1937

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COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK

IN AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS


W. H. Brokaw, Director, Lincoln

CHILDEIEN AMONG CHILDREN

Florence J. Owens, B. S., A. M.,
Editor, National Kindergarten Association, New York City

"O, how will he do? O, how will he be?
When with more of the children,
The forecast you'll see."

There we have the unadorned truth. But it is not an unalterable decision of fate that we shall face when we study the child's present behavior as he comes into daily contact with other boys and girls.

If the forecast is unpleasant, we of course want to help him to change it, but we proceed very gently. For since he chose neither his inheritance nor his environment how can we consider him to blame? One or the other or both of these contributors have involved him in difficulties not easy to work out of. A change of conditions alone can change his attitudes, and we can help to insure for him a beneficial environment.

Are we apt to narrow that word "environment" and forget that it embraces every influence that touches the child's life? Do we remember that it includes very little incidents as well as the more noticeable ones, both the desirable and the undesirable? For instance: a hurried breakfast, an appreciative smile, Mother's irritation with the grocer's boy, gentleness shown a lame dog, an aunt's fear of a storm, Father's willingness to be inconvenienced for the benefit of a neighbor, irreverence, an intimation that another child must be avoided because not as good as he, deception on the part of Brother with regard to some berries he has picked, and is selling, perseverance in flying a kite, discourtesy to a peddler and a misunderstood effort to help are all experiences that may come in medley disorder to any boy or girl.

However carefully the home environment is conditioned for well-rounded development the child must mingle with other children from his earliest years. But parents should know their child at home and abroad. Sometimes a boy or girl is quite a different personality when with other children, from what he is at home. Often because of a lack of social adjustment the child has serious difficulties to meet about which his parents know little.

It isn't wise to "pry" if the door of confidence between parent and child has been closed. But there are ways of getting it reopened. If necessary one should woo a child's friendship. It should, of course, be done very naturally, treating the child with respect and dignity (not formalism) as one would if seeking the friendship of an adult.

The little stories that follow are somewhat of a medley, too. Perhaps there will not be a single lesson in any of them that will be of value to you, personally, but they are not uninteresting. And if among them there is a story which carries a suggestion that helps one mother to a better understanding of her child's problems, the time spent will be worth while, won't it? Just one word more. I do
desire to speak particularly of the last article: "Wh Robert Does Not Marry." If your community needs the lesson that it carries, I urge you as a group to become Crusaders, in a tactful but positive way.

TURNING THE OTHER CHEEK  
Nola Nance

One of the most difficult problems in bringing up a child deals with the question of teaching him whether to grin and bear or to fight back.

I have had an opportunity to see two distinct kinds of training carried out and I must confess that neither was very successful. My brother was much younger than I and, upon the death of my mother, I became responsible for his upbringing. The hardest decision I had to make was when he came home with the tale of some childish insult and wanted to know if Mother had been right when she told him always to turn the other cheek. After thinking it over, I felt that I could not contradict the teaching of so lovable a person as my own mother and for this reason I kept telling him never to fight back with his fists, that the one who was right would win without it in the end. And so Charles grew up with never a fight to his discredit—or credit! But one day, when he was nearly sixteen years old, I found him hiding behind the hedge until the town bully had passed by. It often took him twice as long as it should to go anywhere for there were certain houses he would avoid by going around the block.

And he is still going around the block, so to speak. Even though he has an unusual talent for a singularly important line of work, he always has to be under somebody who is a leader. By no feat of imagination could I picture Charles forging ahead to the position his ability entitles him to hold.

And so when my son was born I made up my mind to use a different method with him. Long before he started to school I told him always to fight back.

And he did! When he had a score that he couldn't settle on the spot, he would "lay" for his victim until he had an opportunity to attend to him properly. About three times a week he would come home with black eyes or a bloody nose disfiguring the triumphant expression that told me he had another victory to his credit. He was expelled from school twice for fighting and was refused entrance into another for the same reason.

Dan is a grown man now and though he is often intolerant of the opinions of others, he is fighting his way to the top—a more forceful personality than Charles, though even I know that he has not so brilliant a mind.

