



To become a resourceful, self-reliant individual, a child must be given the precious privilege of being alone.

NO TIME FOR SOLITUDE

WHAT is the matter with children today? They are incapable of spending even half a day alone. As the mother of a nine-year-old son, I find myself caught up in a continuous taxi route because Phillip, in my opinion, has the misfortune to be so popular that he is constantly in demand. Mothers beg me, plead with me, and even command me to bring Phillip over to play with their various Johnnies, Stevies, Tommys and Michaels, because if I don't, their children will be faced with being alone for an entire day.

by Nancy Ray

Is it really so calamitous that a child spend a day by himself? As I remember my own childhood, I was frequently without companionship for weeks on end in the summer, because my neighborhood was deserted. But time never fell heavily on my hands. I worked up my skill at croquet until I became the neighborhood champion when everyone returned in the fall. I collected stamps, spending the uninterrupted mornings on my album. Over the years, I made end-

less scrapbooks, furnishing complete homes from catalogues obtained at local stores. As a Girl Scout, I developed an interest in nature, and I organized pressed leaf and flower collections. I mounted pictures of birds, identifying each, and even painting the brilliant hue of the Baltimore oriole and the scarlet tanager. I gathered coins, assembling everything from a Canadian penny to a silver dollar.

At a younger age, I cut endlessly from fashion magazines, creating families, from mother, grandmother and aunt, right down to the children, all with complete wardrobes. I kept a photograph album, pasting pictures of my favorite subjects, among them, my dog in this pose and that. Reading was an everpopular pastime, and many a hot sticky afternoon was spent with a book under the shade in the back yard. In truth, I was never at a loss for something to do. But today's children are different.

This year, when Phillip entered the fourth grade, it became apparent that the social whirl was really underway. Until then, in the earlier grades, the gaiety had consisted mainly of "birthday parties" and in view of the fact that there were twenty-two in the class, it meant approximately twenty-two parties between September and June. I could gracefully manage that situation, with an occasional Saturday expedition thrown in.

This past year, however, Phillip has spent the entire school term being driven around every Saturday to spend the day with the Michaels, Jonathans and Christophers. If I pled to decline, it was argued that "Billy will be alone, and he must have someone to play with."

PHILLIP was born right after Christmas, and to date, since his entry into school, he has always had a birthday party, complete with all the trimmings, despite the fact that Santa Claus has barely gone back up the chimney. But this year, due to the untimely arrival of Francie, one week before Christmas, it was explained to him that there could be no party—perhaps a spree later.

I had truthfully resolved that in his spring recess I would set aside a day, take him and a friend to New York, and have a fling at Radio City. But, alas! How could I foresee that the twelve days of vacation were going to be solidly booked with social engagements for lunch, movie dates and overnights. I never saw my son long enough to take him to New York.

Wistfully I longed for summer, hoping that the majority of the class would be away and that Phillip would have an opportunity to pursue some interests of his own, which, due to the social pressure placed on him through the school year, he had not had the time nor the initiative to discover. The doors

of the school had barely closed, when we were deluged with swimming invitations! "Come for the day! Bring your suit!"

But that in itself was not enough! Each morning, the telephone rang at 8:30, and Phillip's social calendar proceeded to unfold.

"Would Phillip come and spend the night?"

"Would Phillip come to lunch, to a movie, return for supper, and spend the night!"

"Would Phillip go to New York to a baseball game?"

"Would Phillip come for a picnic and bring his bathing suit?"

For two weeks this activity continued. Each day held not only one bid, but usually two. Some days there were three invitations.

SUDDENLY, one morning, the telephone did not ring. Phillip insisted that it must be out of order. His face was getting longer and longer at the prospects of playing by himself for a single day. So, partly in guilt, and partly in sympathy, I proposed a plan, by which he could have one boy as his guest for lunch. They could then walk up to the local movie and see the current western, returning on foot, in time for the guest to be picked up.

Phillip was delighted at the prospects of playing host. He is constantly telling me that he is in arrears with his obligations. Actually,

there are not enough days in the year to ever catch up! When David arrived, I was met at the front gate by his mother, who most courteously thanked me for having her son over for the day, and then she enthusiastically proposed a counter plan. "After the movie, I will pick the boys up, take them out to our club for a swim and then I will take Phillip home for the night!" She further explained that she would keep him all the next day, returning him in time for supper!

