

## TRAINING THE CHILD

By ELISE AYER

### From Childhood—Be a Builder

A baby delights in a ball, a circle, the moon, a top, in fact anything that is complete and whole. He delights to blow bubbles and expresses momentary disappointment when one bursts, only to find pleasure in creating more of the beautiful, floating spheres. Most small children do not like broken, playthings. They also, have to be shown the reasons for being gracious and kind to people who have had some part of their toys destroyed. Love of beauty is natural to normal children.



Mrs. Elsie Ayer

Why then, do we find older children making destruction their main pastime? In the streets, small urchins scatter ashes from cans, as a prime amusement. Breaking bottles under auto tires is a great thrill maker. Unearthly noises come from bands of boys and girls. They keep the younger children from sleeping and wear out the nerves of older persons.

In schools and houses, owners lose thousands of dollars on scratched desks, marked walls and broken furniture. Torn books and wasted materials are a constant problem. Windows are continually broken and I have seen youngsters walk across the keys of pianos placed in playgrounds for game work.

### Parents Responsible

It can all be traced back to the thoughtlessness and indifference of parents. These parents are careful about the things they themselves have to buy. They allow the first signs of senseless destruction to go unnoticed, if it does not touch their pocketbooks. Rather, they should be more particular about other people's property than about their own. This the parent must first teach himself.

On the first offense, the child should be taught the value and beauty of the object. If the child persists, he should be punished by depriving him of privileges and pleasures. He has deprived others. Many think that destroying is a form of curiosity which should be satisfied. A valuable clock is taken apart by young Johnnie and mother thinks it is a sign that he will be a mechanical genius. Rather, Johnnie should learn the rule "Take apart only what you can put together again."

### The Well-Trained Child

If these ideas are instilled into children, they will have power within them to withstand suggestions and temptations. Their playmates may want to turn over ash cans; or annoy the neighborhood by tooting the horns of parked automobiles; they may elect to spend an afternoon heckling a vendor. But, the well-trained child will always do his bit to oppose and if not successful, will leave. I have not ceased to be aroused when such instances as the following occur.

### Destructive Children

The other day, a handsome new sedan was standing near a school entrance. Slippery sidewalks had been liberally sprinkled with sand and ashes. A thaw had mixed these with slush which clung to rubbers. As soon as school was out, the sedan was covered with a swarm of youngsters. They climbed up on front mudguards, on the running boards and tugged at the doors. Of course it was badly scratched.

One specially vicious child, using school crayon, wrote indecent words on the sides of the car, digging into the paint. The grown people passing, showed no interest whatever. Perhaps this was because they had seen worse the afternoon before. An old delivery wagon had been left over night near the curb. It had refused to operate.

The next afternoon, the crowd from the school, investigated the horn, first, and gradually explored further and further into the hood until they had completely dismantled the motor. The seats arrayed the sidewalk and the roof showed evidence of the punches made with investigating sticks. One woman, who had protested, had been greeted with noisy smart talk.

These are destructive acts of sufficient importance to cause alarm. There is only a short step from these to juvenile crime. A wise parent plucks out the first sprouts of the weeds of destruction as soon as they appear.

### BRITISH ACCURACY

From the Washington Post

The British "Who's Who" reports Colonel Lindbergh married to Elizabeth Davis, daughter of Dwight Davis, United States Ambassador to Mexico. Marvelous accuracy, my dear Mr. Watson, except that Mrs. Lindbergh was formerly Miss Anne Morrow, and that Mr. Davis has no daughter Elizabeth, and was never Ambassador to Mexico.

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## Book Review

WINGS ON MY FEET, by Howard W. Odum. Published by the University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

Here is a volume replete with rich humor, colorful language and a most delightful but keen philosophy.

WINGS ON MY FEET is a continuation of the interesting peregrinations of Black Ulysses. A part of the narrative was begun in the American Mercury sometime ago. The book deals with Ulysses's life in the world war. It is most unusual how the author carries the soldier through the war with a song on his lips and a devastating belief in his own ultimate escape free of all injury from enemy bullets. Ulysses's song of victory is: "Got my buddies, but never got me." It is a naive, almost stupid description of an all-important consequence, yet this very simplicity is most effective in putting across the book.

The entertainment is highly fascinating and succeeds in keeping above the level of the low, vulgar, and of-

fensive. Very frequently, it has been the practice of the white author in dealing with Negro characters to treat them in such a manner that they become at once more or less insulting to the Negro group. Mr. Odum has happily steered clear of this possible objection. One is attracted to the volume because of its excellence of structure and style. It contains no propaganda and its appeal is due to the fact that it is unique and original as a work of art. As art, the book transcends any possibility of classification of as a racial work.

That WINGS ON MY FEET should be a volume devoid of race prejudice is rather to be expected, inasmuch as very fine books have been written by members of the faculty at the University of North Carolina. North Carolina is by far the most progressive of the Southern States, and this spirit of progressiveness of willingness and cooperation is nowhere more evident than in the University of North Carolina. Various members of the faculty have from time to time compiled works whose accuracy has been applauded by the Negro group.

For those readers who like sharp clean-cut entertainment, WINGS ON MY FEET is heartily recommended.

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