

Mental Health

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Sensitive, Thin-Skinned Persons Susceptible to Slight and Affronts often Cause Trouble

One morning a young man whom we shall call Frank Jones, though that is not his name, found Joe Brown's hat hanging on the cloak-room hook that he generally used. Hooks were not assigned to any particular employee, but most of the men had their favorite hooks. Frank, more methodical than most, was irritated to find another hat on the hook which he looked on as his own. He was especially sore this time because he remembered having found this same hat on his hook once before. The truth was that Joe, not so methodical as Frank, had simply hung his hat on the first available peg; he generally came in later than Frank, otherwise the thing might have happened oftener before. But Frank was convinced that Joe had done it to spite him. He went to his desk hot with anger and suspicion. A few minutes later he saw Joe go over to another clerk and say something at which they both laughed, and Frank thought, they glanced in his direction. He was sure they were talking about him.

At lunch in the company cafeteria he, as usual, sat by himself; he preferred to read rather than join a group of others who were usually noisy and, according to his views, rather silly. This day, however, when the others gathered in groups about the tables he felt they were doing so to avoid him, and he blamed Joe for turning the others against him.

Each day after this he watched Joe narrowly, and each day fancied he detected some other slight or action calculated to annoy him. He became more and more morose, until finally his attitude was noticed by others and comments were made. He, of course, became aware of this new interest, which helped increase his resentment. He became so slovenly and careless in his work that he was reprimanded by the office manager, and in a huff he resigned. Three days later he walked into the office, pulled a pistol on Joe and if he had not been overpowered would have shot him.

When he was examined by a psychiatrist, or mental expert, he was found to be suffering from paranoia, a form of insanity which is characterized, among other manifestations, by undue suspicion or delusions of persecution. This was no sudden development. He had always been a solitary individual, rather unsocial, overly thin-skinned, and sensitive to slights and affronts.

Parents should discourage in their children any tendency to prefer solitude to the company of others, and especially any tendency to feel slighted or picked on. Adults who discover in themselves such tendencies should take steps to overcome them through self-study and the cultivation of wider and freer contacts with other people. If they feel unable to cope with the situation they should seek the advice and assistance of a psychiatrist. Suspicions like fears, are signs of unhealthy mental attitudes.

(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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Health Service

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 GRANT FLEMING, M.D. — ASSOCIATE SECRETARY

WHAT TO EAT

Individual enthusiasts are very often a serious menace to those who follow their misguided teachings. Enthusiasts, even when we may fairly call them cranks, are in most cases sincere. Because of their sincerity and their enthusiasm, they are convincing, and this accounts, no doubt, for the extensive following which many of them have.

The enthusiasts on the subject of some particular food or diet are generally persons who are sure that some one food or combination of foods will benefit the human race. They overlook the fact that what may be of help to one individual may not be good for all. The experience on which they base their conclusions is so

limited that their contentions do not stand when generally applied.

The body requires a number of substances which must be secured in the food we eat if the body is to be kept in a state of health.

When we come to consider what we should eat in order to secure a sufficient quantity of all the substances which we require, we think of all the foods used, not merely this one or that one.

Much of what is written or said concerning the value of one particular food is based upon the idea that we are to use or depend upon one or, at the most a very few articles of diet. This is wrong. The diet of the normal, healthy adult should include the use of a wide variety of foods.

Fortunately for us, and thanks to science which has given us

rapid transportation and discovered safe and satisfactory methods for the preservation of foods, we are able to have a wide variety of foods the year round.

Not many years ago, scurvy was prevalent during the winter months. We do not suffer from this disease nowadays, because we can have fresh or canned green vegetables and fresh or dried fruits at any season of the year.

The increased use of milk and milk products, of green leafy vegetables and fruits, and of cuts of meat which were previously not eaten, such as liver, constitutes a move in the right direction.

The normal, healthy adult would be well advised not to follow the food faddist. Because one man does well on some unusual diet, this does not mean that it is suitable for another. Because some roughage in the diet is required, it does not follow that a larger amount is desirable; indeed, it may be harmful.

The normal, healthy adult should eat a wide variety of food. Milk and milk products, fruit and green leafy vegetables should form a regular part of the diet.

The amount of food to be used depends upon age and occupation, and can be regulated by watching any variation in the weight.

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

Walter Frieman, serving a six months term at the district jail at North Bay, escaped from that institution on Friday last and was still missing at last reports.

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