

Lynch, Ella Frances
— The Renegade Home
ADT 8012

The
**RENEGADE
HOME**

by
ELLA FRANCES LYNCH

With Discussion Club Outline



The Home is the Greatest University in the World!

THE RENEGADE HOME

By

ELLA FRANCES LYNCH

Founder, The National League of Teacher-Mothers

"To Educate is to develop the young human being from his natural state into a higher state by enlarging his soul, sharpening his senses, enriching his mind and strengthening his will."

THE PAULIST PRESS
401 West 59th Street
New York

Nihil Obstat:

ARTHUR J. SCANLAN, S.T.D.,
Censor Librorum.

Imprimatur:

✠ FRANCIS J. SPELLMAN, D.D.,
Archbishop of New York.

New York, December 15, 1939.

COPYRIGHT, 1940, BY
THE MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF ST. PAUL THE APOSTLE
IN THE STATE OF NEW YORK

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED IN THE U. S. A.
BY THE PAULIST PRESS, NEW YORK, N. Y.

Deacidified

The Renegade Home

I

"Ills Out of Ills Rise Ceaselessly"

PARENTS, terrified by the prevailing defiance of right order, are asking themselves: "Will our children behave in such scandalous ways?" The answer they can find under their own roof-tree. If the home is based on the laws of God, hence on truth, morality, and mutual respect, if the parents set an example of self-control, loving self-sacrifice, and industry, if they revere what is beautiful and of good repute and abhor what is ugly, mean, and sordid, their children will instinctively choose the good and avoid the evil because they have been educated in the true sense. Education does not consist in words and schooling, in moralizing and mandating, though these may help after change of teeth, but in the example and atmosphere the child finds in the home. Thus, it begins at birth, nay, even before, through the mother's attitude towards life and the inner direction of her thoughts and feelings.

Would that we dare to stop at this point. How hard it is to insist that child-failure in 299 cases out of 300 must be charged to the parents' account. Nearly every crime takes its beginning in the lack of home education and protection during the first seven years of life. Result: a shortage in character-formation. Here, then, is the direct cause of a definite and measurable moral delinquency, an actual and appreciable breakdown. The shortage may be due to bad example in the family, or to some evil influence the parents have weakly tolerated in the environment. Or the cause may be the overlooking of childish faults until they harden into habits. It may result from the unhappily popular endeavor to sharpen the child mind

before enlarging the child soul. And while any of the foregoing would amply explain the failure of education and the resulting moral delinquency, the combination of bad example, evil environment, indiscipline, and over-intellectualizing such as we often see, leaves the poor child without a leg to stand on.

Common Errors

In this day of multitudinous snares for souls, it would take a legion of angels to safeguard the children of unwary young fathers and mothers. Is there a single major error that they do not fall into? They mistake animal liveliness for intelligence. They treat sportive defiance and disrespect as if they were cardinal virtues. Gloatingly a father shows you his child's photograph and says: "That chap of mine is only four but he is a terror. If I leave him alone in the car for even a minute, he grabs the wheel and off he goes. Twice this week the police had to jump on the running-board and stop the car. He certainly is the spoiled kid." As if child-spoiling were a matter of family pride instead of being the cruelest course on earth, the sign of spiritual and mental infirmity on the parents' part. Soon will fade out the short-lived charm of infancy, leaving what? An ungrateful, vain, egotistical, obnoxious, unbalanced unit, a curse to himself and society. Having triumphed easily against home authority, the undisciplined youth soon tests his powers against the moral and social laws, with devastating consequences to himself and the family. "Oh, God," exclaimed a gray-haired chief of police, "I'm not thinking of the broken laws but the broken hearts."

Soul-Murder

Today they are exceptional parents who do not murder their children's souls. It is not that they deliberately court damnation for their little ones. None-

theless, they pave the way by failing to maintain a well-regulated, steady discipline and to set a wholesome example in everyday affairs. Without an undisturbed atmosphere of love and spirituality until character is formed, the normal expectancy for a child is dullness, crime, and atheism. Need we add that a line of conduct which jeopardizes the soul rarely leaves mind or body unscathed? Precisely the same precautions against soul-dilapidation would forestall mental failure and physical undoing. Therefore, sending children to kindergarten or pre-kindergarten before the age of seven or eight can be definitely harmful. The change of teeth indicates outwardly that inner forces are now freed for mental requisitioning which, if undertaken earlier, will deprive the body and mind of needful growing forces and so result in physical and mental illnesses.

The Nudist Trend

Another common enemy of the good life is the ugly fashion of going about half-clothed. Naturally, children wish to imitate the grown-ups, but even physicians complain that for children an over-exposure of the spine and lower limbs can be a fruitful source of ill-health in later life. The practice is even more malignant from the spiritual viewpoint, nakedness tending to the destruction of soul-delicacy. This, in turn, dulls the perceptive powers for the finer things of life, though it may be no bar to swimming and high jumps!

Notice how far the slaves of fashion overstep the bounds of decency. Evening gowns without visible means of support! What lack of art and true originality in these degradations! No longer beauty of line and drapery but something daringly vulgar. Because Paris labels the new contraption "faintly naughty," the American woman pays \$19.50 for a surcingle to advertise her bad taste. God help her children!

