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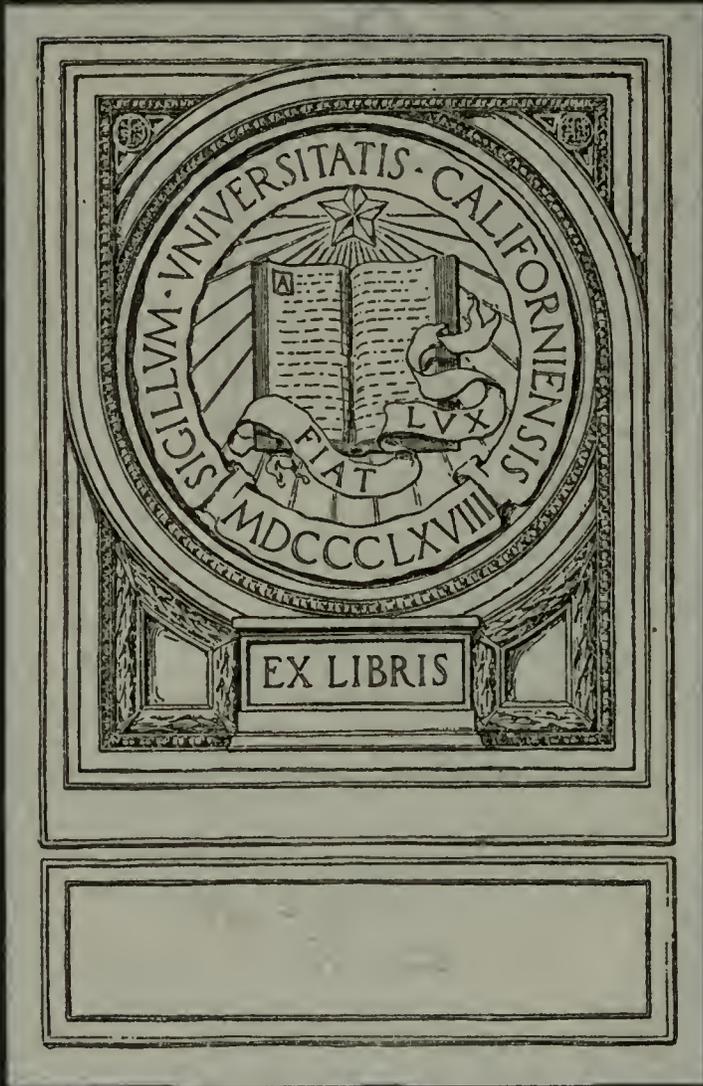
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EUGENIC EDUCATION

FOR

WOMEN AND GIRLS

BY

Miss ALICE RAVENHILL, F.R.San.I.

Late Lecturer on Hygiene, King's College for Women, University of London.



Eugenics Education Society,
Kingsway House,
Kingsway, W.C.

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are traceable to ignorance, want of observation, carelessness, intemperance, or neglect of the elementary requirements of human infancy, spring in many cases from an exaggerated individualism, from an absence of any sense of social responsibility, briefly from the moral failing of selfishness; while the social sores of poverty, disease and pauperism, or the worse plague of unbridled extravagance and gross self-indulgence, as well as the devitalising influences of insanitary surroundings, originate chiefly in the economic or industrial conditions included in the third group. If, therefore, the education of girls and women is to equip them to withstand the errors and to revise the misconceptions which detrimentally influence modern thought and action in respect of the obligations of maternity, its methods must be based upon a knowledge of biology, ethics, and economics, and must take cognisance of the more potent forces, hereditary, moral, intellectual and social, which will play upon the product of our educational system in its period of productive and more or less independent activity.

It is difficult to estimate at the present moment the relative weight of influence which these forces are bringing to bear upon early womanhood. All things, social and educational, are in a condition of flux and transition. Old standards and traditional ideas clamour for revision in the light of modern demands upon the human race, and that power of expansion, which Mr. Chatterton Hill considers a fundamental law of life, is exhibiting itself with explosive violence, so that, for the moment, no definite opinion can be expressed as to the degree to which economic necessities tend to neutralise the biological instinct of parental care, or to what extent man's ethical standard will yield under industrial stress, or whether the claims of the State will successfully outbalance the exaggerated individualism characteristic of modern youth. What *must* be done, and that without loss of time, is to impress upon the public the fact that no amount of social culture can replace biological fitness, where the perpetuation of healthy human life is concerned. In common justice to their potential parent-

hood, to the Empire of which they and their offspring are the pillars, and to succeeding generations, our young people have a right to be trained to preserve a truer perspective in respect of the claims of more or less conflicting duties and desires, to be skilful in the accommodation of old-fashioned principles and practices to new and exacting circumstances, and to withstand temptations in the strength of reliable and up-to-date knowledge.

