A CHAPTER FOR BOYS

Boys, this chapter is for you. It is written and printed purposely for you. If you do not read another word in the book, read these few pages if you are old enough to do so. Read each line carefully and thoughtfully. You may not find anything to make you laugh—possibly you may: but you will be certain to find something of almost inestimable value to you in every line.

Who are Boys?—Boys are scarce now-a-days. In the days of Methuselah, male human beings were still boys when nearly a century old; twenty-five years ago boys were still such until well out of their “teens”; now the interval between infancy and the age at which the boy becomes a young man is so brief that boyhood is almost a thing of the past. The happy period of care-free, joyous innocence which formerly intervened between childhood and early manhood is now almost unobservable. Boys grow old too fast. They learn to imitate the vices and the manners of their seniors before they reach their teens, and are impatient to be counted as men, no matter how great may be their deficiencies, their unfitness for the important duties and responsibilities of life. The consequence of this inordinate haste and impatience to be old, is premature decay. Unfortunately the general tendency of the young members of the rising generation is to copy the vices of their elders, rather than the virtues of true manliness. A strong evidence of this fact, if there were no other, is the unnaturally old-looking faces which so many of our boys present. At the present time the average boy of twelve knows more of vice and sin than the youth of twenty of the past generation.

It is not so much for these human mushrooms, which may be not inaptly compared to toadstools which grow up in a single night and almost as speedily decay, that we write, but for the old-fashioned boys, the few such there may be, those who have not yet learned to love sin, those whose minds are still pure and uncontaminated. Those who have already begun a course of vice and wickedness we have little hope of reforming; but we are anxious to offer a few words of counsel and warning which may possibly help to save as brands plucked from a blazing fire, those whose moral sense is yet alive, who have quick and tender consciences, who aspire to be truly noble and good.

What are Boys for?—This question was answered with exact truthfulness by a little boy, who, when contemptuously accosted by a man with the remark, “What are you good for?” replied, “Men are made of such as we.” Boys are the beginnings of men. They sustain the same relation to men that the buds do to full-blown flowers. They are still more like the small green apples which first appear when the blossoms drop from the branches, compared with the ripe, luscious fruit which in autumn bends the heavy-laden boughs almost to breaking. Often, like the young apples, boys are green; but this is only natural, and should be considered no disgrace to the boys. If they grow up naturally they will ripen with age, like the fruit, developing at each successive stage of life additional attractions and excellent qualities.

Boys the Hope of the World.—A nation’s most valuable property is its boys. A nation which has poor, weakly, vicious boys will have still weaker, more vicious and untrustworthy men. A country with noble, virtuous, vigorous boys, is equally sure of having noble, pious, brave, and energetic men. Whatever debases, contaminates, or in any way injures the boys of a country, saps and undermines the very foundation of the nation’s strength and greatness. Save the boys from vice and crime, give them good training, physically, mentally, and morally, and the prosperity of the nation is assured.

Man the Masterpiece.—When a skillful artist perfects a work of art, a painting, a drawing, a statue, or some other work requiring great talent and exceeding all his other efforts, it is called his masterpiece. So man is the noblest work of God, the masterpiece of the Almighty. Numerous anecdotes are told of the sagacity of dogs, horses, elephants and other animals, of their intelligence and ingenious devices in overcoming obstacles, avoiding difficulties, etc. Our admiration and wonder are often excited by the scarcely less than human wisdom shown by these lowly brothers of the human race. We call them noble animals; but they are only noble brutes, at best. Compared with man, even in his most humble form, as seen in the wild savage that hunts and devours his prey like a wild beast, a lion or a tiger, they are immeasurably inferior. And in his highest development, man civilized, cultivated, Christianized, learned, generous, pious, certainly stands at the head of all created things.
Boys, do you love what is noble, what is pure, what is grand, what is good? You may each, if you will, become such yourselves. Let us consider for a moment.

How a Noble Character is Ruined.—A noble character is formed by the development of the good qualities of an individual. A bad character is formed by the development of bad traits, or evil propensities. In other words, sin is the cause of the demoralization of character, the debasing of the mind, the loss of nobility of which we see so much around us in the world. Sin is the transgression of some law. There are two kinds of sins: those which are transgressions of the moral law, and those which are transgressions of physical laws. Both classes of sins are followed by penalties. If a person violates the laws of health, he is just as certain to suffer as though he tells a “falsehood, steals, murders, or commits any other crime. Perfect obedience to all of nature’s laws, including of course all moral laws, is necessary to perfect health and perfect nobleness of character. . . .

