

How Do You Know What You Know?

An Amateur's Adventure in Psychology

By HAROLD T. PULSIFER

THOSE eminent gentlemen who have invented a whole new vocabulary in which to rephrase some of the commoner experiences of mankind have rediscovered much of interest concerning human intelligence. The experiences which they describe were quite familiar to the elder theologians worrying about the relationship between the flesh and the devil. Their language, however, would probably be quite as incomprehensible to Jonathan Edwards as his is to them. Being neither a theologian nor a psychologist, and not being particularly impressed with the cant phrases of either school, it seems to me that the conclusions of both can be summed up in very simple words.

1. What we learn as children affects our lives more strongly than anything else.

2. Most adults think in childish terms.

So far as I can see, modern psychology has not gone much beyond these plain conclusions. It has not offered any adequate explanation as to why the formative period of character is so largely confined to childhood or why when we reach physical maturity we insist upon our childhood concepts.

I think the explanation can be found in the fact that we learn most effectively from the teachers with whom we have the most intimate contacts, and those teachers are seldom found in positions of authority in our homes, schools, or colleges.

Our most intimate teachers are those with whom we play and fight as children. Count up the number of hours which the child spends in contact with adults and compare it with the number of hours which the child spends in intimate relationship with other children, and you will readily see how inevitably it results that the most powerful and lasting impressions came from the child's own contemporaries. At no period in life are contacts so intimate or so influential as they are in childhood.

We know that there are traditions and customs, habits and beliefs, which are transmitted directly from child to child without any help from the adult world. Boys transmit to one another the traditional time for top spinning, kite flying, Hallowe'en frolics, and the hanging of May baskets with little or no help from their elders. Their elders blissfully imagine, perhaps, that such a superficial list as this comprises most of the information which is handed from child to child. They do not realize that in this top-spinning, kite-flying world there exists a philosophy of sex and religion which is passed from childish mind to childish mind as effectively as the knowledge of the proper date to hang tick-tacks on a neighbor's window. If they did, they would have long ago found the explanation of the fact that both Jove and Jehovah wear long gray whiskers, and why unreal romance is permitted to destroy the romance of real living.

PERHAPS the impact of this contemporary teaching can be illustrated best by a simple diagram. One column represents the age of the child's most effective teachers; the other, the age of the child pupil. When the child is six, it imitates, studies, and aspires to the accomplishments of the child of seven. What the child of seven reports the child of six believes. The child of eleven looks for his knowledge of life to the child of twelve, and so on up and down the column. Below the age of fourteen

there is a vast world, self-sufficient and self-perpetuating. It is a world only indirectly influenced by the adult world, which is at once so near and so remote. Is it any wonder, therefore, that the child who learns from a child continues to think like a child when, according to his physical age, he is classed as an adult? Is it any wonder that the psychological tests of the army showed that the average mental age of our population was in the neighborhood of fourteen years?

IT is difficult to search your mind and analyze its own development. You might test this theory of mine, however, by asking yourself or your friends a few leading questions.

When and how did you acquire your information concerning sex? How much has your conception of the function of sex changed since maturity?

When and how did you acquire your idea of God? How much has your conception of God changed since maturity?

Fortunate, indeed, are the children whose parents have the ability to lead them wisely and cautiously to an understanding of adult relationships. Of such parents come the children who are able to continue their mental development after the period of adolescence. During the whole period of their development their intellectual curiosity has been awakened and stimulated by glimpses of a world beyond the horizon of their own contemporaries. They are given a touch of that divine dissatisfaction which makes leaders of men and women.

There is perhaps more of that constructive restlessness in the minds of our present young people than has ever existed before in the history of the world. That is why old fogies throw up their hands in horror at the rising generation, and why the rest of us look forward with hope and delight to the time when the scepters of the world will pass into the hands of the youth of today.

What the child of fourteen reports the child of thirteen believes

AGE		AGE		AGE		AGE
14	→	14	→	14	→	14
13	→	13	→	13	→	13
12	→	12	→	12	→	12
11	→	11	→	11	→	11
10	→	10	→	10	→	10
9	→	9	→	9	→	9
8	→	8	→	8	→	8
7	→	7	→	7	→	7
6	→	6	→	6	→	6
5	→	5	→	5	→	5

