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PROMOTING THE PRINCIPLES OF UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD IN THE FAMILY

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This is likely to be the statement of a problem rather than a survey of progress. The field of investigation is so little known and yields so reluctantly to investigation that it is impossible to arrive at anything more exact than generalizations. The processes to be investigated are not standardized; the active factors vary tremendously and the conditions vary just as much. In fact no one knows the facts as to the degree to which the family has been developing the spirit of human brotherhood and it is to be doubted if any one can discover the facts. The most that can be done is to measure and evaluate certain discernible factors which enter into family or home-training. Amongst these factors are the following:

1. The nature of the family as a social force.
2. The experience of family living as a social experience.
3. The leadership of individuals in the family.
4. The social environment of the family (a) as an interpretation of larger relationships, and (b) as a field or an opportunity for the expression of brotherhood.
5. The many agencies or means of instruction and stimulus which reach into the family and instruct its members, such as:
 - a. Newspapers and periodicals. ("Literature" would be too exclusive a term).
 - b. The Schools, both through subjects and by means of experience.
 - c. The Churches and similar institutions.
 - d. Organized recreation, especially the movies.

We can only briefly survey these factors. Many of them need no more than a bare enumeration; their functions in the family differ but little from their functions in other social agencies.

1. *The nature of the family*, indicating its effect on training in the spirit of brotherhood. The family is the vestige of the clan. Social evolution has reduced the patriarchal group to this smaller unit. Perhaps it has also, in some respects, concentrated in this smaller unit the spirit of the clan. Family life is essentially clannish. Even though the domestic hearth—or radiator—is the hub of unending dissensions, the family turns a united face toward the world without. Whether its atmosphere be pacific or Hibernian it hangs

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together in a spirit of defense. This natural characteristic may be a serious menace to wider democracy—or it may be an aid.

Clannishness in the family is the basis of group loyalty. Family tradition, personal affection and the idealization of the social experience of the group may be the strands of the habits of loyalty. It is a mistake to suppose that the wider love precludes the lesser loyalties. The one is developed from the other. The family trains in world-brotherhood by training in the brotherhood of its immediate world. For the child, at first, "universal" means, so far as persons are concerned, those in this social group of the family and those who come into contact with it.

2. *The social experience of the family* as a factor in training in brotherhood. Experience in loyalty in the smaller group gives reality to the ideals for the larger group. The family is the richest opportunity to discover the meaning and worth of personality. In this respect it is the most effective school of democracy. It is organized for persons; all its determinative motives are personal; its ideals are personal. It is the one great democratic institution of our life, the one in which lives are freely given that all lives may freely develop. Without this very concrete experience in a society which consists of and for persons, without family living, the notion of universal brotherhood is likely to be a thin, unreal speculation, the kind of gospel easy to preach in the evening clubs where otherwise solitary beings intoxicate themselves with theories, but hard to practice in the sober realities of the street and the workshop. It is not only possible, it ought to be natural for the brotherhood learned in the family to pass over into ever-widening circles of social experience.

Whether this development and transition shall take place will depend on certain educational conditions in the family. Amongst these are the following:

3. *The leadership of individuals.* Nothing more effectively determines the child's attitude to life than the ideals and attitudes of parents. The teachers are the nearest and the most natural. Their thoughts and habits are the real lessons in the home. If people generally conceive human brotherhood more vividly and practically we can be sure it is being taught in the home, for whatever people really think that they teach—usually unconsciously—in their homes.

4. *The social environment.* Social conditions determine whether it is possible for the family group to think in a generous spirit of society as a whole, or whether the effect of social pressure

on the family will be to create hostility, to develop the sense of association for defense, and offense. Where life is a constant struggle for necessities the wolf at the door is not some impersonal apparition; it is the social organization which, with its tremendous power, appears to be an army of cruel, heartless despoilers. It is difficult to build the spirit of brotherhood on a social experience of injustice.

This social environment becomes a field for the expression of ideals. Much depends on the immediate social experiences of the family, on whether its life freely finds its way out into other like social groups. The physical congestion of life in the city does not bring people together; this polarization tends toward isolation, in the direction of social separation. The families in a large tenement know less of one another than do those scattered through miles of rural area. This is not only due to absorption in occupations; it is equally due to the pride that hides itself under poverty. An investigation in a large apartment building, especially designed to work out community living for partially destitute families, showed a division into as many communities as there were families, each in conscious antipathy to all others, each desirous of going its own way alone until "better times come."