Self-Abuse.—Secret vice, masturbation, and self-pollution are other names applied to this same awful sin against nature and against God. We shall not explain here the exact nature of the sin, as very few boys are so ignorant or so innocent as to be unacquainted with it. To this sin and its awful consequences we now wish to call the attention of all who may read these lines.

A Dreadful Sin.—The sin of self-pollution is one of the vilest, the basest, and the most degrading that a human being can commit. It is worse than beastly. Those who commit it place themselves far below the meanest brute that breathes. The most loathsome reptile, rolling in the slush and slime of its stagnant pool, would not bemean itself thus. It is true that monkeys sometimes have the habit, but only when they have been taught it by vile men or boys. A boy who is thus guilty ought to be ashamed to look into the eyes of an honest dog. Such a boy naturally shuns the company of those who are pure and innocent. He cannot look with assurance into his mother’s face. It is difficult for any one to catch his eye, even for a few seconds. He feels his guilt and acts it out, thus making it known to every one. Let such a boy think how he must appear in the eyes of the Almighty. Let him only think of the angels, pure, innocent, and holy, who are eye-witnesses of his shameful practices. Is not the thought appalling? Would he dare commit such a sin in the presence of his father, his mother, or his sisters? No, indeed. How, then, will he dare to defile himself in the presence of Him from whose all-seeing eye nothing is hid?

The Bible utters the most solemn warnings against sexual sins. The inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by fire and brimstone for such transgressions. Onan was struck dead in the act of committing a vileness of this sort. For similar vices the wicked inhabitants of Palestine were destroyed, and their lands given to the Hebrews. For a single violation of the seventh commandment, one of the most notable Bible characters, David, suffered to the day of his death. Those who imagine that this sin is not a transgression of the seventh commandment may be assured that this most heinous, revolting, and unnatural vice is in every respect more pernicious, more debasing, and more immoral than what is generally considered as violation of the commandment which says, “Thou shalt not commit adultery,” and is itself a most flagrant violation of the same commandment.

Those who imagine that they “have a right to do as they please with themselves,” so long as no one else is immediately affected, must learn that we are not our own masters; we belong to our Creator, and are accountable to God not only for the manner in which we treat our fellow-men, but for how we treat ourselves, for the manner in which we use the bodies which he has given us. The man who commits suicide, who takes his own life, is a murderer as much as he who kills a fellow-man. So, also, he who pollutes himself in the manner we are considering, violates the seventh commandment, although the crime is in both cases committed against himself. Think of this, ye youth who defile yourselves in secret and seek to escape the punishment of sin. In Heaven a faithful record of your vile commandment-breaking is kept, and you must appear in the eyes of the Almighty. Let him only think of the angels, pure, innocent, and holy, who are eye-witnesses of his shameful practices. Is not the thought appalling? Would he dare commit such a sin in the presence of his father, his mother, or his sisters? No, indeed. How, then, will he dare to defile himself in the presence of Him from whose all-seeing eye nothing is hid?

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A CHAPTER FOR GIRLS

We have written this chapter especially for girls, and we sincerely hope that many will read it with an earnest desire to be benefited by so doing. The subject of which we have to write is a delicate one, and one which, we regret exceedingly, needs to be written about. But our experience as a physician has proven to us again and again that it is of the utmost importance that something be said, that words of warning should be addressed particularly to the girls and maidens just emerging into womanhood, on a subject which vitally concerns not only their own future health and happiness, but the prosperity and destiny of the race. Probably no one can be better fitted to speak on this subject than the physician. A physician who has given careful attention to the health and the causes of ill-health of ladies, and who has had opportunities for observing the baneful influence exerted upon the bodies and minds of girls and young women by the evil practices of which it is our purpose here to speak, can better appreciate than can others the magnitude of the evil, and is better prepared to speak upon the subject understandably and authoritatively. Gladly would we shun the task which has been pressed upon us, but which we have long avoided, were it not for the sense of the urgent need of its performance.
of which our professional experience has thoroughly convinced us. We cannot keep our lips closed when our eyes are
witnesses to the fact that thousands of the fairest and best of our girls and maidens are being beguiled into everlasting
ruin by a soul-destroying vice which works unseen, and often so insidiously that its results are unperceived until the
work of ruin is complete.

The nature of our subject necessitates that we should speak plainly, though delicately, and we shall endeavor to
make our language comprehensible by any one old enough to be benefited by the perusal of this chapter. We desire that all
who read these pages may receive lasting benefit by so doing. The subject is one upon which every girl ought to be
informed, and to which she should give serious attention, at least sufficiently long to become intelligent concerning the evils
and dangers to which girls are exposed from this source.

