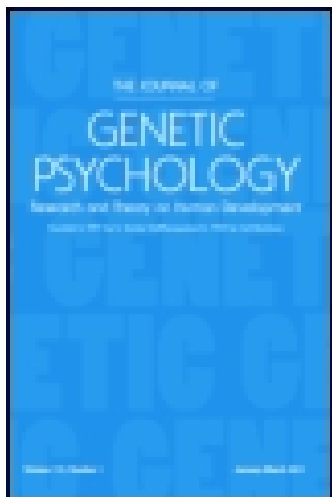


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THE ONLY CHILD IN A FAMILY.¹

By E. W. BOHANNON, Fellow in Psychology, Clark University.

The present study was briefly outlined in an earlier one of "Peculiar and Exceptional Children." Forty-six of the 1,001 individuals described were named as "only children," though none of the questions of the syllabus asked about such children, either directly or indirectly. It appeared, therefore, that only children are either more numerous than usually supposed, or that they are much more frequently distinguished by peculiarities than children generally.

The statistics of Ansell² are of interest in this connection. They relate to families of England and Wales, and although they may show a higher average fertility than we have a right to claim for this country, they are valuable for comparative purposes here. He found in 1,767 fertile marriages contracted at an average age of about twenty-five years that, after allowing sufficient time for fecundity to show itself, there were 131 unions resulting in only one child, or one out of every thirteen of the fertile marriages. The average fertility of the 1,767 marriages were six. Thus the proportion of only children which they show is one in every 78, while the proportion found among the 1,001 "Peculiar and Exceptional Children" is one in less than every 22. A marked tendency to peculiarities was therefore suggested for only children.

In the second place, after arranging the 1,001 reports into three groups, to indicate that the peculiarities were "advantageous," "disadvantageous," or "neutral," it was found that two-thirds of the 46 only children belonged to the group having "disadvantageous" traits. Furthermore, this group represented but 448 of the reports, or considerably less than one-half of the entire number. This offered the second suggestion, indicating in an emphatic manner the general character of the peculiarities of only children as a class.

¹ I am indebted to President Hall for valuable suggestions, and to Dr. W. H. Burnham for helpful criticism, made in behalf of the present study. I am also under very great obligation to all those who have co-operated by sending in reports of their observations, but especially to Miss Lillie A. Williams and her students of the State Normal School at Trenton, N. J., and to Prins. E. O. Holland and F. M. Ingler, of the High Schools at Rensselaer and Marion, Ind.

² Duncan: Sterility in Women, p. 4.

In the third place, it was strongly indicated that they have less social ability than other children, and that their relations with others, especially those of corresponding ages, are characterized by a greater amount of friction.

Fourth, it was apparent that they very often indulge in imaginary companionship to compensate for inadequate real companionship.

Fifth, unusual precocity was indicated.

Sixth, it appeared that they neither enter school so early, nor attend as regularly, as other children.

Seventh, it was suggested that the only boy, the only girl, and the youngest child, have many of these traits in common with the only child.

Eighth, and finally, it was stated in nearly every instance that they were indulged to an unusual degree.

These suggestions, though derived from a very limited number of cases, were so emphatic, and are of such decided importance, if generally true, that it was determined to ask for information of a more detailed and comprehensive character. Although the number of returns received has not been great enough to warrant the assumption of general validity for conclusions derived therefrom, it is strongly believed that a number sufficiently large to give such a basis for inference would not yield materially different results. Excepting the 46 reports already referred to, the study is based upon answers to the questions of the following syllabus.

THE ONLY CHILD IN THE FAMILY.

Give age, sex, nationality, and describe the temperament, complexion, and general health of the child briefly. Has he brothers and sisters dead? If so, how many? Is he the first born? How long did the others live? Does the child go to school? Regularly? Commenced at what age? Get along well with other children and in work? How much time does he spend in play? The favorite games? What plays at home? What are the child's best traits? Worst traits? Is he precocious or dull? Has he any mental or physical defects? Name them. What subjects best in? What poorest in? What has been the home and school treatment? What treatment do you recommend?

Age of parents at birth of child? How long had they been married at the birth of child? Are the parents still living? Health, habits, occupations, temperaments and position in life? How many brothers and sisters had *they*? Do they (brothers and sisters) have good health? In so far as above questions apply, describe twins, the only boy, the only girl, and the youngest child, in families.

State anything else you may think to be due to the fact that they are the only child, only boy, only girl, the youngest child, or twins.

CLARK UNIVERSITY,
Worcester, Mass., March 30, 1896.

Altogether, 481 children are dealt with in the study. 381 of these are only children, 54 are only boys or only girls, 32 are the youngest children, and twelve are twins. The reports for the 381 only children are direct and practically complete answers to the questions of the syllabus in 256 instances, while 81 relate only to health, and the other 46, as has been indicated before, come from reports on "Peculiar and Exceptional Children," and contain information about age, sex, nationality, health, heredity, conduct, and home treatment. The 81 were made by members of Clark University, 95 were made by the students of the High Schools at Rensselaer and Marion, Indiana, and 259, excepting a small number of individual reports, came from the students of Miss Williams in the New Jersey State Normal School at Trenton.

Unless otherwise stated, any statistics that may be presented, refer only to only children, of whom it may again be said that there are 381 mentioned under at least one of the rubrics. Thus the sex is given in each case but no other point is mentioned 381 times. The number of children referred to will be indicated as the various topics are introduced.

The persons making the reports have regarded as only children, not only the ones who have never had brothers or sisters, but also those who have been left alone by death of others, and, in two instances, those who are only children for a number of years before the birth of others. The environmental conditions of these three classes are essentially the same, for the dead brothers and sisters seldom lived over five years, and, in nearly all the instances where they are mentioned, they lived less than one year. Furthermore, the surviving child is not the first born in more than half the number of instances, the other, or others, often dying before his birth. In a few cases it cannot be assumed that there would not have been other children had not the parents been divorced, or had not one or both of them died.

