

PHYSICAL EDUCATION
IN THE PRIMARY SCHOOL
PART ONE

MOVING AND GROWING

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THE ILLUSTRATIONS

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CHAPTER ONE

MOVING AND GROWING

SECTION I

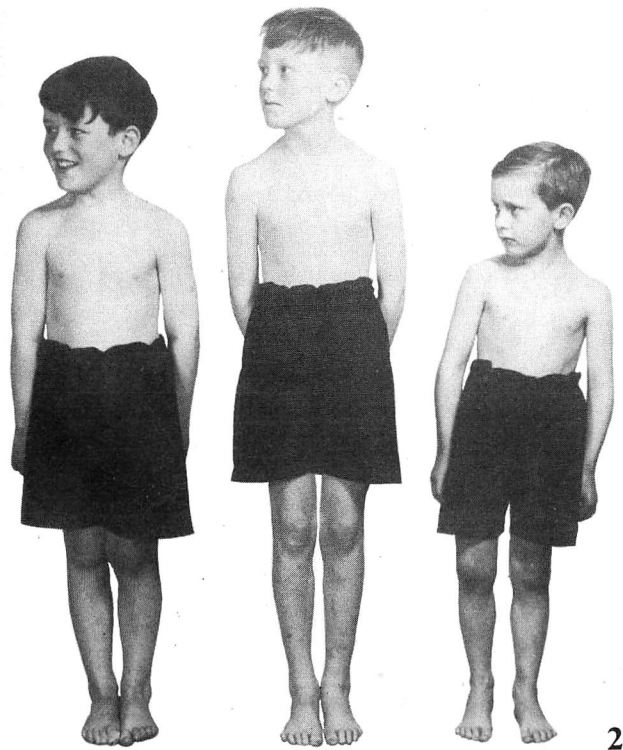
ONE OF THE LANDMARKS in the life of every child is the day when, for the first time, he stands up and walks. It is a day eagerly awaited by his parents, who look upon the event, quite rightly, as a sure sign of all-round development. If the occurrence is delayed, there is concern lest this should signify retardation; if precocity is shown, there is pride in a 'forward' child. Later, when the child begins to speak, the spoken word, rather than movement, is regarded as a sign of development. This is partly because the development of language is in itself significant, and partly because most adults use and understand words more readily than they use and understand movement. Yet for the child movement continues to be both a means of growth and development, and a result of these processes. The study of movement is therefore of importance to adults who want to observe and understand children.

Although most of us are more at home with words, we are accustomed to observe movement from day to day and to regard it as significant; we recognize mood, and may even judge character mainly through movement. In describing a person's walk as 'characteristic', we are less concerned with pace or length of stride than with the quality of his movement, in which we discern something of the quality of his personality; we use such words as 'fussy', 'self-important', 'easy-going', 'restless', 'gracious'. We may be inaccurate interpreters, but we are right to recognize that movement is not simply an affair of strong muscles and supple joints, but part and parcel of personality. In



the adult, poise is admired as a sign of maturity, gracelessness deplored as suggesting lack of integration. There is an indication here that growth is not merely a matter of increase in height and weight, but a complex process which cannot merely be weighed and measured. It suggests, too, that movement may be both a means towards, and a reflection of, maturity.

For many years now teachers have been accustomed to judge children's development by their drawings and paintings, taking into account the arrangement of forms in space, the choice and use of colour, variety, repetition, proportion, and imaginative quality, thus

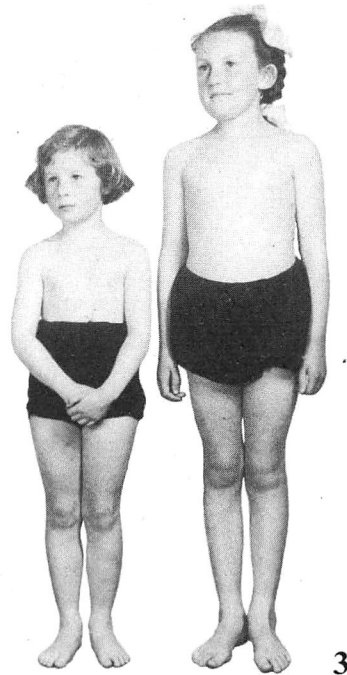


7 years

2

amplifying the information given by such facts as age, intelligence quotient, and the results of various tests. Information about the development of children may also be obtained by observing their movements, which often reflect immaturity or precocity, steadiness or hastiness, lethargy or resilience.

An inexpert crowd or audience watching a team of first-class players, athletes or gymnasts is surprisingly quick in discriminating, even at this level, between those who are good and those who are superb performers. Judgment is quite as much in terms of quality—style—as in the number of boundaries hit, or the height cleared. Individually the members of such a crowd may be poor performers, but they may become, through continued and vivid interest, expert observers.



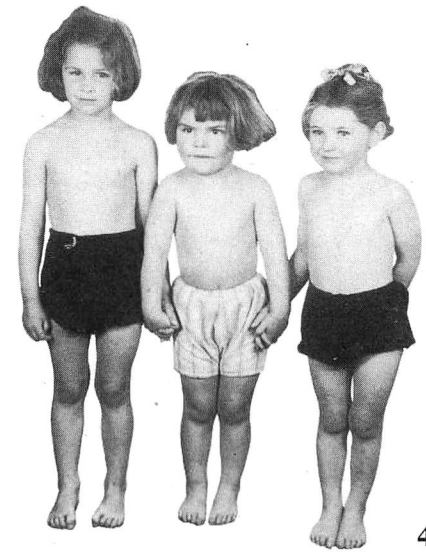
7 years

3

FACTORS WHICH AFFECT THE DEVELOPMENT OF MOVEMENT

INHERITED CHARACTERISTICS

There are certain inborn characteristics, such as a tendency towards tallness or shortness, a tendency towards a certain build and towards certain qualities of temperament. We all know what we mean by a 'family likeness', and when we use this term we are really referring to those qualities which are inherited. Although family likenesses obviously exist, it is useful to remind ourselves of the very great variety to be seen in children. For example, it is true to say that children at the age of four tend to be chubby, while at seven they tend to be comparatively skinny. But look at the differences in build shown in these children of the same age and in the same class at school (2, 3, 4).



4 years

4



Even if we take such a limited characteristic as height there is, as we can see, great variation. This is commonly realized at adolescence when a period of rapid growth—which starts up at different ages according to the onset of puberty—makes for obvious variety. At the primary stage, when there is a greater degree of homogeneity, the fact of variation may escape notice.

There are, too, differences between boys and girls of the same age. Here both are climbing a wall (5).

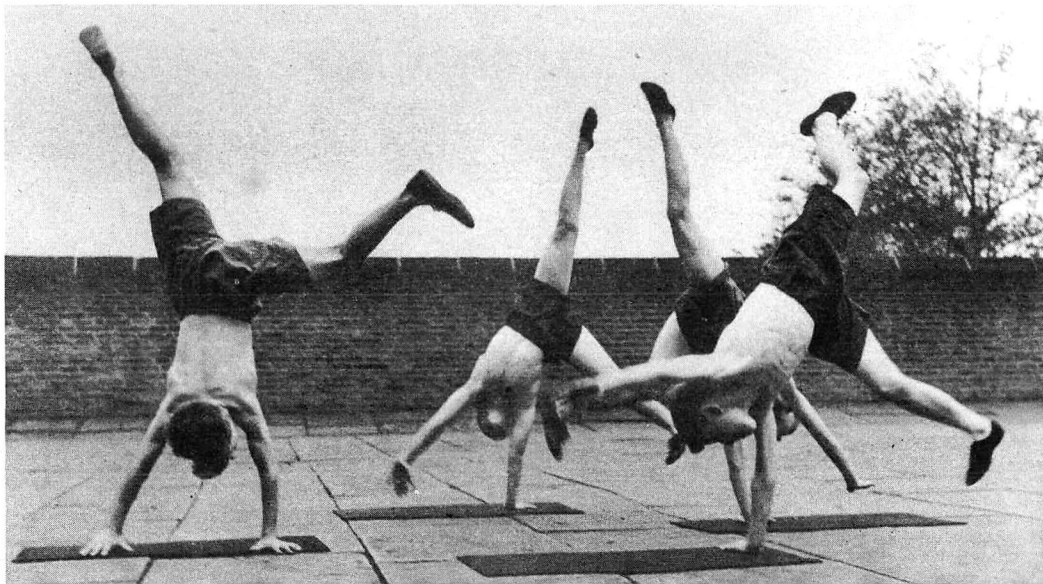
All four children started together, but although the girls are taller than the boys they are not as nimble, partly because their arms and shoulders are less powerful so that they cannot heave themselves up so easily.

Girls tend to excel in feats where momentum matters; boys usually surpass girls where a direct and vigorous application of strength is necessary. Here is something which delights many girls but which boys find more difficult (6).

The girls can be recognized by the better shape of their cartwheels.

Here is something in which a boy seems to be more naturally at home than a girl (7).

5



6

7

Both boys and girls show agility in climbing trees
but they often go about it differently (8, 9).



9

The girl uses momentum to swing herself up ;
the boy, with his stronger shoulder and arm muscles, pulls himself up directly.

8



10

Here are boys and girls skipping (10). The boys are in difficulties.



11

Here a boy and two girls are throwing (11). The girls look awkward.



12

Yet boys learn to skip
and girls to throw
(12, 13).



13

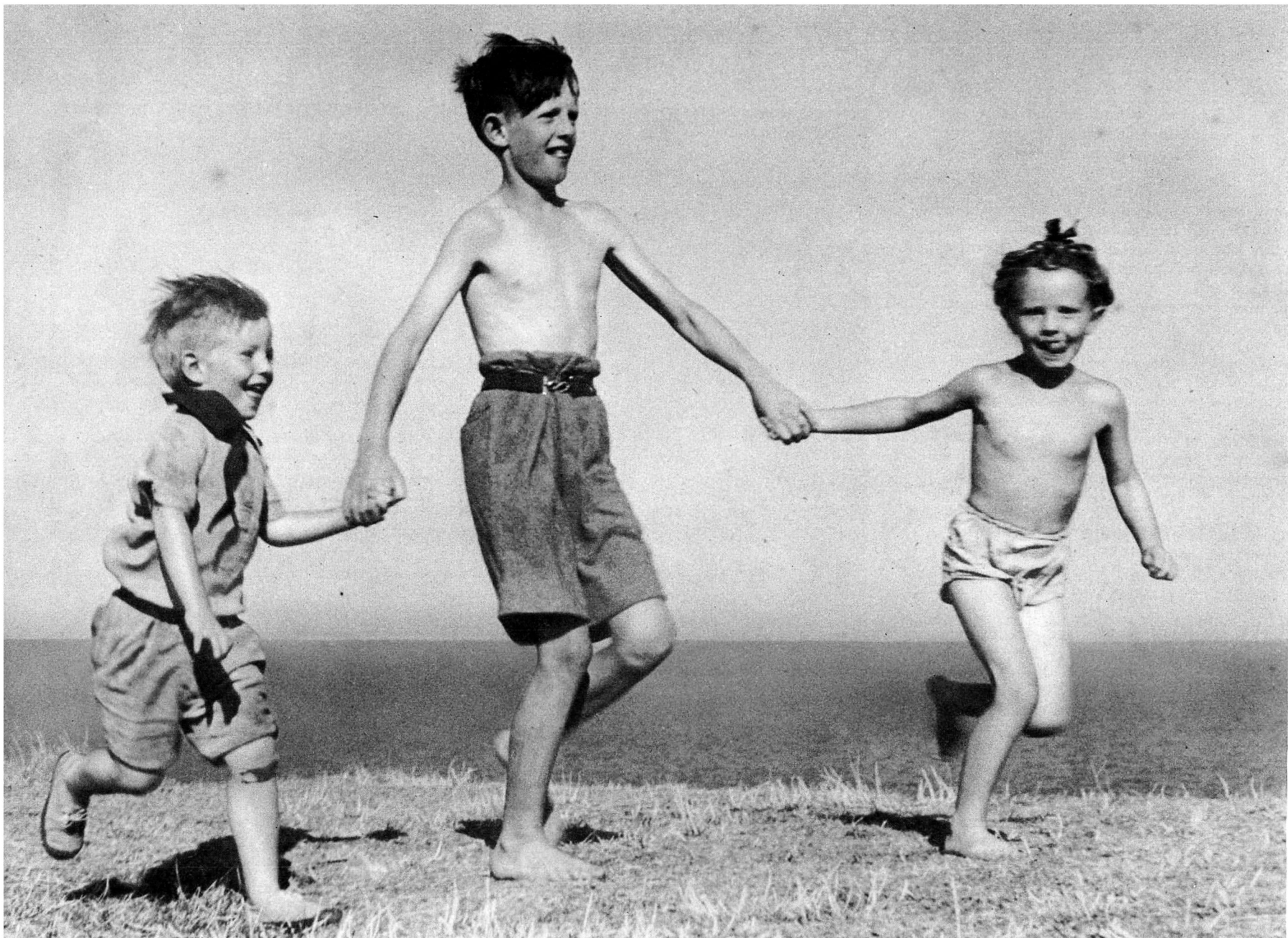
We do not know how far the ability to throw is something inherited by most boys and lacking in most girls, or whether boys throw balls because they are expected to do so and are therefore given balls by their fathers, who frequently play ball with their sons, but less often with their daughters. Neither do we know whether the ability to perform repetitive rhythms, as in skipping, is something belonging to most girls, or how far they are led to skip by being given skipping-ropes and encouraged to use them.

We have seen that the development of movement may be affected by tallness and shortness, by body build, and by sex. These are all patterns of growth which are laid down before birth. There is a further pattern which is regarded as innate—the temperamental pattern. There are very many shades of temperament, but we are familiar with such extremes as lively and placid (14), cheerful and gloomy, and discern them in others by behaviour in which quality of movement is a significant characteristic.

SOME EFFECTS OF ENVIRONMENT

It is misleading to separate heredity and environment because in practice their interplay is so complex that it is difficult to disentangle the genetic and social factors. Children of very short parents tend to be short, but taller than their parents; those of very tall parents tend to be tall, but shorter than their parents. These are inherited trends; but height is also dependent upon nutrition, that is, not only quality and quantity of food, but the capacity of the child to assimilate and make use of the food he eats. It is well known that children who have always enjoyed an adequate diet tend to show a different pattern of growth from those who are less fortunate. It would, however, be possible to feed a child on an adequate diet in terms of quality and







quantity, yet, because this diet was distasteful—unappetizing—the child would fail to assimilate it, and would not be nourished. A starving child is thin because his food intake, both in quantity and quality, is below a certain level, but two children may be fed on the same diet with very different results; one may become fatter and perhaps rather sluggish, while the other continues to be thin and fiercely energetic.

Children living an open-air active life in camp or at the seaside often seem to flourish in every way; their skin and hair change not only in colour, but in texture; their appetite often increases and we say 'their food is doing them good'.

On the opposite page three children are seen at the seaside (15), while on this page the same children are seen in the street (16); the difference in appearance is remarkable.

Either too much or too little clothing may have unfortunate effects. One of the functions of the skin is to regulate the loss of heat from the body, thus playing a part in the series of changes (known as metabolism) which affect the capacity of the child to be nourished by the food he eats. The skin of a constantly over-dressed child is prevented (through being too constantly and too closely covered) from functioning properly, and the child will probably be sluggish and inactive partly because of the encumbrance of his clothes, partly because of a lack of liveliness due to poor metabolism. On the other hand an inadequately dressed child may be drained of vitality, even when adequately fed, because the loss of heat from too rash an exposure of the skin exhausts his resources. Such a child will shiver and huddle, and be restricted in movement.

The younger the child the greater is the surface area of the skin in relation to his bulk; the greater therefore is his need for extra protection, and the more harm will he



17

suffer if exposed unduly to cold and damp

While care and discrimination are necessary in deciding the amount of clothing children should wear (age and state of health as well as climate must be taken into account), it is certain that clothing hampers skill and hinders activity. This fact is recognized by any man who removes his jacket before tackling a job such as hanging a picture or mending a puncture ; and no woman would attempt to knit or sew with her gloves on.

Most children seem to revel in the freedom which results from removing their clothing. A baby at bath-time usually starts to gurgle as his clothes are taken off, and his enjoyment reaches its height as he splashes unhampered

in the water. Babies and children are seldom discontented in their baths, partly because most of them seem to have an inherent pleasure in water, and partly because they enjoy being naked and unhampered.

Both lack of sleep and poor sleep sap vitality and are a source of listlessness. Yawning may be a sign of insufficient sleep, or it may be due to boredom, a stuffy atmosphere, or hunger.

We have considered a few of the many differences which are shown by children, some of them inborn and some arising from environment. Parents and teachers will observe many more and will be interested to discern their source.

STAGES OF GROWTH

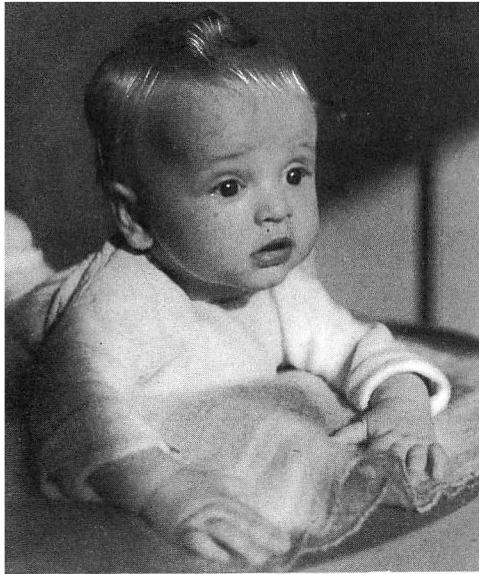
Walking is one of the milestones marking a child's development ; it is interesting to see how, after the first staggering steps, walking develops.

The first thing to notice is that steady continuous walking is not a mode of locomotion adopted naturally by most children. A three-year-old can walk, run, and climb (17), but still crawls, creeps and rolls, sits and squats on the floor (18). A six-year-old is much more nimble, but he still prefers the floor to a chair, and, if you watch him crossing the playground, his progress is marked by hops, skips, jumps, and erratic changes of speed ; it is scarcely ever in terms of steady walking.

The ten-year-old is more likely to run and jump than to walk, and he still enjoys squatting, lying, and rolling on the ground. All these stages are marked by locomotion in terms of fits and starts, not by sustained effort. It is perhaps for this reason that ' going for a walk ' has been detested by many children.

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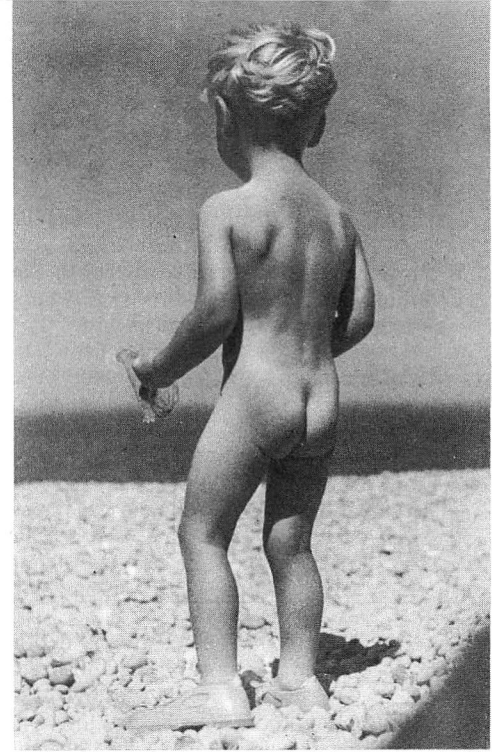
When a baby is born he is capable of gripping and suspending himself from a bar. At four months, when lying in a prone position, he can probably raise not only his head but also his chest and shoulders, taking the weight on his arms (19). At eighteen months he not only supports himself on his legs, but moves with increasing confidence. At three years old, he can walk and run, but he is still more certain as a climber than as a pedestrian. When he stands he keeps himself steady by having his feet apart and his knees bent (20), but he often prefers squatting (21) to standing. He walks and runs with his feet somewhat apart, and effort overflows into his arms so that they are usually carried away from his sides (22). His walk is a patter rather than a stride.

In turning he traverses a curve rather than an angle. When we look at his proportions and remember that he has not been a biped for very long, we find it easy to understand all this. His feet and legs are comparatively short, his trunk is long, and his head is

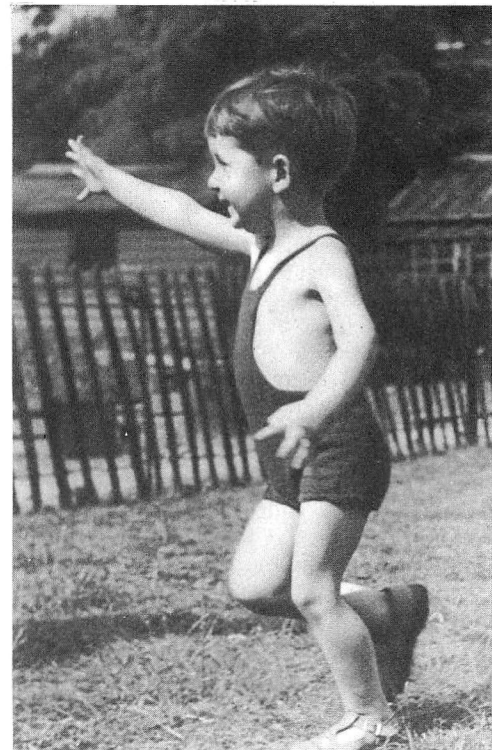


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large; he is, in fact, top-heavy. Much of the world is new; incomprehensible forms confront him; distances are still difficult to judge. Motion in the upright position demands a highly developed sense of touch and of vision, as well as the power of locomotion; indeed at three it seems necessary, in order to understand an experience, to bring every sense to bear on the matter in hand. Seeing is not enough; a child needs, if possible, to touch, to taste, and to hear. Anybody who has held a watch to a child's ear realizes this.



