The free family : a creative experiment in self-regulation for children / by Paul and Jean Ritter.

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Publication/Creation

London : V. Gollancz, 1959.

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THE FREE FAMILY

BY PAUL & JEAN RITTER

If

You are a parent or would-be parent, please read the description of this book overleaf ⟶

of the attitude even of progressive writers on this subject).

We come next to some chapters in which the Ritters discuss the wider implications of their theory—for instance, the nature of learning and the limitations of freedom; and compare normal development theories with the results of self-regulation.

The final group of chapters is mainly concerned with helping the child in the community; the problems of choosing a school; the problems of children from different families being together, with the tensions produced by their differing backgrounds; and the prospects of "housing therapy"—the housing layout which is planned to bring people together instead of isolating them in their separate units, the elimination of motor roads in the inner area of the housing group, and the development of the "children's house".

The Ritters do not suggest that self-regulation solves all problems. Indeed, they have much to say about the emotional disturbances which their children still had to endure: Erica's desperate jealousy of Penny; Leonora's sudden fear of the night when she was about two years old. In such circumstances the parent must act as therapist, though "that takes considerable energy and is fraught with special dangers in such a close relationship. But the parent can be the ideal therapist." They go on to indicate quite how much energy it may take, and quite how acute the dangers can be. But sometimes the source of disturbance can be righted: patience and understanding resolved Erica's jealousy and Leonora's fear. . . .

But we heard all this, the reader may say, a quarter of a century ago, in the crusading days of Bertrand and Dora Russell and of A. S. Neill. That distant revolution, however, was followed by a counter-revolution. Freedom, we were told, breeds insecurity in the child; the child needs routine, training, discipline, in order to become a well-integrated adult. And, because we are still so told, the Ritters devote their first two chapters to a refutation of these heresies, as they regard them.

Paul Ritter is an architect and housing consultant.

Mr. and Mrs. Ritter

have been raising a family. They have been raising it in terms of a theory, which they call Self-Regulation. It is a proven fact, they argue (and they feel they have proved it), that healthy organisms are able to regulate their natural functions. Childbirth should be a completely natural and relaxed process, pleasurable and almost painless to the mother, and they strongly denounce the attitude and methods currently adopted by most hospitals and midwives. Babies should be nursed whenever they cry, and fed whenever they want to be and for as long as they want to be. Bladder and bowel control should be left for the child to achieve in its own way and its own time. As they begin to grow up, children should be allowed the greatest possible freedom of judgment and be subject to the least possible amount of control.

Their book is largely an account of the raising of their own family of five girls. Chapters IV to VII describe in considerable detail the five births. From an early stage in her first pregnancy, Mrs. Ritter followed the methods of exercise and relaxation prescribed by Dr. Dick Read, who is now well known as a leader of the new school of thought about natural childbirth. Her devotion to her exercises is demonstrated by a photograph taken of Mrs. Ritter touching her toes on the day before one of the births. But alas, she soon found that inside the hospital they had not heard of

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THE FREE FAMILY

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A Creative Experiment in Self-regulation for Children

by

PAUL AND JEAN RITTER

Illustrated with
Photographs and Drawings

LONDON
VICTOR GOLLANCZ LTD
1959

Printed in Great Britain by
The Camelot Press Ltd., London and Southampton

THIS BOOK is mainly for the adventurous young and the courageous old. Unlike psychoanalysis, which has taken flight from the idea of freedom for children, it sets out to re-examine the idea, and to diagnose the conditions in which freedom fails. It reaffirms the principle as valid and practicable but shows how the application is crucial to its success. Experience and theory blend in the evidence.

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PART ONE

WHERE SELF-REGULATION STANDS

CHAPTER I

PARENTS' DILEMMA

WE ASSUME THAT you who read this book agree that the behaviour of adults is decisively affected by their upbringing. We assume also that you agree that the adult-controlled world, our society, behaves in such a way today, as for hundreds of years, that a development towards something better is highly desirable. You are therefore on the look-out for ideas. But when you try to learn you face extraordinary difficulties.

Upbringing, like most of the really important fields of knowledge, is uncharted. In this field the bees from many bonnets buzz and sting. Amateurs and parents feel entitled to pronounce and contradict with certainty, and interpret their personal experiences to fit their various whimsical theories. Professionals too disagree, though possibly with greater profundity and less profanity. Everywhere attitudes conflict; not only, as might be expected, those expressed in the books of the experts, but, more disturbingly, those which impinge from your immediate environment and even from within your own self.

Therefore it should be of interest that we have corroborated, with our five children, that, left alone, the young *homo sapiens* will eat, drink, sleep, love, learn and play to an extent proper for him. From this we have arrived at our attitude to education: self-regulation.

Our approach is down to earth. Freedom, the opportunity for deciding, cannot be complete. Children must be preserved from dangers incomprehensible to them and cannot be allowed to harm others, or their property. We today, unlike advocates of freedom for children a generation ago, understand the decisive effect of the character of the parents and teachers. Within these limitations, the proposed attitude offers vastly more freedom than it is customary to offer to children, for it is the tradition to interfere as a matter of course at birth, with breast-feeding, taking nourishment in general, sleeping, washing, dressing, and wherever else possible. The notion that a child is not capable of judgement,

and must have its life regulated from without, has insidiously grown into law: the child must be trained, trained on the further assumption that adults know what is right and wrong, "nice" and, more often, "naughty".

The cruel confusion of society and the inability to sort itself out are for us clear signs that we must not rely on tradition. We aim at adults who cannot only talk of Christian love or scientific humanism and so on, but have the inclination and capacity to live vividly and reasonably.

If self-regulation is likely to lead to such qualities, and we aim at much which is different from ourselves, values will differ from those traditionally appreciated. We think the fundamental signs of health in a child include vitality, adaptability, persistence, power of concentration; a capacity for love, understanding, sympathy and dealing with new circumstances, for joy in playing and learning and in fulfilling all its natural functions. It is by such basic qualities only that the efficiency of the new attitude of self-regulation can be judged.

Looking at it from that point of view, we recommend the principle as possible, efficient and pleasurable. And yet many people will rightly reject our attitude. Those who cannot endure the vitality it fosters are wise to do this. In some cases they may seek to rationalize their rejection by finding something wrong with the approach rather than admit shortcomings in themselves or their circumstances. But on no account should we persuade parents to take up what is too much for them. "Make the rod into pea-sticks and leave the child alone" cannot be a light-hearted command!

Those who are just a little bit timid should not be put off by the argument that it is not right or fair to experiment with children, for, in this age of transition, upbringing is in all cases an experiment. It is reassuring that self-regulation is an experiment in which parents and children partake actively, sensitively and with purpose. Such experiments we call "creative", to distinguish them from those objective experiments by objective scientists who sit back fearful lest they exert a harmful subjective influence on the procedure. For that kind of cold, feelingless attitude to experiment is, even if very prevalent, repulsive, irrelevant and inefficient when applied to the upbringing of children. It ignores the social aspect that upbringing is always the interplay between the child and those around him, always a matter of relationships.

It is difficult, perhaps, but essential, to understand and to take seriously that damage to the emotional make-up, diagnosed in the few by Freudian psychoanalysts, is a general condition, and that this condition is one symptom of the disease of the whole social organism. With this opinion we are in good company. From points of view which have been termed "psychoanalytical", "sociological", "functional", "sex-economic", "socio-psycho-somatic", "cultural", "bio-energetic", "psycho-social" and "bio-social" by many workers, starting with Freud in 1908, and including Burrow, Reich, Frank, Horney, Scott-Williamson, Fromm, Halliday, Halmos and others, society and its individuals collectively have been diagnosed and pronounced "sick", "ill", "diseased", "unhealthy", "disintegrated", "unbalanced", "anxious", "neurotic" and "emotionally plagued". It is the last diagnosis, Reich's diagnosis of "emotional plague", which, we feel, is exactly right and vivid.

It is, for the purposes of this book, superfluous to ponder the origins of this state and condition. Suffice to stress that, as the emotions are the seat of the trouble, it is these we must have in mind—particularly if we are to help in the regeneration of our children. The business would be quite hopeless but for the spontaneous capacity and tendency of living things to self-regulation and to health. This can be observed in all living things and it is not difficult to assume that it is valid also for man. The work of A. S. Neill, Dr. Wilhelm Reich and others, in various fields, is powerful evidence that this is true. And so, in simplest terms, the sane aim of our attitude is to allow offspring to regulate themselves to the greatest extent possible and in all ways possible. Spontaneously they will emerge emotionally more alive and capable of creative co-operation with others if we take care to protect them from the life-inimical elements of our society and their environment, and bring them into contact with all that is most alive, as much as we can. For it must be understood that anti-life elements, the symptoms of the emotional plague, have their roots, together with the life-positive ones, in every one of us.

The measure of our own pleasure and the understanding of the purpose of the pain involved make us feel that we are in a position to advocate self-regulation as a fruitful attitude to up-bringing. It comes to grips with the real problems. It avoids wasting energy in shadow-boxing with the scapegoats our society uses when things go wrong.

No wonder many people have to belittle the difficulties and the shortcomings of the *status quo* for their own children and for society in general. They shut themselves off from reality and close down their perceptive senses; not to feel, not to be aware is an insurance for a dead sort of peace. It avoids the need to enquire and to feel painfully puzzled, and it shirks the ridicule, the belittling and the opposition of those who take offence and cannot stand the vitality of self-regulated children.

Common sense to the rescue? Alas, writers have emphasized that vague notion, "common sense", only because they can give so little guidance. To urge the use of, say, "love and common sense", as progressive pedagogues have done, is vain. Common sense on a subject so steeped in the emotions, so close to traditional taboos and principles, is the hardest thing of all, and requires far more than the will or inclination! Those who forget this forget the importance of emotion. And, as it is just that aspect of life which is most twisted and mutilated in our society, it is bitter irony to urge "just common sense" and "love" as if these most elusive things could be switched on like gas and electricity. Do's and don'ts are easy to pronounce, but so very, very difficult to carry out; and why this is so is generally and perilously ignored.

Books with impossible remedies merely make parents feel guilty. The parent tries and fails. Society considers this a serious failure and it is therefore covered up in such generalities as "people are only human", or "things will always be like that", or certain "circumstances" are at fault, all tending to vindicate the parent.

This mess, muddle, conspiracy of silence and ignorance must be faced and understood if our positive attitude is not to be entirely frustrated.

If you doubt the diagnosis of an "emotional limp", or find it hard to believe that this condition is common, ask yourself why the vast majority of people walk straight past a pram with a crying baby when a whining puppy dog would be surrounded by helpers in no time? Why, further, do people not realize that a crying baby is a baby in distress, but believe that the human young, alone among mammals, should have to cry solely for the good of his lungs, or his soul, or whatever? Ask again, why are people so naïve as to believe that, because one scientist in search of data has observed and timed some special children and found them to be in discomfort a large part of the first three months of

their lives, this discomfort should be unavoidable, inevitable and acceptable? The picture of the scientist's assistants running up and down a hospital ward eagerly marking the long periods the babies are crying, because it backs a theory, instead of creatively picking up the babies to see how many could be loved better very quickly and simply, all this is in itself a vivid picture of the emotional limp as it manifests itself in our science of life and the living. How can scientists gain reputation by being uselessly objective? The emotional limp is there all right, no need even to point to hydrogen bomb threats.

Reason goes and chop-logic enters when the exasperated mother, or the midwife who is trying to convince you of the "spoiling the baby" theory, picks up the baby and so stops it crying. They shout triumphantly "See, he's just trying it on!" What "trying it on" means in a baby is difficult to fathom. But the obvious logic of the situation is that certainly he is trying to get the comfort he wants from those who naturally could and should give it to him. And, having got it, then of course he stops crying. What is produced as evidence for the "spoiling the baby" theory turns out to be the most straightforward way of satisfying a real need.

We don't consider a baby crying for, and then satisfied by, food as a mischievous trickster who was "only trying it on". That the need for love should be regarded as less real, and that there should be thought to be something ulterior and wicked in the baby crying for it and stopping when satisfied, that indeed is very clear evidence of emotional limp and emotional deadness.

CHAPTER II

SELF-REGULATION AND PSYCHOANALYSIS

PSYCHOANALYSIS first initiated the quest for freedom for the child and then found reasons to turn against it. To compare self-regulation with the present psychoanalytical attitude to upbringing is instructive. It is also essential if we are to show clearly where we stand in the context of educational thought and theory.

Among the many conclusions of psychoanalysis since its inception by Freud, there are many which have been shown valid only in the narrow context of the cultural traditions of Western Europe. Freud thought the œdipus complex was universal, but it has been shown by anthropologists to occur only in certain cultures, including our existing one. Of the other psychoanalytic concepts with limited validity, we are particularly concerned with those on child development by Melanie Klein, Ella Freeman Sharpe, Susan Isaacs and others. In self-regulation we are concerned with what might be, not with that which is usual, or now normal, in society. It is from this latter basis, however, that the psychoanalytic theories stem, and the analysts ignore that they apply therefore only to what is already obsolete in self-regulation.

We reject the general and invariable validity of many of these conclusions. They are, however, still important and applicable to what has happened, and will tend to happen, in many instances and for a long time, and even in spite of wishes for self-regulation.

So, on the one hand, it is of value to have the views of psychoanalysis, and, on the other, it is very necessary to show that, even in the little amount of work done in self-regulation, the general validity of many psychoanalytic views has been contradicted and refuted.

Even more than the parents who are prepared to take notice of what psychoanalysis has to teach them, the parents who choose the attitude of self-regulation feel that it is worth while to go to great lengths in learning from the child and adapting accordingly

the whole environment, not as little as seems necessary, but as much as is possible. The child, as father of the man, gives the most valuable and generally valid lessons in living through its spontaneous actions and in its behaviour as a baby.

From this we have learned that the bleak start to upbringing which psychoanalysis postulates and which we quote below is basically false. All the quotations are taken from an anthology edited by John Rickman, called *On the Bringing up of Children.*

> "It is easy enough to recognize that we are born into an organized social community, and that unless we are to be outlawed or imprisoned we must fit into or adapt ourselves to it, in the course of growing up. So with the individual's first community, the home, there is a pattern in being into which the baby is born, and to which he must orientate himself." (*p. 2. Ella Freeman Sharpe*)

If our existing "organized social community" or home were worthy of continuation in its present state, the above might make sense. As their condition is our very reason for seeking better ways of upbringing, and as there are subtle ways of living non-conformist lives that don't lead to prison, it is far more sensible to recognize the importance of the possibility that home and society might change as the child's needs demand.

Herein lies the kernel of the difference between the vast majority of psychoanalysts and the few who can recognize the possibility of self-regulation. The majority, basing their views on the study of what is normal, as well as on the cases they treat, find a certain negative quality in the misery of babies, the naughtiness and cruelty of children, the lack of desire by adults to co-operate, even in therapy, on many occasions, and in such general adult evils as war. And this negative quality is taken as inevitable. The theories to explain it are then built up. For Freud it was a "death instinct". More recently, sociological orientation of the analysts has led them to postulate that restrictions will be necessary in whatever society, and they will always create in the child hate towards his mother, which cannot be discharged and which is bound to result in conflict between his love and his hate for those he depends upon, mother and society. And this these more modern Freudians call ambivalence. For them this ambivalence is a primary and necessary thing. Growing up is for them a more

or less successful adjustment to this hate of mother and society; an adjustment to a society which, even the psychoanalysts agree, is sick and unstable and cruel.

It is the view of self-regulation, however, that only love and sex are primary drives and that restrictions upon children can be lessened to such an extent that it is quite possible for them to emerge without undischarged hate towards their parents and society. Further, we believe the emergence into adulthood to be a creative process which will go successfully and easily through many stages which in our present society create difficulties so general that the majority have taken them to be inevitable—for example, weaning and puberty. The view, for instance, that the child has to be trained away from its mother in weaning is only a partial, negative view. The self-regulation theory takes into account the creative joy at becoming something else. The change from bud to flower does not require the gardener's help. Similarly, the weaning process is a spontaneous development which is not basically problematic. Society makes it so.

With the help of quotations from the anthology mentioned we intend to show, in some detail, how the difference between the two approaches manifests itself. It is well worth while, for there is a strong current of opinion that the idea of freedom came in with Neill and Russell some thirty years ago but has since been "disproved".

It has been the psychoanalysts who have led the attack on the idea of freedom for children. Their reasons have been good ones, but not generally valid. They were good reasons for the denial of freedom, or the inadvisability of freedom, in certain families, perhaps even in the majority. But in an age of transition it is often the minority who are on the right track and who count. That is why advice culled from the observation of what exists (which is generally the advice offered by the psychoanalysts) is so dangerous and misleading, for it does not take into account what might be.

Bertrand and Dora Russell and A. S. Neill in their schools, and others advocating freedom for children long ago, knew little regarding the chronic emotional limp of the parents and teachers on to whom they were urging freedom. It was this, the attempt to use and employ and allow freedom by those who did not have the emotional capacity to allow it, which resulted in children and parents who clearly discredited the idea of freedom for children.

For if those who are not emotionally secure try to give their children freedom, they will in fact give them licence, and in some cases, to compensate for their own childhood experiences, they will thrust it on to their children in a self-conscious and artificial way. In each case the parents are also afraid to insist on their own rights, and incapable of doing so, and the result is inevitably the spoilt child.

It is the understanding of the part played by the character of the adult, made possible by the work of Wilhelm Reich, which makes it practicable, responsible and meaningful to advocate our attitude, with the proviso that the adult is aware of his own nature. Perhaps it is not really odd that, as upbringing is a relationship between child and parents, what is possible and desirable will vary as the capacity of one party, the adult, varies.

As for Neill's self-regulation school, Summerhill, nothing could be further from the truth than to call it a failure. It has been a success all these thirty odd years in spite of phenomenal opposition and difficulties and the analyst's theory of ambivalence has been thoroughly discredited. It has been shown clinically by Reich, and in the creative experiments of some other analysts, that the Freudian "libido", the sexual drive, is the primary drive and that all and any aggressive impulses are secondary and can be avoided or lived out by therapy. Ian Suttie, a Scot, made this point in 1935 in a brilliant work—*The Origin of Love and Hate.* It is only the greater publicity given to the safer and easier and more generally palatable views which has created the vague notion that the striving for freedom is so much idealistic eyewash.

There is a good example in the anthology mentioned of the assumption, without evidence or even allusion to evidence, that Neill's school failed. And no doubt this book had a powerful influence in continuing the rumour and enlarging the public which believed that "freedom" for children was a false concept not worth pursuing. Mrs. Ella Sharpe writes:

> "From time to time new revolutionary educational schemes are promulgated. The absolutely 'free' school where children 'do just what they want' without let or hindrance was one such revolution. Parents in the flood of revolt against the stultifying effects of hard discipline and repression hailed such 'free' schools as the salvation of children and the ushering in of a new

era. But though the old was wrong the reaction was not therefore right. It was the swing of the pendulum." (*p. 8*)

We now know that, to give "freedom" to children and make it practicable, the adults in contact with them must have what was, and still is, an uncommon capacity for life, in a limping, lacking, lifeless society.

In spite of the theory of the libido, the psychoanalyst seems to forget that we start with a creative process which is modified according to our culture. The first thing for him has become conflict between love and hate, ambivalence. The result is the negative assumption that many things stem from conflict alone. When, however, we look at some of the conflicts thought basic and necessary, we see clearly how they could and can be avoided. Let us consider the father's position for a moment.

Susan Isaacs says:

> "The child's early relations with his mother and father are thus very complicated. In the beginning, of course, the mother dominates the child's world entirely, but even in the second half of the first year, and typically in the second to the fourth years, the child finds his father attractive also and seeks love from him. This turning to the father, however, is not only to a person who is loved for his own sake. Since his mother was inevitably the first source of frustration . . . and, therefore, the first object of his rage, the child presently, to some extent, turns away from her and seeks his father as a person who has not yet inflicted disappointments and frustrations, and has not yet been attacked in anger." (*p. 180*)

Now the above applies in some cases, but it is also possible that from the moment of birth the father warmly holds the child, nursing it if you like, even more in the first weeks than later, and more than the mother, perhaps, because he is stronger and more able to walk up and down to give that comfort and rhythm which loving, moving arms can give. In this case, the theory of the child turning to the father is clearly irrelevant, and the conflicts should disappear.

In the question of weaning, the psychoanalysts assume that the baby does not want to develop to the next stage of eating solids, and that if allowed he would suck till he was . . . well, only the

psychoanalysts know the answer, for in some cases there are no more children, and so the next child taking over the mother is no criterion.

Melanie Klein writes:

> "The crucial point is reached at the actual weaning when the loss is complete and the breast or bottle is gone irrevocably." (*p. 41*).

And Mrs. Sharpe threatens:

> "Sooner or later parent and child have to realize that nipple and comforter should be given up and that His Majesty the baby must abdicate his throne . . ." (*p. 21*)

This applies in a certain way to the normal and insecure baby, but certainly not to secure healthy babies who relish new tastes and give up the breast by taking less from it and finally refusing both it and the bottle.

But as Melanie Klein sees it, this is never likely to happen.

> "Thus the breast of the mother . . . gives gratification or denies it . . ." (*p. 32*)
>
> "To begin with, the breast of the mother is the object of his constant desire . . ." (*p. 33*)

Those practising self-regulation have found that there is no need at all for the mother to deny the baby the breast when the baby wants gratification, and this goes hand in hand with the mistaken observation that the breast is the baby's "constant desire". Replete, a baby will spit out a nipple in a way that is convincing evidence. There is no question of having to deny the baby the breast because otherwise it would be "greedy". The self-regulating capacity of the baby is tested and real, while he is secure. And the self-regulation process keeps him secure. This then does away entirely with the concept of the mother's denials which necessarily produce, according to the psychoanalyst, hate against her and so ambivalence from the earliest hours.

In self-regulation it is understood that the pleasure of actions justifies and explains the existence of the actions in children. In this light it seems irrelevant to read for healthy children:

"But let us now consider what happens when the feelings of guilt and fear of the death of his mother (which is dreaded as the result of his unconscious wishes for her death) are dealt with adequately. . . . From them springs the desire to restore. . . . These tendencies to make reparation I have found in the analysis of small children to be the driving forces in all constructive activities and interests, and for social development." (*p. 38. Mrs. Klein*)

"The child feels that any change is likely to be a change for the worse; at the least it stirs up a feeling of grave uncertainty, which is in itself very unpleasant." (*p. 127. Mrs. Isaacs*)

"The child's wish to separate any two grown-ups whom he sees together . . ." (*p. 180. Mrs. Isaacs*)

"The more ordinary child can find the reassurance he needs in the milder control of a regular life and the quiet but firm limit which every sensible parent will set upon the real aggression and the real expression of destructive impulses." (*p. 212. Mrs. Isaacs*)

In fact it is far more important to allow the child real aggressive outlets and yet make sure that they do not do permanent harm, so that one can approve of the child even while he vents his aggression in a very real way. For instance, take the case of a child in our experience whose aggressive feelings up to the age of ten were very much lessened by chopping off the heads of thousands of wild flowers. Although it was not exactly encouraged, it was not stopped and he did it with great glee on every walk. It is also of interest that he did not destroy anything in the garden. In other words, a child can be selective about the real aggression. Diametrically opposed to the central ideas of the psychoanalyst, we have found that the secure child, in his bouts of aggression, can be encouraged, quite safely, to direct these against his parents. The psychoanalyst thinks that this is bound to set up and exaggerate the basic conflicts between love and hate feelings for the parent in the child. These the psychoanalyst thinks inevitable because of what he sees as necessary denials.

Because in self-regulation basic denials are unnecessary, the conflict of emotions is not there, and to encourage hate, when the child feels it towards his parents, lets it out cleanly, and reassures the child, with the result that the love can reappear later cleanly, with no trace of ambivalence or hidden hate. But one must be

quite, quite sure that one can stand the child's hate, before encouraging it, and that takes great emotional strength and security on the part of the parent.

Another instance of deducing general principles from the ill-treated babies we have in the past produced is the celebrated opinion of Charlotte Buhler, quoted by Dr. Merell Middlemore in the same volume, that "from birth to the third month of life the baby makes more gestures of distress than he does of pleasure —that he spends more of his waking time crying or grimacing than contented, and that speaking in a general way he actually dislikes being touched and moved, seeing light or hearing voices."

A more sensitive attitude to babies than is usual can almost eliminate crying, and this, like Buhler's statement, is based on observations, but this time of healthy babies. And with this crying we remove another keystone of evidence from the edifice of misery the analysts find necessary to build into infancy.

We begin to see a crucial difference, not only in degree but in kind, between self-regulation and the psychoanalyst's assumption that frustrations are up to a point unavoidable and that

> ". . . feelings of an aggressive and of a gratifying, erotic nature, . . . (a fusion which is called sadism), play a dominant part in the child's early life." (*p. 36. Mrs. Klein*)

Similarly, there is a crucial difference between social behaviour and its motives among the healthy and those among children diagnosed by psychoanalysts and hence used for generalization. For in self-regulation we have observed and recognized that even the youngest children are social, because the attraction between children is as real as that between adults (there are instances of children loving each other a few months old and crying each time when parted, long before they could talk), and the pleasantness of contact is sufficient reason for seeking it. Note that the psychoanalysts observe the fearful toddlers of our society in nursery schools and then conclude as follows:

> "When a child recognizes the possibility of identifying himself with others of his own age and skill, he feels that he has a new support against those adults of whom he is a little afraid, in the real world, or the frightening 'bad' parent inside his

own mind. Once they have discovered the pleasure of togetherness, children will do all sorts of things together that they never dared to do alone. . . . The child now tastes the pleasure of social contacts." (*p. 198. Mrs. Isaacs*)

This is the description of emotionally diseased children in a world where adults are in fact hostile.

In the community A. S. Neill has created, different phenomena can be observed. Neill stipulated thirty or so years ago that to leave children alone was a feasible, worth-while aim. (It is heartening that that other pioneer of Freedom schools, Bertrand Russell, has recently, in his eighty-fifth year, reaffirmed his belief by joining the Summerhill Society which helps Summerhill and Neill to resist adverse circumstances in an increasingly organized educational system.) Knowing full well that adults have rights also, and that children need adults in many ways, of course he was further aware that such an experiment could not be reduced to simple formulae.

Inspired by the work of Homer Lane, Neill looked upon his school as a community, in which one might give freedom to children to an extent at that time unthinkable and generally deemed monstrous. And so for thirty years it has been possible for those who count their feelings as part of their scientific equipment to observe and learn. To feel the pleasure of the place is essential to form a meaningful picture. An end in itself, as well as wonderful evidence for the possibilities of self-regulation, the criteria in judging Summerhill are the lithe, freely moving bodies, the lack of sadism and the lack of that adolescent awkwardness thought inevitable in our society. Here in Summerhill one can see and feel a spontaneous rationality and joy of life, which, anthropologists tell us, can be found among small and differing culture patterns in various parts of the globe. The academic take a look at such experiments, feel nothing and ask to be convinced by statistics. "What percentage of your ex-pupils are misfits in society Mr. Neill?" "How many have got on in the world?" "And in which professions?" "What, Mr. Neill," they gasp astoundedly, "you have not bothered to keep such figures? Why in that case we can say nothing about your ideas on education, except of course that they are interesting." And they wander off. They cannot see "education" as an end in itself as well as a preparation or emerging process. Had they studied the way Neill has searched himself

and his methods and his results in his own way, with feeling, they would have been convinced that, had he created misfits or those who could not cope, he certainly would not have continued to run a school which, up to his seventieth year and beyond, allowed him only such a car as can be picked up on any better type of scrap heap.

Investigation would show the reverse. In very many early years of the school Neill took the misfits that other schools and modes of upbringing had produced and, with almost uncanny ease, if infinite patience, the misfits became positive parts of Summerhill and later managed to hold their own against a society which is hostile to all that savours too strongly of life.

Neill has written many vivid books on self-regulation in his school. In his last one he said a book on self-regulation in a family was overdue. It was that statement that initiated this book. Let us therefore summarize the beliefs which were the starting point of our own creative family experiment, and which have been vindicated by nine years, five children and two imperfect, and in that way typical, parents.

1. The child is a creative organism. The creative energetic process is one of attraction (to people and food and knowledge and sleep and so on), fusion (the word which best describes the enjoyment of each of these) and liberation (the capacity and wish to do something else subsequently if the release in the fusion has been adequate). This makes comprehensible the child's spontaneous capacity to feel when he has had enough, and when he wants more . . . self-regulation.

2. As this capacity for self-regulation has been ignored in our society, tradition and the entire set of values surrounding the child tend to be false values. It is this that makes it so necessary to distrust our attitude and to observe the child. It further suggests that regeneration for our society lies in this source of knowledge, and therefore it is very desirable to give as much energy as we are able to the process of transforming our society to fit the needs of the children.

3. Satisfactory energetic, and so emotional, contact is made only with people who are reasonably emotionally healthy and therefore have, and insist on, their own rights. It is this which cuts out entirely the concept of the "spoiled child" as an aspect of self-regulation. The spoiled child has emerged from all kinds of upbringing, in which only the guilt feelings of the parents are

constant. These do not allow them to insist on their rights.

4. The hostile anti-life environment must be taken into account and counteracted. This is done by taking advantage of the greatly increased intellectual and emotional capacity of the self-regulated child. His powers of reason allow him to understand the maxim "everybody silly sometimes" and although the frustration which is the result of such silliness in parents, teachers, friends and the world does not stop emotional outbursts and pain, it nevertheless avoids many of the deeper conflicts that emerge from respected and deified father and mother figures as psychoanalysts find them.

5. The upbringing of children is, in a very real sense, therapy. Constantly the illth and emotional disease impinging on them has to be counteracted. The most important requirements are, as with any psycho-therapy, that the child should feel the basic approval of his parents, and that this should show itself by allowing him aggression and backing him just at those points where society would denounce him. This does not lead to conflict in the child but to greater tolerance of society's denunciations. We merely give the therapeutic sixpence (which A. S. Neill has given to thieves on discovering their theft, for a long time), in the widest, most general sense.

6. The positive influence on children, through tendency to imitation, is great. This is secondary, however, to honesty. Fantasy comes into being to a large extent in the absence of real information. Conflict between parents should not be hidden, although children do not like it. But to be honest about the conflict is possible to a remarkable extent with children, and what is more it is a salutary discipline for the parents to have to explain themselves in front of the children. This will in most cases lead away from biased accounts of what happened, and the children's part in making peace and installing sensible values is considerable. We could not resist our daughter Erica's coolly expressed wisdom when, six years old, emerging from her room late one Sunday morning after we had been shouting at each other, she said "I stayed in my room till you stopped being silly."

CHAPTER III

PLEASURE AND PAIN IN BIRTH

THERE ARE NEW and unusual elements in our positive attitude to birth. Dr. Dick Read and others have for some thirty or forty years tried hard to convince society that birth need not be the ordeal that has commonly been assumed. Dr. Read found that fear of the birth is the fact which is largely responsible for pain. To lose the fear and to learn to relax is such a help to many people that they manage to have their babies with joyous effort. If there is pain it is incidental, like cutting your hand in a tug of war.

But even the admirable propagandists for natural childbirth look upon the whole process of birth as something only the mother experiences. The baby is not considered. We, on the other hand, look upon birth as an experience which involves mother and child in a relationship. We recognize the baby's "I-want-to-get-out" as a factor as real as the mother's equally involuntary "I-want-to-push-you-out". Both can be pleasurable experiences, and indeed both baby and mother move. But, usually, the wriggles of the baby to get out are ignored as unimportant.

In this we differ again from the psychoanalysts who, with Rank, assume the bad effects of birth in birth traumas only, but leave out of account that, as a creative process, birth may not result in traumas at all but be a pleasurable experience. Observation confirms this.

Although Dr. Read limits his estimate of the influence of the birth process on the child to saying that the mothers who have had their babies while conscious and relaxed have a better breast-feeding relationship, it is in very far-reaching ways the effect on the baby, every bit as much as that on the mother, which justifies the quest for the natural birth.

Once again, if we look to the emotional limp of society, the situation becomes clear and the understanding helpful. It is just because deep emotions are involved in birth that fear envelops the subject and taboos keep it secretive. Blocked against the strong

feelings involved, women and men consider unconsciousness at the time the best way out.

This is typical of society. In fact, so strongly anchored (even in the musculature, as Reich has shown) are the fears of emotion which are awakened by birth, that many attempts to learn to relax fail. Dr. Read does not make allowance for the emotional fears that are not rational and whose origin lies in childhood. In fact, as with upbringing, so with birth. As our society is sick it must from the beginning be regarded as a therapeutic process to train for childbirth. And training for what is a dramatically important phase of life for mother and child and their relationship is obviously worth-while, once our view has been accepted.

Only with that concept of energetic flow which springs from Reich can we understand why consciousness at birth is so important to the emotional relationship between mother and child. That it is so cannot be doubted any more. Ironically enough, one of the clearest bits of evidence is the experiment of a religious helot to prove that pain at birth is ordained as necessary by God, to expatiate the sin of intercourse, no doubt. Wrongly assuming that conscious birth is painful, even to the antelope, with crass naïvety this person gave anæsthetic to one antelope in a herd. This antelope alone, in contrast with the demonstrative motherliness of the others, did not acknowledge her offspring. If we understand that birth is to the antelope a deeply satisfying emotion and not excruciating pain, then we realize that the emotions felt during birth, and missed where there is fear, are a very important tie between mother and offspring, and obviously the only healthy start to the infant's life, and to self-regulation. If they are missed, by accident or design, the relationship must at once be regarded as an unhealthy one, and it will take much effort to put things right and to make self-regulation fully applicable.

So rarely is the right and sensitive attitude found in those professionals who help in birth that the husband's presence can be a very valuable safeguard to his wife and newborn child. The very deep emotional involvement of the wife makes her almost as vulnerable to the bossing of the attendants about her bed as the new-born. It is therefore only proper for the father to read up the facts and arguments regarding natural birth and to make sure that he is a real deterrent to the unconscious and casual cruelty and harm which are part of the routine behaviour of the medical and

nursing professions. This professional detachment is not surprising. University courses in medicine and nursing brutalize notoriously. The husband needs a proper emotional capacity to grasp and be unafraid of the event. He should certainly not feel guilty that he has in some way caused pain, and, if he does, or is panicky for some other reason which he cannot overcome, then some close friend can often take his place by the bedside of the wife. The criterion is her choice. The mere presence of someone emotionally close is of great help during much of the time of the birth.

The taboo on full knowledge of birth is continued, perhaps unconsciously, even by Dr. Read. In his latest book on ante-natal training and exercises, the class photographed, all quite fully dressed, is treated with that standard, depersonalizing white strip that renders faces in medical text books anonymous. Once again the traditional assumption that birth is "not quite nice", and has to do with hospitals, is backed from a most unexpected quarter. Even now, when films and records of births have emerged, there are no pictures showing the emotions in healthy birth. Yet this might reassure many frightened women most convincingly. It is because of this that the photograph in this book, of the beautifully relaxed face, even at the crowning of the head, the climax or crisis of any birth, is of inestimable value. It should have a great and direct effect in dissolving fears and mystery. This photograph, together with another showing the ecstatic and transfigured face of the mother immediately after the birth, are reassuring evidence that the emotional aspects of birth are delicate, precious and important.

What all this means in terms of the everyday happenings in this country will emerge clearly from the accounts of the births of our daughters. These, because of their circumstances, illustrate remarkably well a wide range of what is typical. Even before the first pregnancy we had been convinced that birth could be a great experience. From the first we knew also that this was not generally appreciated or understood in our culture, by our doctors, hospitals and even midwives. And so we tried hard in all cases to choose a place and personnel which would be, in our belief, conducive to a good birth. That means cheerful attendants who agree that birth is a strenuous but great occasion, who understand the healthy physiology and psychology of it—people who do not fuss and who allow and encourage relaxation when it is required, who are aware of

the sensitivity of the baby and the mother, and the delicate intimacy of their emotional relationship.

In describing those instances in which, despite our efforts, things went wrong, we hope we will not make others afraid. We merely wish to show distinctly how important it is to make sure, in very many ways, that atmosphere and personnel will be right. We want to reduce fear of the unknown, to counter the gory stories whispered so often in puberty, confided anxiously to those in the teens, and told with pathological relish in the waiting-room of clinics.

The general ignorance of the physiological happenings in labour is also due to the emotional limp. It is a source of guilt to many men, and of fear to women. To counter the ignorance resulting from this we give a short summary of the biological process. Without this it might be difficult to follow the accounts.

There are three recognized stages of labour, known respectively as the first, second and third stages.

FIRST STAGE, STAGE OF DILATION—From the commencement of labour until complete dilation of the cervical canal. As a rule, the membranes rupture at the end of this stage, but not always, for at times the membranes are not ruptured till late in the second stage, or, rarely, the child may be born without their being ruptured; while in other cases, and these the more common, the membranes may rupture long before the external os is fully dilated. In the case of a mother having a first baby, this stage lasts about sixteen hours, in subsequent births, about eleven.

SECOND STAGE, STAGE OF EXPULSION—From the complete dilation of the cervical canal till the birth of the child. This stage usually lasts, for a first baby, between two and three hours, and in subsequent births, one.

THIRD STAGE, PLACENTAL STAGE—From the birth of the child till the placenta and membranes have been expelled.

The average duration of labour is: In a primigravida, or mother pregnant for the first time, eighteen hours. In a multipara, twelve hours.

The durations given above are those found in text-books. In physically and emotionally healthy birth they tend to be shorter.

PART TWO

JEAN RITTER DESCRIBES HOW SHE AND HER HUSBAND ESTABLISHED THEIR SELF-REGULATED FAMILY

CHAPTER IV

BIRTH IN HOSPITAL

LEONORA'S BIRTH was due on May 25th, 1949. For twenty weeks I had been attending not only the regulation ante-natal clinic but also a weekly relaxation and exercise class with a trained physiotherapist. This class took place at a hospital recommended by Dr. Dick Read personally. The exercises lasted for an hour. There were ten people in my particular class, all with babies due at roughly the same time. The mothers had been selected according to their capacity for intelligent co-operation: all were primigravidas.

As the time of labour approached, we were given a lecture by the sister midwife in charge of the clinic and we were encouraged to ask questions. We were also conducted over the hospital, shown the reception room and the labour ward, and even introduced to the anæsthetist who instructed us in the use of the gas and air machine. All of this was conducive to a relaxed attitude, apprehensions vanished.

We had decided on the hospital as the place of birth because our two rooms were not completely suitable, our landlady did not like the idea of birth at home, the hospital conditions *seemed* altogether good, and we were to some extent influenced by those of our friends who continually reiterated: "Oh, but if anything should happen—hospital is best—they have all emergency apparatus and you will be in experienced hands." Little did they know.

On Sunday, May 29th, at 8.30 a.m., the membranes ruptured on my getting up: the water began to flow. The hospital was telephoned and said they would send an ambulance immediately. Off I went, completely confident. Paul accompanied me to the hospital, but once there I was on my own. The routine enema and hot bath and shaving of genital hair, if unpleasant, were soon disposed of and I was conducted straight to the labour ward. Here I lay on the narrow, very hard bed (labour "beds" consist of a metal sheet one foot nine inches wide with a very thin soft

layer on it), was examined *per vagina* and asked how the "pains" were. ("Pains" mark you, not contractions.) I told them no "pains" and that I did not think I was ready for the labour room yet.

The room was unbearably hot, a minor point perhaps, but I lay there for the next twenty-four hours, not allowed even to get up to go to the lavatory. In fact, although nobody had said I must not, I was bawled at by the nurse in charge when I attempted to do so. I was constantly asked "Any pains yet?" and that whole night I listened to a poor unfortunate woman who had not had my good fortune ante-natally, shrieking—"Oh my God, no I can't. Oh, my God, no I can't", until her baby was finally born under anæsthetic on the Monday morning. (She was separated from me by a screen only.) What a wonderful initiation into childbirth!

However, I had such faith in my powers of relaxation that I was still confident, although somewhat tired.

At this point the staff finally decided that there was nothing doing as yet and transferred me to the ante-natal ward, where I was in the company of those who were abnormal in some way (e.g. android type pelvis, very high blood pressure) and therefore under observation. The general atmosphere in this ward was not conducive to relaxation. Some of the patients who had been there for weeks, or even months, had been listening to shrieks of agony coming from the labour rooms through the special sound-insulated doors, left permanently open for the nurses' convenience. It sounded at times like Hell's ante-room. That was not all: the Professor who stood at the end of my bed with a group of students, behaving as though I were a lump of inanimate matter unhearing or uncaring, stated "A case of ruptured membranes. Amniotic fluid is coming out at a fair rate, it is likely to be a dry labour, therefore long and difficult." He also was not likely to make me relaxed. (How I wished I had at least a catapult at that moment!)

On Tuesday morning I was given another enema and, although I assured them from past experience that if I took castor oil it would come back, they insisted, and half an hour later back it came. Still nothing moved.

Wednesday I had feelings, and I realized by 4.0 p.m. that the first stage really had begun at last. However, the contractions were far apart and I realized it was to be a slow business. But the sister on duty shunted me off to the labour ward despite my

protestations that it was going slowly. The labour ward sister reversed the decision and back I went to the ante-natal ward. Each time an uncomfortable, unnecessary internal examination.

I found I could relax well, and was in the mood to be left alone peacefully. I did not want food, just peace and quiet. However, matron was coming, so the bed had to be remade, pills had to be taken, in spite of protests, and vomited up again five minutes later, and so it went on incessantly.

As Thursday drew on, the contractions grew closer and, as visiting time was 7.30 p.m.–8.0 p.m., I was determined to stay relaxed until then and see Paul if possible. At 6.30 p.m. a pupil midwife came round on a routine foetal heart check and "listened in" just as the contraction was at its height. She hurriedly sent for the day sister, who examined me *per rectum*, found I was four-fifths dilated and rushed me off to the labour ward. Then, instead of sending a message along with me, I was subjected to yet another unnecessary examination. When I protested that I could tell her the condition of things she used blackmail to get co-operation: "If I don't examine you I can't help you." Such coercion is not conducive to relaxation, and tense examinations are very painful.

From the reception into the hospital it had slowly dawned on me that the Out-Patients Department, with its exercises and relaxation technique, was quite a separate entity. Here inside the hospital they were not only ignorant of the theories but also of the very fact of the existence of the exercise classes!

It was comforting that, on my insistence, they wheeled me out of the labour ward to see Paul for some moments. But vomiting started and I realized I was at the end of the first stage. How I wished he could stay with me.

The second stage lasted from 8.0 p.m. until 10.30 p.m. It soon became obvious that the sister on duty, whom I did not know, assumed all women were ignorant fools and was not interested in Dick Read methods or whether I had attended relaxation classes or not. She exhorted me to push when the contraction was finished, was generally impatient and did not like her job. (These impressions were later confirmed in conversation with others whom she had also attended.)

In spite of the circumstances, the labour—tremendous, involuntary convulsions and hardest physical effort, alternating with the most serene peace—went well. The experience was spoiled by the ridiculous left lithotomy position, with one leg

over the nurse's shoulder. (Even a man can grasp how awkward it is to try to push that way; defæcating is in that sense a minor version of giving birth; imagine performing that function in that position!)

I was in command of myself as the head was about to crown, for I asked whether the baby's hair was red and curly. Then as I was wholly in the throes of the tremendous involuntary convulsions—alternating with vibrant and intense anticipation of the cry and birth of my baby—my cries, grunts and groans of extreme effort were beyond the understanding of the young house surgeon and, taking for granted that they were expressions of unbearable pain, at the height of one of the powerful contractions, he approached from behind and put a chloroform pad over my face. . . .

When I came to I was alone—no nurse—no baby—just a bitter feeling of anticlimax. As soon as sister came I was immediately pummelled in the stomach to get rid of the afterbirth. This is as stupid as the method of delivery. It is very painful, unlike natural expulsion, and results in the afterbirth coming away in bits and pieces. (One of these pieces, which did not come way, will be heard of again later.) I was then trussed up like a chicken to posts at the end of the bed to have three stitches inserted. *I still had not seen my baby.* In desperation I gathered my strength and bullied them until they brought Leonora in for me to see. They thought this "not nice" because she had not been bathed.

After I was stitched, hastily washed and the baby bathed, she was put in a cot by my side where she cried, and cried, and cried. I could not reach her, but begged a sympathetic pupil midwife to give her to me. She gave her to me at the risk of getting into a terrible row if sister found her. When sister did come, she removed the baby in her cot to the "nursery" where, presumably, she continued to cry and cry. I was left lying on the high, narrow, hard labour "bed", sleepless, babyless and utterly despondent.

If only they had left me my baby to hold I should have been happier, and the hardness of the bed would not have disturbed me. I lay there for seven hours, till 6.30 a.m., when I was moved into a comfortable bed.

I saw Leonora again at 9.30 a.m., when I was "permitted"(!) to feed her. The next seven days were some of the most trying of my life. There was never a moment's peace from the 5.0 a.m. awakening until the ward quietened down, somewhere in the

region of 11.30 p.m., when the silence was broken only by the distant crying of the many babies removed from the ward into the "nursery" because they had cried, and by the occasional baby in the ward who began to cry and was carried off. And even if Leonora was not at times crying, I heard her pathetic voice incessantly in my ears; I was as helpless as she was. Every visit of my husband (and the daily visits permitted in this hospital are not a general rule in maternity hospitals) opened the wound of disappointment: we had so looked forward to the birth . . . so much had gone right and so little had turned it all into such bitter tragedy. Little things like the indescribably poor food (for one used to wholemeal bread and salads), the many minor humiliations—pills against constipation and being refused the bedpan subsequently when it was needed urgently, because "It is not bedpan round yet"—all this did not help to mend my morale.

As my physical strength returned, the lack of control over my baby's well-being became less bearable. Once, when the baby was crying by my side, in came the matron, absolute ruler, benefactory or otherwise; she was kind and wanted to know from me why my daughter was crying. I told her that she needed her napkin changing. It then transpired that the sister's strict ruling that no mother was to change her baby was not the matron's order, and she suggested then I should change Leonora myself, and told the sister to bring me a napkin quickly. An hour or so later the malevolent person, possibly irked by happenings, brought the napkin, but by that time I was too distraught to swallow this last humiliation. I told them in no uncertain way that I would not stay in this place and that I would go. Now they changed their tune and, with explanations of the advantages and threats of what might happen at home, they tried to keep me in my full time. (I was due to return home in twenty-four hours in any case.) I insisted and was examined, found fit, but had to sign that I was going against the advice of the doctor.

What an utter relief it was to be back home in control of the situation once more!! To have Paul's love and strength to comfort and make up to the baby for the terrible experience it had gone through, and to cheer me when the memory of what I had missed depressed me.

Ah, but that was not the end. A continual slight hæmorrhage persisted. At the post-natal examination at the hospital (by a tired, young, inexperienced doctor), a retroverted uterus only was

diagnosed, and an enormous Hodges' ring was inserted (three inches across).

Fortunately we had a family doctor, a woman who had had three children and had brought into the world many more than most male doctors would do, whose common sense was supreme. She came when I complained that the ring would not stay in and told me to discard it, and that the uterus would right itself. This proved a wise decision, particularly as two weeks later a cotyledon of placenta was spontaneously ejected by the uterus. The family doctor was suitably horrified and answered in the affirmative Paul's question as to whether this was the sort of thing that caused puerperal fever. It is the duty of the labour ward sister in the hospital to make quite certain that the complete placenta has been expelled, by carefully examining it. With the "pummelling to pieces" method this is most difficult and this incident was the result. So much for the "expert" attendance in hospitals!

In the hospital's view it was a good birth—after all, both mother and child were alive and seemingly well—but what of their emotional relationship?

Many mothers claim to have been more lucky. But, before Paul and I accept assurances that a hospital birth has been satisfactory, we make sure that the person in question has our high standard of what a joyful occasion childbirth, and the first week after, should be. I seek more than just to stay alive ("mother and daughter both well"). Those, however, who set out full of fear of the consequences of birth are obviously relieved when no major calamity occurs, and believe sincerely that that is all one can hope for.

CHAPTER V

BIRTH AT HOME

ERICA WAS PLANNED to arrive on August 4th, 1951. This time we were determined to do everything to achieve a happy and successful birth. It was to be at home and my husband's presence throughout would prevent anything undesirable while I was lost in my own sensations, so that all should be done as we wished.

To this end we rang up the supervisor of midwives and asked whether she could recommend a midwife who practised Dick Read methods. We were referred to the local centre and met first the sister-in-charge. She was a grey-haired, very vital woman and inspired comfort and confidence with her personality. She had to her credit twenty years' experience of delivering babies in the district, in all sorts of conditions, which gave her voice authority. She knew of Dick Read's work and thought that most midwives had practised what he proposed long before he had put it in print.

It took considerable determination to state one's own view in the face of such a forceful personality, especially when there was some difference of opinion over important details. The unusual proposition that my husband should stay with me throughout was put in a tactful but completely decisive way. So ignorant and paralysed with fear are most husbands, in the experience of midwives, that the latter do not take kindly to the suggestion of their presence. Thus, if you ask whether your husband may be present, the answer may be "No". But we said Paul was going to be present, and that, as the doctor did not mind, we were sure she would not mind either. She looked very stern for a moment and then she said she did not mind. The firmness of midwives is only a good thing when, say, reactionary grandparents have to be kept in their place, and prevented from making the mother tense or insisting on stupid and cruel procedure.

We talked of the position for delivery, of waiting for the placenta to come out (no pummelling), and about having the baby in the mother's arms immediately on birth. We got to know all the

sister's assistants so that whatever the day for the delivery I should be attended by someone familiar with us and our views.

Things again started with the breaking of the membranes, three days after the expected date. Again for five days the water drained, but this time I was allowed to get up to go to the lavatory, I was in my own comfortable bed, saw my friends, enjoyed the food, slept when I felt like it, and spent a comparatively pleasurable time.

Here we came up against the sister's and the doctor's limitations. Sister wanted to give me castor oil to get things going, and the doctor pituitrin injections, to the same end. We asked whether there was any danger in waiting patiently? The reply was "No". And our own comment was: "Then what's the hurry?" I was glad to have Paul to back me up at this point, as alone I might have given way to their exhortations, repeated at four-hourly intervals, although Dr. Dick Read stresses the need for patience again and again!

It was Saturday night when the contractions really got going and stabilized themselves. By 6.0 a.m. I knew the second stage was not far off. Paul rang up the midwife, she arrived with her assistant and her kit at 6.30 a.m. She asked whether we wanted our doctor present and we decided we did not, so there were no unnecessary examinations. "Tell me when the next one comes," (meaning the contractions). She lightly put her hand on the fundus of the uterus at the height of the contraction and said cheerfully that we should not be long. Her assistant rapidly prepared the bed, with those innumerable layers of impervious papers, draw sheets, etc. I began to vomit and knew the second stage was beginning.

Judicious use of the gas and air machine: six tremendous convulsions and severest efforts, during which time Paul's presence was a relaxing factor, for the enormity of the emotional experience of those convulsions tend to create anxiety, and Paul reassured me: I heard Paul repeat the sister's words, which I had not heard, "Hold it, don't push" (for the cord was round the baby's neck, and pushing might have tightened it): the ligature was rapidly accomplished: I heard that most wonderful sound—my baby's first cry: one push then, and there she was wriggling against my thigh and I felt nothing but the deepest rapture and delight.

She was wrapped in a towel and I held her immediately—an exquisite sensation. While waiting for the afterbirth, baby's face

had any slime and blood removed, *all without any crying from her. She was tucked up and then lay in her cot beside me, awake for three hours, purring in contentment and delight.*

The afterbirth was expelled with a little difficulty but more humanity than in the hospital, and carefully examined. I was made comfortable and the midwives then departed, leaving me in blissful peace and quiet with the sweet gurgling of the new born Erica.

After her three hours' wakefulness, Erica began to whimper and she was suckled, against the midwife's orders. She then slept for eight hours!

The doctor arrived early in the afternoon (without anæsthetic!) and inserted one stitch as she thought intercourse might be more satisfactory if this were done. (A consideration many other doctors could well copy.)

The forceful sister showed her weakness again when she began to command what was to be done to the baby after its birth. Feeding was not "permitted" to commence until hours after we had already started it and her comments had been ignored diplomatically. The visits of the assistants to swab me and bath the baby were soon limited to my own needs only, if the baby was asleep, so that her natural rhythm was not disturbed. Thus we took a firm stand against the midwives, who were used to complete obedience on the part of their patients, but friendly contacts with them continued long after this happy birth.

CHAPTER VI

BIRTH AT HOME WITH COMPLICATIONS

PENNY, LIKE ERICA, was planned to arrive in the summer holidays so that Paul's presence was ensured. Due on July 24th, she was actually born on August 5th, 1953.

We had moved to a new home, found a new doctor and got into contact with the local city midwife early in the pregnancy. She was a young married woman who had, nevertheless, delivered eight hundred babies. She had recently attended a refresher course and we were delighted to hear of the progressive nature of what she had been taught, and of the way in which she was prepared to co-operate in all the ways we mentioned. Her monthly visits became pleasant little social interludes.

At her suggestion, when I was thirty weeks pregnant I visited a specialist who confirmed her suspicion that the fœtus should be turned from a breech presentation to a normal vertex one, and he did this with consummate skill and sensitivity and without pain, a *rare* man indeed.

A few days after the expected date of the birth the uterus started to contract, but although the contractions were quite strong they were irregular and colicky. The midwife, when called in, gave an enema and said we should call her again when contractions were regular at five-minute intervals. If they did not become regular she would come to see me the next day in any case. This she did, and, realizing that I was getting tired, having had the third disturbed night through the contractions, she prescribed a bromide sedative. I slept soundly for five hours in the afternoon and the strength gained stood me in good stead.

About midnight I realized that the first stage was in progress. I could not sleep, but lay relaxed during contractions and read a novel in between. At 3.0 a.m. I awakened Paul, asleep next to me, and he rang up the midwife. She arrived shortly afterwards and looked rather doubtful when she saw I was reading. She thought it was perhaps another false alarm, especially as the contractions were still irregular. However, on examination she found the

cervix four-fifths dilated. Much surprised she then speeded up her arrangements.

There followed three-quarters of an hour of convulsions and the hardest work, and once again the presence of my husband helped at critical moments. The peace between the contractions was more complete and exquisite than ever, and Paul admired the fullness and repose of my face. Again the cord was round the baby's neck, but the efficient technique of the midwife, and her care in easing the perineum over baby's head, saved me even the slightest tear and resulted in my pure joy at the cry and the delightful wriggling against my thigh. The baby was wrapped in a towel, I held her close and Paul took a photograph of her five minutes old.

Again the baby did not cry, Penny lay awake and glowing in her warm cot.

But while I held Penny in my arms I realized something was wrong . . . the uterus had become inert and was not contracting to push out the afterbirth. An intramuscular injection of ergometrine was administered, with no result. By this time the loss of blood was exceptional, 40 oz. had been lost and the midwife asked Paul to call in the doctor urgently. He arrived in thirty-five minutes and administered intravenous ergometrine but not morphine, also putting great pressure externally on the fundus to expel the placenta mechanically. There was no result.

I was getting very weak, but the presence of Paul made it possible for me to remain conscious, which in that condition was of the utmost importance. There was no morphia, as there should have been, to mitigate the shock and my pulse was barely perceptible. At the midwife's constant urging my husband pressed the doctor to ring up the Flying Squad of the maternity hospital with which the midwife was quite familiar. (This emergency service is generally available and of the utmost importance.) Within twenty-five minutes two specialists, one a Fellow of the Royal Institute, arrived with complete gear for blood transfusion, inspiring considerable confidence at a very critical point.

Having made their examination, and having enquired when and how much morphia had been administered, realizing with astonishment that none had been given, they decided to try a manual removal of the placenta. I was too weak for an anæsthetic. To have Paul with me at that time gave me untold strength. The

pain was too extreme to feel and I experienced a disembodied, elongated feeling, as if my soul had left my body.

The extreme efforts of a man six foot tall and of generous physique pulling on the umbilical cord were of no avail, and a blood transfusion was by this time most urgent. However, my own doctor did not know my blood group! I had to be taken to hospital by ambulance, hurriedly summonsed. The baby went too. The midwife, who had held my other hand throughout the ordeal, giving me great comfort, went with me to the hospital. The placenta, I weakly realized, would now at last be removed under an anæsthetic. Paul had to remain with Leonora and Erica.

