

his awkwardness. But control comes with early manhood.

What are the mental characteristics of these periods? In what respects does the boy differ from the child, and the youth from the boy? Perhaps the best clue is to be found in the plays that are characteristic of each period.

Play is both a symptom and a means to an end. Schiller believes it to be a sign of a surplus of energy. Herbert Spencer adds imitation as an explanation of the ways in which the excess of energy finds vent. Play is a symptom of more than a surplus of energy. It is a sign of growing powers. The child of three or the young woman of twenty, does not delight in skipping. It is only when muscular strength and muscular control are fairly well developed that the lassie of seven or eight becomes an expert with the skipping rope. Similarly, riddles and conundrums baffle and bewilder the little lass and annoy the matron, but they delight the girl in her teens. With the rapid development of reasoning power, the interest in these games grows. Play, then, is an excellent index of the growth of new powers.

Play is a means to an end. It provides the practice necessary to develop the powers that are useful in after life. Play is an apprenticeship for the work of life. Running, climbing, shouting, give that strength of lung and limb that is necessary for success in life. Games of skill give precision to eye and hand and prepare for the work of the skilled artisan. Dressing dolls and house-keeping plays make the little girl familiar with the mysteries of dress and the household arts. Need I add, that the boy, who learns to play his proper part on the cricket or football team, has learned a lesson in co-operation that will serve him well, when he takes his place in the large organization where his life work lies. Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton.

What plays are characteristic of childhood, of boyhood, and of youth?

The infant delights in plays that exercise the muscles and satisfy the ear, such as babbling, chattering, gurgling, and later crowing, humming, smacking, clicking, yell-

ing, whistling. These give him new sensations of sound and of movement. Plays that give him sensation of touch, attract him, such as picking, dropping, rolling, pushing, splashing sand, dirt, stones and the like. He exercises his muscles and receives a variety of touches in playful kicking, creeping, running, skipping, climbing, etc., or in block building, where his eye is gratified, as well as his senses of touch and movement.

In all these plays the child is in search for new sensations. He is a scientist in the germ. His plays are the experiments; the world about him is his laboratory; his restless activity brings variety into his experiments. The joy of the infant upon the discovery of his toes is as great as that of the scientist when he discovers a new species. The bewilderment of the child when he notices for the first time the double touch which he gets by placing one finger on the other is akin to that of the scientist when the fisherman places a blue lobster before him.

These plays when persisted in, leave curious habits. The grasping and handling of the infant survives in the adult, who plays with his watch charm, or pushes his pencil back and forward between his fingers, or twirls his walking stick, or fumbles with the button on his coat. The infant's playing with his "comfort" and sucking his thumb, persists in the adult, who bites his pencil or like the great "Pam" of Punch sucks a straw, or delights in chewing gum, or something worse. Such idiosyncrasies are, like the "rudimentary organs" of biology, survivals of actions once useful or pleasing. To-day they are silent witnesses of the power of play to produce habits that have long outgrown their pleasantness.

The keynote of the plays of the boy is competition. If the child be deemed a scientist, the boy is a hunter and warrior. His aim is to overcome the animals of the chase, to outwit the bird when she hides her nest, or the trout that shuns the hook, or the squirrel, or the rabbit. He strives to outdo his companions at marbles, or running, or fishing, or in ball games, or even in his studies. The little child will play alone. The boy likes company to show off before or