as boats, trains, wagons, with the blocks.

If your child has no brothers or sisters, make a special point of asking other children over to play with him. After the early

manipulation with blocks and toys, crude forms will emerge —houses with no doors, or half a wall, or no depth; trains with no engines; garages with shaky roofs. The actions and words of the people will show how hazy are children's ideas of life. Passengers may sit on engines, horses may go to sleep in beds, storekeepers may toot whistles like engineers. The children flit quickly from one thing to another. Blocks and toys change back to wood at a second's notice. But if they are actors only at moments, during those moments they live their parts. A four-year-old bent over and peered intently across the floor at a string of blocks. "Look! Look!" he cried to his mother, who was sitting close beside him. There was a catch in his breath. "That big light! My train! My train's in trouble out there in the night!" Often those who smile condescendingly at this play have never really seen it. You can only see it if you are very close and very still.

The mother who watches and understands cannot but help these children. Again, do not show them how, but step into their world and offer a few pertinent suggestions like, "That's a fine garage, but I wouldn't bring my car there—I'm afraid the roof would fall in," or "Do you think the passengers would be very comfortable up there on the engine?" Then let them work out their own problems.

When you have the time, take them out and let them have a closer look at some of the things they are trying to build. But always let them find out for themselves, and improve as best they can. Answer their questions, and chat with them afterward, if and when they themselves are eager to talk.

This very simple guidance will make all the difference. Without it, the children's play would be aimless. They would repeat themselves, and, becoming bored, would be cantankerous and generally difficult. But if you gradually hold them up to higher and higher standards—then they will be busy and absorbed. And by the time they are six or seven, they will be building amazingly accurate, and often very

lovely, replicas of structures. Their play will show an astonishing grasp of what is going on in the outside world. Because the older child's drama is of longer duration than the younger child's it will seem even more real. A little girl whose lame doll is in the hospital may give an anguished cry as a thoughtless boy throws it down. The parent may find himself stiffening in his chair as he watches the terror and panic on a sinking ship.

And suddenly you will realize that you are looking at people you know. That is Mrs. Harper spanking her little girl—that irritable father is Mr. Briggs. And sooner or later you will see yourself. You will see how the children are working out their feelings in play, often feelings you never dreamed they had. For example, jealousy of a baby brother may show itself in the remark, "Oh, don't take the baby along—he's such a nuisance!" Or you may hear, "I'm not the mother, I'm the nurse! I want to take care of the children!"

In families where there is only one child who does not go to nursery school, it is hoped the mother will invite other children over often. Of course brothers and sisters will play together a great deal. Children can have a wonderful time together even if they are not almost of an age. But in this case they should sometimes be encouraged to play in different parts of the room, or even in different rooms. And occasionally suggest to one of them that he do something else while the other is building.

The older child should not be held back, nor should the younger fall into the habit of becoming his handy man. Discourage comparisons. If the older calls the younger "stupid," tell him immediately that this is not so, and later speak to him alone, and ask him if he did any better when he was the same age. If for some reason the older does not do as well, he will excel in some respect. Make a point of emphasizing his success.

If children continue to have encouragement, there will be

a gradual change in their dramatic expression. They will begin to give up the blocks, also their interest in everyday happenings. At eight or nine they will be cowboys and Indians, Superman, generals, members of the F.B.I., pirates, and all kinds of animals. They will like to act out incidents from movies they have seen, or from books they have read. Later on, the influence of the medieval will become evident, and they will be kings, knights, and princesses. Both before and after the age of nine they will like to act out fairy tales. This play, like that of the younger children, will be intensely realistic. The bloodthirsty shouts of the pirates may frighten the younger children; the watching parent may surprise himself by a stab of pity as the wounded general falls to the ground.

These changes in dramatics reflect a deep and growing need of the children. The everyday is beginning to pall; they turn to the new and exciting. Their increasing sense of helplessness in relation to the adult world makes them have to create an imaginary world in which they can be as strong and heroic as they long to be.

It is so easy to discourage these children. A bored sigh, a patronizing smile, a frown of irritation, these may be enough to make the children decide it's not much fun to play act, after all, at least—not at home. They seem to care so little what we think of them, and actually they care so much. They can storm at their parents, and fight for what they want, but they cannot look ridiculous. So a world is closed to them, and to their parents also.

Sometime, when you are watching this play, and when it really interests you, take the pains to tell the children how you feel, but without interrupting them. A little material assistance will be greatly appreciated. Since even the sketchiest of costumes will make the whole thing ten times more real, get together some kind of costume box. It is called "a costume box" by courtesy. All it needs are some lengths of cloth, perhaps a worn, dark blanket, an old felt hat or two, a discarded

belt, a feather, some bits of cheap costume jewelry—anything of the kind that you happen to have around the house.

When you comment on the play, there is no reason not to express your real feelings, as long as you are with the children in spirit. At certain points the play will be very exciting and real, at another point it will bore you; perhaps it will peter out at the end. Or one child, who is not shy, may make the entire performance bog down because he is not really feeling his part. When the play is over, talk with the children about some of these matters. Your approach is always to tell them whether or not things seemed real—to *you*. For example, ask them how they think this or that character really felt, and tell them he didn't make *you* feel that way. Ask if the part couldn't be done differently. Ask the children if they agree with you that the play was better in certain places, and what they think the reason was.

While the slightest bossiness would be resented, suggestions offered in a friendly spirit will be eagerly seized upon, and what is more, you will find that the children are playing their roles with mounting enthusiasm. They may begin to repeat the action, taking out some parts and adding others. You might help them further as you go along, if you are interested and have the time, but they should carry on for the most part themselves.

Finally, for all its crudity and simplicity, the play will astonish you. Without any scenery, with no properties, and the sketchiest of costumes, it will somehow be alive and exciting. The children's acting will be uneven. It will reveal crudeness and naïveté, but they will lose themselves in their parts. They will be acting in the same way they paint, freely and fearlessly. They will have laid hold of some reality—terror, loneliness, triumph, courage—and will be portraying it (if only in flashes) with all the intensity of their souls.

This is the way in which dramatics developed in one home. Three children, Rupert, nine, Andy, eight, and Sheila, who

was almost seven, had seen the movie "Thunderhead," the story of a wild Rocky Mountain horse. They came home full of it. The two boys immediately began to re-enact a fight between Thunderhead and another horse. Suddenly Rupert, the older boy, jumped up and cried, "I'm a wolf! You're a rancher! You're trying to trap me! It's night. Wait!" He flew out into the hall. Andy darted to a corner of the living room. "Here's my trap!"

Then followed a very realistic scene. Rupert crept in stealthily on all fours, sneaked up to the trap, was fired on by Andy, and made his escape. The boys squealed with excitement. This was too much for Sheila, who demanded to play too. Rupert told her to be the rancher's wife. The next time the scene was played, her lusty cry of "The wolf's coming!" added to the excitement. The father came into the living room to mend an electric light bulb to find the play in full swing. Sheila was clutching her baby, a cushion, frantically to her breast, Andy was taking deadly aim with a ruler.

The children played the scene over and over again, with variations. Finally, when there did not seem to be anything more to do, they became noisy, and at last sank to the floor in a heap. The father, who had finished mending the light, suggested they rest for a little while and offered to read them a story. He chose, *Lobo, the King of Currumpau,* by Ernest Thompson Seton, the tale of the great wolf who eluded the ranchers' traps year after year, until finally he was caught by diabolical cunning. Sheila lost interest in the story after a while, but the boys hung on every word to the end. After the father closed the book, there was a long silence. Then Andy said in a low voice, "I wish they hadn't caught him." Rupert looked away. "*I* wish his pack hadn't deserted him," he said. "Why *did* they?"

Dad looked at his watch and said, "It was time to get ready for supper." "*I'm* going to be Lobo tomorrow," announced Rupert. "You are not!" protested Andy shrilly as they started

toward the hall. *"I'm* going to be Lobo. You've been the wolf every time!" "How about taking turns?" suggested Father mildly.

