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# **THE CHILD'S ATTITUDE TO LIFE**



**THE CHILD'S  
ATTITUDE TO LIFE  
A STUDY OF CHILDREN'S STORIES**

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**TO**  
**MY WIFE**



## PREFACE

**T**HE original stories of children, and the unaided descriptions of sights they have seen, are valuable as revealing the true child, and the mental attitude adopted to exciting events, at particular ages. The remarkable power shown by the more intelligent children in their vivid accounts of new experiences produces a profound impression on the student of child nature.

Many of the stories are, naturally, not original, and are obtained by the children from a variety of sources. The fact, however, that from a very wide choice these stories have been selected by a number of children, and enjoy considerable popularity at a certain age, and are replaced by other favourites at a later period, is of the greatest interest as indicating different stages of development.

In the various investigations with large groups of children, on subjects of special interest to them, care has been taken to secure, as far as possible, first-hand impressions, unbiased by the opinions of parents or teachers. In the air raid stories the nearest approach to this ideal was reached.

The discussions which have followed papers read on the different investigations before various societies, consisting largely of teachers, have proved of great value in considering conclusions which may safely be drawn from them. It will be seen that special features in the stories which appear at certain periods of the child's development, as, for example, the stage of rapid growth, are confirmed

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and illustrated in dealing with subjects of widely different character.

The stories and descriptions are given, where possible, in the child's own language. They are not, from the adult point of view, necessarily the best stories, but are fairly representative of the age with which they are associated.

My sincere thanks are due to very many teachers in England and America and to a small number in France and Germany for the generous assistance they have given to me in carrying out my studies of children. I have also to thank Messrs. Longmans Green & Co. for permission to use a few illustrations from my book on " Children's Dreams " in the chapter on " Fairyland and Dreamland/' and my friend Mr. A. J. Mundella for the help he has given in the reading of proofs, and for many valuable suggestions.

C. W. K.

*January 1926*

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# THE CHILD'S ATTITUDE TO LIFE

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

**T**HE problem of finding some reliable method of discovering the special characteristics and mental make-up of a child, and especially of his attitude to life, is one which has puzzled the philosopher from time immemorial.

It is not difficult to find the standard reached in educational achievement by suitable examinations ; and by intelligence tests much information may be gained of native ability in various directions. But when all this has been done, there remains an unexplored field, and it would be rash to prophesy how, in an important crisis, the child left to himself would behave. There are so many factors in human behaviour, of which at present we have only an imperfect knowledge, that it is impossible to gauge them with sufficient accuracy to feel any confidence in the results. Moreover, some of the factors are continually changing, and even if we obtained an approximately satisfactory result for one age we should very soon have to start afresh for the same child when fresh interests had come into play. We must therefore, in the present state of our

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knowledge, be content with rough generalizations in our study of children.

One type of investigation, however, has not received sufficient attention, and that is the indirect method of studying behaviour by getting first-hand information from the child himself by his own record of impressions on being confronted with new situations. To secure that the impressions are really personal, and not those of parents or teachers, it is necessary to obtain such a record as early as possible after the development of the new experience. The belief of the child in the infallibility of the information given to him by his mother and other members of the family group, and later by the teacher, up to the age of 9 or 10 years is fatal to that faithful picture of the first impression which is of such priceless value when it finds expression.

The entry of England into the Great War, and subsequently the air raid attacks on London, were such striking new situations that the writer collected some three thousand essays on the War at an early stage from children in selected schools, and later on a thousand essays from children in districts which received the brunt of the earlier Zeppelin attacks. The analyses of these records, which are given in Chapters VII and VIII, throw considerable light on the attitude of London children of different ages to these thrilling experiences and reveal the real child in a very significant manner. The dreams of children, of which an account is given elsewhere, also satisfy the necessary condition for the revelation of individual character and interests by the child's own record.

The extraordinary power of young children to

describe in graphic and picturesque language the impressions of a fresh experience, in which the child is intensely interested, is common knowledge. The fact that this power, in time of emotional stress, is far ahead of the normal ability of the child to describe the affairs of everyday life has so far received no adequate explanation. Of its existence there can be no question. This unique power applies to verbal as well as to written records.

The reason why children's stories are so intensely interesting is not entirely due to this power of graphic description. The freedom of expression, the daring originality, and the fresh point of view, are precious elements in their accounts of abnormal experiences. Later on, unless they are fortunate in the type of education they receive, the outlook of the children may be entirely changed, and conventional methods of approach will seriously interfere with the spontaneity and charm of earlier records. When they are confronted, however, with situations of an exciting and interesting character, children frequently use vigorous and picturesque language in their descriptions, which exhibit a significant contrast with the school essay of the same period. This was clearly shown in the accounts given by children of different ages of air raid experience during the War.

People of humble birth in the habit of using a marked dialect, who by educational processes, and great industry, later acquire a more cultured mode of speech, are always in danger of reverting to type, and of using the broad dialect of earlier years in times of great stress and strain. Reversion to type similarly plays a very important part in the shedding of conventional modes of expression, **and**

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the adoption of more original forms of construction, in children's stories describing wonderful adventures or sights seen under unusual conditions as, for example, in accounts of film stories or exciting dreams.

The power of condensation observed in descriptions by young children of interesting scenes or experiences is very striking. Situations are summed up in a few words dealing only with essential features. A young child concluded her account of a vivid dream with the words, " My mind then shut and I dreamt no more." It would be difficult to find a more graphic and expressive way of ending a record of an exciting event. Children frequently take liberties with words, and do it very effectively. Many of their stories owe their quaintness to the special content attributed to words of which they have had only a limited experience. As time goes on they have to eliminate part of the contents of a word, and, meanwhile, the retained portion of its meaning becomes richer and more detailed. This eternal change in the content of words, varying with the age and education of the child, is a source of real difficulty and bewilderment to children. In this connexion it is of great interest to notice the changing meaning of words in common use in the essays of children of different ages. The word as first heard by the child is given a much wider sphere of usefulness than it can justly claim. The limited vocabulary of a child thus naturally results in this overworking of favourite words. The advent of a new word is a source of great joy to intelligent children. It is repeated again and again until it is firmly established, and then put by for use at the earliest opportunity.

The extraordinary progress in language made by children from 2 to 5 years of age—progress far in advance of that at any other period of like duration in the child's life—is largely due to the intense desire to improve the means of communication with other children, on which the happiness of the child so largely depends. Quite apart from the love of acquiring new words the child revels in playing with words, and will, frequently, even when under three years of age, make puns, knowing them to be puns. This form of play is of special value in making clear the shades of meaning of words nearly related in sound. The number of words added to the vocabulary each year by the pre-school child depends upon his memory and intelligence, and above all his environment. The child in the sheltered home where he spends a lot of his time in the family circle, rather than in the comparative isolation of the nursery, is at a great advantage in the acquisition of a wide vocabulary.

In stories of young children there is no padding of any kind, and words full of meaning—frequently too full—are used for purposes of narration. A child has the power, often denied to adults, of describing effectively what he has seen, with a minimum number of words. The following record of an air raid dream written by a girl of 8 years of age, without preparation or warning of any kind, is fairly typical:

" I dreamt I was married and had a little girl at school; also I had a little boy. My husband was a soldier in France. My girl had long curly hair. She wore a white frock with a blue sash and white shoes and stockings. But one night as I got into

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bed I heard the maroons go off. My children were fast asleep, so I got the eldest up first. I dressed them, and put their hats and coats on and then dressed n<sup>^</sup>self. Then I ran down the Tube. A little while after I heard it was all clear, and when I got home I had just put my children to bed, when I heard a rat-tat. I went and opened the door, and my husband walked in. He was home on leave. He was an officer. I was a school teacher. I had the first class, and a little while after I joined the ' Wax.' When I woke up, I found it was only a dream.

All the essentials of the story are given without any unnecessary elaboration, and the child's love of orderly treatment finds full expression. Readers who have made up stories for the amusement and edification of their children, and have, by special request, repeated those stories, will have had ample evidence of the remarkably retentive memory of the listeners, in their kindly correction of details and their demand for a more orderly arrangement of exciting episodes.

The child sometimes becomes so intensely interested in a popular story heard for the first time that he will not stop the flow of the narrative to ask for the explanation of a new word. If, moreover, the story is being told to a group, he does not like to appear less well-informed than the rest of the group, who apparently understood the meaning of the new word. This attitude of mind is very common in young children. The result is that there is a tendency to fill up the gap by gathering the meaning from the context. Children frequently **repeat formulas of various kinds with a totally**

wrong conception of the meaning of certain elements. Sir Joshua Fitch gave an astounding example of this in his "Lectures to Teachers." He asked the boys in a country school to write out the Lord's Prayer. In describing the result, he recorded a large number of ridiculous mistakes which had been made, such as "Harold be Thy Name" and "Lead us not into Thames Station." Similar cases of a complete misunderstanding of well-known quotations are frequently found in children's essays.

A good collection, from reliable sources, of stories of the *naïveté* of children for the ages of 2 to 5 years would be of extraordinary interest and value, in affording evidence of the nature of early language difficulties. In *naïveté* the quaint sayings and doings have no necessary connexion with the humorous stories of older children, except in so far as occasional naive elements may occur in stories and add to the comic pleasure of the particular situation. The natural object of the narrator of funny stories is to produce laughter. In *naïveté*, however, the original intent is not to cause laughter, and no one is more surprised than the young child at the amusement caused by his remarks. At a surprisingly early age, however, a primitive sense of humour is shown by children, and jokes are frequently made in playing with words which may be mistaken for *naïveté*.

The pre-school period being the most fruitful time for examples of pure *naïveté*, the difficulties of obtaining trustworthy information are very great. There are many excellent accounts of the first year of the child's life by distinguished experts, but the 2 to 5 span is a comparatively unworked field. In some cases, however, well-qualified

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observers have kept reliable records of their children's sayings and doings, and some of these will be recorded in a later chapter. The value of a study of this period, as being from a psychological point of view the most important of a child's life, is now fully recognized, and it is beginning to receive, especially in America, the attention it deserves.

The most striking feature in the favourite stories, humorous and otherwise, of young children is the all-pervading *fairy* element. Quite apart from the well-known fairy stories, which have such a remarkable hold on the imagination of the average child, the overflow of the *fairy* element is clearly shown in the domestic stories of the children. The treasures of the nursery, the teddy-bear, the golly-wog and, with girls, the various types of dolls, are, to them, possessors of feeling and intelligence, and in many cases receive far more confidences and expressions of affection than the mother and the nurse. The dog, the cat, and the parrot, and even, though in lesser degree, the rabbits and the hens, are given a far higher place in the animal scale by the child than that allotted to them by man. In fact, the animals are retained in the exalted position they have always held in the fairy stories. The fairies have to a large extent been removed from their pedestals at an early stage, but the animals remain on theirs until the boy reaches the age of 9 and the girl a year later. At the age of 8 years, animal stories on fairy lines are of absorbing interest to children. A good example of this type of story is the following:

" My father was reading his paper and the cat jumped on the dresser and stopped the pendulum

of the clock. Soon my father looked up and said: 'The clock is stopped/ The cat looked very uncomfortable, and then she jumped on the dresser again and gave the pendulum a push and the clock went on.'

The sense of humour in children may be clearly indicated by the type of story and joke which makes the greater appeal at different ages. With a sufficiently large number of selections, made by children in different types of schools in different countries, it is possible to trace the emergence of the various kinds of humorous situations which find the greatest favour at particular ages. The results may also be confirmed and strengthened by investigations of the sights seen by children which cause most amusement at different ages. It is possible not only to discover the particular type of humour which becomes popular at a given age, but also roughly how long it holds sway, and the type which succeeds it. Apparently the order of succession is much the same in widely different countries, though there is considerable variety in the time of the first appearance of a particular type of humour, and also in its duration as the most popular of mirth-producers. In this connexion, it is found that there is a very great difference between the sense of humour of the white and that of the coloured child.

Whereas special types of humour run their appointed course in normal sequence, and then more or less disappear, others which may never have been claimants for the first place in popular favour are constant in their appeal to children of all ages. Prominent among these is the element of superiority—amusement at the mistakes of

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others—as a cause of laughter, which is well marked at the age of 8 years, and from this point onwards is a fertile source of mirth, with varying popularity, through the whole of school life with both boys and girls. In this connexion the story of Epaminondas—a negro folk-story—which deals with the absurd mistakes made by a stupid boy in carrying out the commissions of his mother, is a great favourite with children of 8 to 12 years of age. The story has no literary merit of any kind, and its great popularity in English and American schools is undoubtedly due to the fact that the stupidity of the boy is obvious to young children, who thus become conscious of their own superiority. It is significant that a story on exactly similar lines, with illustrations more suitable for older children, is a great favourite with the children of Japan.

There are many physiological conditions which have a profound effect upon the essays and stories written by children, and also upon the types of story which give them the greatest pleasure and amusement. This is clearly exhibited during the operation of any departure from the normal physiological state. For example, the mental changes which accompany any great increase in the rate of physical growth are very marked. This is well shown at the ages of 12 and 13 years, when the curve of normal growth of children becomes steeper and then flattens out again. This point is a veritable parting of the ways to the child and approximates mentally to a re-birth. There is a well-marked breaking away from authority, not necessarily accompanied by any definite breach of discipline in the home or the school, but involving a fundamental change of attitude socially and mentally.

In the home, the links binding the members of the family group are being weakened by the cultivation of more definite friendships in the outer world. The belief in the omniscience of parents and teachers is rapidly disappearing, and the value of the child's own opinion, as he now estimates it, results in his carefully examining the statements of those in authority before accepting them. This entire change of attitude finds expression in a variety of ways. Tradition and convention now mean much less to the child ; it is a time for adventure and a new state of things. For a time his sense of humour deteriorates ; it is of a more primitive type, but it recovers as the curve of growth becomes normal again. This period is also marked by a change in the language he employs, oral and written, in describing sights he has seen. There is a tendency to extravagance both in action and in language. This is well shown in the following account of a boy of 12 years of age giving a description of the funniest sight he has seen i

" When I returned home and opened the door the scene that met my eyes was enough to make a cat burst into laughter. Standing upon a chair and flourishing a large spoon in all directions stood my aunt, whilst uncle, his body bent almost double, and with a poker clenched in his grasp, was making violent cuts and slashes at an invisible victim beneath the sink which in answer to my inquiries I found to be a mouse. At length his efforts were rewarded, and, with a squeal the mouse ran out from his retreat. The poker descended but missed the creature by at least a foot. Without pausing it ran straight towards uncle and he naturally

jumped, but this only served to frighten the mouse and it ran right up inside uncle's trousers. But he never lost his presence of mind. He caught it just as it climbed over his knee and held it a prisoner. Aunt thought she would throw things at it but, after she had tried two fire-irons, uncle begged her to desist. Then she got some cheese to coax it down, but uncle did not dare to let it go for fear it would run further up. Then uncle happened to trip and lost his hold and the mouse fell to the floor as dead as a door-nail. Now when mice run into the kitchen, uncle leaves at once. He can kill a mouse, he says, but the fun isn't worth the trouble."

As further illustration of the use of extravagance of language may be quoted the following expressions from girls' stories : " When the crab was removed from the man's feet he was filled with an ecstasy of delight." And again, " I heard the thin, piping voice of a parrot intermingled with the stentorian voice of an aged man." And yet again, " Rose and I had faces as long as winter." The girl reaches this interesting stage of development rather earlier than the boy. The type of story which finds most favour with boys and girls at this period is one dealing with adventure, and preferably of an extravagant variety. There is a distinct break away from good literature, but here, again, there is a recovery when normal physiological conditions are once more reached.

In addition to the normal changes which occur as the period of rapid growth disappears, the stories have a wider outlook; the children think more for themselves and have very definite opinions

of their own. The restoration of a love of good literature is accompanied by a difference in the type of story which appeals to them. The normal domestic story, which centres round the home, loses some of its appeal, and stories with a love interest, not limited to the family group, find much favour, particularly with girls. Tales of adventure and -enterprise are more popular with the boys. In both cases more interest is taken by the children in the doings of people of other countries than their own. The addition of the narrator, who increases the normal effect of a humorous situation by a clever method of description, makes its appearance at a later stage, and prepares the way for a genuine creative sense of humour.

A child hears a simple story which contains humorous material, and sees directions in which it might be improved, and, by elaborating certain points, improves it considerably. This process may be further amplified by another narrator, and, eventually, a story, rich in humorous content, is the result. The same is true in describing sights, containing humorous elements, which lend themselves to successful additions by the narrator. The power of stressing important points in describing a comic situation is a valuable asset. On the other hand, a good story, or the description of a funny sight, may become utterly ineffective in the hands of a poor story-teller.

The source of the popularity of particular books with young children of a certain age is an interesting study, and though the type of humorous situations may not be the dominant factor, it undoubtedly holds a very important place. A knowledge of the sense of humour of children, and of their dreams—

day and night—at different periods, would give a valuable clue to the waiters of stories for children for the ages under review, for they indicate something of the mental make-up of the child, and the kind of interest and comic element which would make the greatest appeal. Advantage is taken in some countries, especially in America, of the evidence which is thus afforded of the main interests of children at certain stages of their development. Books are written which are suitable for children of certain age-groups, and are much quoted by them in their records of funny stories. It is thus evident that such books are very popular and are widely read. Statistics of the books selected by children of different ages from school libraries are very illuminating.

At a certain stage day-dreaming becomes a more important factor in the child's life, and not only colours the children's own stories, as shown in more imaginative writing, but also gives an added interest to books in which imagination plays an important rôle.

In the recording of incidents which they have experienced, the development of interesting situations frequently passes beyond the bounds of actual fact, and bears unmistakable witness to the influence of the day-dream. On many occasions, where there is in the story of the child an appearance of untruthfulness, the day-dream is responsible for the departure from accuracy of description. In describing the events of an exciting night-dream, the same influence is often at work, as may be seen by descriptions of the same dream at varying periods after its actual occurrence. This test can readily be applied when the first record of the dream is of a very definite and detailed character.

At this period also natural phenomena make a very definite appeal, and town children delight in giving accounts of novel experiences they have had in visits to the country. The pleasure of the child in the presence of a situation which he has never experienced before has all the elements of wonder and delight. In describing such a new experience the *fairy* element is naturally called into play, and the animals are not infrequently given the important place which they hold in the fairy story, and if, in addition to this, the day-dream enters the field, the extraordinary accounts given by children of country scenes can readily be explained.

The boy who described a deer-park in the country in which a horse was giving a deer a ride on his back, with a long queue of deer waiting for their turn to ride, gave such minute details of the way in which they were able to get on the horse's back that the story would appear to have had its foundation in some slight incident, and the more detailed part to have been filled in by a highly imaginative child with a firm belief in fairy stories.

A girl at the same stage of development gave a somewhat similar story of events which occurred during a holiday in the country. She was staying at a farm, and was much interested in a group of cows which were in a field in which there was very little grass to eat. They frequently looked over a hedge into a field in which there was an abundance of food and longed to get into it. One day a cow was standing near the hedge, and another cow jumped on to her back, and found that then she could jump without difficulty into the adjoining field. The other cows were surprised and delighted and followed her example ; the cow which acted as

the jumping-off platform remaining in position. The fortunate cows then tried various experiments to find some way to enable the one which had been of so much assistance, and which was still on the other side of the hedge, to join them. Eventually they made a rush at a weak spot in the hedge, so that the other could just scramble through, and then they were all happy together. The explanation of this modern fairy story is probably of a like nature to that of the boy's deer-park story.

The material of a day- or night-dream story, after being played upon by waking material, forms such a well-connected whole that the child finds it impossible to separate the elements. The imaginative child, at certain stages of development, frequently acquires a reputation for unreliability, which may have its origin in directions beyond his control, and for which no blame can be attached from a moral point of view.

It is interesting to notice in the stories of children about animals that they often regard the organization of the animal home as being on the same lines as their own. This is clearly shown in the following description of the squirrel:

"The funniest sight I have ever seen is the squirrel which hops from tree to tree and eats acorns. They are tiny little things and they have bushy tails. In the night they hide in a hollow tree and go fast asleep. In the morning they fly about the street and the mother squirrel makes the breakfast and the father goes to work. In the night he comes home to supper and then goes to bed."

Not only is the home organized in the same way,

but the same standard of politeness is observed, as will be seen by a girl's story of ducks' behaviour :

" We have two ducks, one is a drake. The drake is a beautiful bird ; he has a green head, his wings have a band of white tipped with green and his back is black. The duck is not such a fine bird ; she is brown and white. We put a bath of water in the garden ; the duck got into the bath and began splashing about, then the drake, whom we call Blackie, came along ; he filled his beak with water and began to wash his wife. Blackie is a perfect gentleman. When we take their food to their house in the evening they come waddling after us, but Blackie never goes into his house before his wife and he always lets her have her food first."

In the chapters which follow it will be seen that in children's stories at different ages, no matter on what type of material they are based, there is approximately what may be termed a special outlook for each age, varying with the mental make-up for the particular period. From this starting point, however, there is a wide range in the manner of treatment depending upon the ability, educational achievement, and temperament of the child. The boy's story differs in many ways from the girl's of the same age. Points strongly emphasized by the boy may be entirely omitted by the girl in dealing with stories on the same subject, and vice versa. This is especially well marked, as will be seen, in War stories, which are of exceptional value in this connexion. In judging of the value and interest of a story regard must be **had** to the conditions **under which** it was **produced**,

## CHAPTER II

### THE AGE OF *NAIVETE*

**T**HE stories associated with a study of *naivete* are of very special interest, but naturally they are of a somewhat fragmentary character. The special period of *naivete* is from 2 to 5 years of age, which, as has already been indicated, represents the most important stage in the development of the child, and that in which it is most difficult to get reliable information. Now that the extraordinary importance of this period is so fully recognized, a larger body of competent observers will undoubtedly enter this fascinating field for research, and will extend our knowledge of the mental make-up of the young child. The recently published works of Professor Koffka on "The Growth of the Mind" and of Professor Stern on "The Psychology of Early Childhood" are notable and valuable contributions to the better understanding of the problem.

The very remarkable difference between the child's world and the world of the grown-up has given rise to much misunderstanding. It is very difficult to interpret the sayings and doings in childish *naiveU* in terms of adult behaviour. At a very early stage there is a development of a love of fun and a playful sense of humour in the child, and the separation of the naïve from these elements leads to some confusion. It is possible that the laughter-provoking

results of pure *naiveté*, which at first puzzle the child, may stimulate him to produce material for mirth on his own account, for he loves to be the centre of admiration and amusement. The separation of the animate from the inanimate is not fully recognized by the child until a much later stage than is generally supposed, and this has an important bearing on his attitude to the toys of the nursery with which he enters into very close personal relations. It is not a question of his endowing them with life; it is rather that he has no clear conception of the difference between the living and the dead, though he realizes that the inhabitants of his world differ in many respects from those of the outer world. It is well that this should be so, for the friendships of the nursery are a source of joy to him; especially is this the case with the only child.

Here comes in a very important crisis in the child's life. With many children the passage from the position of baby, in which he is the centre of all attention and has practically his own way, to the discipline of the nursery is a time of stress and strain. The child in passing from a position of absolute dependence, self-gratification, and self-will to that of being simply a member of a group with rights shared by others, with subservience to nursery rules, requires great care and wise guidance during the transference. The feeling of resentment with regard to any serious change in the normal life of the child, which finds expression at a very early age, may produce serious results, and it is here that a happy nursery environment is a matter of prime importance. The next crisis which comes when the child leaves his world for the outer world is

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generally not such a serious matter, for the change is so gradual from the one to the other. The links binding him to his own world have become less and less effective, and the spirit of adventure associated with his entry into the bigger world more than compensates for the loss felt on leaving his own.

