

QUEBEC HOME AND SCHOOL

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HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS

VOL. VI, No. 1

MONTREAL, QUEBEC

OCTOBER, 1953

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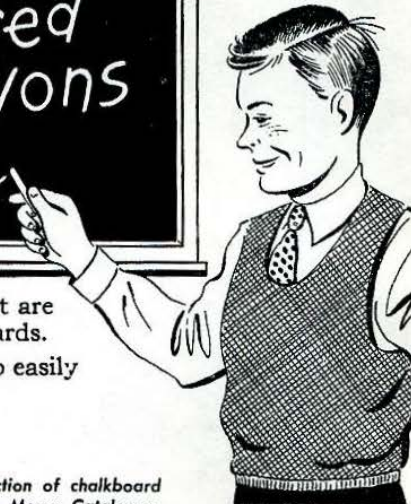


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NOT FOR POWER OR GLORY



REUBEN RESIN

I have been called upon to serve as your president. It is a great honour, a great privilege, and a great responsibility. The more so, because of the calibre and accomplishments of our previous presidents.

My friend and predecessor, Mowbray Clark, has done an outstanding job, difficult to equal. I know you would want me to thank him on your behalf. To this I would add a personal tribute to his leadership, understanding and unfailing good humour, which made it a privilege to work with him. I have learned much that will stand me in good stead.

And now, at the start of another Home and School year, all of us, and especially those of us who have been summoned to positions of leadership, should keep our sights unswervingly on the aims and objects of our organization. Let us not forget that we are in Home and School to acquire a better understanding of our children and make of them healthy, happy, and well adjusted individuals. Everything we do in Home and School should have the welfare of children as the point of departure as well as the goal. Can you think of anything more worthwhile?

For Home and Schoolers there is no power and no glory. We must approach our job with understanding and humility. Humility does not imply a sense of inferiority, or fear, or uncertainty, or lack of confidence. It does mean a sense of proportion, a sense of values, and the ability to assess the relative importance of our work and of ourselves. Let us take our responsibilities seriously — never ourselves.

To help our children we must first understand one another. We have some adjustments of our own to make and prejudices of all kinds to overcome. None of us is free of prejudices, which too often we fail to examine in the light of reason and with the understanding that we expect of others. We have to make allowances for differences — of attitudes, of points of view, of race, of language, of religion, and I could go on indefinitely. The eyes of our children are upon us, their ears are strained in our direction, and the example we set will be mirrored in what they are. We must be sure that what we do is consistent with what we teach.

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WINS BUZZELL AWARD



Winner of the Buzzell Award for 1953, Mrs. T. B. Hughes has an extensive background of Home and School Work. A trained kindergarten teacher she formed a parent education committee in 1944 and in the ensuing four years trained 24 leaders. Since 1948 she has organized, promoted and led child study groups.

School Radio Audience Shows Rapid Growth

Fifty-five per cent of the 21,650 English-language schools in Canada are equipped with radios. This according to the CBC, adds up to a classroom audience alone of about one million students. Not taken into account are numerous shut-in students in hospitals and other institutions across the country and many adults who tune in to hear such productions as Shakespeare's Julius Caesar and Macbeth, and other programs of the CBC School Broadcasts.

The great growth in the potential classroom audience is reflected by figures showing that more than twelve thousand English-language schools in Canada are now equipped with radios, an increase of more than seven thousand over 1949.

CBC school broadcasts are now in their eleventh year and the programs are planned by the CBC and the National Advisory Council on School Broadcasting. The council includes representatives of each of the ten provincial departments of education and teachers' organizations. The content of the programs is generally related to some phase of the school course or some aspect of life in Canada.



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PARIS PATE

The Tasty, Dainty Sandwich Spread

Esther J. Swenson has been a teacher, principal, supervisor, and superintendent of schools and has also done significant research on the learning process. She is now professor of elementary education at the University of Alabama. Her latest book is Arithmetic 3, The World of Numbers.