In neither case did I find a happy medium. But to mothers who have the same problem confronting them, I would suggest that they be guided by the individual temperament of the child. If he is naturally of a timid disposition, he must be encouraged to stand up for his rights until he can boast some measure of courage. If too aggressive, he should be taught that the greatest victories are won with wits and not with fists. Above all things children should be taught never to "pick" a fight.

However, these things usually work themselves out better without our blundering attempts at guiding. Teach your boy to reason clearly and to deal fairly.
to be habitually good-natured and considerate of others, and then when trouble comes—and it will—let him work out his own problem.

THE CHILD'S SOCIAL PROBLEM
Sophie Kitchener

In a more or less hushed, expectant, unresisting attitude a group of children were waiting for one of their number, who was at that moment howling his way across the street, to reach his mother "to tell her on them." The occurrence was not a new one. In another moment the boy's mother would hurry out of the house to answer to her son's lusty cries and cross the street to learn what had happened to him.

The children were not afraid of her. There was rather a sense of long-suffering endurance in the way they waited for the scolding and her threats that they would get into trouble if they did not "leave Jimmy alone." They were quite bored, although they did not know the name for the feeling, at the frequency of this same happening. They were conscious, too, that they did not go out of their way to hurt Jimmy. They rather liked him and were really friendly. But it was his inability to play happily with them and accept the general give and take of their youthful society that had become annoying: a disagreeable shadow was cast when he joined the group. The shadow was specifically that of his mother, ready at all times to come out to defend and protect him from them. This was, of course, because she could not see that he needed no more protection in his social experiences than the rest of them.

When Jimmy went crying home, they knew in some vague way that the ethics of their group, their child society, had been violated. The telltale who, instead of standing up and taking the little hurts they all had to endure, or fighting it out if it reached such a pass, always ran home to his mother, roaring his chagrin at the top of a powerful pair of lungs with no thought of shame, was in a sense an outlaw.

They were too young to realize that it really wasn't Jimmy's fault. His mother had encouraged his natural timidity. She had cautioned him to come to her whenever anything went wrong, to tell her when anyone hurt him and, in general, to come running to her with every petty difficulty attendant upon finding his bearings in the social order.

Nor did she realize the harm she was doing. Jimmy would continue to lack courage to defend himself in the increasingly intricate social struggles since she acted as a shield for him in these days of his childhood, the determining period of his life.

So, with conditions as they were, all Jimmy could do was to disturb his playmates and acquire for himself a disposition that would be difficult to escape in manhood—and all because his mother brought no real thought to bear on the working out of his problem as an individual and a future man.

THE CHILD NEXT DOOR
Minerva Hunter

Charlotte's social group in Hogansville agreed on essential points in child development. When little Lottie spent an hour with small friends, Charlotte
felt perfectly sure she would not be offered anything to eat and only water to drink. She knew, too, the general trend of what the child was likely to see and hear while at any one of her friends' homes.

Then Sam, her husband, was transferred to Springfield. The day they moved, little Lottie quickly found her way to the fence, peeked through and was soon playing with the child in the next yard. At noon when her father called her into the house for lunch she said she was not hungry, that she had eaten candy, cake and a ham sandwich.

"Where did you get those things?" her mother asked.

"Sara got them out of her mother's refrigerator and handed them through the fence. Her mother was on the porch and said she might."

Charlotte disapproved of this demonstration of neighborliness and began considering what would be the best way of taking the matter up with Sara's mother, later on.

"There is a rag man comes down the alley." Lottie broke in upon her mother's thoughts. "He catches little children and makes them into soap."

"We are under a new regime." Sam observed.

Before either parent could think of a suitable reply Lottie continued, "I have a new hat and a new coat and new shoes and a new dress and new socks and—"

"Where are they?" Charlotte interrupted.

Lottie paused to consider. "I have them," she affirmed.

"Where?" her mother repeated.

"I— I" Lottie stammered. Then she saw a child in the yard across the street and pointing toward her, changed the subject. "That is Ruth Gray. Sara says she is poison."

Charlotte and Sam looked from Daughter to each other with chagrin. Something must be done to prevent any more such experiences.