The advent of the invisible friend is an interesting event in the development of the child. At about the age of 3 years the child recognizes himself as a separate unit apart from his surroundings. Self-knowledge, self-criticism, and the development of the will have entered into his life. From this time to about the age of 6 years there frequently occurs a curious phase—the period of the invisible friend or friends. The extent to which this phase is a common element in child-life is a matter of conjecture; it would be difficult to obtain reliable statistics. All who have had any experience with young children, however, know of its existence and the variety of forms it takes. Some children refuse to talk about their invisible friends, though they admit having them. Mothers are very frequently unwise in dealing with their children in this matter; to laugh at, or even make light of, a child's invisible friend results in a sensitive child making no further reference to it. Sometimes the name and even the sex is altered. Occasionally, a different invisible friend is taken for each day of the week, and, if a normal friend is taken into confidence and confuses them one with the other, great annoyance is felt by the child who regards the matter very seriously. It has been suggested that the only child is more likely to have an invisible friend than members of a family, but those who have had much experience of children deny that this is the case. It is also

denied that children of a neurotic type are more liable to invisible friend attachments than others. The following cases may be quoted:

(a) A boy of 4 years of age had an invisible friend whom he named Mr. Harris. Everywhere he went Mr. Harris accompanied him, unless as a punishment, for some indiscretion, he was left at home. The invisible friend was such a real thing to the boy that frequently he would pause at the door on entering a room to let Mr. Harris go in first. His mother very wisely did not make fun of her son or discourage him in the attachment. When Mr. Harris had been particularly good he was invited to lunch, and a place was provided for him at table. The boy was quite normal in every way, and at 6 years of age he lost interest in his invisible friend, who disappeared entirely from his life. The invisible friend phase rarely extends beyond the sixth year of the child's life.

(b) A boy of 3 years had a group of invisible friends. He danced round in a ring with his arms outstretched as if playing with other children. The ones he liked best, and who played with him most frequently, he called George and Nan. He used to play with them for a long time, chased them from room to room, and then turned and ran screaming as if the invisible children had started to chase him. He also played balls with them, throwing the ball as if to one and naming the invisible friend as he did so. He used to have conversations with them on domestic matters, in which he was deeply interested; the phase only lasted a comparatively short time. He was a very intelligent child and was not unduly imaginative.

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The child's attitude to his invisible friends is generally one of the superior partner, but he consults them and asks their advice on various matters, and is much concerned about their physical well-being and makes free use of medicines. His ideas of discipline are based on those of the outer world. He is a very stern disciplinarian and punishments bulk largely in his dealings with his friend. If he has had a punishment which he considers unjust he frequently inflicts this in turn on the invisible friend. As to the value or otherwise of this fairly common phase of child life between the ages of 3 and 6 years there is some difference of opinion.

The playing-with-words stage in the child's development is one of the greatest importance and lasts a considerable time. In any investigation of the *naïveté* period of a child's life, one is remarkably impressed by the almost uncanny power of very young children in meeting and overcoming obstacles placed in their way by adults, and by their power of playing with words. In obtaining evidence with regard to this it is necessary to rely only on the reports of expert observers. The great value, for example, of the records of Professor Stern and his wife is due to their great knowledge of child life, and their well-known skill of accurate observation, and also to the fact that, in their researches on their children on the psychology of early childhood, they had the assistance of university colleagues who were carrying out similar observations on their own children.

In the following records of a well-known and capable observer some indication of the remarkable powers of young children, both of overcoming obstacles and of playing with words, is shown by

the careful observation of his boy from the age of 2 years onwards:

" *Age 2 years and 23 days.*—This is an example of thinking out a problem. His mother was using a sewing-machine in the dining-room and he got into a chair beside her and hindered her by persisting in turning the handle. I came in, took him on my knee, and kept him still. He got tired of this, clambered down, took my hand and pulled me, saying, ' Teeune on ze moosical box/ I took him to the library to start the gramophone. As I opened the door he disengaged himself and saying, ' By yourself, daddy,' bolted back to his mother and the machine. He evidently worked out a way of getting rid of me.'

This boy of 2 years and 23 days clearly decided that he must get rid of his father, who stood between him and the sewing-machine, in which he was so much interested. He laid a trap for his father, into which he fell, and gained his point.

The next selection shows that at a very early age this boy played a joke on his father, and showed a capacity for playing with words. It was his practice before getting into bed of going through the exercise, right foot, left foot, and so on, suiting the action to the words :

"*Age 2 years and 117 days.*—Laughed immoderately at his own joke when going to bed. It was holding up the right foot and saying, ' That's my right foot,' and then the left, ' That's my left foot.' Then repeating the process with ' That's my right foot. That's my *wrong* foot/ and laughing **much.**"

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The boy had shown a great interest in telephones, and a toy telephone had been fixed up *in* the nursery for his amusement:

" *Age 2 years and 150 days.*—Overheard A with toy telephone. 'Hullo! Hullo! (Pause.) I want 5959 (our number). (Pause.) Wrong number (tone of disgust). Hullo! Hullo! (Pause.) Wrong number again. DAM.' "

This shows how careful we should be in the expressions we use before young children.

A further striking example is given of playing with words :

" *Age 2 years and 116 days.*—A's nurse is engaged to a young man named Lowe. To-day A went to tea with his paternal grandmother, who, during the meal, asked him 'How is Nana?' He replied, 'Nana's quite well. Nana's gone Lowing.' This was entirely spontaneous."

The love of practical joking persisted, and many of A's plans were carefully worked out :

" *Age 3 years and 104 days.*—Played a practical joke on me! I was reading and heard a low, humming sound. A came in fresh from a bath and said : 'Come and see the aeroplane, daddy.' I went with him, he led me to the bath-room, where he had turned the tap so that it made the noise. He laughed at me heartily."

Some time afterwards A's mother noticed that he did not always appear to hear what she said and feared he might be a little deaf. The following concluded her investigation of the matter:

" *Age 3 years and 194 days.*—' Are you deaf, darling?' 'No,' he replied. So she persisted: ' Don't you always hear when Mummy speaks to you ? ' His reply was not given cheekily but as merely a grave statement of fact: ' T"3öh't want to hear sometimes.' "

Later on he developed a rather keen power of observation :

" *Age 4 years and 73 days.*—Having tea with his paternal grandmother the old lady said, ' What nice strong teeth you've got, A/ His reply was to the point. ' Yes,' he said. ' You see mine don't take out.' "

A had a very pleasing sense of worldly wisdom:

" *Age 4 years and 198 days.*—When he came to see me off at the station he remarked tactfully to his mother, ' I want a chocolate from the machine *to eat my daddy's health!* ' "

At the early age of 2 years and 349 days he made a pun on " Russian " and " rushing," knowing it to be a pun. His love of punning continued, and at 5 years of age when he had made a serviette dirty and his father complained that he could not use it again, " Oh, yes," he said deliberately, " you will ; it will *serve you yet.*"

The illustrations which have been selected are sufficient to show the remarkably early development of powers in the pre-school child of dealing with difficult situations, and, in some cases, of outwitting those who are in authority. There is, in the investigation of the ability of very young children, a rich field for research. The careful records of a large body of competent observers of

children from 2 to 5 years of age would be of inestimable value. With such evidence, a clear view could be obtained of the course of development of the child during this all-important stage, of which comparatively little is known at present.

Professor Sully, in his *Essay on Laughter*, gives an interesting account of early playing with words. His little daughter, on her third birthday, heard her mother say, "Mr. Fawkes is coming to lunch," and the child said, "I hope Mrs. Knives will come too." The statement was criticized, as it was thought that at such an early age a child would not consciously play with words and make a definite pun, but investigations of sayings of young children prove that a love of playing with words frequently enters into the child's life with the introduction of new words into his vocabulary. He plays with a new word as he would with a toy in the nursery, and this serves the very useful purpose of leading him eventually to the true content of the word. In the process, however, the misplacing of it in many connexions gives rise to the quaint sayings which cause so much amusement in childish *naïveté*.

The quaint sayings of children are of interest from many points of view. The limited vocabulary of the child in describing natural phenomena is a great mirth-provoking source among older children. A little boy complained of having been strung by a fly, and, on being questioned by his mother, said, "It was rather a big fly with a footbath jersey on." Another, describing the sting of a wasp, said, "It was all right when the wasp was walking about, but it hurt when it sat down." A little girl, on being pursued by a bee, surmised that it had heard her mother calling her "Honey."

Fanciful remarks of parents often miss their point with young children. A mother was reproving her little boy for refusing to run upstairs and fetch his baby sister's nightdress, and tried to improve the occasion by remarking that if he wouldn't the baby would unfold her little wings and fly back to Heaven. This offered a new line of argument to the boy, who suggested that she might fly upstairs and get her nightdress.

The casual remark of the adult is often literally interpreted by the young child. A boy watched, with great interest, his uncle drinking, and was obviously much disappointed with the result. On being questioned, he remarked, " I heard father say that uncle drank like a fish."

A father, anxious that his little son should make a good appearance at a party to be held in the house, told him that he must wash his face nicely or the guests would not kiss him. Later on, seeing his father washing himself, he exclaimed, " Ah, daddy, I know why you are washing your face."

Little children are adepts in finding excuses for an apparently wrong line of conduct. A little girl came home from a kindergarten because her teacher was ill and could not be there. The mother said, " You must have been very sorry to hear that your teacher was ill." " Oh, yes, mother," said the child, " of course I was, but I couldn't help clapping my hands under my breath."

A mother was rebuking her little boy for letting the water run over in the bath, and said, " Did you not listen to the little voice inside you saying it was wrong to overflow the bath ? " " Yes, mother, dear," replied the boy, " but **the water** made so **much** noise **I couldn't hear it.**"

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The following incident is frequently quoted by experts as an excellent example of pure *naïveté* :

A clever child wrote a play, which was acted by young children. In the first act there was a wedding, and at the end of the ceremony the little husband said, " And now, my dear, I must leave you and go abroad and make my fortune." In the second act he returned, bringing bags of gold and beautiful presents for his little wife. Recording his adventures, he concluded by saying, " I have had to work very hard." " Yes, my dear," replied his wife, " and during your absence I have not been idle," and drawing aside a curtain she presented him with four children.

The following examples of childish *naïveté* are fairly typical:

(a) A little girl of 3 years of age was taken by her mother to visit a family in which there were many uninteresting children. She did not enjoy herself, and on leaving said to her mother, " Why doesn't that woman save up her money and buy a really nice baby instead of having all those cheap ugly ones ? "

(b) A father entering his little son's bedroom overheard this portion of the boy's evening prayer : " If I should die during the night, please excuse me coming to Heaven in my pyjamas.

(c) A little boy on Christmas Eve was praying in a very loud voice, and asking for things he particularly wanted, whereupon his brother told him not to shout, and that God wasn't deaf. " No," said the boy, " but grandma is."

The slow process of discovering the real meaning

of words, which the children use quite fearlessly, naturally results in a rich harvest of amusing mistakes. To follow the meaning attached to words through the various stages, until they reach the normal content which the outer world recognizes as satisfactory, would be a very laborious task. Moreover, it would probably be of little value, as the process of reaching the ultimate goal may be short-circuited by the intelligent child, and would depend so largely on the opportunities of hearing a particular word used in different connexions. There is the greatest possible variety even in adult life in the knowledge of the content of many words in common use. The suggestion of a small child that the reason why our first parents were forbidden to taste the fruit of a particular tree was, " Because they were cooking apples/" was quite natural, and probably represented the result of a childish experience. Little children are much interested in the story of the Garden of Eden, and the child's question, as to the kind of carriage in which Adam and Eve were driven out of the Garden, might well indicate the child's normal acquaintance with the word " driven." On hearing for the first time the banns of marriage published in church with the final words, " This is for the third time of asking/" it was not unreasonable that a little girl should say, " Mother, dear, how did the clergyman know how many times the man had asked her ? "

Children, at the age of *naivete*, frequently use very picturesque language in the description of normal occurrences ; for example, a child, describing a scene between a dog and cat, concluded by saying, " And then the cat went up to the dog and she sneezed right in his face/" Another child in

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describing a visit to the Zoo said, " When we threw some biscuits to the elephant, he picked them up with his vacuum-cleaner." A little boy went fishing for the first time but did not catch anything, and remarked sorrowfully to his brother, " I don't think my worm is trying."

A sensitive child does not like to confess ignorance of the meaning of a word. Thus a little girl asked by her Sunday School teacher whether she had been baptized said, " Yes, I have been baptized three times, but it hasn't taken yet."

A small boy enjoyed his sister's wedding cake so much that he thought he had found the reason why Henry VIII married so many times.

In interviews with adults young children often get the advantage :

(a) An irate old gentleman in scolding a little boy for some misdemeanour said, " You ought to have a thorough good caning ; I wish I were your father," to which he replied, " Well you can be. Mother's a widow."

(b) A fond mother was entertaining some friends when her little son came home from an infant's school, and she asked him how he had got on. " Oh, very well," he said, " I was the only boy who could answer one of the questions." The proud mother was delighted, and wanted to know what the question was. After some pressure, he said it was, " Who broke the school window ? "

Similarly, parents are often placed in serious difficulties by their children's questions:

(a) " Mother dear, why is father so bald ? " asked a small child. " It *is* because your father

thinks so much,<sup>1</sup> she replied. " But, mother dear, why have you got so much hair ? " " Go on with your breakfast, you naughty boy/' was her retort.

(b) A father, breaking the news to his children that he was about to marry again, told them that he was going to give them a new mother; whereupon, a disapproving small member of the family said, " She won't be a new mother; she will only be a second-hand one/'

Teachers, when they are imparting knowledge to older children, naturally appear to them as being remarkable sources of reliable information on every conceivable subject, and, until the critical attitude appears at the age of about 10 years, children would not think of calling in question a teacher's statement. With very young children, however, the deference shown at a later age is undeveloped, and they freely discuss matters of opinion with the teacher. The story of Noah's Ark was under discussion, and the teacher was asked questions as to what the people in the Ark did during the long time the water was settling down. She ventured the suggestion that much of their time was spent in fishing, but this was strongly resented by a small boy, who pointed out that there were only two worms in the Ark.

A teacher was very angry with a little boy, and told him to tell his father how naughty he had been and to ask him to give him a good whipping. The following day the teacher said, " Well, Johnny, did your father whip you ? " " No, teacher," said the boy. She suggested that the father must be a very kind-hearted man. " Oh, no, he isn't, teacher, but he's got rheumatism," he replied.

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At a nursery school two little boys were boasting of the position and virtues of their respective parents. " My father is a doctor," said one, " and so I can be ill for nothing." " Well," said the other, not to be beaten, " my father is a clergyman, so that I can be good for nothing."

To the very young child family relationships are difficult to grasp, and, long after he has recognized himself as a separate entity, there remain puzzling questions as to the origin and exact nature of the small group of which he is a member. He finds that a knowledge of dogs and cats in their family groupings does not give him any assistance; in some cases it increases the difficulty. A little girl, knowing that only one or two of a family of kittens are allowed to live, was much concerned as to which of her twin brothers would be retained by her mother. The mistake of the boy, who described his hard-working father as, " The man who comes here on Sundays," can readily be understood, as it was the only day in the week on which he saw him. A child who, in answer to his inquiries, found that his father was born in one town, his mother in another, and he himself in yet another, was curious to know how they had all met. On being refused certain luxuries by his father, on the ground that when he was a boy he never had them, his son naturally remarked, " I say, dad, aren't you glad you came to live with us ? "

The occasional reversion of adults to a state of *naiveté* is a matter of considerable interest. Although the great age of *naiveté* is from 2 to 5 years of age, there is much evidence of its survival in later life, especially in cases of absent-mindedness, which Bergson claims to be the great watershed of laughter.

As might be expected in such cases, where the power of reasoning is temporarily in abeyance, there is a reversion to childish and naive forms of judgment and expression.

The following stories may be taken as examples of this reversion :

(a) A student, in answering a question as to why in a fruit pie the juice is found at the end of the cooking operation in the inverted cup placed in the dish, dealt in detail with the various points. He explained how air being expelled from the cup in the process of heating, the juice ascended in consequence of the air pressure being greater outside than inside the cup. Then, remembering the limitations of the water barometer, he decided, in his desire for scientific accuracy, to add the note, " *N.B.*—The cup must not be more than 32 feet high."

(b) A woman standing in a tram holding a strap had some difficulty in getting the money to pay for her ticket, and asked the conductor to hold the strap for her while she was doing so.

(c) An Irishman's wife was suddenly taken ill, and he wrote an urgent letter to the doctor asking him to come at once. Before the servant left the house with the letter his wife became better, and he concluded that a visit from the doctor was unnecessary. He thereupon opened the letter, and added a postscript, " My wife is much better, so that you need not come after all."

(d) A man was asked why it was that doctors never practised on themselves, to which he replied, " Well, you see, if they died in doing so the people would lose their confidence in them."

During the *naïveté* period of childhood the dreams of the children are of great interest, being, apart from fear-dreams, almost entirely very evident wish-fulfilments. The dreams of the young child are very different from those of adults, or even from those of older children, consisting very largely of overflow experiences from the day before, in which, however, any unpleasant occurrences now take a favourable turn.

The very human interpretation of sacred things by little children indicates the first stage in the child's outlook on such matters, and has the characteristic atmosphere of the child's, as distinguished from that of the outer, world.

It is interesting to notice in the stories of the *naiveie* of children the gradual development of a sense of justice in regard to discipline, and a definite attitude towards the claims of authority.

### CHAPTER III

#### FAIRYLAND AND DREAMLAND

WE have seen how in the child's world, in all stages of development, there is something which marks it off quite clearly from the outer world—a well-marked *fairy* element. The nature of this element changes as step by step the claims of reality become more powerful. The very young child appears to resent any attempt to interfere with the special characteristics of his own little kingdom, and, long after the fact is clearly demonstrated that Santa Claus is not a real fairy, the earlier associations retain something of their old charm, and the advent of Christmas is a source of delight because it means the partial restoration of his old friend to a position of greater importance. The child's reverence for the correct representation of Santa Claus receives a shock at any departure from tradition. A father otherwise correctly garbed as Father Christmas but wearing a bowler hat and carrying a stick was greeted by his son, a boy of 4 years of age, as Charlie Christmas.

The element of make-believe, however, gradually weakens, but the Christmas stocking is still an exciting adventure, and as time goes on it is made the occasion of giving the child presents which gradually take the place of the *fairy* element, and bring their own type of pleasurable gratification. The gastronomic pleasures associated with the

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festive season also play a by no means unimportant part in this transference. In the child's world Christmas is a far greater festival than the birthday celebration, for in the latter there is nothing fairy-like, and only after entry into the outer world is the position reversed. Moreover, Christmas is a social group function whereas the birthday is an individual affair, and is not such an occasion of general rejoicing.

Some of the children's Christmas dreams are good examples of wish-fulfilment as, for instance:

" I dreamt that my mother bought me and my sister a large Christmas tree, and on this tree there was a number of tiny little candles which were of different colours, and there was a lot of toys hanging on it. Mother had a wish-bone which she had kept, and she said we could see who got the wish and so we pulled and I had the wish. I wished that my dad would be home on Christmas Day. When Christmas Day came we were dressed in our best, and our uncles and aunts had come and we were enjoying ourselves. We went into the parlour and we found somebody dressed up as Santa Clāūs, and he asked us what we wanted off the tree. When we had got what we wanted he took off the clothes of Santa Claus and it was my father, and so my wish came true, and then I woke up and told mother."

Important changes are also taking place in the atmosphere of the nursery. The *fairy* element, associated with the teddy-bear and his nursery friends, is losing its hold, as the attitude of **the** outer world towards the intelligence and capacity for friendship of these toys penetrates nursery politics. **The** *fairy* element, so dear to **the** child,

cannot, however, be rudely banished by outside opinion. It simply alters its objective, and then there comes into existence, as we have already found, that remarkable development in the mental make-up of the child—the introduction of the invisible friend. Where this transference to an invisible friend takes place there is a clearly marked increase in the fairy type of experience. Not only has the *fairy* element a much wider field for its expression, but it has a natural stronghold in the invisibility of its objective. This renders it practically immune from adult criticism. The nurse or parent can readily demonstrate to the child the absence of any response from the gollywog, and the ineffective character of its behaviour in comparison with that of the dog or the cat. No such comparison is possible with the invisible friend, who is a creation of the imagination.

It is possible to make fun of the invisible friend and hold it up to ridicule, but this simply results in its withdrawal from discussion ; the companionship is continued, and the fairyland of childhood is greatly strengthened by such withdrawal. One of the reasons why this period plays such an important part in the child's world, and lasts in many cases for at least three years, is because it is beyond the control of those in authority to deal with this special feature of the *fairy* element. The invisible friend disappears as quickly as it comes. When the interest of the outer world is fully experienced by the child, he finds that in the realities of life there are as joyous experiences as those associated with the invisible friend, and the death-knell of this type of fairyland existence is sounded.

Through **all** these changes the fairy story **retains**

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a prominent place in the affection of the child. There have been many tests of loyalty as the human elements have failed, one by one, to maintain the proud position of earlier days. The domestic animals still possess for him, however, many of the attributes of the fairy story animals, and the child refuses to recognize the hard-and-fast line which separates human from animal behaviour. They are admitted to the sacred circle of the fairy group and are still endowed, as we have seen, with important human qualities of which nurses and parents are ignorant. The intimate friendship for the teddy-bear and gollywog, and later for the invisible friend, is now transferred to the domestic pets and greatly increases the child's joy of life. It is, in fact, a serious misfortune for children to miss, at an early stage of childhood, the companionship of domestic animals. They form a safe and very welcome transition from that pure and undefined fairyland existence, through which we must all pass, to one in which a modified fairy state is developed, where the actors are living animals with the intelligence of human beings. A gulf separates the untruthful, naughty gollywog from the kitten of extraordinary intelligence, and it is an advantage to have a convenient bridge by which to cross it.

In the earlier stages the reasoning powers of the the dog and cat are absurdly exaggerated as may be shown by the following stories recorded by young children :

(a) " Our dog is very affectionate but he is **very** jealous. We had a lovely little kitten given to us and of course we made a great fuss of it. The dog

went out of the room and had a good cry and when he came back his eyes were red and his cheeks were wet with tears."

(b) " A poor little tabby cat came to our house and our two dogs took a great fancy to her, and they kept washing her until she was wringing wet, and then they kissed her and they winked at each other."

(c) " One day we heard a noise in our parlour and we went in very quietly and there was our cat sitting on the music stool at the piano. His front paws were on the keys and he was mewling just as hard as he could. He was trying to sing."<sup>1</sup>

(d) " When I was in the city with daddy, we went into one of the teashops and sat down at a table which was near the counter, and while we were waiting we saw a cat who was evidently very hungry. She walked up to the counter and mewed until she was noticed, and then she laid a penny down at the waitress's feet and she gave her something to eat. Then she ran out of the shop and ate it on the pavement, while the waitress took the penny which the cat had carried in her mouth. The waitress said the cat did this every day, but she did not know who it belonged to or where it lived."

