

THE LITTLE GIRL.



AS infants, little girls and little boys begin life very much alike. Aside from the physical differences between the two, the distinguishing characteristics are not marked at first, but the period of earliest infancy is scarcely passed before marked points of difference begin to make their appearance. These are in part due to inherited peculiarities of disposition; but we are led to believe from considerable observation that many of these differences are more largely the result of education than of inheritance. The toys presented to the girl-baby for her amusement differ radically from those furnished the little boy. She learns to love dolls and tiny cradles, miniature china sets, and similar toys, simply because they are first presented to her in such a way as to attract her attention. Not only in the selection of toys, but in almost every other particular the little girl is treated differently from the little boy. The latter is expected to become a strong, vigorous man, able to hold his own in the battle of life, and is treated with a sort of respect which is inspired by the anticipation of what he is to become. The little girl, on the other hand,

is looked upon as destined to fill an inferior place,—she is to be “only a woman,” and is treated as a toy, petted, kissed, admired as a pretty thing, talked to in a simpering manner, and every way treated quite differently from her little brother. The result of these different modes of treatment is to cause the little boy and little girl to become more and more unlike during the whole period of development.

Under such circumstances, it is not surprising that the tastes of boys and girls are so totally different, and that a casual observer in comparing mature or half developed human beings of the two sexes should be led to believe that the differences between the two sexes are radical and fundamental,—that woman is “the weaker vessel,” and by nature destined to fill a very subordinate place in the social scheme. We do not deny that there are mental as well as physical differences between the sexes, neither do we dispute the position that the work for which the average woman is naturally fitted differs from that for which the average man is best adapted; but we thoroughly believe that the great differences in adaptation which are observed between man and woman, are largely the result of perverting influences acting upon woman from earliest infancy, the effect of which is to make her mentally and physically the inferior of man. Against these perverting influences we protest. There is no reason why little girls should not be treated during the first years of infancy exactly the same as little boys; their physical demands are precisely the same; until near the period of puberty the physical development of the two sexes run parallel.

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We regard the popular method of treating little girls as not only senseless but criminal. In case a girl is born of healthy parents, who are well developed mentally, morally, and physically, she loses a large portion of her precious inheritance by the depraving processes to which, in obedience to the dictates of fashion, she is subjected almost from the moment her sex is ascertained. Now and then it happens that a girl-baby's parents are poor and outside the pale of fashionable influence, by which fortunate circumstance she grows up under more favorable influences; and in a large share of these cases it may be noticed that the girl differs far less from the boy than when brought up under the usual influences.

The little girl of fashionable parents is kept in the house, dressed up like a little doll, and is taught that she must keep still like a little lady, that she must keep out of the sun, never run out of doors barefooted, and must try to ape her fashionable mother in every possible manner. Her clothes are so fine that she must never venture near the dirt, and must devote her whole time to playing mother with her dolls, or sitting bolt upright in a high chair with her hands folded while her mother receives company. Starting out in life under such a regimen, while the mind is plastic and just beginning its development, and the whole organization is in the highest degree susceptible to impressions, is it any wonder that the delicate, rosy tint of health soon gives way to sallowness, or that the blooming cheeks become pale and faded, and that the mind becomes dwarfed and shallow?

Early Training.—As just intimated, the influences to which the little girl is subjected in early childhood, often in earliest infancy, are of the greatest consequence. The mind is at this period in the highest degree impressible. The infantile brain is soft and almost semi-fluid in its texture. The skull and coverings of the brain have acquired little of that density and firmness which they exhibit in later years. The brain may be molded into almost any shape. Deficient organs may be developed, exaggerated ones may be repressed by proper training: and it is equally possible by improper training to destroy utterly its symmetry by dwarfing well-developed and valuable faculties, and obliterating desirable traits of character, while developing those which are in the highest degree undesirable.

Education should begin with the earliest dawn of reason. The first evidences of mental activity on the part of the child should be watched for and met in such a manner as to insure a healthy development. It is possible, by giving careful attention to all the surroundings of the infant, and bestowing care upon every act in relation to it, on the part of the mother, to give direction to the development of its dawning mind, and thus to do much toward forming the character.

One of the most reprehensible of all perverting processes to which the minds of children are exposed, is the practice of talking "baby-talk" to them. Sometimes it requires years for individuals to unlearn the bad habits of pronunciation which they acquired

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by this absurd practice, which also leads children to form bad habits of thought and expression. Those who have the care of children ought ever to bear in mind the fact that the perceptive faculties of small children are very active. As a rule, these little ones are in the highest degree imitative; every look, gesture, action of the nurse or mother, is followed with the closest scrutiny. Whatever is brought before the attention of the little one makes an image upon its soft and forming brain which is pretty sure to be reproduced, more or less modified, sometime in its future history. The nursery ought to be considered a sacred place; nothing perverting in its tendency should ever be allowed to enter its doors. The building of a brain, the formation of a character, is a work with which that of the most skillful sculptor cannot for a moment compare; yet how little attention is given to this important work. Children — little boys as well as little girls — are allowed to come up without any attempt to give proper or natural direction to their development.

A matter of great importance to the little girls and little boys alike is that they should be early taught to think. Women as a class are dependent. The majority of women want some one to do their thinking for them. Little girls should be taught to think by bringing objects calculated to stimulate thought to their attention, and by stimulating inquiry by carefully and patiently answering all their questions, and putting to them such questions as will call out thought and encourage further inquiry. This work, properly

done, will accomplish more toward the molding of character and the developing of valuable mental qualities in the first four or five years of life, than can be accomplished by the most skillful training during any subsequent period. The kinder-garten is a most admirable institution which may be made the means of imparting most valuable instruction. A large amount of useful knowledge may be impressed upon the mind in such a manner that it cannot be forgotten, by the methods employed in the kinder-garten. Moral as well as mental culture may be imparted in this way. We have been greatly pleased with the recent effort to employ the kinder-garten as a means of impressing on the young mind the truths of temperance. We believe that here is a wide field of usefulness for this new educational system, and have no doubt that under the wise and inspiring influence of such talented and enthusiastic workers in the temperance cause as Miss Willard, Mrs. Foster, Mrs. Hunt, and others whom we might name, this agency will be made a means of incalculable good to the rising generation, especially in our large cities.

School Education. — When the little girl reaches an age at which it is thought proper to send her to school, other depraving influences are brought to bear upon her. While there has been great improvement in methods of education within the last quarter of a century, it is still an unfortunate fact that the school-life of the young, boys as well as girls, is to a large degree perverting in its character. Little ones are made to learn by rote. Instruction is imparted

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in such a way that they are led to acquire knowledge very much like little parrots, and without much greater appreciation of what they learn. Little attention is given to the natural order in which the mental faculties should be developed, or the natural means by which young children acquire knowledge. A routine method is followed, the effect of which is to extinguish, to a large extent, the naturalness of those who are subjected to it. Reforms are in progress, however, and we trust the day is not far distant when school instruction will be made much more in conformity to the healthy development of the mind than at present.

Moral Culture of Children.—The cultivation of the moral faculties of the child cannot be begun too early. Depraving influences are so abundant and so certain to be brought in contact with the little one at a very early period in its existence, that the attempt to fortify the mind against such influences cannot be begun at too early a date. It is of the greatest importance that while the minds of children are yet impressible, such images of truth and purity should be formed upon them as cannot be easily effaced. Children ought early to be taught to love the right *because it is right*. The instinct of fear should seldom be appealed to, and never when such an appeal can be avoided. The dignity of truth, the nobility of purity, and reverence for nature and the God of nature, should be held up before the young mind as the highest possible incentives for right doing. A moral character founded upon such a basis will not be dis-

turbed by the "winds of doctrine" or the waves of unbelief; it is founded upon a rock which cannot be moved.