Phillip, whose energy knows no bounds, beamed in gratitude. The following evening at suppertime, he was returned on schedule, burned to a crisp and exhausted to a point of tears.

Aware of his fatigue, I declared five days of solitude. Phillip had very fortunately been invited to go away for three weeks to the mountains with his cousin. I made up my mind that he would spend Monday through Friday, before his departure, alone. I explained that in the mornings he and I were going to houseclean the kitchen, laundry, pantry, and other such sundry closets. And that he, as my helper, would be amply remunerated. In the afternoons he was going to stay home and play alone.

On Monday morning, when I was reaching up to the top shelf of the china closet to hand some things down to Phillip, we were interrupted by the telephone.

"It was Bobby," said Phillip.

"Can I go over for the day?"

"Tell him what you are doing." I replied.

Phillip returned. "Bobby wants to know when we will be through?"

And so it continued throughout the entire week. We were not permitted to enjoy our solitude. Mothers frantically pulled up alongside my house at noon, regarding me as something from another planet.

"Are you finished?" One would question hopefully. "Stevie has been alone all morning. Can Phillip come for the afternoon?"

With the fortitude of Custer's Last Stand, I bravely combatted the invaders, knowing full well that I would never be elected to serve as Class Mother again.

"No!" I explained. "Phillip is too tired. I want him to stay home. He needs to be alone!"

IN THAT short week of isolation or unsociability, Phillip began to relax for the first time since last September. He and I became reacquainted with each other. Mornings we worked. In the afternoons he was permitted to do as he pleased. He read. He played. He pattered in his room. Television was forbidden, otherwise, he was on his own. He rode his bicycle. He walked around the place. In truth, I believe he began to discover who he was, but I realized regretfully that we still had a long way to go. On the sixth day, I sent

him off to the mountains, relatively rested and ready to enjoy some fun and companionship.

What is the point in overstimulating children to such an extent that they end up enjoying nothing they do, but nevertheless feel compelled to continue?

As a child I loved to play alone, perhaps because the dessert of life was not handed to me in vast quantities and all at once. My recreation was restricted and consequently I enjoyed, to the utmost, every single thing I did. I can still remember, year by year, the good times which were mine to enjoy. I was never permitted to burn the pleasure candle at both ends, as the children of today are not only being encouraged but forced to do.

How is my child ever going to have any resources of his own when he is constantly being rushed from this place to that place and on to the next place? How is my child going to have the time to really learn who he is, what he likes and in what direction his interests lie? I want my child to be alone so that he may discover these things and receive joy in the pursuit of his accomplishments. In truth, I want my child to know himself, and above all, to like himself in order that he may live at peace among others, as a single, self-reliant individual. But how can that be achieved, if he, as a growing child, has not been granted the privilege of solitude?

He gives facials to granite phizes

THE MAN WHO SAVES FACES

by LEO HAMALIAN

HOW WOULD you like to take a short stroll on Roosevelt's mustache, stretch out for a nap on Lincoln's eyelid, or play shuffleboard on Washington's wig? "Ridiculous!" you say, "Impossible!" Yes, for everyone but Glenn T. Jones, an unassuming government employee of Rapid City, South Dakota.

As the only man in the National Park Service with the classification of "maintenance man and sculptor," every year Jones is responsible for giving "facials" to the 60-foot faces of four presidents which were carved into the granite cliffs of Mount Rushmore (summit 6,050 feet above sea level) between 1925-1941 under the supervision of the American sculptor, Gutzon Borglum. With his own brand of skin cream, Jones must keep the colossal likenesses of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, and Theodore Roosevelt looking their best for the million motorists who view them

every year from the other side of the Black Hills valley in southwestern South Dakota.

Variable weather in that part of the country would raise havoc with the massive faces that dominate the 1,668 acres of the national memorial park, known as the "shrine of democracy," if it were not for the agile Mr. Jones. Moisture freezes in the cracks of the great countenances, opening fissures in the granite and paving the way for greater damage and destruction. But Jones knows the secret of saving stone faces. Carrying a bucket filled with a mixture of dry white lead, linseed oil and rock dust, he rides a seat resembling a bosun's chair over the side of the mountain. He daubs the material into the cracks, shouting instructions to the other members of his five-man crew, who operate the winches to raise or lower him into position. This rock dust treatment is given only to the faces; a thin mortar is used to seal cracks