In each of these stories there is a well-marked *fairy* element which may have, especially in the last case, been associated with the day-dreams of an imaginative child. Some of the animal stories told by children indicate very human methods of dealing with difficult situations. Thus a child tells a story of a visitor who disliked cats, and who insisted on one being turned out of a room during her visit. The cat was very much annoyed, and on gaining

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entry into the room through an open window, dipped her paws in some water, jumped on the table, and flicked it into the lady's face.

Friendly actions by animals are the foundation of many stories:

(a) An excellent frog story concludes as follows : " The frog had been sitting on a number of tiny eggs. We did not know whether he had laid them there or whether he was simply keeping them warm for a friend."

(b) " A boy was riding on the mother pig and the father pig came out and knocked him off, but when the father pig went home to bed, the mother pig got up from her bed and gave the boy another ride."

(c) "A gentleman was bathing, and his dog coming down to the beach found his master's clothes and, fearing they might be stolen, he put them in a place of safety, much to his master's consternation when he came out from his dip."

(d) " A man with a monkey both had seats in a train. A lady came in and was standing up, whereupon the monkey jumped up from the seat and with a polite wave of the hand, offered her his seat, which was accepted amidst roars of laughter."

We see how the *fairy* element, ancient or modern, permeates the various activities of the child's life and acts as a powerful stimulant in different directions. It is not, however, sufficiently recognized what a valuable part it plays indirectly in giving that vivid interest in the acquirement of the mechanical arts which are involved in the power of reading and understanding the fascinating fairy story.

In the infant school, working under enthusiastic

and capable teachers, there is very little difficulty in maintaining that vivid interest which is so essential. The novelty, the wonderment, the joy of life, and the longing for self-expression, render a teacher's task, from the point of view of interest, a very simple matter. Just as in a primitive community where the interest associated with all activities is concerned with important matters such as the procuring of food, hunting, the making of necessary clothing and the construction of buildings, which all deal directly with the fundamental facts of survival, no additional stimulus is needed to secure the putting forth of the very best effort. Under such conditions the pupil learns very rapidly, and practically every impression is followed by expression. In the presence of a vital interest all things are possible, and activities which would otherwise become tiresome drudgery are converted into joyous experiences. The value of interest is that we work with the least possible \_\_\_\_\_ and with pleasure instead of pain.

With young children the longing for self-expression is such a powerful stimulus that, under proper conditions; the acquirement of knowledge proceeds more rapidly in early childhood than in any subsequent period of life. The child who has become fascinated by fairy stories soon discovers that the power of reading is the key which unlocks the door of a great treasure house; he sees clearly the definite connexion between means and end. This is the reason why an intelligent child, with very little guidance from the teacher, will make phenomenal progress not only in the act of reading but in the wealth of ideas associated with the meaning of words.

The *fairy* element at all ages finds expression, as

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already stated, in the children's favourite stories. An exhibition of figures so cleverly made that confusion arises as to the objects being inanimate or animate is a great source of joy to the child. It links up successfully with the earliest experiences of the nursery. The following story recorded by a boy of 12 years of age is a case in point:

" When I went to Madame Tussaud's I was very much amused with some wax-works when my mother pointed to an old lady. The lady was asking a wax policeman the time and as she found it would not answer she gave it a prod with her umbrella. Still thinking it was a real policeman, she started insulting him and called him a good-for-nothing and went on to say ' This is where our rates and taxes go.' After ten minutes or so the old lady moved away after much persuasion to look at other things. When the bell rang ordering everybody out of the building we saw the old lady go up as we passed the door and prod her umbrella into a real policeman and exclaimed, ' Here is another old good-for-nothing,' at which the policeman told her she had made a mistake. She then made an apology and walked away amid much laughter."

The pantomime is a very popular form of entertainment with young children. The type of fairy story represented varies in the nature and extent of its appeal with the age and sex of the child. From the stories recorded as favourites it would appear that " Dick Whittington and his Cat," " Ah Baba and the Forty Thieves," and " Jack and the Beanstalk " are most popular with the boys, and " Cinderella," " Red Riding Hood," and " The Babes in the Wood " with the girls. The animals

in the plays are more popular than the good and bad fairies, as they are much more important members of the child's fairy kingdom, the human representatives having been partially dispossessed of their claims to fairyland and almost reduced to the position of good and bad people in ordinary plays; with very young children, however, the fairy makes its appropriate appeal.

The stories and dreams of children are frequently based on well-known fairy tales, as, for example, the following:

(a) "A girl carrying a pail of milk on her head started day-dreaming. She will buy hens with the price of the milk, and then the hens will lay eggs and produce many chickens. She will then become rich and go to a ball in a fine dress. She tossed her head as she refused charming suitors, and the pail fell off, and so ended her dream."

(b) "Last night I dreamt that I was a brave knight. A great big monster came running after the most beautiful lady I ever saw. I drew my sword and hit the monster on his back. He roared so loud that the lady screamed. I said I will soon slay this monster, and I hit him again and then I cut its head, and he fell dead on the ground. The lady said 'You are a hero.' Then I awoke."

The fascination of the *fairy* element is so strong that it influences the choice of quite young children of extravagant stories in which animals play an important part. This accounts for the popularity of such a story as the following :

" There was a storm at sea and in order to lighten the ship the sailors threw overboard a fat wññfli,

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a box of oranges and a deck-chair. The storm having abated, a large shark was caught and hauled aboard. On cutting it open the woman was found sitting in the deck-chair selling oranges at 3 a penny."

The dream appeals to the child to a remarkable extent, and principally because of the close relationship which exists between it and the fairy story. In the dream normal reasoning is abandoned, and the rapid changes from scene to scene in the most incongruous manner find a generous response in the mind of the child. The fulfilment of wishes which have found no satisfaction in waking life are a source of continual delight, and new experiences of an exciting nature are crowded into the dream. Compensations for disabilities, physical and mental, find expression; the crippled child is no longer handicapped and plays games with normal children; the blind child sees and the deaf child hears. No fairy story can rival the delightful experiences of a happy dream.

In no case is the compensatory function of the dream more clearly illustrated than in that of the child who has lived with unkind, worthless parents, in the deep shadow of adversity in a wretched home, an utter stranger to practically everything that makes life worth living. Such a child frequently, after being thrown entirely upon his own resources, finds himself in a reformatory or industrial school. From the records of a collection of dreams of children in all types of schools, the reformatory child stands out as the happiest of all dreamers. The natural craving of the child for a happy home, loving parents, and the normal joys

of childhood, is gratified in his dream. Wealthy parents in priceless motor-cars, laden with presents, visit him at school, and he becomes the popular dispenser of appropriate gifts to his school-fellows. He dreams of astonishing success in after-life unsurpassed in the records of any fairy story. It is difficult to realize fully the joyousness of the experience afforded by the following account of a fairylike dream of one of these little outcasts :

" My last dream was of motors, motor-bicycles, and aeroplanes, all of which I thought I possessed. I went into business with the idea of becoming like Selfp'dges and to possess everything. I first had a motor-bicycle, which I bought very cheaply, but thought a motor better, so I bought one. I always carried my motor-bicycle at the back of my car. One day I met a nice young lady but before long forgot about her. My business becoming great I bought an aeroplane. I had many trips in my aeroplane, the greatest being to Australia. While in Australia I set up another business and at last became a millionaire. I asked my mother to come across but she would not, so I went to her. Until this time I did not possess a house, but after some trouble I saw a beautiful large mansion and bought it. Having nothing to do I became a doctor and became renowned for my being able to cure the influenza."

After the visit of the King and Queen to a poor part of London, a girl of five years of age dreamt: " A lady was sitting on my bed, and the King and Queen were under the bed eating bread and butter and a lot of ladies with them."

In addition to the *fairy* element having a very

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marked effect on the dreamer, there are many cases recorded of young children having definite fairy story dreams, as, for example, the following :

(a) " Last night I dreamt that I was in fairyland, and that I had beautiful little fairies to wait upon me. One day, a little fairy said to me, ' Would you like to come into the wood with us ?' and so I said, ' Yes.' So we went into the wood and we saw lots of rabbits running about. Presently, the fairies thought it was time to go home so we went home and had tea. For tea we had ice-cakes and cream. Then we went out and had some moonbeam slides like all fairies like to do. Soon after we went home to bed. Now our beds were not made of iron, they were made of moss with rose petals for pillows and fern leaves for a cover. Just as I was going to sleep, I awoke."

(b) " Last night I had a most strange dream. I dreamt that my sister gave me some money and I went to a shop and bought a chocolate nurse and took it home with me and laid it in the cupboard. When tea-time came I sat down at the table and waited to be served. Just at that moment the chocolate nurse came walking out of the cupboard and served me with my tea. I thought this very strange but after a while I began talking to it. At night I made a little bed for it in the doll's house. Next morning she served me with my breakfast and after that I took her for a nice walk in the meadows to pick flowers. There were some cows feeding in the meadow and one of them ate poor chocolate nurse. I then woke up."

Girls have far more fairy dreams than boys. Generally these dreams are of a most pleasurable

nature ; they are greatest at 8 years of age, but the *fairy* element has a considerable effect on the dream during the whole of the school period. It enters into the changes which occur when people are converted into animals, for example: the head mistress becomes a horse, an old man becomes a mauve cow with green eyes, and the brother of a girl becomes a dog and she rides home from school on his back.

The falling and rapid movement dreams also give the child a thrilling experience of a novel character which, although frequently of an unpleasant kind, approximate rather to the fairyland type than to that of normal life. The following example is fairly typical:

" The last dream I had was not very pleasant. I was walking along when I saw a little girl. I asked her if she would come for a walk with me. She said she would be pleased to come. While we were walking along, in front of us stood a high wall, which we tried to climb, and as we got near the top we fell down again. I tried to speak to the little girl, but I found she had gone, and I was alone so I went and turned back, and I found myself on the top of Nelson's Monument, and all at once all the four lions came and lay at my feet. I looked at all the people, and they all called to me to come down, I tried to jump, and I found myself in bed."

The compensatory nature of the dream and its *fairy* element are also well shown in the stories of physically defective children. A lame boy, who dreamt of escaping from a bull by flight, adds to the record of his dream: " I never dreamt that I had a bad leg." Another good example of a wish-fulfilment dream is the following, of a very poor

crippled boy of 14. He dreams of wealth and physical vigour:

" I dreamt that I had plenty of money. I drew a thousand pounds out of the bank. I was coming along the road when two men came and tried to take it from me. The two men started fighting me to get the money and I gave both of them a knock-out blow. I went to bed that night and put the money under my pillow, and when I awoke I was hunting all over the bed for it. I did not find it."

Physically defective children sometimes explain the origin of their dreams. A boy had an exciting dream of a man shooting rabbits from a low-flying aeroplane, and he was running along picking up the rabbits. He explains it as follows :

" Early in the day we were playing cricket and I remember seeing an aeroplane and after my dream, in the morning, I heard some of the boys in the school saying that they had heard someone shooting rabbits in the evening ; so I expect my dream was due to seeing an aeroplane in the day and hearing the shots of the man shooting rabbits in the evening in my sleep.<sup>1</sup>"

From the various examples given of the dreams of children it will be seen that a very close connexion exists between the fairy story and the dream. The basis of the extraordinary fascination of the dream for the child is unquestionably the *fairy* element. This return to fairyland at night must be a real source of joy to the child long after he has been forced into a partial, and somewhat grudging, acceptance of the verdict of the outer world with regard to fairies. It is of the greatest interest to

trace, in all stages of development, the struggle for the retention of as much as possible of the delightful fairyland existence. It is seen in the attitude to the toys of the nursery, then in the invisible friend, and later in the impossible demand for abnormal fairy qualities in animals. In all these struggles, with a continual weakening of the fairy position, there remains the compensatory nature of the dream with occasional visits to fairyland. This is not all, for in the day-dream, in periods of reverie, there may again be fairyland glimpses. Under normal conditions the separation of the day-dreaming from the waking state is very rarely so complete as in the night-dream, but the day-dreamer has the great advantage of being able to select the subject of the dream. To a certain extent we all day-dream from early childhood to old age. In thinking over ambitious schemes or any important departure from the trivial round of daily life, the day-dreaming element, with its fairy associations, is certain to enter. If the stimulus thus given leads to practical applications in the kingdom of reality all may be well, but if the only satisfaction obtained is the pleasurable effect of the day-dream it may be a very real source of danger. There comes a time, if the day-dreaming tendency becomes habitual, when the child or adult becomes so enamoured of this type of experience that he fails to possess the power of dealing effectively with the **common concerns of life.**

## CHAPTER IV

### THE SENSE OF VERBAL HUMOUR IN CHILDREN

**T**HE dawn of the sense of humour in children appears in a primitive form, as has already been shown, at a very early stage. Cases have been quoted which prove clearly that as, in the process of learning to speak, new words appear on the scene, they are played with and compared with those already in the child's vocabulary for the definite purpose of causing amusement as early as the third year, and should therefore be separated from those odd combinations which occur with no such purpose in view. At a later stage this playing with words has become so well established that riddles are incorporated in the child's scheme of funny things, and reach a position of considerable popularity at the age of 7 years in the case of girls, and a year later in that of boys. It is difficult to determine how far this spirit of play enters into the attitude of the child towards nursery toys and invisible friends, and how far his love of make-believe, for its own sake, affects his attitude towards the fairy story which has such a predominant interest for him.

In early life the child shows on occasions such an extraordinary ability in playing upon the susceptibilities of his parents, in order to secure the end he desires, that it becomes extremely difficult to

analyse the different elements in the child's somewhat complicated mental make-up and to discover the real child. At an early stage leg-pulling becomes a childish accomplishment, but it needs the expert to recognize it. In the presence of a really intelligent boy or girl the comparatively unintelligent father becomes as clay in the hands of the child potter when the desire for some particular favour is in question. In a contest of this nature, the child's sense of humour is a valuable asset.

The power to interest and amuse young children is regarded as a special gift and is much coveted ; it ministers to our feeling of superiority. To attempt to trace the source of this power is interesting and sometimes disconcerting. The popularity of the successful teller of stories to very young children does not necessarily rest upon the verbal content of the story, though this must naturally reach a certain standard of interest for its own sake. There must be something beyond this ; a dramatic form of representation is a powerful factor, there must be light and shade, and frequent change of gesture and tone of voice. If, added to these elements, there is something incongruous in the dress and appearance of the story-teller, success is assured. Incongruity has a high value in mirth-production for the young child, as will be seen in visual humour which finds expression at a very early stage.

In an investigation of the sense of humour in children, in which a very large number of boys and girls gave an account of the funny stories and jokes which amused them most, it appeared that from age to age there was a well-marked group of incidents **for** each period, which seemed to be the chief humorous situations which caused amusement.

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At the ages of 5 and 6 children are amused by action, noise, and dramatic effects ; someone falling down, funny dancing, bumping into each other, grotesque faces and figures, things upside down and inside out, dressing up when they take part, and funny songs. Jokes told to very young children, as a rule, only appeal through the dramatic instinct, and depend largely for their effect on the inflexions of the voice and the facial expressions or actions of the narrator. Spoken or written humorous material, without dramatic action, can only be appreciated when children can read fairly fluently. One observer read, without gesture, in an ordinary tone of voice, some of a well-known comedian's most obvious stories to the children in an infant school without raising a smile. Funny or grotesque illustrations drawn in front of the children by the teacher, which they are afterwards allowed to reproduce, greatly delight small children, probably due to the actions and discussion produced as the picture grows.

Considerable changes are to be noted when the age of 7 years is reached. The records of children of this age mark the transition from the purely visual type of humorous situation to an increased interest in playing with words. At this stage there is a very marked difference between the boys and the girls ; the stories of the boys mainly consist of cinema and fairy tales, and many of the jokes have for their basis the misfortunes of others. On the other hand, the stories of the girls are almost exclusively fairy tales, a large percentage of which are about the story of the " Three Bears," which retains its appeal to children far longer than might have been anticipated. In the girls' records there

are many riddles and much play upon words, but these elements are missing from those of the boys. Humorous situations, based on the misfortunes of others, do not bulk so largely in the girls' as in the boys' records.

The mistakes and quaint answers in school of younger children also cause amusement, such, for example, as the reprimand of the teacher of the boy who came to school with dirty hands, and who said, "What would you say, Johnny, if I came to school with dirty hands like yours?" and the boy replied, "Please, teacher, I would be too polite to mention it." Another boy who had egg on his mouth was reproved by his teacher: "Oh, you dirty boy, why didn't you wash your face before you came to school? I can see that you had an egg for breakfast this morning." "No, teacher," said the boy, "it was yesterday that I had the egg." The story of the boy who was punished by his mother for washing the wrong arm, when he went to be vaccinated, is also popular at this age. Many of the stories are concerned with cleanliness. The girl who told the inspector, who asked her to do an arithmetic sum in apples, that she couldn't do it as in their school they always did sums in oranges, caused much amusement. Any play upon words is popular, as, for example, the story of the nervous curate who gave out the hymn, "Greenland's icy mountains," as "Iceland's greasy mountains."

At 8 years of age the element of superiority, which is foreshadowed in the records of some of the stories of the children of the age of 7, now becomes an important element, and there are many accounts of mistakes of younger children. The girls here, as at other ages, associate stupidity with

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the boys, but there is no reciprocal action in the case of the boys. At this stage the misfortunes of others and fairy stories, including those about talking animals, are very common in the records of boys and girls. The boys now take an interest in riddles and playing with words, but in this respect are far behind the girls. The favourite fairy story is still the "Three Bears." There is a marked increase now in domestic stories, and, curiously enough, those of boisterous fun are far more common with the girls than with the boys.

Among the records of school events are the following:

(a) " It was the arithmetic lesson and the question was, ' If your father owed the butcher 15s., the shoemaker us., and the grocer 4s. 6d., how much would he pay altogether ? ' to which the answer was, ' He wouldn't pay anything, teacher; he'd move.' "

(b) "A boy, being re-examined on a lesson given on the bones of the body the day before, excused himself for giving the number of bones as being one in excess of the number given by the teacher the previous day, because he'd swallowed a fish-bone at breakfast that morning."

(c) " A boy wishing to be absent from school and go to a football match telephoned to the head-mistress: " Hello ! Miss Brown; my son is very ill and I'm sorry to say cannot come to school to-day.' ' Who is this talking ? ' said Miss Brown. ' My father,' said the boy."

(d) " A teacher was asked by a little girl whether anyone could be punished for something she hadn't done. ' Certainly not, my dear/ replied the

teacher. ' Well, teacher, I haven't done my homework,' said the child."

(e) " The children were having a history lesson and were asked, ' Who followed Edward VI ? ' ' Mary,' was the answer. ' Quite right,' said the teacher. ' And who followed Mary ? ' ' A little lamb,' said a small child."<sup>1</sup>

There is a great change in the following year. The intelligent child of 9 years of age has, to a large extent, overcome the mechanical arts of reading and writing, is an omnivorous reader, and is rapidly acquiring a fair background of useful knowledge. Boys and girls of this period are particularly interested in funny stories and jokes. The good fairy story is still very popular, especially with girls. The domestic story is improving, and accounts of comic incidents from well-known books are quoted. One girl of 9 says : " The funniest book I have ever read is Mr. Shakespeare's Comedy of Errors." The feeling of superiority is increasing and stories and jokes of amusing mistakes are still very popular. The story of Epaminondas satisfies the childish demand in this respect and is much quoted. An amusing story, or one considered to be amusing by the children, spreads rapidly through the school. Riddles and play upon words still maintain their position at this age, but the popularity of the misfortunes of others, as a source of merriment, is decreasing.

Some of the stories of children of this age are evidently drawn from books of stories, for they are the common property of school children in many countries. The following are fairly representative :

(a) " A coloured servant girl in her first situation,

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on being told to fetch a glass of milk, brought the glass in her hand, and was told by her mistress to bring it on a tray, or in a saucer, in future. The following day, on a similar request being made for a glass of milk, the girl poured the milk into a saucer, and entered the room carefully balancing it and said, ' Shall I bring you a spoon too, mum, or will you lap it up ? ' "

(b) "A kind lady visiting a workhouse went up to an elderly, very carelessly dressed man, and said, ' I hope you have plenty to eat and that they don't overwork you.' She was very much embarrassed when the matron told her that she had been speaking to the doctor of the institution. Covered with confusion, she went back to him and made profuse apologies, and then made matters worse by telling him that it had taught her a lesson, and that she would never go by appearances again."

(c) " The story of ' the chauffeur who ran over himself.' A chauffeur sent a little boy to buy a packet of cigarettes for him, but the shopkeeper wouldn't sell him any. On hearing this, he said, ' Oh, never mind, I will run over myself.' "

(d) " An old deacon, who very much disapproved of dancing, thought he would admonish his daughter, who had been to a dance the night before. On coming down to breakfast in the morning he said, ' Good morning, daughter of the devil,' to which she replied, ' Good morning, father.' "

(e) " A lady in the country was much worried because the doctor had to come such a long way to see her and told him so. ' It doesn't matter,' said he. ' I have another patient out here; so that I can kill two birds with one stone.' "

## VERBAL HUMOUR IN CHILDREN

At 10 years of age there is a considerable development in the type of humorous situation which finds most favour with the children. The most important change is the appearance of a critical attitude towards those in authority, which finds its fullest expression two or three years later during the period of rapid growth.

Children are still very interested in funny stories, and books of jokes and comic papers are eagerly bought and read. The power of graphic description has improved. Funny stories from good books are increasing in number; "Alice in Wonderland," "Helen's Babies," "Three Men in a Boat." and "Tom Sawyer," are often quoted. At this age much attention is given to the affairs of the classroom, as affording suitable material for the gratification of the sense of humour. The inspector is the subject of much ridicule; for example: an inspector was testing the arithmetic in a class, and inverted the numbers given, by writing them on the blackboard, thus : if the children said 26, he would write 62 ; if they said 87, he would write 78, and so on. At last a rude boy said, " 33, now muck about with that! "

The teacher who explains the meaning of a word, and asks the children to construct sentences containing the word, in order to discover whether the meaning is understood, gives much scope for laughter. The following is an example:

" A teacher, in reply to questions, explained that 'trickling' was another word for running, and that the word 'anecdote' meant a short tale. He then asked the children to construct a sentence containing these words. One of the answers was, 'A dog

came trickling down the street, with a tin-can tied to his anecdote.' "

The critical attitude of the children to the teacher is also a subject of merriment, as may be seen by the following :

(a) "A teacher explained that the word ' heirloom ' meant something which descended from father to son, whereupon a boy said, ' Well, teacher, that's the funniest word I've ever heard for a pair of trousers.' "

(b) " Two new boys, Tom and Jack, entered a class and the teacher asked the first his name. ' Tom,' said the boy. ' You should not say that,' said the teacher. ' Your real name is Thomas,' and he emphasized the second syllable. Jack, on being asked his name, was embarrassed and suggested ' Jackass,' "

(c) " A teacher, after giving a lesson on the giraffe, asked the children if they could imagine anything worse than a giraffe with a sore throat. A small boy suggested, ' A centipede with corns,' "

The element of superiority is still a very important factor. At this stage the fairy story still retains its hold, and boisterous fun is kept within its proper limits. Riddles are on the decrease, but the play upon words is increasing, and improving in quality.

Reference has already been made to the striking changes which take place in the sense of humour when important physiological developments, such as rapid growth, are in progress. This is particularly well marked at 11 to 13 years of age. At

this stage it is more convenient to associate special characteristics of the sense of humour with this longer period than to group them into separate years, as is possible with the stories of younger children.

