are BOMB *drills scaring our kids?*

Left to themselves children are not afraid of bombing—by A-bomb or any other bomb. But adults are! A plea to parents to stop scaring their children to death with their own fears

Our children are scared. I found this out recently when my wife and I drove into New York City with our son, Mark, on his eighth birthday, to see the rodeo. We expected him to be dancing on clouds with his pockets full of star dust. He was excited all right, but not the way we expected. On our way home he was quiet, until suddenly he said, "How far are we from the city now, Daddy?"

"About ten miles," I told him. Ten minutes later he asked again. "About fifteen," I said. This went on every ten minutes or so. We couldn't understand what he was getting at. Finally, when I said we were about thirty miles out he heaved a sigh. "Boy," he said, "I'll sure be glad when we get home. Then if an atom bomb falls on New York we'll be safe."

My wife and I looked at each other in startled silence. Apparently the kid had been worrying all the time we were in the city.

That woke us up. Mark had been having A-bomb drills in his school and we decided to find out whether those drills were giving our kids the jitters.

In an early bomb drill in a [*Continued on page* 66]

BY ANDRÉ FONTAINE

PHOTOGRAPH BY WARMAN—HERALD TRIBUNE

"No," she said finally, "it won't be easy, will it? But at least it helps knowing that we've both got problems."

It helped too, the next morning at breakfast, to see that a little of the strain and the anxiety had lifted from Bob's face. Obviously these two who had once loved so much still were able to find each other again in the long, lonely night. Joan looked happier too, standing with the twins, waving goodby to Nancy as she boarded the train.

There would be more to it, of course. Jack would coax and Joan might waver at first. Nancy was certain though that Bob would work harder to hold her sister and to keep her happy. Nancy might waver too, knowing that decisions were a lot easier to make than they were to keep. But what she had said to Joan was true and she knew it now. Once you're married you can never be really free again, so why wish your young free years away?

Thinking that, unconsciously her chin lifted and her expression brightened. A tall red-headed young man, whom she remembered as the young man who had been on the train coming up, paused in his journey down the aisle.

"Hello, there," he said suddenly. "Aren't you Bob Hadley's sister-in-law?"

"Why, yes—"

"I thought so when I saw you getting ready to get off the train yesterday. I work for Bob's company in the New York office. I started to speak, but when you looked so blue I thought maybe you were having some kind of trouble and would rather be alone."

What a nice young man! thought Nancy. And a sensitive one to have been so perceptive. "Trouble?" said Nancy. "Heavens, no. I was just feeling a little sorry for myself—"

"Well, I guess we all do that once in awhile. Mind if I ride in with you?"

"Why, no, not at all." He looked like a young man with whom a girl might have a very pleasant journey. A girl, that is, who wasn't too busy feeling sorry for herself!—Isabel Moore

Are Bomb Drills Scaring Our Kids?

Continued from page 25

New York City school, a teacher drew a line on the floor and when a crouching boy's foot stuck over the line, she said, "There! Your foot was burned off!" In Idaho a mother said " 'tomic bombs" had become the chief weapon in children's play warfare. In Los Angeles, classes were told the A-bomb "blows up houses and makes the earth wiggle."

In Boston seven-year-old Andy Hanover couldn't sit still in class and began having frequent nightmares. Nobody knew what was bothering him until one day he drew a picture of an airplane dropping bombs. "If the enemy comes," he said, "I'll mow 'em down. It's awful the things that can happen. Babies are killed, children's homes are burned. All we can do is pray." He was silent a few moments, then said seriously, "I'm not going to get married until I get through serving in the Army because I might have to kill someone."

Generally, the most fear seems to be felt along the East and West Coasts. So far that's where school drills are practiced most. But many large inland cities are planning them for the near future. Not one child-care expert with whom I talked suggested that we stop school drills, but every one emphasized that they must be handled wisely or they will increase children's fears.