The extreme state of weakness became clear when, to soften the shock of my departure, I tried to wave to the children and I had desperately to gather all my strength to manage this.

It was still only 7.30 a.m. when I arrived in hospital, just over three hours after the birth. I was greeted by the night sister (who no doubt wanted to get off duty) with "Come on—help yourself—get that dressing-gown off." This to one whose chart read: pulse imperceptible!

The day sister was by contrast calm, cheerful, willing to explain everything she did, a wonderful comfort to me. While my strength was ebbing away I was asked questions such as what contraceptives I used, and was made to sign a document which allowed the hospital to do anything they saw fit.

A heart stimulant was given and, while my blood group was investigated (they had to "cut down" literally, about quarter of an inch deep into my arm to locate a vein to find blood), two pints of dextravin were allowed to drip in through a vein in my wrist. Whole blood was started as soon as the group was known. To lie and watch life drip back and feel the tide of weakness recede was an unforgettable experience.

At 11.30 a.m. I had recovered strength sufficiently to be given first pethidine and then a general anæsthetic while the uterus was cleaned out.

All day the blood dripped slowly—two pints of dextravin and two of whole blood were administered, and the latter at a very slow rate.

At 4.30 p.m. I was moved into a post-natal ward with a temperature of 102° F. and still too weak to do anything but drink from a feeding cup. A cheerful ward orderly greeted me with: "Want a kipper, love?"

Paul came to see me that evening and we decided that as soon as possible I should be moved home. He had made an appointment to see the Senior Registrar the next morning, having pleaded quite unsuccessfully with the sister to allow the baby to regulate itself regarding feeds.

Next morning my temperature was down and I had been able to feed Penny for the first time. I felt much better, but one night in the ward convinced me that I would get better faster at home. I wanted to sleep, sleep and sleep, and with sixteen babies in the ward, and routines, and a small staff, I should not get the opportunity as at home.

Paul arrived after a long interview with the Registrar, who had treated his views on self-regulated feeding as a "fashionable fad" which would disturb the routine and mean more work (though many large hospitals now let the mothers feed their babies "on demand", and find it takes no more labour, just a little more liberty). We decided that, as my temperature was next to normal, discomforts away from home were not conducive to recovery, and self-regulation here was impossible, I should go home that very morning. It was only much later that Paul told me of the attempts to persuade and coerce him into leaving me at the hospital; how scientific terminology was used to blind him; and how only a good knowledge of our rights and the general principles of birth and medical attention made it possible for him to arrange for my immediate removal, again against advice and amidst the grunts of disapproval of the most life-negative sister we have ever seen.

She was most obstructive. She informed Paul that he might have to wait all day or even longer till an ambulance was free, and this in spite of his pleadings that two young children were waiting at home under temporary care. She was sure nothing could be done. Taking the bull by the horns Paul rang up the ambulance station himself, and within twenty minutes the free ambulance service was at our disposal. Perhaps it would be unkind to say that the sister looked disappointed!

The Registrar had explained to Paul that he was trying out a theory in administering to me an extra large dose of streptomycin and penicillin, not only to combat the danger of infection but "to kill the bug". It was again only our knowledge that the midwife could administer this which made the Registrar agree that there was no concrete reason against my return home. We were by that time too worn out to do more than attempt to cut short this

experiment: the lack of co-operation from our doctor was too much, and the experiment continued. Whether the cryptic liver trouble which puzzled specialists and the general practitioner, and troubled me for weeks and weeks, had anything to do with that large dose of antibiotics is not by any means certain.

The delight of myself and my children was wonderful on my return home. My bedroom was soon a bower of flowers and I did in fact sleep and sleep and sleep as I could not have done in hospital. Nourishing and healthy food was prepared and served when I felt like it, and I recovered my strength in spite of the liver complications and the nasty wound remaining in my arm.

Seven months later, only the exquisite feeling of the newborn was associated with the birth—the idea of another did not repel—the nightmarish memory of the aftermath was something quite separate—like any other accident.

CHAPTER VII

BIRTH AS IT SHOULD BE, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

JOY NICOLA WAS born at 11.35 p.m. on January 2nd, 1956. There had been a false alarm on the Friday. The doctor listened in accidentally to a "practice contraction" and sent the midwives along. They got the room ready. The pubic hair was shaved off, but an enema, which was to be given as a matter of course, I flatly refused. I was convinced that labour had not started, and, in any case, by eating a healthy diet I do not suffer in the slightest degree from constipation. There was some argument, and the midwife insisted that when labour did start I should have to have one. When Paul arrived home I was shaking and depressed from the effort of resisting their authority, so I decided that, as the midwives lived very near, I would not call them until the first stage of labour was almost complete and should thus avoid further dispute, the disturbing enema or further examinations (also largely unnecessary).

The first stage did in fact begin at 6 a.m. on Monday, three days later, and fourteen days after the nominated date. Contractions came more or less regularly at ten-minute intervals. I felt that, as in previous pregnancies, it would be a slow process. I got up and carried on normally, cooking lunch, doing housework and playing with the children, relaxing only at the height of each contraction. The waters broke at about 9 a.m., and when the doctor looked in a little later she cautiously stated that she thought the baby would be born that day.

After lunch I decided a rest would be a good idea, in case the night was badly disturbed. I lay down fully dressed, but about 4 p.m. I realized that the first stage was really well established and so undressed and went to bed. I managed to relax comfortably, and was able as usual to read a story each to Leonora, Erica and Penny, stopping only when contractions were at their climax, to be able to relax toward them. The children followed the whys and wherefores of this easily. At 9 p.m. the contractions

came closer together and stronger, and from then on I was extremely glad of Paul's company. We talked of a great variety of things, and the longer and stronger the contractions the more I found talk, on subjects such as holidays we had enjoyed in the past, helped. Dr. Dick Read says just this, and we thought of that too.

When the contractions were at their fiercest and I felt the end of the first stage could not, nay must not, be far off, I found tremendous comfort in the green fields and illimitable blue of a Van Gogh reproduction and the smug dog face of a cheap Czech china money box. (In the official hand-out on "Preparation for Home Confinement" the first paragraph says: "... All ornaments, mats and other small articles should be put away, leaving only a minimum of furniture in the room ..."—an example of the fetish for cleanliness leading to complete disregard of the emotional factors.)

Dr. Grantly Dick Read speaks of this period as the true pain period of labour. I felt the muscles of the cervix stretched to their extreme by the baby's head. With the few final contractions, my capacity to relax was now fully extended also. Keeping my breathing going evenly and deeply during the contraction, I managed to keep off the excruciating pain which results when the baby's head is forcing tense muscles of the cervix apart. I tried and used many more different positions than during this period in other pregnancies, and was helped by the wonderful peace and absence of all fuss and attendants.

Suddenly, about 11 p.m., I found the contractions ceased. No longer did I feel the need for companionship, I wanted to be quiet, by myself. Paul retired across the room to type a letter (the study had been converted into a temporary nursing home, a very unhygienic one!).

I made myself comfortable on my left side with the right knee well drawn up and my right hand hooked under the knee. I practised deep breathing and relaxed. The outer world receded. I was utterly at peace and withdrawn.

Then came the first contraction of the second stage, the process of the actual expulsion, and I used it to the full, my deep satisfaction expressed by the tremendous grunt, and my right hand gripping my right knee and the left pulling its hardest on the pillow slip.

I vaguely remember the typewriter stopping, Paul crossing the

room and asking, "Jean, has the second stage started?" I felt furious at this meaningless disturbance and ignored the question. He left me alone again. More typing. I was glad he left me alone. Again, a few minutes later, an even more tremendous expulsive push, set off by the convulsion from within, and an even louder throatier grunt. Again Paul spoke to me. This time I came a little way out of my natural amnesia, said "Phone midwives", and said that I was ill at ease because excreta had been pushed out by the baby, and I knew the midwives' view.

Having rung the midwives, Paul returned to clean me up before they arrived, but he was met by my curses at the disturbance mixed with the most sustained and powerful of the tremendous grunts which brought the head through the perineum into his hands.

It was all too good to be true. I enquired anxiously why my baby wasn't making a grunt or cry. "It's you who are keeping its mouth shut, as yet," said Paul, and then the midwives were in. I found that the panting required to slow down the expulsion, to avoid stretching and tears, came spontaneously, even before it was ordered by the midwives. One more push brought the baby's body. The satisfaction was the deepest of my life. They told me it was a girl. I wished they'd have let me ask.

The doctor arrived too. There was no tear, no particular discomfort and, awaiting the afterbirth, I felt quite different from last time, when it had refused to budge. The midwives left me utterly alone, the baby was handed to me in a towel, and within ten minutes of the birth two gentle contractions brought the afterbirth away complete and without loss of blood.

The atmosphere became highly elated and light-hearted, it was just like a party, Paul taking photographs. I was not even very tired.

I was made comfortable, the baby was gently bathed and weighed (6½ lb.); it cried, and had the healthiest, lovely colour when the brown meconium mess had been gently removed from its body and face.

At 1.30 a.m. Nicola lay in her cot and cooed. Paul and I lay side by side. All of us slept well till the morning. Nicola slept most of the next twenty-four hours. I was able to walk across the room within twelve hours, and had no need of a bedpan at all. On the eleventh day I went out for a walk. The birth was really the most satisfying and invigorating experience of my life, like any physical

work well done, and it had a very profound and relaxing effect on my whole being and character.

Jonquil Olivia was due on Tuesday, April 15th, 1958. Comparing these last two pregnancies with the others, we found them on the whole much less disturbing. Here was pregnancy of a far more healthy and genital character, which showed itself in the strong desire for, and enjoyment of, intercourse up to one or two days before the birth, with, in contrast to the earlier pregnancies, no disturbance to orgasms due to my physical state. Marring this general picture, however, there persisted dreams and fears linked with the manual removal of the placenta and the unfortunate happenings associated with Penny's birth. These were to some extent anxiety symptoms of the increasing capacity for pleasure. My pregnancy with Jonquil was further disrupted by various illnesses: Asian 'flu, gastritis, and finally a very nasty gum infection, which had taken two weeks to clear up, during which time I lived on fluids. As the birth was due only a few days later, we were expecting that I might feel very weak, possibly during the birth and certainly afterwards.

The birth was due on Tuesday and on the previous Saturday the waters broke as I got up in the morning. I knew from previous experience that it could be some time before contractions started and decided not to call for medical assistance until the first stage was well under way. So I stayed in bed, to retain as much of the fluid as possible, and had time and opportunity to do many jobs there and to reflect on the drastic difference between this and the days spent similarly, but in hospital, before the birth of Leonora. Contractions started on Sunday afternoon at twenty- to thirty-minute intervals; it was not until midnight that they began to come regularly every ten minutes.

Paul had fallen asleep at 11 p.m. beside me and I lay quietly relaxing and reading intermittently. It was the first time in my experience that I felt no great need for company during the first stage. Finally, at 4.0 a.m. I woke him, because I suddenly felt extreme loneliness. In retrospect I think this must have been the ending of the first stage. About ten minutes later, after he had suggested it several times, I told Paul I thought he should go downstairs to phone doctor and midwife, and he went to do it.

Just after he had gone there was a most tremendous and sustained contraction, which I used to its utmost, so that I lay gasping

and panting madly at the end of it. I levered myself as upright as possible, gingerly put my hand down and felt the top of a little head. It was a heart-stirring moment of delight. I shouted "Paul" just once, but then another long contraction brought the head out completely. Again a moment of mad panting, then a third terrific push and out slithered, under my fascinated gaze, the dearest little girl imaginable. Paul then arrived back upstairs. We were thrilled to bits and cuddled and admired and loved the baby, wrapped in a towel and still attached to the cord and me. There were no cries—content from the beginning, she merely made herself comfortable with movements not usually associated with newborn children.

The doctor arrived some ten minutes later, closely followed by the midwife. The cord was separated, and after about ten minutes and two contractions the afterbirth came away. The total blood loss during the birth was no more than a tablespoonful.

I felt really triumphant that all the unpleasant (as most mothers will agree) additions to childbirth, usually carried out as routine, had been avoided: genital hair-shaving, castor oil, enemas, internal examinations. And subsequently even the routine injection of ergometrine was not administered by the remarkably sane team of lady doctor and midwife.

On the first day I was able to get up and my bowels moved. It was this which above all was most admired by the attendants: yet it was due merely to our ordinary, fairly balanced diet.

There was none of the weakness we had expected, and I felt wonderful on getting up properly on the eighth day to find myself slimmed and able to wear all my pre-pregnancy clothes with the odd inches to spare.

The baby, put in her cot after the birth and wiped later, slept fifteen hours without interruption.

The new doctors (both of them female and both "National Health") and midwives I found to be more progressive than the old school, and in favour of natural techniques, but there are some points on which even progressive medical routines remain unreasonable and I must enlarge upon them. One is the application of enemas. The first argument for giving enemas is that an empty bowel facilitates the birth process and lessens any pain. When it is pointed out that in a person not constipated the bowels are naturally and spontaneously emptied for the birth process, it is then said that the actual birth is not pleasant or hygienic if the

fæces that are bound to be left without an enema come away as the alimentary canal is squeezed empty by the baby. This second argument is equally invalid. The fæces will be quite separate in any of the more natural birth positions, and in any case it must be borne in mind that the little thing is born into a pool of amniotic fluid and blood. It all comes off with gentle wiping. In Jonquil's case, my bowels moved just before and even just after the birth, without any variation in my normal diet.

There remains the real reason for their insistence: nurses tend to reflect our civilization in feeling an irrational disgust for excreta. But it is unreasonable to let this affect the birth. Enemas create serious discomfort at a time when maximum comfort is required. They should not be applied as a matter of course, or to satisfy the cultural inhibitions of midwives, but only when called for by constipation. The midwife who attended me with Jonquil, trained in Derby, was the very first we had met to take our rational view of the subject.

The absence of an enema was of immense importance and value in allowing relaxation and enjoyment in the last two births. In the second stages I was very much aware of my increased capacity to "let go" and to push with that pleasure which only accompanies involuntary actions of the body and of which before, when more rigid, I was afraid.

I was also increasingly aware in these two births of the efforts of the baby to facilitate the process by its own wriggling movements. The baby's part in birth, both in terms of this wriggling and in terms of its pleasure, is still entirely ignored by the huge army of natural birth enthusiasts who are none the less turning England into a very progressive country for home "confinements".

The easy discharge on these occasions of the afterbirth, which had been troublesome before, without any pressure whatsoever, is also significant. The pressure on, and squeezing of, the ultra-sensitive tummy, as confirmed by other friends, is excrutiatingly painful. It is applied by impatient and fearful midwives who cannot wait for the natural process of expulsion. An injection of ergometrine, to help the contraction of the womb after the afterbirth has come away, was given by the attendants in Nicola's case, and was not resisted. It was the most painful part of the birth, although just an injection like others. It proved quite unnecessary when it was omitted with Jonquil, doctor and midwife again using their judgement instead of the rule of thumb.

Although the very strong physiological reactions of the womb to any noises of the baby are weakened in those who are not sensitive to feeling, this feeling contact with the baby has important physiological results, i.e. in the contraction of the womb to expel the afterbirth. Here lies one of the disastrous consequences of the removal of babies from mothers as so often done in hospitals.

The photographs which Paul took immediately after Nicola was born showed the fullness of my face, and, in particular, of my lips. But only Paul can testify that they also expressed that tender love which rises out of a passionate involuntary experience. This birth was just that. "Indescribable", the word used by some people for the pleasure they have experienced in birth or sexual intercourse, points clearly to the total energetic experience which is, in fact, beyond words. It transgresses the limits of language and intellectual comprehension.

The advantage of having present at the birth the husband or another trusted friend, who, calm and sympathetic, understands the healthy attitude to childbirth, and sees that the mother's will is carried out (when she is taken up by the experience of the birth) is in itself enormous. And, in spite of the comparative excellence of midwives, to be in attendance as a husband, and see things done according to previous agreement (things can slip from the memory of the midwife), is worth a very great deal, and can be crucial. Here is somebody who is unreservedly on the side of mother and baby, and not the textbooks. Such common and considerable outrages as castor-oil, injections, demoralizing talk, uncomfortable positions of delivery, wrong commands to push, all these can be controlled and prevented when necessary. In most hospitals these outrages are part of routine, and coercion of the well-known kinds helps to foist the tradition on people.

In emergencies, in most locations the existence of a Flying Squad guarantees expert attendance, with all the medical facilities required in case of any emergency, with the same speed as in hospital, and often quicker than in many nursing homes.

A final piece of evidence in favour of home birth lies in the following figures: In the U.S.A. 94 per cent. of babies are hospital born, in England 64 per cent. and in Holland 20 per cent. However, the death rate during the first year is greatest in the U.S.A. (twenty-six out of a thousand), in Gt. Britain correspondingly less (twenty-three), and in Holland much less again (only seventeen out of a thousand).

To summarize: Capacity for relaxation and emotion, for deep pleasure and orgasm—in short, health—is necessary for good birth, and it is desirable to take pains to get as near to this condition as possible. Indeed, capacity for relaxation is more fundamentally needed than exercises. At home the atmosphere and the carefully selected personnel are likely to increase the limited capacity of a woman to enjoy birth, whereas in hospital a woman and her offspring with full capacity may well be robbed of their invaluable relationship by unfavourable conditions and inexperienced, ignorant or over-worked attendants.

SUMMARY OF POINTS FOR THOROUGH AGREEMENT BETWEEN DOCTOR AND/OR MIDWIFE AND PARENTS

1. The shaving of the pubic hair to take place days before the birth if the mother feels apprehensive, and therefore tense, about it.
2. No artificial inducement of labour if there is no danger in waiting.
3. No injections or drugs of any sort without a clear explanation of why they should be administered.
4. Enemas only when constipation makes them essential; then only as much as needed.
5. Comfortable position for second stage, which means *not* the traditional "leg over midwife's shoulder" position.
6. The baby in the second stage may slip back somewhat between contractions, so there is no question of "holding it" tensely where it is. Relaxation is the aim until the next involuntary contraction makes itself felt, and then the tremendous push, holding one's breath, is the voluntary reinforcement of what is an involuntary reflex.
7. No routine cutting of the perineum to "facilitate" birth, as advocated by "cut-happy" people like the otherwise progressive Prof. Nixon in his book.
8. If the baby breathes, it does not need slapping to make it cry on being born.
9. Immediately on birth the baby is to be handed to the mother.
10. The baby is not to be bathed, but only wiped gently.
11. There must be a waiting period of fifteen minutes minimum for the afterbirth (unless there is considerable loss of blood). A squatting position should be tried to let uterus expel placenta naturally. No pummelling of the placenta in the tummy!
12. The foreskin of any male child is to be left strictly alone.

13. If the baby cries, or the mother wishes it, the baby is to be given the breast immediately after birth and before the afterbirth has been expelled.

14. The blood group of the mother should be known in case of emergency, also the telephone number of the Flying Squad.

15. The parents are prepared to go to another doctor/midwife if agreement is not maintained.

16. It is essential to arrive at a supple body, which in most women means adoption of the exercises as given by Randall or others.

17. The husband to be present at the birth.

CHAPTER VIII

BREAST-FEEDING

With Leonora

TWO MONTHS BEFORE my eldest daughter Leonora was born I attended a lecture on breast-feeding given at the pre-natal clinic of the hospital. It was given by the sister tutor of the nurses. She gave us much knowledge and much sound advice. She told us of the structure of the breast, how to massage to stimulate the flow of milk, how to keep the breasts clean, what sort of brassières to wear, about colostrum and so on. But, and it is a very large but, she did not once mention the wonderful pleasurable feelings connected with relaxed breast-feeding, nor the delicious flow between the nursing mother and the sucking infant.

This kind of lecture does a great deal of good from the point of view of finding retracted nipples and such abnormalities, but it misleads by completely neglecting the emotional side of the relationship. Thus many women think they have done "their duty" to their children by breast-feeding them but when asked whether they enjoyed it reply, "Oh, no, I loathed every minute of it, but I was determined to carry on." They have no conception that a rigid nursing mother can affect the emotional stability and well-being of her child through the tensions of her body and the withdrawal of feeling so that she could bear the child suckling.

My first experience of this lack of feeling in people's attitude towards babies came when Leonora was handed to me by a staff nurse ten hours after her birth in hospital, with: "Three minutes each side, that is all." This is the standard time allowed and the attitude is quite obviously ridiculous. Babies are not mechanical toys shot off the assembly line but individuals with their own idiosyncrasies. One does not expect each new-born baby to look alike, so why expect them to behave alike?

It is only the lack of feeling, both on the part of the attendants and experts and on the part of mothers, that makes clock feeding at all possible. To a mother fully alive, breast-feeding is right and inevitable, and it is no less right and inevitable to feed the baby

when it is hungry, for as long as it wishes. To be sensitive towards a child entails a very early realization, as well as intuitive knowledge, that the new-born is aware of his needs. And if he is understood he will be able to satisfy them efficiently.

But whereas a mother who "loathes" breast-feeding may be well advised to feed her baby by bottle if she can relax and love it then—there is never any such excuse for clock-feeding a baby, which is dangerous, and in most cases utterly indefensible and unnecessarily cruel.

I once lived next to a young doctor and his wife whose first baby was born a week before Erica, and her clock-feeding upset me very much. The little girl in the garden in her pram would start to cry about 1.30 p.m., and she would cry and cry and cry. Exactly on the stroke of 2.0 p.m., out came her mother to take her in for a feed. A similar thing happened at 5.30 p.m.–6.0 p.m. That mothers listen to their babies crying like that and do not have compassion will never cease to horrify me.

Many babies are ready for their feed long before the time allocated by hospitals or nursing-homes. They cry, of course, and are exhausted and sleepy when the time-table says they can have their food. Nurses then have to resort, as a matter of course, to slapping the babies' hands and feet on passing them to their mothers for feeding. But, even if this momentarily wakes the babies, it does not prevent the vicious circle which ensues: baby too sleepy to feed—not enough food taken—ready for next feed before it is due—crying—exhaustion—again too sleepy to feed properly. . . .

It is this sort of thing which makes many mothers mistakenly assume that there is something wrong with their milk. They fail to realize that it is the application, and not the milk itself.

The feelingless birth of Leonora had already marred our relationship, the false feeding and night separation made things worse. But the birth had left me so numb and flat that I am sure my suffering was less than if I had had full contact with my baby. The suffering of those healthily born and then subjected to this rigid routinizing must be excruciating. I dare not think of it in relation to my other daughters.

The harm done to my relationship with Leonora by the time-table feeding and the removal of the crying child at night was incalculable, and completely exhausted me. It was largely this which drove me to sign myself out of hospital so that at home I could feed Leonora when she was hungry, and ignore the clock.

If Leonora had been self-regulated from the beginning, and had not been left to cry during our sojourn in hospital, it would have been easier, because then from the start she would have felt secure in obtaining food when she felt the need. However, after a period of two- and three-hourly feeds, she settled down to her self-determined routine of roughly four-hourly breast-feeds. If she woke during the night she was fed, loved and then went to sleep again. It is better to spend half an hour feeding the child, although this can be wearing, than to spend half the night listening to the child getting more and more exhausted and insecure by crying.

This night-feeding of Leonora's did however cause me to make a quite unnecessary and common mistake: I followed a piece of the hospital's advice, which later, with my other daughters, I found to be quite incorrect. It was that one should *sit up* while nursing. The theory is that there is less strain on the breast, and also that the baby can get the wind up better. I did sit up whenever I fed Leonora in the night, and it was the most wearing part of the whole procedure. Nor did it help that I was roused to quite unreasonable and unfounded feelings of resentment against Paul, fast asleep at my side.

Later I followed my intuition and fed Erica, Penny and Nicola down well on my side. I found this extremely comfortable with far less drag on the nipple than before. Not only did the comfort induce relaxation, and therefore a far better feed, but when I gently rolled them over my body to change to the other breast, all the babies invariably brought up any wind inside. And after the feed they went down peaceably into their own cots again.

So, to return to Leonora, the regular night-feeds did not carry on for longer than three weeks and after this she slept right through the night from about 11.0 p.m. to 7.0 a.m. And, please note, they stopped spontaneously—we did not make it a habit! She merely satisfied her need. By the time she was three months old she was only having three breast-feeds a day and nothing else other than orange juice, and she would sleep continuously for twelve or thirteen hours. The length of the feeds would vary enormously, and on one memorable occasion she sucked slowly and steadily for one hour and ten minutes! These long feeds did not cause indigestion, though they were rather an endurance test of love—but when a baby feels insecure that is just what must be expected and satisfied if at all possible. At other times, ten minutes would see

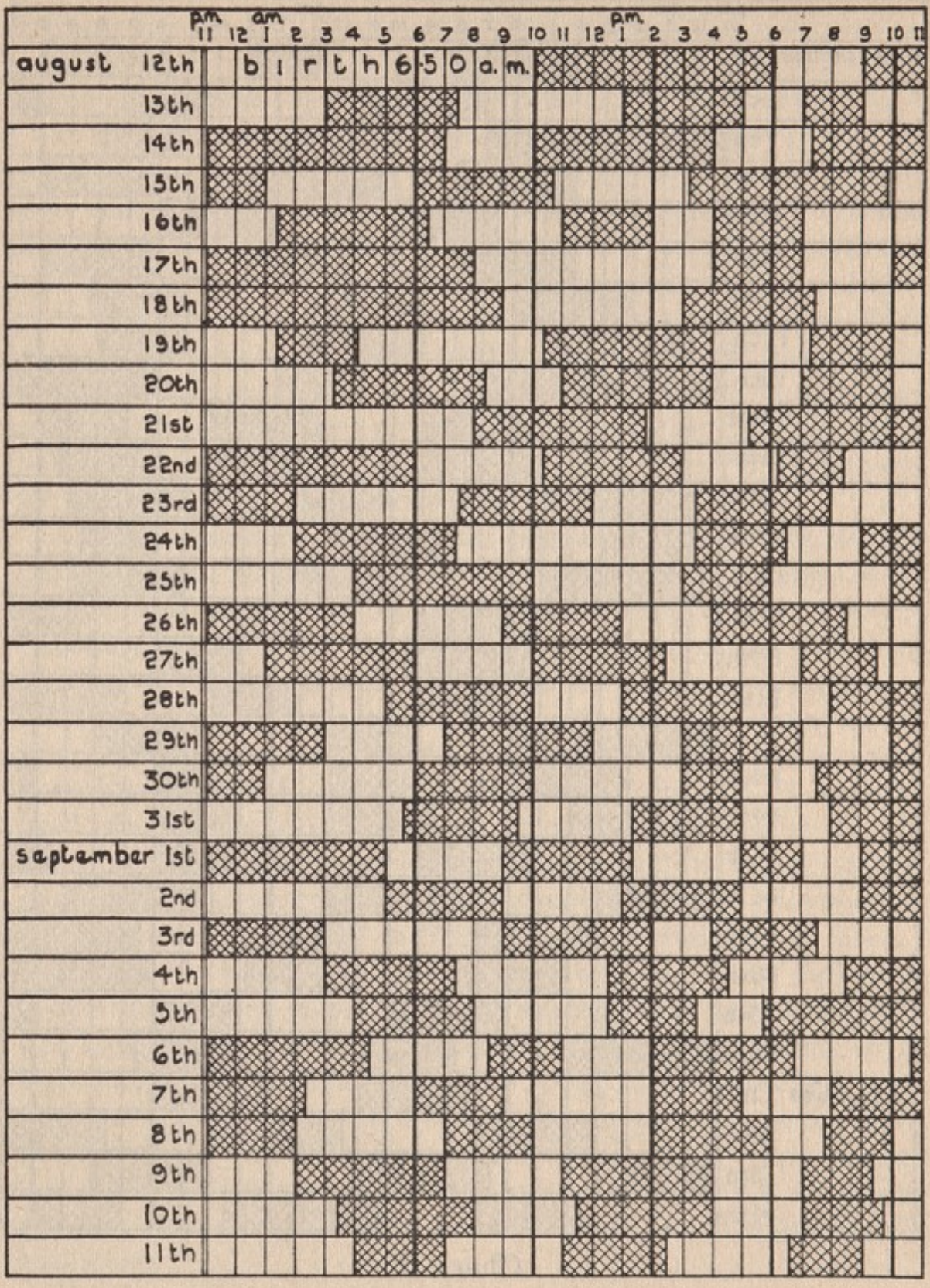


Chart I

Self-regulated breast-feeds for the first month of Erica's life. Up to $12\frac{3}{4}$ hours between feeds (August 21st).
Orthodox feeding times are marked in heavy vertical lines for comparison. Change of colour indicates start of feed.

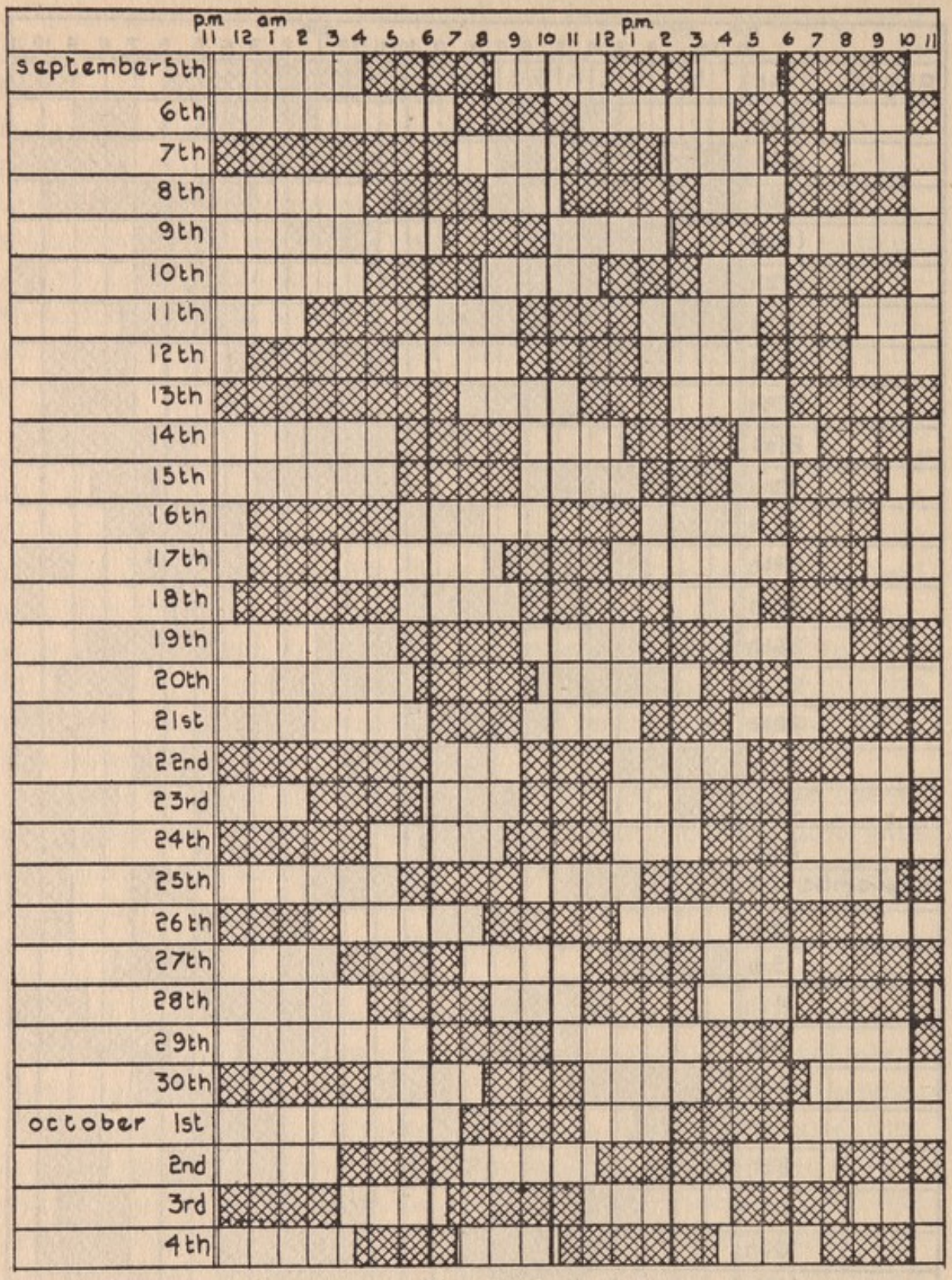


Chart II

Self-regulated breast-feeds for the second month of Penny's life. Up to 11 hours between feeds (September 21st).
Orthodox feeding times are marked in heavy vertical lines for comparison. Careful study shows a rhythm, a preponderance of feeds at, approximately, certain hours. This becomes more obvious in the third and subsequent months.

her finished, and always Leonora was contented and happy because her insecurity due to the birth and routines was counteracted by an extraordinary amount of loving, and no cry of hers was taken for granted—the cause was always sought and often found.

It has been said to me many times that if you pick a baby up when it cries it will always cry to be picked up. To which I can only reply "Rubbish!" There may perhaps be no apparent cause for a baby's tears, but sometimes it will cry because a noise has startled it which we have barely heard, because we are accustomed to it. Again comes the emotional relationship. Why shouldn't a baby cry for love? At this stage a baby can't say, "Kiss me better", in so many words, but it can tell you in the only way it knows how. The more securely loved the baby feels, the less it will cry for reassurance. But can it feel secure when it is left to cry for one of its most basic needs—food?

At five months my breast milk began to give out for no apparent reason. Nor did artificial stimulation keep it going, but it did last long enough for me to wean Leonora slowly to a bottle. No fancy expensive babies' foods for her! (She spat out, sicked up or otherwise dealt unkindly with some of the samples which were sent to us.) I used cow's milk diluted with a third of water and a teaspoonful of brown sugar. Nor did I boil the milk, just warmed it to blood heat. I consider boiling milk from a T.T. attested herd which is unpasteurized quite unnecessary, and after all it is desirable that the child should develop a certain amount of natural immunity. (This sounds fantastically simple compared with twenty-four pages on 'Formulae' in Benjamin Spock's celebrated book.)

This bottle business is again a very curious thing. Tell most people that a baby of, say, eighteen months is bottle fed and they will look slightly horrified, askance, shocked, bewildered or at least amused. "Oh, surely not still drinking from the bottle?" and the remark shows a mixture of pity and contempt. If you pin them down and ask, "Well, why not drink from a bottle?", they splutter and rationalize nonsensically, and mutter about teeth not being straight, or spoiling the shape of the mouth, or infecting tonsils and so on.

This lack of understanding for the infant's deep and necessary pleasure in sucking, and its great value, is even more curious when one realizes what a good proportion of the critics find comfort in smoking cigarettes or sucking pipes, pencil ends, sweets, straws and grass, and to what extent they are addicts! As for

spoiling mouths or teeth, photographs of many children, including ours, show that, though they enjoyed bottles, their mouths are vibrant and charming, and it would be difficult to find fault.

Nor is this very puzzling, for it is just the pleasurable sucking which keeps the mouth mobile and alive, and so full and shapely. And the soft teats of bottle or dummy do no harm to the teeth. It is only when a child sucks its thumb, and only then when the inside of the thumb presses against the inner surface of the top teeth for long periods, that there may be danger of spoiling the teeth. Penny, having sucked her thumb for long periods, judiciously, pleasurably and with passion, has no deformation of teeth whatever.

Of course there are some people who say, "Oh, my child does not need a bottle to go to bed with, she goes without any trouble at all." Enquire further and you will often find that some sort of bribe is given, or perhaps the child is already repressed. But what is more likely, once in bed she sucks her thumb, bed clothes, sleeves, toes, knuckles, toys, handkerchiefs, etc., etc., and this is, of course, much better than nothing, but not so good as a bottle —which can be washed and is made for the purpose. (Although some teats are much better than others, they are mostly too short. It must be borne in mind that the infant does not only suck the nipple but all the areola goes into its mouth.) The crowning irony is the common complaint that children won't drink milk, from those who look horrified when I suggest they should let the child suck it from a bottle!

A first child is bound to suffer from the parents' inexperience, but it gains from their undiverted love and attention. There are numberless little things that worry the new parent and mislead. One lesson we learnt the hard way, Leonora acting as unintended guinea pig, was that the diet of the nursing mother can affect the child in no uncertain manner! I ate spiced meat one day and the way in which Leonora tried the milk again and again, spitting out the nipple in bitter disgust, and cried and cried and cried until the spiced milk had been drained off by the next feed was remarkable and unique. Too much green stuff or peas and beans (vegetarians please note) have, in our experience, given babies painful flatulence.

With Erica

As has been described in the previous chapter, when Erica was

born she lay happily cooing in her cot until she was three hours old. Then she started to whimper and was put to the breast. This had been such a relaxed and happy birth that this first feed was like a climax of happiness. She suckled for a few minutes at each side, gaining mother-love together with the colostrum and then slept peacefully for eight hours.

She woke during the nights for a feed but it was a lovely feeling to have her close by in the stillness of the night. She always went back into her basket afterwards and often lay gurgling peacefully until she dropped off to sleep. My own rest was very much less disturbed as I was lying down and the feeds were something not to be missed!

There was just one fly in the ointment. As with Leonora, while feeding Erica I developed sore and cracked nipples—my sensitive, fair skin made me rather prone to this complaint. In the first case the hospital had tried penicillin ointment, but to no avail, and I had sore nipples for some weeks, reducing the joy of feeding to agony. However, this time the district midwife, with her twenty years' experience, soon cured them: Gentian Violet dabbed on twice, and giving each breast a rest at alternate feeds for twenty-four hours, soon cleared up the trouble. It recurred with Penny and the Gentian Violet proved again effective. As sore nipples cannot but lead to tense feeding, to have them healed quickly is of far greater importance than just to end the physical pain of it. With Nicola, a new herbal ointment "Kamillosan" helped to prevent the nipples from cracking.

From the beginning we charted Erica's feeds, and although they did not show the regularity of Leonora's routine they did show that it is sheer nonsense to say that if a baby is fed when it cries it will always cry to be fed. Nor does it mean that I was unduly tied down. I would look at the chart and work out when I could go shopping or to a cinema without disregarding Erica's needs.

With Penny

Penny's birth was a good one, but the complications of the removal of the afterbirth which necessitated our transfer to hospital resulted in such weakness that for the first twenty-four hours of her life she could not be put to the breast. She had swallowed a large amount of amniotic fluid during the birth and persisted in vomiting this back during that time. When she was

given to me for her first feed, her poor little mouth turned down and I had considerable difficulty in persuading her to take to the breast. However, I persisted, and she suddenly seemed to get the idea.

When Penny and I found ourselves home again the day after entry into the hospital, she soon settled down to what could be called a regular irregularity. Her feeds were the most peaceful of all three, and it was fascinating to see, both in reality and in the photographic records, how her mouth, upturned at birth and downturned through her suffering immediately after birth, again took its normal, healthy, upturned position. In my very weak state feeding her was a therapeutically beneficial pleasure, not a weakening factor.

Whether or not as a result of the overdose of drugs prescribed as an experiment by the hospital, shortly after Penny's birth, while still recovering from the weakness of the complications, I contracted a queer kind of jaundice which the G.P. could not diagnose. The specialist, called in, showed no appreciation of the mother-child emotional relationship. He suggested that I give up breast-feeding at once, just in case the baby contracted the jaundice—the likelihood, however, being extremely small, no greater, it emerged, than many other dangers. He also suggested I should enter a hospital for the sole purpose of observation for a week or a fortnight, leaving the baby behind!! As a special favour, when we suggested that this would be madness, he said he would let the baby come too. We declined the offer, were pressed by the remark "My goodness, if you were my wife you'd certainly go into hospital", but remained adamant. It may be of interest that the tests "necessary to diagnose the jaundice" were found to be possible by sending samples of blood and urine, so that the whole hospital trip would have been quite unnecessary, and that in the end the diagnosis was so vague it told us nothing about the illness. The feeding of the baby and its welfare throughout were not in the slightest disturbed!

Penny's feeds, as will be seen from the charts, followed much the same pattern as Erica's. They came roughly at four-hourly intervals. It was noticeable that as I regained my strength, got up and busied myself, she needed her feeds at closer intervals if I had a particularly busy morning. Conversely, if I had a relaxed, quiet time, then five- or six-hour intervals were common.

These very obvious variations are something the clock-feeders

just do not take into account. In retrospect it also seems obvious that there will be less milk as the day goes on. The night's sleep having created a maximum supply of milk in the morning, this lessens with the day's activity. Yet we did not think of this, nor had anybody else done so, as far as we know, until we looked at our charts and saw the baby's more frequent demands at the end of the day. We feel that this is a discovery of importance.

Similarly, if a baby is awake for a longer time, or is in the fresh air, or is more active than usual, it uses more energy and needs the next feed earlier than usual. Often I feel I would like to put clock-feeders on a strict routine themselves. They would soon find that the odd sweet, chocolate, apple, cup of tea or cigarette is badly missed and much desired, and that these are, as in fact their main meals, not of the regularity they imagine, both in terms of time and quantity. Thus it makes nonsense of the argument that the baby is being trained for the routine and discipline necessary in life. Penny was breast-fed until seven months old, when I had to transfer her to the bottle, again it was diluted cow's milk and there was no trouble whatsoever.

The whole question of how long to breast-feed causes a great deal of controversy. The original hospital lecture gave three or four months as "all that they ask of mothers nowadays"(!) (Note the stress on the duty and not on the pleasure.) The period does, in any case, seem quite arbitrary. I know of a case where the mother was still giving the child breast-feeds when she became pregnant again; the child was seventeen months old and was gradually weaned from the breast. When the mother breast-fed the second child, the first showed intense jealousy and was full of wants whenever the baby was being fed. As a result of this tense situation, the digestion of the infant suffered. The unusual solution to the problem was found in breast-feeding the two children simultaneously, which may not be the right way out in every case!

There are many possible combinations of reasons for this situation: for example the breast-feeding of the elder child had not been satisfactory qualitatively in any of many ways, this resulted in an oral fixation, and as the child had been brought up freely it showed jealousy clearly. Or is it just that in the natural state we should normally breast-feed for a long time, and that weaning to a bottle is simply a compromise with civilization? Children have been breast-fed in this country even while going to school without ill effects, and in other culture patterns, take for instance some of

the Javanese, breast-feeding goes on till the third year regularly. Whether this is a result of shortage of food may of course be a debatable point.

It is here relevant to quote Mr. Tait, an expert, in the history of breast-feeding:

> "The duration of breast-feeding has, in this modern period, also been curtailed, and weaning is now frequently recommended at three and a half to four months instead of the more logical—and physiological age—of six months.
>
> "Thus we see that, throughout the centuries, the duration of breast-feeding has shown a steady and progressive reduction from the two- to three-year period in the sixteenth century to the three- to six-month period of modern times. Coincident with the reduction in the period of suckling there has also, since the mid-eighteenth century, been a steady increase in the extent of artificial feeding so that now it is more widespread than maternal feeding."

There are of course many children who are weaned from the breast straight to solid food and a cup after some short months. Among these are a considerable number of thumb-suckers, knuckle-chewers and those who suck their clothes or are given a substitute of some sort.

At this point it might be pertinent to examine the question of dummy, soother, comforter, call it what you will. On the assumption that a small baby needs lots of sucking (this being its main source of pleasure), a dummy was given to Leonora. She used it a great deal at first, and later only when going to sleep, until at thirteen months she spat it out in no uncertain way and for ever after refused it.

Erica similarly was offered the dummy, but we surmised that her happy birth and good relationship with me gave her all the pleasure she wanted, for she just refused to have anything whatsoever to do with it. Nor did she suck her thumb or indeed anything else.

Other children offered a dummy try it a few times and, not happy about it, give it up. They may discover and prefer their own thumbs.

Whether Leonora's preference for the dummy and Penny's for her thumb have anything to do with the fact, for instance, that Leonora liked the honey we put on all dummies, we do not know.

But it seems significant that Erica, whose birth unlike Leonora's was healthy, and who had a healthy mother unlike Penny, was the only one who found sucking the nipples sufficient, even though she took less time for feeds by far than the others. One can only conclude that those who deprive a baby who likes it of a dummy are rationalizing in the same way as those who will not let a child drink from a teat and bottle. It is a pleasure they subconsciously object to, and which they cannot allow.

To illustrate the truth of this last sweeping statement, one cannot do better than deal with the nipple shield. The proper function of this is to enable mothers whose nipples are insufficiently developed to feed their infants by attaching this rubber valve as an artificial teat to the breast during the feed. (It must be said at once that, with the pre-natal care normal today, it is only in the rarest of cases that massage, etc., cannot rectify a retracted or otherwise non-functioning nipple before birth.) That the relatively frequent use of nipple shields is due to its pleasure-checking effect was vividly illustrated in Dr. Margaret Fries' film (*Psycho-neurosis with Compulsive Trends in the Making*) on the life of a child. Here the mother always used a shield, although there was no medical reason. Her tenseness during feeding can be seen clearly even in stills.

The following case-history shows how unfortunate circumstances can lead to an increase of tension in a mother who would otherwise be capable of wonderful breast-feeds, which could easily be made possible—and this is in contrast with the many cases where only prolonged therapy may make them possible.

This mother's breast became engorged when her small boy was only a few days old. As a result, the baby could not get a grip on the nipple, which was in any case rather small, and the use of the breast shield was advised by the midwife in charge (these small nipples should of course have been observed pre-natally and steps taken to increase their size before birth). After a short while the breasts became normal again and the mother wished to discontinue the use of the nipple shield. It was not only interrupting the flow between herself and the baby, but it was a nuisance to keep clean and, worst of all, meant that the night feed (or any other feed for that matter) had to be given in an upright position in order to maintain the breast shield in place. However, when she attempted to manage without the shield the baby yelled and yelled and yelled until she was forced to use the shield again. He

also suffered from a certain amount of wind, which he probably got through the difficulties of using a shield. After this had gone on for some time she came to see me.

By this time she and her husband were very tense about the whole situation. When the baby's feed became due I sent the husband away and established his wife in a comfortable chair where it was possible to relax. I then persuaded her to massage the nipples a little first to make them erect and so easier for the baby to grip. I gave her the baby. It was obvious at first sight that the position was wrong, the mother was used to the nipple shield increasing the length of the breast and so the baby's head was too low and being very small he could not support the weight of it himself to grip the nipple. The mother raised her elbow supporting the baby, took a few deep breaths and sat back relaxed—the baby fed without a murmur, except those of contentment. Confidence was established and the nipple shield was not needed again. The mother fed the baby lying down last thing in the evening and during the night. The father just could not believe that where there had been wind, tears and tension there was now relaxation and peace.

Why, one may ask, did the midwife in charge not watch the mother and help her with this problem, instead of thinking that it did not matter if a breast shield was used? Again, because attention is given to the physical but not to the emotional side of the relationship.

CHAPTER IX

SELF-REGULATED BREAST-FEEDING IS PRACTICAL

LEONORA'S BIRTH WAS announced in the local paper and a spate of lesser and large booklets published by baby-product firms followed. Their contents had three things in common: They were all written by "experts"; they all stated that breast-feeding is best; and thirdly, on other points, each disagreed with all the others, particularly on the question of timing feeds. "Four-hourly exactly", "four- or three-hourly", "not to the minute", "by the clock", etc., etc., there were endless variations on the theme of mechanical regularity and similar disagreement on the length of individual feeds.

Taken together, these documents provided the strongest possible recommendation for self-regulation! Not to have to choose from this range of experts, reinforced by parents and in-laws, friends, acquaintances, shopkeepers, nosey parkers, theorists of the purer kind and cranks is a very great practical help. The baby decides, in self-regulation, and that is that.

On the question of giving the first feed at an early time after birth much nonsense is spoken: unless the mother has chloroform for the birth—which would go through to the milk and affect the baby—or is otherwise seriously incapacitated, this feed seems to be a very important one for the mother, the child and the relationship.

In an article on the subject of breast-feeding in the *Medical Times*, New York, November 1950, the following passage is to be found:

> "New-born infants should have nothing for the first eight to twelve hours. Then, or as soon as the mother's condition permits, the infant should be placed at the mother's breast to obtain colostrum. As a prelacteal feeding, after twelve hours and before the mother can nurse, water or about five percent carbohydrate in water may be given at four-hour intervals. Colostrum contains a large amount of protein and vitamin

A but little carbohydrate and fat. The infant should be placed at the breast and allowed to root for the nipple every eight hours during the second twenty-four hours of life and every four hours the third day. Water or a prelacteal formula should be offered following each of these feedings to insure an adequate fluid supply. The new-born infant requires a proportionately higher fluid intake during the first few days of life. However, water or prelacteal feedings should be kept to a minimum, for it is very important that the infant empty the breasts if lactation is to be established. By the fourth or fifth day the milk supply should be established."

First of all we are not told why the new-born infant should have nothing for eight to twelve hours. Then the feeds are too severely limited for another day and a half. Yet serious concern is expressed less the milk supply should not be established because milk is left in the breast by an infant who has had too much water! That the new-born infant requires a higher fluid intake is an unwarranted assumption, and that the milk supply is not established until the fourth or fifth day a conclusion based on the erroneous and artificial methods described.

It seems only rational that, as in any other mammal, the infant should have access to the milk as soon and as often as he likes, and that the supply, if healthy, is the ideal nutriment for the new-born. "If nature intended the infant to have water it would have supplied the mother with a tap", is the pertinent remark of one of the more enlightened doctors.

And indeed we found with Erica that the milk supply was well established by the second and third days.

To the evidence of our own experience, we would like to add, to show the practicability of self-regulated breast-feeding, three other examples.

First the moving account of "A Mother of Three", read by millions in a recent number of *Woman*:

"When my first baby arrived . . . I set out to be a model mother. Anne consequently found herself embarked on a life governed by the clock . . . She was fed at four-hourly intervals on the stroke. . . . If she woke at night . . . (and she always *did*) she was left to cry. . . . If she cried during the day, she was lifted, tested for wind, examined for dirty nappies or loose pins, given a drink of water and put down in her pram to sob herself

to sleep again. . . . She became a quiet unsmiling baby. . . .

"[The second child] was a lusty, healthy young man. . . . I found it difficult to obey the clock and the textbook now that I had a toddler and a new baby. Still, when the baby woke in the night and yelled, I resisted him at first. But I began to dread his crying. It invariably woke Anne and at last I gave up the struggle . . . although he was certainly a happier baby than Anne, he knew discipline. . . .

"My third baby was born at home. She slept for hours, then yelled at midnight for food. I eyed her uncertainly. After a brief hesitation, I reached for her and fed her. Afterwards, she fell asleep in my arms. It was the shape of things to come. . . . When she cried, I picked her up. If she was hungry, I fed her. No clock, no textbook now, but love, instinct and common-sense. Anne is . . . quiet and withdrawn. . . . . Richard is a highly strung, sensitive boy . . . only Jane is completely spontaneous and loving. . . ."

The next quotation is from the work of M. A. Kegel, Superintendent Midwife, Withington Hospital, Manchester (where self-regulation—demand feeding—is said to be the rule):

"Some mothers may think that feeding on demand will 'spoil' a baby, so it is explained to them that a baby in the first three or four weeks of life is not always capable of taking full normal feeds every time, but that if the baby is satisfied, and not frustrated he will gradually reach his own level, be older, and more accustomed to taking a proper feed; the mother being more expert at handling him, subsequently he will take a full feed each time and not wake up in the night.

"When a mother goes home she is advised to give the last feed as late as possible, and if the baby wakes a short time before the feed is due in the morning to feed him. In this way most babies invariably sleep through the night.

"Feed on demand not only gives a contented baby, but a happy and contented mother (and father!). We all know the mothers who have had broken nights' sleep for many months, and have tried to satisfy the baby with water; we know how this has caused severe mental strain and perpetual tiredness which has resulted in discontinuing breast feeding. The extra stimulation, too, is helpful in the producing of more milk, since demand creates supply.

"The baby develops a sense of security from the continual close and intimate contact with the mother who handles her baby gently and lovingly. It is now recognized that an important item in the treatment of children is '*love t.d.s.*', and if this method is approved and used by the pædiatricians amongst sick children, surely we cannot do better than to begin this on DAY 1.

"The birth is not really a dramatic beginning, but is a continuance of its life; hence, when it is born we should aim at making this transitional period as gradual as possible, preserving the continuity which has existed from early embryonic days to allow the baby to adjust itself to these changes in the environment."

It should be added that M. A. Kegel's provisos, demonstrating a dubious sense of values, include "providing it (nursing the baby a short time after feeds) does not interfere with ward routine". However, this hospital leaves babies with mothers day and night, and on the whole seems to be quite outstandingly life-positive, if the matron's views are implemented.

As our third piece of evidence, here are the findings of the extensive research carried out by Drs. Aldrich and Hewitt at Rochester, U.S.A., which, although they have some very serious shortcomings, are most instructive. 668 babies were studied through their first year of life. Ninety-six per cent. of them had been born in one hospital. The feeds of a hundred of them were charted according to the information given by the mothers at weekly meetings. Forty were breast-fed and sixty bottle-fed:

"From these figures it is clear that both the precocious babies and the slow babies would have been out of step with the traditional feeding intervals, so that since these two divisions represent a large proportion of the hundred group, it is clear that the prescription of set schedules, without regard to observed individual rhythms, must give rise to conflicts in feeding matters, which represent the babies' basic feeling of security and pleasure. . . . Less than one per cent. presented problems of appetite. . . . Growth was not impaired by this self-regulating method of feeding."

A very important conclusion is that "mothers . . . seemed to have little difficulty in recognizing when their babies were hungry". It

is just doubt of this which is held to be a valid reason for suspecting the efficiency and practicability of self-regulation. (See for example the article on infant feeding in the *Medical Times*, already quoted.) It is true that the mother may have some doubts at the beginning, with the first child, but an orientation towards the baby's needs soon tends to make her more sensitive and aware. As a general rule, feeds are not likely to be needed more frequently than two-hourly. If the baby cries more often, it probably just wants love without milk. Perhaps love is lacking from the feeds or the last feed was a tense one.

This indeed touches upon one of the major virtues of self-regulation. When the child needs extra love or food he can get it if it is possible, and the many insecure babies born in hospitals and then subjected to ruthless routines will need a varying amount of extra love and contact with the mother to make up for the loss and to counteract their insecurity. Only with self-regulation can they show how much they want, and only so can one tell whether it is possible to give them all they want.

Self-regulation is not an ideal. It is an attitude. This allows for numberless modifications imposed by circumstances, society and our own tense character-structures. The harm done by these can be minimized if from time to time one considers carefully whether one is allowing the child to regulate itself to the maximum possible extent. However, there are many parents who have not the capacity to allow, believe or exercise self-regulated breast-feeding. It is clear that it is a tense mother who will want to get the feed finished, and yet it is just her baby who will want to suck on and on, because, though he may get milk, love is not flowing . . . and he sucks for it, on and on. One cannot escape the sad truth that not everyone has the capacity to do something really useful with the idea of self-regulation. There are some one cannot persuade, however strong the case and lucid the exposition. To understand this we must remember that we are dealing with a relationship. It is revolutionary to suggest that the child is giving to the mother as well as the reverse. But once we realize that the flow of love and energy is as real as that of milk, it is feasible that the pleasure the mother feels is "given" by the baby. The mother who is emotionally incapable of feeding the baby cannot stand the feelings of pleasure. Such "pleasure anxiety" is more usually associated with the sex-life of adults, but it can be as real in birth and breast-feeding.

Recommendations

1. When at first there is no milk, or only the minimum of colostrum, sucking is as important as at any other time.

2. If you enjoy breast-feeding, resist all attempts to terminate it before the milk dries out. Heal cracked nipples and meet all other difficulties. ("Love is not love which alters when it alteration finds"!)

3. Feed the baby for as long as he wishes to suck.

4. If the baby refuses the milk and cries bitterly, try to remember whether you have eaten anything that may not be to his liking—but stay relaxed and let yourself flow towards the baby.

5. When the baby cries, see whether he is uncomfortable with wind, fæces or urine, or whether he wants love. Especially when it is not likely to be feeding time (that is if it is less than two hours since the last feed), carry him lovingly up and down. If he does not stop crying, and it is more than two hours since the last feed, try the extreme comfort of the breast and its by-product, milk.

