

THE HERALD OF HEALTH

AND

JOURNAL OF PHYSICAL CULTURE.

Vol. 12, No. 2.]

NEW YORK, AUGUST, 1868.

[NEW SERIES.

PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY MILLER, WOOD & CO., 13 & 15 LAIGHT STREET.

DEPARTMENT PHYSICAL AND HYGIENIC.

THE REARING OF OUR CHILDREN.

A SERIES OF VERY VALUABLE PAPERS BY
DISTINGUISHED AMERICAN WOMEN.

No. III.

Boys and Girls.

BY MRS. ELIZABETH OAKES SMITH.

IT is a common saying among persons of limited observation, that "There is so much difference between boys and girls!" implying that a totally different system of education is required between them. I remember my mother, who was a woman of superior sense and observation, used to remark that "It was much more difficult to manage girls than boys." That is, most likely, a very just remark; for the more composite the character, the more difficult of comprehension; the finer the shades, the deeper the study—dull boys are easier to get along with than sensitive, penetrating girls.

I think a part of the difficulty in the case of my noble mother may be attributed to conventional causes. The world was partially right in regard to the one sex, and all wrong in regard to the other. The boy must have a career; that nobody denied. The girl must not have a career; that was assumed. The boy must study, get a profession, trade, or office, and marry at his pleasure; or not marry, and be that pet of society, a bachelor. The girl, on the contrary,

must be trained, coerced, checked, be made fine, fair, feminine, and foolish, and married. That was the design in and through her. She was nothing without a husband, and less than nothing with. She was trained to allure, to attract, to marry. She had no sphere out of the domestic relation. The old maid, or spinster, was nothing. Society jeered her, the law ignored her, while the married woman rose to that dignity in the law, that she ranked with lunatics, idiots, and infants! Become a widow, she did not recover an individualism she was ever supposed to have possessed; but she became a *relict*—what was left of the man who died before her!

When I was a child of not more than five years, I was walking in the "graveyard" with other children, when I came to a headstone, with skull and crossbones, inscribed, "Sacred to the Memory of Mehitable Higgins, *relict* of the late Deacon John Higgins."

I read the word *relict* over and over, and we children consulted as to its meaning, which ended in their knowing no better than I did, though much older, and their laughing at me for my persistency. I ran home repeating over and over the word, for from the first I could never let one pass of the meaning of which I was ignorant. I looked in all the dictionaries for a solution of the difficulty, and found them much like an apothecary's method of pouring the same liquid back and forth in his bottles. *Relict* sent me to the remainder, and remainder sent me back to *relict*. Of course, I applied next to my mother, who laughingly gave me an

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illustration, which was better than a definition in the present case. She said:

"If Pa should die, child, I should be his *relict*!"

The idea! I can trace many thoughts, many opinions in after life to this dilemma of mine, when a child of less than a half dozen years.

Thus the girl was considered only as an appendage, a hindrance, an adjective—*never absolute woman*. She must never seek, but be sought, never move till called; she must have neither opinions nor prejudices, likes nor dislikes, desires nor revulsions. She was to be placed in a sphere supposed to be fitting for her, and there "stay put."

Is it to be wondered that a revulsion has come? The only wonder is that it has not brought us the whirlwind and the earthquake, instead of the voice of remonstrance; and it must and will bring infinitely more than the agitators of the day of either sex foresee; changes and disruptions which it were hazardous to predict and define.

Any difference in the training of a boy or girl is the worse for either. In my own family, and in other well-regulated families, I have never found the dissimilarity so much talked about. I have found the boy as apt to play with dolls as with kite and ball; and the girl took as spontaneously to the one as the other. Why should it not be so? The fondness for dolls is the germ of the parental instinct, and is no more inherent in one sex than in the other. As a little girl, I kept a very large family of dolls; but I "coasted down hill," played ball, and made kites, and "flew" them with as much zest as my young companions of the other sex, who, so far from calling me "tomboy," were proud and delighted at my skill. I have found all through life, that many men welcome with pleasure the noblest achievements of a woman, while the weak men have a jealousy and envy, and a mean caviling spirit, such as weak women evince for each other, which only goes to prove that sex is merely functional, and that the sexes are one and the same in all that goes to make up a true, noble humanity, as well as in all that mars the greatness and harmony of its proportions.

Leave the freedom of choice to your daughter, as generously as you leave it to your son. As you give him a profession, trade, or some sure means of earning a support, that he may be free, independent and manly, give your daughter an equal opportunity. Teach her to feel that it is mean, dishonorable, nay, indecent to marry for a support; that the equivalents of marriage

are as base and wicked as those of the most degraded of the sex. If boys need a becoming pride, girls, in our transition, undeveloped state, need it tenfold more.