Senile Manners.—A most alarming, and, we may almost say, disgusting feature of the modern fashionable mode of bringing up children, is the encouragement which is given to the formation of senile manners. The question has been very pertinently asked, "What has become of all the little girls?" It certainly is not often now-a-days that we see a genuine little girl. There are plenty of little creatures dressed in such a marvelous manner that even a zoölogist might be puzzled to determine the species to which they belong, but there is very little in these fancifully dressed specimens, these human dolls, which should characterize the ideal little girl. A talented and observing lady has in the following words drawn a true picture of the contrast between the real and the artificial little girl:—

"In former times, a pretty muslin bonnet, or a simple, close-fitting cottage straw, was thought the most appropriate covering for a little head, protecting the bright eyes from too intense light, and shielding the rosy cheeks from the sun's too fervid kisses. But now we see *something* placed on the sunny curls, leaving eyes and cheeks entirely unprotected, which is elaborately trimmed with bows, feathers, a flower-garden, or perhaps a mingling of both; for although it is too small for even a good-sized doll, the milliner, with an ingenuity which would have been praise-worthy if exercised in a more sensible manner,

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has contrived to pile up trimming enough to hide even the faintest suspicion of a bonnet. But what is sadder than the lack of true taste and good common sense in this stylish affair, we see no semblance of child-like simplicity in the wearer. And the bonnet is but the beginning of this unfortunate change which we mourn. The pretty *baby waist*, the plain white dress, the neat muslin or merino, so appropriate, which little girls used to wear, are supplanted by incomprehensible garments, the fac-simile of the grand-dame's attire, flounces, fringes, bows, and double-skirts looped and festooned in an astounding manner, the child's — no, we mean the *young lady's* height, there are no *children* in these days — is less than her circumference, and the "mite" who is made to carry such an incongruous burden, totters about on high-heeled boots. This tiny specimen of womanhood, hardly weaned from her mother's breast, or more probably, a wet-nurse's, shakes out her redundant robes, bending and twisting her small body in grotesque imitation of the woman spoken of by the prophet Isaiah with haughty mien; walking *and mincing as they go*. See how the little ape looks over her shoulders, as she tottles about, to be sure that her skirts give her dress and figure the correct *wiggle* her sharp eyes have observed in the stylish mother and her fashionable friends. It is lamentable that all the simplicity and beauty of babyhood and childhood should be destroyed by fashion.

"Added to the absurdity of the dress, these little women attempt to discourse on the 'latest style.'

With their companions or dolls you will hear them imitating the discussions on this subject that they daily hear in the parlor or nursery from their mother; or still imitating with contemptuous toss of their little heads, they will inform their listeners that they 'could n't think of sociating with those girls, because they are not *stylish*!'

"A few day since, as we passed out of a store on Broadway, our attention was arrested by the conversation of two little figures seated in a fine carriage, waiting, doubtless, for mamma to finish her shopping. They were dressed in a style positively overwhelming. Their hats were wonders of skill, their gloves had the orthodox number of buttons with bracelets over them, a dainty handkerchief suspended from a ring attached by a chain to another ring on the little doll-like fingers. The dress was simply indescribable. The elder was speaking to the younger, who, scarcely more than a baby, sat demurely by her side. 'Oh, mercy! just look at that horrid little girl who is crossing the street! She has no hoops on, and not a single flounce — no trimming at all on her dress! And, oh! see her gloves! — why, she has only one button! Pshaw! she's nobody — not a bit of style!'

"The youngest lisped a reply, which we lost as we passed on; but it was painful to think of the training they must have received which enabled them at that early age to judge a child of their own years so quickly by the rules of fashionable dress, and because her attire was not in exact accordance with that week's style, turn from her with contempt as something too low for their notice."

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The above description of the fashionable little girl of to-day is not overdrawn; yet how few parents realize the dangers into which they are themselves leading their little daughters in fostering and stimulating this sad and unnatural inclination!

This terribly pernicious tendency is wholly the fault of the parents, who little realize the mischievous work they are doing, the sad harvest they are preparing to reap in later years. They are rearing their children like house-plants, forcing them to an unnatural growth, the result of which must be an early decay. As soon as exposed to the storms of adversity, they must quickly wither and fall.

Juvenile Parties.—Nothing could be more painful than the descriptions which we sometimes read in the papers, of children's parties. Some of them would be appropriate objects of ridicule, were it not for the painful disclosures they make of weakness and wickedness on the part of the parents and depravity on the part of their children. Some time ago a New York paper gave a graphic description of a children's party in Brooklyn. The writer told "of ravishing costumes of silks and satins and laces in most delicate and fashionable shades, all in the highest style of the modiste's art; of flashing diamonds and milky pearls in tiny ears and on slender necks; of six-buttoned white kid gloves on lilliputian hands, barred with massive bracelets of 'the real stuff,' as one midget of nine years proudly asserted; of twinkling feet encased in French boots matching the dresses in color; of dazzling lights and fragrant flowers; of bewitching music and circling dances; of

flirtations and a midnight supper with its indigestibles, its ices, and its wines."

Such parties are not confined to Brooklyn nor to the large cities; we hear of them in all parts of the country, and their legitimate result is seen in the petty insubordination of children not yet in their teens, in juvenile flirtations which result in elopements of boys and girls, and in all sorts of social scandals.

The natural simplicity and sincerity of childhood is a precious trait which should be fostered and preserved. Hypocrisy and sham, notwithstanding their prevalence in the fashionable society of the day, are always distasteful to a person of pure mind and unperverted instincts, but never so much so as when exhibited in children. Genuineness of character has come to be a rare trait to both old and young. The little girl does not reach her teens, scarcely, in fact, learns to talk, before she begins to acquire the art of trying to appear somewhat different than she is, imitating the example of her elders, who possibly imagine that their shoddy gentility passes for the genuine article, when in fact they are the laughing-stock of all their acquaintances.

The Clothing of Little Girls. — As a rule, mothers exercise excellent sense in the clothing of their little boys: their limbs are warmly clad, their feet protected from the cold, and their garments are so constructed as to allow freedom of motion to their limbs. Thus protected, they are usually allowed to romp and play in the open air, gathering health and strength, and laying the foundation of a constitution

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which will be able to bear the wear and tear of later years. Why should not little girls be as comfortably and sensibly clothed as little boys? Why should fashion insist that the "weaker vessel," even in her tenderest years, should be clothed in such a manner as would be considered culpable neglect on the part of the mother if the child were a boy instead of a girl? How often have we seen fashionable mothers leading along the street shivering little girls whose lower extremities were so thinly clad as to be scarcely protected from the gaze of the passers-by, to say nothing of the piercing winds against which the mother was protected, at least in part, by her long skirts, thick boots, woolen stockings, warm drawers, and leggins. The upper portion of the body is usually protected by furs, warm cloaks, and mittens or muff, but not infrequently we have seen little ones trotting along beside their mothers with their little limbs plainly in sight, blue and pinched by the cold, — their short skirts no protection to the portion of the leg below the knee, and the thin drawers that scarcely met the top of the stocking no adequate protection for the limbs. The stockings, too, are often of the thinnest material to allow the wearing of as small a shoe as possible.

Is it any wonder that these little ones so often sicken and die? Who knows how many consumptions originate in colds contracted by these exposures in early childhood? This style of dressing is without doubt responsible for the great share of croup, diphtherias, and other throat and bronchial troubles to which children are subject in early life. Diseases of

the lungs and air-passages are vastly more frequent in young children than in older persons; and we doubt not that the culpable carelessness and senseless obedience to fashion in the manner of clothing them is in a large degree responsible. In more than one instance we have known mothers called to mourn the death of their beloved little ones when we very well knew that the responsibility was their own. The minister offered consolation in the thought that the ways of Providence were mysterious, and that perhaps the good Father had taken the little one to himself for some wise purpose which eternity might reveal. Possibly the mother accepted the consolation with the thought that the little one was really better off, being delivered from all the trials and hardships of life and safe with reference to the future. We confess to have felt our indignation roused when hearing such sentiments as these expressed. Providence has nothing to do with the killing of little children. Fashion is the modern Herod that slaughters the brightest, fairest, and most promising of our little ones without compunction. Little girls seem to be her favorite victims. Children have a right to live, to develop, to enjoy this life as well as the next. In fact we can scarcely understand how the true fullness of joy can be reached in the next world in any other way than through the experience afforded in this. There are joys and legitimate pleasures and happiness in this world which make the present life well worth living. We insist that girls as well as boys have an inalienable right to live, and the mother who sacrifices the life of her child by bending her knee to the goddess of fashion

is as culpable as she who commits her little one to the merciless waves of the Ganges, or dashes it beneath the cruel wheels of Juggernaut.

