

The Power of Womanhood, or Mothers and Sons eBook

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Page 1

INTRODUCTORY

In a banquet given in honor of Heinrik Ibsen by a Norwegian society known as the Woman's League, in response to a speech thanking him in the name of the society for all he had done for the cause of women, the poet, while disclaiming the honor of having consciously worked for the woman's cause—indeed, not even being quite clear as to what the woman's cause really was, since in his eyes it was indistinguishable from the cause of humanity—concluded his speech with the words:

“It has always seemed to me that the great problem is to elevate the nation and place it on a higher level. Two factors, the man and the woman, must co-operate for this end, and it lies especially with the mothers of the people, by slow and strenuous work, to arouse in it a conscious sense of culture and discipline. To the woman, then, we must look for the solution of the problem of humanity. It must come from them as mothers: that is the mission that lies before them.”

Whether we are admirers of the great Norwegian poet or not, whether we are afflicted with Ibsenism, or regard his peculiar genius in a more critical and dispassionate light, no one would deny to him that deep intuitive insight which belongs to a poet, and which borders so closely on the prophet's gift.

It is now some years since I have been laid aside, owing to the terrible strain and burthen of my ten years' conflict with the evils that are threatening the sanctity of the family, the purity of the home, and all that constitutes the higher life of the nation. But in those ten years the one truth that was burnt into my very soul was the truth enunciated by Ibsen, that it is to the woman that we must look for the solution of the deepest moral problems of humanity, and that the key of those problems lies in the hands of the mothers of our race. They, and they alone, can unlock the door to a purer and a stronger life. This, in Ibsen's words, “is the mission that lies before them.” And it is this strong conviction which makes me feel that, even with broken powers and shattered health, I cannot rest from my labors without, at any cost to myself, placing the knowledge and experience gained in those years of toil and sorrow at the disposal of the educated women of the English-speaking world who, either as mothers or in other capacities, have the care and training of the young.

No one recognizes more thankfully than I do the progress that the woman's movement has made during what have been to me years of inaction and suffering. The ever-increasing activity in all agencies for the elevation of women; the multiplication of preventive institutions and rescue societies; above all, that new sense of a common womanhood, that *esprit de corps* in which hitherto we have been so grievously lacking, and which is now beginning to bind all our efforts together into one great whole—these



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I thankfully recognize. We no longer each of us set up in separate and somewhat antagonistic individuality our own little private burrow of good works, with one way in and one way out, and nothing else needed for the wants of the universe. We realize now that no one agency can even partially cover the ground, and conferences are now held of all who are working for the good of women and children, to enable the separate agencies to work more effectually into one another's hands and unite more fervently in heart and soul in a common cause. Beneath all this, apart from any external organization whatever, there is a silent work going on in the hearts of thoughtful and educated mothers, which never comes before the public at all, but is silently spreading and deepening under the surface of our life.

But when all this is thankfully recognized and acknowledged, I still cannot help questioning whether the mass of educated women have at all grasped the depth and complexity of the problem with which we have to grapple if we are to fulfil our trust as the guardians of the home and family, and those hidden wells of the national life from which spring up all that is best and highest in the national character. Nay, I sometimes fear lest even our increased activity in practical work may not have the effect of calling off our attention from those deep underlying causes which must be dealt with if we are not to engage in the hopeless task of trying to fill a cistern the tap of which has been left running. This absorption in the effect and inattention to the cause is to a certain degree bred in us by the very nature of the duties that devolve upon us as women. John Stuart Mill has compared the life of a woman to an "interrupted sentence." The mere fact that our lives are so interrupted by incessant home calls, and that we are necessarily so concerned in the details of life, is apt to make us wanting in grasp of underlying principles. Perhaps it is the fact of my having been associated all the early years of my life with eminent scientific men that has formed in me a habit of mind always to regard effects in relation to causes, so that merely to cure evil results without striking at the evil cause seems to me, to use a Johnsonian simile, "like stopping up a hole or two of a sieve with the hope of making it hold water."

It is, therefore, on these deeper aspects that more especially bear upon the lives and training of our own sons that I want to write, placing before you some facts which you must know if you are to be their guardians, and venturing to make some suggestions which, as the result of much collective wisdom and prayer, I think may prove helpful to you in that which lies nearest your heart. Only, if some of the facts are such as may prove both painful and disagreeable to you, do not therefore reject them in your ignorance as false. Do not follow the advice of a politician to a friend whom he was urging to speak on some public question. "But how can I?" his friend replied; "I know nothing of the subject, and should therefore have nothing to say." "Oh, you can always get up and deny the facts," was the sardonic reply.

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Let me first of all give you my credentials, all the more necessary as my long illness has doubtless made me unknown by name to many of the younger generation, who may therefore question my right to impart facts or make any suggestions at all. Suffer me, therefore, to recount to you how I have gained my knowledge and what are the sources of my information.

In the first place, I was trained for the work by a medical man—my friend Mr. James Hinton—first in his own branch of the London profession, and a most original thinker. To him the degradation of women, which most men accept with such blank indifference, was a source of unspeakable distress. He used to wander about the Haymarket and Piccadilly in London at night, and break his heart over the sights he saw and the tales he heard. The words of the Prophet ground themselves into his very soul, with regard to the miserable wanderers of our streets: “This is a people robbed and spoiled; they are all of them snared in holes and hid in prison-houses; they are for a prey, and none delivereth; for a spoil, and none saith, Restore.”

The very first time he came down to me at Brighton, to see if I could give him any help, speaking of all he had seen and heard, his voice suddenly broke, and he bowed his face upon my hands and wept like a child. That one man could suffer as he did over the degradation of this womanhood of ours has always been to me the most hopeful thing I know—a divine earnest of ultimate overcoming. The only thing that seemed in a measure to assuage his anguish was my promise to devote myself to the one work of fighting it and endeavoring to awake the conscience of the nation to some sense of guilt with regard to it. In order to fit me for this work he considered that I ought to know all that he as a medical man knew. He emphatically did not spare me, and often the knowledge that he imparted to me was drowned in a storm of tears. We were to have worked together, but his mind, already unhinged by suffering, ultimately gave way, and, with all that this world could give him—health, fame, wealth, family affection, devoted friends—he died prematurely of a broken heart.

For ten years, therefore, after my friend’s death I gave up everything for the purpose of carrying on the work he left me, and beat wearily up and down the three kingdoms, holding meetings, organizing practical work, agitating for the greater legal protection of the young, afterwards embodied in two Acts—one for removing children from dens of infamy and one known as the Criminal Law Amendment Act, which have done much to educate the public sentiment of the country; but always making it my chief object to rouse educated women to face the facts about their own womanhood, and, above all, to rouse mothers to realize the perils of their own boys and to be determined to know enough to enable them to act as their guardians.

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During those ten years of warfare, passing as I did from family to family, and always concerned with questions that touch upon the innermost shrine of our life, I necessarily became the recipient of many hidden sorrows. In fact, my fellow-creatures used me as a bottomless well into which they could empty their household skeletons; and I used often to reflect with sardonic satisfaction that I should never run dry like other old wells, but that death would come and fill me up with a good wholesome shovelful of earth, and I and my skeletons would lie quiet together. But in this way I gained a knowledge of what is going on under the surface of our life, whether we choose to ignore it or not, which possibly can only come to those who are set apart to be confessors of their kind; and the conclusion was forced upon me that this evil, in one form or another, is more or less everywhere—in our nurseries, in our public, and still more our private, schools, decorously seated on magisterial benches, fouling our places of business, and even sanctimoniously seated in our places of worship.

After the first two years of work among women I found that it was absolutely hopeless attacking the evil from one side only, and I had to nerve myself as best I could to address large mass meetings of men, always taking care clearly to define my position—that I had not come upon that platform to help them, but to ask them to help me in a battle that I had found too hard for me, and that I stood before them as a woman pleading for women. The first of these meetings I addressed at the instance of the late revered Bishop of Durham, Dr. Lightfoot, who took the chair, and inaugurated the White Cross Movement, which has since spread over the civilized world. And throughout this most difficult side of my work I had his priceless co-operation and approval; besides the wise counsel, guidance, and unfailing sympathy of one whom but to name is to awake the deepest springs of reverence, Dr. Wilkinson, then the incumbent of St. Peter's, Eaton Square, afterwards Bishop of Truro, and now Bishop of St. Andrews. But so great was the effort that it cost me, that I do not think I could have done this part of my work but for my two favorite mottoes—the one, that “I can't” is a lie in the lips that repeat, “I believe in the Holy Ghost”; the other, received from the lips of Bishop Selwyn, that “If as soldiers of the Cross we stick at anything, we are disgraced forever.”

But lastly, and perhaps best of all, as giving weight to any suggestions that I may make, across the dismal mud swamp that I often trod with such an aching heart and faltering steps came to meet me God's best and highest, with outstretched hands of help and encouragement. It was the highly-cultivated and thoughtful women who, amidst the storm of obloquy that beat upon me from every quarter, first ranged themselves by my side, perceiving that the best way to avoid a danger is not to refuse to see it. Some were women already in the field in connection with Mrs. Butler's movement, to which our nation owes so much, some were roused by my words.



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In all our large towns where I formed Associations for the Care of Friendless Girls I was in the habit of reporting my work to the clergy of my own church, whose sympathy and cooperation I shall ever gratefully acknowledge. Ultimately, the leading laity, as well as some Nonconformist ministers, joined with us; often these conferences were diocesan meetings—to which, however, Nonconformists were invited—with the Bishop of the diocese in the chair; and after my address free discussion took place, so that I had the advantage of hearing the opinions and judgments of many of our leading men in regard to this difficult problem, and getting at men's views of the question.

The matter that I lay before you, therefore, has been thoroughly and repeatedly threshed out at such conferences, as well as in long, earnest, private talks with the wisest and most experienced mothers and teachers of our day; and it is in their name, far more than in my own, that I ask you to ponder what I say.

Do not, however, be under any fear that I intend in these pages to make myself the medium of all sorts of horrors. I intend to do no such thing. It is but very little evil that you will need to know, and that not in detail, in order to guard your own boys. We women, thank God, have to do with the fountain of sweet waters, clear as crystal, that flow from the throne of God; not with the sewer that flows from the foul imaginations and actions of men. Our part is the inculcation of positive purity, not the part of negative warning against vice. Nor need you fear that the evil you must know, in order to fulfil your most sacred trust, will sully you. This I say emphatically, that the evil which we have grappled with to save one of our own dear ones does not sully. It is the evil that we read about in novels and newspapers, for our own amusement; it is the evil that we weakly give way to in our lives; above all, it is the destroying evil that we have refused so much as to know of in our absorbing care for our own alabaster skin—it is *that* evil which defiles the woman. But the evil that we have grappled with in a life and death struggle to save a soul for whom Christ died does not sully: it clothes from head to foot with the white robe, it crowns with the golden crown. Though I have had to know what, thank God! no other woman may ever again be called upon to know, I can yet speak of the great conflict that involved this knowledge as being the one great purifying, sanctifying influence of my life. But even if, as men would often persuade us, the knowledge of the world's evil would sully us, I know I utter the heart of every woman when I say that we choose the hand that is sullied in saving our own dear ones from the deep mire that might otherwise have swallowed them up, rather than the hand that has kept itself white and pure because it has never been stretched out to save. That hand may be white, but in God's sight it is white with the whiteness



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of leprosy. Believe, rather, the words of James Hinton, written to a woman friend: “You women have been living in a dreamland of your own; but dare to live in this poor disordered world of God’s, and it will work out in you a better goodness than your own,”—even that purified womanhood, strong to know, and strong to save, before whose gracious loveliness the strongest man grows weak as a child, and, as a little child, grows pure.

God grant that, in view of the tremendous responsibilities that devolve upon us women in these latter days, we may cry from our hearts:

“Let not fine culture, poesy, art, sweet tones,
Build up about my soothed sense a world
That is not Thine, and wall me up in dreams.
So my sad heart may cease to beat with Thine,
The great World-Heart, whose blood, forever shed,
Is human life, whose ache is man’s dull pain.”

CHAPTER II

“Why should I interfere?”

I am, of course, aware that at the very outset I shall be met by the question—far less frequently urged, however, by thoughtful mothers than it used to be—“Why need I interfere at all in a subject like this? Why may I not leave it all to the boy’s father? Why should it be my duty to face a question which is very distasteful to me, and which I feel I had much better let alone?”

I would answer at once, Because the evil is so rife, the dangers so great and manifold, the temptations so strong and subtle, that your influence must be united to that of the boy’s father if you want to safeguard him. Every influence you can lay hold of is needed here, and will not prove more than enough. The influence of one parent alone is not sufficient, more especially as there are potent lines of influence open to you as a woman from which a man, from the very fact that he is a man, is necessarily debarred.

You must bring the whole of that influence to bear for the following considerations.

Let me take the lowest and simplest first. Even if you be indifferent to your boy’s moral welfare, you cannot be indifferent to his physical well-being, nay, to his very existence. Here I necessarily cannot tell you all I know; but I would ask you thoughtfully to study for yourself a striking diagram which Dr. Carpenter, in one of our recognized medical text-

books, has reproduced from the well-known French statistician, Quetelet, showing the comparative viability, or life value, of men and women respectively at different ages.

[Illustration: *Diagram representing the comparative viability of the male and female at different ages.*]



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The female line, where it differs from the male, is the dotted line, the greater or less probability or value of life being shown by the greater or less distance of the line of life from the level line at the bottom. Infant life being very fragile, the line steadily rises till it reaches its highest point, between thirteen and fourteen. In both cases there is then a rapid fall, the age of puberty being a critical age. But from fifteen, when the female line begins to right itself, only showing by a gentle curve downwards the added risks of the child-bearing period in a woman's life, the male line, which ought, without these risks, to keep above the female line, makes a sharp dip below it, till it reaches its lowest point at twenty-five, the age when the excesses of youth have had time to tell most on the system.[1] Here, at least, is evidence that none can gainsay. The more you ponder that mysterious sharp dip in the man's line of life at the very age which Nature intended should be the prime and flower of life, the more deeply you will feel that some deep and hidden danger lies concealed there, the more earnestly you will come to the conclusion that you cannot and will not thrust from you the responsibility that rests upon you as the boy's mother of helping to guard him from it. Keep him from the knowledge of evil, and the temptations that come with that knowledge, you cannot. The few first days at school will insure that, to say nothing of the miserable streets of our large towns. As Thackeray long ago said in a well-known passage, much animadverted on at the time:

"And by the way, ye tender mothers and sober fathers of Christian families, a prodigious thing that theory of life is, as orally learnt at a great public school. Why! if you could hear those boys of fourteen who blush before their mothers, and sneak off in silence in the presence of their daughters, talking among each other, it would be the woman's turn to blush then. Before Pen was twelve years old, and while his mother thought him an angel of candour, little Pen had heard enough to make him quite awfully wise upon certain points; and so, madam, has your pretty rosy-cheeked son who is coming home from school for the ensuing Christmas holidays. I don't say that the boy is lost, or that the innocence has left him which he had 'from heaven, which is our home,' but that the shades of the prison house are closing very fast round him, and that we are helping as much as possible to corrupt him." [2]

But though you cannot keep him from the knowledge of evil, you can be a potent factor in teaching him the hidden dangers that beset him, in seeing that his young feet rest on the rock of true knowledge, and not on the shifting quagmire of the devil's lies; but above all, in inspiring him with a high ideal of conduct, which will make him shrink from everything low and foul as he would from card-sharping or sneaking, proving yourself thus to him as far as in you lies—



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“A perfect woman, nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort, and command;
And yet a spirit still, and bright
With something of an angel light.”

The boy thus mothered is saved as a rule from all physical risk.

And this in part anticipates my second point. You cannot let this question alone if you are to aim at the highest for your boy. High character is more to be accounted of than long life. And it is to you, as a woman, that the guarding of the higher springs of his nature is especially entrusted. My whole experience has gone to teach me, with ever-increasing force, that the proposition that purity is vitally necessary for the woman, but of comparatively small account for the man, is absolutely false. Granted that, owing to social ostracism, the outward degradation of impurity to the woman is far greater, I contend that a deeper inner debasement is its sure fruition in the man. Cruelty and lies are its certain accompaniment. As Burns, with a poet's insight, has truly said:

“But oh! it hardens a' within,
And petrifies the feeling.”

Yes, it is exactly that; “it hardens all within”—hardens and darkens. It is as our Lord says: only “the pure in heart” are capable of divine vision. Only the man who has kept himself pure, who has never sullied his white faith in womanhood, never profaned the sacred mysteries of life and love, never fouled his manhood in the sty of the beast—it is only that man who can see God, who can see duty where another sees useless sacrifice, who can see and grasp abiding principles in a world of expediency and self-interest, and discern

“In temporal policy the eternal Will,”

who can see God in the meanest of His redeemed creatures. It is only the virginal heart that has kept itself pure, that grows not old, but keeps its freshness, its innocent gaiety, its simple pleasures. The eminent Swiss Professor, Aime Humbert, does but echo these words from the sadder side, when, speaking of the moral malady which is the result of impurity, he says:

“It does not attack any single organ of the human frame, but it withers all that is human—mind, body, and soul. It strikes our youth at the unhappy moment when they first cross the thresholds of vice. For them the spring has no more innocent freshness; their very friendships are polluted by foul suggestions and memories; they become strangers to all the honorable relations of a pure young life; and thus we see stretching wider and wider around us the circle of this mocking, faded, worn-out, sceptical youth, without poetry and without love, without faith and without joy.”

Too soon and too earnestly we cannot teach our boys that the flaming sword, turning all ways, which guards the tree of life for him, is purity.



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But thirdly, there are wider issues than the welfare, physical and moral, of our own boys which make it impossible for us to take up any neutral attitude on this question. We cannot remain indifferent to that which affects so deeply both the status and the happiness of women. We cannot accept a standard for men which works out with the certainty of a mathematical law a pariah class of women. We cannot leave on one side the anguish of working-class mothers just because we belong to the protected classes, and it is not our girls that are sacrificed. At least, we women are ceasing to be as base as that, and God forgive us that, from want of thought rather than from want of heart, educated women could be found even to hold that the degradation of their own womanhood is a necessity!

Take but one instance out of the many that crossed my *via dolorosa* of the anguish inflicted on the mothers of the poor. I take it, not because it is uncommon, but because it is typical.

At one of my mass meetings of working women in the North I was told at its close that a woman wished to speak with me in private. As soon as I could disengage myself from the crowd of mothers who were always eager to shake hands with me, and to bless me with tears in their eyes for taking up their cause, I went down the room, and there, in a dimly-lighted corner of the great hall, I found a respectable-looking woman waiting for me. I sat down by her side, and she poured out the pent-up sorrow of her heart before telling me the one great favor she craved at my hands. She had an only daughter, who at the age of sixteen she had placed out in service, at a carefully-chosen situation. We all know what a difficult age in a girl's life is sixteen; but our girls we can keep under our own watchful care, and their little wilfulnesses and naughtinesses are got over within the four walls of a loving home, and are only the thorns that precede the perfect rose of womanhood. But the poor have to send their girls out into the great wicked world at this age to be bread-winners, often far away from a mother's protecting care. The girl, however, in this case was a good, steady girl, and for a time did well. Then something unsettled her, and she left her first place, and got another situation. For a time it seemed all right, when suddenly her letters ceased. The mother wrote again and again, but got no answer. She wrote to her former place; they knew nothing of her. At last she saved up a little money and went to the town where she believed her girl to be. She sought out and found her last address. The family had gone away, and left no address. She made inquiries of the neighbors, of the police. Yes, they remembered the girl—a nice-looking girl with a bright color; but no one had seen her lately. It was as if a trap-door had opened and let her through. She had simply disappeared. In all that crowded city her mother could find no trace of her. "It is now thirteen years, ma'am, since I lost her."

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But all through those thirteen years that poor mother had watched and waited for her. All through those weary years, whenever she read in the local paper of some poor girl's body being found in the river, some poor suicide, who had leapt,

“Mad from life's history,
Swift to death's mystery,
Anywhere, anywhere, out of the world,”

that poor mother would get into her head it might be her dear girl that was lying there alone and unclaimed; and she would pay her fare—if she could afford it—or if not, trudge the distance on foot, creep, trembling, into the mortuary or the public-house where the body lay, blue from drowning, or with the ugly red gash across the throat, take one look, and then cry with a sigh of relief, “No, it ain't my child,” and return again to her watching and waiting.

“Once, ma'am,” she said, “I had a dream. I saw a beautiful place, all bright and shiny, and there were lots of angels singing so sweet, when out of the midst of the glory came my poor girl. She came straight to me, and said, ‘Oh, mother, don't fret; I'm safe and I'm happy!’ and with those words in my ears I awoke. That dream has been a great comfort to me, ma'am; I feel sure God sent it to me. But oh, ma'am,” she exclaimed, with a new light of hope in her face, and clasping her hands in silent entreaty, “the thought came into my head whilst you were a-speakin', if you would be so kind as to ask at the end of every one of your meetin's, 'Has anyone heard or seen anything of a girl of the name of Sarah Smith?' As you go all about the country, maybe I might get to hear of her that way.”

Ah me! the pathetic forlornness of the suggestion, the last hope of a broken-hearted mother, that I should go all over the three kingdoms asking my large audiences, “Have you seen or heard anything of Sarah Smith?” And I was dumb. I had not a word of comfort to give her. I had heard the words too often from the lips of outcast girls in answer to my question, “Does your mother know where you are?” “Oh, no; I couldn't bear that mother should know about me!”—not to know what the fate of that young girl had been. She had been trapped, or drugged, or enticed into that dread under-world into which so many of our working-class girls disappear and are lost. Possibly she had been sent out of the country, and was in some foreign den. One's best hope was that she was dead.

But picture to yourselves the long-drawn anguish of that mother, with nothing but a dream to comfort her amid the dread realities of life. Picture her as only one of thousands and thousands of our working-class mothers on whose poor dumb hearts the same nameless sorrow rests like a gravestone; and I think no woman—no mother, at least—but will agree with me, that this is a matter from which we, as women, cannot stand off. Even if we had not the moral and physical welfare of our own boys to consider, we are baptized into this cause by the tears of women, the dumb tears

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of the poor. But there is one last consideration, exquisitely painful as it is, which I cannot, I dare not, pass over, and which more than any other has aroused the thoughtful women of England and America to face the question and endeavor to grapple, however imperfectly as yet, with the problem. For some strange reason the whole weight of this evil in its last resort comes crushing down on the shoulders of a little child—infant Christs of the cross without the crown, “martyrs of the pang, without the palm.” The sins of their parents are visited on them from their birth, in scrofula, blindness, consumption. “Disease and suffering,” in Dickens’s words, “preside over their birth, rock their wretched cradles, nail down their little coffins, and fill their unknown graves.” More than one-half of the inmates of our Great Ormond Street Hospital for Sick Children are sent there by vice. But would to God it were only innocent suffering that is inflicted on the children of our land. Alas! alas! when I first began my work, a ward in a large London penitentiary, I found, was set apart for degraded children! Or take that one brief appalling statement in the record of ten years of work—1884 to 1894—issued by a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. In the classification of the various victims it is stated that the society had dealt with 4460 pitiable child victims of debauchery! Alas for our England, and the debasement which a low moral standard for men has made possible in our midst! And, judging by the absence of proper legal protection and the extraordinarily low age of consent adopted by some of the States of the Union, I fear things are not much better in America.

One of our sweetest poets, Charles Tennyson Turner, in an exquisite sonnet on a three-year-old child being presented with a toy globe, has portrayed the consecration of a child’s innocence, bathing the world itself in its baptismal dew:

“She patted all the world; old empires peep’d
Between her baby fingers; her soft hand
Was welcome at all frontiers.”

And when at length they turn “her sweet unlearned eye” “on our own isle,” she utters a little joyous cry:

“Oh yes, I see it! Letty’s home is there!
And while she hid all England with a kiss,
Bright over Europe fell her golden hair.”

By the side of that exquisite picture of the beatitude of a child’s innocence place the picture of that long procession of desecrated children, with no “sweet unlearned eye,” but eyes learned in the worst forms of human wickedness and cruelty; and let any woman say, if she can or dare, that this is a subject on which she is not called to have any voice and which she prefers to let alone. Surely our womanhood has not become in these last days such a withered and wilted thing that our ears have grown too nice for

the cry of these hapless children! As women, we are the natural guardians of the innocence



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of all children. The divine motherhood that is at the heart of every woman worthy of the name “rises up in wrath” within us and cries: “We *will* fulfil our trust, not only to our own children, but to the helpless children of the poor.” The day is at hand when every mother of boys will silently vow before God to send at least one knight of God into the world to fight an evil before which even a child’s innocence is not sacred and which tramples under its swine’s feet the weak and the helpless.

Indeed, when one reflects that this great moral problem touches all the great trusts of our womanhood, the sanctity of the family, the purity of the home, the sacredness of marriage, the sweet innocence of children, it seems like some evil dream that women can ever have asked, “Why cannot I leave this matter to men? Why should I interfere?”

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 1: Dr. Carpenter does not hesitate to attribute this sharp dip in the male line of life to the indulgence of the passions in youth, and the subsequent rise to marriage and a more regular life.]

[Footnote 2: *Pendennis*, vol. i., p. 16.]

CHAPTER III

FIRST PRINCIPLES

“But what can we do?” will be the next question, uttered perhaps in the forlorn accents of a latent despair.

Before answering this question in detail, I would endeavor to impress two cardinal points upon you.

The first point I want you to recognize, though it may seem to minister to the very hopelessness which most lames and cripples for effective action, is the depth and magnitude of the problem we have to grapple with. All other great social evils, with the possible exception of greed or covetousness, which in Scripture is often classed with impurity, may be looked upon as more or less diseases of the extremities. But the evil which we are now considering is no disease of the extremities, but a disease at the very heart of our life, attacking all the great bases on which it rests. It is not only the negation of the sanctity of the family and the destroyer of the purity of the home, as I have already pointed out, but it is also the derider of the sacredness of the individual, the slow but sure disintegrator of the body politic, the dry-rot of nations, before which the mightiest empires have crumbled into dust. The lagoons of Venice mirror it in the



departed grandeur of her palaces, overthrown by the licentiousness of her merchant princes. The mute sands that silt up the ruins of old empires are eloquent of it. The most brilliant civilization the world has even seen through it became the most transitory. Even the vast and massive structure of the Roman Empire, undermined by moral corruption, vanished before barbarian hordes like the baseless fabric of a dream. To think that we can solve a problem of this depth and magnitude by any mere external means—as so many good and earnest women seem to imagine—by any multiplication of Rescue Societies, Preventive Institutions, and other benevolent organizations—is to think that we can plug up a volcano with sticks and straws. The remedy, like the evil, must be from within, and must to a great degree revolutionize our life.



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My second cardinal point is, that the first step we have to take, the step which must precede all others, if anything is to be of the least avail, must be to restore the moral law and get rid of the double standard. I know well how much has been said and written on this point; it has been insisted on possibly *ad nauseam*. But even now I do not think we fully realize how completely we have been in the grasp of a “tradition of the elders,” which has emphatically “made the law of God of none effect.” Side by side with the ethics of Christianity have grown up the bastard ethics of society, widely divergent from the true moral order. Man has accepted the obligation of purity so far as it subserves his own selfish interests and enables him to be sure of his own paternity and safeguard the laws of inheritance. The precepts which were primarily addressed to the man, as the very form of the Greek words demonstrate, were tacitly transferred to the woman. When, in a standard dictionary of the English language, I look out the word “virtue,” which etymologically means “manliness”—the manliness which would scorn to gratify its own selfish passions at the cost of the young, the poor, and the weak, at the cost of a *woman*—I find one of its meanings defined, not as male but as “female chastity.” Long ago I suggested that as manliness thus goes by default, the word had better be changed from virtue to “muliertue.”

In a passage in one of our standard school-books, Green's *Short History of the English People*, the historian, alluding to the coarseness of the early Elizabethan drama, remarks that “there were no female actors, and the grossness which startles us in words which fall from a woman's lips took a different color when every woman's part was acted by a boy.”[3] Why, in the name of all moral sense, should it be less dreadful that gross and obscene passages should be uttered at a public spectacle by young and unformed boys than by adult women, who at least would have the safeguard of mature knowledge and instincts to teach them their full loathsomeness? Do we really think that boys are born less pure than girls? Does the mother, when her little son is born, keep the old iron-moulded flannels, the faded basinette, the dirty feeding-bottle for him with the passing comment, “Oh, it is only a boy!” Is anything too white and fine and pure for his infant limbs, and yet are we to hold that anything is good enough for his childish soul—even, according to Mr. Green, the grossness of the early Elizabethan stage—because he is a boy? But I ask how many readers of that delightful history would so much as notice this passage, and not, on the contrary, quietly accept it without inward note or comment, possessed as we are, often without knowing it, by our monstrous double standard?



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If we want to see what is the final outcome of this moral code, of this one-sided and distorted ethic, we have only to turn our eyes to France. On the one hand we have “la jeune fille” in her white Communion robe, kept so pure and ignorant of all evil, that “une societe ecclesiastique,” I am told, exists for the emendation of history for her benefit—Divine Providence, as conducting the affairs of men, being far too coarse for her pure gaze; and at the other end of the stick we find Zola, and a literature intended only for the eyes of men, of whose chastity, according to Renan, “Nature takes no account whatever,”—a literature which fouls with its vile sewage the very wellsprings of our nature, and which, whatever its artistic merit, I make bold to say is a curse to the civilized world.

Now, I earnestly protest that while we have this social code, which is in direct violation of the moral law, we may set on foot any number of Rescue Societies, Preventive Agencies, Acts for the Legal Protection of the Young, *etc.*, but all our efforts will be in vain. We are like a man who should endeavor to construct a perfect system of dynamics on the violation of Newton’s first law of motion. The tacitly accepted necessity for something short of the moral law for men will—again I say it—work out with the certainty of a mathematical law a degraded and outcast class, with its disease, its insanity, its foul contamination of the young, its debasement of manhood, its disintegration of the State, its curse to the community. You cannot dodge the moral law; as Professor Clifford said, “There are no back-stairs to the universe” by which we can elude the consequences of our wrong, whether of thought or action. If you let in one evil premise by the back-door, be sure Sin and Death will come out at the front.

Here, then, you must take a firm and watchful stand. As the mothers of the future generation of men, you must look upon it as your divinely-appointed task to bring back the moral law in its entirety, the one standard equally binding on men and women alike. Whatever your creed, you have got to hold fast to this great truth, which life itself forces upon you, and which is a truth of Christian ethics because first of all it is a truth of life. It is simply a moral Q.E.D., that if chastity is a law for women—and no man would deny that—it is a law for every woman without exception; and if it is a law for every woman, it follows necessarily that it must be for every man, unless we are going to indulge in the moral turpitude of accepting a pariah class of women made up of other women’s daughters and other women’s sisters—not our own, God forbid that they should be our own!—set apart for the vices of men.