Lobo laid hold of the children's hearts. They played him after school, they played him by themselves in the evening, they played him on Saturdays. Leslie and Selma, two friends on the block, often joined them. Mother found a dilapidated broad-brimmed hat for the rancher, also a belt for his holster. The children did take turns playing the roles as Father had suggested. Even Sheila was Lobo occasionally.

The next time the father offered to read to the children, they begged for another story about the ranchers and the animals. The first two he tried bored them, but when he started Will James' *Cow Country* they were entranced. And after that time steers became an important part of the play.

With a little encouragement and a few suggestions from the parents, the children became more interested and more ambitious. They rigged up a ranch in the back yard, made themselves traps of boards, and used pieces of rope for lariats. Sheila's baby grew to be a strong boy, and she and his father quarreled bitterly when the former started to take his son hunting.

"Lobo" never became more than a string of incidents, but the great wolf and the thrilling, dangerous life of the West had become so real for these children, that nothing would ever take it from them.

If the children continue their dramatic play in this way, they eventually develop something that is more than a string of incidents—something that has some semblance to structure, that has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. And when they have done this, ask them if they don't think it would be fun to work on it some more, and make it so good that the whole family and perhaps some friends would like to see it some evening or Saturday afternoon. However much the family may have enjoyed the little performance, another need not

follow it quickly. For aside from having other things to do, the children may need a period of letdown. But they will continue with their spontaneous play, often by themselves.

And after a while it may be that something, perhaps the approach of some holiday, like Arbor Day or Valentine's Day or Halloween—that is not too exciting in itself—will suggest another play. Or if their father liked the first performance, it may seem a fine idea to give another little play on his birthday. What it is about depends on what the children happen to be interested in at the time. Incidents from books like *Hitty,* mentioned earlier, or *Spice in the Devil's Cave* or *The Knights of the Round Table,* or *Grimm's Fairy Tales* lend themselves beautifully to dramatization by children. Knowing their interests, you can offer suggestions if they seem to need them.

And this play should develop exactly as the first one did, through weaving little incidents together. Of course there should be no writing down or memorizing of lines, for the children will probably speak them differently every time. If you are helping them occasionally, encourage them to talk things over together. Help them to be impersonal. The point is always how the part is played, not the player.

The children may be ambitious, and want to make a bit of scenery, and a few properties. If they paint themselves, have them make little sketches and let them transfer these to pieces of wrapping paper which they have pasted together, and which can be thumbtacked to a screen. They will only need help with enlargement. Then they can paint the scene. A woodland scene, a city street, the soaring towers of a castle, these will do wonders to keep the mood of the play. The children might make a few properties of cardboard or of clay, or a mask or two. Perhaps they would like to introduce a song or a dance.

In this way dramatics, which has been a natural outgrowth of dramatic play, will become increasingly important in the lives of the children. They will act incidents from books they love, from movies they have seen. Plays will grow out of things

that have happened at home or in school. If a child is interested in creative writing, he may write a play to be given at home. You can help children in so many ways. There may be squabbles over parts. One way to help here is to let all the children have a try at the part all of them want, and to decide impersonally which child is the best. Another is to rotate important parts, developing a kind of miniature repertory theater. Do not worry about appearance. If a little blond girl wants to play a swashbuckling pirate, she probably needs that part, and may play it very well. Be sure that dramatics are not allowed to dominate the life of the home, except for very short periods of time. And the children should realize that they cannot claim more of the parents' time or attention than they want to give. In any case, they must carry on for the most part themselves.

If the parents have not encouraged dramatics among the older children, they will undoubtedly be shy and self-conscious, and will need help. Charades are as natural an introduction to dramatics as to rhythmic dancing. When some members of the family have acted out their word especially well, have them do it again and make it longer, if they want to. Then ask them simply to act, without using the word. Puppet play is also an easy introduction to acting. If the children have been having a wonderful time playing with puppets for quite a period, choose the right moment, and suggest that they themselves be the puppet people.

Pantomime is a wonderful way to overcome shyness. When the children are talking animatedly about someone they have seen, invite them to stand up and imitate that person, though, of course not in a spirit of ridicule. Or have them imagine they are people doing everyday things—old men tottering along the street, mothers rocking their babies, women in a supermarket, and so on. When they have lost their self-consciousness, they will want to prolong the pantomime, and to bring others into it. Soon it will be natural for them to begin to speak.

Parents and adolescents will surely become so interested in children's dramatics that they will like to step in now and then and take parts as they are needed. On the other hand, they may want to give some sketches or informal plays themselves, or with some of their friends, and the adolescents may want to join them. In this case, of course, the children will be happy to fill in when they happen to be needed, and to help with their comments, as the parents have helped them. Or parents and adolescents may want to join a community dramatic group, or, if there is no group in their community, to organize one.

And parents and adolescents can certainly have a great deal of fun with other dramatic forms—radio and motion picture drama. The first is a fascinating form of expression. Even the simplest problems are intriguing. Adolescents who are scientifically minded will greatly enjoy working out sound effects. And the family does not need a broadcasting system to produce radio dramas.

If you own a motion picture machine, have a playlet occasionally. It will be a fine variation from the kind of family scenes that are usually shown. And this dramatic form, like radio drama, opens up very interesting possibilities.

Part IV

PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL GROWTH

Chapter 19

THE HEALTHY FAMILY

We used to say, "A sound mind in a sound body," as though the former were something neatly encased in the latter. We now say instead, "A sound human being." For modern science has indisputably proved the interrelationship between body and personality. They develop together.

Everyone knows the inroads physical suffering makes on personality. How often we say, "He is ill; he is not himself." And it surely is hard to be yourself when you are suffering; when you are tortured by backaches, blinding headaches, or stabbing pains in the side. It is hard to be efficient and to think straight, hard even to warm to people of whom you are very fond. It is also hard to be optimistic about yourself or the world. And those rare individuals who manage to rise above physical affliction and to carry on as usual do so partly because they have strong constitutions, but chiefly because they have strong personalities.

An amazing fact which is far less generally known, because it has only recently been discovered, is that this principle also *operates in reverse.* Being unhappy can make people sick. Emotional pressures—black depression, a gnawing sense of failure, or of being shunned by others, fear of an impending calamity, a sudden and terrible shock—these and other pressures can produce physical maladies. What is more, emotional pressures can make sick people sicker. Modern physicians as well as psychologists take account of this fact in treatment. "Tell me," said a doctor to a patient who came to her com-

plaining of aches and pains, "is something troubling you?" And a psychologist said of a man who died of heart failure, "He did not want to live."

The discovery of the relation between body and personality has led to the development of a new field, that of psychosomatic medicine. Parents may be interested to read on the subject, Dr. Carl Binger's book, which is called *The Doctor's Job*. In this book high blood pressure, stomach ulcers, and glandular disturbances are held to be among the maladies that can be caused by emotional factors.

And in the same way bodily strength, co-ordination, and skill are reflected in the personality. Certainly activity, particularly sports, will not make us great thinkers or great people, but it will *help* us to become as great as we can. To improve in sports does not simply make you a better swimmer, canoeist, or tennis player. It also helps you to become a better person. "I don't play golf for the sake of my health," remarked a department store owner. "I play because it helps me to think and to control myself." Psychologists and educators have also found that there is a subtle connection between bodily states and learning. Dr. William H. Kilpatrick, Dean of American education, says:

> Today it is well understood that the whole organism is involved in each significant response. . . . If we respond all over, we learn all over. . . . Any significant instance of living, and consequently of learning, thus includes in a single sweep all parts of the total response—thought elements, feeling elements, and movement elements.

Nowhere is the application of this knowledge of the connection between bodily health and personality quite so important as in the home, where children are growing up, and with those who care most for them, who are most responsible for them. Family health must be interpreted broadly, as including both physical and mental health. The subtle rela-

tionship between the two must continually be recognized. When the child is ailing, has frequent colds, stomach upsets, and so on, possible emotional pressures should be considered. Is he under some strain? Are the parents expecting too much of him in school, is he becoming too responsible about housework, is he beginning to wonder if you care for brother or sister more than for him, is he losing his friends?

