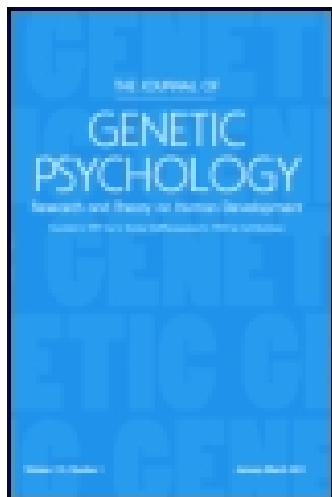


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## A Study of the Faults of Children

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## A STUDY OF THE FAULTS OF CHILDREN.

By NORMAN TRIPLETT, State Normal School, Emporia, Kansas.

The problem which pedagogical pathology presents of tracing the faults of children to their source and showing their psychological causes has only lately been attacked. The subject of human faults, however, has always been a theme for prolific discussion on the part of theologians and of philosophical and pedagogical writers. The prevailing view in times past being that faults were the evidence of original sin, this thought found expression in religious creeds, and traces of it are still in evidence as distinct survivals in the popular attitude towards these various phenomena of childhood. Furthermore this view has been especially fruitful in giving teachers a faulty apperception of children.

No attempt at a systematic treatment of faults was made until recent times. The publication in 1890 of Prof. Ludwig Struempell's "*Die Paedagogische Pathologie*"<sup>1</sup> was the first extensive treatment of the subject and it has inspired a copious literature by his disciples. This work merits attention chiefly for its historic interest, and because it first made prominent an important field of work in which many German scientists are now engaged. Struempell was a follower of Herbart. He accepted in its essentials his system of philosophy and psychology and based his work on its principles. The pedagogy of Herbart possesses much of value, but his psychology is obsolete. Struempell's attempt, therefore, to account for the faults of children by basing them on such arid speculations can have little value for science. Much more to the point are the contributions of such men as Kraepelin, Demoor, Baur and others; and of Ufer and Trueper and their contributors in the publication "*Die Kinderfehler*." In the solution of these problems science must consider all the evidence in the psychology of abnormal types, from medicine, penology and pedagogy. The recent advancement in these departments of knowledge now makes such a study possible. It is a work which must be done by many men and its accomplishment will bring closer agreement as to what constitutes faults and defects in children.

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<sup>1</sup>*Die Pädagogische Pathologie oder die Lehre von den Fehlern der Kinder.* I. Aufl. Leipzig, 1890.

At present one is impressed by the very divergent views of the various writers on the subject.

From reading the pedagogical literature of the German writers of the past century, Professor Struempell found mentioned 314 faults, or words used to designate faults; and these he classified according to his philosophical scheme. A more careful search by his pupil, Koezle,<sup>1</sup> brought to light more than nine hundred different faults so-named of children. Have children so many faults? The mere naming of faults, much more a classification of them, implies some standard of comparison. Have we a true unconditioned norm which will enable us to recognize faults and defects and to estimate their importance? It seems to the writer that an absolute standard is out of the question. Even on the physical side this has not been reached. The measurements by Dr. Porter of 33,500 children in the St. Louis schools and those by Dr. Boas on children in Worcester and by others, notably Dr. Christopher in the Chicago schools, indicate how intangible a quantity is even a physical norm. In pedagogical pathology it could be only an abstraction as the phenomena in this field exhibit so wide a range. Even in the so-called normal all shades of variation exist; most eyes are astigmatic to some extent, yet astigmatism is not regarded as a defect below a certain point. A child may be slow to respond in the mental world or may lie and yet be neither feeble minded nor a moral imbecile. No line of demarcation exists between the faults of children in the schoolroom and the graver phenomena seen in the distinctively pathological cases. Crimes are faults writ large, and idiocy but the extreme of dullness. The schools, however, are not concerned with the abnormal cases of an extreme type. These are cared for in State institutions by more or less appropriate methods. It is the task of the pedagogical pathologist to throw light on the doubtful cases which lie in a wide-reaching borderland and to delimit the range of variation.

In the light of the above we must emphasize the relativity of the norm. Avoiding any attempt at strict definition we may, perhaps, regard that as normal which permits of a development advantageous for the race or the individual; while deviations from the norm would be a lack of biological or sociological adjustment to environment. In this view only those phenomena and tendencies of childhood are abnormal or faulty which are serious enough to interfere with development into good citizenship.

This paper is preliminary to a more searching study of faults.

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<sup>1</sup>Die pädagogische Pathologie in der Erziehungs. kunde des 19. Jahr. hunderts. Gütersloh, 1893.

Its purpose is to show just what traits of children are given the name of faults and what degree of seriousness is attached to each. There will be presented in it the results of (1) A study of the faults of children as seen by teachers in the school-room.

(2) The faults of children as seen by children.

(3) A partially successful attempt to ascertain what are the faults of children from the standpoint of parents.

# I.

## CHILDREN'S FAULTS AS SEEN BY TEACHERS.

In view of the fact that no objective study of the faults of children from the point of view of the schoolroom has ever been made, so far as the writer is aware, it seemed worth while to ascertain just what teachers consider faults in children. The assistance of several prominent superintendents of the country was enlisted. Among them Supt. Kendall, of Indianapolis, Ind.; Supt. Balliet, of Springfield, Mass.; Supt. Johnson of Andover, Mass.; Supt. Spaulding of Passaic, N. J.; Supt. Whitcomb of Lowell, Mass., and Supt. Tarbell of Providence, R. I. Their teachers were asked to mention those faults and defects of children which were the greatest obstacles to them in their school work, and to give the essential characteristics of each. They were also asked to describe striking cases of any of these. 402 teachers responded to the request. Some of them simply mentioned the worst faults of children, or those that gave most trouble; others wrote at great length and contributed excellent studies of special cases. Below is given the tabulation of the faults named and the number of times each is mentioned. The grouping of the faults may appear arbitrary, but was determined not only from the terms used but also from the meaning expressed in the answers so far as it could be ascertained.

### *Faults and Defects Named by Teachers.*

	Times named.
1. Inattention, 154; Lack of Concentration, 141; Lack of application, 38,	333
2. Defects of Eyes, Ears, Nose and Speech producing inattention,	61
3. Carelessness in observation and Mental Slovenliness,	73
4. Indifference, Lack of Interest in study, No Ambition to Work, No Appreciation of Opportunity, Looking forward to being Fourteen, Distaste for Uninteresting Work and desire to shirk it, Wanting to be Amused, Helped to Death, etc.,	74
5. Lack of Honor, Lack of Moral and Intellectual Standards,	52
6. Lack of Self-reliance, Dependence on others, No power of Initiative, Lack of Confidence in themselves and their work,	48

7. Laziness, Indolence, Procrastination, Lack of Mental Energy,	39
8. Dreamy, Listlessness, Abstraction, Absent-mindedness, Sleepiness, etc.,	20
9. Lack of Vitality from various causes: from poor health, overwork out of school, insufficient sleep and food, bodily abuse, cigarette smoking, etc.,	30
10. Nervousness and Lack of Steadiness from excessive use of tobacco, etc., Restlessness—mental and physical,	53
11. Heedlessness, Thoughtlessness, Impulsive Speaking, Lack of self-control,	55
12. Mental Incapacity—under many names: Lack of power to Reason or to think, Lack of Comprehension, Lack of visualizing power or perceptive power, Lack of Mental Grasp, Lack of Brains, Inability to sift out the important point or to gain the thought from the printed page, Stupidity, Dullness,	78
13. Poor Memory, Inability to retain facts taught, etc.,	23
14. Inability to Express Thought,	15

*Faults—Egoistic and Relating to Conduct.*

15. Lack of Consideration for others, Desire to Rule, Willfulness, Stubbornness, Rudeness, Selfishness, Impertinence, Teasing, Quarrelsomeness,	69
16. Disobedience, Disregard for Law and Authority, etc.,	45
17. Lack of Home Training, Lack of Harmony between the Home and the School, Increase of Hoodlumism,	35
18. Untruthfulness,	53
19. Stealing,	6
20. Whispering,	11
21. Tardiness,	4

Besides the above many others, given below, were named from one to six times. Most of them could have been classified under some of the above heads: Vanity and affectation, jealousy, untidiness, cruelty, swearing, desire to imitate, meddling with neighbor's business, some children too young to receive the work, variation in the ability of children, laughing and making others laugh, wrong idea of success, over-wrought imaginations, vandalism, harsh voices, lack of imagination, non-critical attitude, taking on authority, reforming the children's language, blaming others for faults, mischievousness, snobbishness, dislike of school, raising hand when unable to give an answer, grumbling, telling tales, boasting, diffidence, inquisitiveness. Several of these groups, with some remarks of explanation are given separately below. A number of the teachers' expressions characterizing the faults are also quoted. These extracts may seem unduly multiplied, but they are so vibrant with the life of the schoolroom that no better composite picture of schoolroom conditions can be gained than from their perusal:

*Inattention.* The worst fault of children, as teachers view it, is, by an overwhelming vote, inattention or lack of con-

centration. The number in the table opposite this group, however, is somewhat misleading. In several cases teachers evidently did not regard inattention and lack of concentration as the same trait and gave both. This preponderance appeared uniformly in the returns from every city contributing. An explanation of the reasons for the frequency with which this trait is mentioned involves a knowledge of the psychology of teachers as well as of children. Without reference at this point, however, to the question whether the teachers calling inattention, and some other traits, faults, convict themselves of ignorance of child development, let us very briefly review the psychology of attention for the light it throws upon the subject.

Attention may be regarded as a certain aspect of the stream of consciousness. It is best taken as a narrower term rather than made identical with consciousness. The range or grasp of attention is limited. After the helpful analogy of vision—we are attentive to that which is focal and more or less inattentive to that which is in the margin of consciousness. A momentary spurt or pulse of attention in one direction leaves little energy of consciousness for other things. The monoideistic character of attention seems more marked in children. I know a case of a young girl who, when using the telephone, is utterly oblivious of all that goes on about her; her attention cannot at that time be diverted even by loud shouting.

The forms of attention of importance here are (1) natural or passive and (2) voluntary, active or acquired attention. The attention of young children and animals is almost exclusively of the first sort. It is easily captured by loud sounds and bright lights, but most easily of all by moving objects. The significance of attention to movement, as of attention in general, is to be interpreted in relation to the struggle for existence: through far reaching ages of primitive life it was essential to every creature to have an eye out for the moving object. To many animals it was and still is a condition of life, as existence itself depended upon giving the moving object a correct interpretation. It was hence essential that it be brought into the field of clearest vision; the reflex reaction to movement in the eye was thus established through stern necessity and still persists. Noting the tendency of children to give only passive attention Professor James<sup>1</sup> says "The child will always attend more to what a teacher does than to what the same teacher says. During the performance of experiments, or while the teacher is drawing on the blackboard the children are tranquil and absorbed." When the explanation begins attention takes its flight to the next most attractive object.

