A Chronicle of Infant Development and Characteristics. By Sir W$^{R.}$ G. Simpson, Bart.

(*Continued from p.* 389.)

Child Odo, born 8th February, 1885.

July 15*th.*—The following differences between James and Odo were noted in the first few months of the latter's existence:—James's eyes from the first were noticeably wide open, and seemed to look. They seemed much larger than Odo's. Now they are soft and languid. James was somewhat delicate during infancy, but grew out of it; stomach easily deranged. Softness of eyes in some measure due to very long lashes; but I find comparative brightness or languor of eyes a sure guide to his state of health. Odo's eyes have steadily grown in apparent size, because (the converse from James) the older he has grown the wider he has opened them. They are now wide, round, and bright (blue). James has very large pupils; Odo not. Odo apparently healthy, can partially raise himself up; has cut thirteenth tooth; has a placid temperament; does not cry much, *i.e.*, will lie awake for long periods, which James never would do; sleeps all night for most part, which James seldom did. In short, thus early the one shows an excitable, the other a placid temper. Odo objects to being taken by a stranger, although he very soon gets over his misgivings. At this age James showed no distrust of strangers. Odo has a distinct manner to the three persons he knows best—nurse, mother, and father. He coos and smiles to mother when she comes to take him. He only smiles to father. Smiles more but talks less than James did at same age. By talking I mean saying "coo," "ug-gug, and the expression called "crowing." Cries at once on being scolded. James did not understand a scold at same age. Odo always tries to seize father's moustache when taken by him. In the case of women it is the hair he goes for in preference to anything. Odo makes use of smiles at five months old, and used them unconsciously at four months, which James (see notes on him) did not do till his seventh month. On the other hand, Odo uses his hands only to grasp things, or at most to put them to his mouth. At the same age James always put them to his mouth and could play with them, that is, pull them about.

September 6*th.*—He has become eagerly interested in, and

https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.39.167.498 Published online by Cambridge University Press

has made great and sudden progress in grasping things and conveying them to his mouth; he wishes not only as before to handle what is put in his hands, but stretches them out for unoffered objects. In a jerky way he can shake a rattle, and has begun to recognize the rattling as the result of the shaking. The power of producing this sound at will seems to afford him intense satisfaction. The wish to get a hold of things and examine them is his first clear symptom of reaching out voluntarily for knowledge. Until now he has accepted amusement passively. He is now reaching out after knowledge. This active pursuit of things shows itself to be still a very feebly developed desire by the fact that he will not cry, however abruptly anything is removed from him. Of course this does not apply to food, the unwished-for removal of which has caused screams since his first day. The sense of *meum* in food, and desire for it, is as fully developed in the new-born infant as in man. Besides food, in the matter of comfort, a child's senses are fully developed from the first. Pain, I suspect, is, however, long in being localised. His brother, now three years old, barked his shin the other day. I took down his stocking that he might see the wound. He failed to find it, searching his knee (the usual place for hurting himself), and finally accepting an old bruise thereon as the wound, which nevertheless must still have been smarting.

As showing the same feebleness of active intelligence in matters of sentiment or knowledge, Odo—besides not minding the removal of objects he is grasping—does not yet show temper when taken from one person to another, even though much amused, and although the person he is taken from is a favourite, provided always the person taking him is not a stranger. He will cry at being taken by an absolute stranger under any circumstances.

He distinguishes people he knows, and has, I believe, done so from a very early age. There are slight distinctions of manner to his different familiar friends not easily described. To his father he holds out his hands more demonstratively than to others, probably because he sees him less, and because he is made more of by him and more played with in the few minutes he has him.

A fortnight ago he could not recognize anyone attracting his attention from outside, he being at the nursery window (second floor). He stared vacantly without a smile. Now he does, but still imperfectly. There is no sign of recogni-

https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.39.167.498 Published online by Cambridge University Press

tion if the person merely stands below the window. He or she must call to him. It is evidently more by ear than eye that he knows them at this distance. On being called to he looks about searching the direction of the sound. But when he has once caught sight of the person, he sees him and smiles, and keeps his eye upon him.

