

Why Children Cheat and Steal

A revealing light is cast upon the cause of the shady morals in public life, now being dragged out into view, by a magazine article that exposes the beginnings of financial and moral laxity in our school children. Written long before Teapot Dome became a byword, it appears at the very moment to show where the root of adult crookedness begins and where it should be attacked. In school, it seems, every pagan god in history may be the subject of the day's lesson, but not the God of the Bible. A knowledge of Greek and Roman gods is often one of the requirements in courses necessary for graduation. Geography is taught along with the history of pagan faiths, but the God with whose handiwork geography is concerned, the God of Christianity and of Judaism, is left out of the curriculum. The child must learn about Him and about religion as best he can. The comparatively few children who go to Sunday school, as shown in statistics compiled in Indiana, average twelve hours a year in religious training; additional training in the way they should go at their mothers' knees, but a vast number receive it not at all. It seems that it is not the business of the public school to teach the child the plain and simple morals of every-day living, to teach him that it is as sinful to cheat a storekeeper or a railroad company as a friend, as sinful to steal from the rich as from the poor. The result is seen in the archives which we would the soonest forget, in the unparalleled growth of crime of every sort in the United States. It is a pretty stirring indictment of our public school system which William G. Shepherd, journalist and author, presents in Good Housekeeping. He tells us that the facts prove that there is no place in America to which a parent can send his children—and keep them within the limits of democracy—where they will receive instruction in religion and morals. "Religion and morals, somehow, have dropped out along the road in our educational progress." Tests show, we are told, that more than one-half of our American school children will, under temptation, have an unethical outlook on life. They show more than half of them will cheat and lie and steal. These tests, we are told, were conducted scientifically. One of them, known as the "True-False" test, has been applied to thousands of children in the United States. After each statement given to a child to test its moral viewpoint are printed the words "True False," and the child is asked to underline the word which he believes describes the statement. Here is the viewpoint presented by some children:

"It is NOT wrong to steal from one who has secured his wealth dishonestly."
"It is more honorable to have charge of an office than to work at a trade."
"Stupidity is more sinful than deceit."
"Unnecessarily failing to meet an appointment on time is NOT immoral and unchristian."
"It is true that our duty is greater to secure justice for the people of our own race and religion than for others."
"Cheating a railroad is NOT so much a sin as cheating a person."
"It is not the pupil's duty to call attention to the fact that a teacher has given him too high marks."
"It is true that IF A STOREKEEPER GIVES YOU TOO MUCH MONEY IT IS ALL RIGHT TO KEEP IT, BECAUSE HE WOULD PROBABLY DO THE SAME IF YOU PAID HIM TOO MUCH."

Thousands of American children, we are told, assented to these statements when they had an equal opportunity to dissent from them by merely making a mark with a lead-pencil. "No-

thing they had received in school or at home in the way of religious instruction caused them to mark their paper otherwise. Their answers "afforded proof that under American life, 'way down deep into its very childhood, there is unmorality in thought and downright approval of dishonesty.'"

Another test—the Purchasing Test—tried children with the confidence of the examiners—gave the child purchasers a dime too much in making change. The test was to see how many children—and which ones—would bring back the dime to the teacher. The result was that:

"Sixty-four per cent. of the children did not return the dime, either to the teacher or to the store."

"The scientists who made this test insist that their selection of children was made so carefully that they feel safe in assuming that sixty-four per cent. of all America's children would have done as these children did."

"In still another test the children were taken into cafeterias where they could select their own food, and where they were expected to make a report of how much food they had bought. Not half of them reported honestly."

"The tests were ingeniously disguised. In one city a test was given in a restaurant where the children thought they were giving a banquet for the restaurant keeper who, some weeks before, had made a gift to their school organization. Every child brought a certain amount of money to pay for his share of the banquet. At the conclusion of the banquet it was announced, privately, to each child, that the cost was less than had been expected. The children were supposed to return the excess to their school organization. This test involved not only honesty, but gratitude to the restaurant-keeper and loyalty to the school organization. Only a small percentage of the children returned the money."

Here is a test made to see how children would cheat in examinations, a test so severe that it would strain the moral fiber of even senior college students:

"The children are given double sheets of paper, the under sheet being secretly coated with wax that shows any change or correction. A set of questions and answers is written on the blackboard and a map hung over the answers. The teacher, in this test, leaves the room while the children are writing down their answers to the questions. After a certain length of time the map, apparently by accident, falls from the blackboard and discloses the list of answers. The children, with no teacher in the room, have the opportunity to correct any errors they have made in their answers; they are given plenty of time to yield to this temptation. In some of these tests 100 per cent. of the children yielded."

Tests to determine whether they would overpraise themselves or allow themselves undesired credit were given children. These tests were character-essays, scientifically designed, scores were given in every test, and strength of character and the ability to resist temptation were expressed in terms of percentages, as engineers express the strength of steel. The highest score, we are told, was 82.3 per cent.

"It was made by a group of Boy Scouts which had been organized two years. These high-idealized little fellows came within 17.7 per cent. of being 100 per cent. trustworthy and honest. Some new fellows came into the troop during the latter months that the tests were under way. Of course, none of the boys in the troop knew the purpose of the various experiments; often, of course, they were not aware that they were being tested. The old-timers in the troop ranked up 100 per cent. One young fellow said, 'I don't know what these examinations are, but they must be trying to test our nerve.' He scored 100."

"The second highest score was 80.4 per cent. It was made by a group of

Boy Scouts which had been organized six months."

"The third highest score was 78.2, made by a group of boys in highly efficient private school, who came from high-class homes."