6. A baby—except for his fontanelle—is much tougher than is thought. There is no need to handle him like a trussed chicken, as many nurses and midwives do—but hold him very firmly, rock him violently to his comfort and delight.

7. If the baby bites your nipples you are most likely tense, or he is, because you or someone else (visitors?) have been so beforehand.

8. Try to arrange circumstances so you can enjoy the way the baby nuzzles for the nipple and grunts with delicious satisfaction on finding it. Let the flow of pleasure go through you, and don't be distracted.

9. Sit comfortably so that you may relax, or else you are seriously handicapped.

10. Beware of company, particularly relations, who create a tense atmosphere during feeds.

11. Learn to ignore advice, threats, old wives' tales, voices of experts and experience, booklets, textbooks, lectures and lies, and feel *with* your baby.

12. Bright yellow fæces are a sure sign that the baby is thriving.

CHAPTER X

FOOD

WE HAVE FOUND that it is one thing to accept, theoretically, the implications of self-regulated feeding and quite another to experience it. Little do we realize, until we encounter the desires and performances of our children, how much is traditionally "not done". Thus the descriptions in this chapter are designed to make it easier for readers, when the time comes, to face the utterly unusual in eating.

But first something must be said on the subject of weaning: whenever we open a woman's journal with a page purporting to help mothers with their baby problems, we invariably see an anxious plea such as "My baby is now five months old, should I start him on solid foods, and if so what?" The reply usually involves special feeding charts and all sorts of advice as to quantities, at which feeds what should be given, how to prepare, measure and so on. Or you may note the great variety of advertisements asking "Was your baby born last January? If so, you should give him" (and the implication is "*if* you are a good mother) "our food. It is specially sieved, predigested, humanized, etc., etc. . . .", and possibly also devitalized. The whole thing is a typical case of commercial interest satisfying a mother's anxiety about a natural situation in a life-negative society.

If a baby is used to having its food only at a set time, and if it is left to cry a lot before it gets it, then there may well be anxiety as mixed feeding begins. If, on the other hand, the baby has been self-regulated and breast-feeding has been a pleasure, its own development will soon show when it is ready to start on mixed feeding. This will of course vary with different children. Usually the child will find interest in the solid food his family is eating, if in close proximity, and then it is the easiest thing to mash finely a little of the more likely foods and try them out. The child can either spit them out or swallow them. If the former, then leave the matter for a day or two and then try again. If the latter, then the child is obviously ready for mixed feeding and, from then on,

the way is clear for a little mashed food whenever he likes it. This tasting stage was reached by our own daughters at the age of four or five months. In each case the food was tasted and obviously enjoyed. The child was eager for a new experience, and the guide to quantity was the child's appetite. What rubbish the books talk about a teaspoonful of this and that at definite ages. Here lurks the beginning of the dreadful blackmail: "Just a little more for Mummy." This is finely developed with the help of Popeye, his spinach, and many other myths, such as Noddy, currently fashionable. I well remember being told at four years to eat crusts that would make my hair curl. No doubt my straight hair is explained by the fact that I found a convenient ledge for my crusts under the table where they remained undiscovered for a surprisingly long time.

So much for the time and the manner of starting weaning. There are many patent baby foods on the market, supposedly specially suitable for weaning. But where a family diet is reasonable and includes, say, vegetables other than potatoes every day, it is easier, and, what is more, less expensive, to have a baby choose from what the others eat. The popularity of the patent food can only be explained by the irrational anxiety of mothers about their baby's food, or by the grossly unbalanced diets of most homes.

With regard to these tins of infant food, have you ever tried any yourself? We have. When Erica was born, in response to our announcement in the local newspaper, we received a great deal of literature from a large number of firms, just as we did in the case of Leonora. However, there was a follow-up when she was five months old; we received from a certain very well-known firm a tin of their much advertised baby food. Erica was already established on mixed feeding, so we tried this sample on her, not wishing to waste it. First she, and then we, spat it out with similar vehemence. If that is what adults think children like it seems not surprising that so many people have difficulty in weaning!

It follows that self-regulation is simplest if the child can do the choosing and the feeding. Thus we have given our children the (unbreakable) dish and spoon at an early age and watched how they used their fingers with ever-increasing discretion, how they wallow in the mess they make with great joy, how meal and play are completely bound up and interwoven. On the matter of appetite, as soon as a child has had enough he will show it unmistakably by firmly and decidedly pushing away the spoon-load of food.

And this he does to the bottle also, from the very beginning.

On the tray of the high chair a few foods of different colours, tastes, textures, allow him to make a choice. One gets to know a child, and while we have never stopped ours from trying new things, a baby chooses from surprisingly few items what it needs, as long as they are carefully selected according to its own previous preferences. Tomatoes and apples, home-made biscuits and bread and butter, jam, Marmite (a special favourite for months and months) and, say, lumps of brown sugar, may make a reasonable spread for a tea. As one can place very small quantities on the tray at first, replenishing the supply of any food eaten up, there needs to be very little waste or luxury. Occasionally the child will start with one food and go back to it after eating something quite different, so, unless the child asks or indicates in some way, food should not be removed.

If a household is orientated towards self-regulation it comes as something of a surprise when visitors gasp, catch their breath, dramatically point out, or actually remove what they conceive to be a dangerous mouthful—for example tomato or grape skin: we have found that in most cases the child spits out the indigestible bits, sometimes after chewing them for hours. In this connection one must note that much time is occupied with all small children making them spit out the pieces of coal, soil, stones, toys, leaves, sticks, coins, buttons, paper, card, nails, lids, cloth, keys, pipes, bottle tops, marbles, dominoes, pins, jewellery, belts, wires, screws, razor blades, chains, pencils, chessmen, tools, torches, matches, boxes, hairclips, to mention only a very few of the articles they taste. The fact is that the chewing is a really necessary function: maybe to help the teeth come through as well as for the pleasure of chewing pure and simple (as with chewing gum). For this reason it is not sufficient to get the child to spit out what may be really dangerous (although we have found our daughter chewing a pin, and a friend's child chewed a razor blade, both without hurting themselves): a good substitute must be found.

That children do swallow dangerous things occasionally cannot be denied. To what extent this is a swallow reaction to the "Oh heavens" gasp of the parent or grandparent is debatable! But it seems that, though it is preferable to choose things that are slightly too large to swallow, or things that will dissolve even if they are swallowed, chewing should in any case be regarded as one of a child's staple needs for a considerable part of its early

life. Leather and steel straps, as on prams, seem ideal for chewing. Penny, at six months, found a fruit gum her sisters had left behind and chewed and sucked it until it completely dissolved. It was obviously of a very satisfactory texture, hard enough to give satisfaction but not so hard that it hurt the mouth. The multitude of things on sale which are supposedly designed for children to chew are not good alternatives: invariably the child has to hold these in one hand at least, whereas a child, like the tobacco-chewing miner or gum-chewing typist, likes to do things with both hands at the same time. The chewing is just a background occupation.

When the child, often because he indicates the wish himself in a number of ways, gets promoted from sitting at the high chair to sitting by the table, there comes a most trying time for the adult. Children still need to select from a number of foods and are messy eaters. To impose adult standards of table manners takes the pleasure from their food and clearly creates anxiety.

A white tablecloth has got to be dispensed with, if reluctantly. But there are many attractive plastic cloths or finishes such as Formica on the market. It might seem that for the children to eat alone is a solution. There is much to be said in favour of this when it can be managed. However, those who cannot have the advantage that the children will gradually learn how to use various implements and will be able to ask questions. But it must be borne in mind that pleasure in eating is the criterion, and if the child is removed from the dining-table it is only because the parents have not the capacity to let him enjoy his food messily. Table manners are at that age quite an arbitrary thing towards which it is quite irrelevant to strive. This does not mean that our daughters are anti-social at meal times. They have all tried to throw food or eat from the plates of others. But they do respond to reason and, at the earliest stage, to a shaking of the head indicating "not funny", and then just being ignored. The game stops before long. (It's more difficult, admittedly, when the spontaneous applause and laughter of an older sister reward the genuinely funny and accurate aim of a two-year-old.)

I well remember cringing when I heard the mother of two-and-a-half year old twins complain that she could not get them to eat, and then, almost in the same breath, describe proudly how well she had taught them to use a knife and fork. It took a great deal of hard work to make her see that the two things were

The day before Penny was born

Erica, one day old: no taboo on tenderness

Invigorating birth: relaxed mother, aged 37, shows intense interest in the "crowning" of her third child (note relaxed hand)

Leonora six years: fascination of the garden next door

Penny two years: relaxed in the sun

Erica one year ten months: running

Nicola two years: winter clothes for small children are more difficult

Leonora four years: profound concentration

Erica: self-regulated children are vehement when unhappy

Leonora two years: taking pillow, bottle and blanket the children settle for day-sleep in garden or house

Nicola four months: a cardboard box gives good support

Leonora four with Erica two: the tolerance of a sister two years older can be staggering

Erica two years: children climb safely and deliberately

Respectively nine, seven, five and two and a half: life is worth living

One, two, three, four, five little girls

connected, and it took even more hard work on her part no doubt to undo the harm she had done.

Those who have self-regulated babies during breast-feeding and weaning will be used to irregularity. But when a child is old enough to feed itself it will take considerable self-control to prevent the parent interfering unnecessarily. The amounts eaten of a particular food, the mixtures of various things, and the succession in which food is taken are often alarming, breathtaking, revolting, disgusting, and utterly, utterly, unlike anything one has dreamt of before. If we describe some of the things which we found difficult to tolerate as beneficial to our children then it may be easier for others.

1. *Amounts of Foods Taken*

In 1946 Penguin Books published a revised version of *Common Sense in the Nursery* (to take only one of many similar books which have appeared in enormous numbers), a book by a Mrs. S. Frankenburg, mother of four children and a State Certified Midwife. This lady writes, "A sensible apportionment for strawberries is to keep strictly to age; a one-year-old child may have one, a two-year-old two, a five-year-old five, and so on." So much for common sense.

Leonora at two ate, on one occasion, over 1 lb. of strawberries (!) and many times since has eaten considerable quantities without ever showing any ill-effect, short-term or long-term. We were very apprehensive, it was after all the first child! However, we ought to have known better: at twelve months Leonora was left on a bed for a while unwittingly with the shopping, and when Mama returned to sort baby and shopping out Leonora had sucked dry 1 lb. of tomatoes! On that occasion we positively stood by for ill-effects, but waited in vain.

"But fruit is all right," say many, when they listen defensively to the tale of self-regulation. And then one has to tell the gory story of how Erica bettered Leonora's record of eating unadulterated fat: almost a quarter of a pound of margarine, out of her fist, quite neat, on top of that all the fat meat on the table, and finally spoonfuls of very fatty gravy. This sort of thing happens frequently and is far more difficult to watch than the consumption of large quantities of fruit! This hunger for fat occurred every winter in some of the children. It really seemed incredible that no harm should come to a child eating to such seeming excess. Yet it caused

no harm whatsoever. It must have been needed and is no doubt partly responsible for their good health and lack of colds. (Maybe it is not very different in effect, if in taste, from cod liver oil taken regularly.)

Other foods that have been passionately demanded and devoured in extraordinary quantities include carrots, cooked and raw, beans and peas with all children, and meat, milk and cider.

Nicola, aged sixteen months, enoyed the whole of a Lyons' threepenny ice-cream plus cornet without any ill-effects whatever. The volume of the ice-cream is a cylinder $1\frac{1}{2}''$ in diameter and $1\frac{1}{2}''$ in height. She also devoured at twelve months most of the skin of an orange, leaving the fruit itself—again with no ill-effects.

It is often assumed that gristle and fat will be disliked by children. Ours have always shown a special liking for these things. Leonora changed only when, for various reasons, she copied the usual attitude in other children. They chew them with the greatest ferocity and enjoyment, and in vast quantities. Bacon rinds have always been specially attractive, although long pieces get harmlessly stuck quite often. It is possible that dislike of tough and chewy things has much to do with insistence on table manners, in which case anything which is difficult to manage becomes unattractive.

2. *Mixtures of Food*

It is perhaps easier to witness and allow the consumption of large quantities than to be party to some of the concoctions into which children mix drink and food. When one is quite sure that all the food is wasted, they often set to and devour the stew or brew with a relish quite unlike that usually found at the dinner-table. Some mixtures are, rather like successful recipes, prepared time after time. Sardines with diluted orange juice; a mixture of cocoa, jam, Ribena and tomatoes; vegetables eaten with a spoon from a dish of milk, these are some of the things we have learnt to appreciate (for the child only—not for ourselves!), as tolerant people before us have learnt to appreciate caviar or rice, though previously unknown to them.

Recently I was annoyed when delicious chicken soup, cooled with a little milk, was "messed up" by Erica or Penny who added apple sauce in an off-hand sort of way and then went on to eat some bread and jam, or something similar. I could hardly contain my sermon about wasted food any longer, when to the

astonishment of even ourselves, Erica ate with relish, unaware of our thoughts, the whole concoction to the last drop.

3. *Sequence of Foods*

Rules and expectations do not cover the actual sequence in which children like to eat and drink. This suggests that it should be possible for a child to eat courses when they are ready and demanded. To insist on bread before cake and potatoes with meat is quite pointless in self-regulation. Again and again our children have left the food popularly regarded as attractive (biscuits, cake, jellies, chocolate and even ice-cream) and eaten bread and tomatoes, or foods generally regarded as less attractive.

It is well to bear in mind—for our upbringing tends to stop us from looking at many of these things rationally—that to eat the peas, carrots, beans, etc., raw, a few minutes before they are cooked, is no worse than most hors d'œuvres, and the almost mystical desire to see the food eaten exactly at meal-time has no rational foundation. One even finds that parents who forbid the raw stuff persuade the children to eat the unwanted cooked stuff twenty minutes later!

The fetish of eating at meals only, of not spoiling the children's appetite by letting them eat in between, has also been exploded. As long as a fair choice is available, and food and meals usually ready when the child is hungry, there is hardly ever any need to tell a child it cannot have something because it's too near dinner. And experiments have shown that children nibbling all day long do very well.

Below are listed some menus typical of those often eaten by Leonora at the age of about two. They should be compared with what is ordinarily prescribed for such children for tea; for instance, meals suggested for children from eighteen months to five years in *Health and Education in the Nursery* by V. E. M. Bennett and Susan Isaacs: "milk 6-8 oz., bread 1-3 oz., fat ¼ oz." (this compares oddly with the ¼ lb. Erica has sometimes eaten), "cress or lettuce; cake or biscuits, 2-3 oz.; jam, sugar, syrup or honey ½ oz." (this seems far less than our children have always eaten).

Specimens of Leonora's Tea Menus, eaten in the order given:

1. Chocolate
   Sardines with orange juice
   Bread and butter (eaten separately)
   Toast dry

2. Raw peas
   Bread, with lots of crab-apple jelly (say 12 teaspoonfuls)
   ½ egg
   One glass of gooseberry juice
   Four bacon rinds
3. Chocolate
   One whole tin of sardines
   Lettuce
   Tomatoes
   Ice-cream
   Bread and honey
4. Four biscuits
   Much very fat meat
   Bread with lots of strawberry jam
   Cauliflower stalks of half a cauliflower
   Diluted cider
5. Raw peas
   Glass of milk
   Cheese (Cheshire)
   Cooked beans
   Meat
   Strawberries and cream

It must be understood that all the above were enjoyed and had no ill-effects whatsoever, and that for a food to be mentioned a fair quantity must have been consumed, e.g. bread. In most cases all the foods mentioned were available with some others at the same time. And in many cases one food would be taken while there was some left of the other kind, e.g. when bread was eaten in menus one and three there was still some chocolate left.

The question of waste is a pertinent one. We have developed quite a technique of rescuing rejected food. The children soon realize what they will not want and give it with relish to one of us or to each other. Thus a considerable amount of exchange takes place. At one time Leonora rejected her meat regularly, and no sooner had she said she did not want it than Erica, just two, yelled: "I have it pleash." The "please" is something they have picked up from us without anyone ever suggesting it or mentioning it. Nicola at twenty-two months says in a moving off-hand manner "thank you muuuch". This is a pointer to the whole problem of table manners. One of the first things Erica said was "Esh pleash!"

And how those who teach table manners labour at all ages to make children learn these things! But it is by no means true that our children *always* say please and thank you.

However, to return to waste, it cannot be avoided altogether. Even the most hardened parent does not feel like some of the mangled morsels left at times by his offspring. It is then one must beware of the widespread notion that food not eaten is wasted, whereas what is painfully stuffed into full guts, with a feeling of disgust, is doing good. It took us some time to see that to overeat is worse than to leave some and "waste it". For, in the first instance, the food may act rather like poison, quite apart from the psychological aspects of making children anxious about not finishing when they feel they should, to please mother or father or God in Heaven.

Those who have experienced such shortage of food that any food at any time was precious, may well feel righteous indignation. But the principle is irrationally applied if that condition no longer exists or threatens. A child, in households where food can be obtained in reasonable quantities, experiences his meals as a delightful special playtime. Finish, why? And what for? (The starving Chinese are, after all, the concern of the adult, and he is not a very inspiring example. "Mummy, why does it say in the newspaper that potatoes will be dumped if Mrs. Jones can't afford them?")

Cruel advice about the duration of children's meals is dished out freely. This, like the whole question of eating, can only be understood if the meal is seen also as play, with all the ritual and experiment and conservatism that go with it. We must remember that most of us eat too fast. It was one of our joys to see Leonora linger over her food, munching and chewing with relaxed pleasure, while, all too often, Paul has thrown his back without joy, compulsively. And if ritual at mealtimes for a child seems queer at first, then contemplation will soon show any adult that his own life is absolutely full of it. Thus Leonora would cry out, as a Mohammedan watching a shoe-clad unbeliever disgrace his place of worship, if her bread was unevenly cut. The detail of feeding, the place on the plate, the kind of plate, all these things may be, in the child's play world, of great importance. Some adults are blind to this: Mrs. Frankenburg on page 47 of her book, writes: "It is very bad training habitually to allow food to be left. A very small child who is obviously daunted by the amount still

uneaten may be helped by a little juggling at the sideboard. Under pretence of adding, e.g. a little more gravy, the bulk of the food may be abstracted, leaving one or two mouthfuls to be consumed for the sake of good habits. Even when the child shows any suspicion, which under three years old is most unlikely if the manœuvre has been skilfully executed, the remark 'Doesn't the gravy make it look like a little tiny bit!' will be all that is necessary to allay it."

But most children are very observant indeed; I cannot imagine any normally intelligent child being deceived by the trick, though it might well pretend to be: it would be to its advantage! The whole thing is a wonderful instance of an adult backpedalling on rules imposed unreasonably, and then rationalizing about it.

We are reminded of a memorable occasion when we had finished tea and, sitting around the table, Daddy spotted a sausage on Leonora's forsaken plate. The old ingrained belief that anything down his hatch is not wasted made him eat it. Some minutes later Leonora returned to her plate. Utterly aghast, the sausage indelibly imprinted on her memory, she asked with the trembling voice of one who fears the worst but dare not believe it, where it was. The scene which followed stands out particularly. Partly continual adult company, partly self-regulation, had made Leonora quite astonishingly reasonable, even before the age of two, when this occurred. Waves of rage, weeping, anger, despair and finally just heart-breaking sobs, with "But I want THAT sausage NOW!" shook the whole of her little body. The same sausage promised for tomorrow, lots of sausages tomorrow, apologies from a greedy, genuinely sorry father, all were in vain. It was, in fact, so fantastic an occasion that to remain serious was at times impossible.

Another aspect of feeding which seems surprising at first is the way children don't mind comparing food with fæces and all sorts of other things disgusting to adults, while they are busy eating it. Of a similar nature are the calm enquiries of our children about the animal they are eating. What part is it? Where are its eyes? Wouldn't it be funny if it were still alive? All without sadism. Father spotted and removed from Erica's plate a dead caterpillar, subject of shudders to so many adults. The following conversation took place,

Erica—"What is it?"

Paul—"A caterpillar."
Erica (with great force)—"I want it."
Paul—"Are you going to eat it?"
Erica—"No, I just want to look at it"—
and she insisted that it stayed on her plate throughout her meal.

On the few occasions when the children have been ill, it has been quite startling how easily they can bring up their food. The painful and exhausting retching most adults experience must be due to the tenseness of the musculature. Erica was very sick one night without even waking up.

Of their own accord, our children fast on some days of illness, ask for orange juice only on others and prefer a light diet until back to normal. Just as they manage to self-regulate in this sensible way when they are ill, so can the seemingly excessive fat eating and so on already mentioned be understood as satisfying a specific deficiency or need. Others have found that refugee children, having been without vital foods for some time, eat large quantities to make up. Salt is one of the things which children show a spontaneous need for. Apropos, Penny once found some spilt salt, tasted it, pulled an awful face, but went back again and again for more. Whether this is related to the little boy who, tasting beer for the first time, said "Nasty, nasty . . . more" I cannot say.

Chocolate and sweets, mentioned by many writers as problems, are frequently as much linked with emotional unhealthiness in children as pipes and cigarettes in adults; but children need a great deal of sweet stuff, and very often they do not get it in their normal diet. Even if they do, the emotional associations of the shop-bought stuff may be decisive, specially for children mixing with others. One should try, with the small child, to give him chocolate, etc., as part of his meal, lots all at once, for this does his teeth least harm. It seems we were not clever enough and Leonora, maybe as a consequence, has a couple of fillings in her teeth. Generally speaking, a temporary or permanent lack of love and security leads to undue liking of sugar. During healthy and secure periods sweets and chocolate are eaten in smaller quantities, savouries and fruit are preferred.

As for the romantic fascination of the shop-bought stuff, the prestige of it needs to be countered, as well as the actual craving for the rubbish sold all around us. It seems that here, as in the case of more obvious and quickly acting danger, the adults have

to take the initiative and protect the child from the poisonous food and drink that is served in the shops. This is nothing like the dieting of the food reformer, of course, for the child still has the immense choice of wholesome foods at home and in the shops. Thus our children have sometimes had a lot of chocolate and have sometimes, more economically, eaten enormous quantities of brown sugar, either neat or by dipping a bit of lemon or raw rhubarb into it.

Food reform faddists are of course bound to be opposed to the idea of self-regulated feeding. One sympathizes with their outlook if one reads, for example, this paragraph in the press, headed "Naughty? It may be . . . Bread, butter and tears":

> "Dr. Daynes claims [in the *Lancet*] to have found a link between canine hysteria, . . . known to be due to eating agenized or improved flour, the insomnia and depression that follow influenza in adults, and the sleep and behaviour disorders of small children after illness." (*News Chronicle. February 20th, 1956*)

It is important to realize the poverty of the diets which most children, perforce, do eat. An enquiry made by us in a secondary technical school for girls showed that the vast percentage had green vegetables only on Sundays, that fruit was rarely eaten, and that starchy puddings supplemented starchy meals. But how the food reformer gets himself into difficulties is borne out by two quotations from a book by J. Thomson:

> ". . . self-regulated meals may not be convenient, nevertheless they are the ideal arrangement so far as the child is concerned." (*p. 35. Healthy Childhood*)

> "If he prefers to cry, let him cry! . . . When he learns that crying does not bring a fresh supply of nourishment or a little extra fussing, he will realize after a few nights that it is not worth a baby's while." (*p. 42. Healthy Childhood*)

Perhaps we ought to give an outline of the types of food which constitute the mainstay for our eating. We bake our own bread: it is very little trouble and we find that, contrary to some notions, the children can digest wholemeal bread from the very beginning. There are always lots of vegetables, but only few greens are liked, it seems, by the very small. Carrots, peas, beans and tomatoes are much preferred. One should mention the

notion that cooked food has lost its goodness and add that, in the light of recent findings, it is quite feasible that goodness is added by cooking foods. Children, including those of vegetarian families, will usually not refuse, but rather enjoy meat. Of fruit, we have as much as we can afford, and it is always eaten. Cooking apples are, after bread, the main item of food. They are eaten, a stone minimum for the six of us each week (i.e. two apples a day) by everybody from the age of five months onwards, with the greatest enjoyment. They are eaten without the skin, which the small children dislike and which, during the winter, has often been treated chemically to preserve the apples better, but the apples are not grated, neither are carrots. This seems to us a silly way of preparing food. In having to chew the hard apple or carrot, the saliva has time to mix with the food which is very important as the first stage of digestion. Again, the biting and crunching of the hard texture is excellent and enjoyable exercise for the teeth, and keeps them clean. Fruit and vegetables are often home grown, and, for the rest, bought cheaply straight off the market, often wholesale.

In contrast to other aspects of self-regulation, the workability of self-regulated feeding is comparatively well established: the experiments of Dr. Clara Davis, Anna Freud and others, and the writings of Gesell, Aldrich, Buxbaum, Ethel Mannin, etc., show that a whole progressive host has recognized the ability of the child to choose the right kind and quantity of food from what is available on well assorted trays. For a long time they have thought with Aldrich that:

> "If we should find any of our family standing over the baby trying to regulate the number of times a minute he breathed, or showing him a better way of using his muscles of respiration, we might feel inclined to question their sanity. Yet when it comes to eating, most of us try our hand at regulation without feeling that we are doing anything at all out of the ordinary." (*Babies are Human Beings*)

Yet the extraordinary thing is that most of the authors mentioned do not deduce from this the general validity of self-regulation.

CHAPTER XI

SLEEP

HEALTHY CHILDREN know the pleasure of sleep and of the relaxation that goes with it. They will sleep, if we let them, as long and deeply as is good for them, just as functionally as they eat and breathe. The description of the sleeping of our children is a record of five organisms in conflict with a society regulated by the clock and composed of tight little families of individuals, with common accommodation but few common rhythms in their living. We have been on the side of the children, but nevertheless, inevitably, we did represent in many instances the very evil which we helped our children to resist.

This much has been on our side: In our case, student life and Paul's subsequent career as lecturer and practising architect allowed more freedom from clock-determined hours of work than would be the case with most people.

Broken nights are a threat of which parents expecting their first baby are endlessly reminded by those who take it upon themselves to pass on their own miserable experiences. It is true that to get out of bed during the icier periods of the English summer or winter, to carry a baby up and down in an unheated chamber, can sap a great deal of energy. But, as broken nights usually represent some need desperate enough to break through the child's sleep, which is often connected with the emotional conflict the child has with a hostile, anti-life society, it seems eminently worth-while to spend our energies in comforting our children, even at night, even when it's cold. It means that we put the care of our children first, before a host of other values society considers greater, such as the house that's spick and span, the dinner that's on time, the concert, play or television programme. Any adult has, of course, a right to all the above, but we regard a child waking at night as an emergency and so the ordinary activities take second place. Once this is understood we can often enjoy nursing the child better, even at night, even in the cold. If this sounds too saintly, let me add that at other times the exasperation

can lead to murderous thoughts and fantasies, far as these are removed from action when allowed free rein and not guiltily suppressed. In any case, no person of sensitivity could sit and listen to the crescendo and repeated climaxes of a baby's cries, and finally to the diminuendo of its sobs as it sinks into exhaustion, without feeling exhausted himself or herself and resolved to prevent repetition—unless either feelings or the urgent cries of the child are cut off. The first policy is only made possible by the hardness which emerges from such intellectual theories as "the child must learn that people are not running to its every cry", and the latter by closing sufficient doors firmly. But both occur.

At first babies fall asleep several times a day; as they grow they fall asleep perhaps twice a day, and finally they do so only in the evening. The term "falling" asleep rightly suggests that one has to let go and let oneself fall. Now letting go like that, we all know, is easier if one is secure than if one has fears. And further, most people can deduce that to love a baby is to give him security.

The very young baby has his feeds and usually ends up asleep, or, in his contented stupor of fullness, burps up his wind with some powerful rubs on his back, and snuggles down in his cot or pram "ready" for his sleep. But if he does not, then the new parent faces a problem, if only in our society. It is the answer which self-regulation gives to this problem which seems to us useful and correct. First let us follow those who believe in the "common-sense" attitude a little further. Examine the baby, they say, to see whether it is wet or has wind or other physical discomfort, and, if not, put it firmly back. But if it still cries? Then let it "cry it out" they say. After all, the psychoanalysts say that the baby is bound to have frustrations, well this can be one of them. After all, mother must get on, wash up, feed the canary or dust the mantel-piece. Others, who can't stand the cries of the baby pick it up, feeling indulgent and guilty at spoiling the child or not getting on with the work.

Against these two attitudes, self-regulation is a third. To achieve the security which allows the child to let itself fall asleep, more important than physical comfort is the need for emotional comfort, love. To hold a baby feelingly is to allow a warm flow of love to give pleasure to the infant as well as the adult. This flow of love is not a metaphor but concrete reality. If a child is held in an unrelaxed way, so that neither the soft feelings of love nor the flow are present, the difference in its reactions become, over a

long period of time, very obvious. Thus, when a baby has finished its feed and is not ready to go down, we have found that the baby wants love. And it seems reasonable to cuddle and carry it in whatever way will stop him from crying. Then in your arms he falls asleep, and this does not become a "habit" to be avoided. If it recurs, then the need has recurred and why not, indeed? Like meals of food these times of mutual flow of love, of the first social relationships of the baby, carry on until other functions take their place, quite smoothly and spontaneously. To some it is amazing that our children should have wriggled to get out of our arms and indicate that they don't want to be carried any more, because they have had enough of it. But that is just what can and does happen with self-regulation. Snug in the cot, the baby lies replete with love and snoozes.

We find that the myth of "habits" and "training" rears its ugly head with greater determination here than in any other place. Yet, "Let him cry it out" means "Let him feel nobody cares for him"; "If you pick it up it'll get spoilt and have you on a string" disregards, ironically, the fact that until recently the baby was attached to the mother, literally, *by a string* and that it might well need to go through the separation gradually. Alas, to allow that flow towards the baby which really feels like love and pleasure requires the adult to be really relaxed towards the baby. And if there is chronic tension or envy or jealousy of a child, or temporary estrangement because we are thinking "I wish I could put you down, you little devil", or "Oh dear, I wish you'd let me get on with the work", then the baby feels, instead of love, the tension of hate or anxiety, and he may feel worse than before, not comforted at all. In other words, if picking up the baby is going to make the mother very tense, then, sad as this may be at times, it may be better for him to cry alone than to experience the hate and anxiety of the mother directly. To pass a crying child from a tense person to a relaxed one, by whom it is instantly comforted, illustrates our point admirably.

All this should lead to the happy realization that where there are two parents available there is always the chance that, if and when one is tense, the other may have the capacity to relax to the child. And this can be a great boon to the family, but one must be aware of one considerable difficulty, which is this: when a mother feels tense towards the child she also feels guilty at not being able to answer its needs. She therefore denies its need. Mothers

who approve of self-regulation may trot out at such times the most idiotic repetitions of meaningless arguments, overheard or read, of the "spoil the child" variety. And so, too tense and guilty to give in, they deny the capacity of, say, the father to help out. We know very well that it takes more strength and insight to pass a howling baby to another because of tension in oneself, than it takes to continue to carry the child, or just put it down. But if one overcomes the reluctance to appear weak and tense and inefficient, it is always eminently worth-while. It is therefore also well worth-while to watch oneself for the symptom.

You may think that to carry a baby for hours is quite impracticable or impossible, but, on the one hand, how many things are more important than a contented child? and, on the other, the more content your child becomes the less carrying he is likely to need. One learns to do most things with a baby in one hand, if one tries, and surely it will not be long before somebody manufactures an elegant and efficient counterpart to the shawls which attach babies to mothers in many of our slums, leaving both arms of the mother free (it is not suggested that such a thing should be worn as a matter of course, but only when the baby wants the mother's proximity). To carry a baby and love it better is the simplest remedy for any ill, and one would think it ought to be available to all at any time. But this is not so. All the talk and writing about so-called "sleep habits" is almost valueless if the basic influence of tension from the outside world *and* the inside world of the family is not taken as basic.

The character-structures of children differ. And so does their tendency to "catch" tension and fear, which stop healthy, deep sleep. In our society lots of tensions and fears impinge almost inevitably on most children (bad births, tense parents, relations' visits, etc.). It follows that it must be expected that children *will have disturbed sleep*. That is normal in our society. It does not of course apply to all nights or times.

The insensitive, heavily repressed child may well sleep its shallow sleep more regularly, leaving his parents undisturbed for longer periods. He will also need more sleep as the quality of his sleep is more shallow. Also, the exhaustion involved in many a baby's battle with the rigid-clock-conscious or bad-habit-forming-conscious mother necessitates for the poor mite longer periods of recuperative sleep than those required by the baby growing up without basic frustration of its needs. The continually frustrated

baby often gives up crying, because it's no good, and chooses apathy, as one of the countless ways open to the organism to conform, yet survive. Thus, beware of envy of those whose children sleep as they want them to sleep. Have a very close and careful look at the child's face and at the whole life of that family before you come to any conclusions.

The experiment with our children with regard to sleep is, as in other aspects, doubly instructive. We have Leonora, whose birth and first week in hospital made her a child typical of our society, insecure, and with a poor, comparatively unfeeling relationship with her mother immediately after birth. The others, self-regulated from the beginning, had the warmth and emotional security that come with a healthy birth. They had to meet hostility from the outer world only at a later date. Leonora met the anti-life orientation and insensitivity of our institutions at the very start. It is this, we believe, which is directly related to the fact that today, when Leonora is nine years old, she is still the only one who does not like to be left to go to sleep after she has been kissed good night. She very much wants people to come up every quarter of an hour or so if possible. And because we regard this need seriously, and go to her when possible, she can do without it half the days of the week, when it is not easily arranged.

Born in hospital, for the first week of her life her sleeping habits were outside my control; when the babies cried they were removed to the "night nursery". I do know she spent a considerable part of the night awake and crying, because the rule of "no night feed" was strictly enforced in that hospital. Also the nurses were very fond of saying that we should not rock the slung cots during the day, as we were making a habit which would be impossible to break—that of being rocked to sleep. This, like all the very many subsequent "undesirable" and "unbreakable" habits in which we indulged Leonora and the others, ceased quite gently as the need for the "habit" subsided. The theory that a habit must stick is utterly, dangerously false. There was one feature of Leonora's early sleeping pattern which did not occur with the others: extreme sensitivity to being put down. She would fall asleep over a feed, and the very second her head touched the pillow she would almost spring awake with great anxiety. This we put down to the shattering effect of her removal at night in the hospital.

After a very few weeks, during which she became to some

extent secure, she settled down to a handy routine, sleeping from 11.30 to 5.30 a.m. as her long stretch. By the time she was a year old she was sleeping soundly all night, but her actual bedtime varied from five o'clock to seven o'clock. The criterion of the quality of her sleep was the tension in the house. Certain visitors always brought with them disturbed nights and that was also the case with Erica and Penny. Before Leonora could talk I would watch for familiar signs of tiredness and then put her to bed. After she could say a few words, at a year or so, it became a simpler matter. She would say "bath" or "bye-bye", intimating that she was ready for bed, but she often took a long time to go to sleep, nor would she go to sleep alone. One of us always sat with her until she dropped off. "Leave her to cry" was the ill-advice of many.

We have no doubt that my unconsciousness at Leonora's birth was a distinct if indirect factor in this reluctance to go to sleep alone. I did not have a good feeling relationship with her at this time, and it was not until she was four years old that the relationship did in fact become established on a relaxed and full basis. However, once asleep, she slept well and cut her teeth, like her sisters after her, without any of the traditionally disturbed nights.

At fifteen months there began another period of disturbed nights, and in retrospect one can see clearly that this coincided with three factors: (*a*) I was doing a full-time job and had a full-time nursemaid at home, (*b*) I was at the beginning of a new pregnancy, (*c*) there was a sudden spell of very cold weather. The nights were so regularly disturbed that Paul and I took alternate "duty" nights so that we could be assured of sleeping alternate nights. This went on until one evening I wrapped Leonora into an old blanket so that I could carry her in warmth. I could not easily disentangle her when asleep so I put her down and she slept all night! From then on she was put down securely wrapped in the same blanket every night and she slept wonderfully. (The blanket had to be washed daily!) This is a good example of how a technical point can be of great importance—the woollen blanket must have given security and comfort in a basic sense.

The tensions created in the household by the last stages of Paul's architectural thesis again disturbed Leonora's sleeping. That it was in fact this tension which was at the root of the trouble was shown in a unique way: the four nights after the thesis had been given in she slept for fourteen and a half hours each night

without a break! This was unprecedented; she had never done anything like it before or since, nor have the other three.

Leonora never slept from 6 p.m. until 6 a.m. as is supposed to be correct for small children. She slept, roughly, from eight to eight and we found this far more convenient, too. We read with interest that Portland Mason, the daughter of the film star, slept "at the age of nine months from twelve midnight to twelve noon and throve on it". It is also relevant that many Italian and French children stay up until their parents go to bed, and seem to suffer no ill-effects. When Leonora was nearly three, however, there came another disturbance to her sleep from outside the family, so serious that it is described in the chapter dealing with therapy.

When Erica was two, Leonora went to bed at the same time. This was a compromise, but there was the big proviso that Leonora could get up again once Erica was asleep. Erica invariably went to sleep within five minutes, Leonora sometimes did and sometimes did not. On those evenings on which Leonora got up again she was not in the way. She would sit happily and "read" or draw until she felt tired and then she'd *ask* to go to bed.

At the time of Penny's birth Leonora had just been cured of her night fears. We had told her she would be the first to see the new baby, but that she should not come in until the baby was born and the mess cleared up because she'd get in the way. This she accepted in a straightforward way. The actual result of this acceptance was nevertheless astonishing. Penny was born so early in the morning that it was pitch dark. Curtains separated the dark hall from the lobby which led to Leonora's room. And there, behind the curtains, in the darkness, was Leonora, emerging about twenty minutes after the birth (before the complications of the afterbirth had come to a climax). She said she had heard the baby cry so she knew it had been born, but that had been a long time ago and she was sure the mess would be cleaned up now. True enough, the baby had made no noise for the last twenty minutes so the child had stood there patiently and unafraid, waiting for twenty minutes in the dark, with adults moving silently to and fro. Paul was moved to tears and brought her in at once. She was thrilled to bits that some of the mess was still about. The buckets of blood did not put her off at all. We can easily believe that, according to Danielsson, birth is a very popular free spectacle for all in the South Sea Islands!

After Penny's birth the pattern of the other two continued

much the same. Penny, as Erica, slept well. Her separation from her mother, if more dramatic, was less long, less decisive, less traumatic.

Things changed somewhat when Erica, at two and a half, did not drop to sleep so quickly and wanted to get up again with Leonora. But in the middle of the night it was quite different, just putting Erica back with a bit of love, from having to struggle, with loads of love and patience, with Leonora. Erica could always be left to go to sleep herself, changed into dry pyjamas and with a comforting bottle.

Now that there were two to keep each other company at night, that helped in going to sleep. Moving for the first time into a home where they went "upstairs" to go to bed, we transferred the bedtime read to the bedroom. We found that they were almost always asleep by the end of it. Recently Erica resented the read when really tired, but had not quite got it in her to tell us to go downstairs. So now we read for half an hour, and if after that they are for some time still awake we go, saying that we think they would not wish to be disturbed any longer. This, they feel, is the truth and Erica lets us go. Again no "habit" was formed by reading to them until they were asleep. Leonora only objects to our going when we have been particularly tense, and that happens in the "best of families".

But we have our achievement for the patience spent on Leonora, if only with the help of her most persistent demands! She is quite secure and happy about sleep, stays in bed whatever may happen in the night, or however wide awake she may become through it. We have "our little talk" when Erica has gone to sleep, about things dear to her heart. For a long time she said, "Night, night, see you in the morning, I will tell myself a story now." With this, the once insecure toddler, then not five, stayed in her bed till she fell fast asleep. What is more, when in the night she needed to go to her potty (in her bedroom, and under a seat specially made for comfort) she put on the bedside lamp, disturbed no one and got back into her bed.

The general pattern of the sleep of these three children shows clearly the main factors mentioned at the beginning as the aggravating problems. Outside influences and tension in the home are the disturbing factors of peaceful bedtimes and long deep sleep. Penny's wish at two and a half to play for two to three hours happily after, say, eight hours sleep, from 3 to 7 a.m.

in spite of all the efforts to get her back to sleep, were coped with far more easily when the family was relaxed than when tension reigned. I took her downstairs and, while she played, knitted, sewed, wrote or even on occasion did the week's ironing, or baked a cake. We are fortunate in being able to share the responsibilities in the morning, so that I can make up the sleep while Paul gets up with the children and looks after them until he departs at 9.15 a.m. We know this is, alas, not possible in most families; the "closed" family society is not functional.

These play periods in the peaceful, quiet night, with no interfering sisters have their special charm! And, when relaxed, the loss of sleep is easily made up. Then one wonders whether the night-time play is such a bad thing or habit, or whether it merely *seems* so because of the time-table tendencies of our civilization. The virtue of regularity is incomparable with the loveliness of relaxed life. Strict hours of work make this sound infuriatingly theoretical, but one can at least realize that these things influence one's attitude, and an attitude, as we repeat often, is all that self-regulation can be.

And when the outside world has done its worst, that attitude helps. When peaceful, secure Erica woke three nights running and was afraid to be left alone, a patient two hours at her bedside brought out that the little girl next door had threatened to let fierce dogs and cats into Erica's house to eat her up while she was asleep. This sounds silly, maybe, but the dog Erica knew best was as tall as she was! If you will imagine a fierce dog of your own height, maybe the fear will not seem groundless! Explanation of her safety made things better, but we had another idea. Eight months old, Penny was still in our room. The nursery is a very big room. We suggested to Erica that Penny be put in her room "to look after her". Erica's face lit up at once, and, two years older than Penny, she added with glee, "And when Penny is big enough she can make me another bottle when I need one in the middle of the night"!

And so they sleep, occasionally disturbed or disturbing one another so that adult help is needed. It matters so little when one is relaxed. It matters a great deal when one is tense.

It is the day-time sleep or rest that shows the virtue and existence of self-regulation best; all the children slept less in the day than the books say. From the age of eighteen months Leonora and Erica got their own blankets, cushion and bottle after lunch,

settled down on the floor, in the garden, or on a chair and slept or rested quietly. Nothing had to be said or suggested. This ability to decide for themselves, on feeling tired, that it is a rest they need, and the ability to go and have it is a wonderful asset, not found in the majority of children.

There was a striking example of this the other afternoon. The sun was shining brilliantly, after months of awful weather; we were all in the garden. Leonora announced she was tired and was going to the nursery on the second floor. A little later Paul found her, curtains drawn, electric light on, revelling in the quiet and peaceful atmosphere she had created around her bed. She rubbed one hand on the other in a way characteristic of her when she is enthusiastic and excited about anything, and added in a manner we expect from tired adults, looking forward to a slippered evening by the fire, "And now I'll quietly and peacefully have a lovely look at these books." After about an hour she came down to the garden relaxed, refreshed and cheerful.

During a particularly happy period of the family, Penny at two and three-quarters asked quite spontaneously to go to bed at the time she was tired, something like 6.30. The others, who were playing in full swing, played on. And this astonishing thing has happened from then on almost every day: when Penny first gets tired she says she wants to go to bed in a sweet, sleepy voice and co-operates in doing so in a soft loving way, as if she felt loving because we are responsive to her request . . . which is quite rational, too.

And then one day Erica, who sleeps in the same room with Leonora and who had always gone to bed with her, announced that, as Leonora kept her awake by talking once they were in bed, she wanted to go to bed by herself first and not have Leonora until she was asleep. Erica was five, and perhaps the most sensitive about missing anything Leonora had. So it was all the more astonishing that she should give up, through a reasonable approach of her own, a later bedtime which had been, because of neighbours, etc., something of intrinsic value.

We now have no option; we must believe that even families of young children can respond to self-regulating bedtimes under favourable circumstances.

In self-regulation one can be fairly sure that the child will have as much sleep as it needs. This is important. With our five daughters this has been less, considerably less when very small

babies, than that theoretically stipulated by the orthodox—and this, needless to say, in spite of energetic days. We can only suppose that the seemingly arbitrary number of hours that a child is supposed to sleep is based on observation of children who are allowed to cry themselves to exhaustion, so that the extra sleep is needed for recovery: children of parents, no doubt, who, as Aldrich and Aldrich will have it, ". . . lose sight of the true function of sleep as a freshener and look upon 'unconsciousness' as a virtue".

CHAPTER XII

THE SEX-PLAY OF CHILDREN

"FEAR AND GUILT are catching, so get rid of them before you begin to teach your child," says Professor Nixon in his foreword to a most creditable little booklet on sex-education by Sten Hegeler, called *Peter and Caroline*. This is good advice of course, but it does not mention how difficult it is to get rid of fear and guilt! The fact that this near-monosyllabic little book had to be translated from the Danish is a deliciously ironic indication of how hard it is to speak simply on sex! And the danger is that we fool ourselves. Consciously, intellectually, we may believe that of course sex is a subject, like any other, to be discussed openly and that therefore this shows that we are not inhibited at all. But to do this is to ignore Freud's discovery of the unconscious, which is not much influenced by intellectual thoughts and good intentions. We have seemingly moved far since 1925, when books that sold by the 200,000 declared that masturbation was "the result of a depraved body", "a loathsome, hideous monster ever feasting and never satisfied", that it is the sin which has caused more pain, more shame and more sorrow than all other sins united, and that its after effects include "Insanity, Consumption, Varicocele, Spermatorrhea (many meanings)". Now we get, even in respectable papers, glimpses of nipples, not just ankles. But have we really reached a reasonable attitude to sex, or are there still lurking in the unconscious mind reservations, fears and guilts? These would manifest themselves in inconsistencies and illogicalities in people writing on the subject.

And because we believe that even in the theories of the psychoanalyst these sex fears can still be detected, and because we believe further that it is necessary in self-regulation to be aware of the fears that exist in oneself, we intend to show at some length that even an eminent psychoanalyst betrays her unconscious fears very clearly in a very well-known book by just such illogicalities and inconsistencies as would be expected. If we get this across, then parents will find it feasible and not so offensive if we suggest

that their attitude to the sex-play of their children will also be influenced by their unconscious motives, whatever their intellectual intentions. Knowing this, they can be neutralized more efficiently. As this attitude is directly connected with approval or non-approval of the most strong pleasure-sensation in our life, it is of crucial importance.

The book, *Personality of the Young Child* by Margaret Ribble, M.D., first published in New York, 1955, is typical of the psychoanalytic approach. The author won widespread fame with her very progressive book, *The Rights of Infants*. The book we are about to study from the point of view of genital play and general confusion is described as "An Introduction for Puzzled Parents". It is a repetitive and very short book, the progressive strains of which are seductive and may well lure the parent into the belief that the author is wholly on the side of the child, life-positive and sound. The basic fallacy is found in the Introduction: "In the areas of sex and aggression, intelligent guidance is imperative. . . . Permissiveness without direction is as harmful as neglect." We have pointed out before that it has been shown through therapy and through self-regulated upbringing that aggression is not to be seen as parallel in any way to sexual drives, as psychoanalysts insist, but as secondary, emerging only if the need for security and sex is frustrated. And that frustration is not, as the psychoanalysts would have it, inevitable.

Almost immediately, and with the clarity of crystal, Margaret Ribble shows the contradiction one comes to expect from those who are irrational about sex. For although above she speaks of the necessity for guidance by parents, she says also on page 25 that "*Pleasure feeling is nature's 'all's well' signal, her criterion of rightness*". It seems to us that self-regulation follows logically from this. Why should guidance be needed if nature provides her own signals of rightness? Of course aggression, being a secondary and sick phenomenon, certainly has to be guided and dealt with therapeutically.

It is of the greatest interest to note what guidance and direction Margaret Ribble suggests. First of all we meet that very old friend, the taboo on masturbation, no longer threatening with insanity, but, insidiously, with something vague called "exaggerated momentum":

". . . when the parent shows neither embarrassment nor

disapproval, but rather smiles casually while gently diverting the child's attention and providing the small hand with a loved toy, the sensuous impulses will not gain exaggerated momentum nor will they drift into secret channels." (*p. 30*)

Why should the "momentum" become "exaggerated"? And if the drive is strong enough to do that, is it likely that provision of a "loved toy" will divert it? We don't think so. As far as the "casual smiles" are concerned, which take the place of "embarrassment" and "disapproval" (just like that, in spite of Freud!), we can well imagine the inane grins which perfectly plainly show disapproval to the child. Play may then well drift into "secret channels"! We are not quite clear, though, what these rather sinister sounding "secret channels" are. Is it not just a matter of the child loving himself in bed when peaceful, quiet, undisturbed and alone? And what is wrong with that? Children don't have to be guilty about secrets, as Ribble seems to imply.

Next comes the old taboo against nakedness (the italics are mine):

"The early intimacies of bathing and dressing together may be quite harmless [if shared by brother or sister]; if, however, these intimacies are continued without the presence of an adult, too much excitement is aroused, and the practice becomes *anything but a matter-of-fact* and casual sort of play." (*p. 34*)

What is necessarily harmful about that? We do not see that because play is not "casual" it is necessarily harmful . . . unless, of course, you happen to have a prejudice regarding the dangers of sex!

"He will soon become overinterested in their [the parents'] undressing, bathing and toilet activities. The unthinking 'sophistication' of some modern parents who sleep without nightwear and go about naked before the small child, bathe with him, sleep with him, is a powerful stimulus to *precocious sexual feelings* and fantasies which may get out of hand. Hence the need . . . to enjoy new play activities which are diverting. . . ." (*p. 43*)

Once again how can all this happen if "pleasure" is nature's signal that everything is all right? What are "fantasies" that have "got out of hand"? Surely fantasies are the best and right outlet of

anything that has got out of hand in the child's life, fantasies rather than reality—unless, of course, one is afraid of sex itself and so even of sexual fantasies!

> "The toddler who has become aware of his own body . . . quickly becomes curious about the person of the adult. He observes his parents caressing. He appears suddenly in the bathroom or the shower to look questioningly at various parts of adult anatomy. Creeping into bed with the parents early in the morning is an experience which easily *arouses pleasant feelings of excitement* in the child. These interests and activities, though natural and harmless enough in the beginning, may very quickly become exaggerated to the point of an 'addiction'. . . . It is important to romp fully dressed." (*pp. 45, 46*)

Again here are the contradictions we expect to find in those who feel unconscious guilt about sex: why should nature's "all's well" pleasurable feeling lead to "addiction"? Surely the criterion is whether the parents are guilty, or sexually unsatisfied, and not whether they romp nakedly or "fully dressed". But Margaret Ribble puts her taboo specifically on nakedness. Next comes some very odd advice about toilet activities.

> "The father had allowed her to come into the bathroom while he showered and shaved and had frequently urinated in her presence. This intimacy aroused in her an exaggerated erotic interest in his body." (*p. 111*)

This very special case is quoted as if it had general relevance. What usually happens is that children lose interest—unless they are excluded, of course—it is then they will "look questioningly at various parts . . . suddenly appearing in the bathroom or shower".

We have already seen that Margaret Ribble is a little chary about emotional contact between children and adults. There follow a few further instances of the irrationality of her arguments and her own guilty attitude to sex and emotions:

> "The quality of modesty and need for restraint of sex impulses increases as the school age is approached. When the attitude of the parents towards sex development has been frank from the beginning, when excessive fondling has not been indulged in (particularly kissing on the mouth), when there has been due regard for personal privacy and sleeping

with someone else has been avoided, the youngster will assume reasonable control of himself with a minimum of effort." (*p. 114*)

The implication is that there are things to control. What are they? Surely only masturbation and sex-play with others. Are we back again with the masturbation taboo? Why is this contrary to "nature's all's well"? And if the demands of society and strict schools are taken as so important, and if Ribble is really talking about adjustment to them, surely there is also the possibility that schools might adjust to the harmless natural pleasure feelings. As for kissing on the mouth, singled out once again for a special taboo, why not trust the child's "pleasure signals"?

There follows another queer deduction, popular with psychoanalysts.

> "Children between the ages of one and three who sleep in the parents' bedroom and are awake . . . when sexual intercourse is going on are stimulated in a way that is damaging to emotional growth. Older children may interpret intercourse as highly aggressive activity. . . ." (*p. 49*)

If intercourse is no mystery, if the child knows that after intercourse his parents are happier and better to be with, and if intercourse has no sadistic elements, why should this apply? Sadistic elements in intercourse are, in our society, widespread, and so it may be for us, and most people, reasonable to make love in private, but it is of the utmost importance to realize at the same time that the advice of Margaret Ribble is not generally valid. Why should the witnessing of pleasure affect children adversely? Do we deduce from this that they are to be excluded from intercourse in the farmyard, and are we back again at the stage where we drag the child from the street intercourse of two dogs because . . . well why? Is it not because basically there is a belief that sex is dirty and unwholesome? We don't drag children from shop windows of sumptuous food that, if eaten, would give them indigestion, do we?

Having given the little child a room of his own we note that it is not to give him freedom, but

> "A room of his own is an important aid in the further sex education of the child and in helping him in self-control." (*p. 51*)

What does this mean? Surely only the "God-is-watching-you" type of warning of the old-fashioned moralists.

It is important to see clearly the contradiction, and so the basic guilt in this approach. First, it shows clearly the difference between self-regulation and what is usually regarded as the progressive way of bringing up children which has "proved freedom wrong". Secondly, psychoanalysis sets up, generally speaking, principles of how much freedom is good for man. This has the most misleading results in a formative society, where creative experiments seek to change the environment and do not strive to adjust the creative child to a dubious society. These progressive people err sadly. They would not dream of asking parents to "gently" divert the mouth while the baby still wants to suck, nor to divert dancing, speaking, listening, copying in normal children, all of which are natural functions and all of which can be so used that they compensate, just as genital play does sometimes, albeit not as directly, for lack of love, security, etc.

Observing children carefully, one can learn of the variations in genital play even at different times with the same child. The combination of thumbsucking and genital play as compared with thumbsucking and hair-twisting is probably very meaningful. Again, self-sufficiency in loving can be distinguished from withdrawal: the child who is self-sufficient can change to participation in play with others instantly, whereas the child suffering from withdrawal cannot.

Genital play may be compensation for lack of outside love, security, company and (if the basic condition cannot be changed at once, and usually it cannot) then it is not a bad thing, but in fact the very best compensation available to the child to keep it balanced and healthy. It is quite wrong to try and divert the hand of such a child even "gently" with a "loved toy". Loving himself is probably a far better compensation for what is lacking than the "loved toy".

Our assumption that in sex, as in all other functions, the child has the capacity for self-regulation has been entirely vindicated at ages which, according to Ribble, should have shown the disastrous results of "lack of guidance".

To us the source of any danger is in the guilt feelings the parent has about things sexual, and the extent to which this is unconscious and therefore beyond his awareness. This may lead to an attitude which seemingly tolerates sex-play but nevertheless does

not. Even if it is only a vague look in the parent's eye, or his "casual smile", the child will feel disapproval. Alternatively it may lead to a forcing of the child into sexual things lest he miss what the parent himself still misses. Either would affect the child's capacity for self-regulation. A very positive, approving attitude to his sex-play is as reasonable as a positive and sympathetic attitude towards his other activities. I wonder why Ribble says that neither "embarrassment nor disapproval" should be there, but does not mention approval? However, in this activity, above all others, the hostility of the outside world must be taken into account, and only strong approval will counteract it.

Only if strong approval is clearly shown can the child really trust the adult when he recommends and explains that such activities are best kept for certain places, not because they are "not quite nice", but because others do not always understand the loveliness, innocence and pleasure of them. The basic reason is always, "everybody silly sometimes", and if he can trust the adult, then he understands and shows amazing powers of voluntary restraint. Far from diverting his hand hypocritically, the child can be approached honestly and directly. If, however, he is already insecure, then the therapeutic actions necessary to make him well are not likely to be simple, nor is he likely to be able to respond to reason or be able to restrain himself in certain company. But approval he will need more than ever, not the would-be-subtle removal of his hand from where it really wants to be.

If the child plays with his genitals in situations that he is taught are socially safe, e.g. the home, and not in places where there may be objections, parents should, however, anticipate the loud clear voice asking in all sorts of places "Is it all right to play with my wee-wee here?" The child may even think his way out of the problem of long times in boring places, there are other erotic zones! On going to a party one of our offspring reassured us, "I think I will play with my ear, they don't think that's rude."