Conversely, if the child shows emotional symptoms that trouble you, if he is tense and irritable, if he flies into rages, falls down in school work, consult the doctor. Possibly some undiscovered physical malady accounts for the change.

And in your health guidance and in the handling of children during illness and convalescence, take account of the effects of guidance and care on personality. A parent may faithfully follow every rule of health in relation to children, but like the rules of child rearing, they may not work as they should. It is possible for a child to eat exactly the amount and kinds of food his body needs, and for that food not to nourish either his body or his soul. It is possible for him to sleep the required number of hours, and for that sleep not to bring rest.

He may be sick and recover, or pass through an operation with a body as good as new, but with a personality scarred forever. A vacation in ideal surroundings may be by no means as restful and refreshing as it should; in fact, it can not only be boring but actually injurious. Sports do not always strengthen character; sometimes they weaken it.

If families are to grow as whole human beings, health must become a part of the total life in the home. Every principle applied earlier must be applied here: the democratic principle of conclaves, theories of interest applied to exploration, theories of creative expression as applied to art. And here, as with other sides of living, the emphasis must always be on the positive—not on the miseries of sickness, but on the joys of health; not on the necessity of having a vacation, but on making a vacation happy; not on becoming proficient in sports,

but on knowing their incomparable delights; not on fighting fear, but on keeping courage.

Then practicing rules of health will be exactly like the rest of family life. Most of it will be fun, some of it will be trying, but the fun will be exciting, and the trials will bring strength.

PRACTICE HEALTH RULES

"My, you're giving yourself a good scrubbing," remarked a friend of the family who was watching eight-year-old Jean at her ablutions; "it must feel good." Jean grinned and nodded as she reached for the towel. "Mommie likes me to wash." "We'll get germs if we don't wash," put in Rhoda, a neighbor's child, seriously. Her eyes grew round. "My Mommie read me all about it, and my teacher too. Germs are awful—they make you sick."

The answers express the world of difference in the way families look on health and the kind of health guidance given the children. Rhoda worried about it; Jean never gave it a thought; Rhoda talked about it; Jean lived it.

Perhaps before everything else, do not be over anxious about your own health or your child's. Protect yourselves against accidents, but do not overdo it. It may well be argued that this is easier to say than to do. Sometimes these fears about health and safety are very deep rooted. Where you find you are unable to rid yourself of them, it is wise to ask an understanding friend or a specialist to help you. For, as has been said, fear is injurious.

The ways these fears affect people can more readily be seen in the case of children than of adults. Claude's mother was a worrier. She worried about the slightest draft. She worried if Claude sneezed. She went to school and begged his teacher to see that he wore his sweater if the temperature fell below seventy. And, of course, Claude worried too. Emily's mother worried also. Like Rhoda's mother, her special dread was of germs. When they first came to school, both children were

badly adjusted socially. Neither had many friends, either in or out of school. The children pronounced Rhoda "crazy" when she refused to take a piece of candy from the hand of another child. And when Claude tried to play baseball, he was greeted with howls of derision, for when the ball came toward him, instead of reaching out for it, he shrank back and covered his face with his hands!

"Perhaps I do upset Ray a little about getting hurt," said a mother. "But it's better than having him break his neck!" As a matter of fact one of the most dangerous things you can do is to be overprotective about your child's physical safety. Since you cannot always be near him, he must learn to protect himself, and he will do this if he has any chance. Children have an unerring instinct of how far they can go safely, but they have to practice. The moment his teacher saw Carl, an overgrown six-year-old with soft, flabby muscles, she knew he would need special watching. And she was right. Carl never looked where he was going. He handled himself badly on the slide or jungle gym—he had had no practice. Naturally young children have to be watched, and reasonable precautions must be taken with older ones, but this is not because they are unable to protect themselves; it is simply because they become so absorbed in what they are doing that they forget to exert the care they should.

In determining how careful he must be in safeguarding a child's general health the parent must rely on the doctor. If the doctor says the child is as strong as other children, he should be treated accordingly.

And the best way for children to learn the rules of health is as Jean learned them, by practicing them, emphasizing always the positive factors. Suggest that the children read in a good light, not in order "to save your eyes," but in order to see better. Where possible, stress the esthetic side of health. Get them bright and pretty washcloths and soap dishes, and attractive outfits for rainy weather. Do everything possible to

find a doctor who will be your ally, who will be warm and friendly with your child, and who will become his very good friend. Never fool him when things are going to hurt, but show that you are sure he will be grown up about it, and praise him when he is brave. It is amazing how children will respond to these methods. A boy of nine had to have a few stitches taken in his tongue. When the doctor, who was his very good friend, started to work he cried a little. Then the doctor began to speak about what he was doing, and before long the boy was asking questions. This kind of response does not develop suddenly in children.

So many excellent books have been written about the physical care of babies and growing children that the subject will be treated very briefly here. Parents are referred to the following: *The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care,* by Benjamin Spock, *Babies Are Human Beings,* by Charles and Mary Aldrich.

The old methods have given way to new. We do indeed treat babies like human beings. A really modern baby does not spend his first days in a sterilized glass cage, but beside his mother. She is not told that fondling him or rocking him to sleep will be bad for him, but is urged to show him in no uncertain terms exactly how she feels. The old rigid schedules as to feeding and toilet training are fast going. The new ones are flexible, and allow for individual differences. They take account of the fact that Johnnie may need a little more milk than Sue, that Sue may be ready to be weaned before Johnny is. Later on, it is not a case of "You eat that or else! Move your bowels when I say so!" Force is constantly avoided—mothers are warned against giving suppositories to screaming children, or pinioning their hands to prevent thumb sucking.

These general methods are also applied to growing children. For example, parents are advised to be more easygoing and casual about food. Junior is not to be allowed to "get their goat" by refusing to eat what he is supposed to eat. Nor are

they, on the other hand, to browbeat or infuriate him by threatening him with dire punishment unless he eats. While he is not to be indulged, neither are his tastes to be ignored completely. If two foods are equally nourishing, he should be given the one he prefers. Food should be well prepared and made attractive to him, as to an adult. Because he is small he should have small helpings and allowed to come back for more instead of being confronted with what to him is a veritable mountain of food. And if a healthy child becomes a "fussy eater," parents are told not to worry—let him skip a meal now and then until hunger makes him less so.

Parents cannot be too strongly urged to bring their children up the new way. This is not a matter of today, but of all the days. If you would have a child who is sure of himself, independent, and outgoing toward other people, do not introduce him to a world that is hostile, a world that flouts and ignores the way he is made. Do not indulge him, but let him experience love, understanding, and gentleness from the day he is born.

WHEN SICKNESS COMES

There is no need to dwell at length on the care and handling of the patient in the home. The atmosphere of the sick room is all-important. Love, calmness, sympathy, a sense of strength —these mean as much as medication and treatment. If the patient is a child, give way to your impulse to baby him. As was said, he tends to regress when under strain and is temporarily a more babyish person. It need hardly be said, however, that sympathy should not carry the parent away to the point where the child is not given all prescribed medicine and treatment. Furthermore, he should be helped to be as brave about this as he possibly can, and not to become hysterical, which is injurious to him, both physically and emotionally.

Sickness, like every other experience in the home, belongs to the family as a whole. This certainly does not mean that all

should be drawn into the sick room or even into the orbit of sickness. But sickness does dislocate the entire life of the home; it changes activities and relationships between the members.

It is hardly necessary to mention the comfort the parents can give to one another if a child is ill. And if the adolescents are well adjusted, and not suffering from further strains outside of the home, they will certainly benefit by knowing at least something of the nature of the illness and by taking some responsibility for it.

A father was once greatly worried about the health of his wife, whose condition threatened to become serious. She did not appear to be very ill, however, and in his great desire to protect his daughter from worry he told her nothing at all. Blanche, who was a high-spirited girl, facing the problems common to adolescents, made no effort whatever to show special consideration toward her mother, with the result that life in the home became very hard for all of them. Finally, on the advice of a friend, the father told Blanche that her mother was really not well, but without revealing his real fears. And as Blanche was both mature and intelligent, she adjusted herself very well and was careful to be more considerate toward her mother.