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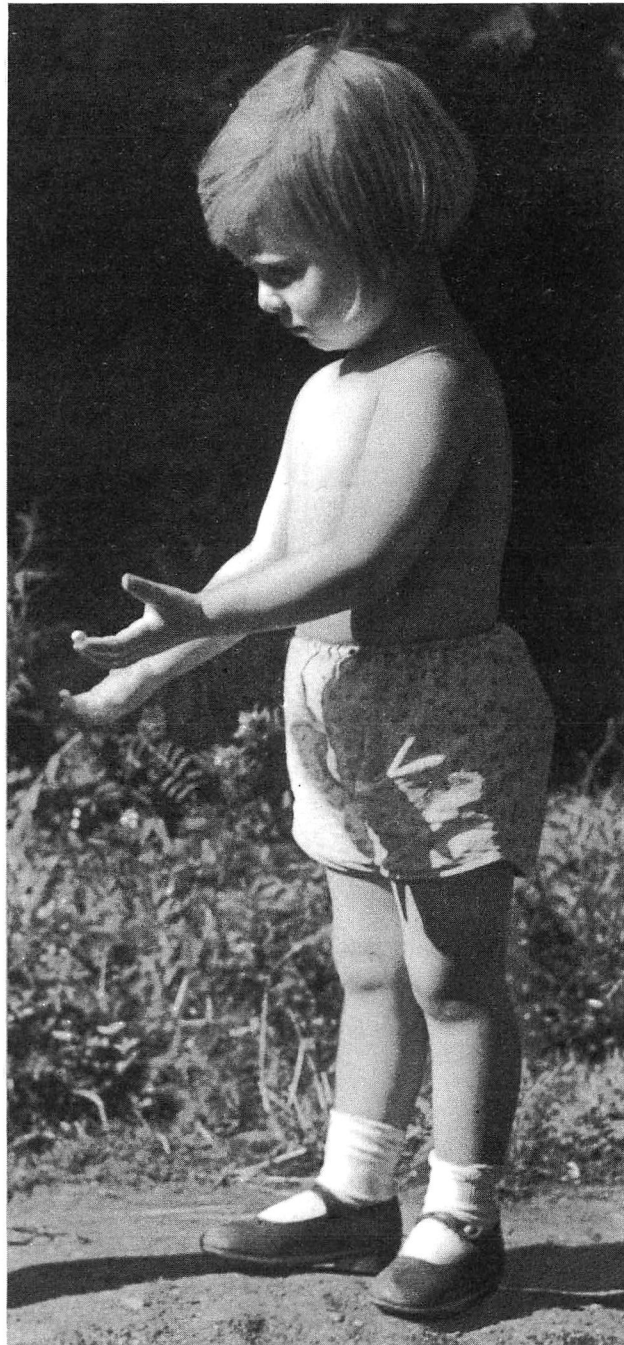


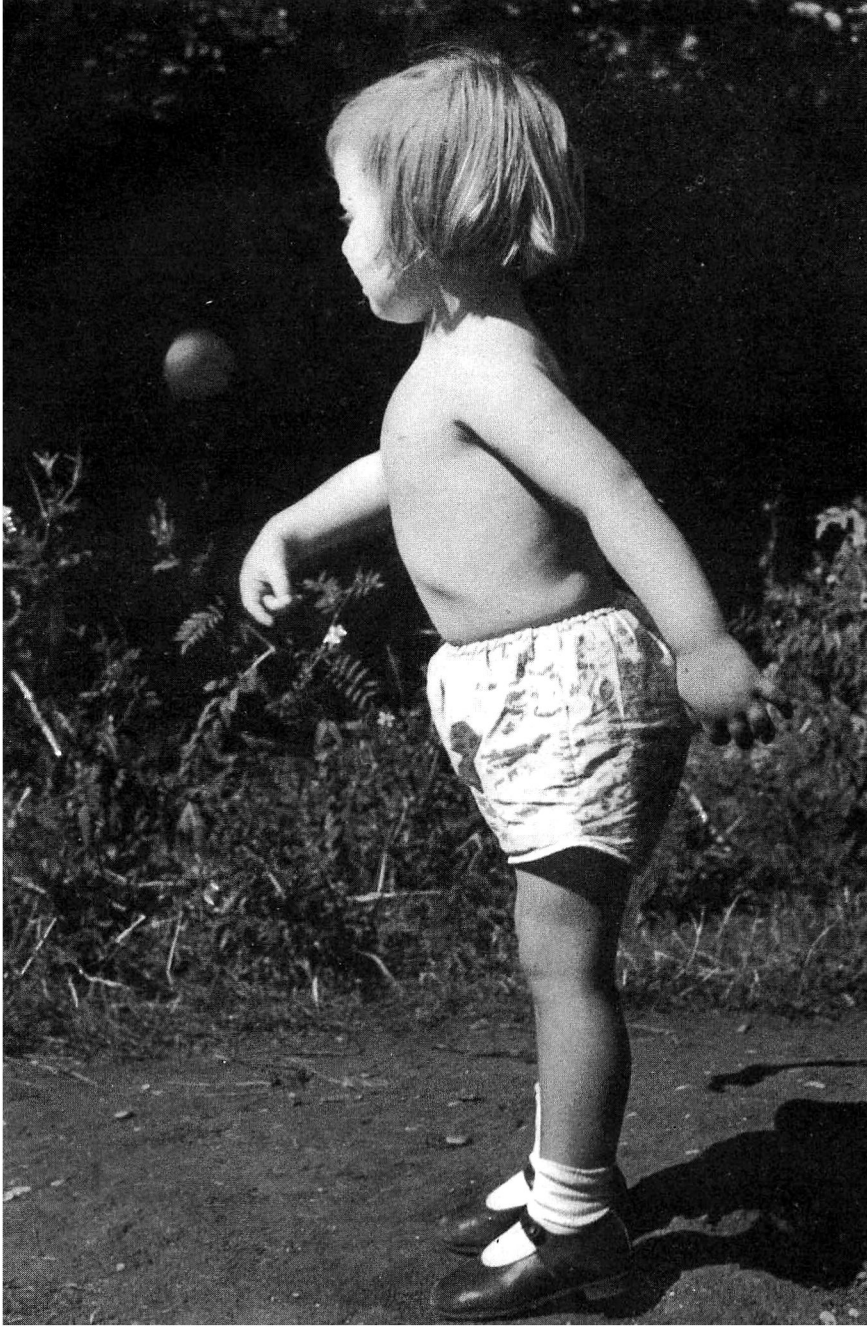
22

We all know that a three-year-old finds great difficulty in catching a ball. This child (23, 24) holds her hands out uncertainly, and fails altogether to come into contact with the ball although it is tossed directly towards her outstretched hands. We also know that it would be foolish to expect a child of this age to thread a needle with a fine thread. We know these things, but perhaps we are only vaguely aware of the reasons behind the facts. At this age the eyes look large because the face grows slowly and, at three years, is still small; while the eyeball, which reaches almost adult size by the age of five years, is big. The eyes look large but they are very far from functioning in a mature way. Binocular vision (which means that the eyes work together, and upon which perception of depth and distance depend) is not fully established; neither can the eyes converge steadily and easily in order to focus on objects close by. So the moving ball is dropped, and the fine task at close range is either not attempted or is quickly abandoned. There is of course the further reason, that the muscular control which is necessary in order to perform movements accurately is only just beginning to develop. A child of three may be able to unbutton, but not button up his clothes; he can probably accomplish the first stage in tying his shoe laces, but is unlikely to be able to make a bow. His lack of dexterity is partly due to the difficulty experienced in releasing objects. Grasping is easy; to let go is more difficult; to let go at the right moment is very difficult indeed. For this reason the tower he builds topples over, and the ball he throws, though it may be propelled in the right direction, is released too late or too early so that it falls beside him—or her (25). He throws from the elbow—'like a girl'—standing square, with little weight behind his throws (26). Kicking a large ball is possible, but kicking on the run is beyond him.

23

24



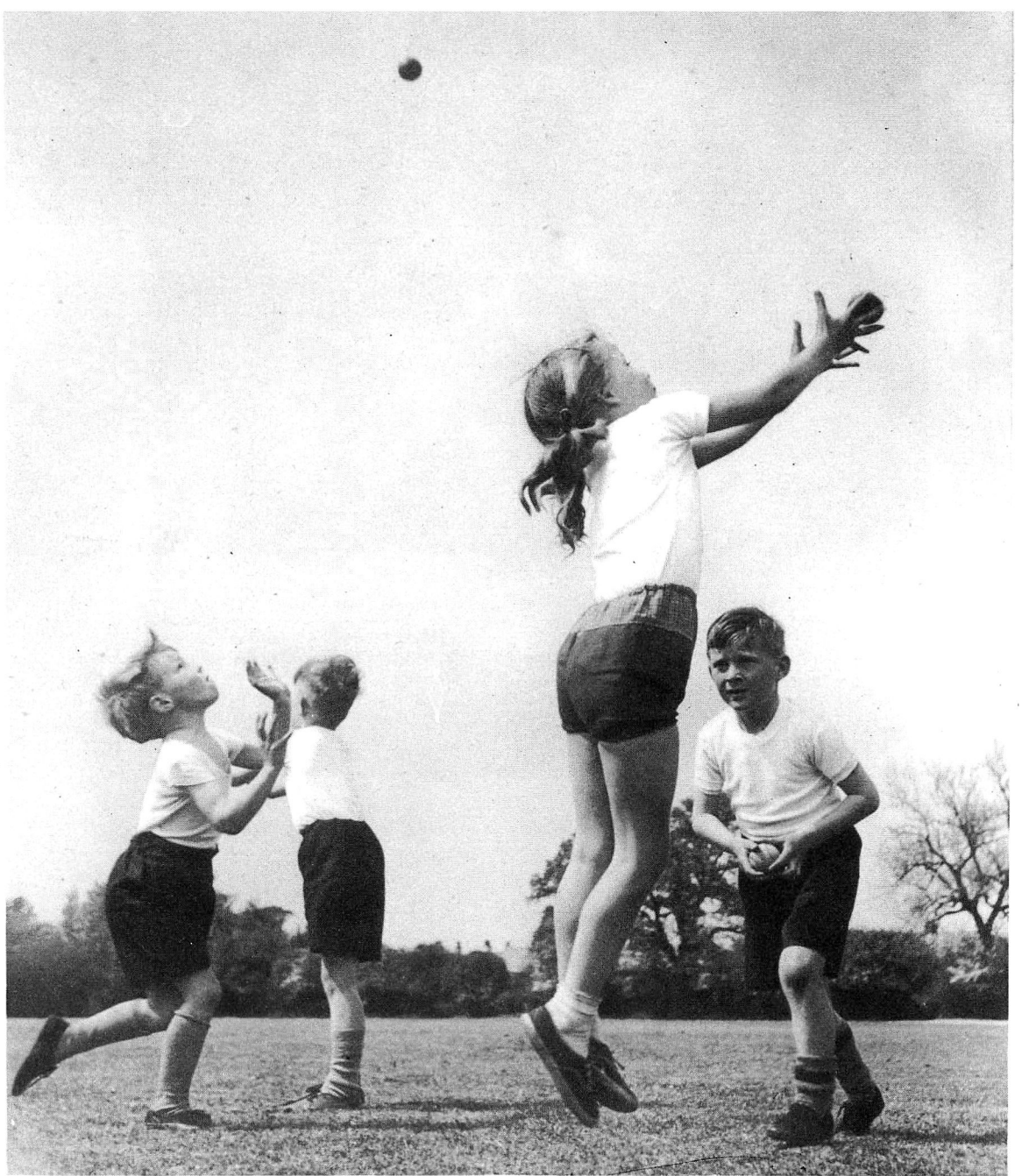


At six we see many differences. Not only is the child taller and heavier, but his proportions have also changed so that his legs are longer, and his head smaller in proportion to the rest of his body. He no longer appears top-heavy and in consequence is altogether nimbler than he was at the age of three.

He can kick a ball on the run though with little accuracy; jump forward over a space, as well as upwards; and turn corners much more acutely than at the age of three. He can throw from behind his shoulder, using his weight to help the ball on its way (27). Vision and the co-ordination of hand and eye have developed so that he readily catches a ball, if he throws it up himself, whether at a stand-still or on the move (28). Two children are, however, unlikely to be able to catch and throw to each other as they run. Standing with the feet together is soon felt as a strain,



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28

and these are some of the attitudes in which children choose to build, paint and read (29, 30, 31).

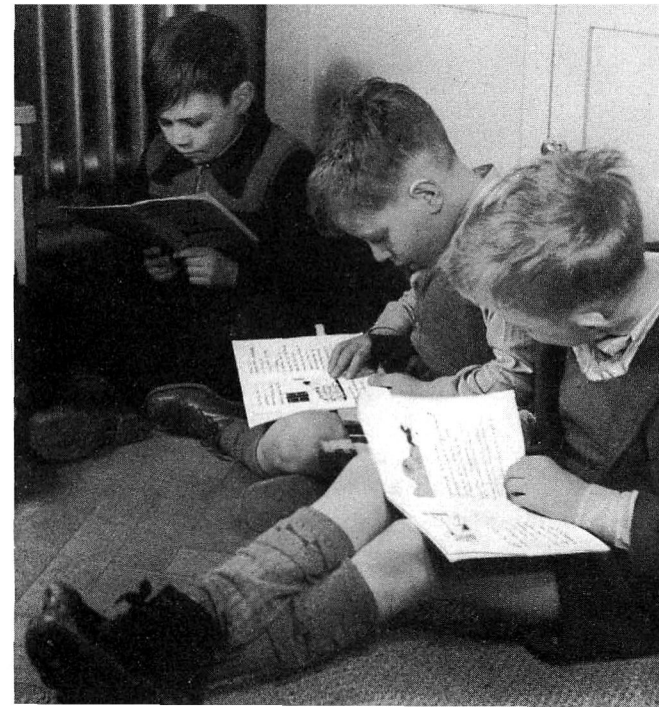
Compared with adults they find it necessary to change position frequently.



29



30



31



32

Many children will enjoy sitting on a donkey or a pony, but few can ride in the accepted sense of the term because their legs are too short to grip the animal. Where there is ice and snow the six-year-olds skate and ski (32), sometimes with astonishing velocity, and tobogganing is very popular. They will scramble in and out of boats, manœuvring and paddling those they can handle. Water is always a source of delight and a few children are ready to swim.

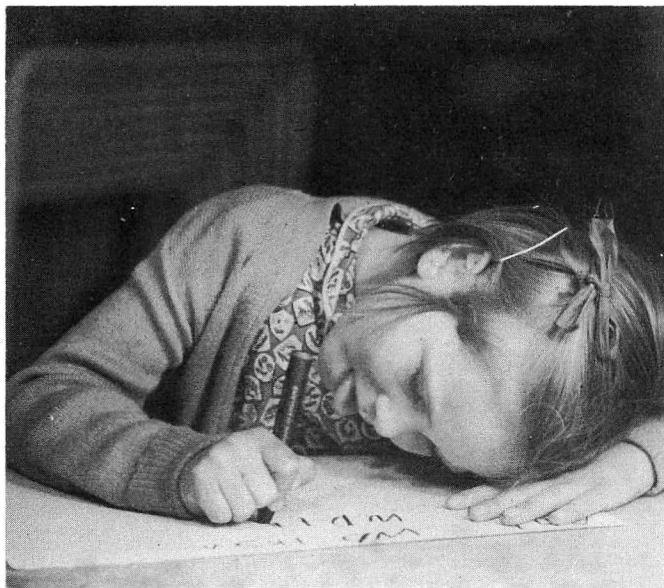
At the end of the sixth year about one-third of the children have normal mature vision. Most of them, as far as vision is concerned, may be expected to read large print of a suitable type; to write with a suitable instrument, such as a thick pencil or crayon, on plain paper (but compare the two six-year-olds in photographs 33 and 34); to thread raffia or wool through a large needle and to make bold stitches. We must, however, remember that the act of accommodating the eyes for near vision requires sustained muscular effort; indeed the muscular effort involved in reading has been compared, in



33

many respects, 'to that required in maintaining the arm aloft for a considerable time'.*

*Report of the Consultative Committee on Infant and Nursery Schools, Appendix II.



34

While the three-year-old climbs readily, he does not usually expose himself on an unguarded height ; the climbing frame suits him very well. At six children climb more boldly, with less need for surrounding supports (35). They will venture out on a limb, and many will walk along the top of a wall with obvious enjoyment (36).

Six-year-olds may play a game together, but the association is a very free one and the group is likely to be small. They have little team sense, whether the game is one with a ball, or the acting out of some idea. This is partly because they have a strong sense of individuality, partly because skills which are necessary for real collaboration are not yet developed.



35



36



37



38



39

Differences between boys and girls are already marked, but, as suggested earlier, it is difficult to decide how far these are due to traditional upbringing, and how far they are innate. Most boys appear to be more exploratory than most girls, girls to be more repetitive than boys; but this may be due to the tradition that 'boys will be boys', with its accompanying toleration of dirty hands (37) and torn clothes, while girls are often expected to engage in activities in which they keep clean and tidy (38).

At ten children are not capable of great feats of strength nor are their powers of endurance developed; but they are probably as nimble as they ever will be, and their appetite for sheer activity is likely to be at its keenest. They are fairly compact in build, and in very few has the rapid growth which marks adolescence become apparent. Walls which once seemed insurmountable, and trees which presented perilous problems, have become uninteresting, and a whole new range of possibilities is within reach.

They leap, race, chase, climb and scramble with great zest (39, 40).



They take up a lot of room and need much space. In between bursts of activity they can abandon themselves to complete relaxation (41).



Ten-year-olds are competitive, but their contests are brief affairs, quickly forgotten. They enjoy winning a race or a game ; they

may even, unless other interests intervene, take pride in collecting points ; but the playing, the climbing, or the leaping matters

much more than winning. When they play a game the group is small, usually with not more than four or five a side.





They are no longer content to be merely transported by a donkey or a pony, they want to ride him (43).

And at ten boys and girls who have had the opportunity may be skilled in horsemanship. Snow is a source of activity and great delight. Pleasure in tobogganing never seems to fail, and the slope which at six seemed mountainous has dwindled into dullness. It is possible for a ten-year-old to be a highly skilled swimmer or skater (very exceptional children may become as good as first-class adults), but virtuosity is quite foreign to the nature and behaviour of most young children, and can only be obtained by the sacrifice of opportunities for other things.

At six, catching, throwing, kicking or hitting on the run was a chancy business, but



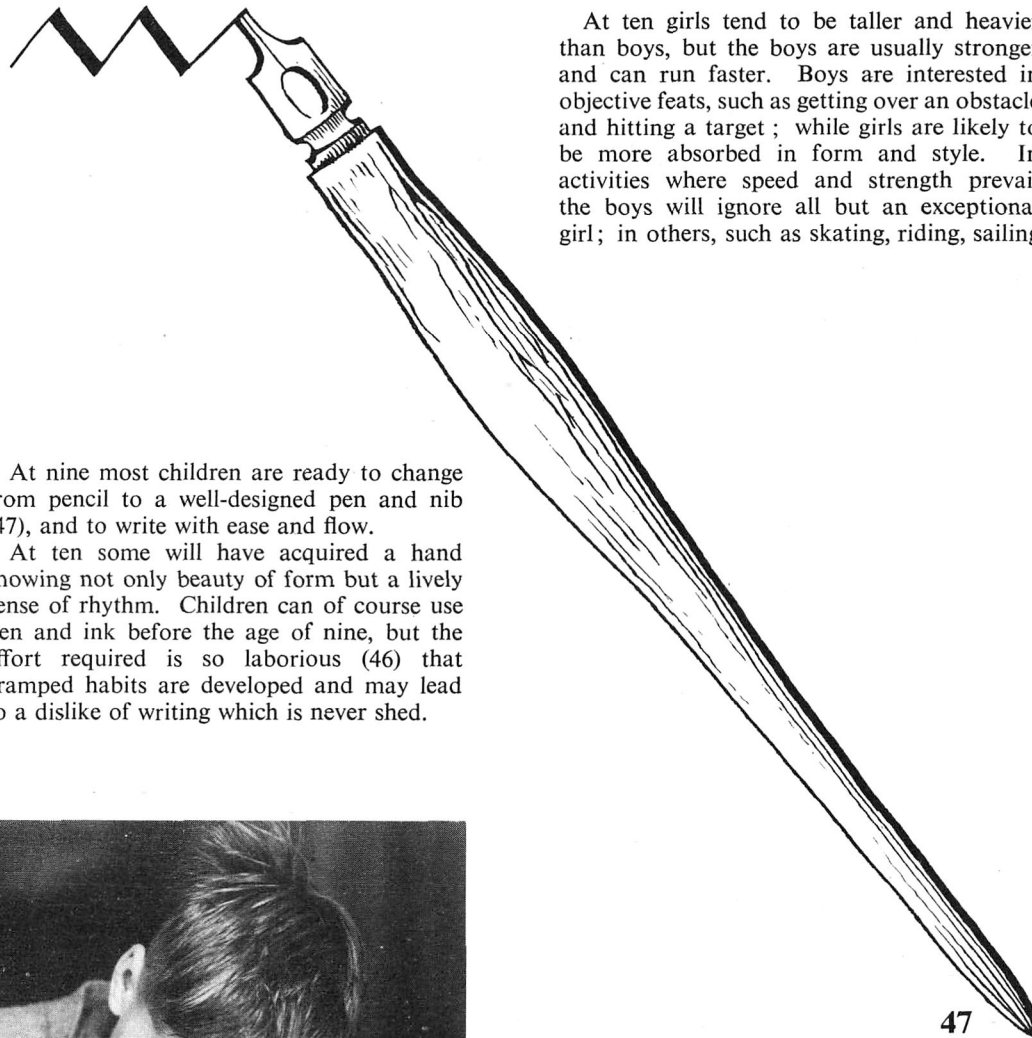
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44

at ten many perform all these feats at speed, and with control. This means that the co-ordination of hand and eye, the thing we refer to as 'timing', has developed very considerably. Two-thirds of the children at this age will have normal mature vision, but many eye defects will have developed and may be a source of mistiming and failure.