But perhaps, looking at our complicated civilization, which, at least in the upper classes, involves, as a rule, the deferring of marriage—looking at the strength of the passions which generations of indulgence have evolved beyond their natural limits, some women will feel constrained to ask, “Is this standard a possible one? Can men keep their health and strength as celibates? Is not my husband right when he says that this is a subject we women can know nothing about, and that here we must bow to the judgment of men?”

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I answer that a mother must know by what standard she is to educate her boy, and therefore must have the data supplied to her on which to form her own judgment, and be fully persuaded in her own mind what she is to aim at in the training she is to give him; and the mere fact that the current judgment of men involves the sacrifice in body and soul of a large class of our fellow-women lays a paramount obligation upon all women to search for themselves into the truth and scientific accuracy of the premises on which that judgment is based.

“Can men keep their health and strength as celibates till such time as they have the means to marry?” is the question we have, then, to face. Is the standard of the moral law possible to men who have to maintain a high level of physical efficiency in the sharp competition of modern life?

Primarily, the answer to this question must come from the acknowledged heads of the medical profession. Now, I am thankful to say, we have in England a consensus of opinion from the representative men of the faculty that no one can gainsay. Sir James Paget, Acton in his great text-book, Sir Andrew Clark, Sir George Humphrey, of Cambridge, Professor Millar, of the Edinburgh University, Sir William Gowers, F.R.S., have all answered the above question in the strongest affirmative. “Chastity does no harm to body or mind; its discipline is excellent; marriage may safely be waited for,” are Sir James Paget’s terse and emphatic words[4]. Still more emphatic are the words of Sir William Gowers, the great men’s specialist, who counts as an authority on the Continent as well as here:

“The opinions which on grounds falsely called ‘physiological’ suggest or permit unchastity are terribly prevalent among young men, but they are absolutely false. With all the force of any knowledge I possess, and any authority I have, I assert that this belief is contrary to fact; I assert that no man ever yet was in the slightest degree or way the worse for continence or better for incontinence. From incontinence during unmarried life all are worse morally; a clear majority, are, in the end, worse physically; and in no small number the result is, and ever will be, utter physical shipwreck on one of the many rocks, sharp, jagged-edged, which beset the way, or on one of the banks of festering slime which no care can possibly avoid. They are rocks which tear and rend the unhappy being who is driven against them when he has yielded to the tide of passion, they are banks which exhale a poison for which, no true antidote exists.”

In face of such testimony as this, well might Mr. George Russell, in an address to young men, speak of “this exploded lie which has hitherto led so many astray.”



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Turning now from knowledge to fact, we have only to look at the French clergy to see that even in the extreme case of life-long celibacy it is not injurious to health. I know, in taking this case, I am grating somewhat harshly against Protestant prejudice. But the testimony that Renan bears on this point is irrefutable. Himself a renegade priest, he certainly would not have hesitated to expose the Order to which he had once belonged, and vindicate his broken vows by the revelation of any moral rottenness known within the walls of its seminaries. Far from this, he bears the most emphatic testimony in his autobiography that there is enough virtue in St. Sulpice alone to convert the world; and owns so strong was the impress made on his own soul by his training as a priest that personally he had lived a pure life, "although," he adds, with an easy shrug of his shoulders, "it is very possible that the libertine has the best of it!" Another renegade priest, also eminent in literature, bears exactly the same testimony. Indeed, when we remember the argus-eyed hatred with which the French priesthood is watched by the anti-clerical party, and the few scandals that appear in the public prints only too anxious to give publicity to them, this unimpeachable testimony is borne out by fact. I believe this testimony to be equally true of the English and Irish Roman Catholic clergy. Yet few would dispute the vigor of the physique of the Roman Catholic priests, or their capacity for hard and often exhausting work.

Let me, however, guard myself from misapprehension. That a celibate life, combined with rich feeding, French novels, and low thinking, does produce a great deal of physical harm goes almost without saying. Nature, like her Lord, requires truth in the inward parts, and takes but small care of outward respectabilities that are but the whitewashed graves of inward foulness. Surely Lowell is right when he says, "I hold unchastity of mind to be worse than that of body." To live the unmarried life one must, of course, fulfil its conditions of plain living and clean thinking.

It is almost with a feeling of shame that I have dwelt at some length on the point we have been considering; but all through my ten years of work the sunken rock on which I was always making shipwreck was the necessity of the evil—often openly avowed by men, but haunting even the minds of women like a shadow—a shadow which gained solidity and substance from a sense of their helpless ignorance. I have even met with Christian women who have serenely averred to my face that they have been told, on authority that they could not question, that, were it not for the existence of an outcast class, no respectable woman would be safe and we could not insure the purity of the home! So low had the moral consciousness fallen, through ignorance and thoughtless acceptance of the masculine code, that women calling themselves Christians could be found who seemed wholly unconscious of the deep inner debasement of accepting the degradation of other women as a safeguard to our own virtue and of basing the purity of the Christian home on the ruined bodies and souls of the children of the poor. Truly the dark places of the world within, as well as of the world without, are full of cruelty!



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What can I do, in the face of such an experience as this, but humbly and earnestly beseech the women of England and America not to play fast and loose with the moral sense within them—which is God’s voice within us—but to hold fast to the moral law, one, equal, and indivisible, for men and women alike; and to know and feel sure that, whatever else is bound up with the nature of man or with an advancing civilization, the hopeless degradation of woman is not that something. It is God who has made us—not we ourselves, with our false codes, false notions, and false necessities; and God has made the man to love the woman and give himself for her, not to degrade her and destroy the very function for which she was made the blessed “mother of all living.”

Only be sure of this: that men will rise to the level of any standard that we set them. For the present standard of what Sainte Beuve calls “l’homme sensuel moyen,” which we have accepted and tacitly endorsed, we women are largely to blame. In my conferences with the clergy and earnest laity held in all our large towns it was always this that men spoke of as the greatest stumbling-block in their way. With the utmost bitterness they would urge that men of known fast life were admitted into society, that women seemed to prefer them rather than not; and it seemed to make no difference to them what kind of life a man led—whether he revered their womanhood or not. How could I deny this bitter accusation in the face of facts? All I could urge in extenuation was that I believed it was due rather to the ignorance than to the indifference of women, owing to the whole of this dark side of life having been carefully veiled from their view; but now that this ignorance was passing away, I was only one of hundreds of women who ask nothing better than to lay down their lives in the cause of their own womanhood. Only when women learn to respect themselves; only when no woman worthy the name will receive into her own drawing-room in friendly intercourse with her own girls the man who has done his best to make her womanhood a vile and desecrated thing; only when no mother worthy the name will, for the sake of wealth or position,—what is called “a good match,”—give her pure girl to a man on the very common conditions, as things have been, that some other ten or twenty young girls—some poor mothers’ daughters—have been degraded and cast aside into the gutter, that she, the twenty-first in this honorable harem, may be held in apparent honor as a wife; only when no woman worthy the name will marry under the conditions portrayed by our great novelist, George Eliot,—that of another woman being basely forsaken for her sake—then, and then only, will this reproach that men level at us drop off; then, and then only, shall we be able to save our own sons and bring in a better and purer state of things, enabling them to fight the battle of their life at less tremendous odds; then, and then only, shall we be able to evolve the true manhood, whose attitude is not to defile and destroy, but “to look up and to lift up.”



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FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 3: *Short History of the English People*, by J.R. Green, p. 247.]

[Footnote 4: See a little White Cross paper entitled, *Medical Testimony*.]

CHAPTER IV

THE SECRET AND METHOD

There is a simile of Herbert Spencer's, in his book on Sociology, which has often helped me in dealing with great moral problems. He says:

"You see that wrought-iron plate is not quite flat; it sticks up a little here towards the left, 'cockles,' as we say. How shall we flatten it? Obviously, you reply, by hitting down on the part that is prominent. Well, here is a hammer, and I give the plate a blow as you advise. Harder, you say. Still no effect. Another stroke. Well, there is one, and another, and another. The prominence remains, you see; the evil is as great as ever, greater, indeed. But this is not all. Look at the warp which the plate has got near the opposite edge. Where it was flat before it is now curved. A pretty bungle we have made of it! Instead of curing the original defect, we have produced a second. Had we asked an artisan practised in 'planishing,' as it is called, he would have told us that no good was to be done, but only mischief, by hitting down on the projecting part. He would have taught us how to give variously directed and specially adjusted blows with a hammer elsewhere, so attacking the evil not by direct but by indirect actions. The required process is less simple than you thought. Even a sheet of metal is not to be successfully dealt with after those common-sense methods in which you have so much confidence. 'Do you think I am easier to be played on than a pipe?' asked Hamlet. Is humanity more readily straightened than an iron plate?"[5]

Now, in our moral "planishing" we need to know where and how to direct our blows, lest in endeavoring to lessen the evil we not only increase the evil itself, but produce other evils almost as great as the one we intended to cure. The mistake that we commit—and this is, I think, especially true of us women—is to rush at our moral problems without giving a moment's thought to their causes, which often lie deep hidden in human nature. Our great naturalist, Darwin, gave eight years' study to our lowly brother, the barnacle; he gave an almost equal amount of time to the study of the earthworm and its functions, revealing to us, in one of his most charming books, how much of our golden harvest, of our pastures, and our jewelled garden-beds, we owe to this silent and patient laborer. Yet we think that we can deal with our higher and more complex human nature without giving it any study at all. We hit down directly on its moral inequalities, without giving a thought to what has caused the imperfection, when constantly, as in the sheet of metal which has to be straightened, the moral disorder has to be met, not directly, but

indirectly—not at the point of the disorder itself, but of its often unsuspected cause. Purity, like health, like happiness, like so many of the higher aims of our life, has to be attained altruistically. Seek them too directly, and they elude our grasp. Like the oarsman, we have often to turn our back upon our destination in order to arrive at our end.

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Do not, therefore, think impatiently that I am putting you off with vague theories when you want practical suggestions, if I ask you first to give some patient thought to the causes of the disorder which seems to mark the side of our human nature on which the very existence of the race depends, and which cannot, therefore, be evil in itself. To me the problem presented was almost paralyzing. It seemed as if Nature, in her anxiety to secure the continuance of the species, had taken no account whatever of the moral law, but had so overloaded the strength of passion as not only to secure the defeat of the moral law, but even of her own ends, by producing the sterility which results from vicious indulgence. It was not till I met with two wonderful sermons on "The Kingdom of God," by that great master of "divine philosophy," Dr. James Martineau, that I first got a clue to the moral difficulty and to that fuller understanding of our human nature which is so essential to all who have the training and moulding of the young. And, therefore, I ask you to let me enter at some length into this teaching, which will not only give us light for our own guidance, but enable us to grasp the right principles on which we have to act in the moral training of the coming generation.[6]

Now, in trying to think out the laws of our own being, we are met at the very outset by the great crux in the moral world: What is the true relation of the material to the spiritual,—of the body, with its instincts and appetites, to the moral personality, with its conscience and will? On the one hand, seeing the fatal proneness of man to obey his appetites and run into terrible excesses, ascetics in all ages and of all creeds have taught that the body itself is evil and the seat of sin; that its instincts must be crushed and its appetites repressed and eradicated; and that it is only so far as you trample your animal nature under foot that you can rise to be a saint. "Brute," "blind," "dead," have been the epithets bestowed on matter, which is a ceaseless play of living forces that rest not day nor night. To look down on the material pleasures with suspicion, to fly contact with the rude world and lose one's self in the unembodied splendors of the spiritual, to save souls rather than men and women, to preach abstract doctrines rather than grapple with hideous concrete problems—this has been the tendency of the religious spirit in all ages, a tendency of which positive asceticism, with its mortification of the body, and its ideal of virginity, and marriage regarded as more or less a concession to the flesh, is only an exaggeration.

On the other hand, in disgust at the mutilation of human nature and under pretext of its consummation, has arisen the "fleshly school," whose maxim is "obedience to Nature,"—leaving undefined what nature, the nature of the swine or the nature of the man,—which holds that every natural instinct ought to be obeyed, which takes the agreeable as the test of the right, and which goes in for the "healthy animal" with enlightened self-interest as the safeguard against excesses.

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Alas! the results are no happier. The healthy animal treads under his feet the helpless and the weak, who suffer that he may grow fat and kick. The attractive warmth and color and richness are found to be but rottenness and decay.

When, dissatisfied with the teaching of men, one turns to the great world at large, to see whether some practical instinct may not have guided men to a right adjustment, one's first feeling is one of dismay at the spectacle presented. The bodily instincts and appetites that seem to work aright in the animal world, in man seem fatally overloaded, and, instead of hitting the mark, explode with disaster and death at the outset.

Let us now turn to the teaching of Christ, and see whether it does not explain the deep disorder of the animal instincts in the world of man, and while saving us on the one hand from the self-mutilation of asceticism, and from the swinishness of the fleshly school on the other, whether it does not embrace the truth that is in both and teach us how to correlate the material and the spiritual.

Now, Dr. Martineau points out that Christ teaches, in contradistinction to asceticism, that the animal body, with its instincts and appetites, is as good on its own plane as the higher and spiritual attributes of man are on theirs. Our Father knoweth that, in common with other creatures, we have need of physical good, and He has provided us with a self-acting mechanism for its attainment, which will work rightly if only it is left alone and not tampered with. There is the same provision in us as in them of unconscious instincts and appetites for carrying on the lower life which is necessary as the platform of the higher spiritual being, to set it free, as it were, for the pursuit of its legitimate ends—all those higher and wider interests in life which are comprised under the one comprehensive name of “the kingdom of God.” And the teaching of Christ is: Neither hate nor fear this part of your nature with the ascetic, nor pamper and stimulate it with the Hedonist, but let it alone to act on its own plane; trust it, trust God who made it, while you throw all your conscious energies into the higher concerns of life; and you will find, when left to its own unconscious activity, it is neither an over-nor an under-provision for carrying on your subsistence and that of the race. “Take no anxious thought [(Greek: *me merimnesete*)] for the morrow.” “Your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things,” and has arranged your being accordingly. “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you.” “Behold the birds of the air; your heavenly Father feedeth them.”



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“Oh,” says the practical man at once, “that is all very fine as sentiment; it is very Eastern and poetical; but I should like to know how, in these overcrowded days, I could support myself and family if I am to trust God to feed me and them like the birds of the air, and only think about religion.” But is not this wholly to misunderstand our Lord’s teaching? How does God feed the birds of the air? Is it not by incessant and untiring effort on their part? Those who have watched a pair of birds flying backwards and forwards to the nest under the eave may well question whether industry can go further. But in the unconscious being of a bird it is toil without [Greek: merimna], without thought and worry, and becomes, therefore, the very picture to us of trust in a higher Power, who has thus adjusted an unerring instinct to an un failing end. The insect and the bird provide for the morrow, while they take no anxious thought for the morrow. “The agility which achieves it is theirs, the skill and foresight absent from them remain with God. And thus the simple life of lower natures, in its unconscious surrender to involuntary though internal guidance, becomes the negative type of perfect trust.”[7]

But to leave his instincts and appetites to work, unimpeded and unconscious, on their own plane, while he concerns himself with matters of truly human interest, is just what man is not content to do. On the contrary, he takes his higher and spiritual nature down into them. He enhances their pleasure with all the powers of his imagination; he sets his intellect to work to plot and plan for their gratification; he loads them with the whole force of his spiritual will, and in so doing he overloads and maddens them. The instinct for food and drink, which in the animal is sufficient for the maintenance of health and activity, in the man becomes gluttony and drunkenness; the instinct for the preservation of the race becomes the licentiousness which produces sterility and defeats its own ends; the instinct of self-maintenance becomes the feverish greed and money-getting which leave no room for the higher life of beauty, and science, and worship, and disinterested service. “Seek ye first the material,” says the world, “and all these things shall be added unto you when you get the time for them”—which will be probably never.

Now, then, do we not begin to see why the animal instincts and appetites, which make for order and happiness, and fulfil their end in the animal world, lead to such intolerable disorder in the world of man? Their laws, like all other laws in the Divine economy, are holy and just and good; but man by not observing their conditions makes them work evil and death. Do you not see that to be a healthy animal is just what man cannot be except by being a true and high-minded man, all his conscious energies taken up and absorbed on a higher plane, with none left over to filter down into and disorder the animal instincts, which only

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work aright when left to their own unconscious activity? Fix your consciousness long enough on the tip of your little finger, and you will feel a pricking sensation in it. The mind directed intently to any part of the frame will produce a flow of blood there. Any physician will tell you that this is one of the greatest difficulties he has to contend with in his patients; the mind being steadily directed to some disordered spot increases the congestion which is the result of disease.

Unconsciousness, therefore, is the very channel in which our animal nature works healthily and undisturbed according to its own laws. But you are a self-conscious being, and not as the animals. God keeps the keys of their nature in His own hands. They are shut up to certain ends which are in His purpose rather than in their minds. They are locked within limits of their nature, which are absolute, and cannot, therefore, be transgressed. But man, in virtue of his self-consciousness, is emphatically "he who hath the keys, who openeth and no man shutteth, and who shutteth and no man openeth." All the secret recesses of your being lie open to you, and no man can close it to your vision. You can voluntarily shut the door of salvation and hamper the lock, and no man can open. A limit is no absolute limit to you because your very consciousness of the limit involves your consciousness of the beyond which makes it a limit. And therefore to you as a self-knowing existence, with your being necessarily surrendered into your own hands, two faculties have been given as a substitute for the unconscious necessity of an animal nature: First, a self-judging faculty which we call conscience, or a power of discerning between a lower and a higher, and a sense of obligation to the higher which enables you to correlate your faculties and functions in their true order of relative excellence; and secondly, a spiritual will, capable of carrying the decisions of conscience into practical execution and attaining to a necessity of moral law. The true function of man's will is not, therefore, to add itself on to any one of his instincts and give it a disordered strength, but, while throwing its chief conscious energies into the higher interests of life, to rule his instincts and appetites according to those higher interests. This, when the condition of that infinitely complex thing, modern civilized life, interferes, as at times it must do, with the legitimate exercise of his instincts, and his good has to be subordinated to the good of the greater number, may occasionally involve a hard struggle, even when the instincts have been left to their own healthy natural play; but at least it will be all the difference between a struggle with a spirited animal and a maddened and infuriated brute.

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“But,” asks Dr. Martineau, “if the animal instincts and appetites are to be directed by conscience and ruled by the will in accordance with the dictates of conscience, what becomes of the unconsciousness which is necessary for their right action? Its place is gradually supplied by habit, which is the unconsciousness of a self-conscious being.” The habit of plain living and spare food, so necessary to high thinking, at first acquired possibly by real effort of will, by real fasting and prayer, becomes a second nature, that sets the will free for higher conquests. The habit of purity, which at first may have resulted only from a sleepless watch of the will in directing the thoughts and imagination into safe channels, becomes an instinctive recoil from the least touch of defilement. The habit of unworldly simplicity, which may have had to be induced by deliberate self-denial, becomes a natural disposition which rejects superfluities from unconscious choice.

This is what takes place where direct conflict is necessitated by the constant readjustment of the individual, with his instincts and appetites, to his social environment which so complex a state of society as that of modern civilization involves. But under ordinary circumstances, where the teaching of Christ is observed and all the conscious energies of the man are absorbed in seeking first the kingdom of God, there the need of conflict on the lower plane is at least partially done away with. The whole current of thought and will, flowing into higher channels, is drained away from the lower instincts and appetites, which are thus restored to their natural unconsciousness, with only an occasional interference on the part of the will to subordinate them to human ends and aims, or to those demands of a high and complex civilization in the benefits of which we all share, but for whose fuller and richer life we have in some directions to pay, and perhaps at times to pay heavily. The scientific man who in his passionate devotion to the search after truth—the kingdom of God as revealed in the order of the universe—exclaimed testily that he had no time to waste in making money, had no conflict with the instinct of self-subsistence maddened into greed. It worked out a sufficient quotient of bread and cheese to insure the healthy exercise of his brain, and that was enough. The Alpine climber, intent on mastering a printless snow-peak, has not to control an appetite sharpened by mountain air from sinking into the gluttony which would be fatal to the cool head and steady foot necessary for his enterprise. The man who has a noble passion for the weak and defenceless, who from the first has cultivated a chivalrous loyalty to women, putting far from him the lowering talk, the cynical expression, the moral lassitude of society, and guarding his high enthusiasm from the blight of worldly commonplace, has no need to fight against the lower instinct that would degrade them or wrong the weak and defenceless. The conflict

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is there, but it is removed to a nobler and higher battle-field, a battle against the sacrifice of the weak by the strong, whilst in him the lower life may be left to settle itself, as in the unconscious birds of the air. "Love God," as St. Augustine said, "and do what you will." "Be a child of the water, and you may be a child of the wind, blowing where it listeth." "Seek the kingdom of God first, and all these things shall be added to you."

This, then, is the first great practical lesson that we learn from the study of the laws of our human nature, taken in their widest aspect, under the teaching of the Divine Master, the "open secret" of overcoming in man and woman alike, that which restores to us our whole nature, and vindicates it, even in the depths of disorder into which it has practically fallen, as originally bearing the Divine stamp. The more unconscious we are in the pursuit of physical good, the better for the ends of life; the more conscious we are in the pursuit of moral and spiritual good, the nearer we are to that kingdom of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost which we seek. Get out of the narrow individualism or atomism—for let us never forget that individual and atom are the same word—which threatens to dwarf and pulverize us, which keeps within our view only the narrow range of our own interests and defeats their true pursuit by the very intensity of attention it concentrates upon them; and live, as Goethe says, "in the beautiful, the good, and the whole," the kingdom of the Eternal. Have the higher passion that casts out the lower. The physician whose conscious aim is the relief of human suffering and the enforcement of the laws of health, even though a large professional income may be added to him; the lawyer who regards himself as the minister of the Just One to uphold the law of right and equity, whose reputation does not rest on his skill in getting off a fraudulent company without costs, and who makes his money not by his "practices," but by his honest practice; the man of science who reverently devotes himself, as the servant of the truth, to "think God's thoughts after Him," in the words of Kepler's prayer, and establish the kingdom of law and order, in the humbleness of conscious limitation which forbids dogmatizing; the artist who is true to his art and does not subordinate the laws of the eternal Loveliness to the shifting laws of the temporary market; the capitalist who looks upon himself as the steward of the public good, and to whom material gain is the means and not the end; the workman who does good work for the kingdom of God's sake, knowing that every stroke of good work is a brick in the palace of the great King, and who scorns to scamp because it pays; and, generally speaking, every man who is so intent on helping and serving others that his thoughts are taken off himself and centred on another—these are the men who are seeking first a kingdom of God, wherein dwelleth righteousness; these are the men who, living in the higher life can rule the lower—the men whose feet are in the lilies, and to whom the floods of earthly passion, even when they beat hardest, end in the flight of a dove and in a triumphal arch of light.



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Now, you will see at once the intensely practical bearing of this teaching on the training of your boys. You are not called to hit down directly on the evil, to give warnings against vice, or to speak on things which your womanhood unspeakably shrinks from mentioning. What you are called to do is to secure, so far as you can, that the mind and soul moves on its own proper plane. It is more an attitude you have to form than a warning you have to give. And here it is that the imperative need of high positive teaching comes in. Till parents, and especially mothers, recognize their God-given functions as the moral teachers of their own children, till they cease to shunt off their responsibilities on the professional shoulders of the schoolmaster, we had better frankly give up the whole question in despair. Strange and sad it seems to me that at the end of the nineteenth century after the coming of our Lord I should have to plead that the moral law is possible under every condition to any man, and that parents are *ipso facto* the moral teachers of their own children. And yet it is the denial, tacit or explicit, of these two primary truths that has been the greatest obstacle to the progress of my work.

But I appeal to you: Who but a mother can bring such a constant and potent influence to bear as to secure the mind and character moving on its own higher plane in relation to the whole of this side of our nature? Who so well as a mother can teach the sacredness of the body as the temple of the Eternal? Who else can implant in her son that habitual reverence for womanhood which to a man is “as fountains of sweet water in the bitter sea” of life? Who like a mother, as he grows to years of sense and observation, and the curiosity is kindled, which is only a cry for light and teaching, can so answer the cry and so teach as to make the mysteries of life and truth to be for ever associated for him with all the sacred associations of home and his own mother, and not with the talk of the groom or the dirty-minded schoolboy? Who so well as a mother, as he passes into dawning manhood, can plead faithfulness to the future wife before marriage as well as after? Nay, as I hold by the old Spanish proverb “An ounce of mother is worth a pound of clergy,” who like a mother, by her prayers and ever-present example and influence, can lead him to the Highest, and impress upon him that his life is given him for no lower end than, in the words of the Westminster Confession, “to know God and to glorify Him for ever”; and that therefore he is made on a very high plan—as Browning puts it, “Heaven’s consummate cup,” whose end is to slake “the Master’s thirst”; and that the cup from which He drinks must be clean inside as well as out, and studded within and without with the pearl of purity?



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But refuse to give him this higher teaching and training; go on, as so many mothers have done, blankly ignoring the whole subject, because it is so difficult to speak to one's boys,—as if everything worth having in this life were not difficult!—leave him to the teaching of dirty gossip, of unclean classical allusions in his school-books, of scraps of newspaper intelligence, possibly of bad companions whom he may pick up at school or business, and be sure of it, as this side of his nature is awakened—in his search after gratified curiosity or pleasurable sensation, in utter ignorance of what he is doing, through your fault, not through his—he will use his imagination and his will to strengthen the animal instincts. What ought to have been kept on a higher plane of being will be used to stimulate functions just coming into existence, and pre-eminently needing to be let alone on their own plane to mature quietly and unconsciously. Thus dwelt upon and stimulated, these functions become in a measure disordered and a source of miserable temptation and difficulty, even if no actual wrong-doing results. If you only knew what those struggles are, if you only knew what miserable chains are forged in utter helpless ignorance, you would not let any sense of difficulty or shrinking timidity make you refuse to give your boy the higher teaching which would have saved him.

It is told of the beautiful Countess of Dufferin, by her son and biographer, Lord Dufferin, that when the surgeons were consulting round her bedside which they should save—the mother or the child—she exclaimed, “Oh, never mind me; save my baby!” If you knew the facts as I know them, I am quite sure you would exclaim, in the face of any difficulties, any natural shrinking on your part, “Oh, never mind me, let me save my boys!”

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 5: *The Study of Sociology*, by Herbert Spencer (International Scientific Series), p. 270, fifth edition, 1876.]

[Footnote 6: I quote here at some length from a White Cross paper called *Per Augusta ad Augusta*, in which I summarized and applied Dr. Martineau's teaching, as I do not think I can do it more clearly or in more condensed form. By some mistake it came out, not under my name, but under the initials of the writer of *True Manliness* and several others of the White Cross Series. I only mention the mistake now to safeguard my own intellectual honesty.]

[Footnote 7: *Hours of Thought*, by Dr. Martineau, vol. i., p. 35, third edition.]

CHAPTER V

EARLY BOYHOOD

Having now laid down the general principles which we have to recognize in the moral training of the young, let me endeavor to make some practical suggestions how these principles may be carried out, suggestions which, as a matter of fact, I have found to be helpful to educated mothers in the great and responsible task of training the men of the future generation.

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All I would earnestly ask you to remember is, that in offering these suggestions I am in no way venturing to dictate to you, only endeavoring to place a wide experience at your service. Doubtless you will often modify and, in some cases, very possibly reverse my conclusions. All I ask is that you should weigh them thoughtfully and prayerfully and with an open and unprejudiced mind before you finally reject them.

Let us, therefore, begin with the nursery. It is in the nursery that the roots of the evil we have to contend with are often first planted, and this in more senses than one. In the more obvious sense all experienced mothers know what I mean. But I am quite sure that there are a large number of young wives who become mothers without the smallest knowledge of the dangers to which even infant boys may be exposed. This ignorance is painfully shown by the frequent application for nursemaids from our penitentiaries. At one house where I held a small meeting my young hostess, an intelligent literary woman, came into my room after the household had retired to rest to ask me about some curious actions which she had noticed in her baby boy at night. There could not be a doubt or a question that her nurse was corrupting her little child before that hapless young mother's eyes, and forming in him habits which could only lead to misery hereafter, and only too possibly to idiocy and death; and that young mother was too ignorant to save her own baby boy! Indeed, I know of no greater instance of the cruelty of "the conspiracy of silence" than the fact that in all the orthodox medical manuals for young mothers the necessary knowledge is withheld.[8] But more marvellous still is the fact that women should ever have placidly consented to an ignorance which makes it impossible for them to save even baby boys from a corrupt nursemaid, who by some evil chance may have found her way into their service through a false character or under some other specious disguise, not seeing at once that the so-called delicacy which shrinks from knowing everything that is necessary in order to save is not purity but prurience.

I would, therefore, beseech young mothers who are conscious of their own ignorance to see a lady doctor, if they do not like to consult their own family physician, and ask her to tell them plainly what they have to guard against and the best methods to pursue. All I can say here is to beseech every mother to be absolutely careful about the antecedents of her nursemaids, and only to admit those of unblemished character into the precincts of the nursery. Never, if possible, let your baby boy sleep with any one but yourself, if through illness or any other cause he cannot sleep in his own little cot. Pyjamas, I think, are generally recognized now to be the best form of night gear, as keeping the little limbs warm and covered, when in the restlessness of sleep the child throws off the bedclothes, as well as for other and more vital reasons.



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If through straitened means you cannot afford an experienced nurse—not that I should altogether allow that even the experienced nurse is to be implicitly and blindly trusted until she has been well tested—then I would entreat you not to let sleepiness or ill health or any other excuse prevent you from being always present at your boy's morning bath. Often and often evil habits arise from imperfect washing and consequent irritation; and many a wise mother thinks it best on this account to revert to the old Jewish rite of initiation by which cleanliness was secured. Teach them from the first self-reverence in touch, as in word and deed, and watch even their attitudes in sleep, that the little arms are folded lightly upwards. Even experienced nurses are not always nice in their ways. Be vigilantly watchful that the utmost niceness is observed between the boys and girls in the nursery, and that childish modesty is never broken down, but, on the contrary, nurtured and trained. Knowledge and watchfulness are the two cherubim with the flaming sword turning all ways to guard the young tree of life and bar the way of every low and creeping thing. If I may venture in some sort to reverse our Lord's words, I should say His word to all mothers is, "What I say unto all I say especially unto you, *Watch.*"

But there is another and a deeper sense in which the root of the evil is first planted and nourished in the nursery. If we are to contend with this deadly peril to soul and body, I cannot but feel that we must bring about a radical change in the training of our boys. There must be some radical defect in that training for men to take the attitude they do. I do not mean bad, dissipated men, but men who in all other relations of life would be designated fairly good men. Once let such a man be persuaded—however wrongly—that his health, or his prospect of having some day a family of his own, will suffer from delayed marriage and he considers the question settled. He will sacrifice his health to over-smoking, to excess in athletics, to over-eating or champagne drinking, to late hours and overwork; but to sacrifice health or future happiness to save a woman from degradation, bah! it never so much as enters his mind. Even so high-minded a writer as Mr. Lecky, in his *History of European Morals*,^[9] deliberately proposes that the difficulty of deferred marriage which advanced civilization necessitates, at least for the upper classes, should be met by temporary unions being permitted with a woman of a lower class. The daughters of workingmen, according to this writer, are good enough as fleshly stop-gaps, to be flung aside when a sufficient income makes the true wife possible—an honorable proceeding indeed! to say nothing of the children of such a temporary union, to whom the father can perform no duty, and leave no inheritance, save the inestimable one of a mother with a tainted name. Verily there must be some fault in our training of



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men! Certainly an intelligent American mother put her finger on the blot, so far as we are concerned, when, speaking to me many years ago, she said what struck her so in our English homes was the way in which the girls were subordinated to the boys; the boys seemed first considered, the girls in comparison were nowhere. Doubtless our English homes are more at fault here than in America; but, as a mother's pride in her boys is the same all over the world, may not even American homes admit of a little improvement in this respect as well? And, if we choose to bring up our boys to look upon their mothers and sisters as more or less the devoted slaves of their selfishness, can we wonder that they should grow up to look upon all women as more or less the slaves of their needs, fleshly or otherwise?

