

PSYCHOLOGY

Children From Happy Homes Have Less Trouble in School

Swearing and Raging, Imitation, Disgust, Irritability And Quarreling Reflect Marital Difficulties

MARITAL difficulties in the home have a bad effect on the emotional stability of the child and his behavior both in and out of school, Dr. Ira S. Wile, psychiatrist of New York told an audience at the New School of Social Research.

Children coming from homes with a minimum of marital friction are the most stable emotionally, he said. "As the whole child goes to school, his behavior naturally reflects to some extent the home and the parents, their training and guidance as well as the emotional balance in the home that makes for familial equilibrium."

Children's behavior in school is not, however, a reliable index to the amount of family disturbance, Dr. Wile stated.

"Even the rising divorce rate is not a reliable index of marital difficulties that affect children, because divorces are most common when no children exist," he said.

"Parental disharmony constitutes an important factor in juvenile misbehaviors to the extent of perhaps 10 to 15 per cent. if one may judge by the experience of Child Guidance Clinics. One may properly ask, however, whether perhaps an equal amount of disharmony does not exist in homes from which no children are brought to the clinics."

Dr. Wile described several ways in which marital difficulties may affect the behavior of children in school.

The child is imitative; he may swear and rage as one of his parents does.

He may show effects of the general situation by attitudes of disgust, weepiness, irritability, reverie and hysteria.

He may participate in the quarrel by taking sides with one parent and offering a form of progressive disobedience with defiance, loud and vociferous language.

Or he may capitalize the parental disharmony by playing one parent against the other for his own benefit, and may carry this behavior over into the classroom.

"Personal maladjustment following marital disharmony as noted in school may be marked by hyperactivity, inferi-

ority, fearfulness, reverie, mental conflict, emotional instability, sensitivity, self-consciousness, seclusiveness. The direct behavior symptoms which may disturb the school vary from inattention, easy distractibility, irregularity in various branches, school failure with retardation, to disobedience, tantrums, exhibitionism, fighting, bullying, the use of obscene language and swearing, and at times may be evident as chronic lying and stealing, and even truancy itself."

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GEOPHYSICS

Ocean Sediments Have High Radium Content

RADIUM is more abundant in the sediments of the deep ocean bottom than it is in land rocks. The deep sediments have more than four times as great radium content as the granitic rocks on land, and more than ten times as much as land basalts. The deeper the sediments, and the farther they are from shore, the greater their radioactivity.

These are among the facts laid before the American Geophysical Union by Dr. Charles S. Piggot of the Carnegie Institution of Washington.

The samples of ocean-bottom sediments analyzed for radioactive elements are not at all numerous as compared with the land rock and earth samples similarly examined, Dr. Piggot says; but in so far as any generalizations can be made, the facts are as he stated.

This accumulation of more highly radioactive deposits in the deepest and most remote places in the ocean may be having an appreciable effect on the course of the earth's geological history, he said. For one thing, such deposits can well act as blankets to slow down the escape of the internal heat-energy of the earth.

A number of theories of probable sources of these radioactive deposits were examined and discarded by Dr. Piggot. He does not believe that they have been concentrated by living organisms and deposited by the down-sifting of their skeletons after they have died. While some organic sediments have high radium contents, he said, on the average the non-organic red clay sediments are three times as radioactive. Neither is the theory of submarine volcanism, with intense chemical action where water and hot magma are in contact, any more tenable, he thinks. Such action would be more or less "spotty" in its effects, whereas radioactive sediments are found everywhere.

Recognizing that much research yet remains to be done on the question, Dr. Piggot inclines to the belief that the origin of the radioactive content ocean-bottom sediments is to be sought directly in the rocks of the earth's crust. These are worn or broken down into the fine particles that eventually settle on the bottom of the sea.

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PHYSIOLOGY

New Evidence to Show That Nerves Secrete Hormones

NERVES achieve their effects by means of special hormones which they produce, instead of by direct action on muscles and glands.

This is the latest theory of physiologists. Further evidence in support of it was presented by Dr. B. P. Babkin and his associates, Drs. Armine Alley and George W. Stavray, of McGill University, to the Royal Society of Canada.

These investigators found that, under certain conditions, stimulating the nerve

of the salivary gland on one side of the mouth produced increased activity and secretion by the salivary gland on the other side. Under the conditions of their experiment, there could be no direct nervous connection between the two glands. This strongly indicates that the nerve itself produces a hormone which acts on the secretory cells of the corresponding gland and reaches the opposite gland by the blood stream.

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