

TRAINING THE CHILD'S MIND BY MEANS OF TOYS



A Little Waitress SHE IS LEARNING THE JOY OF USEFULNESS



There are no stiff desks or immovable chairs.

Wonderful Results Accomplished by Method of Dr. Maria Montessori Which Is Being Introduced Here—System of Play Which in Italy Has Enabled Children to Read and Write at Age of Four and Five

By "JOHN-MARTIN," Editor of "John-Martin's Book."

EVERY baby is a miracle to every thoughtful mother. The wonder of her baby's life presence never ceases to be sacred and unsolved mystery. A mother is our only conceivable link with immortality. A mother's love is God's direct and comprehensible channel of love's highest expression. Every baby is a little heritage of God's love, carrying immortality within its tiny frame. Its first cry, its first bewildered struggle of motion is an immortal effort to grasp the miracle of its own life.

The first shadowy glow of intelligence in the eyes of a baby, so precious to the watching mother, is always an awe-inspiring proof of the living soul entrusted to her care. This child is her unique tie with heaven, sent to her in trust only, to share and mould. She is entrusted with a soul to set free in that beautiful little animal body so that her child may see and take all of its immortal heritage. He must have the chance to expand into powers and greatness that are his birthright, or he is to be cared, crippled and so nearly extinguished that he finally loses realization of his God given rights. A mother's responsibility is great in proportion to the wonder of her motherhood.

Dr. Maria Montessori in all her work has been conscious of this wonder and responsibility. The splendid results of her activities are due to her comprehension of motherhood. Maria Montessori perfected a method for the training and education of children from 3 to 7 years old by which direct connection was made between the soul and the senses of little children.

The conception and evolution of the Montessori method was practical and accurate. It was a normal growth based upon purely scientific principles. No weakening sentimentality clouded its soundness, though a loving spirit gave it human vitality. The method was not a spontaneous theory working backward from theory to the educational needs of the developing child, but step by step this remarkable woman constructed a system with the child's soul as its foundation. She lived the life of the little child animal, but never lost sight of its immortal rights. The processes of her work were didactic, but the first principles of it were spiritual.

Maria Montessori is an Italian educator and physician who graduated from the university at Rome and was the first woman of Italy to receive a degree of doctor of medicine. From the very beginning of her splendidly useful career all of her great heart and rare mental powers were directed in channels of help and usefulness to children, for she knew that on their true development depended the future of the race. Her aim was a higher civilization beginning at the roots of civilization—the child.

Here is a remarkably trained mind, broad, generous and full of human optimism. Her love for and understanding of childhood softened and sweetened the externally cold and scientific basis of her work. She is primarily a gentle, kind and loving woman working with a marshaled mind, clearly defined ideas and proved scientific knowledge.

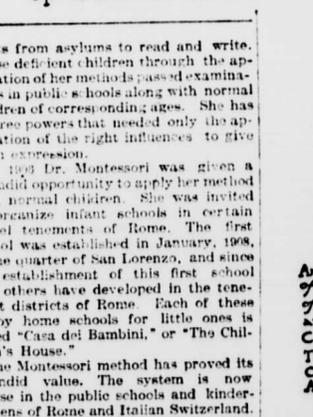
During an early period of her activities she became a specialist in the diseases of children and later was appointed as the head of the State Orthopedic School in Italy for the training of teachers of the feeble minded. At this time her interests became centered upon the child of feeble mind and she gave her entire time to teaching these poor little deficients, always applying the method she had evolved. She soon concluded that the methods used with the subnormal children were not limited in their value to the deficient child. She says: "I became convinced that such methods applied to normal children would develop out of their personality in a remarkable and surprising way."

This encouraged by remarkable results with the child whose mind was below normal Dr. Montessori adopted the didactic materials used with the defective children with normal children. To be sure this instructive material was scientific, but a spiritual value underlay its application. She labored to bring forth the own inheriting powers that are unclouded in every individual. She believed in the child's inheritance; on this belief is based the great success of the Montessori method.

Washing Dishes Montessori Children Seldom Break Things.



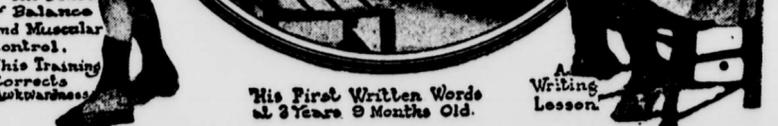
Little Housewives Clearing Up a School Room.



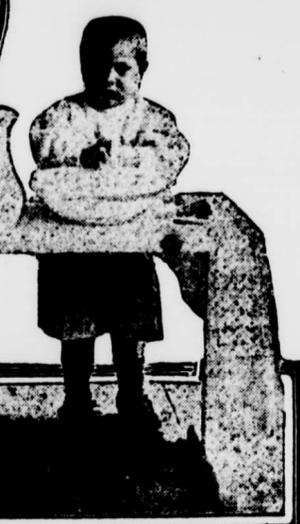
An Evidence of the Sense of Balance and Muscular Control. This Training Corrects Awkwardness.