Now, what I want all boys taught from their earliest years is, roughly speaking, that boys came into the world to take care of girls. Whatever modification may take place in our view of the relation of the sexes, Nature's great fact will remain, that the man is the stronger—a difference which civilization and culture seem to strengthen rather than diminish; and from his earliest years he ought to be taught that he, therefore, is the one that has to serve. It is the strong that have to bear the burden of the weaker, and not to prostitute that strength by using it to master the weaker into bearing their loads. It is the man who has to give himself for the woman, not the other way on, as we have made it. Nay, this is no theory of mine; it is a truth implanted in the very heart of every true man. "Every true man," as Milton says, "is born a knight," diligently as we endeavor to stub up this royal root, constantly, as from the very nursery, we endeavor to train it out of him. You may deny the truth and go on some theory of your own in the training of your boys, but the truth cannot deny itself. It is *there*, whether you will have it or not, a root of the tree of life itself.

Now there is not a day that need pass without opportunities of training your boys in this their true knightly attitude. You can see, as I have already said, that they learn in relation to their own sisters what in after years they have to practise towards all women alike. To give up the comfortable easy-chair, the favorite book or toy, the warmest place by the fire, to the little sister—this ought to become a second nature to a well-trained boy. To carry a parcel for her, to jump up and fetch anything she wants, to give in to her because he is a boy and the stronger—all this ought to be a matter of course. As he grows older you can place him in little positions of responsibility to his sisters, sending them out on an expedition or to a party under his care. In a thousand such ways you can see that your boy is not only born but grows up a knight. I was once in a house where the master always brought up the heavy evening water-cans and morning coal-scuttles for the maids. And if these were placed at the foot of the stairs so as to involve no running in and out of the kitchen, it might be no mean exercise for a boy's muscles.



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I was told only the other day of a little six-year-old boy whose mother had brought him up from babyhood on these principles. He was playing with his little sister on a bed, when suddenly he perceived that she was getting perilously near the edge which was farthest from the wall. Instantly he dismounted and went round to the other side, and, climbing up, pushed her gently into the middle of the bed, remarking sententiously to himself, "I think boys ought always to take the dangerous side of their sisters." Ah me! if only you mothers would but train your boys to "take the dangerous side of their sisters," especially of those poor little sisters who are thrust forth at so early an age to earn their own living, alone and unprotected, on the perilous highways of the world, skirted for them by so terrible a precipice, what a different world would it be for us women, what a purer and better world for your sons!

Surely the womanhood in our homes ought to enable us to bring up our boys in such an habitual attitude of serving a woman, of caring for her, of giving himself for her, that it would become a moral impossibility for him ever to lower or degrade a woman in his after-life.

In concluding these suggestions there is one point I must emphasize, the more so as in treating of one particular moral problem it is difficult not to seem to ignore a truth which is simply vital to all moral training. Let us clearly recognize that there is no such thing as moral specialism. Our moral being, like Wordsworth's cloud, "moveth altogether if it move at all." You cannot strengthen one particular virtue except by strengthening the character all round. Cardinal Newman points out—I think in one of those wonderful Oxford sermons of his—that what our ancestors would have called "a bosom sin" will often take an underground course and come to the surface at quite an unexpected point in the character. Hidden licentiousness, which one would expect to evince itself in over-ripe sentiment and feeling, manifests itself instead in cruelty and hardness of heart. The little habit of self-indulgence which you in your foolish fondness have allowed in that boy of yours may, in after-life, come out as the very impurity which you have endeavored so earnestly to guard him against. This mystical interdependence and hidden correlation of our moral and intellectual being is a solemn thought, and can only be met by recognizing that the walls of the citadel must be strengthened at all points in order to resist the foe at one. Truthfulness, conscientiousness that refuses to scamp work, devotion to duty, temperance in food and drink, rectitude—these things are the bastions of purity of life, as well as of all high character.



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But in these days I think we have more especially to remember that the Beautiful Gate of all noble living rests, like the gate of the Jewish Temple, on two pillars, both of which show signs of being considerably out of repair. One of these pillars is obedience, or discipline. If you have not exacted prompt and unhesitating obedience in your boy, from his earliest childhood, to the parents whom he has seen, do you think that in after years he will obey the Father of Lights, whom he has not seen? Do you think, if you have let him set your authority at defiance, he will in future years, with temptation on one side and opportunity on the other, bow to the invisible authority of conscience? What is it, I ask, that makes the army the finest school for character, giving us our Lawrences, our Havelocks, our Gordons, our Kitcheners, but simply this habit of implicit obedience, of that discipline which has grown so grievously lax in so many of our English homes? In Carlyle's strong words, "Obedience is our universal duty and destiny, wherein whoso will not bend must break: too early and too thoroughly we cannot be trained to know that 'would,' in this world of ours, is as mere zero to 'should,' and for most part as the smallest of fractions even to 'shall.'" [10]

The second great pillar of the portal of noble life seems to me to show still greater signs of being out of repair and in want of restoration, and that pillar is reverence,—that heaven-eyed quality which Dr. Martineau rightly places at the very top of the ethical scale. Let that crumble, and the character which might have been a temple sinks into a mere counting-house. When in these days children are allowed to call their father Dick, Jack, or Tom, and nickname their own mother; when they are allowed to drown the voice of the most honored guest at the table with their little bald chatter, so that even the cross-questioning genius of a Socrates would find itself at a discount; when they are allowed to criticise and contradict their elders in a way that would have appalled our grandmothers; when they are suffered to make remarks which are anything but reverent on sacred things—have I not some reason to fear that the one attribute which touches the character to fine issues is threatened with extinction? Do you think that the boy who has never been taught to reverence his own mother's womanhood will reverence the degraded womanhood of our streets, or hear that Divine Voice guarding all suffering manhood and all helpless womanhood from wrong at his hands, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these, ye have done it unto Me?"

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Oh, I would entreat you to set yourself firmly against this evil tendency of our day, to which I cannot but believe so much of its agnosticism is due,—that deadening down and stamping out of the spiritual instincts of our nature, those great intuitions of the soul, which lie both above and below all reasoning and logic and form their basis rather than their apex. Once let the springs of reverence be choked up, once let that window of the soul be overgrown with weeds and cobwebs, and your most careful training will only produce a character estimable in many respects, but for the most part without noble aspirations, without high ideals, with no great enthusiasms—a character, to use Saint Beuve's expressive phrase, "tout en facade sur la rue," whose moral judgments are no better than street cries; the type of man that accepts the degradation of women with blank alacrity as a necessity of civilization, and would have it regulated, like any other commodity for the market; that very common type of character which, whatever its good qualities, spreads an atmosphere of blight around it, stunting all upward growing things and flattening down our life to the dead level of desert sands.

If you would not be satisfied at your boy rising no higher than this, then, again I say, guard the springs of reverence. Do not let your pride in your child's smartness or any momentary sense of humor make you pass over any little speech that savors of irreverence; check it instantly. Exact respect for yourself and for the boy's father, the respect which is no enemy, but the reverse, to the uttermost of fondness. Insist upon good manners and respectful attention to the guests of your house. Do not despise the good old fashion of family prayers because they do not rise to all that we might wish them to be. At least they form a daily recognition of "Him in whom the families of the earth are blessed"—a daily recognition which that keen observer of English life, the late American Ambassador, Mr. Bayard, pointed out as one of the great secrets of England's greatness, and which forms a valuable school for habits of reverence and discipline for the children of the family. Insist upon the boys being down in time for the worship of God, and do not allow them to get into the habit indulged in by so many young men of "sloping" down with slippers on feet long after breakfast is done and prayers are over.

Only let the springs of reverence well up in your child's soul, and then, and then only, will you be able to give your boy what, after all, must always be the greatest safeguard from shipwreck in this perilous world—religious faith, that stops him at the very threshold of temptation with the words: "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" Your very attitude as you kneel by his side with bowed head and folded hands while he says his little evening and morning prayer will breathe into his soul a sense of a Divine Presence about our bed and about our path. Your love—so



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strong to love, and yet so weak to save—can lead his faltering childish feet to that Love which is deeper than our deepest fall, “which knows all, but loves us better than it knows.” You can press your child against the very heart of God, and lay him in the Everlasting Arms, that faint not, neither are weary; and, with the mother of St. Augustine, you may know that the child of such prayers and such tears will never perish.

“Happy he
With such a mother! faith in womankind
Beats with his blood, and trust in all things high
Comes easy to him, and though he trip and fall
He shall not blind his soul with clay.”

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 8: This is the case with our recognized medical manuals; I do not know whether it is equally true of American manuals.]

[Footnote 9: Vol. ii. See chapter on “The Position of Women.”]

[Footnote 10: *Sartor Resartus*, by Thomas Carlyle, Book II., chap, ii., p. 68. Chapman and Hall, 1831.]

CHAPTER VI

BOYHOOD AND SCHOOL LIFE

I now come to what must always be the great moral crux in a boy's life, that on which all the higher issues of his character will, in all human probability, turn—his school life. One of our great educators took what, looked at superficially, seemed the somewhat retrograde step of giving up the mastership of a college at Oxford to take again the head-mastership of a great public school. But in a conversation I had with him he led me to infer that he had done so from the conviction forced upon him that the whole moral trend of the character must be given, if given at all, prior to university life, at the public school; and to him nothing less than the formation of high moral character seemed worth striving for. Fine scholarship and high mathematics are excellent, but after all, as the apostle of culture, Matthew Arnold, has told us, conduct, and not intellectual attainment, forms seven-tenths of life.

Now, it is in connection with your boy's school life that you will have your greatest dangers to face, your hardest battle to fight.



I am, of course, aware that your school system is in some respects different from ours. You have the mixed day school such as largely obtains in Scotland, but which does not exist, at least for the upper classes, in England. You have private boarding-schools, which with us are called preparatory schools, as they form the vestibule to the public school. And you have, lastly, a few large public schools somewhat on the model of Eton and Harrow.



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Let us begin with the boarding-school. I do not intend for one moment to deny the advantages of our great English public schools. They are excellent for discipline and the formation of strong character, especially for a ruling race like ours; and their very numerical strength and importance command a splendid set of men as masters. But both public and private boarding-schools labor under one great disadvantage: they remove a boy from all family influence and violate the order of our life, which can never be violated with impunity. Boys and girls are sent into the world in pretty equal proportions, and we were never intended to pile a lot of boys together without girls and largely without any feminine influence whatever. To do so is to insure moral disorder whether in our schools or yours. To quote from an excellent paper of Dr. Butler's: "In giving us sisters," says one of the Hares in *Guesses at Truth*, "God gave us the best moral antiseptic," and it is their absence more than anything else that has produced the moral problems which our boarding-schools present. To be absent from sisters for the greater part of the year, at an age when their companionship is perhaps the most eloquent of silent appeals to purity, is undoubtedly one of the greatest evils to be set against the blessings of our public schools.[11]

For my own part, I can only say that the one thing which has filled me at times with the darkness of despair has not been the facts about our back streets, not those facts to meet which we hold conferences and establish penitentiaries, refuges, preventive homes, *etc.*—I am full of hopefulness about them—but the facts about our public, and still more about our private, schools, which until lately have been met with dead silence and masterly inactivity on the part of English parents. On the part of mothers I feel sure it is ignorance, not indifference: if they knew what I know, it simply could not be the latter. Even now, when some, at least, of their ignorance has been dispelled, I doubt whether they realize the depth of moral corruption which is to be found in our public and private schools; the existence of heathen vices which by the law of our land are treated as felony, and which we would fain hope, after nineteen centuries of Christianity, might now be relegated to the first chapter of Romans. They do not realize the presence of other and commoner forms of impurity, the self-defilement which taints the moral nature and stimulates the lower nature into unhealthy and abnormal activity. They do not understand the essentially sporadic nature of the evil—that it may exist "as a pestilence that walketh in darkness" in one boarding-school, while another, owing to the influence of a good set of boys, is comparatively free from it; and they will, therefore, take a single denial of its existence, possibly from their own husbands, as conclusive. Even the affirmations of head-masters are not altogether



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to be trusted here, as mothers cannot betray the confidence of their own boys, and often fail in gaining their consent to let the head-master know what is going on, in the boy's natural dread of being found out as the source of the information and, according to the ruling code, cut, as having "peached." Once I obtained leave to expose an indescribable state of things which was going on in broad daylight in an unsupervised room at one of our great public schools, utterly unsuspected by the head-master, and his subordinate, the house-master. But another case which for long made my life a kind of waking nightmare remained unexposed to the last.

Speaking of those commoner forms of impurity to which I have referred, and which are so mischievous as stimulating immature functions, needing, as Acton over and over again insists, absolute quiet and rest for healthy development, Dr. Dukes, the head physician of one of our best known public schools, states: "The reason why it is so widespread an evil"—computed in 1886 at eighty per cent. of boys at school, a computation accepted by a committee of public schoolmasters—"I believe to be, that the boy leaves home in the first instance without one word of warning from his parents that he will meet with bad boys who will tell him that everybody does it, and thus he falls into evil ways from his innocence and ignorance alone." [12]

Dr. Dukes further states that as the results of his thirty years' experience he had come to the conclusion that only one per cent. of parents ever warned their boys at all before sending them to school.

These statements were made some fifteen years ago, when first the conspiracy of silence was broken through and the question of the morality of our public and private schools was dragged into the light of day and boldly faced and grappled with, largely owing to the action of Dr. Pusey. Since then a mass of strenuous effort has been directed against the evil by our high-minded head-masters; and an immense improvement has been effected. It is too short a time for one to hope that the evil has been eradicated; but when parents learn to fulfil their moral duties of teaching and warning their own boys—as Dr. Dukes observes—I feel sure it could be so far removed as to cause the numbers to change places, so that we might obtain a percentage of ninety to ninety-five of those who lead pure lives while at school, as against five per cent, who are impure, reversing the lamentable ratio that now exists. But here again there has been progress, and I feel sure that the percentage of parents who do warn and teach their sons before sending them to school is now incomparably higher than Dr. Dukes's "one per cent." and is steadily rising.

As to other deeper and nameless evils, they have been already reduced to a minimum, and if fathers could only be persuaded to do their duty by their own boys, they might be made wholly to disappear.

I give you these facts about our English schools, that parents may see for themselves what are the consequences of refusing both teaching and warning to their boys, under the delusion that God's lilies will grow up in the weedy garden of the human heart without strenuous culture and training.



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Do not, therefore, I beseech you, take for granted that your boarding-schools are entirely free from such evils. You have the same conditions that we have. Till lately your boys have been as untaught and unwarned as ours. In your boarding-schools, as in ours, they are removed from the purifying influence of mother and sisters. They are just at the age which has neither the delicacy of childhood nor of early manhood. Rest assured that conditions will breed like results.

“My belief, not lightly formed,” says Dr. Butler,[13] “is, that none of the great schools can congratulate themselves on anything like safety from this danger. And if this is true of the great public schools, it is still more true of private schools, where the evil is admittedly greater. Boys and masters alike may strangely deceive themselves; the evil may hide very close. Many a boy has been known to assert positively and honestly that nothing of the kind was ever heard of in his time, and that any fellow suspected of it would have been cut, and half killed, when all the time the evil was actively at work even among the circle of his intimate friends.”

And yet it is this evil, so pervasive in its influence, so certain to taint the fresh springs of young life with impure knowledge, if not to foul them with unclean acts, that parents still too often elect to ignore. The boy, full of eager curiosity, anxious, above all things, to catch up the ways of the other fellows, afraid, above all things, of being laughed at for his innocence, and elated at being taken up by one of the swells in the shape of an elder boy, and at first set-off wholly ignorant of the motive; exposed to suggestions about the functions of his own body which he has not the knowledge to rebut as the devil's lies—what wonder is it that so many boys, originally good and pure, fall victims? “They blunder like blind puppies into sin,” a medical man who has had much to do with boys' schools exclaimed to me in the bitterness of his soul. The small house of the young boy's soul, full of the song of birds, the fresh babble of the voices of sisters, all the innocent sights and sounds of an English or American home, swept and garnished till now by such loving hands, but left empty, unguarded, and unwatched, for the unclean spirit to lift the latch and enter in and take possession—the pity of it! oh, the pity of it! What can the boy think? To quote Dr. Dukes again:

“He will say to himself: ‘My father knows of all this vice at schools, and yet has not said one word to me about it. He has warned me about most things. He told me to be truthful, to keep my temper, to be upright and manly, to say my prayers; he pressed me never to get into debt, never to drink, and never to use bad language; and he told me I ought to change my boots and clothes when wet, so as not to get ill; and yet he has not said one syllable about this. My father is a good man and loves me, and



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if he wanted me not to do this he would surely have told me; it can't be very wrong, else I am sure he would have protected me and told me all about it."

I remember a friend of mine, who had been greatly stirred on the whole subject, endeavoring, with tears in her eyes, to persuade a father to warn his boy before sending him to his first public school, and on his absolutely refusing to do any such thing, she said to him, "At least promise me that you will give him this book," placing in his hands Mr. George Everett's excellent little book, *Your Innings*. This he consented to do. The next morning my friend met him at breakfast, the boy having been already despatched by an early train. "Well," he said, "I sat up till past twelve last night reading your book; it is excellent, and I gave it to my lad before starting him off. But there is just one chapter in it, called a 'Strange Companion,' which I took the precaution of previously cutting out with my penknife; and my boy in his after years will thank me for not putting any such ideas in his head, but having kept him the pure and innocent lad that he is." I need not say that it was the one chapter that would have put the boy on his guard. Oh, befooled and purblind father! I happened to know that the school to which the boy was sent was swept at that time by a moral epidemic, and before that hapless lad had been a week in its corrupt atmosphere he would have had ideas put into his head with a vengeance. His father had handed over the ground of his boy's heart for the devil to sow the first crop, and as a rule the devil sows, not wild oats, as we say, but acorns—a dread sowing which it may take years to root up and to extirpate, even if, so far as after-taint is concerned, it can ever be wholly extirpated.

In another case a widowed mother came to one of my meetings, and was profoundly alarmed at what I said about the dangers of our schoolboys. It had never occurred to her that her gentlemanly little lad of twelve could have any temptations of the kind. Unlike the father I have mentioned, she resolved to speak to him that same evening. She found that he was fighting a battle against the whole school, standing up alone for the right, guided by some blind instinct of purity to resist the foul suggestions which were inflicted upon him, threatening him with the most terrible consequences in after-life if he did not yield and do as the other boys did. Think of it, ye mothers! a child of twelve without a hand to guide him, without a voice to cheer him, refused the knowledge that would have saved him from his deadly peril, his own mother deaf and dumb and blind to his struggles, leaving him to fight his little forlorn hope absolutely alone. I need scarcely say how thankfully he poured forth his sore heart to his mother when once she had opened the door, till now kept locked by her own ignorance; and how she was able to explain to him that, far from reaping any evil consequences from doing what is right, like Sir Galahad, "his strength would be the strength of ten" if he kept himself pure. She probably took steps to remove him from so corrupt an atmosphere as prevailed in that preparatory school, but of this I do not know.



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But here let me guard myself from being misunderstood. I am not making out that every schoolboy is exposed to these temptations; there are boys so exceptionally endowed that they seem to spread a pure atmosphere around them which is respected by even the coarsest and loosest boys in the school. All I do maintain, with Dr. Butler, is that no school is safe from this danger, that at any time it may prove an active one in your boy's life, and that at the very least you have to guard him from impure knowledge being thrust upon him before nature has developed the instincts of manhood by which she guards her inner shrine.

And now I come to the question of day schools. As I have already said, I cannot feel but they are more consonant with the order of our life as giving the discipline and competition of numbers without removing the boy from family life, nor do they lend themselves to some of the graver evils of our boarding-schools. But, alas! in themselves they form no panacea for the evils we are contemplating. On the contrary, I am told on authority I cannot question that in some places this plague spot is rife among them. In one case the evil had struck so wide and deep that the school had to be temporarily closed. Here, again, the same lesson is emphasized, *viz.*: that whatever is the form of the school, however excellent the teacher, there is no substitute in the moral life for the home teaching and training of mothers and fathers.

No mother can read these statements unmoved—statements, remember, not my own, but made by men of the deepest and widest experience, and which, therefore, you are bound to weigh, ponder, and carefully consider. I know that straight from your heart again comes the cry, "What can I do?"

I am inclined to answer this cry in one word, "Everything,"—with God's help.

I

And now let us enter into practical details. We will begin with the outworks, and work our way inwards to the shrine.

First, as to the all-important choice of a school, should the boy's father decide, for reasons in which you concur to send him to a boarding-school.

As to how to ascertain the real state of a school there is, of course, considerable difficulty. I have always found the best way is through mothers who have gained the confidence of their boys and who know through them what really goes on. In this way, as mothers wake up to the danger their boys run and to their own responsibility in guarding them, we shall be able to help one another more and more. But make a point of yourself, as well as the boy's father, personally seeing the master to whom you think of entrusting your lad, and talking over the matter with him. In this way you will not only satisfy yourself, but you will strengthen his hands by making him feel how vital the



whole question is to your heart. What more than anything else weakens the high-minded men who have the tuition of the young is the utter unconcern that is evinced by the parents and the sense that, by the payment of a sum of money down, they can compound with a master for the performance of their inalienable duty of undertaking the moral education of their own children.



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Here let me give you two most earnest cautions. Do not attach too much importance to mere mechanical arrangements as moral safeguards. One of our most successful head-masters says:

“I would most seriously warn any parent anxious about the choice of a school not to attach much weight to the apparent excellence of arrangements. Some of the worst schools have these arrangements in the highest perfection. They cannot afford to have them otherwise. Neat cubicles and spotless dimity have beguiled an uninterrupted sequence of mammas, and have kept alive, and even flourishing, schools which are in a thoroughly bad moral state and are hopelessly inefficient in every particular. Of course, many a parent feels that he ought to judge for himself, and these mechanical arrangements are too often the only material on which he can form his judgment. Let me assure him that they are entirely untrustworthy.”

Secondly, do not think to find safety in the choice of a so-called “religious” school, even though it reflect the exact shade of your own religious opinions. The worst evils I ever knew went on in a school where the boys implicated held a weekly prayer-meeting! We must boldly face the fact that there is some mysterious connection between the religious emotions and the lower animal nature; and the religious forcing-house, of whatever school of theology, will always be liable to prove a hot-bed of impurity. Choose a school with a high moral tone, with religion as an underlying principle—a practical religion, that inculcates duty rather than fosters emotion, and embodies the wise proverb of Solomon, “In all labor there is profit, but the talk of the lips tendeth to penury.”

Only let me beseech you to use your whole influence not to have your boy sent away at too early an age. Do you really think that the exclusive society of little boys, with their childish chatter, their foolish little codes, their crude and often ridiculously false notions of life, and their small curiosities, naturally inquisitive, but not always clean in the researches they inspire, and *always* false in their results, is morally better for your child than, in Dr. Butler’s words,

“the refining and purifying atmosphere of home, with the tenderness of a mother, the grace and playfulness of sisters, the love and loyalty of the family nurse, and lastly—scarcely to be distinguished in its effects from these influences—the sweetness, the simplicity, the flower-picking, the pony-patting of happy, frolicsome younger brothers or sisters in the garden, the paddock, or stable?”

If the boy has got out of hand, I ask, Whose fault is that? and is it fair to the child that your fault should be remedied by sending him away from all that is best and most purifying in child life? I would plead earnestly that eleven or twelve is old enough for the private school, and that a boy should not be sent to a public school before fourteen. In



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this I think most of our English head-masters would agree with me. Till this age, a day school or a tutor should be had recourse to, and when the time comes for sending him off to school, at least we can refuse to place the boy anywhere, either at a private or public school, where there is not some woman to mother and look after the boys and exert a good womanly influence over them. A head-master keenly alive to moral dangers, with a capable wife ready to use her womanly influence in aiding and abetting his efforts, I have found the best possible combination.

But if it is decided that the boys are to be brought up at the day school, your range of choice will probably be very small. You will have to look wholly to your home influence and teaching to counteract any evil influence they may encounter in their school life. But as your boys will never be separated from you, what may not that home influence and teaching, with knowledge and forewarning to direct it,—what may it not accomplish?

II

Let us, then, think out the best ways in which you can warn and guard your boy and fulfil your responsibility of being his moral teacher.

Let us begin with the simplest measure which you can take, and which can present no difficulty to anyone. Before sending your boy to school get him quietly by himself and say to him some such words as these: "My boy, you know, or will come to know, that when boys get together they often talk of nasty things, and even do nasty things. Give me your word of honor as a Christian and a gentleman that you will never say or do anything that you know you would be ashamed to tell me, that you know would bring a blush to your sister's cheeks. Always remember that dirty talk, and still more dirty deeds, are only fit for cads. Promise me faithfully that you will never let any boy, especially an elder boy, tell you 'secrets.' If you were to consent through curiosity, or because you feel flattered at one of the elder fellows taking you up, be sure he means you no good. Whatever you want to know ask me, and so far as I can I will tell you." Some such words as these said solemnly to a boy the day before he leaves home for the first time, either for a boarding-school, or even a day school, will make your womanhood a sort of external conscience to your boy, to guard him from those first beginnings of impurity, in the shape of what are technically called "secrets," which lead on to all the rest. I know one mother who, from her boy's earliest years, has made a solemn pact with him, on the one hand, if he would promise never to ask any questions about life and birth of anyone but her, she, in her turn, would promise to tell him all he wanted to know; and from first to last there has been that perfect confidence and friendship between mother and son which is, and ever must be, a boy's greatest safeguard.



Only remember that with young boys men who have had the greatest experience are generally agreed that it is better not to put the stress on religious motives. Practically, for a young boy, it is better to treat the whole thing as dirty, nasty, and blackguardly. And the whole subject must always be spoken of with reserve, without any emotion, and with much "dry light."



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With most lads I should go a step further; I should give the boy one of the White Cross papers, "A Strange Companion." [14] It is impossible to lay down hard and fast rules; it is impossible to make so many jam-pots of even young humanity, to be tied up and labelled and arranged upon the same shelf. Each individuality has to be dealt with in all its mysterious idiosyncrasy. One boy may be so reserved that it is better to write to him than to talk face to face; another may find the greatest possible strength and comfort in freedom of speech and the feeling that there is no barrier between him and his mother with regard to being able to tell her freely of any temptations that may assail him. Your mother's instincts will be your best guide as to what method to adopt with each of your boys.

If the father of the lad can be induced, at any rate before he enters a boarding-school, to follow the advice of that remarkable man, Mr. Thring, the founder of Uppingham School, in his address to our Church Congress, and write a letter of plain warning and counsel to the lad, it would be an unspeakable help. "My first statement," says Mr. Thring, "is that all fathers ought to write such a letter to their sons. It is not difficult, if done in a common-sense way." [15]

But now I come to what on all hands we must allow to be a point of extreme difficulty. I think all head-masters, deeply concerned in the moral welfare of the boys under their charge, would emphatically endorse the following words of Dr. Butler's:

"It is certain, it must needs be, that boys should, at an early period of their boyhood, come to hear of the nature of sexual relations. From whom should they first learn it? Should it be with every accompaniment of coarseness, of levity, of obscenity? From some ribald groom in the stables? From some impure maidservant who has stolen into the household and the nursery? From some brother only a year or two older, who has just received his first initiation in impurity at a private school and is too young to understand its danger? Worst of all, from the idlest, and most corrupt, and most worthless set of boys at this same private school, who surround the newcomer within a few days, perhaps a few hours, of his first joining, and, with knowing looks and enticing words, try to probe his childish knowledge, and leave him half-ashamed of himself and keenly inquisitive for full initiation, if he finds that he knows nothing of this engrossing mystery? Is it right, is it fair, is it consistent with religious duty or with common-sense, that a little boy of eight, or ten, or twelve, should be sent at this impressionable age to hear for the first time of facts of human nature which must ere long be known, and are part of God's appointment? Does not every dictate of humanity and of reason point to the conclusion that the dawn of this knowledge should be invested with all that is tender, and loving, and pure, and sacred, instead of being shrouded



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in the mists of innuendo or blazoned forth in the shamelessness of bestiality? There is really no answer but one to such a question, and the plain truth is that fathers, perhaps still more mothers, must recognize the duty which lies upon them to teach their children, at such times, in such words, and with such reservations as the character of each child may suggest, the elements at least of that knowledge which will otherwise be learnt but a very little later from a widely different set of instructors. I lay down the principle as admitting of no exception—I do not anticipate even one dissentient voice from any who now hear me—*that no boy ought ever to be allowed to go to school without learning from his father or his mother, or from some brother or tried friend considerably older than himself the simple facts as to the laws of birth and the terrible danger of ever coming to talk of these phenomena as matters of frivolous and filthy conversation.*”

I can only beseech you to give due weight to these words of one who had many years’ experience of a large public school. Over and over again, at all my meetings of educated mothers, I have reiterated his question in similar words, “Is it right, is it fair, that your boy should learn the sacred mysteries of life and birth from the sources which Dr. Butler enumerates, and to which you abandon him, if you refuse to speak; sources of unclean and lying information by which I have no hesitation in saying that the mind and conscience of many men are more or less permanently defiled, even when the life has been kept outwardly pure?” Can you hesitate for one moment to allow that the springs of the life which you will be the first to acknowledge comes from God should well up from a pure source, till, like Wordsworth’s stream—

“Crowned with flowers,
The mountain infant to the sun laughs forth,”

and that the whole subject should be so bound up in the boy’s mind with his father’s love for his mother, his mother’s love for his father, with his own existence, and that of his sisters, that he would shrink with utter loathing from the filthy so-called “secrets” that are bandied about among schoolboys? I know that the task of conveying this knowledge presents many difficulties, but again I ask, “What is there in our life that is worth doing which is not difficult?” Long ago the definition of a difficulty to me has become “a thing to be overcome.” It is not in sitting down helplessly before a difficulty that the way will open. With us, as with the Israelites on the brink of that raging midnight sea, it is in a brave obedience to the Divine command, “Go forward!” that the path opens through the trackless sea, and we find that the great waters that seem ready to overwhelm us are in reality a baptism into new life.