Questions

1. What is the parents' antidote for the prevailing defiance of right order?
2. Of what should the education of the small child consist?
3. Who are to blame in most cases for child-failure and why?
4. Illustrate several kinds of errors that unwary parents make concerning their children's upbringing.
5. Name a common enemy of the good life. Point out its effect on youngsters.

II

Pseudo-Sociology

Some amateur sociologists propose to sterilize the crime-bug by enlarging playgrounds, employing more policemen, speeding up the trial and punishment of offenders, and propagating "idealism." Others would combat human failure by separating politics from crime, as we separate curds from whey. Many hold that Bible-reading in the public schools would create moral stamina. A convention of clubwomen proposed a crime-curb without claws, teeth, or beak in seven segments, listed in the following order: sex-information, income-tax reduction, sewage-disposal facilities, year-round schooling, birth-prevention, sterilization, character-training! Recently a prison physician jolted a D. A. R. group that had assembled to do something about juvenile delinquency. According to the newspapers, almost every woman present wore a corsage of roses, orchids or gardenias . . . pastel colors predominated in elaborate gowns of chiffon or sleek brocade. Nevertheless, the shrewd speaker told the ladies quite candidly that they might contribute best to the lessening of delinquency by paying more attention to their own children. "We have been talking for years,"

said he, "about the underprivileged boy or girl as if they were in some other household. I wonder if we look carefully enough if we could find them in our own home?"

Picture Puzzle: Find the Culprit

That is a rare parent who never sets the little ones a bad example. Yet, whether we like it or not, Example-plus-Imitation is the form that education takes from birth to change of teeth. During this first seven-year cycle, the child is one great sense-organ, a sponge soaking up everything in the atmosphere. A keen observer, he soon becomes a merciless judge of parents whose moral stability is only deep enough to wet the feet. True to his nature, he wants to do, and be, and wear, and hear, whatever he sees being done, or being worn, or heard. Allow the infant to see, hear, feel, smell, or taste that which drags him downward,—and what have we in adolescence? Such distracted appeals as this from the helpless father or mother: "Really, Miss L—, I can do nothing with my children. It is unpopular in this day of 'progressive' education to tell a child of any age 'you must.' At our study club meeting we had to admit that we parents cannot make a child do, or not do, anything different from what his schoolmates do. So I simply have to let my daughters do like the others in high school, or else they will make it unpleasant for them. They tell me they don't want to be better than the others. My neighbor for a long time now has had to let her high school son have full sway at home. The other night his father told him it was too muddy to take out the car. When the boy got ready to go and demanded the key, the father meekly handed it over. The mother anxiously paced the floor all night, waiting for the boy's return. At daylight the police telephoned: the car had failed to take a bridge, gone into the chasm. The mangled body of her son and two companions lay under the wreckage."

Warped Management

That is an ill-guided home where the parents differ concerning the management of children. Sometimes the mother really has an understanding of the child's needs and nature but finds her best designs thwarted by the husband, who quackishly curries favor with the infant. In such circumstances, it is impossible to overcome inborn defects, such as selfishness, jealousy, and egotism.

Or again, the father may have some notion of the care and training due the young soul, while the mother trots after false gods. A bewildered father writes: "Our five-year-old boy is terrorizing the home and neighbors. His mother excuses his tantrums by saying he has inherited my disposition and will not allow the justice of a keen switch. Returning home today I found her looking like a wild woman, with a wet towel around her head after working for an hour to get him to sleep. There is nothing the matter with him except that he is spoiled rotten. I punished him, then asked him at dinner, 'Do you want to return thanks?' 'No,' he answered sullenly, 'not after the way you've acted.' I am sure a child has to be systematically disciplined, but can one parent do this when the other favors allowing him to 'develop his initiative' without let or hindrance? My wife charged me with not even trying to win the child's affections, so last night I took him to a movie. Much of it, however, was poison; he has played machine-gunner ever since."

Is it surprising that a few years later this boy showed symptoms of dementia praecox? Only in a home where adults fail in mutual respect is it possible for a child to defy his father. "Not after the way you've acted," is a carbon copy of a grown-up speech. Anyhow, instead of asking the boy such a question, the father simply should have set the example of returning thanks humbly and devoutly. Furthermore, no child

of tender years should be subjected to the cinema. Apart from the contents, the rapidity of movement upsets his mental balance.

Fatal Mishandling

A mother complains in the child's hearing that he does not obey. Thereafter he neither respects nor obeys her, since a child cannot forgive weakness of character.

Father and mother beseech a caller to stay for lunch. Afterwards they give the children a lesson in duplicity and meanness by criticizing and ridiculing the departed guest.

Jackie, at a summer hotel, hauls from his pocket a handful of nickels. The father chuckles,—“That rascal of mine has found how to get the nickels out of the slot machine. He often gets \$2 or more on a Sunday morning before the help is stirring.”

Mother says to Mildred, “Don't tell daddy we played bridge today. Here is a nickel.” A week later, Mildred demands a dime hush money.