High hooks were adjusted on gates and doors; Lottie's baby brother, in his crawling expeditions required these precautions which served equally as well to keep outsiders out. Next, Sam made a poultry yard to run the full length of Sara's fence, and Lottie was not allowed in the poultry yard alone. Swings and a sand pile in the back yard kept the children from wanting to play on the front lawn where there was no fence. These arrangements conspired to separate the children of the two families in ways that seemed natural.

To have attempted entire separation would have caused unpleasantness, and Charlotte did not feel equal to reeducating Sara's mother, with whose circle of friends she soon found she had little in common. However, taking advantage of an opportunity to return Sara's sweater, found on the lawn one morning, she greeted her neighbor pleasantly, sniffed appreciatively of her cooking and then, very tactfully, mentioned that Lottie was not allowed to eat between meals and asked quite frankly for cooperation. It was promised good-naturedly.
From time to time Lottie met Sara on the front lawn. On such occasions Charlotte supervised their play, keeping them interested in something constructive. Little girls like Lottie and Sara usually do meet sometime or other, and the attitude of each toward the new experience is of course the important issue. Charlotte found that it was less difficult than she had anticipated to bring about an attitude of tolerance rather than imitation, on Lottie's part, with regard to Sara's crudities, and to center her admiration on the little neighbor's constant good humor and ready generosity. Both children were, without doubt, really benefitted by the acquaintance.

HIS HOUR OF NEED
S. E. McCahey

Mrs. Dunn, a young married woman in her twenties, sat sewing on her piazza one hot day in June waiting for her 6-year old son to come home from school. At last she saw him. Coming down the street was a sturdy little figure hurrying along, seemingly intent on his destination.

"Lo, Ma," said Tommy Dunn soberly to his mother as he climbed the piazza steps.

"Hello, Sonny," was the smiling response. "Did you have a good day?" To her surprise her small son passed quickly into the house.

She was about to follow when two boys, a little older than Tommy, passed by the gate and looked impudently at Mrs. Dunn.

"Guess he won't tie a can to Mrs. Greene's Pomeranian again," said one in a loud voice.

So that was it! That was the reason Tommy had gone into the house so quickly. After all she had told him about keeping away from the Putnam boys, here he was again mixed up with them in a scrape about which they wanted her to know.

She hurried into the house and found Tommy lying face downward on the bed.

"Tommy," she began severely, "haven't I told you time and time again to keep away from those Putnam boys? Answer me!"

"Yes Mother," muttered Tommy.

"Did you tie a can to Mrs. Greene's Pomeranian?"

Tommy dug his face into the bed-clothes and said nothing.

"Just wait until your father comes home..."

"May I come in, Mrs. Dunn" a voice called from the other side of the screen door.

"O, Miss Brent, I am glad to see you," and Mrs. Dunn hastened to open the door to Tommy's teacher who must pass their gate on her way to and from school. "I've just been scolding Tommy for being with the Putnam boys."

"Let's talk on the piazza," said Miss Brent quietly, and both women left the room.
Miss Brent began the conversation.

"The Putnam boys caught Mrs. Greene's Pomeranian and asked Tommy to hold it, for some reason or other, and when he was doing so, they tied the can to the dog's tail and then shoved him out of Tommy's arms. The dog ran away."

"Why didn't Tommy tell me?" asked the exasperated mother.

Miss Brent continued.

"I have seen Tommy try to avoid those boys without getting into trouble, but they contrive to get him mixed up in all their mischief. They swear him to secrecy, and, Mrs. Dunn, those same boys have discovered that you believe them when they tell you what they wish about Tommy. Can you understand the position in which they place Tommy?"

Miss Brent was hardly prepared for the move Tommy Dunn's mother made, but she sat there quietly as Mrs. Dunn hastened out of the yard and down the road to the Putnams' where she told the whole story to the Putnam boys' mother who told her she didn't believe a word she said.

That was that! The mother who had the whole neighborhood complaining about her boys, defended them unheard, while the mother of one of the finest of boys had wavered in her faith and understanding. Had her son sensed that? She almost ran home.

