Glimpses Into Child Problems

By Helen Herr

When could the old adage “an ounce of prevention is worth more than a pound of cure” be more applicable? The case of a small girl who was_mtx was being taught by the nursery school teacher. The child was beginning to show signs of anxiety by not being able to make decisions. As Dewey says, “You shall have a case just like that of Billy, aged two and one-half, who said, “I just don’t know why mamma punishes me so much.” She evidently had been trying to correct some mistake he was making but he had absolutely no understanding of just which of his many actions were wrong. Surely that kind of punishment defeats its own ends. After all, the only real purpose of discipline is to correct habits which will lead to the self-control of the child and not merely obedience for obedience’s sake. We should avoid getting a child to mind through fear, constant nagging, hard tasks or humiliation.

If you had come around the corner of the Home Economics Annex any morning this spring I wonder if you would have been surprised to hear the men singing of “Here we go round the Mulberry Bush,” or to have seen, if you had peeked in the door, eager faces bent over some frame as if they were modeling a bear or cutting out a picture. These workers are our very youngest college students, but perhaps the whole affair would need an explanation.

Educators in Home Economics all over the country are beginning to realize that training a girl to be the best kind of a homemaker could not be complete without a study of the care and development of children. This was one of the main topics for the State Convention of Home Economics held at Ames. It could be for it is a problem affecting both mothers and teachers. Of course we could let them “just grow” like Topsy, but to help them develop into the best kind of individuals possible is another problem.

To give senior home economics women the chance to observe real children was the aim in bringing a group of little children of pre-school age together. The question might be asked, “What ages were the children and why were those ages chosen?” The pre-school age is from two to five, was chosen because of its unrealized importance. The “toddler” is left more or less to his own devices and at times the school at that age is of five or six the problem of correcting bad habits or of forming desirable ones is before the teacher. Why not start him in the right path when the habit was first being formed? Little have we realized that habits, fears, formed in early childhood often are still asserting themselves in adult life. Test it by asking yourself what you are afraid of and then try and trace that fear back to its cause. It will probably go back to some incident in your childhood. Such was the case of a girl who was unable to go to sleep in a room in which there was not light. It seemed like a silly whim, doesn’t it, but it was started when as a small child she was very ill with scarlet fever. The nurse, inexcusably, told her mother, in the child’s presence, that unless the room were kept very dark there would be a danger of the child’s going blind. Of course it struck terror in the little girl’s heart and whenever her mother and nurse were out of the room she would run to the window, and lift the blind to find out if she could still see! This same fear still came over her when she was in total darkness and it was so deeply imbedded that it was impossible for her as an adult to eradicate it.

Perhaps your fears are not of that type, but many of them turn out to be fears which could have been avoided but which were not, for some careless remark or act of an older child or adult.

Besides the pre-school age being an age when mental habits are being formed it is also a time when a child’s physical condition should be carefully watched. Medical inspection in our public schools shows how many defects the children have but the outstanding fact is that most of them are preventable.

In observing the children as they go through the daily routine in the two hours that they spend in the Child Care laboratory, the girls note the different characteristics of the various ages and the differences in individual children.

The casual observer might say that “all is play” but the children do their work with all the intent of an adult. The difference is that they add real joy to their tasks which makes us call it “play.” Anything really accomplished is termed work, if it be modelling a basket out of clay, or building a tower with blocks. Of course there are always rules of the game too, and the children soon learn as a natural sequence, to put away their work when they have finished it.

The children have the privilege of choosing what they wish to work with and this helps them form the habit of making decisions. As Dewey says, “Play should not be mere amusement but should take a child to a higher plane.” A child learns much more by expressing himself in his work with sand, clay, crayons and paints than when playing with a mechanical toy.

Attention and concentration are two things that we strive for as adults and
are crisp and delicious with afternoon tea or coffee.

Fattig mand kager (poor man cakes) are an appetite pastry made by adding to four beaten egg yolks one cup of sugar and eight tablespoons of sweet cream. The whites of the four eggs are then beaten and added. Flour is folded in until the mixture is of a consistency stiff enough to lightly roll out to about a quarter of an inch in thickness. Strips are then cut and fried in deep fat.