The average age of 134 girls is twelve and ten-thirteenths years, of eighty-six boys it is eleven and eight-ninths years, and for the 292 of both sexes it is twelve and two-tenths years. One is 2 years old, 5 are 3, 6 are 4, 4 are 5, 10 are 6, 15 are 7, 24 are 8, 22 are 9, 32 are 10, 19 are 11, 26 are 12, 17 are 13, 21 are 14, 8 are 15, 24 are 16, 15 are 17, 15 are 18, 7 are 19, 7 are

20, 2 are 21, 3 are 22, and 1 each 31 and 35. The youngest is two and the oldest is 35. 161 belong to the years from 8-14 inclusive. The fact that relatively so many more are given for these years is probably due to circumstances connected with the persons making the observations. Nearly all of the reports come from teachers, those preparing to teach, or from pupils in high schools. It seems but natural that they should have named more for these ages than for others. Yet it would be interesting, in the light of what may be presented later, to know whether the average age attained by only children as a class is equal to that attained by people generally.

Of 381 of both sexes, 215 are females and 166 are males. The greater number of females is probably explained by the fact that more females send in reports, but if the opinions of writers who have considered the subject are to be relied upon, we would expect to find a somewhat larger proportion of females than of males, as only children.

190, out of 240, are said to be Americans, 8 Germans, 5 English, 2 Jews, 2 Scotch, 2 Irish, 3 English-German, 3 Scotch-Irish, 1 Welsh-Irish, 1 Jewish-American, and 1 Welsh-American. There are 50 of non-American parentage, 17 of whom are the results of marriages between persons of different nationalities or races, a reference to which will be made in another connection.

The statements thus far made will suffice to give a general idea of the preparation and character of the data to be presented. Let us see whether its significance is in harmony with the general suggestions already outlined.

HEALTH.

Following are some condensed reports of cases that are typical examples, not only of the health, but of other conditions peculiar to such children. In condensing the original reports their expressions have been modified as little as possible, though quotation marks have not been used except in one or two instances. Besides the evidence which a knowledge of the preparation of the reports offers as to their trustworthiness, still other evidence of reliability is furnished by reading them through. Each report will be numbered for convenience of reference.

1. M., 16. Irish descent. Sanguine. Health fairly good, but must take care not to drink tea, coffee or other stimulants. Neither can he eat much vegetable food without feeling great discomfort. He is the first born, but had a brother who lived to be three and one-third years old. Began school at six and attended regularly. He gets along with some of his friends quite well but with others he disagrees. Spends much time in play, which is active at school but quiet at home. He is truthful and dislikes sham; also stubborn, and given to contradiction

of his elders. He is precocious. The right leg is paralyzed from the hip down. Both at home and at school he has been allowed too much of his own way. The mother was about 25, and the father 33, at the time of his birth. They had been married two years, and are still living. The mother has good health, the father only fair. Both have good habits and are conscientious in the discharge of duty. The father is a railroad station agent and the mother helps him in this work. He is of a bilious temperament, while she is sanguine. The mother has four sisters and two brothers, the father two brothers and two sisters. All seem to have good health.

2. M., 10. German-American parentage. "The father is a German of culture from a well known German university. The mother has one brother living and one, who was very delicate, dead. She is herself a chronic invalid and never, as a girl, took any interest in life. She is cultured and refined but lacks the will to do. Her only object now seems to be to properly rear her boy, who was an unwelcome addition to the family and for years was tolerated out of necessity. The mother-love seems to have asserted itself finally. The boy attended kindergarten at five, had a private tutor at six and entered the public school at seven. He speaks German and French as well as English, and also plays the piano well. Is a *real girl-boy*, sews, makes tiny doll dresses, cuts and fits them, sews on sleeves and puts on belts. He has whole sets of bed clothes, pillows and mattresses stuffed with cotton, and the pillow cases made on the machine. He is a sturdy, manly fellow, always taking his hat off as he enters the room, speaking in a soft voice, and taking part in conversation. He begged to be allowed to stay at home this week to help sew, because I was helping his mother with her sewing. He does not like school and seldom plays with boys. He says they are too rough and fight, and are not nearly so nice to play with as girls. He says boys tease him because he likes girls better, but that he does not care. He seldom quarrels with his playmates and is good and obedient generally. He is usually happy but sometimes becomes annoying by reason of the numerous questions he asks. He has rather definite and advanced notions of what he is to be when grown up. The mother seems to admire and honor her very intellectual German husband, and is a model wife, but she does not seem to have any love for any one save the boy. She was never happy with her own mother and feels she was never understood by her, hence she thinks it very important for her to avoid the mistakes from which she suffered. The mother was 26, and the father 45, at the time of his birth. The mother feels her duty very strongly and is in danger of overdoing the watching, and of making him too dependent on her own frail self. He is very different from other boys I have met."

3. F., 11. American. Nervous. Delicate, takes cold easily, and cannot stand much hardship. She is the only child born to her parents. She began school at seven and attends regularly except when ill. She does not get along well with other children, but succeeds fairly well in work. Not much time spent in play, which is always of a quiet sort. Her best traits are obedience and politeness; her worst is thinking herself better than other children. She is neither dull nor precocious, yet quite studious. The mother, especially, is very strict, but her teachers have usually been more considerate. The mother was 35, and the father 37, at her birth. They had been married five years, and are still living. The father has good health, but the mother has always been delicate, and since the birth of the child has been an invalid the greater part of the time. The father is superintendent of a railroad. The family occupies a good social position. Both parents are nervous. The father has one half-sister, the mother, two brothers and two sisters.

4. F., 12. American. Nervous. She has very poor health and is sick a great deal. She has three sisters and one brother who died before her birth. Only one of these lived to be five years old. She commenced school at seven, and but for bad health her attendance would be regular. She has little or no trouble with other children, and succeeds well in her work, as she is very studious. She plays little and in a quiet way. Her best traits are truthfulness, obedience, and affection; the worst is bashfulness. Precocity is very noticeable. The home treatment has been characterized by great indulgence. The father has always called her "Baby." At the birth of the child the ages of the father and mother were 36 and 34 respectively. They had been married 14 years. Their health is very good as are also their habits. The father is a dairyman. The mother, with hired help, keeps the house. They both have irritable temperaments. The mother has four sisters and two brothers; the father, five sisters and two brothers. Two of the mother's sisters have bad health, and the father's brothers and one of his sisters do not have good health.

