

CHILD TYPES

BY
FRANCES W. DANIELSON



AN evidence of maturity is the tendency to measure children's good behavior by their inactivity. "She's a good little thing — so quiet," we say. Another of our encomiums is, "I should never have known he was in the room," and we use the mouse and the dove and the lamb as terms of endearment.

Yet the law of growth is activity, and normal children are by nature full of movement. To suppress them is not only cruel; it is stupid. The world has work to be done. The untrained energy that is so objectionable to most adults is the raw material out of which work is made. It simply needs to be directed. In its highest form it will be activity for others — helpfulness — and it is this form of activity we shall especially encourage in the church school.

If we can make the children feel that they are needed, they will respond proudly. Do not for one moment think this is because they are longing to help. Their motive is not so high. They probably want to show what they are able to do, and that they can do more than some other child.



The Imaginative Child

IN the present age the Imaginative Child has come into his own. Heretofore branded as the Liar, or with equal scorn, as the Dreamer, he has suffered for the cause of the Imagination a soap-washed mouth, beatings, scoldings, refusals to accept his word, supperless nights and stay-in-bed days. Occasionally he has retracted and accepted the creed of the Matter-of-Fact, but for the most part Imagination has lived under martyrdom, though secretly. The Imaginative Child of the past has dreamed dreams and built castles in Spain, but has not told about them.



The Shy Child

SHE was a trial to her parents, and her own worst enemy. To begin with, the Shy Child was pretty, and it is a calamity to be both shy and pretty. If she had been homely she might have met contemptuous glances, it is true, but these would have been nothing to the Shy Child in comparison with Attention. The bugaboo of the Shy Child was Attention. To be neither pretty nor homely but plain would have been most desirable, for plain children are ignored by all but the child-lover and the conscientious adult. I mean by the conscientious adult the relative who because of kinship pats a child on the head and asks his age, or the honest, hireling type of teacher, who does her duty by all her pupils. The child-loving adult is a different proposition.



The Good-Natured Child

WERE parents to choose the fairy's birth gift for their child, it would probably be good-nature. For the Good-Natured Child is comfortable to live with, and easy to deal with. The parents anticipate, instead of frequent clashes of will, made less frequent only by avoiding the issue, pleasant companionship, because of the Good-Natured Child's tendency to be happy under all circumstances.

Nor do parents rate good-nature higher than do teachers. The Good-Natured Child is welcome in any class in any school. Popular with his play-mates, too, is the Good-Natured Child. He is like the sunshine that destroys germs of hatred and scatters clouds of ill-temper.

"The world is a happy place!" is the attitude of the Good-Natured Child toward life.

"Everybody is my friend!" is his attitude toward people.

Have we, then, discovered in the Good-Natured Child the Perfect Child? Alas, no! Even good-nature, carried too far, may change from a virtue to a fault.





The Helpful Child

IT is a pleasant tribute to human nature that the Helpful Child is not rare. We meet him everywhere, with his beaming smile, his eager hands outstretched, his feet willing to run our errands. The sad part is that most of us regard him as more of a nuisance than a blessing. "Oh, dear, no! I can't wait for you to go, dear," we say, pleasantly enough, not dreaming that we are crushing a lovely impulse. "Mother will carry it; you're too little," says the strong, efficient parent, and let her not delude herself into supposing she says this from any desire to save her child's strength. No; she is sparing herself the unpleasantness of a load brought slowly, or clumsily dropped. And the Helpful Child gains the idea that he is not needed in the big world full of capable, self-sufficient adults.



The Secretive Child

BY the Secretive Child I want it distinctly understood that I do not mean the Shy Child. There is a world-wide difference. The Shy Child simply has a larger amount than customary of childhood's reserve, and is usually of a delicate nature. The Secretive Child, on the contrary, may not be shy at all, but apparently frank and open.

A lover of children recognizes that there are large tracts of every child's mind which are hedged about with an impenetrable wall of reserve. This hedge has a gate, but only the elect can discover it. Woe be to any adventurer who tries to scale it, for he finds himself baffled as though by magic. The term "elect" refers to people who have a rare understanding of children, and these, although they know the entrance, hesitate to go in often, lest they wear out their welcome and some day find it barred.



The Persistent Child

THE Persistent Child's relatives dread his visits. Instead of planning to interest him their hope is that he will not take a violent fancy to anything, for they know that thing he will have, no matter how much they may object.



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