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<sup>1</sup> Talks to Teachers, p. 92.

The child comes into the world with an imperfectly developed nervous system. His mental life begins at zero. By contact with the world, through the stimulation of his sense organs, there is gradually built up a body of knowledge which enables him to fit in, more or less closely, to environment. His nervous system is fashioned to respond to external excitations, and for several years development is dependent on what comes through sensory channels.

The passive sort of mental reaction corresponds, according to Professor Wundt, to a simple impulsive act following a single motive, a simple perception or idea; while the active form of attention corresponds to a complex voluntary act and involves a conflict of motives and the exercise of volition. The purpose of education is to train to power of attending actively. It is only possible when there has been passive attention. Herein lies the difficulty of the teacher's problem: to gain for the relatively uninteresting ideas of the school subjects a proportionate share of the child's conscious energy in competition with the large mass of ideas instinctively appealing to him. In the first years of life very little is possible; to use an old figure the mind is like the butterfly, the creature of incessant change. This is the inattentive state so troublesome to teachers in its various forms. "The worst form of inattention, sometimes called distraction, is characteristic of those people whose intelligence," in the words of Ribot,<sup>1</sup> "is unable to fix itself with any degree of persistence and who pass incessantly from one idea to another at the mercy of their most transient whims, or of any trifling events in their surroundings. It is a perpetual state of inability and dispersion which is the very reverse of attention. It is frequently met with in children and in women." From their very nature this must to some degree be true of most children. Indeed Compayre says that "In one sense we might say without paradox that the child's attention is only perpetual distraction."

Aside from cases of unusual distraction, therefore, the character of the trait under discussion is to be regarded as perfectly normal, and due simply to the reaction of an immature nervous system in the presence of a world of sense objects. The nature of the trait is plainly seen from the extracts below.

The greatest fault is a lack of concentration on what they are doing. Lack of concentration impedes the progress of my school more than any other defect.

From my experience I would say inattention to study, caused by giving attention to little things happening around them, is the greatest obstacle.

Among faults the greatest is lack of concentration in both listening and studying.

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<sup>1</sup>Th. Ribot: *The Psychology of Attention*, p. 72.



A lack of power of mental application, causing the child's attention to be constantly shifting, is the chief obstacle I meet.

Inability to concentrate attention for very long. Shown by becoming tired or restless.

A lack of the power of concentration, as shown by the inability to grasp and hold the essential points of an explanation carefully made.

When information is given I find the child's mind wandering, his fingers playing, and again and again must the same thing be repeated before the child grasps what is being given.

Many are inattentive to all directions and rules, and excuse their wrong doing by saying "I didn't hear you say so," "I don't know the place," etc.

The master of a high school says, "the defects and faults which I observe to be most general and prevalent, are of a mental rather than physical nature, and consist of weakness of attention approaching nearly to deafness, and a superfluity of shadowy and imperfect concepts."

Lack of power to concentrate. This results often in a pupil reciting on another point than the one in question. It is also shown by a quick shifting of the child's mind to trifles in his surroundings. Again it is shown in a lack of attention to the work of other pupils in the recitation.

Many reasons are assigned to account for the alleged inattention. A few are seen from the quotations which follow:

Inattention. They will listen only if lesson is very interesting—something out of the ordinary. They want to be amused most of the time.

My pupils are first and second grade pupils and quite young. I find that some are so absorbed in play that it renders them inattentive.

It is due to absorption in too many outside interests.

A slight noise or movement is sufficient to attract them from work. Nervousness is the cause in some cases.

They seem to have cultivated the habit of entertaining themselves with the things around them or lapsing into oblivion.

Inattention in class is sometimes due to the spirit of willful mischief, but more often due to (1) indifference, (2) to mental or physical exhaustion, (3) to inability to grasp subject under discussion.

The first is characteristic of those pupils who are in school against their wills or who know that they are to leave soon. The second is found among pupils who have a good many studies and a limited amount of brain power, and those who have many interests besides school work, especially those who work afternoons and evenings, and those who have many social duties to perform. The third is due sometimes to lack of mental power; sometimes to poor training or lack of foundation in lower grades.

Inattention is the greatest obstacle to effective work in my school. This is not because of indifference on the part of the children but on account of deeper reasons. The location of the school in the business part of town brings many distractions and the crowded curriculum adds confusion.

Special interests may serve to draw the attention as in the following case, cited by a correspondent who says, "many cases could be cited of inattention in young children caused by interest in clothing." An example is given of a five-year-old child who was greatly interested in dress and styles. Her mother was found to have as her chief interest the elaborate dressing of the child.

Of the many special cases furnished by my correspondents a few may be profitably cited.

"One case of inattention in my experience was a girl, aged nine, in good health, who could not concentrate her attention for more than three minutes at a time, and never knew anything that was going on in class. I questioned her several times and found out she had to be up early in the morning to help her mother and also to care for the baby before she came to school, and the result was the child was tired before her work in school began."

"A case of inattention, boy, eight years old, 1 B grade, stout looking child. Has been out some for illness. Child sounds a word. I say in ordinary tone "what is the word?" No answer. Same procedure gone through with several times with no better result, only a vacant stare or a word entirely wrong. Finally with higher pitched voice and very decided tone I demand the word. He starts as if from a dream and says the right word. Does learn when aroused and retains, but seems to learn only in an excitement. I have concluded that he has been talked to but very little and when asked a question has not been pressed for an answer.

### *Sense Defects.*

Many of the replies naming these as the greatest obstacles are in place here as showing how they cause inattention.

The greatest defects I find in my school children are poor eyesight and deafness, these leading to inattention and carelessness.

Defective hearing is an obstacle because it is often the cause of the inattention. Pupils are often blamed for inattention when they cannot hear what is being said.

Defective eyesight is often the cause of idleness. A child cannot see the work on the board and, consequently, idles away his time.

Deafness makes them inattentive, for even if they hear the teacher they cannot always hear the children. I have found these children stubborn.

### *Defects of Various Kinds.*

I think the greatest obstacles to both teacher and pupil are defects in a pupil's sight or hearing, where the pupil, teacher and parent are ignorant of the defect. Defect of sight makes a pupil appear careless and defect of hearing inattentive.

Among the physical defects that are a hindrance to successful school work are poor eyesight and poor hearing. The children with defective sight must strain themselves to see the work on the board, and work at their lessons with curved shoulders and lowered head. Those with poor hearing are slow to respond, and are not nearly so alert as the others.

The greatest obstacle to me in my school work has been the lack on the part of a great number of children of the possession of essential knowledge, which should have been gained through keen sense-perceptions, owing chiefly to physical defect of the children.

In poorly ventilated homes where method and order are not known, we find children with weak bodies, minds not controlled and hence very inattentive. In this physical defect the food given them plays no little part.

Lack of vitality apparently caused by not enough sleep and not having proper food.

Those children who are so deaf that they are not able to hear all that is said in the school conversation, and thus require a special effort from the teacher and other pupils.

Overwork out of school hours. In girls from preparing meals, minding baby, washing dishes, running errands, carrying parents

meals to mill, etc. In boys from carrying parents' meals to mill, running errands, selling papers, etc.

These cases show a large number of exciting causes, for the inattention noted, which could be added to almost indefinitely. Consideration of the subject convinces one that while the trait may be the result of defects, it is in itself not a fault. It is often, indeed, nature's protection against undue strain of the nervous system. In large measure it is the inattention of self defense to escape the abnormal grind of the schoolroom. Every investigation of the effect of school work upon the child indicates that a condition of fatigue is produced after even a brief period of mental labor. The curve of fatigue will vary with the kind of work, the time of day, etc. The inattention to the teacher's instruction will, perhaps, vary with the state of fatigue.

*Carelessness in Observation, and Mental Slovenliness.*

Judging from the replies of the teachers this trait seems closely related to that of inattention. It is perhaps a difference of emphasis, the teachers having in mind the effect on the school work rather than the mental attitude itself.

Since carelessness is so nearly the analogue of inattention, much that was said under that head applies here; thus it is for the most part in young children not a fault but a natural condition which it is the purpose of education to change. Children are born careless. The young of most animals come into the world well equipped with helpful instincts, and relatively little training from the parents is necessary. The human infant is extremely dependent. The advantages of the long period of infancy in the child, gives opportunity for training to a life of carefulness and responsibility, but there is danger that the system of education may prove inadequate to the task. On the virgin soil of the child's nervous system is to be developed a hierarchy of habits of greater complexity than that of any other animal. Here lies the problem of the home and school.

The greatest fault I have had to contend with is carelessness. I find children careless readers, listeners and writers. For example, I gave this problem to a fourth year school: "If one pipe can fill a cistern in twenty-eight hours how long will it take four such pipes to fill it?" Many of the answers read like this, "It will take four men seven hours to do the work." "It takes four such pipes seven hours to be filled." "It takes seven hours to fill the pipes." "It takes seven hours to fill four cisterns," etc.

Children are inaccurate in what they write. They fail to express clear thought on paper. In telling of Hiawatha's home the child may say "Hiawatha lived in a wigwam with three poles and a deerskin thrown around them."

Many do not observe carefully out of the school or in it. Their attention must be called to every interesting or important fact instead of learning to notice for themselves.

The greatest obstacles in my work as a teacher have been the tendency of children to inaccuracy of thought and expression and their failure to concentrate their mental powers.

The children in my school show inattention, lack of application and lack of ambition. They are inaccurate, careless, and prefer resting to work.

Carelessness is the greatest fault. In reading they will call *a* the or *the a*. In a review I change the figures in a problem for next day. Half of the class will work the problem with yesterday's figures notwithstanding the fact that I have mentioned the change.

Carelessness is plainly shown in the child's constantly omitting the last letter of many words. In arithmetic carelessness is shown in neglecting to label.

Lack of sense-perception is another defect, resulting in the careless use of hands, the careless seeing of things and careless hearing.

Careless and inaccurate thinking. A tendency to deal with words rather than ideas. For instance: A child said "Robinson Crusoe built himself a boat so he could sail on his creek and perhaps get to some land he saw;" thus getting idea creek for big ocean he would have to cross, thinking merely of water and not which body of water he would sail upon.

Careless habits of speech and behavior formed at home are faults which are obstacles in my school work. These careless habits lead to inattention, lack of application as well as to disobedience.

Carelessness. Disorderly habits about their appearance, care of material and manner of studying and reciting lessons. My first aim in organizing a school is to form careful habits.