5. F., 9. American. Nervous. Not robust, takes cold easily, and seems unable to resist disease. Has never had brothers or sisters. She began school at 7 but has not attended regularly on account of bad health. Her relations with other children are troublesome. Success in work is fair. She plays a great deal and has much company. The games are usually those demanding considerable activity. The best traits are truthfulness and affection; the worst are selfishness and passionate temper. She is very precocious. Has been greatly indulged at home, and is a favorite with the teacher. She ought to be required to "give up" to other children. At the birth of this child the father was 27 and the mother 28. They had been married two years. Both are still living, but the mother is never in good health. Their habits are good; the father is a partner in a general merchandise store. His temperament is sanguine, and that of the mother, nervous. The mother has one sister, and the father one brother. These have good health. The child is an only grandchild, and is subjected to the combined indulgence of grandparents, uncles, aunts, etc. One of the grandmothers lives with the child's parents, and always intercedes when any strictness is suggested.

6. F., 8. American. Nervous. Health is quite poor. She is subject to severe headaches, and in the winter time to bronchitis and croup. There have been no other children. She first went to school when 7, and has not attended at all regularly. The desire to have her own way has prevented her from getting along well with other children. In her work she succeeds fairly well. When alone she plays little and generally inclines to the imaginative games. She tries to impersonate different characters. She is sympathetic and affectionate, but also selfish and disrespectful. She is also precocious. Parents have humored her. Ought to be thrown with girls of her own age. The father was 33, and the mother 35, when she was born. They had been married 12 years. They are still living, but the father is subject to very severe attacks of rheumatism. The temperament of the mother is nervous, that of the father bilious. They live on a farm. The mother has two brothers and two sisters; the father one sister and seven brothers, all of whom have fairly good health.

7. F., 19. American. Nervous. General health is good, but she is subject to a kind of "fits." There have been no other children. School attendance is regular and began at 9. Her success in work was good. She got along with other children well, and in play her favorite pastime was to seat herself on a box and imagine herself a queen. At home she could usually be found sewing for her dolls or playing

with them. Her best trait was her good temper; her worst, lying and stealing. Precocity was marked in action and words. There was a slight turn in the left eye which was very noticeable at times. At home she had her own way and was consequently frequently in need of restraint at school. The mother's age at her birth was 20. She had been married over a year. The father is dead—died of heart disease. He had one brother, while the mother had two sisters. They seem to have good health.

8. M., 15. American. Phlegmatic. Seems to have good health, yet the sight of blood always causes him to faint. There were never any other children in the family. He commenced going to school at 9, and attended regularly, though he does not now attend. He has little trouble with other children. He seems to be affected mentally and does not progress very well in school work. He is exceptionally dull. He spends considerable time in play, and at home the play most often is imitative of the various trades. The treatment, both at home and at school, seems to have been considerate. His father was 24, and his mother 21, at the time of his birth. They had been married about one year. They are both still living but are separated. The father is delicate, and a drunkard besides. Neither parent has had brothers or sisters.

The above are typical of almost 100 reports. In a general way the health, as indicated in the reports, is most conveniently described by use of the 3 expressions, "good," "fairly good," and "bad." 162 belong to the first class, 98 to the second, and 96 to the last. That is, 96 have bad health, and 98 others do not have good health. The disorders of health most often mentioned are: lung trouble in ten instances, heart trouble in 5, St. Vitus Dance in 5, exaggerated cases of nervousness in 10, "very delicate" in 30, and paralysis in 1, while chronic susceptibility of an unusual kind to headaches, throat troubles, nose bleed, colds, indigestion, catarrh, eye troubles, convulsions, etc., is very frequently mentioned.

Still other evidences of impaired health are added under the head of "physical defects." Ten are deformed. Some of the deformities are: club-foot, weak legs, hunch back, spinal curvature, cross eyes, etc. Fifteen have very weak eyes, 4 are deaf in one or both ears, 3 blind in one eye, 5 have grave disorders of vocal organs, 8 are birthmarked, one is hydrocephalus, and one a paralytic. Others are "hair-lipped," "flat-footed," "pigeon-toed," have one side undeveloped, etc. A total of 48 have physical defects of one kind or another.

A great variety of terms were used in describing the temperaments, but it is sufficient to say that it is described as "nervous" in 133 out of 258 cases, or something over half of the number for whom the temperament is indicated. No other expression descriptive of temperament was used more than 42 times.

In 80 of 249 families, for which the information is available, there have been at least 120 other children. The largest number of any one case being 5, all of whom were still-born. In

42 of these 80 families the surviving child was not the first-born. Of the entire 120, 9 were still-born, 20 lived only a few hours or days, 46 others less than a year, 6 not more than a year, 3 not more than 2 years, 3 less than four years, 2 less than 5 years, 2 less than 6 years, 6 less than 7 years, 2 less than 9, and one each, 10, 12, and 15 years. It could hardly be claimed that so large a proportion of the children of families in general die at corresponding ages, and that the early deaths of so many of these children do not signify degenerative tendencies of a very pronounced sort. Besides it must be remembered that the 120 deaths represent only those that were *known* to the individuals making the reports. That there were others cannot be doubted. Yet with this number the proportion of all the children born to the 249 families, who died at the above mentioned ages, is 31%, or about 320 per thousand for the years 1-9 inclusive. Nevertheless, in the absence of suitable statistical data for comparative purposes, it cannot be positively asserted that the rate is greater than the normal.

Thirty-two of the 242 fathers are dead, as are also 23 of the 248 mothers. The father's health is said to be bad in 58 of 245 reports, and that of the mother so in 100 out of 239. It appears, therefore, that in so far as bad health in either parent is a factor in the limitation of the birth-rate, the mother is of far greater importance than the father. Gross¹ presents statistics showing that women are sterile about eight times as frequently as men.

Thirty-one parents from among those of 249 families had consumption, dying of it in most of the cases. 22 were so weak and delicate that they were called invalids, 18 suffer from nervous prostration, 8 had heart trouble, 5 were insane, while there are many reports of grave female disorders and not a few of paralysis, rheumatism, and cancer. Still there are many other disorders of a serious character, mentioned at least one time each. The frequency with which consumption and cancer are noted seems to harmonize with the observations of many writers on the subject of fecundity, that cancer and tubercular diseases are especially conducive to sterility.