Dexterity, which perhaps first shows itself when a baby manages to put a fist into his mouth for the first time, has made great strides. This is shown not only in hitting and catching, but in games such as marbles (44) or conkers, in bowling a hoop or whipping a top, and in an increasingly adroit use of tools and materials (45).



At ten girls tend to be taller and heavier than boys, but the boys are usually stronger and can run faster. Boys are interested in objective feats, such as getting over an obstacle and hitting a target ; while girls are likely to be more absorbed in form and style. In activities where speed and strength prevail the boys will ignore all but an exceptional girl; in others, such as skating, riding, sailing

benefit of both. Where, as in large families, and in small mixed rural schools, boys and girls are accustomed to collaborate, the differences between them are often very much less marked. In any circumstances it is probably true to say that at this age the differences between boys and girls are no greater than the differences found among a group of either.

Many children at the age of ten have already explored widely in many fields—in colour, sound, texture, strength, speech and space—and this exploration may have led to demands for help in establishing techniques. Children may splash in and enjoy water for a number of years ; they may make attempts to swim and these may be clumsily successful, but the time will come when they need to be shown the best way. The same stages may be followed in climbing a rope, in trapping a ball, in moulding clay, and in using a tool. When the time is ripe, and this is not the same for every child, the necessary help must be provided. This is a delicate matter. If technique is demanded before the necessary exploration has taken place, zest will vanish ; if it is too long delayed, a child may well lose heart. An over-zealous parent, perhaps himself a footballer, swimmer, or skater, may constitute himself as coach and concentrate on ' bringing the child on '. It may be that the child is specially talented and thrives under such treatment, or seems to thrive, but often precocity is forced, and maturity never achieved.

For the less talented such treatment is frustrating and cramping. None of us, adults or children, are at home in a new medium ; we need a period in which to find our feet—to ' mess about '—before we can hope to achieve anything. But this is quite different from a period of prolonged floundering which may be unduly discouraging, and is quite unnecessary if somebody would put us in the way of learning.

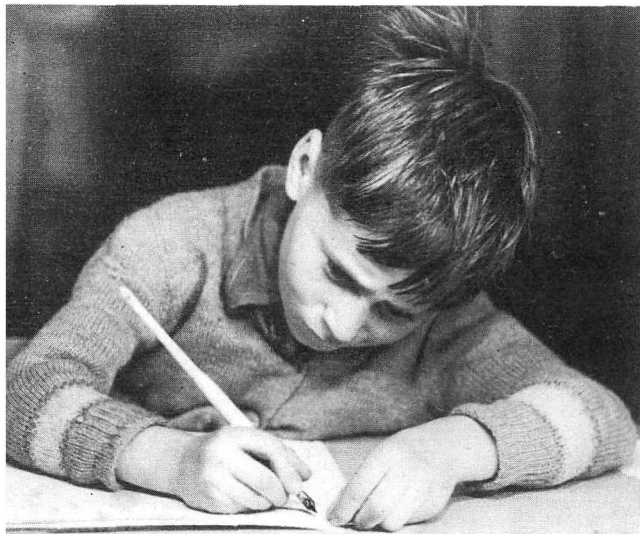
At nine most children are ready to change from pencil to a well-designed pen and nib (47), and to write with ease and flow.

At ten some will have acquired a hand showing not only beauty of form but a lively sense of rhythm. Children can of course use pen and ink before the age of nine, but the effort required is so laborious (46) that cramped habits are developed and may lead to a dislike of writing which is never shed.

boats (48), and sometimes swimming, the girls may excel. The interest of boys in objects and that of girls in style are complementary traits ; each learns from the other to the

46

47



Let us remind ourselves of the broad differences between the stages chosen—three years, six, and ten.

Here are three children aged three, six and ten years (49). Compare, at each of these



49

three stages, the length from the top of the head to the waist with the length from the waist to the ground ; examine the proportion of the head to the rest of the body, and the general contours of the body.

48



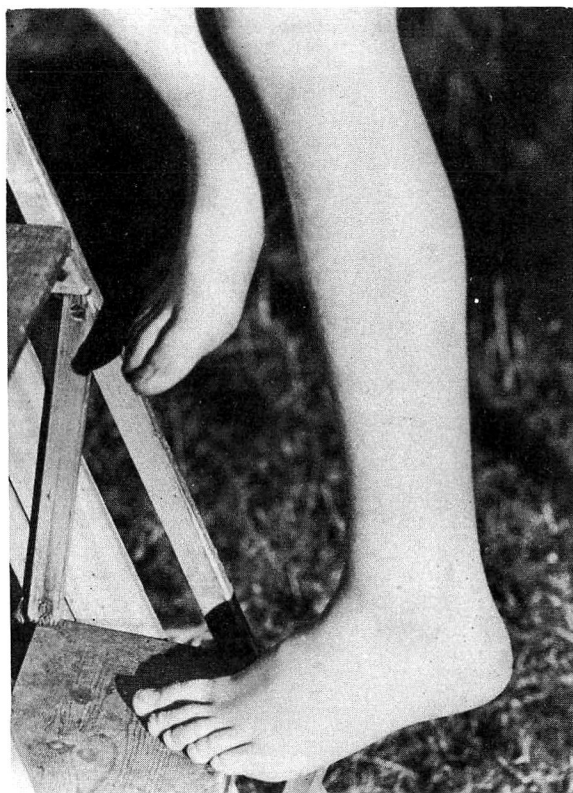
Look at these hands (50, 51).
To what ages do they belong?



50



51



52



53

And now feet (52, 53).



And here are children running (54)
and leaping (55).
How old are they?



55

NO TWO CHILDREN ARE ALIKE

It is perhaps a dangerous thing to describe three different stages of growth, because, in so doing, we suggest that all children of a certain age conform to pattern, and we know this to be false. A study of stages of growth gives us perspective; we are reminded of the progress made by children in the long process of growing up, of the large advances made, and of the different opportunities needed.

Parents who bring up a family of children are more likely to be aware of the various stages of growth than a teacher who is concerned with a homogeneous age group, or who teaches in one type of school. Parents can 'take a long view', though they are apt to judge each member of the family by the unique standards set by the eldest, or perhaps the 'brightest', child; while the teacher, who may be acquainted with only a segment of a child's career and who may be ignorant of, and therefore disregard, progress in previous and subsequent years, can at least see him in relation to a number of children of the same



56



56

age. That child is fortunate whose parents and teachers collaborate so that a balanced view can be taken of his progress and his needs.

It is unlikely that any child we know will conform to any one of the various stages of growth described. At any age there will be children who have advanced far beyond the average level, others who are far behind. If, for example, we watch six-year-olds playing with balls (56), we shall see that one or two throw far and easily and catch with certainty, even when running fast. We shall see one or two who cannot catch at all and who cannot throw from behind the shoulder. Most of the children will be at stages between these extremes. If we watch the same group at a

different occupation, using pencils for example, we are likely to see another picture. A child who is skilled with a ball may be immature in his use of a pencil—his fingers 'all thumbs'—while one of the 'butter-fingers' may be ahead of the rest, writing with ease and skill. If we could grade a large group of children and arrange them in order for throwing and for writing, few children would occupy the same place in both lists. Some who were high in one might be low in another, and vice versa; some might be high in both lists, some low in both; most would be in the average group in both lists.

There are all sorts of children at every level, and few of them show even development in all directions.



SECTION II

MODES OF MOVEMENT

CHILDREN AND ADULTS

When we look at family portraits painted a hundred or more years ago it is noticeable that the children are usually wearing clothes which are miniature copies of those worn by their parents, and they look less like children than like little men and women (57, 58, 59, 60). Today children wear clothes specially

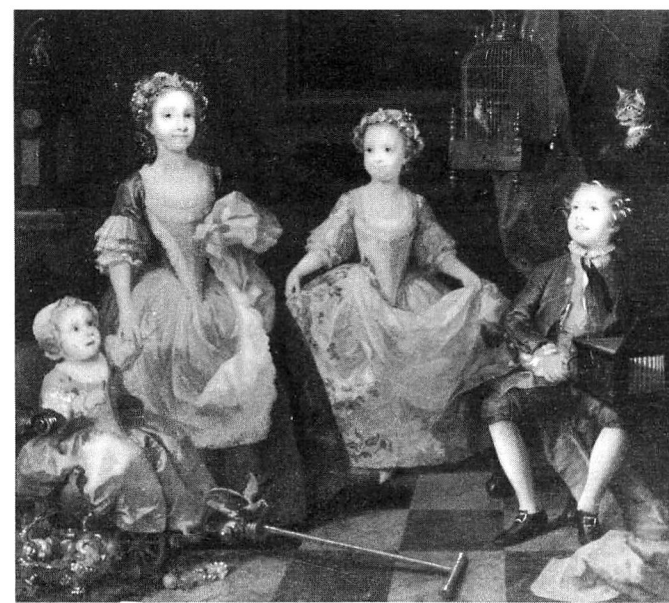


58

designed to meet their needs, and, in thus equipping them, we show that we realize that childhood has its own pattern which is shaped and followed, not by little men and women, but by children.

This pattern of behaviour may be seen in movement. An adult walking along the street normally moves directly and steadily, taking the shortest route to his destination. A child proceeding along the same street behaves quite differently. He may walk steadily for a

57



59

57. 15th Century (Memline)

58. 16th Century (Oliver)

59. 18th Century (Hogarth)

60. 19th Century (Denning)



60



short distance and then break into a run which is interrupted by a few leaps. For a time he may go along, dot and carry one, with one foot in the gutter, the other on the kerb. Then a puddle attracts him, and he jumps over or splashes through it; a group of workmen unloading a truck delays him for several minutes, and he may finally go on his way swinging round each lamp-post he passes (61).

While young children certainly make use of movement for utilitarian purposes, they often indulge in it for its own sake, exploiting it in many ways. When they run they may get somewhere, their leap may carry them over the ditch, their climb take them over the wall or up to the top of the tree, but from a purely practical point of view these feats are usually unnecessary—it is the sheer act of running, leaping, or climbing that they love.

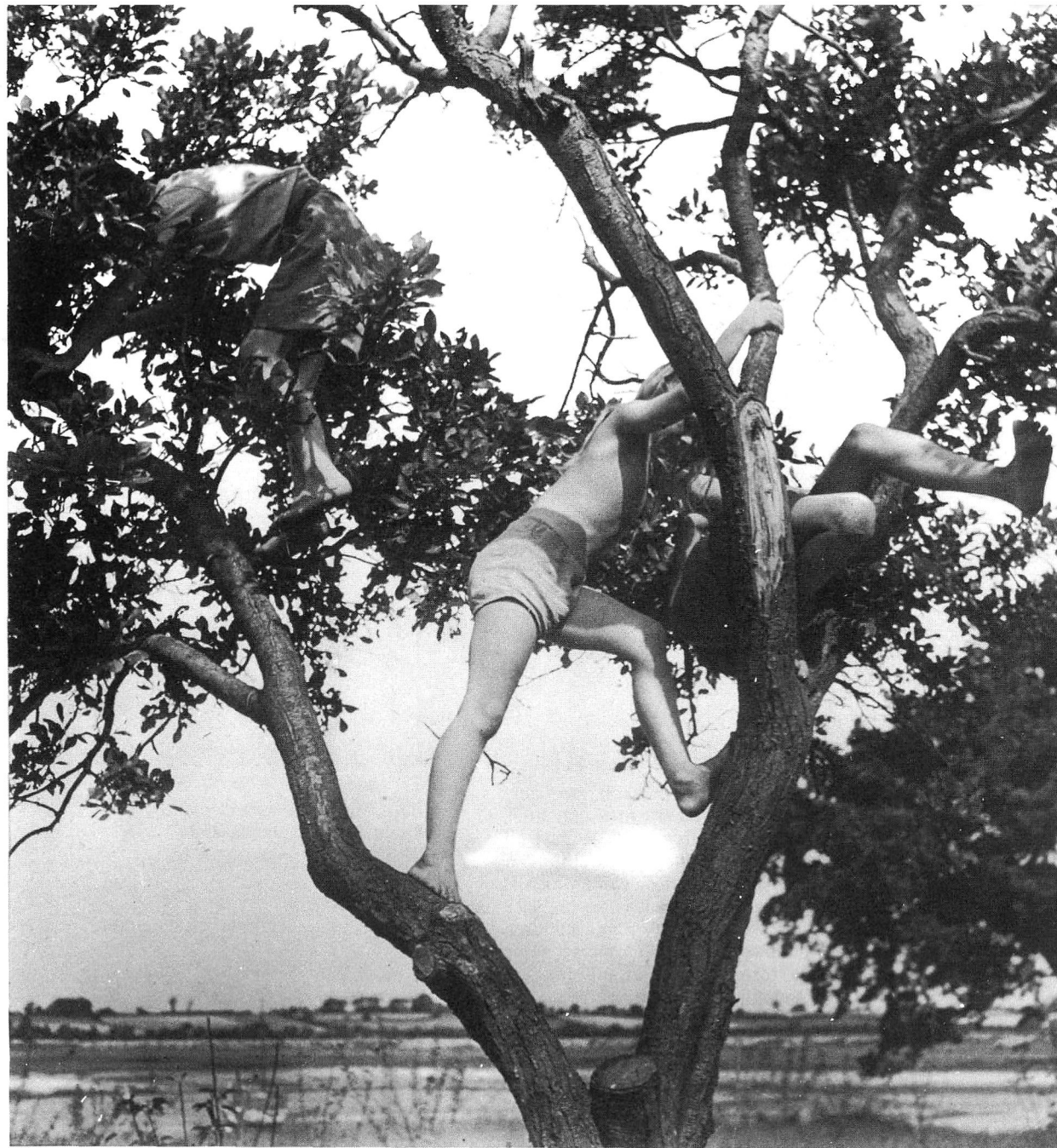
A wide space will often set them off, skipping, hopping, running and shouting, whirling their arms and performing all sorts of—to the adult—curious antics. One may be seen walking rather exactly along a curving line, muttering to himself; another appears to find satisfaction in jumping up and down, making his impact with the ground as terrific as possible; and another indulges in a swaying, rolling motion. While some children thus seem to find satisfaction in movement for its own sake, others may be led through their lolling, swaying, or creeping, into make-believe; they become somebody else and, alone or with others, play out an idea. Others will turn to a game, whether of the free running sort with a ball, or the more manipulative variety, such as conkers or marbles. If there is anything on which to climb or swing, anything through which to crawl or creep, then many children will swarm round it. Water is also a certain attraction, at first only by offering the sheer enjoyment of its feel and sound (62), later also as a medium for certain skills.

In climbing a tree (63) a child becomes more versatile as he finds his way round an awkward angle, up a place where a long stretch is necessary, and along a branch where he must wriggle full-length. He begins to know more about trees and about himself, and he gains new realizations of height, width, depth, weight, and resilience.

A child who, with a lace curtain hanging from her shoulders, becomes a queen, enjoys in movement, and perhaps in speech, a new experience. She too is reaching out in a new direction and, in so doing, gains fresh powers of vivid expression and deepens her capacity for further growth.

Children explore new ways of using their body by discovering how to overcome some physical obstacle, or by inventing stunts which involve curious forms of running, leaping, and swinging, or hanging upside down. They gain more control by the repetition which is part, for instance, of bouncing a ball, or of balancing along the top of a wall. They find further use and control of their body in expressing their imaginative ideas when erecting, for example, a ship out of a pile of timber and manœuvring it into port; or when engaged in dance or drama.

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EXPLORATION

Exploration is one of the first steps in learning, and of great importance to children, who, even when they begin by imitating somebody else, need time to get the feel of new material for themselves, and to see what they can do with it ; to find out the possibilities of a new tool, or of a fresh arrangement of familiar things. As we all know, children discover all sorts of things to do and all sorts of ways of doing them ; through variety they gain experience, which helps their growth.

Of course they will often go about things in the wrong way, and they will make mistakes ; but the time taken to find things out for themselves may be time well spent (64), because it often results in a more solid learning than if they had been shown a short cut by an adult. This does not mean that children should be left to flounder helplessly, but that they should have time for necessary exploration and discovery.

REPETITION

We are all familiar with the demand 'Again, again !' ; with the insistence on the same story being told in the same words, day after day, until, suddenly, it is rejected. We have all endured the almost maddening repetition of the newly discovered sound or word which is reiterated, unceasingly, until it takes its place in the everyday vocabulary. Some children seem to be more repetitive than others ; some hardly pause for repetition at all, but are constantly shooting off in new directions. Generally speaking, the younger the child the stronger is his need for repetition of the same routine (a regular cycle of bath, bed, and meal-times), the same story, song, or rhyme. We ourselves may return again and again to

a book we have found too difficult to grasp at the first few readings. When we have managed to assimilate its contents, and have made it a part of ourselves, we no longer need to return to it and are ready to go ahead. The same may be true in listening to unfamiliar music, or in using a new tool. Sometimes of course we re-read a well-known book or listen to well-known music merely as a pleasant relaxation, rather as we enjoy the easy company of a familiar friend ; and there are some things of such a quality that we return

to them over and over again because, although they are familiar, they are always a source of refreshment or of inspiration.

It seems likely that children use repetition for the same purposes as ourselves ; they repeat a new sound or action or routine because they need to make it a part of themselves ; or they demand the well-known story or song for the sheer delight of feeling perfectly at home with it. There is so much that is new to them that they need the sense of security which repetition gives them.



RHYTHM OF GROWTH THROUGH EXPLORATION AND REPETITION

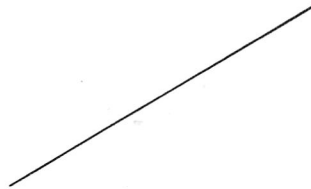
When repetition has brought some action to the point where the child feels confident in its use, he is ready to use it as a jumping-off place for fresh exploration. For example, before he manages to walk he repeats many movements, pulling himself up countless times to his feet, bobbing up and down, swaying forward, standing without support, and finally achieving some unsteady steps. From this point he repeats his efforts until he acquires greater steadiness, and, as the months go by, agility; he grows less and less concerned with the sheer act of walking, and presently it becomes almost automatic. Then, indeed, the opportunities for exploration are very great.

We can see the same process in relation to the use of skipping-ropes, bats, balls, and tools, and materials and opportunities of all kinds. Many children enjoy hammering, and some will be content to keep on hammering; others will quickly discover that this is a way of joining pieces of wood and will use the process for construction. It may happen that they move on too soon, when a little more repetition would have given them the mastery necessary to do a satisfactory job, and they may quickly drop construction because they feel inept and are dissatisfied. Some children play with a ball unceasingly and almost automatically; others use their skill to invent new games.

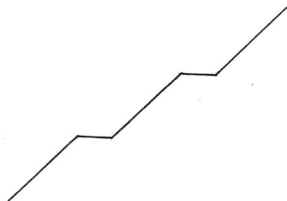
Although children often seem to realize both when repetition is needed and when they are ready to explore, they do not always know, and an adult may help by gently urging the over-repetitive child out of his routine, or by drawing the over-exploratory back to necessary repetition.

This process of alternating repetition and

exploration is a most important one in the growth and development of children, whose pattern of progress is not steady and continuous like this—

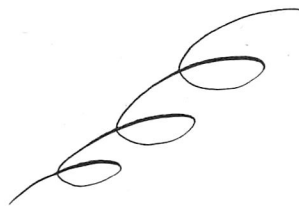


nor yet like this—



with regularly spaced pauses and advances.

The process of development is more likely to follow this sort of pattern—



where the alternations do not occur regularly, but follow a fluctuating rhythm, each phase, whether recurrent or advancing, having its own resilience which leads sooner or later, according to the complexity of the situation, to the next stage.

Where unnecessary repetition is enforced there is no growth, but boredom; where

there is too much change, restlessness, indecision, and insecurity are likely to appear.

EXPRESSION

'Self-expression' is a term which rouses suspicion and uneasiness because it is often associated with uncontrolled, egotistical behaviour. Yet everything that we do, every gesture we make, every action we carry out, is expressive. Some people, and some races, express themselves freely and colourfully; others are more impassive.

The expressive quality of children's movement differs widely from that of adults. When we experience some deep feeling we may say that we are 'moved', and we probably demonstrate this by smiling or by tightening our lips and frowning. But a child under similar circumstances is literally 'moved'; he leaps in the air, jumps for joy, shouts and laughs, or, if the experience is unpleasant, he may cry or beat the table with his fists, and kick. This exuberance of expression is regarded as undesirable and uncivilized; it is described as 'childish'; and English men and women would find it a shocking and inconvenient mode of behaviour in everyday life. So children learn to subdue such expressions.

The problem for adults is how to help children to 'grow up' without sacrificing their natural capacity to express themselves imaginatively, whether in speech, colour, or movement. Expression suggests liveliness and feeling; but it also implies form.

Children's ways of expressing themselves are not, of course, the same as ours. Their paintings, for example, are, to the adult, curious in colour, in proportion, and in design. We have learnt to accept this, and no longer expect childish copies of adult performances. If they write a story we expect something childlike—both in what is said and in the way in which it is said.

ABSORPTION

If we want to know whether an opportunity fits a child, the degree of absorption he shows offers some guide. We are all familiar with the extraordinary capacity of children for complete absorption, when, whether singly or in a group, they remain intent on their occupation, undisturbed in circumstances which would make it impossible for most adults to concentrate for a moment. They may of course be absorbed in something which, though very satisfying, may be held to be undesirable and must be interrupted; but this does not affect either the satisfaction or its hall-mark, absorption (65).