How much the adolescents are told about illness depends of course on the individual, but in general it is best not to tell them if a patient is in grave danger, both for their sake's and the patient's, since it is hard for them to conceal these feelings when they are with him. Where there are younger children in the family, the adolescents can be a very great help by taking additional responsibility for them.

Often the adolescents make a better adjustment to illness in the home than the children. They are more definitely a part of the situation. They understand so much more, and feel freer, when they do not understand, to ask for explanations. The welfare of the growing children is carefully provided for in advance, and then they tend to be excluded from

the experience, both because we wish to spare them strain, and so that those responsible can devote themselves more completely to the care of the patient.

But the very natural tendency is to believe that the children can be more completely excluded from this experience than is possible. They both suffer and comprehend far more than is generally understood. The children are lonely, as every member of the family is lonely. But if the patient is a parent, their loneliness is of a particular kind. Then they are deprived of more than affection and companionship—they are deprived of part of their security. They have lost one of those persons whose presence, whose voice, whose touch continually said to them, "Everything's all right." Since protracted loss of security is not good for children, see that whoever is made responsible for them—grandmother, aunt, or servant—is a loving and understanding person. In fact, this is far more important than other matters—like keeping the house spotless and in perfect order. And when you are with the children, be even more loving, more gentle, more responsive than at other times.

And take for granted that the children know far more about the illness than they will, or even can, tell you on their own initiative. Consider how quick they are to sense atmosphere, even when they do not understand. Expressions, tones of voice, hurry and bustle, snatches of conversation—these tell so much. A mother of four children was taken very ill in the middle of the night. The children were not heard from all night, and were assumed to be sound asleep. But the twelve-year-old girl had sobbed for a long time, the ten-year-old had been violently nauseated, in the morning the four-year-old said, "I didn't cry." The four-year-old seemed as usual for the first day or two, but for weeks thereafter refused to move a step from the side of the aunt who was taking care of her. The children should certainly not know more than they need to know about illness, but they should not be left in uncertainty

and confusion. So take for granted that they are anxious, and probably have groundless fears, and show them that their feelings matter to you. Draw them out, and explain what they need to know and reassure them.

If the children remain in the home during the period of sickness, do not try to exclude them completely from the experience. There are many little ways in which they can be taken in, which will help them very much. For example, do not say things, like, "The best way you can help is to play quietly!" A slight change in wording makes all the difference —"You can help very much if you will play quietly." Both to give them a feeling of belonging, and to relieve the strain of inaction, let them help do what they can. Ask them to fetch and carry and to take over responsibility for errands.

CONVALESCENCE

Today we consider convalescence "the road back" in a twofold sense. As through rest, medication, and some movement, the body gradually regains its old vigor, so the personality, weakened and depleted by illness, recovers its lost strength. Adults whose habits of independence have become deeply engrained come back quickly. But children who are so close to helpless infancy find recovery a great deal harder; in fact, they need parental guidance and help. Because the early years mean so much in forming character it is of the greatest importance that they should have this help. Many an adult's weakness and selfishness go back to the aftermath of a serious illness, when he was too greatly indulged.

Guided by the doctor's advice and your own observation, encourage the child to be as independent as he can from the time he begins to recover. Praise his efforts to wait on himself, and to keep himself amused. Draw him into the life of the family by talking a good deal about what they are doing, even before they can visit him a great deal. Speak of his friends. Look forward to the time when he will be doing things with

you, and with them. Give him some tangible reminders. A boy who broke his leg by a fall from a bicycle asked for another bicycle long before he had recovered. His father bought him one, and at his request the bicycle stood in the corner of his room throughout the period of convalescence.

The secret of keeping convalescent children happy is to strike a balance between passive amusement, like reading and quiet games, and active play. Emphasis will here be placed on the first, not because it is more important, but because it usually receives less attention. Cross and cranky convalescent children, like cross and cranky well children, are often the ones who have too much done for them, and who have too little chance to do for themselves.

Give your children a surface to play on. A hospital tray is ideal. If you do not have one, raise an ordinary tray from the bed by means of cushions placed on either side of the child. A sewing board, or even a plain board, can be used instead of a tray. Give the young child small toys—dolls and plastic toys, like trains, boats, airplanes, and trucks. One of the things which will please a child most will be a lump of plasticine. Cover the bed with a piece of oilcloth when he is manipulating it. Let him cut out pictures and paper dolls, string beads and use crayons. Give him simple puzzle pictures. The very young child should, of course, not have a large supply of toys at one time, but he will tire of his toys more quickly than when he is well, so have plenty of different ones on hand.

Books are a favorite passive amusement for children of all ages. Also have a record player in the room if it is possible.

The older children will enjoy more complicated picture puzzles, as well as simple crossword puzzles. They will like games like checkers and parchesi when someone can play with them. These children may like to use crayons, particularly the kind of crayons which form a surface that becomes paint with the addition of a little water. Meccano sets and magician's tricks are suggested for children who can be more energetic;

the girls may like to knit, if they already know how to do it. The books on games and on crafts listed at the end of this volume contain accounts of innumerable activities which will amuse the convalescent.

Attractive trays, well-prepared food, and small helpings are important for these children, whose appetites are usually not up to par. If the child is fond of flowers, place a few on his tray. A new dish, decorated with pictures, will appeal to the young child. It may appeal to the six- or seven-year-olds, especially the girls, to have their meals served in doll's dishes occasionally. The children will be greatly pleased to find a toy or little gadget like a whistle or watch chain under the napkin occasionally. A humorous menu is also a diversion. Sometimes children who have difficulty in swallowing like to drink from the spout of a teapot.

It is most important that the child begin to make up school work as soon as he is able. This is one of the most valuable incentives he can have to return to normal living. It will also save his having to make up a great deal of work, or perhaps even being put into a lower grade. Before you begin to help him with his work, find out the teaching methods, so you will be able to apply them.

If the family considers itself at all times as whole organisms, not as divided into minds, emotions, and bodies, then "in sickness and in health," the members will be growing.

Chapter 20

VACATIONS

SUMMER HOME

The family's vacation means so much more than externals —the heart of it is the family, its happiness as a group. And everyone will have a happier and more restful vacation if the words "summer home" are taken quite literally. This means that there is at least some group thinking and planning, and that, as far as possible, the needs and desires of each member are taken into account. Insofar as choice is possible, many, and sometimes conflicting needs, have to be considered. The father, who has a very short vacation, may need a place near enough to town to enable him to go there for week ends, or even to commute. The mother may need a complete rest from household responsibilities, and then a hotel, or a cottage near a hotel, would be indicated. The small children will be happy almost anywhere, but the growing children benefit most by having a great deal of freedom and space, a chance to be independent and some companionship with other children. The adolescents, on the other hand, may both want and need a good deal of social life; the parents may also want to have some rather formal social life. There are preferences about location—and finally there is often a question as to whether or not to send the children to camp.

Decisions are not always based on a consideration of what will best meet the needs of the greatest number. For example, the father of a family in a remote lodge in the Canadian Rock-

ies made too great a sacrifice for his adolescent daughters. This father had come to a certain remote lodge when he was a small boy, and had always dreamed of returning. The place was all he hoped it would be. But because the girls missed dancing and tennis, the family remained there only one day and night. Since they were to spend several weeks in this region, surely the daughters could have spared more than twenty-four hours to their father. And many parents, like this father, tend to make too many sacrifices of this kind for their children, especially for the adolescents. While the young people must certainly have their chance, the parents must also have theirs, and to them too a chance lost now may be a chance lost forever.

Conversely, of course, sometimes the needs and desires of the children are unduly sacrificed to those of the parents. And when this happens, it is usually those of the growing children which are sacrificed.