The stories and jokes of the boys and girls of 9 and 10 years of age gave evidence of a considerable advance in the appreciation of amusing incidents. Naturally, the material was of a primitive type, but it was improving rapidly and appeared to give promise of important developments, especially in the play upon words and the selection of funny stories from good literature. At the ages now under consideration, however, there is a very marked deterioration, especially at 12 years of age, when the sense of humour seems to have disappeared almost entirely. Great physical changes are taking place ; rapid growth is in progress and reaches its maximum increase at 12 years of age, when, according to trustworthy figures, the boy increases in height by seven and the girl by nine centimetres, after which the curve of growth tends to flatten.

Associated with these physical changes there is a tendency for the children to break away to a certain extent from established authority, and to think out things for themselves, and the appreciation of good literature is weakened. The funny story is now of a more personal nature; it is a story they have heard rather than read. Their own experiences bulk largely. The element of superiority runs riot, and they delight in extravagant stories of stupidity concerned with adults rather than with children. American exaggeration and Irish stories are very popular, and the sayings of parrots are the sole survivors of the earlier animal stories.

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As examples of exaggeration stories the following may be mentioned:

(a) " An American passing the Law Courts in a bus asked the conductor how long it took to put up ' that block of buildings.' The conductor replied, ' Oh, about 7 years.' ' In our country,' said the American, ' that would have taken about 7 weeks.' Later on, the bus was passing Westminster Abbey, and the American inquired what was the name of the building; the conductor replied that he didn't know, as it wasn't there when he passed in the morning."

(b) "A man was shaving, when a sudden knock was heard at the door ; this startled him, and he had the misfortune to cut off his nose. In his excitement he dropped his razor, which cut off one of his toes. A doctor was called in and bound up the wounds. After some days the bandages were removed, when it was found that the nose had been fixed on to the foot and the toe on to the face. The man made a complete recovery, but it was very awkward, because every time he wanted to blow his nose he had to take his boot off."

Such a story as (b) is rarely, if ever, quoted by children outside the rapid-growth range of age.

This is the period when many stories are related of the idiosyncrasies of the English, Scotch, and Welsh. A very popular one is the nature of the presents taken home to their wives by representatives of England, Scotland, and Wales : the Englishman took home " a tea-cosy from Cork," the Welshman " a tea-pot from Dublin," and the Scotsman, a cup and saucer bearing the inscription " The Great Western Railway Company."

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The boys' football stories at this stage are singularly bad, and betray an inadequate sense of humour. The boisterous fun element comes into a larger proportion of the records than at any other period, and these consist mainly of ragging stories and somewhat crude practical jokes.

In the stories of the girls of *n* years of age the falling off in the sense of humour is more clearly marked than in those of the boys, which in many cases show a slight improvement on the 10-year-old stories. The story of the woman who slipped on the polished plate of the "Victory," marking the place where Nelson fell, and told the guide that she was not surprised that Nelson fell on this spot, for she nearly fell there herself, is often quoted; and the advertisement of "A good dog for sale—eats anything—very fond of children," is much appreciated. Far and away, the lowest point in the humorous quality of the material which affords amusement is reached with boys and girls at about the age of 12. Towards the close of the 13-year-old stage there is, in the case of girls, a recovery; but with boys it comes somewhat later. During the 11 to 13 period the riddle practically disappears, but it is, to a certain extent, revived at 16 to 18 years of age.

The great change during this period is the diversion from fun found in childish incidents, in the fairy story, in books of some literary merit, and the affairs of the class-room, which is so common during the ages of 9 and 10, to adult material of an inferior kind, much of which is imperfectly understood. When the revival comes there is a far greater resemblance to the material of the 10-year-old child, than to that of the child in the serious gap from 11

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to 13, and there is far less of the boisterous element, Irish stories of stupidity, and stories dealing with American exaggeration.

It has been pointed out that extravagance of language accompanies the extravagance of action in the stories of this period. This is well shown in the following examples:

(a) " On October 31st I entered a museum and while walking along a gallery I saw a couple, evidently married by the way they clung to each other. But what arrested my attention was the bright-hued dress of the woman. My first glance suggested that it was wallpaper, but on approaching nearer I saw that it was some expensive material, with such patterns as roses with gorgeous-hued butterflies on the wing, whilst bright-coloured leaves were also entwined on a pale blue background. A costly fur adorned her shoulders and a hat, made of feathers on the outside with a long ostrich feather hanging down the back, was on her head. The gentleman, quite a foot shorter than his wife, wore a black frock coat and a rosette in his buttonhole. He had on a light pair of trousers while a light pair of spats were on his polished boots. His collar and shirt front were evidently too tight for he tugged at them at intervals and screwed his neck. They were very comical, and I passed a very pleasant ten minutes."

(b) " A burglar entered a building and saw a notice on the safe : ' Don't waste dynamite; the safe is open—just turn the knob,' He did so. The place was flooded with light; an electric current made him helpless. A bell clanged loudly ; a door in the wall opened and a bulldog sprang upon

him. As he was dragged to the prison cell he said : ' My confidence in human nature has been rudely shaken.' "

At this period of remarkable change of mental outlook there is much curiosity, and a great desire in the children to explain the origin of things, as is indicated by the quaint essay of a boy on " Why I am glad that I am a Boy " :

" I am glad that I am a boy because boys are fonder of open-air enjoyments such as fishing, football, and cricket, which lead to health and happiness. I am glad because boys have more suitable raiment to face the storms of the seasons. Boys are also stronger than girls, they're more muscular, but in will-power we must give place to the girls. I am glad also because the male race is so much more silent than the female race. We learn the reason from the story of the Creation, for man was made from the dust of the earth and woman from the ribs of a man. Take a sack of dust and drop it down a hole, you will only hear a small thud, but if, in a similar way, you drop down a sack of bones, you hear a great rattle. Dust is more silent than bones."

With the close of the rapid-growth period, normal conditions again obtain in the development of the sense of humour in children. From 14 to 18 years of age a very great improvement takes place. In the selection of funny stories, a much larger proportion come from the works of well-known writers. The culture of a good home has a great influence on the choice and variety of the stories ; whereas in the very poor home the child relies on the school

and the comic papers for his material. Stories for which originality is claimed by the narrator are mainly *naïveté* stories of young children. The personal contributions, however, increase in value and give promise of future witticisms. The children quote less and less of the old stories.

The domestic stories of this period may be divided into three groups, viz. :

(1) Those in which the father is the object of ridicule as, for example :

(a) " A child had a favourite dog called Paddy. One night an accident happened, and Paddy was killed. The mother broke the news to the child the following morning, and was surprised to find that so little notice was taken of the sad news. Later on, the mother heard screams coming from the nursery, and the child cried out : ' Oh, mother, Paddy's dead,' ' But I told you so at breakfast time,' said the mother. ' I didn't understand you, mother,' replied the child ; ' I thought you said Daddy,' "

(b) " A child, having written a letter, was on the point of going out to post it, but her mother said, ' It is an awful night and raining in torrents. It isn't fit for a dog to be out. Your father will go,' "

(c) " A boy said to his father, ' Dad, what are ancestors ? ' ' Well, my son,' replied the father, ' I am one of your ancestors, and your grandfather is another,' ' Then, dad, why do people brag about them ? ' said the boy,"

(2) Those dealing with the untruthfulness of the mother, as when she tells her child to inform unwelcome visitors that she is out, whereas she is in, and the child, by stupidity, reveals the fact; and

(3) The sayings and doings of young children, some of which are said to be original; for example : " A child had noticed that her father, in presenting his books to his friends, always wrote in them, ' With the author's compliments.' On receiving a birthday present of a Bible from her little girl, her mother found on the first page the inscription, ' With the author's compliments,' "

Towards the latter part of the 14 to 18 period the description of humorous situations improves immensely, and the stories in which the element of superiority finds satisfaction are no longer confined to the mistakes of children, but deal rather with the actions of people in official positions who are unduly pompous and over-estimate their own importance. The element of subtlety now becomes a frequent and welcome factor in funny stories which are much enriched by its inclusion.

There is a considerable difference of opinion among experts as to the number of really good original funny stories and jokes from which the modern stories and jokes have been evolved. It is agreed that the number is small.

There is no more pleasant occupation than to unravel the life-history of a funny story. In collecting children's stories from a variety of sources it is interesting to notice the changes which occur when a story becomes acclimatized in a new environment. England, America, France, and Germany have a large common stock of stories which are treasured among the children in the schools of these countries. There is no question whatever about their having had a common origin, but it frequently happens that different points in the story are emphasized, depending upon the country of its adoption.

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There are many points in a story which may cause laughter, such, for example, as stupid mistakes, the recognition of which does homage to our sense of superiority, a play upon words, a ludicrous situation, exaggeration, the misfortunes of others, and any humorous situation which causes surprise followed by a relief from restraint. If the story contains several elements which independently would cause amusement the appeal is considerably strengthened, and also its chance of survival is increased. Thus many funny stories which have no literary merit or intrinsic interest survive because they reach the sense of humour from so many angles.

The following story is quoted by large numbers of English and American school children : " A mother had two sons named Ikey and Mikey who one day were playing in an upstairs room. The mother went out of the house and slammed the door. She then found she had left her key in the house and called out, ' Ikey throw my key out of the window,' whereupon Ikey threw his brother Mikey out." The absurd mistake of Ikey appeals to the sense of superiority ; there is also the play upon the words Mikey and my key, and, further, the misfortunes of others in the fate of Mikey. This triple appeal saves the story and makes it a favourite with young children.

Similar conditions have safeguarded the life of another story which is clearly a manufactured one : " A stupid, nervous man reading the Lessons in church by turning over several pages in mistake read, 'Moses was sick and the lot fell on Aaron,' " Here we have the stupidity of the reader (superiority), the play upon the words sick and lot, the

misfortunes of others by the lot falling on Aaron, and the abrupt switching off from one line of thought to another, all concentrated in a very short story. Thus this made-up story will probably have a very long life in virtue of the variety of its appeal and its brevity.

Children frequently laugh at stories the point of which has been completely missed. The sensitive child thinks that not to see the point of the story at which other children laugh casts a reflection upon his intelligence, and he joins in the laughter. Laughter, moreover, is so contagious that a child, entering a room in which others are laughing, laughs himself, and then inquires as to the cause of the laughter. This is especially true of negro children ; if one child laughs the whole class joins in. The negro child appears to have much less control over the facial muscles than the white child, and has a less developed sense of humour. The play instinct is more dominant as the cause of laughter than the sense of humour. Whereas the white girl has quite as keen a sense of humour as the white boy, the coloured girl lags far behind the coloured boy, and many appear to be quite devoid of the power of appreciating a humorous situation.

There are many examples of children missing the point of a humorous story, as in the well-known riddle : " Why was the elephant the last animal to leave the Ark ? Because he had to stay behind to pack up his trunk," The boy who tried the riddle oh some others, and said portmanteau instead of trunk, clearly showed that he had missed the point, and he was surprised that there was no laughter response. Similarly a boasting traveller, telhng of his climbing experiences in the mountains, was

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asked if he had seen Ben Nevis. " No," said he. " I called on him, but he wasn't in." On repeating this a child said " Snowdon " instead of Ben Nevis, and the story failed. In the same family group is the " Strange " story : " A solicitor named Strange told his wife that when he died he wished to have a tombstone placed on his grave with the simple words: ' Here lies an honest lawyer.' The wife protested that people would not know who was buried there, but he said, ' Oh, yes, they will; everybody who reads it will say, " That's strange." ' " When on the repetition of the story the word " extraordinary " was used instead of " strange " it proved clearly that the point of the story had been completely misunderstood. There are numerous stories in this family group based on exactly the same sequence of ideas, and they generally have a play upon words as their claim to popularity.

No funny story can live long which demands for its comprehension the local colour of a particular district, nor if it centres around a person not known to the hearer of the story. Similarly, political stories, however funny, unless they have a general application, are doomed to early death.

The same conditions will provide similar stories without any knowledge on the part of the producer of the story of the one which runs on parallel lines. Given a stupid man, ignorant of travel, who has not taken a ticket before, and a proper name as the name of a station, and you obtain similar stories ; for example : " An Irishman wishing to go on a journey hears the person in front of him say, ' Maryhill' (a station in Scotland), ' single,' and says in order to get his ticket, ' Pat Murphy, married.'" Another man hearing a woman in front of him say, " I want

a ticket for Helen Montana " (a station in America), follows with, " I want a ticket for Florence." The puzzled booking clerk asked, " Where is Florence ? " " She is sitting over there on the bench," replied the man.

Some stories improve considerably as time goes on with useful additions by the clever narrator, or by an improvement in the construction of the story. Others, however, degenerate and die a natural death. This is often the case with over-elaborated stories which require much ability in the telling. Technical funny stories enjoy a very limited circulation, as without a technical knowledge of the subject the point of the story is lost. At a college meeting of classical and scientific dons funny stories are told of mistakes made in examinations in classics. There is no laughter from the science men who are ignorant of classics. Similarly, when mistakes made in the laboratory form the basis of the story, there is no laughter from the classical men, though the normal sense of humour of the two groups may be equal. With ignorant, unskilled labourers stories dealing with very primitive and domestic subjects are the only ones which make any appeal to the sense of humour, but the intelligent man, with a good background of knowledge, has a wide field for laughter because he can appreciate such a large variety of humorous situations and allusions.

In order to secure long life for a funny story it must be of very general interest, requiring no great knowledge for its full appreciation, and should contain more than one type of humorous appeal.

## CHAPTER V

### THE SENSE OF VISUAL HUMOUR IN CHILDREN

**T**HE investigation of the type of story which affords most amusement to children at different ages is interesting as showing the development of a sense of humour, and its variation with changes in environment, alteration in rate of growth, and many other conditions. Equally interesting is the investigation of the sights which children laugh at during the various stages of their school life. It was possible in the study of verbal humour to discover the basis of the kind of story which achieved popularity at varying age-groups, and it would be reasonable to suppose that where a sight represented the same elements as the story laughter would result. This was abundantly confirmed in very many cases. In others it was found that the amusement caused by the visual representation started earlier, and lasted longer, than the story based on the same elements. The order of the changes from one type to another, however, was found to be fairly constant.

Towards the end of the third month, or the beginning of the fourth, laughter appears ; whereas the smile is well marked at a much earlier period, as an expression of satisfaction associated with feeding and bodily comfort. The laugh, as a result of surprise followed by relief from restraint,

or any form of amusement, can be studied from the child's first real laugh to the last laugh of old age.

The material for the investigations of visual humour was obtained by asking boys and girls, in different types of schools, to give an account of the funniest sight they had seen during a given period. The records of the funny sights fall naturally into such groups as : (i) Matters associated with performances in cinemas, theatres, music-halls, circuses, concerts, and boys' and girls' clubs; (2) Punch and Judy shows ; (3) behaviour of domesticated animals ; (4) behaviour of animals at the Zoo ; (5) a great variety of street scenes with humorous elements, including incidents in shops, trams, and buses ; (6) scenes in which " dressing up " plays an important part, such as carnivals and Guy Fawkes' celebrations.

In the very early stages surprise or fear followed by a relief from restraint is a very common element in mirth-production in the nursery. The variants of games based on Jack-in-the-Box, Bo-Peep, and Hide-and-Seek never fail to appeal to the normal baby. Authorities agree that the conditions associated with relief from restraint play the most important part in humorous situations, from the period of the Jack-in-the-Box with the very young child, to sights involving similar conditions right up, to the end of school life. Many of the funny sights which are brought about by children themselves are successful exactly to the extent to which these conditions are satisfied. They form the basis of the most successful of the practical jokes. The ghost who is the big brother in disguise, and the father who pretends to be Father Christmas or even

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a burglar, are simply ringing the changes on the Jack-in-the-Box.

The incongruous, in its simplest expression, finds a place in the nursery supply of mirth-provoking elements. Daddy wearing baby's hat is certain of an uproarious reception by a group of small children. An equally successful cause of laughter is provided when the conditions are reversed and the baby wears daddy's hat. Uncommon sounds, especially if they are produced by people well known in the nursery, may cause great laughter. The delight of the young child in rapid change, whether in voice or appearance, is most marked. The appeal made by Charlie Chaplin to very young children is largely due, apart from the genuine ability of this clever artist, to the rapidity of movement and disregard of convention which characterize his methods.

The Punch and Judy show is always popular. This type of entertainment contains many of the essential elements of mirth-production, and in spite of all the rival claims of various street performances, and the comic incidents of train, tram, and bus, it makes a constant appeal to the children of all ages. It is always more popular with the boys than with the girls, as may be shown by the following statistics:

At 7 years	15%	of the boys	and	12%	of the girls
„ 8 „	14%	„	„	10%	„
„ 9 „	<b>11%</b>	„	„	<b>8%</b>	„
„ 10 „	10%	„	„	6%	„

gave the Punch and Judy show as the funniest sight they had seen. That the Punch and Judy show appears, in some form, in practically all highly civilized countries is significant.

The rich variety of street scenes, with their

carnivals and many entertainments for raising money for different purposes, adds greatly to the enjoyment of children, who take full advantage of the opportunities offered for their amusement. The keenness of the child, by nature an inveterate pleasure-seeker, may be illustrated by the experience of a boy who was delighted with a performance and said, " I laughed so much that I burst my trousers, and had to run home to get them mended, but I ran all the way, and got back before the end of the show,"

Apart from the misfortunes of others, which bulk so largely in the comic experiences of early life, the child's unconscious protest against convention continually finds expression. The grotesque appearance of the clown, the quaint costumes of boys dressed as girls, men dressed as women, painted faces, and the human representations of all types of animals, link on quite naturally to the delightful fairy stories of earlier days. Moreover, many of the actions performed by the comic man in the street run counter to all the rules and regulations of the home and the schoolroom, and this gives an added joy to the entertainment.

In giving illustrations of the funny sights the language of the children is retained, but, for obvious reasons, the spelling of certain words is modified. The following are descriptions of some of the street incidents :

(a) " The funniest thing I saw was a carnival. There was a cart with a bear standing at the back of it. When the cart went along the bear went up and down. There were all sorts of chains of flowers made round the cart, and inside there were beds, and in these beds there were babies playing with

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toys, and there were three bears and the bears were sleeping together in one big bed. In the cart there were two nurses minding the three bears. When it was passing there were lots of funny things I noticed, and it was very grand indeed."

(b) " An old man was dressed as a rather peculiar-looking Scotchman wearing a Scotch 'tarn' several sizes too small, an extremely short kilt and both socks hanging down. He was followed by two people dressed as ghosts swathed in white sheets. In their hands they carried empty whisky bottles, and they each wore a large card with the words 'Departed Spirits' printed on them. In the procession there was a great tall man dressed up as a baby in arms. He had a baby's hat perched on the side of his head tied under his chin by an enormous white bow. He had on what looked like a lady's nightdress, and he was sucking at a large baby's feeder."

(c) " The funniest thing I have seen was a party of carol-singers standing singing when a strange dog came along and tried to sing with them. It did not bark but made a strange noise in its throat as if singing. But it was funnier still when a cat came along and sat on a wall near by and started mewling. This was too much for the poor carol-singers."

(d) " On Firework night, I was leaning out of our window looking at the fireworks when all of a sudden a rocket went up, and when the stick came down it knocked off a man's top hat which made me roar with laughter, so much so that I almost fell out of the window **and** that made the man laugh too."

**A favourite story with the children is that of the old lady, who went for her first drive in a taxi-cab,**

and noticed that the driver kept putting out his hand. Feeling very nervous, she said, "Look here, young man. You go on with your driving and don't put your hand out. I'll let you know when it starts raining."

In many of the records of street scenes, the children become so absorbed in witnessing street performances that they entirely forget the purpose for which they left home. "I was very much interested in the sight, but suddenly remembered that I was on an errand," is a typical experience of awaking consciousness of some dereliction of duty. The child who saw a woman cleaning the steps in front of her house, and asked her friend if she was what they called a stepmother, made the kind of mistake in which young children delight, as the possession of knowledge, which the stupid child lacks, affords evidence of their own superiority, which, we have seen, is a prevalent element in the humour of early years.

The minor accidents of the street, involving the misfortunes of others, are frequently referred to by children as the funniest sight they have seen. The case of the man who falls into the mud in trying to get on to a bus, or who steps on orange peel or a banana skin, is typical. Curiously, in the records of young children, the person who provokes mirth in these street accidents is nearly always a fat man. In those of older children, the person who suffers misfortune is generally an over-dressed young man who prides himself on his personal appearance, as, for example :

"One day, as I was going home from school, I saw a herd of pigs going down a hill. A young man was walking by the side of the road. He was wear-

ing a navy blue suit, a velour hat, light blue socks, and highly polished patent-leather shoes. His hair was well brushed and he had a small moustache. He carried a black walking-stick with a silver knob on the top. He walked with a certain amount of swagger and held his head high ; now and again he adjusted his tie, and altered the angle of his hat.

" But, to return to the pigs. They were coming down the hill when a motor-car came round the corner and also went down the hill, steering to one side of the pigs. This startled the pigs and they ran down the hill on the other side of the road. The foremost one ran full tilt into the young man, who promptly sat down on the pig's back, and was carried at least ten yards down the hill before he was deposited on the muddy road. The velour hat had fallen off at the first charge and had rolled into a pool of water. When he got up he was spattered with mud from head to foot,"

Women rarely come into the children's records of street accidents. When they do, however, they nearly always are stout ladies, as in the following stories :

(a) " I was in the street when a carriage drew up at the main entrance of the Post Office and a stout old lady came out. After speaking to the coachman, a short thin individual, she made towards the Post Office, but her advance was soon terminated. Being short-sighted, she tripped over a step, and came rolling down. The heroic little coachman put himself in the path of the human avalanche, but was swept, with all haste, into the gutter, where he found himself almost suffocated. However, he was soon relieved of the weight, three men having

pulled the lady off him. After arranging her garments she muttered something about 'steps,' and immediately entered the carriage, and the coachman, looking very uncomfortable, drove her away, leaving me bursting my sides with laughter, as was the case with many other individuals, one man giving vent to his mirth by laughing uproariously."

(b) " The funniest sight I have seen was in a park. On seeing it I burst into a fit of laughter. There was a very fat old lady who had fourteen 'pommy' dogs with her; strange to say, they were all on their leads. One of the dogs began to quarrel, and all the dogs joined in, and they began rushing round their mistress at a terrific rate. At last they rolled her over on to the rough stones, and she sat in the midst of her dogs who were still continuing their quarrel. To make matters worse an aged man tried to help her up. He did not succeed in pulling her up, but she succeeded in pulling him down. They both sat struggling with the dogs around them until I joined with a few of my friends to make an effort to help them up in which I succeeded."

It is interesting to observe that the boys who recorded these incidents were twelve years of age. It affords additional evidence of the characteristically extravagant language of this period of development. As a further example: A boy of the same age, giving an account of how he and his friend went to a cricket match without paying for admission, said: " For some time we had been completely consumed with ennui and then I said ' I will see that cricket match or I will eat my hat' and, though my digestion rebels against articles of clothing, I meant what I said," The following

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story is also an excellent example of this kind of florid description :

" A very proud girl had the misfortune to fall to the ground during a set of Lancers at a party, and, one of her shoes coming off, revealed a hole in her stocking." The account concludes as follows: " When she got up from the floor she was red as a beetroot, partly from concussion with the floor, and partly from humiliation. She rushed from the room, and a bang from the street door betokened the fact that she had left the house."

