

# CHARACTER EDUCATION

*A Program for the School and the Home*

by

CHARLES E. GERMANE

PROFESSOR OF EDUCATION  
UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI

and

EDITH GAYTON GERMANE

CO-AUTHOR *SILENT READING*



SILVER, BURDETT AND COMPANY  
NEW YORK    NEWARK    BOSTON    CHICAGO    SAN FRANCISCO

Copyright, 1929

**By SILVER, BURDETT AND COMPANY**

*Printed in the United States of America*

## CHARACTER EDUCATION

## PREFACE

The primary purpose of this book is to present a theory and practice of character building, that is, of personality enrichment, by means of a program designed to enable the home and the school to cooperate more intelligently and zealously. The fundamental assumption which has motivated and controlled the researches of the authors for the past three years is that any program of character education will succeed *only* in the degree that parents and teachers cooperate wisely and whole-heartedly. With this basic assumption, a series of experiments, investigations, and school, home, and community projects has been carried out in sixteen cities and thirty-one rural communities with 915 teachers and 5,463 parents cooperating. These teachers and parents have in their intelligent, cooperative endeavors for the past three years made a contribution to the study of character training in at least two ways: (1) certain crucial character-training problems, universal in nature, have been ascertained; (2) a successful technique or method by which to approach and solve these vital child problems has been experimentally determined in both rural and urban communities.

Since the diagnostic and remedial measures suggested above were carried out in both the school and the home, this book is divided into two parts. Part One is concerned with the question: How Can the School Build Character? The three sections, consisting in all of eleven chapters, are devoted to a presentation of the psychological and sociological principles involved as well as to a regimen of practices that have been found of greatest help to the teachers and school systems taking part in the investigation. Part Two is concerned with the question: How Can the School and the Home Cooperate to Build Character? In the three sections of Part Two, made up of fifteen chapters, there is presented

a carefully worked out plan of teacher-and-parent cooperation in a child-study program. The fundamental aim of Part Two is to present a plan and technique of school and home cooperation in study and experimentation whereby the child may live continuously in a wholesome environment.

This book is intended for the use of two classes of readers: for teachers and for parents, upon whose shoulders jointly rests responsibility for the success or failure, the happiness or woe of the nation's children. Part One has been planned with the hope that the classroom teacher will find every psychological principle that is set forth clearly illustrated in interesting school projects, case studies, and workable devices for pupil self-government. Part Two presents in language easily understood, certain phases of child psychology which teachers and parents may profitably consider together in teacher-parent study groups.

It is hoped that the book will appeal to all such principals, supervisors, and superintendents of schools as have long since felt the need of a more definite and vitalizing program for parent-teacher association meetings. The parents of every community are a source of significant possibilities for effective cooperation with the school. But these parents need leadership. They need a definite program clearly focused upon the grave problems having to do with that vital and most profound interest, their children. For this reason, Part Two is printed also in separate book form—a parents' edition.

Mothers' Clubs, Child Training Clubs, and Parents' Clubs in communities where cooperation with the schools has not yet been realized, will find in the parents' edition a sympathetic treatment of many of their problems. The suggestions made here have already helped thousands of parents. Extension courses given by universities and colleges that are sensing the need of adult education, especially among parents, will find that the book has been carefully designed and executed as a text for them. In fact, Part Two has already been used for that purpose. Those giving courses in Character Education in colleges and universities will appreciate the carefully selected references at the close of each section. In

so far as possible only those chapters are named which are pertinent to the topic under discussion in the text.

Reading-circle boards will probably find in the book a helpful manual for their teachers, since the text covers both the theory and practice most pertinent to character education in both the rural and the city school, as well as a definitely worked out program uniting the home and the school.

The authors are deeply indebted to many of the great teachers and thinkers in modern education whose philosophy, in some cases, they have attempted to reinterpret by way of concrete illustrations. If the interpretations are faulty, it is hoped the readers will at least see the underlying principle. But it is the hundreds of teachers and the thousands of parents in Missouri to whom the authors are most indebted. Their generous spirit of cooperation, their zeal, and their sincerity in all the projects connected with the university extension courses of the University of Missouri in Character Education during the past three years have made this treatise a possibility.

