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**Highly Influential Book on Child-rearing  
Once Again Available in a New Edition**

## **GENTLE MEASURES**

*Renowned 19th Century Educator Discusses Effective  
Sympathetic Methods of Managing Children and  
Developing Their Mental and Moral Capacities*

**by Jacob Abbott**

*In all of Jacob Abbott's remarks there appears a great love of purity and truth, and a kindness and generosity of disposition — New England Magazine*

*He is a leader and prince among writers for young people — The Ladies Repository*

Jacob Abbott, highly respected educator and social activist, wrote over 200 works for and about children. Yet this amazing oeuvre has been almost entirely forgotten. His most important work, **GENTLE MEASURES** (Gavrinis Press), originally published in 1871, became one of the most widely-read books on parenting. This wonderful volume, out of print for many years, is now available in a new edition. It brings Abbott's insight and sympathetic consideration once again to the public, and sheds light on long-misunderstood aspects of Victorian child-rearing.

Abbott's historical "location" assures us of a fresh view. His great intellect, his careful measured tones, his humanitarian concern, all come through to us today across the divide of time. Indeed, this book is part of a large store of undervalued American literature, that still has much to say to the present generation. Written by an outstanding observer of human nature, this work will give parents and teachers a new perspective on the interactions between adults and children. The question of using force in discipline always arises when trying to effectively deal with the "irrational" child. How can we respect the desires and wishes of children, while still guiding them into positive and constructive behaviour? Experts of our day have voiced various opinions on the issue, with but one general agreement, that extreme authoritarian or overbearing methods should be avoided. But then what will we do, when children obstinately refuse to listen and cooperate? An objective historical investigation of the literature on child-rearing would show that parents and teachers throughout the generations have had to create strategies in dealing with challenges. Inappropriate conduct in children, arising from inattentiveness or willfulness, is, it might be remembered, nothing new.

Abbott, who lived long before the field of child psychology was established, developed a deep understanding of the mind of the child, in order to find efficient ways to nurture healthy, capable, and responsible attitudes. Quite simply, he wanted to see the world through the child's own eyes. Abbott strongly opposed the view that "moral guidance" is essentially a set of rigid instructions, issued without feeling or consideration or individualized accommodation. For him, teaching was a rewarding interactive experience, needing careful planning. In line with such an approach, this book contains detailed discussions on numerous varied issues, including child temperament; overactivity; incentives; illness; allowances; and religious

education. **GENTLE MEASURES** recommends easily understood and practical techniques, based on a unique combination of professional practice and time-tested wisdom. Many charming but instructive stories of mothers and children are used to illustrate the points made.

This book is an excellent resource for parents and teachers, giving them a fresh view into the practical aspects of raising and educating children. It is also for anyone who is interested in 19th century traditional ideas about child-rearing, parental roles, and religious influence in the domestic sphere. The book also reveals a truer picture of the 19th Century period that overturns various myths about our supposedly “unenlightened” ancestors. In reading the book, it is immediately clear that Abbott’s literate and scholarly approach was actually aimed at the average middle-class housewife, not the intellectual, a fact which demonstrates that many ordinary people of that time possessed a high level of sophistication.

Jacob Abbott (1803-1879) was greatly involved in educational endeavours. He was born in Maine, very much a true son of New England, a believer in the virtues of practicality and intelligence. He was professor of mathematics and natural philosophy at Amherst College, and afterward he established the Mount Vernon school for girls in Boston. He subsequently devoted himself almost exclusively to literary labour, and travelled extensively abroad. His diverse work exceeds 200 titles, including *Franconia Stories* (10 vols.), *Science for the Young*, *The Teacher* and *A Summer in Scotland*. He also edited several historical textbooks.

Paul Dennis Sporer (editor) is the author of *The Dimensions of Companionship*; *Liberating Love*; *The Concept of Family*; and *Equal but Different*; he has also served as editor on more than 30 culturally and historically significant books, including *Painting Explained*, by Thomas Gullick; *Is Secession Treason?*, by Albert Bledsoe; *The Heart of Aryavarta*, by Lawrence Dundas; *Beauty and Art*; by Aldam Heaton; *The French at Home*, by Albert Rhodes; *From Slave Cabin to Pulpit*, by Peter Randolph; *Newer Ideals of Peace*, by Jane Addams; *Views of Old Europe*, by Bayard Taylor; *Gentle Measures*, by Jacob Abbott; *Parental Influences*, William Bacon; *Finding a Way Out*, by Robert Moton; *The New Birth*, by Austin Phelps; *Tupelo*, by John Hill Aughey; *An Incident of Travel*, Arthur Jerome Eddy; *End of an Era*, by John Sergeant Wise; *The Missionary*, by Samuel Mazzuchelli; *Half a Century*, by Jane Swisshelm; *Born Three Times*, by Thomas L. Johnson; *Dark Hollow*, by Anna Katharine Green; and *1492: Admiral of the Ocean Sea*, by Mary Johnston.

For further information about **GENTLE MEASURES**, or to arrange an interview with the editor, please contact Cassandra Foxton, [inform@anzapublishing.com](mailto:inform@anzapublishing.com). The publisher’s website address is [AnzaPublishing.com](http://AnzaPublishing.com).

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**Revised and enhanced new edition, with new index and preface**

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