The little girl should be so clad that every portion of her body will be thoroughly protected. The arms and limbs should be as well protected as the trunk. In order to secure this equable protection of the body, the undergarments should be made in one piece, that is, the chemise and drawers should be united. The undergarments should be of flannel, the best material for children's wear at all seasons of the year, thick flannel being worn in the winter, and in the summer time the thinnest woolen fabrics, if the weather is very hot. Children often complain that flannel irritates their sensitive skins. This difficulty can be obviated by wearing thin gauze suits underneath the flannel garment. The stockings should always be of wool except in very warm weather. They should never be supported by garters, but should be suspended from the shoulders by means of elastic straps either passing over the shoulders or attached to the undergarment.

In cold weather, high boots with thick soles should be worn, and should be supplemented with warm, knit leggins extending above the knees.

Short-sleeved and low-necked dresses are fortunately just now out of style, so we need not say much with reference to this abominable mode of dressing children which has been so long in vogue. It must have a passing notice, however, as the fickle dame may soon return to her old folly, and insist that the arms and bosoms of children shall be exposed at all

seasons of the year regardless of the pernicious effect of such exposure upon their delicate constitutions. The upper part of the trunk contains the heart and lungs,—two of the most important vital organs. Chilling of this portion of the body is certain to result disastrously to health. There is no doubt that many of the weakly, sickly, consumptive girls of the present generation owe their feeble condition to the low-necked, short-sleeved dresses which they wore in childhood.

We are glad to know that mothers are becoming more sensible in this matter. It is now not an uncommon thing to see upon the streets a little girl who is warmly and sensibly clad. We hope that this course on the part of some mothers will be contagious, so that we may have a thorough-going revolution in the dress of little girls.

Stays, corsets, and French heels are instruments of torture to which no intelligent mother will subject her growing daughter. The idea that the clothing of the little girl must be so constructed as to “develop a nice form” is an intolerable reproach on the Creator. It is a rare thing now-a-days, at least in large cities, to find a young lady who can walk in an easy, graceful manner. The stiff, unnatural, mincing gait of the fashionable young lady is not so much an affectation as a necessity with her. Her physical development has been so sadly deformed by the unnatural compression of the waist with stays or corsets, by the curving of the spine through the wearing of shoes with high heels placed under the instep instead of under the heel, and by various other deforming processes, that

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an easy, natural, graceful bearing is as impossible for her as for a man with heavy manacles upon his ankles. She struts or wriggles and minces along in the most ridiculous fashion, not because she desires to do so, but because it is impossible for her to walk in any other way. But we will not delay longer upon this point here, as it will be more fully considered hereafter.

A point of primary importance in regard to the clothing of children which mothers should ever bear in mind is the fact that frequent changes are necessitated by the almost constant changes of temperature in this climate. The weather of a temperate climate is always subject to changes which will be recognized, and should be as far as possible anticipated, by the careful mother. Children possess very little power to resist the influence of cold or heat. Their vital functions, while very active, are more easily disturbed than those of older people, hence they are more susceptible to injury from change of weather than older persons. Mothers should be constantly on the lookout for changes which may involve the life of their little ones. The fashion of putting on flannel undergarments at the beginning of the cold season of the year, and putting them off again in the beginning of spring, is a pernicious one. There is no time of year when flannel clothing is more imperiously required than in the cool, damp days of spring and the occasional cool days in summer. Clothing should be adjusted to the weather of each day independently. In the winter time, an unusually cold day demands an additional supply of clothing. In the summer time, an unusually hot day may require an opposite change of

garments. In the spring and autumn, particularly when the weather is very changeable, it may be necessary to change the clothing two or three times a day in order to meet the exigencies of the weather.

Children should never be allowed to suffer for the want of a change of this kind simply because the needed garment has been soiled or must be saved for Sunday wear, or for any other trivial reason. If a child cannot be properly clothed, it should be sent to bed and kept there until the proper garments can be provided for it. The excuse which mothers often make for carelessness in this particular, "that they have been too busy" to make the necessary garments for the little one who has outgrown its old clothing, is no justification for such neglect; and it will generally be found that the required time has been worse than wasted in the preparation of unwholesome dishes which will have no other influence than to deprave the tastes and undermine the health of the husband and child, or in the entertainment of fashionable friends who are themselves squandering valuable time which belongs properly to their children, in the discussion of the latest fashions or the most recent scandal.

The clothing of the child at night is also a matter of importance. -As a rule, flannel night-gowns should be worn, as by this means the little one avoids the chill often given by coming in contact with cotton or linen sheets, and is better protected from the chilly night air if, as is often the case, it becomes uncovered in the night by the displacement of the bed covers through its restlessness.

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Exercise.—The idea that little girls must be kept in the house and never allowed to romp and play out of doors as do their brothers, is productive of a vast amount of mischief to health. There is no more reason why little girls should be treated this way than for the treatment of little boys in the same manner. As previously remarked, during the first years of their existence until the approach of puberty, girls and boys are very much alike in their physical development, and there is no reason why they should not receive very much the same treatment. The muscles and bones cannot be developed in any other way than by physical exercise, and this cannot well be done with the proper freedom elsewhere than in the open air. The play-room or family gymnasium is an excellent thing for use on rainy days and in inclement weather; but there is no means by which a good foundation for physical health and a normal development can be so well laid as by abundant exercise in the open air. The disposition which most healthy little girls exhibit to romp and play with their little brothers should not be repressed unless carried to great excess. A little girl with the steady and sober manners of an old person, while often pointed out as a model of decorum, is really a monstrosity. Such a girl lacks something in her mental or moral composition, and will be likely to be still more lacking in the physical endurance requisite to meet the emergencies of mature womanhood, which can only be secured by proper development of the physical organism in childhood and early youth.

Girls as well as boys should be early taught to be

useful. In many kinds of work they may find the most healthful of all kinds of exercise. The various movements required in the process of "putting a room in order," clearing off the table, washing or wiping dishes, running errands, replenishing the fire, and in various other household duties, afford almost as good an opportunity for the exercise and development of muscles as the most complicated maneuvers of systematic calisthenics in a gymnasium. For girls who do not have an opportunity to engage in light household duties, gymnastic exercises of various sorts, a few of which are shown on Plate XI, are exceedingly useful, and should be employed daily. Every family ought to have its gymnasium, where its little ones can find ample opportunity for healthful exercise in all weathers and at all seasons of the year.

Little girls should be early taught the dignity of work. They should be made to understand that their lives, if successful, must be lives of usefulness. Nothing can be more damaging to the mental and moral development of a little girl than the common custom of making her a household pet. We do not say that children should not receive kind attentions from older persons, and be made to see that they are beloved and respected by their superiors; but the common habit of humoring and petting children, especially little girls, is in the highest degree detrimental to their proper development and usefulness in future life.

Another common custom, very damaging in character, is that of "coddling" little children. Very careful mothers, in their anxiety for their daughters,



PLATE XI.—LIGHT GYMNASTICS.