Why Do Teaching Methods Change?

"They just don't do things the way they used to," confides Mrs. Harper to her friend, Mrs. Snow. "I visited school today, and I simply don't understand why some things are done as they are. The children tell me about what goes on, too. And it's all so different from what went on in school when I was a child. Maybe it's all right, but I can't say I understand it. Why do ways of teaching change so much in one generation?"

Mrs. Harper is honestly puzzled. She is only one of many parents who wonder, "Why doesn't my child get a book and start to learn to read as soon as he enters the first grade?" "Johnnie says he didn't have spelling today. I don't see why." "I knew all the multiplication tables when I was Mary's age. She says she hasn't had any tables to study so far." "Why do the children move around so much?" "Why don't all the children have their reading class at the same time?"

Of course, though school methods may have changed in many ways, much is also the same. In fact in some situations the parents might appropriately be asking, "Why don't teaching methods change in our school as they do in others?"

Changes in teaching methods, like changes in anything else, may be for the better or for the worse. This article will deal with changes that are in general for the better. But we should always remember that whether or not a method of teaching works out as it should depends to a large extent upon how well it is understood by both teachers and parents.

New Light on Behavior

Why do teaching methods change? Among the numerous answers and partial answers

that might be given to that question, the three that follow are fundamental:

Teaching methods change as we extend our knowledge and understanding of children.

Arguments as to whether our schools should teach children or teach subject matter are useless, since we must teach both. Those who keep saying that we must teach children instead of subject matter are confusing the situation. Obviously we cannot teach children without teaching them something—be it facts, skills, attitudes, or anything else.

If we can steer clear of this confusing and fruitless argument, we shall better prepare ourselves to understand how child study applies to teaching methods. The best teachers of both past and present generations have been those who were interested in children and who adjusted their methods in the light of their understanding of their pupils, both as groups and as individuals. Within the past two decades there has grown up, however, a more intense interest in (1) children's changing characteristics as they grow and develop and (2) the significance of individual differences among children.

Although it has been evident all along that children do change and that they are different, the study of child psychology has led teachers to focus their attention on the effects of those changes and differences upon children's learning. Teachers who have extended and deepened their understanding of their pupils' abilities and behavior have had to reevaluate their ways of teaching. Consequently those ways have changed.

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TEACHING METHODS, cont'd

Let us consider the child whose parents are concerned because he has been in the first grade for some time and has done no "reading in a book." Careful investigation of reading readiness, conducted with large groups of children and at widely scattered locations throughout the country, reveals conclusively four important facts: (1) Children vary widely in the ages at which they can profit by being introduced to reading activities. (2) Many entering first-graders need "getting ready" experiences, both in and out of school, more than they need to begin "book reading." (3) Readiness for reading is a very complex matter in which many factors play an important role—such as vision, hearing, general health, play experiences with other children, background of general experience, desire to learn to read, mental ability, and adjustment to school. And (4) children who are not forced into reading too soon, who have a chance to "grow into it" naturally, become better readers and happier children than they would be if they had to pick up a book and try to read before they were ready for what should be a delightful experience.

We cannot force all children to read well at the same age any more than we can force them to grow up physically at the same rate. There is nothing necessarily wrong with Johnnie or with his teacher's methods because he does not "read in a book" at the same age that Susie does. The main question is not "When does Johnnie get a book to read?" The main question is, rather, "Does Johnnie start reading at a time when he can best profit from that experience?" The school's job is to fit its program to individual children's needs, *not* to fit all children to a fixed pattern.

We've Learned a Lot About Learning

Teaching methods change as we extend our knowledge and understanding of how people learn.

Although we still do not know exactly what happens in the brain and nervous system when a person learns, from experiments on learning we do have a good deal of evidence to support certain shifts in teaching methods.

Teaching is a process that aids learning. Learning may take place without teaching, but teaching takes place only when learning occurs. When better methods of learning are found, teachers have a responsibility to see that children have a chance to learn by those methods.