Absorption is probably due to the complete identification of the child with the situation; he has become part of it, and it has entered into him. The phase may be a passing one, as when, with deep seriousness, he paints a picture or washes up; it may be more sustained, as when he becomes a character—perhaps Buffalo Bill—whose life he lives for many months; or it may be permanent, lasting all his life.

This absorption is much more than the polite attention which children are so clever in assuming when they want to please, and we can, if we care to do so, learn to distinguish between those children who are merely superficially employed and those who are deeply intent.

EMBARRASSMENT

There are many embarrassments — self-consciousness, fear, and fatigue are some of them.

While children are absorbed in acting out an idea among themselves, their movements may be fluent and eloquent; but if they are placed on a stage and required to act to an

audience their movements are likely to become stilted and awkward. This embarrassment has two sources—self-consciousness, and the fact that movements designed to convey meaning to an audience demand a technique which is remote from children's mode of movement.

Fear can make us move with greater speed and agility than we thought possible, or it can bring us to a standstill. Fearfulness usually limits us in every way.

A child whose parents do too much for him is often very restricted in movement; where other children run and gallop he walks sedately; he never reaches out for anything; he is too dependent. On the other hand, a child who receives insufficient care and who feels insecure may be wild and jerky, and may develop stunts in order to show off and attract the attention he craves.

What are the sources of clumsiness, or of accidents, some of which might be described as special cases of clumsiness? Fatigue, poor eyesight, and deficient hearing are all possible causes. We tend to be clumsy or to have an accident when we are placed in a situation to which we are not adequate. An extreme example is that of a little child or an old lady placed in a busy city street. Neither is sufficiently agile, and each is confused by the varying speeds and sounds, becomes frightened, and gets involved in an accident.

A less obvious example is that of a child whose *tempo* is leisurely, who perhaps fits well into a job where he can carry on at a steady pace and where, as in tending animals, his steadiness and lack of hastiness serve him well. Such a child may be so bewildered by a game of tag in a crowded playground that he either gives up, falls himself, or causes others to fall.

In contrast there is the speedy child whose accident arises from trying to be too quick in a group of slow-moving companions, or who,



in a situation where steadiness is required, is hasty and impatient. We must learn to distinguish between him and the 'bull in the china shop', whose strength, applied regardless of direction, often causes devastation.

There are also those who are described as 'accident-prone', whose sources of difficulty are not yet fully understood. Intensive competition and the 'daring' of a less skilful child by an agile one can be a source of accident; so can the fearfulness of an adult, whether it is suppressed (though still infectious), or whether it is demonstrated by frequent admonitions to 'Take care'. Many mothers know this, and preserve a heroic silence for fear of spoiling the confidence of a child whose feats make them hold their breath.

Clumsiness and accident (its more dramatic form) are complicated subjects which have been studied in industry and elsewhere, but about which, in relation to childhood, we know too little. There has been no attempt here to discuss the topic exhaustively, but only to open up a subject which is of concern to parents and teachers.

In this chapter an attempt has been made to indicate the outlines of the complicated process called growth, of the part played by movement in helping that process to unfold itself, and of the way in which movement itself is a reflection of growth.

In order to try to gain an all-round view we have first traced one part of the pattern, and then followed others. Words cannot give a true picture of this complex process because they can be used to describe only one thing at a time, whereas, as we know, in the living child the whole pattern unfolds itself continuously.



CHAPTER TWO

CHILDREN IN SCHOOL

NURSERY SCHOOLS

IF A CHILD goes to a nursery school or class he finds himself in a place rather like a good nursery in a well-run home. The rooms, the furniture, the playground and garden, the wealth of material of all kinds, and the way in which the day is planned, are all designed to meet the needs of a young and growing child. Although there may be certain times in the day when all the children do the same thing at the same time (eat their dinner, for example), there will be plenty of opportunity for each child to choose his own occupation,

to experiment with material, and to go at his own pace. His teacher will not be at all disturbed by the variety which she sees all round her. She is able and eager to see the difference between individuals and to observe the pace set by the children for themselves, the enterprise of one child and the repetitiveness of another, or the fatigue and listlessness which, under a uniform régime, may go unnoticed.

The day will not consist of periods in a classroom interspersed by a period or two in the playground; the children will be constantly in and out of doors, and there will be ample opportunity for all the natural

(untaught) movements of running, climbing, swinging, and throwing. It is most unlikely that the playground will be a bare yard ; there

will probably be a garden, a sandpit, natural obstacles or apparatus on which to climb, crawl, and swing, and, perhaps, a pool.

Indoors and out there will be material for construction, trucks and barrows to load and pull, paints, big brushes, chinks and pencils, and there will be a fair amount of elbow-room. Young children learn much by seeing and hearing, but perhaps most of all by doing things. Shapes are not only seen but must also be handled, and attempts must be made to fit or build them together ; colours must be used, tools tried out, materials smoothed, squeezed, patted, or pressed. Much of a child's learning depends upon the type and variety of the materials he finds about him ; the uses to which he puts them are often unexpected.

At this stage children are very individual, and are more likely to be absorbed in their own affairs than to share in the play of other children. It is true that, from time to time, several children may become interested in the same thing at the same time, and a small group may form ; but the association is likely to be a loose and fleeting one.

Large buildings, and large numbers of people, are bewildering and frightening to very young children ; so nursery schools should never be big and each group within the school will possibly contain no more than 20 children. Each group has its own large living-room with an adjoining cloakroom ; these form a self-contained unit, and together with the playground meet most of the children's needs. Because of the way in which the buildings are planned, and because the day is arranged with reference to the needs of the children for activity, fresh air, food, rest, and quiet, there is space and time for children to move freely, at their own time and in their own way.

In a nursery school of this kind there are plenty of opportunities for moving and growing, and plenty of opportunities for the teacher to observe movement both as a means of growth and as a reflection of that process.



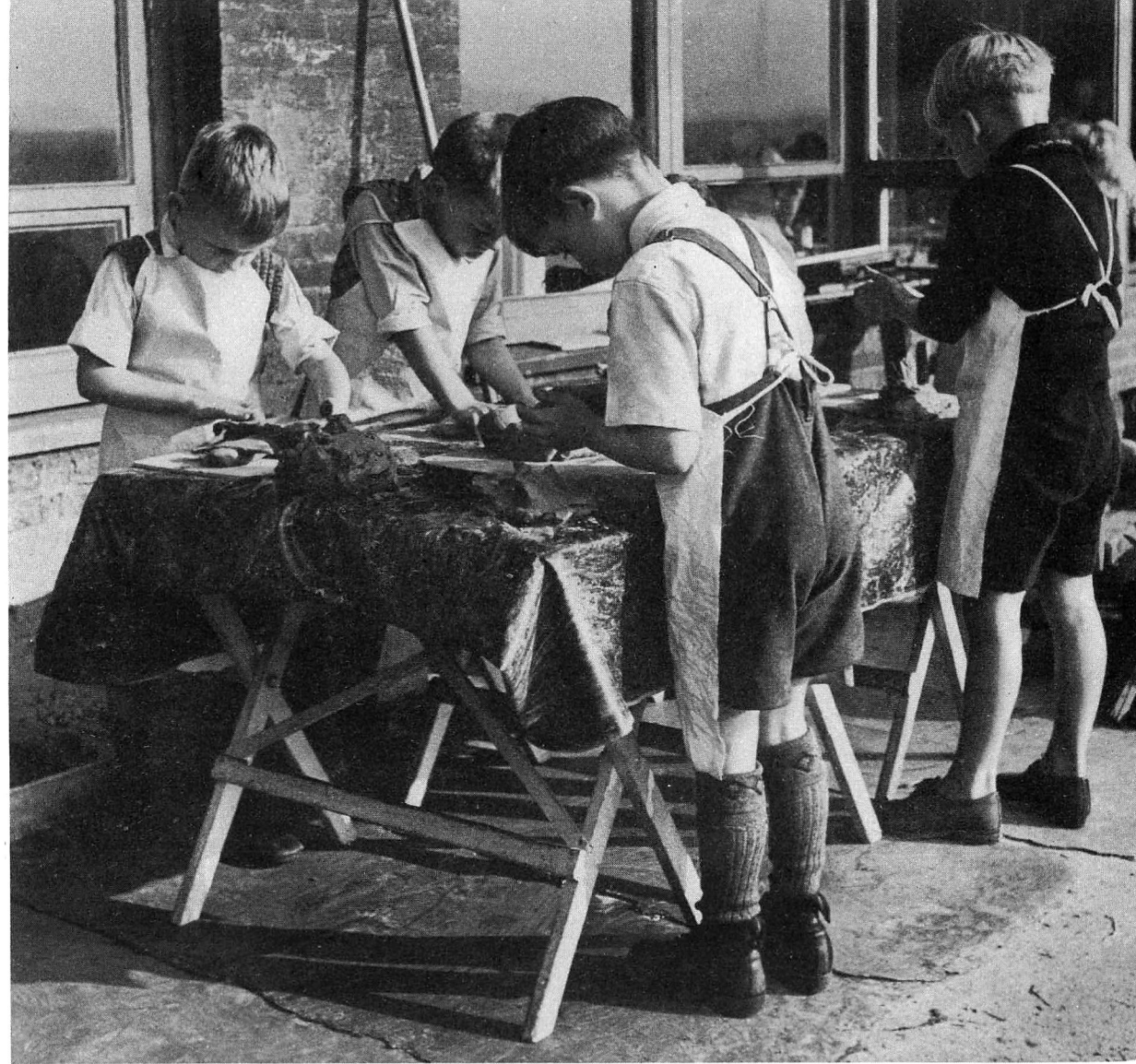
INFANTS' SCHOOLS

When children go to the infants' school they enter a bigger world than that of the nursery school, and most of them are eager and ready to do so. No longer, as at three years old, do they need the shelter of a self-contained unit; they enjoy the variety of rooms, the greater complexity of the building, and, probably above all, the passages and steps. Most five-year-olds enjoy going on an errand to another part of the building, while three-year-olds would be likely to be overwhelmed and perhaps terrified by long passages and crowds of other children.

In a modern infants' school there will be a reception class for the youngest children, and this will probably be very like a nursery class; in addition there will be four or five other classes housed in light and airy rooms which will be arranged to catch the sun. These rooms will have doors opening out on to the playground, part of which will be paved, but there will also be a garden, grass, trees, banks, and bushes. There may also be water and sand, and there will be opportunities for climbing, clambering, swinging, and leaping, but of a different and more varied sort than those provided for younger children.

The difference in capacity for movement between a three-year-old and a six-year-old is of course very great. For example, a three-year-old can jump a little in an upward direction, but forwards hardly at all; he is also very uncertain indeed over balancing along a narrow surface. At six leaping is not highly developed, but it is a common activity; and balancing has improved very considerably. The six-year-old will have outgrown much of the apparatus which satisfied him three years earlier; he will need to rearrange it, and to use it for fresh ideas; and he will also need something different.

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Indoors there are light, sturdy tables and chairs of a size to fit the children, which they can arrange in all sorts of ways as the need arises. Mostly the tables serve as work

benches where all sorts of jobs are carried out such as modelling, painting, cutting out, carpentry, and reading; the floor, too, is very useful for all these things (69).



The modern infants' school will have, in addition to the classrooms, a hall, which may be used for vigorous activity in bad weather and at all times for movement which is predominantly expressive in character, as well as for a variety of other purposes. Arrangements have to be made for sharing this space.

While there are a number of modern buildings there are also very many old ones, and in these it is difficult to plan the day to meet the needs of active and inquisitive children. The playground may be small and barren and the surface poor; there may be no hall, and the classrooms may be full of heavy furniture arranged in rows and even screwed to the floor. There is likely to be little space for the storage of material. Under such conditions it is exceedingly difficult to arrange for the sort of opportunities which best meet the needs of young and growing children; but





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many teachers of infants who have, through close observation and study, become convinced that the infants' school should be regarded 'not as a place of instruction, but as an instructive environment', have in spite of all difficulties managed to provide rich and varied experience for the children. They have found that, even with large numbers, a discipline based on uniformity is not necessary; children may properly move about freely in order to find material, to seek information, or to discuss. They can learn both to move and to talk with freedom, and to do this without disturbing others.

Outside the classroom children learn to move independently about the school playground, and to steer their own course without interfering with others. It is found that this independence gives a better opportunity for the development of self-discipline than mass movement, which demands little more than passive obedience.



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Where the space available to the whole school is restricted, a time-table must be drawn up to arrange for sharing it. This means that certain sorts of activity may have to be confined to set periods. Such an arrangement may not always suit the needs of a class. A real urge towards activity in a big space may boil up at any time of the day, and several times a day; equally, when the set period is due the children may be so absorbed in something else that it is unfortunate to have to interrupt them. On a stormy day a few minutes' burst in the playground several times during the day may best meet their needs; under other conditions the children may well be ready to work out of doors absorbedly for as much as an hour. Some ideas may crop up in the classroom which demand realization in movement, and neither hall nor playground may be available.

These restrictions sometimes make it difficult to provide a school environment which meets the needs of young and growing children, but much may be done if we are aware of these needs and make ingenious use of every available opportunity.

JUNIOR SCHOOLS

The differences between children when they enter the junior school at the age of seven, and when they leave it at eleven, are very great. As the children grow older their capacity for movement seems to increase; not only are they active, but in skill, vigour, and agility they show great progress (73, 74).

They can also range further afield. At the same time—and especially as their ability to read and to handle tools skilfully develops—they spend more time sitting down than they would at an earlier age, because more of the jobs they wish to do are sedentary. As they grow older, too, they are able to concentrate for longer periods on the same thing—whether



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playing football or reading a book—though time is not the same for them as for adults.

In modern junior schools the increase in vigour and agility is provided for by larger playground space, and by the addition of a playing-field for such games as football, shinty, handball, and cricket. This field is, of course, arranged for a number of small-

sized games, rather than for one or two full-sized ones. Many older schools have not got these facilities; and they have neither the type of furniture and equipment nor the storage space which makes it easy to plan the sort of opportunities that meet the needs of children at this stage.

While infants are ready to take messages

from one part of the building to another and to behave independently, juniors will undertake errands of a more sustained nature, and will carry out pieces of organization of some complexity with zest and good sense. Yet because junior schools are, for the most part, larger than infants' schools, and because their bigger and more vigorous children fill the space more fully, teachers have sometimes felt that uniformity must be the chief way of ensuring discipline, and the divergence between a child's natural way of moving and growing, and the somewhat rigid pattern of behaviour expected in school, has sometimes been very wide indeed.

As children grow older, there is a tendency to plan their time-table solely in terms of subjects, with the result that the day's programme becomes set in a fixed pattern which sometimes bears little relationship to the needs of active, eager children. Moreover the same length of period is generally kept throughout the school, in spite of wide differences between the needs of seven- and ten-year-olds.

In many schools, however, the education is of such a kind that the teaching spaces are more like workshops than the traditional idea of a classroom, and many 'subjects' are worked out in movement, speech, manipulation, measurement, and construction, as well as in terms of reading, writing, and doing sums.

In such schools every opportunity for movement in a big space is likely to be seized, whether for games or physical training, or for carrying out some idea in dramatic or dance form. Expeditions of various kinds will take the children out into the surrounding districts, and, as the children's range increases, they will be able to cover more ground.

In schools of this kind the zest and liveliness of the children will not be unduly cramped, and will find new ways of flourishing.

FATIGUE

Many people who understand that children need the expansive opportunities of big and vigorous movement of all kinds forget the cramping effects of fatigue brought about by reading or writing for too long a spell, by using too fine an instrument (pen, pencil or paintbrush), by the use of unsuitably printed books, or by stitching with an ordinary needle and thread before vision is fully developed. As we know, and as has been mentioned in the first chapter, normal vision develops slowly, and the link between fine movements of the hands and the focusing of the eyes on small objects at close range can only be established very gradually.

A child who is kept reading or writing for too long a period will often show fatigue by turning his head and lowering it towards the book or paper (75); many adults fail to notice this sign.

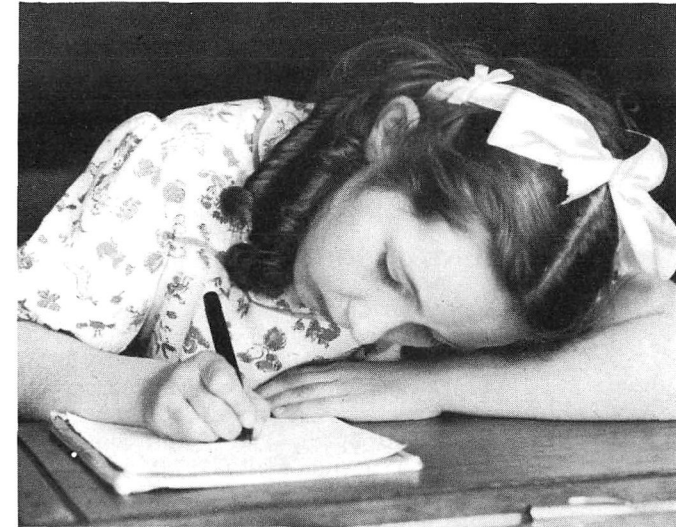
Children will also correct the effects of too long a sedentary period by fidgeting, turning sideways, tucking one leg underneath them, or stretching in their desks. These actions bring necessary relief and it is as well for the children if such relief is allowed. It would be better still to train the children to acquire a well-balanced position making for ease in the movement of writing (compare the boys in photographs), and to remember that the effort should be demanded only for very short spells.

Many adults avoid the act of writing if they can; and much of their dislike is due to the feeling of difficulty and strain associated with the movement involved in holding a pen and writing with it. This may well have been set up in childhood through the premature use of a pencil with a fine instead of a thick shaft and point, or a premature introduction to pen and ink, or the use of an unsuitable penholder and nib.

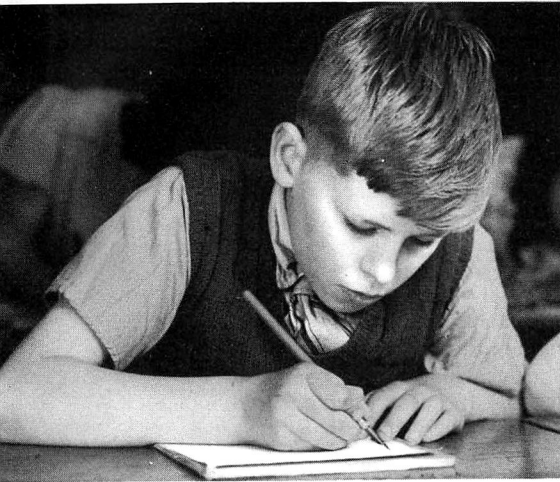
It is not necessary to sit in a desk in order to read. The important things to consider are:—1, the size and type of print and the layout of the page; 2, the angle and distance of the page from the eyes; 3, adequate lighting; and 4, the avoidance of long spells of reading without any relief.

Ten minutes of reading or writing would seem to be a very short time to many adults; how does it seem to a child of seven, or to one of nine years?

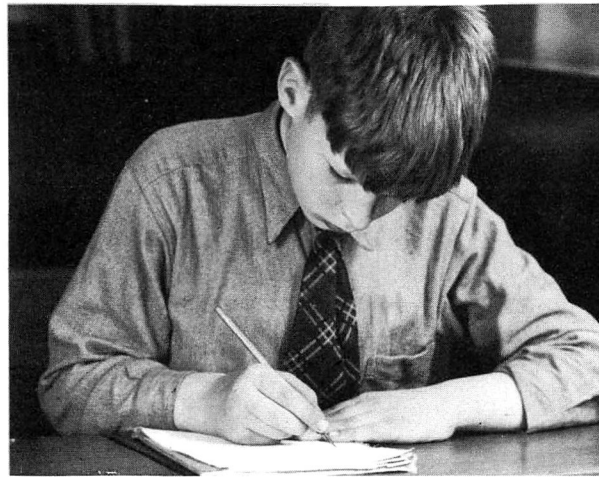
Fatigue may be shown, as in 75, by the lowering and turning of the head in an effort to relieve the strain on vision; it may also be



shown in other ways, as, for example, in lethargy or in sleep; or it may appear in the form of undue tension.



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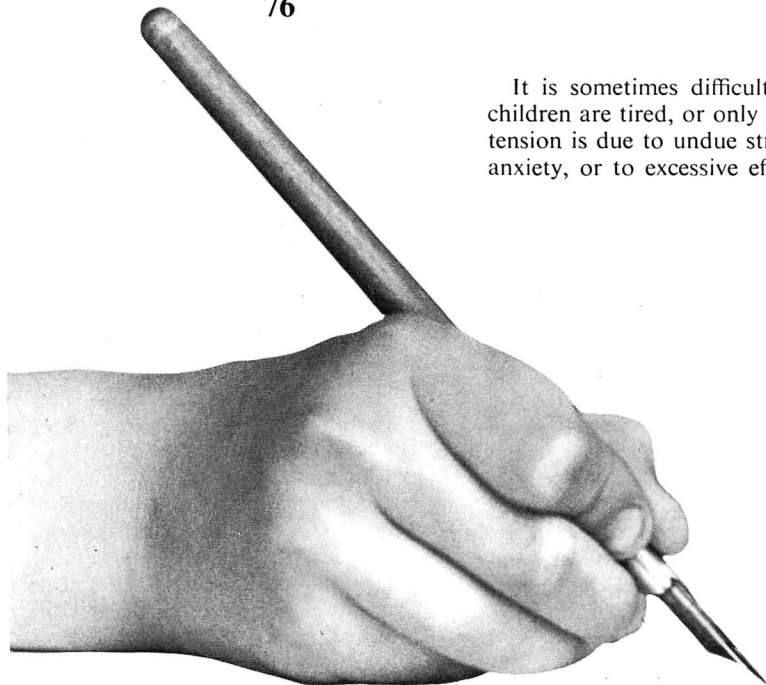


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It is sometimes difficult to know whether children are tired, or only bored ; or whether tension is due to undue strain and fatigue, to anxiety, or to excessive effort (76, 78, 79).



