Due to their outdoor life, wholesome food and active pastimes, the children were usually healthy. Particularly was this so in the mountains where they had, according to Weld, "a healthy ruddy appearance", especially "the female part of the peasantry." (223) But in spite of their hardiness, the young folks were subject to the usual diseases of children. Their common afflictions were worms, (224) coughs and croup, (225) the itch, (226) and the many other aches and pains of childhood. Besides these ordinary ailments, they were occasionally visited with infectious and contagious diseases such as measles, (227) whooping cough, (228) small pox, (229) scrofula, (230) erysipelas, (231) fevers of different kinds, (232) and ague, (233). Moreover, since the witchcraft delusion had not yet been entirely dispelled, certain strange and incurable diseases of children as those of the internal organs, dropsy of the brain, and the rickets, were ascribed to the malignant power of witches. (234) It is not to be supposed that all these bodily disorders occurred at one time or in the same place, but enough of them did occur at various times and places as to enable the settlers to make use of the many homely remedies they had brought with them or had since concocted as necessity required.

224 Doddridge, op. cit., p. 116; also May, op. cit., p. 47.
225 Doddridge, op. cit., pp. 116, 120.
226 Ibid., p. 119; also "Extracts from the Diary of Abijah Hill", Pa. Mag. of Hist. and Biog., XIV, 193.
227 Michaux, op. cit., p. 151; Brackenridge, op. cit., p. 10.
228 Boucher, op. cit., I, 188; also Owens, op. cit., p. 124.
230 Sachse, The German Sectarians of Pa., I, 178.
231 Doddridge, op. cit., p. 120.
232 Ibid., pp. 83, 116; also Ashe, op. cit., p. 81.
233 Doddridge, op. cit., p. 83; also Pittsburgh Gazette, May 12, 1787.
234 Doddridge, op. cit., pp. 125f; also Owens, op. cit., p. 126.
And necessity did often require them to exercise their ingenuity in this manner, for doctors were few and far between. (235) In fact, doctors were so scarce that almost anyone who knew how to "let blood" was quite a desirable citizen in any community, and often the passing Moravian missionary was called in to perform this office. (236) Sometimes, in desperation, recourse was had to the Indians and their remedies. (237) But usually the settlers had to rely upon their own limited medical knowledge, so most of their medicines were of home concoction and many of a superstitious nature. (238)

Each of the ordinary afflictions had its especial homely cures. For worms there were various remedies. Sometimes a half tablespoonful of salt, in solution, would be given; or maybe the scrapings of pewter spoons with sugar; and, when they could be secured, sulphate of iron or green copperas. (239) Mrs. Hulin, a German lady, had "a sovereign cure for worms in children", which she was glad to recommend to other parents:

"Take a half-pint of live angle-worms, put them in a linen bag, and sew them up. Then put them, while yet alive, on the child's stomach. There let them remain six hours; then remove them to the navel; there let them remain for the same time; then remove them to the bottom of the belly for six hours; then take them away, and the child will never be troubled with worms again." (240)

We should think not! To alleviate coughs and croup, of which ailment many children died, the juice of roasted onions or garlic was administered; or, perhaps, syrups, the chief ingredients of which were spikenard and elecampane, might be given. (241) The itch was treated with an ointment made of brimstone and hog's lard. (242) Burns were poulticed with Indian meal, scraped potatoes, roasted tur-
nips, or slippery elm bark. (243) Poison ivy could be relieved by applying the leaves of spice-wood soaked in vinegar. (244) For snake bite many superstitious remedies were considered efficacious, but the most sensible and popular one was to give the patient large doses of a decoction made by boiling the plant, known as white plantain, with milk. (245) The bite of a dog was guarded against infection by applying some of the dog's hair to the wound. (246) Frosted fingers were thawed by immersing them in cold water. (247) As can be seen, several of these remedies might be considered effective today, so the pioneers were not so far wrong after all.