Three at least of the many innovations in conventional ideas and usages introduced by the great industrial revolution of the nineteenth century bear directly upon these questions of parental inefficiency, of wastage of child life and of failure to perceive racial responsibilities. The same century in which women gained, at great cost, opportunities for a large and liberal culture saw also the transference to a new scene of action of a large proportion of the occupations which had previously engaged their whole attention; the extended employment of steam and machinery rendering it henceforth unnecessary that every household should be a workshop or every home a factory. Experience proved that a majority of the domestic industries could be more effectively and economically accomplished at centres planned for the purpose. The capacity which had qualified women for the extensive organisation of these multiple industries carried on in the castle of the mediæval baron or in the manor house of the seventeenth or eighteenth century squire, the administrative skill, the judgment, decision, sagacity, foresight, perseverance, and moral courage, they exercised in these spheres were suddenly diverted into fresh channels or received an unrecognised check. In the first case, these qualities gained success for their possessors in the new sphere of higher education, and reopened to women professions and occupations which they had practised in the Middle Ages. In the second case, the energy suffered perversion, a recognised result of suppression or misuse. Thus the claims of domestic life were first narrowed, then despised or neglected, so that household duties became indeed drudgery, for no effort was made to apply to them the

intelligence and energy which were meanwhile adjusting other callings to the demands of modern progress.

Throughout these years, the minds of men and women were alike mainly engrossed by the vast industrial and social changes which followed each other with unprecedented rapidity. The mushroom growth of factories and the associated reduction of domestic industries led also to a demand for cheap labour, of which an immediate result was the adoption of that system of false economics which compelled women and children to labour in factories and mines, and thus exposed them to the stress of keen industrial competition, and to the deteriorating effects of prolonged, fatiguing, over-specialised occupation. Equally associated with these new conditions of work were others which sapped the very sources of home life, namely, the aggregation of large numbers upon small areas, which led to dense overcrowding, and the early independence of parental control and its coincident discipline among the young wage earners. The provision of cheap, highly exciting forms of recreation soon met the demand for an almost essential relief to physically exhausting and monotonous toil. The unpaid work of women in their homes became more and more despised; domestic service with its inevitable restrictions was unfavourably contrasted with the relative freedom of factoryhands; while the rapid growth of luxury among the well-to-do resulted in a distaste for the trouble and discomforts associated with the insistent demands of a young family on time, energy and purse. Desires for more ambitious standards of dress and diversion were stimulated by improved means of rapid transit, by a cheap press, and by the general social upheaval which upset standards of living and fostered selfishness. At the same time, minds and bodies were strained well nigh to breaking point in their often fruitless efforts to make adjustments in this changed environment, and to keep abreast of new departures.

Now it is an accepted biological fact that when an organism is subjected to any severe and protracted strain, or to a series of conditions which diminish physical efficiency,

the qualities last acquired are those to be first weakened and undermined. Prolonged devotion to the offspring during its period of helpless dependency is considered to be of relatively recent development in the human race. John Fiske and other sound authorities on social evolution have expressed the opinion that it is doubtful whether prolonged parental care can be justly described as a deep-seated fundamental instinct. They find good reason to attribute its origin in primitive man not to instinctive tenderness and spontaneous affection for his offspring, but to self-interest, stimulated by the recollections of advantages derived by his own parents from the support and assistance he rendered them in childhood and youth, and to an ill-defined consciousness of the advantages to tribal prosperity of a more stable domestic life. That analogous reasons prompted the large families characteristic of the cotton spinning districts, for instance, became apparent when legal limits were placed on the employment of children. The decline of the birth-rate in certain towns was perceptible and prompt, because the cost and anxiety of child rearing had lost the stimulus of early financial compensation to the parents. Among all the primitive races, indeed, the child was held to be but one among other animate or inanimate chattels, and was treated with no greater, perhaps even with less, consideration than the most costly of these. The power of life or death over their children was exercised by parents certainly to the time of Calvin, which suggests that other sentiments could out-balance the parental instinct, even when it had gained considerable strength and stability, and before it was exposed to the rude shocks to mind and body associated with the social and industrial expansion of the past century.

