

Loyalty is not always, or even often, spectacular. It is an everyday virtue. It underlies all real achievement; it is the substance of all good character. To be loyal is to serve the ideal, whatever the field in which that service may lie.

Besides loyalty to country and loyalty to duty there is another sort,—loyalty to persons. It is the loyalty of trust and affection, begotten in intimate personal relation or in the more or less distant admiration of hero worship. It is the loyalty of lovers, of friends, of parent and child, of teacher and pupil, of leader and follower.

Loyalty is a natural human virtue. Its roots may be traced far back in the life of childhood. Children's affection for others; their desire to help; their instinct to protect and care for dolls, animal pets and younger children; their obedience; their idealizing imagination; their growing interest in constructive activities; their developing patience, persistence and self-control,—these are the beginnings of loyalty. Just beginnings, of course,—and beginnings that may be turned and modified to almost any sort of end. The roots of loyalty are natural; the quality of their fruit is determined by cultivation, or by the lack of it. Much, I had almost said everything, depends upon us older folk. It is our business, in dealing with early and middle childhood, not to appeal to or try to use a loyalty not yet developed, nor to seek to awaken loyalty before its basis is laid in experience, but rather to cultivate in the child such habits and ideals as may enter helpfully into the development of the loyalty that is to be.

In later childhood and early adolescence, loyalty blossoms forth in rich promise. From ten to sixteen is the age of spontaneous social organizations, such as clubs and "gangs." Boys no longer play alone, or with older folk; they seek companions of their own age, and go about in bunches. Their games call for team play, with its cooperation and its subordination of the individual to the good of the whole. They formulate their own laws, formally or informally; and have their own code

of honor. Each group constitutes a social unit whose members are bound in mutual loyalty. They will stand by one another through thick and thin, and they will stand by the ideals embodied in their code. They will

keep their word in strictest fidelity, to one another and to those whom the group recognizes as friends and "square;" and they will not "squeal" though the heavens fall. Loyalty is the gang's fundamental virtue; disloyalty is the unpardonable sin which leads inevitably to expulsion.

In his most interesting, if somewhat extreme, book, *The Boy and His Gang*, Puffer holds that we must look upon the gang as nature's training school for the social virtues. "Only by associating himself with other boys can any youth learn the knack of getting on with his fellow men; acquire and practice cooperation, self-sacrifice, loyalty, fidelity, team play; and in general prepare himself to become the efficient

citizen of a democracy. Nature has given the boy the gang instincts for the sake of making easy for him the practice of the gang virtues."

It is a crucial time in the boy's moral development. He is reaching beyond the life of the home into that of school and playground, forest, field and city street. At no time does adult influence seem to count for so little, just because his new friendships count for so much. He cares more for what the fellows do and say than for what older folk think. He is beginning to take the ordering of life into his own hands, and is guided by such public opinion as is open to him. The father and mother who fail to recognize this function of the boy's friendships, who, impatient and unsympathetic, simply "put their foot down," stand pat on the rules and precepts of childhood, and try to keep their boy "tied to his mother's apron strings," only engender a conflict of loyalties with him, in which the home loyalties are very apt to lose out.

That does not mean, however, that it is the part of wisdom simply to let boys go their own way in these "gang" years. Something very like that has been proposed by certain advo-

With mallet and chisel, or with brush and color, the sculptor or artist labors patiently and enthusiastically for years to produce his ideal statue or picture; yet, no matter how perfect, the result at the best can be only cold marble or lifeless canvas. How much more absorbing and self-satisfying is the work of parents and teachers who, with similar skill and perseverance, fashion the plastic child! And how much greater pride and delight they may well take in the finished product,—the living, breathing man or woman—strong and splendid in the truest and best sense of the words!—C. N. Millard, in *A Parent's Job*