Teach the girl that her person is as sacredly, as rightfully her own as that of her brother's; that it can not and will not be bartered for any conventional fact or fiction, but is hers, subject to her own will and choice; holy, pure, and religiously her own, to be preserved as such—"a temple for the Holy Ghost to dwell in;" not to be polluted by marriage or defiled by licentiousness. Teach her this, and she will know and feel her own queenhood, her inalienable right to eclecticism, her God-imparted right to be one and equal with her brother, and to choose for herself her husband, as he is left to choose his wife. Each is to be absolute man and woman—king and queen; and neither is to encroach upon the prerogatives of the other.

Every true, noble, self-sustaining sentiment you instill into the mind of your daughter is reflected in the mind of your son, and thus the race is helped onward. Give your daughter a trade, a profession—a something by which under any emergency she can earn her own bread, and you have done better for her than if you could marry her to a Prince Esterhazy, with all his diamonds; you have given her chastity a better safeguard than all the moral precepts of the universe; you have given her purity, in every relation—a better guarantee than any legislative enactment. This equality of woman, this sense of her own value, this ability of self-support, is the only protection to the sanctity of marriage and the holiness of the family altar.

All the evils, corruptions, and abuses of society that I have been showing to the world for twenty years, spring from this false relation of the sexes—*protection and support* through marriage, or otherwise, on the part of the man, and *dependence and submission* on the part of the woman. An equivalent, a consideration always; whether sympathy and affection existed, or aversion and hate, the tie was the same; and based always on the idea of sex; as our judicial code, and our infamous divorce trials, and our horrible murders of the Sickles and Cole stamp abundantly testify.

Teach your daughter independence of thought and action, as you would teach your son. Teach her that her sphere in life is just what she is able to make it; large or small, as she has the ability to make it either one or the other. Teach her that *the measure of capacity is the measure of sphere to either, man or woman*. Teach her that God no more designed her for a subordinate

than he did her brother; and, as his nerves and muscles, every fiber of the soul, and every attribute of manhood spurn the degradation of servility, so does every characteristic of womanhood spurn the same.

Will this convert her womanhood into what is coarse and masculine? Will this render her a virago? a vixen? a domineering, repulsive, arrogant, conceited, and half ferocious representative of her sex? God forbid! When a woman is any or all of this, she is, like the poet (*poeta nascitur, non fit*), born to it, not made.

If the parents are calm and esthetic, tender, devoted and truthful, the whole household will be the same, as by a divine instinct.

The world only needs this: Truth at home, honor at home, love and duty, human kindness and human forbearance at home, to do away with human legislation and inaugurate the rule which is the sum and substance and aim of all law. "Do ye to others whatsoever ye would they should do unto you," and this time must and will come.

In training a family, the sensible parent will look well to the health of the boys and girls. Both must have free, vigorous, out of door exercise, and the same kind of exercise. Before I published my book entitled "Bertha and Lily," in which I described an ideal community in which the sport was popular, not ten women in the country knew any thing about skating. Now, they count millions, and there is no reason why they should not.

Neither boys nor girls ought to take cold from exposure to the worst of weather. Persons addicted to cold water, air, and exercise do not take cold. When I see a man or woman of fifty wrapped to the throat in flannels, shivering with bad circulations, and dreading water like a cat, I give them up as hardly worth the care they require, for they make life burdensome and convert houses into hospitals. I should sooner covet good health for a child than genius, for the latter is apt to be unwholesome in character, unless conjoined to good health.

Dyspepsia ought to be regarded as disgraceful, and cold feet and hands an anomaly in the economy of a fine, generous household.

The rearing of a family is the great school of our humanity; an educational process appointed by God himself, in order to bring into full exercise all the faculties with which he has endowed his creatures, and it is a solemn truth that those who do not at some time assume the responsibilities which it involves, are less well developed beings, and they grow full, noble representatives of the species, just in proportion, as

they have a living, acting sense of all its duties.

In a family you have the rudiments of a nation. You have every variety of character to call into exercise, all your wisdom, forbearance, and force, and goodness. Some of your children may happily be of that beautiful, fine, heroic temper, that they are

"Creatures without reproach or blot,
Who do God's will and know it not."

They are born free, and, like the angels, have a right to their own will and way; they are those in whom all the virtues do congregate and show themselves with delight, acting spontaneously like the boy's mouth "that whistled itself." With these heavenly conformations all is peace, and the parent is blessed in his tender companionship where no coercion or training is required.

There will be those again who are the reverse of all this, who are of the earth earthy. Creatures in whom the lower appetites and passions predominate, and these must be curbed with a wise, pitying, loving hand. Parents may sometimes seem to love these better than the better organized child; but I think if such is the fact, it is one of those beautiful compensations in life, by which we are most ready to help the weak and uphold the feeble. Perhaps, too, the parent sees a phase of himself reproduced, and yearns with remorseful tenderness over the child afflicted through him.