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frequently keep them too close in-doors, hovering about the fire, or pent up in furnace-heated rooms from which the vivifying air of heaven and the reviving sunshine are rigorously excluded. Such children grow up like sickly plants in a cellar or a coal-mine. It is no wonder that their cheeks are pale, their lips bloodless, their eyes lusterless or lighted by an unearthly brightness, and their constitutions so weak as to be the easy prey of disease. We do not advise that children should be exposed in a careless or unreasonable manner, but they should be inured to exposure sufficiently to prevent an unnatural susceptibility to injury from slight changes. The man who obliged his child to run through the ice and snow of winter with unprotected feet, carried this idea to a very great extreme; but the danger to the lives and health of children through such extreme and cruel treatment is by no means so great as that incurred by the mode of treatment to which children are often subjected by their over-anxious mothers.

Rest and Sleep.—Children require much more sleep than older people. An infant does little more during the first weeks of its existence than to eat and sleep. This is very natural, since the greater part of the process of growth and repair takes place during the hours of sleep. During the waking hours the vital functions are occupied in the expenditure of energy through the activity of the muscular and nervous systems; but during sleep, these activities cease, and processes of growth and repair are carried on with great vigor. This is true to some extent with plants as well as animals. During the day, the plant

is occupied with receiving food and elaborating it into nutritive materials by which its sap is enriched, and during the night the new material received through the day is organized into cells and formed into the tissues of the growing plant. It is of great importance then that children should be allowed ample time for sleep. For a child eight or ten years of age, ten hours of sleep is none too much. Children should be taught to go early to bed and should not be awakened in the morning so long as they are sleeping soundly, but a child should never be allowed to lie long in bed after waking.

Great care should be taken that the children's conditions during sleep shall be such as are conducive to health. The sleeping-room should be well ventilated. The vital activities of children are very great, and they throw off from their bodies in a given time a much larger proportion of organic impurities than do older persons. Hence, the same provision for a supply of fresh air should be made for a child as for an adult. The air of the sleeping apartment should be so changed that it cannot acquire the peculiar fusty odor by which such apartments are generally characterized, and which, although not observable to the inmates while occupying them, is readily detected by a person coming in from the fresh air outside.

Care should also be taken that children are warmly covered at night. Violent colds are frequently contracted by children in consequence of insufficient covering during sleep. The sleep of children is so sound that the little one will not be awakened by a degree

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of cold which would readily awaken an older person sleeping less soundly. Changes of temperature at night often result seriously to a child which may have been properly covered at bed-time but is not protected from the greater degree of cold to which it is subjected during a subsequent portion of the night. To provide against such emergencies, an extra cover should always be provided at hand, and during seasons of the year when sudden changes are liable to take place at night, young children should be looked after at least once during the night to see that they are properly covered. Children are also frequently restless through dreams, usually the result of indigestion, late suppers, or the irritation of worms. This also necessitates their being looked after during the night to re-adjust displaced clothing.

Equal care should be exercised to avoid covering the child too warmly. As a rule, heavy "quilts" should not be used as coverings for children, and indeed it would be better to avoid their use as bed-coverings altogether. Woolen blankets are far more healthful, since they furnish an equal degree of warmth with much less weight than the old-fashioned comfortable.

The nature of the material on which the child lies, as well as that with which it is covered, is also a matter of importance. We advise that feathers be discarded altogether. They are objectionable on many accounts. Their animal origin gives them in a high degree the property of absorption, so that they readily take up and retain the exhalations of the body and whatever impurities may be brought in contact with

them. It is true that feathers may be renovated, but this process is seldom resorted to more than once a year, and frequently the feather-bed passes down uncleaned from generation to generation, adding yearly to its accumulation of impurities. The susceptible systems of children may be readily injured by contact with this source of impurities. We well recollect when a child, visiting away from home, having been made very sick upon several occasions by being put to bed on one of these reservoirs of filth. Feathers are also objectionable on account of their heating property. The body settles into the yielding mass in such a way as to be half buried in it. Feathers are very poor conductors of heat, and consequently a child, if none too warm when first put to bed, by the accumulation of heat is very certain to become very warm after an hour or two. Perspiration being induced, the little one becomes restless, and kicks off the covering, exposing itself to the cold air, which suddenly checks perspiration, thus occasioning a severe cold.

A word should be said respecting the sleeping of children with older people. We have no faith in the popular notion that one person may attract vitality from another in a mysterious way, and would not suggest that children may be injured from any such cause. We have no idea that any injury whatever can come to a child from sleeping with a healthy adult; but the susceptible constitutions of children may be injured by sleeping with an invalid or an elderly person with enfeebled constitution, through the absorption of effete materials thrown off by its

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invalid or aged and infirm companion. The custom of placing a child between two adult persons is one which should be condemned. A child so circumstanced is often in the highest degree uncomfortable. If the face of each of its companions happens to be turned toward it, it may have to lie for hours breathing air grossly contaminated by the exhalations of its bed-fellows. Very often, also, a child sleeping with elder persons becomes covered with the bed-clothing in such a way that it breathes over and over the air charged with the products of its own respiration and the exhalations of its companions. Death not infrequently results in this way. Sometimes, also, in the case of small infants, death has resulted by the little one's being "overlaid" by one of its parents, most frequently the mother.

We also object to allowing children of the opposite sex to sleep together, at least after the very earliest years of infancy are passed. We have in mind examples where children of both sexes have been injured for life by promiscuous sleeping. Little girls are very seldom allowed to sleep with older brothers, but the contrary arrangement is a very frequent custom, and should be condemned. Children who are properly brought up will seldom be afraid to sleep alone. The infant may be accustomed to sleeping by itself from its earliest childhood, and if it is never injured by frightful stories of ghosts and hobgoblins, it will never think of being afraid of the dark, or consider a bed companion necessary.

Diet.—The health of children is to a much greater degree dependent upon their food than is generally

supposed. The popular notion seems to be that little ones should be allowed to eat what they crave and whenever they please. This is a very mischievous practice, and results in weakening their digestive organs at a very early age. Candies, nuts, sweet-meats, and "knick-knacks" generally, are exceedingly harmful, and should never be allowed children at any age. Their digestive organs are not as strong as those of older persons, and will not bear the amount of abuse which those of their parents endure with impunity.

The diet of children should be simple in character. It should consist chiefly of fruits and grains with plenty of milk. Eggs should be sparingly used and meat would better be discarded altogether. Condiments, such as pepper, vinegar, pepper-sauce, mustard, and other stimulating articles of diet, should be wholly interdicted. The use of tea and coffee is another practice which should be discountenanced in the young as well as in older persons. The use of stimulating articles of diet not only weakens the digestive organs, but develops those parts of the system which would better be restrained.

Fine-flour bread is another article of diet the general use of which has been in the highest degree detrimental to children by interfering with their normal development. Grain from which the coarse parts have been removed does not contain the requisite amount of bone and muscle building material. Such food is fattening, but not strengthening. Graham bread, cracked wheat, oatmeal, and other whole-meal preparations, are in the highest degree wholesome, and are especially adapted to the wants of the grow-

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A child brought up on "knick-knacks" is never a healthy child. The large use of sweets is sure to result in some sort of dyspepsia sooner or later. Candies should be discarded altogether, not only as furnishing an unnecessary amount of saccharine material, but on account of the fact that they contain many injurious articles employed for flavoring and coloring purposes. The public should also know that such a thing as pure candy, that is, candy made from genuine cane-sugar, does not exist. Candy is universally adulterated. Glucose, or "corn-sugar," is almost exclusively used in the manufacture of all kinds of candy.

The habit of eating fruits, nuts, sweet-meats, etc., between meals, is in the highest degree pernicious and detrimental to the health of the child. When it is considered how universal is the custom of allowing children to indulge in sweet-meats, pastry, and tidbits of every description without restraint, it is not to be wondered at that infantile dyspeptics are becoming exceedingly common. Great regularity in meals should be observed from the very beginning of infant life. After the first month of infancy, the child should be strictly confined to three regular meals a day, and the last meal should not be taken less than two and one-half hours before retiring. The child should not be allowed to taste a mouthful between meals. The habit of eating between meals when early acquired, becomes as inveterate and difficult to

break as that of tobacco-using or liquor-drinking. A short time ago, we heard a confirmed dyspeptic confess that he had experienced greater difficulty in breaking off the habit of taking sugar between meals than in discontinuing the use of tobacco, although he had been an inveterate user of the weed for years.