The temperament of parents is described as "nervous" in 134 instances out of 249. 43 is the greatest number described by any other single expression. There are 37 cases, out of a possible 226, in which one of the parents was an only child. 7 of these are among 108 fathers of girls, and 9 among 76 fathers of boys, while 13 belong to 120 mothers of girls and 5 to 76 mothers of boys. The only-child parents of girls are more often mothers than fathers, while the opposite is true for

¹ Duncan: Sterility in Women, p. 3.

those of boys. There are 17 only-child fathers and 20 only-child mothers. Whether this is a larger number than is to be found among parents generally cannot be determined, because there are no satisfactory data on which to base a comparison, but it seems that it must be considerably greater, especially if it be true, as Ansell found, that only one child out of every 78 is an only child.

The average number of brothers and sisters which both the 209 fathers and 226 mothers had is three and one-fifth. Adding one to this, we have four and one-fifth as the average number of children for these families, or nearly two less than the average which Ansell found for 1,767 families. The average number of brothers and sisters of 108 fathers of girls, is three and two-fifths, and of 120 mothers of girls, is three and one-sixth, while that of 76 fathers of boys is two and six-sevenths, and of 81 mothers of boys is three and one-third. Thus the mothers of girls come from smaller families than do the fathers, and, on the other hand, the fathers of boys come from smaller families than do the mothers.

The health record of the brothers and sisters of the parents, though not indicated in a very considerable number of the reports, shows 30 consumptives, 5 insane, 4 cancerous, many cases of heart trouble, invalids, nervous and mental wrecks, and numerous early deaths, in not a few instances nearly the entire family of children dying in infancy. Here, also, though suitable data for a comparative estimate is wanting, it is difficult to avoid the inference that the health is inferior to that of people generally.

The average age of fathers at the time of birth of 149 girls is thirty-two and two-fifths years; of mothers of 157 girls it is twenty-six and one-fifth, the two showing an average disparity of about six years. The average age of fathers at time of birth of 86 boys is twenty-eight; of mothers of the same number of boys it is twenty-four and two-thirds, the average difference here being three and one-third years. The average age of fathers at the time of birth of 235 of both sexes is 30.5 years, and that of mothers of 243 of both sexes 25.5 years, the average disparity being 5 years. It is perhaps rather significant that the mean age of parents at time of birth of the boys—twenty-eight for fathers and twenty-four and two-thirds for mothers—is very noticeably lower than that of parents at time of birth of the girls, which is thirty-two and two-fifths for fathers and twenty-six and one-fifth for mothers. Does it not mean that the children born in the later stages of relative sterility are more likely to be girls than are those born in its earlier stages?

In 218 marriages the mean length of time that had elapsed

between marriage of parents and birth of the first child is approximately 3 and five-tenths years. For 29 of these, the time between marriage and birth was 1 year, for 54 it was 2 years, for 39 it was 3, for 14 it was 4, for 17 it was 5, for 5 it was 6, for 10 it was 7, for 2 it was 8, for 3 it was 9, for 5 it was 10, for 2 it was 11, for 6 it was 12, for 1 it was 13, and for 2 it was 14.¹ Ansell found in 6,035 marriages that the first birth was within 1 year after marriage, in 3,159 cases, within 2 years in 2,163, 3 years in 421, 4 in 137, 5 in 69, 6 in 26, 7 in 21, 8 in 11, 9 in 7, 11 in 5, 12 in 4, 13 in 13, and 14 in 2. Let these numbers be compared with those above given for the 218 marriages, and the extent of the variation from the normal time that elapses between marriage and birth is made apparent. For 106 or nearly half of the 218, this time is 3 years or more, while at the corresponding time for Ansell's 6,035 marriages, only about one-twenty-first part had not resulted in children. That is only 1 in 21 of the 6,035 couples had their first child after 3 years, only 1 in 39 after 4 years, etc. Duncan, commenting on the table, says that parents who have been married 16 months and are still childless, are exhibiting signs of relative sterility, and also that after the fourth year has been entered upon without children, there is a presumption of persistent sterility. With this in mind, it is well to remember that the average length of time after marriage at which 190 first children were born is over 3 years.

There are a number of very early marriages, one with the mother at 11, and several as early as 15, being reported. Likewise there are quite a number of marriages coming near the end of the reproductive period of one or both parents. If it be true, as is claimed, that the age in women best suited for reproduction is somewhere between 24 and 35, and in men between 30 and 40, it is but natural to infer that children born to parents of other ages will have poorer health as a rule, an inference which ought certainly to be employed in accounting for the bad health of some of the children under consideration. It seems that the strain of too early child-bearing often exhausts the girl-mother's stock of vitality without producing a healthy child and results in early loss of fecundity. Although child-bearing near the end of the reproductive period may not be so dangerous to the mother's health it seems to be quite as unfortunate for the child. Thus 12 of the 32 youngest children, their average age being 11, have bad health. Two of them have convulsions, 4 are weak and delicate, 2 have lung trouble, and another has kidney and eye trouble.² Mitchell found

¹ Duncan: Sterility in Women, p. 19.

² Duncan: Sterility in Women, p. 62.

among 433 idiots that 138 were first born, and 89 last born.¹ Duncan is inclined to think that the only child, especially if born near the end of the period of fecundity, is more likely to be a girl, and when so, represents the last effort of the stock to perpetuate itself. The greater average age of parents of girls, already stated, seems to accord with his view. In the same connection he refers to Galton's observation of 100 English heiresses, one-fifth of whom had no male children at all, a third but one child, and three-fifths not over 2 children.

The habits of the parents are said to be bad in 40 instances. There are 20 drunkards, and many drinkers, several of whom are mothers. 5 fathers are excessive smokers. The work of 5 mothers seems to be unfavorable to child-bearing, and 5 others are immoral. Over-fondness for society and late hours are mentioned 8 times, as are also divorces. The occupations are named in 143 of 241 families, as in-door, and in the main are sedentary. For the remaining 98 families they are out-door. People of the middle class predominate.

IN RELATION TO SCHOOL.

The following condensed reports give a very good idea of the school life.

9. F., 10. American. Nervous. Has good health, but the parents thought her sickly and were continually giving her medicine. She is the last born of four children, 3 of whom died in infancy. Her school attendance commenced at four but was very irregular till she was ten. If she disliked the school she was allowed to stay at home for awhile and then try another. She gets along very well with other children and also in school work. Not much time is spent in play, as most of it is taken up by music. When alone her favorite amusement is with her dolls. Unselfishness and affection are the best traits, while self will and a bad temper are the worst ones. Precocity is pronounced, and she is always ready with an answer. She has been allowed to do about as she pleased at home and has also been favored at school. The father was 27, and the mother 25, at her birth. They had been married 4 years. The father, who was a consumptive at the time of his marriage, died when she was small. He had 2 sisters and the mother 1. They have good health.