With such examples from the parents, what chance has the poor child? Is not the “tough kid” the logical outcome?

Questions

1. How would you propose to sterilize the crime bug?
2. What form does education take from birth to change of teeth?
3. How many years do you reckon as the first life-cycle?
4. Can you make a child do differently from his school-mates? Suggest ways and means.
5. That is an ill-guided home where parents differ concerning child-management. Illustrate. What may result?
6. Why should a mother refrain from complaining about her child's refusal to obey? Mention several examples of the duplicity and meanness into which an unwary parent could fall.

Uncommon Sense

When it comes to the necessity of giving the adolescent such disciplining and instruction as should normally have entered into the formation of his character before the age of ten, let those who have tried it say whether it is easy, or whether it is something like attempting to domesticate a buck rabbit after he gets his growth. I do not assert that it is impossible to redress the wrongs of the 7-14 cycle at a later stage. Miracles do happen. But I am not presuming here to outline a general corrective. The problems for which a simple solution are simply not possible I do not tackle, but leave them to "progressive" writers on the child mind, who, compared with, say, Mother Janet Stuart, have still the very alphabet to learn. We kill time painlessly by reading in the Sunday papers how the "modern scientific method" is restoring to good condition the failures and delinquents which "modern scientific methods" had reduced to bad condition. And yet in real life it is somewhat rare to see spoiled youthhood make a sudden spring into divinity. But hope springs eternal. The simple, homely, everyday facts seem to be savored only by the rare souls rich in common sense.

Dirge for the Massacre of Genius

What kind of home is that which sends the child beyond the safety of its four walls before the change of teeth? For this betrayal of childhood others must share the blame, since the school, yes, even the Sunday school, not only permits but demands the sacrifice of the innocents.

If our government were alert to national interests, it would make home education compulsory under the age of ten for all children whose parents have enough

intelligence to establish and conduct a well-ordered family life. For the unfortunate little ones who can have no real home life it should still maintain nursery schools and kindergartens to compensate in some degree for their condition of artificial orphanhood.

After decades of second-rate pre-molar education, applied wrong-end-foremost, America, do you notice, has all but ceased to bring forth poets, statesmen, original thinkers in any category. Or does she still produce souls of good quality only to clamp them into the mold of intensified schooling instead of helping them cultivate their God-given aspirations?

It is too bad that children must hear talk of graduating, promoting, graduating, while too young to realize that such distinctions are fictitious. The talk of school compulsion signifies to their callow brains two notoriously undermining notions,—that parents “do not know enough” to teach their yearlings, and that the State must be more important than God. Such false notions, when they persist through adolescence, culminate in the slave personality. Recently, in quoting a prominent speaker, the reporters, who are by no means fools, illuminatingly conjoined two sentences: “We are confronted with a tremendous increase in the number of highly educated citizens,”—“Improved social conditions must wait until the level of the national intelligence is prepared to accept measures for betterment.” As though education were a disaster: the blockade of social improvement!

Instead of “highly educated,” the speaker meant lengthily schooled. Does he or does he not indicate that protracted general schooling is calamitous? With the restoration of the Christian home and the consequent ousting of primary school grades, we may soon cease our dirge for the death, or at least the dearth, of a national intelligence.

Domestic Education the Golden Key

Only when parents have sacrificed to educate their children at home can they rightly make special demands on the school that instructs them. Now, before the reader consigns to Jericho my plea for parental self-sacrifice as the indispensable preliminary to success in school and in life, I hasten to repeat my oft-told definition of domestic education as soul-enlarging, sense-sharpening, mind-enriching, will-strengthening. This, one sees clearly, is a commission for the child's parents, both of them. God knew what He was about in giving children both a father and a mother. He constantly reassures us that He is keeping a loving eye on their endeavors. (The fowls of the air that neither sow nor reap. The sparrow that doth not fall unseen. How much more are ye than these?) How rarely blessed are the young who grow up under the wise and vigilant eyes of two divinely-commissioned educators! Children need kindness and affection. They need guidance every hour, but this consists mainly in good example. They must be guarded from the infection of bad contacts. All in all, they must live with good people or they will not be good.

Questions

1. Is it easy to begin the disciplining of a child after the age of 10? Why?
2. Who savor best the single, homely, everyday facts of child education?
3. Why should a child be kept safe at home until change of teeth?
4. When does this physiological change generally take place?
5. What happens to budding genius in the molding process of set grading and promotion?