Happy Little Home-Makers.



His First Written Words at 3 Years 9 Months Old.



The Children Wash and Dress Themselves.

idiots from asylums to read and write. These deficient children through the application of her methods passed examinations in public schools along with normal children of corresponding ages. She has set free powers that needed only the application of the right influences to give them expression.

In 1907 Dr. Montessori was given a splendid opportunity to apply her method with normal children. She was invited to organize infant schools in certain model tenements of Rome. The first school was established in January, 1908, in the quarter of San Lorenzo, and since the establishment of this first school five districts of Rome, each of these happy home schools for little ones is called "Casa dei Bambini," or "The Children's House."

The Montessori method has proved its splendid value. The system is now in use in the public schools and kindergartens of Rome and Italian Switzerland. Within the last six months scores of Montessori schools have been organized in the United States. In England a national commission has been appointed for the establishment of the method in that country. In Paris these schools are a recognized factor in the education of children.

During the past summer in the United States lectures have been delivered on the Montessori method in the universities of Pittsburgh, California, Virginia and Tennessee, the Iowa State Teachers College and at Harvard University.

pendent of his environment. He learns to learn everywhere, for his mind is made inquiring but constructive. Children of Montessori schools are taught to dress themselves without awkwardness, to care for their apparatus and their little bodies. The teacher prepares her children not for the abstract theories of life but for life itself. She discreetly disciplines, and her children are spurred to controlled activities, not to dependent mobility or restless passivity.

This teacher knows that continually serving children dulls their true capacity for usefulness and spontaneous activity;

above all she knows that the child who does not do will not learn how to do. The teacher is not a servant to wait upon the child; her function is to reveal his power to himself by encouraging his mental activity; in other words to educate the man in him. Here it is that the teacher aims not to repress the individual to the level of the group, but rather to stimulate the expression of the individual to a consciousness of himself and his own powers. He is left, therefore, free to develop and unfold.

The Montessori teaching apparatus provides for the training of the senses to

their highest state of normal power. With the very young child experiments or discoveries of the senses are his first thrilling life experiences. The wet toy throws his rattle to the floor in a moment of instinctive motion. He discovers noise. What mother doubts his delight, but how few realize the significance of this era making "noise."

The child's unconscious discovery that something made a noise, that noise was heard, that a quick motion made the noise are all wonders to an awakening sense in the child. He has made a discovery. His action is power. The noise

gives experience to a sense. So this baby life is launched upon a vast sea of experience. The wonders of sense adventure begin. The man within has awakened and strives to gain his heritage.

To many this case of wonder may seem trivial; then just be "little" again for the sake of your baby. Be "little" and then feel the wonder you have lost the delicacy to appreciate. Just feel the excitement of a "noise" which only you were strong enough to make, keen enough to hear and great enough to claim for your own. Do this and you will be as wise as your baby. It is upon these wonders of early childhood that Dr. Montessori has based her constructive method.

Every initiative action of early childhood is observed by the Montessori teacher. No individual action is unimportant. No personal characteristics are ignored or repressed. The teacher watches, waits and remembers, and above all respects the tiny straws that show the direction of the child's mental inclination. These teachers of the Montessori method must be rare and sensitive individuals, for their work has to do with the delicate mechanism of lives that may easily be put out of order.

The period of a child's growth between the years of 3 and 7 covers a time of rapid physical and mental development. This is the important period for the shaping of sense activities as related to the intellect. During these years he develops his senses in proportion to the opportunity and stimulus provided. These years may see his powers misdirected and over stimulated or confused by disorderly influences. On the other hand the senses, as servants of the expanding individual, may be so prepared and so ordered that a sure foundation is laid for a clear and strong mentality and for a demonstration of the noblest maturity.

The Montessori method is a physiological system that goes straight to the centres of sense. The child's life is directly prepared for individual growth. The organs of sense are perfected by an accurate process applied at the time the little child animal is striving to reach a higher plane through the only channels it recognizes, namely the senses.

The teaching apparatus evolved by Dr. Montessori for the development and refinement of the senses has the mark of true genius, for its many units produce unit effects upon the child mind. These units of growth combine to shape an orderly whole out of his undeveloped senses.

The fascination of this apparatus for children is the best proof of its power and influence. It is not a collection of aimless toys; it has the dignity of a perfect machine. Each unit forms some expanding impulse of the immature mind, and yet no ossified or unnatural growth occurs through his interest in any one unit because the influence of each tends toward a full mastery of all other units until the full value of the whole has been accomplished. The apparatus is self-corrective and logically suggestive. It builds its own complete structure.

The writer will not attempt to describe in detail all the parts of this remarkable apparatus, of which there are 600 distinct pieces or units. These are placed

divided into about twenty groups, each having a direct bearing upon some specific development of the senses. The parts and groups are distinct in their effects upon the child, but all parts are dependent upon other parts in providing for his physical, intellectual and spiritual development.

