

Bill's Letter To Dad - In Which He Sees Stars and Likes His Astronomy 'Prof.'

November 5, 1938.

Dear Dad,

Now, Dad, you want to hear about my courses and professors. I have enrolled in five courses, totaling fifteen hours of classwork a week. According to the fellows in the house, I have arranged my schedule perfectly for this first semester. I have no afternoon classes, no eight o'clocks, nor any Saturday classes.

American Government is the first class I attend on Mondays, and it is a one-hour lecture. The professor is a tall, slender man, who has lost a good percentage of his gray hair. A Ph. D., and LL. D., I would say he was good lecturer. Anyway, he holds my interest as well as the majority of the rest.

On Wednesdays and Fridays the lecture class of approximately 250 students splits up into many quiet sections. My instructor, who is a woman, and I might as well sleep in her class, since I don't learn a thing. She punctuates her sentences with a little irritating laugh, and she always wears the same hat. If a fellow in her class are any indication of the class as a whole, I think that soon we shall take up a collection to buy her a new adipose and relieve the monotony.

Although not as uninteresting as this woman, my English instructor is another person who puts me wrong way. I understand this is his first year as an instructor in Freshman English, and this may account for his attitude and general disinterest in his subject. He shows it in his lectures and in his voice. The latter, is a slow, hesitant one; he pauses every three or four words, too.

Right now he is endeavoring to get across to us the proper method of using the English language. And, Dad, I never realize that I knew so little about English. Really, I have spoken it unconsciously for over seventeen years, but when I study the things in our Handbook, I am aghast at how little I know (in regard to definitions, rules, etc.).

About once a week we are required to write a theme, five or six hundred words in length, and you should see some of the topics that the English prof hands out. Then take a look at them when they are handed back. From all the markings on the papers, it appears that we have violated every rule in the course.

One class I like better than the previous two is Public Speaking. The instructor is a short, well-built fellow who knows what he is teaching. On the average

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Children In Court

By Judge Mahlon Hatfield

(Continued from last week.)

The problem of children moving from one community to another in a house trailer is adding to the complications which now beset those who are interested in delinquency prevention. Such children usually do not remain long enough in any one spot to benefit by the public opinions existing in any particular neighborhood. Only the strange characteristics of a given neighborhood are absorbed as a result of continual moving.

On the other hand, it cannot be assumed that all youthful delinquency will cease as soon as children are removed from house trailers and the slum areas. Living conditions and delinquency are not so closely affiliated that it can be presumed that delinquency will cease once the house trailer and slum areas are eradicated. Such reasoning is not based on facts, for approximately half as many youngsters from rural areas become delinquent as do children from the city.

Delinquent children are usually not only underprivileged, but they are also supervised by ignorant parents, who are unable to develop sufficient ingenuity to direct, guide and counsel their properly. Such children come not only from large families and broken homes, but they are often found in better neighborhoods where every opportunity for advancement is afforded.

This leads to the conclusion that where the family is functioning successfully it is possible to rear law abiding children even though outside influences tend to disrupt the teachings of the parents. However, it would be much simpler for parents in all sorts of environments to counteract unwholesome outside influences if adequate recreational activities were provided.

Children Reflect Parents'

Viewpoint

Children are always affected by viewpoints held by their parents. Youngsters who are forced to worry over economic conditions do not have the sense of security which children from normal homes possess.

One of the primary essentials necessary to the welfare of every child is that the parents carry a decent income so that they can provide wholesome surroundings for their offspring. When any family encounters the evils of irregular work, unemployment, or prolonged illness, it is the duty of the community to provide the kind of relief which will preserve family ties and give adequate parental instruction to the children. If society neglects to assist families which meet temporary reverses, it should not be astonished to see children embracing the doctrine of communism.

Are Immigrants Criminals?

While it is an admitted fact that large numbers of delinquent children come from immigrant families, it should be absurd to say that such children are delinquent because of their parentage. Authorities who are in daily contact with delinquent children, are cognizant of the fact that foreign-born parents have nothing whatsoever to do with youthful delinquency; such criminals no longer believe in the old theory that criminals are made at birth.

The prevailing and more enlightened viewpoint takes into consideration that, since many foreign-born families are forced to work for low wages, it is necessary for them to crowd together in our large metropolitan centers, where their children are exposed to all forms of vice, over which the parents have little control. An additional factor which further assists in dispelling the foregoing erroneous theory is the fact that, where foreign-born families reside in rural areas, their children show no marked delinquency tendencies.

The Air Gun Evil

Judges are convinced that the boy who becomes proficient in the operation of an air gun does not find it difficult later on to acquire the necessary skill to handle a rifle or machine gun effectively. In fact, on numerous occasions

the use of toy guns has been known to instill in the adolescent mind a desire for a real weapon.

While it may be amusing for thoughtful parents to witness small children re-enacting a robbery, hanging, or Indian massacre, there is danger that such children will continue to act out these parts when they become adults. Wise parents not only prohibit their children from turning in on radio programs descriptive of crime, but they also supervise the types of motion pictures their children are allowed to see. A concerted movement is now under way in the United States to bar all toys, which might in any manner tend to depict war or crime, from interstate commerce, and to substitute in their place character building activities such as advocated and practiced by the Boy Scouts, the Y. M. C. A. and other praiseworthy movements.

Delinquent Children Are Often Emotionally Ill

Courts frequently discover that many children, sent to court for observation and treatment, are emotionally ill. An analysis of such children reveals that in many instances the emotional illness can be attributed directly to the parents. The seriousness of this problem can be realized after studying the results of a recent survey, which illustrated that from two to nine per cent of the city and the rural school population of a given state was made up of problem children. While the rate was highest in the large metropolitan areas, the rural schools possessed a per capita population which was approximately half as large as that found in the highly congested districts. Handicapped children are generally classified into mental and physical handicap categories. The mentally handicapped are usually grouped as being either emotional, or retarded children. Many in this group are abnormal, possessing peculiar personality traits. Mentally retarded children are often feebleminded and dull. Among the physically handicapped can be found the crippled, blind, deaf, etc., and also those suffering from tubercular and other chronic disorders.

Social workers and courts alike lament the fact that the medical world, outside the field of psychiatry, investigation must be undertaken to determine the exact connection between the mental and the physical elements which effect the lives of delinquent children, before lasting gains can be made.

Correctional institutions must work in closer harmony with the law enforcement as well as recreational agencies and child welfare groups, before greater and more efficient services can be rendered to the individual delinquent. Such an intense future program of cooperation will uncover many of the deep rooted causes of maladjustment which are ignored by courts throughout the nation. It will also stress the fact that the first six or seven years of a child's life are the most important, for during that period the child lays the foundation for the ideals, habits, etc., that guide him during his entire future life.

Treating The Handicapped Child

Some years ago, the parents of a handicapped boy asked the court for assistance in meeting their problem. After hearing the story, the judge urged them to seek scientific advice to enable them to better appreciate their child and his needs.

The psychiatrist whom the court recommended finally advised the parents that there was little science could do to remove the disability, and that the best cure for them to follow was to interest the youngster in things he could learn to do. The parents were cautioned not to show pity for the child openly or to deny him the right of performing certain tasks. The psychiatrist also warned the parents that great tact and understanding would be required, lest they develop an inferiority complex in the youngster. The psychiatrist closed the interview by impressing the parents with the importance of the fact that their son should never be reminded of his handicap, but should be taught to do the things in which he excelled.

(Continued Next Week)

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