10. M., 14. American. Very nervous. Not healthy. Had asthma till 12, but is better now. He is the second born of 3 children, 1 of whom was dead at birth. The other lived three years. Commenced going to school at 7, but has not attended regularly. He does not do well in his work nor get along well with his playmates. Much time is spent in plays, which are usually those that boys most often enjoy. He is generous, and at the same time deceitful. The treatment has been rather severe. The father was 35, and the mother 32, at the time of his birth. They had been married 3 years. Both are still living. The mother does not have good health, and is club-footed. The father has good health, but is near-sighted. He is an excessive smoker. The mother's character is not good. She has 2 sisters, and he has several half brother and sisters. These all seem to be in good health.

¹ Ibid: pp. 66, 67, 68, 69.

11. M., 23. American. Equable. Has very good health now, but when about 15 was afflicted with St. Vitus Dance. Has had no brothers or sisters. He attends school regularly, having entered at 7. He did excellent school work, but is indifferent toward other children. Instead of playing he would sit in the Navy Yard and examine machinery. Seems to have no bad traits. Has been indulged both at home and at school. He has been kept too much under the influence of his mother and is very effeminate. At the time of his birth the father was 27 and the mother 20. They had good health, but the father, who is a drummer, is intemperate. The mother had two brothers and two sisters, the father two sisters. These have good health.

12. M., 7½. American. Irritable. Is not a very healthy child, but this is probably due to his not being allowed to play out in the open air as much as other children. He is the only child his parents have had. Until this fall he was taught at home by his mother, but now attends the graded school. His attendance is regular. The other children delight in teasing him and it is with the girls he gets along best. He is very slow in his school work. His favorite games are those that can be carried on in doors, for which the *real* boys have called him "the girl boy." He is not talkative, but is sly and willing to blame others for his misdoings. Is also selfish and wants his own way in playing. He is not very bright, and one cannot help noticing the dreamy expression of his face. His home treatment has made a baby of him, while the impartiality of school life does not please him. The trouble rests with his parents. The father was 43, and the mother 41, when he was born. The former has one brother and one sister, the latter 3 brothers and one sister. These seem to be in good health. The father is deaf.

13. M., 10. American. Nervous. Has a bad throat and is quite delicate. He is large for his age. He began going to school shortly before 6, and attends regularly when his health permits. If the other children do not yield him his own way he will not play. He is quite bright in his studies but has to be encouraged very often. Active plays, and those in which he can win, suit him best. He has many moods. Sometimes he is pleasant, but more often very disagreeable. He is deceitful and has a bad temper. He is quite precocious. The vocal organs are defective and he stammers in his speech so that it is difficult to understand him. It would be well if he had more playmates and were compelled to share with them. The ages of his parents at the time of his birth were 37 and 39. They had been married 12 years. They are in good health. The mother had 1 sister and 6 brothers.

Sixteen of 272 who are of school age, do not attend school, while 74 of those who do attend are very irregular. Many are allowed to remain at home whenever they choose, others are kept at home whenever the weather is in the least threatening, and still others are allowed to attend, now this school, and now that, as fancy may suggest. Quite a number have tutors at home, and a still larger number go to private schools. Very often they do not begin going to school until several years after the usual age for beginning. 2 began at 3 years of age, 7 at 4, 36 at 5, 78 at 6, 81 at 7, 24 at 8, 8 at 9, 4 at 10, 2 at 11, and 1 each at 13 and 14. The average age of entering school for the first time is $7\frac{1}{2}$ years. Bearing in mind that kindergarten attendance has been called school

attendance also, it is apparent that these children enter school a year and a half or two years later than is usual with children generally. This is doubtless due in part to their poorer health, but in the main, to the unwillingness of parents to part with their company so early. Perhaps, also, the children are not so anxious to begin as those having older brothers and sisters, but it would seem that the only child would be more anxious than others to start to school, because of the promise of increased companionship. This state of things probably arises in part from their greater timidity in making the transition from home to school life. Another phase of this is taken up in the consideration of their social life.

PLAY AND SOCIAL LIFE.

The reports given under the preceding topic are more or less typical here. The following ones, however, illustrate in a more specific way the character of the means employed to realize the social longings.

14. F., 8. American. "Self reliant, but especially sensitive to rebuke. Well developed physically, and without any defect except weak eyes. She had been accustomed to playing alone or with older persons. One morning, about two months after she had entered the kindergarten, the children were taking their seats as usual at the conclusion of the preliminary exercises. M— had taken pains to reserve a chair by her side. On noticing the vacant chair, I told J— to sit by M—. Several of the children said, 'But M— will not let any one sit there. She says it is for her friend.' After a moment's thought I recalled that she had greeted me that morning with, 'Miss —, I have a little friend with me!' Seeing no child, I had supposed the mother, who very often spent half the morning in the kindergarten, would bring the little friend later. I also remembered that she had a vacant chair by her during the story in the circle. I called her to me and asked her to tell me what she meant. She said I had told them they might bring their little friends to school and that she had brought hers. I told her I did not see him and asked where he was. He was in the dressing room, she replied. We went out to bring him in. On the way out she talked all the time, explaining that it was a little boy friend with whom she played at home. On reaching the dressing room she ran to the other end of the room, pretended to take hold of a child's hand, who was a little younger than herself, and led him to me. I pretended to shake hands and asked his name. It was J—. We took off his wraps. We then led him into the school room, M— holding one hand and I the other. She pulled out the reserved chair and seated the imaginary J—. M—'s manner was very matter-of-fact. While she was seating her little friend I told the others that M— had brought a little play child, a little make-believe boy, to spend the day with us, that he was not even a doll dressed as a little boy, and that we should try to see what a happy time we could make them have. Some of the faces expressed disapproval, others of them looked at her as if there were something uncanny about her, while others started to make fun of her. They were easily checked, and so the imaginary J— spent the day. He was given the same material to work with, M— doing his work as well as her own. He played the games with