The normal child loves to play and this is his right. He finds a Wonderland in "the lots of things" that Dr. Montessori has given him. He is working without knowing it, being good without the boredom of labelled goodness. This child is subtly being made a Man. The apparatus (a big toy of many pieces) is given him. He learns to "play right," but he learns in his own way.

Among the many parts of the apparatus are little boards upon which are fastened alternate strips of rough and smooth papers. The child distinguishes between rough and smooth. Later he is given cut-out letters and numbers of the same sort, and presently, by the sense of touch, these definite forms are registered on his mind. Little fingers that have followed the letter forms soon find themselves tracing letters without the form to guide them, for the brain has learned the message of the finger tips.

The child can soon write. No copy book tortures could accomplish this so naturally and happily. Fundamental forms are presented the child in blocks of various sizes and colors. Then there are flat tablets of wood with the centres cut out in triangles, squares, circles and many other forms. Color is again identified with these, so the association of color and form is soon comprehended. Again the little fingers are busy giving the brain new impressions. Dexterity of finger movement is the result.

Many blindfold games are played with these form boards and the children soon learn to place every inset in its place by simply running well trained fingers along the edges of the forms. This game is a delight, order and mental discernment are accomplished, no error is possible, so no error is registered on the brain.

Another part of the apparatus is most interesting to children and most valuable in its results. A series of little frames have been devised by which the child can simulate every act of dressing. On these frames strips of cloth are mounted to be fastened together in various ways. There are buttons and buttonholes, hooks and eyes, glove fasteners and silk laces. There are leather frames to be laced as shoes are laced and other practical instructions in dressing. Self-dependence is here taught. The child need no longer be dressed by a grownup. Dressing has become the continuance of a game.

Among these educational toys the broad stair is included—blocks teaching order, system, accuracy; then the long stair teaching variations of the same along with fractional differences and also variations of color.

Color games are numerous with many parts to make them useful and entertaining. This is the tower of blocks which the child learns to arrange according to size and color. He also learns to carry this topheavy pile from place to place without disaster. Here he acquires muscular control and a sense of delicate balance.

It is needless to tell of the many parts of this apparatus or of its infinite effects upon the child. The Montessori method develops the fundamentals of character and physique. It means little that children under the direction of this system learn to read and write at the age of 4 and 5, for this is really of minor importance in comparison with such accomplishments as self-reliance, order, dexterity and individual personality; add to these healthy bodies, well trained minds and happy hearts and our mothers have children to be proud of.

The question is often asked: "Wherein does the Montessori method differ from the kindergarten system?" I can only draw a distinction from the viewpoint of a child in whose place I put myself in making such a distinction.

The kindergarten pleased my mind and imagination. I was happy while learning. It helped me to do good things; then I went home, but I did not use what I had learned. My Montessori day was full of experiences that were like living. My day's work-play was more elaborate and appealed more directly to my senses and my brain. I was allowed to find myself out. I was not a little part of a whole, but an interested individual working out my own problem. I went home and continued to live my Montessori day.

To conclude, there are few mature men and women who cannot discover in themselves dormant powers, latent capabilities forever lost to themselves and the world's usefulness through lack of early development.

Let us see to it that the coming generation does not suffer a like impediment. Let us train our children from infancy in natural and scientific principles that the man of to-morrow may attain to his own birthright of fully expressed powers.

PERILS ARE EVER PRESENT IN MOTOR BOATING

Sheepshead Bay, the narrow strip of water that lies behind Manhattan Beach and finds its outlet to the open sea in front of Rockaway Point, is the harbor where hundreds of motor boats find anchorage or lie tied up at the shore. A remark about their numbers started a conversation among a party on Plum Island the other day about the dangers of motor boating.

One of the party recalled that some twenty years ago Louis Caemmerer, the Brooklyn iron merchant just retiring from business, bought one of the first naphtha launches, as they were then called, that had been seen in Hempstead Bay and used it for pleasure trips. The old fisherman around East Rockaway watched it with interest and anxiety. Lowd White, the dean of the guild, used to shake his head when he saw it pass and say: "It looks to me like a coffin."

There was plenty of danger on those boats," he said, "and the worst are those that you can't foresee. I was out the other day near the Sandy Hook lightship and we ran over something or other that was floating around but submerged, so that we couldn't see it. I reckon it must have been some sort of a mattress."

There was no trouble when the bow struck it. We didn't even feel the impact, but the boat went right on over it and the wheel cut into it and in a minute we were all tangled up and lost control. We reversed the engine, throwing the wheel over by hand, but the stuff was wound around the wheel and the shaft so tight we couldn't work loose. And it was a long time before we could pull it off with hooks and with our bare hands. If the sea hadn't been smooth and the weather good, we'd have been in more serious trouble."

"I never got outside in a motor boat myself without a good anchor and at least 250 feet of cable. If one loses control of such a boat, as he may do in twenty different ways, the only thing that can be done is to anchor and wait for help. Then if the help does not come he can sometimes up anchor and drift with the tide when its going the right way, and anchor again when it's going the wrong way. But that's slow travelling and you look mighty anxiously for help."