

ing into adulthood, when there seems to be a hypersensitivity to any deviations from the accepted norm. The physical differences which are thrust on some children by the mere difference in their velocities of maturing are among those hazards. The adult who is aware of these hazards and recognizes them when they occur, may through his understanding guidance help such children to understand themselves and to develop adequate

compensations in other ways. Often, when the deviations are only temporary the knowledge of their temporary nature may help a youth to accept them with less emotional disturbance. For more permanent deviations, an honest evaluation of one's self in relation to others is an important start in the formation of a sound basis for building emotional attitudes which make for happy social adjustments.

## Growing Pains

*If you've forgotten what you worried about when you were 15, perhaps these statements from boys and girls not many years past that age will help you remember. Among the most vivid recollections of these youngsters are their worries about changes in their bodies—growing too fast or not growing fast enough, being fat, changing voice and facial appearance. Miss Bayley's article on the preceding pages gives evidence that much they worried about as "abnormal" was quite "normal," if they but knew it. Mr. Stoltz and Mr. Kirkendall in the articles following this one make suggestions about how we can help youngsters to understand these changes in themselves.*

*These statements, typical of scores from which they were chosen, are published in the hope that they will help us as teachers see more clearly the viewpoints and problems of boys and girls in our own schools. They were collected by Lester A. Kirkendall, U. S. Office of Education, from college freshmen.*

### *They Called Me "Half-pint"*

• One of my adolescent concerns was the fact that I was so small in stature. Most of the girls of my age were taller, and I was the victim of much kidding and joking. I had all kinds of nicknames such as "Squirt," "Half-pint," "Shorty," etc. After a while I became quite conscious of my size and did all kinds of exercises to make myself grow.

• When will I grow bigger? When will I grow bigger? This question kept flashing into my mind very often when I was 15. Most of my friends had grown quite a bit larger than I, and occasionally someone "kidded" me about my size. The answer which I gave myself was, "Oh well, I'll shoot up any day now." The only trouble was that the day forgot to come. It seems silly now, for in one year I grew 7 inches and have kept growing until now I stand 5 feet 10 inches.

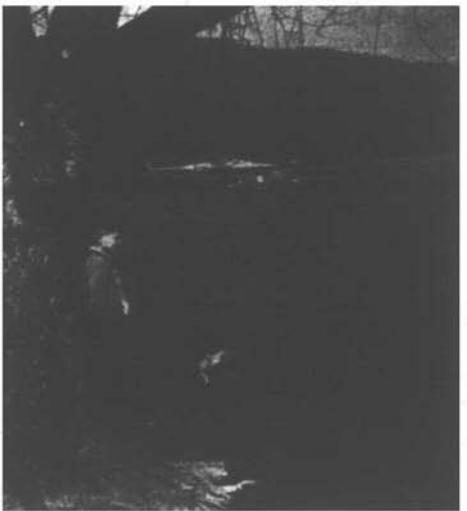
### *"My, How You've Grown"*

• An adolescent worry of mine came at the age of 13 when I was beginning to dance. I had always been taller than most of the girls

in my class and I was just a little bit proud of it because I was above average in athletics and so stood out in the group. However, when social dancing became a prime activity in our young lives it came at the age when boys were very small and girls were shooting up. For the first time I was ashamed of my height.

*Courtesy Central School, Glencoe, Ill.*





TVA Photo

When everyone else was going to dancing class and having fun, I crawled into my shell and stayed home. Boys did not like to dance with girls taller than themselves, and I knew it. They were as uncomfortable as I.

- One of my chief worries during adolescence was my tallness. This strikes me as a little absurd now for I am shorter than any of my acquaintances, but this was not always the case. I had reached my full height by the time I was 11 years old, and I constantly worried as to whether I should be an odd member of a line. Why is it that lines always are uneven?
- Growth has been a very big worry of mine until about two years ago. I did not worry about growth in the sense most boys do. I was not afraid that I would grow tall, but rather I was afraid that I would grow too tall and be a so-called freak. I had visions of myself being a star attraction in a carnival or a side-show of some kind.

Through early adolescence I grew very, very rapidly but I could not seem to fill out at all. As near as I could see it, my body was nearly like it was while I was very young and my height was still going up. My arms, legs, and chest I thought never would develop.

- As an adolescent my greatest worry was

due to the fact that I was so much taller than my classmates. It was bad enough to be taller than the girls but oh, the woes of going to dancing school and realizing that all the fellows my age were shorter than I, too. This really was something to worry about. Supposing my friends should never get to be as tall as I? What would I ever do? Thoughtless friends and relatives who were continually saying, "My, how you've grown!" certainly didn't help me to adjust myself and to take the proper attitude towards my height. I spent about four miserable years before some of my friends grew to be at least almost as tall as I.

#### *The Spectre of Being a "Fatty"*

- One thing seems to have bothered me almost constantly during my adolescent years. I worried about being fat. Everywhere I went I noticed ugly, short people who were unpleasant to look at merely because they were fat. I was haunted by a fear that I would resemble one of them. I refused to eat and even gave up candy and cake.