Many of the stories describing funny sights are of domestic incidents, and, as was the case in verbal humour, the father is occasionally held up to ridicule. The following records are fairly typical:

(a) " When mother went away for a week to stay with a friend, dad tried a hand at the cooking. Of course he was quite sure of himself, as all men are, though he had never done any cooking before. After fussing about for some time he decided to make some cakes. He put on a big blue apron, which nearly enveloped him, and commenced to mix the batter. I knew he was putting the wrong flour in, and not enough sugar, and I told him so, but he waived me aside and told me to keep quiet. I soon tired of looking at it so I went upstairs to do my lessons. Presently I noticed a faint smell of burning. Rushing down the stairs three at a time I beheld my dad, the blue apron practically ruined, the kitchen full of smoke, and his face as red as a lobster. The humour of the situation struck me and I burst out laughing. This was too much for him. Getting a handful of the cakes (which had been hopelessly burnt) he threw them at me. I managed

to dodge them, and ran upstairs and laughed till the tears ran down my face. I shall never forget dad and the burnt cakes, which was quite the funniest sight I have seen for a long time."

(b) A mother was giving a tea-party and was anxious for her boy to produce a good impression on the visitors. After being dressed for the occasion, he made a great noise by stamping down the stairs to the drawing-room. His mother said, "Now Johnny go upstairs again and show these ladies how quietly you can come down." After a noiseless interval, he again appeared, and was applauded by his mother. "Yes, mother," he said, "I slid down the banisters this time."

(c) A little girl was going out to a tea-party. Just as she was leaving, her mother gave her the final instructions. "Be very careful to be polite, dear," she said; "always remember to say 'Yes, please,' and 'No, thank you,' " On arriving home the little girl said, "I had a lovely time, mother, and ate ever such a lot, and I kept on eating, and when they said, 'Don't you think you've had enough?' I said, 'No, thank you,' "

(d) "A father promised to go and see his son swim at the swimming bath. He went there and inquired for his son. The boy was swimming, and on climbing out of the bath to meet his father, he slipped, and, clutching one of his father's legs, both fell into the water. Everybody laughed except the father."

Children are apt to take the injunctions of the mother too literally, and this gives rise to comical situations. A mother noticed that her little boy cleaned up his plate too effectively after a meal, and told him that he should leave a little on the plate

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for manners. On seeing his aunt doing that for which he had been corrected, he said to his mother, "Oh, mother, auntie has swallowed her manners," A boy having run into a cross-eyed man and been told that he ought to look where he was going, made the obvious retort that the man should go where he was looking. A nervous Frenchman, who was much alarmed by a dog barking at him, and who was reminded of the proverb that "Barking dogs never bite," replied, "But does ze dog know ze proverb?"

Domestic stories are frequently enriched by the doings of the animals of the home, as will be seen by the following records :

(a) "It happened one Sunday morning whilst mother was mixing the custard. The kitten caught a small mouse ; the kitten was not very old, and had not had the opportunity of catching any mice before, so it was uncertain what to do with it, but it finally decided to play about with the mouse. He started by chasing it about the room, then he became more desperate and, whilst mother had gone upstairs, it began tossing the mouse up towards the ceiling. Eventually the unexpected happened, the mouse fell into the custard. The kitten, angered at this occurrence, became determined to obtain possession of the now dead mouse, so it jumped up on the table and plunged its paws into the custard and extricated the mouse. He then licked off the custard and went into the lower regions of the house."

(b) "One day I went to my aunt's who had a dog and cat. When we had had tea we played with them. Suddenly the cat stopped playing because he saw a mouse and he at once began to run after

it. Then the dog started to run after the cat. Then they were all running after one another in a ring as if they were playing ring-a-ring-of-roses. Suddenly they all fell over a stick, and the cat caught the mouse and the dog caught the cat."

(c) "A little while ago my mother lost her fur, and it could not be found anywhere in the room where she had placed it. We happened to go into the next room and then I saw one of the funniest sights I have seen for a long time. Seated in the midst of a large cushion was our little kitten, and around his neck was my mother's fur. Not this alone, but the look upon his face would have made anyone laugh; he was purring away, a look of deep content and satisfaction in his eyes, and turning his head from side to side to see if anyone were watching him. I wonder if cats are really vain. After that, I think they must be so."

(d) "Dogs and cats are usually considered to be of entirely different natures, but a dog and a cat belonging to my family seem to have exchanged characteristic habits. The dog, a retriever, considers it his duty to wash the cat; this he does vigorously with his great tongue and, rolling the cat over with his paw, drenches and ruffles the fur of his unfortunate victim. As for the cat, which is quite pretty when dry, it has the extraordinary habit of sitting on its hind legs and begging like a dog for anything it wants. The art of mewing, so favoured by its feline relations, it apparently scorns."

The range of age of the children by whom these particular stories were written was from 10 to 18 years.

A story, very typical of the records of older girls, is the following:

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" I was walking along the road when I saw a very stylishly dressed Frenchman coming towards me. He was not looking where he was going and in consequence tripped over the kerb. He rolled over several times and sitting up in the gutter he took a small dictionary from his pocket and began to look for a word, presumably to find the word an Englishman would use under the circumstances."

Of recent years great progress has been made in the humanization of laughter, and deformities, as such, have ceased to be the subject of amusement or comment in stories of funny sights, unless obesity can be regarded as being in this category. The following record is unusual, but is redeemed by the comic element in the situation :

" A man with a wooden leg was trying to cross the road, when his wooden leg got fixed in the tram line. He tried to get it free but could not ; he kept on twisting round and round but found it impossible to get it away. Presently, he unstrapped his wooden leg and hopped on to the pavement; his leg was still standing on the tram line. A policeman came along and gave the man back his leg, which he strapped on and went away very angry."

The sights which evoke laughter naturally vary considerably with the environment. The child carefully nurtured in a good home has a different appreciation of a comical incident to that of the child living in sordid surroundings. A sight which would make no appeal whatever to the former might cause great amusement to the latter. Taste naturally varies with the state of culture of the home; the same is true, as has been pointed out, in the appreciation of verbal humour.

In all humorous situations involving a special costume or quaint attire the number selected by the girls as the funniest sight seen is greatly in excess of those selected by the boys. In the Guy Fawkes incidents, for example, the boys are more concerned with the situation created by the fireworks, and the girls with the odd dress of the Guy ; this is common to all ages.

Occurrences in trains, trams, and buses, provide a rich harvest of humorous situations which are much quoted by the children of all classes. They are somewhat difficult to classify. The fat man who takes up too much room ; the woman with too many parcels ; altercations with the conductor ; heated discussions between fellow-passengers ; the curious mixture of all classes ; the strap-hanger who treads on people's toes and is requested not to loiter on them—all afford occasions for boisterous fun in which the child revels. Here are some typical examples :

(a) " One evening my mother and I were in a District Railway train which was rather crowded. When the train stopped at a station a woman entered the train. A gentleman rose and the lady said, ' It is quite all right, keep your seat, for I'm going to get out soon.' With that she pushed him back into his seat. Again the man rose, and again the lady pushed him back. The man, after being pushed back three times, said, ' When you've finished I want to get out.' "

(6) " One day my brother, auntie and I were going on a journey on the Underground Railway. There was an automatic machine standing in a corner where you put the money in and the ticket falls out. My brother said to auntie, ' That is where you get

the tickets,' so auntie walked up to the machine, bent her head down and asked the machine for three to Paddington. Of course we all started laughing, even auntie. It really was the funniest sight I have ever seen, auntie asking the machine for tickets."

(c) "I was going home. The bus was crowded and people were standing up. Among those were several elderly ladies, and a little boy, who was evidently taught to be polite, jumped up and offered one of these his seat. Not being tall enough to reach the strap his father, who was with him, took him on his knee. Some time after this a young lady stepped into the bus. Partly through habit, and partly through want of thought, the little boy jumped up and said, 'Madam, please take my seat.' The people in the bus laughed and the father, to hide his embarrassment, boxed the boy's ears."

(d) "I was sitting next to a little boy, in a tram, who would keep on sniffing. A rather old gentleman who was sitting on the other side of him was much irritated and said, 'Haven't you got a pocket handkerchief?' 'Yes,' answered the little boy, 'but mother told me not to lend it to anyone.' Everybody in the tram burst out into laughter, because the little boy thought that the gentleman wanted to blow his own nose on it,"

Children describe many amusing travel incidents, such as that of the old lady, unaccustomed to travelling who was getting out of a railway carriage backwards, and the porter, thinking she was getting in, pushed her back and she went on to the next station. A young lady, who was carrying a pair of skates, entered a crowded tram, and a gentleman offered her his seat, but she replied, "No, thank

you, I have been skating all the afternoon and I am tired of sitting down." One of the best stories was an account of the difficulties experienced by a stout lady, carrying a dog, leaving a bus when another stout lady, also carrying a dog, was getting on. To the great amusement of the passengers, and the despair of the conductor, the dogs insisted on fighting a royal battle before the bus was able to continue its journey.

Stories of street scenes are frequently based upon amusing incidents caused by wind and fog; the former being represented by a fat man chasing a hat, blown off, thinking it was his own, and discovering, when the rightful owner claimed it, that his own hat was on his back, held there by a hat-guard; the latter, by a series of mistakes—for example, a wife scolding a stranger under the impression that he was her husband, a nervous lady apologizing to a pillar box with which she had collided, and a young lady who, in the fog, embraced the wrong young man.

The stories about animals in the Zoo are numerous and entertaining. Children revel in the Zoo, but their special interests are limited. They concentrate almost entirely on the monkey-house and the elephants, with occasional references to the parrot-house. The lions, tigers, buffaloes, giraffes, bears, snakes, birds, and other groups of animals are hardly mentioned in the essays that children write on the Zoo.

A personal experience in one of the records is of an interesting nature. An elephant on which the child was riding investigated an unoccupied perambulator from which the smell of biscuits emanated. **Unable to reach them, he turned over the peram-**

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bulator, raised it by his trunk, and shook it, thus releasing a bag of biscuits, which he consumed amid the laughter of the children.

Of the many records of the doings in the monkey-house, the following example may be taken as typical:

" There were in a cage of the monkey-house about six monkeys ; there was the mother monkey and five baby monkeys. They had just been given fresh greenstuff, and a bowl of water had been left in the cage. The mother monkey went and looked in the water, then taking her babies each in turn, she dipped them into the water. She then took a cabbage leaf and dried the babies with it. With her fingers she combed the hair of the little ones, and then she made them stand in a row so that all the lookers-on could admire her good work and also her little babies."

Other stories are much exaggerated, as, for example, the accounts of the monkeys playing leap-frog ; the monkey who snatched a monocle from a visitor and, placing it in his eye, made the other monkeys roar with laughter ; and the monkey who captured a watch and chain, and, not wanting the watch, put it back in the gentleman's waistcoat pocket, and performed many clever antics with the chain. The tricks of the monkeys seem to have a far richer content and significance for the child than for the grown-up.

The parrot-house also has a certain degree of popularity with the children. The apt remarks of the parrots, and the very interesting and amusing conversations recorded between them and the children, would suggest a very advanced knowledge of our language. Here, again, the child's natural

bias would favour a very generous interpretation of the parrot's remarks. The parrot, moreover, much prefers children, and is far more communicative to them than to adults.

To every child a visit to the Zoo is a happy occurrence, full of laughter, but to the very poor child who can rarely go there it is a sheer delight, the memory of which cannot be too often recalled.

Following at a respectful distance from the joys of a visit to the Zoo comes a visit to the country by children from densely crowded cities. The extraordinary popularity of these visits, arranged by Local Education Authorities and such organizations as the Children's Holiday Fund, is almost pathetic. The joy of the new experience never loses its hold, and the feelings of wonderment aroused in the dwellers in mean streets remain with the children as cherished memories.

Farmyard scenes are full of interest and bulk largely in the records of children. The story of the child, who was so delighted at seeing a cow milked that he asked the man to pour the milk back and do it again is a great favourite with the superior child who has been to the country before. The same is true of the story of the girl in a red blouse who was alarmed at the hostile attitude of a cow, and the farmer surmised that her blouse was probably the cause. "Well," said the child, "I kribw that it is very old-fashioned, but I had no idea that a country cow would have noticed it."

A country girl on her first railway journey received much kindness, on reaching her destination, from a young man in the railway carriage, who assisted her in getting her luggage on to the platform. "Thank you very much," said the girl.

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" Oh, don't mention it," replied the gallant youth.

" Oh, no, sir, Til be sure not to tell anybody about it," she said somewhat coyly.

An excellent account is given, by an observant child, of the intelligence of a cat during the removal of a family from one house to another in the country : " A cat with three kittens a few days old, grasped the situation, and made three journeys carrying a kitten each time. Even the kitten seemed to realize the seriousness of the occasion, for it neither struggled nor mewed but hung limp and motionless in the mother's mouth. Three times the journey was made—each time the careworn expression of the cat became a little brighter. When the third and last kitten had been installed in its new home, the positive smile of satisfaction which overspread the face of the anxious mother, as of one who had done her duty in the face of all obstacles, and can now enjoy a well-earned rest by the kitchen fire, is the funniest thing I have ever seen."

Occasionally moral qualities enter into the stories of funny sights. The following example is a case in point:

" Take those horrid creepy creatures away, cried my mother one evening, as I brought in a leaf on which were crawling some hairy caterpillars. Being an obedient girl, I immediately removed them to the garden. Mother then continued her sewing, and I went to play, but suddenly I heard a shriek, and, being interested, I ran in. To my surprise I saw my mother jumping round the room and on her needlework was crawling slowly but surely a dark creature, which I found to be a caterpillar. I laughed and so did my mother when she had

recovered from her fright. Although I thought she would scold me, she did not because I was obedient the first time, and she did not think I meant to frighten her, so I was let off with a warning, as the saying is."

Imperfect acquaintance with the English language in stories told by foreign children frequently adds to the quaintness of the description, as in the account of a Russian child's visit to Madame Tussaud's Exhibition : " One day I with my father and mother were coming to Musium Madame Tusso. When we came in we saw a policeman who stood near the door. My father wanted to ask him where is a room with figures all kings and all chief mans, but policeman don't answer because he was a figure. We were very laughing after that."

In some cases with young children, and more frequently with older ones, the stories rely on the method of telling, rather than on the details of the humorous situation. Here is an illustration of each :

(a) " On Saturday evening my friend and I went to the pictures. We had a very comfortable seat and we were enjoying the pictures immensely when a gentleman sat in a seat two or three rows in front. He had a very tall body and when he sat down his head seemed to block a part of the screen, and when he took off his hat the comical part struck us. His head was the exact shape of a cocoanut, and the back of his head was bald, but in the front of it was a small piece of hair standing up straight. So when we first saw his head against the screen it looked like a cocoanut, with a piece of hair standing **up like the fibre on the top of the cocoanut.**"

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(b) " A girl carrying a basket on her arm was crossing the street when out of the basket dropped a large dinner knife. The girl was apparently unaware of her loss, but an elegantly attired lady, a few paces behind, picked it up and hastened forward with a gracious smile to restore it. As she drew level the girl leapt on to a passing bus and was whirled away, leaving the lady with the dinner knife held in her white-gloved hand. It was obviously impossible to drop the knife again, and there was no way of concealing it. However, a somewhat peculiar knight-errant appeared in the guise of a street cornet-player, who, perceiving her plight, stepped forward with an exaggerated bow and a smiling ' Allow me, madam,' and relieved her of her burden."

Apparently at about the age of 17 in the case of boys, and at about 18 in the case of girls, there is a marked development of a finer sense of humour, and this finds expression in the records, in the elaboration of the elements in a humorous situation by a distinct contribution on the part of the recorder.

Many children describe their dreams as the best illustrations of comical scenes. It would be very interesting to see whether there is any special parallel between dream mechanism at different ages and the humour of the same period. There appears to be some relation, as suggested by Freud and others, and the fact that so many children record their dreams as the funniest sights they have ever seen lends support to it. A very careful study of the subject, however, would be required before any definite opinion could be expressed.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE CHILD AND THE CINEMA

**T**HE description of a film seen by a child is a type of story with features which mark it off quite clearly from those which have already been considered. It is in some respects like the record of a dream, and has many of the characteristics of the fairy story. It differs from the dream in that it represents the description of a continuous narrative, aided by captions, or subtitles, which are intended to incorporate in a very condensed form the main points of the story. Further, whereas the dream is marked by an absence of anything in the nature of logical reasoning, the cinema story is supposed to have a definite basis in reality, and the main action to be the result of material shown on the screen. By means of what is known as the cut-back, or flash-back, the memory is assisted by representations of important events which have occurred earlier in the story. This saving of mental effort, in comparing the present with the past, gives the cinema, from the point of view of recreation, a very distinct advantage.

In witnessing a theatrical performance on the stage, or reading a story in a book, it is necessary to keep constantly in mind the details of the play or story for purposes of comparison, which is an exacting piece of work for the immature mind. To obviate this difficulty short stories are preferable

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for young children, who lose interest in narratives in which the early events are so far removed as to make it practically impossible to hold the past and present relationships together. Interest cannot be maintained, and the children tire of the story. The ease of remembering the film story is also increased by what is known as the close-up, which, by magnified representation of important elements in the story, emphasizes them and adds considerably to the emotional effect, and consequent retention by the memory.

The relationship of the film story to the fairy story is very close. Some of the events appearing on the screen are of a very extravagant nature, and rival the most fantastic creations of the fairy story. Moreover, the movement and actual action seen by the children are much more thrilling and effective than the record of similar things on the printed page. The effect is much increased also by the clever mechanical devices by which action may be speeded-up or slowed-down at will. The invention of puzzling contrivances, by which apparently most hazardous enterprises are carried out with perfect safety, belongs to the mysteries of film production.

In the more exciting scenes of the cinema there is thus a great resemblance to the fairy story. The miraculous escapes of the hero or heroine who triumphs over apparently impossible obstacles, climbing up chimneys, rushing along perilously difficult pathways on the roofs of houses, successfully negotiating wonderful leaps from point to point, sometimes even defying the laws of gravity, give a succession of sensational situations even greater than those of the favourite fairy story. The ever-present motor-car, which always **exceeds**

the speed limit, and can travel as rapidly backwards as forwards, plays an important part in the inevitable happy ending; and the faithful bloodhound which conveys the important letter, and releases the hero by gnawing through the ropes that bind him, gives that indication of a high standard of intelligence which is generally confined to animals in fairy stories.

As further evidence of the close kinship between cinema and fairy stories a few extracts from the records of the children may be given: (*a*) The fortunes of a family hang on the performance of a horse in a race, and at the critical moment it is found that, by malign influences, the jockey is prevented from taking his place. A young girl disappears from the family group, and, disguising herself as the jockey, wins the race and restores to affluence her impoverished parents; (*b*) a village blacksmith seeing a runaway horse, with a beautiful lady on his back, dashing towards his forge, fixed a chain across the road. " This done, he swung himself in the path of the oncoming horse, which he seized, and caught the lady with his spare hand, and saved her from a terrible death " ; (*c*) a parrot aids the victim of a plot to escape from a lonely house in which he is incarcerated; (*d*) a man, wrongly imprisoned, is restored to freedom on giving an assurance to the police that he will become a clergyman; (*e*) a popular actress, in danger of drowning, stops a serious leak in a boat by placing her hat on the hole; and (,) a beautiful girl marries the detective who found a million dollars, which had been lost, in an impossible position. Such absurdities and departures from reality could not be surpassed by any fairy story.

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In preparation for evidence to be given to the Cinema Commission, the writer made an investigation of the type of film which made the greatest appeal to children of different ages in selected schools in poor and well-to-do districts. For this purpose he obtained 6,700 accounts of favourite films, a large proportion of which were well and graphically described, and showed clearly that the children could give detailed connected narratives of the films they had seen, though no notice was given of essays to be written, and there was therefore no preparation possible. The children also were limited to fifteen minutes for the description, so that the points which attracted them most were alone recorded. The main groups yielded the following results: Domestic and fairy stories, 25 per cent; adventure films, 15 per cent; comic films, 15 per cent; war films, 11 per cent; crook films, 5 per cent; and, at the bottom of the list, educational films, 2 per cent. There were, of course, great differences between the records of the boys and those of the girls. The most striking result, however, was that from the investigation it appeared that no less than 92 per cent of the children went to the cinema. In the poor districts, out of more than 3,000 children, only 32 boys and 50 girls had not visited a picture-house. The reasons for not doing so were given in some cases; and here are samples from children of 9, 10, and 13 years of age respectively :

(a) " My reasons for not going to cinemas are that the heat gives me a headache. I also found that germs like the dark and so cinemas are unhealthy, so father and mother decided I had better not go.

I like books very much, and having many at home, I do not want to go."

(b) "I have never been to cinemas. Last year my two sisters went, and in two or three days one had scarlet fever and the other had measles, and so mother would not let me go because she thought I might get it."

(c) " I do not go to the pictures because of three reasons : (i) I save money by stopping at home. (2) It don't do your eyes any good. (3) It is not healthy to be stuck inside a hot place taking other people's breath."

In some cases the children did not hesitate to criticize the film very severely ; for example :

" Some pictures are degrading and they do not do one any good, but they help to make the people who see them less pure and have less moral support. These pictures are only shown in cheap and degraded picture palaces, and are only supported by the people of inferior education. Some pictures are so degrading that they ought never to have been passed by the censor."

During the sitting of the Cinema Commission the members made it a practice, when possible, to visit cinema theatres in order to become increasingly familiar with the subject under discussion. The experience was general among members that their difficulties in following the more intricate portions of the films were not shared by those children present who were cinema-habitues. These children had undoubtedly acquired a power of readily interpreting visual scenes so as to form a connected narrative, which power was denied to some of the

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uninitiated members of the Commission. This was fully confirmed by the experience of the writer, who had an opportunity of reading the children's accounts of some well-known films, which made clear and intelligible to him many points he had failed to understand on seeing the films.

The possession of the "cinema sense," as it is termed, with its power of ready and accurate interpretation of visual stimuli, might prove a valuable asset in many interesting situations. Thus, for example, in diagnosing correctly the full significance of the warning look of parent or teacher, troubles in the immediate future might be averted. The cinema screen affords excellent opportunities for the training and exercise of this power.

One of the most striking features of the cinema stories is that so many children dwell upon the beauty of the scene depicted as the reason for selecting a particular film. A few examples of selections from their stories, which illustrate this point, may be given :

(a) " The picture I like best is like a meadow. It has flowers and little hills. Why I like it is because it makes you think you are in the country yourself. It also learns you your nature study."

(b) " The picture that I liked most was not a funny story, nor a drama, but just views of water waving and curling and also some falls. It gave some most beautiful falls and fountains splashing and sparkling in sunny France. The water first turned a beautiful blue and then on the fountain it sparkled with a silver tint. Then came the fall with its beautiful waters, jumping and bubbling over sharp stones and rocks, making many pools of

white foam. Another picture was the river, and sometimes it did not sparkle but was dark and sullen,"

(c) "I have an aesthetic taste for scenery, and one of the best pictures I have seen is 'Doran's Travels in China,' This young lady travelled on the tranquil winding river. The mountains glistened in the sun and the traveller stood amazed at the wondrous spectacle. The people in the massive buildings were similar to the ancient people of years ago. The beautiful scenery helps to uplift one to purer thoughts. It helps to give you a better idea of the world and gives one ideas of different countries,".

