

Mental Influences during Pregnancy.

By A. E. HOPKINS.

IT WAS THE CUSTOM in ancient Greece for pregnant women to spend a great deal of their time contemplating beautiful things. From the moment of conception to the actual birth their minds dwelt on high ideals and their eyes sought the beauty that was around them. All this was practised with one idea, that their children should be born with beautiful bodies and minds and no one can deny that these Grecian women did produce a race of beautiful and intellectual human beings.

Doctors and nurses specialising in midwifery can testify to the relationship between certain marks on a body and the mental state of the mother which preceded their appearance. Although the variety of these markings is very wide there is no evidence that ownership proclaims any special virtue. It seems, however, to have some bearing on the mother's thoughts during her pregnancy as related to the unborn child, and this fact is the point of interest herein reviewed.

The power of the mind over the body is acknowledged to be so profound that there is more than a modicum of truth in the above statement. Therefore if it is true it goes a long way towards the acceptance of the possibility of physical manifestations after birth being due to mental prenatal influences.

To beget beauty there must be beauty in thought in the mother for beauty begets beauty and this maternal influence, through the intricacies of the mental processes, of which we seem to know so much but conversely really know so little, is transferred to the unborn child, to be developed or destroyed when the child takes on its separate existence.

This thought of beauty in its purest sense must reach above bodily form, mental heights and physical conditions. It must emanate from the soul, from the innermost cells of the mind. This beauty of soul can be seen reflected on the faces of some women during the latter stages of pregnancy, and the result is a child born with influences that can react to its advantage throughout its life.

The subject of thought or mind transference is a complex one, far beyond the ability of the ordinary woman to understand but a more general explanation of its effect on the unborn child may simplify what is meant by it.

When a woman realises that conception has taken place the first reaction should be that of joy at the thought of the marvel that is to develop in her own body. Unfortunately this pleasurable state of mind is only too rare due to our present social laws and the common state of jealousy that is engendered by such knowledge.

To participate in the artificialities of modern life, with its endless supply of mechanical enjoyment, is the wish of many women but when she realises that, as the development of pregnancy takes place, she will be able to take part in them less and less, often she becomes bitter against society and regrets her condition. This attitude towards the greatest of Nature's many marvels is, to say the least, contemptuous, particularly in the woman socially well placed with enough wealth to smooth over all difficulties, but for the poor woman there is another outlook.

With a poor woman there often develops a sense of

fear and worry, because of the approaching difficulties due to the conditions of life in her lowly sphere, and to an extent some sympathy with her is warranted.

In appreciation of the wonders of motherhood, and in the realisation of the effects on the unborn child of the mental influence of the mother, all thoughts of fear and worry as to the future should be banished ruthlessly from the woman's mind, to be replaced by the beautifying effects of thoughts of joy—real joy, at what is about to happen.

The mother's mind, once cleared of negative thoughts should search for the beauties of life that are inherent in true love, generosity, kindness, self-sacrifice, tolerance, wise understanding and other positive and beautiful qualities. Her mind should concentrate on these soulful thoughts all her waking hours, waking with the spirit of thankfulness at her creative ability, and drifting into blessed sleep at night time with the knowledge that the child within her is hers to make or mar, by her own private thoughts.

What the mother thinks during her term of pregnancy has its reflection on the child's character in later years and these thoughts and their reflections can be analysed into two groups, virtues and vices.

The marital life of the woman is influenced by the moods of others, particularly those of her husband, whose thoughts and emotions indirectly also have their repercussions on the developing child, through the mind of the mother. An understanding woman will counter the negative influences of irritability, hate, selfishness and other undesirable manifestations by the antidotes of love, generosity and calmness, which in turn will affect in a positive way, the mental development of the child in later life. In other words she will substitute virtues for vices whenever possible, and by aiming at perfection in herself will transmit the idea of perfection to her child.

In order that the nervous system of the child should be strong and well balanced, the woman should always endeavour to control her own. She should always strive to be calm and serene, for this striving in itself is beneficial in its reactions. Cheerfulness at all times is another essential.

Apart from the mind the body also needs care. Attention to diet and exercise, the latter of the rhythmic kind is best, and plenty of clean fresh air are all necessary, for it is always easier to have a healthy mind in a healthy body.

If only the germ of the idea contained in the foregoing remarks is appreciated, any effort made towards the ideal in mind and body can only result in the production of finer and better children in every way.

Studying the Prevention of Water Pollution

ENGINEERS AND RESEARCH WORKERS from South Africa, Italy, France, Austria, Finland and Belgium assembled in London on May 21st for a fortnight's British Council course on Water Pollution Prevention for which the fee is £21 each person.

Among them are Miss E. Hogg, Microbiologist to the City of Johannesburg; Mr. H. W. Cajander, Chief Chemist of the Sewage Purification Works in Helsinki; Dr. A. Passaro, Professor in charge of Public Health Engineering in the University of Naples; and Dr. Alfred Schinzel, Director of the Bacteriological Research Institution, Municipality of Vienna.

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