Though superstitious and ridiculous preventative and remedies were common among all people then, the Germans were particularly credulous. An enumeration of some of their queer beliefs will not only be instructive but amusing. "Falling away" in a child might be cured by placing it in an oven (it is not stated whether the oven should be hot or cold), (248) or in the following manner:

"To cure "falling away" in a child make a bag of new muslin, fill with new things of any kind, and place it on the breast of the child, letting it remain there nine days. In the meanwhile feed the child only with the milk of a young heifer. After nine days carry the bag by the little finger to a brook that flows toward the west and throw it over the shoulder. As the contents of the bag waste away the child will recover." (249)

It was supposed that headaches could be cured by one who had been born on Sunday. (250) If a child were lucky enough to procure the nail of the middle toe of an owl, with which to pick his teeth, he would never be bothered with toothache. (251) Sprains could be cured by rubbing them the first Friday after the full moon; goitre by rubbing the neck three times with the hand of a corpse. (252)

244 *May, op. cit.*., p. 66.
245 *Doddridge, op. cit.*, p. 117.
246 *Brackenridge, op. cit.*, p. 12.
248 *Owens, op. cit.*, p. 124.
249 *Kuhns, op. cit.*, p. 247; also *Owens, op. cit.*, p. 124.
250 *Owens, op. cit.*, p. 124.
To cure a snake bite, kill the snake and swallow the heart. (253) A felon could be cured by a child which, in its tender years, had killed a ground mole. (254) Children might rid themselves of warts in at least three ways: by stealing a piece of meat and burying it under the drop of the house; by cutting an apple, a turnip, or an onion in halves, rubbing the wart with the pieces, and then burying the latter under the drop of the house; and by washing their hands in water found in the hollow of a stump, providing they never saw the stump again. (255) To cure a boy of homesickness, put salt in the hems of his trousers and make him look up the chimney. (256) If he happened to be troubled with pain anywhere, place a buckwheat cake upon his head. (257) Various other ailments of the young could be cured by putting them three times through a horse collar, (258) or by allowing a black cat to eat some of their soup. (259) “Pow-wowing” (saying a little formula, and making a few passes with the hand) was believed to cure nose bleeding, stop the flow of blood due to any cause, remove instantly the pain from cuts, bruises, and burns; to cure almost any skin diseases, and many others more deeply seated. (260) It is not strange to note that most of these supposed cures were for children, for it would have been a hard task, indeed, to have convinced a hard-headed old “Dutchman” that the pain in his corn would cease if he would place a buckwheat cake upon his head.

For the serious diseases of a contagious or infectious nature, the remedies and palliatives of the people in general, were more carefully selected and prepared—sometimes. When afflicted with measles, whiskey was often given to make the patients sweat. (261) Smallpox was allowed to run its course in the earliest times because no one knew how to combat it, but by 1777, inoculation as a

253 Ibid.
254 Boucher, op. cit., I, 188.
255 Owens, op. cit., p. 124.
256 Ibid.
257 Ibid.
258 Boucher, op. cit., I, 188.
259 Owens, op. cit., p. 124.
260 Ibid.
261 Michaux, op. cit., p. 151.
preventative was not uncommon. (262) For whooping-cough, syrups (see page 189) were given which gave but little relief. (263) In the case of this disease the Germans again resorted to superstitious measures. As a preventative they caused their children to wear the breast bone of a chicken upon a string tied about their necks. (264) Needless to say their youngsters were assailed the same as the rest, and were cured (?) by having them breathe the breath of a fish or by placing them in the hopper of the mill while the grist was ground. (265) Among them, too, children suffering from scrofula, or who were known to be afflicted with some hereditary taint or diseases, were dosed with a coffee substitute, made of acorns, which was supposed to possess both medicinal and mystical properties. (266) Other people were just as foolish, however, for erysipelas was generally believed to be circumscribed by the blood of a black cat, and, consequently, "there was scarcely a black cat to be seen whose ears and tail had not been frequently cropped, for a contribution of blood." (267) In the case of fevers, an effort was made to make the patient sweat by administering large doses of a decoction of Virginia snake root. (268) This was followed by a strong decoction of white walnut bark, which, if intended for a purge, had been peeled downwards; if for a vomit, upwards. (269) A contributor in the Pittsburgh Gazette, May 12, 1787, recommends the following cure for ague:

"Take as much flour of brimstone as will cover half a dollar piece, moisten it to a paste with a glass of rum or port wine, and take it as the fit comes on. This has been seldom known to fail in effecting a cure."