"Far down in the list, number nine, came the group that interests you and me—that interests every father and mother in this land—a group of boys in a typical American public school. Most of us have our children in the public schools. We can not all have our sons in the Boy Scouts, or in private schools. These privileges are luxuries to some of us. The score of this public-school group was only 56.8."

"Are our public schools in America being so conducted that honesty and the development of character in our children are luxuries outside of the range of public schools? Is a belief in God, such as the Boy Scouts have, and the Girl Scouts, and such as is taught in most private schools in America, too rare a privilege for American public-school children?"

"I am giving the list of these scores. They are taken from a book by Dr. Walter S. Athearn, entitled 'Measurements and Standards in Religious Education,' published by the George H. Doran Company, of New York."

Rank	Group	Average
1st	Boy Scouts (2 years)	82.3
2nd	Boy Scouts (6 months)	80.4
3rd	Private School	78.2
4th	Private School	75.0
5th	Camp Fire Girls (4 months)	62.2
6th	Boy Scouts (just organized)	60.5
7th	Private School	59.5
8th	Boy Scouts (just organized)	58.1
9th	Public School	56.8

These tests were made, not to prove the wickedness of American children, but "to discover, scientifically, whether or not goodness, honesty, trustworthiness, and a decent outlook on life and a love of God and man could be taught in school; whether they could be taught, definitely and decisively, like other subjects." It was discovered that these subjects can be taught in school and that "they can be so thoroughly learned that they produce definite results in children."

"It is encouraging to behold the major divisions of the churches uniting in an effort not only to give all the children entrance into their spiritual heritage, but also to develop in them the virtues which are at the basis of all sound citizenship—without which our whole social structure will be as the house built on the sand. The effort deserved recognition in the first column of the first page and has had it."

"Our desperate criminals to-day range under the age of twenty-two years."

"Fifteen thousand persons will die this year by murder and crime in our country. It would take three hours for a procession of those who will perish by murder or homicide before December 31, 1924, to pass a given point."

"I have secured the following figures from William B. Joyce, Chairman of the National Surety Company, of New York. They show the estimated thefts that will occur in the United States this year:

Nature of Crime	Amount Stolen
Stock Frauds	\$1,000,000,000
Credit Frauds	400,000,000
Burglary, Larceny and Petty Theft	250,000,000
Embezzlement	100,000,000
Forgery	100,000,000
Seaport Robberies, Piracies, Customs Frauds	100,000,000
Railroad Freight	25,000,000
Thefts	25,000,000
Home-Building Frauds	25,000,000
Add Miscellaneous Financial Crimes	1,000,000,000
TOTAL	\$3,000,000,000

"Our public-school system has been improving and increasing every year. And yet see what else has been increasing. I give in the table below the items of embezzlement and burglary, because they are not merely financial crimes of tricky business or commercial cheating, but crimes bordering on individual, moral or physical violence:

Year	Embezzlement Losses	Burglary Losses
1910	\$1,396,031	\$ 886,045
1912	2,090,201	1,293,533
1913	2,060,948	2,264,790
1914	4,633,604	5,660,305
1915	5,623,313	10,183,353
1921	\$2,370,000	11,500,000

"We must find a way to secure religious instruction for our children. 'The place for it is America's public schools, for all of America's children.'"

However, a joint meeting of Catholics, Protestants and Jews in New York—the first of its kind, according to the press—held that religious instruction should be outside the school, and that each child should be instructed in the faith of its parents. The conference, attended by 3,000 teachers drawn together by a common peril, was addressed by Archbishop Hayes, representing the Catholics; the Rev. Dr. Walter M. Howlett, in charge of the Daily Vacation Bible School Association, representing the Protestants; and by the Rev. Dr. D. de Sola Pool, rabbi of the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue, representing the Jews. One sentiment animated the gathering—the need of spiritual training for the child. All children, without question of creed, comments the New York Times, must be brought within the range of

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It is one of the oldest industries, having been practised in the East from time immemorial, and can certainly be traced back in Egypt for 4,000 years. It was transplanted thence to England hundreds of years ago.

Messrs. Goodison's business in Birmingham was established in 1847, and is now being carried on by the third generation. There can be little doubt that the methods in operation to-day in Messrs. Goodison's establishment are substantially the same as those which were used by the ancient Egyptians in the time of the biblical Pharaohs.

It is one of the few industries into which the machine and mechanical power have not entered and seem

unlikely ever to enter. It depends entirely upon highly trained hands and brains, and in England that skill has been so highly developed that English gold leaf stands pre-eminent all the world over.

The gold, arriving in thin ribbons, is put, in small pieces into moulds, or books or specially prepared skin, and subjected to heavy beating with hammers for about five hours. They vary in weight from 4 lb. to 16 lb. At the end of that time the gold is beaten into a delicate tissue of a thickness estimated at the 230,000th part of an inch.

Mrs. Davis Recovers Strength

The following statement contained in a letter from Mrs. Alice Davis of Jamestown, N.Y., should bring hope to other women who are in the same condition she was. She says, "I was nervous and weak with pains in my back, no ambition, and utterly discouraged, and could not sit up all the time. Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound restored my health and strength so I am now running a rooming house and do all the work."

Income Taxes May Be Cut

Ottawa, March 14.—(By Canadian Press).—Rumors current that the budget is to be brought down in about three weeks have led to an inference in certain quarters that the Government intends to reduce income taxes. The inference is founded on the idea that the budget is being brought forward early so that any changes made in the income tax may come into effect before April 30 next when the first payment of income taxes for the present year is due.

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