This table illustrates visually just how childhood is its own teacher

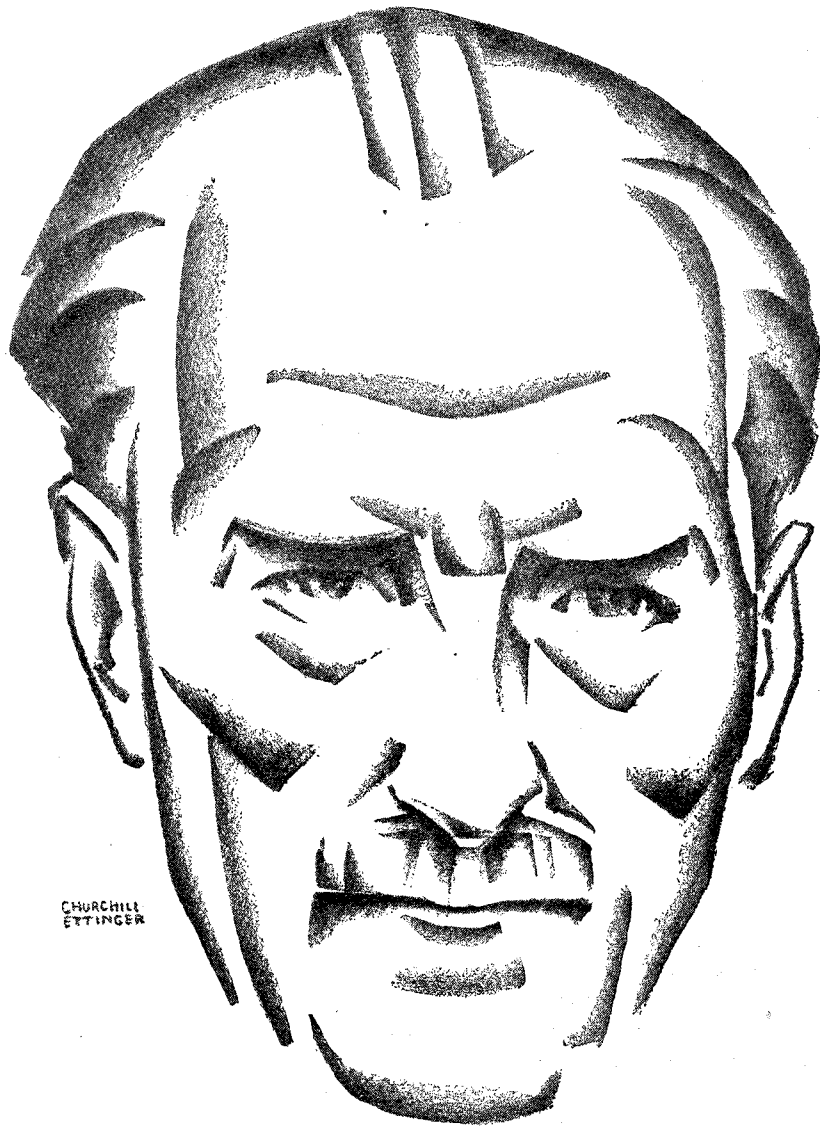
Steer Clear of Turkey

By HARRY A. FRANCK

I VERY recently returned from a journey through Turkey. Upon reaching the frontier my passport was taken away by a soldier canvassing the train, and was returned hours later as I neared my destination. Our State Department advises travelers to keep their passports always in their own possession, for very obvious reasons; yet even our consular officials, traveling on diplomatic passports, are compelled to hand them over to irresponsible soldiers when they enter Turkey. But let that pass. My first stop was Adana. By luck, there remain in Adana a few Americans still striving to maintain a mission hospital. For it was only through them that I learned that if I did not present myself to the local police within twenty-four hours of my arrival I should be subjected to a fine—and worse. The fine might not be serious, but it is still the Turkish way, as of yore, to keep the now helpless foreigner hanging about for a fortnight or a month before he is allowed to pay his fine and ask for permission to move on. I had to present myself before the police of Adana (armed with six portraits) and spend the morning waiting for a long tissue-paper document, bearing one of said likenesses, and permitting me to proceed to my next stop, Konia.

I had twenty-four hours in Konia. It should have been amply sufficient to fulfill the purposes of my visit. Yet they were not fulfilled, for I spent virtually all my time there, except eight hours of sleeping, in the police station, being batted back and forth like a tennis ball between unobliging, indifferent, and in some cases insulting minor officials. To top off the ordeal, I waited four and a half hours for the chief of police to return from the café where he spends most of his time, since his hastily scratched initials were necessary on my travel order before I could leave town. At that I was lucky, for I frequently met foreigners in Turkey who lost the daily train or worse for lack of such scratched initials in time.

Now that his rights under the capitulations are gone, the foreigner in Turkey cannot move hand or foot without the permission of the police. Soldiers bearing huge ledgers go through every train, examining, and usually taking up, the police permits of foreigners. If one of these is out of order, due to the innocent



Mustapha Kemal

ignorance of said traveler—and seldom, indeed, will a Turkish official give a foreigner information on what he is ex-

THE accompanying article relates the experiences of a wise and seasoned observer.

It is only fair to Turkey, however, to remind the reader that one traveler's story is not the whole story, and that police regulations in regard to visitors are enforced in most countries.

Other observers in some parts of Turkey, both residents and tourists, report some hopeful signs of progress.

—THE EDITORS.

pected to do—due to the carelessness or even the intentional malice of a bored clerk in a police station, he is hustled off the train and returned to the point of departure for trial. Even our officials holding diplomatic passports are required to report themselves to the police and ask permission to move on. No matter how great his hurry or what the reasons for his traveling, the foreigner in the “new” Turkey must report to the police within twenty-four hours after his arrival and before his departure at any stopping-place in the country.

My next stop was Angora, the new capital. The police station there was a disgrace to civilization. Foul Arabs and European prostitutes were