CHAPTER XIII

CLOTHES

TRY TO WEAR shorts, as Paul has done, when it is really very hot and when, therefore, it is very rational to wear them—for in England it is specifically absurd to rob the body of the sunshine it can enjoy on rare occasions only. Try it, if you will, at a provincial University, in the coal mines, in a secondary school, farming, or shopping in a small town, and it is highly likely that ridicule and derision will be your lot. But if you have the capacity (weather permitting) to carry on in the same environment for some time, you may note that some of the scoffers recognize the advantages of acting rationally, and start wearing shorts themselves. This is the type of thing which has shown us the similarity that exists between young miners and university students!

The shape of clothes—even if we exclude the extremely grotesque and obvious perversions, such as the highest heels, and restricting corsets—shows, for instance, in the basic form of clothes for children and men, that, fashion apart, the irrational has firmly established its grip on our manner of dressing.

Modesty is not a "necessary function". But the nudist who goes naked to show that he attaches no importance to sex is also irrational. In other words, in his case the irrational rules the attitude not to dressing, but to undressing. Progressive people often feel that not to mind being naked, under any circumstances, is a necessary quality of the rational person. They ignore once more the emotions, and, in our society, these are clearly not to be ignored. The disturbing element is the inability of most people to feel comfortable in the presence of nakedness. Thus they either try to seem unconcerned, which they can only achieve by tension and artificial detachedness, or feel very deeply, nakedness being necessarily a strong experience if one moves constantly among clothes. In short, occasions for rational nakedness are rather rare; except within the family where it should be quite commonplace. And so clothes pose more problems.

Self-regulation can be adapted to individual circumstances,

and this is an advantage which becomes clear when those who have this attitude compare notes. Thus A. S. Neill finds that:

> "The biggest difficulty we have found with self-regulation is the clothing one. Zoe would run about naked all day long if she could. Another parent of a self-regulated child reported that when the day was cold, her daughter . . . asked for warm clothes. We have not had this experience. Zoe will shiver with blue nose and cheeks and resist all efforts to get her to put on more clothes. Courageous parents might say, 'Her own organism will guide her; let her shiver; she'll be all right,' but we are not courageous enough to risk pneumonia without knowing more about the incidence of disease, so we bully her into wearing what we think she ought to wear." (*p. 47. The Free Child*)

We ourselves find that in the matter of clothes the children can be relied upon to a very large extent. They love nakedness, but England is the wrong place for it. Recently when summer was the name of the season, the opportunity here in Nottingham to play naked in the open really arose once only. In fact English weather is so variable, so tricky, deceptive, changeable and treacherous that to rely on how the child feels, too hot or too cold, seems the only practical way to make sure it will wear neither too much nor too little. In other words, we have more trouble in other aspects of self-regulation. Leonora, at three, almost untouched by our culture, and untroubled by siblings, was altogether rational, though with five of them all sorts of disturbing difficulties do arise, in a number of contexts. But we are often reminded how little even we, who should know better, believe in the child's powers of self-regulation.

A few days ago it was pretty warm and all of us wore very little. Erica wanted woollens on! It seemed crazy and we pestered her until she gave way. Now we know she was sickening for tonsilitis, and was probably running temperatures and subsequently really feeling the cold. In fact, one might even say that had we left her alone she might have fought it off before it became acute.

For a full understanding of any individual child's behaviour towards its clothes, all elements must be borne in mind. Thus, if the only overcoat a child possesses comes from a hated or very

life-negative person, then it is more than likely that the child would much rather freeze than wear it! We feel that this sort of thing might be an explanation of Zoe's behaviour, but this, of course, in no way discredits her parents. To go with less clothes than we adults think fit may well be a good example of self-regulation. But for a child to insist on shivering, blue and obviously in discomfort, seems to us to be more likely not the result of self-regulation but of some disturbing factors unknown and not thought of. We need be no more courageous than Neill. The case of our children exposing themselves hardly arises; just as they hate danger, so they hate being cold—unless insecurity gives rise to unreasonableness in clothes, as in other fields.

We have had experience of this: Erica, who adores pretty clothes, has refused, infuriatingly, and consistently for weeks, the most endearing garments for the reason that they came from a person she disliked. Only embroidering her initial on them, or some similar device of identifying them with her person, made her change her mind. And, interestingly enough, when she changed it she changed it with glee; we had not in any way persuaded her; no, by "magic" the garments had had the evil spell taken off them suddenly, and, overjoyed, she could wear them now as she had longed to do all along!

It is the relatedness of it all that is the key to the solution of many problems: living and playing are almost synonymous terms in a child's waking life. Only by bearing this in mind can one understand the phenomena of dressing and undressing. For the parents it may be far neater, and, oh, so much more feasible, when at the end of an exhausting day the child just takes off his or her clothes and goes to bed, just like that. But this, we feel, is bound to be the exception. It occurs with us when the children are tired and happy. But mostly they like to have the most out of the day, and undressing becomes play. It's no use looking up the word "play" in the Oxford Dictionary, to try and counter our arguments. It is one of those words which the dictionary does not define properly, which the dictionary cannot define properly, like "life". The solution to the terminological puzzle here is that play cannot be defined in terms of any specific activities, but all activities can be "played". Play is the result of a certain approach, and that approach is the one most frequently used by the child. It is perhaps best described as activity without any conscious motive.

Undressing at night and dressing in the morning have also the symbolic importance of first steps towards going to sleep and facing activity, respectively. In our society many children, and we have found this is so with ours, often have things on their minds of which they are not fully aware, but which disturb them and make them resist the idea of being left alone to sleep: they know that they will not be able to relax and let go, to sleep, and so they may resist the first symbolic step of undressing until the nagging feeling has been dislodged.

Similarly, if the activities of the day loom unlovingly and unloved, in a threatening way, it follows that to dress and get ready for this agony will be resisted under many rationalized guises. Only understanding the whole of the child's life makes detailed behaviour comprehensible, so that one can influence it or help it when necessary—like Erica and the Magic Initials.

Where newborn babies are concerned, the tendency seems to be to overdress them. Ours wore a vest and nightie when they were born in the summer, plus a woolly in winter, and, when it became colder, they wore a woolly on top of that and were wrapped in a shawl when they were carried about. In this outfit they caught no colds.

Later (dressed in just as little), we were to observe the truly amazing phenomenon of finding the children uncovered, seemingly icy cold, and what is more very, very wet, in the mornings: they had thrown off the covers, again without catching cold! From that point of view I should like to touch on the subject of urine, treated more fully in a later section. It may be that the function of sleep can protect the child from catching "cold", but that the wet is urine and not water seems also to be of major importance. In the iciest of weather we found that, wrapped in a woollen blanket, Leonora slept right through, although the blanket was soaked and had to be washed each day. (As the blanket is ruined in this process, an old piece is suitable.) On the other hand none of the children caught cold through occasional exposure in the night. This, with one very important proviso, that they had not been much too hot before. And that is the way in which we believe nine out of every ten colds are caught: an overheating of the body first and then too sudden cooling, or evaporation. The next most frequent instance is in the drying of wet hair, again evaporation.

It seems very easy to keep a child under one year warm enough.

By the age of two Leonora was able to tell us what she wanted on, quite unmistakably, and little Penny, who was more advanced in most ways than either of the older two, could be relied upon, to quite an extent, at the age of sixteen months. Knowing more than 150 words, and understanding many more, she could say yes or no to a vast variety of questions, which was, of course, a great help. (For example, she managed to decide when she wanted to go to sleep. Carrying her lovingly, as I did a great deal at one time on account of her having measles, I found that she asked for "sleep" or "pram" when she had had enough of being carried, and this information usually proved correct. She stayed there and went to sleep. She had had enough of loving and being carried. Please note, those who believe in the development of bad habits through carrying a child!)

It seems to us that from this early age, when a child learns to express its decisions, irrational behaviour in dressing should just be regarded as the symptom of some disturbance, e.g. bad associations, even though these may of course be subconscious.

There remains to be said something about the kind of clothes we prefer. In all weathers, though indoors only perhaps in winter, the T-shirt must be mentioned from the point of view of practicability.

From the age of six months or before, T-shirt and napkin and perhaps vest and woolly are infinitely preferable to those ghastly, absurd confections of silk, lace and smocking in dress form, which many little mites wear to adorn their mothers! There is not only the patent absurdity of putting a garment designed for walking (a dress) on a baby who crawls, thus very seriously impeding its movements, but also the more mundane consideration of washing soiled clothes. It is here that cotton comes into its own, and particularly the T-shirt, which needs no ironing at all and dries very easily. It is colourful, very popular because comfortable and cheerful, and as cheap to buy as anything else.

I want to state at this point that we believe, sincerely and with all the realism necessary in the craft of politics, that to supply a washing machine to every mother on the birth of her first child, under the National Health scheme, is a desirable and possible way of improving the lot of mothers and children. It would amount to a minor revolution in our culture pattern to hear no more "get your hands off it, mind the dirt . . .!" Given a really good washing machine (say a "Thor" which spin dries), and even

assuming realistically that many others will still go on threatening their children, being unable to use the advantage of the machine for their good, and believing on principle that "cleanliness is next to godliness", there are many who would realize that they could then give vastly more freedom and scope for play to their offspring. In the evening his filthy clothes are less difficult to get clean than his skin!

It is worth-while to bear in mind another point. Many births induce trauma; and so many babies dislike intensely to have narrow things passed over their heads. In such cases, and we found this with Leonora, it is well worth-while to concentrate on garments that fasten in front, and things that slip over the head quickly, easily and loosely.

To quite an extent I make our own clothes. That does allow one to incorporate special designs, and it cuts down prices too. Favourites with Leonora and Erica have been corduroy dungarees (these, in combination with woollies, are far better liked for outdoor wear than overcoats—loathsome, inefficient things, restricting movement by their form, and far too heavy) and corduroy skirts which "spin out" (made from remnants costing four shillings on the local market). All this stuff can be washed in the washing machine and is hard wearing. Other popular garments are windjammers, brightly coloured cardigans, waistcoats and woollies. To use up all the remnants of wool in very gaily and variously striped cardigans has been a most successful and much repeated venture approved by absolutely everybody who has seen them. And general approval is a rare thing in self-regulation.

About footwear we have learnt less. We bought two pairs of the attractive sensible-looking soft leather shoes which have sole, heel and back in one piece. We found them expensive and dangerously slippery. Children like crêpe sandals—and the wide, wide fitting Marks and Spencer varieties seem as good, or as bad, as any other, but cheaper. As with men's shirts, the sensible thing has yet to be invented and marketed.

Socks too are questionable. We have read of the girl who abandoned wearing them and lost her constant colds. The theory is that wool socks tend to be too hot, and so encourage overheating. And cotton socks are mostly very damp, and lose all power to keep warm, they rather keep cold, once they have absorbed any moisture at all. Others will have to pioneer in this field. We have not forced the children to wear socks but they wear

them daily. What should be a very definite pointer is that they like running about in socks only. Surely the ideal shoe would be as nearly like a sock as possible, with a durable sole and upper, but probably it would be very expensive; it would mean soft leather, in fact moccasins.

School uniforms are another problem, but they can, like all other things, be relatively sensible or stupid: they may theoretically offend our longing for freedom, but on the other hand they do prevent jealousies among the children at school. Far more positively, they can encourage a feeling of belonging, which is a basic social need. As uniforms fulfil a need in children when they first go to school, they are the chief evidence that they "belong". Smaller children love uniforms (so do men and women who stay little children in that same sense of needing to belong to a similarly dressed group). As the school Leonora, Erica and Penny go to has chosen pleasant practical colours, as they prescribe the type of overall for all school activities that we might well have thought of ourselves, for it gives freedom to mix with their environment in an uninhibited way, and as, furthermore, they allow the older girls far more freedom from hats, stockings and in fact all aspects of uniform than most other such schools I know, we are well pleased. (Just as socialists and conservatives must learn to judge public schools and private schools not on political but functional and real criteria, so anarchists must learn to look upon uniforms worn by the very young as possibly a healthy phenomenon giving security through a sense of belonging when *first introduced to a large community*. If, later, a child wants to shed its uniform, as most children do, the problem may be greater and the anarchists right.)

CHAPTER XIV

CLEANLINESS

TRADITIONAL CRITERIA of cleanliness amount to the axiom "the more antiseptic the better". This concept, highly relevant to Lister's day of the widespread slums, when and where germs and filth had the upper hand and the people little resistance, cannot, in its purely negative way, apply to day.

There is more to health than killing germs, and to what extent cleanliness satisfies real needs, and the lack of it necessarily offends the senses of others, is an open question. For example, the incidence of polio has, it is generally accepted, risen with the increase of cleanliness, which robs children of the mild dose which previously immunized them. One cannot assume that, because deodorants are much advertised, perspiration (or even sweat!) are always evil smells. Conversely one cannot generalize, from the fact that one likes the smell of some people's perspiration, that the smell of others is bound to be pleasant or a good thing. The truth of this matter is, far more likely, related functionally to the whole organism, so that sweat may on the one hand be sweet, and the reflection of health, or on the other unsavoury when the result of unhealth. But all this must be related to the way the senses in our culture are extremely and irrationally refined. Thus one must not assume that a smell offending one nose is a bad smell for other noses. We personally like the smell of the muck-heap on farms. It may be that in others the nose is unable to enjoy it. Then again, one must allow for perversity in the liking of smells! It emerges, therefore, that the matter of personal cleanliness is one for which it is very difficult to lay down any rules. It is quite clear that an open mind and uninhibited senses are essential for any deep appreciation of the subject.

There are, of course, other views on health than the anti-septic one: Nature Cure Food Reform, for instance, is more functional, more life-positive, but still distorted and incomplete. In fact the variety of behaviour in existing cultures is bewildering. Our upper middle classes bath every day, and we know a certain gymn

teacher who really believes it must be disgusting not to. The Eskimo may not wash for a year: the country yokel, as Bernard Miles caricatures him, is embalmed in a fatty layer for the winter: the self-regulated child survives the most amazingly long bathless periods, during which he may not smell, and interspaces them with living in the bathroom. And many adults manage similarly, but hardly dare admit it.

We must thoroughly understand the function of water in washing before we can arrive at a useful theory, or differentiate between the function of the Japanese piping hot soak and the central European Spartan immersion into water, or between the devotees of both these methods and the sitz-bath enthusiast, who throws himself alternately into steam and ice, or their nearest liquid approximations. That all these procedures have a profound effect cannot be doubted by those who have indulged (though "indulged" may be a questionable term to use in connection with the icy bath of those who venture forth with pick-axe to make ready rivers for the rude immersion). They know the strong, invigorating and relaxing effects, even if these effects do not amount to cures for the specific symptoms which they are supposed to remove. All warm-blooded animals do wash, but the profound and complex functions and qualities of water are as yet unfathomed, and unaccepted by the orthodox, though some original and unorthodox work gives valuable clues.

One can divide people into two groups according to their reactions on first meeting grimy or soiled children: one lot is taken aback, the other is pleased and satisfied, as these are the signs of having had a good time. We knew a mother who praised a nursery school solely because when she collected her child he was in just the same spotless condition as when she had handed him over!

It may be that readers of this book are not concerned with dirty hands and dirty faces, dirty fingernails, dirty hair or dirty necks, as long as it does not arouse too much external criticism. It is, however, very disturbing how easily external criticism does make one concerned about these things, about which, in theory and on principle, one has no qualms. We have found that engrained prejudice in ourselves often rears its ugly head in rationalized guise.

We feel that the ideal, the practicable ideal, is to have the children so that they need not be averse to a reasonable plea for an extra special wash when cleanliness is necessary, as for a visit to a

very good dentist, whom it would be a very great pity to lose just because he is fussy about filthy necks, or for the sake of the family when clean sheets have been put on the bed. A really clean child is a joy to behold, when this state contrasts with the normal! But remember always, the function of a child is not to be looked at or admired for its purity and prettiness.

The whole business of cleanliness is divisible into a few main categories, and we will make our comment in relation to these:

1. Washing before and after meals and other activities.
2. Bathing.
3. Washing the hair.
4. Brushing and cutting hair.
5. Cleaning and cutting nails.
6. Cleaning teeth.
7. Blowing the nose.

On those occasions when any of the above are desirable one is more likely to be successful by making them pleasurable occasions, which the child seeks to repeat. *Play* is the manner in which the child likes to do things. Remember that *imitation* is a strong basis for play and can be useful in this context.

1. *Washing before and after Meals*

Our children know that this is a reasonable act: before dinner it removes grime that otherwise often comes off on, and actually flavours, food badly (small children use their hands a great deal). After dinner the sticky mess is quite obviously the sort of thing which bars them from many places they would like to use, so they co-operate in both cases on this basis. And if they don't, we know that this is a symptom of something else. Sometimes, though they understand the necessity for cleaning their hands and faces, they try and rush for the clean lounge, are detained by force accompanied, on the one hand, by their furious howling and, on the other, by the more or less reasonable voice of the parents repeating the nature of the problem! Let us stress that in our household such an event is an exception and has, we think, a worse effect on the parent than on the child. Self-regulated children seem larger and louder than life in all respects, pleasant and unpleasant.

2. *Bathing*

The bath is beloved by most babies. Ours were no exception,

but there were spells during which, even as babies, they did object. These periods, sometimes lasting for weeks, they survived to the great surprise of plenty of people who seem to believe, quite sincerely, that not to bath a baby daily is to kill it.

Very early our own children loved to have baths together in the big bath. We had previously seen the heavenly, devilish sight of three young children having a really good time in the bath together at the house of a friend, and had marvelled at the amount of splashing, ducking, waves and noise that the smallest one could stand. We have since seen the spectacle repeated in our own bath. Again we were astonished that little Penny and Nicola, at a year or less, stood up to the roughest treatment. As on dry land, they would never have allowed adults to treat them similarly without protesting in a most definite manner. But children lose their taste for baths, just as adults do. The reason may be cold bathrooms, quick unplayful washes (some crazy adults think the main reason for a bath is to get clean!), soap in the eye, unexpected cold or hot water, or, with really small children, the ferocious and raucous gurgle of the bath-water draining down the plug hole.

Leonora once heard it, at about two years old: her insufficiently patient parents had got thoroughly fed up waiting for her to finish her play-time in the bath (although we knew she had every right to it!) and in this mood the fact that she was suspicious of the plug-hole noise seemed to us, weak vessels, too good an opportunity to miss to end a long, long sojourn in the bathroom. Thus we lifted her out, as if ourselves suspecting the noise . . . and had several months in which to regret our foolish act. The child had faith in her parents. When they smelt danger it had usually proved real . . . so she was taking no chances with plug-holes! We finally got Leonora to get into the bath again, on her mother's lap!

We do not feel the daily bath is a sacred ceremony. But, given a warm bathroom and convenient arrangement, it is a very useful way of terminating the day: on the one hand, the child does get cleaner, usually an advantage, and on the other hand it relaxes the child and gives him that beloved play in warm water. But if the bath comes before bed, one must learn to gauge the right moment, bearing in mind that it is after the bath that the child is supposed to be in the right state of tiredness for sleep, not as he goes to it. The bath must be considered as an activity, and the suggestion of it, or the matter-of-fact, reasonable and routine-like

running of the water, should be in keeping. We speak here of children under six. At all times the child should be able to climb in and out by himself.

Without the warm bathroom, on the other hand, it is often better not to pretend that bathing is easy. All-over washes in front of the fire are just as easy from a cleanliness point of view, even if they don't lend themselves to play so readily.

3. *Washing the Hair*

Washing hair, especially the longer hair of a girl, is a fairly complicated business. Regularity and weekly washing are not necessary for a clean look. It is, for example, highly relevant that our children have been admired as clean when they have been in a phase of disliking water, and not having their hair washed for weeks. The look of cleanliness, it seems, is not related to washing alone.

When hair-washing does take place, the following technical hints have been helpful to us. They make it into a playful occasion.

(*a*) A mirror may be placed in front, so that the child can see himself both looking funny with hair soapy and, possibly, upside down, when he is having his rinse, "like at the hairdressers".

(*b*) His hair may be washed after his mother's or father's.

(*c*) *Very, very* careful gauging of the temperature of the rinsing water is important. It comes in great quantities on a very sensitive part of the head, and, unless absolutely right, gives the child a very nasty shock.

(*d*) Use of easily dissolved shampoo is advisable, so that not much rinsing is necessary. Vinegar or lemon in the rinsing water makes the hair slip out of knots.

(*e*) The occasion may be made into a surprise for somebody, say Daddy, when he comes in.

(*f*) The drying period should be as warm and as pleasant as possible, especially in winter, with a nice extra read or story by the fire and very careful brushing, rather than combing, while the hair is drying. This get the knots out most easily. An electric dryer is a wonderful boon.

4. *Brushing and Cutting the Hair*

The point about a brush being a more humane, if less exact, instrument for hair toilet is applicable for the daily routine. What

is more, we feel strongly that there is no need to get out every knot each time. The agony of combing one's hair when knotted is considerable, even for the expert and tougher adult. To a child, the only reason for hair toilet is that if it is not done it will be worse next time. Once he has had as much as he can reasonably stand, that reason no longer applies.

Knots can be gently undone by hand, and many of them dissolve when the hair is washed. Some work themselves out. Thus the torture of getting rid of knots of hair and jam, hair and honey, hair and mud, hair and sand, hair and butter, hair and gravy, hair and custard, hair and potato, etc., endlessly, is to a child pointless and thrice hateful. It can become one of those instances where the parents feel, falsely, that to harden oneself to the cries of agony is absolutely necessary. It is not, and if you do, don't be surprised if the child thinks you are against him. A self-regulated child will give you plenty of evidence that it is not necessary.

The choice of barber should be as deliberate as the choice of doctor. In fact, from the child's point of view, it is more important because he frequents the barber more and spends more time in his shop. This can, of course, be a most enjoyable time, always something new and interesting. Paul found barbers' shops fascinating in childhood, although he hated the actual hair-cuts. Why could adults not understand that, sitting there deeply absorbed, the sudden sharp "pull-twist" was torture greatly refined! The nature of the individual barber, as of the dentist and doctor, matters more perhaps than his technical proficiency.

Our hairdresser we know, like most, hurts the children occasionally, but unlike the majority, who try to ignore this, she tells them to hit the basin with a comb when it hurts. Paul's own dentist used the same technique. It's most relieving! It gives the feeling that all is under one's own control. It was quite a time before he realized that his dentist had no intention of stopping the drill if he put his hand up, unless it coincided with her wishes. But the feeling that he could stop her if he wished allowed him to endure very much more without becoming panicky or tense! By the time he realized that it was all a trick, he had confidence that he could stand the drilling anyway. What a good hairdresser can do can be judged from a recent visit when, having watched her three elder sisters having their hair done, Nicola, aged two, mounted the barber's chair on her own accord and,

to my surprise, for I had not planned a hair-cut for her, demanded with firmness "Me have hair cut", and sat their expectantly. So she had one.

5. *Cleaning and Cutting Nails*

Cleaning nails is virtually unnecessary until the children are old enough to do it themselves. Then they may ask for help if their clumsiness hurts.

Nail cutting can be a wonderful game of making the nails jump, one further than the other, trying to establish records. But here, as with the hair-rinsing, it is of the utmost importance not to hurt, and it is possible to hurt by cutting the nail too short. This seems such a deliberate act of cruelty on the part of the parent that saying "sorry" does not make any difference at all; it is out of context, rather like saying it to a man whose leg you have just severed with a hatchet. With babies we have observed that if their nails are not cut they break off in a very functional way where they don't hurt.

The reason for having nails cut, one which the children have understood easily, is that otherwise your hands represent too dangerous a weapon. All ours have suffered from unintentional scratching, which makes the point quite easily.

6. *Cleaning the Teeth*

This is a very questionable pastime. Seven years ago a good dentist warned Paul that in three years his teeth would all have gone because they were weakening at their juncture with the gums. He felt that this was due to cleaning the teeth and resolved not to clean them any more. He usually eats an apple or carrot last thing at night instead.

Eating a reasonable diet of raw stuff, apples and wholemeal bread, pastries and brown sugar, as well as a million things that food reformers would frown on, and without any change in diet at that point, the rate of having to have fillings, which had been most alarming, has decreased remarkably. He has lost one tooth only and that for a different reason. (The cynical dentist pointed out that as more and more tooth disappears and is replaced by fillings, of course the chances of getting cavities become less!) During that period of not cleaning his teeth, Paul was most concerned lest his mouth should smell. It has not done. Bad breath is always due to indigestion or eating something strong,

not to stuff in the teeth. In fact he has visited two dentists during that time and each one was told only after examination that he had not cleaned his teeth for years. They were both very much taken aback and said they would not have known. Then both remembered learning at the University that, of course, given a reasonable diet the teeth do clean themselves, and they accepted it easily, merely stressing the hopeless diets and the toothpaste industry as well established traditions in the land. Thus with the children we try to avoid chocolate last thing at night and have considerable assurance that, given a reasonable diet, things like the consistency of the water and milk etc. are likely to be a far more powerful factor in dental health than the brushing of teeth, which we believe can do great harm. To brush teeth efficiently is quite a difficult technique!

7. *Blowing the Nose*

It is the passionate, compulsive, painful, pinching of the nose in blowing it that puts off the baby when he is quite small, and continues for him as a frightful nuisance to be avoided. If one has the patience to treat it as a gently playful thing, blowing one's own nose in that manner first each time, then the principle is accepted easily. Thus all our children used handkerchiefs usefully from the age of seventeen months or so quite by themselves. One must add, however, that, when they are deeply absorbed in play, the nearness and handiness of the sleeve makes its use as a substitute for a handkerchief inevitable. This suggests very strongly that some sort of cotton or linen attachment to the sleeve, exchangeable, and perhaps fastened with press-studs, is a very useful auxiliary while a child has a cold, particularly as the inevitable losing of the handkerchief, whether from pockets, bags or whatever else is provided, represents the greatest difficulty.

For those extreme revolutionaries who say "Why not the sleeve anyway, without more ado?", let us say that smearing nasal mucus on to all and everything is a problem. And a combination of earth and nasal mucus, food remains and many other cementing agents, well mixed and conditioned for setting with a liberal addition of water, are as easily washed out of wool as cord out of corduroy!

CHAPTER XV

EXCRETA

D. H. LAWRENCE thought that we ought to use our forbidden Anglo-Saxon four letter words; in his opinion it was their proper use which would restore to them their common-sense and straightforward meaning. Wilhelm Reich, on the other hand, thinks that the pornographic meaning these words have acquired is a very real and essential one, so that this remains their correct use.

Whichever view we favour, we are left without a terminology for the other. We use "excreta". A. S. Neill uses "development of natural function habits". This shows the difficulty clearly, for when A. S. Neill uses clumsy terms, neat ones must indeed be hard to find!

Mrs. Frankenburg, in *Common Sense in the Nursery*, has this to say:

> "It will be found invaluable to have some special name for these processes, unknown to the general public. The child, too young to realize his elders' embarrassment, can cause them acute mental agony in omnibuses and other public places by using any of the usual nursery terms. But invent your own name, and you can remain calm while your little boy shouts in a crowded restaurant, 'I want Nathaniel!' " (*p. 58*)

For myself, I pity the poor child when left alone in the house of a new friend called Nathaniel, and would be less embarrassed if the child referred to a natural function in one of the more ordinary forms such as wee-wee, potty, biggy or any of the other terms which, because of their ease of pronunciation have taken the place of the Anglo-Saxon in many homes, if not in dictionaries. No real embarrassment is here involved, as compared, say, with Penny, aged two, pointing an arresting finger at a half-witted looking *homo sapiens* in a bus, and repeating loudly, again and again, audible to all, on a seemingly unending journey, "Monkey, monkey, monkey", with strong stress on the second syllable.

The language difficulties reflect, and are insolubly bound up with, the diseased attitude of our culture to natural functions. It is most important that we stress the need for self-regulation in this connection, and watch for rationalizations on our part.

Basically and rationally what can one say? Given a napkin, given, furthermore, the washing-machine or some other technique for washing napkins, given alternatively a floor which does not get damaged through soiling, there is no real need to get a child clean or trained, or reliable, or whatever you like to call it, while he toddles about at home. At night, wetness is rarely, we believe, the cause of discomfort. It is only in assocation with having to have a bath in the morning, spoiling the favourite pyjamas, or, far more often, wanting to please some adult, that the uncomfortable feelings arise. All our children, and many more, are the evidence for this statement. Children can lie in pools of urine which, in the low lying parts of the bed are lakes on the plastic below, when the sheet has been removed. They lie in these pools sometimes when they waken in the night, and although they may demand another bottle, which deepens the pool, they do not always wish to be changed or made dry. This is particularly convincing when they go to sleep again peacefully.

Giving a bottle last thing at night does not necessarily mean a wet bed. The amount of control that our children have shown is truly amazing, particularly as this is in no way enforced by us. Thus, during a period when Erica became dry for a week or so, then had measles and became a night aquatic animal again, we found that, during the dry period, she had sometimes had one and a half bottles before going to sleep, whereas, when wet, she may only have had half. It may be useless, as well as harmful, to discourage a child from having a bottle at night if it is resented and he really needs its comfort.

Thus before the child goes to school the reasons given for training are not normally convincing! We see clearly that all the hullaballoo, all the fuss, all the talk and discussions, all the competitive arguing of mothers in parks, all the bragging of the early house-training of children, all this is the direct and sole result of the excreta taboo of our society. Maybe you think we exaggerate. But even Mrs. Frankenburg can smile at extreme examples:

"I was once told quite seriously of a baby three months old

that squeaked once when he wished to pass water and twice for a movement of the bowels." (*p. 52*)

But, alas, she writes equally grotesquely herself:

"It is better for the child in every way that his bowel movements should take place at a fixed time daily. The whole human mechanism moves to a rhythm, and the bowels are no exception to the rule. When a tiny baby is held on the chamber at the hour when its bowels *should be moved*, it is a useful reminder to touch the anus with a tiny screw of oiled cotton wool. This may also be very gently inserted, and does not call for the same condemnation as soap-sticks and similar violent means." (*p. 56*)

Here we have the contrast to self-regulation. With her the body is a mechanism, the bowels "*should be moved*" (the italics are mine), and it is assumed that (correctly, if dealing with a "mechanism") the rhythm should be accurately regular.

Only careful consideration of the irrational roots will show the real reason for all the patent nonsense, and will explain why mothers find it necessary to train their offspring, some from the moment of birth, others not until a later and more sensible time, say eighteen months, when the baby has control over its excretions.

"The bowels are easier to watch, and by the time a baby is two or three *months* [italics are mine] old a dirty napkin should be a very rare occurrence. This depends entirely on the alertness of the adult." (*p. 56*)

And, one may add, this is not only pointless, but guarantees that the baby will develop some kind of anal complex.

"Beware of keeping the child too long on the chamber", this remark from the same book is relevant not only to countless infant hospitals where babies are tied to the bedpost on their potties, but the late Peckham Health Centre, where we had a rude shock to see the same thing done.

Mrs. Frankenburg has some sensible things to add, and to point out these discrepancies in her chapters is to point to the irrational attitude which prevails in spite of her wish:

"Largely owing to these mismanaged cases, there has emerged a theory that the child should be left entirely without guidance until eighteen months or even later—that he should be wet and dirty day and night and never be corrupted by the sight of a chamber or a word of advice. . . . The bad effect of the worry and agitation of the adult was confused with the innocent chamber itself, and thus whole families are now condemned to live in conditions more unpleasant and uncivilized than any birds or young animals in their nests.

"The important thing to remember is that the fact of a child not having attained absolute cleanliness at the age of two is merely a matter of inconvenience for the *adult*, and as far as the child's physical and mental health are concerned, is quite immaterial. It is the attitude of strain and worry on the part of the parent that reacts dangerously on the child, making a moral issue out of a very minor matter.

"If a calm and detached attitude is maintained, there is no reason why training should not be begun at birth—and every reason why it should." (*p. 55*)

In fact the only reason given in her book is that the human mechanism must be made to perform regularly. Yet she also says, "What is gained? Less washing. And what lost? Long stretches of undisturbed rest and peace for the baby's brain and body." And if she goes to such lengths as "oiled screws of cotton wool", then one can hardly believe that it is to her a "very minor issue" about which she can be "detached". Furthermore, as some who are condemned to live in so-called "worse than animal" conditions, allow us to say that, as Mrs. Frankenburg herself suggests, we find it, indeed, a "very minor" matter.

We can, then, broadly distinguish between mothers who live by the potty and those who don't. The former make their lives a misery "potting" an unwilling child at intervals, day and night. Their pride and boast is that he is dry and clean by the age of six months. Imagine the blow to their pride when, as invariably happens, the routine breaks down when the child is about fourteen months old—in spite of the fact that, according to Mrs. Frankenburg, the baby has been sitting on an upturned stool by the bed and "the child tied to the bed leg with a scarf and left to get on with it".

We, on the other hand, watched at that same critical period,

twelve to eighteen months, for the involuntary bowel and bladder movements to become conscious and voluntary. Thus one day, when she was thirteen months old, I saw a surprised look on Leonora's face, and then came the flood. From then on, matters were simple. We had had a smooth wooden box made with a round hole in the top and a lid with a shiny round knob, which children enjoy lifting on and off. It was a comfortable height from the ground, which meant they would be able to sit down easily so that sitting on or lifting off was unnecessary. It cost five shillings to have it made and, if going away for a prolonged stay, could easily be packed so that no difficulty occurred because of strange surroundings.

From this time onwards, whenever we went to the lavatory we took her with us and she sat down also. She very quickly grasped the association and enjoyed the whole situation. She also noticed our handwashing with interest. What's more, she clearly saw one difference in the sexes. In this way, by the age of eighteen months she went independently to the lavatory. At night, Leonora's potty was placed in her room, and she very soon preferred to be dry each morning and use the potty at night.

Here it is relevant to say that far too many mothers worry when their children do not have a daily rhythm of bowel evacuation. Our children vary. Quite obviously if one can trust the organism to eat the right things, then one can also trust it to evacuate waste products efficiently. We have found that the only time that the children have become constipated has been when they have become tense for some reason, and that this has been occasioned by some particular visitor. Then, on occasions, Leonora has contained herself for four or five days. At an early age there is very little waste in breast milk, making bowel movement rarer anyhow.

Erica's case was more prolonged, partly because she is the second child, so that we had a little less time, and partly because we moved to another flat where the lavatory was minute, and it was barely possible to get oneself in, let alone have a child in there sitting on a potty seat. Thus she took six months longer than Leonora to stop wetting her pants during the day, and, as we have described, she varied at night time, sometimes having a dry bed, and tolerating floods on most others, until at four and a half she became completely reliable and this, surprisingly, immediately after Nicola's birth. To her we often said "never mind",

until we realized that that implies "minding". So then we always said "clever girl" and she lost any discomfort. But if a child is secure, there is really no reason why, when he can control his excreta, he should not be told of, say, one particular chair: "Not for wee-wee, lavatory for wee-wee", and so on. It is no more involved than teaching that books are "out of bounds", as long as one does not have a horror of excreta oneself. Penny did not like waking wet, so we lifted her on her potty seat when we went to bed and regularly she urinated and then woke dry. It did not seem to disturb her. What she desired was to wake dry, unlike Erica, who never cared. Later, getting up did seem to disturb her, so we asked whether she still wanted us to lift her and she said, "No." From then on, just before she was four years old, she has managed by herself, and still wakes dry. Lifting her did not teach her the habit of depending on us.

To learn going to the lavatory in this most obvious way has another advantage. The children learn that, although some people are shy, others do not feel that these functions are exclusively private. This is necessary if the harmful taboo and mystique of the privacy of the lavatory is to be removed. It is interesting to report that a child we know, and brought up pretty freely, found that at school they insisted on closed lavatory doors, and this so disturbed her that she could not use a lavatory at all for a while!

Penny has again learned from us and uses the potty in the lavatory, just as Erica is learning to use the potty box-no. 2, upstairs, from Leonora. Nicola is more relaxed than all the others and at two shows little interest in copying her sisters.

Finally, let us stress the positive aspect of excretion. Like all natural functions, those of excretion can be a joy. If one watches the infants, conquering one's own prejudice, it becomes quite obvious with what deep satisfaction they fulfil those functions, and it seems a shame to try to make a dutiful performance of them.

CHAPTER XVI

TOYS

"I FEEL HAPPY today, I must play," said Leonora at two years nine months.

Playing enters all activities of the child, neither eating, dressing nor going to bed can be dissociated. But play not connected with any of these functions takes up the major part of the day. Some of this, in some children, takes the form of telling stories to themselves, in a variety of vivid ways, as we found with Leonora when an only child; but material things of one kind or another are needed for all other types of play: in other words, Toys.

There are expensive toys, cheap toys and toys that cost nothing. There are those which are made for one game only, others which suggest certain games, and still a third group which allow any number of imaginative applications. A bus ticket set is for one game only, a pack of cards allows a number of uses, but an empty box or a tricycle, or a box of bricks, has endless applications.

Research is needed before anyone can say anything valid about the intrinsic difference between male and female playthings, for the culture pattern influences this tremendously. In our own culture, the many cases of boys playing with dolls and girls with guns, contrary to the accepted norm, may be seen either as the possible expression of a wish to be like the opposite sex, or as a genuine liking for such things.

But even leaving aside this distinction, it is impossible to generalize about toys beyond saying that the cheap and gratis toys, and those that last, are attractive to parents, and the toys which lend themselves to many uses are favourites with children.

We have, however, gleaned from our experience several interesting observations. First, rattles. The louder the better! The larger the better! Babies like to pat things that are smooth. The chewing business is easily solved: the bones from the right joint of meat can be made more attractive, and can be found in more suitable shapes, than any toy we have noticed on counters.

It is of even greater importance that babies do not like chewing plastic very much, but a bone, and this may well be replaced at regular intervals, has an attractive flavour and can be kept just as clean.

There are many things children like chewing, but adults prefer to give them substitutes because of the possibility of swallowing small objects or of collecting dirt or "germs" from them. Metal and coal are very high on the list of things that are picked up from the floor by accident, and chewed with great delight until some adult extracts them and involves the attendant or the toddler in some pseudo-scientific moralistic lecture. Miners chew coal and like it: carbon blackness is not dirt nor even less "germs". As for the pennies the chilren chew, it is very easy to make one of them absolutely clean (it will get dirty of course) and we believe that they will not ever swallow these unless they are given a sudden fright. Even then, a penny is rather big. One cannot help thinking that there is significance in the fact that babies like chewing metal, and that one should, whenever it is possible and safe, allow it. This involves abandoning the irrational, exaggerated fear of swallowing objects, but the leather and metal combination of pram straps is a good and safe example.

Bricks of many kinds are favourites. But good boxes of bricks cost a lot of money, and to give a child just a few is not enough. Our bricks, which, in contrast to others, have lasted four children and promise to last all comers, cost us nothing, although they are numerous, of a great variety of shapes, and of very fine material. Riding on a bus one day (sitting on the top whence one is privileged to see so many things unknown to the pedestrian, though condemned to breathe the foul fumes of nicotine), we passed the same stonemason's yard which had been there on our route a hundred times. This time the great heap of stones, small stones which had been cut off grave stones, impressed me as a potential source of raw material. We made a point of passing on foot and calling in. The mason was only too glad to let us pick what we wished from the heap, as it would all only be carted away as waste. The only drawback was the weight; but we persevered, and the wonderful white Carrara marble blocks, serving Paul as lamp-stands and book-ends, and the much smaller blocks of black granite and Carrara, serving Leonora as toys, were most efficient, attractive and liked. This is a source and a type of brick which can be thoroughly recommended. The heaviness of

even the smallest blocks is a very great advantage for the child in the handling, in the stability of the buildings it erects, and indeed in the pleasure of touching substantial things.

Our other set of bricks, timber with natural finish, are waste-products of a joiner who put in shelves at the Department of Civic Design, the University of Liverpool, when Daddy was about!

Plastic bricks are not so attractive. Some of the very bright, very strong bricks, those that will stand the weight of a mother carrying another baby and a tray, let us say, without breaking, can be good and lasting. But to mould thick plastic is a very expensive process, so that these toys are dear. The net result of this is that the vast majority of plastic toys are not strong enough. No doubt on sound commercial principles, that pleases the manufacturers! However, the parent who starts to buy the toys that look so delightful on the counters of the stores, and so charmingly cheap, soon learns that they do not last, that the little metal car, perhaps a penny more, will usually outlast the plastic one a hundred times. It has become a recommendation for a toy in our household that an adult can tread on it! It may be different elsewhere. The wonderful dream that, now the plastic age has come, the world will soon be so full of non-corrodible, wonderful toys as to make even the poorest happy has dissolved, and we now wonder whether it is not reasonable to assume that all the broken bits of plastic in the kingdom would make the aggregate for a decorative concrete! But Polythene toys are perfect.

If one cannot afford new prams, tricycles, scooters and other toys which we call major toys, and which cost a great deal of money, it is infinitely worth-while to get them second-hand. There are always many about. Leonora has had many things first which have been passed on to Erica and even to Penny. Contrary to the experience of others, and to our expectations, there have been to date no protests whatsoever about not having new things. With prams, especially with girls, there should be one for each child, but with scooters, tricycles and fairy-cycles, one sibling is usually at a different stage from the others, and duplication may not even be desired. There comes a stage later, we have been told, when of course bicycles, tennis racquets, motorbikes, cars, mink coats, etc., are needed, and all in quadruplicate! or quintuplicate!

One major toy which we met at the house of a friend is the

"Mobo" roundabout. This toy looks forbiddingly expensive. But it is the best in major toy values: it costs about £4, which is less than a medium-sized doll's pram, half the cost of the very cheapest tricycle, and a third of the more expensive ones. It takes two children of between eighteen months and ten years and is very popular. It is painted in bright colours and simply and sturdily made, worked by a very simple action by the children themselves. It gives rise to friction only when they are not in a mood to co-operate; then they prefer to use it solo, each riding at her own speed. Penny at two years old loved it, and, imitating the others, sang at the top of her voice "Here we come and you can't catch us", while whizzing round at a rate that has flung her off twice. She has reduced her speed a little, but is not discouraged otherwise.

Slides, and swings fastened to door frames, are very welcome, specially in the rainy season, which has been thirty-six months long! (Still, some people have had to suffer seven-year rhythms!) Our slide, which is 6′ 6″ long and 2′ 6″ wide, and consists of polished plywood, gently curved upwards towards the sides, is an ex-service bed base and is propped up on an armchair, the back of which has rungs, serving perfectly as a ladder leading up to the slide. The chair was half a crown at an auction. Of course this arrangement takes much space.

On the subject of dolls' prams, it may be as well to realize that the smaller pram can be more popular when the child is actually coming to use it, as opposed to viewing it in the shop window: manageability is the criterion of success and the lighter, cheaper pram can be manœuvred inside the house with greater ease. It is essential that the hood should move up and down easily, and that the pram cover should fasten and unfasten equally easily, if the angry yells of a frustrated toddler are to be forestalled.

Among the more generous toys, in terms of space, must be mentioned the "bouncing-bed". Very often it is their own bed the children use for bouncing. This can be a nuisance, because it makes the bed uncomfortable for the night. They are usually single beds and not really large enough. A double bed, metal coiled springs with a horsehair mattress on it, a total expenditure of £3 in the auction room, has served our large family of children to bounce and dance and wrestle and romp so well that we can recommend it to all those who have the space. Recently this has been replaced by an enormous couch 8′ 6″ × 4′ 6″, wonderfully

sprung and upholstered, bought for 5*s*. in an auction. The original bouncing-bed is now a sleeping place!

The manageability of toys also applies to dolls. Enormous Teddy-bears, dolls or rabbits merely serve in most cases to please the adult, and rarely stay in use unless they have wheels and can be pushed or ridden. With dolls, the possibility of washing, dressing and undressing is highly desirable. Real hair, although this, we find, does not often take well to water, is a great attraction.

The need for workability applies to other toys: the car should have strong wheels, the guns a lasting firing mechanism, the tanks should continue to make sparks. If one is just a little allergic to noise, some of these things may well be left in the shops by sensible parents. It is no fun having a gun that fires if you are supposed to fire it "quietly". We wonder what our children will say when they realize that we have deprived them of bugles, whistles, pipes, drums and xylophones throughout their very young childhood? Still, come to think of it, they managed to get hold of the tops of two whistling kettles and did quite well on those! Leonora has certainly specially enjoyed "band" at school, which may be due to her starvation of these semi-musical noises! But parents too have rights!

A toy we have discovered by accident, and which is very much beloved, is a cheaper and more efficient variant of a type on the market. It consists of an acoustic tile and a box or two of different coloured matches. The acoustic tile, "acousti-celotex", has holes just the right size to take the matches, and of a depth that holds them very securely. The holes are arranged so that they form a grid $\frac{1}{2}''$ centre to centre all over the tile. We have found that the children do not suck the sulphurous ends of the matches and that the once or twice they have struck one this has been a most valuable lesson. Our tiles came as samples, but we feel sure that they could be obtained from builders' merchants. Drawing pins, nails and a variety of other things have been used successfully instead of matches in our home, but the latter have such pretty coloured heads that they remain most popular.

There is a host of play material which is free and available to one and all, and which lends itself to innumerable games. The cardboard boxes in which the grocery orders arrive have been used as boats, removal vans, cots, cars, aeroplanes, packing cases, to climb on and in innumerable other ways. We shall always remember Nicola pulling a rough box behind her by strings, on a

particularly richly endowed Christmas morning, ignoring all the new shine and glitter. The egg containers, with their fascinating ups and downs, never cease to be an attraction. The many tins and cardboard boxes, which so many adults throw away, would often make them more welcome as visitors in the homes of people with children than the plastic toy, which pleases the adults no end, and may even please the child for a while, but which has meant expense, dutiful expense, and the time and despair of trying to choose something the child has not yet got. Children love playing with coins. It is not likely that just our children have inherited this, and at that age it is, after all, a feasible pre-occupation! A tinkle of twelve pennies in a tin, perhaps pennies shiny from the bank, is in any case a joy, and they lend themselves to many uses. Empty bottles, the little pretty ones of various colours, give much pleasure, and they break so rarely that this should not deter parents from letting their offspring have them.

It is well known that water is beloved. It is also well known that water makes a mess. Most children have not got a brook in the garden, nor a pool. What is worse, many are prevented from playing in the puddles the rain so conveniently makes. But the kitchen sink or the bathroom basin, perhaps, with a chair drawn up to let the very small child play with the water and any of many implements, can be a great boon. The fact that the child is on a chair efficiently restricts the radius of the water distribution!

In a garden, sand pits are all they are said to be, although of course the importation of sand into the house is inevitable. Our children have loved playing in the shrubs and in the bushes; they climb the trees that are easy to climb, and a jungle gymn, made from branches with platforms and ladders, right under a tree, was the favourite playground of the whole neighbourhood, and children of all ages found it attractive. It is one of those play-things which lends itself to endless games.

For the very poor and slightly desperate parent, we can also suggest the travel agencies and gardening firms; they present the most fascinating collection of books and pictures! And, dealing with books, there are of course the endless colourful advertisements in professional journals, the bright pictures in women's magazines and catalogues, which are always welcome. These lend themselves also to drawing in crayons and painting, one of the favourite occupations of our children. They love large sheets of paper, and all those unfortunate enough not to be architects

should bear in mind that many large sheets of paper are thrown away in most households because they may need slight modification before they can be used to draw on. We mean bags, or brown paper, of which there is always a supply. Stapled together, any few sheets of paper make a "book". The possibility should be borne in mind by all those who can get near a stapler. In fact a stapler may be a good investment for families with several children.

One can make little of the children's reading-book market: we have tried to reject those that draw morals too difficult for children brought up with a self-regulatory attitude to understand. All one can do is to mention what one's own and one's friends' children have liked; but the likes and dislikes will vary greatly. Leonora has liked a big volume of Steig cartoons, those tiny, by adults much scorned, Enid Blyton books about little girls like herself, books that rhyme clearly, books that tell a fascinating story, those that employ the repetitive, rondo fashion, books that have happy secrets in them, and books that have an illustration on each page to look at. Books that create fear, foreboding and fright, none of our children have liked. Erica has insisted on sticking brown paper on the faces of things she has not liked! Much also depends on how the book is read the first time. The animal noises must be loud, the engine noises both loud and intense.

It depends on the sense of values whether one allows the children to look at the family photograph albums by themselves. We have let them do this, because they have loved it immensely and have done it for hours. While Leonora was the only one, nothing got disturbed. But subsequently pictures have been torn out and have fallen out. It seems that to make a specifically tough job of it, or to make special ones for the children, would be very much appreciated. But, from the age of one, they all love very much photographs of the family and themselves when younger.

In drawing, Biro pens have given to our children delight whenever they have managed to badger one out of their parents. But Leonora used to disfigure herself to such an extent with these that they have become unpopular with the parents! Unlike pencils they are so delightfully easy to use as tattooing implements. The marks don't last quite a lifetime.

Well designed pencil sharpeners which very young children can use save a great deal of time and frustration all round. Crayons are indeed the most wonderful, essential implements in our household, as far as the children's occupation is concerned.

Where they all go to in the end we do not know, but they disappear at a rate which certainly does not coincide with the rate of use, great though this may be. Like napkin pins, they are among the many things which, if not witched away, ought to fill every nook and cranny. But when one is wanted, none can be found. Painting involves water and is therefore more complex. The kitchen tables have been used for the purpose by our children, who tend to gather for painting sessions, which almost always include self-decoration as part of the self-regulation. We have found that chalks, which make a hundred times the mess of crayons, are successful only, like paints, for special surfaces and special occasions. Corrugated and brown paper, outside surfaces which do not matter, and, of course, proper blackboard surfaces, are necessary to make chalking a success.

We must beware of condemning a toy because a child's misuse, due to emotional stress, makes it intolerable in terms of that particular child. We have heard tricycles strongly condemned on the grounds that the child never gets off to walk, an argument which suggests that mechanization has taken command of the child's impulse to move about. This rather unlikely idea was understood in the context of a rather insecure child, who found that, being pushed along on the tricycle with the metal rod that is unwisely provided in some makes, he could command attention from his mother which was not otherwise forthcoming. Similarly, the use of a car for the journey to school leads to "laziness" only if the child sees the car as representing its parents' love.

Neill has written about the children at his school not putting away tools, so that unless he took the responsibility chaos and destruction were inevitable. We can corroborate this finding in terms of toys and the family! The longing of so many adults for order is quite functional: it stands them in good stead in finding things. It leads to numberless ways of trying to teach children how to be tidy and orderly. We believe that tidiness is a considerable self-discipline, which is acquired slowly. With children we find it first emerges in terms of, maybe, one or two specially loved toys. But knowing of many untidy children, like ourselves, who have grown into reasonably tidy adults, we are not worried about the future of our children, especially as tidy children have been known to revolt for a lifetime afterwards!

And so, unless children are bullied unduly, one must accept the fact that in most cases (and we are speaking about children of up

to eight years old) the adults will be responsible for the clearing away of toys. Once this is appreciated it is a matter of working out a technique, for order, rather than petty tidiness, is a great help to the adult. It means that, given a rainy day, maybe six different lots of toys can be produced successively, all looking crisp and surprising. This is better than a confused toy drawer, or drawers all of which are a mixture of everything. Boxes suggest themselves as a solution, or tins, to make things a little more permanent. These have the advantage over open shelves that the toys are out of sight when not in use, and present an attractive surprise each time they are fetched out. But boxes have, we find, decisive disadvantages: the cardboard variety breaks when you step on it; the tins bend, and neither can be easily opened and shut, especially when in a fragile state. What is more, it is very difficult to get enough boxes for three children, boxes which, at least to some extent, fit the contents. And boxes which fit the contents exactly are difficult to fill so that they will shut easily, whereas the vast majority will take the contents easily but need a much larger storage space than the volume of the toys themselves.

Thus we reasoned: "What is needed is something that will adapt to the shape of the toy, will not break, can be easily opened but keeps the toys out of sight, is easily filled and emptied—something which, furthermore, is readily available. The answer is the paper bag!" This has worked wonderfully. No matter if they wear out, they are easy enough to replace. Children love tipping them upside down to see once more a forgotten toy. They are stored very easily, not only because they take up less room than boxes, but because they can be made to take the shape required by the drawer or shelf: they last surprisingly long: and in the evening they are filled and sorted again with the greatest of speed. The children, when so inclined, can open and shut them easily, and, if one forgets which is which, it is handy to feel or look into the stored bags. We can thoroughly recommend this idea, the result of much serious research.

The time taken in keeping toys reasonably sorted is remarkably small and also pays tremendous dividends. Even though children mixing them in various parts of a house or garden, especially in the summer, may reduce 100 per cent. possible order into 50 per cent., this is still a very useful amount.

Though the classification of toys into, say, cars, boats, cooking things, doll's furniture, bricks, coins, animals, etc., etc., is useful,

there is a need to allow the imaginative use of all the toys together. One may wish, to make things easier, to think in terms of clearing up one lot so that they don't get mixed, but often several bags are involved in imaginative games which may last for hours, or even days. One can make no sharp rule about clearing things away over night, especially when they are not in the way. To know when a child has finished with a game is quite tricky, and to destroy prematurely what he has richly endowed with prodigious imagination elicits, as might be expected, wrath and hate.

Countless games are started by current topical happenings, —removals, cooking, baking, gardening, packing, trains, television, cinema, puppets, making fires, traffic—all these may be played with an immense enthusiasm when they have been met with in real life. Impromptu invention of playthings can help out a great deal. To lend a child a suitcase to pack, making it clear that you are lending it for the occasion only; to improvise a toy theatre with a cardboard box with a hole in it, behind which he can show pictures he has drawn; to let him turn out what may be an already untidy drawer of one's own; to let him put real pastry in the real oven (you will have to eat the mixture or some of it!); all these things, we have found, do not mean a frightening precedent if the child is clearly told the condition under which they are possible.

Gardening deals with lots of little plants which, if trodden on, can never fulfil the dreams of the gardener or the ambition of the plant to grow big and strong and to be eaten. Children want to join in gardening. We had the experience first with Leonora, who used to spend hours at the allotment, and she learnt where not to tread. The desire to help is tremendously strong. Here we found that children of two, three, four and more learn easily, and are much more careful in, say, weeding, planting, or watering than many grown-up friends whom one has pressed into service. The most vivid memories are associated with times when, frightened of the destruction of young plants, Paul would tell the child for the nth time to be careful, and, when he lifted his own foot to move, found that he himself was standing on a plant! In fact we have found that the little feet of the child, and his great understanding and care, result in less damage than the hefty feet of the father: yet still we go on saying, "Be careful", and still our own feet are on the plants while saying it.

Children like variety, variety in toys and variety in company. They relish the adults who come to stay and who have all day to romp with them. But when they have gone, the way they enjoy being alone is also noticeable. Again, especially with children of different ages, playing together alternates with being apart. Leonora could often be found in a quiet corner, scowling at the accidental intruder and saying, "Can't I have a bit of quiet to read my book?", even at the age of five.

The utmost care and skill are necessary to improve, enter, or in any way influence children's games. It is best to listen first, to "learn the rules", as it were, before trying to judge what is fitting. Not every game of "ship" can be turned by cheerfully shouting "Come to the ship's restaurant for dinner". Furious howls may make it quite clear that the kitchen happens to be the harbour they are going to. Again, the overhelpful father may so enjoy hearing his children play happily that he feels like making them even happier. Emerging on to the landing from his study with, say, another trinket each for the game of treasures, he may spoil everything, if each one likes the same trinket best. . . . How he curses himself at such times: they could have gone on so well for so long if left alone! And that is of course the secret of most good play, to be left alone. Secretly or accidentally observed when left alone, they can be seen to share magnificently, and the skill and tolerance shown in keeping each other happy must be seen to be believed. This is not altruism on their part, but a truly functional attitude which ensures that happy play may continue!

Sometimes children don't feel like playing anything. They quickly get fed up with everything. This may well seem extraordinarily peevish to the adult if he forgets that quite often adults don't feel like doing anything either. In both cases it is a matter of emotional disturbance, blockage of the energy metabolism. A child in that state often asks for all that is just possible, and, when in possession of all that he has asked for, then asks for the impossible. To recognize his malaise, to be able to take him in one's arms and say "I think it's love you really need", and really give it, can save endless trouble; a rapid change of mood follows, and great enjoyment in some of the available toys.