Then there are lazy, inert children who must be stimulated into high aims and useful activities; they must be made to know, and to act up to the knowledge, that no drones are allowed in the human hive; that God has appointed work as the handmaid of reason, the aid to virtue, and the antidote to evil. It is the great human privilege, and whoever shirks it must abide the penalty; whoever scorns it, sounds the blast of his own imbecility. In the long run, the worker is the true aristocrat and autocrat.

There is another class of children: the wheedlers, the cunning cajolers, who, without any great ability, by a supreme selfishness and art, contrive to have their own way, and to rule the more sensitive and honest minded. You will hear these children commended for their wit and good humor, but their qualities are dangerous to themselves and others, and they need more vigorous supervision than almost any other class. They are smoothe, subtle as serpents, and as they go on in life they make up the great army of mischief-makers, inter-meddlers, slanderers, and double-dealers of every

kind. They are the ones to say, "art thou in health, my brother," and give a stab "under the fifth rib." They worm out the secrets of others only to make an ill use of them. They are incapable of true sympathy, or truth, or honesty; for all their plan of life is based upon selfishness, self-interest, and treachery; and yet these persons are as unconscious of their monstrous qualities as the toad is of his misshapen aspect, or any other reptile of the disgust it occasions. I speak strongly of this class of children, because it is so large a class that parents are unconscious, half the world over, of the kind of progeny they are raising. I will give an illustration. The father of a family was bringing forward some choice fruit, and one specimen promised to be so excellent that he wished to preserve it, and cautioned the children of the household not to *pluck* it. The word he used suggested an idea. One child would by no means disobey. Oh, no! she would not gather the tempting fruit! She would not go contrary to the orders of the good father. Accordingly, she put her head down and ate the fruit, piece-meal, leaving the stem on the vines. The fruit was missed, and inquiries followed.

"Did you, or you, and you *pick* the fruit?" was asked of one child after another. Every one answered "no," the guilty one with the rest.

Years afterward, when a full-grown woman, she owned to the truth, and it was considered a *witty joke*; and so it was, but give me the dullest of children, with a bright, honest, moral sense, and I should prefer it to one of this witty kind.

JONES WAS, or believed he was, near his death, and the doctor calling, he held a long and earnest conversation with him about his chances of life. "Why man," said the physician, "you are likely to die any hour. You have been living for the last fifteen years without a constitution—lungs gone, liver diseased, and all that sort of thing." "You don't mean to say," replied Jones, questioningly, "that a man can live for fifteen years without a constitution?" "Yes, I do," retorted the doctor, "and you are an example." "Then, doctor," and a bright smile illumined the pallid face of the doomed man, "then, doctor, I'll go it ten years more on the by-laws," and he did.

BALLOON ascents have shown that over England the cloud region has a thickness varying from 1,500ft. to 3,000ft., and that the temperature at the top is not lower than that at the bottom, notwithstanding.

The Art of Getting a Living.

BY REV. WASHINGTON GLADDEN.

THIS is an art which some people understand well enough, and some, perhaps, a little too well. Some persons of whom I have heard in my travels, live in splendid style upon nothing at all. They dwell in magnificent houses, their wives are driven out every day in magnificent carriages by magnificent coachmen, all their domestic appointments are on the most magnificent scale, and yet when you examine the income lists to see how large the income must be to support such magnificence, you find to your bewilderment that these prosperous individuals have no income at all! It is really wonderful—the skill and management of these people! The art of living as known to them must be a magical art. I don't know any thing but the lamp of Aladdin that would enable a household, in these days, to support a large family and a small retinue of servants in ease and elegance on an income of less than a thousand dollars a year.

It is true that one may live on his capital, when his income is reduced, and, in this manner, may live expensively in perfect honesty, without paying a tax; but I suspect that very many of our men of means who pay no income tax are not living on their capital. When they say they have no income to report, they mean that they have added nothing to their accumulations during the year. If I were assessor, I think I could invent a little catechism that would fix such people. It would be something like this:

Are you poorer now than you were a year ago?

If not, have your household expenses for the last year been more than one thousand dollars?

If so, you should pay a tax on the amount you have expended for household expenses in excess of one thousand dollars, whatever that amount may be.

I am not at all in favor of income taxes, but so long as the law requires them to be paid I want to see fair play; and I do not believe that clerks and mechanics and country parsons, living poorly on salaries should be obliged to pay larger taxes than merchants and capitalists living in luxury, unless these latter persons are growing poorer every year. If they are, I have nothing to say.

This art of getting a living out of nothing, seems to be understood by persons in all conditions of life. Some of the poor have completely mastered it. You know families who have con-