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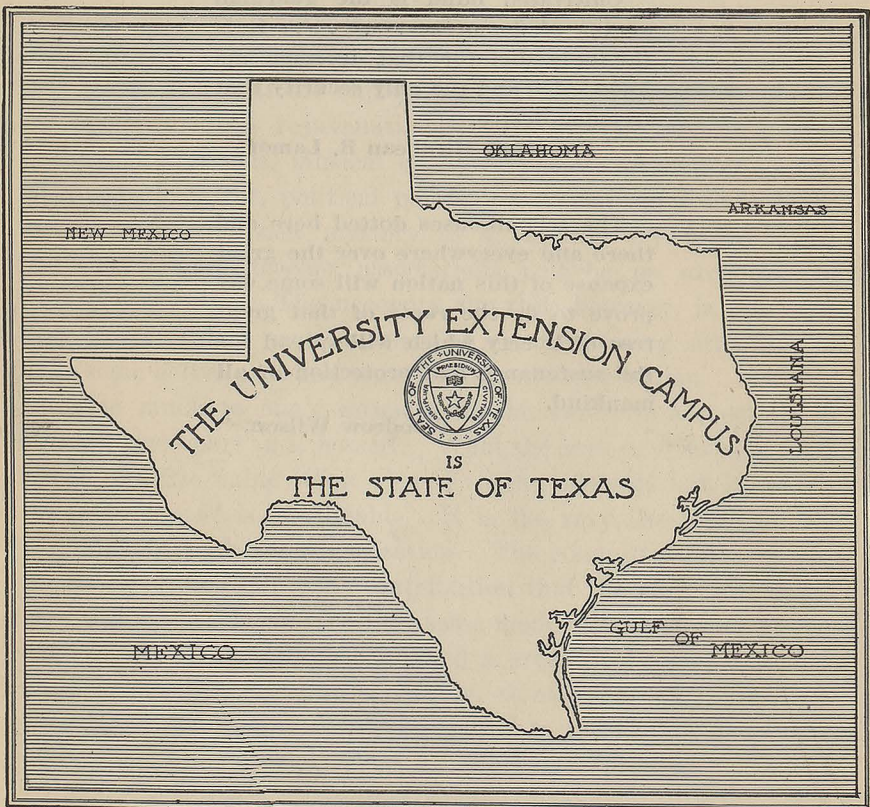
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**STUDY OUTLINES OF ELIZABETH HARRISON'S "CHILD NATURE"**

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**The benefits of education and of useful knowledge, generally diffused through a community, are essential to the preservation of a free government.**

**Sam Houston.**

**Cultivated mind is the guardian genius of democracy. . . . It is the only dictator that freemen acknowledge and the only security that freemen desire.**

**President Mirabeau B. Lamar.**

**The schoolhouses dotted here and there and everywhere over the great expanse of this nation will some day prove to be the roots of that great tree of liberty which will spread for the sustenance and protection of all mankind.**

**Woodrow Wilson.**

# STUDY OUTLINES OF ELIZABETH HARRISON'S "CHILD NATURE"<sup>1</sup>

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## INTRODUCTION

In any organization or proposed organization of parents and teachers there is always the problem of how best to keep up interest after the first burst of enthusiasm has spent its force. In the beginning everyone is rich in suggestions and especially ready to entertain propositions from others but as the novelty of the situation wears away the routine of work becomes a drag and unless some contribution is made to render each meeting distinct in itself there is a mental depression and a loss of interest. When this occurs, one may be sure that decadence has set in and that the end is not far, unless something occurs to bring about a rejuvenation. Churches on such occasions indulge in revivals, musical or literary societies import expensive outside talent, political parties must lead out a dark horse or uncover some new mystery as a rallying cry for renewed activity. Parent-teacher associations will be no exception to this general rule. The necessity for this, however, is rendered less urgent when each member at every meeting attempts to take some active part and make some real contribution. Nothing adds so much to one's estimate of the value of a meeting as to have some part in it herself. What she says or does may have great or little value when viewed in the abstract but its reflex value to herself is inestimable. It is the very life-blood of her relationship with the organization. The committee on arrangements must seek out some contribution that the backward members can make. It may be that some modest little mother at the edge of the community has learned a great deal about teaching children obedience. She, of course, thinks she can't "make a speech," but no pains should be spared to induce her to tell the body what her experience has taught her. What to her seems

