

Kelley: Sparing Rod Produces Psychopaths

"Spare the rod and spoil the child" is still the best child-rearing philosophy, Douglas M. Kelley world-famed University of California psychiatrist said yesterday.

Unless we return to it we may, centuries hence, face a future "where a select group of unusually aggressive psychopaths ponder a final printed volume entitled 'The Rise and Fall of Civilization,'" he warned.

The old, strict methods of upbringing may yield more neurotics, he added, but they probably produce fewer psychopaths.

SPEAKS IN TEXAS.

Kelley, the psychiatrist during the Nuremberg war trials, made his remarks at the annual meeting of the Texas Medical Association in Fort Worth.

Children, he said, tend normally to be self-centered and emotionally unstable, confuse daydreams with reality, and lack the capacity to evaluate situations critically.

"Children react in a sort of totalitarian all-or-none."

Carried into adulthood, this behavior is psychopathic, or as the psychiatric world has come to call it, a character disorder. Herman Goering, Kelley said, exhibited several child-like tendencies.

Before Freud, Kelley continued, our approach to child-rearing taught methods of self-control that frequently led to neurotic personalities.

Now, he said, we emphasize "freedom of speech, lack of obsessive rituals and minimal demands on behavior.

"Such a pattern may well prevent neurotic fixation, but, on the other hand, may account for an increase in character disorder and antisocial behavior.

"We have, I think, been overenthusiastic in our refusal to teach control lest we traumatize." This approach, Kelley further warned, is a major reason for the rise in delinquency.

ADEAL SOLUTION.

The ideal solution to the extremes of the strait-jacket and virtual-complete-freedom philosophies of child-raising, Kelley said, would obviously be a median choice with neither too much or too little training suppression.

Since few men can know what the ideal be, he added, he would favor an overemphasis on the old-fashioned teachings of self-control. The result might be more neurotics but fewer psychopaths, and consequently less crime.

In the meantime, Kelley said, "I would recommend re-education of parents by physicians that they may permit their children to mature in a somewhat better fashion.

"I am not sure we can produce a normal civilization. Our problem at present is clear. We must choose between increased neuroticism or increased psychopathy."

If we don't want to assume the risk of producing more neurotics, Kelley concluded, we "may bring about a situation in the far future where a select group of unusually aggressive psychopaths ponder a final printed volume entitled 'The Rise and Fall of Civilization.'"