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A section of the head table at the Canadian Federation dinner. Right — Mrs. Newton P. Leonard, guest speaker.

OUR CONVENTIONS

This summer's conference are now a matter of history. But the great success of our own Federation Conference in May and the Canadian Home and School and Parent Teacher Federation Conference a month later, is significant in that it reflects the growing importance of the Home and School movement. At the latter conference our federation was privileged to distinguished Home and Schoolers from the other provinces.

Much of the information emanating from these conferences could be helpful to all our associations. During the ensuing months, Quebec Home and School will provide in varying forms a digest of those discussions most applicable to our own individual associations.



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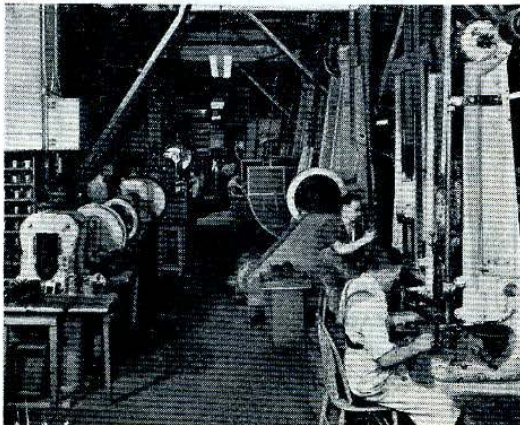
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Something very new and undertaken for the first time by any Association was "The Mental Health Series." This was a series of five films followed by discussions on every day adult problems.

These discussions were directed by Dr. A. W. MacLeod, who is Assistant Director of the Mental Hygiene Institute. He was assisted by Dr. S. Barza, psychiatrist at the Children's Memorial Hospital.

All this was done on an experimental basis. Last season we had a membership of 48. (40 parents—8 teachers.)

Interest is quite keen as is noted by the membership. The Mental Hygiene Institute feels we are the testing ground for a number of groups of this kind which will be spread throughout the City. They will learn from our reaction just how to go about it. Mrs. Benjamin is the convenor and any association interested may call her at BE 1379 for more information. Our program would not have been possible without the aid of the Mental Hygiene Institute.

OUTREMONT

With our April meeting our Home and School year came to an end. We did not, however, sit down, fold our hands and relax. No, we swung immediately into high gear.

Our new president, Mrs. R. Straus, convened all committees and plans were formulated for the coming year.

Our membership and magazine subscription drive were held simultaneously in early September. Arrangements were made to print the necessary letters and the membership cards during the summer so that everything will be ready when school opens.

Program planning for our association, embracing as it does both the Elementary and the High Schools, presented its usual difficulties. With the aid of the Program Planning Manual and the knowledge gained from the program planning sessions of the Quebec Federation Conference, we have scheduled an interesting and informative series of lectures. All dates have been set and the speakers contacted.

Our projects committee embarked upon a very ambitious program. For our children, there is ballet and tap dancing, field trips and art classes. Our adult projects include woodwork, child study groups, ballroom dancing and art classes. As far as possible, all arrangements have been made for leaders and instructors for our many projects.

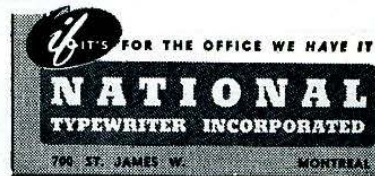
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NORAH MOORHEAD* writes . . .

*English specialist at St. Francis High School,
Richmond, Que.

. . . On Reading

. . . At Home and in School

"I am a part of all that I have met," says Tennyson. That really is a staggering thought. When we come to examine it, we recognize its truth. We got one idea at school, another came from our parents, a bias was set to our thinking by our travels hither and thither. And after serious analysis of our minds, we come to the reluctant conclusion that there is not much in us that is individual and has been our very own from the beginning. In fact, the rhyme that appears without fail in the children's autograph books seems to sum us up pretty well:

"There's nothing original in me
Except original sin."