Of course every one is familiar with examples of touching maternal devotion to offspring, common to forms of animal life far removed from the human, which seems to confute this opinion. But a brief consideration of biological facts affords evidence that, though widespread, this instinct is strictly limited in its duration, and easily susceptible to perversion in the maternal parent, while it is rarely

more than temporarily present in the male of any species. At first it is solely ante-natal in its manifestations, and subsequently it is confined to the immediately post-natal period. The cat, for instance, will attack her own kitten when the suckling period is passed, and similarly a puppy soon becomes a stranger whose presence is resented by his mother. That changes in environment or physical disturbances in the mother will lead her to neglect or destroy her offspring are familiar facts to the boy with his rabbits, or the farmer with more than one species of his stock. So that there are unquestionably good grounds for the assertion that the parental instinct demands considerable stimulus and direction if it is to persist at all, and most certainly must these agencies be active if its ethical and economic relations are to be maintained when its purely physical manifestation is no longer physiologically stimulated. Thus, though the simplest evidences of care for the welfare of progeny can be traced among fish, it merely assumes the form of ante-natal interest in the eggs, and is gradually developed in response to structural arrangements, of which it is primarily the result. The basis for what ripens into love in the highest types of life assumes greater prominence in the case of insects, and presumably the rearing of offspring so immature as to demand post-natal care has led to the preparation of burrows, nests, and dens, primitive homes, in which to secure their safety. A further growth of parental interest, intensive and extensive, is noticeable in the highest classes of bird life, when both parents share the duties of incubation and subsequent nursing of the helpless brood; the necessary stimulus for this devotion being found, it is said, in the instinctive struggle for existence, for, as the type of life becomes higher, the number of offspring diminishes rapidly, while their greater and more prolonged immaturity calls for more parental care.

Among mammalia the great importance of preserving the species at all costs has resulted in the evolution of so marvellously complex a constructive process on the part of the female that it is fitly described as one of the greatest

economic processes of nature. This process reaches its highest development in the human race, but the cost to the mother is so high that it calls for compensation. Therefore, in order to achieve its full intention of perfect motherhood among the highest types of life, nature has planned a scheme of paternal as well as of maternal duties. The life of the mother must be preserved and sheltered, for upon it depends the food and natural shelter of her infant. She is therefore entitled to look for the maintenance of herself and her offspring at the hands of the father, at least during the infancy of their family, and it is conventionally assumed that a man's desire to perpetuate his name and race proves a sufficient stimulus to secure the necessaries of life to his wife and children, and thus to relieve her of economic obligations. But, unfortunately, a realisation of the interdependence of offspring and mother, of the mother's physical and moral claims, and of the great economic value to the community of healthy children has suffered regrettable eclipse from time to time among the human race. It is true that considerable modification of paternal asperity in respect of the child is to be traced towards the end of the Patriarchal Age, but even then little thought was given to the preservation of infant life, for, with the exception of the Assyrians and Hebrews, the practice of infanticide is shown by historical records to have been a widespread archaic institution. Though normally confined to girls, it still prevailed among the Greeks and Romans, and persists even to-day among certain Eastern races, its perpetuation having no doubt been sanctioned by a variety of motives, prominent among which would be famine, poverty, a desire to promote national efficiency by the elimination of weaklings, and non-recognition that a new-born child is entitled to the privileges of humanity. It may also not be amiss to remind ourselves that the value of infant life as a national asset was hardly realised till the middle of the eighteenth century, and it was well on in the nineteenth before the effect on infant mortality of ill-nourished, over-worked mothers was first perceived. The publication of the Privy Council Investigations of 1861

and 1863 revealed facts which shocked the public mind, but unfortunately these facts were not sufficiently understood to stimulate a somewhat emotional, but wholly unpractical, electorate to insist on the adoption of measures calculated to effect the eradication of their causes. Even at the present day many fathers choose to ignore the fact that they are the legal guardians of their children by nature and nurture, for though a child is unfortunately only entitled to recognition as a human being at birth, it is from that moment legally entitled to food, clothing, and lodging at the father's cost until capable of self-maintenance. This non-recognition of legal ante-natal rights reacts disastrously indeed upon the mothers as well as upon their infants. It inevitably tends to national deterioration, besides subjecting poor women to exhausting stress and toil when least fit to endure the strain. The deplorable social consequences are well known, though often ignored, their imperial significance being, as yet, inadequately perceived.