(d) "The views on the hillside were very pretty and the Swiss peasants in their costumes looked very neat. Then the picture turned to the flowers and animals and birds. It showed the flowers open and shut up and the numerous colours of the grass, ferns, flowers, sea and birds. It showed the different small animals and insects and how they live and how they grow up. It showed other countries and their fur-bearing animals and foreign birds. The picture showed sunset on the quiet and peaceful sea and sunrise. It was a very beautiful picture and I shall not forget it."

(e) "It was a beautiful picture and beautiful scenery too, and, as we sat looking at it, it seemed to dazzle our eyes. The lady of the house was dressed in green velvet, while her son had a green suit. Her son's sweetheart also had a green dress, but it was trimmed with black fur. As they sat under the trees, on a seat made of oak, in the moonlight, it was very picturesque and more beautiful than ever. We held our breath as we watched it for it was so beautiful,"<sup>1</sup>

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So marked is the beautiful-setting element, as the basis of selection, in film stories, that it would appear that under suitable conditions advantage might well be taken of the cinema in the cultivation of aesthetic appreciation, especially for children in large cities who have few opportunities of visiting the country. In this respect the cinema will always have a great advantage over the theatre. However expert the scenic artist, and however elaborately the scene in a theatre may be staged, the result must always be tawdry and commonplace as compared with a natural background in a beautiful country.

The filming of well-known books does not influence children to any considerable extent in their selection of film stories, with the exception of "Tom Brown's Schooldays," of which some excellent records were received. The shorter films are more popular for this purpose, as the child likes to give in his description a condensed account of the whole of the story.

The educational film is rarely referred to as it is in a position of some difficulty. One of the reasons for its lack of popular approval is that this type of film has to serve two separate functions. The material must be of sufficient general interest to satisfy a somewhat uncultured audience, and at the same time arouse sufficient scientific interest to make its appeal to the student. The consequence is that neither section is enthusiastic in its support. The low percentage of educational films selected, however, is partly due to the comparatively small number shown, as there is rarely more than one such item in a long programme. The human element is, moreover, lacking, and this handicaps it in competition with subjects of more general appeal.

The lectures of the late Sir Ernest Shackleton on Arctic exploration, and those by distinguished experts on the Mount Everest expeditions, illustrated by remarkable films, are frequently quoted. They were, of course, educational in the highest sense, and of absorbing interest. But they are on an entirely different footing and have no connexion with the ordinary, so-called educational film.

We noticed that in the children's stories in connexion with verbal and visual humour there were, in the process of selection of story or sight, well-marked differences from age to age, and that boys differed from girls in their choice of material. The same is true, within wide limits, of the cinema stories. Most of the children frequent picture-houses fairly regularly, and therefore have a large number of film stories from which to select; though with the children of 8 to 10 years of age there is a natural tendency to describe films which they have seen recently.

Boys prove to be much less interested in fairy and domestic stories than girls, and show a marked preference for cowboy stories and adventures. Films dealing exclusively with love stories are rarely selected by boys, though they are very popular with girls from n years of age onwards. Comic pictures are great favourites with boys up to the age of 12 y^ars, when the interest in them begins to wane. The investigation clearly indicates that boys are more interested in serial films than girls. This may, however, be partly due to the greater demand of the home on the girl, and the consequent difficulty in setting aside a particular night in the week for following up a serial story. Another reason may be **that many of the serials have a predominant crook**

interest; whereas, the serial most frequently selected by the girls had a strong love interest.

In many cases the older children selected for description films which they had seen some considerable time before, and described them with great accuracy of detail. This would seem to open up possibilities of great educational developments if films could be produced which, in addition to being of value from the educational point of view, were of sufficient general interest to command the concentrated attention which is evidently given to popular cinema films. Recent researches, moreover, have proved that the memory retains the moving picture, as in the cinema, more effectively than the static picture, as in the lantern slide.

At 8 years of age films dealing with exciting events of a domestic character are very popular, such as :

" When I went to the picture palace I saw a picture of a fire. It was a large house that was on fire. It was caused by a little girl dropping a lighted lamp. When the house was burning a boy came walking along and he saw the house on fire and three little girls looking out of the window. He threw up to them a large rope. They took hold of it and climbed down in turn. The mother came down after her children and the father came down last. The mother and father thanked the boy for having saved their lives,"

At 9 years of age interesting domestic films are described, those selected by the boys being of a more exciting character than those of the girls. In some cases a lamentable ignorance of country life was shown, as, for example : " There was a lady

who had a little boy and girl; the only cattle they had was a pony, two hens, and a dog." In other accounts the phraseology was very quaint; a good example of this is the following : " There was a gentleman who was very much in love with a beautiful lady, and he asked her to be his wife, but she replied in the negative. Some time afterwards the lady was in great danger and the gentleman saved her life. Again he asked her to be his wife ; this time she replied in the affirmative."

At 10 years of age girls frequently state the type of film they prefer. Thus, a girl of this age gives as her ideal:

" The pictures I like best are dramas, but not too sad. I like about when people get bankrupt. A lady has to marry a person she does not like in order to get her father's business back. She loves another gentleman and she tells him her troubles. Then, just as they are going to the church, a telegram boy comes to say that her uncle has died and that she is an heiress. Then she marries her real young man. Her father is then able to keep his business on."

At 11 years of age, also, girls freely state the type of film preferred. Thus : "I always look forward to pictures about people who do daring things. I like to see people climb mountains under great difficulties, or people running away and being pursued." As an illustration of this may be given the description of a film which has no literary merit, but it fully satisfies the demand for continuous movement, which can be so effectively produced by cinema methods :

" The moving picture I liked best was a gentleman advertised in a paper for a lady friend, and in

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a class of young ladies, one read it in the paper and ran out of the room, another also read the article, and also left the room ; one by one they all disappeared and went to the gentleman's house. When they all came, he did not want every one and he then started to run away. During different pictures it is shown that he runs into woods and hides behind trees, all of them trying to catch him, but not one succeeding. He continues to run up hills, over ragged rocks, sometimes falling over, but always picking himself up and continuing. The women also stumble over many large boulders, but they never seem to mind. It shows him running along a pier, and unable to escape, he dives into the sea, all the women following him. There was quite a band of bobbing heads, all trying to get to him, but as he had a start none succeeded. He swims to land and races across open country, all the others following him. He is then seen climbing on the top of railway carriages with the others behind him. At last tired out he reaches home again, to find that his wife, who had run away, had come back again. The others leave very sorrowful at their disappointment."

It is very evident from the number of films of this type selected by children of 10 to 12 years of age that this rapid change of scene, crowded with incident, is particularly popular at this period.

At 12 years of age the child has a wonderful love of detail, and has a remarkable capacity for concentrating the essential material of a story into a very small compass. The following record, which also fulfils the demand for the happy ending required at this age, is typical:

" ' **The House of Fear** ' was the moving picture I enjoyed most. It was a drama in four acts, and was not so long as some dramas. It was about a very old lady named Mrs. White, who was bed-ridden. She had only one child, a girl named Margaret, who was married to a certain Mr. Fairley, who had no relatives. Margaret had one child named Elsie who was 13 months old. Soon after Elsie's second birthday her father was accidentally shot through the head and died immediately. Her mother, hearing of her husband's sudden death, is taken very ill and dies soon afterwards. She then lived with her grandmother until she was turned 5, knowing but little of her parents' death. In her ninety-ninth year Mrs. White died, leaving the child in the care of an uncle who is her godfather, but the uncle was a miser and did not wish to keep her. After the funeral of her grandmother, Elsie is brought before a meeting in her house and the uncle is asked to keep his promise. He does not wish to, but in the end, wishing not to appear ungrateful, he consents. In the end Elsie is married to her uncle's nephew, and here we leave her with a good husband, a comfortable home, and two children."

The number of facts contained in the above story is positively bewildering.

In stories about films the extravagance of language, which has been seen in other investigations to be characteristic of periods of rapid growth\* is equally well marked at this age, as is shown in the following extracts: (a) " Sometimes when he was caught in a raid on a club, he dived through a trap, astonished the policeman, and abashed the plans of his pursuers.

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At last one of the world's famous criminologists caught him, and then he poisoned himself." (6) " The gentleman whose mighty brain had yet to find an obstacle too great to overcome.<sup>1</sup>" (c) " Her mother was a weakly, pessimistic woman, who groaned over her numerous hardships."

At 13 years of age stories with a moral become popular, and the love of detail, though slightly on the wane, is still above the normal. Here is an example in the account of the reformation of a beer-drinker :

" Once when I went to a cinema I saw a picture about a little girl named Mary whose mother was very ill and whose father was a drunkard. One night her father came home very drunk and aimed a jug at his wife, and when Mary saw it she ran away. Presently she came to a motor and got under the covering and went to sleep. Later a gentleman got in who was very rich, and whose fiancee had broken off her engagement with him because he drank beer. When he got in the motor he put his feet under the cover and woke Mary up. He sat her on his lap, but she said, ' I don't like you ; your breath smells like my daddy's,' He took her home with him, determined never to touch beer again."

At this age, also, there appears the simple story with the love interest as the main theme. The problem play has no message for the young girl; she likes the simple, unaffected story, with not too many obstacles in the course of true love, and the inevitable happy ending. The following story is very simply told and is fairly typical :

" **The girl and boy were brought up together in**

Wales. The boy grew to be a great sculptor and went to London. His foster sister followed him as a singer, but she was forgotten. The girl sang at a great hall; amongst the audience she saw the man she loved. He thought he knew her but he did not expect her to be in London. The sculptor proposed to the singer, but he told her of the little Welsh girl he had left behind. She persuaded him to return and refused to marry him because she felt sure his little Welsh girl loved him still. The singer returned to Wales, and dressed herself in her peasant's costume, and waited for him where she had said good-bye. He recognized her to be the singer as well as the Welsh maiden, and he again asked her to share his life. Her reply satisfied him."

This may be compared with the story of adventure by a boy of the same age ;

" Sexton Blake was sitting in his favourite chair smoking; his assistant, Tinker, was devouring a large meal. The previous day they had followed a false trail, trying to catch 'Jim the penman,' a great forger, and this is what it led to. After they had returned from a long chase, they saw a white handkerchief, and this they picked up and on it were the initials 'J.P,' 'At last we have a clue,' explained Blake. 'Tinker go and fetch Pedro, the bloodhound,' Tinker was off like a shot, and was back again in five minutes with the dog. After an interval of about a minute, the detective put the rag to the dog, and in less time than it takes to write it, he was off, like an arrow. 'He has got the scent,' muttered Blake, running after the dog. On and on went the animal, until it came to a sudden halt **outside a small inn.** Meanwhile the fugitive

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was in the inn, hurriedly packing something in a small leather belt, which contained valuable jewels. While he was doing this, he had not noticed the door, until a stern voice was heard saying, ' You're covered with my automatic, and it's no use you trying to struggle.' "

These stories are interesting as showing the extraordinary difference in outlook and interest between the boy and girl at 13 years of age. One cannot imagine a boy selecting the above love story or a girl selecting the detective story.

At this age a curious element enters into the girl's record, in which dual qualities in heroes and heroines are emphasized ; as, for example :

(a) " Joan was a young and beautiful girl of about 17 years of age, who worked in the mines. Her friend was Lizzie, a pretty girl of about the same age, but fragile and obstinate. Their ' boss,' as they called the manager, was a young man, handsome and kind ; many a time he saved Joan from blows from the foreman ; and she had grown to love him. Joan's father was a bully, and the terror of the mine."

(b) " It was a dull day, and a heavy storm was raging overhead, and a man, evidently a newcomer, entered an inn. He was tall and respectable, with large bright eyes which seemed to influence everybody. Having had his **fill**, and the storm having abated, he left the inn, and proceeded homeward. On arriving there he sat down and seemed lost in meditation."

When a girl of this age deals with a story in which crime plays a part, there is a domestic setting which

is generally absent in the boy's story. As an illustration of this, the following example may be quoted :

" Bob believed in crime and reared Daisy, as the little girl was called, to believe in the same principle. One day Daisy was hungry, and being now a girl of 17 and very pretty, she decided to pick someone's pocket, but was detected and carried to the Police Station, where a middle-aged gentleman took pity on her, and took her to his own home, which was situated in Park Lane. Daisy had never seen such a lovely house, but, even after she was dressed in lovely clothes, the impulse to steal would come to her, and at last, while the haughty footman was asleep, she cut off the gorgeous gold braid from his shoulder and tied it round her own waist."

The children, in dealing with interesting films, show great ability in their power of graphic description. This varies, naturally, with the age and intelligence of the recorder. It can be well illustrated by the following example of a description of a war film by a boy of 13 years of age :

" The best picture I have ever seen was the ' Battle of the Ancre ' and the advance of the tanks. It shows us in old England the privations Tommy had to undergo in blood-sodden France and Belgium. The Tommies went to the trenches stumbling and slipping but always wore the smile which the Kaiser's Legions, try hard as they might, could not brush off. Lords, tinkers, earls, chimney-sweeps, side by side, were shown in this splendid film. It showed and proved that although England is small and Germany large the British lion was a match for

the German eagle any day. The film also showed that monster terror, and fear of the Germans, the tank. Snorting, creaking, wobbling, the huge bogey started for the German first line trenches. The film showed the huge British guns. Day and night, night and day, the huge monsters of destruction roared, never ceasing."

## CHAPTER VII

### CHILDREN'S STORIES OF THE WAR

**T**HE great difficulty in the investigation of children's stories, as indicating the change in the mental make-up and general outlook from age to age, is the discovery of material which can be treated entirely from the child's own point of view. The normal subjects for essay writing in schools are generally of such a nature that the product follows a more or less conventional course, and there is very little trace of originality or of the child's own genuine impressions. The Great War brought about a radical change in the child's environment in a variety of directions, and opinions were expressed on matters which had never before become the subject of discussion. Here, then, was a unique opportunity of getting practically first-hand impressions on a series of absolutely new experiences. The object of the investigation of a large number of essays on the War, written under conditions which admitted of no possible preparation and in a limited time, was to secure, as far as possible, records of the dominant ideas of the children with regard to the exciting events which had come into being.

Great care was taken to eliminate the obvious danger that the essays expressed not the child's own opinions but those of someone in authority such as the teacher. Thus, it was necessary to

remove from the essays for investigation those coming from the same group which contained common elements, and ideas similarly treated, indicating that the opinions expressed were the result of lessons or talks by the teacher. In spite, however, of the precautions taken, the views of the child were somewhat biased by frequent discussion of matters of such vivid interest with their friends. It is impossible to avoid this, and, moreover, it does not matter, as by such discussions the children's own views are clarified. Although, naturally, there is a considerable amount of overlapping in the interests and ideas at different stages, it is possible to group them broadly according to the ages of the children. By considering the War stories in a chronological order a fairly good picture is obtained of the child's point of view. The boys' are separated from the girls' essays, and striking differences are seen not only in the main interests but in the emotional attitude experienced at different ages. All the essays in the first investigation were written during the first year of the War and so are strictly comparable as regards the novelty of the new environment.

At 8 years of age the boys give a blurred account of the various activities involved in the conduct of the War. Bombs bursting, guns going off, ships sinking, men fighting all day and all night, brave English, cruel Germans, English winning battles, Germans losing, and so on, are dealt with in unrelated sentences. It is just a confused mass of actions and ideas. The only people referred to are the English, Germans, and the Belgians, generally called "Belgiums," or preferably "Beljams."

At this age the girls are affected by very different

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elements. The sufferings of the soldiers, the cruelty of Germany to Belgium, especially to Belgian children, the khaki uniform of the soldiers, and the heroic deeds or sufferings of relatives who have joined the Forces, are of the greatest interest. The activities of war itself appear to make no appeal to them. Like the boys, the girls only refer to the three nations. At this age there are practically no references to the Kaiser, although he figures prominently in the essays of the 9-year-old children. Scarcely any reference is made to the cause of the War.

At 9 years of age the boys give more detailed accounts of fighting. They refer to battles and generals, and references are constantly made to Lord Kitchener. They are much interested in aircraft and submarines, the different kinds of guns and shells, the digging of trenches, and so on. Much is written about the sea, and special interest is taken in the Dardanelles. Many references are made to Victoria Crosses. The treatment of German and English prisoners is compared in very simple terms. The sufferings of Belgium, and the debt we owe to Belgium, are referred to at this age, and, throughout the essays of the older boys and girls, the feeling of sympathy with, and gratitude to, Belgium is a subject of constant mention.

There are a few curious references to the cause of the War, such as : (a) " The Kaiser is fighting because he wants to be King of England " ; (b) " The Emperor of Germany said, ' I am the right man, because I am the son of Queen Victoria, ' but the English said they would not have a German to rule over them " ; (c) " The Germans are losing ; I wish they would give in **now**, then **our** lüing

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would be King of Germany " ; and (d) " We are fighting because we want to catch the Kaiser and the Black Prince,"

The girls make very few references to the fighting, and do not mention the names of soldiers or of battles. They dwell principally on the sufferings caused by the War, the cruelty to English prisoners, the dearness of food, bread tickets in Germany, and making things for soldiers. Much interest is shown in soldiers and sailors and their uniforms. The general dislike of the Germans is evident, and much sympathy is constantly shown with the Belgians. There is much in the essays about Red Cross nurses. Constant references are made to the wounded soldiers, for example : " The dying soldiers will never see the beautiful spring."

It is difficult to trace the origin of such statements as : (a) " The Russians are very brave : they drove the Germans out of England " ; (b) " We are sorry to hear that Lord Nelson is dead and we are sorry to say the nasty Germans killed him " ; (c) " A man was made dumb by the War, but he spoke again on touching a hot water pipe " ; and (d) " Our soldiers have nothing to do in the trenches, so we have sent them some magazines," The warlike temperament which finds its full expression among the 10-year-old girls is foreshadowed here by such statements as, " If I had been a man, I would have been fighting long ago, but I am not old enough yet for anything,"

A great advance is seen at 10 years of age. The record of unrelated events is replaced by more or less definite opinions with regard to the War. This is much more clearly seen in the case of the girls than in that of the boys. It is evident that at this

age boys read the newspapers and talk much about the War. They are beginning to regard it more as a whole, and have views of their own. A much more intelligent attitude is being taken. At this stage the boys are very proud of having relatives with the Forces, and think that their actions will naturally be of interest to others, for example : (a) " When my father came home from the War, he shook hands with me"; and (b) " My father captured a German soldier, who had a nice knife; the German soldier gave his knife to my father." Much interest is now shown in the doings of the Belgian refugees. Great pride is taken in the Navy. Many references are made to drilling and recruiting, and the need of having plenty of men. The boys become interested in the reason why we went to War, and write less about guns, shells, bombs, and aircraft.

The girl of this age has suddenly become very bellicose, and even wishes to enter into personal conflict with the Kaiser, as will be seen by the following : (a) " If I could get hold of the Kaiser, I would kill him, or put him to death, or do something to him " ; (b) " My mother thinks the Kaiser and Little Willie and all the rest of them ought to be sent to prison " ; (c) " I would like the Kaiser to stand on a rock so that I might have a shot at him " ; (d) " I wish I was a man so I could fight " ; and (e) " My mother said she would go and fight if they would let her."

The girls at this age rejoice at any news of heavy losses by the Germans, for example : " The War is getting very nice now; the English are killing thousands of Germans." She is now keen on recruiting and thinks it is a glorious thing to die for

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one's country. References are made to the necessity of every *one* "doing his bit," Anxiety is felt about the price of food and the possibility of the Germans coming to England. She has a great desire to become a Red Cross nurse when she grows up. For the first time the girl is interested in the Navy and the doings of our soldiers and sailors. She still expresses great sympathy with those who have suffered from the War, especially with the Belgians, and occasionally with German mothers. Her general attitude at this age is, however, that no suffering should deter us from continuing the fight until the victory is won. The girl of 10 is thus far more bellicose than the boy of the same age. It is very different at the age of n.

At n years of age the boy's attitude to the War becomes more warlike ; he is anxious to take part in the fighting, and there is much virulent abuse of the Kaiser and his followers, such as : (a) " His name is William Kaiser. I think he ought to be hanged " ; " The Kaiser is a beast " ; " Germany ought to be wiped to pieces " ; (b) " We call the Germans cowards because they run away, and they also squeal like pigs " ; and (c) " The Kaiser drops bombs on Kent ; not many people will go to Kent this year."

The boy now is very keen on recruiting and refers frequently with pride to the work of the Navy ; he speaks of Jellicoe and Kitchener generally without prefixes. Up to this age he has lived almost entirely in the present, with just a few references to the future, especially with regard to his anxiety as to the food supply and increasing prices. He now deals with the recent past, and discusses the origin of the War, about which, in some instances,

he has curious ideas, as will be seen by the following : (a) " The Kaiser wanted to be Emperor of all the world " ; (b) " The Turks came out on the German side when the Austrians were done in " ; (c) " Then mighty Russia said ' I will help the Germans,' but when she heard how cruel the Germans were, she said ' No, I will help the British ' " ; and (d) " If it had not been for Lord Kitchener we should have been beaten and under German rule."

Other accounts give fairly clear ideas of the part played by Belgium. This has been well grasped by the children of this age. Here is a dramatic account of the early days of the War : " Germany telephoned to Belgium to ask if they could go through their country and they said ' No,' ' Then,' said the Germans, ' we shall fight you,' No sooner had they set foot on Belgian soil than they telephoned over to England. That night the British Army sailed across the English Channel," The boy at this age regards the War much more as a connected whole and is glad to be associated with it : " We are losing many soldiers, but still we are fighting for a cause." He is glad to see the Colonies joining in. His one regret is that he can take no part in the fighting himself. The boy's attitude at the age of n is very like that of the girl of 10 in his impulsive desire to fight.

. The girl at n is no longer so bellicose as she was at 10 years of age. She is depressed at the sufferings of the soldiers, and her anxiety with regard to the shortage of food is increasing. Her interest in the Dardanelles is evidently due to the fact that she thinks that our success there would mean cheaper **food**. Schools are being converted into hospitals, and she is constantly hearing of soldiers being

killed and wounded. The sufferings of the War appear to depress girls more at this age than at any other. The doings of Red Cross nurses again receive much attention, and their bravery is extolled "for picking up the wounded soldiers on the battlefield." The idea appears to be quite prevalent among the girls that the Red Cross nurses are in the fighting line.

Girls of this age also think about the origin of the War, and their accounts are generally more intelligible than those of the boys. Here, however, as with the boys, very absurd statements are made, such as : (a) "The War was declared because the Prince and Princess of Australia were killed" ; (b) "The Emperor of Germany insulted Queen Victoria when he was at Windsor, and King Edward smacked him round the face ; he said he would be avenged" ; and (c) "The War began because the Kaiser wanted England for his own, but our King would not let him have it, so he said 'I shall fight you,' " Much confusion exists in accounts of the origin of the War about the "scrap of paper."

There are now few references to recruiting, the pugnacious attitude has almost entirely disappeared, and there are very few expressions of personal antagonism to the Kaiser. Matters of mere local interest do not find such an important place in the essays. Air raids receive a certain amount of attention. It is remarkable, however, that hardly any references are made to the sea attack on Scarborough and the word "baby-killer" is rarely mentioned. The attitude of the 11-year-old girl is thus very different from that of the 10-year-old. Another change almost as clearly marked is to be seen in the essays of the girls of 12 years of age.