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The causes of fatigue and of strain may lie outside school in lack of sleep, inadequate food, or home difficulties of various kinds ; in school they may have their source in prolonged periods in desks, in work demanding too high a degree of fine co-ordination, in a stuffy atmosphere, or in conflict of some kind.

There is still much to be done in designing and adjusting school furniture to meet the needs of children. Although much furniture is now designed so that it can be moved and stacked, the underlying idea seems to be that all the children in a class must be able to write simultaneously, and that for this purpose desks equal in number to the children in the class are necessary. It may be that this idea should be modified.

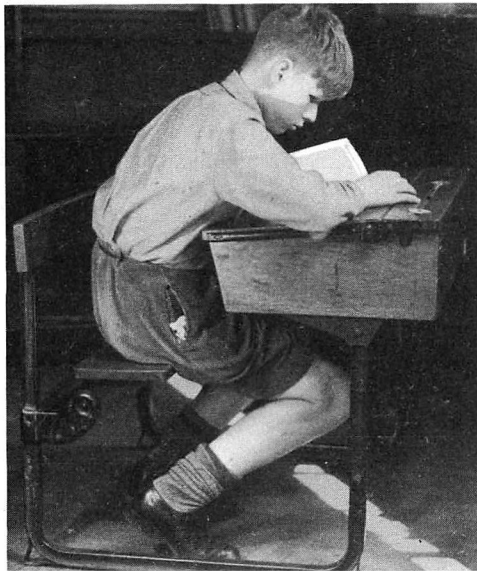
When desks are in use it is obvious that they should fit the children. In many classes four or five sizes may be necessary, and while it may be impossible to be scrupulous in this matter of fit it should at least be possible for

children to avoid the discomfort of sitting with their legs dangling (80), or of being crammed into a desk which is several sizes too small (81).

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81



SPONTANEITY

82

As we have seen in the first chapter, children are apt to express themselves in an exuberant fashion. Where the adult smiles, speaks, or raises his eyebrows, the child may laugh, shout, or jump with excitement (82); this disturbs adults, but not necessarily other children. Where adults discuss in words children explore through their senses, touching, tasting, seeing, listening, as well as talking; they play out their ideas in movement, colour, sound, and in many materials.

In a sensible home children have plenty of opportunities for working things out in their own way, but they learn, as all members of a family must learn, to adjust their needs to each other. A wise mother puts up with more noise and mess than is comfortable because she understands the way in which children live and learn, and the children learn that there are times and places that demand carefulness and quiet. In some homes the children have it all their own way and are excessively noisy and self-assertive; sometimes the parents make excessive demands on the children and insist that they behave 'like little ladies and gentlemen'. The results of either of these extremes are usually unfortunate.

In school it is difficult to establish the sort of adjustment which is made in a sensible home. Much is demanded of both teacher and children in establishing a working arrangement whereby the individual has the fullest opportunity to work things out in the way best suited to him, without impeding or disturbing those around him. Many teachers and children have shown that such an arrangement can be established.

Satisfactory working arrangements may sometimes entail silence as being convenient for all, but usually discussion and comment will arise, and noise will occur as work is done. In schools unaccustomed to this practice there is an understandable fear that the noise will become uncontrollable, and exhausting to the teacher. There may be the usual difficulties accompanying any change of method, but where both teacher and children have a real sense of purpose the necessary adjustments will soon take place. In schools where children are not expected to speak without permission they often react with extreme noisiness on being released from the building, yelling and screaming at the tops of their voices.

In the early days of elementary schools, when very large numbers of children were often crowded into a single schoolroom, efficient drilling, whether in the three R's or in mass movement, must have seemed essential. Today many school buildings are old and still equipped for clerical instruction on uniform lines; lack of space cramps activity, and the size of classes, though considerably reduced, is still large. Yet in many schools successful efforts are made to provide an education which, in spite of all the difficulties, takes into account a child's mode of living and learning; adjustment is made as may be necessary between the known needs of the children and a pattern which may be enforced by the accumulation of numbers and the restriction of space.

CHAPTER THREE

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

THE TERM 'physical education' has been in general use only for a few years; before that there was 'physical training', which in its turn was preceded by an activity known as 'drill' (83). A further, and very descriptive, term—'physical jerks'—is familiar to many,

and recalls the quality of movement which used to be regarded as an effective means of setting up physique and ensuring discipline.

The use of these different phrases is interesting because they reflect the gradual development of certain ideas. The 'physical

education' of the present day not only embraces a much wider scope of activities than the 'drill' lesson of the beginning of the century; it also reflects a different relationship between the teacher and the class, and a different conception of discipline.





Drill was inherited from military manœuvre ; physical education has emerged from the observation and study of the needs of growing children.

Physical education ' may not be permanently regarded as a satisfactory term. In the past the study of man led to an analysis which split him up into body, mind, and spirit ; at the present time we are becoming increasingly aware of his wholeness and of the interdependence of those processes that we have been accustomed to describe as physiological or psychological. It may not be long before we realize that the term ' physical '—in relation to humanity—has a very limited meaning.

Physical education is connected with much that is touched upon in Chapter Two, such as the causes and effects of fatigue, the use of space, and the planning of the school day, as well as with such matters as the preparation and serving of the school meal, all aspects of the school medical service, and the general cleanliness and seamliness of the school. It is concerned with each child as a growing individual (especially with the result of his response to what is done for him), and with the school (including the parents) as a community ; it includes not only direct teaching, but also the ceaseless endeavour needed to produce an environment which provides satisfactory opportunities of many kinds.

No series of lessons in physical education can be effective if it is considered in isolation from the general pattern of the school day. Cramped movement and ill-adjusted posture will be little affected if, after a period of movement, the children return to prolonged sedentary work in unsuitable furniture ; and the stimulating effects of fresh air soon wear off in an overheated classroom. Physical education can help children to develop their full powers, but this process may be severely hindered by under-nourishment, indigestion,

constipation, lack of sleep, and illness. The class teacher, because he is in close and continuous contact with the children, is well able to relate the activity which takes place in movement periods to the whole pattern of growth and development. He may recognize lassitude as resulting from a bad cold, or suspect its cause in under-nourishment or in constipation ; he may see hesitation and lack of confidence in the classroom transformed to skill and certainty in a game, and help the child to secure this success as a growing point for enterprise in other directions ; or he may see a child's creative endeavour flowing readily from movement to colour, thence to speech and writing, and perhaps returning again to movement. All this is possible for the class teacher ; it depends very largely upon skilled and patient observation.

THE MOVEMENT PERIOD

What sort of opportunities should children find in these periods ? The first chapter, on ' Moving and Growing ', gave many indications of some of the answers to this question, by describing some of the ways in which children develop through movement ; and the second chapter discussed some of the limitations and opportunities which may be presented by the conditions of school life. It is on the basis of what was said in those two chapters that we can begin to consider the use of the time and space which are specially set aside for movement. There is of course no single answer, no well-trying recipe which can be applied to all sorts and conditions of schools in which all sorts and conditions of children are educated. On the basis of our knowledge, experience, and observation, we can establish the broad lines of our plan ; but elasticity is necessary in carrying it out.

ACTIVITY

At this, the primary stage, the sheer appetite for movement must be satisfied first of all ; it will vary very much according to the pattern of the school day. In schools where education is thought of largely in terms of reading, writing, and doing sums, and where practical work is relegated to one or two periods in the day, or even to one or two periods in the week, the need for movement, the need for release of exuberant spirits and cramped limbs, will be very great. The more rigid the constraint in the classroom the more violent will be the explosion when space and the opportunity for movement are available. In such schools the movement periods may have to be planned with a limited end in view, that of providing an antidote to an unsuitable classroom régime ; release will be the outstanding, though not the only, need.

In schools where the children are not deskbound the movement period may provide a richer opportunity than only that of release. It is true that a wide space is in itself a stimulus to activity of a vigorous kind, so that even children whose classroom programme has been satisfying and not too sedentary will show a tendency to run, leap, and shout, when they come into a playground or field ; but such children tend to be less explosive than those who have been more restricted, and soon apply themselves to other matters.

SKILL

The appetite for sheer activity being satisfied, there is next the hunger for skill which brings its own satisfaction, and which also opens up fresh possibilities. Thus a child may, after much practice, become nimble in climbing a ladder, and for a time he may be content to enjoy this skill for its own sake ; later he will use it to reach places and objects which were previously inaccessible.



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VERSATILITY

The pursuit of skill alone is not enough ; it may even lead to narrowness and specialization, neither of which is suited to the needs of growing children. Rather is it desirable to widen the field of their experience so that it is rich and varied, and so that they become expressive as well as dexterous, graceful as well as strong, agile as well as steady. Children of this age should be able to enjoy their skill in many directions (85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90).

QUALITY

Children are aware of quality in movement and enjoy and appreciate it either for its own sake, as, for example, in stretching, going limp, stamping vigorously or creeping softly ; or as a means of doing something effectively, whether in a game, in the use of a tool, in representing some character or in expressing some idea.

These then are the various kinds of opportunity we might expect to find in movement periods—abundant opportunity for movement, opportunity to develop skill, a wide field of experience leading to versatility, and the growth of awareness.

WAYS OF LEARNING

We shall also expect to find children learning in different ways—by exploration, by repetition, through creation, and through their contact with each other, with their teacher, and with other adults. There is no single way of learning ; each process may be useful according to the nature of the individual concerned and the stage through which he is passing.

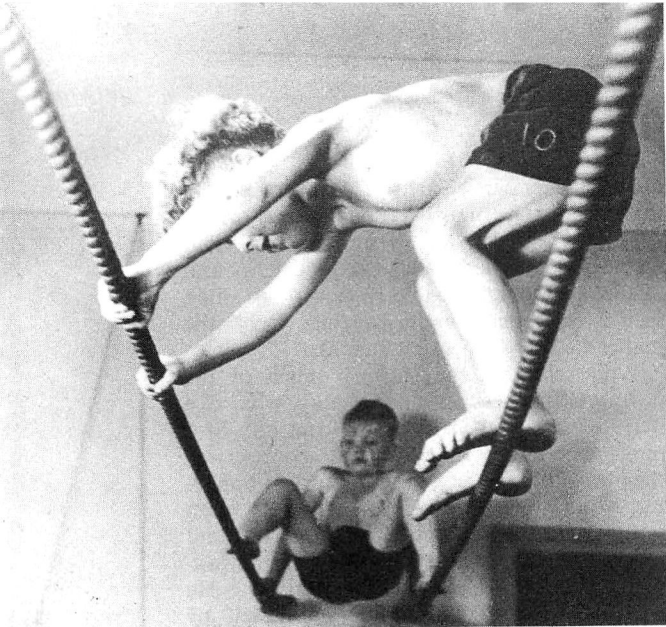
EXPLORATION, REPETITION, AND CREATION

Most children of three years old when they use paint and brushes for the first time splash about, trying the effect of brush and paint on themselves or on the paper in a purely exploratory way. This stage is usually succeeded by careful but still exploratory handling of brush and colour, but as time goes on increasing certainty leads to a deliberate shaping of something new, and the stage of creation is reached. This in its turn gives way to further exploration, and so the process goes on.

We speak of teaching a child to ride a bicycle, but if we recollect our own experience we may remember that, although a friend



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may have propped up our early efforts and helped us to gain confidence, it was in the main our own clumsy searchings for the right balance which suddenly seemed to click into a pattern, so that at one moment we could not ride, and in the next, mysteriously, we could. Children may learn to ride a bicycle with or without adult help, but they certainly pass through a period of exploration and of repeated efforts until, having achieved the technique, they ride insatiably, apparently for the sheer joy of riding, and in order to establish real mastery. This achieved, the appetite for riding seems to diminish, and finally they use their bicycles mainly for necessary locomotion.

In a movement period children may explore the possibilities of materials such as bats and balls, a ladder, or even some fresh chalk marks; they may experiment with their limbs in movements such as stretching or curling up tightly; they may attempt a new feat such as turning a somersault or a cartwheel, or trapping a football; or they may

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sit astride some object and try to find out what it feels like to be a horseman.

Sometimes their attempts seem to lead nowhere ; at other times it is obvious that a real start has been made and that something fresh is being deliberately shaped and created.

LEARNING FROM OTHER

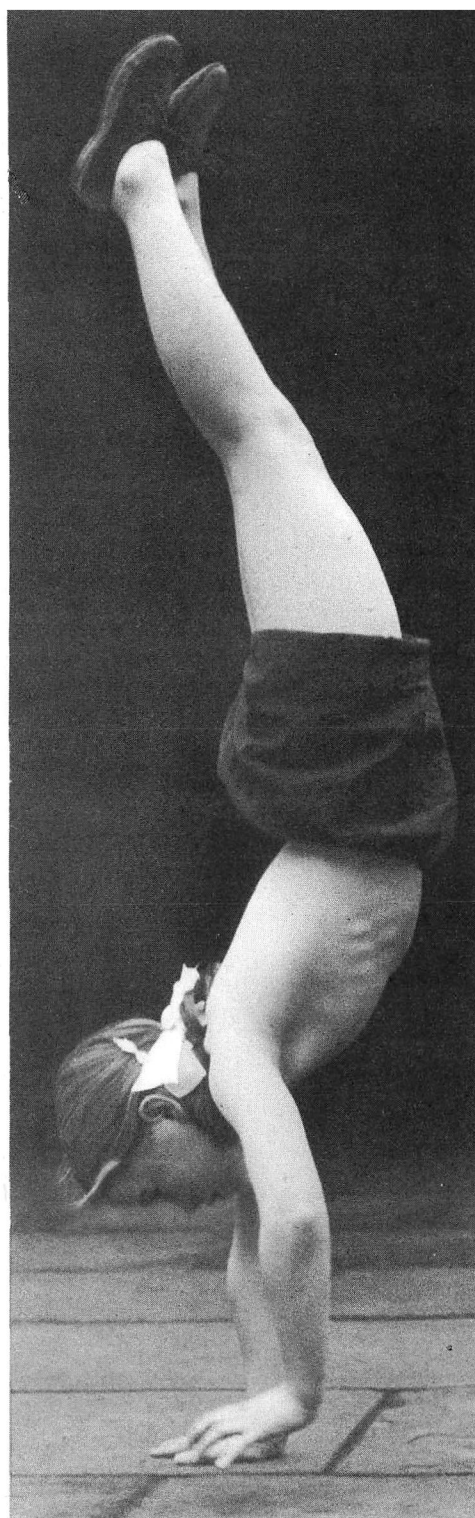
CHILDREN

Children learn much from one another, sometimes consciously, by copying another child, sometimes unconsciously, from the general atmosphere created by their companions, whether at home or in school. They also learn much through the give and take which living in a family or a community demands. At first this give and take may be no more than an avoidance of interference with other children ; later a child may join a small group which has a common purpose—such as building a structure or kicking a ball—but in which the members work as individuals ; later still he may learn to play a part as a member of a team. Children's play, for example, passes through all these stages.

While children certainly vie with one another in all sorts of fields (including, for example, the number of ices they claim to have eaten, or the number of kittens their cat may be expected to have), they are less seriously competitive than many adults believe. They have their rivalries, but if these are sustained it is usually under adult influence, and they more readily accept their own limitations and the skill of others than do their parents, or even their teachers.

LEARNING FROM THE TEACHER

If children learn much from each other they also learn a great deal from their contact with adults, and in school, of course, from



their teachers particularly. They absorb much that is not specifically taught, but which lives later on (as we all know) as a vivid memory of the personality of the teacher and of the atmosphere created by him ; this often seems to remain more distinct than the matter he has deliberately taught.

While children may absorb much of the flavour of the teacher's personality, what else may we expect them to learn from him in a movement lesson, and in what manner will they learn it ? First of all, the sort of opportunity they will enjoy partly depends upon whether he takes them into the playground or the hall, to the baths or to the playing-field, or to a neighbouring hillside. He will also decide (within limits imposed by circumstances which may be beyond his control) what sort of material is to be available, and how long the period is to last. Thus, in a measure, the teacher sets the stage.

Within the period itself he determines the general lines to be followed, and because he has a fund of knowledge (and maybe some personal skill), there is much that the children may learn from him. But in addition to his knowledge of movement he knows much about the growth and development of children, and, where his particular class is concerned, he has perspective, for he is able to see the children as they are, in relation to what they were a few days, weeks, or months ago. He also has an eye to the future.

There is thus in every lesson a complex pattern woven from a number of threads. There are the threads spun, as it were, by each child himself—the threads of growth (dependent partly upon inherited qualities and partly upon environment), and the threads of his own efforts which lead him to explore, to shape, and to create new forms ; or, through repetition, to establish fresh techniques. The individual pattern of each child is interwoven and modified by those of other children to

form the pattern of the group or class. These threads are always growing, the pattern constantly forming and changing. The teacher may remain aloof, content to bend proceedings according to his will ; or he may let the threads of his own knowledge and experience, his own sense of perspective, fashion and enrich the texture. Sometimes the threads of the teacher will dominate the pattern and those of the children will follow ; sometimes they will intermingle, and sometimes separate, following, apparently, independent paths, yet always sharing in a common process. Where all goes well both children and teacher discover, and enjoy, each other's artistry.

These ways of learning are not new, and they are not unknown in physical education, for they have been used by wise and watchful games coaches for very many years. Teachers of swimming, too, help children to learn through exploration, through repetition, through the confidence they inspire, and through instruction. They think the time well spent which is given to exploring the feel of the water before any instruction in strokes begins. They give definite information as the children become ready for it, judging when repetition is necessary and when something new may be added. They know when to leave a child to himself, when he needs time to feel his way, and when to intervene with specific directions. Their methods vary with different groups, and according to the conditions under which they are working.

The movement period is an occasion for activity ; for the development of skill, versatility, and fluency. Together both teacher and children will find that there is no one way of learning, that instruction is only one of the ways of teaching, and that discipline lies not only in obedience to a pattern, but also in the ability, either alone or in collaboration with others, to create one.



CHAPTER FOUR

SOME FIELDS OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION

IN CHAPTER ONE there is a description of the various ways in which children seem to use movement when left to themselves.

It may be convenient to repeat it here.

'A wide space will often set them off, skipping, hopping, running and shouting, whirling their arms and performing all sorts of—to the adult—curious antics. One may be seen walking rather exactly along a curving line, muttering to himself; another appears to find satisfaction in jumping up and down, making his impact with the ground as terrific as possible; and another indulges in a swaying, rolling motion. While some children thus seem to find satisfaction in movement for its own sake, others may be led through their lolloping, swaying, or creeping, into make-believe; they become somebody else and, alone or with others, play out an idea. Others will turn to a game, whether of the free running sort with a ball, or the more manipulative variety, such as conkers or marbles. If there is anything on which to climb or swing, anything through which to crawl or creep, then many children will swarm round it. Water is also a certain attraction, at first only by offering the sheer enjoyment of its feel and sound, later also as a medium for certain skills.'

If this description is a realistic one it gives a useful indication of the different ways in which we might think about movement when planning a programme of physical education. Of course, the younger the children the less likely they are to be active in such a way as to provide the adult with tidy categories. They will pass easily from, for example, dramatic

play to a game of chase, thence to experimentation on apparatus, which may, in its turn, send them back into make-believe. It is often difficult to distinguish between their work and their play, their playing at work and their working at play. While we remember that young children's activities do not fall into clear categories, we may reasonably expect play in water to develop gradually into swimming (if facilities are available), for which definite periods will be necessary; games of chase and play with balls (which contain the germ of major games) will give rise to a need for pitches and playing-fields. Enjoyment of movement for its own sake, and as a means of impersonation, are the forerunners of dance and drama respectively. This seems to leave climbing, swinging, leaping, and feats of various kinds to the category commonly called 'P.T.'

Practical considerations, such as the availability of a field, swimming bath, hall, or apparatus, may well dictate the nature of a movement period, and as children grow older they are ready and able to concentrate on one aspect of movement such as swimming, football, or dance, for a whole period, but clear-cut divisions of this kind are unlikely to be suitable for younger children. What is necessary is that we should be fully aware of the different opportunities presented by the various activities which may be included in physical education.

GAMES

The main quality in any game is the element of play—fascinating because incalculable, charged with both chance and skill. A game is never wholly serious although we may enter

into it with all our might and main. We use the word 'play' in many contexts; speaking of 'the play of words', 'to play with an idea', 'to play the fool', 'to play fast and loose', and we may describe the wind as 'playing on the water'. All these expressions seem to suggest light-heartedness, and the unpredictable.

It seems necessary to emphasize the meaning of play in relation to games in the primary school, because there is sometimes a tendency for children's play to be too heavily influenced by the type and manner of adult games. So many primary schools have taken on the tradition of the secondary schools, instead of building their own; though a number of rural schools show a more independent spirit, suiting their games to meet their needs and often inventing their own variants (91).

This emphasis on the playful element in games does not imply the elimination of ardent endeavour, nor the neglect of skill; but it does imply that both should be tempered to fit the needs of the children, which, by the age of ten, will be very varied. One or two may have the maturity, and with it the capacity, for the technique and sustained effort of children of twelve or thirteen or even older; one or two will show the capacity we might expect of children of only seven or eight or even younger; the remainder will be scattered between these limits. It is not easy to judge what is suitable nor, having considered the matter, to provide opportunity to fit all needs; but generally speaking technique should develop as an outcome of play rather than precede it.

At the infant stage most children find a sufficient element of play in the unexpected behaviour of the ball, which is difficult for



them to control. As their skill grows they will choose a more complicated situation by collaborating with, or striving against, another child. (Some six-year-olds will play a sort of cricket, with probably not more than three to a game.) As skill develops 'sides' get bigger, and more space is needed for increasing powers of hitting, kicking, running and throwing; but children of this age are very far from wanting anything approaching the size of adult pitches, and the collaboration demanded by real team work is late in developing because it is a complex matter, demanding both a sufficiency of skill and the ability to take in the manoeuvres of two opposing groups.