When the conceivable biological explanation for diminished maternal affection is taken into account, together with the paternal indifference, possibly born of economic and industrial as well as of moral causes, the fact that the conditions of true motherhood seem temporarily imperilled among the poorer classes does not appear so surprising. Among well-to-do men and women excessive egoism and absorption in the material sources of enjoyment are probably more actively promoting causes for this unnatural condition, for here the stress on health and emotions is more directly traceable to gross luxury or to excessive and continued excitement than to fatigue, mal-nutrition, and financial disabilities. Indeed, those to whom from one or other cause, the profession of motherhood appears irksome and uninspiring are not wholly blameworthy. Girls have hitherto been deprived of all direct teaching or helpful counsel upon their new functions which ripen during adolescence. Reference to marriage is rare throughout this period of development, and if made, the subject is mostly treated as a joke or condemned as immodest. Whereas, sympathetic

advice and judicious discussion of the great issues of marriage should be at the service of every young girl. Indeed, so intimate are the relations of mind to body, so subtle are the influences which promote or hinder normal growth, that a woman physician of long experience considers that possible interference with physical fitness for maternity as well as disinclination for matrimony may and do result from the conspiracy of silence with which it has been customary to treat the dawn of womanhood in our girls. Then for many generations female education was limited by exclusive regard to the specific functions they were to discharge as mothers and housekeepers. According to one writer, family relationships were to overshadow the social, and even the divine, in the lives of women; they were actually to be made the basis of a special moral code applicable to women only, and no attention was to be given in their education to other sides of their nature which craved for expression. The assumption in any scheme of boys' education, on the contrary, was that it embodied means to develop in them all-round capacity in youth, leaving them free to adapt themselves to specific functions in later years, according to their occupations or social spheres. The absence of disciplined, cultivated minds and of training in accurate habits of thought among girls did not, however, conduce to the concentration of their energies to better purpose on the mechanical acquirement of dexterity in the ordinary domestic arts, or to the intelligent exercise of the qualities requisite for the successful bearing and intelligent training of children. Their restricted instruction but enhanced the wearisome monotony of daily doings, for it threw no light upon interesting underlying principles, and rendered no assistance to the solution of the physiological or psychical problems associated with child-rearing; aspirations were checked, energies were frittered away, and the tendency to take false or unworthy views of daily duties was uncorrected by the development of power to form a clear conception of their dignity, worth, and intellectual demands. Neither was any provision made for the employment of girls where large

establishments, or a limited supply of young children offered no daily practice in the arts of housekeeping and of rearing babies. No consideration either was shown for the intellectual ambitions or for the economic needs of the many women who would remain unmarried, and who justly claimed to be prepared for self-support or for social service. Is it therefore surprising that a temporary reaction against the claims of maternity coincides with a partial attainment of long repressed desires for expanded interests; or, that a better understanding of the possible results to wife and child associated with sensual indulgence on the part of men, has caused an instinctive shrinking from matrimony among some of the more thoughtful and refined women. Thus the ordeal, physical, mental, and moral, through which womanhood is still passing, in order to place its relations to life and to the community on truer lines, is one of great severity. That it has already produced some good and practical results is an obvious fact. The world is more alive to the real gain to public welfare and prosperity which follows general recognition of the common human element in both men and women; the more broad-minded and unbiassed thinkers are perceiving that the specific functions belonging to each sex demand substantially cultivation of the same qualities in early life, and call for equal educational advantages in a preparation for their performance; so that, through their efforts, the comparatively less liberal standard of education hitherto deemed sufficient and fitting for girls has been raised to that accepted for boys. It must now, however, proceed to a still higher level, and take into account the special capacities and requirements of a more complete womanhood than was conceived of in the past. The real problem before our girls' schools to-day is to plan a curriculum which will not only keep in view the harmonious development of mind and body, and the preparation necessary for a girl's future life, but which will also cultivate all normal faculties and interests by maintaining a just balance of subjects. And thus we arrive face to face with the subject which gives its title to this paper—In what way can our girls be best pre-

