

# Getting Along With Each Other

*Children tell us why they like Billy and don't like Tommy; they discuss the importance of friendships and of adjusting oneself to people and the world*

*Children in elementary school are blunt and unsentimental about their friendships. Yet they are decidedly aware of one another and the actions of others affect them deeply. We can do much to make these early associations worthwhile and to help children learn from their experiences with people. The following artless comments of elementary school youngsters about other children may help us to understand the child's point of view and thereby learn to use greater insight in our work with children.*

I DONT LIKE Gary because he hits me from behind and hits and scratches me in the face. Some times I tees him and he chases me then when I stop teasing him I tell him to stop he stops In a little while he comes up behind and scratches me.

- I dont like David because he pokes me and bothers me when I dont want hime to.

- I dont like Norma because when she dose her arithmetic she whispers. that bothers me.

- The changes that could be made to make this a better school are to tell people to stop pushing in line and making noise in the hall.

- There was a boy in the fourth grade that always bothered me. He came from New York and talked all the time.

- Jerry came in our room. We thought he was ugly at first, but Sarah didn't think so. She still likes him.

## *Friendships Are Not Determined by Academic Standards*

- Jimmy is very good on geography but is sort of dumb. Example, asking silly questions. I like him, though.

- When I went to the fourth grade I met a good friend. His name was Dick. Most of the time I had to help Dick.

- In the first grade there was a boy in our room who was not very smart and needed a lot of help. His name was Billy (I forget his last name). He used to come over to my house and my girl friend and I had oodles of fun with him.

## *We Notice Improvement in Ourselves and Others*

- In the third grade I had the most defective teeth in the room and I had to stay in nearly everyday because I was so mean. I pulled girls' pigtails, hit boys, chased people. I tell you I was just mean, plain old mean. But I hope that I'm not now.

- When I was in the second grade, we had lots of fun with Miss Baker, but I hated to see her get mad. Carl was so bad that she had to yell at him to get him quiet, and he still wouldn't get quiet. He's improved a whole lot now. [*Because of, or in spite of? Ed.*]

## *We Fight—and Forgive*

- One thing I didn't like in the fourth grade was a boy named Charles (don't know his last name). He always was saying that Bob could beat me. So one day we had a fight.

Both of us had been fussing, and so it was a fight that afternoon. By afternoon both of us were afraid to fight each other, but we were going to anyway. It had been raining that morning and where we were going to fight was muddy. I took the first hit. It started his nose bleeding. Then he hit my eye and I started to cry. He started to, too. Both of us were crying and hitting nothing. Then he ran home and I left still crying. We never have fought each other after that. I made up with him the next day. I was shy but I did it.

*High school boys and girls have a good deal to say about getting along with fellow students, and they place great importance on that phase of school living. They feel that it is part of the school's responsibility to teach them how to live happily and harmoniously with other people, and they are eager to learn. Young people express serious concern about over-emphasis on undemocratic organizations that sometimes spring up in high schools. It is our job to help young people plan school activities so that all children—not merely a "popular" or "talented" few—may enjoy and benefit from these educational experiences. Such knowledge is fundamental to peace among nations, as well as individuals. Are we giving sufficient attention to this area of education?*

COMPANIONSHIP is the thing I value most of everything which I have received from school living. I believe that being able to get along with family, friends, and associates is one of the most important jobs an American can do for his country. I am sure that had I not gone to school I would not have

achieved this as nearly as I hope I have.

At school I have learned understanding, tolerance, sympathy, kindness, and friendship. I have seen these things all around me; if I do not live by them as much as I should, I do not know what they are and what they mean. Where else but the school could I have learned these virtues so comfortably and yet so adequately?

- We are learning to understand people more thoroughly. Core class has taught us to listen to the other person's point of view. This gives us a wider area of information about things. Having a chairman in every class we feel would help us develop self-control and cooperation.

When we find that we are often wrong we learn to think before doing things. This is especially illustrated in core when we have a class discussion because we explain to each other why we think ideas are right or wrong. Frequently, too, we combine our ideas.

#### *We Learn by Living Together*

- The school has had a lot to do with social habits and social development. Everything from football games to just walking up the halls teaches you how to act and how to handle and come in contact with people, which is outstandingly important and will be more important later. A large field is "just general fun" which makes living more enjoyable.