**Girlhood.**—Nothing is so suggestive of innocence and purity as the simple beauty of girlhood when seen in its
natural freshness, though too seldom, now-a-days, is it possible to find in our young girls the natural grace and healthy
beauty which were common among the little maidens of a quarter of a century ago. The ruddy cheeks and bright eyes and
red lips which are indicative of a high degree of healthy vigor are not so often seen to-day among the small girls in our
public schools and passing to and fro upon the streets. The pale cheeks, languid eyes, and almost colorless lips which we
more often see, indicate weakly constitutions and delicate health, and prophesy a short and suffering life to many. Various
causes are at work to produce this unfortunate decline; and while we hope that in the larger share of cases, bad diet,
improper clothing, confinement in poorly ventilated rooms with too little exercise, and similar causes, are the active agents,
we are obliged to recognize the fact that there is in far too many cases another cause, the very mention of which makes us
blush with shame that its existence should be possible. But of this we shall speak again presently.

Real girls are like the just opening buds of beautiful flowers. The beauty and fragrance of the full-blossomed rose
scarcely exceed the delicate loveliness of the swelling bud which shows between the sections of its bursting calyx the crimson
petals tightly folded beneath. So the true girl possesses in her sphere as high a degree of attractive beauty as she can hope to
attain in after-years, though of a different character. But genuine girls are scarce. Really natural little girls are almost as scarce
as real boys. Too many girls begin at a very early age to attempt to imitate the pride and vanity manifested by older girls and
young ladies. It is by many supposed that to be ladylike should be the height of the ambition of girls as soon as they are old
enough to be taught respecting propriety of behavior, which is understood to mean that they must appear as unnatural as
possible in attempting to act like grown-up ladies. Many mothers who wish their daughters to be models of perfection, but
whose ideas of perfect deportment are exceedingly superficial in character, dress up their little daughters in fine clothing, beau-
tiful to look at, but very far from what is required for health and comfort, and then continually admonish the little ones that
they must keep very quiet and “act like little ladies.” Such a course is a most pernicious one. It fosters pride and vanity, and
inculcates an entirely wrong idea of what it is to be ladylike,—to be a true lady, to be true to nature as a girl. Such artificial
training is damaging alike to mind and body; and it induces a condition of mind and of the physical system which is very con-
ductive to the encouragement of dangerous tendencies.

**How to Develop Beauty and Loveliness.**—All little girls want to be beautiful. Girls in general care much more
for their appearance than do boys. They have finer tastes, and greater love for whatever is lovely and beautiful. It is a nat-
ural desire, and should be encouraged. A pure, innocent, beautiful little girl is the most lovely of all God’s creatures. All
are not equally beautiful, however, and cannot be; but all may be beautiful to a degree that will render them attractive. Let
all little girls who want to be pretty, handsome, or good looking, give attention and we will tell them how. Those who are
homely should listen especially, for all may become good-looking, though all cannot become remarkably beautiful. First
of all, it is necessary that the girl who wishes to be handsome, to be admired, should be good. She must learn to love what
is right and true. She must be pure in mind and act. She must be simple in her manners, modest in her deportment, and kind
in her ways.

Second in importance, though scarcely so, is the necessity of health. No girl can long be beautiful without health;
and no girl who enjoys perfect health can be really ugly in appearance. A healthy countenance is always attractive. Disease
wastes the rounded features, bleaches out the roses from the cheeks and the vermilion from the lips. It destroys the luster
of the eye and the elasticity of the step. Health is essential to beauty. In fact, if we consider goodness as a state of moral
health, then health is the one great requisite of beauty.

Health is obtained and preserved by the observance of those natural laws which the Creator has appointed for the
government of our bodies. The structure of these bodies we may do well to study for a few moments.

**The Human Form Devine.**—Go with us to one of the large cities, and we will show you one of the most mar-
velous pieces of mechanism ever invented, a triumph of ingenuity, skill, and patient persevering labor for many years. This
wonderful device is a clock which will run more than one hundred years. It is so constructed that it indicates not only the
time of day, the day of the month and year, itself making all the necessary changes for leap year, but shows the motions
of the earth around the sun, together with the movements and positions of all the other planets, and many other marvelous
things. When it strikes at the end of each hour, groups of figures go through a variety of curious movements most closely
resembling the appearance and actions of human beings.
The maker of this remarkable clock well deserves the almost endless praise which he receives for his skill and patience, for his work is certainly wonderful; but the great clock, with its curious and complicated mechanism, is a coarse and bungling affair when compared with the human body. The clock doubtless contains thousands of delicate wheels and springs, and is constructed with all the skill imaginable; and yet the structure of the human body is infinitely more delicate. The clock has no intelligence; but a human being can hear, see, feel, taste, touch, and think. The clock does only what its maker designed to have it do, and can do nothing else. The human machine is a living mechanism; it can control its own movements, can do as it will, within certain limits. What is very curious indeed, the human machine has the power to mend itself, so that when it needs repairs it is not necessary to send it to a shop for the purpose, but all that is required is to give nature an opportunity and the system repairs itself.

