

BUILDING CHARACTER, BUSINESS OF THE HOME

Child Study Conference, Attended by North Shore Folk, Dis- cusses Problems

The business of the school and the home is to build character, according to experts who spoke before over 2,000 parents daily last week at the Palmer House, when for three days mothers and teachers heard eminent

psychologists and educators lecture on the child. The Chicago Association for Child Study and Parent Education sponsored the Mid-West Conference and School for Parents last Thursday, Friday and Saturday, which is the second meeting of its kind.

Authorities discussed the technique of character development. Dr. William Healy, director of the Judge Baker Foundation of Boston, in addressing the opening meeting stressed the fact that character is derived from conflicts and hardships. He pleaded for those children whose parents strive to save them from all unpleasantness

and hardships, suggesting the need for every child to wrestle with problems that call into play the whole personality of the child. He emphasized the need for independence and the need to work with others and for others. "If the child can do something for himself or for others, he will achieve personal and social status to establish his own self respect," he said. Work and responsibility are as indispensable for the development of character as food and exercise to the body.

Study from Varied Angles

Dr. Mark A. May, Department of Education at Yale university, pointed out that character education derives benefit from a wide range of sciences, those of psychology, psychiatry and sociology. The child is studied in three different angles, one being the physiological method, which includes measuring blood pressure, heart beat and glandular activity. Analyses of the fluids of the body have thrown great light on the emotional life of the individual. The case study method is another approach to the understanding of the complete child. The psychiatrist who has this in hand searches through his past history, secures mental releases and helps the child break down inhibitions. The third angle is that of investigation. Character tests are given, which measure achievement abilities in certain aspects of character. At Yale university, tests are being made along the line of moral knowledge, such as lying, stealing and cheating. Such men as Dewey and Kilpatrick believe that if the individual can foresee and evaluate the consequences of his acts, he will be able to determine his own conduct along the right lines.

Must Omit Fear Control

Prof. Ellsworth Faris of the Department of Sociology at the University of Chicago, in a roundtable discussion made the statement that psychologists can make a contribution to parents if they are willing to follow the assump-

tion that human acts have causes and can be controlled. He said, "There is a time when a child can do nothing because he is unable to assume responsibility. What he does and sees and feels can be controlled by those who handle and manage him. Parents start the thing off, whether it be physical habits, or mental attitudes. Fortunately, parents are not the only people a child knows. Every conscientious parent wishes to give his offspring the attitudes that are nearest his heart. Parents are given precious capital, in this influence over their children." He said children need control, but this control must come from respect, not from fear. It is not the control of a policeman or a jailor, but the control of one who has a friendly interest in the child.

On the moot question of what to do with the adolescent, Rabbi Solomon Freehof of Chicago spoke of the adolescent as thinking more deeply than the child, who only reacts to outside stimulus. He reacts to the relations of facts of existence, and if led aright his thinking will lead him to a great love for philosophy, for study and beauty. If he does not understand himself, he becomes an objector, a fighter and a doubter. If he can learn to understand himself, he soon arrives at the secret of life, which Rabbi Freehof said was the determination to live each day so that tomorrow is cared for and carried over into the future. His social sense will be awakened so that he will see that the laws of righteousness, goodness and truth are part of the structure of the whole universe.

Mrs. James Fentress of 1127 Sheridan road returned Thursday, February 16, from a month spent in the East. Mrs. Fentress, who is the director of the Devereux school in Devon, Pa., spent much of her time at the school, although she included several days in New York City.

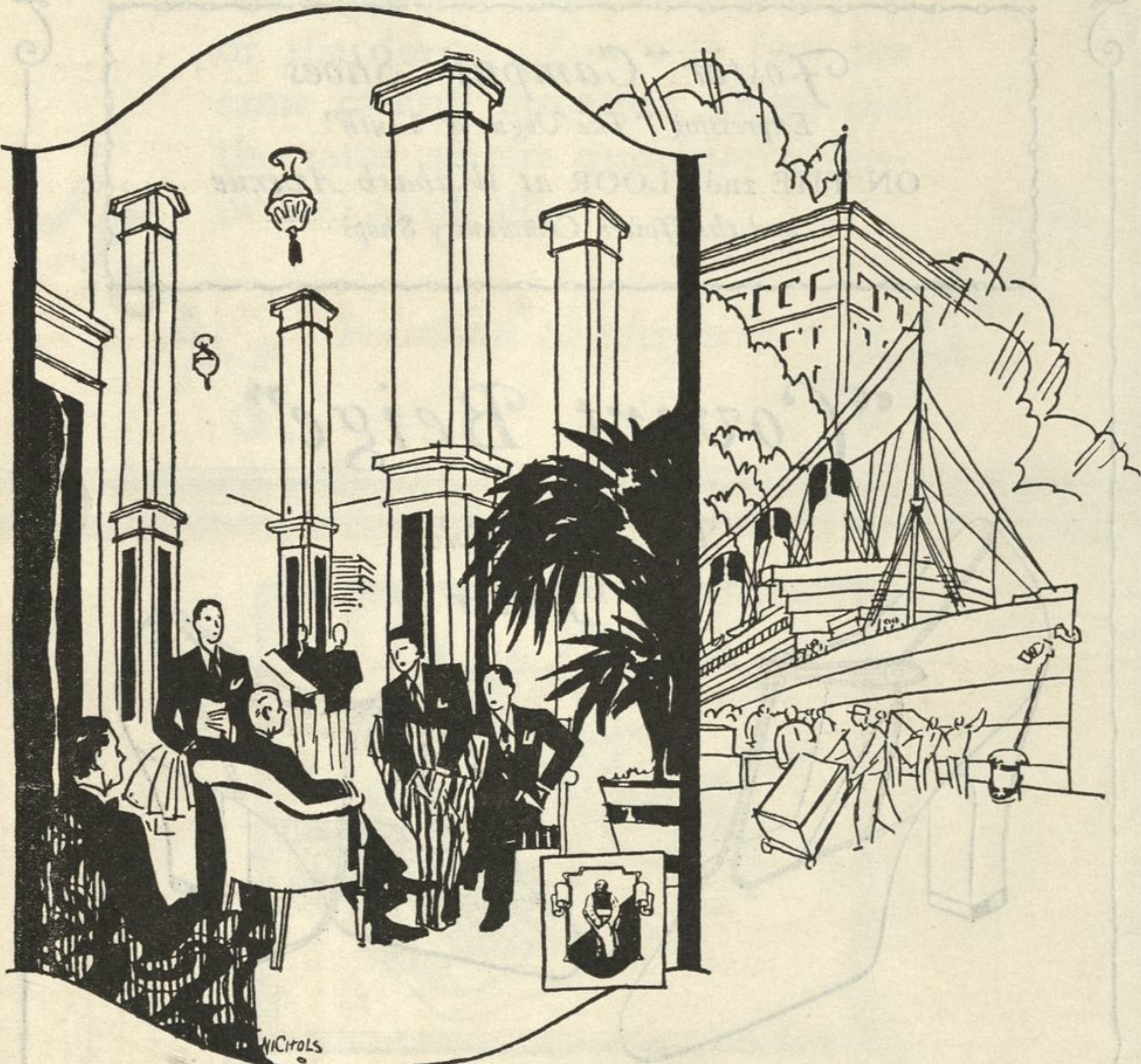
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