Knowing from our own experience how many and how varied are the influences that have made us what we are, ought we not to take great pains that the children should come into touch with the best that is available for them, especially in that fascinating realm of books? If my memory doesn't play me false, a certain bishop took as his motto a Latin sentence which may be translated thus: "Read, read, read; something will remain." Something will remain, but the question is what? That is a question that none of us can answer.

Words That Stick

Take, for instance, that very motto which I gave you just now. Why did I remember it? It was given in a Latin class in Grade IX to illustrate the use of the Imperative, and I'm sure that my teacher would be amazed

to know that I was still able to quote it. The memory is quite unaccountable—you know that just as well as I do.

We never know when some words may strike a spark in us, and we do not know what sort of spark our words may strike in others. At the end of the war one of the boys I had taught returned to Lennoxville from Europe. His words of greeting have kept me guessing ever since. "Miss Moorhead, as soon as I saw Stone-henge I thought of you." Of course, I try to console myself that he wasn't thinking of the analogy of ancient monuments!

And as we don't know which of the words we have heard and read we'll retain, likewise we don't know what words will come to our minds in a time of crisis. You will all recall the remarkable passage in "Kim" which tells of Kim's resistance to hypnosis. He had to have a mental life-line, and he clung to the multiplication table in English—the learning of which was a great achievement for a boy brought up to speak Urdu as a native in India.

A friend of mine told me of a session he had with a hostile committee. He saved himself from feeling overwhelmed by their charges through the repetition of a line parodied from "Hamlet" that he had heard not many days before: "The slings and arrows of outrageous criticism."

(continued on page 12)

ON READING, cont'd

So much for my contention that we don't know when we'll come across a saying or a thought that will become a part of us, and we don't know when we'll need to depend on it. I don't feel that I dare to stress this point in the relationship of parents and children and of teachers and children. It makes one think of the lines about an idle word, and truly the thought is terrifying.

The Comics

Now parents and teachers must teach the same things. I know perfectly well that if the school advocates one course of conduct and the home another, the home will win. For instance, I may groan at the sight of every comic book, and describe "True Life Story" and others of that ilk as trash. But if those papers are bought and read at home by parents and children alike, I'll be considered a bit queer. Although the papers may be kept out of my sight so that my strange susceptibilities may not be hurt, the children will feel that my judgment is faulty because it doesn't agree with that of their parents.

I condemn the cheap sensational magazines because they are badly written and the subject matter is intended to appeal to those who have mastered the mechanics of reading but whose minds are undeveloped.

I condemn the comics because they are inartistic and unreal. Some people may say that their unreality provides an escape for the reader. The adult may need that type of escape—heaven help him if he does—but the child still has an imagination which is not atrophied and he doesn't need reading matter of this kind. It's a lucky escape for the child who is not addicted to comics.

"Comics"—what a misnomer! there's nothing comic in them. If children grow up with the idea that the situations therein depicted are comic, our sense of humour as a nation is doomed.

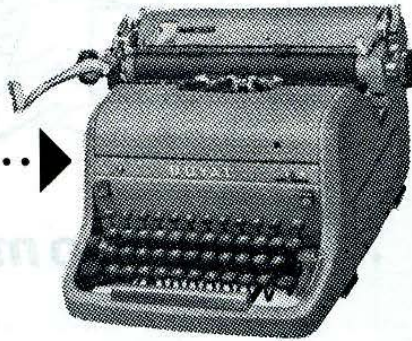
I feel a sense of despair as I listen to the laughter with which an audience of grown-ups greets what passes for comedy at the movies. Children under sixteen are excluded from movie theatres, but the comedies, so-called, should appeal only to an eight or ten-year-old.

The development of a sound sense of humour seems to me a most important part of education. It is definitely an adult quality and cannot be cultivated too early. For that reason I welcome the addition of "Life with Father" and "Sunshine Sketches" on the Extra English course in Grade X.