us, M— insisting that the children take his hands in the game. She pretended to show him how to hop like the birds, etc. She shared her lunch with him and, when ready to go home, put his wraps on. Before she started I called her in, telling her at the same time, to leave J— in the dressing room. Taking her on my lap I asked her if they had had a happy day. She replied, with a bright face, that they had. After telling her I was glad they had, I said, 'but, M—, J— is not a *real* boy, is he?' 'No,' she replied, 'but I play with him at home.' I then tried to persuade her that she had to do so much for him that she could not give any time to her *real* friends, who were sorry, and asked her if it would not be better to leave J— at home. She replied, 'Yes.' Her parents, soon afterwards, told me that she had several imaginary friends, but two special ones, a little girl and the little boy, J—. She spent so much time with them that they were uneasy and had sent her to the kindergarten with the hope of having her forget them. They said she usually announced the fact when she wished to take them out with her, but that on the occasion above alluded to she had failed to do so. Her happiest hours were spent in this way. She continued to play with these imaginary companions at home, but never again, in the four years that I had her, did she refer to J—. She was always ready to 'make up' a story about the house she had built, etc, etc. She was especially good at illustrating stories that had been told her, on the blackboard.

"She has a good healthy disposition in most respects, but is mean and little about some things. She will share her lunch with others very grudgingly, and hold on to old things long after they are of no value. Her grandmother gave her, on her sixth birthday, a 'companion,' containing pencils, paper, etc. She had been using an old and worthless one which I had supposed she would throw into the trash basket, but she gave it to A—. Soon after I heard her tell A— that she would have to return it, as she had only pretended to give it to her. I tried, by means of persuasion and explanation, to have M— understand that it was now no longer hers, but observed at the close of the day that she took the companion home with her. She said it was one she had had for a long time and that she could not part with it. (Such conduct was often excused by means of sentiment.) Another time a penny belonging to one of the children was left on the table. Some of the children saw M— take it. She denied having done so, but a prolonged conversation with her caused her to find the penny. She said she thought it was hers. I never regarded her as untruthful or untrustworthy. She was certainly fussy and over particular."

15. M., 7. American. Nervous. Has bronchial trouble. Has never had brothers or sisters. He entered school at 5, and has attended regularly. He is backward with other children, but succeeds fairly well in work. He spends much time in play and, at school, plays much the same games as other children. He is selfish, yet obedient. He is also precocious. The home treatment has been good. The mother was 20, and the father 22, at his birth. They had been married a year. Both have good health. The father has three sisters and one brother, the mother six sisters.

16. F., 19. American. Sympathetic temperament. Health usually very good. I had an older sister who lived a little more than two years. Entered school when about 8, and have attended regularly. I never got along very well with a *number* of girls, but generally wanted just one friend to be with most of the time, and even yet I would rather go with just the one. Liked to go to school, and succeeded very well, but found it hard to settle down to work. Never cared for such play-

things as other children had. The games at home were usually quiet, such as matching cards, jacks, etc. I was patient but lacked self-reliance, for others had usually done for me what I did not care to undertake for myself. I was humored by my mother, with whom I spent a great deal of my time. At my birth she was 25 and my father 24. They had been married 4 years. My father is a farmer, and does not have good health. He has no brothers or sisters, but my mother has four brothers, who enjoy good health.

17. F., 11. American-Jew. Nervous. Has had no brothers or sisters. Health good. She attends a boarding school and is regular in her attendance, which was begun at 7. She does not get along well with other children, and often will not play unless she can have her own way. She plays a great deal. At home she places books on chairs as pupils and, with another book in her hand, she addresses the chairs as her pupils. She also likes to play theater, pretending that she is a ballet girl. Her home surroundings lead to this. She is kind and sympathetic, but also contrary, vain, and precocious. The loss of sight in one eye above mentioned, and a broken arm, were caused at birth. She has been surrounded generally by adults who have petted and spoiled her. The parents were each about 25 at her birth, and had been married about 2 years. They have good health. Both are excitable and nervous. The mother keeps a boarding house. Her father is an accountant.

18. M., 18. American. Irritable. Has good health. He entered school at 7 and attends regularly. With other children he is always striving for the mastery, and consequently does not get along with them very well. In work he is slow. He spends much time in play. He enjoys playing with pets. He tells many improbable stories. One of these was about a lion and a tiger fighting in his back yard. He saw them from his window, put on his hat, and went out and killed the lion, which was about to conquer. He is affectionate, but very selfish also. Has too much home indulgence. The father's age at his birth was 38, that of the mother 30. They had been married 3 years. The father has good health, the mother is excitable. Three sisters of the father died in infancy and only one of his two brothers is now living. The mother had three brothers and two sisters. This boy has an only child-cousin.

134, out of a total of 269, get along badly with others, 54 only fairly well, while only 81 seem to be normal in their social relations. When they disagree with other children it is usually because of a desire to rule. If they fail in this desire they are likely to refuse to associate with the children who cause the failure, and in a measure succeed in the wish to have their way, either by choosing younger companions whom they can control, or older ones who are willing to grant indulgence. Many do not care for a large number of companions, and select one or two for friends with whom they prefer to spend most of their time. They do not, in numerous instances, enjoy crowds, and keep aloof from games, very often remaining in doors to talk with the teacher. A marked preference for company of older people is manifest, even when every opportunity for younger company is present. But this is no doubt due less to a dislike of suitable companionship than to their inability to understand, and be understood by, children of near their own

ages. It is plainly evident that they have as deep longings for society as the children of other families, but their isolated home life has failed to give them equal skill and ability in social matters. They do not so well understand how to make approaches, to concede this thing and that, and are not likely to so readily fall into companionable relationship with those who are unaccustomed to yield less than half to others. The greater intimacy with parents unmistakably predisposes to premature development of the social instinct.

They are very often imposed upon, notwithstanding the willingness which so large a number of them display to practice impositions on others, but they are less proficient in such contention. To be sure there are many who appear perfectly normal in these respects, but they have played more with children, of their own ages, have had sensible treatment at home, and enjoy more vigorous health. Quite a number seem to begin to overcome these limitations during the age of puberty.