James, October, 1885.—His understanding of conversations not directed to him is very considerable. Within the last month he has not only voluntarily told to third parties what had been said to him when no third party was present, but also things grown-up people had said to each other in his presence (both new developments). A curious instance of understanding conversation, and of the conservatism of childish minds, is: A girl of ten or eleven had been in the habit of repeating rhymes to him. Amongst these she taught him that "Humpty Dumpty went to town upon a little pony." Hearing this I explained that Yankee Doodle was the gentleman's real name, and in his presence had an argument with the girl about her version, calling it wrong. This she would not admit. Now when he wishes "Yankee Doodle" he asks for "Humpty Dumpty," and gets angry if either of us gives him the correct version.

Odo, 28th October, 1885.—Has been ill with a bad cold for some weeks. Recovering, he has suddenly developed in many ways. This seems often to follow illness with children. He has within one week learnt (1) to clap his hands, (2) to interest himself in toys (he wishes to handle all his brother's toys, and does not take them exclusively to mouth as before, but examines them), (3) has developed more pronounced tastes for people, in that he will now cry if not taken by the person he for the moment prefers, and (4) most noticeable of all is the first attempt at speech. He has no articulate sounds which can be positively regarded as words unless we except "mum, mum," "dad, dad." "Mum, mum" does not mean mother. In my opinion these are not more than mere animal cries of the same class as "ug-gug," "coo," etc., referred to above. He has not yet identified any word, but appreciates that communication is made by sounds, and has begun to try to make himself understood by what may be called nonsense words. He varies the sound, because to his ear we vary, and is inclined to believe that so expressing himself, taking the sounds at random, the meaning he intends will be understood. Grown-up people who constantly say "You know what I mean," when they have not expressed

https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.39.167.498 Published online by Cambridge University Press

but only felt a thing, are for the moment in this stage of Odo's in regard to language. In other words, I feel sure he thinks that so long as he talks, no matter what he says, he will be understood.

James, 1st November, 1885.—He has no conception of death. "If Tim eat num meat Tim die and go to Holy Father." "Tim want to die." Asked why. "Tim like to go high high up above chimney in the sky." He answered in the same tone when asked why he wanted to go by train to London. There was no distaste for "num num meat" (kidneys); wanted them all the same. It is noticeable that he is not logical. Believed meat would kill him, and wanted to go to skies; but no idea of insisting on getting the meat *in order* to go.

Playing hide-and-seek with child of ten; has no idea of inventing hiding-place; always hides where she last hid. Accepts the hiding turn about, but has no idea of searching for her in new places. Looks at all the old ones, and asks elders "Where to?"

Same child often plays the game with him and enjoys it. She amuses him when he hides, by *pretending* not to know where he is; but when her turn comes she amuses herself; she really hides, and triumphs if he fails to find her. Though not an infant, she is nearer one than a grown-up person, which we often forget about a clever child, who, like her, is in advance of us in many points—arithmetic, geography, etc. This child of ten got three birthday cards clumsily addressed by me, two in envelopes with the monogram torn off. She saw that the monogram was torn off, but did not detect the fraud. One better disguised as to writing and make-up she detected, because I enclosed it in the paper I write articles on.

James, 18th April, 1886.—A period mainly characterized by *inquisitiveness*, *i.e.*, having learned to use his own senses he is now acquiring skill in profiting by the experience of others. At dawn of activity the predominant idea is *touch*. He is very far advanced in observing things. Sees and observes a new thing almost more quickly than seniors, because always looking for them, *e.g.*, at once noticed a new cigar cutter on my watch chain which was lying on my dressing-table, although it was partly hidden among a bunch of trinkets with which he is familiar. The new one he first examined very minutely, then after some time asked "What's it for?" I had to submit to a pertinacious cross-

https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.39.167.498 Published online by Cambridge University Press

examination as to its use. A fire escape which he saw standing unobtrusively he was equally exhaustive in questions about, but he became inattentive when I pointed out that his playing with matches might entail its use.