CHARLES E. GERMANE

EDITH GAYTON GERMANE

*University of Missouri*

## INTRODUCTION

### WHAT IS CHARACTER EDUCATION?

It was a hot, sultry Friday morning in May. For four boys in a certain grade, school life had that week been anything but successful. On their way home to lunch the lure of the "old swimmin' hole" and the thought of the opening game of the baseball season alternated in holding their attention. What a relief, what a change from the tedium of lessons and quizzes it would be "to play hookey"! Here, confronting the boys for solution, was a real life situation. At this juncture the minds of these boys became mental chess-boards upon which was staged the contest between "playing hookey" and returning to school. Here a choice must be made. Here was a test of character (for character is determined largely by the choices one makes). How would these lads react, respond, or adjust themselves to this perplexing life situation? Finally, a wholesome social adjustment was made when they decided to return to school that afternoon and accept their responsibilities.

The challenging job of the parent and the teacher is to help the child meet his life situations—that is, his tasks, duties, and conflicts—manfully and successfully. Left unaided and unguided, the child would, in many instances, no doubt, respond in ways that are wholesome and that develop such traits as industry, self-reliance, honesty, self-confidence, patience, and foresight. But in far too many instances the clash between impulsive desires and duty is disastrous, developing such traits as loss of self-control, attitudes of failure, inferiorities, selfishness, sullenness, dishonesty, laziness, indifference, and poor judgment. These maladjustments make the child a misfit in group living. He is said to be abnormal. He is doomed to failure and unhappiness. Guidance, then, at all those points in his experiences where wrong choices are

likely to be made is the child's birthright. He was not born for failure and misery.

It is evident, then, that character training has a two-fold aspect: (1) Prevention, that is, helping the child learn to make wholesome adjustments to his daily life situations so that he will emerge out of every conflict stronger physically, intellectually, and emotionally; and (2) Cure, that is, helping the child overcome certain maladjustments or bad habits by supplanting these with good habits. Unfortunately, character training too often has to spend its best energies upon the latter aspect—uprooting the bad habits.

Character education is a process through which the child learns to make wholesome social adjustments to his many perplexing life situations. Perplexing life situations are all those occasions in daily life which vex, disturb, and annoy because there is a conflict between what one impulsively wishes to do and what one is obligated to do. Wholesome social adjustments are those happy and successful ways and habits of responding which are beneficial both to one's self and to others.

### WHAT IS CHARACTER?

Simply stated, character develops in the interplay between one's human nature and one's environment. One's character, then, could well be defined as one's way of reacting to his life situations. In truth, character is the sum total of one's ways of responding that have become fairly well established or set.

In a certain city this spring, a member of its police force was found guilty of accepting "hush money." He was summarily discharged. But in the trial it was shown that this policeman received only \$125 per month. He was, at this time, attempting to bring up his family of five children in a respectable, residential section of the city. With one girl going to college, and two others in high school, the drain upon his finances had made his monthly salary wholly inadequate for the decent standard of living which his family had a right to demand. No alibi or excuse is offered for this policeman's conduct. He was intelligent. But why did he commit the wrong? Why this maladjustment to a trying life

situation? Was innate human nature alone the cause, or did the social standards, the whole of his environment, play an important role?

A negro janitor in a certain southern university was caught, not long since, with a quarter which he had appropriated from an instructor's desk. On being dismissed, he asked the officials concerned if any one of them could live and support a family of six on \$75 per month. Did environment have anything to do with this negro's morals, with his failure to make an honest or wholesome adjustment? Or was he just born that way?

Whether a man turns out to be one of the world's great benefactors or a "bum" who runs amuck in society, environment or society should be held directly responsible, for there is no expression without impression. No healthy human being ever was inherently bad; but many inherit as children a wicked or wretched environment. Character is a matter of stimulus and response. The environment is the stimulus; one's reaction or behavior constitutes the response. One begets the other.

### HOW CAN THE SCHOOL BUILD CHARACTER?

If character education means helping the child learn to adjust himself normally, healthfully, and successfully to his many life situations (his environment) then what opportunities does the teacher have for help and guidance in the school?

#### *1. How does teaching effect growth in character?*

Many crucial life situations of the child arise in connection with his daily lessons. If he is failing in one or several of his subjects, he is certain to make unsatisfactory adjustments to many of his life situations. For instance, a boy fails repeatedly in history. What does he experience? What part of the subject matter does he learn? Does he learn how to study better? How will these experiences affect his love for history ten, twenty, thirty years from now? What attitudes is he forming toward his teacher, his chums, his school, and society in general?

But the most significant and far-reaching query is: What does this failing child think of himself? Have these experiences in-

creased or diminished his faith and confidence in himself; have they quickened or slowed his dreams of future victory and conquest; have they sharpened or dulled his enthusiasm for living and learning; have they increased or diminished the sum total of those wholesome personal adjustments which will make him stronger intellectually and emotionally for the succeeding conflict? If school-room conditions make the answers to these questions confessions of failure, then one beholds a cross-section not only of the life of a failing child but of a man's failure twenty or forty years hence.