One cannot doubt but what many a child's nose was held

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262 "Minute Book of the Va. Court held for Yohogania Co.", Annals of the Carnegie Museum, II, 109. The record runs thus: "Ordered, that the inhabitants of this county have leave to Inoculate for the Small Pox, at their houses or such other convenient Places as they may think proper."

263 Doddridge, op. cit., p. 120.
264 Boucher, op. cit., I, 188.
265 Owens, op. cit., p. 124.
266 Sachse, op. cit., I, 194.
267 Doddridge, op. cit., p. 129.
268 Ibid., p. 116.
269 Ibid.
before he would take such medicines.

Diseases supposed to have been inflicted by witches were cured (?) in equally mysterious and queer fashions. Doddridge gives us the following ways:

"... the picture of the supposed witch was drawn on a stump or a piece of board and shot at with a bullet containing a little bit of silver. This silver bullet transferred a painful and sometimes a mortal spell on that part of the witch corresponding with the part of the portrait struck by the bullet. Another method of curse was that of getting some of the child's water, which was closely corked up in a vial and hung up in a chimney. This complemented the witch with a strangury which lasted as long as the vial remained in the chimney." (270)

Among the Germans similar superstitions prevailed. To prevent witches from entering their homes, they sometimes laid a broom across the door or nailed three horse shoes, toes up, onto the doorstep. (271) If these precautions were disregarded by the Germans or eluded by the witches, and someone in the family became bewitched, the following remedy was prescribed:

"... take equal parts of cinquefoil, fennel flower seed, a piece of a human skull, water-soaked wood. These ingredients are to be pulverized. Dose: For a child, as much as will go on the point of a knife." (272)

Crude, ineffectual, and absurd as many of these remedies were, they at least show us to what extremities the pioneer fathers and mothers were pushed to preserve and care for their young. Perhaps the ridiculousness of some of the above cures were apparent to them at normal times, but, when their offspring were near to death, they, like ourselves, were willing to pin their faith to a straw, and, in desperation, prescribed the doses which kindly neighbors suggested.

But the physical welfare of their children was not the only care of the pioneers. Religious and moral training of some sort had to be provided, if their young folks were not to grow up as savages. In fact, such seemed to be their state in 1759, if Col. Bouquet's report of them is not

270 Ibid., p. 126.
271 Owens, op. cit., p. 126.
272 Sachse, op. cit., I, 178.
exaggerated (see page 36). Yet, twenty years later, in certain parts of the region, "there was no other vestige of the Christian religion than a faint observation of Sunday, and that merely as a day of rest for the aged, and a play day for the young. (273) Even the Germans, a people as a rule very religious in those times, when living far in the wilderness, lost the habit of church-going, and many of their children were unbaptized and without proper religious instruction. (274) Under such circumstances it usually fell to the mother to instruct her little ones in the principles of Christianity, if they were to receive any instruction at all. (275)

Soon, however, itinerant preachers made their appearance. These hardy ministers of the Gospel were content to preach their messages in the open air, even in winter, to all who came to hear them. (276) Usually a grove was selected, and there was erected a crude pulpit, constructed of logs or a few rough slabs and covered with clapboards. (277) Seats were sometimes provided for the audience by placing other logs on a gentle incline rising from the pulpit. (278) That the people were anxious to hear these sermons is attested by the fact that they often came ten and fifteen miles to attend; the older folks riding and the young walking. (279) But home instruction was not at all forsaken with the coming of the ministers, or the publishers of the *Pittsburgh Gazette* would not have found it to their interest to publish, or import and advertise for sale, New Testaments, and primers containing the catechism and "the Principles of the Christian Religion, expressed in plain and easy verse, for children." (280) Such conditions existed in the scattered rural communities, but the different sects (see page 36) which emigrated in groups and settled closely together, brought their elders and dea-

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273 Doddridge, *op. cit.*, p. 134. Mr. Doddridge was born in 1769, and writes of this condition as existing prior to his tenth year.