The habit of hurrying to finish work is another serious fault, the lack of being satisfied with careful, thoughtful work only.

The same is true in geography and grammar questions consisting of several parts. They answer only one part. When working long division or subtraction problems, only about ten out of a class of twenty-five will prove their problems before handing them in to the teacher.

*Indifference, Lack of Interest, Lack of Feeling of Responsibility for the School Work and for their own Development, etc.*

This great group of "faults" seems to be nearly the counterpart of inattention. They undoubtedly bear the same relation to it that interest holds to attention.

It is unnecessary to examine far into the conditions found in many schoolrooms to realize how general is this lack of interest. In some schools there are almost whole classes who, as one teacher says, are waiting to be fourteen (the legal age) when they may quit school. The thought that, perhaps, the majority of these children have their intellectual curiosity, the very germ of their self-activity, blunted seems almost tragic.

The lack of a sense of responsibility for the school work and for their own development is to be expected in young children, but when found to be true of so many pupils of higher grades, it certainly gives point to President Elliot's query whether the public school system has not very largely failed of its purpose.

Pupils do not feel a personal responsibility for the work and order of the school. Some pupils think that if they can't get a lesson it is

no great matter, the teacher is there to set them right. They rather hold the teacher responsible for any failure they may make.

I find that most children are unstable and seem to have low standards, as they are satisfied with poor marks. There are exceptions, but these statements apply to the majority.

Pupils think it is not necessary to do all the work. When a task is assigned and a definite time set for its completion, pupils do not feel responsible for having that work finished in that specified time. When the time is up, they think the work should be dropped whether done or not.

Many children lack a sense of personal responsibility for their actions and apparently feel indifferent to consequences. They seem to feel that they will be carried along with little or no effort on their part and are at a loss if thrown upon their own resources.

A total lack of responsibility on the child's part, caused partly by the parent's attitude toward the schools. A desire to be entertained only.

Delighted to listen to work given in entertaining story fashion, but not willing to delve for his own intellectual improvement.

Irresponsibility is the greatest obstacle to me in my school work. The essential characteristics are indifference and superficiality. The latter is the most discouraging of anything in my work. I think it is the outcome of the imitations which they see at home. Their parents are satisfied with the imitation play, or dress; the children are satisfied if their work appears like the others, and that later becomes a conscious evasion of duties. Happily, though, such pupils are in the minority.

The refusal or inability, on the part of some children, to assume responsibility. These are the pupils that cannot be trusted or relied upon, and form the lawless element.

One of the difficulties met in teaching young children is their inability to understand that each child is only a unit in the great whole. They finally grasp the idea but it is a great lesson to learn and one which takes some longer than the first year of their school life to understand.

One thing that troubles me is that children feel no responsibilities. "I forgot" is, for them, an excuse for all shortcomings.

In thinking of children 11-13 years old, the faults that hinder a teacher most could be summed up in one word, irresponsibility.

Lack of a feeling of responsibility, which gives as a result, a lack of concentration and attention to work.

Pupils do not seem to realize that they have any part in making their grades.

Generally, the pupils have no idea of the value of school work, consequently, are not earnest in their efforts.

Others think they should do only the work they like best, or that they consider of value.

Lack of thoroughness. They learn for the day or the test and care nothing for the knowledge itself.

A sub-master in an eastern high school, a teacher in a business course, in which it is his duty to enforce a sense of reliability, of responsibility as essential to success, simply names as the greatest fault: "Lack of any proper sense of responsibility," and the city superintendent commenting upon it says that his statement would probably be duplicated by each of the 29 teachers in the school.

Examples of the above.

Walter, a very bright boy of 15, when taken to task for not doing better work in geography, said, "Well, I do good work in arithmetic,

don't I? But I hate geography. What good will it do me?" His father had told him that if he could read, figure and write it was all that was necessary.

Florence, 14 years old, was very conscientious in all her work but in preparing her history lessons, she said, "I just can't study history and neither can my mother." Her mother's favorite speech is "I never could learn history and Florence is just like me."

*Distaste for Uninteresting Work, Wanting to be Amused, etc.*

Those who criticise the doctrine, made popular by the Herbartians, that the training of children must proceed conformably to an aroused interest will find encouragement for their views in the testimony of the teachers which follows. The thing here chiefly complained of seems to arise from the difficulty of making the transition from kindergarten and primary methods, which properly possess entertainment features, to those necessary when the pupil must meet the more serious subjects further on in the course. Those teachers who make the path of learning too smooth and pleasant for the children in the earlier years inevitably dig a pit for their successors. For such children, blasé and critical from having worn out the possibilities of schoolroom entertainment, are in the condition of the child surfeited with toys who didn't want to play with them but wanted to want to. They illustrate the great law of diminishing intensity of feeling. To arouse the degree of interest demanded by their sated appetites stronger and stronger stimuli are required. The mental fiber of such children remains decidedly flabby, and being destitute of proper habits of acquisition they become indifferent, inattentive, and a burden to the teacher.

The children wish to be entertained. They are thoroughly interested during recitation but lack application during study hours, hence do not master the text. They attend to others instead of themselves, listening to other classes and do not feel that they are responsible for a certain amount of work at that time.

Desire for constant change, when material and subject matter have not been exhausted.

A tendency to shirk anything which is "hard work." They demand to be entertained all the time or they grow inattentive.

A restless spirit, inattention, a dislike for solid work, and a lack of the feeling of responsibility on the part of the child. This is true of the eighth year especially.

Restlessness, a desire for the new before mastering the old, are the things I find so hard to contend with.

No grasp of present opportunities or knowledge, desire for entertainment in the schoolroom instead of work.

An overbalancing of the volitional by the emotional nature. Shown by (1) too great a desire for the novel and entertaining, (2) lack of ability to persist and succeed in the more irksome lines of work.

A desire for entertainment and an unwillingness to work at anything that is not entertaining.

Children expect to be entertained and to get lessons without effort, and do not study the printed page.

The children are at an age when they fail to appreciate the importance or necessity of application. They want to be amused.

Unwillingness to do individual hard work; by this I mean a tendency to give up without effort, any task which is slightly more difficult than the ordinary one. This does not apply to all.

A chronic unwillingness to do the drudgery of hard work required, expecting all work to be made easy.

Inattention. Will listen if lesson is very interesting—something out of the ordinary. They want to be amused most of the time.

Lack of power to concentrate the attention, so that in order to secure favorable results a lesson must be made highly interesting.

Lack of perseverance. Easily discouraged with the least obscure point.

*Lack of Moral and Intellectual Standards. Lack of Honor, etc.*

No doubt exists regarding the truth of this charge. The young child is deficient in moral perception and must develop an appreciation of the moral content of an act. To him what is permitted is right and what is forbidden is wrong. In time he may be trained to a sense of moral responsibility.

In the intellectual field, also, he has no proper perspective. Having few ideas his ideals are of a low order. He lacks the power of evaluating the products of the adult mind. Living so largely the sensuous life, the artificiality and restrictions of the schoolroom cannot be otherwise than irksome to him. He is incapable of appreciating the importance of the work; hence his indifference to it.

They are unable to control themselves when they are left in the room without a teacher. They seem to feel it is necessary to do the right only as long as the teacher is watching them.

My greatest trouble is in trying to make children understand the meaning of being thrown on one's honor. The conduct of children is all right while the eye is upon them, but they cannot be trusted when the watch is removed.

Untrustworthiness. They cannot be trusted to continue work in the absence of the teacher or some one to watch them.

Irreverence for authority. This is characterized by the tendency to overstep as soon as privileges and freedom are extended.

The children have no pride in accomplishing a good result.

The children are satisfied with getting only what is required of them.

Lack of power of application, which not infrequently results from lack of ambition.

Lack of proper pride in scholarship, brought about by the lowering of the standard.

Lack of ambition, characterized by shiftlessness.

The impression that the child of ten or twelve years of age has, that when he has attained fourteen years his education is finished, and he will not be required to attend school.

Lack of responsibility for actions: so many children wish to excuse wrong actions in themselves, even when they know the right from the wrong. They feel no desire to do right because it is right, but do right only because they are being watched.

*Lack of Self-Reliance, Lack of Confidence in Themselves and their Work, Dependence on Others, No Power of Initiative.*

We adverted above to the long period of dependence in the human infant which gives time for social preparation. The meagerness of the child's equipment for volitional action is for a long time very marked. Since his capacity for judgment and discrimination is small, it is, perhaps, well that he possesses little power of initiative. For several years imitation is a large factor in his development. He looks to parents, teachers and others for cues to action. Yet while this is a natural condition of early childhood the time soon comes when if he is to be more than a weakling he must rely upon himself for the solution of difficulties, for in practical life there can be no alter ego to supply needed information and suggestion at every step.

One of the great weaknesses in much of our training lies in our failure to change natural dependence into what may be called the efferent disposition. The "idea of success," of power to do things is not given, nor the pride in achievement aroused. The home is, perhaps, more blameworthy than the school in this respect. There is too much waiting upon children by their elders. The child yields to the law of least effort and will not try to do unnecessary hard things. He will not, for instance, learn to speak, nor to wait upon himself if a grunt, a cry or a gesture will bring the satisfaction of his wants. With teachers, also, the temptation is great to do much of the child's work in order to save much of the friction that comes from insistence on strict performance of tasks.

There is a lack of independence in thought and work, little originality, very often the child seeming to rely entirely upon the teacher to present every step in whatever study is before him. This is perhaps due to a lack of application on the part of the pupil, or to his inability to concentrate his mind on a subject, which does not, on the surface, arouse his immediate interest.

Children fail to do individual thinking, depending on the teacher or some force outside themselves for ideas, or else failing to test their own ideas by safe and reasonable guides. I should not like to ascribe all of this fault to the child, as much of it is due to his school training, including course of study and teachers.

Children seem to expect everything to be explained and made easy for them and lack the ability or the desire to hunt out new truths or to solve hard problems, for instance, for themselves.

I have found the greatest obstacle to be,—a lack of independence, the teacher having to supply the plans, energy, animation, the study, and to work out almost entirely alone the desired result.

I believe the greatest obstacle is a lack of earnest purpose on the part of the child. Everything has been made so easy for the child that it takes him too long to realize that he must make an effort to help himself.

They have no faith in their own work and are always wanting to compare their work with some one's. They have no ambition, are



just as happy with fair results as with good ones, and have no high standard.

The children sit like young birds in a nest ready for the food to be placed in them. They cannot or will not think independently.

I find the children very dependent. They do not seem to know how to be responsible for themselves. They are unable to take their books and get from them a lesson unless greatly aided by the teacher.

The fault of children which is the greatest obstacle to me is a disinclination to take upon themselves any responsibility. They depend too much upon the efforts of the teacher and do too little for themselves.