III

Again I seem almost to hear the cry of your heart, “I know I ought to speak to my boy, but how am I to do it?”



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Now, it is here that I earnestly desire to give you, if I possibly can, some helpful, practical suggestions, for I feel that it is not in the recognition of a duty, but in its performance, that the difficulty lies which is arresting so many educated mothers at the present time.

With very young children, whether girls or boys, there should be no difficulty whatever. They are too young to understand. Only, when they come to you asking their innocent little questions as to where the little baby brother or sister comes from, I would earnestly ask you never to allow yourself, or your nurse, to inflict on them the usual popular fables, that the baby was brought by the doctor or that it was found under the gooseberry-bush. A child is far quicker than we think to detect that mother is hiding something, and the first tiny seed of evil curiosity is sown. Make no mystery about it; look your child full in the face, and say, "My child, you have asked me a question about what is very, very sacred. If I were to try to explain it to you, you would not be old enough to understand; for the present you must be content to know that the baby comes from God; how it comes mother will tell you when you grow old enough to understand; only promise me that you will never ask any one but mother about it." The child will then see that you are hiding nothing, and will be satisfied to wait for the explanation that mother has promised.

But what when the child is old enough to understand?—an age which doubtless varies in different children, but which with boys must come before their first school, if you are to occupy the ground of his heart with good seed, which leaves no room for the devil's sowing.

Well, with regard to the facts of birth, I do not think we ought to find much difficulty. You can point out how the baby seed has a soft, downy place provided for it in the pod of the parent plant till it has ripened and is fit to be sown, when the pod opens and lets it fall to the earth, and it becomes a plant in its turn. You can point out that the egg in a similar way is carried in the mother bird's body till the shell has hardened and is fit to be laid, when she warms it with her own breast, patiently sitting on it for days, while the father bird feeds her, till the little chick is strong enough to break the walls of its tiny house, and come forth and peck and fend for itself. You can explain how the little kitten the child plays with has in the same way a safe place provided for it in the mother's body, where it grows and grows till all its organs are formed, and it can breathe and suck, when, like the seed from the pod, and the chick from the egg it leaves the mother's body, and is born, a blind and helpless baby kitten, to be fed and tenderly cared for by the mother cat. You will explain that the baby comes in just the same way so far as its infant body is concerned, growing like the kitten from a tiny cell—borne by the mother till all the organs are formed which it needs for its earthly life, when it also is born and laid in its mother's arms, to be nourished and cared for by the love of both father and mother, not for a few weeks, as with animals, but through long years of helplessness. And you mean to tell me that the sacred truth would not endear you to your child far more than the usual cock-and-bull story about the doctor and the gooseberry-bush?



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A friend of mine has three boys of widely opposite character and temperament. Owing to circumstances, the eldest lad had to be sent to school at an early age. Young as he was, she resolved to follow Dr. Butler's advice and tell him the facts of birth in the way I have suggested. On realizing the truth, the boy flung his arms round her neck and burst into tears. But though she felt that she had done right, she was not wholly without misgivings that she might have introduced some objectionable talk into her nursery. When the time came to send the second lad to school, she repeated the talk that she had had with his elder brother. But to her surprise she found him in total ignorance of the facts: his elder brother had never confided them to him. And so again with the third boy. Evidently the boys had considered it too sacred a thing to talk about—how much too sacred, then, to allow of their joining in with the unclean gossip of schoolboys! Its only result was to give them an added tenderness for their mother, and to make them resent all such unclean talk as so much mud flung at her.

So far, so good. But we all of us realize that it is not the facts of birth, but the facts of the origination of life, that form the perennial source of obscene talk, and often of obscene action, among boys; and it is in explaining these, without violating those instincts of reserve and modesty with which nature herself surrounds the whole subject, that what often seems an insuperable difficulty arises. Yet these functions are, and must be, the very shrine of a body which is a temple of the Lord and Giver of life; and on the face of things, therefore, there must be some method of conveying pure knowledge to the opening mind with regard to them. The difficulty must be with ourselves, and not in the very nature of things themselves.

Has it not been created in a great measure by a wrong method? We begin with human life instead of ending with it; we isolate it from a great system to which it belongs, and treat what is "the roof and crown of things" as a roof that tops no fair edifice, and is therefore anomalous; as a crown that rests on a head which has been severed from its body, and is therefore unmeaning. We obstinately refuse to live—to quote Goethe's words again—not only "in the beautiful and the good," but also "in the whole," which is equally necessary for a well-ordered life. What it seems to me we need is to teach the facts of life-giving, or, in other words, of sex, as a great, wide, open-air law, running right through animated creation, an ever-ascending progression forming a golden ladder leading up to man.

In explaining the facts of reproduction, I would therefore suggest that you should begin with the lowest rung of the ladder, the simplest organisms, such as the amoeba or the volvox. I should show how these multiply by fission, the creature dividing into two, when it is impossible to tell which is the father and which is the mother. I would then pass upwards to more complex organisms, where two individuals are required to form the offspring. You could explain the whole process by the method of fertilization in plants, as urged in an excellent paper by a lady doctor, published in the *Parents' Review*.^[16] Let me quote her words:



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“The child can learn the difference of the names, color, and forms of flowers as soon as it can learn anything. The next step would be to simple lessons in the different parts of a plant—the vegetative organs of roots, stem, leaves, passing on to the reproductive organs in the flower—calyx, corolla, stamen, and pistil. Let the child be taught to notice that all flowers have not quite the same organs, some bearing stamens only, which shed the powdery pollen and are the male, or little father flowers; while others have the pistil only, furnished with the stigma to catch the pollen, and are the females, or little mothers; that the one sort of flowers is necessary to the other in producing the little seed or baby plant.”

Let us take a primrose. Here the mother and father elements are found in the same flower. At the base of the flower, packed in a delicate casket, which is called the ovary, lie a number of small white objects no larger than butterfly-eggs. These are the eggs or ova of the primrose. Into this casket, by a secret opening, filmy tubes thrown out by the pollen grains—now enticed from their hiding-place on the stamens and clustered on the stigma—enter and pour a fertilizing fluid, called “spermatozoa,” through a microscopic gateway, which opens in the wall of the egg and leads to its inmost heart. The ovule, or future seed, is now fertilized and capable of producing a future primrose. Covered with many protecting coats, it becomes a perfect seed. The original casket swells, hardens, is transformed into a rounded capsule or seed-vessel, opening by valves or a deftly constructed hinge. One day this seed-vessel, crowded with seeds, breaks open and completes the cycle of reproduction by dispersing them over the ground, where they sow themselves, and grow and become primrose plants in their turn, starring the grass with their lovely blossoms.[17]

Sometimes the male and female elements grow upon different plants, as in the catkins children are so fond of gathering in the spring.

“More than two thousand years ago Herodotus observed a remarkable custom in Egypt. At a certain season of the year the Egyptians went into the desert, cut off branches from the wild palms, and bringing them back to their gardens, waved them over the flowers of the date-palm. Why they performed this ceremony they did not know; but they knew that if they neglected it the date-crop would be poor or wholly lost. But the true reason is now explained. Palm-trees, like human beings, are male and female. The garden plants, the date bearers, were females, the desert plants were males; and the waving of the branches over the females meant the transference of the pollen dust from the one to the other.”[18]

From these two elements, the spermatozoa, or male element, and the ova, or female element, all life, except in the lowest organisms, is produced.

You could point out how it is by this marvellous process of reproduction, not only that the world is made green and beautiful, but all animal life is fed. Corn and rice, which are only fertilized seeds, form the staple food of a large proportion of mankind; while

even the animal in order to live has first to be nourished on corn or grass before it can become meat for man.



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You could go on further to illustrate the facts of reproduction by bees and ants, so familiar to children, where the drone or male bee, or the male ant, in just the same way as in the plant, fertilizes the eggs of the queen bee or ant by bringing the spermatozoa into contact with the unfertilized egg in the insect's body, when the eggs thus fertilized are laid and carefully nurtured by the working bee or ant. All children have observed the little neuter,[19] or working ant, carrying in its mandibles an egg almost as large as itself with an air of extreme hurry and absorption, to lay it in the sun till the warmth hatches it into a baby ant.

If it were further pointed out that not the male, but the female, as the mother of the species, is Nature's chief care; that among ants the male is sent into the world so imperfectly endowed that he cannot even feed himself, but is fed by his female relations, and that as soon as he has performed his function of fertilizing the queen ant, Nature apparently dismisses him with contemptuous starvation; or—to take the case of the drone or male bee—he is stung to death by the workers, it might help to modify the preposterous pretensions of the male, especially of the boy, in higher circles.

You could then pass upwards through fish with the soft and hard roe, or male and female elements which are familiar to children, and through frogs with their spawn to birds. Here comes in an upward step indeed. "A world that only cared for eggs becomes," as Professor Drummond observes in his *Ascent of Man*, "a world that cares for its young." The first faint trembling dawn, or at least shadowing forth, of a moral life, in the care of the strong for the weak, makes itself seen, which henceforth becomes as pervasive an element in Nature as the fierce struggle for existence in which the weak are destroyed by the strong.[20]

In the bird—till now "the free queen of the air," living at her own wild will, suddenly fettered and brooding on her nest, and covering her helpless young with her tender wings—we see some faint image of the Divine tenderness. In the ceaseless toil of both the parent birds from morning till night to fill the little gaping throats we begin to feel the duty of the strong to serve and protect the weak; and in the little hen partridge, still clinging to her nest, when the flash of the scythe is drawing nearer and nearer, till reapers have told me they have feared the next sweep of the scythe might cut off her head, we see more than a shadow of that mother's love which is stronger than death. And when we pass lastly to the highest order of animals, the mammalia, we find them named after the mother's function of giving suck to her young from her own breast. They are no longer matured in an external egg, but are borne in her own body till they are able to breathe, and seek their nourishment from her, and then they are born so helpless that, as with kittens and puppies, they often cannot even see.



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In this higher order of animals nothing can exceed the devotion of the mother to her young in their helpless infancy. The fierce bear will recklessly expose her shaggy breast to the hunter in their defence. Here, too, we find, as the Duke of Argyle points out in his book on *The Unity of Nature*,

“that the equality of the sexes, as regards all the enjoyments as well as the work of life, is the universal rule; and among those of them in which the social instincts have been especially implanted, and whose systems of polity are like the most civilized polities of men, the females of the race are treated with a strange mixture of love, loyalty, and devotion.”

“Man” as the Duke says, “is the Great Exception,” and has been defined as the only animal that ill-treats and degrades his female.

And when at length we come to the topmost step, “the roof and crown of things,”—Man, as you have already explained the physical facts of life-giving on the plane of plants, and ants, and bees, where they can excite no feeling of any kind, you will have no need to go over them again, but will find yourself free to express the physical in terms of the moral. Man, as a spiritual being, incarnate in an animal body, takes this great law of sex which we have seen running through the animated creation, and lifts it into the moral and the spiritual. The physical love which in animals only lasts for the brief time that is needed for the production and rearing of offspring—becomes in him a love which “inhabiteth eternity,” and unites him to the mother of his children in the indissoluble union of marriage. His fatherhood becomes the very representative of the Father in heaven. The mother becomes the very type and image of the Love that has loved us with more than a mother’s love, borne with us with more than a mother’s patience, suffered for us, in the Cross and Passion, more than a mother’s pangs, to bring us into a higher life. The love of brothers and sisters becomes the first faint beginning of the universal Church and the brotherhood of man; and the sweet babble of their voices grows choral at length in the songs of the Church triumphant, the unbroken family in heaven; while the Christian home shadows forth the eternal home which awaits us hereafter.[21]

The only warning you would have to give your boy would be to point out that, as a cathedral takes longer to build than a shanty, so the human body, which is meant to be the temple of the “Lord and Giver of life,” takes much longer to mature than an animal’s. Many an animal lives and dies of old age in the fourteen years that leave man still an immature boy. And you must earnestly impress upon him that the whole of this part of his nature which you have been explaining to him as a great law running through animated creation and finding its highest uses in Man, must be left to mature itself in absolute rest and quiet. All premature use of it is fatal

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to perfect health of soul and body. The less he thinks of it, and the more he thinks of his work and his athletics, the better for him. Above all, you hope, now that he knows the truth and his curiosity is satisfied, he will loathe all filthy jests and stories about that which is the source of all beautiful living things on the pleasant earth and, in his own little world, of all happy family life and innocent home love and joy.

Let me quote here, in conclusion, a little poem, called “The Golden Ladder,” which seems to me to embody some of the teaching of this exquisite page of the illuminated Word of Creation, which man has so blotted and defiled with his obscenities, but which to “open hearts and love-lit eyes” is the spring of all that is highest—the birth of the moral and the cradle of the divine.

“When torn with Passion’s insecure delights,
By Love’s dear torments, ceaseless changes worn,
As my swift sphere full twenty days and nights
Did make, ere one slow morn and eve were born;

“I passed within the dim, sweet world of flowers,
Where only harmless lights, not hearts, are broken,
And weep out the sweet-watered summer showers—
World of white joys, cool dews, and peace unspoken;

“I started, even there among the flowers,
To find the tokens mute of what I fled—
Passions, and forces, and resistless powers,
That have uptorn the world and stirred the dead.

“In secret bowers of amethyst and rose,
Close wrapped in fragrant golden curtains laid,
Where silver lattices to morn unclose,
The fairy lover clasps his flower-maid.

“Ye blessed children of the jocund day!
What mean these mysteries of love and birth?
Caught up like solemn words by babes at play,
Who know not what they babble in their mirth.

“Or of one stuff has some Hand made us all,
Baptized us all in one great sequent plan,
Where deep to ever vaster deep may call,
And all their large expression find in Man?



“Flowers climb to birds, and birds and beasts to Man,
And Man to God, by some strong instinct driven;
And so the golden ladder upward ran,
Its foot among the flowers, its top in heaven.

“All lives Man lives; of matter first then tends
To plants, an animal next unconscious, dim,
A man, a spirit last, the cycle ends,—
Thus all creation weds with God in him.

“And if he fall, a world in him doth fall,
All things decline to lower uses; while
The golden chain that bound the each to all
Falls broken in the dust, a linkless pile.

“And Love’s fair sacraments and mystic rite
In Nature, which their consummation find,
In wedded hearts, and union infinite
With the Divine, of married mind with mind,



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Foul symbols of an idol temple grow,
And sun-white Love is blackened into lust,
And man's impure doth into flower-cups flow,
And the fair Kosmos mourneth in the dust.

O Thou, out-topping all we know or think,
Far off yet nigh, out-reaching all we see,
Hold Thou my hand, that so the top-most link
Of the great chain may hold, from us to Thee;

“And from my heaven-touched life may downward flow
Prophetic promise of a grace to be;
And flower, and bird, and beast, may upward grow,
And find their highest linked to God in me.”

Possibly you will say at once, “Oh, my boy has no taste for natural history, and he would take no interest in this kind of thing.” All the better his finding it a bit dry—it will rid the subject of some of its dangerous attraction. I have yet to find the boy for whom the Latin Grammar has the least interest; but we do not excuse him on that ground from grinding at it. Whether he takes an interest in it or not, you have to teach him that he has got to know about these things before going to school, to guard him from the danger of having all sorts of false, and often foul, notions palmed off on him. I do not say that pure knowledge will necessarily save, but I do say that the pitcher which is full of clear spring-water has no room for foul. I do say that you have gained a great step, if in answer to the offer of enlightenment which he is certain to receive, you have enabled your boy to acquit himself of the rough objurgation—forgive me for putting it in schoolboy language: “Oh, hold your jaw! I know all about that, and I don't want any of your rot.” I do say that early associations are most terribly strong, and if you will secure that those early associations with regard to life and birth shall be bound up with all the sanctities of life—with home, with his mother, with family, with all that is best and highest in life; then his whole attitude in life will be different. But if these early associations are linked with all that is false and foul, some subtle odor of the sewer will still cling about the heart of the shrine, a nameless sense of something impure in the whole subject; an undefinable something in his way of looking at it, which has often made the purity of men—blameless in their outer life—sadden and perplex me almost as much as the actions and words of confessedly impure men.

IV

But, whatever is the importance I attach to pure teaching, I return to my old position, that purity is an attitude of soul, or, perhaps I ought to say, the “snowy bloom” of the soul's perfect health, rather than anything you can embody in moral maxims or pure knowledge—that perfect bloom of spiritual health which may be as much the result of a



mother's watchful care and training as the physical health of the body. It is for you to train your boy in that knightly attitude of soul, that reverence for womanhood, which is to men as "fountains of sweet water" in the bitter sea of life; that chivalrous respect for the weak and the unprotected which, next to faith in God, will be the best guard to all the finer issues of his character. Truth of truth are the golden words of Ruskin to young men:

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“Whomsoever else you deceive, whomsoever else you injure, whomsoever else you leave unaided, you must not deceive, nor injure, nor leave unaided according to your power any woman whatever, of whatever rank. Believe me, every virtue of the highest phase of manly character begins and ends in this, in truth and modesty before the face of all maidens, in truth and reverence or truth and pity to all womanhood.”

Can we doubt or question this, we who worship Him who came to reveal the true man quite as much as to reveal the only true God—the real manhood beneath the false, perishable man with which it is so often overlaid by the influence of society and the world? Look at His attitude towards women, ay, even Eastern women, who had not been ennobled by centuries of Christian freedom and recognized equality of the sexes, but who, on the contrary, belonged to a nation tainted to some degree with that Eastern contempt for women which made a Hindu answer the question of the Englishman, perplexed by the multiplied of Indian gods and sects, “Is there *no* point of belief in which you all unite?” “Oh, yes,” the Pundit replied, “we all believe in the sanctity of cows and the depravity of women!”

These Eastern women, therefore, had much to enslave and lower them; but see how instantly they rose to the touch of the true Man, just as they will rise, the women of today, to the touch of the true manhood of your sons, if you will train them to be to us such men as Jesus Christ was. See how He made women His friends, and deigned to accept their ministry to His human needs. Many severe rebukes are recorded from His lips to men, but not one to a woman. It was a woman, ay, even a degraded woman, who by her kisses and her tears smote the Rock of Ages and the water of life flowed forth for the world, who won for the world the words: “He who hath been forgiven much loveth much,” and the burden of guilt is changed into the burden of Love. It was to a woman He first gave the revelation of life, that He first revealed Himself as the Water of Life, and first uttered the words, “I am the Resurrection and the Life.” It was women who remained faithful when all forsook Him and fled. It was a woman who was the last to whom He spoke on the cross, to a woman that the first words were spoken of His risen life. It was a woman He made His first messenger of the risen life to the world. Nothing in the life of the true Man on earth stands out in more marked features than, if I may venture to use the words, His faith in women, as if to stamp it forever as an attribute of all true manhood, that without which a man cannot be a man.



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Now, side by side with this attitude of the true Man, this perfect loyalty to all womanhood as such, ay, even degraded womanhood, place the present debased attitude of men, even of some Christian men, which we are looking to you mothers of boys to change *in toto*. Is not a powerful writer in the *Westminster Review* right when he says, "There is not found a chivalrous respect for womanhood as such. That a woman has fallen is not the trumpet call to every noble and wise-hearted man to raise her up again as speedily as may be; rather it is the signal to deepen her degradation and to doom her to moral death." Is it not a received code even among Americans as well as Englishmen that if a woman knows how to respect and protect herself men are to respect her—it is only a scoundrel that will dare to say an insulting word to her? But if she is a bit fast and giddy, if she has little or no respect for herself, if her foolish feet have slipped ever so little, then she is fair game. "She gave him encouragement; what else could she expect? It was her own fault." To expect that any man with an ounce of true manhood in him would at once say, "That young girl does not in the least realize the danger she is in, and I must get between her and the edge of the precipice, and see that she comes to no harm."—this would be to expect the wildly impossible. Have we not made up our mind that the beast and not the Christ is our master here; and does not every beast spring at once on a fallen prey? It is human nature, and you will never get men to think and act any differently. As to faith in man as such, not only in the church-going man, but in the rough-spoken fisherman, the contemned publican, the infidel Samaritan, faith in his power of recognizing and rising to the truth, the higher standard placed before him, *that* I sometimes think lies buried in that Eastern garden—in the Sepulchre "wherein never man yet lay." [22] And yet it is the man as revealed in Jesus Christ, not the man as fashioned by the world, with its low traditions and low public opinion, that is true to human nature. In moments of excitement or danger he reverts to this true nature, which has been so warped and overlaid by the world. In the great mass meetings which I held for the purpose of pleading with men to come over on my side and help me in the work of saving women from the awful doom to which men sentence them, I used to bring this home by saying to them: "If a fire were to break out in this vast hall, who would be the first person that you would try to save? It would be me because I am a woman"; and the roar of assent that burst forth from all parts of the building showed that I had struck home. I used to bring before them—and the sooner you bring it before your boys the better—the conduct of the men on the ill-fated *Birkenhead*—ah! dear men, voiceless and nameless, and lost in that "vast and wandering grave" into which they sank, what have they not done to raise the tone of



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England? You will possibly remember that the *Birkenhead*, with a troop of our soldiers on board, struck and foundered not far from land. The women and children were at once crowded into the boats, and it was only when, in a few minutes, the ship began to settle that the cry was heard among the men, "To the boats! to the boats! every man for himself!" But the officer in command stood up and shouted, "What! and swamp the women and children? Die rather!" And those men did die. Drawn up in military array, without moving a muscle, those men sank into the bitter waters of death, that the women and children might live.[23] That I contend is man's true nature, to love the woman, and, if needs be, to give himself for her.

It is, therefore, to recognize and strengthen this true nature of man, to get it deeper into him, and not to get it out of him, as I cannot but feel we have hitherto more or less done, to train your boys in this perfect loyalty to all womanhood as such; and to send forth men into the world to "die rather" than save themselves at the cost of a woman, to "die rather" than drive a woman down into those deep waters of degradation and death, that we look to the mothers of the future as the sole hope of the world. I say again you have got to see that they learn in relation to their own sisters what they have to practise towards all women, however humble, ay, and however degraded, in their future life. As the great English oaks are built up of tiny cells, so this true manliness must be built up by a mother's watchful use of a thousand small daily incidents—by what Wordsworth rightly calls the best part of a good man's life—

"His little daily, unremembered acts
Of kindness and of love."

In themselves they seem almost too trivial to mention:—the easy chair instinctively given up on the sister's entrance; the door opened for any woman passing out; the cap removed in the presence of ladies, even though those ladies are his own relatives; the deck-chair taken out by the seaside to make the mother comfortable; the favorite cricket-match given up if an expedition has been fixed in which his services are needed; the window raised and the door shut on leaving a railway-carriage in which women are travelling, so as not to expose them to draught; and, when men-servants are not kept, the sister's bicycle cleaned or the skates polished—all those "little daily, unremembered acts" of knightly service which the mere presence of a woman ought to inspire in a man.

I am well aware that here again, as Mr. Philip Hamerton points out, the boarding-school presents a difficulty. As he says, "The worst of the distant school system is that it deprives the home residence that remains of all beneficial discipline; for the boys are guests during the holidays, and the great business is to amuse them." [24]



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But surely this needs only to be mentioned to be remedied. You do not make your boys happier during their holidays by making them selfish: what is really a novelty to a schoolboy, fresh from the association with boys only, is to have sisters to look after and a mother to depend upon him for all sorts of little services. A joyous exclamation on your part, "Oh, what a comfort it is to have a boy in the house to do things for one!" will make him swell with manly pride; and should he show the least tendency to put upon his sisters and make them fetch and carry for him, as they are only too willing to do, you can easily put a stop to that by a few caustic remarks that you don't want savages in your house; and a pointed use of that delightful story in one of the White Cross papers, [25] of the Zulu chief to whom the Government sent a propitiatory present of wagons and wheelbarrows, thinking that it would be sure to please him. But he gazed on them with fine scorn, exclaiming: "What's the use of those things for carrying our burdens when we have plenty of women!" Or you can use that equally good story, told by Sir John Lubbock at a sectional meeting of the British Association for the Promotion of Science, of a remote tribe of savages who had never seen a bullock, and when the white man arrived with his bullock wagons, after much perplexed discussion, they came to the conclusion that, as they were used for heavy loads, they must be the white man's wives!

A little wholesome, if incisive, raillery on your part will quickly extinguish any tendency to make willing slaves of his sisters. If, however, you prefer to indulge your foolish fondness for him, that subtle self-indulgence which makes it easier for you to sacrifice yourself and his sisters to him rather than discipline him to work out his true nature, remember you gratify yourself at his most cruel cost. You produce the boy whose youth is marked by a tacit contempt for girls and whose manhood will be disfigured by a light estimation of the beauty and sanctity of womanhood.

I know well I shall be told that all this is quite out of date; that modern girls are so independent that they stand in no need of brothers, but like to place themselves on a level with them and share as good comrades in all their rough-and-tumble games. Let us be of good cheer. Sex is a very ancient institution, the slow evolution of hundreds of centuries, and is in no danger of being obliterated by the fashion of a day. Take the most advanced "new woman"; yes, concealed under that virile shirt-front, unchoked by that manly necktie and turned-up collar, lurking beneath that masculine billy-cock; nay, hidden somewhere deeper down than the pockets of even those male knickerbockers, you will find the involuntary pleasurable thrill at a strong man's chivalrous attention, the delicious sense of a man's care and protection, which centuries and centuries of physical weakness have woven into the very tissues of her being, in however loud



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and strident a voice she may deny it. Whatever changes in the position of women may take place, the basic fact remains, and will always remain, the man is stronger than the woman, and his strength is given him to serve the weaker; and you have got to get your girls to be your fellow-helpers in developing all that is best and most chivalrous in their brothers, and not so to run riot in their independence as to substitute a boyish camaraderie for the exquisite relations of the true man to the true woman.

There rises up now before me a boy, one of those delightful English boys overflowing with pluck and spirits. His mother had come to one of my meetings, and, like so many other mothers, I am thankful to say, had received a lifelong impression from what I said with regard to the training of boys, and she resolved, there and then, to act upon my advice with her own boys. She told me some two years after, that this boy had come in late one afternoon and explained to her that a little girl had asked him to direct her to rather an out-of-the-way house. "I thought she might ask that question of some one who would tell her wrong, or that she might come to some harm, so I thought I had better go with her and see her safe to the house." "But what of the cricket-match that you wanted so to see?" his mother asked. "Oh, I had to give that up. There wasn't time for both."

On another occasion, when a Christmas-tree was being prepared in the schoolroom for some choristers, as he and his mother left at dusk a chorister tried to force himself past her and gain a private view; and when she refused him admittance, not recognizing who she was, called her a very disrespectful name. Instantly the boy flew at him like a little tiger, "How dare you speak to my mother like that!" "I didn't see it was your mother," the chorister pleaded, trying to ward off the blows. "But you saw it was a woman, and somebody's mother, and you dare to speak to her like that!" And such a storm of fisticuffs fell on every part of that hulking young chorister's person as forced him at last to cry for mercy and promise that he would never do so again. That boy's master wrote to his mother towards the end of his school-time—he was a Bluecoat boy—and said that he positively dreaded his leaving, as his influence on the side of everything good, and pure, and high was quite that of a master.

And now I come to the question of religious teaching, which you may be surprised that I have not put first of all. First of all, in one sense, I do put it. There can be no greater safeguard to purity of life than vital religion. I do not go so far as some evangelical mothers who have told me that nothing less than the conversion of their boys would be of the least avail to keep them morally straight; on the contrary, I have known men who have never come under any strong religious influence, but have grown up sceptical scientific men, yet who have led lives as pure as any woman's. Common manhood,



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with the “Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world”; common love for mother and sister, which for their sakes maketh it impossible to wrong their womanhood, even when fallen into the dust; common self-respect, which is so strong in some men, and makes them shrink from anything in the nature of mud, is often sufficient to accomplish this end. But still, when all is said, if in answer to your mother’s prayers you can implant in your boy a sense of the Divine Presence and the cry of the quickened conscience, “How can I do this great sin and wickedness against God?” you have doubtless given him the best panoply against the fiery darts of temptation. Only I would again warn you that there must be no forcing of the religious emotions, no effort to gather the fruits of the spirit before the root, in the shape of the great cardinal virtues everywhere presupposed in Christian ethics, has been nourished, and strengthened, and watered into strong, healthy growth. We have to bear in mind our Lord’s words, which it seems to me religious parents sometimes forget, that there is an order of growth in spiritual things as in natural—first the blade, then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear; and we are not to try to force the full corn in the ear before the stalk and the blade have grown. For the want of laying to heart these words of the great Teacher, I have known much pulpy, emotional religion engrafted on young souls—admirably adapted to exhaust the soil, but with the smallest possible bearing upon right conduct; a religion perfectly at its ease with much scamping of lessons and hard work in general; indulgent of occasional cribbing, and of skilful manipulation of awkward truth, of betting and small extravagances; and innocent of all sense of dishonesty in allowing a struggling parent to pay large sums for education while the school-time so purchased, often at the cost of home comforts and pleasant outings, is squandered in idleness.

What a boy really needs, and, indeed, all immature things—for I found it equally true of immature men—is a simple, practical religion, based more on the facts of life and conscience than on doctrines and dogmas. To know God as his Father; to know that he has a Redeemer who laid down His life to save him from sin and who takes account of his smallest and most broken effort to do what is right; to realize that it is only so far as he is like Christ and in Christ that he can be really a man and work out what is highest in him; to know that he has been baptized into a Divine Society, binding him to fight against all wrong, both within and in the world without; above all, to know that there is a supreme spiritual Power within him and about him to enable him to do right, and that in the line of duty “I can’t” is a lie in the lips that repeat, “I believe in the Holy Ghost”; this is as much as his young soul can assimilate, not as mere religious phrases, but as realities to live by.

“So nigh to glory is our dust,
So nigh to God is man,
When duty whispers low ‘Thou must,’
The soul replies, ‘I can.’”



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But see that beneath all this he has the special Christian teaching with regard to the sanctity of the body thoroughly instilled into him. If the Incarnation means anything, it means not the salvation and sanctification of a ghost, but the salvation and consecration of the whole man, of his body as well as his soul. True, the animal body to a spiritual being must always be a “body of humiliation,” but nothing can be more unfortunate and misleading than the epithet in the Authorized Version of “vile” as a translation of the Greek word used by St. Paul. On the contrary, we are taught that even this mortal body is a temple of the Holy Ghost.