Games demand flexibility of thought and

action—an ability to meet with and enjoy the unexpected. The competitive element adds zest, and stimulates endeavour in a manner which is exhilarating and helpful, so long as the idea of 'play' is not forgotten. In games also it is possible to enjoy a relationship with others which is perhaps peculiar to the playing-field.

All these opportunities should be made available to children as they become ready to enjoy them.

SWIMMING

All children seem to enjoy water as long as it is not too deep (92). Babies appear to revel in their baths and resent being removed from

them, and most children become absorbed if they are allowed to play with or in water, splashing, paddling, and apparently enjoying its qualities in every possible way. If a shallow pool is available some of them will, at an early age, make crude swimming movements, and, with a little (sometimes without) help, learn to swim. Most children probably reach a stage when they would like to extend their play to acquire the technique of swimming, though some are nervous and diffident because they have not been able to enjoy experiences in shallow water before they face a swimming bath, or an unsympathetic sea, and a few have a permanent dislike of deep water.

Swimming strokes are definite techniques needing specific instruction and practice of a repetitive kind. Some people enjoy practising and perfecting these techniques, and work hard at swimming for its own sake; but many only wish to learn enough to extend a little their powers of playing in water. Most young children want to feel at home in the water and will practise in order to achieve that experience; a few may want to practise with more serious intent, but most of them reach this stage of development after they have left the primary school. Diving may be compared with acrobatic play such as doing cartwheels and handstands, and carries with it a similar exhilaration.

It is obviously useful to be able to swim, but apart from its utilitarian value it is a means of extending the movement education of children in a further direction. Movement in water has a different quality from movement on the ground or in the air, and demands a different kind of effort. If versatility is to be one of the aims of physical education it is desirable that swimming should be included. There is a further reason—children who find it difficult to achieve satisfaction in other fields of movement sometimes come into their own in the water.





MOVEMENT AS AN ART

Many of us find it difficult to explain exactly what we mean by 'art'. In school it often means a period on the time-table in which pencils and paint are used; in everyday life it often refers to pictures hanging in a picture gallery. We probably find it easier to explain our meaning when we say of some cricketer, or worker in metal or wood, 'He is a real artist'. We mean then that the man is more than efficient; that he seems to enjoy skilful execution for its own sake, and that his performance is shot through with an imagination which lifts it out of the commonplace, and to which we respond because it kindles our own.

Some people are artists in their use of words, and some in their dealings with other people. This suggests that they are more than efficient; it implies more than having a good vocabulary and a knowledge of grammar, and more than being polite, or even courteous. For example, a good hostess is an artist in her dealings with people; she creates the sort of atmosphere in which her guests feel welcome, and in which they enjoy not only themselves, but one another. This demands sensitivity and imagination; it is not merely a matter of good organization, or even of gaiety or vivacity.

There are of course only a few people whose capacity as artists can be described as great, and we very seldom meet them; but most of us know people whose way of cooking, gardening, playing football, or teaching, for example, shows plainly both a delight in execution for its own sake and that imaginative quality which makes us exclaim, 'He is a real artist'.

Teachers know that young children readily show the imaginative capacity of artists, and find them unafraid—unlike many adults—of working expressively in form and colour,

words, sound, and movement. We are here concerned with movement as an art. This implies an attitude towards movement which is quite different from our approach to swimming or gymnastics, for example, because we shall be concerned not with movement as a means of performing some feat, but with its expressive quality. All movement, as we have seen in the first chapter, has an expressive quality whether we intend it or not; but in shaking hands, walking down the street, or hitting a tennis ball, we are not aware of this, though it may be apparent to a spectator who describes it in such terms as 'awkward', 'cramped', 'confident', or 'graceful'.

In movement regarded as an art its expressive character will be uppermost in our minds, because this reflects its imaginative quality. In describing it we may use such words as 'shape', 'pattern', 'texture', 'rhythm'; or others such as 'light', 'heavy', 'slow', 'quick', 'steady', 'flowing'. We may also describe what we see by such terms as 'sincere', 'superficial', 'clever', or 'childlike'.

Movement as an art is usually thought of in terms of either dance or drama. Children slide easily from one to the other and there is no need to keep the two apart; it is only necessary that we should appreciate the differences between these arts in order that we may understand the different experiences of the children.

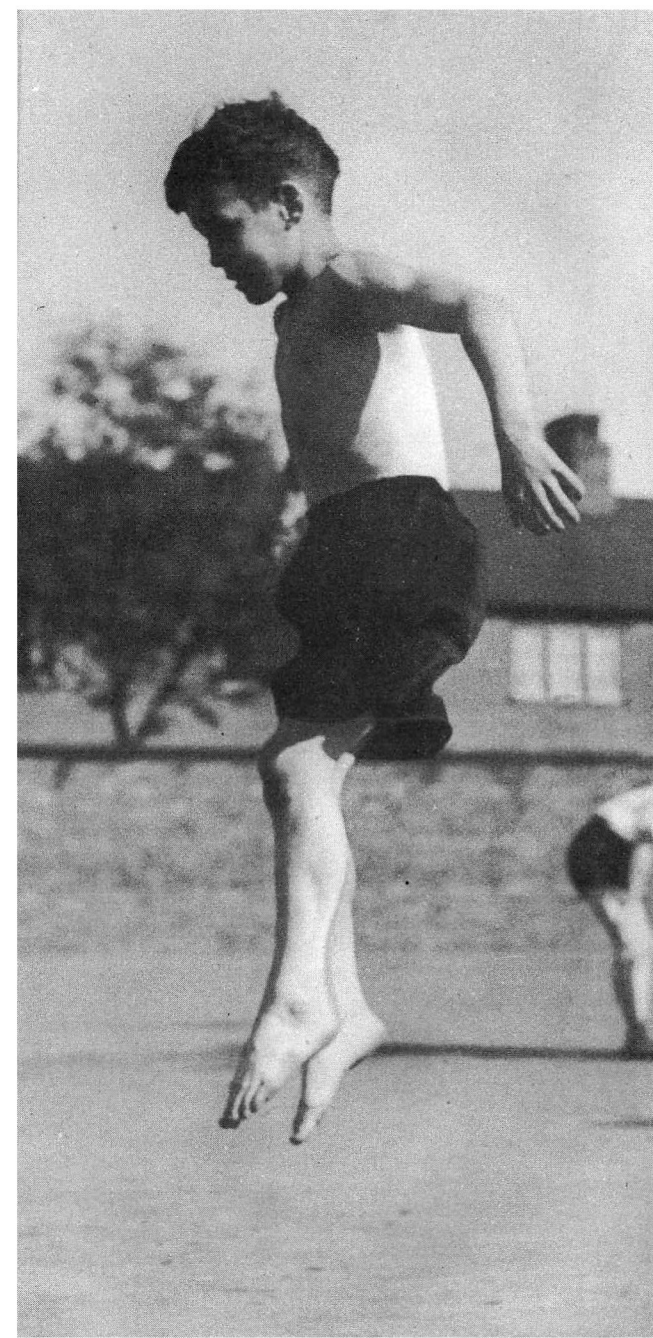
DANCE

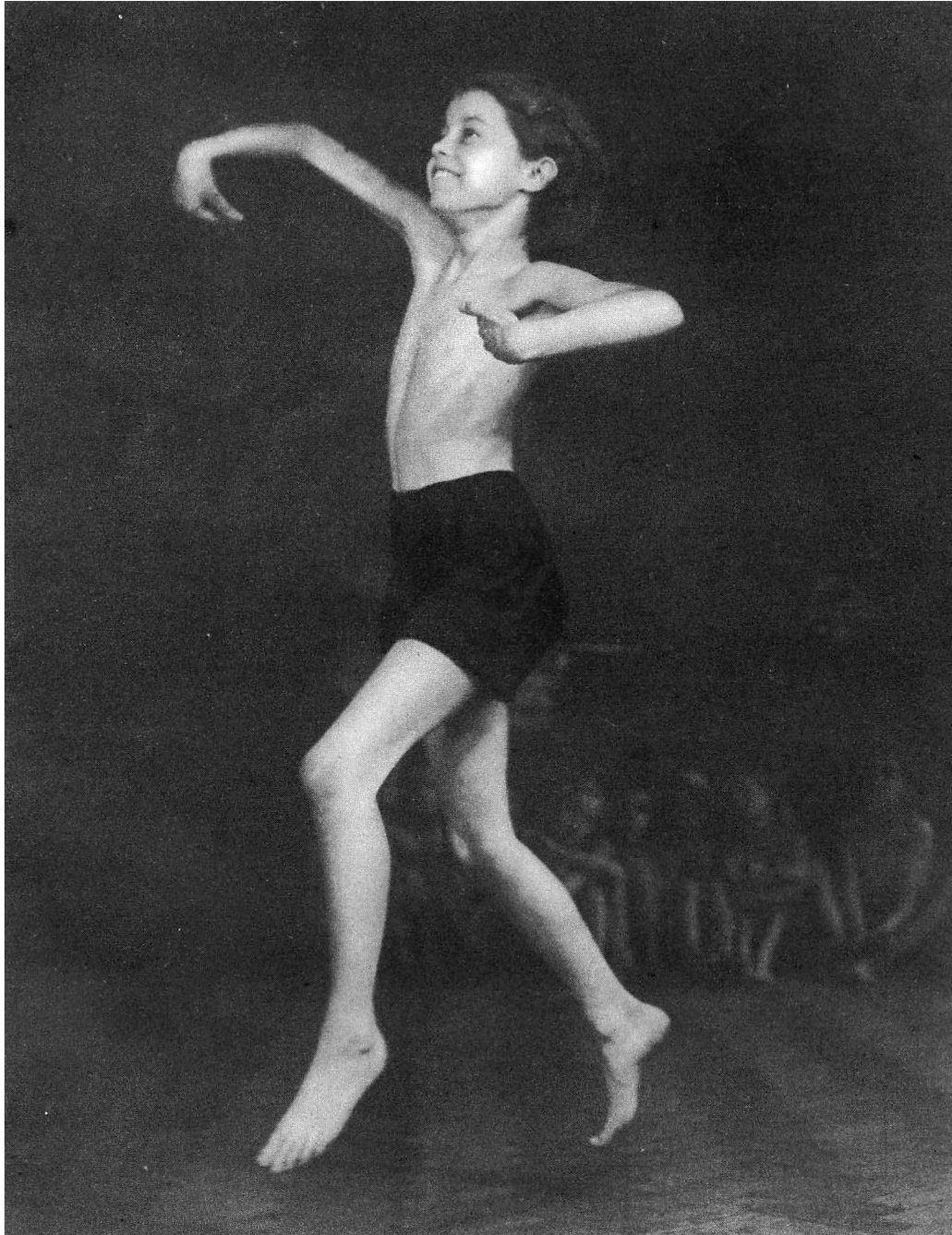
The source of dance is similar to that of play; it arises from an overflow of feeling, energy, or excitement. It is for this reason that, in the past, people celebrated their great occasions in dance, song, and games; and it is for this reason that some people dance today. Social dance may or may not reach a level where we recognize it as an art; it is however important to recognize that its style, both in pattern and

quality, is expressive—like any other art of the period to which it belongs. It is an adult product. The ancient round dance, the pavane, minuet, waltz, and jitterbug, have all been typical of their period, which they have reflected, not in the concrete form of the drama with its situations and characters, but in the abstract. We should understand this quite clearly if we could compare a lady and gentleman of the 18th century performing a minuet with a modern couple dancing a foxtrot. No description would be necessary to bring out the differences in social behaviour between the two periods; the two dances would symbolize them. Dance always tends to be symbolic rather than realistic; even in a dance-drama the action is not representational (as any visitor to the ballet knows), but is more concerned with the ideas, tensions, and counter-tensions, behind the theme.

In the past people have danced spontaneously on some occasion, such as a deliverance from danger, and afterwards, on succeeding anniversaries, both form and steps have been established through repetition to become part of a tradition which is handed down from one generation to another. In sophisticated societies the same dances have been elaborated or modified (often through the agency of dancing masters) and have played their part in the complicated pattern of fashionable society. Those that survive, whether simple or sophisticated, are enjoyable and of interest; but they constitute only a very small part of the whole field of movement, and, as has already been said, they are the outcome of an adult culture of the past.

In those periods when folk dances have been a regular feature of the life of a community there is no doubt that the children would, from an early age, have watched these dances, and become familiar with the tunes; later, as they grew older, they would have joined in with their elders, picking up the dance as they



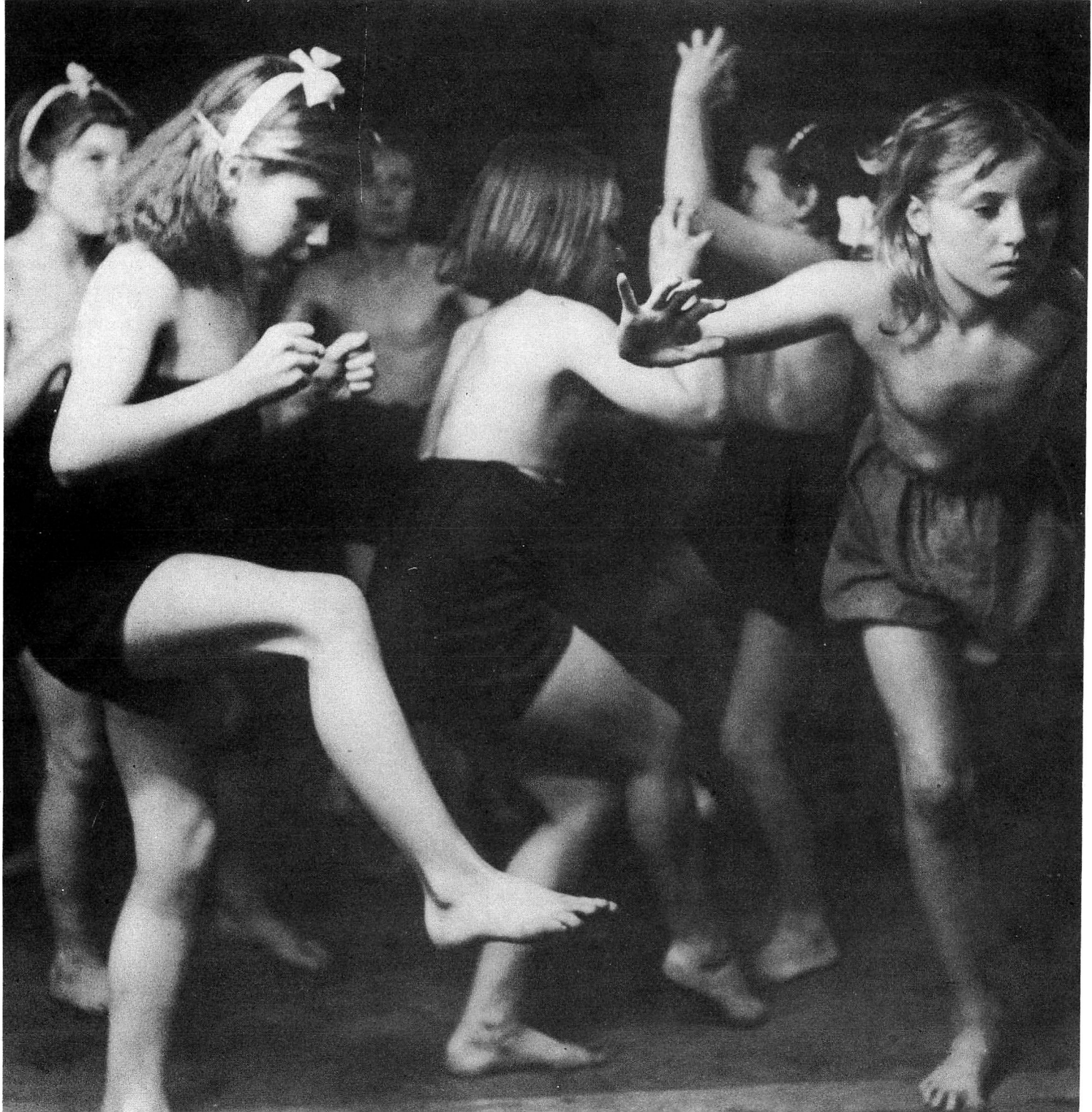


went along. It is probable that, in company with older people, children would take part in certain dances at an earlier age, and more readily, than they would be likely to do in association with children of much the same age as themselves. Removed from the influence of a dancing community, it is doubtful whether they are really ready for the somewhat intricate patterns of most English folk dances before the last years of the primary stage; though they might invent simple patterned dances of their own.

In dance, movement is enjoyed for its own sake—for its quality, shape and pattern. A dancer who leaps (94, 95), glides, or stamps, enjoys the essence of leaping, gliding or stamping; his is a different attitude from that of the gymnast who, in leaping, vaults over an obstacle (compare 94 and 95 with 74), of the housewife who glides her iron over a cloth, or of the child who stamps his foot in fury.

While music lies in the field of sound, movement lies in the field of space; through dance, which is not tied down to utilitarian purposes, it is possible to explore and exploit all qualities of movement in space. It seems important that we should help children to enjoy as rich an experience in movement as we do in language, where we try to help them to widen their vocabulary, to use language flexibly, to write and speak expressively. In movement our aims may be described as similar. This means that although we may familiarize children with certain set patterns (for example, steps such as waltz or polka steps, or national dances), we should have no fixed picture in our minds in relation to dance movement; it may be soft and delicate, slow and sustained, fast and twirling, or vigorous and strong. Infinite variety is possible (93, 96, 97, 98).

When children work as artists in form and colour we do not expect their paintings to be





Infinite variety is possible

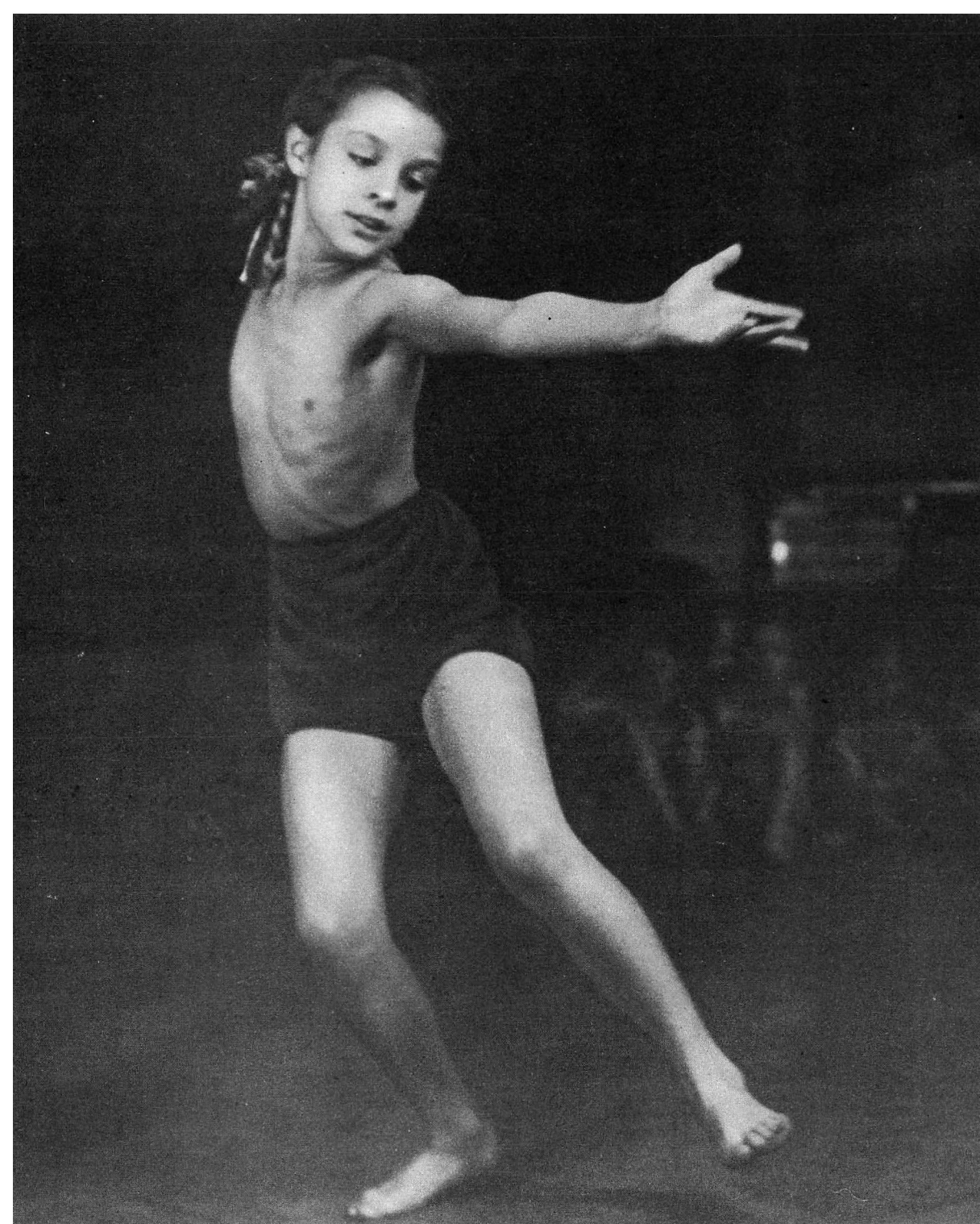
like those of adults ; we are accustomed to accept their notions of colour, pattern, and proportion, which to us are strange. We may expect the same sort of thing when children work as artists in movement. Their rhythms are likely to be unusual, their shaping of movement unorthodox in adult eyes. Sometimes their efforts may be repetitive and symmetrical, but often they will be irregular and asymmetrical.

Just as we look for imagination, sincerity, and sensitivity in their work in form and colour, so we may look for similar qualities in their work in dance (98). To explore the whole sphere of movement does not, of course, imply carelessness, or vagueness ; emphasis on the imagination does not mean an uncontrolled overflow of feeling, or that the teacher has nothing to do. It is for the teacher to provide the kind of material that kindles the imagination ; to help the children to give clear shape and form to their ideas ; and to open out for them, as they become ready, fresh possibilities in the field of movement.