While it used to be believed that some camp experience was almost a necessity for every child, this is no longer held to be the case. To spend some time at camp does benefit many children, especially those between the ages of nine and twelve. But if they are socially well adjusted, and if the family can give them plenty of freedom during the summer, a chance for vigorous physical activity, and companionship with other children of the same age, they do not necessarily have to go to camp. And under any conditions it is better not to send them before they are about eight or nine, as they do not have the maturity to be so long away from their parents. Sometimes, however, the parents have no choice but to send them.

If possible, visit the camp your child is to attend, if not before enrolling him, then afterward. And if you cannot pay a visit, do not rely on a catalogue, or on the word of another person, but write a letter asking specific questions. Ask, for example, how the water supply is tested, about the provisions for medical care, the size of the camp, the number of counselors, and the type of program.

The camp should offer a balanced program, and one which strikes a mean between regimentation, and the kind of freedom which amounts to neglect. Good camps, like good schools, give the children a chance to experience democratic living. Friendly rivalry, but not competition, is encouraged. They do not concentrate on elaborate performances like regattas, or formal plays or operettas, for which the adults do all the planning. It is very important indeed for young children to go to small, homelike camps, and to those which are especially equipped to meet their needs. Parents who are considering camps for their children will be deeply interested in *Creative Camping,* by Joshua Lieberman.

THE FAMILY VACATIONS TOGETHER

The reason vacations mean so much to family life is that the members can know a closer companionship at this time than at any other. Thus a wonderful location is less important than being able to have the father with them on week ends. The very young children can get along very well without many friends, but the older children and the adolescents cannot. Unless both parents and child have some particular need for a close companionship, or unless the family can take some wonderful and exciting trip, the growth needs of the child demand that they have the companionship of other children during the summer months. And if there are no children or young people in the vicinity, make every effort to have some visitors.

The children certainly need plenty of exercise during the summer. In choosing a place to go, do not forget that children were not made never to set foot from the sidewalk until a light flashed, or never to go any real distance by themselves. Reflect on their joy in playing with nature—on darting in and out of caves, building houses of branches, catching frogs and turtles, and doing the innumerable other things you may have done once, but have forgotten. And when you arrive at your

destination, and all of you have become acclimatized, let them be as independent as possible. Ideally, growing children should be able to absent themselves from home for long periods, except at mealtimes and in the evening.

Some restrictions must be placed on the children, however. Each parent has to know his child by noticing how grown up he is, and how well he can keep his head when he is with him. A child should be given freedom gradually, as he shows himself able to use it wisely. It is of the utmost importance that he understand very definitely exactly what the limitations are; for example, that he cannot wander into the woods beyond certain points, that he cannot walk on automobile roads, he cannot take the boat out alone, or play on cliffs. We will not awaken fears in children if we explain to them quite frankly —but without speaking of dire consequences—the reasons for the precautions. Tell them what is perfectly true, that it is always the expert who is most cautious, that the tenderfoot is foolhardy. If an expert like a mountain guide, or a fine swimmer, happens to be around, ask him to talk about the precautions he takes.

It is also an excellent plan to speak a little with the children about what to do if they should find themselves in a predicament. A woman said to her four-year-old niece: "If you tumble into the water, just wave your arms and legs very fast, and get yourself to shore." The aunt never dreamed that the knowledge would ever be needed, but one day Carolyn marched into the house soaking wet. Looking proud as a peacock, she announced, "I fell into the water, and did just what you said!" In this way we can explain a few points like going downhill or along a stream if lost in the woods, about sitting in the bottom of a canoe if a high wind comes up, and so on.

But city-bred children who go into the wilds for the first time need a period of adjustment. After all, most adults are

a little overwhelmed by their first experience with the grandeur of nature; children are more so. The younger children will love to have you bring even one cuddly toy from home if you can conveniently manage it. Often you can buy some things, like wagons, boats or shovels for the older ones, either en route or at your destination; the father might put up a swing near the camp or cottage. Do not discourage the children from playing in the vicinity of the house for a while. And when they are ready to venture out, go with them at first.

Though both parents and children will want to be on their own a good deal, they can have some wonderful experiences together. Companionship in sports will be discussed in the following chapter. Naturally a vacation offers a chance for new and wholly different kinds of exploration of the type discussed in Chapters 10, 11, and 12 of this book. The family may want to avail itself of these opportunities. You can do a great deal more exploring of nature than is possible in the city. You can also make some wonderful collections. Rocks, soil, and streams offer fascinating possibilities.

Many rural communities are as interesting as the country that surrounds them. For example, you may have a chance to see entirely different kinds of farms, such as truck farms or dairy farms, or to watch large-scale farming for the first time, in wheat, tobacco, or cotton country. If you take your vacation very early in the season, you may be able to watch the making of maple sugar. You will certainly not want to miss the chance to see fishermen in operation. Fish hatcheries will certainly interest the family very much. You may be where you can see some lumbering, or a sawmill, or some kind of animal farm. Any kind of mining, from stone quarrying to iron or coal mining is wonderfully interesting. And do not forget that there may be some abandoned industry in the vicinity, like a deserted mine or quarry. The buildings in the places you visit, whether old or new, may be different and lovely. As

always, do not go exploring from a sense of duty, but simply because you feel like it.

If the family spends the summer in a hotel, a small amount of effort on the part of the parents will make all the difference in what the vacation means to the happiness of the children, and correspondingly to that of the parents. The matter of clothes alone presents a problem, for, as we have said, children simply cannot enjoy themselves if they are always spic and span, and hotels naturally frown on overalled, grubby children on their verandas and in their lobbies. The problem can easily be solved, in part at least, by bringing along a few overalls and some simple, dark sun suits, which the children can put on when they are away from the hotel, and take off before they return.

It is even more important to counteract the children's natural tendency to conform to the adult pattern of behavior, and to "hang around" the hotel a good deal, when, if they left it, they would be infinitely happier. So, in the beginning, take them to places they can safely visit alone, and to places where they can have a wonderful time by themselves. Remain there for as long as the children enjoy themselves, and bring your lunch if you want to. And after they have made friends at the hotel, invite them to accompany you. Then encourage the children to go off by themselves as much as they want to. Sometimes parents who spend their vacations in hotels have to give the children a little more time than would be necessary if they had their own summer home.

There are some ways in which a vacation in or near the city can be made more refreshing and pleasant. If there are parks, woods, or beaches near you, take as many outings to these as possible. And go as early as you can, and on week days if you can, in order to have the places to yourselves.

At home encourage water play. If you have a yard, buy a wading pool if possible; if not, let the children use the hose. In the city allow them to remain under the shower longer on hot

days. It will help you to spare yourselves housework by having very simple meals.

BY TRAIN, BOAT, AND CAR

A little planning and a few simple procedures will do a great deal to relieve the monotony, discomfort, and tension which are often attendant on taking long trips, and will, in fact, make traveling a very pleasant experience. Long journeys by train, boat, or car, should be quite different from the kinds of outings described in a previous chapter of this book. Outings are special occasions, and are planned for the family as a whole. But a journey consumes a great deal of time, and parents and children want to spend quite a bit of it enjoying themselves in their own way.

Experience shows that what helps most is for the members of the family not to detach themselves mentally from their surroundings and to try to forget that they are traveling, but to identify themselves with new environments as much as possible. The children, at any rate, will want to have an idea not only of your destination but also of the part of the country in which it is located and of the route you are taking to reach it. Give them some simple kind of map, on which they can trace your course. Give them time tables of their own also, and help them learn how to read these. They have an amazing amount of fun simply keeping tabs on the train or boat, seeing when it is late, when it is on time, and so on. They love to notice when they pass across state lines.

Meet the great need to move as well as to satisfy curiosity by going through the train or boat occasionally, if not all together, then one or two at a time. On a long trip all of you will feel better if you get off at most of the stops and walk about as much as you can. You will probably want to inform yourselves about the boat or train, to know the kind of engine on the train, the number of cars and what the signals mean. You will like to look things over when you get out at stops.

The children will want to know when you change from steam to electricity.

There is a great deal more to do on a boat, and everyone will greatly enjoy taking at least one trip over it, including one to the boiler and engine rooms, which can usually be arranged. You will like to see the boat land at the dock, and to watch the process of loading and unloading. Be sociable with passengers who promise to be interesting. Often employees on trains and boats are especially so. Therefore, when you see they are not busy, chat with them, just as you do with people on outings. Your family may want to do some reading ahead of time about the places you will visit.

