MRS. CON ATTACKS THE CHILDREN’S PROGRAMS

"The programs for the older children are on a much higher plane, and they eagerly look forward to them. I refer especially to the fine historical dramatizations and those on music appreciation.

Living in the Middle West myself, I was glad to get that report from the biggest educational center in America, for it made me feel that my attitude toward children's programs was one held by those who work with children in the schoolroom, and that I wasn't just a fanatic or a crackpot on the subject.

NOW I don't know whether Irene Wicker, "The Singing Lady," has any children or not, but I do consider her programs for children some of the finest that were ever on the air. They combined the best in music with fascinating stories that not only stimulated the minds but left them with something worth while to think about. That I wasn't wrong is evinced in the fact I noted recently that Miss Wicker appeared on the program of "A Half Century of Child Study," a conference and institute held in New York City when that organization gave its fiftieth anniversary dinner.

The "Child Study" group represents 100,000 men and women, all of them parents; and it seems to me a pretty sad commentary on children's programs when many of them write in to head-quarters and ask what they can substitute for radio, when it could be such a tremendous medium for vocational guidance alone.

For example: Children are always interested in how things are made, where they come from. They are, too, fascinated by stories telling how other youngsters live, both in their own country and abroad. The city-bred child is interested in hearing how those in the wheat, fruit, and cattle countries spend their days. They've never seen the waving gold of the vast wheat fields, the plains and hills where herds graze, or known the fragrance of blossoming oranges. Children who have a two-thousand acre ranch for their playground are in turn intrigued by the very different existence of the pavement-bred child, to whom apples and oranges are something that comes from a box.

It seems to me that just dramatizing this one subject properly for younger children would develop a tremendous interest, and one that would be entirely constructive.

As a further inspiration to vocational guidance for children, why couldn’t the childhood of such outstanding Americans as Luther Burbank, Margaret Fuller, the Mayo brothers, Clara Barton, James J. Hill, Thomas Edison, and others be dramatized? One reason they are check-full of colorful incidents that would prove fascinating to children, and help to make constructive hobbies that led to careers later on. All these could be used to avoid the sensationalism, the gun-shooting and raucous voices.

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