Regular Habits.—A variety of diseases very grave and sometimes incurable in character arise from the habit of inattention to the call of nature to relieve the bowels and bladder. The habit of inattention to this important duty to the body is often formed in early childhood. This is the case especially with girls. Mothers ought to give attention to this matter and instruct their daughters respecting the importance of regularly relieving the bowels and bladder at certain times each day. The call of nature should never be resisted or delayed a moment when such delay can be avoided. The inactive condition of the bowels, and the irritable state of the bladder which often result from the violation of this simple rule of health are not infrequently the means of inducing abnormal excitement in the genital organs which may result in the formation of habits most deplorable in their character and consequences.

Vicious Habits.—Many mothers are wholly ignorant of the almost universal prevalence of secret vice, or self-abuse, among the young. It is exceedingly common among girls as well as boys. The nature of this vice is such that it may be acquired and continued months and even years, possibly during the greater part of a life-time, without its existence being suspected by those who are not skilled

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in its detection. We have met scores of such cases in which it was impossible to convince the doting mother that her daughter could be guilty of such an offense, although the marks of vice were too plain to be mistaken. A careful study of this too prevalent vice and a wide opportunity for observation have convinced us that this is one of the great causes of the large increase of nervous diseases and diseases peculiar to the sex, which has been so marked among women during the last half century. A pungent writer who has devoted himself almost exclusively to the treatment of the diseases of females, asks pertinently : " Why hesitate to say firmly and without quibble that personal abuse lies at the root of much of the feebleness, paleness, nervousness, and good-for-nothingness of the entire community ? "

In the last twenty years we have examined and treated for various local ailments the cases of several thousand women of various ages, and more often than we have dared to declare have we found convincing evidence that the foundation of the disease from which the patient was suffering had been laid in vicious habits acquired in early childhood.

This vice is not confined to any one class of society : it penetrates all classes. Those whose social surroundings have been such that they would be least suspected, are frequently found to be among its most abject victims. Too little attention has been given to this matter. Certain writers have taken the position that the prevalence of the vice has been greatly exaggerated as well as its bad effects, which has had a tendency to lull to sleep parents who

might otherwise have realized the dangers with which their daughters as well as their sons were threatened.

Mothers place their daughters in boarding schools which enjoy a good reputation as successful and respectable schools, and imagine that they are safe; when their associations are such that if they escape contamination with this foul vice it is to be regarded as almost a miracle. It is not to be supposed that all girls are corrupt, or that most of those who are the inmates of boarding schools are so; but it is scarcely possible that a large number of girls can be brought together without including at least a few who have been corrupted by this evil habit; and one or two of these emissaries of evil are sufficient to contaminate any number of others.

Teachers as well as parents ought to inform themselves on this subject so that they may be prepared to rescue those who may have become enslaved, and protect those whose innocence has not yet been marred.

Effects of Solitary Vice in Girls.—The victim of this evil habit is certain to suffer sooner or later the penalty which nature invariably inflicts upon those who transgress her laws. Every law of nature is enforced by an inexorable penalty. This is emphatically true respecting the laws which relate to the sexual organs. The infliction of the penalty may be somewhat delayed, but it will surely come, sooner or later. The girl who begins the habit in early childhood will scarcely escape great suffering from some form of sexual disorder as she approaches

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womanhood, at the period of puberty, and her sufferings will not end here. All through life the penalty of unlawful transgression will be visited upon her. If she becomes a wife and mother, the perils incident to that condition will be vastly increased.

In the majority of cases, the effects of secret vice soon begin to manifest themselves in a variety of ways which are easily recognized by the experienced physician, and may often be detected by others. How often have we seen little girls who at the age of five or six years were pictures of blooming health, with faces indicative of purity and all the elements which when developed contribute to the formation of perfect womanhood,—how often, we say, have we seen such lovely little ones fading away under the influence of some terrible blight of the nature of which their friends were wholly ignorant. From month to month we have seen the roses leave their cheeks, the lustre depart from their eyes, the elasticity from their step, the glow of health and purity from their faces, while with the gradual departure, one by one, of their charms, came, instead, the convincing evidences of the vicious habit, undermining both their constitution and their character, and working devastation which the lapse of long years could not efface. The mother often notices these changes in her daughter with other changes which we might mention, and wonders what can be the cause for such remarkable evidences of deterioration. Perhaps it is attributed to some trivial cause which has had little or no influence in effecting the change, but the real cause is usually overlooked. As a rule, mothers will not believe it

possible that their daughters can be guilty of a vice which they are forced to believe is common enough among the daughters of their friends, and often cannot be induced to institute a thorough-going investigation, when the need of it is plainly evident to an unbiased observer.

Wide observation has convinced us that a great many of the back-aches, side-aches, and other aches and pains of which girls complain, are attributable to this injurious habit. Tenderness of the spine, giving rise to grave fears of spinal disease, is not an infrequent result. Much of the nervousness, hysteria, neuralgia, and general worthlessness of the girls of the rising generation, originates in this cause alone. The pale cheeks, hollow eyes, expressionless countenances, and languid air of many school-girls, which are likely to be attributed to overstudy, are due to this one cause. We know of no means by which the vitality can be so quickly lowered and the very foundations of the constitution sapped, as by this. The continuance of the habit for only a few years is sufficient to lay the foundation for suffering through the whole future life.

The period of puberty is one at which thousands of girls break down in health. One great cause of this alarming decline at this period is undoubtedly that which we have mentioned. At this time unusual demands are made on the system; and the constitution, already weakened by a debilitating, debasing vice, is not prepared for the unusual strain, and the poor victim drops into a premature grave. In most of these cases, the sudden failure is attributed

to overwork, overstudy, a slight exposure, or some other cause by no means sufficient to account for the observed results.

Signs of Self-Abuse in Girls. — Mothers should always be on the alert to detect the first evidences of this vice in their daughters. It is especially important that it should be detected at the start, as the habit when once formed so completely subjects its victim as to make escape well-nigh impossible. It fastens its fetters so firmly that, in some instances, nothing but almighty power seems competent to loosen its grasp. It is by no means easy to detect the habit in those who are addicted to it. The evidences may be such as to convince the watchful mother or experienced physicians, but it will be necessary in most cases to obtain undoubted evidences of the existence of the habit before it can be broken up. Girls will almost uniformly deny very emphatically that they are addicted to the vice, when they are truthful on every other subject. We have found this to be the case much more frequently with girls than with boys. Hence, it requires the greatest care and watchfulness in most cases to obtain such evidence of the vice as will render mistake impossible. The only positive evidence is, of course, detection of the child in the act. If the child is observed to visit some secluded spot daily or more or less frequently, or to be much alone, avoiding the company of other girls of her age, her actions should be carefully watched, and means taken to detect her in the act. The habit is often pursued at night after retiring, or in the morning after awakening, before getting

up. Not infrequently we have known children to be pursuing this soul-and-body-destroying vice while their parents supposed them to be quietly slumbering in healthy innocence. Children sometimes feign sleep to afford them an opportunity to practice this vile but fascinating indulgence. A suspected child should be watched under all circumstances with unceasing vigilance.

It is not enough to have such a child under observation in a general way. A most vigilant surveillance must be kept up constantly, and during the night as well as during the day. No dependence can be placed upon the statements made by the victims of this vice, for the moral nature soon becomes depraved to such a degree that conscience is easily silenced.

Aside from positive evidence, there are other signs which may well give rise to suspicion which may lead to the discovery of positive evidence. These may be enumerated as follows:—

1. A sudden, marked decline in health. A change of this kind in a girl who has previously been healthy and has been subject to no influences adequate to produce such a change may well be regarded with suspicion and should be closely watched. Mothers will often find upon a careful investigation of such cases a depth of depravity for which they are wholly unprepared.