In teaching this there can be no difficulty; you can make use of a child’s natural reverence for a church. You can say, “What would you think if you heard of some loose lads breaking into a church, and just for the fun of the thing strewing the aisles with cinder dust and all sorts of loose rubbish; tearing out the pages of Bibles and hymn-books to light their pipes, and getting drunk out of the chalice? You would be honestly shocked at such profanity. Nay, even in the dire exigencies of war we do not think better of the Germans for having stabled their horses in one of the French churches and left their broken beer-bottles on the high altar and the refuse of a stable strewn up and down the nave. Yet a church is, after all, only a poor earthly building, built by human hands. But there is one temple which God has built for Himself, the temple of man’s body; and of that the terrible words are written, and ever fulfilled, “If any man defile that temple, him will God destroy.” God’s great gift of speech is not to be defiled by dirty talk, by profane language, by lies, or evil speaking. The organs which are given us for its sustenance are not to be denied by gluttony and piggishness, either in food or drink. The boy is not to use any part of his body in defiling ways which he would be ashamed for his own mother to know of. To do so is not only to defile, but—with the double meaning of the Greek word, which we cannot render into English—to destroy; to weaken his brain-power, which he wants for his work in life, to weaken his nervous system, lessening his strength thereby and rendering him less able to excel in athletics, and often, if carried to excess, in after-life bringing results which are the very embodiment of the terrible words, “Him will God destroy.” The full force and bearing of this teaching he may not apprehend. I have already said that with a young boy the lower appeal never to do anything that is low and dirty and blackguardly will have far more practical weight, and will also avoid laying undue stress on the religious emotions. But I am quite sure that the Christian teaching of the sanctity of the body must be laid deep and strong with all the force of early impression in a boy’s inmost being, in order that it may lie ready for future use when Nature has developed those instincts of manhood which will teach him its full significance.



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If you are an Episcopalian, you will of course find the time of your boy's confirmation simply invaluable as one of those turning-points which will enable you to speak, or possibly write, more unreservedly than is possible on more ordinary occasions. I would earnestly ask you to give him a little White Cross confirmation paper called *Purity the Guard of Manhood*, a paper which an Eton master pronounced the best thing he had met with of the kind, and which has been widely used. Do not rest content with merely giving the paper in a perfunctory way, but follow it up with a few living, earnest words of your own.

Of course I should do a wrong to your womanly instincts if I were to think it necessary to say that the inculcation of purity must be always in a mother's heart, but only on her lips on some marked occasions, such as the first going to school, the last day of the holidays, or when your boy himself gives the occasion by some question he may ask you, but above all when he reaches a critical age, when a few words from your own lips will be worth all the printed pages in the world. Only ever and always make it an essential element of his idea of manliness to be pure, and do not forget constantly to couple the words "brave and pure," or "manly and pure," or "pure and high character," in his hearing; that he may be endued, not with that pale, emasculate thing that passes muster for purity nowadays, which always seems to me chiefly conscious of its own indecency, full of the old nervous "touch not, taste not, handle not" spirit, bandaged up with this restriction and that lest it fall to pieces, and when it comes to saving another from defilement in body and soul shuffling uneasily into a pair of lavender kid-gloves and muttering something about its being "such a very delicate subject"—nay, not this, but that militant sun-clad power which Milton dreamed of, rushing down like a sword of God to smite everything low, and base and impure; a purity as of mountain water or living fire, whose very nature it is, not only to be pure itself, but to destroy impurity in others.

V

And now let me throw together two or three practical suggestions, which will probably be superfluous to the most experienced mothers, but may be useful to younger and more inexperienced parents.

In the first place, I think there are few of the heads of the medical profession who would not agree with me that our English dietary is too stimulating and too abundant. Sir Andrew Clark certainly held that a large proportion of our diseases spring from over-eating and over-drinking. I don't suppose that for a boy it so much matters, as he is eating for "edification" as well as for sustenance, for the building up of his walls as well as for the nutrition of his existing frame. But "the boy is father to the man," and I would ask you not to accustom your boys to a rich dietary, as the habit once formed will be prolonged into early



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manhood, and undoubtedly such stimulating diet does greatly increase the temptations with which young men have to contend. It is perfectly unnecessary for the developing of strength and stature, as is shown by the splendid Scotchmen who yearly carry off some of our highest university distinctions and prizes—many of them farmer lads who have scarcely tasted meat in their boyhood, but have been brought up on the simple farinaceous food of the country. There was much force and meaning in the quaint congratulatory telegram sent by a friend to a Cambridge Senior Wrangler hailing from Scotland, “Three cheers for the partridge!” And that curious and most impressive fact which Mr. Bayard, the late American Ambassador, hunted up for our edification from various dictionaries of biography—the fact, namely, that a large proportion of our most eminent men spring from the homes of the poorer clergy, where certainly sumptuous fare and much meat do not obtain, is a proof that abstemious living, while forming a valuable discipline for the soul, does not injure but promotes the health of the body and the strength of the brain. Our having given up the religious uses of fasting I often think is a loss to young men; and it might, therefore, be as well if we were to imitate our “Corybantic” brethren, the Salvationists, and institute a week of self-denial, leaving the children to work out an economical dietary, with due care on our part that it should be fairly nutritious, and allowing them to give what they have saved from the ordinary household expenses to any cause in which they may be interested. It would give them a wholesome lesson in self-denial and cheap living; both lessons much needed in these luxurious days. But whether this suggestion finds favor or not, we have always to bear in mind that “plain living” is the necessary companion of “high thinking”—the lowly earth-born twin who waits upon her heavenly sister.

On the vexed question of the use of alcohol there was but one point on which there was a consensus of opinion in the discussion by our leading medical men, which appeared some years ago in the pages of the *Contemporary Review*. The point upon which they were all agreed was that alcohol is injurious to children, and if the boy has been accustomed from his early youth to do without it, and, as he grows up, remains a total abstainer, there is no question that his abstinence will prove a great safeguard; though I cannot go as far as some of my abstaining friends, who seem to regard the use of alcohol as the root of what must, in the nature of things, be one of the strongest primal passions of human nature, and therefore liable to abuse, whether men are total abstainers or not. Anyhow, though a lad can be trained to strict moderation, abstinence in both alcohol and tobacco must after a time come of the lad’s own free will; the last thing that answers is to multiply and enforce restrictions; the rebound is inevitable and often fatal. But I do say that where there



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is a great pinching in the home in order to afford the educational advantages of school and university, it does show some radical defect in the training of our boys that they should indulge in such expensive habits, especially the expensive and wholly unnecessary habit of smoking, when the dear mother and young sisters are doing without many a little home comfort in order to meet the expense of the young rascal's education. One rich old grandmother whom I met abroad promised each of her grandsons fifty pounds if they would give up smoking; and it was marvellous how that stern necessity of doing as other young men do disappeared like their own tobacco smoke before the promise of that fifty pounds for their own pockets! They were all able to claim it one after the other. If boys were not trained by their mothers to be systematically selfish, might not the home-claims in the heart be as strong as those fifty pounds in the pocket?

Secondly, with regard to betting and gambling, which may be classed with drinking, as the fruitful parent of bad company, and a *descensus ad infernum*:—do you not think a boy may be best guarded against a habit of betting, which is so likely to lead on to gambling, by taking the same line as a boy of my acquaintance took with his mother when she was warning him against it: “Well, mother, you see, it always does seem so mean to me to get a fellow's money from him without giving him anything in return; it always does seem so like priggish, and some of our fellows are awfully hard up, and can't afford to lose a penny.” Mr. Gladstone was evidently of the same opinion when he once said to his private secretary, Sir Edward Hamilton, that he “regarded gambling as nothing short of damnable. What can be the fun of winning other people's money?” This strikes me as a way of putting it which would appeal most forcibly to a boy; and if, in addition, we were to point out to him that, like all shady things, it has a tendency to grow and sharpen the man into a sharper and develop the blood-sucking apparatus of a leech, besides bringing wretchedness and misery on others, he might be led to resist the first beginnings of a betting habit which may lead on to gambling in after years.

And here I would say that the absolute absence of any training given to a boy in the right use and value of money, which has obtained till lately in our English schools, is surely suicidal and must lend itself to every form of abuse. I do not know whether it is the same with you, but many of our boys know money only in the form of pocket-money, when it becomes to him a metal token mostly signifying so much “tuck”; becoming, as he grows older, more and more deleterious “tuck” in the shape of billiards, betting, *etc.*, and ending in a general going “on tick,” which is worse still. But in this matter we are improving. I think most sensible parents nowadays place a small sum at their bank to the boy's account, with a check-book, making



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him responsible at first for small articles of clothing, neckties, shirt-collars, etc, and as soon as he shows himself trustworthy, for all his expenses except school bills. The boy is expected to keep accounts, get nothing without first asking the price, and to bring his receipted bills at the end of the term to his father, and see that they tally with his foils; and, above all, always to pay in ready money—unpaid bills being contemplated in the bald light of shop-lifting. To this I would add, if possible, the habit of giving the Jewish tenth, so as to make giving a steady principle, and not a hap-hazard impulse.

Thirdly, it is a vital point to give your boys interesting pursuits. There is great force in the rough old saying, "Never give the devil an empty chair to sit down upon, and you won't be much troubled with his company." Vice is constantly only idleness which has turned bad,—idleness being emphatically a thing that will not keep, but turns rotten. It is not the great industrial centres of our population that are chiefly ravaged by vice; it is the fashionable watering-places, the fashionable quarters of large towns, where idle men congregate, in which it is a "pestilence that walketh in darkness," and slays its thousands of young girls. "Empty by filling," has always been a favorite motto of mine. How many a young man has been driven to betting, drinking, and the race-course from the want of something of interest to fill his unoccupied hours, because more wholesome tastes have never been developed in him! Of course, tastes must be to a certain degree inborn, but I am quite sure that many a taste perishes, like a frost-bitten bud, full of the promise of blossom and fruit, because it has never been given the opportunity to develop.

Take a boy's innate love of collecting. Could you not develop it by the offer of a little prize for the best collection of dried flowers, of butterflies or insects, of birds' eggs, even, in some cases, of geological specimens, but, in any case, with the scientific and common names attached; so forming a healthy taste for natural history, which may be a source of perpetual interest and profit in after-life? Do not let your dislike of destroying life interfere; reverence for life can be as well, nay, better taught by insisting that only the necessary specimens should be given of each species, only one or two eggs taken from the nest, and the nest itself disturbed as little as possible. Chemistry and electricity also appeal to a boy's love of experimentizing and of making electrical contrivances, easily constructed of the commonest materials. As to hand-work, the lack of which in ill-health has made so many a man a torment both to himself and others, there ought to be no difficulty with regard to that. Carpentering, wood-carving, repousse-work in metal, bent-iron work, mosaic work, any of these, except possibly the last, may be set on foot with very little expense, besides drawing, modelling, etc. Where there are



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sufficient means it would be a good thing if boys were taught, as far as may be, how things are made and the amount of toil that goes into the simplest article. I remember giving a small printing-press to a boy of ours—an excellent gift, by the by, for a lad, and it can be had for five or six shillings—and his coming to me soon after with a match-box in his hand, exclaiming with wonderment, “Why, auntie, there are six different kinds of type on this match-box!” If they could learn how to build, how rafters and joists are put in, and construct as much as a miniature summer-house in the garden, how useful this being able to turn their hands to anything might prove to them in their after-life. And with what added respect they would look upon all labor if they had never looked upon it as the part of a “gentleman” to stand aloof from it.

Lastly, but not least, I would plead most earnestly for the frequent home-letter, should your boy be sent to a boarding-school. If you would have him resist the temptations of school life, keep the home as close to his heart and as present to his mind as you can. Make it your first and paramount duty to write every day if you can, if not every other day, at least twice a week.

Do not misunderstand me here. God knows I do not go in for the devoted mother who thinks of nothing but her boys and to whom the whole world besides is nothing but an empty flourish of the pen about their names. Such mothers are like Chinese teacups, with no perspective and everything out of proportion; where the Mandarin is as big as the Pagoda, and suffers from a pathetic inability to get in at his own door. You must see things in moral perspective in order to train character on large and noble lines. And it is from the rough quarry of the outside world, with its suffering and sin, that you must fetch the most precious stones for the building up of true manhood or womanhood. The sooner children are taught that their small concerns must be subordinated at times to the needs of the sick, the poor, and the suffering, the better for them. For a mother, therefore, to undertake *some* outside work may and will prove the best element in their education, enabling them in their turn to live in relation with the world in which God has placed them and do their part in the service of humanity.

All that I mean is, do not so crowd your life with outside work or social engagements as to have no time to spare for this daily or at least bi-weekly letter to the boys at school. Bear in mind that the most important work you can do for the world is the formation of noble character, building it up stone by stone as you alone can do. Do not be too busy to make yourself your boy's friend and throw yourself heartily into all that interests him. I have known philanthropic mothers to whom cricket was nothing but an unmeaning scurrying backwards and forwards, and who scarcely knew the stern of a boat from its bows!



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And what a liberal education a mother's home-letters to her boys at school might be made! The stirring incident in the newspapers, the fine passage in the book, a verse or two of a noble poem, as well as all the loving thought and prayer that is for ever flying like homing birds to the dear absent lads, and the inculcation of all things lovely and pure and manly, brightened by home jokes and the health of the last cherished pet—all these things might go to make up the home letters. Above all, what an opportunity it would give for pleading the cause of the little chaps who, by some strange insanity working in the brain of the British parent, are sent into the rough world of a large school when they are fitter for the nursery, and whom you might appeal to your boys to look after and protect, so far as they are able; and not only these, but to side with every boy who is being bullied for acting up to his conscience or because he has not the pluck to stand up for himself.

In conclusion, I would earnestly ask you to believe in your own power when united to the knowledge which is necessary to direct it. "A man is what a woman makes him," says the old saw. Look back upon the men you have known who have been touched to finest issues, and you will find, with few exceptions, that they are the shaping of a noble woman's hands—a noble mother, a noble wife, a noble sister. Doubt not, but earnestly believe that with those wonderful shaping hands of yours you can mould that boy of yours into the manhood of Sir Galahad, "whose strength was as the strength of ten because his heart was pure"; that you can send him forth into the world like King Arthur, of whom our own poet, Spenser, says, that the poorest, the most unprotected girl could feel that

"All the while he by his side her bore
She was as safe as in a sanctuary."

Nay, may I not go further still and say that by the grace of God you can send him forth "made of a woman" in the image of the strong and tender Manhood of Jesus Christ, to Whom even the poor lost girls out of the street could come and know that here was a Man who would not drag them down, but lift them up; believing in Whom, clinging to Whom, trusting in Whom, they grew no longer lost and degraded, but splendid saints of the Christian Church.

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 11: *Morality in Public Schools*, by Dr. Butler, Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, and late Head-Master of Harrow.]

[Footnote 12: *The Preservation of Health*, by Clement Dukes, M.D., M.R.C.S., Howard Medallist, Statistical Society of London, p. 150.]

[Footnote 13: *Ibid.*, p. 157.]



[Footnote 14: *A Confidential Talk with the Boys of America*, by J.M. Dick. Fleming H. Revell Co.]

[Footnote 15: See Appendix.]

[Footnote 16: See *Parents' Review*, No. 5, July, 1895, p. 351.]



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[Footnote 17: have quoted here from *The Ascent of Man* by Professor Drummond, pp. 292, 293; but any standard work on botany will give you the method of the fertilization of plants in greater detail.]

[Footnote 18: *Ibid.*, p. 310.]

[Footnote 19: Erroneously called neuter, as in reality it is an imperfectly developed female, and is only capable of producing males.]

[Footnote 20: I owe my first clear apprehension of the gradual evolution of the preservative and altruistic elements in nature, arising from the struggle for existence, to a sermon of Dr. Abbott's called *The Manifestation of the Son of God*, now, I fear, out of print. Of course Darwin recognized these factors as a necessary complement to the survival of the fittest, else had there been no fittest to survive; but the exigencies of proving his theory of the origin of species necessitated his dwelling on the destructive and weeding-out elements of Nature—"Nature red in tooth and claw," rather than the equally pervasive Nature of the brooding wing and the flowing breast. Had not Professor Drummond unfortunately mixed it up with a good deal of extraneous sentiment, his main thesis would scarcely have been impugned.]

[Footnote 21: In case this method of teaching should seem to some mothers too difficult, I intend to embody it in a simple "Mother's Talk on Life and Birth," which a mother can read with her boys.]

[Footnote 22: See a White Cross paper of mine called *My Little Sister*. Wells Gardner, Darton and Co., London.]

[Footnote 23: Twice since the wreck of the *Birkenhead* has the same true manhood been evinced on the high seas in the face of almost certain death—once in the wreck of the troopship, the *Warren Hastings*, and again by the crew and the civilian passengers of the *Stella*. Perfect order was maintained, and though, ultimately all the men were saved, not a man stirred hand or foot to save himself till the women and children had first been safely got on shore.]

[Footnote 24: *French and English*, by Philip Hamerton, p. 44.]

[Footnote 25: *The British Zulu*. Wells Gardner, Darton and Co., London.]

CHAPTER VII

EARLY MANHOOD

If, in the words of the great educator I have already quoted, the chief moral teaching and moral trend of the character must be given in the schoolboy days, yet early



manhood presents its own fruitful field for the influence of a mother on the side of whatsoever things are pure and lovely. The methods of exerting this influence must change as your son grows from a boy into a man; the inevitable reticence, the exquisite reserve of sex, must interfere with the old boyish confidences and with your own freedom of speech. Other barriers, too, will most likely spring up as your son goes forth into the world and mixes freely



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with other young men of his own standing. Whether it be at college, or in the army, or in business, he will inevitably be influenced by the views of the men he associates with, which he will enlarge into the opinion of the world in general, and will probably come home, if not to contradict his mother, at least to patronize her and go his own way, smiling at her with an air of manly superiority and with a lofty consciousness that he knows a thing or two which lie beyond a woman's ken. Probably enough he takes up with views on religion, or politics, or social questions which are emphatically not yours, and which make you feel left very far behind, instead of the old familiar "walking together" which was so sweet. Worse still, he may evince for a time a cynical indifference to all great questions, and all your teaching may seem to be lost in a desert flat. The days of the latch-key and the independent life have come, and you often seem to stand outside the walls which once admitted you into their dearest recesses, left with but little clue as to what is going on within.

But have patience. Early teaching and influence, though it may pass for a time into abeyance, is the one thing that leaves an indelible impress which will in the end make itself felt, only waiting for those eternal springs which well up sooner or later in every life to burst into upward growth; it may be a pure attachment, it may be a great sorrow, it may be a sickness almost unto death, it may be some awakening to spiritual realities. I often think of that pathetic yet joyful resurrection cry, "This is our God, we have waited for Him"—waited for Him, possibly through such long years of disappointment and heart hunger—only to cry at the last, "This is our God, we have waited for Him, and He has saved us."

But it is not all waiting. If with early manhood the "old order" has to give place to new, and old methods and instruments have to be laid aside as no longer fitted for their task, God puts into the hands of the mother new instruments, new methods of appeal, which in some ways are more powerful than the old. In early manhood she can appeal to the thought of the future wife. I believe that this appeal is one of the strongest that you can bring to bear upon young men.

I once had to make it myself under circumstances of unparalleled difficulty; and I was struck with the profound response that it evoked. It was on the occasion of the inaugural White Cross address to the students of the Edinburgh University, now one of the first medical schools in the world. The date of the address had been fixed, the hall taken, when an unforeseen difficulty arose. Eminent man after eminent man was asked to give the address, but all with one consent began to make excuse. Spirit and flesh quailed before so difficult and rowdy an audience on so difficult and perilous a subject. At last the professor who was chiefly interested implored me to give the address myself, or the whole thing



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would go by default. Under these circumstances I had no choice but to do so. But as I sat in the committee room while the order of the meeting was being arranged, and heard my audience shouting, singing, crowing like cocks, whistling like parrots, caterwauling like cats, and keeping up a continuous uproar, I thought to myself, "I have got to go into that, and control it somehow so as to be heard"; I confess I did feel wrecked upon God. Professor Maclagan, who took the chair, agreed that a prayer was impossible, a hymn was equally out of the question. The only thing was to push me at once to the front; and almost immediately after a few very brief words from the distinguished chairman I found myself face to face with an audience that evidently meant mischief. By some instinct I told them at once about James Hinton, whom, of course, they knew by name as the first aurist of his day; how, with all that this life could give him, he had died of a broken heart, a heart broken over the lost and degraded womanhood of England, the hosts of young girls slain in body and soul whom he met with at night in our terrible streets. This seemed to strike and sober them, that a man should actually die over a thing which to all of them was so familiar and to many had been only the subject of a coarse jest. Fortunately, there is a stage of nervous terror which rounds again on desperate courage, and having once got hold of my audience, I determined to use the occasion to the uttermost and venture on the most perilous ground. In the course of my address I asked them to take notice of a great silent change that was taking place all round them in the position of women, the full significance of which they might not have grasped. Everywhere women were leaving the seclusion of their homes and were quietly coming forward and taking their place by their side in the great work of the world. I thanked them for the generous welcome that they had accorded them. But had they seized the full meaning, the ulterior bearings of this changed attitude in women, and the wider knowledge of the world that it brought with it? Not so long ago it was an understood thing that women should know nothing of the darker side of life; and there was nothing dishonorable in a man keeping the woman he loved in ignorance of the darker side of his own past, if such there were. But in the greater knowledge that has come to women, and the anguish some of them feel over the misery and degradation of their lost sisters, can this attitude any longer be maintained without conscious deception? "What would you say," I asked, "if the woman you loved with the whole strength of your soul passed herself off as an undamaged article upon you, and let you worship her as the very embodiment of all that is white and pure, when something unspeakably sad and sinful had happened in her past life? You know you would be half mad at the wrong done to you if after marriage you found it out. And what are you going to do, I ask some of you who are so



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careless as to the life you lead, are *you* going to pass yourself off as an undamaged article on the woman who loves and worships you, and who gives herself so unreservedly to you that she loses her very name and takes yours? Is it fair, is it honorable, is it even manly? No, I see by your faces you are saying, 'I don't think it is, I should have to confess.' Well, that is better than basing your life on a dishonorable lie. But, alas! it is no way out of the misery. At the very moment when you would give all you possess to be worthy of that great love she gives you, you have to prove that you are unworthy; and the whole of the only last gleam of Eden that is left to this poor life of yours, the pure love of a man to a pure woman, is blotted out with bitter and jealous tears; the trail of the serpent is over it all. I know well that women can love, and love passionately, impure men; but every woman will tell you that there is a love that a woman can only give to a man who has been faithful to her before marriage as well as after; and for ever and for ever there will be a shut door at the very heart of your Eden of which you have flung away the key, a love that might have been yours had you kept yourself worthy of it. There is but one way out of the difficulty, now that in the changed position of women you can no longer honorably keep them in the dark—to make up your mind that you will come to the woman you love in the glory of your unfallen manhood, as you expect her to come to you in the beauty of her spotless maidenhood.”

I did not know for one moment whether they would not break out into cooing like doves; but, on the contrary, they listened to me with profound attention, and I could see that none of my words went so home to them as those. When I had finished my address a member of the committee said to one of the professors, “I think if she had asked them to go off and storm Edinburgh Castle they would have marched off in a body and done it.” So great is the power of a woman pleading for women.

If I could use this sacred plea with effect under circumstances of—I think you will allow—such unspeakable difficulty, must it not be possible to you, the mother from whom such an appeal would come so naturally, to use this same influence, and in the quiet Sunday walk through the fields and woods where Nature herself seems to breathe of the sanctity of life in every leaf and flower, or in the quiet talk over the winter fireside before he leaves home, to plead with your son to keep himself faithful to his future wife, so that when he meets the woman he can love and make his wife, he may have no shameful secrets to confess, or, worse still, to conceal from her, no base tendencies to hand down to his unborn children after him? Thank God! how many an American and English wife and mother can speak here from personal experience of the perfect love and perfect trust which have been bred of a pure life before marriage, and a knowledge that the sacraments of love and life had never been desecrated or defiled, so that no shadow of distrust or suspicion can ever darken the path of her married happiness. How powerful the pleading of such a mother may become with her son, to give his future wife the same perfect trust and unclouded happiness in her husband's love!



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I remember in a series of allegorical pictures by an old master in the Baptistery at Florence, how, with the divine instinct of poets and artists, in the beautiful symbolic figure of Hope, the painter has placed a lily in her hands. Cannot we teach our sons that if they are to realize their dearest hope in life, that divine hope must ever bear a lily in her hand as the only wand that can open to them the paradise of the ideal, the divine vision which is "the master light of all our seeing," the deepest and most sacred joys of our life?

He safely walks in darkest ways
Whose youth is lighted from above,
Where, through the senses' silvery haze,
Dawns the veiled moon of nuptial love.

"Who is the happy husband? He
Who, scanning his unwedded life,
Thanks God, with all his conscience free,
'Twas faithful to his future wife." [26]

Again, could we not give our boys a little more teaching about the true nature and sacredness of fatherhood? It always strikes me that the true ethics of fatherhood are not yet born. Were the true nature, the sacredness, and the immense responsibilities of fatherhood really and duly recognized, men could not look with the appalling lightness with which they do on providing some substitute for marriage, when they have not the means to marry in early life, and are under the very prevalent illusion that continent men who marry late run the risk of a childless marriage—a notion which so great an authority as Acton pronounces to be absolutely false physiologically, and without foundation in fact. To bring a child into the world to whom he can perform no one of the duties of a father, and to whom he deliberately gives a mother with a tarnished name—a mother who, from the initial wrong done to her and the stigma which deprives her of the society of women, will only too probably not stay her feet at the first wrong step, but be drawn down that dread winding stair which ends in the despair of a lost soul—this, I urge, would be utterly abhorrent to every even fairly right-thinking man, instead of the very common thing it is. Did we see it truly, it would be a not venial sin, but an unpardonable crime.

Now, surely mothers can supply some teaching here which must be wanting for public opinion to be what it is. A quiet talk about the high nature, the duties and responsibilities of fatherhood cannot present any great difficulties.

I remember many years ago hearing Canon Knox Little preach a sermon in York Cathedral to a large mixed congregation, in which he touched on this subject. At this distance of time I can only give the freest rendering of his words, the more so as I have so often used them in my own meetings that I may have unconsciously moulded them after my own fashion. "Look," he said, "at that dying father—dying in the faith, having



fought the good fight, and all heaven now opening before his dying gaze. Yet he withdraws his thoughts from that great hereafter to centre them upon the little lad who stands at his bedside. His hands wander over the golden head with



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“The vast sad tenderness of dying men.’

He triumphs over pain and weakness that he may plot and plan every detail of the young life which he can no longer live to guide and direct. And when at length he seems to have passed into the last darkness, and they hold up the child to see if he will yet recognize him, suddenly the spirit seems to sweep back again over the dark river which it has almost crossed, and an ineffable light illumines the dying face as his lips meet the lips of his little son in one last supreme kiss—the father’s love for one moment vanquishing death itself. And what, I ask,” said the preacher, in tones that thrilled that vast audience, “must be the sin of desecrating and defiling such a function as this, this function of fatherhood in which man seems to touch upon God Himself and become the representative of the Father in heaven—what must be the guilt of turning it into a subject of filthy jests and a source of unclean actions?”

The friend with whom I was staying had brought with her her Bible class of Industrial School lads, and when the next day she asked what had struck them most in the sermon, they answered promptly, “What he said about fathers,” Let us go and teach likewise.

But perhaps the most precious sphere of influence is that which comes to a mother last and latest of all—too late, unless the moral training of all preceding years has been made one long disciplinary preparation in self-mastery and pureness of living, for the higher and more difficult self-control, the far sterner discipline, of true marriage pure and undefiled. But if through her training and influence “the white flower of a blameless life” has been worn

“Through all the years of passion in the blood,”

then this is the time when her long patient sowing comes to its golden fruitage. It is to his mother that a young man turns as his confidant in his engagement; it is to her that he necessarily turns for counsel and advice with regard to his young wife in the early years of his marriage. A young man in love is a man who can receive divine truth even of the hardest, for love is of God, and its very nature is self-giving.

“Love took up the harp of life, and smote upon its chords with might—
Smote the chord of self, that trembling passed in music out of sight.”

A pure affection is an almost awful revelation in itself to a young man of the true nature of sensual sin. He would gladly die for the woman he loves. And we look, therefore, to you mothers to bring into the world that Christian ideal of marriage which at present is practically shut up between the covers of our Bibles, that the man is to love the woman, the husband the wife,[27] “as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it”; not our ideal of the self-sacrificing woman—our patient Griseldas and Enids and all the rest of it—but the self-sacrificing man, who is but poorly represented in our literature at all,—the



man who loves the woman and gives himself for her, holding all the strongest forces and passions of his nature for her good, to crown her with perfect wifehood and perfect motherhood.



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This Christian ideal was doubtless intended to fulfil those restrictions of the Levitical Law which were to safeguard the health of the wife and secure the best conditions for the unborn child; laws and regulations to the observance of which the Jew doubtless owes his splendid physique and his still more splendid mental endowments, which, though he is the fewest of all peoples, bring him everywhere to the forefront,—in finance, in literature, in music, in general capacity,—and to which, I should be inclined to add, he owes his comparatively slow rate of increase, else it is difficult to understand the small numerical strength of this extraordinary race; but I know that this is a disputed point. No jot or tittle of these laws and regulations can pass away until they are fulfilled in some larger truth; for ignore them or not, they are founded on physiological laws; and it is on mothers' recognizing this larger truth in the advice they give, and on their bringing in the Christian ideal, that the future of marriage mainly depends, and its being made more consonant with the higher and more independent position of women than it at present is.

Whilst the sight is so familiar of wives with health broken down and life made a burden, possibly even premature death incurred, by their being given no rest from the sacred duties of motherhood, to say nothing of the health of the hapless child born under such circumstances, can we wonder that the modern woman often shows a marked distaste to marriage and looks upon it as something low and sensual? Or can we wonder that married men, with so sensual an ideal of so holy a state, should, alas! so largely minister to the existence of an outcast class of women?

On the other hand, the remedy resorted to is often worse than the disease. I confess I have stood aghast at the advice given by Christian mothers, often backed up by a doctor whom they affirm to be a Christian man, in order to save the health of the wife or limit the increase of the family. The heads of the profession, in England, I believe, are sound on this point, a conference having been held some years ago by our leading medical men to denounce all such "fruits of philosophy" as physically injurious and morally lowering.

But if we want to know what their practical results are, the moral gangrene they are to the national life when once they have firmly taken hold of a nation, we have only to look across the channel at France—France with her immense wealth, but rapidly declining population, which in less than a century will reduce her from a first-rate to a second-or third-rate power, so that her statesmen have actually debated the expediency of offering a premium on illegitimacy in the shape of free nurture to all illegitimate children,—illegitimate citizens being better in their estimation than no citizens at all.

Would we have the Anglo-Saxon race enter on this downward grade? If not, then let us women silently band together to preserve the sanctity of the family, of the home, and sternly to bar out the entrance of all that defileth—all that sensualizes her men and enfeebles their self-mastery, all that renders the heart of her women too craven to

encounter the burdens of being the mothers of a mighty race, flowing out into all the lands to civilize and Christianize, and “bear the white man’s burthen.”