For failure, even in childhood, is fertile soil in which germinate such traits as sullenness, stubbornness, indifference, irritability, lack of self-control, selfishness, intolerance, jealousy, and inferiority. In failure, pride and self-respect are vanquished. The child must succeed. Not the knowledge itself is so significant; but rather the child's attitudes and his estimation of himself are significant. Teaching which helps the child succeed, which enables him to realize his possibilities, insures wholesome character development. Thus the selection of subject matter and its presentation in ways that assure success become vital factors in the development of the strong character, the poised personality.

*2. How does the case study method of handling instances of maladjustment effect growth in character?*

Too often the hidden but real causes of a child's belligerency are not discovered until it is too late. The teacher's crowded schedule is apt to augment her failure to think of each child as a unique individuality, unlike any other child, one that must needs be understood before he can be helped permanently. Often the injustice done a child by hasty conclusions taints and tinctures his whole attitude toward life. The mistake is made unintentionally by the teacher but that fact does not lessen the consequences one iota. The use of what is known as the "case study method" will do much to prevent such errors. There are several worthy studies on this topic setting forth the technique to be used in diagnosing and dealing with children. These studies not only enumerate the several possible and prob-

able factors operating to cause delinquencies, but they suggest ways of diagnosing, alleviating, and remedying the defects. The case study form, when used sincerely, causes the teacher to stop, look, and collect all facts before making a final decision about certain disciplinary problems.

3. *Why will setting up democracies in the school effect growth in character?*

A third, and vital, opportunity is in providing the children daily with many situations for self-choosing, for self-judging, for self-controlling, for self-governing. Teachers who have successfully worked out the "home room," pupil-participating plan of government know it to be probably the best training possible for good citizenship. Giving the child daily many chances to make choices, and to feel responsibility to himself and to his group for these choices, might well be called the "practicing," "doing," or "living it" method of teaching citizenship in contrast to the mystical and ritualistic method so long the vogue.

This pupil-participating plan of government presumes that right conduct will be practiced upon the child's own initiative and with results satisfactory to himself. It presumes, further, that the child will be encouraged to question sincerely the accepted standards of right and wrong, to the end that whatever he practices as right may be done intelligently, not blindly. Otherwise it is possible for him to initiate and practice with zest and satisfaction social illusions, and vicious, time-worn customs. In this third method, the emphasis is placed upon learning to do by doing, but doing with intelligence and satisfaction, and not by coercion. Coercive learning of right conduct is usually negative in effect. That is, the child is good because he is afraid to be bad. He does not practice the right upon his own initiative. The ideal is to help him reach the plane where he will desire the good, and secure as much satisfaction in practicing it as he obtained previously in doing the wrong. This ideal can never be realized through coercion alone.

Democracy in America is far from attaining this ideal; but how could it be otherwise? One of the great inconsistencies in our

country today is that we do not realize that we cannot prepare children *for* a democracy unless they are prepared *in* a democracy. How can democratic principles be learned, except by practice? How can children best attain these habits, such as honesty, tolerance, sympathy, square-dealing, and fair play, that constitute the soul of democratic living? We learn arithmetic by practicing it, by doing it. Can we learn the elements of democracy in any other way?

We complain that many of our youth have no appreciative sense of the sanctity of law, of personal and property rights. But how can we expect them to feel reverently the meaning of law and the sacrilege of its violation? They have never had the happy experience of making laws for themselves and those of their group. So far as they are concerned, government is autocratic. Then how can we expect them to feel chagrin and humiliation at seeing erstwhile sacred covenants broken and scoffed at by some of their comrades?

If we would have the child possess desires for, or habits of, truth-telling, open-mindedness, and justice, we must permit him to experience the joy of living in an environment where truth-telling, open-mindedness, and justice reign. The child must do the choosing. He must feel satisfaction when he chooses the right, annoyance when he chooses the wrong. In brief, there will be true moral growth in the degree that the child has opportunity to make right decisions, and to practice with satisfaction those virtues which make for stability of character.

#### HOW CAN THE HOME AND THE SCHOOL COOPERATE TO BUILD CHARACTER?

If the child is to make real growth in character, he must live in a continuously and consistently wholesome environment. Such an environment obviously includes the home as well as the school. Any attempt on the part of either the home or the school to put over, independent of the other's cooperation, a definite program for character education will be futile. On the other hand, the home and the school can cooperate most effectively in working

out a day-by-day schedule of life situations that will give the children exercise of those moral muscles that need strengthening most.