**A Wonderful Process.**—We have not space to describe all the wonderful mechanism of this human machine, but must notice particularly one of its most curious features, a provision by which other human beings, living machines like itself, are produced. All living creatures possess this power. A single potato placed in the ground becomes a dozen or more, by a process of multiplying. A little seed planted in the earth grows up to be a plant, produces flowers, and from the flowers come other seeds, not one, but often a great many, sometimes hundreds from a single seed. Insects, fishes, birds, and all other animals, thus multiply. So do human beings, and in a similar manner. The organs by which this most marvelous process is carried on in plants and animals, including also human beings, are called sexual organs. Flowers are the sexual organs of plants. And flowers are always the most fragrant and the most beautiful when they are engaged in this wonderful and curious work.

**Human Buds.**—A curious animal which lives near the seashore, in shallow water, attached to a rock like a water plant, puts out little buds which grow awhile and then drop off, and after a time become large individuals like the parent, each in turn producing buds like the one from which it grew. Human beings are formed by a similar process. Human buds are formed by an organ for the purpose possessed only by the female sex, and these, under proper circumstances, develop into infant human beings. The process, though so simply stated, is a marvelously complicated one, which cannot be fully explained here; indeed, it is one of the mysteries which it is beyond the power of human wisdom fully to explain.

The production of these human buds is one of the most important and sacred duties of woman. It is through this means that she becomes a mother, which is one of the grandest and noblest functions of womanhood. It is the motherly instinct that causes little girls to show such fondness for dolls, a perfectly natural feeling which may be encouraged to a moderate degree without injury.

**How Beauty is Marred.**—As already remarked, mental, moral and physical health are the requisites for true beauty, and to secure these, obedience to all the laws of health is required. The most beautiful face is soon marred when disease begins its ravages in the body. The most beautiful character is as speedily spoiled by the touch of moral disease, or sin. The face is a mirror of the mind, the character; and a mind full of evil, impure thoughts is certain to show itself in the face in spite of rosy cheeks and dimples, ruby lips and bewitching smiles. The character is written on the face as plainly as the face may be pictured by an artist on canvas.

To be more explicit, the girl who disregards the laws of health, who eats bad food, eats at all hours or at unseasonable hours, sits up late at night, attends fashionable parties and indulges in the usual means of dissipation there afforded, dancing, wine, rich suppers, etc., who carefully follows the fashions in her dress, lacing her waist to attain the fashionable degree of slenderness, wearing thin, narrow-toed gaiters with French heels, and insensibly clothing the limbs in cold weather, and who in like manner neglects to comply with the requirements of health in other important particulars, may be certain that sooner or later, certainly at no distant day, she will become as unattractive and homely as she can wish not to be. Girls and young ladies who eat largely of fat meat, rich cakes and pies, confectionery, iced creams, and other dietetic abominations, cannot avoid becoming sallow and hollow-eyed. The cheeks may be ever so plump and rosy, they will certainly lose their freshness and become hollow and thin. Chalk and rouge will not hide the defect, for everybody will disabuse of its beauty, and to secure these, obedience to all the laws of health is required. The most beautiful face is soon marred when disease begins its ravages in the body. The most beautiful character is as speedily spoiled by the touch of moral disease, or sin. The face is a mirror of the mind, the character; and a mind full of evil, impure thoughts is certain to show itself in the face in spite of rosy cheeks and dimples, ruby lips and bewitching smiles. The character is written on the face as plainly as the face may be pictured by an artist on canvas.

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**A Beauty-Destroying Vice.**—But by far the worst enemy of beauty and health of body, mind, and soul, we have not yet mentioned. It is a sin concerning which we would gladly keep silence; but we cannot see so many of our most beautiful and promising girls and young ladies annually being ruined, often for this world and the next alike, without uttering the word of warning needed.