Many children don't show fear directly. "There is always," said Dr. Benjamin Spock, codirector of the Rochester (Minnesota) Child Health Institute, "some tendency to get their fears out of sight. Children may show fear indirectly by suddenly becoming afraid of the dark, by refusing to go to school or to bed at night, or by not wanting to leave their parents."

In the Midwest a teacher asked her class of nine-year-olds, "What are you most afraid of?" Thirty of the thirty-two answered, "Bombs." If they could have three wishes granted, she asked, what would they be? In every single answer appeared, "No more war." Yet, never once in class discussion had these children mentioned a fear of war.

Poorly handled drills, however, are not the chief cause of children's fears. We parents are the ones who are scaring our kids. We do it unconsciously. We pass our fear on to them through our conversations, magazines, radio, television and movies. "Children," said Dr. Spock, "always reflect the current fears of their parents, whether it's polio or the A-bomb."

"But children's fear is a very different thing from ours. If he's left alone," said Dr. John R. Rees, British director of the World Federation for Mental Health, who had long experience with English children under the blitz, "a child really isn't very frightened of war or bombings. His fear of these things comes from his parents."

Children don't really understand death so it means little to them. They're also primitive; violence and aggression are natural to them, and on the whole, more exciting than terrifying.

The idea of bombing, in itself, doesn't frighten most children and neither do bomb drills, if they're properly run. What really scares them is that bombing may rob them of the security and love of their parents.

"Separation," said Dr. Lois Stolz, professor of psychology at Stanford University, Palo Alto, California, "is one of the basic causes of anxiety in children. It goes back to a child's earliest infancy when he and his mother are almost one. She gives him food and warmth and security. It's no wonder that the fear of losing her is his greatest terror."

Several months ago, Alice V. Keliher, professor of education at New York University, circularized a number of schools to find out how frightened the children were of war. Her questions brought little emotional response from the children in city public schools, but at a boarding school in Connecticut, nearly every child showed marked fear. Why the difference? The Connecticut children were separated from their parents.

What, then, can we do to help our children handle their fears? Basically, we must do two things: strengthen their sense of security and bring our own fear under control. We do this the way you conquer any fear—by action.

You can't get anywhere by trying to deny that fear exists; your kids know better. You can't accomplish anything by refusing to have bomb drills in schools either. It does no good to refuse to mention war unless you're also willing to smash your radio, stop taking newspapers and keep your youngster away from all other kids.

It's also useless to try to stop him from playing war games. In fact, Dr. Stolz says that these help him work out his fears. When a child plays war, talks about it or draws pictures of it, he's expressing his fears freely, instead of hiding from them.

What you should do, all the child-care experts agree, is to build up the warmth and unity of your family life. Do things together—both necessary household jobs and family fun.

Dewey Anderson, official of the U. S. Division of Civil Defense, says there are many things children can do—even young children. They can help clean rubbish out of cellars and attics. They can help distribute civil defense papers and pamphlets and act as messengers. In school they can make maps of their town's resources, its water, sewer, light, gas and telephone lines. Older children can

survey empty buildings as possible housing for évacués, learn first aid even if they never use it, find out how many and where the people in town are who need special attention—like the aged, invalids, pregnant women, babies. They can survey the number of empty rooms and beds available in each house and what resources it has for fighting fires. Those who know how can help do typing, duplicating, filing, recording and clerical work.

In Westfield, New Jersey, editors of the high-school paper recently put out a special issue which carried complete —and reassuring—information about the atomic bomb. It explained the limits of the damage area, do's and don'ts for atomic survival, an explanation of the school's defense plans, the things needed in a home shelter and a complete story on what students can do in the civil defense organization.

In our own home we dreamed up an idea that seemed appropriate and the psychologists I asked agreed it was good. We took the kids down into the cellar one day. One section of our cellar has three and a half walls of brick. This, we said, would be a good shelter and the whole family could work together to fix it up. I told them how we could put heavy plywood over the small windows, how there was a separate exit to the outside, how we had water in the laundry tubs, heat from the furnace and a small laundry stove to cook on. We'd paint up the walls, reinforce the ceiling and finish the fourth wall. Then if we ever did get bombed —which was highly unlikely, I said— we'd have a safe, warm place to go.