The tendency to use money as a substitute for love is a great danger with parents, however well intentioned. We all know the family where heaps of expensive toys take the glaringly obvious place of love. But we are concerned here with pointing out the

odd period of tension in more usual households which may starve the child of his security and love. The parent, noting all is not well, wishfully thinks that if he gets the child a little toy his face will light up and everything will be all right. It will not. The toy will be most welcomed only, really, if it has brought with it the love surrender that comes with relaxation.

PART THREE

PAUL RITTER DISCUSSES THE APPLICATION OF THE AUTHORS' THEORIES TO EDUCATION AND SOCIAL LIVING

CHAPTER XVII

FREEDOM, LICENCE, LIMITATIONS

JEAN AND I deal with the limitations to freedom as we meet them, obviously and sensibly to forestall the debating trick of foisting on us the idea and ideal of "complete freedom". This we do not hold at all, and the trick merely allows opponents to rationalize, and so reject our attitude out of hand.

As a student, I attended some tutorial discussions at a department of sociology in a provincial university. One day the senior lecturer mentioned the matter of cultural influences on children: of the suspicion engrained in children of a primitive society in which a baby is deliberately offered, and then refused, a breast; of the aggression common in a tribe where acts of force are applauded and approved; of the peaceful, kind children emerging from a pacifist culture. She alluded to our culture pattern, inferring that we should ponder its influence. "What about A. S. Neill's view of self-regulation?" one asked her. "A. S. Neill", she said, in an offhand way, "has long been proved wrong by Ruth Benedict."

So we wrote to Neill telling him this, and felt at that time that he ought to defend himself: a postcard, "Who *is* Ruth Benedict?", was the reply! And, indeed, Neill is only "disproved" if we take the wrong view that Neill thinks children can grow up without any restraint whatsoever, and that his aim is some idealist, unreal, individualistic and complete freedom. It is an example of the debating trick mentioned above to foist on him opinions he has not held, so that, out of hand, he can be "proved quite wrong" and not worth bothering with in "serious scientific thought".

But the lecturer made us aware of the fact that, however we may try to self-regulate our children, it is most important to understand the effect which the inevitable culture still has. This does not become the basis for an argument against self-regulation, rather it makes for clearer theory and more effective practice.

We have said, and maintain, that self-regulation is an attitude:

we try to let our children choose and develop according to their own criteria *to the greatest extent possible for us*, and strive to increase that extent. To understand the implications of this is vital. The first step is to know that the extent is limited, and I want to clarify the issue by dealing sincerely with the limiting factors, of which we distinguish three:

1. The truly dangerous.
2. The anti-social.
3. The insurmountable limitations of our culture.

1. *The Truly Dangerous*

Let us then discuss those things which are really dangerous, and which we do not believe we can risk. Electricity and motor traffic, for example, are phenomena which defy Neill's suggestion in relation to fire: here he says, and we agree with him, that to be burnt just a little, say with one match trying to light it, is a very useful experience. However, one cannot expect a child to be run over just a little, or to get just a little electric shock! There is bound to be disagreement about the extent of the permissible generally, and some people will let their young climb higher than we will. Our attitude is dictated by experience.

Twice in a day Leonora and Erica, when they were aged four and two respectively, watched the man who installed the telephone climb through their window on to the tiny roof of the bay-window below; on the self-same day a neighbour climbed through likewise to fix his aerial: and so, quite reasonably, they forgot our advice that to climb out of the window was dangerous. Jean was knitting when the bell rang. A neighbour asked her quietly whether she knew that her children were playing on the roof of the bay-window, on the third floor. Jean flew up the stairs in a fright, and was nearly paralysed with fear when she heard a frantic, shuddering shriek as she reached the top. She tore open the door. Erica had fallen . . . backwards into the room, trying to climb out to join Leonora. "I would have looked after Erica" and "I was quite safe", Leonora maintained. And we both think that they would have been all right until, say, a squabble had made them forget where they were. Then . . . Well, I put some bars up the same day. But some people would have trusted their children's skill. Perhaps the fact that Leonora was four and a half and Erica two and a half made our decision much easier.

There are other things much more on the borderline, tall ladders, for instance. Leonora at three years scaled one fifteen feet high after me while I was picking hazel nuts. Her care and deliberation made me feel that she was safe. And she was, going up and down repeatedly. Our jungle gymn is six feet high. Erica, before she was two, climbed up the rough ladder and stood swaying but safe in the log platform. Some people would not have dared to allow it, and we should understand them! One needs a great deal of faith and conviction that accidents are rarer than one thinks!

A more crucial and common problem is the staircase. When the crawler learns to climb, should one fix gates to regulate his climbing to the times when one is there to catch him, or should one leave him alone?

We have left all ours alone. From some angles it looks most dangerous, especially when the steps are many and of stone, and we've seen the baby who broke his arm climbing stairs. But one in how many? And from the height of the child's head the angle of the stairs is far less steep when looking down the flight than it appears to us. Long dresses and slippery shoes, however, should be barred. The Peckham Health Centre experience is very reassuring. They found that children, left alone, and one supposes that also means without taunting from other children, tend not to attempt what is too difficult for them. Ours are keen to keep out of danger, when it is pointed out in quite an ordinary way.

2. *The Anti-social*

There are those actions, like the little girls dancing in nailed shoes on the grand piano in Neill's book, which transgress the rights of others. We have a guiding policy which has helped us to decide to what extent we have rights. We imagine our child is a visitor, one whom we like—would we let him do it?

That leads us to lift our children away from our books when they can first crawl, saying, "No, mine", or "Paul's" or "Jean's", and give them something else. This has proved most effective, and safe-guarded our books perfectly. It's like telling a good friend not to tamper with a machine he might easily ruin. The same guide often leads me to think twice before I answer our children when they ask for something: I may be too busy, but on the other hand I may not: what would I do if she were a friend? It has proved a workable and valuable policy. We can recommend

it. And its validity can be extended to the whole of one's relationship. One does lose one's temper with a friend and he understands, one apologizes, and if the annoyance was external he is genuinely sorry if it stemmed from him—and vice versa. Whatever the circumstances, *understanding* is the basis of the solution. One is occasionally mean, changing one's mind, is occasionally extra generous, tired or cross, and, what is most important, sometimes silly. Were we to inscribe our mantelpiece, our motto would be "Everybody Silly Sometimes". That philosophy leaves scope for weaknesses, but no room for that artificial respect between child and adult used to hide the silliness of the adult, and enforced with "How dare you speak to your mother like that?" If there is a good emotional contact with children, then they understand the meaning of seriousness in parents. If one tells them seriously not to run on the road and that cars are "ow ow", because one *feels* serious about it, and not because one thinks one ought to, even when they are very young, then they take note of the statement, because it is made seriously. This means that the emotional impact of seriousness is a strong one on a child, and that any child can spontaneously grasp and comprehend its meaning. It is on a pre-verbal level that this communication first takes place. This seriousness alone is the key to teaching infants about those things that are truly dangerous, anti-social and insurmountably forbidden. Such seriousness has little to do with anger or hate. It is the vehement and vivid expression of genuine concern, without guilt.

This is not the sort of thing that suggests to children "Disobey if you dare". On the contrary, if there is trust, the very question of disobedience does not arise. Obedience, particularly the unquestioning obedience thought so generally desirable in children, is obviously quite incompatible with self-regulation. In the first place the self-regulating parent does not give orders in that way, and, in the second place, if the child were to obey we should indeed lose all chance of learning from him. And that is, it must not be forgotten, one of the main ideas behind the attitude of self-regulation. But if there is seriousness in the parent's voice the child will "obey" in the first instance, because he trusts his parent's seriousness, because they are rarely serious, because seriousness is reserved for those times when the feeling of concern is genuine. And parents without guilt may be seriously concerned about infringements of their own rights. But if the child's

rights are transgressed, then one must, of course, not expect obedience, nor even wish for it.

The child, like the adult, loses his temper, is cross, mean, generous and extra generous in turn. Help him if you wish, by showing him in *functional terms*, not in moral ones, that he is biting off his nose to spite his face. He may pooh-pooh your opinion just as you pooh-pooh your friend's advice when it is given. In spite of this, it may be helpful, if only to show your sympathy in his plight. But sometimes we wish the child would "go to hell", and we say so. It is then, when the patience of one parent has gone, that two are useful!

Our children have also shown that it is not beyond very young children to see the reason behind "exceptions". It may be forbidden to use our chessmen as toys each and every day, but to allow play with them on "exceptional" occasions is understood: they don't expect to have them on demand after that. Again, we say to the children that the evenings are our own, so that they stay in a "well-appointed" nursery: we are not afraid to invite them to stay in our rooms when the occasion and our mood demand it, or to accede to their own request to do so when their need is reasonable. It is all understood on a functional level.

Furthermore, we can change our minds, if we let the child understand why, without having endless attempts on the child's part to change our minds similarly on subsequent occasions. In fact, we've found that to be able to change our minds quite easily is a great advantage. On the principle "everybody silly sometimes", parents aiming at self-regulation are silly quite often. It's so new, it's inevitable.

3. *The Insurmountable Limitations of Our Culture Pattern*

The third barrier to complete freedom is in the world outside the family; it exerts a strong pressure to conform to its tenets of behaviour and sometimes it is best to conform, even looking at it functionally. For instance, your child may be lonely, and next door there may live quite a reasonable playmate (we believe that among the professional classes there is a strong tendency towards self-regulation even now): but one thing the mother of the little girl next door does not like may be nakedness (in other ways she may well be quite rational, but this may be her most poignant neurotic symptom): in such a case, it may be well worth-while to let your child play there—particularly from, say, the age of three,

when it has already understood that people are different, and that everybody is silly sometimes. Then it is a conscious sacrifice for the child to wear pants even in a heatwave. But the child would probably much rather play next door with pants on than alone, at home, without. And, because it is aware of all this, it does not at any future date mind being naked again, if at home or with other children. None of the guilt and queerness that is so often associated with nakedness, even in children of that age, need arise.

We have already mentioned this principle in connection with playing with the genitals, but there are many points like it: some visitors mind if you go into the bathroom with them, others don't. It was a heartbreaking experience for Leonora when an adult she loved dearly proved to be "shy", and preferred to be alone in the lavatory. But that did not alter her sane and straight attitude to the natural functions connected. She sees nothing to giggle at at all. She just knows some people are "shy" and at first used to ask visitors, to avoid confusion! And when, very young, she noted some embarrassment in response to her question she asked us! The criterion in all such matters is to keep one's dealings with children functional, and to avoid moralism.

In this connection the word "naughty" can be seen as meaning only that a child is not conforming, unless moralistic overtones creep in suggesting "badness". To give an example, "If you don't wash Lena's mother is quite likely not to ask you again", is a functional statement, from the point of view of the child. "You wash your face, you *dirty*, *naughty* girl. What will Lena's mother think?" is a moral one. The same statement, "If you carry on like this I am not taking you", can be understood functionally or morally, depending on whether the child is used to punishment, on principle, or to a functional attitude. To give the true reasons for one's insistence is a necessary safeguard in coercing a child when it is preferable. It works like this: "You can't poke your nose in front of me because I dislike it—it will only make me irritable and neither of us will like that"; or, "You'll have to let me clean your fingernails if you want to come out with me. You may think it's silly, and you may be right, but everybody is silly sometimes"; or "I may be silly about this, but you know that other parents are silly about more things, so try to be tolerant, it's hard for me too". Or one may lose one's temper, even hit at a child (which is in some cases the adult's desperate attempt to

make contact): the child may hit back, or it may not, but the important thing is that it should know why you lost your temper, then it can forestall it next time, or expect it, both of which reduce the harm lost tempers may cause.

In our whole experiment we specifically recognize the insurmountable limitations of the parents as an integral part of our culture, and we have travelled a long way if a technique within the framework of self-regulation can nullify the effects of hitting your child! It is essential that we should have such a technique, for all of us have similar limitations. If it's not hitting, it may be a temporary withdrawal of love in a different way. Losing one's temper has the distinct advantage that getting rid of bound energy makes one capable of a soft contact of feelings immediately afterwards.

This principle of telling the child the truth about one's motives is supremely effective. The understanding children show is great. The sincerity in the relationship makes it consistent, and, on the basis of "everybody silly sometimes", the child is not bewildered. There is just one thing, however, that one cannot afford to be silly about. "You've loved me not at all today," sobbed Leonora in a pathetic way that generated capacity in us at once, "and you are supposed to." Your child must feel he can ask for love and reassurance always, and you should always have sufficient energy in reserve to love warmly and softly when you are directly asked for it. In an anti-social world this may be the child's anchor of security, even at those times when it is unhappy without knowing why.

The fact that you can behave at home in a freer way than outside, that limitations vary with time and place, Leonora, Erica, Penny and Nicola have readily learned. This is an important point and it makes self-regulation all the more practicable. Thus Leonora came home from school, occasionally, saying that she had "used up all her niceness". And we tolerated the subsequent "nastiness", which we then understood more easily, and which, therefore, lasted relatively only a short while.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE NATURE OF LEARNING

IT IS A NEGLECTED truth that we cannot learn without emotion. And the tragedy is that in most organized education the driving force is fear and not pleasure.

In 1945, A. S. Neill wrote his book *Hearts not Heads in School*. In it he stressed again that it does not matter what children learn at school. Whether they enjoy school, that is the crucial point. This remains a revolutionary concept. In the first or second year, in most English schools, children may now be allowed that freedom which leads to learning with pleasure, and this shows the influence of Neill and others. But after that it is taken for granted that the syllabus, the time-table and impending examinations, should and must dictate in detail what is to be done, when and how. Neill does not think this is necessary, nor do many others, including ourselves.

"Learning" is usually taken as synonymous with "education", a respectable word, with an aura of righteousness. This aura turns out on examination to be a mere fog covering confusion. Education emerges as a chaos of concepts. The compulsive neurotic belief of the Victorians that the acquisition of permissible, respectable knowledge is in any case virtuous is mixed with modern psychology of various equally dubious origins. The persistence of the Victorian excesses is exemplified in two aspects of contemporary education. The first is the large amount of unusable, inevitably forgotten and unused substance that remains senselessly in every single syllabus, whether for the first former or the final year of the medical student. The second is the ludicrously false, and ever more false, assumption that a syllabus can cover a field of study, or a subject, thoroughly. To pretend that these are minor matters, as is done in continuing the *status quo*, is to pretend that chaos is order. The dubious nature of the psychology of education is well exposed in the so-called intelligence tests, which even create fundamental disagreement among the experts and thereby show that a valid base for the science does not exist.

To clarify where there is so much confusion we will consider first principles in education, as we see them, and also the practical application of self-regulated learning. This will give us both a picture of what might be eventually, and the clues that might help in modifying, when and where we can, what our children have to put up with today.

The following are the first principles which are to be the basis of this chapter.

1. Learning is a process which combines, or includes separately
   (*a*) creative insight
   (*b*) experiment
   (*c*) imitation
   (*d*) instruction.
2. The desire to learn is inborn, and its nature varies with individuals and with circumstances.
3. Emotion governs learning to a large degree.
4. Education, which is the development of the capacity to live a full life, means the provision of the maximum of choice and freedom in an emotionally happy and life-positive environment of enthusiasms and *joie de vivre*.

Now let us discuss these four points in some detail. We are essentially impatient creatures, and one aspect of this impatience, one symptom of it, is the preponderance of instruction in our schools. Because of this it is particularly important to stress that there are a variety of ways in which a child learns. To allow creative insight to occur, just by pondering, or in artistic creation, a child needs to be left alone. That most people find very hard. Leave them alone and they become a "nuisance", or so it is believed. But that is only because the possibilities of their environment are too few. Art lessons, in spite of the far-reaching influence of Sir Herbert Read and others, continue to be a means to an end, instead of an end in themselves. Leonora is told her paintings should be tidier (!), and the preoccupation with tidiness has entered other fields as well. Writing a story, or doing a sum, a healthy child, especially when very young, gets excited, and the writing represents that excitement! The restraint which couples neatness, and even legibility, with a good story or correct mathematics is a late and minor development in learning. Leonora came to dislike writing stories because consistently, when she had enjoyed composing one and so been excited, her writing became a

series of untidy symbols, the expression of the emotions that are involved, and her concentration on neatness disappeared. And because that did not mean easily legible writing, the teacher, who is honestly concerned with the development of neatness, made adverse comments, even refused to read the story, and she has done the same with sums. It occurred to us that if the two things were separated, the neatness or forms of writing and the content and creative process of inventing a story, both could be enjoyed by Leonora. It seems easy and vital that the skills and creative activity should not be so combined that the child loses the pleasure and so the desire for either, yet this happens frequently.

When Leonora paints at home, it takes a few sheets before the obvious influence of the teacher and the other children has worked off. These anæmic and uninteresting sheets can be clearly distinguished from the others. The four elder children were all painting one wet afternoon, but after an hour all except Leonora (the eldest) had had enough and disappeared. I had to go through the kitchen some time later, and, having noted the rather dull paintings Leonora had produced previously, saw her now dancing, singing and painting simultaneously in a most vital and vivacious manner. Looking at the paper I could hardly believe my eyes. The desire to be tidy and to follow school approved ways had gone, and the painting I saw in its last stages in this veritable frenzy of song and dance, of brush and feet, had quite outstanding qualities, akin to those she had shown in her earliest years, which had been generally recognized.

The encouragement to paint with both hands at once is also one of a number of possibilities, quite widely advocated, that might well be tried in schools to counter the ever present adult wish for representational and tidy art. This may increase the child's pleasure, but we have not tried it.

In a chapter such as this, one faces a dilemma—one is caught on the one hand by those who sneer: "Look at Papa and Mama, so proud of their little dears", and, on the other, by those who threaten: "Well, if what they say about learning is right, why don't they illustrate it with their own children?" But we have done that, and will try to forestall the sneering by saying quite clearly that we believe that our children are not necessarily superior, and that others have capacities that would make ours, in those fields, look very ordinary.

For experiment, as for direct creative activity and insight,

children must be left alone, and our culture does not leave them alone. It is an almost generally accepted idea that a child should, from the beginning, be instructed how to do things right, so that he does not get used to wrong habits. But this is naïve and shallow. Only if a child has experimented can he appreciate the better way of doing things. We must allow the young to make more of their own mistakes, to think the thoughts that are born of failure, and to experiment further on that basis, so that finally they arrive at, or appreciate, a reasonable solution to whatever the problem may have been.

I believe that the widespread inability among children and adults to reason, and to follow a logical line of thought, is due neither to an innate illogicality, nor to lack of instruction in mental discipline. My experience has suggested that logic and reason can hardly be taught, and that their natural and spontaneous emergence is precluded just because we do not allow children to experiment. Only in this way can the sense of logic and reason develop. With self-regulation, adults make great efforts to reason with children. And we have found these efforts well rewarded. We had not previously thought it possible that children of two and three could reason, follow reason or develop a thought logically to the extent to which our daughters have done. The following examples should be compared with the standards which are usual, and considered by educationists as satisfactory, for in that light they are quite amazing.

The first example is that, already mentioned, of Leonora and the bathroom. She was only two years old at the time. When we explained that some people were shy, like birds, when they were in the bathroom, she understood. Logically, as this was an important matter to her, visitors were subsequently asked, very soon after arrival, whether they were "a bit shy". She further understood (at the age of two, it must be remembered) when we explained that shy people would be shy also of such questions, and that she would have to go about it more gently, and either observe them or ask us. It was not Leonora who was exceptional in this case, we believe, but our assumption (which proved correct) that a child of two was far more capable of following reason than is usually believed.

To give another example, Erica played wildly with Leonora when the people from the flat below came into the garden with a sewing-box that had a "dolly" mounted on the top. Both children

were of course very interested, but in the wild state they were in they chased each other away so that each might have the "dolly" first. After some time and many squeaks, squeals, shouts, grunts and other noises, Erica said to Leonora: "You know, if we fight Yvonne won't give us that dolly to play with." Erica was three and there had been no suggestion of this by anyone previously.

One final story. I was busy digging on the allotment, and daughter as usual was playing intensely and vehemently with sprouts, earthworms, water and other oddments. Out of the blue, after a long silence, Leonora said: "Paul, I don't understand where the first Mummy came from." "What do you mean?" I asked, incredulous. And the three and a half year old explained, "Well, there is a baby and a Mummy and a Daddy, but where did the first Mummy come from?" "Well, it's a very difficult thing to understand, I am not sure I do myself", I said, fighting for time to think. Back came a most emphatic "But I *want* to know"! Rather desperately I manufactured an explanation out of what I know about Darwin and Reich and other things. Leonora listened intently. "Do you understand now?" I asked. "I thought Mummy grew from a tiny speck . . ." she said, a little puzzled. "Yes, that's it! Mummy grew out of a tiny speck but everything from life energy . . ." I added, keen to stress a simple point. Enthusiastically Leonora finished with ". . . and the first Mummy had students and they became Daddies. You are a student!"

With clothes, with food, with gardening tools and all toys, children like to experiment. But adults try to make them hurry, hurry with getting dressed, hurry with learning table manners (often feeding the children until they learn to obey instructions). With toys, I have so often, like others, foolishly attempted to show my children the right way to use them, and thus spoilt the magic of finding out, that I am most painfully aware of our impatience. The need for genuine, spontaneous experiment (indeed it is in the end, usually, just the need to be left alone), extends from the earliest days to school and university years, when it is still impossible or difficult, and in any case not part of the curriculum. There are, of course, those experiments which are engineered to show something the teacher wants to ram home, but they, for the most part, are irrelevant to the student. The same applies to infants. Often, when we have thought it would be a good thing to demonstrate something to our children by means of a construed

experiment, they have not been interested, in spite of our enthusiasm for it. At a later date, when it has become relevant to their life, they will listen and look carefully because then they are interested.

Imitation is a concept which for us not only covers what is perceived by the five senses and then reproduced by some magic way in the imitator's own body. We believe that there is a general sense-perception basic to the five recognized senses at the root of the magic. When we say that people imitate, or get the "feel" of a thing by watching, we do not mean that they acquire understanding merely by visual or aural observation, or by tactile experience. Indeed all these may be involved but there is more to it. We see this basic sense-perception as a form of direct energy communication between one life-energy system and another. "The feel of it" really *means* the feel, in terms of energy, and emotion is its direct expression. It may be the grin of one's father, or the forehand volley of a tennis coach. That children look like their parents is not only a matter of hereditary characteristics! Yet imitation is a selective process. No child could imitate all it sees. It is very interesting (and utterly unstudied) why a child imitates the particular phenomena he chooses, from all those available.

Wide opportunity for imitation is desirable, but this has nothing to do with teaching by example in the form in which Neill has exposed it—the attitude of "If only you didn't smoke in front of the children, they would realize that smoking was a bad thing". That is mere pretence, by people who are not the angels they want the children to be. Ironically, as shrewd children always see what we are and not what we pretend to be, this attitude teaches them what hypocrites we are, and it may in fact be the hypocrisy they copy. But it is no wonder that people have tried to teach by example, as it is quite clear that children do learn by imitation. The child chooses, from the innumerable things available, those which suit his needs, the many, many diverse needs, in countless detailed ways. Thus the problem in terms of self-regulation is a most difficult one: to give a child choice in food, sleep, bodily activity is easy; finding the right playmate is more difficult, but to provide him with a fair choice of adult behaviour to choose from for the purposes of imitation is obviously impossible!! As suggested, our hope lies in that the child will choose what suits him: a self-regulated child, having no need or place for many of the neurotic attitudes of his parents, will not copy them, for he has, besides,

the capacity of every living thing for creative originality.

Swearing in our children is an interesting illustration of the child choosing only what he needs. Their father swears. He swears often and rather badly, or should one say well? Anyway, he swears more than either he or their mother likes, when thinking that the children may copy him, and so shock adults whose sympathy they may need. Well, the extraordinary thing is that, far from our having to tell them not to swear, swearing has occurred extremely rarely. When Leonora was two, and bending over her shoe trying hard, but unsuccessfully, to button it, she said, in exactly my own intonation, "The b-l-o-o-d-y thing!", lingering over each letter. Another time, having failed her driving test, which everybody who had seen her drive assumed she would pass easily, and at which her instructor happened to be a well-known misogynist, Jean came home disheartened and furious; Leonora commented with feeling, having listened to her parents, "The bloody examiner!" Erica's attitude to swearing is also illuminating. When five years old, after a few weeks at school, she said: "Mummy, school is really damn' peculiar."

"Is it dear. You know it's a good idea not to use swear words. Most people think it is rather silly, specially for a little girl," her mother answered. (More than was ever said to Leonora.) After a thoughtful moment, Erica said, "What is a swear word? Is it the damn' or the peculiar?" All this was puzzling until we realized that the child only imitated that which fulfilled a need for her. Our family obviously have no application for swearing, and although it goes on about them they have just never attempted to imitate it.

Perhaps I should make clear that I am not generalizing too exclusively. Nicola, at two, has learnt to repeat after her father, "Oh kjisht" and prefers this to the hurriedly provided "Oh dear". More emotion in the "Oh kjisht" no doubt, but even so she has not applied it in her own life. Frustration among the older ones is met with "Bother, bother, bother", or other expressions picked up from school and expressing, it seems, better than, say, "Bloody hell", what they feel and mean. If other children about them had used swear words, we have no doubt whatsoever that they would have imitated and learnt them. They would have understood the way the child used them and would have tried to do the same. Children who swear usually think they are clever, and our children would like to imitate the cleverness. But that really is a

different thing from the imitation of parents or other adults. Children imitate only those things they need. Thus Leonora has started to dramatize (and the others have copied) what she will do if someone else does so and so; and it relieves her feelings very well, just as a similar attitude relieves the feelings of her father, though neither he nor she ever have any intention of carrying out the awful threats they mouth.

At one time Erica started nearly every sentence with "I am afraid. . . ." Here is a phrase we have used occasionally, but she found it most useful because, having gone through a phase of insecurity, she had become used to the fact that most of her requests would make somebody else "afraid" they couldn't comply, so she used it, afraid that one would not comply, and she used it far more than we ever did because it suited her need at that moment very well.

But it is easy to report imitation by word, the really interesting thing is to note the actions, the gestures and the facial grimaces which are copied. Thus, Leonora has copied the rubbing of her hands from her mother, who did it very occasionally, and it has suited her so well to express pleasurable excitement that it is now almost involuntary, like the wagging of a dog's tail. It expresses anticipation of excitement and thrill. She rubs her hands in an unmistakable manner. We have had to tell her teacher not to stop her, as, not only is it harmless, but it is a vivid way of expressing the joy of life and participation.

The tight social and often vicious circle of the patriarchal family in its little house, removed from places of interest, work and entertainment, in most of the housing developments in Britain and elsewhere decreases the child's range of actually observed adult behaviour. Direct experience of people offers a choice for imitation of a quality for which there is no substitute in pictures, still or moving. In fact, lavish substitution is often worse than nothing, luring children away from the live experiments that remain. Our aim should be to let children watch markets, trades, factories and fairs, other people galore, animals, soils and wild plants, as well as the postman, milkman and window-cleaner and the stinking, dangerous traffic, which are, for most young children nowadays, the limit of direct experience. However, there is little one can do immediately, generally speaking. Space, having interesting visitors and taking the children wherever one can, all these things may alleviate the

trouble a little, and are especially practicable, where most needed, in families with only and lonely children. Without outside contacts the child is missing something, and the parents ought to make allowances and to strive to find a remedy. To be miserable and guilty about it does not help. One thing, which I am certainly not advocating, but which has been very worthwhile and workable in our case, is that I have my practice at home, and my office is very rarely out of bounds to the children. This means that they see a great deal of my professional activities, instruments and so on. As this comes out in imaginative play, it is easy to see how it gives them many worth-while opportunities, and fulfils necessary functions. It often takes much more energy from me to have them in the study while I work, but, on the other hand, it gives me many chances of enjoying their company and observing them, which otherwise I should forfeit. And, of course, we get to know each other better, too. Any crossness arising out of the work, or any crisis, is not sprung as a surprise on the family in the evening, but it may be observed brewing, developing, growing and bursting by the children, with surprising and often comforting sympathy.

Imitation is a necessary function in living and loving, and the main point is that children will copy what we are, and not what we pretend to be. Hard pressed, as the wolf children of India, whom Gesell has written about, they will imitate the howl of a wolf, or, more tragically, the emotionally diseased behaviour of man himself. Instruction, however, is the only generally recognized ingredient of education at present. Children are instructed, as a matter of course, in a number of subjects which have their origin in the Victorian ideas of what was worth learning. That, even today, this appears as a list of fields, rather arbitrarily selected, is not surprising. The manner of instruction, "in class", to many children simultaneously, as if they all learnt in the same way and at the same rate, is likewise falsely based and assumed to be inevitable. Yet teaching in this manner, by time-table, is a very inefficient method. Out of the blue, and changing from one lesson to the other, regardless of their wishes, a teacher has to try and get the children's attention. It is not at all surprising that this is difficult, because the subject, dictated by the syllabus, may have nothing in common with the live interests of the children at the time, or of most of the children. Because of this, the rate of learning is very slow.

Instruction, we believe, should consist of lessons which the children are free to attend and to miss, as has been the case in Summerhill for decades; this ensures the relevance of the subject to the children. And once the things taught are relevant, and advice and lessons are given when the desire to acquire knowledge crops up, the rate of learning increases so fantastically that all the hours of play and seeming idleness are made up with ease. One can envisage much more informal teaching to small groups, and far less so-called "class" teaching. To leave the children alone far more for creative activities and experiment would fit in well with this. It would also do away with the necessity of having specialists teaching their own subjects, which may be the wrong way of teaching. It is perhaps far better that the enquiring pupil and an individual nearly as new and ignorant of a subject as he is should get to grips with the matter together. The stress would be on learning *how* to find out, and *where* to find information, rather than on remembering lots of facts from the earliest years. That all this entirely eradicates exams, as we know them now, silly tests of memory, is one of the advantages of such an approach. To know how to find data and to use reference books and reference libraries properly is a far more important aspect of being qualified to do an academic or professional job than the mere repetition of swotted detail. Instruction then becomes that form of learning, as distinct from the other three, which is attractive because it is relevant, or because the teacher makes it seem relevant or spell-binding because of his own enthusiasm. Instruction must attract pupils if it is to be efficient. There is one example of pupils voluntarily attending lessons because they felt the relevance, which is particularly interesting. Half a dozen or so pupils at Summerhill had found out that to be able to become what they wished to be they had to pass School Certificate. Here we have the pupils not even directly interested in the subjects, but interested in the passing of an exam and therefore voluntarily attending class and working at a phenomenal rate to that indirect end alone. The results were roughly equivalent with those achieved by the best six pupils in a school after many more years of arduous disliked and enforced study. In other words, the rate of learning of these students studying voluntarily was far greater than that shown by those normally instructed. Another example, showing the difference between relevant and irrelevant matter, is that of the class of some sixty boys in front of which Jean found

herself during her teacher's training, with a headmaster proposing a history lesson. The period to be studied was, it seemed, round about some King Charles or other. The boys were completely uninterested, and naturally their interest and energies went into a host of such well-known activities as threaten to create chaos in any uncontrolled or uninterested classroom. It was then that Jean decided that recent history might be more relevant, and began to tell the story of the escape of a refugee from Nazi Germany. The result was that this notorious class quietened down to such an extent that not only could one hear the proverbial pin drop but the concentration so impressed the entering Professor and headmaster that a fine report resulted. A change of subject to something which was relevant to the boys made all the difference. The only other way of teaching sixty boys is to rule them with a hand of iron wielding a cane of pain. And this is to some people's liking, only they, of course, love to think it is inevitable.

This leads us straight into the second general principle for discussion. The examples given, and all our experience, show that the desire to learn is inborn, and, unlike those who positively like to think that learning has to be thrashed into some, and forced variously into others, we believe that the way to stimulate this desire is to make learning relevant to the children, which is not at all difficult, complicated or impractical.

In support of the theory that the wish to learn is innate, there is the strong evidence of the achievements of children too young to be threatened or forced. If the desire to learn to walk and to talk is spontaneous, and it must be taken as such, when does the spontaneity stop? At what age, and with what activity? The attainment of such considerable skills as talking and walking shows decisively that even very difficult things are learnt by children through astounding perseverance. We maintain, with others, that this innate desire to learn shown by babies would continue were it not killed by our methods of education, exactly to the extent to which children become lazy and bored and uninterested in learning anything. This laziness, disinterestedness and boredom in children tell us little about children, but a great deal about the methods of education and upbringing. Neill has mentioned somewhere, I think, that children will dig tremendous tunnels with enormous energy while fired with an idea. But the utilitarian suggestion to weed, a much simpler and less strenuous

activity, may leave them static. Leonora learnt the alphabet very early in her life because, one winter, there was not much chance of going out. But she forgot it again in the summer. All this exemplifies the point that circumstances, and the individual nature of the child, affect the innate desire to learn. Mozart, to take an extreme instance of the second, was obviously more disposed to learn about music than most infants. All of us are likely to be innately talented more in some directions than in others, and this can only be taken into account fully if the child is allowed to choose and is given opportunities of many different kinds.

And so to the third principle. It has emerged from the foregoing that the crucial aspect of all teaching in our society is the emotional content. We cannot learn without emotion. This means that we can choose, between fear and pleasure, which shall be the driving force for our children. And it is one of the most pronounced symptoms of the emotional limp that our society has chosen fear in many forms. Most children are emotionally starved and will form an emotional relationship with teachers whenever they can. This can be embarrassing, but it also offers a teacher the chance to show how emotional aspects of a child's life are connected with learning. One of the most obvious examples of this is the tremendous efforts the child will make to please a teacher, however much the subject may bore him. Such learning, for an ulterior motive, is not much good and is not advocated by us. But, for example, to answer honestly their queries on sex, and that is an emotional thing, can make a most unruly class into a co-operative one. This could be one example of a teacher fathoming what is relevant to the children, and satisfying an important need to know. Starved of satisfying human relationships most children will talk a great deal and all teachers have the opportunity to become therapists to the extent to which they are capable. It is up to the teacher to allow the child to work off his aggressions, as much as is practicable, and this may lead, and in fact has lead, to children becoming capable of advancing their learning astonishingly.

Leonora comes home at times loathing the idea of her homework. Some technically small thing, with the participation of a parent, can change her emotional attitude to it, and no sooner is this done than she proceeds with glee and does not bother to finish at the specified time. For example, if, with arithmetic, one

dictates the sums to her, so that she does not have to copy each one out of the book (an exercise which many now adults must have hated) she enjoys the rest. It is in this way, in helping to make subjects interesting, and so liked and relevant, through one's own contribution, that one can assist children a great deal, even if they are caught in the trap of the regimented schooling pattern common in most education. The child's relationship with her teacher, especially when it is the same teacher all the week, has the greatest influence. It may make learning hell or heaven. Children who have long known that everybody is silly sometimes, that others have reasons for being silly as she has herself, can understand the difficulties of a teacher surprisingly well. The result, we have found, is a degree of co-operation in class which is normally only associated with that bred by great fear of punishment. That this is the outcome of self-regulation never ceases to surprise people. It is a serious thing, however, if a child has a teacher with whom he has a hate relationship. And of course this is the common, possibly the most prevalent, condition in our schools. It is not surprising really, as liking of, and sympathy for, children is no criterion in selecting teachers. It is monstrous that a teacher may say publicly that she hates children without in any way endangering her position as a teacher—people will rather mutter "No wonder!"

To sum up: Relevant things are learnt with pleasure; things learnt with pleasure are learnt more quickly, more easily remembered when acquired, and better integrated with the rest of knowledge in such a way as to lead to a further desire to learn. To achieve this key requirement of relevance, with which the argument begins, the emotional and self-regulating elements of the child must be taken as the criteria.

CHAPTER XIX

NORMAL DEVELOPMENT THEORIES AND SELF-REGULATION

IT IS IMPORTANT to stress the emotional factor in learning and general development because of the fundamental omissions in many of the foremost erudite works on these subjects, including those of Piaget and Gesell. Piaget, in four hundred pages on *The Origin of Intelligence in the Child*, accepts the truth that life processes are dynamic and tries to explain them as such, in particular the emergence of intelligence. He even says that, at its departure, "intellectual organization merely extends biological organization". He suggests that "the living body represents an organized structure, that it works to conserve its definite structure, and, to do this, incorporates in it the chemical and energetic alignments taken from the environment".

Piaget describes many aspects of learning in such a way that they closely resemble reality as we see it. But the great and essential gap is that he does not know, nor think relevant, the question of what the "organized structure" is, or what its laws represent. He gets stuck with: "But what is an organized structure if not a cycle of operations of which each one is necessary to the existence of the others?" He refers to "energy" only in terms of "alignments", and puts these *after* chemical alignments! He makes "organization" relative to the person, and the person relative to the organization. There is nothing wrong in identifying what grows with the growth process, but one must then face the question of what is the law that governs them both. And it is the virtue of Reich's work, and so of self-regulation, that this question can be answered, for he discovered the functioning principle common and basic to both.

Gesell, in a style that is as popular as Piaget's is intellectual, is in a similar dilemma. The first impressions of Gesell's work are overwhelming: surely he must know all. So much research, so many facilities, films, photos and so many books. But a careful examination shows that the aim of his countless observations, to

get "principles of natural growth", are based on the false assumption that one can do this by taking as many "civilized" babies (American babies, it seems, in the main) as possible and observing their development. This means he ignores the basic importance of emotional limp in our civilization. The developments he charts are mostly those of emotionally sick children, and he does not know it, at least he does not say so.

But the key to the shortcomings of these leading writers on the child's development, as in many lesser ones, is their attitude to the emotions. Piaget never mentions them in four hundred pages. And all the others at best underrate them very seriously when dealing with education in general.

Shallow research has been done by academic writers to show that emotions influence behaviour in obvious social ills like delinquency, broken families and others. Among these studies, those of Professor Stott are noteworthy. But to the healthy, even the normal, child, these things are not considered relevant. Gesell merely warns against "animistic" concepts, and states that emotions, like all else, grow. We wonder.

Jonquil, ten days old, smiles repeatedly and unmistakably. She smiles half asleep after a feed, when Jean playfully and very gently tickles her lips with her nipples or finger tips. She smiles with the whole face, a radiance spreads over it. She does not smile when the nipple has touched her without tickling. This is not at all like those early grimaces which can be interpreted as wind or smile. This is a relaxed radiance, which comes on and goes off like a soft light. It begins round the mouth and spreads upwards. She has not yet focused her eyes, she recognizes no one by sound or sight. When she smiles in this way her eyes are shut, she is nearly asleep anyway, content, still and peaceful except for the amused, smiling movements.

This illustrated for us that a baby's emotions are fully alive and developed from the very beginning. Did she not seem and look content just after birth, while still attached to the cord and lying between Jean's legs? The smile shows vivid pleasure so early, and cries mean real pain. Emotions, we believe, do not grow, as Gesell would have it, they only change in their intellectual and sensory quality. Reich has shown that the worm's convulsions, indeed the expansion and contraction of one-celled organisms, express a direct perception of the energetic contact—which is what emotions really are. Perhaps the fact that tiny

mites, usually assumed to be as yet sub-human, can really smile, see a joke if you like, at the age of ten days should make the usual inhumanity to infants more obvious, and the positive possibilities more attractive.

And if, like Gesell, we lump emotion in with other phenomena, confusion results. For him emotions are essentially the feeling of a motor attitude. For him the motor activity comes first, the emotion is the result of bio-chemical responses. He is driven into this view, as others are driven to the opposite view (that feelings come before motor activity), because he does not think in terms of psycho-somatic identity, or a basic life-energy of which mind and body are both functions or expressions, as Wilhelm Reich has shown to be the case.

If one does think in this way, it is possible to escape the dilemma of deciding where to give priority, to mind or body, feeling or chemical action. To think in such terms also points to the true nature of emotions: they are the direct, subjective experience of the life energy moving in us. And when, for instance, the energy is spontaneously attracted to learning, pleasure is felt. There are only two other possibilities. Either the subject matter is not attractive, or the child's energy is bound up in tense muscles and fears and so cannot respond to attraction, nor can the child feel pleasure in learning.

The shortcomings of Gesell's approach show themselves in his tabulations of "developmental norms". Among those for children under six we found that the development of self-regulated children makes nonsense of Gesell's stipulations, and also of the various tables which almost any book on up-bringing boasts. The real point is that the comparisons of averages arrived at by using statistics on hundreds of individual babies are far less important than to understand why each child excels in what.

What seems so significant to us is the way children succeed in being very far in advance of the norms. It is our thesis that parents or guardians have the most profound influence on the learning capacity of their children through the emotional contact, the direct energy contact, from the earliest days.

Penny knew approximately a hundred words, and talked in small sentences, when according to the books she should have been using two or three words.

The same thing applies to drawing. The achievements of our children are not unusual among those of free children in general.

But compare them with what Gesell says in his *Infant Development*:

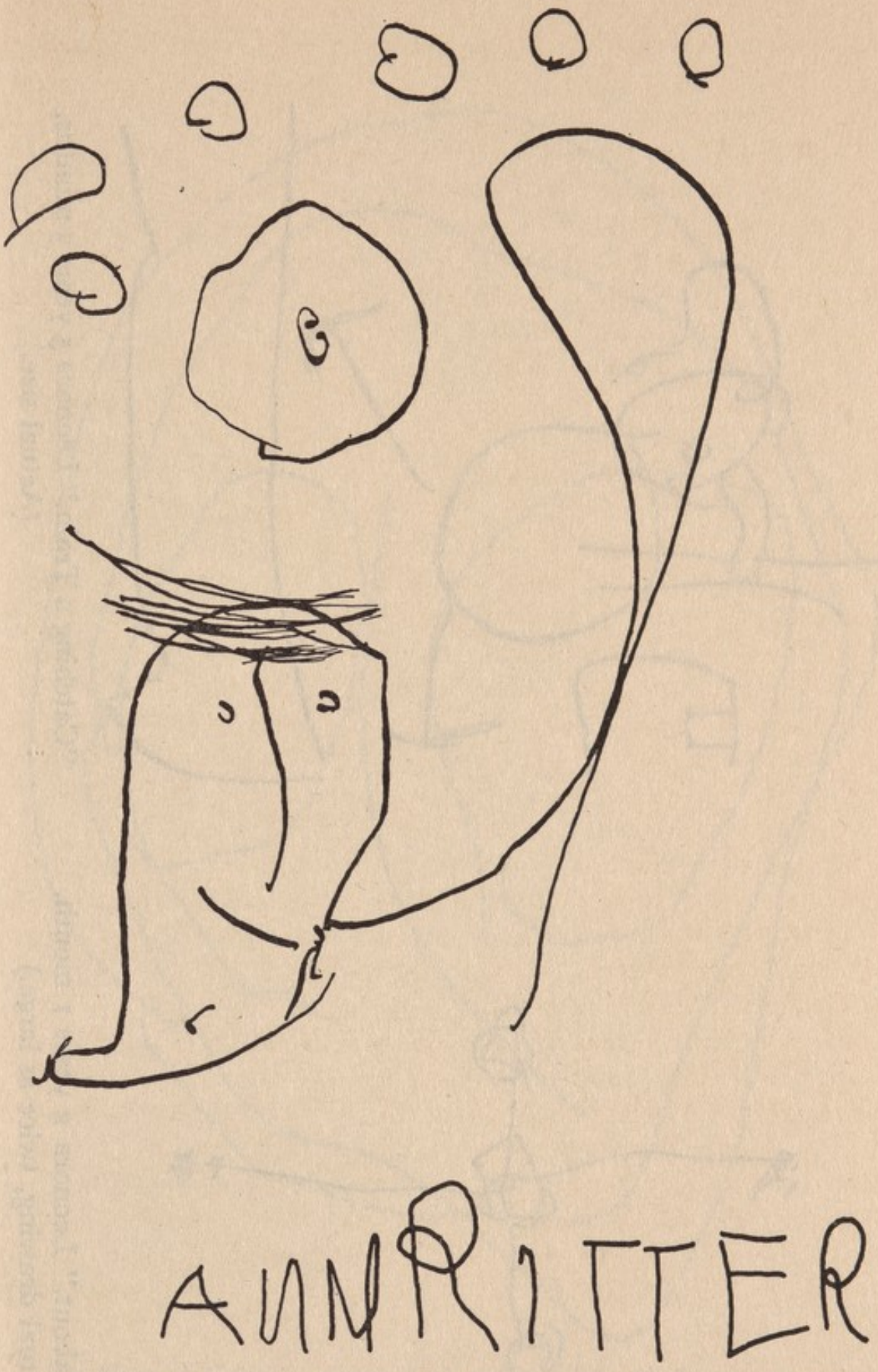
"At eighteen months he scribbles.
At about two he executes a vertical stroke.
At two and a half years, a horizontal stroke.
At three and four years, a cross, combining vertical and horizontal—and a circle.
At five, a triangle, leading to advanced skills of eyes, hand, and brain."

Well, we have a drawing of a "roundabout", executed when Leonora was two years one month old, which incorporates all the above except the last! It is nonsense to put the circle so late, and Gesell here betrays significant shortcomings. All our children, even in the scribbling stage at eighteen months, included lots of circles. They come quite naturally. They express the spontaneous movement of the hand enjoying itself. Thus a circle comes long before a straight line in self-regulatory development. One such fundamental mistake, by one endowed with so much equipment and personnel and scholarship, makes one lose faith in the value of the work of such people. It is highly significant that the joy in doing circles and spirals—round and round and round—appears to be irrelevant to Gesell and his co-workers.

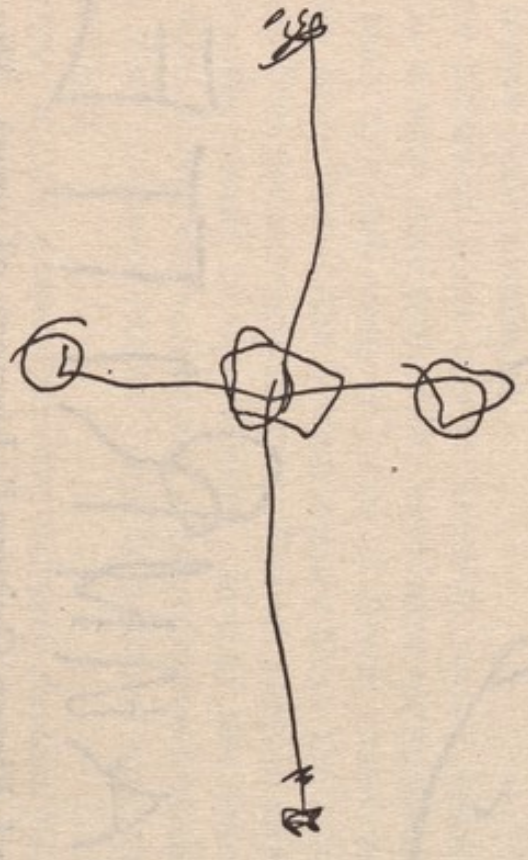
Erica's development is similarly, in speech and drawing, well above the experts' standards. And it is not that our children are retarded in other ways. Penny walked at ten months, the others at more usual ages. Their manual manipulation and dexterity is also above book standards.

If our children have learnt to read, write, draw, talk and reason in a way that makes the text-book categories laughable, rather than to climb trees or swim or fence, many would agree that they have learnt the former rather than the latter because they have had greater opportunity. But we wish to stress that it is not only the result of opportunity, but of the emotions with which these things were endowed when observed by the children, so that their "attractiveness" was heightened and the learning of them eager.

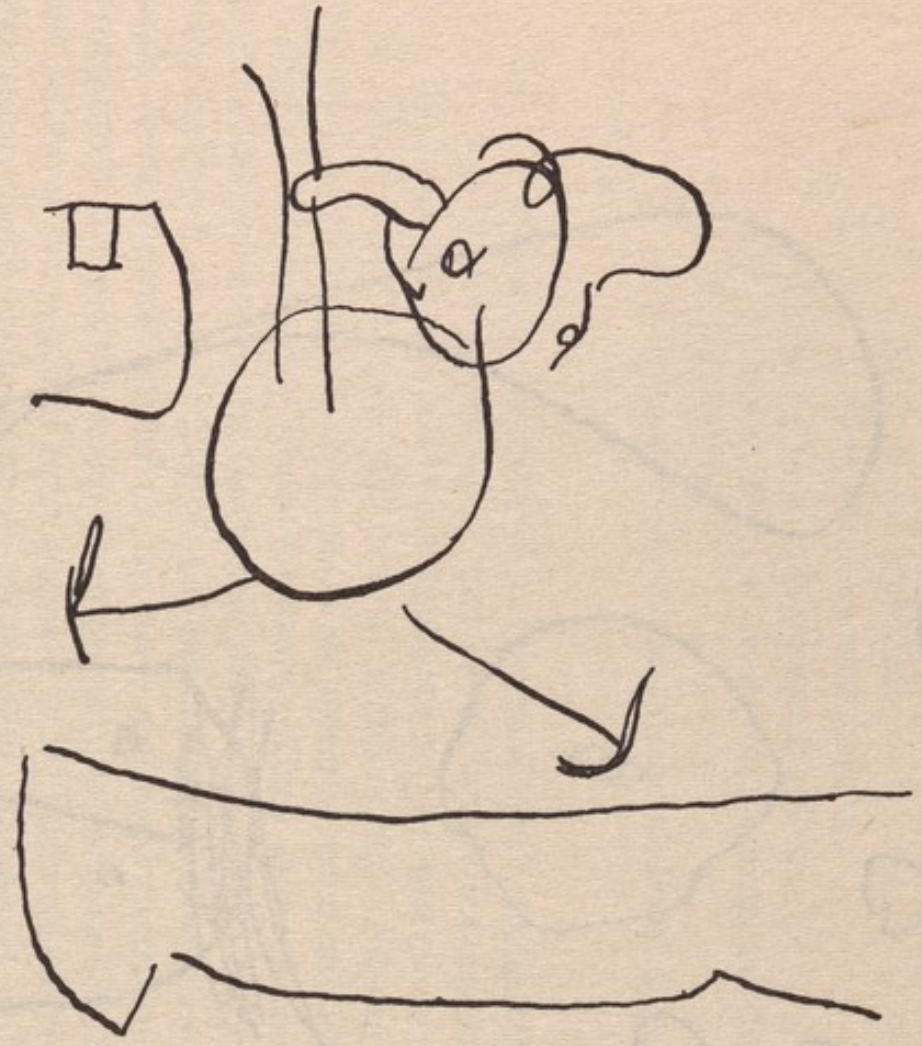
Leonora, at two, knew sixty-five nursery rhymes by heart! We always said them (because we noted her increased enjoyment) with the greatest of vehemence and with great variety of voice and stress, as well as clarity of words. Her pleasure was the signal for



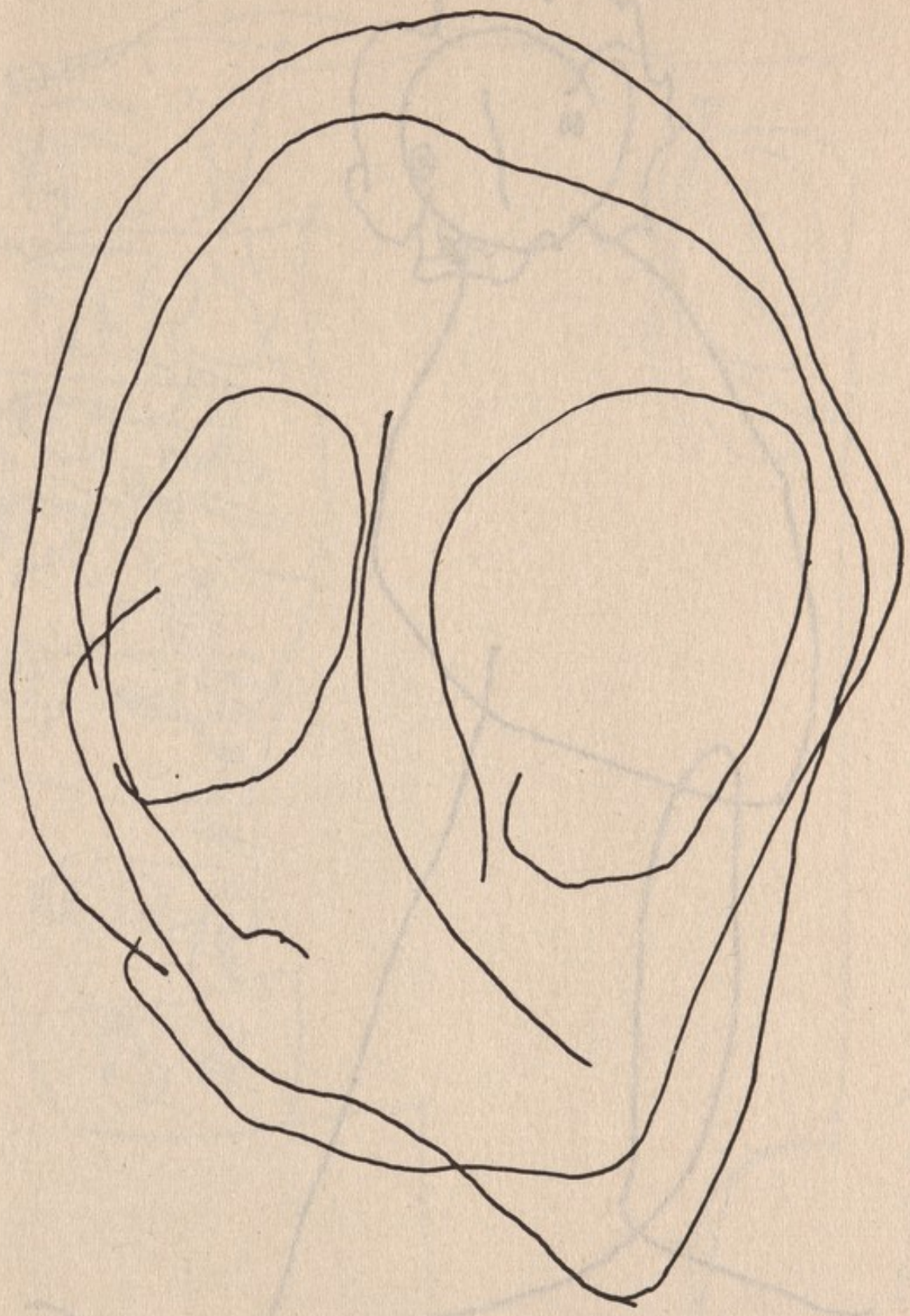
"Dog and Eleven Guineas." Leonora $2\frac{1}{2}$ years. Also her signature at $4\frac{1}{2}$ years. These as all other drawings are primarily meant to show the spiralling, continuous way in which very young children draw. Straight lines do not come first. (Actual drawing one-third larger.)



"Roundabout." Leonora 2 years 1 month.
(Actual drawing, twice as large.)