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One word more, a sad and painful one, but one which comes from my inmost heart. Do not pass by the sadder aspects of this great moral question and refuse “to open thy mouth for the dumb,” for those “who are appointed unto destruction.”

You cannot keep your son in ignorance of the facts; the state of our miserable streets, every time he walks out in the evening in any of our large towns, absolutely forbids that possibility. But you can place him in the right attitude to meet those facts whether in the streets or among his own companions. It is by fighting the evils without that we can best fight the evils within. It is in dragging them down that we are lifted up. A noble passion for the wronged, the weak, the sinful, and the lost is the best means for casting out the ignoble passions which would destroy another in order to have a good time one's self. At present the stock phrase of a virtuous young man is, “I know how to take care of myself.” You have to put into his lips and heart a stronger and a nobler utterance than that: “I know how to take care of the weakest woman that comes in my path.” Surely it is requiring no impossible moral attitude in our sons, rather mere common manliness, to expect that when spoken to by some poor wanderer, he should make answer in his heart if not with his lips, “My girl, I have got a sister, and it would break my heart to see her in your place, and I would rather die than have any part in your degradation.” One mother I know, who had been much engaged in rescue work, and into whose heart the misery and degradation of our outcast girls had entered like iron, taught her young son always to take off his hat before passing on, whenever he was accosted. He told a friend of mine that he had scarcely ever known it to fail. Either the poor girl would say, “Sir, I am very sorry I spoke to you”; or more frequently still that little mark of human respect would prove too much, and she would silently turn away and burst into tears. If our sons cannot bare their heads before that bowed and ignoble object on whom the sins of us all seem to have met—the wild passions of men, as well as the self-righteousness of the Church—then our young men are not what I take them to be,—nay, thank God! what I know them to be, sound of head and sound of heart. They get hold of facts by the wrong end; they cut into the middle of a chain, and look upon the woman as the aggressor, and contemplate her as an unclean bird of prey. They do not in the least realize the slight and morally trivial things that cast too many of our working-class girls down into the pit of hell that skirts their daily path—often as mere children who know not what they do, often from hunger and desperation, often tricked and drugged, and always heavily bribed. But let them know the facts, let them read a little paper such as the *Black Anchor*, the *Ride of Death*, or *My Little Sister*,^[28] and they will feel the whole thing to be, in their own rough but expressive words,

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“a beastly shame,” and fight it both in themselves and in others, for our sakes as well as their own. For the misery as things are is this:—that men divide us into two classes—we pure women for whom nothing is too good; and those others, whom they never associate with us, for whom nothing is too bad. And what we have to teach them is this—that our womanhood is ONE that a sin against them is a sin against us, and so to link the thought of us to them that for the sake of their own mothers, for the sake of their own sisters, above all, for the sake of the future wife, they cannot wrong or degrade a woman or keep up a degraded class of women.

I am aware that, besides the suggestions I have made, young men require a plain, emphatic warning as to the physical dangers of licentiousness and of the possibility of contracting a taint which medical science is now pronouncing to be ineradicable and which they will transmit in some form or other to their children after them. We want a strong cord made up of every strand we can lay hold of, and one of these strands is doubtless self-preservation, though in impulsive youth I do not think it the strongest. But to give these warnings is manifestly the father’s duty, and not the mother’s; and I hope and believe that the number of fathers who are beginning to recognize their duty in this matter, as moral teachers of their boys, is steadily increasing. In the case of widowed mothers, or where the father absolutely refuses to say anything, perhaps the paper I have already mentioned, *Medical Testimony*,^[29] would be the best substitute for the father’s living voice.

And now let me conclude this chapter, as I concluded the last, with a few scattered practical suggestions which may prove of use. My experience has been that the vast majority of our young men go wrong not from any vicious tendencies, but from want of thought, want of knowledge, and a consequent yielding to the low moral tone of so-called men of the world, and the fear of being chaffed as “an innocent.” See that your boy is guarded from this want of thought and want of knowledge. When your son is a Sixth Form boy—it is impossible to give the age more definitely, as it must depend upon the character of the boy—place in his hands the White Cross paper, *True Manliness* which will give him the facts about his own manhood. This paper was carefully revised by the late Bishop of Durham, Dr. Lightfoot, whose specialty was young men; and upwards of a million copies have been sold, which in itself guarantees it as a safe paper. Nor need you as a mother of sons fear to read over any of the White Cross papers, since they concern themselves, as their name denotes, with purity and a high ideal of life—not with the sewer, but with the fountain of sweet waters.



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Should your boys be so inclined, you might suggest their joining that band of modern knights, the White Cross Society.[30] It is a great thing to give a young man a high ideal to act up to, and the White Cross would certainly give him this, as well as save him, with its definite obligations, from evil that is incurred from sheer thoughtlessness and animal spirits, enforcing a respectful and chivalrous treatment of women, even when by their fast ways those women show that they have no respect for themselves. But more especially is this the case with regard to the second obligation, to discountenance coarse jests and allusions and the by no means nice sort of talk that often goes on in smoking-rooms, and by which, I am convinced, more than by any other agency the mind and conscience of young men is gradually deadened and defiled, but in which they are apt to join from sheer thoughtlessness and sense of fun. Their White Cross obligation might screw up their moral courage to utter some such pointed rebuke as Dr. Jowett's to a lot of young men in a smoking-room, "I don't want to make myself out better than you are, but is there not more dirt than wit in that story?" or that other still more public rebuke which he administered at his own dinner-table when, the gentlemen having been left to their wine, a well-known diplomat began telling some very unsavory stories, till the still, small, high-pitched voice of the Master made itself heard, saying, "Had we not better adjourn this conversation till we join the ladies in the drawing-room?" At least they can keep silence and a grave face; and silence and a grave face are often the best damper to coarse wit. Why, I ask, should men when they get together be one whit coarser than women? It is simply an evil fashion, and as an evil fashion can and will be put down as "bad form."

I think also that joining the White Cross will make young men more active in trying to influence other young men and to guard and help their younger brothers, with all the other priceless work that they can, if they will, do for our womanhood among men, but which, from shyness and reserve and the dread of being looked upon as moral prigs, they are apt to let go by default.

But whether you agree with me or not with regard to your sons' joining an organization, see that they assume their rightful attitude of guardians of the purity of the home. We women cannot know anything about the inner secrets of men's lives, or know whom to exclude and whom to admit to the society of our girls. This ought to be the part of the brothers. God knows we do not want to make a pariah class of men on the same lines as are meted out to women. The young man who wants to do better we are bound to help, and no better work can be done in our large cities than to open our homes to young men in business or in Government offices, *etc.* But men who are deliberately leading a fast life and who are deeply stained with the degradation of our own womanhood,



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with no wish to rise out of their moral slough, these must be to us as moral lepers, to be gilded by no wealth, to be cloaked by no insignia of noble birth, or we stand betrayed as hypocrites and charlatans in our own cause. If our position in society is such as obliges us to receive such men, we all know the moral uses of ice, and under the guise of the most frigid politeness we can make them feel their absolute exclusion from the inner circle of our friends and intimates. There need be no discussion between you and your son—just the hint: “Oh, mother, I would not ask that fellow if I were you,” and you will know what is meant.

Much may also be done by keeping up the general high tone of the home. One mother of eight sons, who all turned out men of high, pure life, if ever they used in her presence such expressions as “a well-groomed woman,” or commended their last partner at a ball as “a pretty little filly,” would instantly interrupt them and ask incisively, “Are you talking of a horse or a woman? If you are talking of a woman, you will be pleased to remember that you are speaking in the presence of your mother and your sisters.” And if any scandal about a woman was mooted, the conversation was at once quietly turned into another and more profitable channel.

A word of homely advice from you to your sons with regard to our streets at night: never to loiter, but to trudge on quickly, when they would be rarely molested, may be advisable and useful.

As to absolute watchfulness with regard to the young maid-servants in your house, this is so obvious a point that it scarcely needs mentioning; though at the same time I have known the most culpably careless arrangements made when the family are away for their summer holidays, young maid-servants being left alone in the house while the young men are still going backwards and forwards to their business; or the whole family going out and no older woman being left in charge of the young domestics. What can one expect but that, having sown moral carelessness, we shall reap corruption?

But even with no such culpable neglect of our responsibilities, I do wish we would cultivate more human relations with our servants, and so get them to work more consciously with us in maintaining a high Christian tone in our homes. If we would but take a more individual interest in them and their belongings, as we should do with those we count our friends; getting a good situation for the younger sister who is just coming on, possibly giving her a few weeks of good training in our own household; giving the delicate child of the family change of air and good food, even taking in a baby to enable a sick mother to go for a short time into a hospital. All these things I have found possible in my own household. And surely such thought and care for those they hold dear would form a living bond between mistress and servant. If we would take the same thought and care for pleasant

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breaks in the monotony of our young servants' lives as we do for our own girls, would the servant difficulty press upon us to the same degree? Nay, if we could set going a weekly or fortnightly working party with our own servants in some cause which would interest us both, reading out some interesting narrative in connection with it, could we not even in this small way establish a bond of common service and make us feel that we were all working together for the same Master, so that our servants might become our helpers, and not, as they sometimes are, our hinderers, in bringing up our children in a high and pure moral atmosphere?

But when all things are said and done, I know that with every mother worthy the name there must be moments of deep discouragement and sense of failure—a sense of mistakes made with some difficult nature to which her own gives her but little clue; a sense of difficulties in vain grappled with, of shortcomings in vain striven against. Which of us have not had such moments of despondency in the face of a great task? In such moments I have often called to mind one of those parables of Nature which are everywhere around us, unseen and unheeded, like those exquisite fresco angels of the old masters, in dim corners of ancient churches, blowing silent trumpets of praise and adoration and touching mute viols into mystic melodies which are lost to us. So thin has the material veil grown under the touch of modern science that everywhere the spiritual breaks through. Often in that nameless discouragement before unfinished tasks, unfulfilled aims, and broken efforts, I have thought of how the creative Word has fashioned the opal, made it of the same stuff as desert sands, mere silica—not a crystallized stone like a diamond, but rather a stone with a broken heart, traversed by hundreds of small fissures which let in the air, the breath, as the Spirit is called in the Greek of our New Testament; and through these two transparent mediums of such different density it is enabled to refract the light and reflect every lovely hue of heaven, while at its heart burns a mysterious spot of fire. When we feel, therefore, as I have often done, nothing but cracks and desert dust, we can say, “So God maketh his precious opal.” Our very sense of brokenness and failure makes room for the Spirit to enter in, and through His strength made perfect in human weakness we are made able to reflect every tender hue of the eternal Loveliness and break up the white light of His truth into those rays which are fittest for different natures; while that hidden lamp of the sanctuary will burn in your heart of hearts for ever a guide to your boy's feet in the devious ways of life.



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In conclusion, I should like to record an incident full of encouragement to mothers. A young fellow of eighteen or nineteen, whom his widowed mother had brought up on the principles which I have been advocating, said to her one day, "Mother, you know that men don't always think like you about poor girls." "Alas!" she replied, "I know that but too well; but what makes you say so?" "Well, mother, I was with a lot of college fellows yesterday, and they were giving one another the best addresses in the West End to go to." "But didn't you say anything?" "No, I only kept silence. Had I said anything, they would only have called me a confounded prig. There were three other fellows who kept silence, and I could see they did not approve, but we none of us spoke up." "Oh, my son," exclaimed his mother in great distress, "how are we to help you young fellows? Do you think if the clergy were more faithful, they could help you more than they do?" "I don't think they would listen to what a parson says." "Then if doctors were to warn you more plainly than they do?" "I don't think it would be of much use; they would not heed; and then a fellow generally goes to a doctor too late." "Then what can we do, what can we do?" "Well, I think there is only one person who can really help, and that's a fellow's mother—she can save him, if she would only try."

Doubt not, but earnestly believe. "In every man's breast is to be found a lotus-blossom," says the pretty old Indian saying, and, watered by your prayers and your tears, be sure it will blossom into "the white flower of a blameless life."

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 26: Coventry Patmore.]

[Footnote 27: The word in Greek is the same for woman and wife.]

[Footnote 28: White Cross Publications, E.P. Dutton & Co., 31 West Twenty Third Street, New York.]

[Footnote 29: Office of White Cross league, 7 Dean's Yard, Westminster Abbey, London.]

[Footnote 30: THE WHITE CROSS OBLIGATIONS. I. To treat all women with respect, and endeavor to protect them from wrong and degradation.

II. To endeavor to put down all indecent language and coarse jests.

III. To maintain the law of purity as equally binding upon men and women.

IV. To endeavor to spread these principles among my companions, and to try and help my younger brothers.

V. To use every possible means to fulfil the command,



“Keep thyself pure.”]

CHAPTER VIII

THE INFLUENCE OF SISTERS



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Hitherto I have dealt exclusively with the moral training of boys and young men, but I am aware that I have left out one of the great shaping influences of a boy's life, which certainly comes next to the mother's where it exists—the influence of sisters. The childish hand that he clasps in his is the hand that unconsciously moulds him to higher ends or the reverse. For if the man is the director, the ruler, and defender, “the builder of the house” as he is called in the grand old word husband,[31] the woman is the shaping and moulding influence of life; and if God has placed her in the power of the man, both through the weakness of her frame and the strength of her affections, on the other hand He has given into her hands the keys of his being, and according as he fulfils or abuses his trust towards her, she opens or closes the door of higher life to him. [32]

I often wonder whether we women sufficiently realize this truth for ourselves or our girls. Walter Bagehot used to say in his blind, masculine way, “It's a horrid scrape to be a woman,”—a sentiment which, I fear, will find some echo in the hearts of a good many women themselves. But is it so? If to the man chiefly belongs power in all its forms, does not the woman wield as her portion that far more potent but wholly silent, and often unnoticed thing, influence? Not the storm, or the earthquake, or the strong wind, but the still, small voice: the benediction of dews and gentle rains, the mute beatitudes of still waters flowing through sun-parched lands and transforming them into “fruitful fields that the Lord hath blest”; the silent but irresistible influence of the sunlight, which in the baby palm of a little leaf becomes a golden key to unlock the secret treasures of the air and build up great oaks out of its invisible elements; the still, small voice of the moral sense, so still, so small, so powerless to enforce its dictates, but before which all the forces of the man do bow and obey, choosing death rather than disobedience—are not all these silent influences emblems of the supreme, shaping, moulding influence that is given to the woman as the “mother of all living,” coming without observation, but making far more strongly than any external power for the kingdom of love and light? Truly we have a goodly heritage if only we had eyes to see it. Alas! that we should have made so little comparative use of it in these great moral questions. Alas! that we should have to acknowledge the truth and justice of the poet's words:

Ah, wasteful woman! she who may
On her sweet self set her own price,
Knowing he cannot choose but pay—
How has she cheapen'd Paradise,
How given for nought her priceless gift,
How spoiled the bread and spilt the wine,
Which, spent with due respective thrift,
Had made brutes men, and men divine!"[33]



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But even here is there not place for a hopeful thought, that if women have made so little comparative use of their well-nigh irresistible influence in setting a high standard and shaping men to a diviner and less animal type, it has been, as I have already said, chiefly owing to ignorance? The whole of one of the darkest sides of life has been sedulously kept from us. Educated mothers, till lately, have been profoundly ignorant of the moral evils of schools, and have never dreamt that that young, frank, fresh-faced lad of theirs had any temptations of the kind. Their moral influence, which the poet blames them so strongly for misusing, has been largely, at least with good women, not so much a misused as an undirected force, and we know not, therefore, what that force may accomplish when a larger and truer knowledge enables it to be persistently directed to a conscious aim. This fact, at least, has been stamped into my inmost being, that men will rise to any moral standard which women choose to set them.

I ask, therefore, cannot we get our girls to help us here more than we do, without being crippled by the fear of initiating them too much in the evil of the world or destroying that unconscious virginal purity which is, even as things are, so strong and pathetic an influence for good over young men?

In the addresses that I have given to large numbers of educated girls, I used often to begin by quoting a passage from the Jewish Prayer-Book. In a general thanksgiving for the mercies of life, the men say: "We thank Thee, O Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast not made us a woman." One a little wonders how the poor women could join in this thanksgiving. But in one corner of the page there is a little rubric in very small print which directs, "Here shall the women say: 'We thank Thee, O Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast made us according unto Thy will!'" And, looking upon that bed of spring flowers before me, I used to tell them that it made me feel what a fair and gracious and beautiful thing it was to be made according unto God's will, to be made a woman.

Now, in the first place, could we not get them to realize this great truth a little more than they do, and not in their heart of hearts to wish that they were men? Could we not get them to realize a little more the divine possibilities of their womanhood, and instead of making it their ambition to figure as a weaker form of man, and become lawyers, stockbrokers, and other queer things the modern woman is striving after, to make it their ambition to become stronger and truer women?

But how is this to be done? I remember on one occasion, when I was going in the evening to address a mass meeting of working-class girls, a stout, middle-aged lady bustling up to me in a morning conference we were holding, and exclaiming: "And what are you going to say to them? What can you say to them, except to tell them to take care of themselves and keep the men at arm's length?"



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Now, this old-fashioned method, which we have adopted in dealing with the girls of the poor, I contend traverses the central and most fundamental facts of a woman's being. A woman will never find salvation in being told to take care of herself, and least of all for the purpose of keeping the man, for whom she was created to be a helpmate, at arm's length. Gospels of self-culture may take seeming root here and there in the exotic woman; but even in her, at some moment of swift passion or strong emotion, they will crumple up and fall off from her like a withered leaf. James Hinton knew a woman's nature but too well when he said that she would respond to the appeal "Lay down your life" more readily and more surely than to the appeal "Take up your rights." She certainly has a most divine power of flinging herself away, whether nobly or ignobly, which forms both her strength and her weakness. But I have never yet known a woman who would not, at any rate to some degree, respond to an appeal to save, not herself, but another: "Do not let him do this wrong thing, for his sake. You can do anything you like with a man who loves you. God has given him body and soul into your hands, and you can lift him up into something of His image and make a true man of him; or you can let his love for you sink him into a selfish beast of prey. Do not let him do anything that will for ever lower his manhood, but use your power over him to keep him true to all that is best and highest in him." I have never yet known the woman who will not be moved by such an appeal as this. In other words, the central motive force of a woman's nature, the key of her whole being, is, and must ever be, the mother in her, that divine motherhood which is at the heart of every woman worthy of the name, married or unmarried. It is this divine motherhood, which all evolution, the whole "process of the suns," has gone to strengthen, and which Christianity has enshrined at her very heart—it is this that makes her for ever the Christ factor in the world, the supreme expression of the redeeming Love—that care of the strong for the weak which even in Nature comes trembling into existence beneath the tender wing of the nesting bird, or forces itself into notice in the fierce lioness's care for her whelps, and which we believe will work out the ultimate consummation of the "whole creation that groaneth and travaileth in pain until now." And I contend that if we are to have in the future such women as Lady Augusta Stanley, round whose lifeless form were united in one common sorrow the Queen on her throne and the poorest of the poor, such women as Browning's wife and Browning's mother, of whom he used to say, with a slight tremor in his voice, "She was a divine woman," it will be by strengthening and appealing to this element of divine motherhood in a woman's nature.



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What I would, therefore, teach the girls is this: that they have got to mother the boys, that they are the guardians of all that is best and highest in them, of all that makes for the chivalrous American gentleman, and that their womanhood should therefore be to them a fountain of fine manners, of high thoughts, and noble actions. I would rub into their very bones, if I could, the old saw I have already quoted: "A man is what a woman makes him"; that if there were more high womanhood there would be less low manhood; and that if the boys are rude and rough and slangy, and loutish in their manner to women, the blame lies with their sisters who, in their foolish fondness and indulgence, or in their boyish camaraderie, have allowed them to slouch up into a slovenly manhood. The man at most is the fine prose of life, but the woman ought to be its poetry and inspiration. It is her hand that sets its key, whether

"To feed the high tradition of the world,"

or add to its low discords. Surely Ruskin's noble words apply here: "It is the type of an eternal truth that the soul's armor is never well set to the heart unless a woman's hand has braced it; and it is only when she has braced it loosely that the honor of manhood fails"; or those other still stronger and nobler words of Frederick Robertson's: "There are two rocks in a man's life on which he must either anchor or split: God and Woman."

And could we not appeal to our girls to make their womanhood a rock which bears a light to all in peril on the rough sea of life—a light to save from moral shipwreck and lead to the safe haven beneath the Rock of Ages? Surely we might appeal to them, in the name of their own brothers and others with whom they are intimately thrown, to work out these higher possibilities of their own womanhood; not to lower it by picking up slang words from their brothers—a woman ought to be above coarsening and vulgarizing God's great gift of speech—not to engage in games or romps that involve a rude rough-and-tumble with boys, which may develop a healthy hoyden, but is utterly destructive of the gracious dignity of the true woman; not to adopt fast ways of either dress or bearing which lead to young men making remarks behind their backs which they ought not to make on any woman; above all, never in girlish flightiness, or, worse still, in order to boast of the number of offers they have received, to flirt or trifle in any way with a man's affections; but to remember that to every man they have to make a woman only the other name for truth and constancy. God only knows the number of young men who have received their first downward bent from what to a young girl, in the wilfulness of her high spirits and her ignorance of life, has been only a bit of fun, but which to the young man has been the first fatal break in his faith in woman—that faith which in his soul dwells so hard by his faith in the Divine that in making shipwreck of the one is only too likely to make shipwreck of the other.



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As to the mothers who send out their young girls into society the victims of their fashionable dressmakers, to be a fountain, not of high, pure thoughts to young men, but a spring of low temptations and impure suggestions, I do not blame the young girls here; but surely the severest blame is due to the criminal folly, or worse, of their mothers, who must know what the consequences of immodest dressing necessarily are to the inflammable mind of youth.

But that that unlovely phenomenon “the girl of the period,” is also deeply to blame for the lowered traditions of English society, and consequently of English manhood, I have only too sorrowfully to acknowledge. I remember Mrs. Herbert of Vauxhall telling a very fashionable audience how on one occasion she had to rebuke a young man moving in the first London society for using some contemptuous expression with regard to women, and was led to appeal very earnestly to him to reverence all women for his mother’s sake. He turned upon her with a sort of divine rage and said: “I long to reverence women, but the girls I meet with in society won’t let me. They like me to make free with them; they like me to talk to them about doubtful subjects, and they make me”—and he ground his teeth as he said it—“what I just hate myself for being.” Alas! alas! can sadder words knell in a woman’s ears than these?

But side by side with this desecrating womanhood there rises up before me the vision of a young girl, not English, nor American, but French—now a mature woman, with girls and boys of her own, but who in her young days was the very embodiment of all that I have been urging that our girls might become to their brothers. She was a daughter of the great French preacher, Frederick Monod, and had an only brother who was all in all to her. She knew enough of the evil of the world to know that a medical student in Paris was exposed to great temptations; and she was resolved, so far as she could, to make her womanhood a crystal shield between him and them. She entered into all his pursuits; she took an interest in all his friends and companions; she had always leisure for sympathy and counsel in his difficulties and troubles. She had a little room of her own to which she used to get him to come every evening and talk over the day with her, so that she might keep herself heart to heart with him in all that concerned him. She even overcame her girlish reserve, and would get him to kneel down by her side and pour out her sweet girlish heart in prayer that God would guide him in all his ways, and keep him unspotted from the world. Years after, when he was a married man, with boys of his own, he said to her: “You little know all that you were to me as a young man. My temptations were so maddening that I used sometimes to think that I must yield to them and do as other young men did all round me. But then a vision of you used to rise up before me, and I used to say to myself: ‘No; if I do this thing, I can never go and sit with her in her own little room; I can never look into her dear face again.’” And the thought of that young girl, the angel of her presence in the midst of the furnace, kept that young man unspotted from the world through all the gutters of Paris life. Could not our sweet English and American girls be to their brothers what that young French girl was to hers?



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But perhaps some pessimistic mother will exclaim, "What is the use of making these old-fashioned appeals to our modern girls? They are so taken up with the delights of their freedom, so absorbed in the pleasure of cycling and athletic games, so full of manly ambitions, so persuaded that the proper cultivated attitude is to be an agnostic, and to look at God and the universe through a sceptical and somewhat supercilious eyeglass, that if we did make an appeal to them such as you suggest they would only laugh at such old-fashioned notions." I can only say that I have not found it so. I can bear the highest testimony at least to our English girls, of whom I have addressed thousands, all over the three kingdoms. Occasionally it has happened that maturer women have left me stranded, stretching out hands of vain appeal to them; but my girls, my dear girls, never once failed me. Not only could I see by the expression of their faces how deeply they responded to my appeal to work out the latent possibilities of their womanhood, and be the uplifting influence to their brothers, and other young men with whom they were thrown, that a true woman can be; but they came forward in troops to take up the position I assigned to them in our woman's movement towards a higher and purer life. Nobly did those young girls respond, joining a movement for opening club-rooms and classes for working girls, a movement initiated not by me, but by educated girls like themselves, and which has since spread all over England and Scotland.

And if this is true of our English girls, still more would it be true of the American girl, who has a unique position and influence of her own, and is dowered with that peculiar capacity and graciousness which seem to belong by divine right to the American woman.

I cannot but think that if we were to teach our girls less in religious phraseology and more from the great realities of life; if they were taught that Christianity is only human life rightly seen and divinely ordered, that the Cross is only the uncovering of what is going on all round us, though hidden to a careless gaze,—the sin, the pain, the misery, which are forever crucifying and forever calling forth that great passion of redeeming Love to which, through the motherhood that is in us, "one touch of nature makes us kin"; and that the central truth of Christianity is not, as we have too often taught, saving our own souls, but a life poured out for the good of others, and personal salvation as a means for having a life to pour forth—I cannot but think that much fashionable girlish agnosticism would disappear, and the true woman would reach forth to that divine humanity to which she belongs.

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 31: Husband is derived from two words—"house" and the Saxon word to "build," German *bauen*.]

[Footnote 32: See a little White Cross paper called *My Little Sister*, which I wish mothers would get into the hands of their sons just entering into manhood to read, mark, learn, digest. (Wells Gardner, Darton and Co.)]



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[Footnote 33: Coventry Patmore.]

CHAPTER IX

THE MODERN WOMAN AND HER FUTURE

Up to this point I have dealt only with the great shaping and moulding principles of life, with indirect influence rather than direct. How far direct teaching on matters of sex should be given to our girls has been a far greater perplexity to me than in the case of boys. In the present state of our schools and our streets our boys must get to know evil. Hitherto it was possible to say that our girls *might* get to know evil, and between that "must" and "might" lay a great and perplexing chasm. We do not want our garden lilies to smell of anything but pure dews and rains and sun-warmed fragrance. But is this ideal possible any longer, except in a few secluded country homes, where, hidden like Keats's nightingale "among the leaves," they may remain innocent and ignorant of the world's evil?

But with the ordinary conditions of the present day, with the greater freedom accorded to women, the wider range of education, involving a wider range of reading, with modern newspapers left about, I ask, How is it possible for a mother to keep her girls in ignorance and unconscious innocence? A volume of short stories comes into the house from the circulating library; they are clever and apparently absolutely harmless. Yet embedded in the heart of one such volume, which shall be nameless, I came upon a story almost as vile as anything in a French novel, and conveying the most corrupt knowledge. How, I ask, can a busy mother read through every book of short stories before letting it fall into the hands of her girls; or how, if they are to read Latin and Greek, or even carefully to study our own old literature, is she to guard them from a knowledge of evil conveyed in classical allusions, or in the coarse plainness of speech of an earlier age? I know as a fact, whether we recognize it or not, that behind our mature backs our girls are discussing these moral problems with quite an alarming amount of freedom, and some at least, guided by no teaching, and with no practical knowledge of the great laws of human life, are coming to quite startling conclusions, which would make their mothers' hair stand on end. And one most undesirable, and I may add unnatural, result noticeable among the more advanced section is a certain distaste for marriage, a tendency to look upon it as something low and animal, which strikes me as simply a fatal attitude for women to take up.

Have we not, therefore, got clearly to recognize that the old order has changed, giving place to new, and requiring, therefore, new methods. We may or we may not like the new order, but it is *there*. Under the changed conditions of modern life it is inevitable; therefore it must be in the providence of God; it cannot be wholly bad, and if we will work in with it loyally, and not thrust it aside for some



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old order of our own, it may be, nay, it will be, wholly for good. Let us remember that the two most conservative organic forms, the two that have most resisted progressive evolution, are the donkey and the goose. To ignore the new order, to cling to the old views and methods, is to court moral extinction as a living force. As well think to find safety in escaping from the advance of an express engine by adopting the stately pace of our grandmothers, which was perfectly adapted for getting out of the way of a lumbering stage-coach. May not He

“Whose large plan ripens slowly to a whole”

be working out a progressive ideal such as we trace in the great spiritual records of our race? The Bible, thank God! neither begins nor ends with sin; but it begins with a sinless garden, it ends with a strong city of God, with evil known and recognized, but cast out beyond its walls. May He not be leading us to form a wiser, deeper, stronger ideal; to aim for our girls not so much at Innocence, with her fading wreath of flowers—fading, as, alas! they must ever fade in a world like this—but to aim at Virtue, with her victor’s crown of gold, tried in the fire? May it not be that His divine providence is constraining us to take as our ideal for our womanhood, not the old sheltered garden, but a strong city of God, having foundations, whose very gates are made of pearl, through which nothing that defileth is suffered to enter, and whose common ways are paved with pure gold, gold of no earthly temper, but pure and clear as crystal;—a city of refuge for all who are oppressed with wrong, and from which all foul forms of evil are banned by the one word “*Without*”? Sure I am that if we will accept this deeper and larger ideal, and endeavor, however imperfectly, to work it out on the earth, in the midst of it, as in the old garden ideal, will be found the tree of life; but then its very leaves will be for the healing of the nations.

But whether you go with me as far as this or not, I think you will agree with me that we must not leave our girls to their own crude notions on the deepest matters of life. Still less must we leave them to get their teaching on marriage and matters of sex from some modern novels, which I can only characterize as tuberculosis of the moral sense, but from which, as I have already pointed out, we cannot always guard them. We must give them direct teaching of some kind.

First, I think our girls, as well as our boys, need far more direct teaching than has been customary as to the sanctity of the body. This is especially true of girls who are sent to boarding-schools, as some of the moral evils of boys’ schools are not, I am sorry to say, altogether unknown in girls’ schools, though, as far as I can ascertain, the evil is much less in extent, and in some is non-existent. Still, all girls need to be taught that the body is the temple of the Lord and Giver of life, and that from the crown of their heads to the sole of their feet those bodies belong to Christ.

