

How to Bring Up Baby.

(By HYGIEA.)

Published under the auspices of the Society for the Health of Women and Children.

"It is easier to put up a fence at the top of a precipice than to maintain an ambulance at the bottom."

THE TYRANNY OF HABITS.

AT the dawn of life it is easier to mould a child into good habits than into a bad, but once bad habits have been formed it may be extremely difficult to eradicate them—indeed, in spite of all that we can do, the child may lose not only its health and strength, but may even lose its life owing to the persistence of habits which undermine vitality and the resistiveness of the organism.

One of the most striking instances in this connection is what Darwin tells us as to his experiments with certain insects. I cannot at the moment recall the details, but the essential point was as follows:—In Nature the insect in question lived on certain leaves and grew apac—say it was the paper-mulberry. Darwin started them on other leaves instead—say lettuce leaves. Once the insects had acquired a taste for the wrong leaves they would eat nothing else. Nothing would induce them to go back to their natural food, though the wrong food did not nourish them properly, and led invariably to their premature death. My readers will realize how closely this accords with what may take place in the case of children who are allowed to drift into the practice of quoted from Dr. Still further illustrate habits.

The following concluding remarks quoted from Dr. Still further illustrate the subject:

Dr. Still on Morbid habits in Children.

"Stewart H. aged one year and a-half, was brought because for the last two months he had taken to eating mud, hearthstone, bits of brick, soap, or anything he can get hold of." He was particularly fond of the white plaster off toy horses.

"His appetite for normal food was bad. The bowels had been constipated, and occasionally after such things as those mentioned he retched.

"The child was very irritable, and during the persistence of the dirt-eating habit he had begun to sleep badly, talking in his sleep and starting up in terror at night. He was intelligent, and showed no sign of disease except some rickets. Three months later he was taken to Scotland, with the result that his general health improved greatly, and his appetite became good, and he lost his craving for unnatural food altogether.

"Mud and mortar seem to be special favourites with these children. Coal, cinders, and gravel were also mentioned in some of my cases. In nine out of my 14 cases the habit began in the second year of life. In one only it began in the first year (at eight months); in two it began in the fourth year.

"Now what is the significance of this curious perversion of appetite. As I have mentioned, there was nothing in any of the cases to which I have referred to suggest any mental deficiency. Imbeciles often show a similar habit of dirt-eating but in them it is less strange, for it is associated usually with an extreme degree of mental deficiency.

"Some light is thrown upon the point by the disorders with which dirt-eating is associated. It goes, I think, in the majority of cases with definite indications of the 'nervous' temperament. One child I had seen a few months earlier for spasmodic nodding, another a few months after the dirt-eating was attended for, with the habit, another subsequently developed stuttering and cannibalism, others, like the cases I have mentioned, show an abnormal pica-ness or excitability.

"No doubt these nervous symptoms are aggravated by more or less digestive disturbance set up by the abnormal material eaten, but I think that the development of other nervous disorders, in some cases after the pica has entirely ceased, and the family history in others, go to prove that the nervousness is partly at least cause rather than effect.

"In almost all cases the appetite for ordinary food is extremely poor—in fact,

it is often this rather than the dirt-eating which excites the mother's anxiety. The abdomen is usually large, the stools sometimes contain mucus, and the bowels are constive or irregular.

"It is natural enough that such symptoms should be induced by the indigestible substances eaten; but in some cases it has seemed to me clear that there was digestive disturbance before this habit began, and I suspect that this is so in the majority of cases, and that the subsequent discomfort, hardly felt as such perhaps by the child, plays some part in exciting the habit of dirt-eating in a nervous child. This is confirmed, I think, by the effect of treatment. The duration of the habit is often months, or even some years, if no special measures are taken for its cure.

Treatment.

"The first essential in treatment is to prevent the child obtaining the dirt, coal, mortar, or other injurious substance for which it craves; the second is to improve its general health, especially its digestion.

"There is no part of the treatment more valuable than a few weeks at a bracing seaside place, or, if this is not attainable, at some high-standing, breezy, inland country place. At the same time, it will be necessary to aid digestion by the most careful dieting, and care must be taken that the food is not such as to set up fermentation in the bowels, or to keep up a mucous catarrh by its irritating residue. I need not repeat here what I have already said elsewhere on the subject of feeding and indigestion. These cases of pica call for careful adaptation of the diet to the digestive capacity of the particular child."

(Gen. Frederic Still, M.A., M.D., F.R.C.P., Professor of Diseases of Children, King's College, London).

Brown's Baby.

This is what the Browns had to say of the latest addition to the family:—

The Mother: "Oh, isn't he the bestest, grandest, handsomest, smartest little fellow in the whole world? Such eyes! Such features! Such shoulders! And hear him talk, will you? Why, he understands perfectly every word I say."

The Father: "There's a boy for you! Smith will brag about that kid of his, will he? Well, you just wait until this youngster is a month old, and I'll take the conceit out of Smith."

Little Bobby: "So that's what the doctor brought, eh? I suppose he must have a spite against this family."

Little Bella: "Oh, ma, he's swallowed all his teeth, and all his hair's blowed off!"

Bachelor Brother: "I don't want to cause you folks any anxiety, but he's the smallest human being I ever saw outside a penny museum. You want to feed him up on roast beef and porter-house steak right away."

Uncle Jack (a dog fancier): "Is his nose cold? Hold him up by the back of his neck, and we'll see if he's got any fleck."

Grandma: "There you go! Spoiling the child as soon as his eyes open! I suppose when he's a month old we shall all have to stand on our heads to amuse him! Give me that infant this instant, before he has spasms and dies!"

The Family Cat: "Well, that settles my hash. It's either him or a new home or become a tailless feline inside of a month. Why, that kid's got a grip on him like a longshoreman's!"

The Baby: "Goo-goo! Goo-goo! Goo-goo-goo-goo!" Or, in other words, "I'll make it jolly hot for this family—about midnight!"

Tame Wolf as a Pet.

Mrs M. T. Lloyd tells in "Badminton" very prettily the true life story of a tame wolf. She bought it as a cub from a man who had caught it on a jungle path. It soon became her favourite pet and fast friends with her pet cat. After eight months' absence she returned to Lucknow and sent for the pet she had been without so long:

"On going out in a dressing gown I saw a creature like a beautiful collie, with a large ruff, a thick brush, and glorious fawn eyes, held on the chain by a wild-looking pahari (hillman). She glared at me a moment, and when I spoke to her made a dash towards me and threw herself at my feet, whining like a puppy, then sprang on and pawed, and finally lay down and rolled with sheer joy. No doubt about the recogni-

tion and the delight at being home again. She was let off the chain, and after dancing round me for some minutes, suddenly made a bolt for my bedroom, the French windows of which opened on to the verandah, through it to the bathroom, and with one bound into my tub—as in old days.

Her appetite for meals was always small, but she loved sweets, sugar, and all sorts of cake. I kept a bag of large brown bull's-eyes in my room wherewith to appease her when she took it into her head to howl at the moon. After two or three she would be quite comforted and lie down quietly to sleep."

"Grannie," as the wolf was called, had a particular dislike to black clothes. The sight of a clergyman made her lay her nose to the ground and howl. The poor beastie died at the Zoo in London.

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August 6th 1912.

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(Signed) A. M. KYDD.

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