pared to understand and to perform intelligently and cheerfully the duties and functions of perfect womanhood? And I say womanhood, and not motherhood, advisedly, for all women do not enjoy the privilege of maternity, but, with rare exceptions, all women are called upon at some period of their lives to assume responsibility in some public or private capacity for the nutrition and environment of others, while the majority find themselves also charged to a greater or less degree with the care of expectant mothers or with the mothering of infants and the education of children of tender age. There is also evidence that, as women equip themselves more efficiently for these responsibilities and discard traditional empiricism in their performance, they will be entrusted more exclusively with the direction of the domestic side of large institutions, schools, colleges, asylums, and reformatories, where, if maternal instinct be present, it will gain satisfaction, and where, in any case, all the finest intellectual and moral qualities of good women will find ample scope. But such responsibilities cannot be lightly imposed or assumed, therefore, it is to an improved system of school education that eyes are now turned in the hope of realising the ideal of capable, intelligent, practical, womanly womanhood; the "general educative impulse to bring home to the community" a sense of its responsibility for human health and progress, to which the Committee on Physical Deterioration referred, is being fostered by intention, and demands to this end the aid of school machinery for the purpose.

But, because the recent trend and resultant stress of industrial and social progress have contributed to foster the modern girl's disinclination to assume the cares of maternity or to wear the yoke of domestic drudgery, because for the moment her sense of personal responsibility towards the race is enfeebled, and her eyes are blinded to her ignorance of the claims and needs of infancy, she will not be coerced into shaping a different course of conduct by compulsory and premature specialisation in the domestic arts, or by assigning to them undue prominence in her curriculum. Time for her

own individual development must be accorded her, her reason must be appealed to, her interest must be excited, and her own wishes as well as those of her parents must be considered. This last point especially cannot be overlooked, for there are still parents who attach more value to preparation for earning a livelihood than for qualifying as a perfect woman, and to whom the possible combination of higher education with the popular conception of a good wife and mother is not easily evident. Miss Catherine Webb drew attention to some points relevant in this consideration when writing in the *University Review* for June, 1906. "To-day," she says, "the girl has become as much a wage-earning asset to her parents as the boy. . . . In the well-meant desire to promote the physical well-being of the nation, physicians and educationists alike are inclined to insist that, willy-nilly, . . . girls should early specialise as housewives and mothers, while parents still require that they should become wage-earners. . . . The consequence is an unrecognised clash of interests between which the child is likely to suffer," and, may I add, the ideals also. This "clash" and its echoes resound to-day in some of the newer type of secondary as well as in elementary schools, and conduce to confusion of aim and much vexation of spirit. The economic interests of the parents and the ambitions of their daughters lead to a great striving after occupations external to the home. A recognition of her economic value has also brought to many a woman worker a corresponding realisation of, and desire to assume, her civic responsibilities, while it is not always clear to her that the adequate and intelligent fulfilment of domestic duties is one form of active citizenship or calls for the exercise of a trained mind. How can the short period of school life offer training in all these objects or serve to correct false values? Manifestly, it would be impossible. To attain this end close co-operation between a girl's mother and teacher is desirable, as well as the support of dignified home ideals. It is not easy to frame a scheme of education which must most certainly strengthen the feeble maternal instinct by judicious direction and encouragement, though