That they are not less anxious for companionship than other children, is shown by an examination of the nature of the home amusements, especially those which involve imaginary companions, of which there are about 50 well defined cases mentioned.¹

Miss Vostrovsky found in the study of a number of such cases as these, that a dislike of solitude and a longing for more appreciative and sympathetic relations with others, were the chief factors in their development. The ones reported in the present study certainly harmonize with that notion of their origin. Thus two little girls take their imaginary brothers to school, hang the wraps in the cloak room, reserve chairs for them at the table, and divide the "goodies" at lunch time. Again, one plays on an imaginary instrument, another calls on imaginary friends, another has imaginary friends call on her, carrying on long conversations with them in which she does all the talking. Others have imaginary tea parties, schools, church, millinery stores, etc. Still others assume different characters, as mother, teacher, Queen Victoria, etc. The imagination is often helped out by dressing up in suggestive costumes. Likewise the doll seems to have an unusually prominent place, while the household pets are drawn into service to supply the place of *real* children, some having imaginary animals to help out in the scheme.

The evidence contained in many of the reports warrants the assumption that, as a class, only children have greater power of imagery, and that stories can be pictured out by them with more of ease and accuracy than by other children. (Case 74 is a good illustration of this.) The inference just made, how-

¹ A Study of Imaginary Companions: C. Vostrovsky, Education, XV, p. 383.

ever, does not harmonize with that of Professor Baldwin,¹ who says: "And while he" (the only child) "becomes proficient in some lines of instruction, he fails in imagination, in brilliancy of fancy." It does coincide with the views expressed by Sully,² who states that his studies for students lead him to a conclusion directly opposite to that arrived at by Baldwin.

Out of 244, there are 138 who spend the usual amount of time in play at school, 44 who give less time to it, and 62 who play little or none. Many of the 62 stand around and watch others play, showing little inclination to join in active games. They prefer the quieter forms of amusement, and often like to be alone. If left to their own choice they are pretty sure to be found in the school room with their teachers at intermissions. A number of the boys prefer to play with the girls, at strictly girls' games, such as keeping house with dolls, and generally come to be called "girl-boys." As a rule they amuse themselves in a quieter way and appear to take less pleasure in noisy games of any sort. Very often it is mentioned that they give a considerable amount of time to reading, and that they are disposed to resent the intrusion of others upon their more quiet and pretty well fixed forms of behavior. Those who join in active games at school fall back into quieter ways at home.

MENTAL AND MORAL PECULIARITIES.

The best traits, in the order of frequency mentioned, are: affection, honesty, obedience and generosity. The worst traits in similar order are: selfishness, "spoiled," temper, jealousy, untruthfulness, stubbornness, and haughtiness. The most prominent characteristics, regardless of their worth, are: precocity, named in 134 instances among 238 children, selfishness in 94, imaginativeness in 48, affection in 40, jealousy in 25, mental defects in 23, temper in 23, self-will in 20, and vanity in 20.

As has already been stated, the only boy, only girl, and youngest child offer many points of resemblance to the only child, especially in the traits that are of post-natal origin. The same tendency to unwarranted indulgence and concession on the part of parents is manifested and with similar results. Also the youngest appears to resemble the only child in that the influences which antedate birth, operate to an unusual degree in giving a constitution less healthy and robust than that of the average child. Kolrausche,³ in a study of "Jugendspiele und Einzelsöhne" in "Kaiser Wilhelm gymnasium" at Hanover,

¹ Mental Development, p. 358.

² Studies in Childhood, p. 39.

³ E. Kolrausche. Zeitschrift Für Schule Gesundheitspflege, Vol. IV, p. 178.

says that the only sons enter into movement plays less regularly, if at all, than do the other boys. These plays, especially foot ball, among pupils from Unter Tertia to Prima, have been under the observation of teachers for years. Of the 70 with brothers, 47% entered into the games regularly, 16% irregularly, and 37% exceptionally, or not at all. Of the 68 only sons, 13% took part regularly, 12% irregularly, and 75% not at all. These latter showed a greater number of bad athletes. He concludes, therefore, that the home relations for only sons are not good, and that the "Jugendspiele" should be made compulsory.

The answers to inquiries about subjects of study yield little, if any, suggestion. 117 are poorest in arithmetic, and 78 are best in the same subject. No other subject is mentioned more than 41 times. Whether this is unusual or not, cannot be said.

PRECOCITY.

The observation of precocity in such children is so frequent as to warrant special consideration. The following reports are more or less typical.

19. M., 16. American. Nervous. He is naturally delicate and is kept up only by the most constant attention. He has never had brothers or sisters. He entered school at six and has been regular in his attendance. In his earlier school days he did not get along well with the other children, especially with the boys, who did not like to play with him, because, as they said, he had to tell his mother everything. In school work he succeeded especially well. He would join in most of the games at school, but usually withdrew when any roughness made its appearance. This may have been due to his physical condition, as he has poor eyes and spinal curvature. The home treatment was of a nature to develop a marked religious tendency. This has grown so that his mother goes to him as she would to an older person to discuss religious topics in which she is interested, and she finds that he talks remarkably well about such things. His teachers always treated him with a great deal of respect. He never gave them cause to treat him otherwise, for both his conduct and work were far above the average. The father was 30, and the mother 25, at his birth. They had been married 4 years. Both have delicate health. The father has two sisters and two brothers. These latter do not have good health.

20. F., 9. American. Nervous. Is troubled with heart disease. Has never had brothers or sisters. She entered school when 7 and has attended regularly, succeeding very well in the work. She is precocious. Her ways are those of older people, and she is in a class of pupils at school who are from two to five years older than she. Her parents are quite strict with her and treat her as if she were grown. The father was 31, and the mother 32, at her birth. They had been married three years. Their habits are good. The father is a lime agent. The mother was a teacher. She has no brothers or sisters. The father had two brothers and two sisters.

21. F., 11. American. Nervous. She is thought to be quite delicate and great care is taken of her, she is kept in a warm room and seldom allowed to go out. She is often sick and under the doctor's care. She has never had brothers or sisters. She has a governess and has never attended school. She has few companions of her own age,

and associates mainly with grown up people. She talks and acts in a grown-up manner. When she plays with other children she gets along with them reasonably well, but she does not care to run or take part in active sports. She likes her lessons and is quick to learn. She is affectionate and obedient, and does everything she can to please her parents. Her parents give her a great deal of attention and gratify her every wish. They are always planning something for her and do not like to have her away from them. It is my impression that she should associate more with persons of her own age. Her parents were about 30 years of age at the time of her birth. The father is a lawyer, and the family occupies a good social position.