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<sup>1</sup>"Study of Child Nature" by Elizabeth Harrison, Chicago Kindergarten College, price \$1.00.

common-place and uninteresting due to her too close contact, will prove enlightening and inspiring to others. It is just such reports rich from life's experiences that will lend dignity and significance to the meetings. It is with a view to stimulating this interest and inspired participation that this text was chosen and the following outline of "lessons" has been arranged. Much of its success or failure depends upon the spirit or purpose in which it is pursued.

The suggestions at the end of each lesson are intended to stimulate observation. One must have the laboratory attitude towards the child and must be willing to estimate facts and experiences at their true value. It is hoped that through these suggestions the habit of observing intelligently the conduct of children will be fostered. Such an attitude is at the foundation of all understanding and proper guidance of children. Many people will walk blindly past a better-baby exhibit with all evidences of being bored with the proceedings, but will stand admiringly before a swine pen. The reason is, that they have the ability and the habit of observation more highly cultivated for swine than they have for babies. Different training would induce different attitudes towards the situations. Let the leader call for a report of the experiences or observations of the past month, and above all let the members be diligent in their efforts to improve their keenness of observation and willingness in bringing reports to the meeting. The last thing in every meeting should be the assignments of the general topics for the next meeting to some three or four to prepare specially upon, and the explanation of the suggestions following the day's work with an admonition that all carry out at least some of the suggestions. All will thus develop this inquiring attitude toward children and especially toward their own children.

#### FINAL COUNSEL OF GREAT WEIGHT

Every mother should keep a life book for each child in which she records the important facts concerning the child. Of course, the mother is tired at the close of the day and very naturally she has not the habit of keeping a diary, but the value of such a record will grow as the years go by and, moreover, will vastly increase the definiteness of the work of this course.

## LESSON I

### SPONTANEOUS ACTIVITY AND ITS GUIDANCE

1. What is the relation between restlessness and physical growth? Pp. 13-14.

2. Describe the finger games. Why do they appeal so strongly to children? Give other games or devices of this character. Pp. 14-19.

3. What are the effects of parental guidance of activity into desirable lines as compared with efforts at the repression of undesirable actions? Pp. 19-29.

4. What are the changes of disposition which come with pubescence and early adolescence? Suggest ways of directing or correcting some of these tendencies. Give concrete experiences. Pp. 29-31.

5. Why should mothers study the line of thought which most attracts their children? Pp. 31-32.

6. "The real inner disposition of the child is neither moral nor immoral, but unmoral. It is made moral or immoral by our attitude towards it in the beginning of its unfoldment." Is the foregoing true? If true, what practical bearing has it for parents and primary teachers?

#### *Suggestions for following month:*

a. Take a note-book and keep a list of the things your children do next week which seems to be spontaneous or not connected with anything they have been taught to do. How do you account for them doing it?

b. Find examples of a child's activity which seems to be motivated more from an inner impulse or desire than from something which has just happened to cause him to think or do the thing.

c. Try the experiments of (a) repressing a child's impulses without suggesting a new line of action; (b) repressing and immediately suggesting some substitute; (c) suggesting a substitute without reference to what the child is at that time doing or wanting to do.

## LESSON II

### SENSE TRAINING

1. Summarize what was said in the last lesson concerning the spontaneous behavior of children and how our attitude affects it.

2. What are the three chief types of advantages to come from sense training? Can you name any particular benefit of importance which would not come under these headings? P. 33.