Bring some games to play, as well as crayons, paper, and interesting books. Children like to play games like "hangman" and "twenty questions" on trips, and to tell riddles. They even love to vie with each other as to who can "see the most" cows, farms, or colors. All of these games, except hangman, are also good entertainment on automobile trips.

Children's continual desire for food while traveling is a sign of their need for extra energy, since they are excited and perhaps under strain. But, since they should not have a great deal of rich or heavy food, bring along candy like molasses taffy, sour balls, or peppermints, also simple cookies. It will help to reduce the begging for candy and popcorn from vendors if you talk over beforehand how much the family is going to bring along, and how much will be bought en route. If you are taking a shorter trip and do not want to have all your meals on the diner, it is often a good plan to have some ice cream in the diner. This will give all of you a change, and will surely delight the children.

Most families enjoy automobile travel if they do not rush along at great speed from dawn to dark. Though roadside restaurants and drive-ins serve good food nowadays, it is lots of fun to do at least some picnicking, and to cook some food out of doors if possible. When you rest or picnic, be careful to

select a spot where there is a pleasant view, and where there are comfortable places to sit or lie down. It will rest everyone if the stops are long enough so that the adults can sit or stroll about, or even read, and so that the children can have a chance to run, play outdoor games, or climb trees.

Traveling in this way usually means that it is not a case of "Oh, *when* will we get there!" but of "How did we get there so soon!"

Chapter 21

FAMILY SPORTS

SPORTS AS A SKILL

A group of parents and children was discussing sports on the lawn of a summer hotel. "Your Barbara's wonderful," said a mother. "Only six, and she swims to the raft!" "Paul's not as good as Barbara in the water," said the father, "but if I do say so, he has pretty good riding form." "He certainly has," said another father admiringly. He frowned. "I wish my Frank could ride like that!" He looked away. "That boy's a little afraid of horses." Then he smiled grimly. "But I'm going to get that out of him! No cowards in my family!" "I've always been a coward about the water," said a mother, sadly. "I told Edith so the first time she went in, and explained what a handicap fear would be to her." "Did it help?" asked another. The mother laughed ruefully. "Not too much, I'm afraid. Perhaps I shouldn't have mentioned it." A freckled-faced boy in a baseball suit rushed up, bursting with excitement. "We beat 'em, Dad! We beat 'em all to pieces! We had all the good players on our team!" "Better than the Dodgers," someone said laughing.

As far as sports are concerned, this handful of people spoke for America. As they felt, so do the rank and file. Sports are a skill. The measure of success is "to give a good performance." The drive to improvement is the longing to eclipse the person beside you, to beat the other team. Fear in relation to a sport is a sign of some dreadful weakness of character. Like the

offending right hand, it must be cut off. If the individual is too much of a craven to do this for himself, others must do it for him, by taunts and jibes and sometimes with children, by physical force.

This attitude stems from tradition. It is the old authoritarian method of instruction, the old competitive urge—now greatly intensified by the commercialization of sports—the old Puritanical fear of fear.

In some ways this attitude toward sports closely resembles the traditional attitude toward art. Certainly the results are very similar. Sports, like the arts, are exclusive. Millions never engage in them, because they believe they will never "measure up." Millions more engage in them only in early youth, when they can "do well." And numbers of people—perhaps the majority—who do take up sports do not really know anything about them, for they are like people who listen to a concert but do not really hear it. Many develop fears in relation to certain sports which dog them all their lives, and make them more afraid of everything than they would otherwise be.

Fortunately there is some evidence of a change of viewpoint. Psychologists and educators condemn the old attitudes and practices, and some teachers and recreation leaders are applying their principles. If your family will apply the new principles in the home, you will know the incomparable delights of sports, and will receive their wonderful benefits.

As a matter of fact, there are many resemblances between sports and the arts. Properly viewed, both are forms of individual expression. It has been pointed out that you can be an artist whether or not you happen to be a great artist. And so everyone can be a sportsman, whether or not he is a champion. As your painting can mean as much, in one sense, as the work of a great master, so your floating about in shallow water may mean as much as Gertrude Ederle's swimming the English Channel.

If the family would know what sports can really mean to them, approach them as an art. When you and the children begin to learn, set aside the manuals, for they will only instruct you in forms. Dispense with forms completely at first. Learn as the child learns to paint—by experience. Cast aside all concern as to what other people think of you. A door to new and indescribable sensations is about to open. Think only of this.

Again, as with art, confidence is essential. Parents and children can master the skill, and it does not matter in the least when they do so. All of you can do well, "well" being interpreted to mean that you can gain as much pleasure and benefit from the sport as you wish to gain. If the sport involves any risk, it is advised that you banish the word fear from your vocabulary, and the thought from your minds. Approach these sports gradually, sometimes by talking about them, or reading about them beforehand, often by watching good sportsmen in action. As was pointed out in a previous chapter, if you need to tell the children about precautions, explain the reasons, but without emphasizing the danger. Help them to feel proud because they have the good sense to exert care.

When the beginner starts out to engage in the sport, go very slowly. Let him get the feel of the sport by holding the implement, by playing with it. Always increase his assurance by encouraging him to do *less* than he feels able to do, not more. And give him plenty of praise, not through a comparison with others, but simply through sharing his fun and growing feeling of mastery.

As the growing child becomes dissatisfied with his paintings, so the time comes when the sportsman is dissatisfied. Then he should learn techniques. But these should not be handed out as blanket orders, but with an understanding of the reason for them.

Where anyone, parent or child, has already developed fears in relation to some sport, they should be handled as you

would handle them if they had sustained a bodily injury, for they have sustained an injury to personality. Since, as has been pointed out, criticism, blame, or ridicule invariably increases fear—the individual must scrupulously avoid these. If the person is a child, try to keep him away from anyone who will make him ashamed. If he speaks to you about his fears, be sympathetic, but help him see them in their proper proportions. Say that everyone is afraid at some time and that you are sure he will overcome his timidity.

Frightened people need great patience and understanding. Have faith in them. Your help in conquering their fear must match their own longing to be brave. Do not feel, or show, the slightest concern about when they will overcome their fear; never press them against their own inclinations. Begin where they are, stay beside them, and give them steady encouragement. Without calling attention to yourself, do the thing they are *almost* ready to do and show by your manner what fun it is. Think up ways to divert their minds and so to expel fear with a counter-emotion. Only the seriously disturbed will be unable to respond to such handling, and these need the assistance of the specialist.

It would seem helpful to illustrate these principles by examples of their application to a few sports. They can readily be applied to all.

HOW TO TEACH SPORTS

There is no sport which can and should mean more to most families than swimming. And it is universally conceded to be the most healthful of all sports, chiefly because it brings every muscle of the body into play, even the neck, fingers, and toes. It is well adapted to individual expression, for it demands some skill, but you do not have to be highly skillful to enjoy it. And no sport has been more completely ruined for people by wrong attitudes and wrong instruction.

Before trying to swim, the family should take for granted

that all of them *can* swim, that everyone can swim. The notion that some unfortunate people are so constituted that they "go down like stones" when they are in deep water, is an old wives' tale. When bodies seek the bottom of a lake or the ocean, it is because feelings take them there.

Another mistaken notion is that our bodies are held up by the motion of arms and legs, as a plane is held in the air by the motion of the propeller. Never think of swimming as a "stint," as covering a certain number of feet or yards, above all as something to be done rapidly. It is suggested that you watch some really fine swimmers in action if you have the chance to do so. Notice how relaxed they are, how casually they move. Some of the time they move fast. At other times they seem to behave like people out for a stroll. They stand up in the water, change their positions, speak to each other, perhaps carry something in their hands. You too can do these things. Everyone can do them. And you can learn to do them very rapidly and very easily.