It is clear that the relationship of dance to music will present difficulties. Children may dance to music, or music may arise from and be fitted to their dance. They can, and will, dance without any accompaniment, being perfectly alive to the rhythm and quality of their movements.

As we know, children often accompany movement with sound. They may use their voices melodically, or to produce an accompaniment which is percussive in character ; they may supplement these efforts with such instruments as drums, cymbals, and recorders (99, 100) ; and from these experiments may emerge patterns of sound which can be described as music.

If folk dances are attempted then music and movement must match ; they have grown up together and the partnership should be preserved. While there is much controversy



about the relationship of movement to music, there is no doubt at all that in folk dancing the dancers should be alive to the general character (or quality) of movement suggested by the music, and to the swing of the phrase. To move to counting is to deaden sensitivity and to put music at a discount.

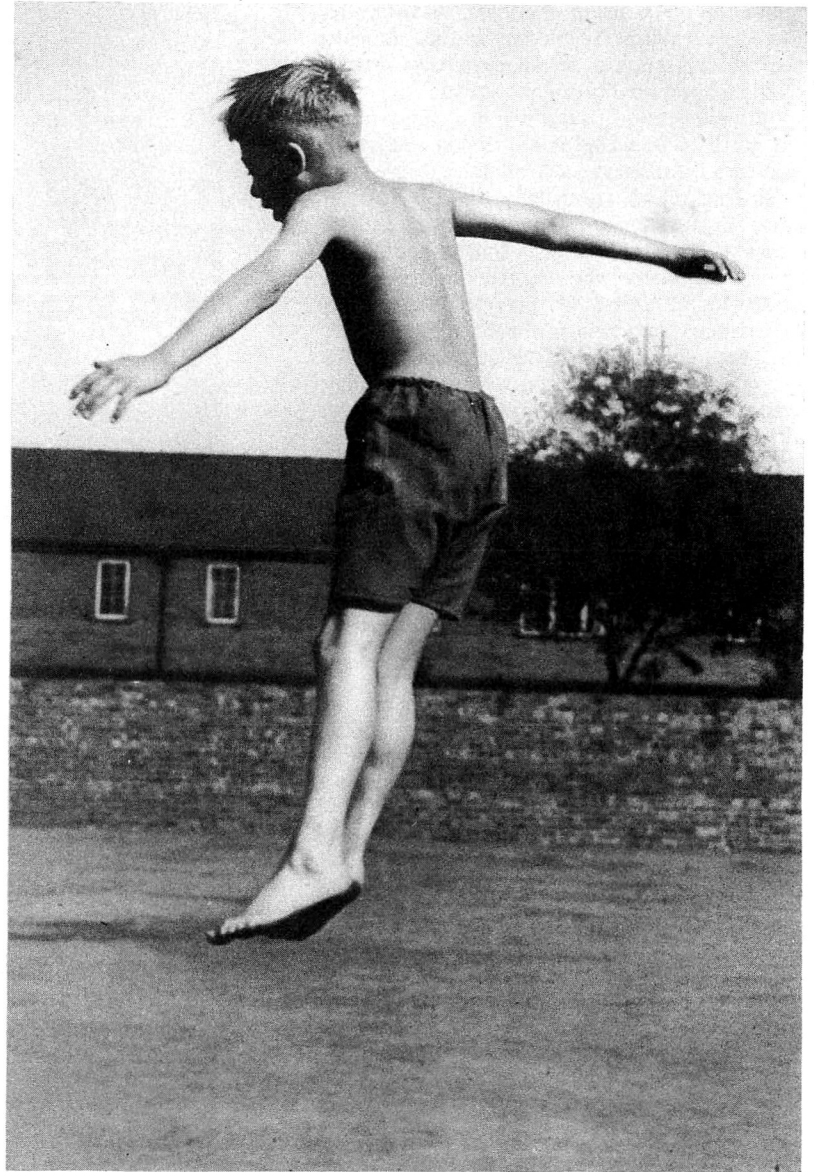
Singing games are usually the survivals, in childish form, of ancient dance rituals. The word 'game' suggests that the emphasis should be on the play element in them. An observant adult will be able to judge, from experience, when to introduce them, and which to select. Having shown the children the game and played it with them once or twice, he may well leave it alone. If he has judged rightly the children will continue to play it independently during playtime and out of school; if he has misjudged his moment the children will drop it just as they will neglect a book which has been introduced before they are ready.

Movement is also used to teach the elements of music such as the different time rhythms, recognition of varying intensities of sound, and recognition of pitch variation, and of phrasing. Such a use of movement may be of value in the teaching of music, but its value as an education in movement is doubtful.

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DRAMATIC MOVEMENT

There are, as we have seen, many kinds of movement, and many associations in the minds of ordinary people with the word 'movement'. Those who watch children with the special intention of finding out how and for what purpose they move will, sooner or later, discern a quality not hitherto discussed in this survey. A child not only runs and jumps and crouches, but he may run joyfully or wearily, jump hilariously or anxiously, crouch in fun or in fear (101, 102, 103). It is not a far step from this to the discovery that a child can, if the mood takes him, run like a horse, jump like a cat, or crouch like a Red Indian.

This kind of movement, which we tend to describe somewhat vaguely as 'dramatic', is

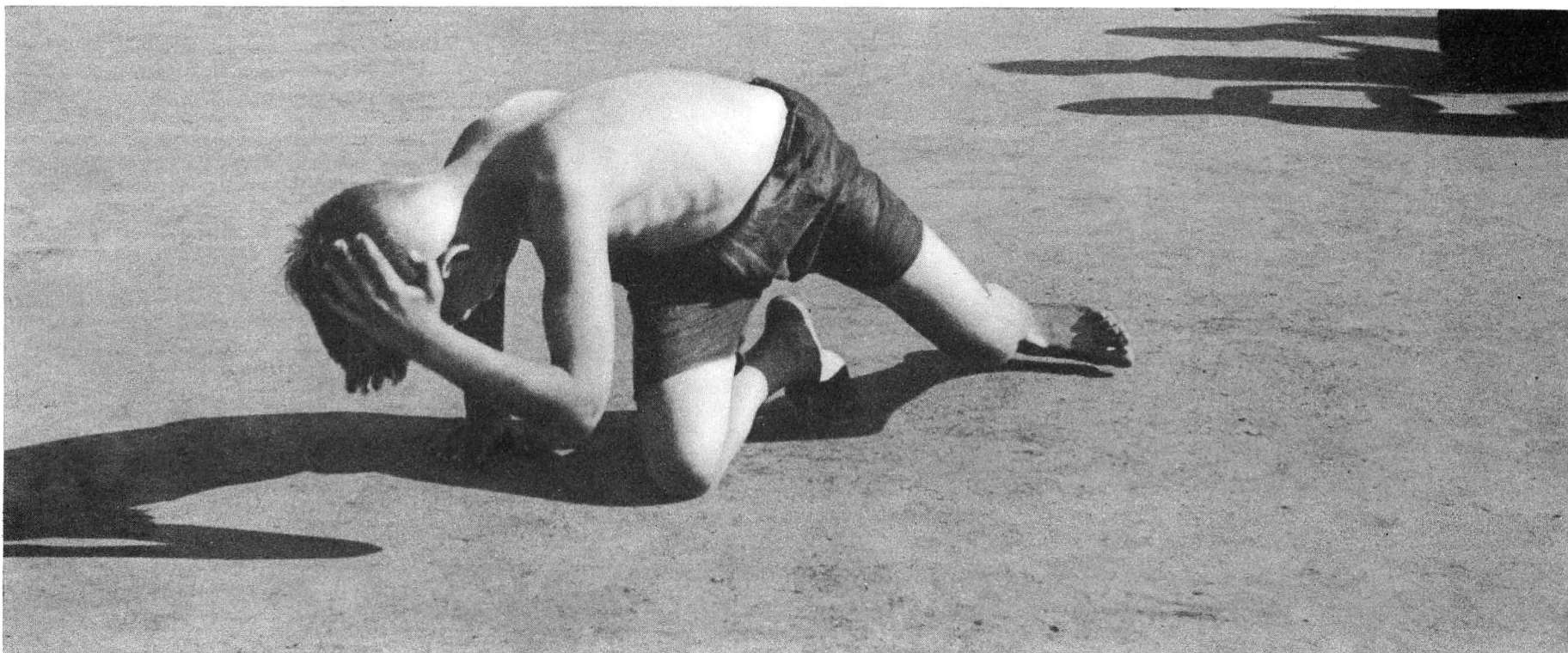
evidently inspired by feeling, for which it serves as an outlet. Dramatic movement is apparently the overflow of the energy or emotion which comes into being in moments of exhilaration. In the past the most exalted feeling took shape in religious ritual or festival dances; in the more restrained life of today the same emotional overflow finds an outlet in the subdued orgies of a Bank Holiday or a Christmas charade. The great art of the theatre as we know it, and the varied forms of ancient ritual and dance, all sprang from the same source, the need felt by people to come to terms with their exciting experiences and to put them into a shape or pattern of their own creation.

The main features, then, of 'dramatic' movement in children, as in adults, are, first that they arise from emotion of some kind,

and secondly that they are made deliberately by an individual to put this emotion or some idea related to it into material form.

There seem to be two ways in which we can try to help this dramatic instinct of children to grow into something which has vital quality. First, it is surely important to be able to recognize the various forms which dramatic movement can take, and it follows naturally that we must also consider how a grown-up person can help or hinder the child's development.

The dramatic play of children seems to be of several kinds. One kind is largely imitative, and in such play events which have been experienced, or people who have made an impression, are woven into dramatic scenes or impersonations, often strongly realistic but coloured by the peculiar interests and



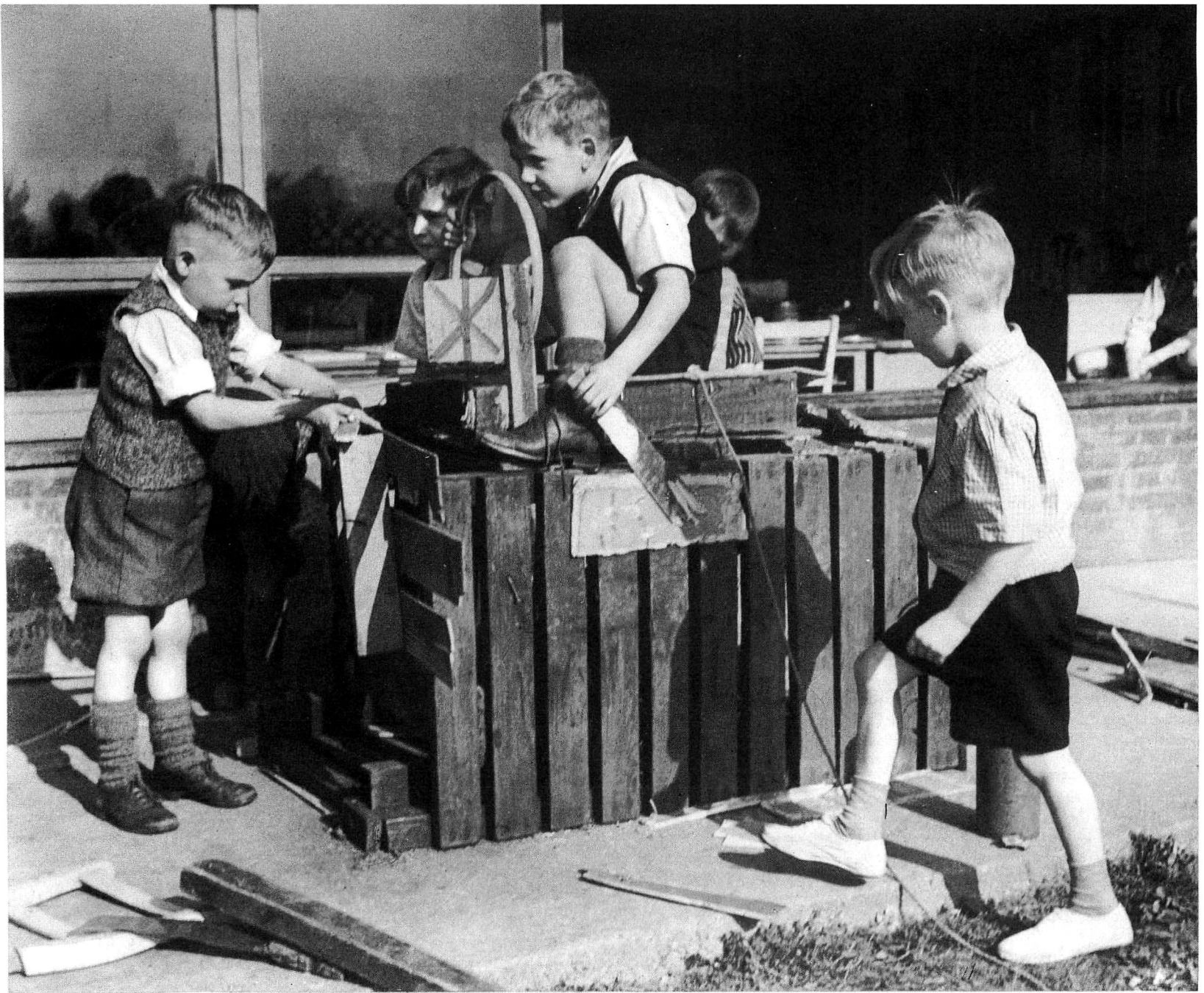


points of view of children. In such play children re-create for themselves the tea party, the doctor's visit, or the bus ride, or become people they know or admire such as father, teacher, or an engine driver. Such actions as these, as already suggested, seem to be an attempt to come to terms with situations which in real life are exciting, alarming, or difficult to understand. To assume the authority of a father or a teacher compensates for submission to such authority; playing over such experiences as air-raids or accidents gives an outlet for the alarm or disturbance these events have caused. It would clearly be as unwise to suppress such dramatic play as it would be to exploit or make use of it for a performance.

Another kind of dramatic play is more exploratory and inventive in character (104). In such play children explore situations they have never encountered in real life, and assume characters they can never have met, or become animals or birds.

These inspirations may come from stories—Odysseus, St. George, the Pied Piper—or perhaps from material things—trees, water, a cloak or a hat, a sword, a pile of stones. On all such materials the light of imagination plays (105) and, as the mood changes, the same thing may become a fortress, or a ship in full sail; the cloak may conceal a robber or grace a king.

An observer will note that often without any properties at all a child can by means of sheer quality of movement suggest the inherent character of such varying subjects as a tree, a fish, an elephant, a house. Children seize upon the strange fantastic characters of the old fairy tale and, in what seems like effortless play, a new dramatic form takes shape. The inspiration may come from the movement itself, so that stealthy creeping suggests being a Red Indian, stamping the feet becomes the action of a giant, bouncing

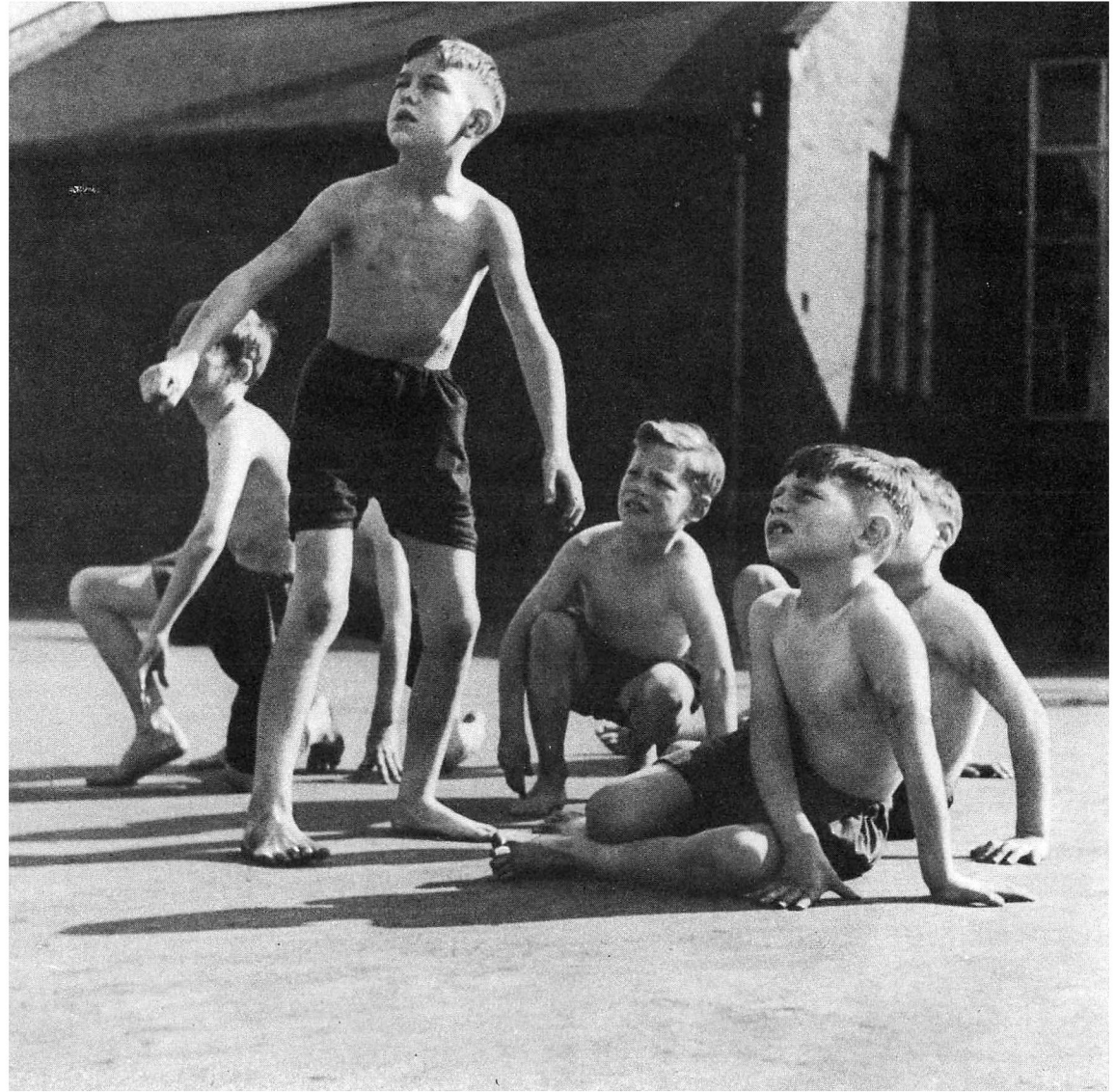


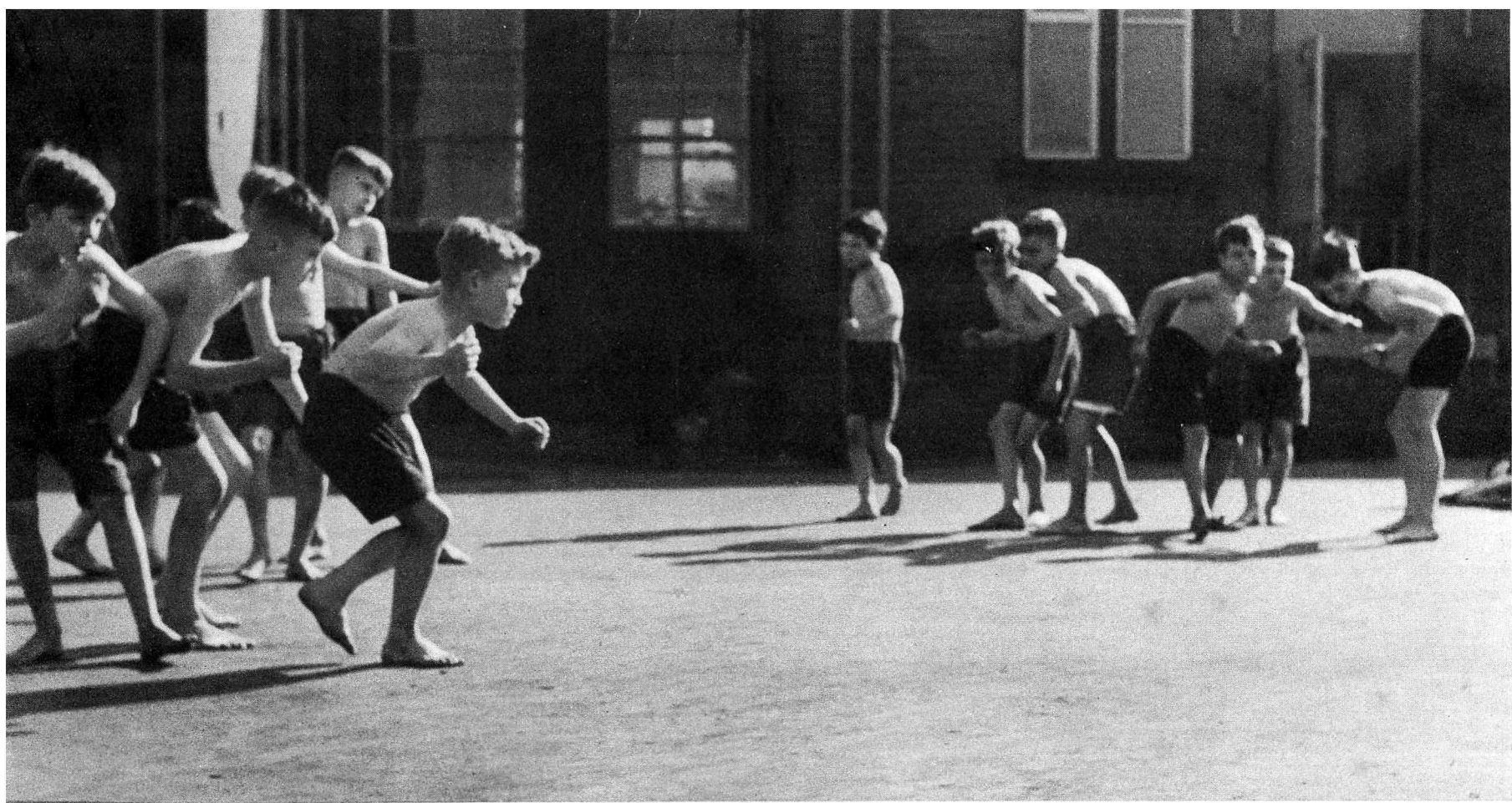
up and down on a chair suggests a horseman.