3. Show how our own pleasure is limited by our failure to perceive what is about us?

4. Show how the habit of observation may be developed out of a habit of contrasting. How may this be overemphasized?

5. How may the morals of a child be affected by training and practice in sense acuity. P. 37.

6. Show how the gratification of the senses is the most universal and dominating force of life. Pp. 39-44.

7. What is the "Tasting Song" and how is it employed? What will be the chief difficulties in using it? Pp. 49-54.

8. Discuss the habits of parents in using confectioneries as bribes, associating a child's sickness with what he has eaten, etc.

9. How should music, especially singing, be used in teaching children to consider others? How will this affect the child's own appreciation of music? Pp. 56-57.

10. "Let them alone  
And they'll come home,  
Wagging their tails behind them."

How would the lesson in this nursery rhyme apply to the matter of training of the senses?

#### *Suggestions for following month:*

a. Report cases wherein a child's tendency to see parts of things rather than to see it as a whole is responsible for his destructive tendencies.

b. Try out the "Tasting Song" as a game and make note in your record book of the results with each child engaged.

c. By directing a child to act out some song or instrumental music see if you can develop any of the enthusiasm for music which he manifests for the "funny page" of the Sunday paper.

## LESSON III

### EMOTIONS AND AFFECTIONS

1. Summarize what was said in last lesson on training the senses. Show how extreme emphasis upon sense training may lead to a wrong attitude in education and in life. Pp. 62-64.
2. Show how the peculiarities of various peoples are expressed in their toys. Pp. 65-70.
3. To what extent has the selection of toys for your children determined their characteristics?
4. How may we avoid wrong standards in selecting toys for children? Pp. 70-74.
5. State the several purposes that toys should serve. If this is true, then what advantages have a few simple, inexpensive dolls over a large number of fine dolls with great variety of dresses and equipment?
6. Show how play activity with toys is a training of the emotions along with the senses.
7. Show how selfishness is developed in children by their parents encouraging certain types of plays and playthings. Show how unselfishness may be developed through plays and playthings. Pp. 75-78.
8. The child's love for mother is more a matter of training than of teaching. How may this training be brought about? Pp. 78-79.
9. What person did you as a child love most, and why did you love this person? What does this show about child nature and about the best method of securing the love and confidence of children in such a way that you may guide them and mold their character?

#### *Suggestions for following month:*

- a. Get two toys for a child. Give one to him as a mark of your own love for him and your desire to please him. Some time later, have him desire the other toy and earn it by his respect and affection for you. (Note the differences in your record book.)

b. Keep detailed record for at least one week of the character of emotions you appeal to in governing your children. How many times do you appeal negatively to fear and how many times positively to respect? Which do you find most effective immediately? Which produces the most desirable habits in the child?

c. Take pieces of ribbon similar sizes and shapes but of different colors and intensities. Place all on a table so that they are equally accessible. Let the child choose the one he thinks prettiest. Aid him to choose the two which go together. (Note the age and sex differences and the difficulties you experienced.)



## LESSON IV

### DEVELOPMENT OF REASON

1. Summarize the thoughts with regard to education through play or playthings that were brought out at the last lesson.

2. Show how the beginnings of reason and of higher thought are found in nursery stories. Pp. 90-93.

3. Many stories begin with such expressions as: "Once upon a time," "A long time ago," "On the other side of the hill," "At the end of the rainbow," "At the end of the road." What is the effect of these expressions upon the child? Pp. 93-95.

4. "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it." Can you explain the apparent exceptions to this?

5. How do kindergarten activities of drawing, sewing, building, etc., develop the reasoning power? Pp. 99-101.

6. The sense of continuity helps the child to explain suffering, fits of temper, etc. What would be the effect if this were over-emphasized? P. 103.

7. What should guide the mother in selecting reading matter? P. 105.

8. What science may be taught the child and how may it be presented? Pp. 105-108.

9. How may a mother best prepare her child to meet all conditions in life? Pp. 110-113.

10. What things do teachers do that cause children to quit using their reason to some extent and depend instead upon their memory? What things do parents do that cause children not to trust their own powers of reason and not try to use this power?