Children, as a rule, do not know how to study. Under the eye of the teacher they apply themselves, but, thrown upon their own resources, they fail, in that they stop work entirely, or are too easily satisfied with what they accomplish.

They are not able to take a book and dig out the lessons for themselves, but must have so much help from the teacher.

Inability to make use of their books after instruction is given.

The pupils sent to me have been helped to death.

In some cases a lack of confidence in their own ability.

The reliance of pupils on each other; *i. e.*, in doing outside work.

Willingness to listen and take an oral part in any recitation, but unable to attend to any task that calls for self-directed activity.

Lack of self reliance and independence. The power of initiative seems most difficult to stimulate.

Inability to apply themselves independently.

Dependent upon teacher's assistance.

The greatest defect discovered in children under my care has been a lack of confidence in their own ability to accomplish work of any kind. Most of the children, when received into the kindergarten from home, are almost helpless in regard to making any effort for themselves. It is very apparent that the home training is greatly at fault. Parents find it far easier to wait upon a child than to teach him to help himself. I have taught a kindergarten fifteen years.

My work has been with children in the sixth and seventh grades chiefly. In those grades I find the children unable to help themselves. They wish to be entertained and to have everything made pleasant and easy for them. They have not the ability to do independent work.

*Lack of Vitality from various causes, Dreamy Listlessness, Abstraction, Absent-mindedness, Sleepiness, Laziness, Indolence, Procrastination, Lack of Mental Energy, etc.*

It is difficult to say whether many of the cases listed here are greatly different from those given above under the label of indifference and lack of interest.

The child who, from lack of vitality caused by insufficient sleep, and food, bodily abuse, cigarette smoking, overheated rooms and bad air, overwork out of school, or from any other cause has his physical powers impaired, is sure to reflect this condition in his mental life, and as a result we have some of the schoolroom "faults" variously named above.

In the search for the causes, the age of the pupils also should be taken into account. It is well known that children in the seventh or eighth year, by reason of the fact that the heart and

other visceral organs do not keep pace with the body growth, pass through a period of special susceptibility to fatigue characterized by a state of unusual laziness.

Outside of his play activity the child is naturally lazy. He must learn, however, to give over his atavistic desires of a paradise where no one works, and, like the race which has unwillingly assumed the burden of labor, set his face toward the struggle which has made man great. The acquisition of the working habit is a large part of social education.

Listlessness is an obstacle in my school, caused, I think, by lack of proper food and lack of proper care at home.

Listlessness is one of the greatest obstacles that I find in my school work. This, I think, is caused by improper food. I find a general listlessness among the pupils.

I find a general listlessness among the pupils. It is very difficult to interest them in a way to hold their attention.

Abstraction. Inability to repeat a problem, or keep in mind a complete thing. Distraction, when it is a question of taking dictation.

There is a sort of dreamy state into which they wander, and yet they seem to be giving attention.

Sleepiness, caused by late hours.

Dreaminess of mind, unwillingness to master difficulties, attention easily distracted. In some, I believe, it is caused by the beer and coffee given, and in some measure by the entirely unfit character of the food which is their daily fare.

I find indolence the greatest obstacle in my school work. A love of ease and a certain pleasure in dreaming seems to overpower the mind.

The lack of energy in regard to personal mental activity is the greatest obstacle in my school work.

I believe that a large part of the dreaminess, inattention and indolence is caused by defective sight and hearing of which the children themselves are wholly unaware. They hear very little of what goes on in the schoolroom and fall into habits of inattention which rapidly develop into mental dullness and stupidity.

The indolence is often accompanied by a dreamy, far away look of the eyes, which would seem to indicate that the child is occupied in thought of something outside his vision, but my experience has taught me that in many such cases, the mind is not consciously active.

Example: Boy, 11 years old, exceptional student in history, only fair in other branches. A dreamer; starts out with good intentions, but at the end of five minutes is building air castles. He walks along the street in the same way, trips over stones, walks into people and other things in his way. Seldom plays,—stands around and watches the others. When he goes on an errand he takes three times as long as other children sent the same distance. His parents are at a loss to understand the cause. He is passionately fond of history, devours all books within his reach and understanding on this subject. Thinks about what he reads, asking peculiar questions about what might have happened had events happened differently or not happened at all. He is a sufferer from acute catarrh and I believe his physical indisposition has much to do with his seeming thoughtlessness and desire to do nothing."

*Nervousness, Restlessness, Lack of Steadiness from Excessive use of Tobacco, etc.*

Teachers have to contend with the natural restlessness of healthy children full of animal life and spirits, which results when they are taken from their plays and subjected to too long hours of confinement in the schoolroom. This is a small matter, however, when compared with what they must endure from the cigarette smokers. In addition to unsteadiness of nerves, nearly all the so-called "faults" named in the pages above may be caused by this vice.

A recent investigation<sup>1</sup> of this evil which "concerns nearly twelve hundred boys from the first grade through the high school shows that more than one-third of these admit that they smoke or have smoked. Those who say they never smoked are counted in the list of non-users. The smokers average one year older than those of their grade who are non-smokers. The inveterate smokers are two years behind the non-users. This is true through all the grades." The teachers' reports show that the conduct of the smokers is far below the average. Some of the reports say of them: "Self control poor, inattentive, not trustworthy; bad memory, careless, excitable, nervous, bad conduct; lazy, sleepy, slow to move; very dull, blank look; heavy eyes, sick frequently; never did any good work in school; no energy, naturally bright but no power of concentration; vacant stare, gloomy, listless. Physical deterioration is also a feature."

Nervousness, continual handling of any small object, button, pin or small piece of wood, constantly dropped from one hand to another, put in mouth, placed in different positions on the desk, restless moving of body and feet, twisting of legs and body in queer positions.

Restlessness. It is seen in the squirming and turning in seats, in playing with pencils, knife, erasers, and in the general disregard of rules.

The nervousness of the child is seen in his inability to make his writing uniform, also in his inability to sit still in his seat for more than a minute at a time.

Restlessness due to too great restraint of school hours on natural animal spirits.

Extreme nervousness, causing inability to concentrate attention on instruction given or on the committing of lessons.

Excitability in all children when anything unusual occurs, or while anticipating some interesting event, for instance, the days immediately preceding Christmas.

Nervousness, as shown in restlessness, listlessness, oversensitiveness and self-consciousness causing the child to be timid and to speak in a low tone for fear of failure.

Nervousness. Types—(a) child nervous, irritable, crying, (b) nervous child, muscles not under good control, subject to violent fits of anger.

<sup>1</sup>Supt. R. G. Ogg: School Report for 1902, Kokomo, Indiana.

In some cases I believe the nervousness is due to kidney trouble.

The greatest obstacle in dealing with boys is the excessive use of tobacco. The result is nervousness, a quick temper, second grade work and a lack of steadiness.

Use of tobacco. Result: nervous condition, minds inactive, loss of interest.

Among boys, I have found the greatest fault to be the use of tobacco.

*Impulsive Speaking, Lack of Self-Control, Thoughtlessness, etc.*

The tendency of children to speak or to act on any perception or idea entering the mind is much stronger than in the adult, in whom the power to inhibit action has been established. Poor methods of teaching may foster or prolong the state. Impulsive speaking, for instance, may arise from a desire to answer first, or from the fact that many teachers urge quick answers because their nervous state renders it difficult for them to wait for the proper mental processes to take place. This puts a premium on superficial memorizing of details which can be quickly given. Very often children respond thoughtlessly, basing their answers on some idea aroused by one or two words in the question.

Poor motor control, shown in the inability to keep the hands quiet during a short recitation, the tendency to pick up a pen or pencil, to open a book, etc., is very strong.

Whispering, to each other somewhat, but more often talking to themselves, repeating page given, saying numbers when working in arithmetic, lips moving when studying, etc.

Lack of motor control shown in writing.

Lack of manual dexterity. I have one little girl, seven years old, who seems utterly devoid of any power or desire to perform the simplest kind of handwork. She has been in school a year and a half, and can read a few sentences in script, but cannot write a word, and it seems impossible for her to trace a line which I make for her. In the year and a half that I have been her teacher I have tried and tried to find some kind of busy work that she would be able to do, but have failed utterly so far.

I find that children do not think carefully before the work is put down on paper. In writing, they will not spell correctly such words as *him, large*, etc.

The children are anxious to answer questions and do so without getting the thought of the question.

They are very thoughtless. They speak without thought and write before planning clearly what they wish to express.

A disinclination to think before answering.

*Mental Incapacity, under many names: Lack of Power to Reason or to Think, Lack of Comprehension, Lack of Visualizing Power, Lack of Perceptive Power, Lack of Mental Grasp, Lack of Brains, Inability to sift out the important point, or to gain the thought from the printed page, Stupidity, Dullness.*

The perusal of the extracts from the teachers' replies below makes it evident that too much is frequently expected of chil-

dren. Because of the weakness or absence in them of those mental traits normally possessed by the adult, many teachers are ready to convict them of "lack of brains," "stupidity," etc. These children of the elementary grades are said to "lack the logical faculty," are "unable to reason," and "wanting in deduction." Other teachers more sensibly attribute the cause of the mental deficiencies reported to lack of training in proper habits of study, lack of training in observation, too many subjects of study, forced promotions, children too young for the work, irregular attendance, and the like.

Aside from the general dullness complained of we have the cases of the really incapable. Monroe in his study of dullards, found about one in every ten children of the public schools to be of this character. Dr. Francis Warner places it at one in thirteen. Such children do not properly belong in the regular schools. They take the time and strength of the teacher and try her patience more than all the rest. The plan adopted by several cities of providing expert instruction for them in a separate school is the best solution of the problem so far found.

Mental incapacity, I find characterized by one or all of the following: 1. The logical faculty to distinguish between essentials and non-essentials, to follow or develop a chain of reasoning, to connect cause and effect, is lacking. 2. Memory is very defective. 3. The power of concentration and of close observation is little developed. 4. Extreme slowness of mental processes.

My greatest trouble is the fact that pupils do not know how to study when they reach my classes, and a large share of our time has to be taken up in teaching them how to study. With a great many pupils it is too late to learn this and so they fail utterly.

Children are unable to select the essential from the unessential, because they have not been taught how to study. Example: The pupils in a sixth year grade were asked the following question in one of their tests, "Describe Washington's campaign in New Jersey." Most of the children took more time in describing some little event, as—how Washington was guided from Trenton to Princeton—than in giving the chief events, their causes and results.

Mental incapacity—evidenced in stupidity, not "seeing the point." Lack of logical reasoning—resulting from not having been taught to see the relations between things. Inability to relate cause and effect.

Inability to put into use knowledge gained—to use in one subject knowledge gained in another.