- Just having been with other students has helped me a great deal in getting along with people. Before I went to kindergarten, I had never played with children my own age. I am not interested in people, but having been with them in school has helped me to not

mind being with other boys and girls quite so much.

### *Some Factors Hinder*

- My first reaction to this high school was one of utter terror. My first day was so filled with unpleasant incidents and associations that at the end of it I had acquired an inferiority complex that would have made an optimist wish he had never been born.

The so-called "Friendship Committee" is one of the biggest farces I have ever seen. Friendship is hardly the appropriate word for this organization. The girl who happens to be on duty at the moment takes the new student around the campus and points out so many different, unfamiliar objects and occurrences at one time that the newcomer is so confused that she doesn't know her own mind.

The fact that the new student is so obviously a burden to her supposedly helpful friend does not exactly put her at ease or help her to gain back her long-forgotten poise either. Nothing makes poise vanish more quickly than the impression that one is a burden and is unwanted, and this seems to be the principal duty of the "Friendship Committee."

- A person learns in high school to get along with everyone. When high-hat organizations exist in school, as they do here, they interfere with the teaching of the types of social life that this country is fighting for.

The problem is not as serious as it has been in the past, but it does give the school a bad name and causes much trouble. If the United States were like our high school, there would be many civil wars.

### *Many Are Deeply Hurt*

- The defect in our high school which stands out most sharply in my mind is the sorority-fraternity situation. Involved is the happiness of the sons and daughters of America who, for lack of money, prestige, or from preference, do not become part of the fraternity system. I have watched the system change in temper, style, and attitude during the past few years; and something is wrong with it, fundamentally wrong. While half the world fights for democracy, people who maintain exclusive little groups are simply out of step.

The main argument for high school sororities and fraternities is that they provide social opportunities for the students. That argument defeats itself. The very social opportunities they provide for the favored few raise a barrier between the "have's" and the "have-not's."

If the happiness that the fraternity system gives one person is weighed against the unhappiness it causes so many others, the system is shown to be seriously lacking. Under the system few boys and girls get truly desperate, but many are deeply hurt. Sometimes the hurts cause lifelong hatreds or deep-seated neurotic patterns in their personalities. Perhaps this builds character. I don't think it is fair to ask high school boys and girls to develop their characters in that way.

Where is the supervision of these groups? Not in the schools, most of which have outlawed them. Not from alumnae, who tacitly accept the "boyish pranks." Not from parents, who hear only what their children want them to.

I firmly believe that to tolerate the

fraternity-sorority system longer is to deny to all children of high school age their right to free social contact.

#### *More Guidance Would Help*

• Some people need more social development than others. It might be a good idea for each student to have a teacher as his personal guide. The

teacher would try to help solve his personal problems and help him select his classes and make social adjustments.

• A very helpful course could be offered in social relations. This course should include training in meeting strangers, how to get along with others, develop poise, etc. I believe that could be one of the finest and most useful courses.



### **Summer Meeting**

. . . of the Department of Supervision and Curriculum Development, N.E.A.

Pittsburgh, Penna., July 4, 1944

2 P.M. Conference Room A, Board of Education Building, 341 S. Bellefield Ave.

Theme: **NEW TRENDS IN THE CURRICULUM**

Chairman, E. A. Dimmick, Associate Superintendent, Pittsburgh Public Schools

Speaker, Lieut. Gordon N. Mackenzie, U.S.N.R. (on leave from University of Wisconsin)

Panel discussion

Note: The National Council for Social Studies will meet in Conference Room A at 9:30 A.M. on July 4. Topic: Postwar Adjustments of the Social Studies Curriculum. Members and friends of the Department of Supervision and Curriculum Development are invited.

#### ***New Publications***

The following publications will be issued this spring by the Department of Supervision and Curriculum Development.

*Modern Education in the Armed Forces.* A pamphlet prepared by educators now in uniform describing programs in the Army and Navy which are of significance to educators. 50 cents.

*Discipline for Today's Children.* A practical discussion to help teachers and parents think straight about discipline problems in the classroom. Fritz Redl and George V. Sheviakov. 50 cents.

(See order form on last page of this Journal)

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