## Humiliating Adventure

S "simple as a child" is all wrong.

"complex" as a child strikes me as being far nearer the mark. But nevertheless it is worth turning this way and that in search for the true explanation of a child's behaviour. When we've arrived at the cause we are at least halfway to rectifying matters.

I asked a small boy to spend a week-end with mine—a year older. It was his first visit to the country. He was excited and happy. Everything was novel, and the first day passed splendidly. He ate all his food, hungrily, and without criticism or comment. He did instantly and cheerfully all that he was bidden. He cuddled down happily in bed that night, turned over and went straight off to sleep. The morning saw him awake long before my boy, but he lay quiet and happy, leapt out of bed at the first Good Morning and washed and dressed in a great old hurry for another new and jolly day.

At noon-at the height of the fun-his mother arrived. She had thought he would miss her. She had thought he would worry us. Perhaps she had better take him home? In the end she stayed the week-end, too.

But, from the moment she arrived, the child was a little fiend. Everything became argument and contention -- the setting of wills, hers and his, against one another - the argument that ended in hysterical screams and tears. By the time Monday morning came we all were exhausted.

But it was obvious what had happened. He had been striving with all his strength to keep up with my yearolder boy - to behave in every detail as he. No difference was made. When his mother came she stressed this difference in every way possible.

"No, Michael, you wait here. Let John run on. You don't know the track, You might fall . . .'

"I can! I can! I can jump the stream!"

"I wonder if you could give Michael only a very little dinner - say, perhaps, half of the amount you give ¶ohn. He doesn't eat much.'

"I do! I do! I'm hungry! That's too little!" and he threw himself on the floor with a wail of woe.

Gently, kindly — but very firmly — she broke it down — all his new-found self-respect. He was only a "little" boy — a "town" boy — a "mummy's" boy. His pride tumbled about his ears, The great adventure came to a humili-

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Departing, she said to me:

"I'm sorry, dear, you've had all the trouble. It's been kind and sweet of you to have Michael - but, you see how it is -- he's quite impossibly naughty. I really don't know what to do about it - I sometimes feel quite distracted!"

And Michael?

-KAY



trolette style.