11. How may the school and the home co-operate in developing the capacity for reasoning in the minds of the children from earliest infancy?

#### *Suggestions for following month:*

a. Try for a time letting your child do whatever he wants to do, provided he can give a good reason for doing it. Just

because he wants to may be appetite, passion, or habit. See that he offers a valid reason. What are the effects of this upon the child's general attitude toward his surroundings?

b. Observe yourself to see if your child is required to act from blind obedience or from an appreciation of the justice of your commands or requests. Distinguish between your appreciation of the reason and his appreciation of the reason.

c. Make a list of the punishments you have inflicted wherein the trouble was with the child having no reason for his act rather than with his having a wrong motive. Was the punishment justified?

## LESSON V

### JUSTICE AND PUNISHMENTS

1. Summarize what was learned at the last lesson about the ways in which our children's capacity to reason is injured or is developed by us.

2. Tell the story to show what the true office of punishment is and how it should be administered. Pp. 113-118.

3. To what extent should the child be allowed to suffer the consequence of his own misdeeds? Pp. 118-122.

4. Does the mother or the teacher have better opportunities to teach justice and injustice? How does Miss Harrison suggest that this be done? Is her view correct? How have you yourself done it? Pp. 122-126.

5. What are the effects of placing too great temptation before a child? Pp. 127-130.

6. What are the effects of using bribes and rewards to secure good conduct? Illustrate some ways in which this is done. How may good conduct be properly rewarded without doing harm to the child? Pp. 128-130.

7. Is it ever proper to arbitrarily compel the child to do a thing in order to break his will? Pp. 130-131.

8. Should a parent never punish a child while either it or the parent is angry? Why?

9. How may we give the child our exalted view of life?

10. What are the objections to the use of corporeal punishment at home? What at school?

11. What other punishments are more effective: (a) in preventing misbehavior; (b) in developing character?

#### *Suggestions for following month:*

a. Arrange the following list of offenses in the order of their seriousness as you have been considering them in your past attitude towards children:

To answer father or mother disrespectfully.

To damage or destroy public property.

To promise one's parents not to go in swimming and then to slip off and go.

- To stay out late at night without one's parents' consent.
  - To steal peaches out of a neighbor's orchard.
  - To pretend to go to church or Sunday school, but instead to go fishing with some "chums."
  - To associate with immoral boys and girls.
  - To run away from home, knowing that it will cause one's parents great distress.
  - To tease, punish, or kill cats and dogs cruelly.
  - To swear.
  - To break a dish and hide the pieces.
  - To tattle on some boy.
  - To tell dirty or vulgar stories.
  - To neglect a younger brother who might be in danger if left alone.
  - To tell a wicked lie about some other boy or girl.
- b. Indicate the age at which you think a child becomes sufficiently responsible to appreciate the justice of punishment for the above offenses.
- c. Suppose your child is one year older than the minimum age of responsibility as you have indicated above. Now what kind of punishment do you think a child should have who commits one of these?

## LESSON VI

### TRAINING THE WILL

1. Summarize what was learned at the last meeting about punishments and rewards.
2. How does the sense of "ought" and "must" arise? Pp. 136-139.
3. How does voluntary obedience differ from other types of obedience? Pp. 139-141.
4. Illustrate from personal experience the use of the alternative situations as a means of punishment. Pp. 141-143.
5. What are the signs which indicate that the child has come to the point at which his individuality must be recognized? Pp. 143-145.
6. What ought parent and teacher do when it is seen that the sense of personal power and personal responsibility in the child lead it to want to choose its own line of work in life? What is the effect of ignoring the child's awakening sense of power and desire to guide his own actions? Does a child develop his will power by exercising it or by submitting his will to that of another?
7. How may we avoid the overdevelopment of individuality into self-consciousness and vanity? Pp. 146-151.
8. How can the special days observed in school serve to give expression to hero-worship?
9. Tell the story of the Five Knights and illustrate how it develops hero characteristics in the child.
10. Show how co-operation and "community" approval will break down the child's obstinacy. Pp. 152-156.
11. How important is it for the parent or teacher to carefully leave open to the child a way of reconciliation towards which he may strive? Can you give a concrete case showing how this was done and another in which it was not done?
12. By drawing illustrations from the boyhood lives of great men, show how what is considered obstinacy in children often

develops into adult characteristics which make these men famous.