An inability to apply what they learn to the every day needs of life. Want of deduction. Children are not able to apply knowledge to new surroundings.

The inability to gain the thought from the printed page.

Poor expression. Few have travelled and their experience has been only with Indianapolis, an inland city. The mental images they form from the printed page of a geography show lack of interest and attention.

The tendency of pupils to learn the words instead of the meaning of a lesson, *e. g.*, question is asked, What is an axiom? Answer received—an axiom is a self assumed evident, the words of the book were, an axiom is a truth assumed self evident. The words and not the meaning had impressed the child.

Inability to think—to get from the printed page something more than the words found there.

Lack of mental grasp—they learn words but seem to miss oftentimes the true significance.

Many children's brains work slowly. When the work of the term is carried on too rapidly, they are unable to grasp the thought, lose all interest, and are then alert for other things to take up their attention.

One who says she has taught chiefly the children of society people says "the great fault is lack of ability to grasp the subject matter presented, especially in its relations, due chiefly to the mental energy of the child being expended in so many different directions by a multiplicity of subjects. Also mental restlessness, lack of concentration, a state of being on the *qui vive* for a new sensation due in great measure to the same cause, as it seems to me. There is also a lack of steadiness of purpose, a spirit of frivolity which is one of the characteristics of the time."

Inability to reason—somewhat due to incapacity, but mostly lack of mental discipline.

In a school of thirty-five, the ages ranging from thirteen to seventeen, the children seem able to memorize a thing easily enough but any attempt to lead the child to draw a conclusion from any number of particulars, or any effort to have him follow logically steps that need to be taken, is met almost at once with a falling off in attention and a corresponding increase in non-concentration.

One of the greatest faults I see in children is the lack of power to grasp the entire thought presented. They are satisfied with a part, and do not seek farther for the whole thought.

The children under my charge range from twelve to seventeen years of age. The mental defects most apparent in these grades (sixth to eighth inclusive, are, sluggish perception, distaste for mental exertion and inability to retain facts taught in the school course. These conditions, which are general to a remarkable degree, seem to me to be due, first, to adolescence; second to the overcrowding necessary to cover the prescribed course of study; third, too long hours spent in the schoolroom; resulting in too little physical activity.

A few seem stupid and dull of comprehension; others seem to get tired and sleepy and neglect their work. I strive to counteract these faults with a lively interest in the work, etc.

Mental and moral defects, lack of general information,—current events observe hastily and imperfectly; power of discrimination not developed; lack of "common sense;" no power to make inferences.

A teacher of chemistry says that the greatest obstacle is lack of visualizing power—not remembering things as seen and handled.

In my first year work, children who develop in a one-sided manner form a great obstacle to my work as a whole.

Defect in the power of reflection, caused mainly by multiplicity of subjects.

Inability to comprehend the work of the grade, due to forced promotions or irregular attendance during the first years of school life.

### *Poor Memory, Inability to Retain Facts Taught, etc.*

The charge here, as in the large group just given, seems to be the failure of children to measure up to some standard, held by their teachers, of what ought to be expected of them. As a matter of fact, children's memories are not tenacious. Even with the best teaching the lessons passed over, for the most

part, soon slip away. Much more is this weakness in retaining apparent with that style of teaching which lays emphasis on the acquisition of mere facts.

**Lack of retentiveness.** Real inability to remember or understand lessons.

**Defect of memory.** Lack of power to retain; When requested to bring articles from home, it is sometimes necessary to remind the children five or six times.

**Lack of quick perception and strong association of ideas.** This makes frequent repetitions necessary, and even then many cases of seemingly poor memory result.

**Forgetfulness** is one of the great faults which I have noticed in children, and I cannot always tell whether it is caused by weakness, or whether it is simply carelessness.

The children forget the sounds of groups of letters. They will know a word one day, the next day it is gone.

*Lack of Consideration for Others, Desire to Rule, Willfulness, Stubbornness, Rudeness, Selfishness, Impertinence, Teasing, Quarrelsomeness, etc.*

In all animal life the "push upward" appears under one of two forms: It is fight or flight, It is strength or craft. Among school-children we have, on the one hand, the many manifestations of a blind insistence on personality, such as willfulness, stubbornness and other forms of "selfishness;" we have the fighting, teasing and bullying which gives the child an agreeable sense of power, of superiority; and on the other side we have the lying or deception, cases of which follow below.

In the traits of the first group is found an expression of an important instinct. Within limits these tendencies are desirable as giving evidence of an expanding soul-life. Every normal creature seeks a large development. Not life alone but a more abundant life is sought. The strong outcrop of egoism in the child means just this. It explains the many disagreeable traits of the untrained child, such, for instance, as the strenuous resistance to fancied attempts at diminution of his personality on the part of teachers or others. The ability to conquer these untamed bundles of potentialities without a direct conflict of wills but by the power of a real and tactful sympathy is the mark of a true teacher.

**A spirit of selfishness and ingratitude.**

**The tendency to shirk responsibility:** that is, to blame others for faults.

**Selfishness,** characterized by 1. A desire of pupil to claim more than his share of the teacher's attention and time, in helping him with his work or keeping him in order. 2. He is not at all considerate of the rights of others. 3. Anxious to lead without regard to those who are forced to the rear.

**Examples:** Frank, aged 13, anxious to be the captain of the boys in his class. Whenever he was captain, his conduct was irreproachable, but when a private in the company, he was reported every day for in-

subordination. I could not find out the cause for a long time, till one day in conversation with another teacher, I learned that she had "reformed Frank by letting him do things for her."

Ruth, aged 5, always wants to choose the games in the kindergarten. When allowed to do so, she enters into the games with much spirit, but is either disorderly or indifferent when some one else does the choosing.

I have found that a great number of children are vindictive, impatient and impulsive. Whatever be the cause of the injury, the child seems to think he must repay, and often seeks to return a greater on that received. A seeming accident is sometimes taken for an offense, because the child is too impatient to investigate for himself.

Combateness; ready to strike any one, especially smaller ones, on the way to and from school.

Crossness. Nothing pleases. Cross to every one around. Do not want to be touched or interfered with in the slightest way; are sure to be in trouble on playground; nothing is accidental; everything was done "on purpose."

Unreasonable desire to do just what they know is not desired or not to do what is desired. This is a characteristic of a few and where found is apt to be violent. It is persistency carried to the last equation.

A sullenness that takes offense at any word of reproof or explanation, even though it be offered kindly.

Petty jealousies, requiring careful treatment in order to avoid discouragements and brooding which result in obstinacy and lack of application. This is, of course, a matter of narrowed vision.

Treating of lower classes with disdain by those of wealthier class. Thus bringing about the spirit against labor.

Vanity, and the not wanting to associate with others more poorly dressed.

Vanity, a desire to be seen and heard and to gain notice. Also lack of consideration for others—incivility, rudeness, impertinence.

The lack of natural gentleness toward each other, resulting from street life in rough neighborhoods, and a smaller amount of antagonism caused by some not being as clean and agreeable, personally, as others. "I don't want to take hold of his hand." (In games.)

Great pleasure in annoying or teasing each other—saying little things to each other that need not be said; taking things away from each other in fun; boys hiding others' caps, etc.

A desire to meddle with the work of nearby pupils, and the habit of laughing at the mistakes of others, are the defects which are the greatest obstacles to me in my school work.

One of the greatest obstacles to me in governing my school is the pupil's curiosity to know all of his neighbor's business.

Self-consciousness; child afraid of the sound of his own voice; where the child cannot bear to have his name spoken and simply cannot be singled out because of the pain given.

There is a boy in my school who affects a peculiar gait—not for the purpose of being annoying, but for his own gratification. I have noticed that this affectation appears in many schools, some boys affecting a peculiar laugh, others a peculiar facial expression.

### *Disobedience, Disregard for Law and Authority.*

What was said above of egoism applies to disobedience, in some respects its most obvious phase. The passion for self-assertion is the dominant trait of childhood, and whether in the



home or the school is an element in, perhaps, the majority of the cases of disobedience. Pedagogy has vexing questions to solve in this field; a broken will is fatal to the development of strong character; on the other hand, the price of entrance into the largest social freedom is through submission to law—parental, scholastic and civil.

The defects which I find the greatest obstacles to me in my teaching are lack of prompt obedience, the lack of power to concentrate attention, and the slowness with which responsibility is assumed. Young America is not taught prompt obedience at home, and does not have a high standard of the meaning and necessity of obeying. There is a lack of the proper appreciation of authority.

Repeated disobedience, carrying with it no marks of shame, but growing into a lack of reverence for parents, teachers and places of instruction. A growing tendency to argue and correct the teacher, the outgrowth of pushing our children forward to make them easy and conversant upon all subjects. This flavors of sauciness but seemingly is not meant for it, but where children were formerly eager to receive information, one must now convince.

Greater than any defect, and greatest of all faults is that of disobedience, characterizing the child as bold, defiant and disrespectful to his companions and teachers.

Another fault is the growing disregard for law, both school and civil.

The average American child is not law abiding. His own pleasure and convenience determine his actions, and he has small consideration for the rights of others when they stand in the way of his own gratification.

Protest against authority, from merely reluctant obedience to open defiance.

Spirit of disobedience, brought about by lax home government and views of life.

Failure to obey promptly, seeming to question teacher's right of authority.

A disregard and lack of pride in conforming to any laws.

*Lack of Home-training, Lack of Harmony between the Home and the School, Increase of Hoodlumism, etc.*

The troubles of the teacher due to the causes named, are ever present. Her work often seems hopeless because of the apparent impossibility of contending with bad home influences. Training in conduct goes back for its beginning even to the babe in arms, and the constant assertion of teachers that responsibility rests largely upon the home seems justified. When to the natural tendency to follow selfish desires is added the contamination of bad surroundings in the home and on the street, it is cause for wonder that teachers, with their limited opportunities, accomplish so much.

One of the greatest faults is lack of home training, as shown in 1. lack of self-control; 2. stubbornness; 3. impoliteness even to the degree of impudence; 4. untruthfulness; 5. bad companions, or home influences leading to evil-mindedness and cigarette smoking.

An indifference on the parts of the parents to the preparation of

home work; irregularity of attendance, due to the fact that children are kept out to assist with home work.

Dislike for home study. There are many reasons for this. Parents do not insist on it. Too many outside interests, as—play, parties, special lessons, lack of proper conditions, as a quiet room, good light, etc.

Dislike for school. Home influence not what it should be. Pupil attends school from necessity not choice,—hates books and class room.

Lack of discipline at home is the greatest obstacle in my school work. Parents are out at work, children left to do as they please, and hence know very little of obedience and order.

Impoliteness and careless habits due to ill breeding.