Kumla (a potato dumpling) is made by grating a half dozen average sized potatoes with a tablespoon of salt. To this is added the flour until the mixture can be formed into dumplings. A piece of meat fat is put in the center of each kumla. These potato dumplings are cooked with pork shank.

Milk is used, considerably in Norwegian dietary in the form of cheese and other dishes. In the summer the cows are taken up on the mountain side to graze. Here the saeter (dairy) is located. One room in this cabin is the bedroom of the girl who tends the cattle, takes care of the milk and makes cheese. In the other rooms the floors are covered with juniper twigs. In one part are rows of crocks filled with milk, in another room are cheeses ripening.

If you wish to bring a hint of the cool and beautiful Norwegian mountains into your menu, serve cold dravels (curd). This is prepared by adding one beaten egg mixed with a half cup of sugar and one cup sour milk to 2 cups of sweet milk which has been allowed to just come to boil. Allow this to stand on the back of the stove and simmer for a half hour. When cooked it forms into curds and whey. The curd is very tender and the whole has a pleasing sweet taste.

If you want something delightfully new and unusual, try some of these Norwegian suggestions. You don’t have to inherit the traditions. Your second taste, if not your first will assure you of their palatability.

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ground which has a prominent design, such as some of our wall papers and textile hangings.

Whether it be a bit of forget-me-not, a delicate lily, goldenrod or but a few clover, arranged with thought and care, they not only bring enjoyment to ourselves but lessens the monotony of the room, heightens our sympathy, brighten our table, perhaps enliven our living room and bid welcome to a guest.

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still unknowingly we destroy it to keep it from developing in a child. Dr. Wooley, an eminent psychologist, tells of how when her daughter was five months old she began, one day, to explore the edge of the chifflower drawer with her finger. Instead of hurrying to finish dressing the child she decided to see how long the baby could keep her attention on that one thing and discovered that it did not waver for forty minutes. Of course we can never know just what the baby learned during that time, but it certainly shows us that by snatching children from first one thing and then another we may be destroying their developing power of concentration.

"Do children think?" an interested onlooker might ask and student observations reveal such instances as:

Bobby, aged two and one half was building a tower of blocks. Soon it became so high that he could no longer reach the top to put on the next block, so he went for a chair and his problem was solved for awhile. Of course it wasn’t long before it again outgrew his height and after a moment of contemplation he went for another chair and placed it carefully beside the first. What a look of surprise came over his face when he put one foot on one chair and one on the other chair and still found he was no nearer the top! His method of reasoning was all right but he needed experience to help him reach the right conclusion.

No adult jumped to his aid, but after a little experimentation he finally placed one chair on the other and reached the top! That was a real problem solved.

Some general rules that are given to the students are: Do not make a request unless you wish it carried out; ask a child courteously to do something instead of plainly demanding it; give a child a chance to make a choice as, “Will you walk in from the playground or shall I carry you in?”. It is only by truly trying to understand a child and by trying to see things from his viewpoint that we can help him to develop into the finest possible type of individual.

“That Shoel Girl Complexion”
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I hasten to answer—a sense of humor, without which all else would count for little. She is never dull because she sees the funny side of life and enjoys a jape from herself as much as a joke on someone else.

As I mused over these inner qualities which in the last analysis determine, more than do the outward traits, the beauty of the portrait I was reminded of a woman whom I knew. She possessed not a single good feature but she was blessed with a tranced degree with those splendid mental and moral characteristics a few of which we have been discussing. A celebrated artist was engaged to paint her portrait. He finished and placed on exhibition we beheld the portrait of a beautiful woman. There was no mistake the identity of the subject, however, for the artist had been faithful in the reproduction of her features.

What magic then, had he practiced to enable him to portray this homely woman as a beauty? There was no magic except that of a great artist—be had caught the spirit of the woman and put it upon the canvas—the light that shone from her eyes, and lines of understanding and sympathy about the mouth and the tender, sensitive lips. All the honesty, the loyalty, the quick sympathy for others, the generous spirit and the fine sense of humor, all these had burned within that woman like a white flame. They had softened and made beautiful her features, just as a glowing light, at times, can obliterate a piece of porcelain. The delicate porcelains of thought and spirit had given her a charm which mere physical beauty could not produce and which every girl can cultivate if she will.

Attractive tho Inexpensive Hangings
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