Slowly we're doing it too. Of course I'm no expert on bomb shelters, but that isn't the point. Knowing it's there gives the kids a feeling of security even if it's never used and helping fix it up gives them the confidence that comes from action against fear.

The value of taking appropriate action makes school A-bomb drills good therapy for childhood fears. But of course they have to be handled carefully. Charlotte Carr, who is the director of the Citizens Committee on Children of New York City, says that before any drill is ordered, mental health specialists should advise principals and teachers on how to conduct it and how to keep the children from being frightened.

One point needs emphasizing: For younger children the drill should be conducted by their own teacher. She is their mother-away-from-home and her presence reassures them.

Dr. Stolz pointed this up with the story of a drill during the last war in Oakland, California. A kindergarten teacher carefully and calmly explained the forthcoming drill to her class. She also told them about the insidiousness of rumors. After the drill was held a five-year-old boy rushed home to tell his mother the exciting news: "Mommy, Mommy, today a great big rumor flew over the school and we all fell down on our tummies— *even Miss Thompson!*"

He was quite unfrightened, and the most impressive part of the whole drill was that teacher had fallen down too.

Calmness, everyone agrees, is essential. The kids should be given the idea that this is like a fire drill—the fact that they're having a drill doesn't mean an A-bomb is going to fall tomorrow any more than a fire drill means the school is going to burn down. With young children it's a good idea to let them take along to the shelter area a favorite toy for the sense of security it gives. In our school they play music for the youngsters or their teacher reads to them during the drill.

After a hurried and bad start, which scared many youngsters, the drills in New York City have been straightened out to a point where they're not alarming and are teaching the children lessons which one day may save them. In early February they held the first "silent alarm" drill—a frightening thing

Your Beauty Shop

Beauty shops offer more to their customers today than ever before. They try constantly to give you more good looks for your money. But do you know how to judge the efficiency, the prices, the cleanliness, the standards of operation in the shop you patronize? Next month TODAY'S WOMAN presents the results of a fair investigation into a big business which is of vital interest to every young wife. Read this helpful feature by AMY PORTER.

coming in the July issue

in itself, for the teacher without warning suddenly cries, "Take cover!" and the children dive under their desks and shield their faces. Yet, so well-conditioned were they that after the first drill Superintendent of Schools William Jansen was able to report, "no single incident of panicky or uncooperative behavior was reported."

Shortly before the drill, Dr. Jansen sent home a statement to all parents, containing sound advice: "The vast majority of children accept these drills matter of factly, as part of the school routine. You can help strengthen this feeling if you yourself accept them in the same spirit.

"Let your children talk to you about their air-raid drills if they wish. Remember they will be watching you closely to observe your reaction. Your attitude will largely determine theirs. If you are calm, they will be calm. If you are sensible, they will be sensible."

An example of how effective your own calmness can be in lessening your children's fears was given by Anna Freud and Dorothy T. Burlingham in War and Children, their authoritative report on English children during the blitz. A few days after a tremendous raid on London a mother appeared at a hospital's out-patient department with her little girl of five. She said simply. "She has a cough and a bit of a cold."

Only by questioning did the doctor learn that the mother and child had been rescued from a burned-down warehouse during a raid. The sudden exposure to the cold gave the child "a cough."

"We can be certain," wrote the authors, "that this child, protected and fortified by her mother's lack of fear and excitement, will not develop air-raid anxiety."

The British, in fact, can teach us a lot about how to control our fears—which we must do if we are to handle our children's. "It seems to me," said Dr. John Rees, "that what you need is much more education of adults on atomic warfare and what can be done to protect yourselves against it. Plenty can be done. Only this way will you relieve the unspoken anxiety that leads to apathy."

Dr. Rees put his finger on the hub of our fear—apathy. For four years we sat, smug and secure, behind our A-bomb and never thought of what it would mean to be on the receiving end of one. Then the Russians exploded their first one and blasted our security to bits—and fear swept the country.