You may or may not approach swimming by going directly into the water. Unless you feel reasonably at home there, why not become better acquainted with it in the familiar surroundings of the bathroom? Use the tub rather than the shower, and advise the children to do the same. And take time to enjoy the delicious sensation of stretching out luxuriously in the water. Plunge your faces in the basin again and again. Play with it, make bubbles by breathing in it, even sniff some of it, and when some of it goes down your windpipe, relax your throat and swallow it.

Then, should the lake or the ocean tempt you on a hot or very warm day, go down to it. If you have a friend who is a fine swimmer, ask him to accompany you on these first swims, but be sure he does not "instruct" you. It is assumed that you swim a little, but not very much, also that you float. But forget that you ever did these things. If it is possible assume that being in the water is an entirely new experience. It will be

pleasant to stretch out somewhere with your body half in and half out of the water. The children will probably be too restless to do much of this, but they will get the sensation. In this way you come to know water as water, without feeling you have to do anything about it. In time you will feel at home in the water.

Lie about this way until you feel you simply *must* go in. But do not go very far, and ask the friend to stand near you and the children. Start to float, not as a "stunt," but simply to experience a singularly delicious sensation. And again play with the water. Stop floating, but long before you feel you need to stop. And change very slowly and smoothly from floating to swimming. As you do this, *take the floating feeling with you.* This feeling should never leave you as you move through water, it is the real swimmer's feeling. Swim, not as fast, but as *slowly* as you can. Encourage the children to swim slowly, also. You might tell them that the water is a bed, and will hold them up. Do anything that occurs to you—sniff the water again, turn and twist in it. Open your eyes beneath it, and hand things to one another.

Draw no comparisons between the children. Praise them all, and have fun with them. Sooner or later you will find yourselves going farther and farther—again, not as a stunt, but because it is easier to swim in deep water. In time, you will discover that swimming *is* like strolling, and that you can keep on doing it as long as you want to. As you like to walk fast sometimes, because it is invigorating, so you will sometimes increase your pace now. And before long you will look back and be amused to see how far you have come. And this—not a "neat breast stroke," or a "slick crawl," or a "graceful trudgeon"—this is swimming.

If the parents have never known the experience of swimming in this way, they may not be interested in techniques for years. On the other hand, they may in time become dissatisfied and want to try their bodies out in different ways.

The adolescents will undoubtedly feel this way. But before consulting the manuals, give some thought to possible ways of moving through water with little effort. The bodies of water animals are streamlined to cut down resistance, and expert swimming is simply a matter of cutting down the resistance of our bodies. Then consult the manuals, and begin to streamline your bodies, and to learn new strokes. Eventually you will find yourselves experiencing new and wonderful sensations. You will seem to shoot through the water effortlessly, and with every part of your bodies moving in perfect harmony. Swimming some strokes will seem like dancing, and it will be fun for members of the family to swim in unison.

Members of the family who have developed real fear in relation to water need a great deal of assistance from someone who not only has perfect confidence, but who is also sympathetic and understanding. Parents who assist the growing children and adolescents need to devote a great deal of time exclusively to them. Take for granted that the boy or girl has a strong drive to progress. Build on this desire, and on your own confidence.

Do the things with the child that he is already able to do, and move forward very slowly. For example, suggest that he go out farther into the water, but for him farther may be a matter of feet, or even of inches. If he swims, swim close beside him, or suggest he swim out to you. Be guided always by him. Stand exactly where he wants you to stand; never fail him. In some cases, it helps to divert the child's mind by playing water games, like throwing a ball back and forth, or, if the child wants to do it, riding rubber animals. While swimming with older children and adolescents, it often helps to converse with them casually—even if they do not reply—about a big rock, a sea gull, about what other bathers are doing. And continually encourage these boys and girls; praise the slightest effort.

A seven-year-old boy who refused to go into the water at the beginning of the summer was so helped by these methods that he had learned to swim a few strokes before the vacation was over. The way in which he made friends with the water is interesting. One day his father brought home a small hand pump to use in bailing out a leaky boat. Bruce was fascinated with the pump, and wanted to help bail. His father suggested that he wear his bathing suit since he might get wet. The boy soon discovered that he could pump better from a standing than a sitting position, and before he realized what he was doing, he quietly slid into the water. When children surprise themselves in this way, do not call attention to what they have done, for this will remind them of former fears. Take courage for granted.

Like the swimming novice, the beginning canoeist will benefit by watching good canoeists, better still by being their passengers. The old hand should not frighten his passengers by tales of how easily canoes tip over and spill their passengers into the water. He should rather call attention to the peculiar shape of this craft, and explain why it glides so smoothly through the water and why you can sneak so close to shore. He should make the point that the shape also explains why it is tippy. The children may like to hear stories of Indians and pioneers, and to read about how Hiawatha made his canoe. When watching the canoeist, note the beautiful rhythm of his stroke, the way he handles his paddle, and how quietly he dips it into the water.

When you want to do some paddling yourself, do not ask for lengthy directions at first. Sit in the bow, where you will have no responsibility whatever. Worry about nothing. Simply enjoy paddling, the feeling of power it gives you, and the sense of gliding, which is like no other sensation on earth. The man in the stern should only give suggestions as you seek them, and should not advise you to steer until you want to. Again, ignore both form and speed. Soon you will pick up

all you need to know about holding the paddle and bearing down on it so that the weight of your body will do some of the work for you, and so on. It will be fun to try taking the canoe up to the dock. In this way the canoeist becomes bolder and bolder, and finally enjoys taking the boat out in rough water. But he will know how to manage it very well by this time, and will understand the necessary precautions.

A fine way to start children out in riding is to talk, and perhaps to read, to them about horses. Speak about their surefootedness, their essential daintiness, about "horse sense." Tell them how riders trust them to bring them home on pitch dark nights. Point out the things that frighten many horses, and discuss the reasons. And explain why it is better to approach horses from the front, and to give them an apple from the palm of the hand.

Then pay some visits to the stable, and talk with the riding master. Let him explain about Smoky's sensitive mouth, Tony's dislike of the whip, Colonel's steadiness, and Ginger's passion to lead. Then if you and the children like horses, and when they want to ride, have them do so. Begin with the safest, most phlegmatic horse in the stable, even if his gait is slow and his trot hard. The children will start with a leading rein, and will ride beside the riding master, who should like children, and should not be addicted, as some masters unfortunately are, to giving forth with stinging rebukes. If possible, the beginner should not start trotting until he wants to "go faster." Explanations about posting will be more helpful if they are not given until the horse is trotting. And very few directions are needed. If you use Western saddles, and want to ride Western, the only advice you need is to brace yourself in the stirrups. Galloping is like riding a super rocking horse. After the new rider feels quite at home, and asks for a more sensitive horse, he should have some information about what to do if horses shy, buck, or rear, or start to bolt.

Throwing and catching a ball is the best introduction to baseball. Form a team if there are enough players. Let the beginners handle the bat for a while in their own way until they begin to get the feel of it. And let them have the fun and excitement of the game before the technicalities are introduced to them.

Most children pick up roller and ice skating very easily. The most important point about these sports is not to start them out on skates before they have the physical co-ordination to manage themselves, for failure leads to loss of confidence, and often to dislike of the sport.

Though very young children are not "sportsmen" in the ordinary sense of the word, their physical activities mean to them exactly what sports mean to us. For they are quite as delightful, and they demand all the skill, strength, and co-ordination these children possess.

But children need a wide variety of activities, both for physical and emotional growth. They should have a chance to run, jump, climb, roll, carry, bend, stretch, and swing. It is usually easy enough for them to do most of these things in the country.

If the family has a yard in a suburb, the city, or a small town, play equipment of the type described in an earlier chapter will mean everything to a child. If, however, you live in an apartment, take advantage of a playground if there is one in your vicinity. Sometimes parents' failure to do this results from the lack of understanding of the need for varied activity. And sometimes it is due to the child's lack of interest the first few times he is taken to the playground. The mother makes time in her crowded day, and conscientiously trails him over, only to have him firmly refuse to budge from her side. And then and there she decides the game is not worth the effort.

