

### HOW TO MAKE CHILDREN HEALTHY AND HAPPY.

A MOST interesting lecture was lately delivered by Dr. Alice Ker in Edinburgh, under the auspices of the Edinburgh Health Society, her subject being, "How to Make Children Healthy and Happy." She began by laying it down as an invariable rule that children would never be healthy unless they were happy, and would never be happy unless they were healthy. That many children were constantly robbed of their precious birthright of health, was seen too plainly in the lanes and alleys of our cities, and was emphasised by the knowledge of the fact that one child out of every five died within the first year of life, and one out of every three within the first five years.

Proceeding to point out some simple ways in which the child's health, and therefore his happiness, might be secured most effectually, Dr. Ker said that in the forefront of all must be placed the question of cleanliness, the neglect of which probably produced more diseases than any other single cause, and, from the first moment of birth, its beneficial action might be made to work. It was not so generally known as it ought to be, that many children who were said to be "born blind" had really been born seeing, and that blindness had resulted from neglect during the first days of life. The eyes of a new-born baby should be carefully washed with a clean, soft linen rag before anything else was attended to, great care being taken in the washing not to introduce into the eyes any of the matters which were being wiped off. But the advantages of cleanliness were not confined to the eyes, or to very young babies. It must be observed, as strictly as possible, all through the child's life. The skin, especially of a growing child, should be washed all over with warm water and soap once at least in the twenty-four hours, when children have to live in a town, with all its smoke and dust. Ordinary yellow soap should not be used for washing children, as it contained too much alkali and was too harsh, and white curd soap, which was sufficiently mild, was no dearer.

Considering the next question of food for infants, the lecturer said that for very young infants, the proper food was that provided by nature, and that should be given as far as possible, even if artificial feeding had to be resorted to in order to provide a sufficiency. Where the child was brought up "by hand," the very strictest cleanliness must be observed in the management of the vessels in which the food was prepared, and the feeding-bottles used should never be those with long india-rubber tubes, as it was almost impossible to keep

them clean. As children grew older their food must become more solid, but it must be simple and wholesome. Much sugar should be avoided, except what was found in natural, ripe fruits, and very little butcher's meat should be eaten by children of any age. It was unnecessary to say that alcohol in any form should be shunned as a poison, and even the stimulants of tea and coffee were very injurious. Strict regularity in the hours of meals was necessary for the complete health of a child, and no meal should be taken in a state of exhaustion from either bodily or mental work.

The cleanliness which was so important for the skin and for food was hardly less so for the clothing of the child; and frequent changes of the garments worn next the skin were absolutely essential for preserving health as it ought to be preserved. The dress of very little babies left a great deal to be desired. The under garments should be fewer in number, warmer in texture, and more easily fastened than they were at present; and the long, trailing outer robes, which pressed on the child's toes and hampered its movements, should be given up altogether, except for state occasions, such as christening. As children grew up the best material in which to clothe them was wool. While scanty clothing was to be avoided, a word of warning might not be amiss on the subject of too much clothing and coddling. To over-burden a child with garments, especially if they were heavy, and to make him feel too hot to move about freely and rapidly, was to weaken the skin so that it would not be able to discharge all its duties properly, and when a chill came upon it, instead of acting promptly to resist it, the enfeebled muscles and glands would succumb, and "a cold," if nothing worse, would be the result. This applied specially to the custom of winding thick woollen comforters round and round the necks of little children, so that all the moisture and gases from the skin were confined close to it, instead of passing away into the air, and sore throats were cultivated, instead of being guarded against. The boots and shoes of children were important matters, and should be made to fit the foot by having the broadest toes procurable.

Having urged the necessity of exercise being afforded to children of all ages, from the time the infant was old enough to kick on the Nurse's lap, Dr. Ker went on to speak of the occupations, recreations, and discipline of children. In this connection she gave a word of warning to mothers who were nursing their children, and who might not be aware how much the state of their own health, and even temper, might affect the health of the child. Cases had been known in which a mother had indulged in an outburst of passion just before nursing her child, with the result that the

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