Miss Brent didn't mind it a bit when Mrs. Dunn passed her on her way into the house as though she never existed, but she heard her:

"Tommy, Sonny, don't hesitate to tell Mother anything. No matter what is said or done to you—tell Mother so that she'll understand. Mother is your best friend. I must thank Miss Brent . . . ."

But Miss Brent had gone.

CHILDREN'S CLOTHES
Laura Gray

A girl of seven danced along on her way to school, humming merrily. "Hello!" she called to me. "Look at my pretty dress! Auntie brought it last night!"

"Lovely!" I smiled back in surprise. Was this the shy, nondescript little Ann Gaunt who passed my door daily? Why, her face was radiant. She was a pretty, vivid child. I'd thought her ordinary!

"I'm going to say a piece in school today!"

She'd never spoken to me of her own accord before and had scarcely answered when I had spoken to her. But the charm of the simple gingham frock and clean white socks and her freshly washed brown hair had entered into her spirit and radiated a delight too great to keep to herself.

Do we realize how much children are affected by clothes— or have we forgotten? The boy or girl conscious, even vaguely, of being well dressed has a bearing

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among his fellows that the dowdy, not quite clean, child has not. A torn stocking, a spotted, ugly dress, untrimmed, or unbrushed hair evoke a sense of inferiority that tends to make the child timid, and friends, even teachers, quickly adopt a corresponding attitude.

A girl who had been content and eager to wear the uniform of a private school she had attended, surprised her mother by refusing to wear the same frock to the public school.

"Nonsense, Molly, of course you must wear it. It's a pretty dress."

"I know, Mother, but nobody else wears one anything like it, and the girls make fun of me!"

One Saturday, a boy of nine strode past my door, petulantly kicking stones. When he'd gone over the ridge he glanced back, jerked off his tan, hid it under a bush, pulled off his tie, opened the neck of his shirt and rolled up his sleeves. Then, hands in pockets, he whistled along. Other lads similarly clad joined him.

Ridicule from the crowd is hard for an adult to bear; it is genuine pain to a child. Boys are as sensitive as girls in this respect. If tans and neckties are not the fashion on play days and rolled up sleeves and open collars are, why then the boy is pretty likely to be happier if the parent doesn't insist on more formal dress.

Clothes have an educational value. To be "out of style" or to be untidy or badly dressed is an offense to those who must look at us. Flowers, birds, all are beautiful. Boys and girls, also, should be made personally attractive. And if the parent begins early and does not lay undue stress on this particular phase of the subject, it is not hard to persuade the child that clean hands, orderly hair and a cheerful face play an important part in making one presentable.

Selections of pleasing combinations can be easily taught to both boys and girls. However, the beauty of simplicity must sometimes give way to the glamor of bright colors. It may actually hurt a sensitive child to have to look daily at a dull brown or gray frock, unless it is relieved by a dash of bright color as trimming or hair ribbon. A becoming ribbon will often make a little girl's heart dance. And, what can't one do and be when the heart is light! Harmony in color, when understood, is generally enjoyed quite as much by the young as by the more mature, and it is a lesson well worth teaching.

THE DO-AS-YOU-PLEASE ROOM

Hilda Richmond

"Mother, Helen won't play with us!" complained Mary Joyce to her mother. "She wants to sew all the time!"

"Don't be odd, Helen," reproved Mrs. Joyce, "go and play with the others." Helen gathered up her sewing and went to join a game in which she was not really needed and at the moment was not at all interested.

Many mothers make this effort to standardize their children's play, forgetting that the individuality, the tastes, the physical condition and the inclinations of each child should have consideration. If the quiet little girl wants to
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finish a doll's dress while the other children romp on the lawn with the pet dog, it is hardly fair to make her put down her fascinating task just because the majority prefer another occupation. If she is apt to take insufficient exercise she needs encouragement, not force. When driven into active games under protest a child is pretty sure to dislike them more than ever.

