

Mental Health

By D. M. LeBOURDAIS
Director, Division of Education, Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene

UNREASONABLE FEARS CAUSE MUCH MISERY

Ignorant or Thoughtless Parents Often Responsible For Children Becoming Unduly Fearful

Among the patients regularly found in every mental hospital are those obsessed with fears. That most of these fears are quite unreasonable is evident to everyone except their victims, but to them they are very real. Such cases, however, are extreme. But the difference between these patients and the rest of us is only a matter of degree. Talking to the mental hospital patient, we can easily see that his fears are largely imaginary. But we are often unable to see that our own lesser fears are for the most part quite as unnecessary.

Fear, of course, can be constructive, such, for instance, as fear for future want, which results in industry; the fear of ignorance, which leads to study. Even these are likely to be overdone, however, like the fear of want which leads to niggardliness and hoarding.

While fear has a very decided action upon the human body, it is probable that the effects of fear caused by actual, definite situations such as that experienced when one narrowly escapes being run over by a motor car, are not as serious as those due to imaginary sources.

The world is full of people who are always worrying about something; they worry about their health, they fear the loss of their jobs or their money, they are unduly susceptible to the opinions of others, or they labor under a sense of guilt or shame because of some act they have committed.

Doubtless persons prone to such fears owe something to their hereditary make-up, but it is clear that many of them have been made so by the habits begun in childhood by parents, ignorant or thoughtless, or themselves also victims of unreasonable fears. Who does not know of the mother who magnifies her child's every pain or ache, who enlarges endlessly upon every slight misdeed with suggestions of divine wrath to come, who rushes to shield him from every conceivable contact with life, mixing in his quarrels and developing in him a sensitiveness to slights, real or imaginary, of which he himself might never be aware.

The best equipment for life that parents can give their children is not to dwarf their imagination but to direct it in healthful and constructive channels, to endow them with the ability to look the world squarely in the face and to accept with fortitude whatever may come their way.

(Information on any point not covered here will be given in later issues if you will address your questions to "Mental Health", 111 St. George Street, Toronto, Ontario.)

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CARE OF THE EARS

The ear is divided into three parts. The outer ear extends from the outside to the ear-drum behind which lies the middle ear. The middle ear is connected with the upper part of the throat by the Eustachian tube.

The existence of this tube makes it comparatively easy for any infection to spread up into the middle ear from the nose or throat. That is why middle ear disease, which result in deafness, is not infrequently a complication of measles and scarlet fever.

To prevent ear disease, we should begin by preventing, as far as possible, infections of the nose and throat. Such infections include the common cold, measles, scarlet fever and diphtheria.

Enlarged adenoids should be re-

moved. One reason which makes their removal advisable is that they often interfere with the opening of the Eustachian tube and so cause deafness, and, at the same time, increase the chance of infection.

The middle ear, in addition to being connected with the throat by means of the Eustachian tube, is also connected with the cavities which are contained in the bone and which may be felt behind the ear—the mastoid.

It is important and desirable to protect the middle ear from infection in order to preserve the hearing, and it is equally important to do so because of the danger of mastoid disease. Just as the middle ear becomes diseased by the spread of infection from the throat up the Eustachian tube, so disease is spread from the middle ear to the mastoid.

A running ear should never be allowed to go on without proper treatment, in the belief that it will get better itself, or if it occurs in a child, that he will outgrow it. The discharge may cease in time and it may seem that a cure has taken place, but in such cases appearances are usually deceptive.

What has happened in many cases of this type is that by the time the discharge has ceased, the hearing mechanism has been so badly damaged that hearing is entirely lost or there is a permanent partial loss. To neglect the discharging ears of a child is to expose him to be deaf when he grows up.

Ear-ache means trouble in the middle ear. It is a symptom which should not be disregarded. Temporary relief may be had by applying to the ear a hot water bottle, or cloths wrung out in hot water, but this is nothing more than temporary. The physician's advice should be secured.

Questions concerning Health, addressed to the Canadian Medical Association, 184 College Street, Toronto, will be answered personally by letter.

The Porcupine Advance is seeking, through requests in its columns, to establish the identity of the first white resident of the camp that was later to become the thriving town of Timmins.

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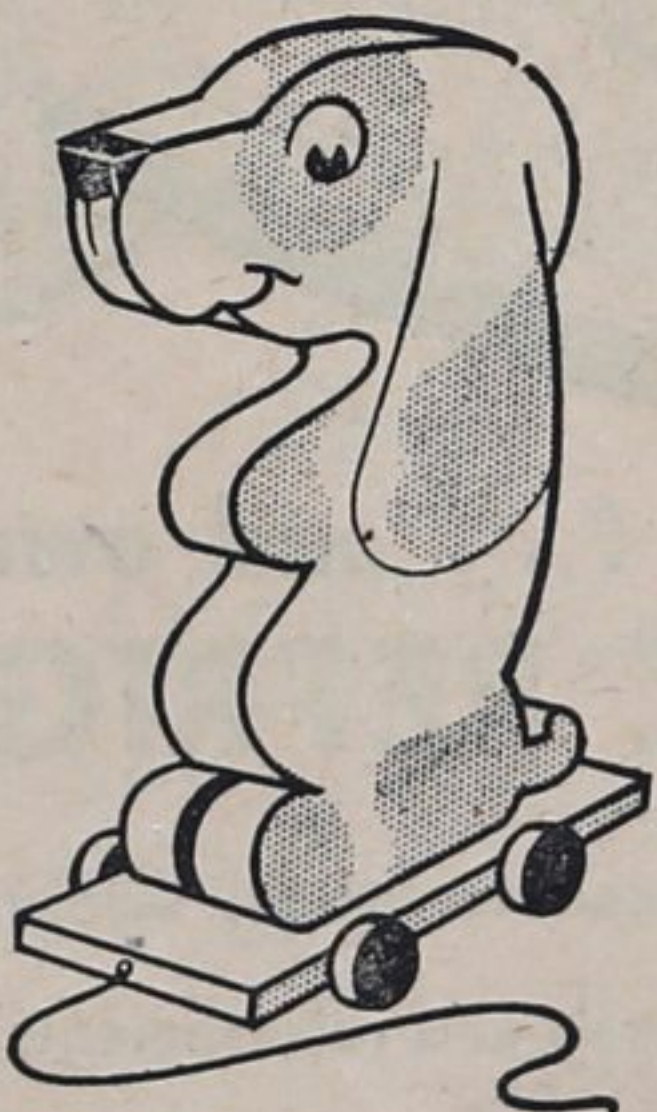
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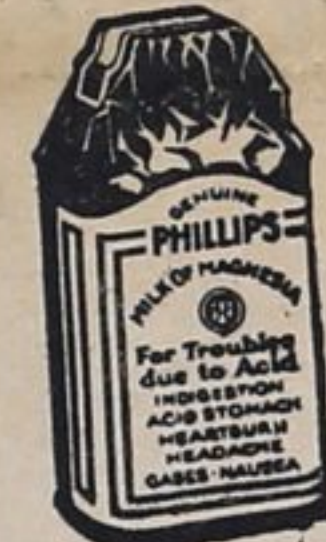
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