

The Adolescents' Theory of Birth

We all learn about sex—or some aspects of it—during our lives. With children in non-progressive schools it is a great topic for speculation.

At School

I remember yawning my way through a dull lesson decimals, when Liz Stone next to me whispered. "Do you know where babies come from?" I was instantly awake. "No, Do you?" I hissed.

As the master turned to the black-board, Liz whispered that Bebe Grant new. I hastily wrote the question and my note was surreptitiously passed from hand to hand down to her. She looked round and grinned, showing that two of her front teeth were missing. I winced back, then pretended to be studying the figures on the board. By a devious route a grubby note was thrust into my hand. I read:

"You get wun if you kiss a boy"

By Clara Marc Wallace

I started hard at Bebe Grant and showed the note to my colleague. She let out an "aaaah" that made Mr. Gorman swing round. At play time, several of us, including that fount of knowledge on these matters, Bebe, crouched round in a corner. Liz, aged nine was almost in tears.

"I kissed a boy once," she sobbed.

Bebe Grant said nothing, she just looked and pursed her lips.

"It was two years ago. Does that mean I'll have a baby?" Liz continued.

"Course not, silly," put in Sheila Arthur, a girl of pediculosed hair but much knowledge. "You 'ave to have your periods."

"What are they?" I asked.

"They're fings wot yet get monthly," said Sheila.

"Like letters?" I asked in my innocence.

The girl laughed shortly. Don't be daft. It's when your inside bleeds and yer'ave to wear a pad."

We all looked suitably shocked. Then Greta Gibson, aged 12, broke in. "My boyfriends' fifteen and'e don't get no periods."

"Well," said Sheila, taking the floor once again. "That ain't sur-prision' seein' as 'ow only girls get 'em."

"Does it hurt?" I asked the group.

"Somefink terrible!" said Sheila Arthur. "Me mum'as ter go ter bed. She said it's almost like 'aving a baby."

"I know about that", I announced proudly. "When my brother was born my mother said he came out of her side."

"That's a lie," said Bene Grant. "Everyone knows they came out of yer belly button."

"Yes," agreed the group solemnly. And then the bell rang.

Gradually, as I grew into my early teens, I heard some more strange theories on reproduction. It was not until I was a little over 17 and in PTS that I learned more about the facts of life. At first I did not believe it when our tutor calmly told us that babies progressed downwards and emerged at the vagina. I was flabbergasted, and the fact that men and women had intercourse to produce an offspring left me speechless. My parents would not do a thing like that surely?

On the Ward

Fortunately, I didn't voice my grave doubts but read up the appropriate part of my textbook. It was real enough. All my early schoolfriends had been wrong. When I worked on the gynaecological ward I completed my education by being an attentive listener to the patients, but it wasn't until I had witnessed an abortion that my last lingering convictions were banished.

There was no doubt about it. Being a woman required a whole lot of guts...

First Male-Nurse in Quebec

Montreal: The first man to become a fully licensed nurse in Quebec was accepted into membership in the Association of Nurses of the Province of Quebec in December. Jean Robitaille, a graduate of Hotel Dieu de Montreal with a baccalaureate degree from University was formally presented with a license by Helen D. Taylor, ANPQ President. Mr. Robitaille becomes the first male nurse in the province's history to carry the initials "R.N." after his name.

Although the prior legislation had precluded licensing of male nurses, some nursing schools have been admitting men for several years. Six hundred male graduates of nursing schools are eligible for licensing immediately by ANPQ.

Red Cross Booklet On Rights and Duties of Nurses

Geneva, Switzerland: The International Committee of the Red Cross published in May 1969 a 45-page booklet entitled Rights and duties of nurses, military and civilian medical personnel under the Geneva Convention of August 12, 1949. Also included are the seven Red Cross principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity, and universality.

The Red Cross on a white background is the universally respected international symbol adopted in October 1863. Under the section on Humane Treatment, the booklet states. "Persons taking no part in the hostilities...Shall in all circumstances be treated humanely, without any adverse distinction founded on race, colour, religion or faith, sex birth or wealth, or any other similar criteria."

Copies of the booklet can be obtained for 40 cents from: The International Committee of the Red Cross 7 avenue de la paix, CH-1121 Geneva 1, Switzerland.