They are held for nothing at home and are restless under being held for anything at school.

Lack of home training in the laws of health and cleanliness.

In this locality, where many of the poorer people live, the children are weak on the language side—reading, composition and power to express themselves.

Lack of home training. Its bad influence shown by untruthfulness and bad language.

The greatest faults and obstacles I find among my pupils in my school work, are habits of frivolity and rudeness that savor of the hoodlum. I do not speak of incorrigible or vicious pupils. I find the above named habits increasing among the better and best classes of pupils. Their minds have drifted into improper channels under slack home discipline, unwisely chosen amusements, and the reading of improper literature.

### *Deception in Many Forms.*

In all animal life deception is instinctive, self-preservative. Children's lies which give so much concern to parents and teachers, but which differ much in moral content from the lies of adults, may all find their explanation along biological lines. Lying is the great refuge of childhood. The child's definition that a "lie is an abomination to the Lord but a very present help in time of trouble" is very much in point. The quotations below are strong expressions of fact but shed no new light on this subject which has been so well studied by President Hall and others. All are familiar with the "selfish" lie in its many forms. The lies of self-defence given expression to by all children when under the fear of punishment, and the lies in defence of the tribe, are most troublesome in the school. Next, perhaps, are the lies to excite wonder and to magnify the individual which lead to lives of falsity and sham. The whole question of deception gives little trouble where parents and teachers act and speak the truth. The forcing process in education is responsible for much of the deception in the school. Where great emphasis is laid on grades and promotions, where the child, to win the approbation of parents or for other causes is required to maintain a "standing," a pressure is brought to bear which he cannot withstand and the result is the many forms of cheating complained of.

The tendency to misrepresent things. It is frequently found in the written work which the child has, himself marked; also in his pretension to orderly conduct when a teacher is thought to be near. Lack of courage to confess his own misdoing will often lead a child to tell an untruth. Fear of punishment will produce a like result.

They seem to think nothing of copying a lesson or telling a falsehood.

There is a tendency towards deceit in children. Not that the thing is absolutely willful, but like all mankind, they try to get something for nothing, attempting to copy and crib in their tests—making it necessary for the teacher to be watchful of the first attempts at liberties of this nature, lest it lead to premeditated willfulness later.

The spirit of deception. As far as my observations have gone this fault is not restricted to any particular class but is found alike among all classes and conditions of children. It is also true that the child who does not have this fault is the exception. We see the evidence of this fault in the children's work, and a teacher of any experience must have often felt how impossible it is to know just how much the children can do unaided.

Another fault is what we would call "cheating." Many children will use every means possible to obtain right answers without regard to the means employed, whether honorable or otherwise. Arithmetics which contain the answers to problems are the bane of a teacher's existence.

The boys cause me the most trouble by shuffling their feet or teasing their neighbors, and then try to get out of it by lying.

An utter disregard for truth in statements of wrong-doing when the child wishes to shield himself from censure.

A deceitfulness that shows in preparing lessons, in tests, and more especially in cases of misconduct.

Falsehoods. 1. The results of a too vivid imagination. 2. Those told to screen a fault or to make mischief.

It is a fact that few children are really truthful.

Untruthfulness. Plea of illness to escape lessons.

## II.

### THE FAULTS OF CHILDREN AS SEEN BY CHILDREN.

In the foregoing section are given the faults of children from the point of view of a body of people who, besides showing the influence of their peculiarly personal relations as teachers, also give evidence of having judged children by adult standards.

We give below the results of an attempt to ascertain the ideas that school-children themselves have of faults.

Since the suggestibility of children leads them to respond in the way they think they are expected to, a change of method was rendered necessary. The plan adopted was to have children write papers in the course of their regular school work, the subject of which was to "tell about the meanest boy or girl you ever knew and why you thought he or she was mean." The plan has justified itself, as the papers collected in this way are, for the most part, naïve and bear the earmarks of honesty. The subject seemed to touch a sympathetic chord and the children wrote from full hearts as though glad of a chance to ex-

press themselves. In some cases, however, the teacher's ideas of bad conduct had been adopted and "mean boys" were mentioned whose chief sins seemed to be that they made the teacher trouble or did not get their lessons at school. It is a suggestive fact that the teacher's attitude toward a pupil may brand him in the eyes of his fellows.

Papers were collected from 309 children, as follows: 152 children from the fourth to the seventh grades inclusive of a ward school in Bloomington, Ind., average age, 11.9 years; 80 children from the fourth and fifth grades of a school in a New York tenement district, almost entirely of foreign parentage, average age, 11.8 years; 77 first year high school pupils of Worcester, Mass., average age, 14.8 years.

The tabulation of the mean traits mentioned by the children of these cities is presented in separate columns below.

*Table of Faults as Seen by Children.*

	Bloomington.	New York.	Worcester.	Total.
Number contributing,	152	80	77	309
Average age,	11.9	11.8	14.8	
1 Fighting, bullying, teasing, etc.,	92	36	29	157
2 Stealing, Robbing, etc.,	49	11	14	74
3 Bad conduct, ignorance of etiquette, impudence, calling names, "sassing," ill-mannered,	15	7	49	71
4 Lying and cheating,	37	10	23	70
5 Disobedient, "won't help work," runs away from home, etc.,	47	8	12	67
6 Malice, telling tales, slander, revenge, etc.,	40	4	4	48
7 Plays truant, "hookey," runs away from school,	32	1	13	46
8 Smoking cigarettes, etc.,	32		7	39
9 Swearing,	33		3	36
10 Troubling the teacher in various ways,	19		12	31
11 Cruelty to animals,	24	6		30
12 Untidy, "won't wash and comb," etc.,	12		14	26
13 Mistreats parents, shows disrespect to them and elders,	12	5	8	25
14 The reproach of ignorance—"does n't get his lessons,"	16		5	21
15 Selfish, "won't share,"	8	8	4	20
16 Out with bad company, leading boys astray,	13		6	19
17 "Ran away and left me," "would n't speak," "kept secrets from me," etc.		16		16
18 Getting angry, bad-tempered, etc.,	2	1	13	16
19 "Hopping" trains,	14		1	15
20 Drinking,	9			9
21 Would n't be "it," would n't accept the penalty of the game,		9		9
22 Gambling,	8			8

Differences of age and environment seem to be responsible for many interesting facts. Clearly marked local differences crop out in the papers and, in some cases, are revealed by an inspection of the table. The Indiana children live in a country town of only a few thousand inhabitants; the place and people are therefore more or less well known to the children. One result of this is that a number mention notorious offenders who have been sent to the reform school. Some neighborhood and teachers' "terrors" are also frequently given.

By some error of direction the idea was given to the children of New York and Worcester that they should restrict themselves to the meanest one they knew of their own sex. The other children, however, had perfect freedom of choice. The result shows that both sexes recognize the greater prevalence of meanness in the boy. Only three out of 70 boys were so ungallant as to choose a girl as the meanest one they knew; while sixteen of the 82 girls choose a subject from their own sex. 87½% therefore proclaim the meanness of the "Bad Boy."

It should be recalled that the New York children are from the slum district. Their papers as a whole differ quite materially from those of the children of the other cities. Their range is narrower, and more frequently the acts of meanness noted seem very trivial and to have been mentioned by reason of a personal feeling in the writer's mind. Inspection of the table of faults shows that lying, cheating and stealing are much less frequently given as an evidence of meanness among the papers of these children, and seldom or never given abstractly as faults of an individual. Swearing, smoking cigarettes, untidiness, going with bad company, drinking and gambling are not mentioned at all and "playing hookey" but once. Is the purification of greater New York an accomplished fact? Are the traits named non-existent among these children, or so common as to be taken as a matter of course—a part of the life? The New York children nearly all refer to incidents of street life and little or nothing from the school world appears in their papers.

The children from Worcester were entering on the age of adolescence and many of them live in a more cultured community. Their papers are better written and give evidence of a wider outlook on life. It is noteworthy that many of them, probably because written at this peculiar time of life, mention as faults—lack of observance of conventional usages. In fact by far the largest group of faults named by Worcester children is that put down as "bad conduct, with the idea of violation of social usages. Ignorance of etiquette, etc." Girls lead in this. They often describe the personal appearance of their subject

and charge breach of good manners. They differ from the younger children, also, in naming good qualities where they can do so and often find excuses for faults.

Let us now refer to the table of faults as a whole in response to the general question what makes a child mean in the estimation of his fellows? A comparison of this list with the faults that teachers find most serious reveals the fact that the child world is an almost entirely different world. Teachers are most affected by what obstructs the smooth running of their school machinery, children very largely by what touches themselves. With both a fault is that which conflicts with personality but in the case of the child it is personality in the narrow sense. Comparable to the overwhelming preponderance of inattention on the teachers' list are the charges of fighting, bullying and teasing in the papers of the children. This phase of egoism seems to have been the chief factor in making a choice of subject in more than 50% of all the cases. Indeed there are but few boys who do not mention it. The following cases will show the nature of this trait. The quotations are nearly all from children from 8 to 11 years of age, those as yet relatively unspoiled by civilization. Wherever the personal element is involved the language is vivid and picturesque because of the feeling.

In summer, when the boys would go swimming, he would duck them, throw mud on them when they would come out and make them go back into the water and wash off again, he would tie up their clothes and hide them.

In winter, when the boys would go skating, he would hold them and take their skates off and run around the pond teasing and tormenting them. He would not tease larger boys than himself or they would have whipped him.

I once met a boy at a corner when I was playing a game of foot-ball. He said, "If I did not let him play he would get his bull-dog after us." And the bull-dog bit a boy in the leg.

While he was in school he was always hitting some one and hurting them. When he was a little fellow he would throw rocks at you and aim at your head. When he was nine years of age he knocked a boy unconscious.

Bob delighted in jumping onto little boys and hurting them. Sometimes he would jump onto little boys who had large brothers and the boy would tell his brother and Bob would get licked.

On his way home from school he would hit little children to make them cry and he would go home and not tell his mother and think he was as happy as any one.

He would steal money and threw stones at every girl he saw, and would hit them in the face with sticks, and would try to pick a fight with every boy he saw.

He will throw stones at you when your back is turned. And will call you names. And will fight you, steal your things and hide them.

I am going to tell you about John J. He lives in a fine large house. His father was a doctor. He would tease and hurt little boys. He was always smoking. All the little boys were afraid of him. I did

not like him. I think boys that have what they want are not as good as boys that don't.