What an opportunity for mutual help and understanding teachers and parents have when they cooperate by organizing themselves into study groups, meeting every two weeks for the last hour of the school day! Here can be discussed the psychological principles involved in transforming the home and the school into laboratories that will provide rich experiences for personality development. A definite list of the specific traits the home and school shall attempt to strengthen most can be agreed upon; a cooperative program for the development of these traits can be worked out; and suggestions can be given for establishing in both home and school the environment which will most likely insure success. Parents and teachers will cooperate in earnest in the years to come when they sense the value of each child's possessing a poised, attractive personality and a steadfast character. Earnest and wise parent-teacher study groups may be the source of almost unlimited possibilities for human progress.

#### WHAT ROLE MIGHT A PROGRESSIVE SCHOOL PLAY IN A COMMUNITY?

When civilization was in its tribal state, the home sufficed as an educational center. As tribal life became more complex, its social, political, industrial, and cultural life experienced corresponding growths. The preparation of children for membership in this more highly organized community life now became too great a task for the home alone. While the home continued for centuries to be the chief educational center in which the child learned his trade and acquired many of his ideals of living, it was found necessary to create another institution—the school—to assist in the education of the youth. But for centuries the chief function of the school was the teaching of the three R's during a school year of only a few months. However, life was then comparatively simple; its needs relatively few.

Now all has been changed. The education formerly given in

the home has been delegated to or at least taken over by other institutions such as the school, trades and industries, the press, the theater and clubs. Life is now very complex, a turmoil of changes taking place so rapidly that definite and separate responsibilities for each of its many institutions have not been clearly marked out. And yet these institutions, including the school, must keep pace with this progress of the state. The modern conception of the school is that it shall be more than a mere trainer of minds. It shall rear worth while citizens, not only by using its own equipment and functioning within its own walls, but also by becoming a leader and inspirer of all the other agencies in the community.

The significance of the socializing influence of such institutions as the home, church, press, theater, clubs, and local or community government is not minimized. Each of these is indispensable. But each is, by its very nature, so centered on some one phase of life that the vision of life as a whole is apt to be lost sight of. For this reason there is need in every community for a general directorship and guardianship over all their endeavors. There is need for some strong and sympathetic agency to correlate the work of these agencies. As a coordinator it could save duplication of effort; could distribute labor; could unite funds and programs. This agency might well consist of representative leaders from the several socializing influences in the community.

It is in the initiating of this coordinating agency and in the judicious guidance of its activities that the school could lead so effectively. For the school is the one institution to which all people come nearest to pledging allegiance and faith. In the face of this opportunity for leadership, how stupid, selfish, and lacking in vision would the school and its teachers be to hold fast to the old conception of the school!

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### *Selected Bibliography for Correlation of History, Geography, Civics, and Literature for Junior and Senior High School*

ADAMS, KATHERINE. *Red Caps and Lilies*. The Macmillan Company.

A story of adventure in the times of the French revolution.

ANTIN, M. *The Promised Land*. Houghton Mifflin Company.

The true story of a child who came to this country from Russia.

ANONYMOUS. *The Log Cabin Lady*. Little, Brown and Company.

The story of a girl reared in a crude environment and of her successful struggle to become a gracious, cultured woman.

AUSLANDER, JOSEPH, and HILL, ERNEST. *The Winged Horse*. Doubleday, Doran and Company.

In this book, boys and girls get the story of poetry from the days when people believed in the gods and goddesses through the various decades to modern times.

BENNETT, JOHN. *Master Skylark*. The Century Company.

The history of England in the time of Queen Elizabeth. The story centers around a boy who ran away to join some strolling players.

BOLTON, SARAH. *Girls Who Became Famous*. The Crowell Publishing Company.

Sketches of Rosa Bonheur, George Eliot, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Helen Hunt Jackson, Louisa M. Alcott, Florence Nightingale, etc.

BOYD, JAMES. *Marching On*. A. C. McClurg and Company.

A splendid story of the Civil War. The experience of the southern lad is extremely realistic.

BROOKS, E. S. *The Master of the Strong Hearts*. E. P. Dutton and Company.

A tale of the conquest of the wilderness and Custer's last fight.

BROOKS, E. S. *The Boy Life of Napoleon*. Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Company.

A splendid biography, appealing to boys, of this great warrior.

BURROUGHS, JOHN. *My Boyhood*. Doubleday, Doran and Company.

A very interesting account of the boyhood of the great naturalist.

BULLEN, F. T. *The Cruise of the Cachalot*. D. Appleton and Co.

An interesting account of the whaling industry.

CODY, W. F. *The Autobiography of Buffalo Bill*. Cosmopolitan Press.  
DEEPING, WARWICK. *Sorrell and Son*. Alfred A. Knopf.