*Suggestions for following month:*

a. Keep a record in double entry of the things you do with children which seem to strengthen and those which seem to weaken their will power. Bring that to the meeting and compare it with records made by others.

b. Note and report instances either with your own or other children under your observation wherein weak wills seem to be due to a weakened, untuned, or undeveloped muscular system. What have you done or seen attempted, or what would you recommend in such instances?

c. An educator recently advanced the doctrine that temptation and struggle are indication of disease of will rather than the manifestations of strong will power. Is that the general sentiment of your community? Or, do they admire most the one who stumbles and almost falls but manages to keep himself straight?

## LESSON VII

### RELIGIOUS TRAINING

1. Review what was learned at the last meeting about the training of the will.

2. To what extent does the outward activity of a child mark his inner spiritual life? P. 164.

3. What, according to the author, is the significance of the hand as a mark of character and disposition? Could training in open-handed games develop a spirit of frankness in the child? Pp. 165-169.

4. What is the relation between an "expanded chest" and inner soul conditions? What is the danger of misinterpreting? Pp. 171-174.

5. What are the effects of assumed bodily positions upon spiritual life and character? Pp. 174-176.

6. What forms of activity in the home, school, or church life of the child do you think are artificial and not well adapted to the development of the right inner response in children? Pp. 176-178.

7. How does the inner religious life first begin to show itself? How are these first manifestations affected by the mother's and teacher's attitude towards them? P. 180.

8. How may compulsory attendance at church and Sunday school work great harm? How may attendance be secured without working harm, when the child does not desire to go?

#### *Suggestions for following month:*

a. Have a frank, heart to heart talk with some ten year old boy (or girl) with a view of finding what he in his innermost soul likes and what he dislikes about church and Sunday school. Extreme caution is necessary or the child will not be frank and will consider you as a religious admonisher who slipped in upon him by the back door. Really try to get the child's point of view. It will be not only refreshing but very illuminating.

b. Are your children acquiring a religious habit which they put on and take off with their Sunday clothes or are they really securing an abiding religious interest? Look at the facts and try to answer.

c. Try some of the Bible lessons in the story hour. There are many good stories for this use. What is the difference between this and the usual Sunday school class?

## LESSON VIII

### IMITATION AND TRUE FAITH

1. What general conclusions were reached at the last meeting about religious training?
2. Show how imitation is the child's experimental laboratory in which he seeks to understand his environment. Pp. 183-187.
3. Kindergarten pageant games serve what purpose in child life? Pp. 187-190.
4. To what extent does this pageant acting become a permanent mark of character? Pp. 190-192.
5. How may the child be given a true conception of invisible forces and how may this become a basis of faith in God? Pp. 192-195.
6. Recall stories of your own children's first attempts to explain nature and to infer one thing from another. Pp. 195-197
7. How may the child's random questions on things about him be used to develop reverence and an increased capacity for religion? Pp. 197-199.
8. What is the danger of moralizing on every point? Would it be better to teach the child and allow the subtle force to work unconsciously with him? Pp. 200-203.
9. General review. Let each one bring a list giving the one most helpful thought which she has got from each of the eight lessons. Also let the members give concrete cases in which they have successfully applied an idea learned in the course to the handling of their children.

#### *Suggestions for following years:*

This supposedly completes the course and you are now ready for your commencement. The effort has been to stimulate action on your part throughout the course. If that has been successful, you are amply prepared to begin a line of work which will last you throughout your life, give you great pleasure and insure you rewards for your efforts. This would indeed be a grand and fitting commencement. Without it, our efforts have been in vain. With it, even in the case of one mother, the writer will feel that his efforts have been richly rewarded.



