

THE
BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING
WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED
THE NURSING RECORD
EDITED BY MRS BEDFORD FENWICK

No. 1,406.

SATURDAY, MARCH 13, 1915.

Vol. LIV

EDITORIAL.

EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

The training of young children is a duty often devolving upon members of the nursing profession, for those responsible for their welfare rightly consider that the physical well being of delicate children is best ensured by placing them under the supervision of trained nurses.

No woman, however, who appreciates her responsibility can be satisfied with merely maintaining her charges in a state of physical fitness. Their moral development must also be her constant care.

A large and appreciative audience of women attended the 6th of the "Advanced Course of Lectures on Infant Care," at the Royal Society of Medicine. This one was the second of two delivered by Dr. Forsyth, F.R.C.P. The lecturer had evidently studied deeply the important subject of the psychology of the child. In due gradation, and very sympathetically, he traced the influences and impressions of childhood, and the development of the mind. Emphasising the importance of early training, he said that the child's character began to form at the outset and that therefore it was never too early to commence moral training, which corresponds with the emotional side of the child's nature. He dealt with the subject from two main aspects, namely:—

1. What was passing in the child's own mind.
2. Consideration of the influences external to the child.

Among the special points to be borne in mind he laid stress upon the essential truth that in order to understand children, one must know how to put oneself in their place. They are possessed of greater sincerity than adults, because they have not acquired any prejudices, therefore the parent or teacher must empty her mind of prejudices. It is a curious fact that although

the first four years of life are the most emotional, the impressions received cannot be recalled, except by suitable means. The lecturer alluded to psycho-analysis as the suitable means.

The early fancies of young children are of a crudely sensuous animal source at the outset. Imagination is a strong force in the character of the child. Dr. Forsyth appeared to think that a child was more imaginative than adults realised, and this resulted sometimes in the misunderstanding of the child, and at a period when sharp conflicts are going on, he is apt to be too severely judged by others.

Dr. Forsyth touched upon several interesting points in connection with the affections of the child. It is a common thing for children to be attracted by the parent of the opposite sex, and he pointed out that when this is very strong, and should the parent prove unworthy, it is a great shock to the child, but does not necessarily alienate the affections. Jealousy and fear are two other great influences of the child's mental development. It was explained that the jealousy in the first born was usually first aroused when another was born, and consequently the psychology of the first born differs from the psychology of the others. In dealing with the influence of fear, the lecturer spoke of that common fear of the dark, and gave the following explanation:—Children when left alone to go to sleep, go over the experiences of the day, they re-enact them; should they be pleasant, no harm is done, but should they be otherwise, imagination increases the fear. Every phase of the child's mind, and every stage of its childhood and youth were touched upon by the lecturer, who occasionally punctured his remarks by apt illustrations. It is interesting to note that in this "The Century of the Child" the necessity of the study of its psychology, so long neglected, is now being practically realised.

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