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The most striking advance made in the essays of the 12-year-old children is that the opinions expressed are as a rule no longer *ex parte* statements. There is now a definite balance to be observed ; evidence is weighed, and the pros and cons are compared. The boys express a desire for the end of the War because of the terrible sacrifice of lives, the enormous cost that war involves, and the increased price of food. The origin of the War is a matter of more interest, but here the difficulty of separating the views of the teacher from those of the child is much greater. The higher motives are referred to ; for example : " We have gone into this War for the sake of freedom." The ambition of the Kaiser as the prime cause of the War is insisted upon, and horror is expressed at the wanton destruction of beautiful things, such as Rheims Cathedral.

A much more intelligent view is taken of the events of the War, and there is scarcely any reference to unimportant matters of local interest. The problems of victory and peace are discussed, and the great need is pointed out of having an adequate-supply of men. The Zeppelins and submarines are referred to with fuller knowledge, and torpedoes are spoken of as " missiles of destruction." Reference is made to the great preparation made for the War by Germany in such statements as: " Germany sent spies to England to build manufacturing factories with concrete roofs for guns." Up to this age England, Germany, and Belgium have practically monopolized the interests of the boys, but references are now made, though only occasionally, to Russia and Turkey. The help given by the Colonies receives more attention, and the

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debt we owe to Belgium is continually insisted upon. The attitude of Germany is condemned, but in more measured language.

The girl's attitude has changed considerably. The depression which was so marked at the age of 11 is now replaced by the dawning of the pride of race. Such expressions as : "I would not like to be a German ; I am proud to think I am an English girl," are characteristic. Now and then there are outbursts of anger, such as : "I would like to tip the Kaiser off his high and mighty throne," but they are infrequent. The origin of the War is referred to in greater detail, and much is written about the "scrap of paper," about which there is still much misunderstanding ; and such vague references as : "The scrap of paper is a thing which was so called by the German War Minister" are common. The moral depravity of the Germans in destroying beautiful things, and the cruel treatment of Belgium, are deplored. Gratitude is freely expressed to "our brave soldiers who have died to keep England great."

The advantages and disadvantages of the War are discussed. One of the minor advantages is said to be "that people have learnt how to knit" ; and one of the disadvantages "that many girls will remain old maids for want of men." The methods of the Germans are compared with those of "the Ancient Britons in the times of savagery." The chances of success in the War are sensibly considered, and confidence is expressed in our final victory. The necessity of keeping up our spirits is suggested ; for example : "We must not be downhearted, but must all do our best, and be thankful things are not worse." The girl at this

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age is again keen on recruiting, and urges the importance of every available man joining the Forces. For the first time mention is made of a specific battle—the battle of Ypres—and the girl appears to be interested now in the main outlines of the War.

At 13 years of age the most significant feature is the general increase in maturity of ideas, which is quite remarkable for young children. This is especially the case with the girls, who in this respect are considerably in advance of the boys. The boys give more accurate accounts of the origin of the War, and there is, in some of the better essays, a nice sense of proportion in discussing the progress of the War. There is far less about the details of the fighting or of particular events. The increased cost of food receives special attention, and the probable effect of the successful issue of the fighting in the Dardanelles in regard to this, in such statements as : " Let us hope that the Lord will give our Navy the power of taking Constantinople, that town which is holding back our daily bread." The seriousness of the War is often referred to ; for example: " This War is the most abominable thing in creation one could wish for." Pride is expressed in the Army and Navy and confidence as to the ultimate result of the War. References are made to the fine spirit which is shown in connexion with the War, such as: " Rich men, who think more of their country than their riches, have been killed," and the effect the War will have upon the future of our empire.

The girls refer particularly to the moral fall of Germany in breaking all the laws of warfare, as **will** be seen by the following : (a) " We must not be Germanized " ; (b) " We are fighting against

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German ideals " ; (c) " Life under German rule would be intolerable, so we must fight to a finish " ; and (d) " We are fighting for the cause of justice and freedom," There are many expressions of pride in England, and there is much general evidence of a fine spirit of patriotism. There are fewer references now to dearness of food or the sufferings of soldiers. The girl at this age prefers to look at the effect the War will have upon the future of England and of the other nations engaged, thus : " Turkey has gone to her doom," She is particularly anxious that full justice shall be done to Belgium : " It hurts me very much to think how Germany has served the Belgians." She realizes the magnitude of the War and that it will probably last a long time, as will be seen by the following :

(a) " There never will be such a war again " ;  
(b) " The horror of this dreadful war makes me shudder and hope that it will soon come to an end " ;  
(c) " This War is like a second Battle of Waterloo " ;  
and (d) " All our Allies are doing their best, and it is hoped the Dove of Peace will come to England soon."

There are many interesting points which emerge in this investigation of the interest of children in the War at different ages. Among the more important of these are the following : (i) Throughout the essays there are scarcely any references to the part played in the War by either France or Austria. There are practically no references to Russia; the countries referred to are almost exclusively England, Germany, and Belgium. (2) The references, apart from those dealing with the origin of the War, are almost entirely confined to the incidents happening

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within a comparatively short time of the date on which the essays were written. Matters distant in time or space appear to have little interest for young children. (3) It would naturally be imagined that the darkening of the streets would, especially with the younger children, be dealt with fully as a consequence of the War, whereas it is scarcely mentioned. It would appear that in the eighth month of the War the children became so accustomed to the darkening of the streets that it had ceased to be of interest to them. (4) The excessive interest taken in the operations in the Dardanelles is clearly due to the supposed connexion of a free passage to the Black Sea with the price of food. This is generally apparent by definite statements in the essays.

The most interesting results may, however, be briefly summarized as follows : (1) The clearly-marked change of interest from age to age ; (2) the radical difference between the interests of boys and those of girls up to the age of 12 ; (3) the very well-marked bellicose attitude of the girl of 10, followed by a period of severe depression at 11, and a recovery at 12 years of age, accompanied by a feeling of pride of race ; and (4) the maturity of ideas on a subject like the War at such an early age as 13, more especially in the case of the girls, who are in this regard at least a year ahead of the boys.

The essays of children in the first year of the War had proved so full of interest, and gave such a valuable insight into the mental development and character of the child at different ages, that a further investigation of a less ambitious character, with fewer children, was carried out to discover **ii** possible; (1) **Any change of view with regard to**

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the War among elementary school children; (2) whether co-education has any effect in modifying opinions on the War; and (3) the attitude of children in the secondary schools, where they remain until the age of 17 years. The essays were written in the early months of the second year of the War.

In the elementary schools the influence of the teacher, who frequently speaks to children about the War, undoubtedly is great. The fuller knowledge shown in the essays, especially about the origin of the War, is very marked; though a boy of 8 writes: "The War is very interesting because no one knows how it started"; and a girl of 8 expresses the opinion: "The reason the War started was because the Kaiser heard that King George had more land than he had." Local colour and unimportant details are less in evidence, though in the records of young children there occur such statements as: (a) "There was a very thin soldier and he went to the German trenches and they thought he was a ghost and he captured some Germans"; (b) "We have sent mouth organs to the firing line so as to keep the soldiers happy"; and (c) "The Germans try to kill girls so that when they grow up they shall not become Red Cross nurses."

At the age of 10 years there is still evidence of a very hostile attitude to Germany and other enemies: (a) "The Germans don't deserve a capital letter to their name"; (b) "The Turks dress in white to look like snow. It isn't fair"; and (c) "The French have got some shells which when they burst nothing will grow on the ground for twenty years. They are not going to use them till they get to Germany." Occasionally at this age there is a

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note of optimism, as, for example : " The soldiers are up to their necks in water in the trenches, but God's in His heaven ; all's right with the world." The mature reflection of the 13-year-old girl is as clearly marked as in the first year of the War, as may be seen by the following : (a) " Men are the price of victory " ; (b) " War shows the metal men are made of " ; and (c) " This War has arisen like an awful apparition in the face of a nation following in the footsteps of Rome."

The effect of co-education on the attitude of children towards the War is very interesting. The more important results obtained by teaching boys and girls together by a mixed staff are as follow: (1) The girls become less critical and take more interest in war activities. (2) The boys become more critical and take a much broader view of the War. A marked improvement is to be noted. (3) The philosophic attitude of the girl of 13 is somewhat impaired by a greater interest in material things. (4) The essays of the boys deal far more with the religious point of view than those of boys taught separately.

Among the younger co-educated children there are similar misunderstandings and absurdities to those previously recorded. At 9 years of age: (a) " The Germans are killing babies and hanging them on church doors " ; (b) " When Lord Roberts said the Kaiser was preparing for war the Prime Minister and a lot of other sillies said he wasn't " ; and (c) " When we send German prisoners home we send them with clean faces, and new suits, and money in their pockets, but the Germans send ours in rags and with no money.\* At 10 years of age : (a) " A man's life was saved by carrying his Bible.

The bullet went straight through and lodged in the 9th Psalm " ; and (6) " They think by dropping bombs they can frighten us so that we shall give in, but not us, we are not fools like the Germans." At 11 years of age: (a) " The Germans cover the Zepps with sheep skins and make them look like clouds " ; and (b) "I have paid my five shillings and am now in the War zone."

The attitude of children in secondary schools towards the War is somewhat different from that of other children. The essays of the older children are of special interest; the greater knowledge of geography, and the fuller background of history, give them a much wider outlook, and some of the boys and girls of 16 and 17 years of age describe their attitude towards the War in terms of reasoned judgment, with considerable power and in a spirit of splendid patriotism. These essays are untarnished by outbursts of passion so frequently found in those of younger children.

Boys at the age of 11 still use much abusive language about the Kaiser ; and the Crown Prince is often referred to as the Black Prince. The methods of warfare are discussed in some detail. In some papers of the boys of 12 years of age there is evidence of a certain amount of depression, but in the majority of them there is a well-marked bellicose attitude and a considerable amount of abuse, as may be seen by the following extracts : (a) " The Kaiser and his cut-throat gang are not men but wild beasts of the vilest type " ; (b) " In the German schools the masters are spies, and the boys are degraded sneaks " ; and (c) " The War is the most appalling tragedy since the landing of Julius Caesar in Britain,"

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At 13 years of age the essays become critical, but general confidence is expressed as to the ultimate issue of the War. The depression has disappeared; for example : (a) " Dear sleepy old England " ; (b) " If Germans use poison gases and sing hymns of hate they must be unmercifully squashed " ; and (c) " The Huns are burning, pillaging, looting and drinking as if in league with the devil himself. This is their kultur."

A higher note is struck at the age of 14. Virulent abuse has ceased and a broader outlook is taken, as can be seen from the following extracts: (a) " This War is the best thing possible for the world because it is really a Holy War " ; (b) " The world appears to have got completely out of control, and as though none but a superhuman hand can put it straight again " ; and (c) " Our soldiers' lives are not wasted for they fight in freedom's cause for their country and their empire." At 15 years of age the boys again become somewhat critical in their attitude ; for example : (a) " The English Government is always asleep " ; (b) " The Kaiser has returned to pagan ages and has shocked the civilization of the world"; and (c) " The Chinese race is sitting serenely by, watching the white races destroying themselves."

In the essays of some of the boys of 16 and 17 the big-issues of the War are dealt with in a calm, statesmanlike manner, such as : (a) " No price is too high to pay for this great struggle for freedom. The gain will be great, morally and spiritually " ; (b) " Civilization is but a huge bluff which disappears when the War trumpet is sounded, and makes us little better than barbarians"; and (c) " The love of empire and country may be **the**

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cause of War. Cannot we replace this by the love and welfare of the world? A nation whose ideal is militarism is a danger to the peace of the world; beneath civilization are hidden the lower passions and blood-lust."

At 10 and 11 years of age the girls in Secondary Schools are very keen about thrift, and are anxious to be of service during the War; for example: (a) "I should like to become a missionary and go among the Germans and tell them how wicked they are"; (b) "We must have more ammunition and we must not be so slow"; and (c) "I would like to go and fight myself if I were old enough." The girls of 12 are somewhat depressed at the outlook, and criticize those in authority, but on the whole they take a hopeful view of the future. The following are extracts from their essays: (a) "It is rather nice to think that I am living while the War is raging"; (b) "I think the English, though I am English myself, are very slow"; (c) "When I am a grandmother I shall read to my grandchildren all about the great War"; and (d) "The Allies have signed a paper known as the 'Entente Cordiale.'"

At the age of 13 the girls are evidently less influenced by their parents and teachers, and are thinking out the problems of the War for themselves. There is, however, less maturity of view than among the girls of the same age in elementary schools. The outlook changes somewhat at the age of 14. The girls become severely critical and urge more business-like conduct of the military operations. They have no sympathy with the slacker: (a) "It is more blessed to go than to be pushed"; (b) "Germany has blemished **all her** page of **honour** in her '**Book of Life**' by being

utterly cowardly in her treatment of Belgium " ; and (c) " This War has shown us that there is in the world a country as wild and barbarous as any in the early races of mankind,"

At 15 years of age the girl is full of confidence, and has no doubt as to the future. She is proud of the doings of our soldiers : (a) " It is a religious War, right against might " ; (b) " The knits are now proudly clad in khaki and the patriotism of the British is recognized among the nations" ; and (c) " The House of Hohenzollern will be brought to the dust and forgotten for evermore." In the essays of the girls of 16 and 17 there is more about England and less about the other countries. With age the point of view broadens, and local colouring and War details disappear in the larger questions involved ; for example : (a) " This War has opened up a new field of thought in military and civil affairs and it is paving the way for universal peace " ; and (b) " This War is making England a better, stronger and a nobler nation every day."

## CHAPTER VIII

### CHILDREN'S STORIES OF THE AIR RAIDS

**T**HE stories of the air raids satisfy, in an exceptional manner, the requirements for obtaining the unaided work of the children. Immediately after each of the earlier air raids, essays were written in selected schools in districts which had been visited by Zeppelins. Most of the children thus had had first-hand personal experiences of a thrilling and exciting nature, and of an absolutely unique character. The descriptions therefore represent, in the child's own language, the impressions produced. As in previous investigations, no warning was given and the time for writing the essays was limited. It was therefore possible to ensure that there was no preparation, and the short time allowed made it probable that the elements of the greatest interest were recorded. Additional evidence is afforded by these stories that the power of graphic description is a very early possession of the intelligent child.

The boys of 8 years of age are so excited about the large number of new experiences that they find difficulty in describing them. The descriptions of sounds in the streets, policemen's whistles, and the **fire** engines bulk very largely, the chief attractions being the noise and the fires. No personal feelings **are** expressed and there is no evidence of fear

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Some horrible scenes are described. Many unimportant family details are given, and extraordinary stories are told of what happened, such as "The bombs melted all the money in a lady's purse."

Simple descriptions are given by the girls of this age of striking events without mention of their own feelings. Nothing is said about waking, dressing, and personal matters, which occur so frequently in later papers. Very local matters are described in simple, unconnected sentences. Some horrible scenes are referred to, and mention is made of people killed and wounded. There is noise and confusion everywhere. Everybody is screaming and crying. Even at this age girls look after younger children.

The boy of 9 years of age thoroughly enjoys the air raid. He spends as much time as possible in the streets and gives not the slightest indication of fear. He takes the greatest interest in Zeppelins, bombs, and anti-aircraft guns, and remains up until very late watching the fires. He sees and describes horrible scenes. Occasionally he expresses dislike of the wicked Kaiser and the Germans. He is so interested in all he sees that he has little time for expressions of personal feelings. He gives no account of incidents of waking and dressing, and rarely describes conversations with other people. He gives accounts of remarkable things, and talks about German spies and the men who fell out of the Zeppelin. The descriptions of Zeppelins and bombs are very good for boys of this age.

In the girls' essays there is much more about personal matters and descriptions of waking and dressing and the time they went to bed. A feeling of dislike **of the raid** is frequently expressed, and

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it is described as terrible. Apparently not much fear is shown, and the girls slept well after the raid was over. Occasionally, however, great fear is expressed. Very little description is given of bombs, Zeppelins, or anti-aircraft guns. There is much local colour, and some of the girls went out with their parents afterwards to see the damage done, but apparently they saw far less of the raid than the boys, and there is no account of a girl going out alone. Very little mention is made of horrible things. Likes and dislikes are expressed, such as : " I don't like German bombs, but I don't mind English bombs."

At 10 years of age there is far less description of personal matters in the boys' than in the girls' essays. The boy now is very talkative and relates his conversations. Here, for the first time, there is distinct evidence of fear, but it is not nearly so marked as in the case of the girls of the same age. The fires are now described fully. The fear of the boy does not prevent him going out occasionally to look for bits of shell and shrapnel. At this age the boy takes his part in looking after the younger children. He describes striking scenes well, and gives more detailed accounts of the shape and size of the Zeppelins. He sits up at night and fears to go to bed. The following extracts from the essays of boys of this age illustrate some of the points:

(a) " Mother said, ' You take Johnny and I'll take Alf,' but as it was dark my Dad took Alf, and my mother took me. Dad fell over two chairs and mother nearly fell over the table. Now, while all this was happening my Bessie was writing a letter " ; (b) " A picture over mother's bed fell

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on her head and on the baby. The baby went unconscious and my mother shook her and then she was all right " ; and (c) " My mother was very frightened, so I tried to comfort her by telling her that the Zeppelins would soon be shot down by our anti-aircraft guns. Our conversation was interrupted by another bomb bursting."

Girls of this age are very frightened and excited. The bellicose attitude shown in the War essays is, however; seen in the abuse of the Germans and the critical attitude taken up on various points. Full detailed descriptions are given of waking and dressing and the care of the younger children. They discuss the place of greatest safety and think it foolish to go into the streets. The folly of using searchlights, which guide and assist the Zeppelins, is noted. Vigorous protests are made against German spies. There are very few descriptions of the events of the raid. All attention seems to be centred on personal matters. Though very alarmed and nervous they are thoughtful for others. Fewer references are made to horrible scenes. They go to bed in their clothes for fear the Zeppelins may return. Full accounts are given of the gatherings of people in the basements. The descriptions given are very different from those of the boys. Some of the statements in the essays of these girls are very interesting:

(a) " Mother was out. I jumped up, awoke my brother, and told Frankie to dress himself. I dressed myself and the baby. I ran out to see the Zeppelin go over the house but was brought back by a policeman. My brother and the baby were screaming for my mother. Soon my mother

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returned. She had been running for her life to get home because one of the Zeppelins was overhead. She came home with her hair streaming down her back"; (b) "I was much excited and thought that some collection should be made for the poor people who had been robbed of their homes and the things they treasured most"; (c) "The people were all running about like mad and the windows were falling out like rain"; and (d) "Many people went off into stericks and others fainted,"

With boys, n years is the great age for records of conversation. The boys give numerical details as to exact time of raid and going to bed, the size of holes made by bombs, the number of casualties, and so on. Good graphic accounts are given of the chief events. No sign of fear is shown, and many acts of bravery are recorded. Most of the boys are out in the streets all the time. A few, however, look after younger children and sometimes dress them. There is far less about waking and dressing than in the girls' essays, and far less expression of personal feeling. They are keen on the work of the anti-aircraft guns, but much less now about the fires. There are good descriptions of Zeppelins. Many mythical stories are told. Much more interest is now shown in people. The boys now take a greater interest in the moral effect of the raid. Descriptions are given of people going to the Tubes for safety. Very few references are made to horrid scenes. Descriptions are given of families removing their savings to a place of safety. Some of these points may be illustrated by selections from the essays; for example \*

(a) ' ' I ran downstairs and sat on the doorstep

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and dressed myself properly " ; (b) " ' Fathead,' I said, politely, ' it cannot be a Zeppelin. It does not move; therefore, it must be a star' " ; (c) " When I heard the bomb burst I got up and put my clothes on, got my bank book and my money box and went downstairs " ; and (d) " Mother said, ' Are you frightened,' and I said ' No.' Then she said, ' Go upstairs and turn the gas out.' I did but then I fell over a chair."

Girls of il give very detailed accounts of waking and dressing. Cellars are now the favourite place of safety. Much is said about the care of children, and there is much personal reflection. Full descriptions are given of Zeppelins, which are called " pretty sights." No fear now appears to be experienced. Girls of this age, for the first time, go out alone to see the damage done. They describe children being taken to the Tubes for safety. The Zeppelins are compared with those of previous raids. Very little is said about horrible sights. There is much local gossip and records of conversations. A few girls are unable to sleep at night. Good descriptions are given of the chief events of the raid. The bellicose feeling, now unmixed with fear, is freely expressed. The following extracts are typical:

(a) " Afterwards I felt we had been mercifully saved and I then knew what our brave soldiers and sailors have had to go through day after day. This kind of thing makes one realize what war is—and yet dropping bombs on harmless people is not war. That night I felt bitter towards the Germans. Then I felt I could fly to Germany and do the same thing to them"; (b) " I think it is the most

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terrible crime. The lives of many innocent people were lost. We all thank God for keeping us safe " ; and (c) " I own it made me down-hearted a little bit, but I was all right in five or six minutes."

At the age of 12 years there is no indication of fear in the boys' essays. Very good vivid descriptions of chief events are given, with less local details than in the earlier essays. There is a great desire among boys of this age to obtain souvenirs of the raid. The collecting instinct is very strong. Boys give various forms of assistance, accounts of which they retail with pride. Many accounts of brave acts are described. Practically all the boys of this age go out into the streets during the raid. There are singularly few personal reflections. No mention is made of the best place of safety, nor is the matter discussed. Different accounts of bombs are given. The boys talk much about spies. A few criticisms are made of the raids, which they regard as failures. Remarkable stories are told of men with loaded revolvers in a motor-car with bright lights. Boys of this age are determined to get a good view of what is going on. They are again interested in fires. The following extracts give characteristic evidence of boys' interests :

(a) "I was watching a lady making signs with a strong light and when the police went up she put it out, and then I walked away"; (b) " The bomb did not go off so I went to get it but burned my fingers. A copper came running round the corner and he took it " ; (c) " Finding that I could not get to the front of the crowd to get a good view of the fire I beat a retreat, I climbed **up a lamp post so that I could see it plainly** " ;

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(d) " When I saw the Zeppelins I thought at once that the time had come for me to do my bit, so I quickly put on my scout's uniform and rushed off to headquarters. The scouts made tea for scared people " ; and (e) "I was sent to find my brother, but I was so interested in looking at the damage done that I forgot all about my brother who got home before me. When I reached home I received the news that a cup of cocoa was awaiting me indoors. After drinking it I went to bed and was asleep within 20 seconds, and slept like a top."

The girls of 12 become very critical and argumentative. They discuss the safest place and why. There is far less going out into the street at this age. The girls think of the future, and sympathize with the sufferers, and condemn the Germans in strong language. They are much more emotional and reflective than the boys, and describe the events of the raid in far less detail. Expressions of sympathy are very common indeed. There is not much evidence of fear. No accounts are given of horrors or distressing scenes. There is still much local colour, and the descriptions of the events of the raid, when they occur, are very good. There is very much in these essays about looking after the younger children, but much less about waking and pressing. There are very well-marked cases here of suppressed emotion. Much is said about the social life in large blocks and the meetings of numbers of people in safe rooms. Precautions are taken in case the Zeppelins return. The attitude of girls at this age is well shown by quotations from the essays;

(a) " The tiling that seemed to stop my nerves

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most was hot cocoa " ; (b) " Ali the street lamps were put out—a very silly thing indeed—for the intense darkness can be as easily observed as bright light " ; (c) " The best and safest place during a raid is in the hall with the door open " ; (d) " The excited people ran about like mad bulls and mothers were clinging to their children as if they were the only things to care for " ; and (e) " After the Zeppelin had gone, I felt all right again, but I don't want any more shocks."

