The Unbidden Guest—Malnutrition

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THE UNBIDDEN GUEST--MALNUTRITION

By GLADYS DODGE

ALTHOUGH THE WAR has been a hardship on many of the people we should be glad that it awakened us from our complacency on the subject of national health. We, as a nation, have always been more or less satisfied. "Yes we have been prosperous, business has been growing, education for our children has been improving," so we say, and lo! back comfortably in our cars and think we have done all there is to do. Many of us have felt sorry for the down trodden countries and have shed tears of sympathy when we heard of the terrible stories of the hunger of women and children of other countries. We have even pushed various enterprises to raise money to send over to alleviate such suffering.

Yes, we should, but do these same prosperous people of the United States, which includes you and I, realize that according to statistics there are still a third of the children in the United States malnourished, underweight and below par?

"Isn't that dreadful!" we exclaim. "However it is a comfort to know that such a condition prevails perhaps only in the big cities where there are crowded tenement districts." But that is not true, although it seems to be a common belief of many well meaning people. Whether you have an income of $1200 or $5000 a year, your children may be malnourished. In the recent extensive study made in Kansas City, Missouri, schools it was found that "no correlation whatever exists between material prosperity and malnutrition."

The Bureau of Child Hygiene investigated New York City and found that that city's million school children would be distributed about as follows: normal as regards nutrition, 175,000; passable, 611,000; seriously undernourished, 216,000. According to Dr. Josephine Baker, this last number is a decided increase over that of previous years. She gives the proportion of malnourished children as 5 per cent in 1914, 6 per cent in 1915, 12 per cent in 1916, and 21 per cent in 1917. Having such conditions revealed with over 200,000 malnourished children, with the number rapidly growing—is it any wonder that New York physicians and child welfare agencies have been aroused to the fact that it behooves them to do something about it?

In Chicago, one out of every three of school students are seriously undernourished it was discovered in a recent survey. This applies equally to the kindergarten, high school and college prep students. It was also discovered that this condition exists among better classes as well as the foreign settlements.

In Massachusetts and other states the same state of affairs exists. Realizing what is true of so many states is perhaps just as true of Iowa, it dawns on us that we are not so different from the rest of the country. Many foresighted people of Iowa have begun to investigate conditions and have found that malnutrition needs attention in our prosperous state. Questionnaires have recently been sent out and by the extension department of Iowa State College and they are anxiously awaiting returns.

The standard of absolute weight for a given child has not yet been established but there is a well-established average weight for a given height. According to Dr. William R. P. Emerson, of Boston, who has conducted and organized nutrition clinics and classes, the boy or girl who falls seven or more per cent below this weight fails just so far below normal conditions—which means that his or her school work either fails below standard also or is maintained at a high nervous, mental and spiritual cost.

Dr. Emerson had listed physical and nervous signs of malnutrition as follows:

PHYSICAL SIGNS

Pallor.

Lines under the eyes.

Lips parted—mouth breathing.

Flabby muscles.

Round shoulders.

"Angel wings," protruding shoulder blades.

Stooping posture.

Spinal curvature.

Prominent abdomen.

NERVOUS SIGNS

Restless.

Irritable.

Cries easily.

Says "No" to everything.

Night terrors.

Forgetful.

Inattentive.

Loss of temper over little things.

Worries himself and everyone else.

Dr. Emerson's system, which is based on extensive child study and investigation, is easy to follow. It consists of an adequate amount of the right kind of food, with abundant sleep, fresh air always, two extra milk lunches daily, two rest periods daily, and freedom from over exertion of any kind.

Late hours, hastily eaten breakfasts, too many sweets and habits of coffee drinking coupled with improper lunches are all responsible for much poor nutrition. Times of illness or unusual care at home, examination periods, over exertion of any kind have been found to mean further loss of weight to those who are already inclined to be under nourished.

It has been found that under proper nutritional guidance nine out of ten of these under nourished youngsters gained rapidly. Of those who remained "not free to gain" because of some handicap, nearly all, after receiving proper medical attention, steadily improved.

According to Dr. Emerson's system the pupils of a given school, grade or room are first weighed and measured. Those below normal weight are placed in nutrition classes under the guidance of the teacher or school nurse with the help of a physician. A simple system of individual charts at once increases competition among the children, who quickly develop rivalry in the joy of gaining weight.