in no way must it over-accentuate the emotional side at this very critical phase of girlhood; which, while it presents the science of home-making in its right light as a dignified and most important profession, in the elements of which all girls should be grounded, nevertheless accords recognition to the fact that the more advanced branches of the subject may be legitimately left in the hands of well-trained experts. Woman's great and incomparable gift of motherhood must be set in the new light of racial responsibility, and must be shown to involve broad and large culture if it is to be turned to its fullest account in later life, for it embraces the moral training of children during the most impressionable years of life. More attention might advisedly be given throughout the curriculum to indicating the true intention of education, namely, the better adjustment of mankind to his environment and the acquirement of power to exercise control over conditions. A truer judgment should be cultivated upon matters economic and social, and a higher value than hitherto ought to be attached to moral and biological responsibilities. To accomplish this, even partially, the period of elementary education must obviously be prolonged, for few girls are sufficiently developed until fifteen or sixteen years of age to grasp the true meaning of school training as a groundwork for future action, to appreciate the relative value of claims and interests, or to connect lessons with life. Some revision and readjustment of timetables would also be called for in the great mass of secondary schools, which are subject to the sway of external examinations, and further opportunities to study human life in its biological, economic, social, and national aspects must be afforded in institutions for higher education. Observation of existing school courses and a knowledge of college schemes, which are, though tardily, being realised, afford satisfactory proof that the suggestions advanced in the chapter on "Direct Preparation for Practical Life especially in the Home" in Miss Burstall's book on "English High Schools for Girls" are bearing fruit. Witness, for instance, the admirable work now being carried out in Training

Colleges, as well as among parents and teachers, by so able an exponent as Miss Norah March on these problems of sex education and their bearing on our national life, a movement which has the support of leading authorities, parental, educational and medical. Some of those to whom is entrusted the education of our girls and young women at the present time are quite alive to the national need for purer, nobler parentage, and for more intelligent parenthood; but, while determining that it shall be gratified, they plead for patience, and point out that a movement of such importance and magnitude must be given time to grow, freedom also must be granted, so that it may develop along various lines, and a frank interchange of views, with ample opportunities for discussion on debatable points, must take place between the medical and educational professions.

Meanwhile, our far-sighted leaders call attention to the urgent need of this movement for two forms of support, parental and financial.

In the case of elementary school girls, parental opposition to training in domestic duties and in the care of infants has practically disappeared, *if* it be given during the very limited period of school life, when time is unfortunately unduly short for the general training requisite for mind and body and when the child is not ripe for the teaching. There is a steady increase in the number of towns in England, Scotland and Wales, where a small proportion of the elementary school product is being caught on leaving school at thirteen or fourteen, and where parents have been coaxed to allow their daughters to attend a six or eight months' course of technical training in housewifery, the results have, beyond all anticipation, confirmed the belief that this is the psychological moment at which to introduce this class of girl to the interests, obligations, and arts of home-making. She is at an age when she begins to think, when she has time to try her powers, when her mother is glad to trust her with some real responsibility in home duties, so that she has the chance of introducing new methods in cooking and cleaning, above all when her dawning womanhood reawakens her

interest in babies, an interest healthily blunted during the immediately preceding years, when her leisure should be absorbed by play and suitable recreation, not by precocious mothering. I am convinced that it is by the adoption of such Continuation Courses, in conjunction, of course, with other agencies, that we shall strike at the root of maternal inefficiency among the working classes; but it is a method which depends upon financial as well as upon parental support. Happily these courses have more than one economic aspect, for teaching on the economic and moral duties and obligations of parenthood and citizenship should find a natural place in such schemes, the false economics of earning a pittance outside the home while its inmates remain neglected should be clearly explained, while the civic and national duties of each individual in respect of personal inefficiency can be emphasised. It is scarcely necessary to add that similar systematic training in suitable form must be provided for lads, upon whom also the duty of leading healthy, pure lives, of bearing their share in the upbringing of children, and of making provision for the wife's maintenance during the period of maternity, must of course be impressed.

Much more trouble, too, must be taken to make known the fact that biological principles apply to the vital processes of human beings, including that of reproduction. It is true that the general physical characteristics of vegetable life and the laws to which it is subject are now brought under the notice of an increasing number of school children in the form of nature study. They are familiarised with the general principles of growth and reproduction in plants, and are led to observe for themselves something of the influences of inherited nature and nutrition and of the capacity for and advantage derived from rapid adaptation to environment. If in the last year of school life girls were led on to trace in human life the qualities, requirements, and functions they had previously observed in plants and in simpler forms of animal life, not only would an admirable foundation be laid for these special Continuation Courses of training, but the

