

**BLOSSOM BABIES: HOW
TO TELL THE LIFE STORY
TO LITTLE CHILDREN**

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Blossom Babies: How to Tell the Life Story to Little Children by M. Louise Chadwick

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M. LOUISE CHADWICK

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BLOSSOM BABIES

How to Tell the Life Story
to Little Children

BY *e*
M. LOUISE CHADWICK, M.D.



New York: EATON & MAINS
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TO MOTHERS

THERE is much diversity of opinion among thoughtful men and women as to how and when and where and by whom the life story should be told to children, or whether it should be told at all. Some claim that with knowledge of these deeper things of life the child loses much of his frankness and sweet unconsciousness, and that, therefore, it is best not to intrude upon the child's innocence. This view is, however, rapidly giving way to a saner and safer view.

Since it must be admitted that children in this country are precocious and unduly excitable, that they are filled with restless curiosity, and that they learn sex facts at an early age whether the parent wishes it or not, most thinking parents acknowledge that there is no choice for the mother who wishes well for her child but to tell the story herself and so forestall the garbled tales of the street and playground. Again, no child of average power of observation fails, early in life, to learn that there *is* sex. All too often a child scarcely out of its babyhood imbibes a vague sense of shame as the result of unwise remarks that are made in regard to its own innocent and unconscious acts. Again, even the child of the wisest parent must go forth from the home nest; and he will come in contact with children whose sex sense is more or less perverted. These perversions may be the result of impure inheritance, they may have been acquired

through polluting experiences, or they may have been fostered by physical abnormalities of which the parent knows nothing. Whatever the source, there are many such unfortunates in the street and in the school; and no child can escape the influence of these befouled play-mates, and learn from them a version of sex that will follow him and color his thought and actions throughout his whole life. Each mother should, then, save her own child; it is not only her privilege, but her duty.

Invariably the question arises, How shall the life story be told? Just how, no one authority may dictate; each mother must adapt her method to existing conditions. Some children take it beautifully at the mother's knee; some children take it through the coming of a new baby into the household; others evolve it for themselves from personal observation. But whatever the method chosen by the mother, let it be an unfailing principle that the story be told *honestly*. When the mother tells her child that the stork brings the baby—pretty legend though it be—or that the doctor brings it, she sets upon the child's thought the seal of impurity, for some day the child will learn differently; and with his knowledge will come a realization that beneath his mother's story lay an element of secrecy, and secrecy, with its companion, prurient curiosity, is the cause of much unrest and sin in later life. "As a man thinketh so is he" is particularly true of sex life, insomuch as the sex organism is so peculiarly under the influence of the sympathetic nervous system, that system which responds so strongly to thought and emotion.

Again, let the child be taught *scientifically*, thereby developing a sane, intelligent interest which shall har-