

“Junior Jury”

- by John Cumming, M.D. -

On last Tuesday's program the emphasis seemed to fall on the fact that every child has a rate of maturing which is as individual as his rate of physical growth. Physical growth is usually a thing which pleases parents and they look with pleasure on it. Maturing, or emotional growth, does not always seem to bring forth the same approval especially since from the age of about 10 years on a great deal of it seems to be a rebellion against the authority of the parent. Why is it that we all are a little alarmed by this process? I'm not sure, perhaps it may be that we are afraid of losing control of our children; perhaps we even resent a little, the seeming ingratitude of their rejection of many ideas that we feel are important.

Children will grow into adults whether we discourage it or not. Isn't it far better to yield gradually to the maturing process rather than to wage an unequal struggle in which we are doomed to be the defeated person? If we are willing to cede authority not always as fast as demanded since this might often give our child too much to take on at one time, but at a rate that will keep him busy experimenting with his new powers, our relationship is not likely to be such that we need fear that he will disgrace us. It also would seem to ensure that we will be able to enjoy our children's young adulthood and welcome them to the new status of companionship in adult problems. Can't we take as much joy in their emotional growth into adulthood as we do in their physical development?