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some years afterwards [1679], the King himself being dangerously ill at Windsor with an intermittent fever, the Council of State forced a dozen physicians to declare if Quinquina, which they were about to give the King, was not sometimes harmful or, at least, useless. To this they were obliged to answer promptly, and without an opportunity of consulting amongst themselves beforehand, and each one frankly assured them that he had often tried it, even on small children, and always with success. After which, the King, already half cured, pressed Dr. Lower maliciously, asking him how the very thing which was so bad for me had become so wonderfully good for him. The embarrassed doctor could only reply in a similar tone of raillery, that this was a remedy from which only kings were worthy of profiting.

My little fellow called himself Taber. He was quite ignorant, but so devoted to his project that he stayed especially in an unhealthy district in order to try out and improve his remedy. Having been hard pressed by the physicians of France (where the King had sent him in order to cure his niece) so that he might expose his ignorance in explaining the origin of fevers, he made this celebrated reply: 'Gentlemen, I do not pretend to know anything about fever except that it is a disease which all you others do not know how to cure, but which I cure without fail.'

He became very rich in Paris as well as in Madrid. Having returned from there to Windsor where the Queen presented him her hand for the kiss according to the custom of our country, instead of kneeling down he stretched out his own hand which was completely covered with valuable rings given to him in those countries, from which one can judge both his arrogance and his stupidity. There, it seems to me, was a great victory for the empirics that they should be obliged at the same time to defend me against disease, and, what is still more dangerous, against the doctors too!

## A NEW METHOD OF EDUCATING THREE-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN (1695)

*by*

WILLIAM BROCKBANK

WHICH would you rather have, one thousand pounds or your three-year-old child taught to learn languages and most arts and sciences? The money should be assessed at its value at the end of the seventeenth century when it was worth far more than it is at the present time and there was no income tax.

The question is prompted by the title page of a fascinating duodecimo volume published in 1695. As was the custom its title was lengthy and ran to some 150 words:

*A New Method of Educating Children: or Rules and Directions for the Well Ordering and Governing Them during their Younger Years. Shewing that they are capable, at the Age of Three Years, to be caused to learn Languages and most Arts and Sciences; which if observ'd By Parents would be of greater Value than a Thousand Pounds Portion. Also What Methods is to be used by Breeding Women and what Diet is most proper for them and their Children to prevent Wind, Vapours, Convulsions, etc.*

Written (to disengage the World from those ill Customs in Education, it has been so long used to) by Tho. Tryon; Author of 'The Way to Health', 'Long Life and Happiness'.

Recommended to Parents, Nurses, Tutors and all others concerned in the Education of Children.

London: Printed for J. Salusbury at the 'Rising Sun' in Cornhill; and J. Harris at the 'Harrow' in the Poultry, 1695.

Price bound One Shilling.

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Much of the advice is very sensible: 'a diet of simple meats and drinks' for pregnant women, avoiding alcohol: a plea for the better educating of women.

Hence it follows that the Females ought to have the principal and best education, they being the first tutors, having the children always with them, whom they will imitate and observe. . . . Now if women were thus instructed how easy and natural would it be for them to begin and teach their children all excellent things from the very cradle?

Tryon objects to energetic games, pleading that the time spent on them is wasted and could better be employed at learning. Games make children 'rude and boisterous', but then what games there were!

Cards, dice, billiards, lotteries, whimsie-boards, stage-plays, drolls, hunting, hawking, bull-baiting, bear-baiting, cock-fighting, wanton and lascivious dancing, racing, etc., with a thousand other vanities that parents by their own practice teach their children.

His suggestions for feeding children are sound. He pleads for their gentle handling. He advises that they be not allowed to sleep in the same bed 'with old persons'. But the best part of the book concerns the 'Methods and Institutions of a School for the advantageous education of young persons proposed'. The age of the children should be kept well in mind.

'First there must be a skilful Master or Governor,' a paragon of all virtues, 'one that is well acquainted with the world and knows the mystery and intrigue of it . . . a good natural philosopher'. There should be a sub-tutor, a 'musick-master and sufficient masters'.

Take ten or twenty children from three years old, to five or six at most, who are not to be suffer'd to speak one word of English, but all keep silence and observe: And as much as may be, the Master and Tutors must make it their business continually to speak Latin and French to them, commanding them to do this, and fetch that: And when the children do not understand them, they are to teach them by example, doing and fetching the thing themselves. By this means they will understand the names of most things about the house, in six weeks, or two months; and in the interim, they must be taught to read the languages they learn, so that in a year's time they shall all speak both Latin and French, as well as any children shall do English at that age.