He likes to be told stories or have things explained, but is very imperfect in telling or explaining. Sometimes he drops a hint as to what he has been doing, but if asked directly cannot or will not tell the simplest matter that has happened a few hours ago. Seems to forget unless it is part of subject at present before him. Although he cannot *tell* a story he can repeat a rhymed story he has learnt by heart. The other day I happened to say something was a change. He repeated eight lines of a hymn, the last two being "changeless sky," evidently seeing some analogy.

Although evidently incapable of recalling what he has done even a few hours before, his memory is most retentive when circumstances repeat themselves, *e.g.*, on Sundays (no other night) I put him to bed. I have to go through the same routine every Sunday as I happened to go through on the first, viz., to lay him down, to hold his hand, hear his prayers, go over and kiss the baby, and then come back and hold his hand till he is asleep. On the second Sunday night when he said "Go and kiss baby" after his prayers I did not go, not understanding. He sat up and insisted. It was only then I remembered that I had done so on the previous Sunday. I could give many other striking examples of ritualistic tendency in a child's mind.

The conscious wish for mischief is developing. He throws things over the stairs in a general way because it annoys, but what he longs most to do is to turn on the gas, because having done so and filled my room, I showed real alarm. When he did it a second time I had to be really cross with him. He looks at the gas now with unutterable longing, and evidently measures this great pleasure against the great pain of what he seldom sees—my solemn displeasure. This he dreads and hates. A child seems to me to understand character in a very high degree. When I am cross and speak really more roughly than when wishing to correct him he is not disturbed. He says "Father got a head-a'" (headache), and goes away unconcerned.

As an illustration of the development of minuteness of observation, he at once noticed the difference between a pack of political caricature cards which I gave him to build castles with and an ordinary pack.

https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.39.167.498 Published online by Cambridge University Press

He cannot count beyond three. The rest is twelve, fourteen—anything.

Odo, 18*th April*, 1886.—Having been seriously ill from teeth and upsetting of stomach has gone back in every way. He is emaciated and lighter than at last notice. He is slightly livelier within a week, but he does not try to speak; in short, he seems to have relapsed every way. Intellectually he has gone back to nine months or further. The last notice about him is of his advance in every way.

Odo, *April*, 1887.—After illness developed rapidly, making up to mental stage at which he was before it about August, 1886. Did not recover in health till July. In bodily matters, *e.g.*, walking (in which no one can give assistance), he was actually retarded, not walking till September, *i.e.*, eighteen months of age.

I have made no notes about mental development because it was less emphasized than his brother's, the reason, I think, being that learning from a child, his brother principally, the process of learning was less noticeable to seniors. It is noticeable that he does not learn except from him, that he pays attention to copying him, and does not try to learn when I wish to teach him. The consequence is that he has been somewhat earlier on the whole in acquiring the points mentioned under "James" than "James" was. In other words he is not quaint. (Is this a reason why an only child is often original, and almost always has points in character when grown up? Is this why an only child when grown up is often said to have been spoilt, and yet that many of them are remarkable men?) Although bold, James, as observed, does not often hurt himself. Odo, less impulsive, learning by copying or by trying to copy his brother, and therefore with less reflection, is prone to bruises.

Odo is not so excitable as James, who, I believe, is exceptionally so. He easily goes into a pet at being frustrated, but cries merely because frustrated, cries sooner and stops sooner. His liking for me (perhaps this is because I do not spoil him, *i.e.*, make such a favourite of him as I did of James) is more intellectual, less lover-like. The other day, after, or rather during, a dispute, I persuaded him to make it up by bribes and threats of not taking him downstairs. Bribes always failed with James. His affections were wounded and could not be bribed.