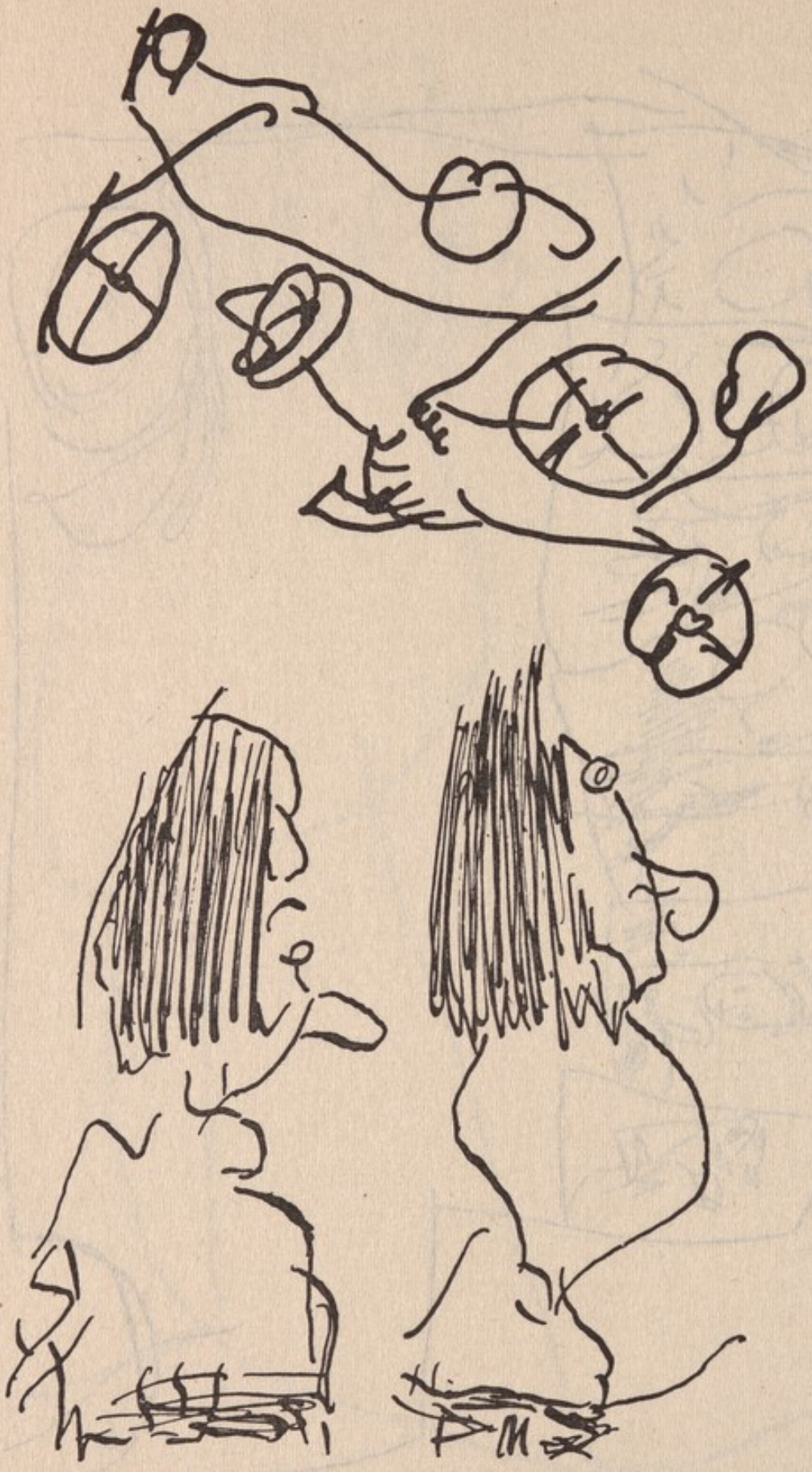
"Catching a Train." Leonora 5 years 3 months.
(Actual size.)



"A Face." Erica 2 years 8 months. (Actual drawing one-third larger which makes the continuous bold spirals even more remarkable.)

"Self-portrait." Erica 2 years 11 months. (Actual drawing one-third larger.)

"People in a Bus." Leonora 5 years 3 months. (Actual drawing twice as large.)



Above: "A Tricycle." Leonora exactly 3, after receiving one. (Actual size.)

Below: "Erica and Leonora." Leonora $4\frac{1}{2}$ years, first profile drawing. (Actual size.)

our pleasure, and more nursery rhymes, and her knowledge and memory of them were the result of requested repetition.

At the age of two, likewise, Leonora could use in their proper grammatical context such phrases as "as well", "too", "used to be", and could differentiate between "this" and "these". The fact that she was in adult company is a relevant factor, but our observations lead us to believe that the emotional affinity of the language spoken in the presence of and to Leonora were the decisive factors. Many children have adult company to the extent that Leonora did, but do not develop powers of language.

Books underestimate the capacity of children to learn. They also seem to underestimate their capacity for memory. Leonora remembered at two years two months that we had a rattle, when we suggested buying one for Erica; she had not seen it, and it had not been mentioned for four months. She also remembered at the same age a name she had not heard for four months.

On another occasion, Leonora and Erica had decided that they were afraid of wolves and foxes, something that harks back to a friend's fears. However, after much debate, Erica vehemently insisted that she had seen a fox. We all knew she had not. In exasperation she looked her sister, two years older, in the eyes and hissed, "I saw the fox before you were born!" This gave us the clue, and by careful probing, and the expression of relief on her face, we realized she was nearly right when we too remembered the stuffed fox she had noticed in a house she had been to, once only, when barely a year old. Memory, too, as is well known to psychoanalysts, is conditioned by the emotional associations.

I could write at great length about many more things that would seem outstanding by textbook standards. But this patting oneself on the back, for whatever motive, is nauseating. To watch the children is gratifying, but to stress their good points in print makes one too aware of their shortcomings! Suffice it to say that self-regulation, and the positive emotional presentation of knowledge, can give a child a rate of development which, from the first day to the ninth year (as far as our really close experience ranges), makes nonsense of the development rate quoted as normal by Gesell and others after observation of very many so-called normal (i.e. emotionally sick) children.

All this is important when the basic criteria of education are decided upon. At the moment, the emotions in learning are hardly considered at all, and this is due to the approach of such

academic authorities as we have criticized. What they say is tied to measurable things, and these are what the educational psychologist and his fear-ridden cousin, the sociologist, alike are after, to keep their scientific respectability. Their views are uncritically accepted. But this attitude is very harmful in obstructing such crucial considerations as the influence of emotions on learning—a positive influence in enthusiasm, and a negative one in anti-life teachers. Only creative experiments can give information on these points, and they are not regarded as "scientific" or "respectable", alas, by those who at present rule the academic world.

CHAPTER XX

CHOOSING A SCHOOL

ONE USUALLY HAS to send a child to school—in most cases the advantages outweigh the disadvantages—and all one can do is to modify the school work to suit the child's development: this must matter much more when children are older, and we have insufficient experience to talk of meliorative measures. But it is essentially a tragedy that children at school are not allowed to develop their interests, but are more or less bullied. Whether in primary schools or universities, examinations obstruct reform: they call for uniformity in progress, and thereby hangs a tale. It is this which demands the teaching of the same things at the same rate to everybody.

We can deduce from observation that neither the home nor the boarding school, albeit as good as Summerhill, provides the child with a sufficiently wide range of enthusiastic activity to watch and choose what he would learn. It must remain a matter of debate whether it would have been better if Leonora had spent her first few years playing pleasurably out in the open, which would have been possible in different accommodation, in a different climate, etc., etc. We can only say that, given the conditions, we concentrated on what she seemed to enjoy and what we could be enthusiastic about. Here lies the adult's opportunity and responsibility and the need to apply judgement: should he, the adult, if he has the power, give his three-year-old swimming instruction from an enthusiastic teacher who will make it a joy for the child? Should he teach his three-year-old climbing, or playing the piano, or judo or yoga? Should he teach him to skate or dance? All these are things which cannot be acquired so well later. Should he teach languages or reading and writing? And what mixtures of these?

Even when one has sorted out those things for which the child has no liking, there are always more things than the child can manage. A decision is made. And we have laboured heavily, grappling with the problem.

One basic point makes judgement easier, and any decision does not seem so irrevocable. If the child has grown up relaxed, his capacity to learn remains intact and his limbs and intellect will remain far more supple than is the rule today. Thus he may learn more quickly and more variously than teenagers or adults who have become stiff with chronically tense muscles and fearful minds.

The choice of school for one's children is a vexed problem. One nurses dreams and hopes of forming one's own school, or of finding a perfect day school, and one hardly dares to face reality till the child is actually approaching five.

Boarding schools, we feel, are only right when the child wants to get away. If he genuinely likes home and you him, then we believe boarding school is not best.

Now we know that Summerhill is a boarding school. What is more, we know the school well. We stayed twice for about a fortnight, with plenty of contact with the children, having broken through the barrier which permanently protects them from the never-ending and voluminous stream of visitors. (In the cold of winter, one way to do this, which we can recommend, is to chop wood and buy some bacon. Then you ask where you may light a fire. The children are all keen to have the warmth! And you may choose from many invitations to their rooms, where bacon, fried over that kindled fire, clinches the matter!) We have friends among old Summerhillians, among ex-staff, and, what is more, through personal contact, we have learnt to know, love and admire Neill. Newspapers liken his great influence on education merely to that of Arnold. But we believe that, through his long, tender and courageous experiment, in the context of these heartless times, he is the hero of a far greater achievement. It is almost unbelievable when up to this dour Scot—looking distinguished in the extreme, despite his intentions and his comfortable clothes, and with whom so many visitors just cannot make conversation —up to this large, tall, grey-headed figure, whose greatness seems almost forbidding to adults, dashes a little lad, saying "Hey, Neill. Seen Jane?" He says it in a tone, a way, that makes clear the essence of Summerhill's achievement: with no artificial respect. Summerhill is a boarding school and if boarding schools are necessary, Summerhills they should be.

But we feel that, given understanding parents who have the time and the capacity for love, homes are best. The parents'

special and immediate presence is more likely to counteract the evil symptoms of our society which inevitably beset our offspring, and which, Neill has shown us, cannot be kept even from his own Zoe, in his own school. Any boarding-school staff is severely handicapped in dealing with these special, personal problems that often need a careful and deeply-felt approach.

We think Neill is right when he envisages youth capable of doing without parental guidance in many ways; youth that finds love among itself and shows none of the sticky attachment to parents whose attitudes are the psychological equivalent of the strongest glue. They need to need us less. But in the special phase of transition from life-negative to life-positive modes of rearing, which is in full swing in these nineteen-fifties, much, much more is involved than just letting them be free. They need love and approval constantly, and strong backing at specific times, if they are to stand up to the life-negative impact of our old and traditional culture pattern. In a boarding school the parents are missing, and although the impact of the outside world and culture is much reduced, because of the geographical isolation, this may be a serious drawback, though it is of course not so in every case.

At home, on the other hand, the right children tend to be missing. One is indeed between the devil and the deep blue sea, and this problem above all shows how foolish it is to look upon self-regulation as an ideal. It should be the means of making the best of both worlds, according to a specific aim, and with a relevant attitude.

Erica, Leonora and Penny and Nicola have played together a great deal, three hours at a stretch, many, many days, without fight or emotional disturbances. A large family can certainly be useful in providing good company for one's children. We feel also that wherever the economic difficulties can be overcome it is worth a good deal of trouble for self-regulatory families to move together, so that the choice of the right playmates and right adults is increased. But in a later chapter it will be shown that this is not as simple as it sounds.

And still we have to choose a school! At present we have decided against a boarding school, at any rate for those who have time and capacity to love their children, and at any rate as long as the children want to stay at home. This may not necessarily be the case, however, when the children are, say, thirteen. Then we shall see, and, of course, much depends on other factors.

So we looked around. We found the council school overcrowded, as most of them are in this country at the moment, and this, except in the classes of the most able teachers, often means boredom for all the brighter, emotionally healthier children, eager to get on. In our particular district continued contact with the children showed us that they were free enough to show their aggression fairly openly. This involves great ferocity, typical of our age of transition, and particularly of the "working classes", where physical violence is a more common symptom, much more readily taken for granted.

Primary and secondary schools everywhere vary significantly. Teachers differ widely, and, above all, one cannot generalize with any precision or validity. But a few points seem worth mentioning. Those who have been ardent socialists in their youth, and who have not quite got over the unrealities of politics, think our children ought to go to council schools rather than private ones, on principle; they believe that at such schools they will "find their own level" and meet "all sorts", that they will not develop into "snobs". But their thought is neither functional nor correct. Let us take the three points in turn. That they will "find their own level" may merely mean that they will be the best of a bunch, in their capacity to learn or enjoy, or that they will be half-way up the mark sheet, because the environment is not conducive to fulfilment: too many violent children can counteract the influence of even the best teacher. The almost inevitable result, in a mixed area like ours, is that the children are forced into physical aggression themselves, in sheer self-defence. But the children of professional people have their own way of expressing aggression: in verbal hate and teasing, no less cruel, to be sure, but different. And so it is easier for a child from such a family to defend itself against those of its own class, using its own weapons, and perhaps the same applies in reverse to working-class children.

To think in terms of "levels" betrays a basic error: the level a child finds, in any field, is directly related to its environment. So that the choice of school should be based on the question: does this school give the best environment we can find and afford, for *this particular* child? In the end one sees that to talk of finding their own level is meaningless socialist propaganda.

The next argument, that they will meet "all sorts" in a council school, is equally fallacious. Even if all the professional classes sent their children to council schools, which of course they do not,

their number would be comparatively small in relation to the "other sorts". They would still not meet the children in "public" schools, nor yet those in private schools.

More seriously, one has to beware of inverted snobbery. Assuming that "classes" of people means merely difference, and not morally better or worse, it becomes functionally desirable that one should learn to be social, and to have contact with those with whom one is likely to have much in common. In the first instance, in other words, it is *not* all sorts, but one's own sort one ought to meet. The professional's child is likely to become a snob if his behaviour is a type of protection against all the strange, aggressive attacks of unfamiliar children in council schools. To keep the standard expected and implicit in his home life may well necessitate what is branded as snobbery in and out of school.

Once the social and natural lessons of co-operation on a functional basis are learnt, and this goes hand in hand with the knowledge that men and women are different, rather than better or worse, no individual should find such a product of self-regulation offensive or unsympathetic to any other type of human being.

We think that to ask our children to learn the task most of us cannot master, to feel at home in a variety of social strata, by the very dubious method of forcing them into a school overcrowded with good, honourable, lovable, but largely more violent working-class children, is clearly not sensible. In the street they mix quite differently, and in a much better background than the enforced co-habitation at school. All this, however, does not of course apply to all schools or all areas, and any particular school must always be judged on its own merits.

The whole question of classes can only be dealt with if, in a truly functional and useful manner, we differentiate between prejudice against things that would not really matter and objections to things which would. Then the fact that these things are within the framework of what one can call "class consciousness" can be seen as merely incidental. The same principle applies far more widely, for example, in judging village schools, which are always special cases and which have to be considered on individual merit.

And so one may look further at the private schools, if one can afford it, especially if one lives in a town or city. And then, as we did, you may find that what sounded quite forbidding in the first instance, say, a public school, seems the best of a very mixed

bunch. And if we describe our experience here, the reader will make the relevant deductions.

Three of our children in turn have been among the few (of many) successful applicants to a locally renowned Public Day School with a royal president. We were happy and relieved when the two "entrance exams" qualified them for acceptance and us to pay £60 fees a year per child (slightly less for several!).

What then are the qualities of this school that make it the best of those available? First there is a pro-child atmosphere, and secondly, the transition from playing outside all day to being in a class-room most of the time is gentle: for the first year the children spend the mornings only at school, and the number of afternoons is only gradually increased over the years. Further, the wearing of uniforms and the discipline imposed is functional. Such a detail as the compulsory wearing of overalls for all the girls throughout the day has the enormous advantage that the children are never told to be careful lest they get dirty.

The attitude to learning and scholarships, only one aspect of "schooling", is remarkably sane. To teach the five-year-olds to read and write and the six-year-olds to do the sums that are normally done by much older children seems, on reflection, a reasonable alternative: our children are most eager to learn now. They will probably not be as eager when they get a little older. *Now* they want to learn the three R's, and we should be teaching them to please them at home if they did not do so at school. It gives the same basic sense of achievement as that of any other game, and gives the child the same sort of satisfaction.

The nearness to home, the pleasant surroundings and the school buildings (converted houses, and therefore much more in scale than the factory-like schools, stringing their classrooms along endless, soulless corridors), all these things count. And what one cannot foretell, but it matters most, after four years and two years Leonora and Erica love school, and the occasions of unhappiness are wonderfully, almost miraculously rare. The positive achievement of having developed into more independent, self-possessed persons is clearly evident.

That we are busy congratulating ourselves on our luck and wisdom in the choice of school does not mean that we are ignoring the drawbacks. First and foremost is the fact that it is only a mixed school for the first two years of the kindergarten. We will have to make a very conscious and deliberate effort to enable the

girls to mix naturally with the other sex. It is delicious to hear Leonora's clear analysis of the situation! However, it is as well to bear in mind that a mixed school merely means, in very many instances, that the distorted and artificial divisions between the sexes is enforced inside school, and that silly, contactless banter dominates the social relations. So it might be preferable to meet the opposite sex in out-of-school activities. But to say this may be construed as "sour grapes", for both of us enjoyed more satisfactory mixed education when we were at school. There are other drawbacks.

If our children stay at this school, the academic activities may take up more of their time and may seem enforced by artificial competition. The result may compare sadly with the fresh-air-care-free Summerhillian. But we intend to wait and see about that, and to keep an open mind. A child who is aware of herself and able to express her wishes may be her own safeguard.

We have learnt to distinguish between genuine disadvantages and those phenomena that seem terribly sad or offensive merely because of our own associations. Take prayers, and religion in general: we, because of our upbringing, had good reason to believe that religion is largely associated with fears, taboos and repressions. Our own prejudice had to be overcome, and it is very difficult to see those things, terrible, harmful, painful and noxious in our own upbringing, as quite innocuous in that of our children. But a father who suggests that religion is rubbish, in a vehement way, is looked upon as a little queer. Why all the fuss? Some of it is silly, but then "everybody silly sometimes". Ironically enough, religion was felt by Leonora to be reassuring: "They put fear in you," she said, referring to the gruesomeness of fairy stories, "and then they try to make it better by telling you about Jesus."

Anyway, to hear holy song reproduced at home in a grisly flat voice has a salutary effect on the prejudice of parents who expect religion to have the same effect now as it had on them.

Our children going to school has taught us two most valuable lessons. First it showed that a self-regulated child easily achieves the intelligence and aptitudes required to gain admission to a good school against competition; and secondly it showed that the child can cope with the discipline and social life such a school imposes, by its own standards, and can enjoy such a school and continue to develop reasonably. Even if many more difficulties arise out of the contact of freedom with imposed discipline, the self-regulated

child seems to be able to cope with the situation out of his capacity for understanding and self-discipline.

The results of our experiment, contrary to the vehement prophecies of our critics, are very heartening. They show that it is utterly invalid to say that self-regulation is cruel because the child will sooner or later have to face the world unprepared: they also show that there is no need to feel that all is lost if one is forced to send a child to a school which is only conducive to freedom and self-regulation in a limited way, though it cannot be denied that a great deal may be lost, heartbreakingly so.

But self-regulation does not estrange a child from the hostile world and make him extra vulnerable. It creates a vital, sensitive and adaptable personality which suffers less at the hands of the life-negative environment, and only so much as is really inevitable. At the same time, it does not condone and continue the present culture, but represents part of the biological revolution which will result in emotional health.

CHAPTER XXI

WHAT LOVE AND HATE REALLY ARE

LIFE IS GROWTH. Social life is social growth. It is to this process that we must relate love and hate if they are to become meaningful and useful concepts. In the whole of the individual organism there are many organs. In the whole of any social relationship there are several individuals. In each case it is the growth of the whole which makes it utterly different from the mere sum of its parts. Growth, life, organizes the parts into a recognizable pattern in the social, as in the biological, sphere. In the sciences dealing with these there is need to assume an origin, force or energy whereby this organization takes place which is basic to the unification, harmony and integration of the growth.

In the healthy body, the various organs act harmoniously together in, if we might call it that, an internal and spontaneous discipline. There is no "grabbing for more of the blood supply" by any of the organs, unless it is diseased. Similarly, social organisms, or groups of people, act with self-regulated self-discipline and do not have to be dragooned to co-operate rationally, unless, and this is the normal in our society, the individual is diseased. And it is the counterpart to the grabbing of more of the blood supply that brings forth such dragooning as, for example, Christian ethics or the law, with its emphasis on punishment.

The harmony of the healthy whole stems, in the social and the biological, from the "life-energy" with its ubiquitous "common functioning principles".

We have learnt from Wilhelm Reich that such an energy, a life-energy, is not just a vague idea but a concrete physical reality. When we feel the emotions of love or hate we have a direct experience of this energy as the organizing or disintegrating force in the social sphere.

Sceptics, or those who think this language fanciful or metaphysical, are referred to the experiments of Reich, which showed, even if only in terms of voltaic electricity and not life-energy,

that there is an increase in charge, at the points of the skin concerned, when pleasurable external stimuli are felt. The pleasure stimulus of love can easily be seen as corresponding to energetic charges of a more general kind, but just as physical and real. And for this there is also much concrete evidence.

Nor, surprisingly enough, are we far from some of the speculations of the academically respectable. It is said by several professors of sociology that the behaviour of a group of people, their social behaviour, is best understood if the individuals are taken to be integral parts of the group, as individual organs are part of the body. But they certainly do not know why, nor venture even to guess. And, just as Wilhelm Reich has seen the natural process of the body as one basically of charge and discharge, so the highly academic Professor Sprott has written that social life serves the same basic function, also charge and discharge. But whereas Reich really knows what he is talking about, and his concepts are concrete, Professor Sprott does not specify what the charge is or what is discharged, so that his gifts of intuitive understanding are refused by that certain critical approach that the highly academic world values. His belief remains mere metaphysics, a poor basis indeed for the whole of the Professor's sociology, and an odd one for this highly academic science, which strains after respectability by sticking, strictly and restrictively, to statistical evidence.

Without elaborating too much, it must be added that we, from observation, have developed Reich's concept of charge–discharge. As there are always at least two things in question, a better description of what actually goes on, energetically, seems to be "attraction–fusion–liberation". This is particularly vivid in social life. Towards discharge or, in other words, towards fusion, we strive, inevitably, for that is the basic function of the life-energy. And there is reliable evidence that love, the affectionate attraction to, and fusion with, others, is the primary and basic creative social function, and that hate is a spontaneous and secondary, disruptive reaction when the quest for love has been repeatedly or decisively denied. Hate is the desperate attempt to get discharge or fusion somehow with the other person or persons, group or society. Because we are emotionally diseased as individuals, and with this we poison the groups we form, which, in their turn, infect the emerging members, the healthy love attractions and fusions are mostly beyond our capacities. The result is the hate and aggression which, in many guises, are the

background and the stuff of most of our social life. Preaching love, we live in hate. Incapable of love and fearing to become aware of the hate in us, we become afraid of emotions in general.

One of the clearest analyses of one symptom of the suppression of emotions in traditional ways of upbringing is that of Ian Suttie. In his book on *The Origins of Love and Hate* he gives much evidence that love is a primary drive. But relevant to the present argument is his chapter on "the taboo on tenderness". Tenderness being an important quality of love, he shows how "manliness is looked upon as a virtue in contrast to babyishness" (even in babies!), how "cry-baby", "Mummy's boy", are names for inferior qualities, and all the "inferior" qualities are expressions of tenderness. He shows how, as grown-up people, particularly male, we squirm when we meet deep feelings and softness, and disdain them on the grounds that they are "sentimental". To be "manly" is to remain unmoved, emotionally unaffected, hard. He asks how many men can really feel tenderness towards babies and, one might ask further, to each other (and here even the law and strong mores object), or even to their girl friends and wives? He differentiates this tenderness carefully from the condescending play that men will indulge in with these lesser things. He shows further how the tenderness that does come out, in spite of all, in love play, and falling in love, is merely excused by society as the "madness" and "temporary instability" of lovers. And he shows how this taboo on tenderness is really contrary to the gentleness that theoretically forms part of Christian ethics, so generally deemed acceptable.

With girls, the manifestations are slightly different but they still exist. Grown up, as mothers, they think they will spoil their babies, girls or boys, if they nurse them too much. Little girls are told not to cry because "they are big now", and to clench their jaws and bear pain. To give birth feelingly has been taboo for a very long time, and it is only gradually seeping back into the realms of fashion in our society. Other symptoms of the taboo lie in those attitudes to weaning which are held by the psychoanalysts and which are contrary to self-regulation. In their view, the child must adjust, grow up and be coerced. Heart-hardening is inevitable. In self-regulation, there is confidence that development will happen at the child's own pace, and that tenderness and emotion will not retard but encourage the process, though it may increase the pain, as well as the joys, of life.

The fact that so many children pull out the legs of anything, from flies to frogs, is not due to their innate cruelty, as is so widely held. It is due to the explosive and exaggerated expression of the gentle, loving emotions. These they are not generally permitted to feel or express, any more than their first reactions to frustration, in anger and crying, for which they are generally punished.

When Jonquil was born we knew already that the chances of the older children being jealous were far less in our case than the psychoanalysts would fear. And so Nicola, two years and three months old, came in with two others. Erica was still asleep. I told Nicola the baby had at last come out of Mummy's tummy and was lying next to her Mummy in the double bed. She climbed up on to the bed and, without a single admonishment to be gentle or careful, she settled herself down, sitting right next to the newborn with adoring and shining eyes. For twenty minutes she sat there visibly overflowing with love, which expressed itself in little spontaneous and pleasurable convulsions of her shoulders, in saying most tenderly "Nice baby", and bending down to kiss and stroke Jonquil with a tenderness which had to be seen to be believed. I do know just how gentle because, when I have shaved, Nicola has stroked my cheeks and has said in the same loving tone "Nice Daddy". After perhaps ten minutes I held out my hand to lift her off and help her to dress. The resentment of this disturbance to her just sitting and loving was outstanding. If I had insisted and taken her away it was obvious that the tenderness, the love, would have been frustrated and changed into desperate hard contact, into cruelty. Both her facial expressions and the determination of her very short protests were quite, quite exceptional for her. And so, we believe, might be the first reaction of many brothers and sisters to their parents' new offspring. In the case of one of my patients, perhaps typical, that is how hatred did start . . . with love. In her case, because she made a noise of joy on the second day, when the baby was asleep, grandmother and mother came down on the little child like a ton of bricks, as if her happiness, noise and love were a great crime. From that moment on, her love for the new one had been decisively denied. And when it had been denied continually, she spent her childhood hating the little brother and all that reminded her of him, with an unbelievable if subconscious ferocity. Such is the clear alternative to the innate love which we ignore. Insensitively we turn it into unwanted hate.

The need to communicate emotionally, violently if gentle contact is precluded, with hate if love is impossible, is shown also in the biting of adults by babies. Quite apart from teething, children often bite. Careful observations have led us to believe that this biting may often be the desperate attempt of the very young child to make contact, when love is not forthcoming. The adult, even when carrying or suckling a baby, may be tense. Leonora, at one time in particular when we had reason to believe that she was feeling a little insecure, would bury her teeth in the tender flesh of my neck as I carried her, quite, quite unexpectedly, particularly when I was carrying her out of duty, rather than love. It was specially hard to bear because I have a pathological aversion to nipping and pinching.

Suckling all of them was usually an exquisite pleasure for Jean. But at times, whether because of cracked nipples, or because of emotional disturbance, she was tense at feeding time. It was then that the babies bit, so often that there is no doubt in our minds that it was their desperate attempt to make contact. It makes sense in that light. The moralist is forced to call the new-born "naughty"! But once it is understood that a tense nursing mother, though she may flow with milk, does not necessarily flow with love, a real energetic flow, we must remember, it is comprehensible that the baby feels that lack. And, desperate to make contact, he gets it by biting. This is hate contact of course, and fits in perfectly with Reich's theory of the origins of masochism. His, the only theory which leads to effective, if prolonged, therapy says that masochism has nothing to do with the death instinct, as stipulated by Freud to integrate it into his theories when his therapy had no effect on such patients. It is due, Reich maintains, to an early identification of pain with a quest for pleasure, as in the case of a baby who has bitten his mother's sensitive nipple repeatedly and received his mother's angry and hateful smacking reaction equally regularly. That was his only and desperate contact with her. No wonder there are lots of masochists! The inference is that mothers ought to try and relax when feeding. And the further inference is that, if they cannot relax while breast-feeding, giving a bottle relaxedly, while the love is flowing to the infant through the mother's arms and body, may well be better.

For it is better to recognize our weaknesses, even if they involve hate in relation to those near to us. Then our reactions to

the hate of the child can always end in a functional, direct approach, and we avoid moralizing and the harmful guilt it creates.

Both love and hate can be restrained, either subconsciously, through fear of emotion, or consciously through the capacity to act opportunely and judiciously. The fear of emotions (hate or tenderness) springs from the emotional limp of our society, the guilt passed on to each generation. The capacity for restraint at will, on the other hand, emerges from lives that are satisfied in love, without guilt, and have been allowed to react hatefully, at crucial times, without facing moral threats and disapproval.

CHAPTER XXII

THE BIOLOGICAL ORIGIN OF LOVE

THE ANALYSIS OF our observations leads us to the following belief: a conscious healthy birth is the only start to the first, basic love relationship between mother and child.

Any writing on parental love in the upbringing of children starts, for us, with the discussion of the above point. We take for granted that love is desirable and necessary. The need to prescribe love as one of the requirements in the daily life of the child, like roughage, as done in books on upbringing, is in itself a symptom of a sorry state. The reality of the need for love can only seem convincing to those who can feel it as well as understanding it on a rational and intellectual basis. Often, however, there is an awareness of the need for giving love and of the incapacity of the parent to do so, in spite of all good intentions and desires. In a love relationship between parent and child it will be as with lovers, the comfort and strength and joy and pleasure obtained will be mutually given. The parent will be aware that he gets as much from the relationship as the child. It is not something one-sided which involves dutiful gratitude.

Love cannot be willed; it cannot be forced. It grows, develops spontaneously and sometimes takes a long time. In the chapter on birth, it was recalled that an experiment with an antelope showed that, made artificially unconscious at the birth of her offspring, she showed no interest in it. We have observed over and over again, among human beings, that an unconscious birth cuts off the love relationship which grows so strongly during pregnancy and gains a tremendous impetus, a hot flow of love, through the birth process. It is one of those discoveries which, if true, suggest that many mothers, as agents of their society, have withheld something vital from their children, and they will, therefore, find it hard to believe. As we see it, there are mothers who are in any case very tense, and for them the birth, whether conscious or unconscious, would not lead to the spontaneous love of the baby. If conscious, the pain and the terror due to tensions and fears

would preclude the natural joys. On the other hand, it is remarkable to what extent mothers may suffer at birth and still retain that hot love which springs from consciousness at birth. Another variation is a mother who, after her unconscious birth, still loves her child, or pretends to love her child because it is the done thing. Closer study has always shown us that such mothers demonstrate less love, tenderness and softness towards the baby than they thought they would, or else their pretence becomes obvious.

And so we see that the origin of mother love is biological. The energetic function of the birth is only healthy and complete if it involves a conscious mother, and really this is not so difficult to believe. What is hard to bear for mothers is the thought that their unconsciousness has marred their relationship with their children from the beginning. But only if one has the courage and the capacity to face such a tragic thought will the guilt subside and another love may then grow opportunely to compensate both mother and child.

We had just that experience with Leonora. In spite of Jean's enthusiastic anticipation, after the unconscious birth she did not feel for and with the baby as with all the others. Physically she was well, but emotionally she had been seriously hurt, and the baby too. There was none of the spontaneous passionate love of the new mother, so obvious and so joyous with our other children. Nevertheless, from her compassion for the little mite there sprang feeling and love, an intimate and growing flow of love, quite different from the feeling towards the others.

We both felt what had happened very deeply, and happily my position, as a student of architecture, made it possible to make up for the love lost to a large extent. If love is in simple reality an energetic flow of feelings between people, then it is quite feasible that a father can give, even to the very small infant, much of the love it needs. We believe that Leonora's far greater and more frequent desire to be nursed was her seeking for the love she had missed and needed so badly. In the best self-regulatory manner she cried for the love and was happy when in my arms and when the feelings for her were loving. For it is the feel of love which is the sure guide that the energy is flowing.

All children have setbacks which, if one made the point sufficiently clearly, might seem tragic. If, on the other hand, one looks upon those setbacks, which in spite of all one's efforts one

has not been able to avoid, as inevitable and not unusual, then Leonora's setback, although still traceable today, when she is nearly nine, is not one which mars her life in any appreciable way. The symptoms remaining, which might be traced back to the birth, are a perhaps greater readiness to become afraid, and, in spite of her very considerable independence, a greater reliance on the approval of mother and father and others than is shown by her sisters. But such things are most difficult to pin down, describe, or even to recognize with certainty.

Unconscious birth is still something "normal" in our society, that which happens in the majority of hospital cases, although the work of the Natural Child Birth Association should alter the proportion daily. However, whether by accident, as with Leonora, or whether by design, once the unconscious birth has taken place, it must be considered as a setback and injury to child and mother and to their relationship. That means that the child needs much more love from someone else, and the mother needs special love and approval also, because of the great tendency to feel guilty about her lack of feeling for the helpless, new-born thing. Furthermore, the relationship between mother and child cannot be forced into a love-relationship, and it is necessary that the mother should be able to express in words all the resentment she might feel against the child, husband, society, without guilt and with agreement and approval. Only then will a new love grow, a love almost as between two fellow sufferers, a love which can be tremendously strong. And, as with Leonora and her mother, in due course it can have all the ingredients necessary for a healthy parental love.

If unconscious birth is not recognized as a setback, then forced pretensions of affection and guilt and deeply rooted resentments tend to be covered with rationalizations about the child. This imperils gravely the whole family life. As an example of this, even in an article on self-regulation (the italics are ours), we read:

> "They [the parents] must be able to feel when the child needs help and when it is trying to boss. Children of *six to eight weeks* try to force the mother by crying to be around all the time. Nevertheless, most mothers soon learn to distinguish whether the child cried because there was something wrong or just in order to get attention."

And yet, in the same article:

"The most essential need of children is, without doubt, their need for love physical as well as psychic . . ."

What a fantastic juxtaposition of statements! What a grave error for one who claims to believe in self-regulation! Surely the capacity to demand as much as is needed applies to love, the very physical need stressed by the author, and surely the child crying for its mother is crying for just that physical contact (or energy contact) which it needs. What else can the theory be? Why should an infant have the desire to "boss"? A strange metaphysical concept, unless it means "He commands the love he needs". It is wrong, dangerously wrong, to write such a thing in the name of self-regulation and to allow countless families to leave their crying infants to their lonely misery in their intention not to "spoil" them!

We state clearly, with all the power of our convictions, based on our feelings, our workable theories and our practical experience, that love for a child, in terms of being carried by, or remaining near, soft, feeling adults, is the most important need, not for survival, of course, but for healthy emotional development. A child will regulate the amount of such love-contact by crying when he does not get enough, or when he gets too much. To ignore the crying of a child is to undermine the whole basis of self-regulation, and it creates conscious or unconscious guilt in the parent. There will be many who cannot feel the love of an infant, both men and women: many even with their own infants. But if they do not, then, of course, the infants will want more of what is an unsatisfactory contact, in the absence of something better, and may cry for it nearly all the time they are awake during the first few months, unless they are carried. Leonora was rather like that. But as it is a hard admission that one's love is not there, not enough, or not healthy, or that one's child has suffered a grave setback through birth, few people care to believe this, and, instead, they take refuge in the metaphysical nonsense of "bossing". Society will have it both ways: tenderness is "soft" and so to be avoided, but a mother who honestly says, as many sincerely might and with benefit, that she does not love her infant, is branded as a monster. Several such cases have recently reached the headlines.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE TIGHT FAMILY

THAT THE UNCONSCIOUS and unhealthy, terrorful birth leads to a mother-child relationship which develops quite differently, and far more sensitively, than the spontaneous relationship following a healthy birth is bad enough. But what aggravates the problem is the way the mother is then cooped up with her children and her guilt, and her subconscious resentments.

If we realize with a shock that that may mean that a mother of two or three children can quite frequently not satisfy the love-needs of her children, as we do not believe in having them on our backs while we cook or do our work, then we have a pointer to the irrationality of organization into tight families. There are other more diffuse ways of life found in other societies, and these give children many more points of contact, and so many more opportunities for love. But we have in our society father, mother and one, two, three children, in a more or less patriarchal relationship. Father goes out to work. That leaves mother and the children. The sentimental notion of the holiness and the beauty of this situation is in rasping contrast to roaring reality. In favourable circumstances, a garden and visits to friends may alleviate the tight relationship, in terms of space, but the tightness of the emotional relationship remains. Three children of differing and great specific love-needs, three children without company of their own age, three children needing physical attention, needing a fair arbiter, three children who want to make noise, penetrating and ear-splitting, and all at the mercy of a mother who, whatever her intentions, is bound to suffer from the constant pressure of the life-negative society and its traditions, and whose resistance is weak because of her own moralistic upbringing.

It becomes a nightmare if one then imagines illness, the English weather, misuse of house space, all superimposed, and if one visualizes this scene set in a house where violence is commonplace. When the father comes home at night, the mother, resentful, vents her feelings: after she has had only the company of infants for

hours, an adult appears at last; the explosive scene is set, and one grasps with a shudder the background and the inevitability of the many, many ghastly tragedies reported in the papers, and of the countless others recorded only in the flesh and fibre of children and in the guilt of their parents.

> "We were all in the caravan together when I did it. She was a funny child . . . I don't think she liked me, she wasn't mine . . . she was getting on my nerves. I got out and hit her and then stood her in the corner. After Margaret had fed the baby she got back into bed. Patsy turned her head and looked at us and then fell down. I got out, picked her up, hit her and stood her back in the corner. I went to sleep and woke up. She was on the floor. She wouldn't do as she was told. We had a large barrel in the van . . . I got hold of her and put her head in it. She cried out. Her arms got wedged, I couldn't pull her out. I called Margaret and we got her out. I dried her and Margaret held her over the stove, but there it was, she was all quiet like."—*News Chronicle*, March 5th, 1955.

Statistics show that we do not exaggerate their frequency. This story is frighteningly stark: but had Patsy emerged alive from the barrel, had that family continued undisturbed in its unhappy ways, and had the *News Chronicle* not printed that story, we should have quoted one of a parent burning his child with boiling water, or of a mother who beat her child and broke his bones, or one who tore out handfuls of hair, or one who threw her three-year-old down the stairs . . . and it must not be forgotten that psychological cruelties can be just as hurtful and crippling, but always remain unrestrained by the law.

If one would do anything about easing the problem of the caged mother and child, and the daily return and week-end visits of the father, then one must first have the considerable capacity to see the problem in terms of one's own family, and we have tried. It is an extreme test for all concerned. The duration and severity of the isolation can then consciously be remedied whenever possible, and at considerable sacrifice: it is nobody's fault: to blame is to introduce cause and effect, moral judgement and dangerous half-truths.

It is urgent to realize that underlying all that we do as parents in relation to our children is our own limited capacity. Knowing

this is a safeguard against that vicious circle: the mother being bad tempered with her children (and so a failure), because she has just been bad tempered at being a failure. This is not just a joke, nor a figment of our imagination: we have watched our family suffer from it. It must be deliberately avoided. Children should not expect their parents to be constantly good-tempered or of even mood. We have found ours quite capable of comprehending our emotional limp. To know that their parents are frail *and* strong makes them feel secure in their own capacity, which is to be both, frail *and* strong, also.

A reasonable solution to the problem of cruelty to children, which is otherwise likely to continue on and on, seems to us to be the establishment of three principles:

(*a*) That homes or boarding schools should be available where children who wish to go to them may stay, when and as long as they please. These institutions should be pleasant, like Summerhill, and paid for through the national budget.

(*b*) That children should have the right to leave home for such places when they wish. (It might be quite normal for them to return home at intervals.)

(*c*) That the blackmail laws should be widened to include offences perpetrated by parents against their children, and that there should be a similar widening of the laws governing assault and battery.

All this amounts to no more than regarding the child as a person worthy of legal protection equal to that given to the adult. At the moment he is almost as underprivileged as a slave.

A less dramatic symptom of the emotional narrowness of our families is jealousy. One hears less of love among brothers and sisters than of jealousy, of the contempt of one sex for the other, mistakenly taken as amusing, or of the so-called "crush" type of attraction between the older brother and the younger sister, or vice versa.

We see that these social relationships are affected by the emotional limp and by the tightness of the family circle. Thus Ziman in his remarkably life-positive book, "Jealousy in Children", is quite correct when he says that we can hardly expect to avoid jealousy in our families, we can only learn to recognize it, take it as "normal", and try to ameliorate conditions.

Erica has provided us with experience of the "normal" jealousy, which I shall describe in a later chapter. The problem of course

arose because we suffered from the following weaknesses of the tight family system; they were:

(*a*) Erica's exclusive love of her mother, which made Jean's illness at Penny's birth an unnecessarily grave loss to her. This was so, in spite of the fact that I took a holiday and spent six weeks entirely with the family, loving but often tense. Jean was ill, and I am impatient with illness.

(*b*) In the tight circle of the family, the many tensions affected Erica directly. She could not escape them.

(*c*) The intense emotions of our tight circle hardly allowed us to notice what we were doing to the child until the symptoms were so strong that the damage had been done. And, even if we did notice anything, we noted it with exasperation, creating more tensions. We had not the capacity to do much about it, nor the child the opportunity to turn temporarily elsewhere.

Jealousy is "normal" just as the family pattern is "normal". The very young hardly get a chance to associate with anyone closely, except their brothers and sisters. This restricts their choice very greatly and jealousy is one negative aspect of this situation. But, as in the case of two wedded adults who create in their twoness a very healthy and lovely relationship, so siblings, too, occasionally manage this.

The children of a family, our own, and other children when they live really closely, can love one another, given capacity and opportunity for privacy as well as play space. Leonora recently wanted to tell Jean she loved her specially because Jean had been very patient and loving. So she said, "Mummy, I love you best of all! After Erica, of course." All of them alternate healthily between liking Jean and liking me, according to which of us is more lovable and relaxed towards them, and say so quite plainly.

We do not think that little sisters ought to love one another like "little birds in a nest"; on the contrary, deploring the fact that the little birds tend to be cooped up in their own nest, we are very happy when they love one another in spite of this. They can love one another deeply and healthily, which does not, of course, mean invariable agreement. They hug each other with real warmth (which is linked to the fact that they see us do it), are concerned for one another when something is really wrong, and protest and unite with tremendous clamour in a quest for justice if we big brutes occasionally hit or yell at one in exasperation. And, though we may sometimes attempt to bully one child,

we can assure all protectors of children that they can take comfort in the fact that to bully three, four or five self-regulated offspring is impossible without gun or whip, neither of which do we find handy at the right time! They unite, make the most poignant and correct remarks about our stupid adult behaviour, and hug one another better until one feels like the most brutal, bad man or woman in England and pleads for pardon, mercy and understanding.

They take precious little notice of one another if they have acted stupidly or are howling, not out of sheer pain, but for an ulterior motive, whether just or unjust, but they do soften to each other, and will change a toy against their will, if the other is very keen on having it and cries to show how much it is wanted.

That friction between children can at times be related to shortage of space and privacy we found when we moved into a large old house in September, 1957. The change in the children was interesting. Erica, Leonora and Penny (aged eight, six and four) had previously slept together in a large room, each in her own bed, dormitory-wise. Mornings had been rather painful to us for some time, for most of them started by our being wakened by arguments, threats or other acts of hostility, particularly between the two eldest ones. From the very first day that each was installed in her own room (only Leonora shared, at her own request, with Nicola, aged one and a half) all trouble ceased. It was holiday time, and Erica stayed in her room, day after day, till quite late, and emerged happy, radiant, tolerant and with co-operative capacity towards Leonora. The transformation was quite staggering, and most enjoyable. As with adults, so with children, the need for privacy at times is definite.

Siblings can play together. As we have said Leonora and Erica, Penny and Nicola, and all the other possible combinations (and how many there are in big families!) spend long hours in play together. It seems surprising to us, though it should not be, every time we hear of children who cannot be left alone because of the mischief they will be up to. But siblings, except in the particular case of twins and other rarer chances, are of varying ages, which means that they are not really the most suitable play-partners, and the difficulties created by the mere difference in age and ability bring the play for the elder ones down to a lower standard than is necessary. For the younger ones it may mean frustration in always doing what the others suggest. But capacity for co-operation is really surprising: The child is two. With her sister of

four and a half she may be playing a game with a pram. They both want to hold the handle in the middle, like mother, neither the side of the handle like a child. So the bigger one, as she has learnt from her older sisters, throws herself on the floor in a temper. "All right then, you hold it here," says the two-year-old, pointing to the middle, "I hold it here", and she is content with the side. All is smooth immediately.

The only possible way to explain such a thing is that the social function of playing with her sister was recognized by the younger one as more important, and, giving way like that at the age of two and two months, she made the game go on. Without threats, without remorse, without fears or adult requests, or even without need for later recrimination or hate or explanations, the two-year-old behaved socially and lovingly, not because love was taught as a good thing, but because love was a workable thing, the functional thing, to make the game continue. The vast majority of adults are in very many situations incapable of such functional social behaviour, which springs spontaneously from the capacity to love when it is useful and rational.

Even while I type this, the conflict is renewed, the two wanting the same dolly's cover. Nicola repeats her functional generosity. But I can see that, if this went on four or five times, the limit of her two-year capacity would be reached. So I make sure she has a cover too, by interfering and being rationally loving to her and appreciative of the mutual problem. I give her two. Automatically she grasps another and says "This Penny's" as she rushes back to the game. This social, rational love breaks down to a tragic extent, though not completely, when the hate reactions of our normal outer world impinge repeatedly where soft love has made a child vulnerable in the extreme. Even so, the remaining capacity for love and generosity, when it is rational, is more genuine, more functional and more intact in the self-regulated child, after his contact with the "everybody silly sometimes" world, than in the bewildered child who has been brought up to expect love through religious and moral teaching, and to whom hate remains something incomprehensible and dangerous in himself and in others, sometimes for the rest of life. If two of them are insecure at the same time, then trouble is surely brewing, and they display what, in our society, is taken as normal behaviour among a group of children under eight, of various ages, various wishes and without supervision or moral pressure. The type of behaviour which

is quite untraditional, and which is best able to resolve conflicts when they do break out, is to give the extra love to those in need of it, not to chide them, as one is very, very tempted to do, for being in fact the trouble-makers. If one returns love for aggression (turning the other cheek perhaps?), almost miraculously, at times, the child's security is restored, and long peaceful play together may result. But it must always be borne in mind that siblings of different ages are bound to have the extra difficulty of this difference of age, and so of interest, which children of similar ages do not experience.

There is one age in particular, when the younger one is not quite two, at which the interests of the older one must be safeguarded. At that endearing age the small child does not yet fully appreciate which of his brothers' and sisters' property is sacred, and at what times. This, in our experience, leads to difficulties which demonstrate clearly the weaknesses of various ages together in the tight family. Nursery schools may be the solution, if you are very lucky, and in special cases. (One was recommended to us when we lived in another big city in this country. Later Jean taught a girl teaching at this local government school, and was told by her of a child who had been forced to eat her own vomit. But a few nursery schools may well really be recommended, we believe, and the individual teacher will make the decisive difference.)

The only child is, of course, in the worst predicament of all. Ziman truly remarks that at the root of the objectionable nature of only children is the fact that the "onlyness" of the child is a symptom of the neurotic personality of the parent, usually the mother. Thus the only child is very often doomed to be the only one before he is even born, and a certain type of upbringing is inevitable as a symptom of his mother's character. If, on the other hand, the "onlyness" is enforced by accident, the child can develop without any of the symptoms associated with only children. His parents can act like children to make up for the lack of company, and they do have the great advantage of being able to concentrate all their attention on one child, who can become the most reasonable and unspoilt child imaginable. But he will inevitably feel strange among those of his own age later on, and react strongly, with great joy if the children are reasonable, but with very great dismay if, like most children, they are not.

CHAPTER XXIV

BEYOND THE FAMILY

A WIDER CHOICE THAN that normally given to children in the tight, patriarchal, self-contained family is necessary for healthy social life.

All wild animals are born in litters or in herds, and primitive communities allow their children fuller opportunities for social contact than we do. The descriptions of an anthropologist conjure up possible solutions. Malinowski wrote in 1929 regarding the Trobriand Islanders, who, it is true, have the advantage of a still largely matriarchal society:

> "Such freedom gives scope for the formation of the children's own little community, an independent group, into which they drop naturally from the age of four or five and continue till puberty. As the mood prompts them, they remain with their parents during the day or else join their playmates for a time in their small republic. And this community within a community acts very much as its own members determine, standing often in a sort of collective opposition to its elders. If the children make up their minds to do a certain thing, to go for a day's expedition, for instance, the grown-ups and even the chief himself, as I often observed, will not be able to stop them.
>
> "People will sometimes grow angry with their children and beat them in an outburst of rage; but I have quite as often seen a child rush furiously at his parent and strike him. This attack might be received with a good-natured smile, or the blow might be angrily returned, but the idea of definite retribution, or of coercive punishment, is not only foreign, but distinctly repugnant to the native. . . ."

The normal isolation of young children in our culture is indeed a very questionable exception. We have seen the joy even babies of four and five months can get out of company of their own age,

and how they can grow sad on leaving each other. With this one realizes that the vast majority miss something that may be a wonderful part of life; the proper, organic and slow introduction to social living. At the Peckham Health Centre this was recognized, and little play cots were devised where such young children could partake of one another's company.

Inviting friends, or being invited by friends, rarely leads to the close play relationship which children need. It can be worse than nothing. Daily visits to parks may be terribly boring for the adult, but the very young child loves them, because he meets and sees many other children there. That he must be taken by an adult is due to our stupidity, for in laying out towns—even all but one of our new towns—we mix indiscriminately the pedestrian traffic of the smallest children with deadly motor traffic.

We are truly in a dilemma with our tight family system, but, from observing the dangers inherent in the narrow family life and the possibility of looser relationships in other societies, it would seem that our solution would be to "get together" with our neighbours so that the children can meet. And, if the others do not take the initiative, then one ought to be able to attract the other children to one's own. It was this idea which, in our inexperience, led us at first to naïve, idealistic concepts, in accordance with which we innocently acted. On arrival in Nottingham we had a reasonably sized garden, lots of trees, and the distance from all other houses was considerable. The trees absorbed all the noise and, adjoining the garden, accessible through the window, was a vast nursery with a slide and many toys. In the garden, a jungle gymn, sand pit, swing and freedom soon attracted the child population in this upper-middle-class to middle-class neighbourhood. *Just* what we wanted; but alas, alas, not *how* we wanted it, or how we could even tolerate it.

Let me recite the tale of woe. First, the gentle child from the flat upstairs, six years old, a boy, just the right playmate for Leonora, we hoped, emerged from his disguise of gentility. He disturbed any peaceful gathering of youngsters with "Anyway . . . I have . . ." or "Anyway . . . *my* daddy . . .": always "Anyway" in such a way that disruption of the play that was in progress followed. And the expression of his disruptive nature went beyond words to violent deeds. No wonder. It turned out, for example, that when the child was as young as two years old his father had had a ruler ready at the dinner table to belabour

his little hands when he slipped up on table manners. And gradually we heard many more things like that, for his mother was really against them; but his aggression was well hidden when he first hugged Leonora in our flat, with seeming fondness.

Before long, mothers and fathers were recalling their children. Whether this was due to the freedom they enjoyed with us, or because they felt their older children were a burden on us, and quite unsuitable playmates for girls of four and two years old, we never knew. But we were greatly relieved, because the freedom allowed had gone to their heads, like new wine affects those who are not used to drink. With the maximum of tact, we sent those older ones who were not recalled packing, as they were frightening and disturbing the little ones.

That left a variety of small children, and some elder sisters. Inexperienced, green and sensitive, our hearts were breaking and our rage was great but impotent, in the agony of having our rational, generous, reasonable Leonora turned into an "anyway . . .". Frequently she came to us shocked to the core by some act quite "normal" and usual among the young, who are thought by so many to be "instinctively aggressive". At first, if a child sneered "Anyway, I have a bigger one", Leonora responded eagerly "Have you?", genuinely interested and not noticing the intention of the other to make her envious. And often she did take the wind out of their sails. Erica, Penny and Nicola have from the first had more experience of the hate bottled up in most children, but they still suffer from it, and this is sometimes shown in their own desire for aggression. It all still makes us very sad.

The difficulties we met, and which have been met by others who have tried to bring together the children around them merely by attracting one and all, are very real and have to be understood, otherwise one becomes cynical, or gets fantastic ideas that one's own children are basically different from other people's. And to understand this saddening process it might help to realize first that it mirrors what happens, and what has happened, in almost every case where adults have wished to form communities, because, theoretically, it seems a so much better way of living than in the tight family group. All these attempts have failed more or less quickly and miserably.

In both cases, whether in the group of children brought together in play or in the group of adults, the theoretical concept does not work out in practice. This means of course that the

theory is not correct or complete enough to include all the relevant and important factors. Though it is true that advantages may be gained by coming together, this cannot happen smoothly, in most instances, because of the disrupting effect of the emotional limp in society. Intellectually we may be willing to sacrifice the individual idiosyncrasies of our tight homes, but emotionally we are incapable of doing it. This may well lead to rationalization about the reasons for the failure of community living, or of children playing together, and to the useless apportionment of blame. It is more fruitful to realize that such things cannot be forced or organized, but must grow. On the experience over years of being able to "get on", two women may well know to what extent they can stand each other. On that basis they may be able to decide whether they could share a kitchen or a home, or live together in some way or other. Only on the basis of living experience, rather than words, which can be variously interpreted, can such a decision be taken wisely and safely.

Similarly with children: with the help of discerning adults the company of our children may well be increased to a maximum. But although we do not mind other children seeing us untidy, nor do we proffer any of the other objections most mothers seem to have against what is regarded as an intrusion of casual visitors, we recognize that the visiting crowd may well bring with it an emotional climate that the child, who originally wanted the individuals and invited them, cannot tolerate without emotional harm. It is important to stop the emotionally disturbing influence of other children against which very young children cannot defend themselves, for they are subtle and unseen like the supposed cold virus. Emotionally diseased company, because of the infectiousness of the disease, may be worse than none. The building up of a circle of friends is not to be forced by ostentatiously throwing open one's doors, unless one is inviting disaster also. With these provisos, therefore, we conclude that every opportunity should be taken to find company for one's children and for one's family, in order to enjoy as many of the advantages of community living as possible; but without an approach which is frankly and openly therapeutic (as in the theories of housing therapy, which I shall discuss in the next chapter); that is at present as far as it is safe to go.

If social self-regulation could be a reality *outside* the family, one would expect to see children, under favourable conditions,

sharing sweets and toys readily, giving way when it is politic, knowing when they want to be alone and when in company. And, indeed, the evidence of our own observations corroborates this assumption.

In the kindergarten at Summerhill school there were half a dozen or more very young children in one of the rooms when we happened to look through the window and observe one day. An adult came in, placed a parcel on the table, told them whose parcel it was and then left the room. The children gathered round the table. The owner opened it, and, sharing out all the contents, got tired of the job at one point and another child carried on. The edible commodities in the parcel were much sought after, but there was no shriek or fight, no bragging, no envy. It could only happen in a place like Summerhill, and it was utterly astounding to us at the time. This was proof positive that self-regulated groups can manage without moral supervision and guidance.

CHAPTER XXV

HOUSING THERAPY

We have shown that isolation of the tight patriarchal family is one of the symptoms and also one of the origins of the emotional sickness in the social sphere. And we have argued further that there is plenty of unhappy evidence that the solution does not lie in vaguely, if enthusiastically, forming communities, or even opening community centres, which belie their name by their very birth.

The physical lay-out of estates, which form such a very large part of Britain's housing, both municipal and private, in most cases emphasizes family isolation. If the general lack of social contact can be compared with a bodily illness, then moving into a housing estate represents a crisis. In a recent research project the symptoms of emotional strain shown in admission to mental hospitals, visits to the general practitioner with "nerves", and so on, have been found, significantly, very much more widespread in a new housing estate than in other older housing areas; and, in fact, in the estate examined minutely the crises wore off in subsequent years. People vaguely know that loneliness will encompass them on the estate, and this apprehension comes on top of other disadvantages, such as lack of facilities for shopping and entertainment. Estates are attractive only in contrast with the apallingly unhygienic and crowded conditions from which their inhabitants often emerge.

If, then, moving to the estates is a time of social crisis, and the occupation of an individual new home certainly is, and if we remember the parallel with the physical illness of the body, then to associate both with social therapy at that particular time is right. As soon as we approach the problem of creating a community as a form of therapeutic action, we are in a position to gain some of the benefits of social health, while avoiding many of the pitfalls that await those who idealistically conceive and start communities without regard to the complex emotional patterns involved.

That the housing estates are as bad as suggested, awful and inadequate, can be illustrated by some findings of my own research. For example, eighty-two motor accidents occurred in one estate within its first two years, far more than was to be expected in comparison with other areas not even deliberately planned. It is an invaluable point, giving decisive advantages in arguments, that, while in the field of human transport we have changed from horse-drawn carriage to cars, and even rockets, housing lay-out is substantially the same as fifty years ago and appallingly out of date.

