

CHILDREN CHANGED IN TYPE

The Fashion Now is for Thin Legs and Straight Hair.

GONE ARE THE RINGLETS AND CHUBBINESS

Is the Change Due to the Artists of Children or to Modern Methods of Bringing Up Children Scientifically?

The fashion in children has changed. There is a quaint humor in the thought that should tickle even a sociologist and set him on lightsome speculations. For we are not dealing, mind you, with the ponderous, patriarchal aspect of the subject. We all know that the good old-fashioned family of anywhere from ten to twenty-two children would now be held to be as out of place as uproarious laughter or a burst of soba, and that as to the vexed question of upbringing such maxims as "spare the rod and spoil the child" and "children should be seen and not heard" are now very much out of date.

Not it is not the metaphysical, statistical, pessimistic phase of the question which is under discussion, but just the superficial side of it with which artists have to deal, the actual change of fashion as to what the admired type of child should be. Mothers, if they have not already made the discovery, will please take notice.

The change in fashion seems to be chiefly in the matter of hair and legs. Once upon a time a robust cupid or a neat fairy in ringlets was the sort of child worth boasting of. Now an awkward little thing on pipestems with straggling locks is earnestly admired. Straight hair seems to be almost a deformity. Most folks ever can remember the trouble, not to say disgrace, that beset a straight haired child and its mother, the taunts they suffered and the torments, in the line of artificial aids to

son for the complete change in the physical type, we have a situation of the gentlest irony. Here we have a small person who is surrounded from his birth by the innumerable laws of sanitation. Everything is sterilized from its food to its clothing.

The period at which it begins its athletic training is sometimes as early as 3 months, but fresh air and cold baths are always on tap and lunches between meals are discouraged from the very beginning. Later it is coaxed gently into study by all manner of pleasant bypaths from kindergarten to nature study classes, and its amusements are legion, including a wealth of picture books and every toy that human ingenuity can invent.

And yet the modern artist draws the and acts of the child which is now ripe. The modern child thin, shapeless, hesitating, restrained, pensive and wistful. Take the other side of the picture. As Mr. Earle says: "The old time child was of a little importance in domestic, social or ethical relations as his childish successor is of great importance today. There was none of that exhaustive study of the motives, thoughts, the theories which governed his physical being would now be thought destructive to a degree. In all the old time behavior books the hands and face were the only portions of his body which a child was urged to wash, but there was a curious hardening fancy introduced by Leocche which demanded that the child's shoes should be so thin that they might leak and let in water, by which means he would

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THE ROBUST CUPID AND THE NEAT FAIRY OF THE OLD SCHOOL.

curliness, such as rags, papers and innumerable tiny braids, not to mention curls made with soap and held before the fire. Similarly the possession of a child with a handsome round leg and a small foot was a blessing to make envious those mothers who had infinite trouble in keeping up the stockings on their thin legged offspring.

There have changed indeed. The modern infant as drawn by popular illustrators has usually straight hair cropped smartly about the neck and fashion seems to be in favor of a spindling, knock-kneed, pigeon-toed effect about the legs which is fondly supposed to embody the innocent weakness and naive awkwardness of childhood. This fancy for aboriginal turned in toes proves that the snip snaps are banished as severely as all the other bogies, for they used to be a most effective discourager of toeing in when some savage bachelorette threatened with suggestive clashing of the big paper shears to call them in to snip off the offending toes.

You may see the modern types of child in books and magazine illustrations, charmingly comical, with all the angular uncertainty of limb, the awkward wistfulness of a puppy. The old type, beautifully rounded and finished with cherubic face and the grace of a little girl, will be found in engravings and old pictures.

Has the childish physique really changed, or is the vision of the artist, aided by public sentiment, entirely responsible for the change in the child type? Perhaps you may think that the noble children of the old Italian masters were ideal, but last summer a veritable Raphael cherub was seen toddling about a Vermont orchard. His parents came from the north of Italy to be sure, but there was the beautiful creature of some three years with dancing gold brown curls and magnificent limbs and body kindly displayed by his one little open garment.

Burly, one does sometimes see trim, graceful little girls with tapering, neatly finished legs, though it must be confessed that crops of ringlets are now very rare. It is possible that the very difficulty of reaching the ringlet ideal may have been the cause of its downfall as a fashion. A surfeit of little Lord Fauntleroy curls immediately preceded the present universal cropping.

It cannot be denied that the art of Kate Greenaway had a positive and wide reaching influence on the externals of child life. She actually inspired a much needed reform in the comfort and simplicity of children's clothes by her revival of the lovable fashions of 1880, and her tender way of depicting the unconscious charm and simple helplessness of childhood was a revelation. But she did not sacrifice beauty to humor. This can scarcely be said of Boulet de Monvel, who, though he owed much to Kate Greenaway, was in a stricter sense the founder of the modern school. In his demure little awkward figures there is a world of meaning.

They are full to running over with the humor of childlike and express its emotions, though the drawing of a head is merely a simple oval with two dots for nose and some delicate accents for eyes and mouth. In a letter published in the Century Magazine explains his method of representing children thus:

"I have learned that there is one all important element which we must seek in everything which we would reproduce, and which for want of a more definite word we may call soul, the spirit of the object represented. In comparison with this some of individual character all else is unimportant."

If this group of the character, the soul, of the modern child, such as the modern artist represents it to be, is the real rea-

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