6. Is a highly schooled person always an educated one?
 7. Define true education.
 8. Who only have the right to make special demands on the school which instructs their children?
 9. Define Domestic Education according to E. F. L.
-

IV

Cheating the Child

Speaking coolly before God and wishing that we need not, I ask you, "Is it not more than evident that juvenile delinquency, like senile misbehavior, should be charged to the ill-guided home?" It is a child's nature to imitate whatever he sees, whether good or bad, kind or malevolent. A certain wicked French writer who died penniless and miserable has been memorialized as an instance of the flat failure of dazzling early promise. As a young man, his literary genius simply blazed; the expressions of his sinful soul were in extraordinary demand. But he would not work except when he felt like it, even when he had commissions for stories. Biographers excuse his sloth and surliness, which drove him to drink and drugs,—or was it drink and drugs which drove him to sloth and surliness?—by saying that he could not work because he was born without will power. But this is nonsense. Will power is not born but built. Character is not hereditary, even though it may often appear so when the same tendencies exhibit themselves in successive generations. "Like father, like son," however, is due mainly to a *hereditary pattern of home discipline*. The home atmosphere and surroundings, the example of the parents, the pressure of ideas accepted by the clan, combined with the type of instruction patriarchally established as "the thing," combine to fit the little newcomer into his orbit as a marble fits the monkey's paw.

A London editor is seeking to persuade me that children's play, games, etc., are hereditary. Yet if his son and heir had been brought up from birth in an Indian wigwam or a Tarzan jungle, would he spontaneously play chess and cricket because such ways of amusement ran in the blood of his forefathers?

The Teacher-Father

Since teacher-fathers disappeared from the home scene, Americans have all but lost their ancient ability to speak the English language. How many high school pupils can answer the question that is asked instead of the one they hoped would be asked? Does one ordinarily find in an entire school a child who can answer, "I do not know," instead of guessing? Especially is it the father's province to drill the children to weigh their words, to think before speaking, to speak to the point and say exactly what they mean.

How children revere the father who instructs them! It is human nature to feel grateful for good teaching. And what a dear companionship this common interest and high striving fosters! Yet unless established early, it takes root with difficulty.

Let the father resume his divinely-established post as the head of the household. Let him inspire, discipline, educate his children through Christian example, correction, instruction.

How many fathers awaken to the high cost of home neglect only when summoned to court where their child is on trial, or to the hospital to find a maternity case or a syphilitic!

"It will be hard enough, in the Day of Judgment," warns Bishop Hedley, "to have to answer for our own souls, . . . but God help those who, in that awful hour, have to answer for the souls of their children!"

Mistaken Mother-Love

A duty the father should never shirk is that of checking the tendency of motherly love to degenerate

into sinful softness. Many mothers thoughtlessly or unknowingly destroy the child's future and their own happiness. By giving in to whims, by hesitating to give a needed punishment, by weakly saying Yes where a plain No is in order, and by reasoning with the child where they should command, they destroy their own authority. Such mothers believe they love their children but in reality they act as if they hate them. We spare children out of excessive love, but it is not a proper instance of affection to forbear correcting them.

Young mothers make the serious mistake of amusing themselves with Baby's naughtiness, thus spoiling the very foundation of character. Their idolatry of the child blinds them to the fundamental laws of spiritual and mental growth. Father Markert, writing of his own mother in *The Christian Family*, gives us a priceless picture of domestic education in practice.

"Mother taught us to depend on ourselves, rather than on others. One of her principles was, 'Do not bother others with anything you can do yourself.' At an early age we learned to sew loose buttons on our clothes. No, we were not spoiled. Not much fuss was made over little sores, cuts, burns, etc., such as happen to lively boys and girls. If one of the 'babies' came home with such a trivial thing, mother would sympathetically blow on the bruise, and assure him or her that it was 'all better.' And, infallibly, the little patient would stop his crying and go his way in life again. We were taught by mother how to clean and dress a wound if it was something that needed attention. It did not take long before we did not bother others, but took care of our own sore hands and feet."

Another pointer from this good priest's mother deals with the ever-present question of children's dietary notions:

"At table, selection of certain dishes and refusal of others was not permitted. The presumption was

that what came on our table was good and wholesome, substantial, nourishing, and properly prepared. Anybody who was not sick could eat it. If we did not like one thing as well as another, we had a chance to exercise our will power by eating it just the same. Quite correctly, our parents' idea was that later on life would be much easier to bear if we had learned not to give in to every whim with regard to such things as food."

Authority

Authority would be less of a problem if parents would keep in mind that the malleability, the docility, of the first seven years when discipline is a simple matter, will not last forever. In reality these years of infancy are the most important in human life, since they establish or fail to establish human character except as a house of cards.

Parents imagine that they know how to command for the sole reason that they are older and physically stronger than the child, who is therefore obliged to submit. However, knowing how to command obedience is a rare art nowadays, so general is the ignorance of how to obey. Whom the child respects, he loves. Whom he loves, he obeys gladly. Unless this law is understood and acted upon, we develop innumerable ways of brutalizing the child in the name of authority. We yell out the same command twenty times, wondering why he fails to respond. Today we show ourselves indulgent to a fault, and tomorrow excessively severe. What a degrading experience for a child to feel unable to respect his parents!

Questions

1. Say something about cheating the child.
2. What would you say regarding will power? Is it born in a child?
3. Is character hereditary? How is the little one fitted into his orbit?

4. What is the father's duty as a parent?
5. What type of father does the child revere?
6. Say something about mistaken mother-love and mention its antidote gleaned from Father Markert's picture of his home life.
7. Why has the art of commanding become so rare?
8. Whom does the child respect? Whom obey?

V

Who Is a Bad Parent?

