

MARKING TIME WITH THE BABIES

By Ruth Hale

THE current crop of books on how to bring up children is abundant, of fair quality, and of some variety, but it has a fault. It contains nothing very interesting. There is something tremendously interesting to be said about this subject, and it undoubtedly will be said, though for the present the long line of child training books

are doing little more than to mill around on the ground covered at one end by Dr. Holt and at the other by Judge Ben Lindsey.

Perhaps the best thing that can be said of the very considerable number of new child books is that there is such a lot of them. At least the degree of enlightenment at which we have arrived is getting spread around, and since the least important of these books, if followed at all, will be better than none, we can probably well afford to be cheered while we wait for stimulation.

We like best, among those we have just read, "A Parents' Manual" in two volumes, by Dr. Maximilian P. E. Groszmann, the first subtitled "Child Problems, Mental and Moral", and the second, "Child Problems in Health and Illness".

Dr. Groszmann is betrayed by his enthusiasm into a rather hindering attitude toward parents at the very beginning of his Manual. He says: "Marriage is for the child; home is for the child. The communion of parents with their children is a sacred thing. It must come first in all considerations." Parents are hereby advised that if they can control their justifiable impulse to throw the book out of the window when they have read this far, they will find Dr. Groszmann later full of gentle wisdom, sound feeling, and a ripe sagacity. Once he is on the subject of how to behave with children, to say nothing of how to watch over their health, he is an ideal guide. Pretty nearly all the specialized educators and supervisors of children fall into this error of overloading and oversolemnizing the relationship between parent and child. It is simply useless to say to any parent, male or female, that the whole of adult life must hold in abey-

ance for a child, or for children. The way to begin a book on raising children is to say: "Recognizing that we have in the past been ridiculously hampered by the attention our children have required from us, this book outlines a decent minimum . . ."

Almost the only virtue in Lady Cynthia Asquith's book, "The Child at Home", is that it intimates, rather between the lines than in them, that a child and its mother can have a really good time together, if they don't overdo it. Lady Cynthia chats pleasantly, aimlessly for the most part, and sometimes rather wittily, about nurseries, games, and young social life.

A far duller and more portentous book is "Living with Our Children" by Clara D. Pierson. All the mothers of whom Mrs. Pierson approves are grave and noble. Home life is what it is over too great a stretch already because women have tried to bring these two virtues to the making of it. We should like to see a home in which, for example, the mother had been convinced that her children could do her as much retaliative damage as another adult could if she took liberties with them. We believe the standard of good manners, charm, joy, and general entertainment would be remarkably higher than that produced by Mrs. Pierson's psychology.

Dr. S. Josephine Baker's three books, "Healthy Mothers", "Healthy Babies", and "Healthy Children", are pleasantly done, and contain much precise information. The books deal almost entirely with physical conditions, as their titles suggest, and whether they are right or wrong we would not even venture a guess. When Dr. Baker goes into the questions of food, medicines, etc., she goes into the most disputed field in the world, and

we, for one, are not equipped to follow her there. She is probably nine tenths right, anyway, and she is ten tenths kindly, encouraging, and sane.

A Parents' Manual. By Maximilian P. E. Groszmann, Pd.D. Two volumes. The Century Co.

The Child at Home. By Cynthia Asquith. Charles Scribner's Sons.

Living with Our Children. By Clara D. Pierson. E. P. Dutton and Co.

Healthy Mothers; Healthy Babies; Healthy Children. By S. Josephine Baker, M.D., D.P.H. Little, Brown and Co.