

Some asked about my trip to Texas. It was through lovely country, over good roads, and nice except for one thing. Miss Thompson came with me to Nashville, Tennessee. After she got out I drove for about four blocks and stopped for a red light on a street car track. My car went dead and would not start. Can you imagine how helpless I felt sitting there and not able to do a thing? The street car motorman got out and called a Negro from the sidewalk to help him and they pushed the car to the curb. I was then able to get it fixed and come on. You may guess that I didn't enjoy any such experience.

You can see from the postcards that Texas is very much like Virginia. We do have less rain and a warmer climate. It rained hard the night that I got to the state and I haven't seen another good rain since. We are still going without coats, even at night.

Yes, I'm having a good time. I'm going to school and I suspect that I'm studying more than any one of you. What do you think?

Yes, I'm planning to be back in Harrisonburg when you get to the sixth grade and shall expect to have at least some of you in my room. Maybe it's because I'm expecting to teach you, but anyway I especially noticed what nice letters you wrote. Of course you will do an even better job in two more years.

I'm always glad when we get something new at Main Street School. I know the halls look better and I hope they don't get a lot of dirty marks on them to spoil them. Enjoy all the new things enough for me, too, please.

Sincerely yours,  
LAVADA RATLIFF

Each child read his own card silently first, and then shared it with the group. One post card showed a picture of a horned toad smoking a cigarette with the following message on the back, "This is the nearest that I can come to sending a horned toad now." Another showed the nine-mile bridge at Fort Worth with the following message on the back, "Isn't this a pretty scene as well as a good bridge?"

On the back of a card showing the huge stadium of the University of Texas was: "Wouldn't you like to see a game here? It's fine if your team wins, but mine didn't."

The children were happy to write letters thanking Miss Ratliff for the letter and post cards. Bill expressed his thanks as follows:

Thank you a lot for sending us the post cards. I think the horned toad is right small to be smoking. We would like to have a horned toad any time you can get it.

The buildings in Texas are larger than the ones in Harrisonburg. If you go to another

baseball game I hope your team will win. I think if you would go on the nine-mile bridge you would feel dizzy.

Jacqueline Dovel brought a big white rabbit to school and we enjoyed it very much and wish you could see it. Its name is the Flemish Giant.

Our pictures didn't turn out so good when we went on the field trip, but we are sending you the best one.

I hope you will and are having a good time. I guess that is all I will say.

Both children and teacher await with pleasure the horned toad they know will come. Until then they simmer in happiness with the spontaneous learning all got through a few trifles.

JANE ELIASON

## HOW DO WE GET CHARACTER?

CHARACTER is not made by one person for another like a garment fitted and sewed. It is wrought out in the processes of growth and learning by every individual for himself. It is the sum total of all his attitudes and habits. His way of behaving at any given moment affords an index to it—the quality or qualities revealed. We cannot bestow character on our children in the home and the school—they must acquire it for themselves. Grown-ups have tried to preach children into virtuous lives or to spank them into being good; but these methods have defeated too often the ends for which they were designed. The child himself with what guidance we can humbly offer must find for himself "the way, the truth and the light,"—he must discover, as he goes along, the art of living.

There has been much discussion and many studies in the last few years to answer the question as to what to do and what not to do in the way of guidance for character development, and although more problems have been unearthed than have been solved, there are a few simple suggestions that may be given, a few rules of the road that are of great importance.

Modern hygiene and the pediatrician have stressed the importance of regularity and system in the life of the infant and small

child. They have pointed out the value of definite times for feeding, sleep, elimination, bathing and play; and the physical and mental well-being of the young child has greatly profited through their teaching. We do have "bigger and better" babies, and to the extent that careful regulation of time continues throughout childhood and youth, we have finer specimens of manhood and womanhood. Another contribution of the pediatrician and the nutritionist is concerning the necessity of pure food, a selection of all the essential food elements, the careful preparation and serving of food to build strong bodies and to secure better emotional and intellectual development.

The present emphasis upon housing has brought to our attention the need of wholesome environment from a new angle. All the specialists interested in the care of the young child have pointed out the desirability of a clean, sanitary environment with good lighting and heating, with furnishing and equipment of a size and character contributing to independent living and happy activity. Regularity in taking care of the functions of the body, the right food and good housing do provide the foundation in a healthy body and mentality for the acquiring of all other habits and attitudes, and are the first essentials, therefore, in developing character.