The good parent has to deny himself many pleasures which are, perhaps, fairly harmless if children were not to be considered. For example: What would you say to a mother who asks: "How shall I prevent my ten-year-old daughter smoking my cigarettes?"

And tell me, would good parents deliberately enslave themselves to the cocktail habit? Medical authorities unanimously denounce the danger of this ready path to moral perversion. How comes it that women will not only acquiesce in their daughters' drinking but take so readily themselves to the custom? Are they completely mad? They even drink at public bars, to the disgust of all decent men, this poison to body and soul. What more awful sign of our downfall than that department stores offer "miniature bars" at the toy counter, with all the materials necessary to prepare the terrible mixture? Mothers actually give these ingenious playthings to their adolescent children for their "studios." Will not conscientious people fight this crime against the growing generation?

"Do as I say, not as I do," is another route to child-spoiling. Jane, aged five, pipes up: "We can say our

prayers without anybody helping us. We say them every night. But mother doesn't say hers. She gets right into bed."

"Yes," echoes Monica, a year younger, "she tells us to say our prayers but she doesn't say hers and she doesn't get up to say them either, because WE WATCH!"

Again, that is a rare parent who never sets an ill-example by substituting a lie for sane and firm discipline. "If you don't go to bed I'll call the policeman," cautions mother. Or, "If you cry any more mother will run away from you and not come back." "Don't open the door, or the bogeyman will get you," is another favorite lie.

Two-year-old Clara still clung to her nursing bottle. Her parents regarding a plain "thou shalt not" as barbarous, capitalized her fear of rats. They told her they had seen a big rat sucking on her bottle. The lie worked. Should such parents be surprised if their little ones grow up without honor and honesty? Before them is the example. Children cannot discriminate but only imitate.

Squanderlust

The tradition of home education has been buried so deeply under the ravel of over-schooling and its consequent wastage that our pseudo-philosophers affect to deny it ever did exist. But they also deny the existence of supernatural truth. A handful of good parents can enlighten the world anew by renewing in their own families the tradition: *Education begins at home*. Unless we return speedily to the attitude that education,—soul-training,—is a rather serious subject we shall all drown in the modern flood of animalism into which the school despots have plunged us along with all the glories of our mechanical achievements and all the splendor of our early enthusiasms.

If our country is to survive, we must arise and overthrow the false science which is destroying us.

At an European educational congress an American "progressive" denounced a speaker who urged training children to exercise self-denial. Said this objector: "Life is hard enough without making children give up things they can have as well as not. I certainly didn't raise mine your way."

Now that woman's physician had limited her to one cigarette after meals. She gave me the carton, stipulating that I should allow her only one cigarette no matter how hard she might beg for more! My role of jailer was far from happy. While I was wondering what her youngsters were like, the daughter, whose husband had committed suicide the week before, cabled her mother. "Frank left big insurance. I am taking Russian dancing."

Weak-willed parents, having no directive in their lives, are naturally at a loss how to guide and cultivate the child. They set him on a level of authority with themselves, keep him in the limelight, advertise him as donor to hospitals and charities, encourage him to "express his personality," by speechifying on subjects of which he can have no knowledge. How quickly he can read his parents! How promptly he imitates their vanity and untruthfulness!

Progressive Methods to Soul-Ruin

1—Don't trouble to maintain a daily schedule. Get meals on the table haphazardly, disregarding tidiness and color-scheme and let family rising and retiring hinge on personal whim.

2—Don't teach the child manners—leave it all to nature in the "progressive" way.

3—Postpone teaching the child its prayers, using the excuse that it is too young. This enables parents to avoid a duty and permits more time for bridge parties.

4—Show off the infant at every opportunity. This will cater to the parents' vanity and later have a similar effect on the child.

5—Don't insist on prompt obedience. Coax the child into compliance. "In minute me will." Even a two-year-old can get away with this excuse, yet the child craves the prop of authority.

6—Don't have friendly talks with him. Let him tell his troubles to his playmates or a local Dorothy Dix. The reader will find examples of this form of child-spoiling in daily heart-throb columns.

7—Don't read Christian stories or fairy tales to him. Let him poison his mind with the newsstand trash you leave lying around. John Bosco's story of the foolish hen would be too moral for him.

In an ill-guided home all manner of unsuitable topics are discussed before the child and so he asks questions that are not the rightful business of any little one. Spiritually and pedagogically in the wrong, the mother gives factual answers that are soul-withering. This initiation once performed is forever. You cannot restore the bloom to the peach.

In like manner parents and relatives tease the children about their "beaux," which as a matter of fact is merely an outlet for their own ill-ordered thoughts.

Is it a wonder that even younglings nowadays remark, "No getting married for me! All married people do is fight." Such a child becomes enslaved by selfishness, ill-temper, greed and covetousness until he becomes too knowing, disenchanted, no longer capable of wonder.

"My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky,"

sang the poet. Nowadays when the child sees a rainbow, he asks, "What are they advertising, dad?"

Christianity is a complete system of government for all evil impulses. As an example in point, a child

who learns to abstain during Lent, is receiving will training.