In referring to notes on James, I find that Odo is further advanced in language than James was at same age. At

https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.39.167.498 Published online by Cambridge University Press

this date Odo uses sentences of three or even four words (see James at same age). This (greatest use of words) is due I think to two causes. Odo learns from his brother more than from seniors, *e.g.*, never will say "dada," although encouraged to do so by parents, but "fa-fa," an imitation of "father," which James uses perfectly now. At the same stage James said "dada." James says sometimes "Nenna" (his own word), sometimes "Nursey;" Odo says "Nennu." Yet he says "ma-ma," not "mother," like James, and occasionally "mum-mum."

The most marked points of difference between them is in eating. James is omnivorous. They both sit beside me at breakfast, yet Odo does not imitate James in his desire to have a share in anything I am eating. He prefers to play, and asks for nothing, if allowed to play with the salt.

James, April, 1887.—Within three weeks he has made two new departures. 1st. A desire of fiction, that is not to tell the truth. After a walk he plots with me to tell his mother he has been to some place he has not been at, and circumstantially. To-day he told me circumstantially that his tricycle was in the drawing-room. Yesterday he described how the dog had eaten my nail scissors. He is not lying. He has discovered story-telling, and takes a keen pleasure in it. Lying he has not taken to much (*i.e.*, telling an untruth to save himself), though I am told children usually discover it early. 2nd. He enters into the personalities of others and therefore into sympathy with them, and imagines their conversation. This is a very interesting development. Some of the most highly developed, or at least the greatest men, never have even the rudiments of it; they never can see as others see, and cannot but call them rogues. James supplied two girls in a picture with conversation for half-an-hour. I gathered that he was quite abstracted from himself. At last I asked, "Are you speaking to the girls in the picture?" He answered decidedly, "No! don't you see! It's me as speaking what the girls think."

James, August, 1887 (nearly five).—Cannot be made to feel for others completely; will sympathize with a person who cries, or a beaten dog, but thinks it fun to put a pin into me or to dismember flies. However, I being unwell (rheumatism), he began to exercise a certain forbearance, and to avoid hurting me without that repulsion which, as a child, he exhibited when I was bad with lumbago. It took a long time, as my sufferings were not demonstratively before him.

https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.39.167.498 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Can count in the sense of naming figures up to twenty or so, but only up to six does he apply the symbols to things and use them. Up to six knows the combinations two and two, two and three, etc. Is learning to read voluntarily. Learns by printing words. The other day he recognized his own name "James" on a cab.

Odo, October, 1887.—Compared with James at same age I have only again to repeat that he is more advanced, but that there is little to note, the process of learning not being visible, *i.e.*, he picks up things from his brother without effort, unconsciously. His acts and deeds are all acquired by imitation, not by thinking them out. His vocabulary is fuller than James' was at his age, because he learns from him. In the same way he climbs, jumps, etc., better than his brother at the same age, although he does not promise to be nearly so athletic a man. As the gap between a child and a senior is too great in everything for a child to learn by direct complete copying, so where James does a thing Odo recognizes as utterly beyond him he gives no attention to it, *e.g.*, riding a tricycle, writing words, climbing *over* a fence.

---

*An Improved Reaction-Time Instrument.** By Dr. Bevan Lewis, Medical Superintendent of the West Riding Asylum, Wakefield.

I thought it might prove of some interest to demonstrate at the psychological section the instrument I have hitherto used at the West Riding Asylum for the purpose of registering the reaction time to a sight and sound signal. The instrument in its original form, as made by the Cambridge Scientific Instrument Company, may be familiar to you, but lately I have so far modified it and extended its utility that I think it will be well to indicate the changes introduced in detail. The original, with minor alterations, has been described so fully in Dr. Hack Tuke's new "Dictionary of Psychological Medicine" that I shall only briefly refer here to the general scheme of its construction, referring those who seek more minute particulars to this article.

* Paper read at the Psychology Section of the Annual Meeting of the B.M.A., held at Nottingham, July, 1892.

https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.39.167.498 Published online by Cambridge University Press