276 McKnight, C., *op. cit.*, p. 651.


278 McKnight, C. *op. cit.*, p. 651.


280 Issues of May 5, 1787 and June 23, 1787.
cons with them, thus taking care that their religious training should not be endangered under any circumstances. These latter were, therefore, more fortunate than their scattered brethren in the outlying settlements.

Religion and morality cannot well be separated, of course, so when the pioneer parent was providing instruction for his children in one of these spheres he was providing for instruction in both. This must have been done well in some cases, for a writer in the *Pittsburgh Gazette* in 1786, (281) sees fit to remark concerning the people that, "They pay respect to their own manners, and are ambitious that their children should behave in such a manner as to deserve respect in life." By 1788, another subscriber becomes so interested in the welfare of the children of the country that he writes to expostulate with parents for binding out their sons and daughters as servants in genteel families, where they were "seldom instructed properly by their masters and mistresses" and where, their leisure hours being spent in the bad company of "unprincipled servants of both sexes", they would be "early initiated into the mysteries of vice." (282) By 1799, vice and immorality had become so flagrant or general, that efforts at its suppression became necessary, at least so thought a group of high-minded people in the township of Elizabeth who organized an association for that purpose. In the issue of the *Pittsburgh Gazette*, February 16, 1799, they served notice to the public of their intentions and added that they did not want to bring action in a single instance, but that they would if necessary. Apparently this threat had little effect, for a month later, March 16, 1799, they issued an ultimatum through the columns of the same paper, stating that they intended to enforce the laws of the state, among which was one which read that "Any person under the age of sixteen years who shall profanely curse or swear, shall forfeit five shillings". Undoubtedly these people, when undertaking this reform, had in mind the welfare of their young, and such interest speaks well for that day.

Nor was the intellectual training of the children en-

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281. Aug. 26; article entitled "Observations on the Country."
282 Aug. 16, 1788.
tirely neglected even under the adverse conditions of the frontier life, though Wilkeson asserts that the Scotch-Irish were sadly remiss in the little that they might have done. (283) Schools, of any kind, were out of the question, of course, until enough settlers had come to establish and support them. (284) In such circumstances the education of the young fell entirely upon the parents. (285) Sometimes the father took this duty upon himself, (286) but it usually fell to the lot of the mother, for Wilkeson tells us:

“The entire education of her children devolved on the mother, and notwithstanding the difficulties to be encountered, she did not allow them to grow up wholly without instruction; but amidst all her numerous cares taught them to read, and instructed them in the principles of Christianity.” (287)

Sometimes she was given a little assistance by the minister, if one were located in the neighborhood, who might be prevailed upon to listen to an occasional recitation. (288) But, if a young person wanted to get an education beyond the “three R’s”, he could get it only by going east of the mountains, or by diligent study in a few ragged books, by the dim light of chips and splinters thrown on the winter’s fire. (289) It is not to be expected that scholars could be produced under these circumstances.

However, when settlers, sufficient in number to undertake the enterprise, had located near to one another, a teacher might be procured and a school established. In some places this happened very early—as early as 1764 in one instance (290)—but such enterprises were never very

284 Ibid.
286 Pittsburgh Gazette, Sept. 2, 1786. Gilbert Gichen says: “I am not a Latin scholar, neither can I speak French; my father took a wonderful pains to teach me the English language. I had no liberty, however, to bother my brains about Hudebras, Aristotle, or any of those crazy-brained fellows.”
288 Veech, op. cit., p. 105; also Rush, op. cit., pp. 34f; also Day, Historical Collections of Pa., p. 87.
289 Warner, publisher, op. cit., p 146; also Day, op. cit., p. 87.
290 McKnight, C., op. cit., p. 223. John McCullough, long a cap-
plentiful in spite of the state law in 1790 providing for the establishment of a “school or schools in every county”. (291) And those that were established, prior to 1800, were doubtless so much alike as to permit one to generalize upon their description and operation.

