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THE "HIGHLY STRUNG" CHILD

MANY young children of to-day are highly strung and hyper-sensitive, and consequently difficult to understand. This "highly strung" condition is accounted for by the strain and struggle suffered by the mothers during the war, and it is recognised that children of this type require very patient and careful treatment if the nervous condition is to be overcome.

Regularity Essential

Absolute regularity of régime, calm, restful surroundings, soothing companions, abundance of fresh air, sleep, and suitable nourishing food indicate the broad outlines of successful treatment of these children.

The tears and tantrums of highly strung children, their nervous headaches, and the sickness or "upset" they often experience from over-excitement and anticipation could be almost entirely prevented if they led a quiet, healthy outdoor life, free from excitement and sudden changes.

A quick, imaginative brain generally accompanies a highly strung disposition, so that it is desirable to keep the mental activities of nervous children in check and direct their restless energy into the safety channels of handicrafts and outdoor games. Keep highly strung children busy and interested all day long, with their hands rather than their minds. Teach them to help others, and to think of others. They might have the care of a window-box or garden plot, or learn to look after a pet properly, or be responsible for several small duties about the house.

Short periods of occupied silence are beneficial, also deep breathing, simple rhythmic exercises, and slow movements to music. Those who look after nervous children need to be calm, patient, and self-controlled. Quiet, even voices, good humour and patience, gentle reproof instead of angry rebuke, help the nervous child to gain self-control.

Gaining His Confidence

Highly strung children must not be allowed to work themselves up into frenzies of excitement, temper, or emotion; neither should their nervous fears be ridiculed, but rather patiently explained and soothed away, and the child's confidence gained so that he has affection for and faith in the person who has care of him.

This type of child is often fussy and difficult about food. It is not wise to indulge him in his "fads," but his meals should be varied, well cooked, and daintily served, besides being light, nourishing, and digestible.

Stimulating foods are not good—no tea or coffee should be allowed—not much meat, but plenty of milk, eggs, and nourishing cereals. Only a very light meal is advisable at bedtime.

"SUGAR BABIES"

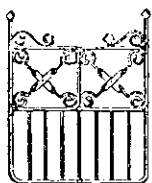
"MY baby is a 'sugar-baby,'" said one young mother to another.

"That's splendid: you can't give too much sugar, especially in the winter," was the response. But both mothers were wrong.

There is a superstition that when children crave for sweets it shows that nature is teaching them that the body is crying out for sugar. So it is, but not necessarily for artificial sweetmeats. Give your tiny baby the natural sugar of milk in his bottle, and little one-year-olds should have the sugar extracted from flowers—honey. Give your children between the ages of two and six years the sugar of fruits—ripe fruits are rich in sugar.

But what is the difference between sugar extracted from a cane and sugar extracted by bees from sweet-scented red clover? The difference is not so much in the way the sugar is produced, but how it is presented. If a child be given maple syrup or golden syrup, with fine wholemeal bread and plenty of butter, it is good, especially if it is not given at the end of a meal. But the sugar of the cane is presented to little ones in the form of hardbake, sticky toffees, sugared nuts, so hard for little teeth to crack. A hard crunch—an invisible crack in pearly enamel, a resting-place for a little germ of decay that waits—a silent enemy—in every baby mouth.

Chocolates and soft sweets should be given at a meal, with bread and butter, but not at the end. Half the damage to children's teeth is due to giving sugar at the end of a meal, whether jam, syrup, honey, or chocolates. Always finish a meal with a piece of apple or orange, or even a couple of dates, or a few seedless raisins. Then you are giving your little folk something to chew that will clean instead of crumble the teeth.



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