5. *The agencies which enter the home from without.* Of these the most potential would seem to be instruction and literature. Under the former we would note particularly instruction in the *public schools*. Here we may be certain that recent developments in the teaching of citizenship, in the use of materials designed to quicken the child's interest and sympathy with peoples in all lands, and the courses designed to break down race prejudice and to build up race solidarity will have effects in the family. We may trace streams of idealization flowing from the school readers which sympathetically describe the lives of other peoples. Such teaching will be freely discussed at home.

The *church* classes present some evidence of real world-consciousness in the different missionary lessons. The lessons, the texts and some really modern missionary publications enter the home.* Some families deliberately build on the interest thus aroused: with the aid of "*The National Geographical Magazine*," for example, and of "*Everyland*," an intelligent basis is laid for the development of world sympathy. The courses for adults reach the problem more directly, for many of them are designed to train parents. They follow courses on the training of children. What consciousness is

*See the graded lists of the Missionary Education Movement.

there in such courses of the duty of developing the spirit of brotherhood? So far as the outlines for parents' classes have been examined, in no instance has a specific reference to this subject been discovered. True, one of the current textbooks devotes some space to it, but the courses do not set it out in any prominence.

Next would come the *newspapers*. Here we strike a vital force. They are found in every family to some degree; in most families they enter at least once a day. They are read with eagerness and freely discussed. What do we know as to their effect on the spirit of brotherhood? First, they bring the whole world to our hearth-sides. No matter how trivial and even misleading they may be the modern newspaper is saturated with a world-consciousness. Today that is peculiarly true. How do they interpret the world? Let it be noted that some forms of race alienation have disappeared. It is no longer customary to hold certain peoples up to ridicule in those painful columns called the funny page. Next, on the whole there has been a fine restraint on hatred of our enemies in the American daily papers. Next, one must not forget the effect of some great newspaper enterprises, such as the sending of the Christmas ship, Armenian relief, and various special forms of philanthropy especially to needy peoples far away. The newspaper has often been a much more simple, direct and comprehensible means of brothering those afar than any form of church missionary effort. All these practical activities have been comprehensible and real to children in homes. But, with rare exceptions, that is about all that can be said. The newspapers constitute the main portion of the intellectual pabulum of the people. For very large numbers they are their only literary experiences. A certain proportion go one step farther—for many of them it is not a step of progress—by including in their reading the frothy, flippant magazine. This material is current in the average home; in many no other material is found. And through it all runs no high note of idealism, no message of the real joy and worth of life. It pictures men as beasts, either devouring or devoured. It knows nothing of sacrifice. It might never have heard of the teacher of Nazareth. Its ethics are either commercial or dictated by the motives of the brothel. Even in the newspapers and magazines of a better class there seems to be little faith in the brotherhood of humanity, little vision of the worth of a spiritual democracy. Yet this material, more than any other, more than preacher or teacher, is training the thought, determining the world-concept within the family. One must not omit the saving hope in a few magazines of high ideals.

Music may be one of the strongest educational influences in the home. No one can fail to recognize the marvelous development of its use in the home. The phonograph has been the principal contributor, but the teaching of music in the schools has played an important part. There is little evidence that the splendid vehicle of song has been used to teach brotherhood or to quicken its spirit. The popular records are not all trivial—on the whole a superficial study of sales is encouraging as to general culture—but they are apparently outside the ways of social thought. This is probably due to the fact that our modern social message has not settled down to song. It is difficult to find social songs to use in the family.

It is difficult to leave so incomplete a survey without looking at the question, what should be done about it? To attempt an answer would be to wander from the central theme. But at least this much may be said, it is time we planned to preach spiritual brotherhood, not as an idealist's dream but as a necessity, a plain law of life, as the only possible way of life for the future. It is time to bring people down to a scientific basis of social life just as we work on scientific data in other and simpler matters. The germ theory of disease has swept before it all old fallacies. It is recognized in even the most trivial literature. Why should we not begin to build on a strictly scientific basis a theory of society which would crowd out the old and damning superstitions of "self-preservation," "economic interest," "competition," "vested rights," etc? It may be that in the family the indirect and informal approach is the best in teaching brotherhood, but those who teach and train here need the corrective and guiding power of something more exact and constant than inchoate ideals. We need the consciousness of the law of the entire human family as an inexorable law of life.