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# How life begins

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# HOW LIFE BEGINS

(Part I - for girls under 12)

BY

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## Dolls and Kittens

IF YOU WERE ASKED, 'Do you still take a doll to bed with you?' you might perhaps look a bit sheepish, but you would probably have to answer, 'Well . . . sometimes', just to be truthful! It often takes a long while finally to give up some friendly bed-mate, whether it's a doll or a teddy bear. Dolls never seem to be out of date—and why should they? All over the world girls have possessed them, talked to them, nursed them, dressed and undressed them, washed them and loved them. To have a doll of one's own is to feel almost like a mother.

Kittens, too, are great fun, and usually a girl prefers a kitten to a puppy. They're very cuddly little things and don't usually seem to mind how they get humped about; when they're fresh one can have all kinds of games with them; and when they're tired and sleepy—well, then they can be nursed like a doll! If you have a female cat, then of course there are likely to be masses of kittens, and it becomes a great problem to find homes for them all. But it's very exciting when the mother cat, now looking big in body, starts to hunt around for some warm spot to have her family. She doesn't always choose with proper consideration: it may be Mummy's bed, or yours! Anyway, when it's all cleaned up, you don't mind for long, and it's great fun to watch these

queer little wriggling naked babies growing more and more like real kittens each day.

Dolls and kittens. Why *do* girls, or nearly all girls, like to have both for their very own? Probably because they all possess a maternal (or mother) instinct—that strong, deep feeling that you must have something to love and care for and protect.

## Motherhood

It's a lovely word, isn't it? And so, too, is 'mother', for most mothers are very wonderful people who have loved you and watched over you ever since you were born—and even before then. *Before* then? But *how*? Well, we mentioned just now that the kitten came from the body of the mother cat; and if you give it any thought then you must know that the kitten was *alive* before it was born; it didn't suddenly come alive at the moment when it left its mother. Actually it started as a tiny speck of jelly and for many weeks it was growing into a kitten while remaining safe and warm inside its mother.

Well, then, kittens and human babies, of course, are very different creatures in nearly all ways—but, even so, the baby boy, or girl, like a kitten, starts life in its mother's womb: that part of her body specially made for the carrying of her

unborn child. And in the same way both the kitten and the baby receive their first food from their mother, the kitten from the cat's teats and the baby from its mother's breast.

Now all this should help us to realize how very, very close is the bond which exists between mother and child. There is no other human relationship like it. The baby has been with its mother from the first moment of its conception (about which we will talk further on) until it was born; and even after that it is still able to attach itself to the mother and draw from her body the milk which first nourishes its own tiny body.

## *Your Wonderful Body*

There is one point on which you must be absolutely clear. God made you, all of you, and what He has made is clean and proper and good—all of it; so that there is no such thing as an improper or rude part of the human body. Anyone can misuse a part of their body; a small boy does when he puts his tongue out at his school-teacher; but it isn't his tongue which is rude (a *thing* can't be rude) but himself. You do see that, don't you? So never think of the private parts of your body as dirty or indecent. They are not. But we do treat them with special respect, even with reverence, because on their very special purposes.

Now right deep down in every girl's body is a pear-shaped organ, called the womb (or uterus). Its walls are made of muscle and on either side near the top two little tubes grow outwards towards two little round bodies called ovaries. Inside these ovaries, right from the start, there are some 30,000 minute egg-cells—roughly 15,000 in each ovary, though these are too tiny to be seen except under a microscope. During the early years of her life these tiny eggs are only partly developed, but when she reaches the age of eleven or twelve they are fully formed, and at regular intervals an egg cell from one or other of the ovaries leaves its 'storehouse', passes down one of the tubes and into the womb. For many years, of course, the egg will not be needed to begin a baby; not until a girl grows up and is married and has a home of her own is it time for the first baby to arrive. So, then, having nothing to do, the egg passes from the womb and out of the body altogether. This goes on happening, time after time, usually once every four weeks, and with the egg a certain amount of blood and mucus passes out too, for this *would* have been for the making of a new baby if the egg had been *fertilized*. We will see what that means in a moment.

This monthly process is called menstruation, but the name usually given to it by women and girls is just 'the period'. There is nothing whatever to worry about when the period starts: it is a perfectly natural thing, which happens to all



girls, and is actually a sign that her body is developing properly and that womanhood itself is not all that far away. At these times many girls do suffer a certain amount of discomfort, a heaviness in the lower part of the body and sometimes real pain. But all this soon wears off, and should not be taken too much to heart. You are growing up—and growing up properly, as God meant you to, and the period tells you that one day, if and when you get married, you too will be able to have a child of your very own; something a great deal more precious than the most attractive kitten or the most expensive doll!