In the earliest times “houses erected especially for school purposes were unknown.” (292) Sometimes, when a schoolmaster came into a community, “an impromptu schoolhouse was obtained in the shape of some log cabin vacated by the tenant as unfit to occupy”; (293) or, perhaps, a part of a building erected for another purpose was secured, as was the case at Washington, where the first school was held, in 1787, in the upper part of the court house; (294) and, if no building at all could be secured, the children studied in the groves and recited in the homes of their masters. (295) Among the Germans, however, “the erection of a schoolhouse and a place of worship” was one of the first matters attended to, whenever they made a settlement, according to one authority. (296) Not so with the Scotch-Irish, for “their schoolhouses, when they were induced to build any, were of the cheapest and most uninviting kind, built of logs, open, low, and smoky, lighted with one, or at most, two windows of greased paper.” (297)

But as the settlements increased in population, the interest in education was sufficiently stimulated to induce the pioneers to build better houses for their schools. A good description of these first Cathedrals of Learning is furnished us by Mr. Van Voorhis, who pictures one of them as follows:

“It was erected of round oak logs, one story high; about

tive among the Indians, says that, as a lad, while on a trip with some young braves, in Aug. ’64, “they came to a schoolhouse, where they murdered and scalped the master and all the scholars.”

296 Rush, *op. cit.*, pp. 34f.
297 Wilkeson, *op. cit.*, p. 204.
eighteen by twenty feet in size, roofed with clapboards held in place by what were called “weight poles” extending a little beyond the length of the roof; these poles were kept at proper spaces apart by what were called “knees”; these were pieces of timber either round or split, about three feet in length. The clapboards were about six feet long and six inches wide, split like unshaven shingles of nowadays, but of uniform thickness and width. The ceiling was laid loose with inch boards and the floor in the same manner. The space between the logs was filled with “puncheons” and the open space filled with clay mortar. The huge fireplace was made of split logs, interlaid with flat stones laid at an angle of forty-five degrees, and daubed with mortar called “catan” clay. The chimney was “topped” out with split sticks plastered with the same kind of mortar. If the chimney smoked it was attributed to the wind “beating down”. The door was hung on wooden hinges and made throughout without nails. The wooden latch with its flaxen string were the fastenings of everyday use. But, to make secure, was accomplished by the wooden bolt which could only be displaced by a practised manipulation of the wire key made at the nearest blacksmith shop. The windows were on the sides, midway between the ceiling and the floor. They were made by taking out on each side a log for about two-thirds of the length, and to keep out the cold and admit light, in the absence of glass, greased paper was used instead of panes of glass. The paper being more frequently used on account of its cheapness. Along these windows, fastened to the log wall, were the boards on which the advanced scholars did their writing. The benches used for seats for the scholars were made of split logs with the split side up—and no backs to lean against. The first was a wood fire—no coal being used.” (298)

Without doubt the community was proud of this humble structure, and pointed it out to the passing visitor with as much pride as we do our huge schoolbuildings of stone.

The teachers employed for instructing the young people were often as nondescript as the buildings in which they taught. As they were hired at the lowest possible wages one could expect little else. (299) "Widows and

299 Wilkeson, op. cit., p. 204.
elderly spinsters" (300) were sometimes secured, though rather infrequently, since men were usually preferred. The latter are characterized and described in various ways, few of which are to their credit. They were men down at the heel (301) who could get no other employment; (302) Irishmen (303) often of questionable habits; (304) or strolling Yankees out of a job. (305) Others, however, were men of education and excellent character sometimes preparing for the higher professions. (306) One teacher, characterized as a "good master", "was a great tobacco chewer and always had the floor near his seat well besmeared with the juice of the weed." (307) As a rule they were of a roving nature and, since they had no homes of their own, generally boarded among their patrons. (308) In fact the children often clamored for their master to go home with them, for the more frequent his visits the less frequent were the applications of the birch switches. (309) The length of the school term varied. Sometimes it was as short as three months or it might be as long as nine. (310) At other times are places the year was divided into two terms. The summer term was provided for and attended by the younger people, (311) while the winter term was for the convenience of the older boys and girls who had to work during the summer months. (312) The rate of payment demanded for each pupil varied from one dollar and half to two dollars for three months, and, for those who were unable to pay this fee, "provision was made in the way of a poor fund assessed by law on the rich class." (313)