(continued on page 13)

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ON READING, *cont'd*

A ten-year-old girl said to me recently, "Daddy's such a funny man!" I made encouraging sounds, and she continued: "Before Christmas he went to Eaton's to buy us a gramophone record. When he asked for 'Rudolf the red-nosed reindeer', the sales-woman said, 'Breakable or unbreakable?' To which Daddy replied, 'Breakable, of course'."

To me the remarkable thing is that the child should have seen the humour of that situation, and the very fact that she remembered it and repeated it to me showed that she appreciated it. We all get howlers from the children of all ages, but we don't get a great deal of recognition for humour. That must be cultivated through reading.

Important advice to parents is to scrutinize carefully your children's reading matter before they get hold of it. If it is not satisfactory, see that it is put out of reach and substitute something that is worth reading. I don't want high-brow stuff to be presented to the children, but I want them to read books which will make them want to read more as their mental powers expand.

Good Reading in the Home

Fifteen cents a week expended on the "Saturday Evening Post" seems to me a good investment for high school pupils. Although the stories may not all be of the pure-as-driven-snow variety, one never sees the triumph of evil, and some of the stories are very amusing. The cartoons are funny without being vulgar.

Some of you may recall an incident of several years ago in connection with the "Post". The heroine of one of the serials was left in a doubtful situation at the end of an instalment. The next week at the beginning of the new instalment she was still there. A flood of letters reached the editor who published a fair sample of them. Finally he wrote his comment: "The Editor of the 'Post' is not responsible for the behaviour of the characters in the serials between instalments."

I've read the "Post" for some years, and although I may object to its politics, especially during the past year, I consider that it is a magazine to which children may be exposed without coming to harm.

It is most important that books should be discussed in the home. To have such discussions, every member of the family should read, and probably sometimes all will read the same book. From time to time it will be necessary for a parent or an elder brother

or sister to read aloud to the younger children. (From my own experience I can say that aunts are very useful for reading aloud.) In this way the youngsters can get the benefit of a story which they are perfectly capable of understanding, but which would be too difficult for them to read to themselves. Thus the reading of a book becomes a valuable family experience and part of the home life.

When I was studying John Buchan's "Greenmantle" with Grade X recently, I recalled how we read that book at home many years ago, and the words, "Ja, Cornelis", became my brother's only reply to the family for some time.

Problem of Censorship

The question as to whether certain books should be forbidden always comes up. I'd say only that books of dubious tone should not be left where the children can find them. If enough worth while material is lying about in an apparently careless fashion, and if there is talk about books and reading, that ought to be the only incentive required. I don't know whether it does any good to take a book away from a child. I'd far rather see a child reading openly a book such as Boswell's "London Journal"—assuming that he had got hold of it from a source outside the school or the home; it couldn't be my copy because I don't know where it is, and, furthermore, it hasn't my name in it—I'd far rather see him reading it openly than discover him reading it furtively.

And then murder mysteries and detective stories. As a teacher I'm on very delicate ground here because many teachers have written good detective stories, and far be it from me to say anything that might deprive a colleague of readers and royalties. And I have a murder story simmering in the back of my own mind. I have the victim picked out but I can't decide on the death she—yes, it's a woman—is to die.

We can speculate endlessly on the reasons why teachers write murder stories. One of these days a leading psychiatrist will write an article in "MacLean's"—"Should the writers of murder mysteries teach our chil-

F. David Mathias ARCHITECT

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ON READING, cont'd

dren?" Then teachers will have to use pen names, and say that they are civil servants, it being well known that civil servants lead very sheltered lives and don't make friends and influence people—that is, all except those who work in the department of Income Tax.

At any rate, some of the detective stories are well worth reading, and that form of literature has had the support of no less a critic than Somerset Maugham. For the most part, they provide entertainment, exercise of the critical and deductive faculties and are not, like the comics, a waste of time. If children are interested in murder stories, they won't become interested in a life of crime because they will soon see that for

every clever criminal there is a cleverer detective.

