



Better Canadian Babies



Department of Child Hygiene

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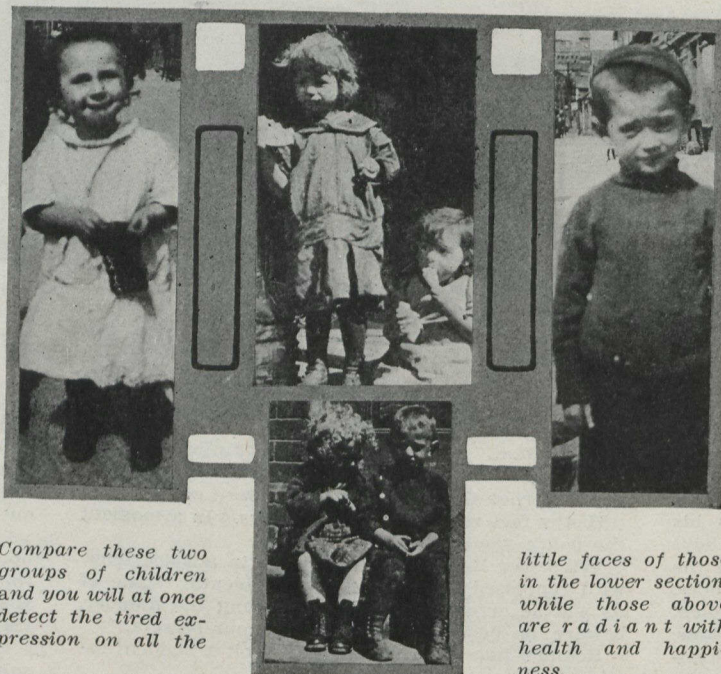
A DEPARTMENT giving much valuable information for Canadian mothers in whose keeping is the future success of Canada, as a nation of strong, vigorous citizens. Mothers are invited to ask questions on any subject concerning their children, which will be answered free, and in a personal manner, if an addressed, stamped envelope is enclosed for reply. The Editors of the Child Hygiene Department will take a personal interest in rendering every assistance possible to the readers of the CANADIAN HOME JOURNAL.

It is not a "comfy," warm, little bit of humanity, all rosy and fluffy, and perfumed from its bath, nestling down in your arms with one wee hand tucked under your chin, and eyelids drooping softly over dear eyes, all misty with sleep, that I am thinking of. Ah, would that it were! It is not the lusty, bouncing youngster of three or four, nodding suspiciously over the last mouthfuls of pudding at his mid-day meal, where, the Sandman having at last definitely asserted his sway, the little lad or lass tumbles joyfully into bed, for that blessed noon-day sleep, which makes for the fairyland of babyhood another happy day, that I am going to write about. Nay, it is not of these, but of the scores of little children being "born tired" or made tired from the commencement of their lives, who are denied that gloriously recuperative sleep of childhood, and the equally glorious good nerve power resulting therefrom.

You may see "tired babies" every day on our city streets in go-carts, and automobiles, in baby-carriages of all grades and descriptions, and in parents', nurses' and older children's arms. You may see them in our beautiful rural districts, tossed about, "minded," rather *tormented*, by assiduous parents, sisters and relatives. You may see them, fat, or thin, clean or dirty, in gorgeous habiliments or in ragged clothing, but wherever you meet them, the same piteous expression of mental even more than physical fatigue, or absolute ennui, is visible. The heavy, lustreless, dark-rimmed albeit beautiful eyes, the down-drooping mouth, and often pinched little nose, the deathly white or muddy or eczematous skin, the ever-present stopper in the mouth, the little flabby hands, holding in many cases some awful sweet, or death-dealing fruit or ice-cream cone, while the child's nauseated look reveals the condition of the stomach. These things, some or all, mark the "tired baby." The lack of abounding, restless life, the queer ability to "stay put" or "be good," or endure endless lap-sitting or petting, the weary, fretful crying, also indicate the "tired baby." Oh, so tired must the poor little mortals be, that perhaps none of us "grown-up folks" can realize it, because an element of freedom is always in our fatigue, while the baby is helplessly at the mercy of the stronger being. The strangest part of it all is that the parents, friends and admirers of these children never seem to see what I have described, or dimly noting it, do not try to work out the reason why, only deciding that Providence has been unkind to them, when a normal, strong, well-fed, *well-slept* little human animal is admired, or that "such a big, bouncing baby is, well — rather coarse." What is the matter with our standards of babyhood, and of lots of other things, I wonder? Why do we endure tired, anaemic babies, French-heeled shoes, high starched collars, outrageous food prices, and a score of other remediable evils? Perhaps some of my readers may be interested to know how to help, and finally to have no more "tired babies."