The maids, and nurses, and other servants, shall not speak any other tongue but what is learn'd and taught in the school; and before they arrive to it, they shall be silent, and do all things by signs.

(The reader is advised to consider the wording for a suitable advertisement for a maid.)

The day shall be divided into so many parts as the children learn arts or things. The Masters and Tutors shall neither whip, beat, nor shew anger or passion toward any child, be he never so dull. But instead of such correction, shall take the dull child aside, and commend and praise him for his endeavours; inform him how many men of mean birth have advanc'd themselves to a noble pitch of eminence and glory, by their learning, vertue and sobriety, and by these means they shall excite and prompt him on to an honourable ambition and emulation. This, no doubt, will have a good effect: for both wise men and fools do alike love to be praised. But other methods shall be used for the executing of justice, if at any time the children become vicious and criminal; such as shall not irritate the spirit, or provoke passion; which is a great enemy to the souls and faculties of most children, and too frequently practised in most schools, which

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will be wholly prevented by the good and regular methods we prescribe. For order, when children are accustom'd to it, has as great power and influence as disorder.

The school shall be at some distance from other houses, or any town, that there may be no communication between the children of the school and other wild children; that they shall not know what swearing or any such frothy discourse is, or that there is any such thing in the world. And so of all other evil communication. So that it will be easy to govern them, when order and custom have their free influences; and where there is nothing else seen or known but the practice of vertue and study of learning.

In the winter, the children shall go to bed at seven o'clock at night and rise at seven o'clock in the morning; and in the summer, at eight at night and rise at six in the morning. For above all things, children should have rest enough, and sleep enough; which does mightily strengthen and refresh nature, and renders them brisk and alert at their learning.

As soon as they are up in the morning, they shall spend one hour in reading, and then eat their breakfast: After which, such as love musick, shall play and practice one hour, and those that are for painting, the like: The others shall walk in gardens for the same time with their Tutors, and discourse of the nature and vertues of herbs, plants and flowers, and of the art of husbandry and gardening, all in the language they then learn. Then they shall all return into the school, and learn their books for one hour. After which, they shall be instructed in the business of the house, and the art of Oeconomicks; also the manner and preparation of the food they have each day for dinner, and have the reasons of every thing discovered to them. Then they shall all go to dinner; after which, in the summer time, they shall rest an hour and a half, sitting silent in a chair, where they may sleep, if they are inclined to it, which will greatly enliven, and fit them for the afternoon's business. After which, they shall read half an hour, or an hour, and then such as are for painting or musick, must spend one hour in the exercise of those arts, and in the meanwhile the others shall be employed in writing, arithmetick and accounting. When this is done, they shall be employed again in gardening, planting, sowing, weeding, digging, etc. Every one having a little garden of their own, which they shall be taught to dress and cultivate; and such as are not capable of that exercise, shall walk among the others, and learn from them to do it themselves, always having their Tutors along with them: After which, they shall walk, run, and play about for half an hour, their Tutors carefully observing that they do every thing with decorum, and handsomly; for all those exercises that are perform'd by the motion and activity of the body and limbs, are to be used in the afternoon, or near the time of going to rest, and not after fullness, or dinner, as the custom is.

Thus they shall all learn Latin and French by custom and conversation; for there shall be nothing else spoke in the school. Likewise they shall learn to read the same tongue, which may be done a quicker and easier way, than the common method.

(Poor wee things! But what about their native tongue?)

Thomas Tryon was a self-made man. He was born near Cirencester in 1634, the son of a tiler. He was sent to the village school where he had scarcely learned to read when he was put by his father to spinning and carding. He worked thus from the age of nine to eleven, beginning at a wage of two shillings a week. But he was more interested in the life of a shepherd and tended a small flock from his eleventh to his eighteenth year when he grew weary of 'shepherdizing' and had a desire to travel.

Having relearned his letters and saved three pounds he trudged to London and apprenticed himself to a hatter. He studied religion, medicine and astrology and eventually set himself up as a hatter and his business prospered. He began to write 'to recommend the world cleanness, temperance and innocency of living'. His book on *The Way of Health* very much impressed the youthful Benjamin Franklin. His *New Method of Educating Children* deserves to be more widely known. But the reader may not be surprised to find that he had no personal experience of his own method.