Other Suggestions

I'd like to see parents encouraging their children to keep a record of their reading. It need be nothing more than a list of the titles and authors. The growing list is a great incentive to reading.

• This article was first presented in the form of an address to parents and teachers at an open meeting of the R.D.A. Teachers' Association. The author, who is now English Specialist at Richmond, has taught in Peninsula and Lennoxville, and was for five years Superintendent of Bishop Mountain Hall, Coaticook.

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Further details from your President or Secretary

NOT FOR POWER, cont'd

May we be the kind of parents who, in our relationships with our children, may never have to reproach ourselves for the things we, unthinkingly, did or failed to do.

May we be the kind of teachers upon

whom our former pupils think back with gratitude and affection.

Above all, may we, in our relationships with one another, be the kind of human beings that mature Home and Schoolers are expected to be.

TEACHING METHODS, cont'd

Take learning the multiplication tables as an example. Many, perhaps most, of the present generation of parents learned them by methods that emphasized repetition by rote. The assigned tables were to be said over and over until they could be rattled off in order, the faster the better. People thought that if a child had not learned to recite the multiplication tables, he did know how to multiply. They also assumed that if a child had learned the multiplication tables, he did know how to multiply. Neither statement is necessarily true. Many of us know from our own experience that we learned to recite the tables with little or no understanding of what they meant or how to use them in solving practical problems.

Experiments have indicated that we do not really learn by repetition; that is, repetition does not cause learning. If the multiplication tables or any other products of learning are to be understood and used, they must be learned by *understanding*. This means that children should be taught not only the facts themselves but also how those facts are related to other facts and to situations in which they are to be used. For example, if Alice learns that seven times five equals thirty-five but does not know how much seven nickel ice cream cones will cost, her memorizing of this multiplication fact is of no value to her. If, on the other hand, Alice knows that five nickel cones will cost twenty-five cents and figures out that seven cones will cost ten cents more, she is well on her way to being able to develop her own "table of fives"—not by rote but by understanding a set of relationships.

When Practice Means Something

Practice (call it drill if you wish) has its place in school learning, but that place has changed in the light of research. Stress on understanding should precede stress on practice. Until the pupil has gained some understanding—of arithmetic facts, of a poem, of a principle in science—there is nothing fundamental for him to practice. But after he understands the fact or poem or principle, he can practice meaningfully. How meaningful the practice is depends upon the degree to which he sees sense in what he is doing and the degree to which he sees a use for what he is practicing.

But, someone asks, what about multiplication tables? Should they or should they not be learned in school? The answer is not a simple yes or no. A child may very well

acquire an understanding of how and when to multiply without having learned the tables as such. After he has been introduced to the meaning of multiplication and has had considerable experience with it, he may well profit from the additional experience of building up the multiplication tables for himself.

The Measure of Achievement

Teaching methods change as we study and revise our ideas of the relative importance of various things to be learned.

When a child completes his schooling or while he is going to school, what do we expect him to get out of it? What knowledge and skills should he gain from his school activities?

Are his achievements represented by letters on report cards? By the number of spelling lists he has written or been tested on? By the pages he has covered in history books? By how nearly his handwriting resembles that in a given model? By the speed with which he can recite memorized details of fact or fiction? By the grade level of the reading book he is now using? By how closely his learning experiences agree with the curriculum of the schools his parents attended?

Or are his achievements represented by *what he himself knows he has accomplished that is worth while*? By how well he spells when he writes a letter of his own? By how well he understands the story of the past as it relates to present events? By whether or not his handwriting is legible and natural for him? By his ability to appreciate and use what he has learned? By his ability to read accurately, critically, and with enjoyment? By the extent to which the curriculum of the school really becomes a part of him?

(continued on page 17)



SCHOOL FOR PARENTS

Dr. Laycock to Broadcast 1953 Series on Children

For the eleventh year Dr. S. R. Laycock will talk to parents on the problems of understanding and helping their children. This year's series of talks will deal with helping parents to understand how a child learns in school and what his parent can do to help him to get the most out of his school life.

