

Babies Frolic While Their Mothers Work

Creche Youngsters Have Their Outing in Hanscom Park Under Fostering Care of "Mama" White.

By ELLA FLEISHMAN.

SOMETHING'S sure gonna happen today. We only gets our shoes shined on Sunday. This was the precocious reflection of little young-old Mildred at the Creche when she awoke Wednesday morning to find two slick, shiny shoes by her bed.

What could it be? It wasn't any holiday that she had heard of. Maybe someone was going to have a birthday, but then the only concessions made to birthdays was a birthday cake. Shoes would not be shined for that.

If the shoes were shined, they must have to look nice because they were going some place. Where could they be going? Maybe for a car ride! Oh, happy thought!

Scampering into her clothes, she rushed down the stairs and throwing her arms around "Mamma" White begged to know where they were going.

"Are we going to have a car ride?" she burst out, for let it be known that is the height of pleasure for the Creche little folk.

"Well, bless your heart, yes!" admitted "Mamma" White, "but I didn't tell you earlier for fear the rain would spoil our plans. Yes, we're going to have a car ride and on top of that a picnic at Hanscom park. Yes, indeed, a real picnic with lots of good things to eat—sandwiches, ice cream and cake and lemonade and plenty of cookies. Oh, yes, and there are lots of swings and teeter-totters and a shoot-the-chute and ever so many things to play there," panted "Mamma" White, in answer to the many questions piled upon her.

Mildred was quick to spread the news and then pandemonium broke loose in the rambling old home on Park Wilde avenue, where mothers who must tell during the day house their children under the motherly care of "Mamma" White. Every child wanted to be first to be washed and dressed and ready for the picnic. All were seated about the

breakfast table, but nobody wanted to eat any breakfast. They were too excited. Going to a picnic and eat breakfast? The usual morning repast was too tame in comparison.

"Now, children, anyone who doesn't eat breakfast will have to stay home from the picnic," exclaimed one of the nurses.

That was a different story! My, what a scramble for porridge bowls and milk cups! Indeed, one little boy ate so hurriedly that he nearly choked, so zealous was he to show that he didn't wish to be left at home.

After breakfast each child received another scrubbing until their faces shone in honor of the picnic and then each one was provided with a sweater or other wrap for the day was inclined to be chilly.

"Oh, it's not cold. Only sissies are cold," declared sturdy little Freddie, asserting his manliness by discarding his coat.

Talk about the "little mothers" that big cities like New York are said to boast! There were plenty of them in evidence at the Creche. You should have seen the motherly little souls of 3 and 5 years helping the younger children into their wraps. Then each "little mother" was provided with one of the smaller children for a "partner" to assist on and off the street car, under the supervision of "Mamma" White and the attendants, each of whom carried one of the real youngest toddlers in her arms.

"You'll have to take care of a few, too, if you're coming with us," sang out "Mamma" White, so I grasped "Buddy" with one hand and dark-eyed Irene, self-styled "Pickaninny," by the other hand and off we started.

The older boys fought for the privilege of carrying the one basket containing towels, wash-cloths and soap necessary to make the children presentable for the return trip. This was the only basket to carry as the "eats" and all other picnic neces-

sities had been arranged for by the women of the City Federation of Child Conservation Leagues, who were giving the outing for the children.

Without any mishap, all marched to the car and boarded it with safety. When we transferred at Sixteenth and Harney passersby, busy men and shoppers stopped for a moment to smile or offer a cheery word to the brood of chubby, sweet-faced youngsters.

I got along nicely with my two charges, "Buddy" and "Pickaninny," until "Buddy" grew effusive in his affections and insisted on kissing "Pickaninny" with more ardor than the little lady enjoyed. She burst into tears and refused to be comforted until offered the ever-remedial penny, whereupon "Buddy" slipped his fingers into mine and announced that he wanted a penny, too. So peace was restored and the two sat up on the street car seat, swinging their little legs and discussing what particular kind of lollipop they would buy with their pennies.

With what eagerness the brood alighted at the park and scampered down to the pavilion where they were met by a reception committee of the women. Then the children were turned loose in the park to play to their heart's content until the ringing of the luncheon bell.

Miss Alice McMahon, relief playground worker, took the children in charge immediately and oh, what a good time they did have! She taught them how to wash clothes to the accompaniment of a pleasing little ditty, ring-around-a-rosy and other gay pastimes, and when they were tired all gathered around to listen to a rich store of fairy tales. The playground worker made an instantaneous hit with the children, her silvery whistle, used to call the children together, winning especial favor with the youngsters.

At 12 o'clock "Mamma" White summoned all her brood to the bandstand, where two long tables had been set for them. The little hands were folded while grace was said and then with what zest the voracious little appetites were appeased! All the goodies your mind could conjure up were Johnny-on-the-spot and when this was topped by delectable ice cream and cake the kiddies' delight was complete.

After luncheon some of the younger ones took a nap in the arms of faithful attendants while the rest resumed their activities with the park playground equipment.

Then came supper, which was a repetition of the goodies of the noon luncheon, and then the children were gathered up and prepared for home.

It was a weary but happy crowd of youngsters that was tucked into bed at the Creche that evening, composed for sweet dreams of the best time they had had this year.