Nutrition class pupils are given a thorough physical examination if it is possible in the presence of their mothers. Parents are always urged to attend the weekly class meetings because of the necessity of their assistance at home.
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Stars are awarded to the charts, red for a week of regularly taken extra lunches, blue for a week of observing rest periods, gold for the greatest gain in a single week, to further stimulate the interest of the students. The record of the food actually taken is based on ten two-day's report of all food eaten, which is handed in by each pupil. Naturally the importance of milk, cereals, fresh fruits and vegetables are impressed on the minds of the children.

Malnutrition concerns more than the home in which it exists. It is a community problem, the problem of every far seeing man and woman. We understand what malnutrition means in terms of lowered vitality, of susceptibility to disease and of reduced output of the individual which in turn affects the economic conditions of the whole community. Disease is the next factor and they must be supported by the state.

Yet we willingly endure this condition without attempting a remedy. Much may be done in our schools thru the teaching of health habits and the relation of food to health. However, we need that good accomplished only thru individual contact obtained in clinics and conferences.

Dr. Mary Swartz Rose says, "Feed a growing child properly and you have helped to make a good citizen. Every child has a right to a useful body and mind, but, in order to have either he must be given the right kind of food at the proper time."

Every city or town needs a leader in this crusade against malnutrition. The mother's and teacher's clubs and women's clubs provide a great opportunity to arouse interest along this line. By means of such an agency may the mothers and fathers be made to realize the seriousness of malnutrition and the need of eradicating it. Perhaps you are the one to start the ball rolling. Shoulder the responsibility in a great cause!

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the first of a series of articles on malnutrition. Next month Miss Dodge will deal with the malnutrition problem in Iowa.

WEDDED AT SUNSET IN JUNE

By CLARA JORDON

IT TAKES but a bit of a garden, a rose bush or two, or an ivy vine on a trellis to make a background for a sunset wedding in June. Peering eagerly through the pickets of a fence, as a child, I witnessed a wedding for the first time in my life and I have never forgotten that wedding or the impression it made on me. It was a sunset wedding in June and to my childish eyes it was lovelier and more enchanting than the weddings I had read in fairy tales. June is the month of flowers and weddings and beautiful days. Of all the times of the day, sunset is the prettiest and why should it not be the best time for a wedding?

Most of us have an idea that a wedding is an expensive affair. Some weddings are, it is true, but those are the elaborate ones that cause days of planning and anxiety on the part of the bride and her family and find everyone a nervous wreck when the important day finally arrives. Many girls have discarded the dreams they have cherished from childhood concerning their wedding, simply because they did not feel that they were able to compete with that type of a wedding. They have slipped quietly away to a parsonage to be married, thus forfeiting the memory of a joyous event.

The home is the usual scene for a wedding of this type. Gardens and woods are full of old fashioned flowers and June roses during this month and large bowls of them, arranged prettily throughout the house give it a home-like yet festive atmosphere. Baskets, vases and bowls are all attractive for the arranging of the floral decorations. The marriage itself takes place either on the porch, under a graceful vine or in the garden near a flowering bush, just as the sun is touching the horizon and a rosy glow is spread over the landscape. The guests all gather around on the lawn or porch as their attendant takes their places.

The bride wears a simple little frock, preferably of white, made of a soft clinging material. She may or may not wear a veil as she wishes and her hair will be neatly enhanced by a quaint bouquet of June roses and garden flowers, to resemble the old fashioned bouquets on valentines. If she has attendants, the bridesmaids and maid of honor wear simple little organdies to fit in with the color scheme of the wedding.

Following the ceremony and congratulations, the guests are invited in to the house where the dinner is in readiness. Here is where one of the special advantages of a wedding of this type enters in. In case of a large wedding, where everything had been carried out on an elaborate scale, a sumptuous dinner served in formal style would be the natural sequence. To do this a whole room of servants and a special caterer or two would be necessary. There would be that constant dread in the minds of the host and hostess that perhaps things will not go off as they should after all their effort and expense and as a result they will be nervous and unable to enjoy themselves. Instead of all these, a buffet service of the growing fowl is used. The dining table is drawn out to its full length and decorated with several pretty doilies, while a large basket of the season’s flowers sets the center.

The plates and silverware are arranged on the table before the guests enter the house, as also are the dishes. The hot foods, arranged on large platters, are brought in just before the service and each dish is supervised by one of the young girls who are in attendance to assist in the service. The guests help themselves and scat ter about the house informally in little groups to eat. After the first course has been completed, the girls collect the dishes, returning them to the table from whence they are removed to the kitchen. The next course is then brought in, the ice cream being placed on one end and the two cakes, the

That Bit of Garden, a Rose Bush and a Trellis!