2. A marked change in disposition is frequently the result of this same cause. When a girl who has formerly been truthful, happy, obliging, gentle, and confiding, becomes within a short period of time

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peevish, irritable, morose, disobedient, and restrained in her manner, it is evident that she is under the influence of some foul blight, and the one which we have described is the one of all others the most frequent. Such a change in disposition should arouse the mother's most earnest solicitude and lead to a thorough investigation of the habits of the child.

3. Loss of memory and of the love for study is a very frequent result of this enervating habit. The nervous forces are weakened and the vitality lowered to such a degree that the natural energy and vivacity are destroyed, giving place to mental weakness and inactivity.

4. Unnatural boldness in a little girl who has previously been retiring and reserved, if not bashful, is evidence of some deep-seated cause which affects the character, and is just ground for the suspicion of secret vice.

5. A forward or loose manner in company with little boys is suspicious conduct, especially in one who has previously shown no disposition of this sort. Girls addicted to this habit usually show an unnatural fondness for the society of little boys, and not infrequently are guilty of the most wanton conduct.

6. Languor and lassitude appearing in a little girl who has previously possessed a marked degree of activity and energy, should give rise to earnest solicitude on the part of the mother for the physical and moral condition of her child.

7. An unnatural appetite is another indication of the existence of this habit. This peculiarity is manifested in a great variety of ways. Sometimes

children will show an excessive fondness for mustard, pepper, vinegar, spices, and other stimulating condiments. Little girls who are very fond of cloves and desire to be always eating them are likely to be depraved in other respects. Such girls are also often very fond of eating clay, slate, chalk, charcoal, and other indigestible substances. We have met persons who were in the habit of eating large quantities of these articles daily.

8. The presence of leucorrhœa in a young girl accompanied by a relaxed condition of the vagina, is presumptive evidence of the existence of this vice, if there is no other cause to which this unnatural condition can be attributed. We have met girls who had scarcely entered their teens in whom the relaxation was almost as great as if they had been the mothers of children. This condition very readily results from the practice of self-abuse, which occasions a frequently recurring congestion of the parts, together with the mechanical irritation accompanying the habit.

9. Ulceration about the roots of the nails, especially affecting one or both of the first two fingers of the hand, usually the right hand, is an evidence of the habit which depends upon the one just mentioned, the irritation of the fingers being occasioned by the acrid vaginal discharge.

10. Biting the finger-nails is a habit, which, when very marked, may be regarded with some degree of suspicion. The irritation of the fingers which gives rise to the habit, growing out of the irritable condition of the nails described in the preceding paragraph.

11. The expression of the eyes often betrays to the careful observer the existence of this deteriorating vice. The blank, dull, lustreless, expressionless eye, surrounded by a dark ring, habitually given to staring into vacancy, frequently tells the tale of sin which its possessor vainly imagines to be unknown to any but herself.

12. Palpitation of the heart, hysteria, nervousness, St. Vitus' dance, epilepsy, and other marked nervous symptoms occurring in children who have been previously healthy and have been subject to no other causes adequate to produce such results, are good grounds for suspicion. Incontinence of urine, giving rise to wetting the bed, is a common result of masturbation, and when present calls for careful investigation of the habits of the child.

It should be remarked that none of the above-mentioned suspicious signs when taken alone is sufficient evidence to warrant the conviction of a girl of this soul-destroying vice, but several taken together may form a chain of evidence sufficiently strong to be considered positive.

Evil Associations.—It is well that mothers should thoroughly inform themselves respecting the various channels through which their daughters may become contaminated. The majority of mothers are either sadly ignorant of the dangers to which their daughters are exposed, or are asleep with reference to them. We earnestly desire to say something that will arouse mothers from their apathy respecting the dangers that their daughters are subject to almost from early infancy.

That "evil communications corrupt good manners" is as true at the present day as when the words were penned by the inspired writer. The vice to which we have called attention is almost always acquired through the influence of evil associations. On this account, mothers should be exceedingly careful of the associations of their daughters. Little girls should never be allowed to go away to spend the night or to sleep with other girls, either of their own age or much older, whose characters are not known to be above suspicion. Many times persons who would not be suspected of such a crime, are in fact not only guilty of the vice themselves, but ready to lead others to the same degradation. Servant-girls often teach the habit to young children as a means of quieting them. Girls not infrequently learn the habit in school. There is probably not a public school in the land where there are not one or more instructors in this debasing vice. Sometimes vile boys, taking advantage of the unsuspecting innocence and simplicity of girls of tender years, give them their first lessons in this most degrading vice.

In a case which came under our observation a few years ago a little girl, naturally bright and unusually attractive and intelligent, had become the victim of this soul-and-body-destroying habit, which had brought on a serious nervous disease that threatened to destroy both body and mind before she had reached the age of ten years. Her first instruction was received from a hoary-headed fiend in human shape who had enticed her to a secluded place, and there introduced her to all the nastiness which his depraved and

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sensual nature could devise. That a mature human being could ever descend to such immeasurable depths of infamy as this, is almost beyond belief; yet the facts are too well attested to be doubted.

Mothers cannot be too careful of the associations of their little daughters. Often those who would be least suspected of such wickedness are the agents of sin who will instruct their innocent little ones in this debasing habit. Trust no one not known to be pure. Keep your little girls under your own roof until you are sure that their characters are sufficiently well formed to resist the encroachments of evil. Build up bulwarks against vice by developing the pure and the good in their dispositions and repressing evil tendencies. The first impure thought instilled into a child's mind is usually the source of all the subsequent ruin. A prurient curiosity is excited which craves satisfaction, and will not rest until the desired information is obtained. Thus the evil seed germinates and develops, and in due time, under ordinary circumstances, brings forth an abundant crop of impure ideas which fill the mind and result in impure acts. A child whose mind has been contaminated by evil communications may be rescued, but cannot be restored to the innocence which when once lost is gone forever. A scar will always remain which cannot be effaced. Our observation has been that the cases of vicious depravity in young women are almost exclusively confined to those whose minds have been corrupted in early childhood so that their evil tendencies have grown and strengthened with their years. This fact accounts for the great difficulty of

reforming young women who have once fully entered upon a life of shame.

Bad Books.—By bad books we do not mean those included under the head of obscene literature. The active efforts of Mr. Anthony Comstock for several years past have resulted in the suppression of the greater part if not the whole of this class of literature, but we refer to a class of books not generally recognized as so very bad in character. Mr. Comstock has only succeeded in suppressing the publication of those works which are ostensibly vile in character and vicious in purpose. In this he has done a most excellent work, and his labors have undoubtedly resulted in saving thousands of young men and women from ruin; but there is a large and growing class of literature which his efforts do not and cannot reach. We refer to books written by men and women whose sole object is gain, and who do not hesitate to introduce in one way or another ideas which tend in exactly the same direction as the class of books which are pronounced illegal, and are suppressed wherever found by authorized agents of the government. Often these prurient, sensual ideas are presented in the most refined and elegant language, and interwoven with other thoughts which may be in themselves elevating, in such a manner that the intent of the writer may be wholly disguised to many persons, and the real character of the book not discoverable without the most careful scrutiny, by a person whose taste is unvitiated by familiarity with vice, and whose intuitions are in harmony with what is pure and ennobling in character.

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It is not always the direct object of these writers to corrupt the morals of their readers. They recognize the fact, however, that a very large class of readers have an intense relish for works which give here and there hints of dark intrigues, illicit amours, and other manifestations of sensuality, and introduce this class of ideas as a sort of spice by which to render their productions palatable to the depraved taste of a large proportion of the novel-reading public of the present day. Never was there a time when books were so plentiful or cheap as now. The competition of great publishing houses has brought books of every sort within the reach of persons of all classes, and a dime to-day will buy more reading-matter than a dollar half a century ago.