### *And His*

The man who may one day become your husband has got just as wonderful a body as you have, for it is he who carries the seed, or sperm, without which there could never be a baby at all.

Now, just as every girl possesses two ovaries *inside* her body, in which the egg-cells are stored, so too every boy has two testes in which the male seed is made. But because this seed had to be kept at a lower temperature than the female eggs, in his case he carries them *outside* his body in the little bag (or scrotum, to give it its proper name) which hangs between his thighs. Only when he reaches the age of about

fourteen do the sperms start being made, so you see his body takes rather longer than the girl's to develop. But when this does happen then his voice will begin to crack, he will be proud to discover hair on his face (a real sign of coming manhood!) and on other parts of his body, and his whole appearance will gradually change from the rounded lines of boyhood to the harder ones of the grown man.

### *How a Baby is Made*

The meaning of the word 'miracle' is 'something to be wondered at'. Well, if that is a good definition then birth is most certainly a miracle. God, in His wisdom, decided that his creations should be divided into males and females, and that together they should be entrusted with the power to reproduce life. He has so made us that by the joining of the male seed to the female egg a new life can begin. But with human beings above all other creatures, this uniting of their bodies is an act of *love*.

What happens? When a man and woman fall in love, as we say, and finally get married, they sleep together. While their bodies have often been very close to one another, in kisses and caresses, now they will want to be closer still. So in this closest union of all the man passes his penis (that is the male organ between his thighs) into the birth-passage of

the woman, and releases a little fluid (semen) in which are vast numbers of the sperms. These travel upwards right into the woman's womb and into the two little tubes. There, if they should happen to meet one of the egg-cells, one of the sperms is likely to join itself to the egg-cell, pierce it, and become embedded in it. When this happens we say that the egg has been *fertilized* and that *conception* has taken place. This very private and very special uniting of the bodies of a man and a woman is called sexual intercourse. It is intended to be the expression of the great love and reverence which each has for the other, so that a child born of this union is quite literally 'born of love'.

These are not things that we normally talk about: they are too private for casual chatter. All the same, they are extremely important and it is for this reason that you are learning about them now. Such knowledge should help us to understand ourselves better; and most certainly it should give us a new respect for that part of our bodies which might well be called 'the seat of life'.

### *Ladies in Waiting*

Isn't that rather a good title, don't you think, for mothers-to-be? The time they have to wait is usually just about nine months, from the moment of conception to the day of birth.

And what is happening all that time? In a single sentence—the making of a new human being. The little cell is multiplying itself over and over and over again, and in the process a little human body is forming out of what began as a speck of jelly. At first it doesn't look much like a baby, but after a few months the limbs appear and the whole body is rapidly taking shape. Throughout the time that it is in the mother's womb it is fed, not through the mouth but through a hollow tube, one end of which is attached to the inside wall of the womb and the other to the baby's stomach. What you probably speak of as your belly-button (my children always called it their 'bell-push'!) is just the scar left where the cord was cut immediately after you were born; until that was done you were still joined to your mother, but as there are no nerves in the cord it did not hurt you or her to have it cut.

And what of the actual birth itself? This takes place when the baby is low down in the mother's body, its growth completed, and is now ready to venture forth into a larger world. The mother begins to feel faint pains as her muscles start to contract and so help to push the baby downwards and outwards. Surrounding the baby inside the womb is a water bag, which protects it from jolts and jars, acting as a sort of cushion. This now is of no use and the water comes away before the baby's head appears between the mother's thighs. The muscle contractions grow stronger and more



frequent as the moment of actual birth draws nearer. If there is too much discomfort the nurse or doctor will ease things for the mother with something to dull the pain. While the birth of a child is very rarely quite painless, yet the enormous thrill of having given birth to her own baby soon helps her to forget her 'labour', which is the proper name for the process of birth.

