

SUPPOSE YOUR CHILD WERE ABLE TO READ IN HER FIFTH YEAR? THIS ONE'S MOTHER IS TEACHING HER PRODIGY HOW TO

Kindergarten Teacher Amazed at Wisdom of Parents

By HELENA CROFTS.
(Kindergarten School Teacher.)

THE Kindergarten door opened one morning to admit a mother leading a very small girl by the hand. There was nothing unusual in this, but something in the mother's manner stirred my interest as she said with urgent appeal:—Can you make room for my baby in your class, Miss Crofts? She must play! She can read; and this morning she brought me the newspaper saying "mother, why did Mrs. Snyder kill her husband?"

I smiled; we receive so many supposedly brilliant children! I looked at the wee thing standing here and frankly doubted.

"How old is she?" I asked.
"Four years and five months—she will be five in December"—replied the mother.

"And can READ!" I exclaimed.

"Yes, she has read ever since she was four years old. She knows her alphabet. She learned from the things in the kitchen, the name on the stove, the Bon Ami tin, cereal packages—anything around the place."

An Intellectual Appreciation.

Unseeing I stretched out my hand for a book, opening a page at —, and pushing it towards her with more haste than courtesy—"Read this," I said.

The baby voice began—

"The Little Red Apple"

"Once upon a time a little girl was walking under the trees in the orchard, when she saw a round rosy apple hanging on the bough just over her head."

By this time the story was holding my interest as well as the reader's, for her expression was as natural as my own could have been, showing that it was



Frances Wightman

not mere parrot knowledge of words, but an intellectual appreciation of the subject matter. Later came the sentence "A Boisterous wind came blustering by," but she read on without any hesitancy whatsoever in perfect command of the situation.

"Sit down" I ordered: "And tell me all about it." This she did. Here is the story:

Asks Many Questions.

"She has never consciously been reading" her mother began. "In the first place I don't know how to teach her; but she asks

At Six She's in Third Term, Doing Sixth Year Work

questions about all the words that she sees."

"A friend of mine gave her a Primer in November, and in December she could read it."

With this we went to the Principal and told him all about it. He gave her many different classes of reading to buy—but even a commercial calendar with the word metropolitan did not upset her in the least.

It was decided that she could attend kindergarten as a visitor until old enough for registration as a pupil.

Her mother begged that she should have the play-life that is so necessary, both physically and mentally at this stage. This she certainly had, and enjoyed to the full; how much more the teacher enjoyed having her could not be told. She was a joy. Her little intelligent face would light up, her soft gray eyes shine as she suggested always just the right thing and so much more.

Reflects Meticulous Care.

She was a sweet little child, quiet in manner, small in build, somewhat fragile looking, though well nourished, showing always meticulous care at home in every way. She enjoyed the dolls and building material in the kindergarten just as the other children did, but her real interest was always in creating something with intellectual content behind it.

She joined in the painting of a large picture with a group, but her bright little mind suggested that a country picture should have water in it, and so I asked her to put the water in. Always at the crucial point Frances came up with the right idea. Oh what discipline it was for her teacher to refrain from giv-

ing her attention.

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READ MOTHER TO PLAY



HELENA CROFTS

the resolution that when she married, whatever came her family should never lack that most necessary element of success, encouragement; for she had learned its value in having to do without it.

Mr. Wightman is a banker in Manhattan and is steadily making his position sure by entering competitive examination at short notice and succeeding.

Just before Christmas Frances said to me, "Miss C., daddy brought home the bacon yesterday all right."

This wasn't the way she usually talked, as she has a very marked degree of natural refinement in her language, but I said, "Well, tell us all about it." "He went in for an examination at his bank this week and he won a lot of gold moneys and mother will bring them to you and show you this morning."

"Mother did! An interesting collection of gold pieces in a purse, \$100 for the prize the day before Christmas—and "mother" had persuaded him to take the examination, bolstering him with encouragement till he consented! So Frances comes by her brains very honestly.

Self-Expression Encouraged.

Her parents are grateful for such a treasure child, but to their credit be it said they are more thankful for her disposition than for her ability. The children in this kindergarten are encouraged to express their own ideas very freely, and a good deal of creative work results. They wrote two plays which were given at different times for the parents and for the other children.

In both of these Frances took part. In the summer play, she read a story to grandma who was resting after working in the garden. In the Christmas play she was Mrs. Santa Claus and was adorable! The children made up the plays themselves; therefore they were perfectly natural, not having had words and words to drill on from memory, but simply using their own conversation in the situation as it came.

She made a sweet little wife for a tiny Santa Claus, serving him with his supper when he came in tired after a strenuous day of preparing the toys.

At the end of the term of kindergarten a consultation with the District Superintendent placed her in the grades on a special program, going to different classes for work as she could do it.

This tiny girl, so childlike and

yet so poised and restrained in her attitude is now in the 3-B grade. She will not be seven years old till December, 1929—and in her third term in school she is doing sixth term work. Of course, a time of difficult social adjustments will come when a child of kgn. age goes to High School—something is bound to happen—but we will hope that the teachers with whom she comes in contact will have the wisdom that her mother has had for her up to now.

Amateur Gets Byrd Radio Message

Muncie, Ind.—A radio message from Commander Richard E. Byrd, who is on a South Pole expedition at least 10,000 miles away in the distant Arctic has been intercepted here by a radio fan using only a three tube receiving set.

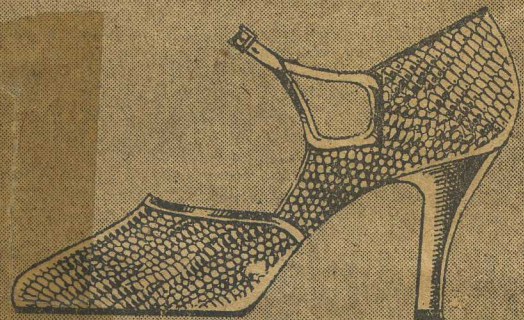
While manipulating the dials of his

set Ernest Thornhill, a local commercial radio operator, was amazed to hear a message from the Byrd expedition.

The message was addressed to the engineering staff of the General Electric Company at Pittsburgh and to station KDKA.

Yale Health Board Has New Quarters

New Haven, Conn.—Yale's department of health finally is to have adequate quarters. President James R. Angell recently told Yale alumni that the health department would have "a new and beautiful building designed specifically to meet its needs, for the construction of which the University has already received the assurance of a number of gifts." The building is to be erected on College street where the health department has been struggling for years in dwelling houses of an ancient construction.



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ing her more than her share of attention!

The child's mother is of Italian birth, her father is American. The Italian grandparents are unable to read or write, never having had the opportunity to learn. Mrs. Wightman is very capable, she told me that when as a young girl, she was sent to the factory to work, she felt impelled to get out and do something more for herself. Finally she gave up her job and appealed to her older sister to help her go to a business school.

Value of Encouragement.

Together they managed it, as she progressed she was conscious always of a desire to do better and a feeling that she could. This finding herself was to be a valuable thing for her husband and family later, as it led her to