great function of perpetuating life would be presented in an entirely impersonal, biological setting, and knowledge so gained could be employed later on to awaken a sense of the vivid responsibilities the function involves. Girls need help to understand the deep mysteries of maternity; they need specific, detailed guidance, moral and mental as well as physical, at a difficult period of their lives. They must no longer be allowed to pick up their knowledge of the most vital of all human functions literally from the filthy lips of ignorance and vice; individual direct teaching must be given at some time or other, with sympathy and tact, on the care and exercise of the newly acquired power. It is the firm conviction of many women, whose experience lends weight to their opinion, that those to whose guardianship girls are entrusted must prepare themselves to gratify suitably the legitimate desire for information and to raise the function of maternity to a purer level from the degraded, unclean abyss to which it has been debased. They must be prepared to recognise the strength of temptation to the unlawful gratification of a fundamental instinct which proves overwhelming to some natures, and generally they must afford opportunity for wholesome confidences and sympathetic direction to girls, to whom too often no training whatever is vouchsafed on the physiological process, which affects, not them alone, but those for whose lives they become responsible. In secondary schools there is practically as much need as in elementary schools for tactful, truthful teaching on these physiological, economic, and moral aspects of the function of motherhood, though from a somewhat different standpoint and for rather diverse reasons. The teaching may be entirely individual and direct, or the phenomena of reproduction may be touched upon in their biological setting, as a part of a worldwide process in class teaching on botany and zoology; this is a matter for the head of each school to determine after consultation with parents and staff. This only is certain, existing ignorance and misconceptions are unjustifiable.

Ignorance and innocence, prudery and modesty must no longer be confused. It has been hitherto a serious anomaly

that, in an age when every possible study is introduced into the curriculum, at a time when effects are being traced to causes, and the influence of deferred results is ever more intelligently appreciated by physicians and sociologists, when, too, press and novelist publish pages of immoral, debasing, and nauseous matter, no direct allusion to the great responsibility attaching to the transmission of life has been permitted between teacher and pupil, and a matter of supreme importance to the community as well as to the individual has been habitually and intentionally ignored. For though, as has been said, some attention to life processes characterises school classes in nature study, teachers have hesitated to refer, after the first year or two, in even just proportion to those functions associated with reproduction; possibly from shyness or from dread of parental resentment. In a few girls' private schools a little systematic teaching on the subject has been attempted, happily with excellent results. Sometimes the biological method of approach has been pursued, sometimes the moral obligations are first discussed; but, without exception, not only have the girls been grateful, but their mothers also, while the value received is enduring, and prompts many expressions of appreciation in later life, when these girls have become wives and mothers. The success of this tactful, restrained teaching in a few English private schools and published reports upon biological courses carried on in certain high schools in the U.S.A. (guaranteed as accurate by the Special Commissioners of the American Academy of Medicine) prove that both shyness and fear are misplaced. Naturally girls are merely introduced to the general principles of this as of other functions in these courses, that is to say, they learn but a very small part of the biological alphabet; but so helpful and successful does this prove that in one or two cases these school courses have concluded, for the last four or five years, when girls are about eighteen or nineteen years of age, with three or four lectures from a medical woman on pregnancy, child-birth, the care of infants, and a general consideration of the institution of the family, heredity, "the social evil," and a brief

reference to the diseases, associated with immorality, which sap the bodily and mental vigour of a people.

The measures now active and the methods in general use to prepare for family life in our elementary schools are fairly familiar to all. Though admirable in intention they are susceptible of much extension and improvement. In respect of the household arts, secondary schools are, I think, doing and experimenting far more than is generally known. At one time only the dullards were encouraged to pursue the purely technical practice of cookery in the school, then fuller post-scholastic courses were provided for girls who were not passing on to a University career or to some immediate wage-earning occupation, a method which is being still further developed with advantage. Meanwhile the Board of Education "recognised" the subject in secondary schools, and encouraged its introduction, so that there are now in existence quite a variety of courses, all of a more or less tentative character, it is true, but all making for good results. Some are wholly technical and distinctly limited in scope, others are linked with one or more school studies, such as elementary chemistry and physics, or, in the case of needlework, with design, while one or two schools are remodelling their curriculum in such a way as to correlate science, literature, art, indeed almost every subject in the time-table, with home, social, and civic life. One or two of these schools find it even possible for all the girls to share in the delight of practically applying their knowledge to the arts of cooking and cleaning, without depriving them of the satisfaction of testing their intellectual attainments by the prescribed standard, matriculation at the London University, for instance, or similar qualifying examinations. Other schools find it comparatively easy to provide some of the scientific foundations for housecraft, but do not yet see their way to make a place for their applications without calling in the co-operation of the parents, in order that some practice in the arts should be acquired in the home, hoping that this method may also serve to forge useful links between the girls' two centres of interest, home and school.