The talks will be given as part of Trans-Canada Matinee on the Thursday afternoons of November and December. The following are the specific topics which will be discussed:

- November 5—Parents and Teachers Run a Three-legged Race.
- November 12—Your Child Starts to School.
- November 19—Your Child Learns to Read.
- November 26—Your Child Learns to Write and to Speak.
- December 3—Your Child Learns Social Studies.
- December 10—Your Child Learns Arithmetics.
- December 17—Your Child Learns Science.
- December 24—Your Child Studies the Arts.
- December 31—Guiding the Child Who is Different.

TEACHING METHODS, cont'd

The questions themselves reveal the answers. In our teaching today we are placing less and less emphasis on the learning of routine material for its own sake. And we are placing more and more emphasis on the learning of whatever information and knowledge, whatever appreciation and understandings, whatever skills will help a boy or girl to lead a more successful, a happier, and a more worth-while life, now and later. Those who agree with this shift in emphasis will probably also agree that it is more important to judge teaching methods by what those methods cause Johnnie to *do* and to *become* than whether or not Johnnie actually "read in a book today."

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LITTLE MOCKING BIRDS

by ZITA CAMERON

I raise my hand in an involuntary gesture and was amused to see little eighteen-months-old in his playpen do the same. Just for the fun of it I went through some other motions which he copied faithfully. I tried a few dance steps and so did he! The girl who helps me in the house laughed and said "Look at the little mockin' bird"!

It was fun watching his antics but there is a sobering aspect to having a little mocking bird in the house . . . or rather four little mocking birds! Even the baby, only three months, smiles when she sees a smile and laughs aloud when she hears a laugh. They begin so young!

We often hear people speak of a new baby as "another little mouth to feed", but a baby is more than that. A baby is a little mind to fill, a little will to train, a little character to be moulded. And the mould is the composite character of the people around the child.

The implied responsibility is tremendous and not a little frightening. I tried a simple experiment on the lad in the playpen. I raised my hands and told him "Keep your hands down", but he raised them just the same. Thus I proved to myself what I had already known, that it is what I do that counts, rather than what I tell him to do.

All the children will act and speak and think as we do, until they go to school and receive further impressions outside the home. But they don't go to school until they are six—or almost six—and their characters and personalities will be pretty well set by that time. And even then, the continuing home influence will be the stronger.

After this little play of gesturing and dancing, I sat down to do some serious thinking on my role and the role of all parents in the drama of home life. We all know, of course, the influence of example,

especially upon children, but we forget most of the time just how deep and far-reaching this influence can be.

We think of it in terms of big things and unusual circumstances. We feel that if we do not steal or swear or commit any crimes that we are setting our children a good example. Mothers will lecture their little ones on the evils of falsehood yet think nothing of sending a child to the door to tell an unwelcome caller that Mother is out. There is nothing wrong in Mother's pretending to be out if she wishes, but childish minds cannot distinguish between this and downright lying and the whole effect of the teaching regarding falsehoods is spoiled.

It is an uncomfortable truth to live with, but it is nonetheless true, that every little word, every trivial action, even our unvoiced attitudes, will be copied by our children and reflected in their personalities. If they show signs of being selfish, quarrelsome, overbearing, we haven't far to look for the cause. If they use rough language or speak badly mutilated English, we had better listen to our own speech and if we can find no fault there, listen to the speech of their playmates. Children rarely invent words and phrases; they repeat what they have heard. They even copy tones and inflections.

The mother who wants her Sally to be a little lady must be a lady herself or be disappointed in her ambition for Sally. The father who wants his boys to be gentlemen must act the gentleman at all times—be honest, kind, courteous, well-spoken. There is no other, no easier way.

It follows that parents who would like their children to grow into good and useful citizens must set the pattern for the youngsters to follow.

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