But the British, knowing they would be a target in any atomic war, spent those same four years learning how to protect themselves. They've learned what the A-bomb's limits of destructiveness are and how to cut down cas-

ualties. They've trained a large corps of rescue workers and other A-bomb specialists. They've learned, in short, how to put into practice the statement on atomic bombing that was made by the U. S. Strategic Bombing Survey:

"Civilian injuries and fatalities can be reduced, by presently known techniques, to one-twentieth or less of the casualties what would be suffered were these techniques not employed."

That's why the British are not as frightened today as we are.

Belatedly, we're beginning to learn these same lessons. The U. S. Division of Civil Defense has put out a pamphlet, Survival Under Atomic Attack, which gives all the essentials and is now available in paper-cover editions on most newsstands. We all ought to know those facts so well they're second nature to us. They're reassuring. But knowing alone isn't enough. Like those of our children who are taking part in well-ordered school drills, we need to take positive action against our fears.

We should take part in our local civilian defense organizations. We should prepare our homes against possible air raids. We should figure out what the role of our town is likely to be—a target or a receiving place for évacués from target areas—and get busy preparing it for its job. We should protect our homes and towns as efficiently as a crew does a battleship.

We may find that our efforts and organization will not be needed because we'll never be attacked, but a couple of things won't be wasted. If we prepare, we'll get the security that comes from feeling we're ready for anything, and we'll lose our fear.

When that happens the reassurance our kids learn in properly run A-bomb drills in school will be reinforced by our own lack of fear at home.

In Milwaukee, Wisconsin, there's a quiet-voiced public health doctor named Margaret Hatfield who said it very well: "People are going to have to realize it's up to them now. They won't be able to call in others to fix things—the police, the firemen and such—the way they do when the refrigerator stops and they call for a repairman. This time everybody has to do a job. And maybe that will be a good thing for America."

—Andre Fontaine

Night Before the Wedding

Continued from page 32

whose world ended with this town of Haley. She stepped gingerly in her new sandals onto the narrow dirt path that crowned the levee.

There was a man sitting on the slope ahead of her, partly blocking the path. She would have to step down through the high grass to pass him unless he moved aside, but even as she continued to approach him he gave no sign of seeing her. She stopped and stared down at him with some annoyance, and only then did she recognize him. It was Sam Barnes, the manager of Latham Engineering where she worked. Her heart sank. She always had been a little afraid of Sam Barnes, of his intent and often disconcerting scrutiny, of his soft voice that was perpetually husky—from too much bourbon, the girls said. She considered turning back without speaking, but he might have seen her and he *was* manager of Latham. She said reluctantly, " 'Evening, Mr. Barnes."

He looked up without recognition. He's been drinking, she thought; she said very distinctly, "It's Celia Harnett, Mr. Barnes."

"Celia Harnett," he repeated.

She looked at him more closely. "Are you feeling all right, Mr. Barnes?"

"Sit down," he said. She remained standing until he repeated, rather impatiently, "Sit down. Here, sit on this." He spread his newspaper out on the grass. "You shouldn't get that nice blue dress dirty."

She sat down uneasily, remembering what the girls said about Sam Barnes. He had carried on with other women until his wife refused to live with him, they said. His wife was a Fraser, and the Frasers were one of the most important families in the state. Celia was a stranger in Haley and didn't know what was common knowledge in the town, that old Mr. Fraser had taken Sam Barnes from a surveying job and had made him manager of Latham so that his daughter could marry him. They said she still loved him and would take him back if he went to her. It wasn't hard to understand why, Celia thought, watching him, seeing his straight profile and the hair as black as hers, without a trace of gray in it, even though he must be forty. He caught her glance and she pretended to be looking beyond him. She felt the color rise in her cheeks.

"Well?" he said.

She smoothed her skirt. "You looked so odd. Is something wrong?"

"Not a thing," he said. "Not a single thing. Nothing's wrong for the first time in twenty years. Ask me why if you want. I'll be only too happy to answer your questions."