Affronted personality in some form inspires the selection of the meanest boy or girl more frequently than any other cause. 55% of the New York children give cases in which the personal element is directly involved. This is true of 31% of the Bloomington children and 8% of the Worcester pupils. The last named seem to have outgrown this stage, for while they frequently mention fighting, teasing or other egoistic traits, it is done impersonally. The line of sex in this matter is quite sharply marked. The stronger sex is given to fighting and bullying and the one who is meanest is so because he has "picked on" the writer, taken his cap, pushed him in the mud, etc., as shown above; the feminine counterpart of this trait is slander and backbiting. Girls fight by "telling tales," "calling names" and "talking about" each other behind the back. Of the 48 cases of this all but one were girls. The continual quarreling and making up so characteristic of little girls crops out repeatedly in the papers. The jealousy or pique felt by a girl at the moment seems often to determine her choice of a mean subject.

My playmate is the meanest girl I ever knew. We had a quarrel and after the quarrel we each went home. And she went out with her friend. And I met her again and she pushed me into some mud. And that is why I think she is mean. And the next day she went with her friend and then when her friend went home she came with me. She said her friend was mad at her so I went with her and the next day she went with her friend again and she passed me by and did not look at me or speak to me. And she was mad at me for a week and then she came to school with me the next day and she played tag with a girl and she said I could play. So we were glad after that.

Note the following from a nine year old: The meanest girl I ever seen. She would talk about people. She would make faces at you. She got angry at Sylvia and I. She would not speak to us and went to other children and talked about us and told them everything that was not true. And when I pass her she will talk to the children that is with her and tell them things that is not so. And then I went and told her grandma she lives with her. And she got friendly again and now she is angry again and I left her alone and she talks about me now.

Gracie, aged nine writes: The meanest girl I ever knew is Lucy D. She is nine years old. She is very mean. The very, very meanest girl on earth. Every time I see her I make a face at her and she does the same to me. But I mine it not a bit, I just let it pass. We were friends.

I know a girl that I don't like for she talks about other children and she tells things that are not true. And every day of school she will make fun of me. One day I heard that she was sorrow of what she had done.

She got mad at me and talked things about me. One day I was talking to another girl and she came along and told the girl not to speak to me.

The desire to dominate in the plays or to have one's own way in general causes a child to be disliked by others.

Once I was playing with a girl. I asked her to play a different game and she would n't so I think she is mean. And I asked her to walk up and down and she would not and that's what I call mean.

There was once a girl and she was the meanest girl I ever new she was playing tage and she said to the other girls "don't play tage any more" and the other girls said Yes and when they were running she pushed the other girl in the mud gutter and she fell and hurt herself.

I will call this girl Molly. She always wanted her own way and would get mad if you would not play everything she wanted to. One afternoon she went to play with some girls. They let her choose nearly every game until they got tired. Then they told one of the other girls to choose a game. The little girl chose something Molly did n't like so she got mad and hit the little girl and then ran home.

Refusal to accept the penalty of the game is another evidence of this spirit. Cases are mentioned of boys taking by force the marbles they have lost playing "keeps," and of others who quit while winning; which is just as mean. The same trait is found in girls. The following is a typical case.

She would never give it (in) when I say she was "it." She would never give it when she was tagged. She would always say "I was not." I think she is the meanest girl I ever knew.

Sometimes a child is called mean because of a failure to grant the writer's request.

One-day as I was playing on the street I met a boy. I was thinking to have a game and there was know one around and he was the only boy there. When the boy seen that I could not get any one he would not play.

The meanest girl I ever knew. She would n't wait for me after school. She would n't come to the store with me. She would n't play tag with me. She was very rough in playing. I thought it was n't right for her not to wait when I wait for her every day. I didn't think it was right that she would n't come with me when she was only sitting on the stoop.

In some cases it is plain that the narrator is at fault. His actions may have provoked the "meanness" of which he complains.

The meanest girl I ever knew. I thought that girl was mean because she would not look at me. She would not look at me because I would not let her see my arithmetic. She would not look at me for a few days just on account of the arithmetic. Was n't that mean?

One can read between the lines in the following: "His nickname is pick a pie and he gets mad when any one calls him that and he says very bad words sometimes."

The keen appetites of children lead them to regard as mean those who refuse to share with them.

Examples. "She was a girl that was mean. Whenever she had a penny she would not give her playmates any of her candy." "If she had candy or anything she would not offer anybody a piece. She



would rather let them look at her before she would give them a piece. If you would ask her for anything she would say 'I have not got any.' "

The second largest group on the list is that of stealing and robbing. In most cases small thefts, but they serve to confirm studies in criminology which show that in early life the chief crimes are those against property.

Following closely upon this comes deception in its many forms. As we noted above this trait also stands high upon the teachers' list of faults. Children, however, have little sense of what a lie means and in their papers they seldom name it but merely give the account or incident involving it. The deceptions given cover a wide range from cheating in school to the lies told to magnify the importance of the individual.

Perhaps no other fault has so much power to shock the mind of the child, the girl especially, as swearing.

I often heard him curse his father or even his mother and sister and he seemed to think it manly.

He curses people big or little or dogs or cats, and everything that comes in his way. He will even curse his mother and grandmother.

He would curse his mother. He will call you names. And then run in the house. When they would have a horried girl he would fight and cuse them.

Children notoriously "want their own way" and they find it hard to render obedience. One is therefore surprised at the strong undercurrent of feeling throughout the papers that parents and teachers ought to be obeyed and well-treated. Such statements as the following are common: "The worst thing I ever knew this boy to do was to throw a stone at his mother when she came to the window to call him in." "The girl who I think is mean, she answered my grandma back and that is why I think she is mean." Even the boy whom a large number of his grade call 'the meanest boy' chooses a subject who 'wount' mind."

The meanest boy is John F. He lives in Rockvill and he cusses and runs away from the house and he never dos anything that his unkel tells him to do and his mother and father is ded, and his unkel taks car of him and he will not do anything atawl and his unkel heats to whip him becaus his mother and father is ded. he goes in No. 5 collige school rockvill and he is a very bad boy, his teacher has to whip him twis a day and sumtimes 4 times a day and he wount mind atawl and he was took up to the purfessors ofice seaverl times and he wount mind.

Judging from the replies many consider smoking as an act of meanness. The consequences of indulgence in the use of tobacco is sometimes given.

"But the meanest thing he ever did was to smoke cigarettes, and even worse than that he smoked pipes."

"I think cigarettes and drinking liquor of any kind and using tobacco will settle him some of these days."

"He was smoking a cigarette and chewing tobacco and to-day he is at Plainfield (the Reform School) for stealing and will go to the penitentiary when he is old enough."

Children resort to exaggeration in order to make out a good case. Here are some characteristic examples: "He uses a whole dictionary full of profane language in a day." "He would steal everything he could get his hands on," occurred a dozen times. "This boy tells the most lies I ever saw and he tells the most lies on me I ever saw." "If she got mad at any of her schoolmates or friends she never got through talking about them and they never would hear the last of it." "He is very very mean, I say he is mean."

Children who are fond of animals become much wrought up over the heartless acts of those who are still in the cruelty stage of life:

"He would catch people's chickens and pull their feathers out and let them go. He would tie a tin can full of stones or gravel to a dog's tail and whip it to make it run. He would catch two cats and tie their tails together and throw them across a clothes line for nothing else but just as he put it "Jest ter have sum fun."

"He is a very mean boy, he will run away from school just because he is too lazy to study. He will throw stones at chickens, cows, horses, cats, and all dumb animals he comes across."

"He used to fight his father's horses and run them. When I would go out riding he would hit my horse to see it run with me."

"He is very cruel to the animals and birds. He threw several cats out of the window."

"This boy would often take worms and small insects, run pins and tacks through their bodies, then fasten them to pasteboard. The insects often died unless some one discovered them in time for the boy always hid them in a place not often visited."

"His best fun is to tie a cat or dog up and whip him till he is dead or throw rocks at him till he dies."

The affection of young children for their teachers readily explains the choosing of one who makes the teacher trouble.

Daphne, aged 8, daughter of a University Professor, says: "Charlie N. is the meanest boy I know. He plays hookey all the time and his father had to be sent to jail. He makes faces at the children and the teacher, and makes very low grades in spelling. He cannot read well. Neither can he write well. His desk is very dirty because he is a dirty boy and never washes it. He tells stories too."

"The meanest boy I ever knew was very mean in school. He would be very saucy to the teacher and try to hit her and when the teacher would call on him sometimes he wouldn't answer her. He would make faces at the teacher and she would be mad at him and take him in the cloakroom and whip him. He would whisper and say funny things to the children and make them laugh. His name was Roy. Sometimes he would have to stand on the floor."

"He is so mean that he never has his lessons but it does no good to whip him he will just be meaner still."

The prevalence of the tribal instinct in boys is indicated by such expressions as, "He is always getting up a club of boys to do some mischief."

The irrelevancy of the child mind appears at times, as in the example of Margie, aged 10, who forgets the bad boy to tell of his little rabbit which had an eye scratched out by a cat.

In making out a case of meanness the children often attribute a number of mean acts to their subject but the following catalogue of sins is unique:

The meanest girl I ever knew. The girl slapped her brother. She would n't let her sister play. She stole candy. She soiled the curtains with ink. She tore her dresses and copied lessons. She pushed roughly through the crowd. She would n't share anything. She kicked the boy. She stole prunes. She spilt the coffee and broke the cup. She hollowed loud. She was a flatterer. She caught a woodchuck. She called names. She punched his feet. She pulled the girls hair. She threw stones. She broke the vase. She tore the calendar. She pulled the cat's tail and made him mew. She told falsehoods. She spilt ashes. She broke her sister's doll. She disobeyed her teacher. She followed her mother. She moved the hands of the clock. She broke the teacher's blackboard. She would not do what she was told. She broke the hinges on the door. She would not play with the baby and broke the baby's toys and rattles. She put crumbs on the floor.

### III.

#### CHILDREN'S FAULTS AS SEEN BY PARENTS.

We here give a brief statement of the results of an attempt to ascertain what parents regard as faults in their children. Because of the small number of responses from parents little emphasis is placed upon this part of the study. Its chief value is for purposes of comparison with the tables of faults given in Parts I and II.

One thousand copies of the questions given below were put into the hands of parents.

1. Without consultation with any one, will you frankly name the most serious faults of your own children or grandchildren, or any troublesome traits which give or have given you most concern, (a) giving the essential characteristics of each, and (b) where possible, illustrating by incidents and examples.

2. All children do not have serious faults. After mentioning such faulty traits as do appear in your own children, as desired above, please state fully, from your experience and observation of children in general, what faults are to be regarded as most serious.

3. Give the sex of the child exhibiting the fault, and if any exist, any differences in the manner in which the different sexes are affected by the fault.

4. State if possible, the causes for the fault or faults.

5. State, as nearly as you can, the age when each fault first appeared.

6. State the age when the fault became most troublesome.
7. If afterwards less troublesome, what method of correction, if any, was used?

