

CHILD PSYCHOLOGY

By SAWITRI GHODKE, *Health Visitor, Karachi.*

We health visitors are very fortunate that the study of psychology is included in our training. Many people are beginning to realise the importance of it, and some, I hope, are seeking the advice of their health visitors as Munni's parents did.

Munni is a girl of about five years of age and the eldest of three, her two younger brothers being about two and four years respectively. Unfortunately her grandfather had spoiled her terribly because she was the first child born in the family after many years; so Munni's mother was very anxious about her.

Munni always wanted to have her own way and she never obeyed anybody. She always wanted to keep all the sweets, fruit etc. for herself. She did not eat them, but she did not want to share them with the other members of the family, no matter how big a share was offered to her. However, she would always give them freely to the poor children in the "galis". She even started stealing things in the house to give them to these children and to the women who were her father's tenants. She loved running out of the house to play with all sorts of children in the streets. She did not care for her elder brother at all, not much for the younger, and apparently not at all for her mother.

Munni's parents are well to do, educated, sensible and anxious to bring up their children on modern lines, and advice was sought from our lecturer in Psychology. On careful observation Munni was found to be a nice, independent, bright little girl with a lot of energy as well as anxiety to show off her ability. Her mother, wishing her daughter to be perfect, used to compare her with other quiet children, telling her rather too frequently not to do this or that and so on. Of course, she was wise enough not to beat her, or even scold her too much.

The following recommendations were made:

- (1) Separate the child from her grandfather, if possible.
- (2) Allow her to do according to her own wishes so long as they are not harmful.
- (3) Let her have her own things and plenty to do to achieve something and show off her natural abilities.
- (4) Never make comparisons to make her feel ashamed or scold her in the presence of others.
- (5) Let her play with older children to learn discipline and co-operation; school was advised for this purpose as well as to keep her from bad company.
- (6) Show extra love and give praise for achievements and seek the child's co-operation in caring for the youngest child.

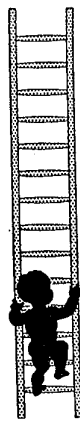
Fortunately it has been possible to carry out the above advice, and Munni is reported to be growing sweeter and sweeter every day.

The ladder of health

Which is the child in your care?

This diagram shows the results of an important investigation (published in "The Medical Officer") into the growth of children between two and five years of age.

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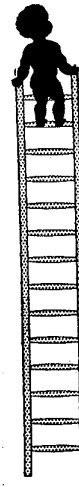
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