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Secondly, I think that they ought to have some such teaching about life and birth as that which I have already recommended for boys, that they may see how through the marital tie and the consequent rise of the parental relation, a world of blind mechanical force gradually developed into a world of life and beauty, and at last crowned itself with a conscious love in an indissoluble union, which makes marriage the very type of the union of the soul with God, of Christ with His Church.

Thirdly, they need to be taught that much in their own physical constitution, which they rebel against as handicapping them in the struggle of life, is Nature's provision for them that no merely physical function should press upon them as we see it do in the animal creation at certain periods of the year, but that they should be free to serve God, whether in the married or in the unmarried state, in quietness and godly living.

Fourthly, above all they need definite teaching on the true nature, the sanctity, and the beauty of marriage. It appears that the line of progress is always a spiral, and it would seem as if we were in the backward sweep of the spiral which looks like retrogression, but will doubtless bring us out further up in the end. The masculine view that marriage is the one aim and end of a woman's existence, adopted also by some careful mothers, is now exploded. Young men are no longer led to look upon every girl that they meet as furtively, to use a vulgarism, "setting her cap for him," and only too ready to fling herself at his feet. So far so good. But have we not suffered our girls to drift into the opposite extreme? In the heyday of their bright young life, with so many new interests and amusements open to them, in the pride of their freedom and independence, they are no longer so inclined to marry, and are even apt to look down upon the married state. They form so high an ideal of the man to whom they would surrender their independence—an ideal which they fortunately do not apply to their fathers and brothers, whom they find it quite possible to love on a far lower and more human level—that because a man does not fulfil this ideal, and is not a fairy prince dowered with every possible gift, they refuse men who, though not angels, would have made them happy as wife and mother. Would not a little sound, sensible teaching be of great good here? Could we not point out that, though in so vital and complex a union as the family there must be some seat of ultimate authority, some court of final appeal somewhere, and that the woman herself would not wish it to rest anywhere else than in the man, if she is to respect him; yet there is no subservience on the part of the wife in the obedience she renders, but rather in South's grand words, "It is that of a queen to her king, who both owns a subjection and remains a majesty"? Cannot we contend against this falsehood of the age which seems so to underlie our modern life, and which inclines us to

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look upon all obedience as a slavish thing—that obedience which “doth preserve the stars from wrong,” and through which “the most ancient heavens are fresh and strong”; that obedience which when absolute and implicit to the Divine will is “a service of perfect freedom”? It is the profession which exacts unquestionable obedience that forms the finest school for character, as I have already pointed out. We do not hear of a Wellington or a Roberts refusing to enter the service because they could not give up their independence. Our military heroes at least know that it is through discipline and obedience that they gain their real independence—the independence of a strong character.

Again, our girls need to be taught not only that there is nothing derogatory in the married relation to the freest and fullest independence of character, but surely in these days of open advocacy by some popular writers of “les unions libres” and a freedom of divorce that comes to much the same thing, they need to be taught the sanctity of marriage—those first principles which hitherto we have taken for granted, but which now, like everything else, is thrown into the crucible and brought into question. They need definite teaching as to the true nature of marriage; that it is no mere contract to be broken or kept according to the individual contractor’s convenience—I never yet heard of a contract for bringing into existence, not a successful machine, but a moral and spiritual being with infinite possibilities of weal or woe, of heaven or hell—but a sacramental union of love and life, with sacramental grace given to those who will seek it to live happily and endure nobly within its sacred bounds—a union so deep and mystical that even on its physical side our great physiologists are wholly at a loss to account for some of its effects;^[34] a union of which permanence is the very essence, as on its permanence rests the permanence and stability of the whole fabric of our life. It can never be treated on an individualistic basis, though that is always the tendency with every man and woman who has ever loved. In Mrs. Humphry Ward’s words:

“That is always the way; each man imagines the matter is still for his deciding, and he can no more decide it than he can tamper with the fact that fire burns or water drowns. All these centuries the human animal has fought with the human soul. And step by step the soul has registered her victories. She has won them only by feeling for the law and finding it—uncovering, bringing into light the firm rocks beneath her feet. And on these rocks she rears her landmarks—marriage, the family, the State, the Church. Neglect them and you sink into the quagmire from which the soul of the race has been for generations struggling to save you.”^[35]

Fall on this rock, stumble into unhappiness and discontent, as so many do in marriage, and you will be broken. But be faithful to it and to the high traditions which

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generations of suffering men and women have worked out for you, and you will be broken as the bud is broken into the blossom, as the acorn is broken into the oak—broken into a higher and stronger life. On the other hand rebel against it, attempt to drag it down or cast it from its place, and it will crush you, and grind some part of your higher nature to powder. How strangely and sadly is this shown in the case of one of our greatest writers, who thought that the influence of her writings would far outweigh the influence of her example, but whose name and example are now constantly used by bad men to overcome the virtue of young educated girls struggling alone in London, and often half starving on the miserable pittance which is all they can earn. But still more is it shown in the life of the nation which tampers with the laws of marriage and admits freedom of divorce. Either such suits must be heard *in camera* without the shame of exposure, when divorce is so facilitated that the family and the State rest rather on a superstructure of rickety boards than on a rock; or they must be heard in public court and form a moral sewer laid on to the whole nation, poisoning the deepest springs of its life, and through that polluted life producing far more individual misery than it endeavors to remedy in dissolving an unhappy marriage. God only knows what I suffered when a *cause celebre* came on, and I felt that the whole nation was being provided with something worse and more vitally mischievous than the most corrupt French novel.

Deeply do I regret—and in this I think most thoughtful minds will agree with me—that the Reformers in their inevitable rebound from the superstitions of Rome, rejected her teaching of the sacramental nature of marriage, which has made so many Protestant nations tend to that freedom of divorce which is carried to so great an extent in some parts of America, and is spreading, alas! to many of our own colonies—a laxity fatally undermining the sanctity and stability of the family. If marriage be not a sacrament, an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual life and grace, I ask what is?

I would therefore earnestly beseech you to oppose your direct teaching to the whole tendency of modern life, and to much of the direct teaching of modern fiction—even of so great a novelist as George Meredith—which inculcates the subordination of the marriage bond to what is called the higher law of love, or rather, passion. In teaching your sons, and especially your girls, who are far more likely to be led astray by this specious doctrine, base marriage not on emotion, not on sentiment, but on duty. To build upon emotion, with the unruly wills and affections of sinful men, is to build, not upon the sand, but upon the wind. There is but one immovable rock on which steadfast character, steadfast relations, steadfast subordination of the lower and personal desires, to the higher and immutable obligations



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and trusts and responsibilities of life can be built—duty. When this rock has been faithfully clung to, when in the midst of disillusionment and shattered ideals the noble resolution has been clung to never to base personal happiness on a broken trust or another's pain, I have over and over again known the, most imperfect marriage prove in the end to be happy and contented. Here again I quote some words of Mrs. Humphry Ward, which she puts into the mouth of her hero: "No," he said with deep emphasis—"No; I have come to think the most disappointing and hopeless marriage, nobly borne, to be better worth having than what people call an 'ideal passion'—if the ideal passion must be enjoyed at the expense of one of those fundamental rules which poor human nature has worked out, with such infinite difficulty and pain, for the protection and help of its own weakness,"[36] I am aware that neither Mr. Grant Allen with his "hill-top" novels, nor Mrs. Mona Caird need be taken too seriously, but when the latter says, "There is something pathetically absurd in this sacrifice to their children of generation after generation of grown people,"[37] I would suggest that it would be still more pathetically absurd to see the whole upward-striving past, the whole noble future of the human race, sacrificed to their unruly wills and affections, their passions and desires. If as Goldwin Smith says in his rough, incisive way, "There is not much union of heart in marriage, I do not see that there would be any more union of heart in adultery."

I have dwelt thus earnestly upon this point because the sooner we realize for ourselves and our girls that any relaxation of the marriage bond will in its disastrous consequences fall upon us, and not upon men, the better. It is the woman who first grows old and loses her personal attractions, while a man often preserves his beauty into extreme old age. It is the burdened mother of a family who cannot compete in companionship with the highly cultured young unmarried lady, with the leisure to post herself up in the last interesting book or the newest political movement. It is the man who is the more variable in his affections than the woman; more constant as she is by nature, as well as firmly anchored down by the strength of her maternal love. It is therefore on the woman that any loosening of the permanence of the marriage tie will chiefly fall in untold suffering. "Le mariage c'est la justice," say the French, who have had experience enough of "les unions libres"—justice to the wife and mother, securing her the stability of her right to her husband's affections, the stability to her right of maintenance after she has given up her means of support, above all, the stability of her right to the care of her own children. If we want to study the innate misery to women arising from the relaxation of the married tie, or transient unions, we had better read Professor Dowden's *Life of Shelley*—misery not the result of public stigma, for there was no



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such stigma in the circle in which Shelley moved, but misery brought about by the facts themselves, and producing state of things which Matthew Arnold could only characterize by the untranslatable French word “*sale*.” But nearer home, one of your most brilliant writers, Mr. Henry James, has given us an equally profitable study in his novelette, *What Maisie Knew*, which I presume is intended as a satire on freedom of divorce, but which again can only be characterized by the French word “*sale*.”

I confess it does fill me with sardonic laughter to find this oldest and stalest of all experiments, this oldest and flattest of failures, paraded as a brand new and original panacea for all the woes of our family life,—woes which, if nobly borne, at least make “perfect through suffering.”

There is but one great rock-hewn dam successfully reared against the lawless passions of men and women, and that is Christian marriage. It has at least given us the Christian home, and pure family life. And sometimes it fills me with despair to see enlightened nations, like America and Australia, whittling away and slowly undermining this great bulwark against the devastating sea of human passion. If only I could feel that any poor words of mine could in any faint measure rouse American women to set themselves against what must in the end affect the depth and steadfastness of those family affections on which the beauty and solidity of the national character mainly rest, I should feel indeed I had not lived in vain.

At least I can claim that one of your greatest women, Frances Willard, was heart and soul with me on this point.

And now to descend to lower levels. Could we not do a little more to save our young girls from sacrificing their happiness to false ideals by opportunely obtruding a little mature common-sense into their day visions and their inexperienced way of looking at things? It is all very well in the heyday of life, when existence is full of delight and home affection, to refuse a man who could make them happy, because they don't quite like the shape of his nose, or because he is a little untidy in his dress, or simply because they are waiting for some impossible demigod to whom alone they could surrender their independence. But could we not mildly point out that darker days must come, when life will not be all enjoyment, and that a lonely old age, with only too possible penury to be encountered, must be taken into consideration?

God knows I am no advocate for loveless, and least of all for mercenary marriages, but I think we want some *via media* between the French *mariage de convenance* and our English and American method of leaving so grave a question as marriage entirely to the whimsies and romantic fancies of young girls. We need not go back to the old fallacy that marriage is the aim and end of a woman's existence, and absolutely necessary for her happiness. Some



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women are doubtless called to be mothers of the race, and to do the social work which is so necessary to our complex civilization. Some women may feel themselves called to some literary or artistic pursuit, or some other profession, for which they require the freedom of unmarried life. But I think I shall carry most women with me in saying that for the ordinary woman marriage is the happiest state, and that she rarely realizes the deepest and highest in her nature except in wifedom and motherhood. Rarely, indeed, can any public work that she can do for the world equal the value of that priceless work of building up, stone by stone, the temple of a good man's character which falls to the lot of his mother. Truly is she called the wife, the weaver, since day and night, without hasting and without resting, she is weaving the temple hangings, wrought about with pomegranates and lilies, of the very shrine of his being. And if our girls could be led to see this, at least it would overcome that adverseness to marriage which many are now so curiously showing, and which inevitably makes them more fastidious and fanciful in their choice, And, on the other hand, without falling back into the old match-making mamma, exposing her wares in the marriage market to be knocked down to the highest bidder, might not parents recognize a little more than they do how incumbent on them it is to make every effort to give their daughters that free and healthy intercourse with young men which would yield them a wider choice, and which forms the best method for insuring a happy marriage?

At least, let us open our eyes to the fact that we are face to face with some terrible problems with regard to the future of our girls. With safe investments yielding less and less interest, it must become more and more difficult to make a provision for the unmarried daughters; and if the money is spent instead on training them to earn their own bread, we are still met by the problem of the early superannuation of women's labor, which rests on physical causes, and cannot therefore be removed. This at least is no time to despise marriage, or for women of strong and independent character to adopt an attitude which deprives the nation of many of its noblest mothers.

But if we are to facilitate marriage, which must form, at any rate, the main solution of the problems of the near future to which I have alluded, if we are to prevent, or even lessen, the degradation of women, if we are to extinguish this pit of destruction in our midst, into which so many a fair and promising young life disappears, and which perpetually threatens the moral and physical welfare of our own sons, if we are to stay the seeds of moral decay in our own nation, we must be content to revolutionize much in the order of our own life, and adopt a lower and simpler standard of living. It is we, and not men, who set the standard; it is we who have been guilty of the vulgar ambition of following the last social fashion,



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and doing as our richer neighbors do, until in England we have made our girls such expensive articles that many young men simply dare not indulge in them, and are led to seek in their luxurious clubs the comfort which they should find in a home of their own, with all that relaxation of moral fibre which comes from club life. Do we seriously think that we are likely successfully to contend against the degradation of women by our Rescue Societies and our Refuges when we are deliberately bringing about a social condition that ministers to it? "Oh, of course," said a near relative of my own, "no girl can marry comfortably and live in London with less than a thousand a year." All I can answer is that if this be so, it means the degradation of women writ large.

And have we even secured the happiness of our own daughters by this high standard of living which prevents so many of them from marrying at all? These unmarried girls, with no worthy object in life to call out the noble energies that lie dormant within them, "lasting" rather than "living,"—are they really happy? Is not Robert Louis Stevenson right when he says that "the ideal of the stalled ox is the one ideal that will never satisfy either man or woman"? Were not the hardships of a smaller income and a larger life—a life that would at least satisfy a woman's worst foe, heart hunger,—more adapted to their true nature, their true happiness?

And to what further admirable results have we attained by this high standard of comfort and luxury? Nature has carefully provided for the equality of the sexes by sending rather more boys than girls into the world, since fewer boys are reared; but we have managed to derange this order. We have sent our boys out into the world, but we have kept our girls at home, refusing to allow them to rough it with husbands and brothers or to endure the least hardness. The consequence is that we have nearly a million of surplus women in the old country, while in America, and in our own colonies, we have a corresponding surplus of men, with all the evil moral consequences that belong to a disproportion between the sexes. Truly we may congratulate ourselves!

I would therefore urge that if we are really to grapple with these moral evils, we should simplify our standard of living, and educate our girls very differently to what, at least in England, we are doing. Culture is good, and the more we have of it the better; it gives a woman a wider sphere of influence, as well as more enlightened methods of using that influence. But if dead languages are to take the place of living service; if high mathematics are to work out a low plane of cooking and household management; if a first class in moral science is to involve third class performance of the moral duties involved in family life, then I deliberately say it were better that, like Tennyson's mother, we should be

"Not learned save in gracious household ways."



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I protest with the uttermost earnestness against the care of human life, of human health, and of human comfort being considered a lower thing and of less importance than good scholarship; or that, when we recognize that months and even years will have to be devoted to the attainment of the one, the arts by which we can fulfil those great human trusts which devolve more or less upon every woman can be practised without ever having been learnt at all.

Do not misunderstand me. Do not think I am decrying a classical education; and, as the daughter of a great mathematician, it is not likely that I should underrate mathematics as a mental discipline. I am only urging that they should be subordinated to higher and more practical issues.

I am thankfully aware that these remarks do not apply to American women to the same degree in which they apply to our English girls. The paucity of domestic servants, and the consequent pressure of necessity, have saved you from the fine lady ideal which we have adopted for our girls and the exclusively book education into which we have almost unconsciously drifted. You have been constrained to choose some nobler type on which to mould your scheme of female education than that of the tadpole, which is all head, no hands, a much active and frivolous tail. Your girls are brought up not to consider it beneath them to take part in the work of the house; and something of the all round capability of American women which so strikes us is doubtless owing to their not having incurred "this Nemesis of disproportion," and therefore to their combining intellectual culture with practical efficiency.

Why we should have taken this fine lady ideal for our girls, when we take such a much more practical standard for our boys, has always puzzled me. If an excellent opening offered itself to one of our sons at a bank, we should agree with his father in expecting him to take it, though it would involve the drudgery of sitting in a cramped attitude on a tall stool for hours and hours every day. Why should we accept life's necessary drudgery for our boys and refuse it for our girls? No life worth living can be had without drudgery,—the most brilliant as well as the dullest. Darwin spent eight of the best years of his life in an exhaustive investigation into the organization of a barnacle—labor accompanied, as all intellectual work was with him, by a constant sense of physical nausea from which he suffered, till, from sheer weariness and disgust at the drudgery, he ends his researches in his emphatic way with the exclamation, "D—— the barnacles!" At least a woman's household drudgery does not end in a barnacle, or in dead coin, but in a living and loved personality whose comfort and health it secures. Blessed is drudgery, the homely mother of Patience, "that young and rose-lipped cherubim," of quiet endurance, of persistency in well-doing, of all the stablest elements of character.

Do not let us refuse to our girls the divine hardness which is the very heart of a diviner joy and of that "fuller life" of "which our veins are scant," nor refuse for them and for ourselves the words of life: "As the Father hath sent Me into the world, even so send I

you”; but be content to send them into the world to love, to suffer, to endure, to live and die for the good of others.



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FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 34: See some curious facts given in Darwin's *Origin of Species*.]

[Footnote 35: *David Grieve*, by Mrs. Humphry Ward, sixth edition, p. 401.]

[Footnote 36: *David Grieve*, p. 524.]

[Footnote 37: *Nineteenth Century*, May, 1892.]

CHAPTER X

NATIONAL AND IMPERIAL ASPECTS

I cannot conclude these imperfect suggestions as to how we may best carry up the moral training of our children, and especially of our boys, to a higher level, without touching on the wider and national aspect of the problems we have been considering. Especially is this necessary in relation to that attribute which, in common parlance, arrogates to itself the name that covers the vast sweep of all moral obligation and calls itself emphatically "morality." "Language," Dr. Martineau has finely said, "is the great confessional of the human heart"; and it may be in some instinctive sense that this question of personal purity or the reverse is the determining force for good or evil to the nation, as well as to the family, that has given this restricted sense to the words "morality" and "immorality." Yet we are possessed with an inveterate and almost irreclaimable tendency to look at the question of purity of life from a purely individualistic standpoint, and to regard it as a matter concerning the individual rather than the social organism. In electing a member for the Legislature how often have we not been told that we are only concerned with his public career, and have nothing whatever to do with his private life, though the private life is only another expression for the man himself; and how can we be called upon to entrust the destinies of our country to a libertine who habitually violates the obligations of his own manhood and does his best to lower and degrade the womanhood of the people he is called as a member of the Legislature to protect and to raise? When shall we learn that whatever touches the higher life and well-being of the family still more vitally affects the wider family of the State, and threatens its disintegration? The family in some lower form will survive in the most corrupt form of society; but the State, as an organized polity, capable of embodying, preserving, and promoting the higher life of the nation, perishes.

I am the more led to dwell earnestly on these wider aspects, since that great epoch-making commemoration which marked the sixtieth year of the reign of our Queen, and which brought home to the consciousness of the nation, as nothing else has ever done, its vast world-wide responsibilities. That great national festival, with its proud imperial

note, in which we celebrated the rise and progress of that “larger Venice with no narrow canals, but the sea itself for streets,” will forever form a landmark in English



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history. None who witnessed it will ever forget that spectacle, of men of all races and color, of all creeds and traditions, assembled together as brothers and fellow-subjects, to do honor to a woman's gracious sway of sixty years. And is there not a deep significance in the fact that these men of warring creeds and opposed traditions came together to do homage to no commanding personality, no Semiramis or Boadicea of old, no Catherine of Russia or Elizabeth of England; but to a sovereign whose chief characteristic has been that of being a true woman, with a true woman's instinctive sagacity and wisdom of the heart: a woman with no glamour of youth and beauty, but bowed with the weight of years and widowhood and cares of State; a Queen who, on the morning of her crowning triumph, sent forth no royal proclamation couched in set and pompous periods, but laid her trembling hands on the bowed head of her people, and gave them a simple mother's blessing: "Tell my beloved people that I pray from the bottom of my heart that God may bless them"?

May I not take it as the very embodiment of all that I have been urging on the women of this day, the immense possibilities of good that lie latent in our womanhood, the vast issues of good to the nation, and through it to the world, if that womanhood is only true to itself?

For let us clearly realize that this great moral question is no question confined to the narrow limits of the home, but a question of the rise and fall of nations. This is a truism of history. All history teaches us that the welfare and very life of a nation is determined by moral causes; and that it is the pure races that respect their women and guard them jealously from defilement that are the tough, prolific, ascendant races, the noblest in type and the most fruitful in propagating themselves. You will never find a permanently progressive race where the position of women is low, the men libertine, and the state of society corrupt. What was it that made the most brilliant civilization the world has ever seen—the civilization which still gives us the inexhaustible wells of our intellectual life—what was it that made it the shortest-lived? Few, I think, would deny that the rapid decadence of Greece, despite her splendid intellectual life, was due to moral causes. Not the pure, but the impure—the brilliant Hetairae—were the companions of men, and the men themselves were stained with nameless vices. Speaking of the decay of the Athenian people, Mr. Francis Galton says: "We know, and may guess something more, of the reason why this marvellously gifted race declined. Social morality grew exceedingly lax; marriage became unfashionable and was avoided; many of the more ambitious and accomplished women were avowed courtesans, and consequently infertile; and the mothers of the incoming population were of a heterogeneous class."^[38] What was it that made the Egyptian civilization one of the longest-lived of ancient civilizations?



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Was it not, as we now find by her monuments, that the position of women was high; the wife was enthroned by the side of her husband, and impurity was condemned by the moral sense of the nation? What was it that enabled our barbaric ancestors, the Teutons, to overthrow the whole power of civilized Rome? On the authority of Tacitus, we know that they were singularly pure. Their women were held in the highest reverence, and believed to have something divine about them, some breath of prophetic insight. Their young men were not allowed to marry till they were five-and-twenty—in other words, till their frame was thoroughly matured. Impurity before marriage was strongly discountenanced in both sexes. Therefore the whole power of Rome, honeycombed as it was by moral corruption and sexual vice, could not stand before these pure barbarians.

And if these mighty civilizations have perished from moral causes, do we really think that the moral law—will

“Of which the solid earth and sky
Are but the fitful shadows cast on high”—

suspend its operation out of compliment to the greatness of the British empire or of the American Republic, if they, too, become morally corrupt; or will not those old vanished nations, in the magnificent words of the Hebrew prophet, greet the phantom of their departed greatness in the land of shadows: “What, art thou, also, become weak as we? Art thou also like unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to the grave; the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee.”

“We talk of our greatness,” says Mr. Froude; “do we really know in what a nation’s greatness consists? Whether it be great or little depends entirely on what sort of men and women it is producing. A sound nation is a nation that is made up of sound human beings, healthy in body, strong of limb, true in word and deed, brave, sober, temperate, and chaste, to whom morals are of more importance than wealth or knowledge; where duty is first and the rights of man are second; where, in short, men grow up, and live, and work, having in them what our ancestors called ‘the fear of God.’ It is to form a character of this kind that human beings are sent into the world. Unless England’s greatness in this sense has the principle of growth in it, it were better for us that a millstone were hanged about our neck, and that we were drowned in the midst of the sea.” “I feel more and more,” said Mrs. Fawcett in words addressed to a great meeting of men in the Manchester Free Trade Hall—words that I wish could be written upon every heart—“that the great question whether the relations of men and women shall be pure and virtuous or impure and vile lies at the root of all national well-being and progress. The main requisite towards a better state of things than now exists cannot be brought about by any outside agency. There is no royal road to virtue and purity. Law can do something to punish wickedness, but improvement



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in the law is mainly valuable as an indication that the public standard of morality is raised. Let us get good laws if we can; but there is only one way of really obtaining a nobler national existence, and that is by each of us individually learning to hate and detest the vile self-indulgence that covers the life of those who are the victims of it with shame and degradation. Self-control and respect for the rights of others are the only cure for the terrible national danger which threatens us. If men and women would learn never to take pleasure in what brings pain, shame, misery, and moral death to others, earth would be turned into a heaven. It would be incredible if it were not true that for mere selfish indulgence thousands of men are willing to drag women down to what even these men themselves recognize as the lowest dregs of humanity. Where is their chivalry? Where is their common humanity? Some would say that such men do not possess either. For my part, I do not believe this. Let women thankfully acknowledge that, so far as other matters are concerned, they are constantly indebted to the chivalrous self-sacrifice of men. Chivalry is not dead; generous self-sacrifice is not dead; but in far too many cases, with regard to the all-important question of personal purity, they are sleeping. Our efforts must be directed to awakening them. We must try and make men realize the callous cruelty of all actions which lower the womanhood of even the poorest and most degraded of women."

And if we refuse, sunk in our own selfish interests and pleasures, and content that the daughters of the people should perish as long as our own are safe, then it will not be by an European coalition that the British Empire will perish, it will be by moral decay from within; in Blake's rough, strong words:

"The harlot's curse from street to street
Shall be old England's winding sheet."

The British Empire, the great American Republic, the two greatest civilizing, order-spreading, Christianizing world-powers ever known, can only be saved by a solemn league and covenant of their women to bring back simplicity of life, plain living, high thinking, reverence for marriage laws, chivalrous respect for all womanhood, and a high standard of purity for men and women alike.

Suffer me to lay before you three considerations, which will prove to you at once that this great moral question is more vital to our two nations than to any other, and that we are peculiarly vulnerable to the action of moral causes.

Firstly, England, and in one sense England alone, is the mighty mother of nations. Three great nations have already sprung from her loins; a fourth in Africa is already in process of consolidation. From the narrow confines of our sea-girt island our people pour into all quarters of the globe; and if we suffer England to know corruption we send forth polluted waters into all lands. Your great Republic,



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on the other hand, is a mother of nations in another sense, since she receives into her mighty bosom vast numbers drawn from the suffering peoples of the old world, and gives them a mother's welcome. According as your civilization is high and pure, or low and corrupt, so will those naturalized citizens be. Decay with great empires, as with fish, sets in at the head; and the moral decadence of England and America will sensibly lower the moral standard of nearly one-third of the population of the world.[39] The heart of the two nations is still sound. It is not too late. We are at least free from the continental system, by which the degradation of women is reduced to a systematized slavery, to meet what is openly called a necessity of nature. The comparative purity of Englishmen and Americans is still a wonder, and often a derision to foreigners. Our women are a greater power than in any other country. We still start from a good vantage-ground.

England, certainly through no merit of her own, has been called by the providence of God to lead in great moral causes. We led in the matter of slavery—the open sore of the world. We English and American women are now called to lead, in this its hidden sore, for the healing of the nations.

Secondly, since you have elected to go beyond your own confines and have dependencies, and so take up the white man's burden of civilizing and Christianizing the world, your men as well as ours will be exposed to that dangerously lowering influence, contact with lower races and alien civilizations. An Englishman in India, if he be not a religious man, is apt to blind himself to wrongs done to womanhood, because those wrongs are often done to a pariah caste who are already set apart for infamy; though I have not yet heard of an Englishman possessing himself of slaves on the ground that they were slaves already to their native masters. Worse still, in savage or semi-civilized countries the native girl, far from feeling herself degraded, considers that she is raised by any union, however illicit, with a white man. It is the native men who are furious. Which of us in England did not feel an ache of shame in our hearts over the plea of the Matabele to the white man: "You have taken our lands, and our hunting-grounds are gone. You have taken our herds, and we want for food. You have taken our young men, and made them slaves in your mines. You have taken our women *and done what you like with them.*" How many of our native wars may not have had as their cause that last sentence in the plaint of the Matabele, a cause carefully concealed from the public eye? For God's sake, let mothers teach their sons that first rudiment in manly character, the recognition that the girls of a conquered race, or of a barbarian tribe inhabiting one of our spheres of influence, from the very fact that they are a conquered race, or, if not conquered, hopelessly and piteously in our power, are *ipso facto* a most sacred trust

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to us, which it is both unmanly and bestial to violate. Especially I would plead with mothers to send us pure men for our army—officers who will set their men a high example of chivalry towards the weakest native woman, and who will so influence them by example and personal influence that they may look upon voluntarily disabling themselves from active service, while still taking the government pay, as unmanly and unsoldierly. Give us men who can say with a non-commissioned officer writing home to one of our White Cross secretaries: “I have been out in India now eleven years and have never had a day’s illness; and I think the whole secret of my good health is total abstinence from all that intoxicates, and that I honor all women as I honor my mother or any of my sisters.”

Thirdly, the hardest thing on earth is not to slay a sin, but to get it buried; and the hardest of all sins to get under ground is the sin of impurity. It is largely due to the low standard of purity among men that we owe the almost insoluble problem presented by the existence of the large Eurasian population in India, and of the half-caste generally.

“The universal unanimity of the popular verdict on the half-caste is remarkable,” says Olive Schreiner in some powerful articles published in *Blackwood* on the problems presented by our Colonial Empire. “The half-caste, it is asserted in every country where he is known, whether it be in America, Asia, or Africa, and whether his ancestors be English and negroid Spanish and Indian, or Boer and Hottentot,—the self-caste is by nature anti-social. It is always asserted that he possesses the vices of both parent races and the virtues of neither: that he is born especially with a tendency to be a liar, cowardly, licentious, and without self-respect.”

Olive Schreiner herself is the first to admit that there are exceptions. She says:

“The fact that amongst the most despised class of our laboring half-castes we have all met individuals, not only of the highest integrity, but of rare moral beauty and of heroic and fully developed social feelings, does not impugn the theory of his unfortunate position. If you should sow human seed inside the door of hell, some of it would yet come up white lilies. But as a rule the popular verdict on the half-caste is not overdrawn.”

I strongly agree with Mrs. Schreiner that this lamentable result is not due solely, or even chiefly, to the admixture of races, but far more to the circumstances in which he has been born and bred. He has originated in almost all cases, not from the union of average individuals of the two races uniting under average conditions, but as the result of a sexual union between the most helpless and enslaved females of the dark race and the most recklessly dominant males of the white. “He enters a world in which there was no place prepared for him.” His father was about as sensible of his parental obligations



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towards him as a toad towards its spawn in the next ditch. To him he “was a broken wineglass from last night’s feast.” “Often without a family, always without a nation or race, without education or moral training, and despised by the society in which he was born,” is it any wonder that the half-caste is the curse of the community in which he is found;—one of those whips, as Shakespeare reminds us, that “heaven makes out of our pleasant vices” to “scourge” us into some sense of their seriousness?

If you would not incur that curse, that insoluble problem of the half-caste, then in both your civil and military services send out men of clean hearts and lives into your dependencies, Alas! in your great military camps during your Spanish war a moral laxity was allowed, which, had it been attempted in the Egyptian campaign, Lord Kitchener would have stamped out with a divine fury. I had it from an eyewitness, but the details are wholly unfit for publication.