The do-as-you-please room is a saving institution which will be used on occasions, not only by the less active child, but by every member of the family. It is not being queer or contrary that prompts a boy to want to finish a kite rather than to go fishing at a particular moment, and the little girl who happily sews on a gay doll's garment is not bound to "grow up to be a maiden lady" on that account. Concentration on an interesting activity, indisposition, or some childish sorrow are good reasons for wanting to be alone. At any rate, having a spot where one can be secure from noise and confusion is a privilege with which grownups can sympathize.

The do-as-you-please room may be only a corner of the living-room or the shady space beneath the apple tree, but wherever it is it should be considered sacred from invasion. When children know that they are recognized as individuals just as definitely as they are regarded as members of a group, they are much better tempered, more likely to do well in school and also more original in thought and purpose. Often the strong child dominates the weak, or the selfish one puts until he gets his way, but in the quiet corner, the retreat, the child can live in the center of a little world all his own.

An elderly woman of my acquaintance, often says that one of the happiest privileges of her childhood and also of her brothers and sisters was the opportunity, always open, to slip into the old-fashioned parlor and there "think their thinks" or sew or read or do whatever they wished to do, undisturbed. Not every day nor every week did the desire for solitude come, but when any child wanted to be apart from the group no comment was made, it being generally recognized that everybody at times prefers to be alone.

"Please excuse me," is the accepted reason in a happy household when one child does not want to go with the rest or take part in the same game. It is quietly and politely given and accepted, and that is the end of the matter.

WHY ROBERT DOES NOT MARRY
Janette Stevenson Murray

"Oh, Betty, wait! The boys said I could drive Buster alone tonight. Won't you come along?" Bobby was out of breath trying to catch up. He had loitered after getting out of kindergarten.

"Oh! can we hitch him up" and Betty's eyes sparkled.

Bobby, the youngest of four boys, had spent most of his life playing in his back yard with Betty, his cousin, who lived across the street.

They did not get far with Buster. He was too wise to exert himself for five-year-olds even though they coaxed, shouted, and slapped the lines. But Bobby was content. To have driven alone was a great achievement, almost equal to the event of entering kindergarten the week before.

Dinner had been served when Bobby came in happy and hungry.
"Where have you been, Son" Father inquired.

"Oh, I know!" exclaimed the high school brother. "Bob has a girl. He's been out buggy riding!"

They all laughed and the older boys began shouting the little fellow with their fingers. "He, he! Bobby has a girl!" It was a great joke with them.

The light went out of Bobby's face. He was shocked and hurt. "No, it was just Betty. She's no girl," he protested with trembling lips.

But the boys kept on. "Tomorrow Bob'll give his girl a box of candy, and Saturday he'll most likely take her to the show."

Bobby felt disgraced. He had evidently made some dreadful mistake; he didn't know exactly what but it was connected with Betty. He could not eat and began to cry. Mother took him away, but he refused to be comforted and sobbed himself to sleep.

"Come and see my new gold fish," Betty called across the street next morning. Bobby pretended not to hear and sneaked off down the alley to school. There must be no more mistakes with Betty.

By staying with the boys he was able to avoid her and actually never talked to his little cousin again. So great became his antipathy to girls in general, he scarcely spoke to one for years. If girls were invited to the parties and picnics, he always stayed at home. His family carelessly accentuated the harm they had done.

"Would you believe it," said one of his brothers, "Bob went around the block today to avoid meeting Betty and her friends."

Bobby turned crimson with shame and embarrassment.

"Yes, I can't understand what's got into you, Bobby," his mother said, "you always slip out of the house when the girls come in. I'm ashamed of you." The boys joked him about being a woman-hater.

After graduating from college, Robert woke up to the situation and for five years made a definite effort to overcome his antipathy to the opposite sex. But now at twenty-seven, this highly educated man with a fine research position is still ill at ease with women. He is discouraged.

"It isn't worth the effort," he said to a friend not long since. "I don't believe I'll ever marry. Being so thoroughly conditioned against girls at an early age, an instinctive antagonism has taken root in my life and it seems impossible for me to get rid of it."

The members of Robert's family are not exceptional. We see this same thing going on all the time—people who are apparently kindly and sensible teasing children and laughing at them, holding up to ridicule the innocent, friendly comradeships of little boys and girls.

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