300 Chapman, Old Pittsburgh Days, p. 235.
301 Ibid.
302 Wilkeson, op. cit., p. 204.
304 Chapman, op. cit., p. 235.
305 Ibid.; also Van Voorhis, op. cit., p. 217.
307 Van Voorhis, op. cit., p. 42.
308 Ibid., p. 51; also Lambing, op. cit., p. 82.
309 Lambing, op. cit., p. 82.
310 Van Voorhis, op. cit., p. 51.
311 Boucher, op. cit., I, 244.
312 Ibid.
313 Van Voorhis, op. cit., p. 51.
No definite age was then specified for the starting of children to school nor was an age limit set for those who desired to attend. Brackenridge's father wanted to start him to school at the tender age of three, but was dissuaded, and the lad eventually made his debut when five years old. (314) On the other hand, young men and women fully grown, who had had not educational opportunities when young, were often found in the same school with their little brothers and sisters. (315)

The curriculum of these schools was anything but extensive, usually consisting of little more than spelling and the "three R's," "readin', 'riting', and 'rithmetic", though sometimes, if the teacher happened to be a minister, a little Latin and higher mathematics might be taught. (316) Spelling usually engaged one-fourth of the pupils' time, and the other three-fourths were divided among the other three common subjects. (317) All the scholars studied their spelling "out loud" and at the same time, and the one spelling most rapidly was champion. (318) What a bedlam it must have been! In writing, "the copy was set by the master, whose competency was measured much according to his proficiency in making good pens and setting copies." (319)

Textbooks were neither uniform nor plentiful. (320) The hornbook, even then old-fashioned, was still in use. (321) Wilkeson says that the only books he ever saw were Dillworth's Spelling-Book and John Rogers Primer; (322) though Van Voorhis tells us that "the books used in those days were the United States Spelling Book, the English Reader, the Introduction and Western Calculator." (323) On September 2, 1786, Wilson & Wallace advertised in the *Pittsburgh Gazette* that they were offering for sale, "Testaments, Bibles, spelling books, and primers."

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314 Brackenridge, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
315 Boucher, *op. cit.*, I, 244.
317 Boucher, *op. cit.*, I, 244.
320 Wilkeson, *op. cit.*, p. 204.
This must have been a profitable venture, for the next year, the publishers of the paper saw fit either to publish or import and advertise for sale, “spelling books”, Dilworth’s Spelling Books, A. B. C. Primers, New England Primers, and New Testaments. (324) Evidently there was no lack of textbooks in Pittsburgh and vicinity, but in the outlying settlements “the scarcity of books was a great hindrance to those who had a taste for study” and, “if a boy resolved to apply his leisure moments to reading, he was perhaps limited to Young’s Night Thoughts, Hervey’s Meditations, and Knox’s History of the Church of Scotland.” (325)

For a catalogue and description of the other paraphernalia used by the school children, we are indebted to Mr. Van Voorhis, who enumerates and describes them as follows:

“The goose quill furnished the material from which the master made the pens for the scholars. The ink was home made from maple bark, sumac, white oak, etc., and occasionally appeared an ink made from what was called “ink powder”, but it was regarded as an outside “material”, not to be trusted, as it would fade. The home made ink was supposed to be unfading, and it really seems so, as the writer has in his possession manuscripts thus written over one hundred years old and not any sign of fade. The paper used in olden times was unruled. It was used by a home made ruler, so called, and a pencil manufactured impromptu from a bar of lead. Ciphering on the slate was done with a pencil obtained from the nearest soapstone. The rocks from which this material was taken was named the slates. The soapstone was chiseled into pencils with the famous “Barlow knife”, or the “Elevy” knift, with a red bone handle, containing two blades. The latter was the rich man’s son’s knife.” (326)

324 Issues of Apr. 14, 1787; May 5, 1787; June 23, 1787.
325 Wilkeson, op. cit., p. 204.

(To be Continued)