I do not hold with our “little Englanders” that the possession of an empire is a disaster; on the contrary, I hold that it constitutes a splendid school for the formation of strong character,—of men who are the very salt of the earth,—and that the sense of a great mission to be fulfilled tends to give a nobility of soul to the whole nation; while even the wars it may involve prove the vultures of God swooping down on the hidden social rottennesses which in prolonged peace may breed unnoticed and unreprieved. We have never forgotten the bitter lessons of the Crimean war which laid bare our miserable incompetence in organizing, and the moral rottenness of our English firms that could supply our soldiers with paper-soled boots and bayonets that bent at a thrust, when the very life of our brave fellows depended on their being well armed and well shod.

America will never forget the sufferings of her wounded in the Spanish war, sufferings caused by the like dishonesty in the goods supplied and the like criminal incompetency which failed to provide them even with necessaries.

But I do say that an empire presents many difficult problems, and that the men who accept its responsibilities need a sound head, clean hands, and above all a pure heart.

Let me in conclusion relate an incident which happened in the wreck of the *Warren Hastings*, to which I have already alluded,—an incident which I can never tell without a breaking voice and eyes full of tears. In that awful night of storm and darkness and imminent shipwreck, the officer in command, after ordering his men below to lighten the crowded deck, stationed two of his men at a narrow gangway through which he feared an ugly rush for life might be made, while the women and children were being embarked, bidding them on no account to leave their post till he gave them the word of command. At length the women and the sick had all been saved in the boats. This done, and not till then, the men had saved themselves,



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some by boats, some by life preservers; and last of all the captain and officer in command were proceeding to leave the fast foundering ship, when the latter heard a voice close to him, saying, "Colonel, may we leave now?" It was the voice of one of his two sentinels. In the stress and strain of the awful scenes of that night he had for the moment forgotten that he had ordered them not to leave their post until he gave the word of command. And he said that *the water was almost up to their lips!*

Oh ye mothers of America and of our great Empire! send us such men as these,—men who will mount guard over women and children in all lands, and see, as far as in them lies, that they do not make shipwreck of what is dearer than life;—men who, even with the bitter waters of temptation up to their own lips, will still hold their post and see that no man, to save himself, drives them down into that dread sea of perdition which never gives up its dead.

Then East, West, North, South, the American flag will witness in the face of all nations to the true manhood that steers its course by no earth-born fires of passion and selfish lust, but by the eternal stars, the heavenly lights of God, and mother, and duty, and home.

East, West, North, South, by its side our flag, twice scored with the White Cross, will float wide in the face of all nations the Englishman's faith, reverence for womanhood, self-giving manhood, and the pure heart that sees God.

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 38: *Hereditary Genius*, by Francis Galton, p. 331.]

[Footnote 39: Great Britain, since the conquest of the Soudan, rules one-fourth of the population of the world.]

CHAPTER XI

THE DYNAMIC ASPECT OF EVIL[40]

There remains yet one other way in which I earnestly desire to help you if I can. I would fain afford you some light on this difficult problem and give you a spring of hope within by enabling you to see what it is working out in the world without. Some, I know, do not need this help. Some wholesome souls seem to gaze on all evil with sun-dazzled eyes—eyes that see Him in whom they walk, and not it, and in His light they see light. They are the "naturally Christian" souls who lead melodious days amid all the jars and discords of the world around them. Others there are who seem to look upon these



great social evils as especially provided to afford a sphere for their beneficent activities; and who if, by some sudden rise in public opinion, some passionate sense of the wrong done to women, the degraded class should almost cease to exist, would in their heart of hearts secretly regret so many empty beds in their little Rescue Home and the possibility that it might have to be shut up, when “the girls did turn out so well.” Others, again, there are who never trouble their heads or hearts about the misery



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and sin of the world, or any social problem, however dark, as long as their own house is comfortable, their own bed soft, and their own children healthy and well cared for, never dreaming how those social evils may press upon those children in their after-life. These are in no need of this kind of help. But there are many thoughtful mothers, possibly an increasing number with the increase of knowledge that is coming to all women, from whose heart there is going up a bitter cry, "Why, oh why is all this evil permitted?" Why is there this nameless moral difficulty at the very heart of our life which our whole soul revolts from contemplating? Why has Nature made these passions so strong that she seems wholly regardless of all considerations of morality?[41]

Some there are who feel that all infidel books are mere curl-paper in comparison with the terrible facts of life, some who are in danger of having all faith crushed out of them

"Beneath the weary and the heavy weight
Of all this unintelligible world."

It is these who need, like myself, as a first step to strong action, to see something of what God is working out by the evil and suffering of the world, to see it as a part of a vast redemptive whole, not as a great exception in our life, but working under the same law by which, in the words of the ancient collect, "things which are cast down are being raised up, and things which had grown old are being made new, and all things are returning to perfection through Him from whom they had their origin."

Now, do not think that I am going to indulge in a dissertation on the origin of evil or why the world is so full of sin and misery. This is insoluble. You cannot solve a problem which has only one term. Your unknown quantity must have some known factor or factors related to it, or you cannot resolve it into the known. In this great claim of cause and effect, where all things are related and interdependent, you can only know a related thing through its relations. Try to account for a bit of chalk, for instance, and consider all you must know in order to enable you to do so. To account for its weight you must know something about the motion of the whole planetary system and the law of gravity that controls that system; to account for the weather-stains upon it, you must know something about chemical reaction; to account for its being chalk and not flint, you must know something of the geological ages of the earth, and how it comes to be built up of little sea-shells; to account for its hardness, you must know something of the intricacies of molecular physics. All this you must know to account for a mere bit of chalk. How, then, can we expect to understand the problem of the world when we know absolutely nothing of its relations with the great moral and spiritual whole to which it belongs, and without the knowledge of which it must for ever remain an insoluble problem, presenting one term only, an enigma of which we do not possess the key?



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But though we cannot understand the origin of evil and why the world is as it is, we can understand something of the processes which are at work for good or ill. We can in a measure trace whether these processes are making slowly but surely for righteousness, or whether all the sin and the suffering are aimless and purposeless, a voice that cries "believe no more,"

"An ever breaking shore
That tumbles in a godless deep."

Now, I contend that the only ground of despair, the only thing that might shut us up to pessimism and to "a philosophy only just above suicide mark," would be not the presence but the absence of these great world evils. If this world presented a dead-level of comfortable selfishness that on the whole answered fairly well all round, an economy of petty self-interests in stable equilibrium, a world generally wrong, but working out no evil in particular to set it right, a society in which every man was for himself, and not the devil, as at present, but God for us all—then indeed we might despair. But who can contemplate humanity as it is, that broken stair of the Divinity, whose top is in the unapproachable light of heaven and whose lowest step rests not on earth but in hell, without feeling that it is destined for an infinite progress, destined for the ascending feet of angels? Who that gazes on this world, with its infinite depths of pain, its heavy weight of evil, its abysmal falls, its stupendous pressures of wrong and misery, but feels that here, if anywhere, we are in the presence of kinetic energies, of immense moral and spiritual forces, capable of raising the whole of fallen humanity to the heights of the Divine. For let us remember that in the moral and spiritual world, as well as in the physical, no fall but carries with it the force that can be converted into a rise; no dread resistance of wrong to the right but creates an accumulated force which once let loose can transform an empire; no weight of evil but, in pulling it down, can be made to raise the whole bent of our life.

"Man partly is, and wholly hopes to be."

He is "no finite and finished clod." Progress, as Browning says, is his distinctive mark, and these deep evils are the gigantic steps by which he rises as he treads them under foot. Once recognize the fact that he is a fallen being—and by that I mean no theological dogma, but a truth of life, which, whatever our creed may be, must stare us in the face—the fact that he is a being knowing good but choosing evil, capable of an ideal but habitually falling below it, no mere automaton, but possessed of a spiritual will and an accusing conscience—I ask how else can he be educated, in the true sense of the word, and raised from death unto life except by being made to educe his own results and work out his evil premiss to the bitter end, till he is forced to go back upon himself, and recognize the right principle which he has violated? The very law of his being, of every being who is being raised from death unto life, is, that he can only know life through death, only grasp good by grappling with evil, only gain knowledge by knowing

ignorance; his highest must be sown in weakness before it can be raised in power, must be sown in dishonor before it can be raised in glory.



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Look back over the past and see if it is not in conflict with these great world evils, themselves the results of man's moral blindness and sin, that we have worked out the true principles of our life, the higher possibilities of our humanity.

Take the most elementary case first, man's disobedience to the physical laws under which he must live to have a sound mind in a sound body. Man in his primitive stages is emphatically not a clean animal. On the contrary, he is a very dirty one. He has none of the cat's dainty neatness and cleanliness, none of her instinctive recognition of the deodorizing and purifying power of the earth, that makes the foulest thing once buried spring up in fresh grass and fragrant flowers. He has nothing of the imperative impulse of the little ant which he treads under his lordly feet to shampoo his brother, let alone himself. It has needed the discipline and the suffering of the ages to evolve that great banner of progress, the clean shirt. From what great world pestilences has he not had to suffer as the consequences of his own uncleanness! Cholera has been rightly called the beneficent sanitary inspector of the world. With what foul diseases, the very details of which would sicken, has he not had to be scourged withal to get him to recognize and obey the one Divine injunction, "Wash and be clean"! Truly his knowledge and recognition of sanitary law, his "physical righteousness," has had to be sown in the weakness and corruption of disease before it could be raised to the power of a recognized law of life, insuring that cleanliness which is next to godliness.

Again, take the great principle of national freedom,—that a nation has a right to govern its own destinies. With what world tyrannies and oppressions, the outcome of man's selfish lust of power and wealth, have not the peoples had to fight and struggle in order at length to win and get recognized that principle of freedom without which a nation can be neither strong nor holy, neither a citadel nor a temple! The Iron Duke used to say, "There is but one thing worse than a battle gained, and that is a battle lost." Yet what battles lost and what battles gained, with all their sickening sights and sounds—

"Oaths, insults, filth, and monstrous blasphemies,
Sweat, writhings, anguish, laboring of lungs,
In that close mist, and cryings for the light,
Moans of the dying and voices of the dead";

what bloody conflicts through the long ages have not had to be fought out to gain this freedom! Truly we might apostrophize Freedom in the words of the Hebrew prophet: "Who is this that cometh with her garments dyed in blood?" Through what long centuries did not what Sir John Seeley called the "mechanical theory of government" survive, the theory which recognized no vital bond of blood and historical tradition between a people and its government, but looked upon nations as royal appanages,



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to be banded about with royal alliances and passed under an alien sway without consent on its own part! Did it not require a Napoleon to work out this false premiss to its bitter end, drenching Europe in blood to gratify his own greed of power, and reducing nation after nation to his alien and despotic rule, till it was felt to be intolerable, and with a convulsive struggle Europe threw off the yoke? Truly a struggle which was the birth-throes of national sentiment and the recognition that the tie between the governed and the governing must be an organic one, a tie of blood from within, not a force from without—in one word, the recognition of the great principle of national freedom which, when the nation is sufficiently developed and self-disciplined to be fit for it, is the great mother of progress. Sown in the corruption of those mangled and decaying corpses on many an awful battle-field, freedom is raised to the glory of an incorruptible truth of national life.

Once again, was it not in his age-long conflict with the great world evil of slavery that man worked out the true nature of a moral personality? Man started at the outset with the evil premiss of the right of the strong to possess himself of the weak and the conquered, and enslave him for his own use, shunting the toil and burden of life upon his bowed shoulders. Through long ages he had to work out this wrong premiss in disaster to empires through the laziness and worthlessness of their ruling classes engendered by slave labor, in the dumb suffering and bitter wrongs of millions of enslaved men and women. Through centuries the Church protested against these wrongs in vain, since the evil root, in the face of all protests, will go on bearing the evil fruit. England, herself the mother of free peoples, was stained with the guilt of being one of the first to originate the worst form of slavery that the world has ever seen, the African slave-trade, her great Queen Elizabeth not scorning to enrich her royal coffers out of the profits of slave-raiding expeditions conducted by her sea-captains. It needed the horrors of this latest development of the principle of slavery, the horrors of the middle passage, of whole regions of Africa decimated to supply the slave market, of mothers torn from their children, or, worse still, compelled to bear them to their slave masters, only to see them in their turn sold to some far-off station; of the degradation of men and women brought up in heathen ignorance lest they should use their knowledge to rebel—it needed all this weight of evil and disaster at last to rouse the conscience of Europe to recognize that slavery was wrong in itself and to cast out the evil premiss on which it rested. By the mere force of moral revulsion in England, by the throes of a great civil war engendered by slavery in America, at last the true nature of a moral personality got itself recognized,—the inviolability of personal responsibility, the sanctity of the individual,



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the sacredness of freedom,—those great principles on which the whole of our public and political life are founded. And I make bold to say that these principles were gained as a heritage for all time, not by the preaching of abstract justice, not by any consideration of the moral beauty of liberty, but mainly by a remorseful passion over the wrongs and the degradation of the slave. These great principles were sown in weakness and dishonor, to be raised in honor and in the power of an endless life.

When, therefore, the Church of the living God awakes, as she is just beginning to do, and closes in a life and death struggle with this far deeper and more pervasive evil of the degradation of women and children, which she has too long accepted as a melancholy necessity of human nature, may we not find in the course of that conflict that wholly new powers and new principles are being evolved, and that the apparent impossibilities of our nature are only its divine possibilities in disguise? May we not work out the true principles, not now of our public and political life, but of the home, of the family, of personal conduct and character—all those great moral bases on which the whole social structure rests for its stability? Granted that this is the deepest and strongest of all our world evils, that which is the most firmly based on the original forces of our nature, and of that part of our nature which has shown the deepest disorder—does not all this point to some great issue? That which has been sown in such deep dishonor, will it not be raised in some glory that excelleth?

If God has suffered mighty empires and whole kingdoms to be wrecked on this one evil; if He has made it throughout the Old Scriptures the symbol of departure from Himself, and closely associated monogamic love with monotheistic worship, teaching us by the history of all ancient idolatries that the race which is impure spawns unclean idols and Phrygian rites; if Nature attaches such preciousness to purity in man that the statistics of insurance offices value a young man's life at twenty-five, the very prime of well-regulated manhood, at exactly one-half of what it is worth at fourteen, owing, Dr. Carpenter does not hesitate to say, to the indulgence of the passions of youth; if the tender Father, "who sits by the death-bed of the little sparrow," has not thought it too great a price to pay that countless women and children should be sunk to hell without a chance in this life, in a degradation that has no name, but which, in its very depth, measures the height of the sanctity of womanhood; do we think that all these stupendous issues are for no end and to work out no purpose? Do we not feel at once that we stand here at the very centre of the mighty forces that are moulding men to nobler shape and higher use?



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Here, at least, is a force, if we will only use it, so weighted with public disaster, with national decay, with private misery, that it insists on making itself felt if there be a spark of life left and the nation has not become mere dead carcase for the vultures of God's judgments to prey upon. Here alone is a power strong enough to compel us to simplify our life and restore its old divine order of marriage and hard work, of "plain living and high thinking," which luxury and self-ease are fast undermining. Here, in the slain of the daughters of our people, is a stinging wrong that will goad us into seeing that the people are so housed that a human life is possible to them. Here, if anywhere, is a passion of conscience, and pity, and duty, and interest combined, strong enough, a heaped-up weight of evil heavy enough, to raise us to a self-giving manhood and a self-reverencing womanhood.

And from this secret place of thunder is not God now calling His chosen ones to come forward and be fellow-workers with Him? And when that call is obeyed, when, to summarize what I have already said, the wrongs and degradation of women and hapless children take hold of men, as, thank God, they are beginning to take hold, with a remorseful passion, that passion for the weak, the wronged, and the defenceless, which surely is the divine in flower in a human soul; when women rise up in a wild revolt against

"The law that now is paramount,
The common law by which the poor and weak
Are trampled under foot of vicious men,
And loathed forever after by the good";

when the Christian Church at length hears the persistent interrogation of her Lord, "Seest thou this woman?" and makes answer, "Yea, Lord, I see that she is young, and poor, and outcast, and degraded," and speaks to young men with something of the passion of the true Man—"It were better for you that a millstone were hanged about your neck and you cast into the depths of the sea, than that you should cause one of these little ones to stumble"; when the fact that a foolish, giddy girl's feet have slipped and fallen is no longer the signal for every man to look upon her as fair game, and to trample her deeper into the mire, but the signal to every man calling himself a man to hasten to her side, to raise her up again and restore her to her lost womanhood; when boys are taught from their earliest years that if they would have a clear brain, a firm nerve, and a strong muscle, they must be pure, and purity is looked upon as manly, at least, as much as truth and courage; when women are no longer so lost to the dignity of their own womanhood as to make companions of the very men who insult and degrade it; when the woman requires the man to come to her in holy marriage in the glory of his unfallen manhood, as he requires her to come to him in the beauty of her spotless maidenhood; then, when these things begin to be, will not God's order slowly evolve itself out of our disorder, and



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the man will become the head of the woman, to guard her from all that makes her unfit to be the mother of the race, and the woman will be the heart of the man, to inspire him with all noble purpose? As we stand by this great world-sepulchre of corruption our unbelieving heart can only exclaim: "It stinketh." But the Christ meets us with the words, "Said I not unto thee that if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?" That which has been sown in human weakness must be raised in divine power; that which has been sown in deep dishonor must be raised in glory. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, even the self-giving manhood of Him who is the Prince of Passion and the Lord of Love, the manhood lifted into God.

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 40: In this chapter I have quoted some passages from an article of mine, "The Apocalypse of Evil," which appeared in the *Contemporary Review*, and received the strong commendation of Dr. Lightfoot, then Bishop of Durham. Many of the thoughts I owe to my friend, James Hinton, to whom my obligations on this subject are absolute.]

[Footnote 41: We must be careful, however, in urging this difficulty, to remember Dr. Martineau's teaching, which I have given in the third chapter, and bear in mind that the evil here is due to man's disorder, and not to Nature's order. In the animal world the reproductive instincts work out as orderly results as all other natural instincts, and are no stronger than is necessary for the preservation of the race.]

CONCLUSION

And it is this great upward movement, lifting man to a higher level, which is given into the hands of us women, touching, as it does, all the great trusts of our womanhood. What are we women going to do in the face of such vast issues for good or evil?

Undoubtedly we stand at the parting of the ways. In England undoubtedly the old high traditions of English society have, at least in what is called the "Upper Ten," been lowered and vulgarized. Our literature is no longer as clean and wholesome as it was. The greater freedom that women enjoy has not always been put to high uses. And all around us in both countries the old order is changing, and the new order is not yet born. Old positions are becoming untenable, with the higher position and culture of women. It is becoming an impossibility for intelligent women with a knowledge of physiology and an added sense of their own dignity to accept the lower moral standard for men, which exposes them to the risk of exchanging monogamy for a peculiarly vile polygamy—polygamy with its sensuality, but without its duties—bringing physical risks

to their children and the terrible likelihood of an inherited moral taint to their sons. It is an impossibility, now that mothers know, that they should remain indifferent as to what sort of manhood



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they send out into the world—the so-called manhood that either makes and maintains the miserable sinner of our streets or is content to give a tainted name to the mother of his child, or the true manhood lifted into God, whose marriage is the type of the eternal union of God and the soul, of Christ and the Church, and whose fatherhood claims kinship with the Father of lights. It is impossible for women who are agitating for the enfranchisement of their sex to accept as a necessary class in the midst of a democratical society a class of citizens who, in Dr. Welldon's[42] words, addressed to the University of Cambridge, "have lost once for all time the rights of citizenship—who are nobody's wives, nobody's sisters, nobody's friends, who live a living death in the world of men. There are one hundred and fifty thousand such citizens,—perhaps far more, in England and Wales—*and all are women.*"

These old positions are simply impossible, each a moral *reductio ad absurdam*. We must institute a new and higher order. To do so we women must unite in a great silent movement, a temple slowly rising up beneath our hands without sound of axe or hammer. It will not make itself heard on platforms; its cry will not be heard in our streets. It will go on beneath the surface of our life, probably unheeded and unnoticed of men. Women must educate women; those who know must teach those who are in ignorance. Let mothers who have been roused to the greatness of the issues at stake take as their field of labor the young mothers whom they may know—possibly their own married daughters or nieces, possibly those who are only bound to them by ties of friendship. Use this book, if you will. If there are things in it which you don't approve of—and oh, how much of the divine patience of our Lord do we need with one another in dealing with this difficult question—cut out those pages, erase that passage, but do not deny those young mothers the necessary knowledge to guard the nursery or save their boys at school. And then try and follow it up by quietly talking over the difficulties and the best method of encountering them. Let us deny ourselves in order to give to associations or institutions for the elevation of women, as well as to that excellent society for men, the White Cross, which is spreading its purifying work through both countries.[43] Let us do what we can to help in organizing women's labor, so that a living wage may be secured and no woman be driven by starvation into selling herself for a morsel of bread. Let us endeavor to secure the franchise that we may have the power of legislating for the protection of women on the one point on which we stand in sharp opposition to all but good men; especially such measures as raising the age of consent, so deplorably low in some of your States, that your children are almost without legal protection; resisting State regulation of vice in the army; cleansing the streets by an Act pressing equally on men and women, and many others



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which will suggest themselves to you. But let us, at the same time, clearly recognize that the remedy must lie deeper than any external agency—must be as deep as life itself, and must be worked out in the silence of our own hearts and of our own homes. We must restore the law of God, quietly but firmly insisting on the equal moral standard for men and women alike; and we must maintain the sanctity and permanence of the marriage bond as ordained by Christ himself.

I say again I do not think, I simply *know*, by my own experience, that men will rise to any standard which women choose to set them. Ruskin's noble words are the simple truth:

“Their whole course and character are in your hands; what you would have them be they shall be, if you not only desire to have them so, but deserve to have them so, for they are but mirrors in which you will see yourselves imaged.... You fancy, perhaps, as you have been told so often, that a wife's rule should only be over her husband's house, not over his mind. Ah no! the true rule is just the reverse of that: a true wife, in her husband's house, is his servant; it is in his heart that she is queen. Whatever of best he can conceive, it is her part to be; whatever of highest he can hope, it is hers to promise. All that is dark in him she must purge into purity; all that is failing in him she must strengthen into truth; from her, through all the world's clamor, he must win his praise; in her, through all the world's warfare, he must find his peace.”

Last, but not least, we must set ourselves to make our lives simpler and plainer, and oppose the ever-increasing luxury and love of pleasure, with its sure and certain result, a relaxed moral fibre, which, to a race called to such high destinies and difficult tasks as our Anglo-Saxon race, is simply fatal. It can, and it must be done. As Philip Hammerton remarks:

“It is entirely within the power of public opinion to relieve the world from the weariness of this burthen of expensive living; it has actually been done to a great extent with regard to the costliness of funerals, a matter in which public opinion has always been very authoritative. If it will now permit a man to be buried simply when he is dead, why cannot it allow him to exist simply whilst he is living?”

To lessen the expense of dress, which has risen twenty per cent, within the last thirty years; to restore amusements to their proper place, as recreation after hard work for the good of others; to resist the ever-increasing restlessness of our day, leading to such constant absences from home as seriously to threaten all steady work for the amelioration of the stay-at-home classes, and use up the funds which are needed for that work; to keep a simple table, so that the future Sir Andrew Clark may no longer have to say that more than half of our diseases come from over-eating; to resist the vulgar tendency to compete with our richer or more



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fashionable neighbors in their style of living—surely these sacrifices are not beyond us, to attain a great end, both for ourselves and our empire. If indeed we think we can meet this evil without making sacrifices amounting to a silent revolution in our life; if we think, as I have sometimes thought some women do think, that we can quench this pit of perdition in our midst by, as it were, emptying our scent-bottles upon it,—shedding a few empty tears, heaving a few sentimental sighs: “It is very sad! of course I can’t do anything, but I am sure I wish all success to your noble work”—possibly even giving a very little money, say a guinea a year, to a penitentiary—all I can say is, *God is not mocked*. I know but one thing in heaven or earth that will quench it, and that is life-blood. Sometimes I have asked in anguish of spirit: “Will women give it?” I believe they will. But, whether we give it or not, what Matthew Arnold called “the noblest of religious utterances” holds good here: “Without shedding of blood there is no remission of this sin.”

And it is because I know that mothers will spend their heart’s blood in saving their sons, and because I believe that women, with their new-born position and dignity, will not go on accepting as a matter of course that their womanhood should be fashioned like the Egyptian sphinx, half pure woman, crowned with intellectual and moral beauty, dowered with the homage of men; and half unclean beast of prey, seeking whom it may slay, outcast and abandoned and forced to snare or starve—it is because of this, my rooted faith in women, that I have hope.

As long ago as 1880 Professor Max Mueller, ever anxious for the interests of his Indian fellow-subjects, when Mr. Malabari came to ask him how he could rouse English public opinion with regard to the injuries inflicted on young girls by Hindu child-marriages, answered him at once, “Write a short pamphlet and send it to the women of England. They begin to be a power, and they have one splendid quality, they are never beaten.”[44] And if this can be said of English women, still more may it be said of the women of America.

But, further, to strengthen us in this splendid quality, have we sufficiently recognized the new moral forces that are coming into the world? Have our eyes been opened to see “the horses and chariots of fire” which are silently taking up their position around us, to guard us and fight for us, that we may not be beaten; the deepened sense of moral obligation, the added power of conscience, the altogether new altruistic sense which makes the misery and degradation of others cling to us like a garment we cannot shake off, a sense of others’ woes for which we have had to invent a new word? Lord Shaftesbury’s legislation does not date so very far back; and yet when his Bill for delivering women and children from working in our mines was hanging in the balance, and the loss of a single vote might wreck it—women,



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be it remembered, who were working naked to the waist in the coal-mines, and little children of eight or nine who were carrying half a sack of coals twelve times a day the height of St. Paul's Cathedral—the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London left the House of Lords without voting, as the subject did not interest them; while in the lower House Bright and Gladstone both voted against the Bill, Gladstone being the only member who, when the Bill was passed by a bare majority, endeavored to delay its coming into operation! I ask, Would such a state of things be possible in these days? Am I not right in saying that new moral forces and sensibilities have been born within us which make such a state of things not only impossible, but simply incomprehensible?

Why then should we despair? What! Has God built up His everlasting marble of broken shells, and will He not build up his temple of the future out of these broken efforts of ours? Has He made His pure and splendid diamond out of mere soot, and shall we refuse to see in the blackest and foulest moral problem the possibilities of the diamond, of a higher life worked out in the process of its solution, reflecting His light and His love? Has He made His precious sapphire of the mere mud that we tread under our feet, and, when we insist on our little sisters' being no longer trodden like mud "under foot of vicious men," may they not in the course of their redemption bring an added hue of heaven to our life, an added purity to home and family, and behold, instead of the old mud, a sapphire throne, and above it the likeness as of a divine man?[45]

But to those who still hang back with a feeling of almost angry repulsion from the whole subject which makes them refuse even to face the perils and temptations of their own boys, I would address no hard words, remembering but too well the terrible struggle it cost me to make this my life work. Only I would remind them of that greatest act in all history, by which the world was redeemed. The Cross to us is so associated with the adoration of the ages, so glorified by art, and music, and lofty thought, that we have ceased to realize what it was in actual fact such as no painter has ever dared to portray it; the Cross, not elevated as in sacred pictures, but huddled up with the jeering crowd; the Cross with its ribald blasphemies, its shameful nakedness, its coarse mockeries, its brutal long-drawn torture. Do you think it cost the women of that day nothing to bear all this on their tender hearts? Yet what was it that made men draw nearer and nearer, till the women who at first "stood afar off, beholding these things," we are told, at last "stood by the cross of Jesus"; and, when all men forsook Him and fled, placed themselves heart to heart with the Divine Love bearing the sins of the world and casting them into the abysmal depths of its own being, deeper even than the depths of man's sin? What was it but their faithfulness to the Highest that they had known which made them endure the Cross, despising the shame?



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And now, when at the end of the ages He once again calls us women to stand heart to heart with Him in a great redemptive purpose, shall we hang back? Shall we not rather obey the Divine call, enduring the Cross, despising the shame, and, like those women of old, winning for ourselves, by faithfulness unto death, the joy of being made the messengers of a higher and risen life to the world?

God grant that the power of the Holy Ghost may overshadow us and enable us to make answer with her whom all generations have called blessed: "Behold the hand-maiden of the Lord!"

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 42: Late Head-Master of Harrow; now Metropolitan of India.]

[Footnote 43: I would especially commend this modern order of knighthood to the prayers and support of women. It is bravely fighting our battle for us and doing the public work among men. As it attacks what is especially the sin of the moneyed classes, it is unpopular, men resenting its interference with what they call their private life, and it is always in peril for want of funds. The White Cross league admits women associates for intercessory prayer—and what mother will not be thankful for that?—for any work where women's aid is needed, and for raising funds for what is so emphatically our own cause. I would earnestly suggest to women who have incomes of their own that they should leave the White Cross a small legacy, so as to place it on a firmer basis. I hope myself to leave the English branch L2000.]

[Footnote 44: From an article in the *Nineteenth Century* on "Meddling with Hindu Marriages."]

[Footnote 45: Ezek. i., 26.]

APPENDIX

In Mr. Edward Thring's address to the Church Congress at Carlisle in 1841, he said:

"Curiosity, ignorance, and lies form a very hot-bed of impurity. We pay heavily for our civilized habits in false shame and the mystery in which sex is wrapped.

"I confess that for curiosity I have no remedy to propose. Ignorance and lies are on a different footing. I suppose everyone is acquainted with some of the current lies about the impossibility of being pure. The only answer to this is a flat denial from experience. I know it is possible, and, when once attained, easy. The means, under God, in my own case, was a letter from my father. A quiet, simple statement of the sinfulness of the sin and a few of the plain texts from St. Paul saved me. A film fell from my eyes at my



father's letter. My first statement is that all fathers ought to write such a letter to their sons. It is not difficult if done in a common-sense way. Following out this plan at Uppingham in the morning Bible lessons, I have always spoken as occasion arose with perfect plainness on lust and its devil-worship, particularly noting its deadly effect on human life and its early and dishonored graves. Ignorance



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is deadly, because perfect ignorance in a boy is impossible. I consider the half-ignorance so deadly that once a year, at the time of confirmation, I speak openly to the whole school, divided into three different sets. First I take the confirmees, then the communicants and older boys, then the younger boys, on three following nights after evening prayers. The first two sets I speak very plainly to, the last only warn against all indecency in thought, word, or deed, whether alone or with companions. Thus no boy who has been at school a whole year can sin in ignorance, and a boy who despises this warning is justly turned out of the school on conviction."

Finally, he dwelt upon the necessity of school life having joined to it a home life. The purifying influence of a good woman and a fuller recognition of woman's work and place in the world he looked upon as that which promised most for lifting mankind into a higher atmosphere of pure life.

THE END.

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