The idea of housing therapy has emerged from the diagnosis that there is something wrong with society, and that re-housing people is an especially opportune time to do something about it. Components of the idea that there is something wrong socially, the ideas of group therapy and of a housing lay-out which is conducive rather than disruptive of social health, are not new with me. But it is new, as an architect, therapist, townplanner and sociologist, to combine the above ideas into something which, because of its integrated plan, is powerful, practicable and likely to be effective.

Social ill, the loneliness of people, the desire of men and women to keep themselves to themselves in an exaggerated way, all these things are largely due to fear. In the main this is irrational fear, and so much of it can be removed therapeutically, if only by explanation and information. A clear instance of this might be the case of the strangely silent lady down the road, who has men attending her house every evening because she does chiropody, and is therefore thought by the neighbours to be a prostitute. She is felt to be a threat to be feared, and so she is slandered and attacked, unconsciously or consciously, or at least cold-shouldered. Now it would have a therapeutic effect on the social relations between these people, and so on the community as a whole, if the true identity of the chiropodist were established and made known to the neighbours. Suspicions of an infinite variety, all reflecting similar fears of dirt, lewdness, lowness, etc., permeate the social climate of the new housing estate and can poison the atmosphere permanently. In dealing therapeutically by explanation with such instances, it is understood that individual neuroses may well emerge clearly for individual therapy. Just as people who fall in love enter a crisis which makes them more aware of themselves, and which creates enormous energies to deal with difficulties, and to improve their lot, so, in re-housing, because the occupation of a new home is a

crisis, energies are forthcoming and the therapeutic approach is eminently practicable and timely.

Contact with future occupants can be made through the housing list, or through some agency which sells or rents the accommodation. Such people can be best approached if you have something to offer that is of advantage to them. You could scare every single person off an estate by saying, in a certain way, that you were going to give them therapy, but there are other ways of conveying the information to people. What is in fact advantageous can sound attractive. Taking a housing list we can at once consider the practical proposition. Those who call to put their names on it could be shown the two alternative approaches: the one traditional, the other, to serve the therapeutic end, experimental. They would be informed that this was no "guinea pig" experiment but a *creative* experiment, where all concerned would try with all their energy and by many means to make life in the estate a success, which might even include financial advantages. The very first of the means would be meetings of those to be housed before they even started moving in. Co-operation in details of planning and architecture could then take place, good friends could live near each other, etc.

And the trump card to attract people to the experiment could be the actual lay-out. It is all to the good that those who would opt for the experiment, the cream skimmed from the list in the way described, would be people not desperately afraid of the new, people still keen to try to improve their life and living, for it is crucial to realize that the lay-out of housing estates can be improved, infinitely, without greater cost, merely by more knowledge. It would then remain only to convince these people of the advantages of the projected lay-out, which might attract even those who would otherwise not very much care to be part of an experiment.

Briefly, the difference between the traditional and the new would be the complete segregation of footpaths from roads, without denying each and every house a garage and direct road access. This offers complete safety for children going to school, shops and play-spaces. It takes out of mothers' lives the painful, pram-clutching drags alongside dangerous roads, when their youngsters, eager to run, only at the risk of fearful slaps let loose the handles. The advantage can hardly be exaggerated. My own research, on over five hundred houses, has shown that the danger

of the road in front of the house is a major reason for keeping children in. And the result of this keeping in is to emphasize the emotional frictions of the tight family. The research has shown further that among people on safe footpaths, in those old and new examples where this type of lay-out exists already, if only on a very small scale, there is more friendship than on normal roads which are in all other ways similar. This is a most decidedly useful finding to townplanners who want to encourage social contact, and the only one sociology has so far had to offer. What is more, I found a greater readiness to look after children for others, temporarily, in the safety of a path.

To tell mothers that they need worry no more about motor traffic, because, like the railways, it is now confined to its safe channels, away from their children (although, as on the railways, they may well be given the chance to watch and view from safety), would be a release from a now permanent and sapping fear and strain. It would be like telling the mothers of a primitive tribe that there were no more tigers in the jungle. The change would be so great that the immediate, full adjustments of behaviour called for to suit the new environment could not be expected to arise by themselves. It would be a very necessary and easily accepted therapeutic emancipation to learn to make full use of the new possibilities, for both children and parents.

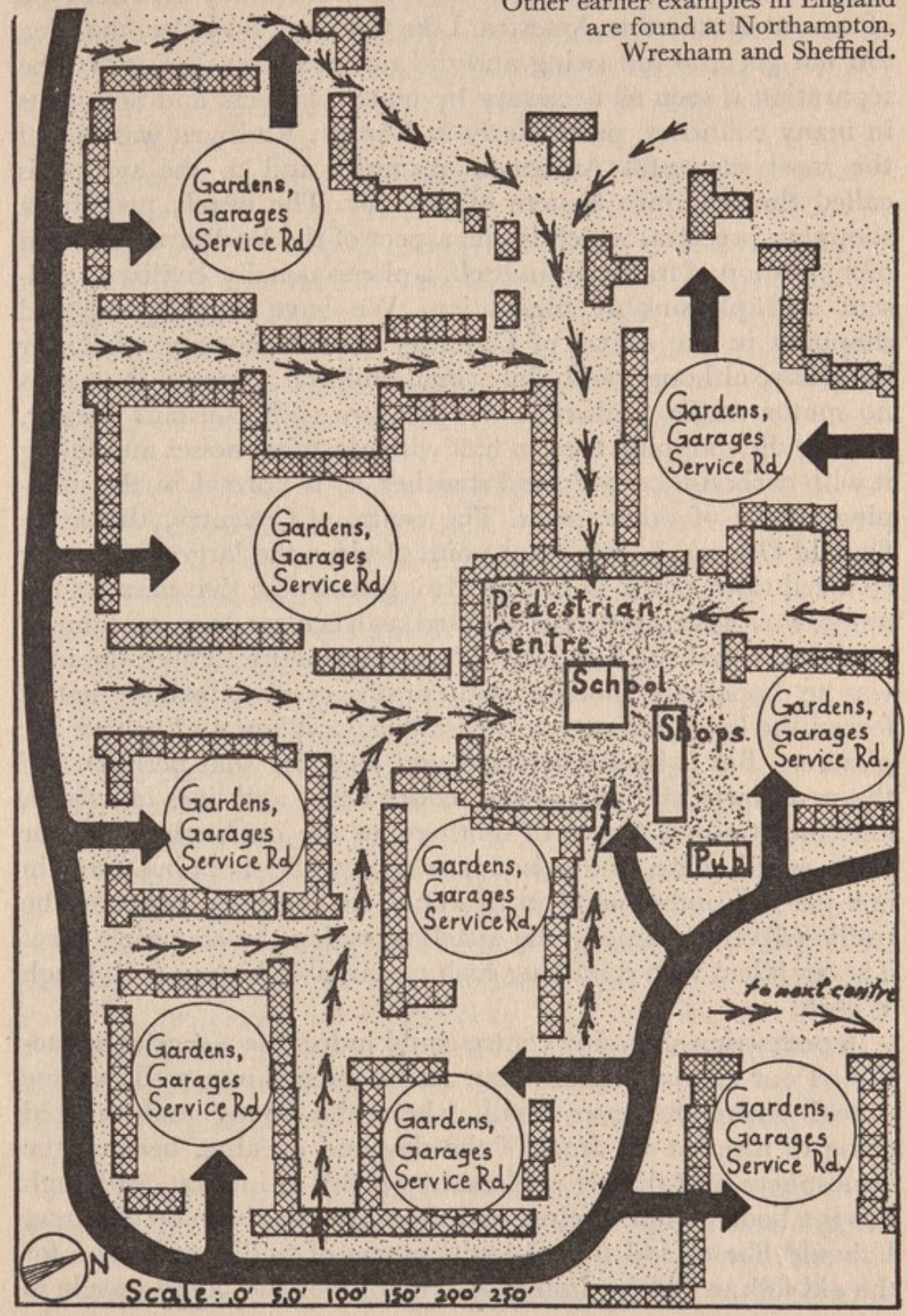
Within the safety of this new housing could be provided industry and livestock. Not in any way noxious, but providing life, work and interest. These things can be and have been found existent and successful in residential areas. We arrive at really civilized, also sentimentally attractive, ideas when we think of the three-year-olds of a city toddling off safely by themselves to watch the lambs or the workshops or the hundred and one aspects of these things.

To make all this vivid, a sketch is included. It must also be stressed that I *have* experience in the disciplines of planning and architecture, and have specialized in research on the subject, therefore I know that the proposals *are* practicable, right down to the fact that they could even be cheaper than the existing types of housing lay-out, penny for penny. But the plan shown is a diagram only, and any particular site would, by its shape, determine the best and most appropriate solution.

The historical origins of the separation of motor traffic from footpaths stem from a small group of planners, architects and

The Radburn System of Traffic Separation in Municipal Housing, Coventry City Architect and Planning Officer A. G. Ling, B.A., A.R.I.B.A., M.T.P.I. The motor traffic enters from the periphery into the service area with garages, private gardens and back access to each house. The pedestrian traffic leads safely from the fronts of houses to school, shops and refreshments in the centre.

Other earlier examples in England are found at Northampton, Wrexham and Sheffield.



philosophers who were influential in the U.S.A. in the nineteen-twenties, including Lewis Mumford, and having, as main executants of their ideas, Clarence Stein and Henry Wright. Many projects were carried out under the New Deal policy with this type of lay-out as suited to America. Like the Deal, however, this idea did not get into full swing and did not catch on. But today the separation is seen as necessary by many planners and architects in many countries, particularly in Europe. Radburn was one of the most successful American examples and so the system is called the Radburn System of Lay-out. The purely pedestrian shopping precinct, which is one aspect of the Radburn Idea and of separation of traffic, is, in itself, a phenomenally civilized, god-sent and pleasurable innovation. We have actually enjoyed shopping in the centre of Coventry on the morning of Easter Saturday, although with four small children, because there was no motor traffic to disrupt the pleasure with constant danger, cutting the shopping area in half with alarming noises and filling it with carbon-monoxide and stenches, as is normal in the shopping streets of other towns. The centre of Coventry, thanks to Donald Gibson, is, from that point of view, the largest and most civilized town centre in Europe. It is gladdening that many of the new towns of England have planned such centres, large and small; instructive that the first New Town (Harlow) to ignore the idea was so hopelessly blocked with prams every weekend that it forced the lay-committee to revise their opinions and believe the planners. But it is also very sad and angering that perhaps half the new towns still expose the tender limbs and lives of infants, and the strained nerves of mothers, to the onslaught of motor force, speed, noise, and poisonous stench while shopping. Only in one place, Cumbernauld in Scotland, do the plans separate the traffic effectively among the dwellings *and* in the shopping area. The architect who is making such remarkable history is L. Hugh Wilson.

A pedestrian shopping centre could indeed be a special attraction of our creative experiment, and as such it may well become a real centre, however small, where the young and the old come to meet at all times of the day and evening, because the atmosphere and the air is pleasant yet full of interest. Although this is a book on upbringing, and the accent has been on children, I should like to add that the advantages of traffic separation for the old folk would be immense. The proportion of old people in

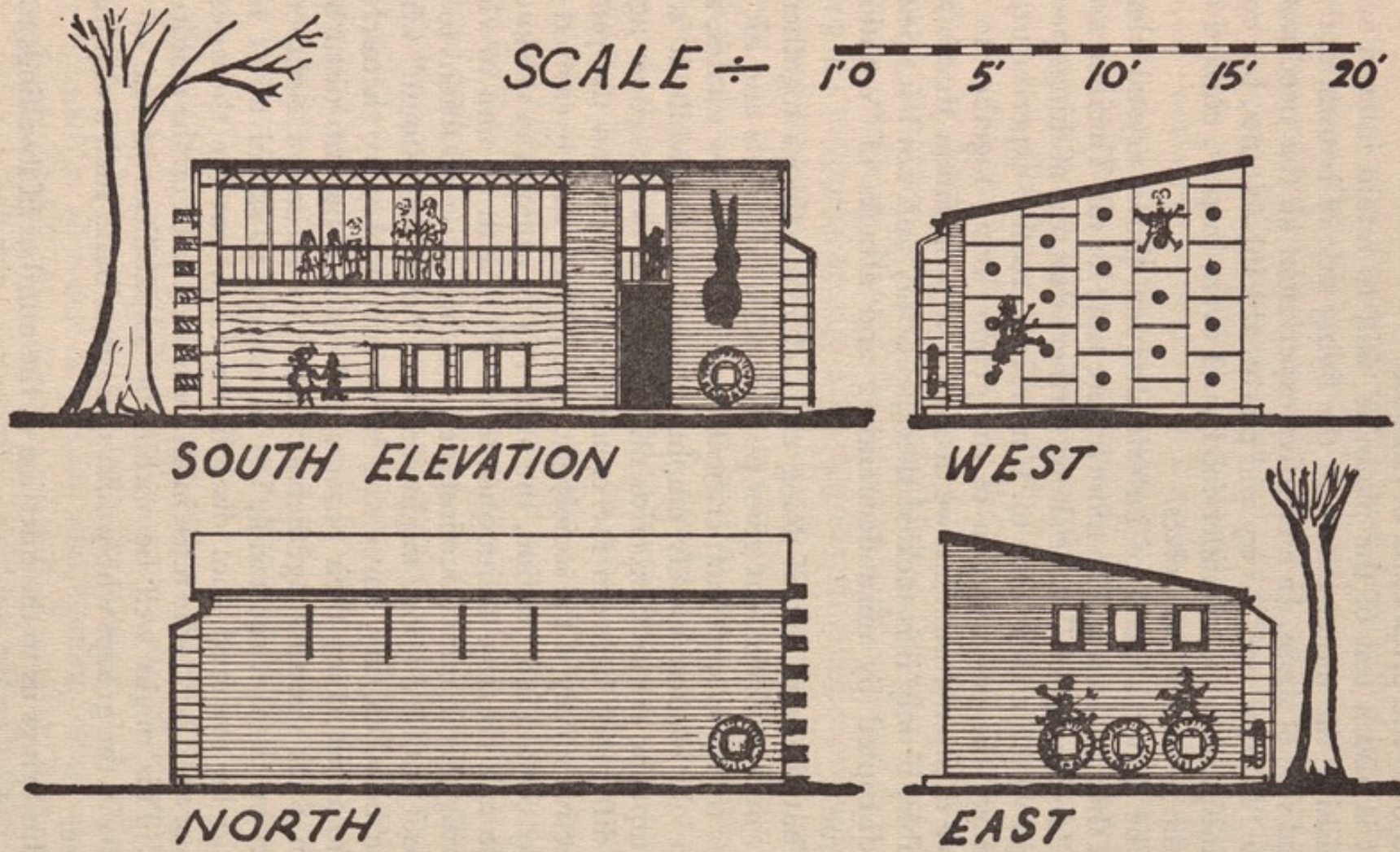
motor accidents shows remarkable callousness in society, as indeed does the proportion of children.

It is also a test of the planners' skill to retain interest when banishing the motor-car from the living side of houses, and the social side of shops. In a creative experiment all this need not be done "from above", to try and placate the inhabitants, but could be initiated, at least understood, and even, in part, carried out, by the residents themselves.

The general trend of industrialization shows crystal clearly that there will shortly be more leisure time for all. The increase in the "do-it-yourself" trade shows further what sort of things people might well put their time to. If now, in a creative experiment, we envisage the co-operation of the people living together to improve their environment, we deal with a proposition that is very feasible, if only it is tackled therapeutically and not left open to be disrupted by misunderstanding and attacks of "emotional plague".

That the very act of doing and achieving things together in their own environment gives people social ties, roots and all the other things so sadly and critically lacking from new estates, and even old estates, merely emphasizes how worth-while it is to attempt the creative experiment. It is as well to stress once again the difference between the creative experiment and the purely objective survey of the sociologist. The latter is merely carried out to get certain information, the former is an attempt to use knowledge and creative techniques to the full, with an aim in view. Bearing this in mind, one instance of imaginative additions to the lay-out outlined above might well be a "children's house" where those between, say, three and seven might play by themselves, without disturbing their parents and without parents disturbing them. Such a getting together of children would have a therapeutic effect on them if successful, but to make it so skilful adult help would be required—not disciplinary help, but the therapeutic help of an expert, who must in all cases seem to be on the children's side. This might well be within the capabilities of one of the adults in the groups who would sponsor or build such a children's house.

This brings us to the question of the number of dwellings to be grouped together in the estate. There is no information to suggest that either twenty or a hundred is the better number. But our experience leads us to believe that, although the hundred may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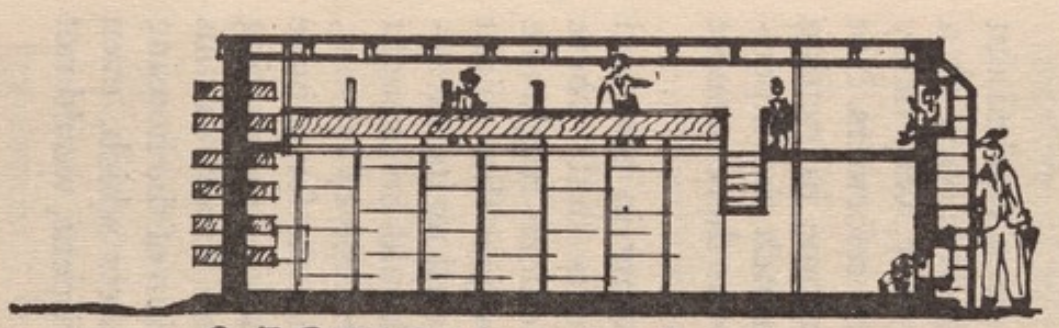

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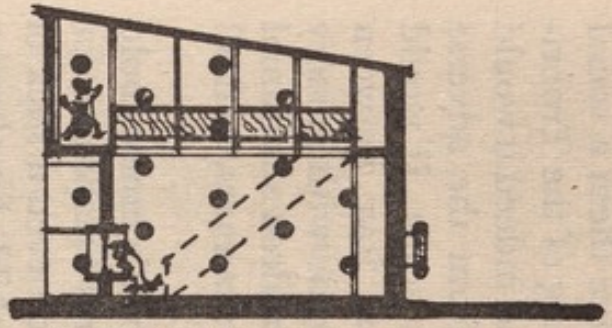

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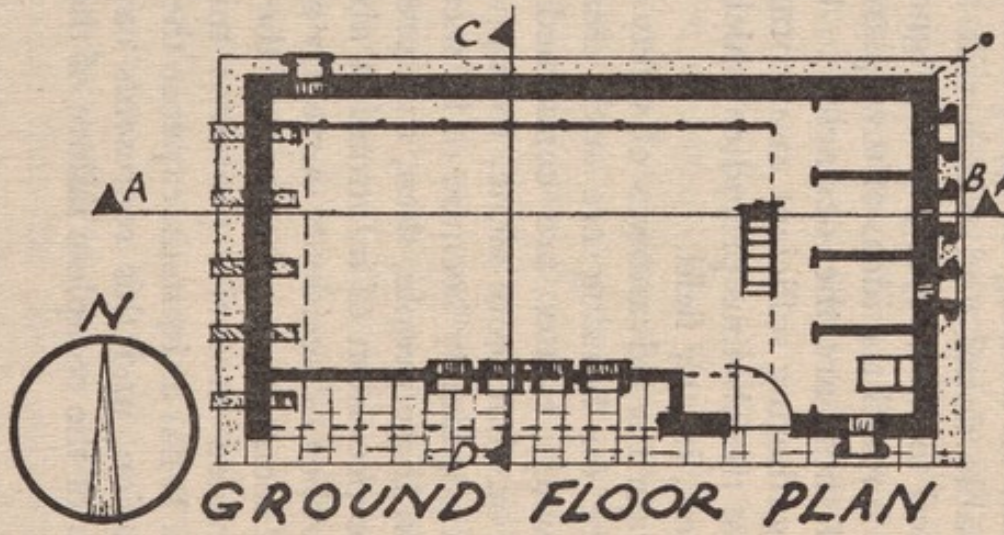
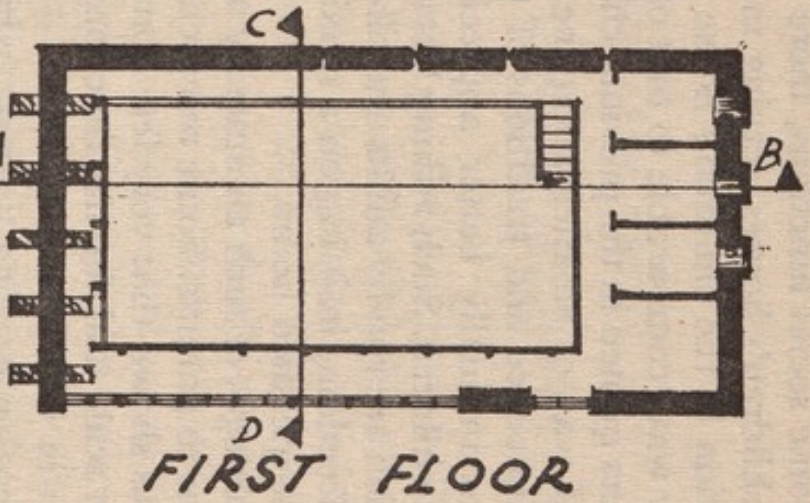


GROUND FLOOR PLAN



FIRST FLOOR

Design for a Children's House, Paul Ritter, Architect, A.R.I.B.A. Accommodation: A large, high, noise room, with a gallery running all the way round: seven small, low, play cubicles arranged on two floors: a w.c. at the entrance. All windows can be used as niches for the children to sit in. Externally they are covered with old motor car tyres. The materials used are brick, horizontal boarding (for cutting initials!), concrete blocks with 2′ 8″ pit props inserted, and wired glass throughout. The rain-water pipe is steel and made for climbing. The rabbit, or other sign of recognition, is plywood, painted. The cost of a simple version of such a Children's House is estimated at approximately £400. Thus, if thirty families share one the cost is the same as for a tricycle.

well serve some social functions, there should be sub-groups for things like children's houses, serving more like 25 to 40 families. The institution of the children's house would give them a social life in many ways comparable to that of the young of the Trobriand Islanders quoted in the previous chapter, and indeed it would be the ideal way of emancipating the young from the adverse emotional influence and traditions of the tight home. It would also lead to mutually better appreciation and love between parents and children. Such a thing has nothing to do with nursery schools, which are run by adults and allow the children a minimal amount of freedom, insisting on a maximum of manners, and all within adult-specified hours.

The advantages of such an amenity as a children's house could be enormous to parents. Some research by Dennis Chapman, for example, has shown that very few homes provide even a stick of furniture in scale and for the functions of the child, let alone a whole room in which to play.

These ideas on housing therapy, which have been worked out in considerable detail and which will be fully developed in a work devoted to the subject, do not ignore the very, very many factors that imperil the ideas of townplanners and reformers. Not the least of these are the obstacles to be overcome in getting started, in gathering sufficient momentum to launch the experiment against the obvious prejudice which is always there to meet anything new, in any field.

In this case the advantages of safety and saving in cost and maintenance on housing are such clear benefits that, where publicly owned estates are concerned, councillors might be persuaded, on that score alone, to support a project that might bring them popularity because of its merits as well as its cheapness. It is on these people, then, that pressure should be brought through the provision of information about the type of lay-out, and the number of accidents currently occurring. As for private ventures, it seems to me that one of the foundations purporting to be interested in social problems might well invest in this experiment. It has as its main expense the provision of the housing accommodation, and this represents capital assets which, even in the event of the complete failure of the experiment, would not lose value.

CHAPTER XXVI

EMOTIONAL THERAPY

MOST BOOKS ON bringing up children have a chapter on illnesses from which children frequently suffer. But whereas measles, chicken-pox and mumps raise few difficulties, and merely demand a little bit of physical care for the child, this cannot be said for the emotional disturbances of the child's nature, which are generally ignored by the books, or taken as normal. The challenge they represent to every feeling parent is hardly mentioned. Although the bodily ills will usually right themselves if left alone, once the child's emotional functions have been disturbed, these do not right themselves so easily without affecting the emotions of others. We provide and take for granted good physical conditions for a physically ill child, yet an emotionally suffering one is not automatically held to deserve the emotional comfort which might be a counterpart. How many meet aggression or temper with love and sympathy?

As in physical illnesses the body is attacked, feels pain and reacts with fever, so, in emotional ills, the feeling nature and mind are attacked, know fear or anxiety and react with aggression. The rare exceptions occur when cowed children become listless. Like very devitalized bodies that cannot raise a fever.

In self-regulation, in contrast to the psychoanalysts' approach, continued aggression is taken as a symptom of emotional illness, not just "lack of adjustment", as surely as fever is so interpreted in physical ills. The various forms of aggression, open and hidden, are innumerable. It may be directed against the child's own person or against those around him: it may be directed against animals or toys. The psychoanalyst guides and prevents such aggression so that the child does not expose himself to the hate and disapproval he must fear, so the analyst insists, from his parents. And this may be right in many cases. But in self-regulation it is understood that the child only fears this hate because it is emotionally insecure. The guidance of the aggression and its restraint when really essential are purely secondary to

the "living out" and curing of the aggression, and so of the original disturbance of which it is merely a symptom. This may well be accompanied by the encouraged hatred of father and mother, if this shows the child, even while he is doing his hating, that he can do it and still be approved. The parents realize his dilemma and his need to live out the hate and to have the reassurance. This sympathy must of course be accompanied by a remedy for the original evil, which came before the emotional instability and threat, and all this takes great emotional strength and security on the part of the parent, for he acts as a therapist, an energetic rôle, fraught with special dangers in such a close relationship.

But the parent can be the ideal therapist. Transference, for example, which is a relationship the therapist has to work for in the beginning of therapy, often for a long time, before he can get a response of any sort from the patient, is already there with the child-parent relationship. Unlike poulticing a child every two hours, a job which can be done by any nurse, with emotional therapy there may be no one capable of helping within many scores of miles, and, if available, he may be very expensive indeed. Only if the job is recognized as very necessary to the child, and indeed to the family's health, will one have the endurance and patience required. The hardest part is the seemingly vicious circle elicited by effective actions of love. For example, if you take your child on your knee and allow him to live out some of his hate, if you thereby take away some of his fear and make him feel more secure towards you, his very next act is likely to be one of strong aggression. Now this seems to be the last straw and to disprove the good effects of love. But the child is merely testing his position. Am I really loved? It is imperative not to come down on him like a ton of bricks. Yet the tendency is to do just that. Having loved, one is soft and vulnerable to the child's hate, and having freely spent one's sympathy one has precious little left: but *precious* little it is indeed.

This is a particularly precarious position for those who have not much faith or feeling for the "new-fangled" approach, and are inclined to talk themselves out of it. "See, I loved him but it did not work." This "testing out" is something quite common. When we taught our children not to play with the precious books at ground level and on open shelves, we used to repeat several times "Daddy's", and give them something else each time,

stressing "Nicola's" or "Leonora's". They would finally go back again, at times, and touch the book, looking up questioningly or even daringly. If it was questioningly we would just say, "Yes, they are Daddy's"; if daringly, we would ignore the look, and the toddler would use her self-control with great success and satisfaction. We had shown her that it did not matter all that much. (Some things, however, like electric plugs, do.)

The mistake so often made is that when a child gets at something precious such a fuss is made as a child rarely witnesses. Now, specially in progressive households, this may not be particularly painful to the child, and indeed, on the contrary, it may be pleasant, in the sense that he has, at long last, secured attention. In that case it is not surprising that he goes on doing all sorts of things which are likely to create more, similar fuss.

All emotional disturbances are basically a frustration of necessary biological functions. These may originate in a lack of love and approval from those who are expected to give just this —mostly the parents. Anxiety then takes the place of pleasure. Denial of needed love or security can be deliberate, or it may exist in spite of even conscious wishes to the contrary. It is reflected in various symptoms. Most common among these are jealousy, aggression, tempers, fears of going to sleep and the dark (and so of going to bed), dislike of food, and returning to old habits like urinating into the bed and thumb-sucking.

Anthropology and self-regulation have already shown that all the usual and assumed jealousies in young children, including the œdipus complex, are nothing but fears of loss of love specific to the existing culture pattern. It has also long been assumed that sleeping in the same room as their parents and witnessing sexual intercourse, albeit in the dark, must necessarily be a source of emotional disturbance: but, as we have already pointed out, this need not be so where intercourse is neither sadistic nor emotionally unhealthy.

As for the envy between sexes, stipulated by Freud as inevitable, and bound up with the œdipus complex, this too is "normal" to our society, and probably to patriarchies in general. Penis envy is relative to the superiority of the male. But there need be no envy at all between the sexes, and anthropology has given us the evidence for this. Even in our own culture, patriarchy is not

universal, and the most charming of all pieces of evidence is a complaint repeated seriously and forcefully by a little boy we know who asked his mother whether he would grow breasts soon: and why, oh why, couldn't he! Needless to say in that family there is no penis envy! Where the œdipus complex itself is concerned, its relation to the tightness of our family life and the extreme emotional climate is obvious.

Self-regulation is the most excellent prophylaxis in emotional ills, but it is no guarantee that in an anti-life and insensitive society they will not occur, even frequently, especially when the young child comes into contact with the outside world for the first time. Emotional ills are as catching as contagious diseases, and, whether self-regulated or not, the young child mixing at first with others is likely to catch them. Perhaps meeting with other children from the earliest ages makes for greater immunity: we do not know, for there are no examples of self-regulated communities in which children have been together from the earliest months.

It will be most instructive, therefore, to describe and discuss emotional disturbances and illnesses as we have experienced them with our children, under the headings of the various symptoms. Almost any symptom may arise out of any of a variety of origins, but the symptom is the little bit of the disturbance which the parent first perceives when his child is in trouble. How therapy leads to a recognition of origins, and to an immediate or tortuously slow cure, can be seen from these few examples.

Jealousy

Our own personal experience has included the "normal" jealousy and the deep love. Jealousy of the new born is almost taken for granted by the psychoanalysts. Yet, when Erica was about to be born, Leonora, just two years old, was full of expectancy of the right sort: realism plus reassurance. She knew where the baby would come from, and learnt eagerly how the baby was to be born and what opportunities and sacrifices it would mean for us and for her. This was the kind of conversation: Leonora, with emphasis: "Timmy tummy going to come out, hard work, tummy bit tender!", and, walking about naked, she would stop and say, contemplating her tummy: "Has Leonora got Timmy?"

"One day you will."

"Will Leonora's Timmy come out of my navel?"

"No, out of your wee-wee."

More concentrated thought, then: "Is Mummy's Timmy coming out of her wee-wee too?"

"Quite right!"

Beaming and pleased with a tinge of triumph: "Mummy's Timmy coming out of a wee-wee." As the child was only two, it was shortly afterwards she learnt that there was a wee-wee hole proper, and a "baby hole", and a "biggy hole" too.

She slept very conveniently through Erica's birth and woke half an hour after it. As I brought her in, contrary to our plan, and contrary to all the experts' advice on how to avoid jealousy, Jean had Erica in her arms. I was greatly alarmed, and watched Leonora's reactions like a hawk. And what I observed changed my foreboding. I was moved very deeply by her facial expression of delight and excitement. She was not at all worried about the baby in her mother's arms, it was, for her, in the right place. Had it not been in her tummy even closer, for nine months? Quite capable of words like "dromedary", "hippopotamus", "rhinoceros", "rhododendron", and of good grammar, she was obviously too moved to speak properly, and, haltingly, her eyes shining, her whole self quivering, she asked: "I . . . give . . . she . . . a . . . kiss . . .?" and she gave Erica a very gentle one.

From then, till a year later when moving to Nottingham, Leonora came into close contact with other children for the first time, her behaviour was entirely free from jealousy. It showed us conclusively that jealousy need not be "normal". When Erica was a nuisance, Leonora said so. We tried to help, but if we explained we could not, she always showed the capacity to take the nuisance in her stride and help herself. She remained loving, understanding without even a vestige of jealousy, although we were carefully watching for it, through the most provocative textbook occasions: the birth, as we have mentioned, breast-feeding, and many, many smaller events took place without aggravating her. She had had enough love; she wanted Erica to have as much. She was very sensitive to Erica's cry, and those who say that one ought to let a baby cry must be sure they don't have other sensitive children (alive to the real needs of babies) in their house. If they do, then it is no easy matter to persuade them the child is only trying to be "boss". Children have no time for metaphysics.

We have learnt since that Leonora could not possibly have been secretly jealous either, for a self-regulated child shows its

jealousy in a most violent and obvious way. There was no question of Leonora hiding her feelings.

It was Erica who provided us with our experience of "normal jealousy", as we have mentioned in an earlier chapter. This jealousy was mainly directed against Penny, but Erica became jealous of Leonora also.

As a very small baby she had a really healthy, close relationship with her mother. She was a far more secure child than Leonora and slept, and did almost everything else, in that "too-good-to-be-true" manner sometimes claimed as the unique accomplishment of the disciples of discipline.

At the age of one she was a joy and triumph for our attitude to birth and early infancy. She was very understanding and tolerant when Leonora, having caught emotional illness from friends, started behaving in a neurotic way towards her. She was untouched by these symptoms herself and took an intelligent interest in Penny's gestation.

It was the combination of the unfortunate complications after Penny's birth, of Leonora's emotional disturbance and our own adult tensions, as already described, which first forced an unhappy Erica into insecurity. It is so easy to see it afterwards but it takes a long time to make the damage good.

And so she became jealous. As jealousy of Penny, it expressed itself when the baby was nursed, carried or loved in any way. Ziman says, "a child is jealous when he wants something someone else has". We can add that it is always *love* that is wanted. A jealous child has not had enough love. Leonora did have enough, and no amount of seeming provocation made her jealous of Erica as a baby. Erica, through circumstances and her parents' incapacity, did not have enough love for a considerable period, so she became jealous of Penny, and without any particular provocation. But she became jealous only after her deprivation of love. Before, like Leonora, she did not know what we meant when we tried to forestall jealousy in some way.

Now all love should be hers, she felt, all love and attention. The need expressed itself in envy of Leonora's prospect of going to school, to the dentist (!), etc. We had to stop Erica from hurting Penny, and that is a very tricky thing with three children and a house to look after. The powerful jealousy of the self-regulated child looked really dangerous. The extremity of the situation is again seen accentuated by the tight family system. One mother

had to hold the balance with three children, all on top of one another by force of circumstance, though jealous and hatefully inclined. Erica had no other company but Leonora and Penny, and from them she could not draw love, for she envied them. But love she might well have drawn from another child outside the family.

We felt she had to be told how seriously she might hurt Penny: this was a grim deterrent and a false step. It led to the fears of loss of parent love which the psychoanalysts know so well. We did not get over to Erica our basic approval of her. It showed Erica only, seen from her point of view, that we cared very much for Penny. But she wanted to hurt, annihilate! We threatened with consequences, stopped her (and all this could have been done in a better therapeutic way) and she became afraid of hurting Penny then, lest we love her even less. This fear expressed itself with great drama: Erica was very frightened: she screamed for some days whenever Penny went near the stairs, because of the (in fact remote) possibility of her falling down: she screamed when the gate leading on to the dangerous road was left open, although Penny would certainly not venture out of it: but always she screamed lest Penny should get hurt. She, of course, wanted these things to happen in lieu of not being able to hit her herself, and wanting these things she felt responsible and afraid that, if they did happen, we should love her less.

Erica did all the other typical things: she started wetting her bed again, she asked for a bottle again, she wanted to be carried on all possible and impossible occasions. Needless to say we put endless effort and priority into the job of getting her to feel sufficiently loved again. But it is one thing to read or even write case histories, and quite another to see them as they happen in your own family. Living does not stop still, so that one may halt, and take stock, or think. Even at night the insecure child tests you by asking for additional bottles. Incessantly the stream moves on and the personal life of the parent moves too. In retrospect, one notes a period of strength, of great capacity for love, which breaks the vicious circle of jealousy and of tensions and the long job of repair commences, in terms of "love therapy".

The turning point came when Erica's endless whimpering and crying was met by Jean with a soft "You howl as much as you like, I love you, and I will love you and hug you while you howl, as long as you like", instead of by our endlessly, senselessly

repeated "Don't cry", either sweetly or violently expressed. We also gave her a rag doll to throw down the stairs encouraging her to imagine that it was Penny, and she did this with gusto after a reluctant start.

Erica recovered. The extra love signs we give her have usually been enough, and crises have arisen since only when the other children have been born or Jean has had to take to her bed for any other reason. As a jealous child she could not have enough love and attention. She asked for more and more and more and more until the patience of an angel or the ingenuity of an experienced parent were exhausted. But Erica became happy again often, instead of rarely, regained her sense of humour and could stand a certain amount of neglect in favour of the others. Best of all, she could again be left to play with her sisters quite alone for two or three hours without supervision of any kind, and her fear of Penny's fate on the stairs and the road left her. They regained a love relationship which is at present particularly close.

Fear of going to sleep in a two-year-old

In spite of one's knowledge and one's attempts to understand the child, it is all too easy to misunderstand and to attempt to impose one's own wishes. Our attempts to follow the child's mind can be very inadequate. In the spring, before the summer of Leonora's third birthday, she just refused to go to bed one evening. Not only had she not suggested it herself, as she did many times, but this time suggestion and persuasion were in vain, although they had sometimes been of use. It became later and later. The tense parents resorted to cajolery, and even bribery, promising story-telling "as never before"—it was all of no avail. It became really late. Leonora has often managed with amazingly little sleep, but this lateness was coupled with tiredness. She forced herself to stay awake, and any attempt by desperate parents to put her to bed forcibly was met by a pitiful, fearful and heart-rending screaming, and more than that, for a self-regulated child cannot be browbeaten into staying in bed so easily!

In despair we left her with us in the room until she fell asleep on the floor about 11 p.m. This went on for several nights. We became more and more worried, and the child became more tense as each bed-time approached. Each night we just picked her up when she had literally dropped to sleep on the floor, and put

her to bed fully clothed. For some evenings, the time of her falling asleep was midnight, and it would be difficult to tell who was more exhausted, Leonora or her parents. We frantically searched for the "cause" and the solution.

Then one day, at long last, came a big discovery! Leonora was in the habit of running up and down telling herself stories excitedly as Jean went about her daily tasks. Jean was thinking about many other things until, on this particular occasion, she pricked up her ears to hear Leonora talking about a family of woodpeckers and how the baby woodpecker would disappear to hospital in the night. At once Jean realized what fools we had been.

In the flat below lived a somewhat more than middle-aged lady who was Leonora's very great friend. She had endless patience with her and would play games by the hour. She was a painter, as were her husband and daughter, and it was her colour games that taught Leonora all the colours before she was two years old. Now this lady had been hurriedly removed to hospital one night, seriously ill, while Leonora was asleep, so that when the child awoke in the morning her good friend had gone. Anxiety and worry were in the air, but Leonora seemed very little concerned and was quite satisfied, so it seemed, with the explanation that she had been taken to hospital to make her better. However, she obviously said to herself, "If Mrs. W. can vanish while I am asleep I must not go to sleep, I must not go to sleep in case I disappear too." (One wonders whether she has any memory of disappearing into that "Hell Hole" of the Maternity Hospital called the "night nursery", where babies take it in turns to wake the others by despairing screams.)

First Leonora tried to stay awake indefinitely. Looking back it seems amazing that we did not realize immediately what was wrong: we were perhaps too close to events, and too wrapped in our own problems and our exhaustion. After we had explained to Leonora with the greatest clarity why she did not want to go to bed, and that her fears were groundless, things were a little easier but by no means normal, and we were anxiously awaiting the lady's return from the hospital. When this did happen it did not, to our utter amazement, dismay and concern, alter Leonora's fears! It seemed a grim legacy of an accident. We took Leonora to the hospital and showed her the beds through the window. It was no good. What now? While the problem was still staring us in the face, Mrs. W. had to be rushed to hospital again.

It was nine o'clock in the evening and Leonora was, of course, still awake. The scene was a grim one—darkness, ambulance bells, those ghastly red blankets, the worried daughter and husband, and the very ill Mrs. W. carried out on a stretcher. However, against all advice, Leonora's absolutely decisive demands "to see" made us feel it would be best. The whole thing was very upsetting to all the adults and we were still apprehensive about the effect on Leonora when we observed the therapeutic effect of the event: Leonora was actually more cheerful and lighthearted than she had been for weeks. She announced triumphantly that she now knew about ambulances and hospitals. The scene had not unnerved her at all. Once the unknown became the known it was integrated, and she could now believe all we had said about hospitals making Mrs. W. better. She relaxed that very night and the fears quickly went after that.

Anxiety affecting sleep and eating in a child of three and a half years

Meeting Patsy was merely the outstanding example of Leonora's social education taken at a forced pace. In Liverpool flat life, the absence of a garden (there was only a park nearby) restricted playing with other children to highly supervised occasions when the diseased tendencies of the children are checked. Thus, at three and a quarter, Leonora had never had to stand up to "life in the raw", to the emotionally sick children normal in our society.

Now all this came with a vengeance. . . . Much of it has been described in another context. Here it is necessary to stress that we understood that the shock of meeting the repressed children of our society might disturb her sleep. But the extreme reaction and fear of sleep, and the dislike of food, was a terrible pain to us.

She changed within a week from a person who would always rush in at meal times shouting "I am starving", who would experiment with new foods and eat practically everything put before her with glee, to one who came in, her face in a grimace reminiscent of that of her favourite friend Patsy, saying, "I don't like it", before she had even seen the food. She disliked a thousand and one things previously adored, and would certainly try nothing new. It took us a little time to understand what had happened. Then, for some weeks and even months, Leonora lived on potatoes and butter, and bread with Marmite, all things Patsy liked. Her gestures were tremendously like Patsy's also.

The effect on Leonora's sleep was equally striking, maddening and sad. She had never known fear as something definite. "Are you afraid of this and that?" adults had asked her in the past, but one could see clearly at those times that the word had no meaning for her.

Now she complained that "owls would get her". So we would show her owls, explain that they were harmless and get rid of that for a night. Next it was lions. This fear went on until I had the inspiration of introducing an odd looking mongrel dog who lived in the neighbourhood as a "little lion". Somehow, unexpectedly, magically, that dispersed the lions. But immediately came "natives". This went on for some time until it struck us that the child was not specifically afraid of anything—she had caught *fear* itself from Patsy. The specific fears mentioned were merely symptoms, manufactured in part, no doubt, for the stupid adult parents who kept asking "*What* are you afraid of?"

It must not be thought that Patsy was an outstandingly bad or disturbed child. Definitely not. Her life was complicated by the fact that she was the third daughter and only fifteen months older than the much wanted son of the family. It was the effect and influence she had on Leonora that were the outstanding things. And this came about through the strong attachment she and Leonora had formed. She was in fact a happy, imaginative, tolerant girl, two and a half years older than Leonora, and definitely the best of a sizeable bunch of children near us. What is more, Leonora's choice of her was quite definite, as was Patsy's choice of Leonora.

The worst effect of this fear was that every night Leonora woke and came into our bedroom. It might be five a.m. it might be one a.m., but still she came. At first we made many attempts to return her to her own bed, some kinder than others, depending on our own tensions and tiredness, but her fears reduced her to a pitiable state, and the icy weather did not encourage lengthy sojourns out of bed! The only practicable thing was to take her into bed with us for the rest of the night.

Many people need to comfort their children by taking them into their own beds in the middle of the night, and many more ought to. There are two main things which make this far worse than it need be. After all, it's the child's way of seeking to re-establish its lost security, so we should not fight against it. One of the two things mentioned, which make these night visits awful instead of pleasurable, because a child is by this time often big

enough to nestle in and sleep soundly, is that the four-foot-six of the typical English double bed is far too narrow. Six or nine inches extra would have saved us many stiff necks. The two three-foot divans next to one another without division, which are common on the Continent, would give a luxurious and ample width to help one's children without making things uncomfortable for oneself. The second thing is that tension in the parents makes molehills into mountains, and the nightly visits are wrongly imagined to account for much of their sleeplessness. Thus, when Leonora found us tense it made her worse, and prolonged the pattern of insecurity. It should be stated that the family as a whole was living through a crisis of some three months.

During one of the more desperate tense spells of this time we were blind enough to take note of the "habit forming" talk we heard about us all the time, and resolved to put Leonora back each time she woke. We found out that a child, a self-regulated child, had more energy and vitality than two parents. She won. No wonder—her need was desperate. She continued to come into our bed.

Remarkable was her saneness, charm and calmness during the daytime, and Erica's ability to sleep through it all.

The total period of Leonora's visits to our bed (at some time sooner or later in the night, often at six o'clock in the morning in fact) was about eight months. It was said that here was a habit so well established that it would stick and we should be unable to break it. The abortive attempt to stop it mentioned earlier seemed in accord with those theories. But they were proved utterly wrong.

At the end of this time she showed many signs of regained security and had benefited from a generally calm and relaxed family life. It was now within three months of the birth of our third child. We decided that, with a little assistance, Leonora would now be able to manage (before we had decided that *we* could cope no longer!) to stay in her bed. Friends scoffed at our plans. Dr. Benjamin Spock's comments on the problem backed them up.

We explained to Leonora that she had had a very long turn of coming into our bed and that now, as she felt so much better (giving her examples of this) it was the turn of the new baby, growing mighty large in her Mummy's tummy and making the bed too crowded. She listened intently to the explanation and her attitude was eminently logical, typical of her healthy self. After one or two nights when she did wake, but peacefully accepted

the fact that she was going back to her own bed, night life became almost lonely. She came into our bed in the mornings only for a cuddle. It was a wonderful example of the irrelevance of the "habit" chatter, and a final successful survival of a first and extraordinarily sheltered child who was self-regulated and had to face the impact of hates and fears.

In dealing with the symptoms we have described we remembered at the time the background of the situation for Leonora. There had been seven unsettling weeks of staying first with relations and then with friends while accommodation was sought in Nottingham. Part of this time I was absent, and, as I had always played a full part in the life of the children, Leonora in particular missed me dreadfully. When the move to Nottingham finally came there followed a very difficult stretch. She had always been sensitive, a very advanced child. Her imagination was vivid, and she would tell the most striking stories as she ran excitedly up and down the spacious flat. She was very perceptive and impressionable, and of course she had met Patsy! Patsy was really Leonora's first friend, and Patsy's two elder sisters and younger brother came quite frequently, once or twice daily. Patsy was a much beloved playmate, a child who was pleasant in her manner. They shared games, were mutually generous and never had to appeal to adults to pacify or solve their problems. It was because they were such good, close friends, I suppose, that Patsy wanted to share and test her deep fears with Leonora. One day, quietly approaching the lavatory in which they had both been a very long time, I realized why Leonora had caught fear from Patsy and started to come into our bed at night, why wolves, natives, etc., etc., were sources of fear.

"The natives are coming," Patsy was uttering full of anxiety. "They'll cut some hearts out, and then they will burn them," added Leonora feverishly, before I had time to realize that this must have been going on for weeks. It was not what they said, it was the atmosphere of fear they had created, which was the telling thing.

They were such close friends that the only thing to do, we very reluctantly decided, was to isolate Leonora from Patsy. It was terribly sad that her first friend should bring her to this. Leonora understood quite well our decision, although she found it impossible not to hanker after Patsy's company. Luckily Patsy soon moved away from Nottingham.

In dealing with the food problem, we suggested all the nice things she was missing, very casually said that we were glad to eat them ourselves, made her conscious of the actions that reflected Patsy, and made plain how she had no need to do these things as she was in quite a different position from her friend. We never blamed Patsy in any way, just kept pointing out how different her life was. All this had an effect. Slowly Leonora became more and more like her healthy self at meal times. Nearly five years later she still carries traces of the disturbance—she still won't eat crusts (and Erica has at times copied that); she still leaves the tiny bit of cake where she held it; she still pulls the occasional Patsy face. But she understood what was wrong with her and was happy with us that she suffered no longer when she first improved. Erica's appetite during this time was most astonishingly great. She certainly did not catch anything from Leonora. "I have it" was her two-year-old's reaction to Leonora's rejections.

When Erica caught a little fear somewhat later, and would not go to sleep by herself, we moved her bed close to Leonora's the very next night and found that that made her secure again. They were both very happy about it. This was when Leonora and Erica were put to bed at a time that was really Erica's, with the big proviso that Leonora could get up again once Erica was asleep.

Sudden return of old habits

Sensitivity to the adult emotional climate is an important aspect in diagnosing the emotional ills of children. Penny, at three and a half, unlike all the others, shouted at about ten-thirty p.m. each evening and wanted to use her potty. She gave us to understand that she felt that that was a good solution to the problem of having a bottle at bed time and comfort at night without a wet bed in the morning, and without having to wake us up. So we have done with her something which we used to deride in others, we lifted her when we went to bed, at her request. It hardly disturbed her sleep and it seemed a good arrangement for that time in her life. Dry for months, she was wet one night when I came to lift her on to her potty with the usual pleasure and tenderness. We thought it was due to the cold. However, she was wet again in the middle of the night. We thought it must definitely be the cold. And so we fooled ourselves for a few nights more while she repeated this very new

behaviour, until we mustered the capacity to realize that we had to find out what the *emotional* upset was, as this had obviously nothing to do with cold, or too much drink. When one has got as far as this painful soul-searching, success is usually not far off. Then we realized that one of us had shouted at Penny in a vicious way, that at that time she had hardly responded (always a dangerous sign), and that since then she had acted in a number of ways that were in line with the wetting of the bed. So we comforted her feelingly, confessed for the nth time (and it takes energy!) that everybody, especially parents, are silly sometimes and reminded her of the particular occasion we thought had upset her.

Result? That very night Penny went back to normal, and has remained so since without fail. This is typical of the sensitivity of children who have not armoured themselves against hate. We must be careful, for we are talking about our own children, and people seem to deduce from joy in one's children that one overlooks their faults: we do not, nor the many sad shortcomings of the sort of self-regulation, or perhaps the degree of self-regulation, possible at this stage with parents like us and society as it is.

The most difficult part is not to detect what has upset the child, but to have the energy to admit that one *has* upset the child. Inevitably it tends to appear that it was somebody's fault, and it's hard to admit faults. It is inevitable that if one does hateful things to one's children, one is already in a state of weakness and emotional upset. And in that very state, or immediately after, one is called upon to enlist special energies for self-criticism before one can start on the constructive aspects of making good the damage. No wonder at times a tremendous vicious circle is formed, which has to be broken.

Adult visitors who are tense or otherwise disturb the children are a frequent source of anxiety and physical symptoms of anxiety such as constipation, as well as the direct emotional ones such as temper, irrational behaviour, "bad manners" and so on are all attempts to get attention and security.

Insecurity in sharing property and general lack of tolerance

He was the dearest little chap, two and a half years old, and his parents were some of our oldest friends, observers and admirers of self-regulation as practised by us, and convinced it was the right way to bring up children.

But he was the first and only child and, happily, no more interested in any sense of property as regards toys than Leonora had been when she was the only one at about his age.

It was because of this that he represented an alarming and quite new inexplicable threat to Penny. With three sisters and neighbours she had always lived in a very property-minded, if mostly tolerant, kind and generous "society" of children. The parents did not realize this until it was too late: Penny's hostility was great. Adults did not seem to understand. And she was right. The hostility spread to Erica after a day or two, and what was to have been unadulterated bliss became torture for the parents, very old friends feeling worn and at times narked and bitter. Their raw feelings expressed themselves in the irrational and useless interpretation of the shortcomings of the children. This is a specific danger and is why we tell the tale. It is far safer and more useful in such situations to realize quite clearly that the child is right, that *both* children are right, and that parents can help to alleviate the position best if they keep this firmly in mind, recognizing that they have merely met a social problem which can probably be solved on the basis that, both being right, both need something extra.

The other lesson we have learnt from this is: it may be infinitely worth-while to ponder possible problems beforehand, and then introduce a number of prophylactic techniques so that social adjustment can be gradual, after personal love has made kindness and tolerance possible and natural in the children. It would have saved us all much heartache. However we remained friends and hope to manage better next time.

In the everyday life of children, particularly when they are going to school and meet children not self-regulated and teachers not self-regulating, emotional disturbances crop up frequently, if mildly, and can be dealt with as a matter of course with reassurance, explanation and sympathy. Leonora has often been frightened by stories at school which, in the tradition of fairy stories, rely on horror and violence. This is reinforced by the general fear feelings abounding in any company of normal schoolchildren. Her analysis of the situation, it may be remembered, was: "They put fear in you and then they try to make it better by telling you about Jesus." But reactions often do not stop at that. Leonora when nearly eight remarked one day: "Mummy I hope you don't mind, but I am going to be a

smacking Mummy." "Oh, are you?" was our casual reply. "Yes. I enjoy thinking of smacking, and tell myself stories of smacking teachers." "Shall I become a smacking Mummy?" Jean asked. Nonchalantly, as if to something irrelevant, she replied, "Oh no, that's different." She is right, of course.

Leonora and Erica catch bouts of aggression and sadism from outside contacts. The sniggering about lavatory matters, making fun of her for not wearing a vest, and countless other less defined happenings produce aggression as a desperate outlet of energy where soft contact has been again and again frustrated.

A particular instance of this, which has affected both Leonora and Erica, who have very different temperaments, is the formation of continuously opposing gangs at school. It is significant that neither of them, although so very different, likes this, because they do not want to join either the one or the other. They do not want to be against half the class. They are ingenious and diplomatic to quite a remarkable extent so that they may avoid joining any gang against another, or two opposing gangs simultaneously! Peaceful, non-aggressive groups they are eager to join however.

Although a special case, like other things mentioned in this book, the hospital as a social institution must be critically examined and the "normal" resisted. There is evidence galore, though luckily not from our own children, that removal to hospital can be a great shock to young children from reasonable homes, and that, side by side with the stipulated expert attention, harm is done to the child and the curative capacity is reduced by his removal from home. Legally no one, we believe, can be kept from his child just because it is in hospital. Indeed, at such a time it stands to sense and sensitivity that a child needs its parents particularly. Operations at home and other unusual, but healthier than normal, procedures have been tried by some, have even been advocated in life-positive broadcasts, and should always be considered as alternatives to shipping the child off to hospital out of habit, just because the doctor says so, with the naïve belief that, not wishing to take responsibility oneself, there every care will be taken. One of the pioneers in this consideration of the emotional constitution and needs of the young child when ill is Dr. Harry Bakwin. It was fascinating to hear him on the B.B.C. describe how, seventeen years ago, he noted that the general health of a baby separated into its anti-septic and sterile glass

cage was deteriorating, although all its symptoms of gastro-enteritis, for which it had been admitted, seemed to have gone. Finally he decided that the baby might as well go home as die in the hospital. To his astonishment, the child, in contact with its mother, had recovered in the short period of even a day. This convinced him that affectionate contact must be of the greatest importance. It is interesting that one emotional experience and not a lot of statistics convinced this man. In his own hospital, nurses are positively encouraged to nurse and cuddle babies, parents are freely admitted and doctors make their rounds on occasions with interested babies in their arms. It was fascinating to hear him stress that love is required, "skin to skin contact", but that he did not know why this should be so beneficial.

On the other hand, if a child has had to go to hospital, resentment and not love or relief may be his reaction towards those at home on his return, for they seem to him responsible for his removal. The British Medical Association has recently issued progressive recommendations to hospitals on many of these points.

Therapeutic help to children is an essential complement to self-regulation. Even so, there is less work and less fuss and bother than in disciplined homes. What is more, whatever bother and work there is tends towards a positive goal, a positive goal for parents as well as children. It will be found that the honest attitude to children has indeed therapeutic effects on the parents too. In such a situation only strong love between husband and wife, or its equivalent, can give the security to the adults that allows room for the emotional releases and crises associated with therapeutic advances towards less fear and a fuller life.

CHAPTER XXVII

TRUTH, UNTRUTH, COUNTER-TRUTH

THE TERM "COUNTER-TRUTH" was coined by Wilhelm Reich in his last great book, *The Murder of Christ*. It is a useful word because the ideas behind it make clear a great deal hitherto confused and of particular relevance to the upbringing of children. To know the difference between the truth, untruth and counter-truth in self-regulation keeps one out of much trouble: one understands clearly, albeit painfully, where otherwise confusion might bog one down into despair and cynicism.