Great interest was aroused among those receiving the questions, but for various reasons, the principal one being the personal aspect of the case, only ninety-one parents responded. These were, for the most part, intelligent and consecrated mothers who, putting aside a natural reluctance to making public the inside of family life, gave conscientious and helpful accounts of their children. A mother who recognizes what is implied in a confession of faults in her children, says, "The faults of my own children are many, but I realize, as will you before you get through with your study, that the child is not to blame. You ask rather difficult questions of us, because we of the Mothers' Club realize that in telling our children's faults, we are acknowledging our own lack, or the children's lack, of home training."

No use has been made of the answers of question two above. It was noticed, however, that the faults attributed to children in general, were, as a rule, of a more serious nature than those possessed by their own children.

Tabulation of the faults of their children which they regard as most serious, gave the following results:

*Faults Named by Parents.*

	Times named.
Willfulness, Self-willed, Stubbornness, Desire to have own way, Obstinacy, Setness of Purpose, Disobedience, Rebelliousness, Slow to Mind, Wanting to take his own time, etc.,	34
Fighting, Teasing, Quarreling, Bickering, Cruelty to Playmates,	13
Violent Temper,	12
Selfishness,	12
Deception in its various forms,	18
Stealing, No sense of the property rights of others,	5
Lack of application to study, Hatred for Books, Laziness, Idleness, Dullness, Indifference, Lack of Self-confidence, Lack of Ambition, Easily Discouraged, Don't care spirit toward learning,	16
Carelessness in putting away playthings and tools, Thoughtlessness, Heedlessness, Shiftlessness,	11

In addition to the above, the following miscellaneous list of faults was given:—Swearing, abusive and insolent language to parents, a superior manner toward other members of the family, rudeness, scolding, sauciness, greediness, argumentativeness to attract attention, desire for notice, too ambitious with slight envy, jealousy of other children, whining, sulkiness, negative attitude toward everything, too much pride, undue self-esteem, sensitive to slights, not affected by praise or blame, too much play of imagination, imitation of what is harmful and bad from

other children, running away, desire to visit continually, disposition to be out of nights, uncommon mischievousness, curiosity, spying into things, repeating things heard, wants good time to the exclusion of everything else, restless desire for something new, nervousness, somnambulism from eating too much candy, no will-power, untidiness.

From the parents' list it will at once be seen that in the children cited in these papers little else than "selfish" traits appears. The different standpoints of the home and the school are herein made evident. In the home attention is largely centered upon the conduct side of life, while with the teacher the intellectual phase is uppermost. The difference appearing here is, perhaps, in part accounted for by the fact that in many cases the parents are reporting children below school age. No doubt remains, however, that the parents' problem is in dealing with the budding will of the child.

Many of the mothers' contributions deserve publication because they show so well the results of wise experience; that is not possible here, however. Only sufficient extracts are given, therefore, to characterize the conditions referred to in these homes.

Of willfulness one mother says: "In my child I would hardly call it a fault, rather a characteristic. It is a setness of purpose to carry out any plan she has set her mind on. Good, ultimately, but very troublesome in a child whose judgment is not to be relied upon. As an infant she showed impatience and fretfulness at any interference of will." Another: "I think the most serious fault we have found in our baby is that of willfulness, and when corrected a disposition to talk back to us. She has a quick temper but it is not of long duration." A third says "I notice a desire to have their own way, a fault we all possess but one very hard to overcome in children. This is a trait of both sexes."

The first appearance of the traits mentioned in this group is variously stated. The large majority of the expressions of the parents indicate its appearance during the first year of life. Characteristic expressions used are, "as an infant," "as a child in long clothes," "as soon as able to express desire," "ten months," "fourteen months," "six months," "two years to two and a half years," etc.

The causes assigned for these faults are, as we should expect, hereditary and environmental. A grandmother says, "I have a little grandson whose greatest fault is disobedience and abusive language and he is only seven years of age. His mother is very amiable, unusually mild and lovely, but she made an inharmonious marriage and she feels that the child inherits these faults from his father."

Other typical expressions are, "inherited and developed by over indulgence," "the only child and petted by so many," "youngest child and is indulged," "not allowing his will to be crossed," "fault is my own by at first allowing the child to use his own pleasure in regard to time."

Among corrections used, were the following: "Making my children feel that I have their welfare at heart," "talking to and shaming her," "showed her how others regarded her," "corrected by the development of reason and judgment." A full account of the correction of a case of this kind is here given:

"I find the most serious fault of our child to be a determination to have her own way and a display of ill-temper when she finds that she must obey the requests that are made of her. Particularly is this true when she is asked to relinquish any playthings to those with whom she is playing. It does not seem to be selfishness as much as to have her own way, for on some occasions she is quite willing to share all she has; especially is this true of anything in the way of candy or nuts. The fault first appeared at the age of two years. The cause for the fault seemed to be that she had no children with whom to play and was humored too much by parents, relatives and friends. We have used several methods to correct it and found that the best was to have her, whenever she manifested an ill-temper, sit on a stool in a corner facing the corner until she could say something pleasant to us. At first she was some time in making up her mind that she was in a good humor and it was some time before the method took effect, but each time we would insist that we never acted that way to her and that until she could smile at us and look cheerful we did not want to see her face. It has worked nicely. She seldom has to sit in the corner and I think she obeys us much better. And as to displaying ill-temper, she has almost ceased it entirely."

The teasing and bullying period of life is a trying time within the home. The following is a typical case:—"My little boy had the habit of teasing other children, oftentimes pinching them to see them cry. If there were no children around he would at any time slip up and pinch older people and would not let go immediately but hang on, and the more he was told to stop the harder he would pinch, all the time laughing." This trait seems to appear in children between the years of three and five, though one mother says it showed itself as soon as old enough to resist the others. Causes assigned are such as, "inborn," "keeping company with bad children," etc. Violent temper appears at a very early age. Indeed some of our correspondents say in infancy. In its worst form it is often the sign of a neuropathic disposition. Heredity and teasing by other children are the causes most frequently assigned.

"I had two children who had very bad tempers. The boy exhibited this fault from early babyhood, the girl at about three years of age. The cause of the girl's temper was being tormented by other children."

"My little girl possessed a very violent temper. Not only did she give way to it on slight provocation but she seemingly gave way en-

tirely and without reserve. It showed most plainly in her play with her brother. When angry with him for teasing or opposition she was likely to throw, and with intent to hit, the thing nearest to her hand. This temper did not exhibit itself in infancy. She was remarkably sweet tempered as a baby. Still I could account for it only as an inherited trait, and feared that as such it might be permanent. My fears happily were groundless. It was much less noticeable at adolescence, and at maturity she is an even-tempered and self-contained young woman."

Selfishness, in the broad sense, covers all the traits so far mentioned. It asserts itself in various forms. We quote two examples:—"Selfishness—manifested in desiring to be captain, driver or leader in all the games. Taking the best playthings, taking the lion's share of sweetmeats, etc. Desiring to be held or petted to the exclusion of the other members of the family. To be favored in going with father or mother when taking a drive or making a visit. It is most often exhibited in the younger members of the family." "One little girl seemed to fear that I thought more of the other one than of her. The fault was shown when very young, not more than one year old, but was almost entirely overcome before sixteen."

Deception stands very high on all three lists. A majority of the parents fix the time of its appearance at about two years. Examples:—"The most serious faults are falsifying and disobedience—lying often resorted to to shield from consequences of willful disobedience—deceiving in various small ways." "The most serious fault has been a tendency to cover up her failings by deception." "I am the mother of three children. At about the age of two it seemed natural for each child to tell wrong stories and to take what did not belong to it." "The most serious fault that I have noticed in my own children and in children in general, is their habit of exaggeration and prevarication—in plain words, lying." "I am both a mother and grandmother and have had a very general knowledge of children all my life, and to my mind the most serious fault of childhood is deception in some form or shape."

Causes:—"Heredity," "As near as I can conscientiously state, his father's family over," "Directly traced to his association with other children," "Just for the pleasure of the thing," "It is trained into children oftener than not by the eternal doubts of parents and teachers." "From parents telling children what they soon learn is false, as that medicine is good when as soon as they taste it they know it is not." "Where children have been punished for telling the truth they get in the habit of lying to avoid punishment," "Parents who lack patience and judgment punish their children so frequently that the children early learn to lie," "To avoid going to school," "Prohibition and suppression."

Methods of correction:—"Moral suasion," "By presenting the example of a truthful boy," Appeal to conscience "through talks of the dear, kind Father," "Paid no attention and she outgrew it." "Asking him to 'be sure' every time he told anything."

The faults of intellect, such as dullness, lack of application, etc., require no word of comment. What was said regarding them when the teachers' list was under consideration applies here. The causes assigned are much the same also. In one case, however, a candid parent says the cause of dullness was, "Too much cordial when a baby, I suppose."

What the parents say of carelessness confirms the remarks made in Part I regarding the need of early training in the formation of habits of care in the child.

#### CONCLUSION.

The study serves to emphasize the statement made in the introduction that a norm for judging faults can have relative value only. There will be as many lists of faults as classes of people making them. St. Augustine gave as the seven deadly sins: Licentiousness, intemperance, avarice, sloth, anger, envy, and pride. This is the order in which Dante, later, finds them punished in the *Inferno*. It would be worth the effort to see how nearly a list of faults given by a large number of modern theologians would conform to this.

It remains to note that, aside from furnishing anthropological material, the chief value of a study of this kind must be of an indirect nature. It is admitted that no definite decision can be reached, as the result of the study, as to what constitutes a real fault. The faults given by each of the three classes are merely the reactions of a class, and the tables given are merely census tables of what each of the classes reporting regard as faults or mean traits. These numerical statements may, however, be safely taken as indicating the degree of seriousness with which the alleged traits are regarded; as such they have real value. The testimonies, of which typical cases are quoted, reflect accurately the minds of those contributing. Truthful pictures of certain traits of childhood are presented and incidentally certain interesting sidelights are thrown on the writers. The teachers who furnished the material for the first part of this study are above the average in their profession, yet one cannot read their contributions without feeling impelled to enter a plea for a closer study of child psychology.

The parents, too, are typical of the better class, yet they recognize the fact that the "mother instinct" may fail of wise direction, and many frankly stated their need of such help as psychology could give in their important task.



This study was begun several years ago when a student of Clark University, at the suggestion of Dr. Wm. H. Burnham, and I wish in closing to acknowledge my indebtedness to him. I wish to thank Superintendent Balliet for advice and suggestion and also to thank those superintendents and others who helped in the gathering of material. I desire also to express my gratitude to President Hall for his interest and help in the work and especially for suggestions on the wider phases of the subject not herein included.