Again, that is an ill-guided home where parents overlook first faults in the hope that they will not occur again. But they always do. "How shall I break Myra of making faces? She says Jennie Miller makes them in Sunday school. Now Fanny, two years younger than Myra, imitates her, saying, 'Myra makes faces this way.'" The face-making is first imitation, then, naughtiness. If persisted in it becomes disobedience, for which we recommend the "laying on of hands." How children, themselves, view the faults of others is enlightening, for they have an instinctive sense of justice even though they often judge severely. One morning I told a 9-10-year-old class about a mother who cannot make her daughter, age 4, stay in the yard. Whipping, says the mother, only makes her worse. With unanimous accord the young jury returned their verdict: "She doesn't whip her hard enough. She should spank her until she can't sit down." Of course the solution lies deeper: one needs to inquire into the home atmosphere and learn what element it is that creates in the child this perilous defiance of authority.

A teacher-mother, age 33: "An adolescent is a new kind of animal in my experience. After a day's outing, our Tommy reported at supper—'Nick Parola lives in a house that looks like a castle. He has a large library with well-bound classics. Walter, one of the guests, today, used these expensive books to make forts on the floor!'"

"What did Nick's mother say?" Daddy queried.

"Oh, she didn't like it but she didn't say anything. Modern mothers are like that. They aren't old-fashioned like mother. When my friends come here and don't behave she says, 'Go home, young man, and stay there until you learn some manners.' She embarrasses me. He was so serious I was convulsed. I recite"

'Somebody's Mother Old and Gray,' with all the pathos in the world, while Tommy got madder every minute."

Bringing up a family is no job for a weakling. No doubt Tommy was inoculated with the Communistic idea that the world revolves around him and his elders must take a back seat.

There is also a type of child who seems to bide his time to trap his parent when entertaining or calling by a fit of thoroughgoing naughtiness. Instead of correcting him then and there, when punishment would carry some weight, she waits until she returns home—when she may forget to correct—and the child "seeing it work" once, repeats the offense again and again. Or, on the other hand she may chastise him too severely—as an unconscious salve to her own mortification.

Questions

1. Should the good parent deny himself certain pleasures when considering the welfare of his children?
2. How would you answer a mother who asks how to prevent her daughter smoking her cigarettes?
3. What of the cocktail habit?
4. Do you say your prayers? Why?
5. Should children be set on a level of authority with the parents? Why?
6. Enumerate seven "progressive" methods towards soul-ruin.
7. Is it wise to tease children about beaux?

VI

Needs of the Nestling

Children require at the very least seven straight years of uninterrupted home-discipline, else their better natures never have a chance. They need kindness and affection within their natural environment. They

require guidance every hour, in things innumerable. Good habits are formed in the elevating and improving calm of a well-ordered home. That means that unless the parents, the indispensable educators, look after their children, cultivating, strengthening and polishing all their faculties, they will never be what God intends them to be. With this care given intelligently, the later responsibility of youth-guidance is simple, delightful, sweet and rewarding.

But if the young child has been subjected to all known methods of spoiling, discussed in his hearing, idolized, overpraised, given everything he sets his heart upon, and that heart wizened with information beyond his years, if his playful defiance has been treated with sinful softness, you will have on your hands a haughty, ungrateful, egotistical, spoiled child.

This happens all too often, and when it does, the delayed training calls for the correction of early mistakes, rooting out waywardness, and implanting new ideals and habits, at the same time that we are confronted with the problems incidental to restless, questing adolescence. Then we have a pretty kettle of fish.

There are few parents who have the loving firmness and sound judgment required for the task of bringing the wronged soul back to grace. To say that it could not be done would be to doubt the mercy and goodness of God, but something like a miracle of grace will be required to strengthen a parent for such a task.

Parents, let us rise up to abolish ignorance. Stiffen your sinews for the fight of the ages. Harness yourselves for warfare on the source of the world's dangerous explosives—the ill-guided home. Let the defenders of liberty begin at home, setting each household in order. Next, fight encroachments on parental rights, no matter in what guise the enemy intrudes. United as parents, we have in our hands the all-powerful instrument of moral, social, intellectual and political uplift.

Keep the little ones safe and sound in a good home until their character is developed to resist ordinary temptations. Thereafter the world cannot easily smirch it. If the mirror be highly polished, say the Chinese, the dust cannot stick to it. Parents, do this, and it shall not be said of us that, "Ichabod is written over their doors," — meaning — "The glory hath departed."

A great deal of the revolt of youth is due to parents who instead of disciplining their children, weakly and culpably transfer their authority to the school.

Is it any wonder then that in children who show neurotic disorders, we find that their parents lacked moral stability and willpower, indicated by such faults as impatience, bad temper, drunkenness? Hardly one child in one hundred is definitely stupid. Sometimes, too, the shortcomings of parents are due to the mistaken notion that child care is simply hygiene. But hygiene in the correct sense covers more than physiology. The child's mind and morals require much more concern than his bath and biceps.

Modern home life is dangerously soft. It replaces the work of love with cushioned comfort, a complete reaction against firmness, which is by no means the same as hardness.