22. M., 22. American. Nervous. Has never been robust. He entered school at 8, but did not attend regularly for several years, because his mother was always unduly anxious about him whenever he was out of her sight. As he became older and, as she thought, better able to take care of himself, his attendance grew to be quite regular. He enjoyed the society of other boys, but his mother determined the amount of time he should devote to play, and as a result he played less than he desired. Fortunately for him he was fonder of reading than of anything else, and when other boys were out on the street he was with his books. He made remarkable progress in his studies, and even his games were those that had some connection with literature, history, etc. His best trait is his fondness for his mother. During the last two years, while away from home, he has written her an average of three letters a week. He has no bad traits. He was always coddled at home, and as his early school work was with an aunt for a teacher, it is safe to say he was petted in school. To me it has always appeared that he should have had more of the free, outdoor life of other boys, yet he has turned out to be a good boy and others have not. The father was 25, and the mother 23, at his birth. They had been married a year. The father died when the boy was 9 years old. The mother is exceedingly nervous. She had one brother. The father had four sisters and two brothers. The boy's submission to maternal whims has made him the subject of many jokes, but he does not mind them.

Little comment on these cases is needed, especially as the subject will be taken up again under the head of Pedagogical Suggestions. It may be stated, however, that, whether or not there seems to be a predisposing physical basis for precocity, there is abundant evidence of the very great influence of environment in producing it.

TREATMENT.

Excessive indulgence is practiced at home in 191 of 266 instances. In 50 instances the treatment is said to be sensible, in 18 stern, and in 7 bad generally. "Never allowed to do anything because thought so much of," "had his own way in everything," "humored," "petted," "spoiled," "indulged," "coddled," etc., are some of the expressions frequently employed to describe the parental treatment.

SUMMARY OF POINTS.

These only children are unmistakably below the average in health and vitality.

Mental and physical defects of a grave character are much more common among them than among children generally.

The average length of time between marriages of the parents and births of the children is so great as to suggest a pronounced degree of relative sterility in the stock. This is much more strongly shown in the mothers than in the fathers.

The average age of the parents at the birth of girls is considerably greater than it is at birth of boys.

A greater proportion of the girls than of the boys have only-child mothers, while on the other hand a greater proportion of the boys than of the girls have only-child fathers.

Nervous disorders seem to be unusually common in the families.

These children appear to enter school later than other children, and to be less regular in their attendance.

Their success in school work is below the average.

Not so large a proportion, as of other children, enter the public school.

They do not join in games so readily or often as do other children of corresponding ages. They prefer quieter forms of amusement.

Many of them have imaginary companions.

Very many manifest a decided preference for older associates, while not a few select younger companions, and often from the other sex.

A large number of them do not have as good command of themselves socially as does the average child. Their social relations are therefore more frequently characterized by friction.

Peculiarities in these children seem to be more pronounced than in others.

Precocity appears to be the most prominent trait.

Selfishness is the most frequently named of the worst traits, while affection is most often named among the best traits.

As a rule the home treatment had been that of unthinking indulgence, which generally develops in a child the habit of expecting concessions on all sides, and corresponding unwillingness on his own part to make them to others. A right appreciation of the conditions with which the child must be concerned outside the family life, requires that he be given ample opportunity for companionship with children of corresponding ages.

PEDAGOGICAL SUGGESTIONS.

Very often they have been forced into an early adulthood from having been made the constant companions of older persons, especially the mothers, who very frequently make them the sharers of their trials and responsibilities. Thus it happens

that the spectacle of a mere child, bowed down by the weight of big problems, is presented, and at a time in his life when it would be most natural to expect him to be deeply interested in a foot-race or a knife-trade. Not a few parents have laid the burden of their troubles on defenceless children, making them father-confessors and both spiritual and temporal advisers. It is little wonder, then, that such children are unable to understand and appreciate children of their own ages. It may be gratifying to some parents to have a child of theirs, while yet in knee breeches or short dresses, spoken of as a "deep thinker," a "perfect gentleman," "a perfect lady," etc., but it is pleasure of a cheap sort and paid for at the price of stunted and abnormal growth.

Their more affectionate dispositions, together with a strong preference for associations with their elders, no doubt has much to do in securing a greater degree of indulgence from teachers. Yet their frequent inability to unite readily with other children in sports, and to adjust themselves to the more stringent requirements of school life generally, leads to not a little trouble, and occasionally results in expulsion or voluntary withdrawal for the purpose of entering another school with the hope that more agreeable surroundings may be found.

The peculiarity of their ways often subjects them to unusual and unpleasant attention from other children. Neither understands the other, but the misunderstanding results more seriously for the only child. Frequently their more effeminate ways cause them, in the language of some of the persons reporting, to be "made fun of," "called a girl boy," "used as a foot-ball," etc. Still the larger number gradually adjust themselves to the more complex relations of school life, which leaves us to conclude that the cause of their backward social development is to be found chiefly in their home surroundings, though suggestions of a physical predisposition are not wanting. The healthy and robust have a greater capacity for social development and will do more to realize it.

The persons making the reports almost unanimously agree in holding that there should be far less indulgence, that a more uniformly firm and natural method of control should be followed, that age considerations should have more influence; that such children should not be so constantly with parents and other elderly persons, but more with children of their own ages and thus learn how to share with, and yield somewhat to, others; that the undue anxiety and concentrated love of parents should yield to a more intelligent appreciation of the wants of the child, who is in much greater need of discriminating attention than of the lavish bestowal of misguided affection.

The constant interference and watchfulness of over anxious

parents denies to the child the range and freedom of action and experience which his nature calls for at the time, and which he must have if he is to develop self-control and self-direction. The basal and fundamental instincts of his nature, physically, mentally, and morally, are ignored only with evil results. He must be given some opportunity to choose for himself, to experiment.

Says one writer :¹ "It will be noticed that all creatures which have large families, whether beasts or birds, have less trouble in rearing them than those which have only one or two young. Little pigs are weeks ahead of young calves, and the young partridge, with its dozen brothers and sisters, is far more teachable than the young eagle." Another claims that the young Newfoundland dogs that grow up with children for playmates are far more intelligent and teachable than those put into the hands of trainers from the start, and there are none who have not observed what wonderful teachers of one another children are.

¹ Animal Kindergartens: Spectator, Nov. 7, 1896, p. 642.