CHILD GUIDANCE

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To

WILLIAM FRANK WEBSTER

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS, MINNEAPOLIS
WHO WAS THE FIRST TO ORGANIZE A
CHILD GUIDANCE CLINIC AS AN
INTEGRAL PART OF THE SCHOOL
SYSTEM

FOREWORD

Authors, it seems to us, might well start the foreword of a book not so much with a description of what they have written, as with apologies for having written at all. Certainly it is necessary for one writing in the field of Child Psychology to explain why he felt himself entitled to take the time and energy of the press and of the reader with another volume. Many books in this field treat the problem child; many describe the possibilities of the normal child; but *that single phase in which the normal child is the problem*—in that each individual child must somehow be lead to realize his greatest potentialities—has not been adequately covered. Our experience in both public and private service has brought us in contact with parents who more and more frequently ask not only for a knowledge of the present philosophy of child behavior but also for a definite correlating of this philosophy with the practical details of child-training.

A book to be of value in this way must be built on practical experience with children from the great mid-ground called normal; and although the parent of the problem child may, we hope, be helped by this study of normal behavior and its minor deviations, it is not written primarily for the benefit of the feeble-minded nor the psychopathic-inferior child, nor for the court case nor the potential criminal but for the normal, healthy little girl who is learning her first steps in the sunshine on the green grass at the end of the block and the small boy whose smiling face looks up from his kiddy-car as one passes his gate. It is not aimed to meet the need of the one parent out of twenty whose child stands out as a social problem, but,

rather, for the parents of those nineteen others who in order to make the most of their children's lives must have sympathetic guidance and understanding.

It is with the organization of commonplace material that the person interested in child guidance must deal. It is again the old problem of the big oak of adult human behavior to be grown from the small acorn of insignificant childhood occurences. Child guidance is not so much for the purpose of curing children of behavior disorders as it is to keep well children well.

The phenomenal public interest in the behavior clinic, under whatever name, shows the groping of the parents of the country toward a more systematic study of the causes of behavior and the hope and possibility of a more successful fruition for the many hours of sacrifice and labor. As a supplement to the guidance clinic and in an effort to meet the need where no clinics exist, this book is offered. It makes no pretense to be all inclusive and, alas, can make none to invulnerability. Many books could not cover the fields undertaken in each of the chapters, nor deal adequately with them. We hope that it may be of service as a college text in child psychology and in study clubs and extension classes. It has been used in manuscript form and found adequate for this purpose. It is hoped, too, that it will stimulate the reader to the keeping of good behavior records to further reading and study, and be of practical aid in dealing with day to day problems as they arise, from birth through the years of growing up.

It is with great pleasure that we acknowledge our indebtedness, first, to the members of the staff of the Child Guidance Clinic and to the teachers of the Minneapolis Public Schools, to the parents of the children with whom we have worked, and to our classes in the Universities of Wisconsin and Minnesota and Iowa State College.

We wish to thank very specially Dr. John Anderson, director of the Institute of Child Welfare; Dr. Donald G. Patterson, professor of Psychology; Dr. Dwight E. Minnich, assistant professor of Animal Biology, for criticisms of the chapter on Original Endowment; Dr. Max Seham and Dr. Hyman S. Lippman for help on the chapters on Feeding, Excretory Functions, and Sleep; Professor and Mrs. A. C. Krey and Mrs. Marion L. Faegre for their helpful criticisms of the chapter on The Mysteries; Mrs. Sidiona Gruenberg for reading the chapter on Child Guidance; Dr. Karl S. Lashley, Institute for Juvenile Research, Chicago, and Dr. Florence Goodenough of the Institute of Child Welfare for criticism of the Trait Chart; and Miss Alice Leahy for assistance in the assembling of much of the case history material. We wish to express our gratitude also to Mr. Newton Howard Hegel, Director of Attendance, Guidance, and Administrative Research in the Minneapolis Schools, whose helpful suggestions were of great benefit to us in preparing the material for this book.

THE AUTHORS.

INTRODUCTION

Those of us who through choice or fate are responsible for guiding children have at our disposal two great natural resources for the task, which are more beautifully adapted to the purpose than any other that could possibly be conceived. One is the fact that every aspect of our own childhood is imperishably preserved in memory; and the other that children have in an extraordinary degree that inherent tendency to be guided which we call suggestibility. And yet, preposterous as it seems, these two great natural resources have been drawn upon the least, not only in the methods that we work out to meet our requirements, but in the ponderous systems of education, training and discipline which society has provided. Preconceptions, theoretical considerations and concepts of the child built up through objective observations—many of them almost worthless—have been used instead. It is only within our own time that attention has been directed to the child who still lives within each of us, and, through the revival of the subjective experiences of our own childhood, there have been made available these imperishable records of first-hand experience which were present but in large part beyond our reach. And it is only within our own time that the mechanism of suggestibility has been so understood that it can be employed in practical yet scientific ways to direct the steps of children.

For the utilization of the first of these two great natural resources, we are indebted to the new direction of psychologi-

cal speculation and research that brought into prominence such dynamic factors in life as instinctive strivings and thwartings, emotions, sentiments and imaginative thinking. No other approach to the understanding of human behavior could have shown the fact and the significance of the preservation intact of the subjective experiences of childhood and their expression in many of the feelings and actions of adults. The special technique of psychoanalysis disclosed not only that these experiences are preserved but that their actual resurrection is possible. For a clearer understanding of the nature and function of suggestibility we are indebted to another type of psychological study which, however, gained impetus and widening of its field from the discoveries made in dynamic psychology.

Drawing upon these two resources which always existed but only recently became available, except through accident or good fortune, child guidance takes on a new aspect. With real experiences of the child in the child's world in which he really lives at our disposal, a flood of light is being thrown upon the things that children are really trying to do and upon the reasons for some of the otherwise inexplicable methods that they sometimes select for doing them. Those who have used this new approach are quite willing to return to the naturalists most of the methods of objective study which we borrowed from them for want of any better ones of our own.

The authors of this book have been trained both in the static psychology of the past and the dynamic psychology of the present. Both can draw upon a rich store of knowledge obtained from reading and study and upon the much richer one that arises from the discharge of practical responsibilities in diagnosis and treatment of deviations in child conduct. Out of this knowledge and experience comes a wise,

timely and useful contribution to the understanding of childhood and the management of some of its problems.

THOMAS W. SALMON
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