For Reich, truth is "the whole truth", and that which is basically and generally true about any particular thing. Untruth, or the lie, is a contradiction of the truth, a contradiction of facts, quite a simple phenomenon. The counter-truth, however, is that truth which applies to and truly describes diseased individuals and sick society. It consists of "half-truths". To give an example: Once children have been repressed in their sex life, as they commonly are, it is a counter-truth that such children will be sadistic and masochistic. But this is not a general truth. Only *such* children will be affected. It does not apply to children in general. The truth about children includes the knowledge that they will become sadistic and masochistic, *if* you repress them sexually. So we see that the truth includes the counter-truth, but not the other way round. In the absence of this knowledge, counter-truths are produced and quoted again and again as if they were generally valid, inevitable truths. We have already described how, for example, much psychoanalysis has done just this.

Self-regulation is truth, we think, because as far as our experience goes, it includes all the facts and phenomena we have met with in the theory and practice of upbringing. And it is essential that counter-truths, such as self-regulation not working in one family, should not erroneously be taken as contradicting the truth. Such a thing merely shows that self-regulation does not work in the *one* family, not that self-regulation as such is useless. Finding out why it does not work at times is the only fruitful,

rational reaction to this. But the recognition of counter-truths in theory, or as used in debates, is only one aspect of it. More dangerous consequences follow if we refuse to recognize that, because of the wide application of the counter-truth in our society, the practical attitude of self-regulation cannot apply, and should not be recommended, in a hundred and one instances. This is a cruel fact, but to ignore it is to court disaster. To say to some that "the attitude of self-regulation will be the wrong way for your children" is, though basically tragic advice, sound, proper and correct. It is the counter-truth for children who will be expected to show fearful respect and respectability, obedience and conformity; children who will not be allowed, without punishment, to enjoy sexual play, shouting, loud laughter, or to indulge in losing their tempers, or perhaps even crying or sobbing vehemently, or indeed any kind of lack of composure. For such children, self-regulation would be, and has been, disastrous. Quite rightly the parents of these children reject self-regulation, and it is helpful to understand why and how they are right. Similarly, very many schoolteachers have found in their despair that to teach a class with Neillian freedom is a tragi-comic fiasco if this takes place in a school where all the other teachers exercise the usual discipline. The freedom given, so the harsh truth tells us, will be beyond the capacity of heavily repressed pupils to use positively. The observed facts, the counter-truth, will be that freedom given to the class has been "misused". And such counter-truths we disregard at our peril. It may cost a teacher his livelihood, or a parent the health of his children.

Those who "preach" the truth, say, of self-regulation, without understanding any of the above implications, and as if it could be applied and accepted by all at will, Reich has named "truth pedlars". Their actions are irresponsible, even if they do not know it. And they highlight the shallowness of communication by words spoken and written. We have all experienced misunderstanding, the result of communications that are shallow between people who have no deeper knowledge of each other. In the case of "preaching" self-regulation this is so important that the point needs to be enlarged and illustrated. Reich's own view on the subject, given in *The Murder of Christ*, is radical:

> "It is not a matter of 'proclaiming truth' but of *living truth ahead of one's fellow men.* And this is possible, but only if the

truth is a *true* truth, and not a made-up, cooked-up, proposed or propagated truth. The truth must be a piece of yourself as is your leg or your brain or your liver. Otherwise, do not try to live a truth which is not akin to your whole being. It will turn into a lie in no time, and into a worse one to boot than the lie which has grown organically in the makeshift of social living." (*p.* 174)

Some examples of the shallowness of words and the inability of people to live the truth we have already discussed. We have told how plans to invite other children to our garden, openly and without reserve, ended disastrously. Akin to this are the countless attempts at community formation which have likewise failed, almost without exception. They have all been based on theoretical agreements on ways of living: spoken or written agreements. The whole living truth of being together has then been surprisingly and disastrously different. Disregard of the counter-truth about community formation, and reliance on the wordy truth-peddling of those who "believe in communities", has settled and sealed the attempts before they even began. And to know this is relevant and valuable to self-regulation, for, as we have seen, to form larger, looser associations than the tight family may do a great deal of good. But the young child for whom the community may in some cases have been formed would suffer from the ill-effects of the ill-formed community, which falls so desperately short of the ideal.

In the case of Margaret Ribble's views on sex, in particular, we have shown how her words could be taken to mean many contradictory things. Related to psychoanalysis, but with a great influence of her own, Madame Montessori has also used counter-truths as if they were truths, and her writing further illustrates the weakness of words. At a lecture we gave there was expressed the opinion that self-regulation was thought of by Montessori fifty years ago, and was therefore nothing new. Madame Montessori deserves her fame. In an age that was frankly brutal and cruel to its young, she stood for a humane approach. She advanced the knowledge of the nature of learning, and its relationship to emotion and age was considered carefully. Her theories developed from observations and they continued to develop. But, judging from some lectures given in 1946, one cannot say that Madame Montessori conceived of self-regulation. She propounds most remarkable truths on many subjects. The sentences may

well be identical with some that have been written by an advocate of our attitude, but, again, we meet and recognize the weakness of words: "We must be full of love, love is an energy in nature." Here Montessori comes so very close to the expression of truth, *but only in words*, as the energy, for her, is psychic only. "People have not only the instinct to be happy, to have nourishment, to be free sexually or to have riches. They have an instinct for restriction, an instinct to restrain their power, their life and love." She goes on to illustrate this with examples of mutilation among primitive people, of fasting in every religion. "People are ready to suffer, *why*? People have adapted themselves to the environment in order to live: but this is not all, for people have an instinct to suffer. They adore to suffer.

"Men and women are happy to suffer: it is like an exercise! It is not true to say that men will do anything to avoid suffering—a man will give his son to be wounded or hurt in some fashion or his daughter to have her ears pierced, otherwise she would not be beautiful! One belongs to a group just because one has been subject to this suffering."

This is akin to the Freudian death instinct, and has all the disadvantages. It confuses primary and secondary drives by lumping all these together as instincts, truth and counter-truth. It is a decided short-coming. In a classroom or at home any failure of the Montessori method, as in the case of Freudian therapy, can be interpreted as a child's instinct to suffer. And so, with one almighty sweep, what reads largely as a life-positive exposition of upbringing lends itself to interpretations which are utterly life-negative. Not having met Madame Montessori we cannot say which interpretation corresponds most with the total reality of her own relationship to children: if a child is dreamily playing with its genitals, does she leave it, or "gently direct its hand" like Margaret Ribble suggests? One does not know. Nowhere have we come across her attitude to sex, in infants and children: to her it may have been irrelevant.

Her theories are based on observation, but observation of the many more or less emotionally plagued societies on this globe. Even then she ignores anthropological research when she generalizes that "adolescence is a crisis". Malinowski, and later Margaret Mead, found clearly that it is a crisis if the culture pattern makes it so, as in our culture, but that this is not by any means universal.

Where lies the counter-truth? In terms of *words*, Montessori is

in many ways a precursor of self-regulation. In terms of *meaning* she shows some vital differences. To her the ear-piercing, circumcision and suppression of sex in the young may well be those sufferings to which a man exposes his son because, according to her, he has an instinct for suffering. It is most important to realize that it also means that those words which sound like self-regulation may well in fact mirror a far different attitude. The test is to see the life-negative application of the Montessori technique in a hundred and one cases. A method that allows itself to be interpreted so easily in that manner is suspect, notwithstanding the greatness and humanity of the work in terms of what exists, and particularly in terms of what existed in Rome fifty years ago, when Montessori began her work. Yet it is a further counter-truth that it may be right to send a child to a Montessori school. A head may be exceptionally life-positive, and the school may be by far the best of those that are available.

A proper use of the knowledge of counter-truth for the parent who tries self-regulation is a necessary development of "manners". Active hate shown against children is very harmful when it comes from outsiders, particularly from teachers, it can be perniciously distressing. The knowledge of the counter-truth allows us to avoid behaviour that would foster such hate against the children on many occasions. It leads to recognition of the point of view of others, and this indicates the right kind of approach to them. If a teacher corrects a child in a way that is disturbing, one could go to the school and try to tell him or her that he should stop it at once, that it is a great misfortune that your child has to go to his rotten school, without his making it worse. That may well be the truth! But it would probably evoke hate, as a truth so often does.

Bearing in mind the counter-truth as applicable to any teacher, one can go to school and tell him, in a language which is his own, that the child is "sensitive", or that the child "regards him so highly", or that "he means so much to the child", that you would be "most obliged" if he would perhaps treat him a little differently, as a favour, and to mutual advantage. At the same time you can reassure him that you know your child can be a nuisance, and that you will do your best to co-operate with him. This is a counter-truth: that is how the teacher can see it as right. This need not evoke hate. And if the child can manage (as our children can) a certain amount of understanding, in terms of "everybody silly sometimes" and teachers having a hard time of it, then the

counter-truth is a valuable and valid weapon with which to fight the hostile outer world. This is not new, but the understanding offered is deeper than the moral one. It is the opportunists' approach to use the right, most effective, means, not any means, towards each end.

To try and persuade a person that self-regulation is a functional attitude for him or for her is the beginning of a therapeutic process. One must expect and be prepared to deal with the frightened reactions which may be powerful and dangerous. It is safe only to help those who come in quest of a life-positive attitude, those who are disturbed at what they are doing, those who are prepared to carry the responsibility of having done the wrong thing with, perhaps, their first two children, and yet will not be paralysed by the guilt arising from this. And, sadly, such chances are rare. We talk here of telling people of self-regulation and showing them in terms of one's own children what one means: the forceful contact of the whole experience. Writing a book, or vaguely talking, as distinct from preaching to people about it, is a far safer way of distributing the knowledge: it is much easier to defend your unwilling or incapable self against the onslaught on a mere book. The hatred and defence reaction do not as a rule hit the author directly, and those who are ready to glean the full truth of the pages will do so and ask for more. Thus, in writing articles or books we expect to have a large audience which reads only to reject; another considerable group who accept partially, accepting the inessentials and rejecting the essentials, just making words mean what they wish them to mean; the final group, for whom the book is really written, includes only those who grasp the essential, and see the details as correct or incorrect applications of those essentials. For authors, especially pioneers, are prone to make many mistakes!

The reader may ask how we know whether a visitor, invited perhaps because we felt he might gain from our company and we from his, is "ripe" for self-regulation. It may be, and very often it is, not one visitor but a young couple without children. . . . The answer is that we find out from their attitude to *our* relationship with the children. The stress is on the word *our*. One cannot put the onus of getting on with children on the visitor. Our children dislike some visitors, because of association, are not in the mood for others and resent yet another because he has unwittingly, or of necessity, stopped a game prematurely: but on the whole

they welcome visitors enthusiastically. Again, the shyness our children have displayed with visitors on rare occasions is not a sign of undue insecurity. Even adults have to brace themselves to make a good impression when introduced. An introduction to a new personality is an event which takes considerable energy and effort, and is coupled with great expectations and risks if you are a sensitive child. The visitor may have brought a present or not; he may have a car to take you for a ride or not; he may talk adult talk and be a nuisance, or hard and inapproachable, or, worse, he may be one of those despicable types who think it fun for children to have their cheeks tweaked and shaken as a first introduction. (The way children rightly resent such feelingless familiarities, obscene and inhibited expressions of what tries to be tenderness, must be seen to be believed, or, still better, remembered from one's own childhood.) Don't expect the visitor to get on with your children, nor even your children with him. Do you and your wife always welcome each other's special friends with open arms? True, you may go out, or hide your dislike, but self-regulated children may not have such a thoroughly controlled grasp of social manœuvring.

It is, then, by their reaction to our relationship with the children that we view prospective friends. Let us take a number of happenings to show what we mean. The soft, gentle cuddling of children is commonplace in our house, and I like to do this particularly when talking to people, because it is an insurance that the time has not been wasted! Babies are often carried, and the positive joy shows quite clearly on my face. The joy of feeling the baby, of having the mutual flow, is obvious. Now that is a phenomenon which some ridicule. This is a defence, for they cannot stand the pleasure "neat" and seriously. Others try to ignore it or try to show that carrying is a bad thing for the baby because it spoils it. These people are irritated by the display of tenderness. Finally there are those who share the pleasure. It is of course those who can share the *feel* of the softness who can take to self-regulation most easily.

When a boy, I used to wonder at the inferiority of the human young. Puppies, I said to myself, kittens, foals, lambs, calves, rabbits, lions, tigers, bearcubs, are all so cuddlesome and sweet, but I certainly did not think this about the human baby. Not until I carried my own up and down and felt the flow and the response did I realize that my assumption had not been the truth. As a

counter-truth it was based on facts: babies, as they had appeared to me—untouchable and wrapped in white stuff, were handled only to see whether they were dirty, and cuddled only by tense women squeaking in tense falsetto. I had not experienced the truth then. I had never seen a father, or even a mother, handle another baby in the matter-of-fact way in which people loved puppies. (The royal patronage for the society for protecting animals, which is not extended to the society for protecting children, may well reflect the same counter-truth.) You may protest that puppies are sweeter, that babies are handicapped because they can't waddle about on unsteady legs. Bearing in mind the much longer childhood of humans, this period of extreme sweetness comes when they crawl and walk. Yet, there again, there were those who realized that the astounding nature of Erica's propulsion in the sitting position was a lovely sign of loose pelvic muscles—and those who did not.

There is a pleasurable sight which particularly reminds us clearly of the feelings about puppies. When Leonora gets out of the bath, as the first of the four, she wraps a towel round her and runs through the long passage into the lounge, by the stove, to dry. Erica follows suit, and the climax is to see Penny, and finally little Nicola, following the other two with a towel wrapped round in just the same way as the others held it. Those who are not moved by the emergence of so much lovely life from a bath, and we have experienced this in terms of the children of at least three other families, are not likely to respond to the idea of self-regulation.

Love is a rare sight in homes and streets. If we see two children hugging with sincere concern and love for one another, we are moved, because of the rarity of this sign of affection in England. Thus, when our children hug we are always touched, and we may look for the same reaction in the visitor. Some think it "cute" or funny, a defence reaction employing humour. Some ignore it, in spite of the obvious delight we take in it. Some share our pleasure, and the event itself is, in those last cases, the starting point for an explanation of how these children come to do what is so rare, yet so simple and obvious an action.

These experiences, and many other instances of everyday life, allow us to decide whether it is sensible or not to talk about self-regulation. If a friend is, say, a wonderful musician, but can't stick our kids; if he has a personality that appeals to us as tolerant

and understanding, then we try as far as possible to enjoy his playing when the children are not about to spoil the mood. We recognize that here music is the worth-while aspect of the relationship which ought to be developed. And we do not risk driving the friend away by trying to preach the self-regulation principle which to him would be incomprehensible, irrelevant or disliked. Knowledge of the counter-truth would keep us that friend, just as the knowledge of the truth of self-regulation has gained us many more on a deep, sincere and feeling level.

CHAPTER XXVIII

WHY BOTHER?

"WHY BOTHER, WHY make such a fuss, why distinguish self-regulation from the way in which most progressive people bring up their children?

"What you call 'counter-truth' is the real world, and it will always be like that, you won't change it, so why bring up your children as if the real world wasn't, or as if you could change it? Why bother?"

These constantly repeated questions insinuate that self-regulation is an artificially forced or futile fad. They sap our strength and confuse us, particularly in weak moments when reassurance is sorely needed. Reassurance, in fact, is rarely forthcoming. The relations and acquaintances who dislike and distrust our attitude are in the majority and are not slow to push or imply such insinuating questions. It is therefore useful to write down clear answers which stand one in good stead at times of doubt and dither.

The brief intellectual reply to the first query is this: Self-regulation gives new valid criteria. That these are necessary and needed even among the "normally progressive" was hinted at in the first and every subsequent chapter. Psychoanalysis is behind the thought patterns of all such "progressives", and we have pointed out enough weaknesses in psychoanalytic theories to make it obvious that these people are in the self-same dilemma of mutual contradiction as others who are not progressive. As a final piece of evidence supporting the view that psychoanalysis pure and simple does not supply valid criteria for upbringing, there appeared in a learned book entitled *Mental Health and Mental Disorder*, published by Routledge in 1956, a piece of research work dealing with just this subject. From a large number of children, those who had the type of upbringing that psychoanalysts stipulate as good (breast-feeding, late potty training, no punishment for toilet accidents, sleeping with mother for the first year)

were compared with others where these things had not occurred. Stipulating that certain signs of insecurity and unbalance were criteria of whether upbringing had been successful or not, the research showed hardly any statistically significant difference between those brought up one way or the other.

It is established from clinical experience that the various things psychoanalysts mention often have the profound effect that they claim. What is missing are the data whereby one may distinguish *when* their views are applicable and *why*. It is just the advantage of self-regulation that it lends itself to this. Take breast-feeding as one example: we know that the quality of breast-feeding is governed by the energy flow between mother and child. The mere "normal" act of breast-feeding, as the psychoanalysts would have it, is not the criterion . . . the child may be sucking milk and hate, not milk and love, to put it with extreme simplicity. But if love is flowing, then the psychoanalyst is immediately right: breast-feeding is superior to bottle-feeding. Such a *qualitative* distinction with full meaning can only come from the life energetic discoveries and concepts of Wilhelm Reich as used in the theory and practice of self-regulation. And what applies to breast-feeding applies to all the other things: merely to hit a child, "corporal punishment", may represent nothing but the exasperation of a parent, *if* it is not accompanied by moralistic preachings and consequent guilt for the child; not to give "sex-education" may be all right if the life in the family is sex-positive; merely to train a child on the potty may not mean anal complexes if it is done relaxedly and with love, with no ulterior motive, but for a very real, rational and specifically valid reason; masturbation at certain times may be stopped without ill-effects. It is the emotional quality involved, the expression of the energy flow, which counts and is crucial. Even more important is the realization that to condone masturbation may be a very strongly-felt negative reaction, as far as the child is concerned: that not to hit him, but to appear hurt and to withdraw love, as if deliberately, to teach him, may be far worse than the explosive swipe and subsequent love and explanation. To give sex-education, for parents afraid of the emotions involved, may be far worse than no sex-education from that source: years of disgust for excreta may be worse than to have trained the child lovingly: and so on. Once we recognize the energetic and subtle depth of the felt relationship, and, so to speak, mistrust the visible bit of iceberg,

we cut through the psychoanalyst's confusions, and all the seeming contradictions are resolved.

The information collected in the research described in the book we have just mentioned was only the visible part . . . the mere facts of yes or no unconcerned with the deeper qualities attached to the replies. And so, in the wider, deeper view of self-regulation, it is quite comprehensible that the findings show psychoanalysis to be shallow; they do not, however, contradict the theory of self-regulation.

If the normally progressive person fails with the psychoanalytic recipe, and blames the recipe for the failure rather than its inappropriateness to the cook, he may well return to disciplinary upbringing, as many have done. He may return to it, not in the belief that it is right in this or that event, or for this or that person, but as the only practical alternative to his abortive attempt at freedom. And, not knowing of the counter-truth, he may well believe that *his* failure is inevitable for all others. Because of the importance of the theoretical background, a knowledge of the work of Wilhelm Reich in the field seems vital in implementing self-regulation under many varying conditions. Integrating it into a wider context, it becomes more meaningful.

The second question with which we began this chapter, which really asks "Why try to change the world when it won't be changed?" is too general in its insinuations for it to be possible to reply with any clear-cut evidence or proof, either one way or the other, but, as it seems that unless we can change the "real" world there will not be any world, only radioactive smithereens, we think the only useful assumption is that the world and the people in it can change, even as we can change ourselves and our immediate surroundings. To be hopeful in this way does not mean that we are stupidly blind to the little that one or two people can do, in relation to the 2,000,000,000 odd people in the world.

To avoid the oppressive feeling of utter insignificance which comes when we look at the task in this light, one should see life, and the upbringing of one's children, as ends in themselves, as well as means to an end. Thus, even if the Hydrogen Bomb dropped tomorrow, the better life that our children have led up to today because of self-regulation is of real value, is an end in itself. Similarly, the line we have just written, if it disintegrates in noxious explosions instead of materializing in printer's ink,

will have been part of our full life and so an end in itself. But all these ends can also be seen as means to another end, or many other ends, which, in their turn, can be seen as means. The happy childhood is in that sense a means and an end, and whether we can make the world better, as we hope and believe to be possible, or whether we cannot, the healthy childhood is justified in itself.

We do not, of course, have the self-regulatory attitude *merely* because it makes life healthier and happier for our children, but also because it is a natural form of energy-expression for adults to increase health around them. And in this we are opportunists. We believe that opportunism is in the essence of nature. The bean does not sulk at the absence of a stick, but climbs whatever it can get hold of. And so we do not dwell on what we cannot do for two thousand million, but keep an opportunist look out for all those occasions when we can act with good effect for the more vigorous and more relaxed life of some people, including ourselves. To be disappointed in some of our attempts merely reinforces the urgency and the care of our opportunism. Such opportunism is not the base behaviour the word has come to mean. It must be understood that any healthy and genuine relationship is one where both parties gain, so that opportunism does not necessarily have anything to do with selfishness or egoism. Nor need it, on the other hand, resemble altruism, philanthropy or the kindheartedness of those who are forever wanting to be martyrs and givers of happiness to others without receiving. Both attitudes are unhealthy. The true social relationship, as the reality of the energy flow shows, must give satisfaction to both parties. And that certainly applies to parents and children.

To live in active hope, to do what satisfies this hope and to urge towards what is healthy in us, that is indeed opportunism. The lost opportunities of each one of us, in that sense, are a reflection, a symptom, of the sickness of societies and individuals.

Let us therefore finish with another description of that opportunism which is a basic object of all that is written in the other pages also.

It is printing day. With the electric duplicating machine I run off all the copies of our bi-monthly journal in one day, usually at a week-end. It is holiday time, so all four walking daughters are present and correct. There are two possibilities: either they are to be kept out of the study where I do the work, or they participate. And this is where opportunism decides: Right through many

activities, architecture, research, writing, printing, I have always had the children in the study from choice. There is none of the *fearful* respect with which a father's study is usually regarded. The *functional* respect for my property has been quite sufficient to make the children's use of the study, both when I am at home and when I am not, pleasurable and practicable. Nothing of value has ever been damaged or put in disorder, and much of it is within reach. Regarding work, things are not as easy. The demands of the children, especially when a little insecure, do disturb work. But I hold that the pleasure I get through the contact, and the gains for the children through seeing me at work, are worth all the frustration, the shouting, and the occasional loss of temper which arise when work is continuously impeded. I resist efforts to make the study out of bounds. Occasionally, of course, circumstances make it inevitable, and then the children respect the embargo well.

Similarly, I refuse to work away from home any more than I must. The glimpses of the children in the garden from the window, and the occasional visit by one or the other, outweigh the disturbances and the howls which mark their misfortunes, make me unhappy and summon me to their aid.

Often the children realize by themselves that I am best left alone. They know there is more fun elsewhere that day, and off they go. But as I am more rarely in the study than Jean is in the kitchen, and as the study was, for a long time, a veritable sun room, they are strongly attracted. I keep many things there which occupy them happily. These of course also act as attractions. Those fathers who, possibly very wisely, prefer to work alone should be careful not to allow their children to associate the study with exciting, attractive things.

In my case, there are little drawing-boards when I am drawing, and large sheets of paper, and, when I duplicate, the stove becomes the "pretend" machine of one, the cover of mine another, the revolving chair and something else a third and fourth.

And so, having given me some moments of peace for concentration to start the complicated proceedings on a well-organized plan of action, they stand waiting for the first sheets to roll off. They use the sheets that are faulty, and often they play imaginatively around me for hours, and move so that they hardly get in my way.

The extent to which the children ask me whether the paper they want is the right paper to take amazes me repeatedly. It has

grown on them through my requests to look and see whether what they have is all right. Now, very often, even when a piece of paper is from their own drawer in my study, if it looks as if it might have strayed there they ask to make sure.

As the work proceeds with great tempo, space becomes more limited: wrapping papers, finished products, test sheets, stencils, ink tubes and waste paper spread to all horizontal surfaces, including the floor. But still the many moments of pleasure I get from watching the children (though this may mean spoiling a sheet or two by taking my attention off the machine for a moment) make the whole procedure of running off the journal more varied, more lively than if I did it in a mechanical way, aimed at maximum efficiency. Very high efficiency is, of course, required, and is still obtained. It all takes very much more energy than if there were no children, but then living richly does. And sometimes I wish there were no children: things go wrong, difficulties coincide and I tell them to get out. This may be of some use, or it may make the general situation worse—it depends on our moods. But if they go, or if they don't, they learn about not disturbing people at crucial moments, when they are concentrating: they learn about duplicating and collating, and how people get cross when things go wrong. And when I or they have had enough of co-operating (and it may really prove handy to have them by me), they disappear. It's a relief. Less energy is suddenly required. Concentration becomes gloriously simple. But after some hours I often miss them again, especially if they can be heard to be in a happy mood.

Well there we are. This description is merely a pointer: experience, not reading of experience, is the way to appreciate what we are talking about.

The relationship between parents and children reflects in the depths of the emotions felt for one another. The softness of Penny's or Nicola's hands stroking our faces and murmuring "I love you", or of Nicola's tender "Nice Daddy"; Erica's shooting eyebrows and sweet mouth, Leonora's originality, these and many other spontaneous, creative and captivating things move us so deeply because they belong to our children, who in turn feel deeply about us.

And so in our experiment we start with a dilemma: we use the theory of self-regulation because it clarifies and defines that dilemma: and then we realize that in our period of transition we cannot

and must not be idealists. But as much of the better life as we can obtain is infinitely worth-while, and both our children's capacities and our own are harnessed into the concerted effort of achieving it. Leonora when two years and nine months old was assured by us that we loved her, even when we got cross. She answered, "I love you too, though you are cross." Yes, children can partake to such an extent that a very young toddler may actively help his parents to improve their leadership: "I am not as big as you, don't forget," said Leonora quite earnestly at the same age, and we *had* forgotten.

POSTSCRIPT

SELF-REGULATION AND THE WORK OF WILHELM REICH

THE DIRECT relevance and usefulness, to this book, of Reich's theory of "orgonomic functionalism" is, we hope to show, twofold: In the first place, the basic concept of a self-regulating organism springs from it and is justified by it. Secondly, it is a most effective approach to the countless problems of upbringing and obviates the traditional, harmful, moralistic approach of "naughty" and "nice", and guilt feelings in parents and children. We only hold the theory in such high regard because it has helped us in situations where all other theories have failed. As such we recommend it. It is a theory basically correct and not something personal, only applicable to the few.

Science is suspect, theories are suspect, and scientific theories about children are thrice suspect! Strange terminology suggesting pseudo-science does not help. These suspicions we share with many others. Why then have we overcome this suspicion and studied "orgonomy" (which is a science), used its method, orgonomic functionalism, and applied it to our children? We will try to explain. Science is suspect because today there is little integration of the countless specialist subjects and only a spurious relationship between science and the real needs of man. In a veritable Tower of Babel there exist, and argue in different languages, the psychiatrist, psychologist, physiologist, bio-chemist, surgeon, philosopher, sociologist, anthropologist, naturopath and homeopath, as well as educationists and many others. Orthodox science is rightly suspect! We returned to science only because we met a scientific method in orgonomic functionalism which allowed and furthered integration. For example, Robert Graves had wisely said that science must include "magic". This new approach did, and it gave a tenable basis for the unification of atomized learning. Nothing experienced had to be rejected. A science which gives insight, not only into the nature of the moralist's pronouncements, but also into the inability of man

to conform, does not exclude the emerging creativeness of the living and integrates the innate hope of the religious as well as the desperation of the nihilist, a science like that has theories worthy of note. Corresponding to the many varying realities, they make action possible and prepare for the probability of failure.

Children as "phenomena" have utterly eluded the sciences of the orthodox. It is perhaps the most compelling aspect of the new approach that it is also a science of children—biological organisms capable of self-regulation, and complicated products of cultural conditioning. With orgonomy we understand the interrelation of these and dispel the ignorance and cruelty which now govern the approach to our young, whether in luxury or poverty.

It is certainly a matter for debate whether it is best to use new words. Reich in orgonomy shows restraint, and invents them only where necessary. These words serve as a safeguard. They make it more difficult to reduce the meaning of his new discoveries to that already familiar, as the fearful are wont to do.

A brief summary of Reich's work will show three things: the connection between his diverse discoveries, their remarkable integration, giving more meaning to each, and the relation of self-regulation to orgonomy as a new science of the universe.

First developments from Freud

Wilhelm Reich was born in Austria in 1897, the son of a well-to-do farmer. Freud's student and co-worker, in Vienna, he felt the shortcomings of psychoanalysis in the early twenties. He reaffirmed Freud's original and revolutionary theory of sex-energy (libido) while most of his colleagues were trying hard to make Freud's theory socially respectable. Extensive psychoanalytic work, and information gained from many "normal" people whom Reich met in the course of social work, showed that the characteristics of sexual intercourse, taken as normal in our society, were in fact symptoms of disturbance. Hard, mechanical rhythms, sadistic or masochistic thoughts and actions, tiredness or even disgust after the act, were usual. Reich reserved the term *orgasm* for tender passion melting into the mutual surrender of a crescendo of waves of involuntary pelvic movements, and the subsequent feelings of serenity and well-being. All these, Reich discovered, were the criteria of healthy intercourse.

He saw the rarity of this as a direct result of the prohibition of

pleasurable, and specially sexual, activities in childhood and adolescence. Prolonged clinical observations led to the theory that the measure of the health of the patient could be judged by the capacity for orgasm. The release of energy (libido as yet) was seen as physiological as well as psychological, and this took Reich beyond psychoanlysis.

More effective therapy

Resistance to analysis made the old therapeutic methods often ineffective. Reich thought about the meaning of these resistances. He saw them as protections against the guilt-ridden pleasure sensations of sex-energy. An active, direct attack on the protections in analysis proved effective, where other, passive techniques had not been able to penetrate the character defences. The use of his "character-analysis" led at last to an understanding of the masochistic character. To distinguish "secondary drives" from "primary" ones was a fruitful alternative to Freud's theory of the death instinct, which was, from the point of view of therapy, barren, leaving masochists often incurable. Reich's character-analysis is still the only basis for penetration of the phenomenal character armour of the masochist.

He noticed that the psychological defence, anxiety, was coupled with the physiological expressions of character attitudes chronically anchored in the tense muscles of the patient's body. He called this "muscular armour", and recognized it as "bound-up biological energy". Psychological and physiological phenomena represented different aspects of one basic "bio-energy". This was the beginning of the unitary science of man which makes the artificial duality of mind and body unnecessary. The unitary concept led to the formulation of "vegetotherapy". This technique made it possible to combine work on the mind in the form of character-analysis, with work on the body, in the form of massage, manipulation and other means of breaking tensions. The new therapy was more penetrating, more widely effective and quicker. Normally the emotional content of each tension is released and pours out with dramatic force; this enables the patient to feel more. This again brings with it anxiety and awareness of deeper tensions, which are then treated and released. Reich called his work "sex-economy", signifying that he saw all the functions of a person's behaviour as part of an energy economy. He was driven to a closer scrutiny of this energy.

Freud had forecast the psycho-somatic work clearly. However the analysts accused Reich of having left his proper field and the physicians complained or laughed at his trespass into their domain.

New basis for education and sociology

The concept of self-regulation arose out of the observation that healthy organisms show a natural capacity for regulation of their energy economy, and for rational morality. The latter appears spontaneously with the satisfaction of primary biological, i.e. energetic, needs. These are best satisfied by self-regulation. A. S. Neill had observed that fact for a considerable time at his school "Summerhill" in Leiston, Suffolk. When they met, Reich was happy to have their evidence to support his theory, and Neill was thrilled and moved to hear the theory which explained the effectiveness of his much ridiculed practice.

Reich was always concerned with social aspects of his findings. He was the first to combine effectively psychoanalytic concepts and sociological ones. He had originally thought the socio-economic analysis of Marxism valid, but its limitations became clear as he saw the decisive influence of the "authoritarian" structure of society. Direct contact with politics gave Reich a vivid view of its irrational nature, extreme in fascism: for him the individual's wickedness, his original sinfulness, death instinct, "only humanness", all these were expressions of the perverted, that is the secondary, drives of organisms. Our culture, blocking healthy functioning, shaped such individuals and they in turn would tend to continue that pattern with their children. He observed that man, deprived of his wholeness, lacked the power of self-regulation and would tend to follow irrationally or lead for ulterior motives. Reich called this pestilent condition the "emotional plague", a malady that can be diagnosed in all those culture patterns which disturb basic functions. The difference between Reich's approach to the ravaging life-negating quality in man and that of the moralist is that the latter pleads and threatens in vain to purge the badness, whereas Reich's natural science shows a fruitful understanding which can lead to effective therapeutic remedies.

The study of social behaviour also yielded the principle on which healthy co-operation takes place. Reich called it work-democracy. It is the rational attitude to work, as well as the

positive attitude to love, which distinguishes a healthy group from a plague-ridden one. Pleasure in work, as in love, is a necessary biological function.

Fuller understanding, not belittling, of religion

As distinct from the many religious experiences which Reich thought healthy, he regarded religious institutions as manifestations of man's emotional plague, similar in many ways to the political organizations. The profound feeling of oneness with the universe is one healthy religious function which gained concrete meaning with his later discovery of the existence of orgone both within the organism and outside it. Thus, unlike those who regard all religious feelings as neurotic symptoms, Reich has made it possible to distinguish between the healthy feeling of oneness, which one small "orgonotic system" feels as part of the "orgone ocean", and the perversions which are symptoms of pathetic, secondary strivings towards this oneness.

The reality of emotions

The importance of the orgasm as a unique release of bio-energy led Reich to examine it thoroughly. Much research finally led to a formula which expressed the orgasm functions in an individual as Mechanical Tension—Energy Charge—Energy Discharge—Mechanical Relaxation. A definition of "healthy" was now possible: it is the capacity to act as an organic whole in this deepest of biological functions. There is affinity between sexual orgasm and the other involuntary and healthy convulsions of the body, particularly birth.

The energy of the "charge" concerned in the orgasm formula was still undefined. Reich assumed it to be "bio-electric". This led to momentous experiments in Norway in 1935. They showed conclusively that the antitheses of pleasure and anxiety could be recorded, with electrical equipment, as a charge or lack of charge, respectively at erogenous parts of the human body. Reich saw emotions to be the feelings, the subjective awareness, of the energy movement in the body. The psychoanalysts protested more strongly than ever against Reich's "meddling", and the natural scientists laughed with greater gusto and actually carried out a smearing campaign, inferring obscenities. This drove him in 1939 from Norway, where he had taken asylum as a refuge from Nazism, to the U.S.A.

Two vital questions then dictated the development of Reich's work: Does the orgasm formula (Tension-Charge-Discharge-Relaxation) only apply to the sexual orgasm, or does it apply to life-function in general? And, if the latter, can it be observed in such simple life forms as the protozoa?

Emergence of the living

In his attempts to see life at its simplest Reich studied the disintegration of moss and grass. Observing movement as well as structure led him finally to believe that disintegrating plant tissue transforms into animal life. He had noted every stage of the transformation. The vesicular nature of the particles on disintegration, their pulsating rhythm, their blue radiations, all these and other astonishing things were controlled and repeated. Low speed film records of the whole process had been taken and contradicted orthodox beliefs. It remained to see whether "air infection", a vague but much used notion of the scientists, was the cause of the emergence of life. Reich sterilized his preparations with the most thorough techniques, often bringing his materials to incandescence. He had begun to observe inorganic matter as well as organic substances. To his astonishment he found that the process of vesicular disintegration and swelling was not stopped, but speeded up considerably by heating! He formulated the theory that the vesicles he had observed were the elementary energy manifestations of life, representing the transition stage from matter. He named these vesicles "Bions". Developed experiments with cultures of bions showed their growth into recognizable life forms which reproduced and survived ten years. The blue radiation from bion cultures inflamed the eye of the observer, and the skin if laid on the arm.

These discoveries were incredible, and Reich's amazement and excitement were mixed, as he realized that the hostility to his work would reach a new and higher peak. But seen in the proper context, of the history of science as a whole, it made sense. He published the experiments and proceeded to investigate the blue energy which had inflamed his eye.

Discovery of orgone

Definition of the nature of the energy eluded Reich for a long period of intense effort. The manifestations did not conform with existing theories of electricity or short-wave radiations.

Examining critically those accidental things which are usually disregarded, as not belonging to the experiment under way, gave Reich his first clues. For a long time experiment and hypotheses succeeded one another until it emerged that he was dealing, seemingly, with an energy which was *everywhere*, governed the living as "life-energy", and concentrated and discharged according to its own laws, unlike those of any other energy form. As Reich had supposed it to be electricity, he made experiments to show specifically that it was not voltaic electricity. However, the poorly understood, so-called, static electricity was far better comprehended when he regarded it as one expression of orgone. Further research revealed that many of the functions of cosmic orgone coincided with those postulated for the hypothetical ether of the nineteenth century.

The orgone energy accumulator

Orgone was found to be excited by the "antithetical" voltaic electricity. This, and the discovery of physical means of concentrating the atmospheric orgone in a simple, iron-lined box made possible tremendous progress in research. The walls of the box were composed of several alternate layers of steel wool and rock or glass wool, with a material such as celotex soft-board on the outside. With the orgone accumulator, many remarkably vivid experiments can be made which control Reich's revolutionary and shattering findings simply. For example:

1. There is a higher temperature of the air above and within the orgone accumulator than in the surrounding atmosphere and this varies only according to geographical location, the humidity of the air, general weather phenomena and the time of day. Einstein said to Reich that this, if it were true, would be a "bomb" on existing physics! It has been verified by us and others.

2. The body temperature of persons sitting in the accumulator rises, almost invariably, up to the extent of over a degree Fahrenheit within a time of about ten minutes, again with variations only due to climatic conditions and the character-structure of the person. Orthodox medicine cannot make sense of this. "Suggestion" can, of course, be eliminated.

3. When time has been allowed for the counter tube of a Geiger Müller counter to soak up orgone it reacts with a greater number of impulses per second than to the strongest atomic radiations.

4. With minimal friction, remarkable light, sound and sparks can be drawn from living things corresponding to the effects of thousands of volts of voltaic electricity.

5. Experiment "XX" shows that protoplasmic matter can develop from concentrated "free orgone", that is orgone that is not bound to any matter. Further, from this plasmatic "bionous" matter protozoa develop. This experiment, comparatively simple, clear and seemingly incontrovertible, has also been repeated independently.

The above and its many possible variations represent an enormous field of research hardly touched. The many forces found and used by Reichenbach, Mesmer, Lakhovsky, de la Warr, Eeman, Brunler, Kilner, Abbot and others can all be better understood and integrated on the basis of Reich's theories.

Insight into cancer

One of the findings made in the experiments with "bion cultures" was that when they degenerated into, so called, "T-bacilli" and were injected into mice they caused cancerous symptoms. The healthy bions were found to act as an antidote. That it was in fact the energy charge of the bions which attacked the T-bacilli was borne out when, later, it was possible to use atmospheric orgone in a concentrated form with the orgone accumulator. Using bions with cancerous mice and concentrated orgone with human beings who suffered from the worst cancerous tumours, both showed reductions of the tumours and prolongation of life. Reich diagnoses cancer as emerging from the repressed organism in a repressing culture: chronic repressions of primary functions lead to anxiety and tense musculature, which mean lack of orgonotic pulsation, that is, the tissue becomes devitalized and prone to rot into T-bacilli. Reich's blood test was the first to make it possible to diagnose cancer in the bloodstream before tumours occurred. *He warned against taking his discoveries as a "cancer cure".* In spite of this, some have done so, obviously to accuse him of quackery in a field where this is particularly damaging. Reich has discovered the connection between cancer cells, tension and anxiety, and the social background that fosters them. A "cure" means eradicating all of these.

Even with orgone therapy, the direct application of concentrated orgone as "life-energy" to the organism, there are complications of getting rid of the rotten tissue in the case of cancer.

This dead tissue tends to clog the kidneys, and death results. However, it is an immense and poignant tragedy that orgone is not used to lessen pain in cancer and other diseases and injuries, for in this it has been found most effective. If there were nothing more to all Reich's thirty-five years' work than this discovery of lessening agony so cheaply, his name would be immortal. This work, above all others, ought to be examined at once by medical authorities. Unlike drugs or other radiations, orgone application is so cheap and easy that there are no rational grounds for rejecting a finding repeatedly verified.

The nature of the unity of the universe

Reich had observed that weather affects the orgone energy concentrations in the orgone accumulators. The interconnection of things suggested itself also in the observation of a "spiral superimposition" which Reich saw in many, very different, natural phenomena. The universality of spiral motion, so that it can be truly said that absolutely all movement in this universe can be observed to tend to spirality, in its broad sense, has been established by others not at all interested in orgonomy and at a loss to find an explanation. Goethe, Pettigrew, Cook, Whyte, Schäffer recognized its crucial importance.

The "free" orgone in the atmosphere can be seen as light dots which can be magnified. Having observed them to be moving in a spiral manner (as do also the "atomic particles" which are said to have no mass or charge, i.e. neutrino), the basic tendency of orgone to spirality seems established. If orgone is the basis for all that exists it is to be expected that its spiral movement should be everywhere traceable. And this, as we have said, is the case. The superimposition of two spiral motions or spiral arms, fusing at their point of meeting, is observed in the basic movements and forms of creation. This applies to the emergence of matter from energy and the emergence of life from matter, as well as all the other acts of creation in their myriad diversity. In all these formulations is inherent Reich's concept of the "common functioning principles". The orgone energy ocean represents a unitary picture composed of many minor streams all functioning according to this common functioning principle denoting their common origin. Reich saw all this in the movements, among other things, of the planets, the earth and the aurora borealis, and in the emergence of hurricanes.

Discovery of effective countermeasures to atomic radiation

The fears of atomic radiation which gripped the world in 1951 made Reich examine the postulate that orgone radiation may be a protection against atomic radiation. The "Oranur experiment" yielded the fact that orgone energy could give protection in a most dramatic manner. But it resulted in much more. The effects set up through the experiment long continued to influence the life and work of Reich and co-workers directly and dangerously. The Oranur experiment was instigated by placing radium in an orgone accumulator. The effects, which were shown to be the reactions of the orgone energy and not those of the other radiation, were tremendously strong, killing experimental mice by the score and affecting the lives of the human experimenters. The continuing chain reactions forced the dismantling of much apparatus and evacuation of the premises. Rapidly disintegrating granite and premature signs of spring in the district of the experiment confirmed the far-reaching forces involved. A method of discharging the dangerously active clouds which had formed over the area was invented. "DOR" as the extreme reaction of orgone energy was called (D standing for death) arose out of the antithesis of orgone and nuclear radiation. The former lost its beneficial effect and turned into a killing phenomenon, just as, illustrating the common functioning principle in nature, love in fighting degenerates into hate, bions fighting T-bacilli themselves change into T-bodies. The unity of Reich's work corresponds to the unity in nature.

The techniques of discharging DOR clouds led to methods of weather control. Rain and dryness have been created at will and hurricanes diverted, unbelievably, but under difficult conditions, without chemical seeding or similar aids. As if all this were not enough, in his last two years Reich's understanding of gravity led him to some of the most fruitful suggestions regarding the nature of flying-saucer phenomena.

The new scientific method

Orgonomic Functionalism is the scientific method of orgonomy and, as it is crucial to its success in penetrating where other orthodox sciences have failed, a summary of its tenets is attempted: All phenomena are investigated as functions of cosmic orgone energy which gives them identity. The basic tool of investigation is the basic sense-perception of the investigator, basic to his five

senses. The common-functioning principles are borne in mind, considering every part as functioning within a whole, in a meaningful manner. A special instance of this is the consideration of the research worker's personality within the work. That is to say, the subjective element, which hitherto has always been discounted by science, is used in a positive manner for the first time.

Many of the grave limitations of orthodox science can be overcome by orgonomic functionalism. For instance, it can go beyond electrical theories of thunderstorms, to take into account the tremendous biological effect that can be observed in plants and animals, and whereas comparisons of foods are usually made on the basis of calories and vitamins alone, freshness, flavour and preparation can now be considered.

The typical end of a genius

Reich's work was cut short by a remarkable series of happenings: while he never got any great financial benefit out of his work and always stressed clearly the failures in the treatments with orgone when medically used, as well as the successes, the Federal Drug Agency of the United States tried for many years, from dubious sources and in odd ways, to get evidence against his activities. The whole thing does not make sense unless one assumes that Reich's medical discoveries, like those of others in the States who responsibly and successfully carried on unorthodox healing, and who were persecuted by the same agency in the same way, unnerved some interested parties, notably perhaps the highly organized orthodox doctors, or the manufacturers of chemical drugs. Whatever the hidden and ulterior motives, the Wilhelm Reich Foundation and Reich, who, commercially speaking, were selling next to nothing and were obviously not working on a profit basis, were, by an injunction of a district court enjoined to submit to the following incredible orders: 1. To destroy all the orgone accumulators. 2. To sell no more copies of Reich's ten major books (many world renowned). 3. To burn all scientific literature dealing, however marginally, with the orgone accumulator, or the word "orgone". 4. To disseminate in no way whatever any information to anyone regarding the construction of orgone accumulators and all else appertaining.

Reich thought that the injunction was ludicrous and that one could not dispute scientific discoveries in a court of law, so, instead of appearing in court, he wrote to the judge, wisely or

unwisely, to that effect. Reich seemed at first to have been right. The injunction, although legalized, was not enforced and the judge showed some embarrassment when protests poured in from many parts of the world. After more than a year, suddenly, out of the blue, the Federal Drug Agency acted again, and, giving ludicrous evidence that the injunction had been disobeyed, had Reich summoned to court once more. Again he wrote and said that, as he had informed the court all the time of his activities, and as he still thought the matter did not come under the jurisdiction of a court of law, he hoped the case would be taken out of court. But this time he was arrested, put into handcuffs, and accused of criminal contempt of court. The books were burnt; Reich, found guilty, was sentenced to two years' imprisonment and a fine of ten thousand dollars, and the director of the Wilhelm Reich foundation, Michael Silvert, M.D., was sentenced to one year's imprisonment on a similar count. Reich died after nine months in jail. Dr. Silvert has committed suicide since being released from jail. The first three numbers of *Orgonomic Medicine* and the bi-monthly journal *Orgonomic Functionalism* which we ourselves publish are all that remain of orgonomic literature for the world.

The original injunction is the key to the understanding of this incredible story. It is crystal clear that the extreme suppression of Reich's work was unrelated to the sole "crime" he was accused of in the injunction, i.e. "falsely labelling the orgone accumulator"! The orgone accumulator was not even commercially distributed, advertised or available. It could only be obtained directly from the Wilhelm Reich Foundation, a non-profit making organization, if one signed forms to say it would only be used as recommended by the Foundation and that, for research purposes, results would be reported. Furthermore, as full instructions of how an accumulator could be made very simply and cheaply were available to all, and as there was no patent of any sort on it, it is idiotic to accuse anyone of having tried to "falsely label" it for commercial purposes. The number of accumulators involved was, in any case, ridiculously small. The Foundation had among its members many M.D.'s and other people of high repute from a number of countries.

The persecution and the death of Reich were treated by the Press with a strange silence. It was almost like a conspiracy of silence, but the asonishing collection of discoveries must have put off many a timid editor. A letter of protest signed by

Professors Sprott and de Pinto, Sir Herbert Read, A. S. Neill, Robert Furneaux Jordan and myself (Paul Ritter) was sent to, and rejected by, all the major and more liberal papers of Great Britain, including the *New Statesman*, which had reviewed the books now doomed to be burnt, the *Observer*, which had received from others at least twenty similar letters of protest and ignored the lot, the *Manchester Guardian*, the *Sunday Times* and the *Daily Telegraph*. Similarly, the news of the death of Reich was recorded only briefly in three British large circulation papers. Two of the reports were the result of an incorrect news-release, and the third paper, *The Times*, had to be reminded by a member of the public that Reich had died and that they should publish an obituary. Some days after this the American Consulate again showed an odd attitude to the case: it refused to confirm that Reich had died in jail, although the news had appeared in *The Times* and several American papers! Again, as with the persecution, banning and burning of the scientific books, silence in all the liberal papers as they were made aware of what had happened was striking.

Such is the typical fate of a man whose discoveries we consider to be as important as any ever made. From Freud's fruitful origin Reich developed a decisively better understanding of man and his universe, and of the oneness of them, at a time which seems crucial, if not too late. It must be understood that we have condensed thirty years' work and about 10,000 pages of relevant published matter into these few pages. This might be misleading if the gaps are not filled in, and we recommend the study of the books listed in the bibliography.

Has Reich discovered too much?

If at first the magnitude and naïvity of Reich's work make it incredible, laughable, too big to grasp, too odd to credit, it is as well to note that it makes sense seen in the historical context of science and civilization. Each of the discoveries has forerunners in its own fields and a great unification of branches of thought and knowledge and of knowledge and the knower, as created by Reich, meets a demand voiced by many different men of our time: D. H. Lawrence, Lord Samuel, Lewis Mumford, L. L. Whyte, Scott Williamson, Alfred North Whitehead, for instance, though this does not of course mean that they approve of Reich's way of implementing their suggestions.

L. L. Whyte wrote, "The species is passing through a transfor-

mation of such wide implications that it eludes the ordinary sociological interpretations and can only be understood as a biological process." But, when introduced to a unitary science which deals with just this concept, he does not recognize that it comes within his scope.

Lord Samuel emphatically stated the necessity for the discovery of the all-pervading ether postulated by the nineteenth-century scientists; but, when introduced to a well-documented claim that this remarkable discovery had been made, with reasons why the Michelson-Morley disproof of ether, usually taken as final, is not necessarily valid, he is barely interested.

Lewis Mumford heralded the "bio-technic era" and stressed the need for integration and physical love, but it would seem that he did not even read one of Reich's many books properly. The short bibliographical reference to Reich in his book, *The Conduct of Life*, is gravely incorrect and judges and condemns the whole of Reich's work by holding forth on one early and misconstrued aspect of it. He dismisses Reich as merely promising a "sexual panacea", whereas Reich himself specifically warned against this silly misinterpretation of his work.

What is the dictum of those who have bothered to repeat Reich's experiments and to use orgonomic functionalism as a method of research? They vindicate Reich. Many of the experiments, even those thought incredible, have been repeated by us and by others in this country as well as abroad. True, Reich's descriptions often show a lack of familiarity with details of some orthodox sciences which one might expect from one who works, and advances, in so many. But the mistakes are not important ones. They are important only if you want to find in them a reason for discounting the rest of the work. However, the mistakes do not really distract from the work—they make it all the more imperative to look at it with critical sympathy. Orgonomy, a live science, is like all else that is live: to get the best from it it must be approached with sympathy, and opportunely, to create understanding and genuine contact. Otherwise you are wasting your time. You might as well expect a nightingale to sing to order as expect experiments in orgonomy to work uniformly in all weathers for all kinds of people.

For ten years we have used orgonomy, and we think the final vindication of the scientific method is that it was used to improve itself! From Reich's own observation, from our own and from other evidence, we came to the conclusion that his four-beat

formula of tension-charge-discharge-relaxation does not describe fully enough the primary, energetic behaviour of the organism. "Attraction-fusion-liberation" emerged as a fuller description of the basic energy process. The four-beat formula was evolved from observing the orgasm, and it was the same phenomenon which led us to the three-beat formula. The energy process, we felt, could not be fully described in terms of what might be in *one* person, before and after. *Two* people were involved and the crucial aspect of the healthy orgasm was, even according to Reich, the fusion at the climax, an energetic fusion, of course, so that the energy behaviour was, attraction-fusion-liberation, the last denoting the increased capacity, after healthy intercourse, to love, sleep, play or work.

And, as Reich with his four-beat formula found that, in its limited way, it described the behaviour of the living in general, so we have come to the tentative conclusion that attraction-fusion-liberation is a formula which describes usefully and basically the behaviour of all phenomena of whatever kind. The two-ness of anything experienced, the experience and the experienced; the twoness of anything which behaves, because any action implies some sort of a relationship; all these suggest that the formula is meaningful and applicable. In biological phenomena it is perhaps most obvious, and immediately useful, and highly relevant to the bringing-up of children.

The word "attraction" denotes all that which brings the parent and the child together. The baby is at the mother's breast because both mother and baby want it. The mother wants to suckle and give the baby milk, and the baby wants to suck and take the milk. But it is not the giving and taking of milk that is important. The attraction is mutual, that is the crucial thing. Not to have suckling, fusion, means discomfort and pain to mother and child. Similarly, if the suckling is successful, then both will feel pleasure and liberation, the gain in capacity for other activity will be mutual.

Where there are problems, we are concerned with unsuccessful attempts at fusion, subsequent to attraction. If we see the human problems of upbringing in this way, then solutions will not be sought by blaming something in the parents or the children, depending on whose side you take, as is now usual. Seen as a relationship mutually unsuccessful, it will be obvious that both parties are involved and their natures, needs and functions must be understood if the problem is to be solved.

To take a simple example, if a baby shows discomfort and cries while feeding, it is not merely something wrong with the baby. Some may try to blame a tense mother, but then the tenseness of the mother may be due to the crying of the baby. The solution can only be found if we start off with the concept of fusion, that both mother and baby should get pleasure out of breast-feeding. And if they don't, then there is, first of all, something wrong with the relationship. The emotional aspects become crucial, and it is very rarely that it is found that only one of the parties is functioning badly.

As children get older, this attitude obviates blaming them for their "naughtiness" and yourself for your temper. All this evokes guilt, which reduces capacities and is therefore to be avoided. To realize that there is something stopping fusion with the children (and, in our culture, that is the normal effect of the life-negative, outside world) is far better, and tends to bring a deep, mutual sympathy between parents and children. And this can be the initial vital healing attitude when things go wrong. The second step is to try and counteract further the effects of the outside world on both parties. That is in the main the job of the adult, who comprehends so much more intellectually. But while he knows that he *should* feel love to heal the relationship, and to create genuine fusion, it is quite another thing to do so, and it is the less comprehending but more alive and innocent child who often shows the capacity for loving, or at least for evoking love and creating it in the bitter, harassed parent.

The scientific concept of attraction-fusion-liberation shows blame to be a lame attempt to get rid of a problem without solving it oneself. The concept lays at the door of adults and children, that increased understanding which is bound to lead to a greater feeling of responsibility and so an increased capacity for self-regulation. Discovered as a natural principle which applies to the upbringing of children, self-regulation, it must not be forgotten, applies to the behaviour of adults also. The intellect and powers of reasoning merely give the adult wider scope and the word wider meaning. Self-regulation, as the law of energy behaviour in the organism, applies to all the appetites, desires and moral implications of social behaviour, and we are not here concerned with an idealist utopia, but with matters of fact, of feasible, attainable health for individuals and societies.

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Dr. Read's methods, and she writes sadly of the ignorance of the nursing staff, their insistence upon pointless and often harmful routine, the impossibility of relaxing in an atmosphere in which pain was regarded as inevitable and normal, the intense frustration of being forcibly chloroformed when she most wanted to be conscious, the further frustration of having her baby kept from her for hours after the birth and for most of the rest of the time that she was in hospital. She ascribes many of Leonora's emotional difficulties in the next few years to the deep sense of insecurity and frustration which the baby suffered in those first days. Mrs. Ritter insisted on having her other babies at home, but still she had to cope with what she regards as the outmoded and wrong-headed methods of doctors and midwives. Not until the birth of her fourth child was she able to organise things entirely her own way. This birth, with her husband present as in the case of all the home births, was a wonderful experience. The Ritters urge that people should aim beyond the bare physical welfare ("both well") of mother and child.

Perhaps there are arguments against the "natural childbirth" process—and not all parents, it may be objected, are as devoted as the Ritters—but almost everything they say here is extremely convincing, and especially so their insistence upon the importance of the mother's emotional state (and, by corollary, of the baby's).

Chapters follow on breast-feeding, weaning, solid foods, sleep, clothes, toys, cleanliness, excreta and sex-play (the Ritters are strongly critical

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