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Call the Doctor

Catholic Physicians' Guilds

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Montessori as encouraging a chaotic kind of learning. The largest share of criticism emanated from the ranks of the very strong Progressivists who were at their zenith. William Heard Kilpatrick, a disciple of John Dewey at Columbia University, in a text, Montessori System, published in 1914, attempted to analyze the method, highlighting the shortcomings as he saw them. Thus, with the unhealthy flavor of the results of the pragmatic philosophy of Dewey, et al., the Montessori work did not gain a strong and lasting foundation in the United States compared with that in India and Europe.

Within the past decade there has been a re-birth of interest in the method. The Franciscan Missionaries of Mary in Providence, Rhode Island, have conducted a Montessori school for the past twenty-five years. The directress was trained by Dr. Montessori. The equipment is strictly advocated by the method. Case by case, the laboratory school of Rhode Island College has always used the method and because some modifications have been introduced it is called the Barnard method. In Bedford, Connecticut, a private school operated by a layman offers teacher-training in the method along with the directed observation of the pupils.

Dr. Montessori's long and dedicated life on behalf of the education of children came to an end on May 6, 1952, in her eighty-first year. She is buried in the cemetery attached to the Catholic church in Noordwijk, Holland. Today with the renaissance of interest in her method, her spirit lives on in the lives of those happy children who learn in a serene, joyful, and liberated atmosphere. Their work and deeds shall shine as stars for all eternity.

Despite amazing advances, medicine is still today not an exact science. But pity the poor folks of 500 years ago who were exposed to every conceivable kind of medical quackery — from the barbers who were the surgeons of the time (and also the dentists) to the herb women and even to the respected physicians, whose remedies would have shamed an African witch doctor.

Some idea of what the people were up against can be gathered from the following set of rules laid down by the outstanding British physician of 600 years ago, John Mefkeld:

- Dress soberly in black. Clean your fingernails before making a call.
- Do not walk swiftly (which betokens lack of seriousness) or slowly (which is a sign of faint-heartedness).
- Get all the information you can from the patient's messenger. Then when you arrive, you will surprise the patient by your knowledge of his condition.
- Make sure the patient has had the last rites of the Church before you examine him. If not, and his case is hopeless, he will think you a bad doctor. After he has had the priest and you tell him he will recover, then he will account you a great doctor.
- In taking the patient's pulse, allow for the fact that there is a general fear of physicians and that he may be disturbed at the thought of the fee you will charge him.
- When asked how long a recovery will take, double the expectant period and it will be to your credit. If the patient asks why he recovered so quickly, tell him he was strong-hearted and strong-bodied — he will be delighted.
- If you are asked to dinner, do not criticize the food, no matter how bad. Stay sober. During the meal excuse yourself several times to go look at the patient.
- Do not make good friends of your patients. You will otherwise make it harder to extract a fee.
- If you do not wish to take a case, pretend to be ill yourself.
- Hide your instruments from the sight of the patient.
- Tell the patient funny stories as well as recommending him to serious contemplation and to the Bible.
- Prescribe twice as much medicine for a rich patient as for a poor one. This will flatter their sense of social position and do your reputation no harm.
- If you find a patient dead on arrival, show no surprise. Tell the family that you knew from the account of his symptoms that he would not recover. Inquire as to the hour at which he died. All this will enhance your professional reputation.

Anybody for an aspirin?

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