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BARBAROUS BABIES
by Right Rev. Msgr. Peter M. H. Wynhoven

Editor-in-Chief, Catholic Action of the South
PARENTAL PARTNERSHIP



I recently read an amusing but very sensible article by Heywood Brown titled "Holding a Baby." He declared "I believe in a rough equality of parenthood. In sharing all the business of caring for children, we men have escaped much hard labor but we have also missed much fun of a very special kind." Then he proceeds to advocate that fathers should assist even in washing and dressing the children. This "rough equality of parenthood," unfortunately is very often sadly ignored by fathers when it comes to the real training and to the character development of the child. The attitude of so many men seems to be "As long as I am a good provider, I have lived up to my end of the deal."

Nevertheless, the father who leaves the rearing, training and education of his children entirely to his wife is creating his offspring to the extent of let us say, at least one-third of the marriage-contract responsibility which he made with their mother.

A father should at every opportunity enter wholeheartedly into the joys and problems and pleasures of the young family. Because, ordinarily, he is at home so little he should make up for lost time when he has a chance to be with his little ones and to participate in their play, their childish interests and their prayers.

Great children, as a rule, do not resent their father because they do not feel close enough to him since he never became their confidant in their childhood and during their formative years. Thus, many a boy who is severely handicapped because he cannot do, or go to, school with his problems or troubles, and who feels nervous and perhaps depressed about talking to his mother.

It is very important that a father should be established early and as long as possible that a boy or girl could look upon his father as his pal. Sometimes the father's lack of interest in his children results from the belief that it is not mainly to bother with or care for babies since this is a woman's job. Sometimes we see a parent tease his little boy for being a sissy if the son and he play with dolls or plays house. This is not so likely to happen if fathers take an early and keen interest in their young children and assume more responsibility for the development of their sons in particular.

In order to build up this relationship between father and children it is a good system for Mother to follow provided the father is sufficiently interested to defer attention to a few childish requests. "Dad gets home because he can do that for you so much better." The little ones will be taught dependence on their father, they will be thinking of him during the day, and will be eagerly looking for his homecoming. When, in the evening, he fixes Richard's broken popgun and fastens the hair once more on Patricia's doll, they will think he is just the greatest man in the world. Fathers who are too tired to do these little things are simply fooling themselves and denying their children something precious.

This kind of "all-in" father as a rule is not too fatigued to sneak out after supper and spend three or four hours at a card table. He calls that the distraction he needs. And yet the distraction which duty proposes, his being with his wife and children is a hundred per cent less taxing and enervating. On the contrary it should be more enjoyable and constructive, provided, of course he takes the trouble of disposing his mind to that effect.

"Naturally, everybody needs a let-up now and then, a change from the regular routine, and there is no harm, and no objection should be raised, when a man, once or twice a week, wants to join his buddies in a friendly game. But what is wrong with giving Mother a chance to get away from her daily, and at times monotonous, grind by a "night out," while father takes care of the brood? It

will work beneficially three ways. Raising and taking care of children entirely by proxy is a lamentable mistake. Here it is that people who can afford to have servants sow quite a bit of future grief, they actually bargain for maladjustment. Even wealthy people should not think of leaving their children's training and care entirely to hired help. It is the same as turning over a fine pedigreed young dog to a trainer in the country, and expecting to have a great deal of satisfactory sport with this dog when the hunting season opens. The animal may be well trained, but he does not know his master sufficiently to be at ease, he won't understand his intentions, his personal ways. Thus, misunderstanding and contrariness may develop, sport is spoiled, a good cause is ruined.

There should be, at all times, a thorough understanding between father and mother as to how to handle their children. Disagreement on particular details must never be expressed in the presence of the children. One parent should uphold the other on every occasion. Differences of opinion in specific instances can be discussed privately.

One thing which the father, in particular, always should remember is that providing for the family is not enough. His principal duty is to help his wife in training the children. In many cases, when a child falls by the wayside, lost to God and country, it is due to the father's lack of interest in this important obligation.



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SENTRIES PRESENT ARMS AS CARDINAL HINSLEY VISITS WAR PRISONERS

LONDON (AP)—"Halt" yelled a sentry as a car carrying His Eminence, Cardinal Hinsley, Archbishop of Westminster, approached a prisoner of war camp in this country.

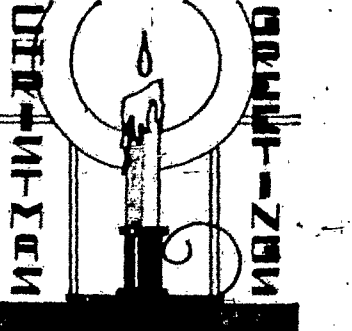
The Cardinal showed his War Office permit, "ward turn out" shouted the sentry and the men presented arms as His Eminence drove in.

Italian prisoners are at the camp and His Eminence gave them a ten-minute talk in Italian. He told them he was "a Roman of the Romans" not only because he was a Cardinal but because he lived for 17 years in Rome. Thus, he said, they were all his sons.

They were his sons in a special sense, Cardinal Hinsley continued, because they were now in his care and he had a special obligation to do everything possible to show them his paternal affection.

He said he prayed that peace to men of goodwill might return to the world a true and just peace that would be a lasting peace.

At the camp the Cardinal saw an altar which the prisoners have chiseled out of stone. Carved in the stone are models of altar requisites: chalice, paten, missal and so on. The missal is shown open at the votive Mass for peace.



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