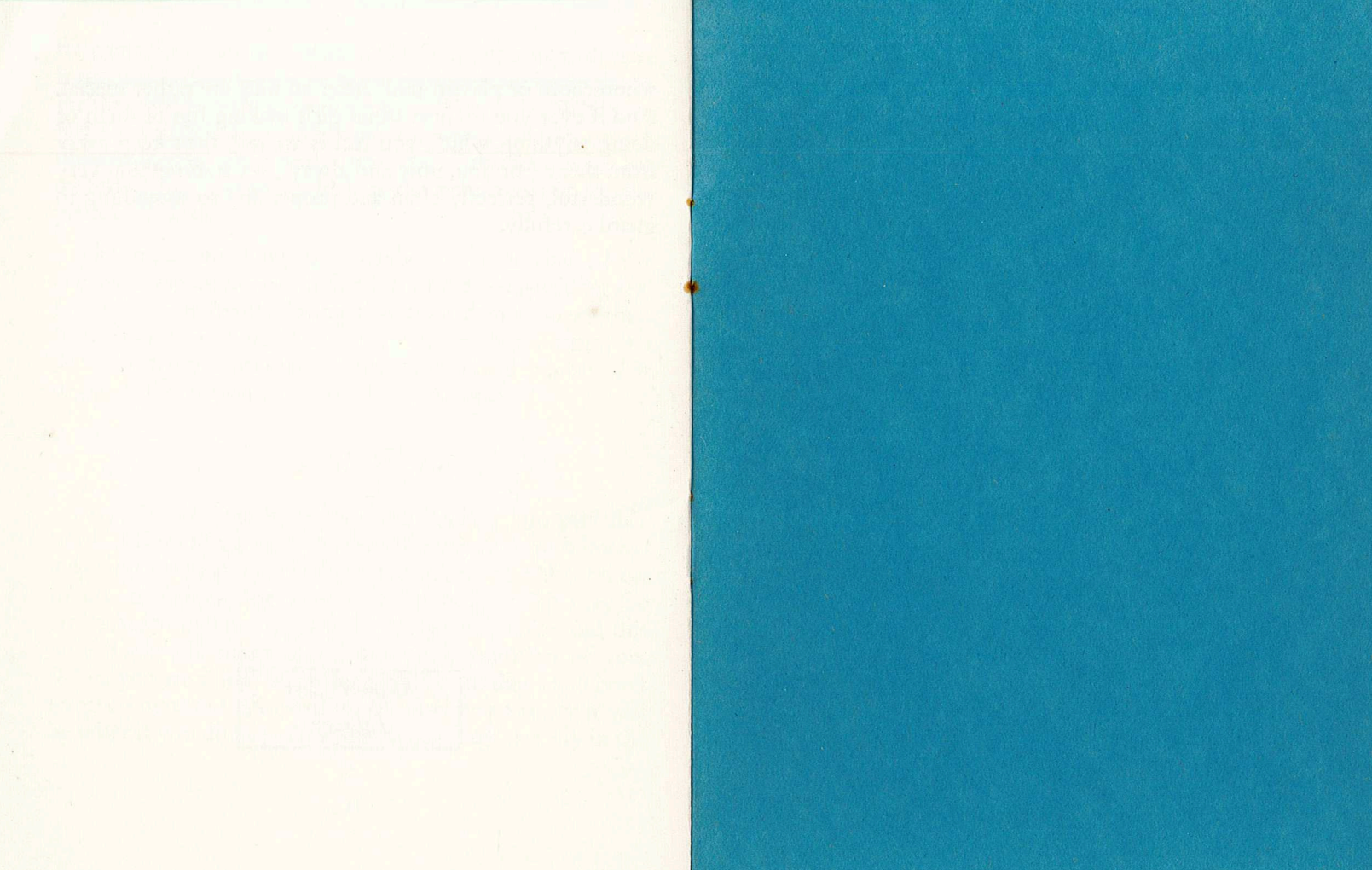
The important thing to remember is that having a baby is in no sense an illness; in fact lots of ladies-in-waiting feel better in their health during that time than at any other. Neither is it anything to be afraid of, for child-bearing is a perfectly natural process. Think what would happen if it stopped: the human race would just die out!

### *A Last Word*

Part of what you have just been reading you probably knew before. Much of it, on the other hand, is fresh knowledge. Never be afraid of talking to your mother about these things and asking her to explain anything which may be bothering you. The fact that she knows you have read this little book will make things quite easy for both of you. When you are a little older there will be another small book to give you more information. Meanwhile probably it will be wiser if you do not talk about these things casually in the

schoolroom or playground. After all they are rather special. And if ever you do hear other girls making fun of them or doing anything which you feel is wrong, then keep away from them. For you, now and always, sex is something very wonderful, perfectly clean and proper and so something to guard carefully.

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