Within a generation, a special class of literature has sprung up known by the general term of "Sunday-school books." The supposed characteristics of these books are wholesome thought, freedom from immoral tendencies, and the inculcation of pure and elevating principles. Unfortunately, many books even of this class are, from our stand-point, wholly unsuitable to be read by young girls, if indeed they are suitable to be read by anybody. The fact that a book is a "Sunday-school" book should not be sufficient recommendation to a mother who desires to preserve the simple-hearted purity of her daughter. Every mother should scrutinize with the greatest care the reading matter supplied to her daughter at Sunday-school or day-school, from the town library, circulating libraries, or libraries of friends. From whatever source a book or paper or magazine comes, it should

be carefully examined before being placed in the hands of a little girl old enough to read and comprehend its meaning. We once took from the hands of a little girl a book over which she had been bending for hours, and found on the open page sentiments which made our cheeks tingle with shame that authors could be so lost to the interests of purity and virtue and so reckless of results as to pen such sentiments as we found expressed so plainly that even a young and unsophisticated school-girl could not fail to comprehend the import of the language.

In our opinion, sentimental literature, whether impure in its subject matter or not, has a direct tendency in the direction of impurity. The stimulation of the emotional nature, the instilling of sentimental ideas into the minds of young girls, has a tendency to develop the passions prematurely, and to turn the thoughts into a channel which leads in the direction of the formation of vicious habits.

Various Causes of Vice.—Among other causes which operate to produce a tendency to the vice under consideration in the early years of girlhood, may be mentioned bad diet. The use of mustard, pepper-sauce, pepper, vinegar, spices, and highly seasoned and stimulating dishes and articles of diet of every description, has a marked tendency to the production of an abnormal development of the passions, sometimes undoubtedly stimulating the sexual organs to such a degree as to occasion a spontaneous formation of the habit. We have known instances in which this has been the case, the habit being acquired accidentally, without the aid of an instructor.

Sometimes this abnormal condition of the genitals is produced by local disease, causing an irritable or itching condition by which the child's attention is called to this part of the body in such a way as to lead to the discovery of the awful secret. Intestinal worms, a constipated condition of the bowels, certain forms of skin disease affecting the parts, are all causes which may result in the accidental formation of the habit of self-abuse.

Another cause which we shall mention, one which we believe has been generally overlooked, is the improper dressing of infants. It is a custom with most mothers and nurses during the early years of infancy to envelop that portion of the body of the infant in which the genitals are located, in many folds of diapers for the purpose of avoiding the necessity for frequent change. Sometimes this thick mass of material is still further augmented by a covering of oiled silk or rubber. The effect of this practice is to retain the moisture of the excretions in contact with this delicate portion of the system, which, with the heat accumulated from the body, acts like a poultice, stimulating and irritating the nerves of the parts, and thus inducing an abnormally sensitive and excitable condition. We have no doubt but that this unwholesome practice on the part of mothers is a very great cause not only of the early formation of the destructive vice, but also of serious disease in future life. Mothers should wisely consider this matter before allowing themselves to subject their little ones to such an unwholesome practice, and one which would seem to be directly contrary to the dictates of com-

mon sense respecting the requirements of cleanliness. The diaper should consist of as few folds as possible, and should never be covered by anything impervious to air. The child's clothing should be changed as often as necessary, which is as often as it is soiled, or as soon as possible after.

Silly letter writing in which little boys and girls at school often indulge, should never be encouraged nor tolerated by parents. We have known of several instances in which the minds of pure girls became contaminated through this channel. A few years ago a letter was intercepted from a little boy to a little girl and brought to our notice. Both the writer and the intended receiver of the letter were wholly unsuspected of any evil tendency, and had been on intimate terms for a long time. Notwithstanding this fact, the letter contained language in the highest degree vulgar and impure, and displayed a depth of depravity, on the part of the sender at least, which was most astounding. Mothers should scrutinize carefully the conduct of their daughters in their associations with the opposite sex, checking promptly any tendency to undue familiarity, and prohibiting utterly associations the tendency of which is manifestly bad. Eternal vigilance is the price of purity, and at no time in the development of the girl is it of more importance than between the ages of six and ten or twelve years.

A Few Sad Examples.—To illustrate the facts to which we have called attention, we will cite a few out of the hundreds of cases which have come under our care, taking pains to withhold names, and in some

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cases slightly modifying some of the unimportant details so as to make impossible the identification of the individuals referred to. We do this merely for the purpose of impressing on the minds of mothers the importance of this subject and the reality of the facts to which we have called attention. Many times we have received evidence for believing that the average mother is quite too incredulous respecting the extent and enormity of this evil. It is only in the hope that we may say something to arouse such mothers to a sense of the dangers to which their little daughters may be exposed or the condition in which they may be already, that we venture to pen these chapters in the life history of a few of those who have come under our immediate care for the treatment of the terrible results of an evil which we have attempted to portray in its true colors.

A Remarkable Case. — Some years ago, a little girl came under our care for the treatment of a very curious nervous difficulty, which had baffled the skill of numerous physicians who had been invited to examine the case. The little girl was naturally bright, attractive, and intelligent, and excited the sympathy of all who witnessed the strange and inexplicable manifestations of her disease. Her doting parents had spared no means which might conduce to her recovery, and which could be secured by the employment of the best medical skill and the lavish expenditure of money, but she was no better. The painful and distressing malady which had fastened itself upon her and threatened to destroy her mentally as well as physically, held her firmly in its grasp.

At any moment of the day or night she was liable to be seized with paroxysms most distressing to behold. We at once suspected the real nature of the difficulty, but the most careful investigation failed to reveal any tangible evidence to sustain our suspicions, except what we could draw from our knowledge of the nature of the case. The mother felt almost indignant that her lovely daughter should be suspected of such a horrible vice. Every measure of treatment was wholly unsuccessful or only temporary in its effects. At last the discovery was accidentally made that the girl had for years been addicted to a curious habit which had been considered as simply a strange notion and had not aroused the least suspicion as being in any way connected with the vicious habit under consideration. Feeling thoroughly convinced now of her guilt, we did not hesitate to insist upon the child's being placed under such circumstances as to make the practice of the habit impossible. For some time this was not effected satisfactorily, but ultimately the desired end was accomplished, and a good recovery was secured.

How to Cure Vicious Habits.—The habit of self-pollution is one which when thoroughly established, is by no means easily broken. The victim of this most terrible vice is held in the most abject slavery, the iron fetters of habit daily closing the prisoner more and more tightly in their grasp. When the mother makes for the first time the discovery that her little daughter is a victim to this polluting habit, it usually seems to her that all the case will require is a careful explanation of its sinfulness and a vivid portrayal of the consequences; but in the majority of cases they

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soon learn that this is not enough. The effect of this kind of transgression is to weaken the moral sense perhaps more rapidly than any other vice. The victim gradually grows weaker and weaker in will-power, and the conscience becomes less and less sensitive, until there is very little left in the character of the child to which an appeal can be made or by which an effort to reform can be supported.

Scores of times have we received from anxious mothers the inquiry, "How can I rescue my daughter from this terrible habit?" As before remarked, the task is not an easy one. Notwithstanding the fact that the effort may be wholly ineffectual, the mother should first carefully set before the child the exceeding sinfulness of the habit, its loathsomeness and vileness, and the horrible consequences which follow in its wake. As powerful an impression as possible should be made at the first interview. In some instances, this will be all that is required, but in the majority of cases the evil is not so easily mastered. After receiving the proper instruction, the child should be carefully watched. The little girl should be placed in the care of some trustworthy, judicious person whose duty it should be to keep her under constant observation every moment of her waking hours. Some simple employment or congenial amusement should be afforded by which her time may be wholly occupied, and a sufficient degree of active exercise should be secured to render the child by evening thoroughly tired muscularly and nervously, so that sleep will be natural and grateful, and the child will have no disposition to lie awake after going

to bed. Care should be taken that the child does not feign sleep for the purpose of gaining an opportunity to avoid observation. This we have known to be done very frequently by those who were determined to continue the habit in spite of the instruction and warnings given them. Immediately upon waking in the morning, the child should be taken out of bed and dressed, and should be employed from that moment until the time of retiring at night. In case there is any disease of the bladder or rectum, or of any other portion of the body immediately associated with the genital apparatus, this matter should receive attention from a competent physician, so that whatever influence it may exert as a cause of the habit may be removed.