But this reaction simply means that the child is overwhelmed by the vastness of the place, by the numbers of chil-

dren, and by the confusion and din around him. Give him time. Take friends along, especially if yours is an only child. Do not press the child to use the playground. Above all, do nothing to make him ashamed of staying beside you. You might make a few overtures to the other children yourself, or pick up their ball and throw it back to them. You might gradually draw one or two of them over to you, and start a little game. If you do not urge your child to take part, before long he will be straying farther and farther away from you. Then, let him make his own way. If the children are somewhat rough in their behavior, leave him on his own as much as possible, only interfering if he is in real trouble. How much watching he needs when he is using equipment depends on his age and maturity. Sometimes, when slides are new to children, they mount the steps bravely, then they become suddenly frightened at finding themselves so high. If the mother speaks to the child quietly, with great assurance he will follow her suggestions to turn around and come down again. And he will venture farther and farther, until at last he reaches the top, stands upright, and surveys the pigmies below him, calling out, "I'm king of the castle, and you're the dirty rascal!"

Some young children make for the water as though they were ducks, others—even though they have no real fear of it—feel too overwhelmed to be willing to venture into it immediately. The first need to be carefully watched, for they are far too happy and excited to exercise their usual caution. But if they do have a mishap, be careful to do nothing that would rouse any fear in them.

The ones who resist the water at first need to go very slowly. Take them to some quiet and secluded place, like a brook or isolated sandy beach, where they will not be upset by other bathers. Let them play around the water at first, and for as long a time as they want to. It will encourage them very much if the parents wade into the water themselves.

After the child does wade into the water, and wants "to swim," get him the kind of belt that has detachable sections, and remove them gradually as he gains more control of his body. It does not matter in the least when he begins to swim. All that matters is that he should love the water.

Because of differences in age, maturity and proficiency, parents, children, and adolescents need plenty of chance to engage in sports by themselves and with others. It is dismal during vacation for the family to work out fixed schedules, with times of the day when "everybody" goes swimming, horseback riding, and so on. Often the members like to spend more time together while they are learning a sport. Thus, for example, when growing children have learned how to swim they become like little water animals, and love to swim very fast, but not far. And they spend most of their time jumping and diving into the water. And of course they want to engage in these antics with their friends. Though the parents may have to be near by, the children should not be taken away from their friends. A father used to take his boy away from his squealing pals, and accompany him on swims which grew longer and longer. When Cal was asked if he liked to swim, he replied with a perfunctory "Yes." But as he started out his eyes were blank and his face set, and he would dart hungry glances toward the raft where his friends were having such a wonderful time. His father, who was devoted to the boy, said he was trying to build up Cal's strength and endurance. But surely those of the young jumping jacks were not being neglected. And any physical gains Cal made were at the cost of so much pleasure, and of a companionship he badly needed.

COMPETITION VERSUS RIVALRY

The unfortunate effects of competition on personality were already referred to in connection with the giving of expensive prizes at children's parties. The effects of competition in relation to sports are far more serious. In his book, *Recreation*

and the Total Personality, S. R. Slavson says, "In our opinion competitive sports are among the most unsocial of our national institutions." Slavson distinguishes between competition and friendly rivalry. He says, "Rivalry aims to outshine one's opponent, competition seeks to destroy him. . . . Rivals can be friends, but competitors seldom are." And he points out that while in rivalry "The end is the game itself, in competition more remote objectives are sought, such as possession and self-aggrandizement." And Slavson further shows that the great danger of competition is that it has permanent effects on personality.

Thus, while it is fine to encourage friendly rivalry in sports, competition—the urge to outclass someone else, to beat someone else—should always be discouraged. And you will automatically be doing this as you adopt the attitude and apply the teaching methods outlined in this chapter. The attitude the parents adopt toward sports will also be most helpful in encouraging wholesome attitudes.

Families to whom sports become an art will be doing more than giving themselves a chance really to enjoy them. They will be helping to give sports their rightful place in American life.

Chapter 22

BEYOND THE HORIZON

CITIZENS OF THE WORLD

The book has ended, but not the journey. For the glory of human growth is that it is unending. While we cannot here move onward toward the more distant goals, we can glimpse them on the far horizon, and can chart, in a general way, our course.

The road leads outward, outward from the home to the larger world beyond its doors. It beckons irresistibly. As children must always climb higher, read more serious books, and leave the small kindergarten for the larger classroom, so the family finds the walls of even a happy home too confining, even a wonderful circle of friends too limited. Social emotions —generosity, sympathy, and a respect for the dignity of the human spirit—generated here reach out; the social base steadily widens. People casually passed by are not moving figures, but living human beings. A bond is felt with them, and in time it reaches farther, to people who are distant and unseen. In all these relations there is a family quality, something parental, something brotherly. The family say, "It is so with us."

Increasingly experience is imbued with social emotions. Things seen and heard in and about the community—a skyscraper on the street, a tractor plowing a field, a revolving bridge making way for boats—these are fascinating, but always they are human, made by men, serving men. Science is

also intriguing, but it also is human; the laws of elemental forces, the nature of substances, are not discovered for the sake of riddle-solving, but in order to use those forces and those substances. So nature shows man's kinship with all things, animate and inanimate, with animals, insects, earth, rocks, and the stars in their courses.

As members of the family while growing as individuals, become more and more closely identified with one another, so the family becomes ever more closely identified with society. Increasingly they become aware of human needs. There is no place for children to play in that neighborhood, those tenements are airless, that state highway is dangerous, the newspapers describe the sufferings of European children.

Looking about for ways to help, members of the family join with other families and individuals who feel as they do. You can no more predict which group, which line of work a given family will choose than you can predict the kind of garden they will have, the books they will read. The parents may choose the new type of work with elderly people, which is having such startling effects on the physical health and personalities of the aged. It may be a group that is helping the handicapped to live and work like normal people. They may help to establish art classes for gifted children from underprivileged homes. They may choose to work for improved legislation, or for better schools, for improved health, for the dissemination of knowledge, or for world peace.

The adolescents may be working for their community through their high schools. They may be studying its needs, joining with adult groups or working independently to help meet these needs. They may be doing such work as making toys for younger children to use in their play centers, or serving as aides to the teachers in these centers, and with adult help they may be developing their own recreational projects through community youth centers.

Both adolescents and growing children will undoubtedly

join groups like the Boy and Girl Scouts, the Campfire Girls, the 4-H Clubs, the Junior Red Cross. The growing children may be serving their classes and their school through running such services as the library or the distribution of supplies; they may be collecting food, clothing, and supplies for children overseas.

Like the best homes, the best of these groups are far from perfect. They have their problems and difficulties, their frustrations, disappointments, and failures. There is friction, backbiting, animosity, chicanery, and personal ambition. Results come so slowly. Always there is the vision, the splendid hospital, the network of playgrounds, widespread slum clearance, harmony between nations—and progress is by inches.

But there are the compensatory satisfactions. Results do come, and through the process of attaining these goals, the individual, whether parent or child, is developing as a person. He is learning how to accommodate himself to many kinds of people. He is experiencing a new feeling of solidarity, is discovering the new friendship, friendship through service. Native capacities, executive ability, business or organizing ability, a flare for public relations, a gift for working with children—creative power—these, developed in the home, find here a wider scope.

The members of the family do not engage in social service from a sense of duty. It is not their way of appeasing their consciences. Nor are they satisfying a hunger for superiority by distributing largesse to "the unfortunate." Their goal is neither appeasement nor power, it is fulfillment. Service is a part of everyday living. They work to relieve mass suffering and to promote mass growth as naturally as they would bring home a lost child. And these social experiences do represent fulfillment to the family; they are, in fact, the final fulfillment, the last stage of growth.

THE PARTING OF THE WAYS

Take a long look backward over the road we have traveled. It *has* been fun, has it not? There have been hard places, but strangely these will ultimately fade from memory, only the joyous will remain—arms linked together, bodies moving in unison, a chorus of laughter, a whispered confidence, a look that says "Thank you." And the light that has illuminated that road from the beginning and that will illuminate it to the end is the light of human brotherhood.

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