As before remarked, the function of maternity, which is the object of the sexual system in woman, when rightly exercised is the most sacred and elevated office which a woman can perform for the world. The woman who is a true mother has an opportunity of doing for the race more than all other human agencies combined. The mother’s influence is the controlling influence in the world. The mother molds the character of her children. She can make of their plastic minds almost what she will if she is herself prepared for the work. On the other hand, misuse or abuse of the sexual organism is visited in girls and woman, as in boys and men, with the most fearful penalties. Nothing will sooner deprive a girl or young lady of the maidenly grace and freshness with which nature blesses woman in her early years than secret vice. We have the greatest difficulty in making ourself believe that it is possible for beings designed by nature to be pure and innocent, in all
respects free from impurity of any sort, to become so depraved by sin as to be willing to devote themselves to so vile and filthy a practice. Yet the frequency with which cases have come under our observation which clearly indicate the alarming prevalence of the practice, even among girls and young women who would naturally be least suspected, compels us to recognize the fact. The testimony of many eminent physicians whose opportunities for observation have been very extensive shows that the evil is enormously greater than people generally are aware. Instructors of the youth, of large experience, assert the same. Nor is the evil greater in America than in some other countries. One writer declares that the vice is almost universal among the girls of Russia, which may be due to the low condition in which the women of that country are kept.

**Terrible Effects of Secret Vice.**—The awful effects of this sin against God and nature, this soul-and-body-destroying vice, become speedily visible in those who are guilty of it. The experienced eye needs no confession on the part of the victim to read the whole story of sinful indulgence and consequent disease. The vice stamps its insignia upon the countenance; it shows itself in the walk, in the changed disposition and the loss of healthy vigor. It is not only impossible for a victim of this sinful practice to hide from the all-seeing eye of God the vileness perpetrated in secret, but it is also useless to attempt to hide from human eyes the awful truth.

Headache, side-ache, back-ache, pains in the chest, and wandering pains in various parts of the body,—these are but a few of the painful ailments from which girls who are guilty of this sin suffer. Many of the tender spines which cause great solicitude on the part of parents and physicians, who fear that disease of the spine is threatening the life of a beloved daughter, not infrequently originate in this way. Much of the hysteria which renders wretched the lives of thousands of young ladies and the fond friends who are obliged to care for and attend them, arises from sexual transgression of the kind of which we are speaking. The blanched cheeks, hollow, expressionless eyes, and rough, pimply skins of many school-girls are due to this cause alone. We do not mean by this to intimate that every girl who has pimples upon her face is guilty of secret vice; but this sin is undoubtedly a very frequent cause of the unpleasant eruption which so often appears upon the foreheads of both sexes. It would be very unjust, however, to charge a person with the sin unless some further evidence than that of an eruption on the face was afforded.

The inability to study, to apply themselves in any way except when stimulated by something of a very exciting character, which many girls exhibit, is in a large proportion of cases due to the practice of which we are writing. Often enough the effects which are attributed to overstudy are properly due to this debasing habit. We have little faith in the great outcry made in certain quarters about the damaging effects of study upon the health of young ladies. A far less worthy cause is in many cases the true one, to which is attributable the decline in health at a critical period when all the vital forces of the system are necessarily called into action to introduce the activity of a new function.

Hundreds of girls break down in health just as they are entering womanhood. At from twelve to eighteen years of age the change naturally occurs which transforms the girl into a woman by the development of functions previously latent. This critical period is one through which every girl in health ought to pass with scarcely any noticeable disturbance; and if during the previous years of life the laws of health were observed, there would seldom be any unusual degree of suffering at this time. Those who have before this period been addicted to the vile habit of which we are writing, will almost invariably show at this time evidences of the injury which has been wrought. The unnatural excitement of the organs before the period of puberty, lays the foundation for life-long disease. When that critical epoch arrives, the organs are found in a state of congestion often bordering on inflammation. The increased congestion which naturally occurs at this time in many cases is sufficient to excite most serious disease. Here is the beginning of a great many of the special diseases which are the bane and shame of the sex. Displacements of various sorts, congestions, neuralgia of the ovaries, leucorrhoea, or whites, and a great variety of kindred maladies, are certain to make their appearance at this period or soon after in those who have previously been guilty of self-abuse. If the evil influences already at work are augmented by tight lacing, improper dressing of the extremities, hanging heavy skirts upon the hips, and fashionable dissipation generally, the worst results are sure to follow, and the individual is certain to be a subject for the doctors for a good portion of her life.

A talented writer some time since contributed to a popular magazine an article entitled, “The Little Health of Women,” which contained many excellent hints respecting the influences at work to undermine the health and destroy the constitutions of American women; but he did not even hint at this potent cause, which, we firmly believe, is responsible for a far greater share of the local disease and general poor health of girls, young women, and married ladies, than has been generally recognized. These are startling facts, but we are prepared to substantiate them.

1. Why was Kellogg obsessed with the “secret vice”?
2. Does he imply that passion and eroticism are suddenly incompatible with the demands of modern industrial culture?
3. How would Kellogg define the role and destiny of women? Of men?