For the adult, the real responsibility lies in seeing that children are not starved for lack of such experience. We can and should provide the means of experience through material—stories, pictures, properties, a dressing-up box, and, if possible, space. We can also help the children to realize their own ideas with clearness. In movement this means that we can help children to explore and understand the dramatic significance of different kinds of movement, such as the difference between coming slowly to a halt or stopping suddenly; and to realize the ideas which may arise from such experiences as running quickly, stopping suddenly, and retreating slowly. The unexpected or surprising element in movement, which is the language of comedy, or the exaggerated movements of buffoonery or burlesque, are all native to children's play, and if we are aware of this much may grow out of it.

Communication from one person to another is an essential part of drama as an art, and after the early stages of marked individualism children quite naturally develop a tendency to play together in order to work out a corporate action (106). New and exciting movements develop through such interplay, and the outstanding themes of most of the great stories of the world, such as the leader with his followers, the opposition of two antagonists, the brave stand of a group against an oncoming force, are often expressed by children through movement, and with great sensitivity (107).

Through such actions grows an understanding of the quality of movement needed to express character—for instance, the variability of pace, strength and direction in those movements which indicate an elusive character, or the sustained strength, pace and direction of a monumental character.





All these experiments in movement may be helped and guided, but it is abundantly clear that the kind of help given ought to be very different from the kind of instruction which results in the stilted actions, formal gestures and imitated attitudes which so often are all that children achieve when they are 'produced' in a set play. This brings us inevitably to the element in drama which is often over-stressed in schools, the element of entertainment. It is only too tempting to use

children's sense of drama to make a show for an audience. In such productions (for often quite young children are 'produced') the natural qualities of dramatic movement are influenced by the need to amuse an audience.

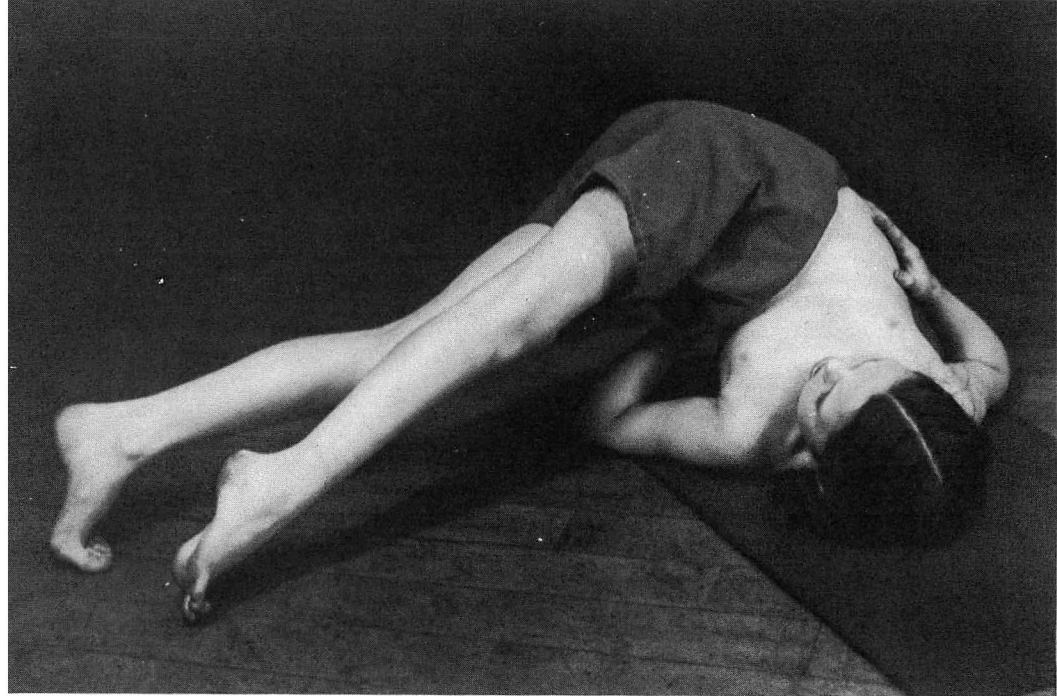
It is obvious that this association of entertainment with drama has suggested that a school hall, even for young children, should have a stage at one end, for children must be raised on a platform if people are to see them perform. It is worth considering whether the

stage, as such, has any other significance for young children. On the other hand, anything which makes their playing space of greater interest is likely to prove an inspiration. This would naturally suggest some means of providing varying heights, and the provision of materials and properties, all of which take their place with delightful words, music and stories, in heightening and enriching the children's experience, and in helping them to evolve and realize their own ideas clearly.

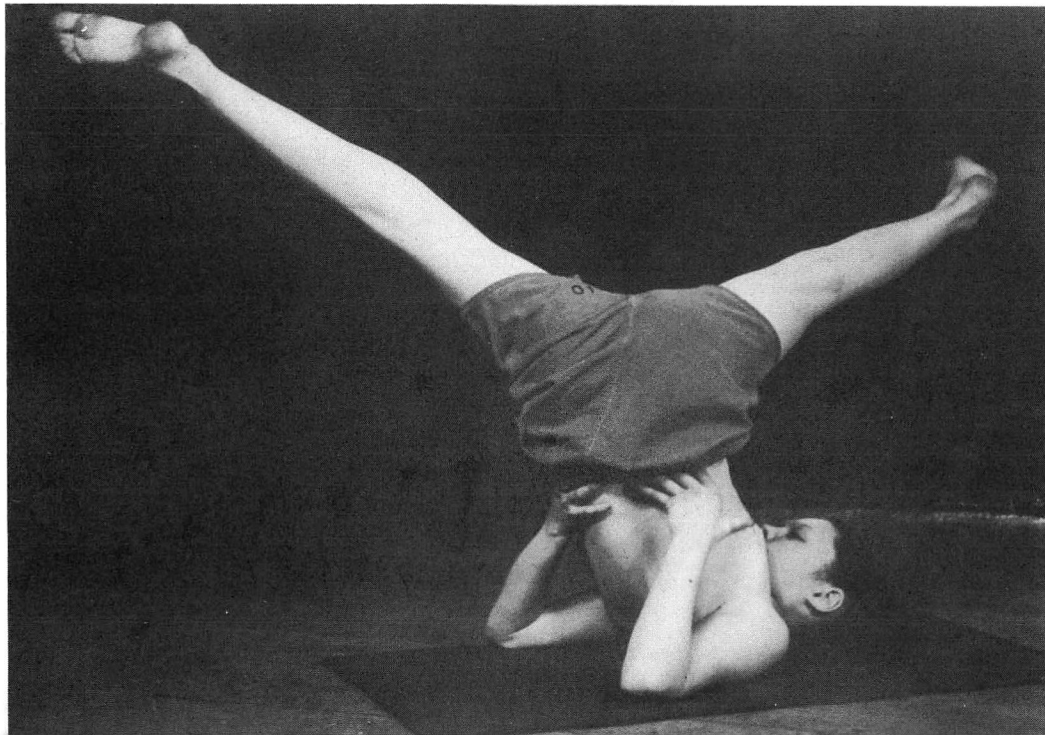
'P.T.'

There remains that aspect of physical education which is usually described in primary schools as 'P.T.'; in secondary schools as gymnastics. Gymnastics are defined in the dictionary as 'exercises developing the muscles'; they might be regarded as the grammar, or, possibly, the anatomy of movement. In gymnastics movement is considered in relation to such matters as the mobility of joints, and the tone of muscles; it is concerned with the full physiological functioning of the body, and is based on the study of anatomy and physiology. The underlying purpose is that of all-round harmonious development.

The rather narrow conception of gymnastics as 'exercise developing the muscles' is a product of the industrial age. As people



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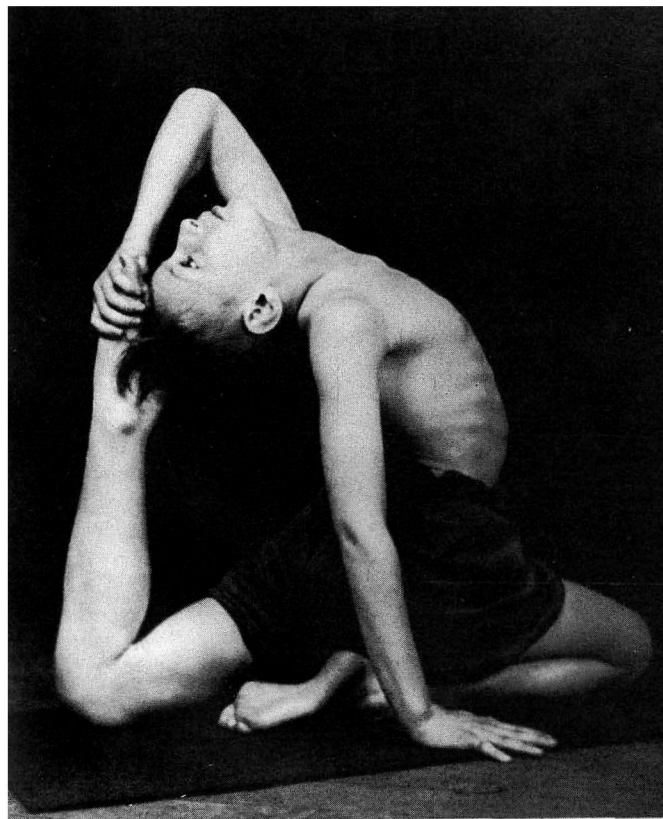
congregated in towns, worked in shops, offices and factories, and were increasingly transported to and from their work; as children were increasingly brought up in small houses with little open space in the neighbourhood, and lived a sedentary life in schools, it became apparent that something must be done to compensate for a mode of living where movement became more and more restricted. Compensation for lack of activity was one of the ideas which lay behind the introduction of gymnastics; there was also a remedial purpose in many of the movements included.

In primary schools where opportunities for games, swimming and dancing have, in comparison with the secondary schools, been rare, the 'P.T.' lesson has included a wider range of activities than would usually be found in a gymnastic lesson. Broadly speaking we may think of the 'P.T.' lesson as being

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concerned with the grammar of movement ; this will include movements which have a compensatory or remedial purpose (that is to say, movements concerned primarily with maintaining or restoring full physiological function (108, 109, 110)) ; it will include the practice of technique such as throwing, hitting, dribbling, running and leaping ; and it will include opportunities for agility on all sorts of apparatus (111, 112, 113, 114).

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There is much to be said for associating grammatical practice very closely with the function for which it is needed, rather than relegating it to the 'P.T.' lesson. Thus if it is discovered that a game is flagging because of the inability of the players to put on a spurt, or to swerve, play might be broken off in order to practise, immediately, activities that will encourage the qualities lacking; if dancers are hindered by rigidity of the hips and ankles, or by a certain heaviness, it might be as well to work forthwith towards the necessary mobility or lightness. Indeed it is possible to argue that the grammatical aspect of movement might be left to emerge from the requirements of games, swimming, and dancing, and might be practised accordingly, rather than that it should receive attention as a separate basic course.

This would presuppose a wide knowledge of movement, acute powers of observation on the part of the teacher, and opportunities for swimming, dancing, and games.

Under such a system no attention would be paid to the remedial type of movement which appears to be needed by many children; and it is possible that the idea of all-round development might be lost.

While conditions are restricted it seems well to use games periods for playing games rather than for the practice of techniques, dance periods for dance, and the baths for such activity as can only be carried out in water rather than for land drill; the necessary grammar would then be practised in the 'P.T.' periods.

The balance to be struck in these periods between compensatory or remedial movements, agility on apparatus, and various games practices, must be decided according to the conditions under which work is carried out, and according to the needs of the children. A period out of doors will differ from one held in the hall; a period for six-year-olds





will differ both in character and emphasis from one for nine-year-olds.

The function of different activities will vary according to the stage of development reached by the children. For example, individual play with a ball at three years is exploratory ; it becomes a game for the six-year-old, and may well be regarded and practised as a technique by a ten-year-old who is interested in cricket or football. At any stage exploration on climbing apparatus may give place to repetition in order to establish a technique. For example, children may, at first, be content to dangle from horizontal ropes, and, this achieved, they may practise this feat until, in the process of fresh exploration, it is relegated to the position of a technique which provides a starting-point for further endeavour.

In using repetition in order to establish a technique children may be described as working with a grammatical purpose.

The teacher too may introduce the same activity for different purposes. He may regard a pushing contest primarily as a game, or mainly as a strengthening exercise ; a leap may be looked upon as a means of clearing an obstacle or, grammatically, as an exercise for the hip, knee and ankle joints.

It is evident that most activities have more than one effect, and serve more than one purpose ; and that both purpose and effect may vary according to the stage reached by the children. It is important for the teacher to be aware of all the possibilities, and to be clear in what manner they are being exploited by himself or by the children.

Grammatical movement implies practice in diverse forms of movement which are held to serve as a basis of healthy living, and of the enjoyment of skill in various fields.

CHAPTER FIVE

PROGRESS

'HOW IS HE GETTING ON?' This is the question which from time to time we all ask. The reply, however simple, involves a judgment; we make comparisons and distinguish differences. But what sort of differences do we look for, and what comparisons can we make?

We may consider a child in relation to his own past, comparing him with what he was like last week, or six months or a year ago. Our judgment of 'now' is illuminated by our knowledge of 'then', and both throw light on the future. This ability to perceive the unfolding pattern of a child's development is an important source of the help and guidance which an adult can give to a child, for whom 'today' is vivid, while 'last year' is faint, and the future can only be grasped in such terms as 'When I am a big boy'.

Judgments which are based on a child's own pattern of growth and development are of a different kind from those which are made when a parent compares him with different members of the same family at the same age, or when a teacher compares his achievement with the average performance of his class. Most of us would probably give first consideration to a child's own record, though we may find it useful to check this from time to time against those of other children.

When we estimate progress we do so by considering differences; for example, between achievement last week and this week, last year and this year, between this six-year-old and that six-year-old, or between these ten-year-olds and our general picture of ten-year-olds. These differences reveal to us the pattern of growth and development.

It is important to consider how we estimate these differences. Some, such as differences

in height, weight, distance and accuracy of throw, speed in running, and height in jumping, can be measured. Information of this kind may be useful, especially when, over a period of time, a number of measurements enable us to make a record; but the picture presented by such measurements is incomplete.

Some facts can be enumerated—for example, the number of times a child repeats the same effort, or the number of different activities he chooses and the length of time he devotes to them. We may compare him in these tendencies with other children, or with himself at an earlier stage. Other differences can be distinguished according to the choice made; for example, we may notice that one child prefers construction to painting, another climbs instead of playing with a ball, while yet another chooses to read rather than to do anything vigorous. Again we may notice that over a period of time the choice changes and perhaps widens, or that the span of attention tends to increase.

A parent may be interested to note that his son, aged eight, can climb to the top of a certain tree, whereas three months ago he could only manage to get as far as the first branch; while his daughter, aged ten, reached a similar stage at the age of seven. A teacher may notice and record the fact that, whereas at the beginning of the term only three children could turn cartwheels, and only half the class could jump three feet in height, by the end of the term thirty children can turn cartwheels, while the whole class can clear three feet and many can jump much higher.

Information of this kind, which can be expressed in figures, may serve as a framework

for further observation, but no more than a framework. We should not be much wiser if a child were described to us as being of a certain height, weight, and age, and as being able to run at a certain speed and jump a certain height. We should want to inquire 'What sort of a child is he?' This leads us at once into the field of quality, and we use such words as 'lively', 'restless', 'placid', 'stubborn', 'sensitive'. These qualities fill in and round out for us the outline provided by the figures.

When we observe movement we may see that, although two children may clear the same height, one does so 'easily' (by which we probably mean fluently), while another jumps 'awkwardly', perhaps heaving himself over by what we described as 'brute force', rather than by a well-integrated pattern of efforts. One child, in turning cartwheels, may show a continuous flow of movement, while another who performs the same number of turns does so in an erratic and jerky manner.

We have noticed in Chapter One that even the inexpert onlooker is able to perceive and appreciate movement which flows easily, and that he is able to distinguish between movement which has this quality and movement which is awkward and inadequate. Expert observers, of course, are very discriminating and are able to appreciate fine differences. This kind of observation cannot be recorded in figures; it resides 'in the mind's eye'.

While it may be true that some people are generally more observant than others, it is likely that our powers of observation vary according to our interest, and that we are all of us most observant in those fields where our special interests lie. Three people may see the same woman coming along the street, but

they will not necessarily be interested in, and therefore notice, the same things about her. One may recognize her as a friend, another may be attracted by the colour of her dress, while the third may be impressed by her lively gait and manner. An artist and an engineer might together look at the same view, but their differing interests would lead them to examine different things, and if each were to give a description of what he saw the two accounts would not be alike.

Our observation of a child's progress depends upon the way in which we look at him. We may look at him chiefly in relation to his own record, we may compare his achievement with that of other children, or we may consider him in both ways. We may concern ourselves mainly with the sort of information which can be recorded in figures, we may pay more attention to the manner in which he does things, or we may interpret his development in the light of information of both kinds.

Assessment will vary, too, according to the nature of the activity. In swimming, for example, progress may readily be recorded in terms of the number of strokes made or the distance swum, though achievement will depend upon the skill with which the swimmer makes his strokes; that is to say on the quality and timing of his efforts and his poise in the water. In games, recording by means of figures may play a very small part (goals scored or runs hit), but progress will mostly be estimated in other ways, since the elastic qualities demanded by games cannot be measured numerically, neither can those by which development in dance and drama is manifested. In leaping and throwing we may notice and record height and distance, but we are more likely, at the primary stage, to be concerned with the manner in which these things are done.

In observing the development of movement there are many qualities we might have in

mind; these are some of the words we might use to describe them—energy, speed, haste, slowness, sluggishness, endurance, strength, lightness, heaviness, relaxation, smoothness, jerkiness, suppleness. Or we may use more general terms such as versatility or fluency. We may hope to see habitual jerkiness changing in the direction of ease and smoothness, sluggishness developing into a capacity for acceleration, or hastiness yielding to an increasing control of speed.

When we take a long-term view of development and consider, for example, children at three, six, and ten years, we are able to discern very great differences. The shorter the period of observation the less wide are these differences likely to be; and the less easy is it, therefore, to estimate progress. Sometimes there appears to be a halt, or even, apparently, a falling back; these are stages we often experience ourselves in learning, and we have to take account of them in judging development. We all know that in the early stages of learning something new (for example, in learning to drive a car, or to skate, or to row a boat), we need time 'to get the feel of the thing'—the response of the car to the manipulation of the wheel, the sensation of being raised on narrow blades on an icy surface, the balance of the oar and its leverage against the water. We need to spend time on exploration before we can begin to build up skill. After this there is usually a period of intensive effort when we overdo most movements and make many unnecessary ones, when we are tense all over, and when we seem to lose the ability to co-ordinate. After a time this stage yields to one in which movement begins to flow, the unnecessary efforts are eliminated, and we find ourselves able to get along comparatively easily. Later still, this stage may be succeeded by one in which we acquire highly developed skill.

It is obvious that during some of these

phases the learner will appear to be marking time; it is equally obvious that the phases will not be distinct, but that each will fade into the next. The differences will be difficult to distinguish, and progress will be consequently hard to discern. This is true when the new skill differs widely from anything we have done before; when, as often happens, the change is a small one—such as, for example, from one stitch in knitting to a new one, or from one type of car to another, the differences which mark progress may be small indeed. Many of the new things which children learn are of this order; that is, they are closely related to that which went before. They may change from one method of swarming along a rope to another, or from the use of one shape of bat to another, or they may build up and use familiar apparatus in a different way. In activities such as these the change itself may be the main mark of progress. Sometimes, of course—for example, when they learn to ride a bicycle, to do cart-wheels, or to swim—the gap between the familiar and the new is likely to be a wide one, and their progress stands out more distinctly.

There are many other ways in which progress may be manifested. There may be growth in the ability to co-operate with others; growth of the power to work imaginatively, and to express ideas vividly and sensitively; and growth in the power to sustain an idea.

Although during the primary stage children acquire and establish skill in many fields, this period may be described, broadly, as an exploratory one. They learn to run, leap, scramble, manipulate, and to move efficiently as well as expressively. But although their powers of control and their capacity for sustained effort increase, most of them are not ripe for the precision and systematization involved in team games and athletics as undertaken by adults; neither are they ready, in

drama, to act a play, as that term is usually understood ; nor, in dance, for elaborate pattern or elegant movement. Some children may seem able, though most of them are probably not really ready, to do these things ; and we should guard against anticipating, and so spoiling, a later stage to which such developments belong. Progress is essential, but the aim must be to help children to develop to the top of their capacity as children, rather than to produce prodigies.

When we consider progress we may inquire 'How fast?', 'How far?', 'How many times?', and 'When?', and we can answer these questions in terms of figures. We may also inquire into quality and ask the question 'How?'. The sort of questions we ask and the answers we find will depend upon our point of view, upon what we are looking for, and upon what we are aiming at. It may be that our aim is ill defined, or that we have not decided what to look for, nor what questions

we should ask. Or we may have hampered ourselves by a too narrow pursuit of a single idea, and have become blind to other possibilities.

Every parent and every teacher must determine the purpose to be pursued ; he will then be able to decide what sort of opportunities are needed by growing children, and what sort of questions he must ask himself in order to answer the question, 'How is he getting on?'.