And after they had asked God to bless papa and mamma and "Mamma" White and all the other attendants at the Creche, these are the women, although they knew not the names, to whom they offered thanks for their joyful outing: Mrs. Charles H. Savidge, Mrs. John H. Beaton, Mrs. Bruce McCulloch, Mrs. Charles A. Wonder and Mrs. Rodman Brown.



"A Bushel and a Peck and a Hug around the Neck"

Mother Nature Teaches Her Children Through Play

I AM so full of happiness," said a little girl in a spontaneous outburst of joy, "that I could not be happier unless I could grow!"

We cannot make our children too happy. The boys and girls of today are the men and women of tomorrow; and, as a rule, the happier the children the better and more successful the men and women. A happy childhood is the best preparation for an effective career, for, other things equal, only the happiest children make the strongest and most useful citizens.

That we are becoming thoroughly alive to this fact is one of the most encouraging things in the life of today. This has been called "the century of the child," and deservedly so, for there has been no more hopeful sign of race progress in the last decade than the rapidly increasing interest in the welfare of the child. We see this reflected everywhere in the greater care of the state for its children; in our wonderful kindergarten and school systems; in the great children's stores everywhere; in the marvelous development all over the world of the manufacture and sale of toys.

In this world-wide awakening to the importance of child life we are beginning to understand more and more the tremendous part of play, not alone in making children happy, but also in developing them symmetrically, and thus making healthier, more efficient men and women.

The three great essentials for a happy childhood are food, love and play. After food and love, play is the great builder and developer of childhood. Yet there is far too large a number of parents who are still utterly ignorant or indifferent to the rights of their children in this respect. Some of them are still a little bit like our Puritan fathers who, in the early history of our country, thought that the fun-loving, playful faculties were of the devil, evidences of lack of piety, and a real detriment to the spiritual life. But we know now that this is quite the opposite of the truth. We have found that the fun-loving propensities, the great demand in us for play, for recreation, are just as sacred as the worshipping faculties, as the religious instincts. We do not use these propensities directly in our living getting, in our occupations, but their functions are to keep the wonderful human machine in running order, to lubricate, to renew it, to restore it to normal when it is fatigued.

Froebel, that great benefactor of children, tells us that play is in reality the most spiritual activity of man in childhood. He finds that it is "typical of human life as a whole—of the inner, hidden, natural life of man and all things; it gives, therefore, joy, freedom, contentment, inner and outer rest, peace with the world; it holds the sources of all that is good. The child that plays thoroughly until physical fatigue forbids will surely be a thorough determined man, capable of self-sacrifice for the promotion and welfare of himself and others."

One of the very piteous things in human life is a sad, prematurely old face upon a child. It gives pathetic evidence that all that was spontaneous, playful, joyous, natural to childhood was suppressed, discouraged, and the natural self-expression of the child strangled at the outset of its young life. For play is self-expression for the child as music or art is for the musician or the artist. Children play until they drop with fatigue because it is nature's method for their development; it is the

flowering and unfolding of their natures. They are like little animals. It is just as natural for them to laugh, to romp and play, as it is to breathe. We might as well try to suppress a bobolink as to suppress a child bubbling over with merriment.

The suppression of the normal activities of children is a crime. They learn by play. This is their great school; God's kindergarten. They learn many more useful things in their play than they do at school, although both are necessary.

Yet many parents wonder why it is that children are not more serious, why it is that they want to play from the moment they get up in the morning until they go to sleep at night. I have been in homes where children were treated like adults and expected to act like them. They were not allowed to make a noise. They had to creep around the house on tiptoe in constant fear of waking the baby or disturbing some one. I recall especially the father of a large family who is so cross, irritable and touchy about the house that the children do not dare to play when he is at home. If he cannot stop them in any other way, he whips them. He tells them he won't be disturbed by noise; that they have too much play, that they ought to be "doing something more important than fooling all the time." Whenever company is present they are obliged to sit still in their chairs like little mummies. They are forbidden to speak or move until the company has gone. They are coerced and repressed until they are almost afraid to breathe.

Now, is it any wonder that these children all have long, sad faces? Is it any wonder that the blighting, dwarfing effects of the lack of play in their lives are written in their expression, their movements, their whole attitude? One has only to look at them to know that all their natural instincts have been crushed and the childhood ground out of them. Nothing more completely and forcibly illustrates the tremendous part that spontaneous fun and play were intended to have in our lives than the results we see in the blighted, prematurely old lives of those who never knew what real joyous childhood means.

Nature is a wise teacher. If we co-operate with her we shall make fewer mistakes in bringing up our boys and girls. She knows how to teach children a thousand valuable lessons, not only without any coercion, but with supreme enjoyment. The time will come when we shall continue the child's education in play. Educators are becoming aware of this great fact. Instead of shutting young people up in close, badly ventilated school rooms we shall educate them in the open, out in the sunlight and air.

Play is not only a developer, but a great self-discoverer. We cannot tell so very much about a boy during school hours when he is busy with routine work. But watch him in his leisure time, in his recreation hours. See what they call out of his inclination, when he is free from restraint and not under any one's eyes or supervision. It is then that the natural tendencies of the boy will show themselves. They find an outlet during his play. When fathers and mothers understand that not in suppressing, but in guiding and directing their children's play, lies the great secret of child training, we shall have a happier, more efficient race, a brighter, more joyous world.—Orison Sweet Marden in The Mother's Magazine



Creche Kiddies at Their Picnic