We divided them into two classes, those who were "born tired," and those who were "made tired." Now, the first class exists because the mother did not receive proper care during pregnancy. And the mother did not receive proper care primarily because *her* mother did not teach her the wonder and beauty and sacredness of her body and its functions, and the eternity of the gift of life that was hers, and likewise her parents may not have taught her that in order to be truly happy and have beautiful and victorious children she must select a father for them, who has known how to reverence his own body, as well as hers, and to accept from his Creator as a trust the God-like ability of giving of new life, endless life. All this primarily; secondarily because such fathers and mothers willfully remain in ignorance of these life truths, for it is possible for even the poorest person who can read to get beautiful, chaste and popularly written literature on all these subjects, and any man or woman of average intelligence to-day, who under ordinary circumstances spoils before its birth a little one's chances of health and happiness, does so because they are too thoughtless, too selfish, or too filled with obsolete ideas to learn better. The blame of this indictment may not be shifted. The husband who still leaves the heaviest weight of the worry of things and of work beyond her strength, of any

"TIRED BABIES"



Compare these two groups of children and you will at once detect the tired expression on all the

little faces of those in the lower section, while those above are radiant with health and happiness.

kind, upon the woman who carries his child must forever bear the blame of the child's lack of health. The world-thought, the community, the social system, or whatever it be, which lays on any pregnant woman burdens too heavy to be borne, these, that is the individuals who profit thereby, must account for the suffering and *sin* they cause to a just God when the day of reckoning comes. The mother-to-be who, in the face of all the light and widespread physical knowledge of to-day, deliberately keeps her eyes and her mind shut, and because of social customs, or careless indifference, or wifely or housewifely ambitions, exhausts her own vitality, and so cheats her babe of its rights, carries her own punishment forever with her, in either a tiny grave on the hillside and in her heart, or a weary fretful, oftentimes unbeautiful child, who some day, in the light of greater knowledge, may curse the day it was born. No man or woman has a right to wait till that minimum of time, the nine months prior to a baby's birth, to settle these issues. Everyone who has reached years of mature thought at all should have settled such questions for themselves long before the lives of their children commence.

In the second class are the babies who are made tired after birth. With all man's foolishness Nature is very kind, and one begins to understand what God's "showing mercy unto thousands (of generations) of those that love Him" must mean: Far more little ones come into life fairly healthy and beautiful than one would imagine possible under

existing circumstances. Our land is a good land, and the very Earth seems kind to her little nurslings. Of how many scores of these are killed or injured before they reach two years of age, our vital statistics give shocking account. Forming a large portion of the injured are the "tired babies."

What makes them tired? Two obvious causes that would make you or anyone else tired. Overwork and poor food. "But," asks someone with incredulous scorn, "how could anyone overwork a helpless baby?" It is done in many ways, but the two most all-embracing and powerful are—by denying them their sleep, and by handling and "amusing" them.

The experiment has been tried, and it has been found that a person may live for many days without food, but without sleep man either dies or becomes insane. Says Dr. Holt, that eminent specialist on babies and children: "A healthy infant during the first few weeks sleeps from twenty to twenty-two hours out of the twenty-four, waking only from *hunger, discomfort or pain*. During the first *six months* (the italics are mine), from sixteen to eighteen hours a day, the waking periods being *only from half an hour to two hours longer*." (How about "amusing" those babies?) "At the age of one year, from fourteen to fifteen hours, viz., from eleven to twelve hours at night, and two or three during the day, usually in two naps. When two years of age, thirteen to fourteen hours daily. At four, eleven to twelve hours. From six to ten years, ten to eleven hours, and from ten to sixteen, nine hours are required." Compare this schedule with the sleep given to the average child, and one soon sees how far below the standard in providing for their children the average parents come. "And yet," someone is saying, "sleep costs nothing." I am not so sure of that. To the person in charge of a child that child's undisturbed, regular sleep costs all that the following of any set plan must cost the follower. It costs self-denial on the part of the parents. It costs convenience, and sometimes popularity. Exactly the same thing may be said of correct feeding. Perhaps no one who has not attempted to bring up a child in the straight and narrow path of health common-sense can ever know the pitfalls and snares that can beset such an endeavor. What tenderly-advising or indignantly and dignifiedly expostulating female relatives and friends! What jeering, or sly, meat-producing male ones! What easily-affronted neighbors, and what other children and servants with "ways that are dark, and tricks that are vain" enough to rival even Mark Twain's noted "Chinee," one encounters! But even so, all these dangers faced, laughed over, or wept over, as the case may be, the result in the end, of well-doing in this instance far surpasses the troubles endured.

In regard to the so-called "amusing" of babies — amusement means pastime. Our pastimes when we need them are what we have been trained to enjoy. Does a little *new* being need to have time helped to pass for it. Does it find time so long, think you?

"The world is so full of a number of things
"I am sure we should all be as happy as kings," said one (Robert Louis Stevenson) who was very wise in his memory and knowledge of childhood. So much to hear, and see, and learn, coming out of that mysterious home of baby souls into this. To the little one lying peacefully in basket or carriage, what more amusement is needed than the movement of his mother's hands as she works not far from him; the smiling of her eyes as she often turns to look at him; the sound of her voice, or of her footsteps as she moves to and fro in her daily task? Then there are the little twinkling leaves on the branch above his outdoor bed, or the shadows on the wall at night. There are bird-songs, and so many homey noises. And later there are his own pink fingers and toes, and *when he is able to hold it* a ball, or rattle, or doll, or anything else — all new, all wonderful, all of strange shape, and color and sound perhaps — *so many things to see, to know, to hear, to learn*. Does he need to be jerked, to be danced and dandled, and grimaced at, and chucked at—to be tickled, and pinched, and startled with discordant and alarming sounds? Oh, no—And when he has to endure all these eccentricities

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