- My chief adolescent worry was, I think, about my physique. Since I was fat all during junior high school, my early adolescent life was marked by worry as to my eventual physique. I went so far as to make out diets and take exercises in my room. At the time, however, I became extremely sensitive due to my rotund physique and failure on the gym floor. As a result I developed into a shy, sensitive, backward person who would rather take a different route home from school than walk with a classmate other than one or two close friends.

- One of my adolescent worries was due to the fact that I gained weight very rapidly when I was about 13 years old. I was exceedingly conscious of the relationship between my weight and my height, and any reference to my abnormality (as I considered it) made me most sensitive.

After about two years, I began to lose weight and once again attained my normal size. However, I shall never forget this period of stoutness. I remember seriously considering sending away for some of the popular fat reducing pills. I believe that they cost \$2 and my financial status prevented me from making such an investment.

### *Complexion "Complexes"*

- Pimples used to worry me; were they really the sign of an unclean mind as many of the boys claimed? If your face broke out quite badly, then you certainly weren't behaving properly.
  - Many adolescents worry about their physical appearances. A bad complexion is the cause of much worry. If an older person could tactfully explain how natural this phenomenon of nature is to some young people, it would save a lot of this worry.
  - My chief adolescent worry was having to contend with adolescent skin eruptions. The trouble started when I was in seventh grade. I was so ashamed of the way that I looked that I always put my hand up to my face to cover my chin whenever I spoke directly to anyone. Also, I snubbed many people so they would not have to look at me to say "hello."
- Then I read about a queen in England who never married because she was cross and had an ugly complexion. That set me worrying about my complexion's keeping me from marrying and worked me up into a frenzy. I cried myself to sleep night after night, would never look at myself closely in a mirror, and suspected that everyone was staring at me and talking about my complexion. I even contemplated suicide at one time, because I thought that I was utterly worthless. Further no one could ever mention the word "complexion" in my presence because I was so touchy about it. This feeling became almost an obsession with me, and I avoided crowds and people as much as possible.
- An experience which worried me for some time was my first seminal emission. I had not been told that it was a natural situation and so I was totally unprepared for it and tried to conceal the fact from my parents. I did not know what was wrong with me and was quite worried until one day a group of fellows happened to be talking and one of the fellows happened to mention "wet dreams," and said that it was a natural thing and that every fellow has them. This at least relieved my mind for now I knew something was not wrong with me. I was not aware of the fact that an internal change in my body was responsible for such action, and I believe my father should have told me what to expect before it happened.

- I don't think I worried over my sex life as much as most adolescents do. Probably this was due to a rather wholesome and objective attitude toward sex. Luckily I didn't associate with fellows who had distorted ideas about sex. In some cases I gave my friends the knowledge I had acquired through reading, through talks with older persons including our minister and scout director and I know that this knowledge has been beneficial to them.

A very close friend up to two or three years ago knew practically nothing about sex—that is, what it means and its part in life. As a result, he worried constantly over his frequent habit of masturbation until nothing in life seemed worthwhile to him. Since I have associated rather closely with him we have discussed various problems, sex and otherwise, and I think he has overcome his fears and worries in regard to sex. And I know these discussions have helped me also.

### *Some of Us Worry About Sex*

- Many adolescents who have been slow in maturing perhaps worry about their acquaintanceship with members of the opposite sex. They are shy in the presence of the opposite sex, and yet feel that this feeling should not exist. However, they do not know quite how to solve this difficulty.
- Worry over auto-erotic practices is common among almost all boys, if they have the ability to think and can be influenced by the thinking of those around them. There are many uninformed persons who spread false knowledge concerning auto-erotic practices, such as that they cause pimples or skin blotches; this false knowledge only adds to the worry of the adolescent youngster.

significance of growing old, and then tried to forget that time had passed and was passing.

In explaining this attitude to myself (and I should admit that I thought it was unique) I decided that it could be traced to at least three causes; one, that my mother had many times repeated that childhood is the happiest part of life, so I was reluctant to have those "carefree" years pass; another, that every success I had had, such as playing the piano or violin, was in direct proportion to my age, so I didn't welcome judgment by adult standards; and third, that desire for success, which is supposed to be the same as fear of failure, made me fear facing the future as an adult, with adult responsibilities.

- When I was about 8 years old I noticed that the nearer adulthood people approached, the more trouble they seem to have. Therefore, I decided that I did not want to grow up.

I refused to give my age when I could avoid doing so. When I could not avoid revealing the shameful fact that I was such and such an age—almost grown up, really—I would give the lowest figure I honestly could. I always wept on my birthdays because they marked another lost year of childhood. I tried to associate with younger children, to wear as young looking clothes as possible, and to conceal any evidences of growing up. As I approached the period of puberty, I prayed that I might be allowed just a few more years of childhood. But all was in vain. When I realized that in spite of all my prayers I was actually maturing a little younger than my playmates, I cursed fate futilely and kept my secret to myself, I went right on trying to look and act younger than youngsters of my own age. I usually succeeded in this, too, because I was not large for my age. I went on trying to push off my birthdays which continued to arrive with a most disgusting regularity.