Purposeful activity is the keynote of modern education and there is no goal of development in which it is more essential than for character forming. In purposeful activity a child learns to be physically independent, to be useful, to think for himself, to solve problems, to complete what he undertakes, to be accurate and dependable, provided, of course, that wise guidance is supplied when needed. When the activity is engaged in for social ends or in working with his fellows, he may acquire techniques of cooperation, sharing, helpfulness to others, fairness and generosity in taking turns and carrying responsibility. He may learn to appreciate his own abilities and

those of others, to be grateful, to be truthful, and to be honest.

Activity which has a purpose for the child will unavoidably often be creative in character. To find the gifts with which nature has endowed him, and to develop those talents through self-expression, a certain amount of freedom is necessary as well as the tools and skills to make progress possible. Such development often changes a child's total behavior and, as if by a fairy wand, gives his life motive and joy, as when a child finds the musical instrument adapted to his use or discovers that he can make pictures with a brush and paint.

In guiding behavior, the grown-up should not be "too lax or too strict." It is necessary to require obedience in some situations promptly and without question, as in the case of fire or a sudden emergency in crossing the street; but these occasions should be few and the child should have some signal to which he gives instant attention so that he will be prepared in advance for such occasions. In general the opportunity to choose one of two or three enterprises or outlets for energy at a given time should be accorded every child for the best interests of the developing character. Such choice and the bearing of resulting consequences is one of the best ways to secure discrimination and good judgment on the part of a growing child and sportsmanship in facing and accepting such disappointments, deprivations, and temporary failures as may come to him.

For all children a certain amount of responsibility for the group of which they are a part, is advisable whether that group be the family, the class in school or Sunday school, the neighborhood crowd, or the Boy Scout troop. The principle of child participation in making the regulations, in planning the activities and enterprises, and in actually carrying a fair share of the working load, can be safely applied in every group to which a child belongs. Such experience together with some opportunity to

lead is an invaluable aid in becoming responsible, dependable, and alert to the needs of a situation—in short, a good citizen.

Grown-ups can help children acquire character by remembering that one act does not condemn a child, that he may rise from temporary defeat a stronger individual, that he may learn by his mistakes. Confidence in the child, and again confidence, and yet more confidence is needed for successful guidance in this most difficult art. No sitting-in-judgment and no laying-out-the-culprit should be permitted. Admission of mistakes—yes; pointing out needs—certainly; but no condemnation. "I may do the wrong things," said a child of three, "but I'm the right girl." And so are they all, the right girls and boys.

EDNA DEAN BAKER

### IS RADIO DRAMA SIGNIFICANT?

**W**HAT significance has radio drama in our culture? The program in dramatic form ranks second in frequency of those broadcast by American radio stations, music, popular and serious, ranking first. The popularity of soap serials and theater hours indicates the widespread appeal of this form as entertainment. Indeed both educational and commercial broadcasters have accepted wholeheartedly the notion that ideas and sales messages can be conveyed best when cast in play form. What attitude is the discriminating listener to take toward this type of program? Is he to deplore this as a pandering to the debased taste of the mass public?

Of course, all programs in dramatic form cannot be lumped together for praise or blame. They vary tremendously from one to another in form itself. Some, for example, are serials which follow a stereotyped pattern. They begin each episode by

extricating the characters from a crisis set up in the previous program and carry them steadily onward to another crisis at the end of the episode. To the listener who follows breathlessly from day to day, life appears to be a precarious existence amidst a succession of horrible incidents. On the other hand, another series consists of individual plays adapted for radio, each following more or less the accepted conventions of drama. The continuity from one program to another is provided by the master of ceremonies, who introduces the guest stars and works in a testimonial for the advertised product.

Again, programs are vastly different in the significance of their content. One drama may plunge the listener into a harrowing world of make-believe, taking him as far as possible from the realities of his everyday existence. Another may make him aware of the poverty in the next block and its significance to the welfare of his community. The content may promote escape, or it may develop a heightened sensitivity to social, economic, and political problems.

The purposes for which radio dramas are broadcast also differ greatly from one program to another. An educational broadcaster, intent on "getting over" to school children important information, may put these facts into conversational form, believing that thus the facts will be better remembered. Another may be more concerned with the shaping of attitudes and utilize drama because in its semblance of reality it catches up its listeners so that they respond emotionally as well as intellectually. An advertiser may be concerned only that he hold his listeners steadily from day to day so that his sales messages may be heard. The most fantastic melodrama may be utilized like a drug, so that the listeners will be unable to "leave it alone." Another merchant may take a long-time view and seek, over a period of several years, to build good will for his product by presenting high-type dramatic entertainment in the be-

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