A story of post war England—a father's sacrifices for his son.

DIX, B. M. *Merrylips*. The Macmillan Company.

An excellent story of the Cavaliers and Roundheads.

DODD, ANNA. *Talleyrand*. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

The story of Talleyrand, friend and betrayer of Napoleon, and of the Bourbons. Interesting sidelights on the history of that time.

FARIS, J. T. *Winning Their Way*. Frederick A. Stokes.

Sketches of forty-eight inventors, explorers, industrial leaders, scientists, statesmen, and authors.

GARLAND, HAMLIN. *Trail Makers of the Middle Border*. The Macmillan Company.

The story of a pioneer family in the sixties, and of the Civil War.

GILBERT, ARIADNE. *More than Conquerors*. The Century Company.

Sketches of Beethoven, Lamb, Scott, Irving, Emerson, Agassiz, Thackeray, Pasteur, Brooks, Lincoln, and others.

GILMAN, BRADLEY. *Robert E. Lee*. The Macmillan Company.

GORDON and KING. *Verse of Our Day*. D. Appleton and Company.

The poems in this book represent the interests of the adolescent as tested in the class room.

HAGEDORN, H. *Boy's Life of Theodore Roosevelt*. Harper and Brothers.

HALDANE, E. *George Eliot and Her Times*. D. Appleton and Company.

HARLOW, A. F. *Old Tow Paths*. D. Appleton and Company.

A splendid picture of the canal as a means of transportation.

HILL, F. T. *On the Trail of Grant and Lee*. D. Appleton and Company.

HORNE, O. B. *Stories of Great Artists*. American Book Company.

Students should have a much keener appreciation of the works of these great men after reading this book.

HUSBAND, JOSEPH. *Americans by Adoption*. Atlantic Monthly Press.

Brief biographies of Stephen Girard, John Ericsson, Louis Agassiz, Carl Schurz, Andrew Carnegie, James J. Hill, Jacob Riis, etc.

INMAN, HENRY. *The Ranch on the Oxhide*. The Macmillan Company.

A thrilling tale of frontier days in Kansas with Buffalo Bill.

JOHNSTON, C. H. L. *Famous Cavalry Leaders. Famous Indian Chiefs. Famous Scouts*. L. C. Page Company.

JOHNSON, GERALD. *Andrew Jackson, or An Epic in Homespun*. Minton, Balch and Company.

The war of 1812 takes on a new color and the personality of this pioneer president is better understood after reading this book.

LUDWIG, EMIL. *Bismarck, The Story of a Fighter*. Little, Brown and Company.

MCNEIL, EVERETT. *Fighting with Fremont*. E. P. Dutton and Co.  
A tale of the conquest of California.

MASEFIELD, JOHN. *Jim Davis*. Frederick A. Stokes.

The days of smugglers and the part a young lad played in that period of a hundred years ago.

MAGOFFIN, SUSAN. *Down the Santa Fe Trail*. Yale University Press.  
First hand chronicle of a trading caravan which blazed the way for that famous bloodless conquest in the old Southwest.

MAUROIS, ANDRÉ. *Disraeli*. D. Appleton and Company.

MINNIGERODE, MEADE. *The Fabulous Forties*. G. P. Putnam's Sons.  
The period of 1840-1850; the days of the Whig "log cabin and hard cider" campaign, etc.

MOORE, JAMES TROTWOOD. *Hearts of Hickory*. Cokesbury Press.

A study featuring the life of Andrew Jackson. The book is replete with thrilling adventures with the Indians in which Kit Carson plays a prominent part.

MORRIS, LLOYD. *The Rebellious Puritan*. Harcourt, Brace and Co.  
High school students will profit from this book because it gives the atmosphere of all Hawthorne's writing. The old manse, the dusty custom house, and the town of Salem are recreated.

PUPIN, MICHAEL. *From Immigrant to Inventor*. Charles Scribner's Sons.  
The story of a young Serbian lad who comes steerage to this great land of promise and how he made good.

ROWELL, CORA. *Leaders of the World War*. The Macmillan Company.

RUSSELL, CHAS. EDWARD. *Julia Marlowe, Her Life and Art*. D. Appleton and Company.

High school boys and girls studying Shakespearean dramas will read with appreciation the life of the great Shakespearean actress. She came to America when a mere child and lived in Kansas.

RUSSELL, PHILLIPS. *John Paul Jones*. Brentano's.

An authentic biography of John Paul Jones supported by much documentary evidence. Very interesting.

SANDBURG, CARL. *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years*. Harcourt, Brace and Company.