With the boys of 13 years of age the most striking point of advance is that matters of more general interest are described. There is much less local colour. The descriptions are well written, but there is very little personal reflection, and curiously little about the home and the other members of the family. It is evident that boys of this age go off by themselves, and take far more interest in the raid than in the affairs of the family. Frequently, however, records of bravery and kindly acts and the protection of young children are given. Sometimes the boy takes up a rather superior attitude and Zeppelins are described as " midnight marauders," There are now hardly any records of conversations. The boys are more than ever interested in the doings of the anti-aircraft guns. Throughout the essays the boys of this age prefer to describe what they see without comment. The girls prefer to tell what they think about matters. The great variety of interests of the boys may be shown by the following :

(a) " During the raid a lady, who was having a drink at the Dolphin, was found to be missing. A **search was made for her** " ; (b) " When I **heard**

the bombs I said, ' Put the light out,' My mother started asking questions. ' Why ? ' and ' What for ? ' Without hesitating to answer I jumped up on a chair and in a moment we were in utter darkness " ; (c) "I was cleaning a stove when the room was lighted up by a lurid glow followed by a bang. ' Zeppelins!' I exclaimed and straightway rushed into the street. There were women fainting and going into hysterics, children screaming and men cursing and special constables shouting, ' Put out your lights ' " ; and (d) " The air raid was a failure, the idea being to frighten the people of London. It did not succeed the feeling being one of curiosity rather than of fear."

In the essays on the War the girls gave evidence of abnormal maturity at the age of thirteen. This is fully confirmed in the essays on the air raids. Frequently there are good vivid descriptions of important events of the raids, but the main interest is the effect they produce. The general verdict is that they will do good because they show us what war really is, and because they will aid recruiting. The girls show far more emotion than the boys, and, on the whole, they have greater facility of expression. There is not the slightest evidence of fear. There is much about the care of children, and it is evident that, when the mother is absent, the girl of thirteen is quite capable of taking command very efficiently. Evidence of the bigger outlook of the girl at this age may be shown by selections from the essays :

(a) " We heard a terrific bang. I ran to pick the baby up. My sister ran downstairs and my aunt ran to pick **her** twins up"; (b) "The raid

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leaves some people homeless and penniless, but, of course, it is not so bad as losing your life, because you cannot buy a new life, but you can a home " ; (c) " The raid has turned some people very nervous and every little bang they hear they jump and turn white. That is not very good for people " ; and (d) " Air raids are good because it makes people feel what our soldiers must suffer."

Throughout the essays the mothering attitude of the girl at times of extreme danger finds full expression. The protection of the more helpless seems to be her first concern. Here are a few examples ;

(a) A child of nine, who had been in the street when the raid began, went up to her bedroom on reaching home to bring her teddy-bear into a place of safety; (b) A girl of eleven, whose mother was out, dressed her little brothers and sisters, put them in a place of safety, and afterwards put them to bed again before the mother came home; and (c) A girl saw a woman she knew, whose house had been blown in, with twins clutching round her dress and a baby in her arms. She took the twins and told the woman to come with her, and she took them all into the Keep Smiling Club, where kind ladies gave them some hot tea. Even the animals are looked after by these girls in times of danger : (a) " Our dog had a fit after the raid was over " ; (b) " Our dog kept crying and my sister bought him a half-pennyworth of milk, but he would not drink it, so we took it ourselves " ; and (c) " **Our** dog kept up an awful row and almost upset the office table."

The philosophic attitude of young children is well illustrated. It is very remarkable that at exciting crises of a child's life we find him pulling himself together and making important decisions with regard to future action, which would do credit to adults, as, for example: (a) " I was a bit frightened when the bomb burst, but still we have only to die once " ; (b) " I could have seen the Zeppelins, but I thought if I do I shall always see them when I look up into the sky, so I would not look at them " ; (c) " My teeth were banging together, but then I remembered that our lives were mapped out for us and God's will must be done " ; (d) " The first thing I did when I heard the crash was to get downstairs as quickly as I could keeping quite calm and cool until I reached a place of safety " ; and (e) " The lady next door had a crippled boy who was ill and couldn't leave his bed and he said, ' You go down into the cellar, mother, and I will keep here. God will keep us all right. ' "

Very interesting glimpses are obtained throughout the essays into the social life of people living in large groups. There is much evidence of the kindness shown to those who suffer in the raid. The woman, who has large, comparatively safe rooms, welcomes her friends and acquaintances from rooms in dangerous positions, and groups of twenty-five to thirty people are not uncommon. The appearance of these late visitors is variously described ; (a) " All the ladies and gentlemen were in their night dressing costumes " ; and (b) " The people from upstairs came into our room. They were in their night gowns most of them with no shoes or stockings. It was a dreadful sight. "

The danger of suppressed emotion is a very real

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thing. The children who suffered most during the raids were girls generally of about twelve years of age, who were really very much frightened, but who for feelings of pride or for other reasons did not show it. The girl of 12 who said she cried and cried until she couldn't stop crying, went out with her mother as soon as the Zeppelins had gone and saw the sights, and probably slept well afterwards. The girls who suffered most were those who had experiences similar to the following:

(a) "I was terrified but did not show it, but afterwards I started up each time I heard a noise. For two nights after I kept in my clothes and my nerves have never been right since " ;

(b) "I did not make any fuss although I was rather frightened, but next day I could not seem to settle down to my school work " ;

(c) " My mother told me it was only the guns practising, but I knew quite well what it was. I could hear the bombs bursting. I tried to be quiet and asked her for a book to read, but I kept thinking of the poor people who were killed. A week afterwards I could hear the bang of the guns in my ears " ; and

(d) " I tried to speak to my brother but my lower jaw seemed stiff. I was awfully frightened because my brother and I were alone in the house. It was a long time before I could sleep and every sound made me jump."

Some of the essays of children of 10, 11, and 12 years of age give evidence of considerable ability in the graphic relation of exciting events. The following are a few examples :

(a) " I sleep in a room at the top of the house in the same bed as my sister. When I heard the bombs bursting I called to my sister but there was no response. I then put out my hand and found that the seat was vacant. My mother then rushed upstairs and told me to come down in the kitchen. I went down a few steps but feeling cold I went back to bed again. My mother then rushed up into my room and carried me bodily downstairs into the kitchen where I saw many friends. I said, ' Why all this excitement ? ' and they said, ' The Zeppelins have come,' and I said, ' Good gracious! You don't say so ! ' "

(b) "I was startled out of my sleep by my mother saying, ' Erne, the Zeppelins are here,' I jumped out of bed and rushed to the door, snatching up my trousers in my flight. I went downstairs as hard as I could followed by my father and my mother in hot pursuit. When I got into the street I put my trousers on " ;

(c) " On the night of the raid I was coming out of a cinema with my uncle and I noticed that the people were rushing to and fro in the street. I went up to a policeman and said to him, ' What does all this mean ? ' and he replied gravely, ' The Zeppelins have come,' ' What! ' I said, ' Do you mean to tell me that those terrible monsters have come at last ? ' and he replied briefly, ' They have' " ; and

(d) " Suddenly a piercing beam of white light shot across the sky. The guns spat viciously out of the darkness at a cigar-shaped body far up in the clouds."

## CHAPTER IX

### " HOW CHILDREN CAN HELP IN TIME OF WAR "

**I**N the stories of children on the War it was seen that certain changes occurred from age to age and that the interests of the boy differed from those of the girl in many ways. At a later stage, when the novelty of warlike operations had somewhat abated, after experiences of them extending over three years, a large number of essays were written by children of about 11 years of age on " How Children Can Help in Time of War." . These essays give a remarkable insight into the power of young children for dealing with difficult problems in a matter of vital interest to them. Here, again, we also find striking characteristic differences between boys and girls of the same age.

The children by whom the essays were written were all educated in mixed schools, and therefore came under the influence of male and female teachers, the latter, however, predominating in consequence of war conditions. When ail allowance is made for the common material in the essays due to the teachers' influence, and also for the difference of interests created by the teaching of certain special subjects to girls whilst others are being taught to the boys, it is quite clear that there are fundamental differences in the attitude of boys and

girls of this age which are independent of school conditions.

The excellent spirit of the children, as evidenced by their desire to do anything in their power to render assistance in time of war, even at great personal inconvenience, is a very pleasing feature of the essays, and the extraordinary ingenuity of some children in devising methods of economizing shows that the matter was taken up with enthusiasm, and that much intelligent thought was bestowed upon it.

The comforts for soldiers are discussed in many of the essays. Continual references are made to the needlework of the girls, whereas little is said of the boys' handwork. The children frequently refer to the various needs of the soldiers, and in this connexion the views of the girls differ considerably from those of the boys.

Naturally, the efforts made in the schools in knitting and sewing a great variety of garments and materials for the comfort of the soldiers receive a large amount of attention, and are referred to in detail by boys and girls. The fact of the children being in mixed schools, and the activities of the girls in this direction being ever before the boys, account for the much larger number of references to girls' work by boys than to those of boys' work by the girls. The list of things girls propose to make for soldiers are generally useful and sensible. An exception is the suggestion that "girls can make handkerchiefs with lace round the edges and flowers in the corners for the soldiers." Many suggestions are made throughout the papers that the boys should provide the money for the wool whilst the girls should do the knitting.

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The average boy of n, being unable to knit or sew, is loud in praise of the girls' efforts; for example, one boy says : " Great help has been rendered in the War by the industrious British girlhood, who has made comforts for the troops." On the other hand, the boy may occasionally be severe. As an instance of this may be quoted : " I saw some knitted things that Lady Jellicoe had sent to be re-knitted. They made me shudder." Girls are very severe in their references to the boys' inability to knit, and think that only the cleverest boys could possibly do it; as, for example: " Boys who are a little more forward than the others might help with the knitting." Another goes so far as to suggest as a division of labour that: " As the girls are engaged in knitting, the boys might do their part by praying for the success of our arms."

Throughout the essays the girls are far more critical of boys' work than the boys of that of the girls. This is shown in continual reference to the boys' inability to do useful work, as the following extracts will show. After referring to the great amount of patience required to knit mufflers, a girl says : " If only boys had patience they could do the same as the girls." Then, again : " Boys are not so useful as girls, because they are not so light-handed " ; and " Boys cannot sew, but they can inform their sisters that their clothes are torn, and they will see to it." Others are less severe, as, for example : " Boys could be very useful, if only they would try." And yet again: " Although they cannot knit they can join the Boy Scouts."

It might have been thought that the boys' other forms of handwork might be quoted as an asset on their side, but the references **to this subject by the**

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girls are disappointing and unworthy of record. No good suggestions are made for the boys' hand-work during the elementary school period being of any real value in time of war. References are, however, made to the value of the after-school activities of the boys in connexion with munition works.

There is considerable variety in the views of the children as to the things which should be purchased with their savings, and which they consider would be most serviceable to the soldiers in the trenches. Among these the following are suggested by the boys: Cigarettes, tobacco, pipes, shaving sets, coco-nut ice, musical instruments not wanted at home (especially mouth organs), pen-wipers, books and games, syringes, hot water bottles, vaseline, boracic ointment, tooth-brushes, bars of scented soap, magazines, and patchwork quilts. One boy suggests that girls should make little bags filled with lavender, which the soldiers can hang round their necks with tape: "This would keep off the horrid smell of the trenches."

Among the things suggested by the girls are all kinds of warm woollen things and various articles of attire, cigarettes, chocolates, air pillows, condensed milk, gramophone records, games, books, plum puddings for Christmas (with 3d. and 6d. pieces in them to amuse the soldiers), toffee, Oxo, blankets, fruit, acid drops, paper, pencils, pencil-sharpeners, pipelights, and cod-liver oil. Girls appear to be much keener than the boys on sending cigarettes and chocolates to the soldiers, and whereas many girls refer to sending Christmas puddings, not a single boy makes any reference to it.

Interesting accounts are given of the War Loan,

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and suggestions are made with regard to different forms of war economies. The War Loan, which one boy says "broke out in 1915," although mentioned by a large number of girls, evidently does not appeal to them so strongly as more direct methods of helping in the War. They like something concrete, and prefer their money to be given for some specific purpose. One goes so far as to raise the objection to the War Loan that "if a bomb fell on the Bank of England, all our savings would be converted into ashes." Red Cross funds, money for delicacies, or immediate comforts for the soldiers, wounded or unwounded, appeal to the girls far more than the War Loan. The boys, on the other hand, delight in explaining, to the minutest detail, how the various stages are carried out in connexion with investment in the War Loan, and they point out the monetary advantage in lending as compared with giving money. Many of them have most exaggerated views of the ultimate results of their efforts in days to come. One boy says: "Put by a penny a week, and then when you grow up you can live happily"; and another says grandiloquently: "And when people say, 'What did you do in the great War?' I shall answer proudly, 'I lent my spare coppers to my country, and that is why I am better off than those who lent nothing.'" A strong advocate of the War Loan says; "Every 5s. lent to the Government kills a German." A curious point is to be noticed here, that, whereas girls continually refer to the amount they have saved, the boys make no reference to it. Both boys and girls have most exaggerated views of the purchasing power of their savings in regard to **munitions and food for** the soldiers. One boy says,

parenthetically t " We must always remember that the British soldier has a very big appetite."

To boys and girls the chief items of retrenchment are money spent on picture palaces and on sweets. In the majority of the papers these are referred to as the extravagances which will have to be most severely dealt with. One boy says ! " The Germans would be frightened if they heard that children were not going to any more picture palaces, but that all the money saved was to be spent on m<sup>u</sup>nition" Similarly a girl says : " Let us help to crush the Germans by not going to picture palaces. Instead of going there go on the common, and the bracing air will do you good, but the picture palaces would harm your eyes," Another says : " If you must go to places of amusement, go to Red Cross concerts."

The boys dislike the total abolition of their weaknesses, and the boy who said : " Only buy sweets when you feel that you simply cannot do without them," is typical. On the other hand, the girl is in favour of total abolition. In support of this one girl says I " Give up such luxuries as perfumes, sweets, and cakes. Perfumes do you no good, and sweets and cakes may cause indigestion," Another girl says ! " Don't buy toffee and stickjaw. They do more harm than good." One boy goes so far as to say that " children who spend money on pleasures are not loyal to their country." Referring to the ill-effects of picture palaces and sweets, a child writes i " We must not get ill or the doctor will have to look after us when he ought to be looking after the pommies."

Economies in food and drink are also referred to. In this connexion there is a very striking difference between the boy and the girl. The boy feels that

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under normal conditions he eats too much. The girl has no such feeling, and thus she thinks that there is no necessity for reform in this direction. They are agreed that in no circumstances should food be wasted. This is well shown by quotations from the essays. The boys say : (a) " We mustn't eat so much " ; (b) " We must eat less meat so that the soldiers may have more Save by eating more vegetables " ; (c) " Instead of eating because you like eating, you should eat just as much as is good for you " ; (d) " Eat margarine instead of butter, and give up jam and cakes. Don't grumble at your food " ; (e) " Don't give things to the cat, but save them for yourself " ; and (f) " Don't throw away your crusts, but save them for a bread-and-butter pudding, which is a very tasty dish."

On the other hand the girls say : (a) " I do not believe in not eating as much as we generally do, but we mustn't waste food " ; (b) " Have a good meal when you are about it, and then you can wait a long time " ; (c) " If you make a silly mistake in arithmetic or any other lesson, when you get home tell your mother not to let you have any jam or butter for tea, but save the money for the War Loan " ; (d) " Girls can help by encouraging their parents not to take intoxicating beverages " ; and (e) " Don't give bones to the dog, but stew them; they make lovely gravy."

Economy in clothes is also discussed. Here, again, the boy is conscious of wrong, especially as far as boots are concerned, and he knows that economy in this direction will mean constant restraint, as will be clear from the following extracts J (a) " Boys must stop climbing up places, and save **their** clothes " ; (b) " **Do not kick** stones **about,**

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because it wears your boots out much more than not kicking stones about " ; (c) " If we skate or play football it will wear out our boots " ; (d) " We can economize by not scraping our boots as we walk along"; (e) " We must not buy new clothes because our old garments might get the moth in them " ; and (,) " We must not wear out our boots by making sparks on the kerbstone,"

With the girls it is different. Economy in clothes, though it may be a serious matter, does not mean such an interference with the joy of life as in the case of the boy. The following quotations are typical: (a) " Do not run about heavily and clumsily, and thus wear out your boots " ; (b) " If you buy a pair of new boots, the man who makes them has to keep a soldier waiting for his, so that you are a traitor to your country " ; (c) " Girls can save in clothing by changing into old things on going home from school" ; (d) " Don't be ashamed to go to school with a darn or a patch in your clothes " ; and (e) " If children fidget it wears out their clothes."

Reference is also made to minor economies. It is evident that boys spend much money in buying cheap comic papers, and that they regard this as unnecessary, and therefore include it in their list of expenditure reforms. No reference is made to "' comics' in the girls' papers. Expenditure on fireworks, which must also be curtailed, is mentioned only in the boys' papers. There it is mentioned very often. Among the less frequently mentioned economies are the following by the boys : (a) " No more toys, especially those made in Germany " ; (b) " No waste in paper, coal, gas, or firewood " ; (c) " Don't ride when you can walk " ; (d) " In-

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stead of paying to see football matches, see your own school play for nothing " ; (e) " Do without birthday presents, and go to bed in the dark, and save the light " ; and (f) " Don't use so much soap in washing," Among the minor economies of the girls the following may be mentioned i (a) " Save paper and economize space in writing and drawing books. Use every inch " ; (b) " When drawing, use very little crayon " ; (c) " Walk instead of using buses or trams " ; and (d) " Don't cut string but untie the knots." It is to be noticed that those of the girls are principally school economies.

It is recognized that much can be done to lessen the burden on the mother. Many of the essays deal effectively with the manner of giving help in the home to comfort the mother in connexion with the worries entailed by the War, and also for the purpose of setting her free to carry on her work of making things for soldiers. The girls look upon this as their main work outside school. One girl makes a very good case for her statement that " the child who minds the baby helps to end the War." The boy also assists, but it is evident that they find the work very irksome, especially in the direction of looking after the baby. As one boy pathetically says ! " Babies want a lot of looking after, especially new-born babies."

The direction in which the children think they can render the greatest service is in always being cheerful, and in trying to induce the mother to look on the bright side of things. They think they can also help by being calm during Zeppelin raids. This is well shown in extracts from the papers. The boys make the following suggestions J (a) " We **can** help mother and save the servant's wages. We

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can cheer her up " ; (b) " We must keep a stout heart during air raids, and not make a noise in the afternoon so that mother may have a good sleep " ; (c) " Always be good, and never have to be told anything twice " ; and (d) " Help mother, and set her free to make things for soldiers."

The girls think they can render the most efficient service by working harder in the home, as may be seen by the following extracts i (a) " Girls must play less during the War, and help their parents more. They must cheer up their mothers"; (b) " Girls must not go out in the evenings, but stay at home and help, comfort and amuse mother, so the time may pass more quickly till the men come home from the War " ; (c) " I wish I was a man, but that was not to be. We boys and girls were made for other reasons " ; (d) " We must not bother our parents with incessant questions during the War. We can help by putting up with irritating things " ; and (e) " Always be merry and bright, and cheer up mother,"

It is interesting to notice the different views taken by boys and girls with regard to the virtue of obedience. At the age of 11, boys and girls are as far apart as the Poles in their attitude to this matter. Throughout the essays the girls insist on the value of obedience, not only in making the affairs of life work without friction, but also in producing that happiness and feeling of satisfaction which only obedience can bring. " If you are good you will be happy," is the keynote of many of the essays. Here are some quotations from the papers : (a) " Obedience is the great thing. If every one did as he was told, this world would be a good place to live in " ; (b) " Be obedient and don't argue " ;

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(c) " Be obedient, and grow up to be noble and wise women " ; and (d) " Girls must behave when teacher is not looking."

The boy's attitude is absolutely different. He regards obedience as a necessity, and adopts it as a war measure, but he never refers to any resulting peace of mind as a consequence. Rigid obedience cuts across the boy's most cherished recreations and excitements. The boy who says " During the War we must obey parents, teachers, and policemen " is a normal boy, and expresses the opinions of his fellows. Quite logically he discusses the reasons for this war measure. The affairs of the home are in such an abnormal condition that his mother is overworked and worried. His love for her purifies his resolve to give all the help he can in the home, and this is impossible without obedience. In the mixed school the replacement of men by new women teachers, so that the men might join the Forces, gives the boy an opportunity of having an exceptionally good time. But there are many references in the essays to his determination to play the game properly, and make it " easy for the new lady teacher to take the place of the man who has gone to fight."

In his attitude towards the policeman the boy fully realizes that out of school he is regarded as a nuisance, and that obedience to regulations would result in " more policemen being set free to fight for the King." He therefore resolves, for example: " Not to get in a soldier's way because a soldier has always something special to do," and he adds, curiously: "I must not say bad things about the Cabinet." The girls make constant reference to boys' disobedience, as, for example : " Boys must

refrain from squeaking horns on standing motor-cars " ; and again : " Boys can help their country by not putting the street lamps out." In fact, the majority of the girls' many references to boys' shortcomings are connected with the unpardonable sin of disobedience.

The girls write much on the various ways in which help may be given to wounded soldiers. They evidently delight in doing kindly acts, and are happy when helping to provide or take part in entertainments for the wounded, or in Red Cross concerts. The boy approves, but does not enter into the spirit of the thing to the same extent as the girl. One boy says : " Children can look after wounded soldiers, and take them into the parks to listen to the feathered songsters " ; and again : " We should visit wounded soldiers because they are tired of seeing so many grown-up people out at the Front." He does these things willingly, but his heart is not in it. It is quite different with the girl.

The boy's greatest interest in helping in time of war is in playing the part of the Boy Scout. References are continually made to the wonderful work carried on by the scouts, and the part that they play in the military organization is painted in glowing colours, and is occasionally greatly exaggerated. Their activities appear to vary from " watching a reservoir while the special constable has a rest " to the discovery and tracking down of alien spies, and in giving important information to the War Office. The boy frequently refers to the desirability of girls becoming Girl Guides, but very few references are made by the girls themselves to this movement.

The boys see in the shortage of labour in **the**

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shops an opportunity of earning money easily by out-of-school work, and this has given them an added interest in financial matters. They constantly discuss methods of raising money, as, for example ! " Boys should fish for bloaters, and reduce household expenses " ; or, again : " Money boxes should be tied to tame pets so that they can collect money for wounded soldiers." The boys are anxious to go about collecting money for the soldiers, and selling pretty things made by clever girls. No references, however, are made to selling anything they have made themselves. The attitude appears to be: " We will raise money, and the girls shall do the other work," The buying of wool for girls to make woollen garments for soldiers is a case in point.

Very interesting references are made in the essays to the great importance of English boys and girls working hard in school in order to become better educated than the German children. The following extracts speak for themselves 1 (a) " We must work hard at school, and beat the enemy at arithmetic and other things " ; (b) " If we work hard at school and become clever, a nation would think twice before invading England " ; (c) " We are the rising generation. England wants boys and girls to be like Drake and Florence Nightingale " ; (d) " We are the citizens of the future, and shall have to select the Members of Parliament. We must work hard when teacher is out of the room " ; and (e) " We children will have to put this country right after the War, so we must **work hard and become well educated.**"



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