

her lack of understanding. But, then, all women, to my way of thinking, were like that. To be called in from exploring the wild lands that lay between the back of the bicycle shed and the garden wall, and to be told that I must change my damp stockings in case I caught cold, was nothing less than an insult. Black Hawk did not wear stockings, and were he, like me, forced to do so he would not notice that they were damp, or if he did, he would never be so feeble as to catch cold. Dry stockings and wool next the skin did not belong to my world, and I bitterly resented these interruptions. It was ignominious to be messed about by women. At such times I felt how wise I had been to make that vow of celibacy to St. Andrew."

Outdoor Playing Space

Take a careful and critical look at the garden provided for the children. How many and what kind of resources has it to fill their days with interesting things to do? It is not expensive equipment that is needed, but opportunities for different kinds of activities. Is there space to learn to run swiftly, a good path on which to push and pull toys, and as wide a space of green grass as possible? Children may grow up clumsy simply because they have not had the opportunity to practise swift running. It is perhaps somewhat demanding to ask that the garden should provide a little hill to run up and down, but if parents can perform that kind of magic, they will be well rewarded by the endless fun to the under fours (and perhaps the over fours, too). At that age a little hill calls one to run up and roll down, to crawl up and run down.

Shrubs of various sizes are necessary, just to race round in the early years and for dodging and hiding among in the latter social games of "tig" and hide-and-seek. Trees in themselves make a garden the adventurous place it should be to children. They will climb them sooner or later,



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and get their first glimpses of the wider horizons and that glorious feeling of conquest, of being "on top." The memory will sustain them in later years as they work their way up the long and steep slopes in other fields of endeavour. To give practice for the real tree climbing, put a 5-barred fence or gate somewhere within the limits of the play space. Later the farm gates serve a similar purpose. Plenty of running and climbing is essential.

It will be noticed that climbing adventures are taken for granted. Even small children must climb, and providing opportunities within their scope is better than having to watch helplessly quite perilous adventure on the wash-house roof. Even in that situation, to preserve the toddler's unconscious confidence is the only way to coax him down. Rushing after him up the ladder which tempted him up will not be effective if there is a drop on the other 3 sides, because he will retreat. But with a smile and "That's clever to be up there. Where did you climb up? See if you can be clever enough to get down, too," he can be guided down.

Another aspect of climbing is illustrated by the story of the wise woman who, hearing a commotion in the orchard, found she had to extricate her grandson, who was stuck high up an apple tree. When he had his feet safely on the ground, she said, "Now go and climb it again." He did, and without getting into difficulties—his confidence intact.

Water Games

Most country children are fortunate in having a small creek somewhere, but for the youngest ones a small concrete paddling pool in the garden is a source of delight. Even a tub or a

trough or water will provide many happy hours. They need a jug with wide-mouthed and narrow-mouthed containers into which to pour water. Waterproof aprons can be worn on days too chilly for the wearing of bathing suits. Clothes should be warm but light and not hampering.

Is there any need for children to come in out of the rain? With a raincoat, a waterproof hat, and gumboots, a rainy day becomes a source of delightful adventures instead of developing into a trial of cooped-up frustration and irritations—that is, if the rain is not too heavy or incessant.

Appreciation of Nature

Country children score in having the love of nature fostered from their earliest years by the opportunity to watch, touch, look after, and understand the living creatures around them—flowers, birds, and animals. Every week they need a little excursion to explore a piece of the surrounding country on foot. Driving round in a car is no substitute, though it extends the field of observation.

Fortunate are the children whose parents explore the neighbourhood of bush, hill, valley, and seashore with them. That brings imperishable treasures to those who share in the adventures in all that they yield of awareness and appreciation of the beauty of the world in which they live—the variety of the earth formations, the plant, bird, and animal life, the wonder of the sky, the sun, the moon, and the stars, the sunrise and sunset, and seasons. There is room for awe as well as understanding in the developing life of children.