- In my early adolescent days I had a habit of worrying about getting old. Old age was frightful to me and took on fearful forms at that stage in my life. I would lie awake in bed, night after night, counting and counting the years before I would be 15 years old, and wondering how much harder it would be when I reached 20, then 30, and so on.

I was definitely a reactionist; I wanted to go

back and not ahead. Sometimes I would literally count the seconds and wish that the clock would stop. I wanted to remain a young lad because I feared the new life that was so strange and yet so certain—the adult life.

A number of things caused me to worry about getting old but the most important reason for such worrying was that I knew that death followed old age. Life was full and rich at that adolescent age and I wanted it to remain that way.

I knew that I had to prepare for a career but the task of selecting a life work was so big that to evade it was sweet. I knew that I would never have to worry about a career or a life work if I didn't grow old. Then I persuaded myself that I wanted to remain a boy because I could always live with the family, always have father and mother to live with and be happy with them.

Of course, I did grow older and these worries did disappear but the memory of them still stands fresh in my mind. One may say that they were foolish wishes but there was a meaning behind them. Many adolescents seem foolish but in reality they have a problem.

#### *On the Face of It . . .*

—freckles

• My trouble concerned my freckles. This problem arose with the seasons. In the spring when the sun would pour down on my face as I walked to school, I would reluctantly trudge into dreaded and abhorred classes. To me, freckles were a sad mark to anyone's beauty and I made it a point to see that I shied away from anyone I particularly liked. No one ever spoke negatively about my freckles but I had overheard remarks about other people's freckles and remade them to fit myself.

The winter drew the best work from me because the freckles faded and I was free to devote happy and conscious attention to the daily work. This is no doubt a too personal case to consider but it greatly handicapped my work especially in English classes when we were called on to give talks in front of the class.

—nose and teeth

• When I was in the early teens I suffered untold remorse because my nose and teeth were so large and out of proportion. In fact,

it seemed to me at the time, that my nose occupied all of my face. However, observers were not too cruel in their remarks about that, but when it came to my teeth they could not contain themselves. Even those of my own age were quite callous in their remarks. I remember clearly one day when the boy upstairs called me "shovel teeth." Now it seems a laughing matter but then, it was a tragedy. I hated to talk in public because I was afraid everyone was looking at my huge teeth. It was unfortunate because I was just becoming conscious of trying to look well and this had to happen. I can truthfully say that this process of growth which I considered an abnormality contributed no end to the inferiority complex that I developed at that age.

- During my freshmen and sophomore years in high school, I used to worry about my looks. I had two buck teeth, one of which was badly discolored. The girls seemed to shun me and whenever I went to parties it was agony because I was usually left in the corner by myself. I became very self-conscious about it and tried to hide them by keeping my upper lip down but this only made it worse. I refused to have any pictures taken and even went as far as to keep by myself because I figured no one wanted me around. I did everything imaginable to try and get them fixed but the only thing that could be done was to have them pulled out. My family and even my dentist refused to allow this. The case was held in abeyance for nearly

two years and then the largest tooth began to decay rapidly and there was nothing to do but have it pulled out. I saw that the other three objectionable teeth were pulled at the same time. A plate was fitted and I really felt a hundred per cent better and even looked it. Even with the teeth fixed, I remained reticent for a long period and can even feel traces of the same feeling coming back now.

#### *On Becoming a "He-man"*

- Perhaps my chief adolescent worries have been my embarrassment at school when a singing lesson was taking place and upon the teacher's statement "this room has the sweetest voices," to hear a baritone clearly and distinctly amidst a group of altos, and have all eyes focus on me.
- When I was an adolescent, I was the possessor of a peculiar worry. During that time I chummed with two other boys who were extremely muscular and very strong. I could compare favorably with them in every phase but one, and that is that I had no prominent veins in my arms. It was our opinion that a protruding vein was the sign of a real he-man, and I was so dismal over my lack of them that I hesitated to roll up my sleeves. I exercised by the hour but still made no progress along this line. I became the object of their ridicule. We were, however, fast friends and on many occasion I had to partake in many a daring stunt to prove my ability was on a par with theirs.

#### **DSCD Publications Committee for 1945-46**

J. Paul Leonard, associate professor of education at Stanford University, has been named by the DSCD Executive Committee to head the Department Publications Committee for 1945-46. Mrs. Dora Skipper, Florida State College for Women, Tallahassee, was appointed to the Committee to fill the vacancy created by a retiring member.

Continuing members are Vernon E. Anderson, director of curriculum in Portland, Ore.; C. L. Cushman, associate superintendent, Philadelphia, Pa.; Henry Harap, associate director of the Division of Surveys and Field Studies, George Peabody College for Teachers, Nashville, Tenn.; and Hollis L. Caswell, *ex officio*, DSCD president and director of the Division of Instruction at Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, N. Y.

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