"Flossie looks pale," worries mother. "She is working too hard. She must sleep longer these mornings." Adolescent Flossie delights in the program. Now she can read in bed until midnight and again before school. Happy days, she thinks, would be here if daddy would only get a new car and allow her to drive.

The father should never become simply a pal, nor the mother a comrade that the child need hardly respect. Familiarity overdone renders bad service on the day that parental authority is put to the proof. The child quickly abuses excessive condescension to his level.

Questions

1. What are the needs of the nestling?
 2. What is a major trait of the home-educated child?
 3. What makes the ungrateful, egotistical spoiled child? What are the remedies?
 4. Who are the educators? Who the teachers?
 5. What is the cause of a great deal of the revolt of youth?
 6. Should the father be simply a pal? The mother a comrade?
-

VII

A Nun's Task—Unspotting the Leopard

Now comes a far-reaching get-together angle. Teachers and hitherto "average" mothers can for a moderate fee join a book club in which each selects a book, keeps it a fortnight and passes it on. Thus in a club of twelve, each member reads twenty-four books a year. FINE, you say. Yes—but examine the selections. "George," exclaimed a matronly reader, as she laid aside her cigarette to pour her husband's coffee, "I don't like a book that comes right out and says *everything*. Give me a little reticence. Just listen to this." And she reads aloud.

"M—m—m—," says George warningly, "little pitchers."

"Pshaw," she retorts, "all this goes right over their heads." Does it? Should not a woman realize that what goes in must come out in one form or another so that, unconsciously, she may in a split second poison the atmosphere? The very fact that a mother fills her own mind with the tommvrot of the usual current best-sellers, is a complete psychological explanation of such ill-behavior in her children, as shown below.

Jessie, when corrected by her mother, grabs her

own arm and bites it until the blood fills the teeth-marks, throws herself backwards in a half-genuine spasm. If Miriam, eleven, puts on a garment and dislikes it, or is told to take off a garment she likes, she seizes it and crumples it into a ball or else tears it in two. When told to wear a frock a second time, she complains that it is dirty. If mother says it is not dirty, in a flash she mops the floor with it and yells defiantly, "It is dirty now." If cross, both children let out at you a bookful of ugly words. Aside from these little peculiarities the children are "darling" and mother wouldn't think of sending them anywhere except to a Catholic school. "I really manage them famously," she says brightly, "by just letting these wild scenes pass over until they calm down. I don't believe in punishing children. Neither do I believe in not satisfying their curiosity. I assure you I answer all their questions matter-of-factly, practically, absolutely truthfully, show them pictures from a nurse's book and so on. I certainly don't mean to let others get ahead of me by telling my children the facts of life in an *impure* way."

The poor Sisters meanwhile work overtime to protect other pupils from rubbing elbows with this mother's "darlings."

"Lions and Tigers and Bears! Oh My!"

Not long ago a leading sciosophist, a master of pedagogical nonsense, was lecturing on the dangers of permitting parents to invade the field of education. With unwonted suavity I tried to elicit that a mother may venture so far as to teach her children the letters of the alphabet as did the mother of John Wesley. Vain was my sally. "Simple as the alphabet may appear to a non-philosopher, it takes a trained teacher to present it from a humanist standpoint. We scientific educators have the letters, both large and small, living in families and so classified because of their

similar characteristics. What could an untrained mother make of that?" Well, what could she? The very thought is enough to put to flight Dorothy, the scarecrow, the tin man and the cowardly lion (of "Wizard of Oz" fame) ejaculating—"Lions and tigers and bears! Oh my!"

One trait that distinguishes the home educated child from the merely schooled is his eagerness for knowledge. Wanting to learn is as natural to a child as wanting to breathe. But KNOWING HOW TO LEARN is quite another quality, coming not solely by nature but by way of a life unfolding naturally in the atmosphere of the orderly home.

The fact is, conscientious parents know a great deal more about psychology and pedagogy,—which is bigwordedness for the laws of soul health and mind growth,—than they dare credit themselves with knowing. In our campaign of BACK TO THE HOME, the first step is to restore the self-confidence of parents as being more inspiring teachers than their children ever meet in a classroom. The next, which may smack of politics, is to help parents regain the educational authority which they have all too weakly surrendered to the lobbying professional. The parents are the educators. The teachers are the teachers. The teacher may be dutiful, self-sacrificing, spendthrift of her own strength in behalf of the children committed to her professional care. One certain fact is that the value of schooling does not depend on the teacher's ability or conscientiousness but on the home education that precedes schooling.

Polishing Putty

School failure is rooted in home failure. The child brings to school his home-caught short-comings and long-goings. The faults he has he keeps. His excellencies come by fits and starts as of yore. The good, meek, little girl still tells the same fibs. The bright

child seeks to "get by" as at home without application, while the dull child becomes no brighter.

However, the real national sinker is the school's efforts to father and mother the pupils as well as instruct them. But if the parents will persist in sending children to school before establishing the foundation on which good schooling can build, and before instructing them in matters which should be taught individually, then failure is the best they have any right to expect.

Like polishing putty is the mis-spent labor of refining and cultivating the mentality of home-neglected children.

