

CHAPTER VIII

Conclusion



ONE of the most important things which a mother must keep in mind is to give only such information and in the manner suitable to the child's age. Children differ so greatly that it is impossible to lay down any rules as to what and how much should be told at any age.

Some children are very curious and very receptive always while others have little curiosity and even when told sex truths pay little attention to the telling or seem little impressed by it.

It is for each mother to do as she finds advisable. Children will often ask a question very seriously and before one can formulate an answer another question has been asked on an entirely different subject. But the fact that he has asked the question shows that the mind has awakened to this curiosity and he will no doubt ask it again.

Mothers be prepared! Do not force any thing it will all come in time if you keep close to the child in confidence. Just be prepared. When children are very young get them accus-

tomed to the naked body Let them un about naked at night perhaps while undressing for bed Let them bathe together or with you If this is done very early at any early age you will soon find that a boy's thoughts are clean regarding the naked body You can then tell him the names of the different parts for he will most likely ask and his curiosity will often entirely cease This is the type of boy who looks back upon life and feels he has always known the clean and beautiful of life

This is the opportunity to tell how to care for the body The teeth and nose should be cleansed morning and night When there is any itching of the rectum or sexual organs this is often caused by uncleanness and washing of these parts at once will often relieve the irritation

Teach that no part of the body should be touched unnecessarily by any one and when there is any discomfort of any kind to come to the mother who will attend to it See that no clothing on the child is tight or causes irritation for this often leads a child to touch and handle himself and forms the habit of masturbation

This is often acquired innocently even at the creeping age and the child becomes a victim and slave to the habit

Keep a close watch over children for this

habit without making them conscious of it especially if the child prefers to be alone or remains long in bed in the morning. These are by no means positive symptoms of the habit only when these signs are present keep your eyes open.

If you do find this habit is formed keep him up at night until he is sleepy or at least do not send him off to bed alone when he is not sleepy to lie and toss about with this temptation. Let someone read to him or tell him interesting stories which will divert his mind so he can fall asleep.

The same in the morning do not allow children to remain in bed after they have awakened do not have the bed too soft or the coverings too heavy the room should be cool and he should lie on his side rather than on the back. Keep his mind busy with interest. Get him to call you whenever he feels the temptation or to come where others are. If he will trust the mother and together fight this habit he will soon be the victor. Always it is the same—confidence confidence is such a necessary part of the child's life.

When a child is under four years of age is the ideal time to gain this confidence for then there is nothing personal in anything you say all interests are general. There is no shyness or consciousness of sex. If this has been done

when he takes up the study of the birds, one could be told him of the sexual parts that as some day he was to be a father he was made differently than mother or sister because he had a different part to do in life's work. That he must keep well and grow strong in order to do this work. There need be no mystery about the sexual truths impress upon it the sacredness of the process. There is no greater crime against a child than for a parent to allow a child to flounder about with half truths gathered from polluted and corrupt associates.

Be deliberate in giving the child the truth as much of it as he can take at a time, or as little *but have it the truth*.

Mothers will be confronted with questions concerning the vilest words of the street. Tell him frankly their meaning in your own clean way and the correct word to use in its place. You will find when his curiosity has been satisfied he will no longer be curious or have any special desire to use these words.

Every child first turns to his mother in confidence for all these questions. Never turn him off with a slight or embarrassed answer just rely upon your knowledge your natural knowledge and answer him. Every mother can do it. Do not make a Sunday School lesson of these teachings only to be taught once a week on very solemn occasions. Children hate being

talked at just be natural simple interesting informal and as often as the opportunity arrives

This confidence and early understanding will bind you together far beyond that most difficult period puberty and enable you to strengthen the child's ideals of manhood and womanhood

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