Thus some of our most prominent head-mistresses are prepared to recognise the new movement in women's education, but they ask for the public support in three directions : money must be found for the necessary equipment, the point of view and the demands on time must be taken into account by those who regulate examinations and fix standards of attainment, and cultured women must have opportunities provided to gain an insight into the principles which underlie processes and to study the factors which have influenced conditions, in order that the demand for teaching power of the highest order may be met. Courses of University status are needed not only for this purpose, but for the advantage of all women who desire to pursue the subject in its more advanced stages, and thus to qualify themselves to elevate the sphere of home and family life to that national importance which is its due, while at the same time they introduce improved methods into conventional practices. Much credit is due to King's College for Women, University of London, for its courageous pioneer work along these lines.

There is abundant evidence also of widespread and better organised efforts to reach those whose mode of life or whose age does not bring them within the range of any obligatory educational influence. In addition to the splendid work of health visitors and district nurses, other agencies of various kinds are active, such, for example, as the numerous schools for mothers and infant consultations and popular lectures. The extreme importance of the matter is recognised by the University Extension Boards, County Councils, and various societies; lectures on the Requirements of Infancy and the Elements of a Healthy Life are offered and are found useful in raising the standard of parenthood among all classes, for among those whose lot is cast in very pleasant places an ignorance prevails, alas, which is out of all proportion to their opportunities.

Thus the signs of the times are altogether far more hopeful than was the case ten years ago. The chief things wanted, as it seems to me, to quicken the seeds of good into more active life are (1) a prolongation of the period of elemen-

tary education, in order that girls may be trained, not only in the duties, but in the *functions* of womanhood at an age appropriate for the purpose; (2) freedom to those in charge of secondary schools to test and to elaborate varied schemes, adapted to the requirements and future lives of their particular types of pupils; (3) financial support to the training schools and colleges where opportunities are offered to acquire purely technical skill in the arts, upon the intelligent practice of which human efficiency depends, or to pursue advanced study of those branches of the subject upon which civilised life is based in the home and in the community; (4) judicious encouragement by every legitimate means in all our young people, not in girls only, of a higher conception of the dignity, duties, requirements, and potentialities of human life and of the vital responsibilities of parenthood. To this end a better sense of proportion must be developed. In the laudable desire to provide social culture for the masses, the equally essential element in national stability of biological fitness has been overlooked or undervalued. As a matter of fact both lines of development must be pursued, and the rising generation must be trained to follow them. It is surely already evident that a lopsided method of education, designed only to the attainment of intellectual culture, defeats its own ends. The youth of the nation must grasp the facts during its period of plastic impressionability that material and moral success have physical foundations.

Capacity for physical endurance is perhaps the only popular test of "fitness" ever applied to the national standard of vitality, therefore this conception of biological fitness must henceforth be enlarged; it must in future include capacity for rapid adaptation to new conditions, capacity for self-control, capacity to reproduce life in its healthiest form, and capacity to resist immorality and the importation of foreign vices. This is not a task beyond the power of education to achieve, for true education means the development of all that is best in body, mind, and spirit. It is competent to strengthen that which is biologically or ethically weak, to reform that which is economically unsound, and thus to

afford to the pregnant possibilities, now dawning on the social horizon, ample scope to bring forth fruitful actualities. But for this great achievement, time, patience, funds, tact, good judgment, and freedom to experiment must all be called into requisition and given fair play. Character, it has been wisely said, is the aftergrowth of activities under the influence of ideals, ideals which, to my way of thinking, must be permeated with the vivifying social principle of religion. The ideal of those concerned with the education of girls to-day is the production of a living, concrete, capable woman, possessed of any and every human virtue. I have briefly drawn your attention to some of the forces now directed towards or militating against the attainment of this ideal. In conclusion may I also remind you that the exhibition of these human virtues is the privilege of men as well as of women, and that it is only by the well-adjusted combination of male and female activities and ideals that one can hope to meet the national reproach of parental inefficiency, an unhealthy population, and an undisciplined youth.

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