Dishonesty

A young mother was bragging to an old school-chum about her candor in answering her five-year-old daughter's most searching questions.

"Do you mean you would explain to that child the entire fact about everything she might see fit to ask?"

"Positively, the whole truth."

"But," continued the friend, "when are you going to teach her there are things that are none of a child's business?"

"My child has the right to know everything concerning her own coming into the world. Doctor says it is not right to withhold this knowledge."

"See here," exclaimed the angry friend, "What will you tell her when she asks how you and her daddy happened to marry?"

The mother blushed. Six years before when she had graduated from a private school her parents had given her a big party, but laid down the order: "This is all we can do for you. Tonight you are to get a husband. Better concentrate on the banker's son." Soon afterwards a forced marriage with the designated victim gave her an establishment. No danger she would tell Marjorie that!

Questions

1. Explain why the good parent is particular about the type of book he reads and discusses in his home.
 2. What is the distinguishing mark of the home-educated child?
 3. Are the more inspiring teachers to be found in the home or in the classroom?
 4. What is responsible for school failure? Why?
 5. Give examples of dishonesty in parents towards children under seven and results.
-

VIII

Nature or Sciosophy

"Give me a child," says a behavioristic mountebank, "and I will make of him what I choose."

"Give me a rich soil, heat and moisture, and I'll produce for you a rich forest," says any arborean. Yet, scientists have never been able to explain why the Pampas of South America, with a humid climate and a soil exceedingly rich, produce only grass, while the dry sterile territories on their north, west and south borders are heavily covered with trees.

Darwin asserted that the extreme violence of the southwest wind prevented trees from growing. His conjecture, however, was proved as unreliable as his guesses on "natural selection" by the introduction of the eucalyptus, which has attained an extraordinary height on the pampas, and a luxuriance of foliage never seen in its native Australia.

Think this over and ask yourself if laws can be

formed for human minds and souls, that are an improvement on the teachings of Christianity.

The fact that a child appears hopelessly dull or lacking in intelligence, is all too often a pretext for parents neglecting his training. A child may have a discoverable handicap, like weak sight or hearing or an obstruction to breathing or some other physical difficulty, which retards advancement along accustomed lines, but it is too late to give the most essential training before any living expert can pronounce him irremediably defective or feeble-minded. Many children who appear mentally deficient are in reality high gifted in ways that we fail to recognize or rightly appraise. We could list in this class many notable men and women who were considered impenetrably stupid or hopelessly backward, when subjected to school measurements wherein the examiners forgot, or more likely had never learned that it takes longer to sprout an acorn than a pumpkin seed.

Just as the physically weak infant lacks the force to develop without special care and nurture, so the mentally weak lacks the force to develop without special training and protection.

Parents cannot escape responsibility by blaming childish ill-doing on heredity unless the guilty ancestor has lived recently enough and near enough to corrupt the living by example. Right and wrong are not matters of heredity or instinct. They have to be learned. Righteousness does not come by nature any more than writing or tailoring. The blame for the boy or girl who goes wrong rests largely with the parents who, through ignorance or negligence, have failed to maintain an atmosphere of right doing, right living, right thinking throughout the habit-forming years of childhood.

To summarize: All children are naughty but no child is bad. All children will be good and happy when

parents train them in good habits from the day of their birth. Failure in making a living or making a life worth while are mainly traceable to early home influences. Mere knowledge of right and wrong is not a safeguard against wrongdoing.

Let us repeat: The causes of failure in life are nearly all more or less the outcome of a domestic system that failed the child during the early and most impressionable years, before change of teeth. The causes are idleness, carelessness, impulsiveness, mental confusion, the inability to sustain attention, to prolong effort, to profit by past mistakes of self or others. Every single one of these causes, mind you, are the result of habits formed and partly set *before the change of teeth.*

The prudent are crowned with knowledge, says Proverbs. Prudence, forethought, readiness to meet an emergency are surely of no less value than sociability or readiness for learning. It is therefore a justifiable conclusion that lack of discipline leaves the individual lacking in those qualities without which intelligence is not only worthless but a menace. After all, mere brains are not such a valuable possession as are temperamental balance, self-control, trustworthiness, purposiveness, and perseverance. Yet all these characteristics are primarily the result of early and regular training before schooling should begin.

As one of the main purposes of education is to fit the individual to adapt himself to circumstances and adjust himself to whatever station in life he may be called to occupy, it follows that from the earliest years he needs practice in doing these things. Otherwise, when the call comes he will be like an awkward recruit, not drilled for the crucial test. The catastrophic violence of the eternal fight between the powers of darkness and of light, between despotic anarchy and well-ordered government, between Hell and Heaven,

which we witness in this saddened day, can be successfully met and counteracted by the parents of our country, through the unfailing means of a good home education. Each orderly, well-disciplined home is a bulwark against civic disorder.

Questions

1. Should a parent neglect a child who appears lacking or dull?
2. Should heredity be blamed for childish ill-doing?
3. What have been the causes for many failures in life?
4. Summarize the outstanding points made in this booklet.
5. Name the greatest university in the world.

