

THE NERVOUS CHILD

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The nervous child by Hector Charles Cameron

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HECTOR CHARLES CAMERON

**THE
NERVOUS CHILD**

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THE NERVOUS CHILD

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"RESPECT the child. Be not too much his parent.
Trespass not on his solitude."—EMERSON.

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P R E F A C E

TO-DAY on all sides we hear of the extreme importance of Preventive Medicine and the great future which lies before us in this aspect of our work. If so, it follows that the study of infancy and childhood must rise into corresponding prominence. More and more a considerable part of the Profession must busy itself in nurseries and in schools, seeking to apply there the teachings of Psychology, Physiology, Heredity, and Hygiene. To work of this kind, in some of its aspects, this book may serve as an introduction. It deals with the influences which mould the mentality of the child and shape his conduct. Extreme susceptibility to these influences is the mark of the nervous child.

I have to thank the Editors of *The Practitioner* and of *The Child*, respectively, for permission to reprint the chapters which deal with "Enuresis" and "The Nervous Child in Sickness." To Dr. F. H. Dodd I should also like to offer thanks for helpful suggestions.

H. C. C.

March 1919.

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THE NERVOUS CHILD

CHAPTER I

DOCTORS, MOTHERS, AND CHILDREN

THERE is an old fairy story concerning a pea which a princess once slept upon—a little offending pea, a minute disturbance, a trifling departure from the normal which grew to the proportions of intolerable suffering because of the too sensitive and undisciplined nervous system of Her Royal Highness. The story, I think, does not tell us much else concerning the princess. It does not tell us, for instance, if she was an only child, the sole preoccupation of her parents and nurses, surrounded by the most anxious care, reared with some difficulty because of her extraordinary "delicacy," suffering from a variety of illnesses which somehow always seemed to puzzle the doctors, though some of the symptoms—the vomiting, for example, and the high temperature—were very severe and persistent. Nor does it tell us if later in life, but before the suffering from the pea arose, she had been taken to consult two famous doctors, one of whom had removed the vermiform appendix, while the other a little later had performed an operation for "ad-