Children suffering from incontinence of urine should be made to empty the bladder frequently, as the nervous condition which results from over-distension, or its irritable condition, often produces an uneasy condition of the genitals which may not only lead to the formation of the habit, but will present a great obstacle in the way of its cure.

Care should also be taken to see that the bowels are properly evacuated. Constipation of the bowels is often a cause of sexual excitement which cannot be easily controlled so long as the physical condition is such as to antagonize the effort of the will in the direction of reform.

Itching of the genitals is another physical condition which should receive attention, medical aid being called unless careful regard for cleanliness suffices to secure relief.

In obstinate cases, very severe means must be sometimes adopted. We were once obliged after every other measure had failed, to perform a surgical operation before we were able to break the habit in the case of a young girl of eight or ten years who had become addicted to the vice to a most extraordinary degree.

As a rule it is much more difficult to cure this soul-destroying vice in girls than in boys. They are seldom as ready to confess their guilt as are boys, and then are less easily influenced by a portrayal of its terrible consequences, so that moral means have less influence with them than with boys. The most sleepless vigilance must be coupled with the most persevering patience to rescue one of the unfortunate victims from the physical, mental, and moral ruin which is certain to result from a continuation of this terrible vice.

Reform is not impossible, however, for any one who really desires to reform; but the work of reformation must begin with the mind. The impure thoughts and images which have been harbored must be banished. The mind must be cleansed from every taint of evil. This is a task which requires no little patience, and in many cases more than human strength. In seeking to reform such an one, point her to the Source of all strength, encourage her to believe that there is One who knows the weaknesses of human nature, and while He abhors sin and villainess, loves the sinner and is ready and anxious to aid her to release herself from the toils of vice. Religion offers aid to these victims of sin for which

there is no substitute; and with the majority of those who have become fully ensnared, success cannot be attained except through earnest prayer for divine aid. By the aid of an earnest purpose to reform, and a determination to become again pure and free from the foul taint of vice, and by a humble, prayerful life of trust in divine strength, the most hapless sinner may find pardon, peace, and purity.

A Few Words to Girls.—Who does not admire the sweet purity of the lily, the delicate loveliness of the rose, the natural beauty and grandeur of a landscape, or the golden tinting of an autumn sunset? No work of art, however marvelous its ingenuity, or wonderful its symmetry, can rival for a moment the magnificence and the wonderful delicacy of the natural beauty which the Creator has spread about us. We all admire them. Even the little infant in its mother's arms, is not insensible to the charms of natural beauty.

The transparent loveliness of the dew drop or the icicle glittering in the sunshine fixes the attention of the appreciative on-looker as closely as the sheen and glitter of the costliest gem.

The love of beauty, of purity, is innate in the human mind. Who does not suffer a pang of grief at the ruthless destruction of one of nature's beauties—the crushing of a flower or a crystal, or of any lovely object?

Most beautiful and noble of all the Creator's works, is the human form. Towering in grandeur high above the most impressive of all Nature's pictures, is the human character, a miniature copy of the

divine. Every man face possesses a natural object formed by vibrations unapproachable work.

The Creator gives us graces and beauty, power to become the improved acquirement of an object of which and grander the condition inspiring thought, beginning of an ending school and knowledge wise Father, trial in this life greatest in a Those who love pure to the heart will gladly suffer by gentle sin rather than loveliness rather than sels of their books, the admiration long down the reward of evil The love of

divine. Even in its least attractive forms, the human face possesses a beauty unrivaled by any other natural object; and when not debased by sin and deformed by vice, the human character possesses attractions unapproachable by any other of all God's handiwork.

The Creator has given to each not only natural graces and beauties of form and character, but the power to become more beautiful and attractive through the improvement of natural good qualities, and the acquirement of others. Human life is a school, the object of which is to fit human beings for a higher and grander life. How this life is spent, determines the condition in the next. Is it not a glorious, soul-inspiring thought that this life may be made the beginning of an endless eternity of progress, a never-ending school-day, each moment adding new wisdom and knowledge and beauties and graces? The all-wise Father puts men and women, boys and girls, on trial in this life, to see whether their tendency is greatest in an upward or a downward direction. Those who love true beauty and purity, and who aspire to the highest degree of perfection attainable, will gladly seek such aids to a perfect life as are offered by genuine religion; while those who choose sin rather than holiness, vice rather than purity, ugliness rather than beauty, will despise the good counsels of their parents, the warnings of the Book of books, the admonitions of friends, and will rush headlong down the path of sin to reap at last the terrible reward of evil doers.

The love of purity, the abhorrence of sin, the de-

sire to attain to the highest degree of perfection possible to humankind, will be the actuating motives of every high-minded, unsophisticated girl. The mere thought of evil will be appalling to such an one. Self-respect and veneration for the God-implanted virtues of purity and innocence, should be encouraged and cultivated. The girl who has these qualities will turn a deaf ear to the siren voice which tempts her to sin. The allurements of vice will present no fascinations to her. She is safely entrenched behind an impregnable wall of defense.

The fact that sin may be committed without being known to parents or friends will be no inducement to a girl of pure instincts. That she will herself possess the knowledge of her guilt will be a sufficient restraint to prevent the commission of the wrong; and that God and pure beings will behold the sin and grieve over it, will be a mental monitor ever at hand to defeat the tempter.

An unvitiated mind will be ever on the alert to detect wrong and to avoid it. Its keen sensibilities will apprehend the real character of sin under whatever guise it may come. There will be no dallying with sin, no harboring of evil thoughts, no beginnings of vice. The seeds of impurity cannot take root in such a soil. How important then that from earliest infancy the mind should be prepared for the ready appreciation and eager acceptance of truth and purity and the prompt resistance of the first approach of what is false and impure.

We doubt not that we have all inherited enough of sinful tendencies and depraved propensities to lead

us in a downward direction without some powerful restraining and redeeming influence; but we do not believe in the idea that humanity is wholly depraved. There is enough of good in every human being to furnish a foundation for a pure and noble character if only the desire for such a character is present. The want of respect for the pure and good and truly beautiful is what leaves so many human lives to go to wreck and ruin.

The only hope for the race is in the future of its girls. If there is to be any permanent, thorough-going reform, it must start with the girls and young women of the world. They are to be the mothers of the next generation. They will mold the characters of the men and women who are to rule in politics and society a score or two of years hence. They are to cradle the men who through the press and the pulpit give tone to the religious sentiments of the generation to come. Whatever they are, their children will be like them. Woman's responsibility to the race is vast and incomprehensible.

The girl who wishes to be a grand, noble, useful woman, a true mother, must be a noble-minded, truthful, honorable, pure girl. If she yields herself to vice and sin, it is not she alone that suffers; for the deformities of mind and character which she thus acquires will follow along down the ages, a legacy of woe and shame, ineffaceable to the end of time. Let every girl who has not yet been led into vice and sensuality think of this. When the tempter comes to you, count the cost to yourself and to the race before you yield yourself to sinful indulgence. Think

how your mother, your father, or an innocent brother would look upon you if your guilt were known to them, and then think how the purity of Heaven must regard such acts. Let the thought inspire in your own heart the same abhorrence and loathing, and you will be saved from the tempter's wiles.

Happy indeed is the girl who has come to womanhood with a mind untainted by sin, a character unsullied by vice! The graces of simple innocence and purity are gems above price. It is the earnest prayer of the writer that God will aid these pages to inspire in the hearts and minds of at least a few of those who may peruse them, aspirations after purity, longings for real beauty of character, such as will lead them to seek the great Source of all goodness and purity and wisdom for aid and guidance through the pitfalls and perils of girlhood, to the attainment of a noble, mature, and useful womanhood.



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