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Title: Almost A Man

Author: Mary Wood-Allen

Release Date: June 6, 2009 [EBook #29056]

Language: English

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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK ALMOST A MAN ***

ALMOST A MAN.

BY
MARY WOOD-ALLEN, M. D.

Author of TEACHING TRUTH, CHILD-CONFIDENCE REWARDED, THE MAN WONDERFUL IN THE HOUSE BEAUTIFUL,
etc.

“What is man that thou art mindful of him?”

DAVID.

“Every true man is a cause, a country and an age.”

EMERSON.

“God on thee
Abundantly his gifts hath also poured;
Inward and outward both his image fair.”

MILTON.

PUBLISHED BY
WOOD-ALLEN PUBLISHING CO.
ANN ARBOR, MICH.

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1895.

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PRELUDE.

Two lads had crossed the sunny meadow-land of childhood and stood by the gate, at the entrance to the rougher paths of youth leading up to the grander heights of maturity. They glanced backward, but not with regret, for their eyes shone with eagerness to climb the upward way. As they waited, an angel came bearing a gift for each, which he gave them, saying: "I have brought you a wondrous gift, not for yourselves but for others. Listen."

And they bent their heads and listened. And one said: "I hear most entrancing music. It thrills my very being. It is for me, for me."

But the angel said: "Listen again. Shut your ears to those bewildering tones and you will hear a deeper, holier strain."

But the youth said: "No, I hear only that melody which speaks to my own heart. I can hear nothing else."

The other youth too took the gift and, bending his head at the command of the angel, said: "I hear that sweet entrancing strain which speaks to myself, and which promises me pleasure; but deeper than all that I hear a tone soft, sweet and low, that sounds like the voices of happy children, and of a mother singing to her babe."

The angel smiled. "It is for them," he said, "that you must keep your gift. And in the years to come that music will be to you the sweetest in the world."

So the youths started on their devious ways through the hilly land of youth. There were bird-songs and flowers; there were bright paths, and dark ones; there were sunny by-paths, which ended in dreamy forests; there were pitfalls in unexpected places; there was often sorrow where they looked for joy, and failure where they expected success. And the one listened oft to the entrancing music of his angelic gift, and was led to think only of himself, and his eye lost its fire, his feet often stumbled, and the days and nights had no pleasure for him. As he reached the heights of maturity he was met by a bright creature who laughed with great joy when he offered her his love and said exultantly: "I have kept myself pure for you," and he, knowing his own dark secrets, could make no reply but hung his head and was silent. And, thus silent, he heard no more the bewildering music of his youth, but instead there came to his ears the sound of a broken-hearted woman's sobs, and the weeping of children mourning the birthright that had been lost for them in their father's wayward youth. And the man said sighingly:

"O that I had my innocence again
My untouched honor. But I wish in vain."

But the other lad turned a deaf ear to the brain-bewildering music and listened with his soul for the happy melodies of the future. And his eye grew brighter and his strength increased and his paths were straight and clean, and as he neared the heights of maturity he was met by one whose robe was shining in its brightness and who whispered: "I have kept myself pure for you."

And gladly he answered: "And I for you;" and so their lives became one, and the melody of happy children's voices drew nearer and nearer, and listening to the sweet voice of the mother singing to her babe, and looking into the bright and rosy faces that with every glance and motion thanked him for their dower of health and honor, he blessed the great Creator from whom he had received the wondrous gift of potential fatherhood, and gave thanks that he had wisely listened to the angel's voice bidding him keep his gift for those whose life, in the years to come, was to be his holiest possession.

ALMOST A MAN.

By Mary Wood-Allen, M. D.

"Let me take your book of quotations, please."

"Certainly, if I can find it. O, I remember. I let Susie Glenn take it. No doubt I can find it in her desk."

As she spoke Miss Bell walked to the desk and, finding the desired book, took possession of it. An open note dropped from it and fell upon the floor. Picking it up Miss Bell read: "My darling little sweetheart," and glancing at the close saw the signature, "Carl." Sending of notes in school was forbidden, therefore Miss Bell had no compunction of conscience in taking possession of this one, and, on the impulse of the moment, read it aloud to Miss Lane, her fellow-teacher. It was not only sentimental in tone but there were mysterious phrases which seemed to hold a deep and sinful significance. The women looked at each other with sorrowful faces.

"What shall I do about it?" asked Miss Bell.

"What a depth of wickedness it reveals!" exclaimed Miss Lane. "Who would have imagined that such a nice appearing boy as Carl Woodford could be so base? And Susie Glenn too, such a shy, modest little creature as she seems."

"Do you suppose it is really as bad as it seems to us? Those expressions which appear to indicate such--such almost criminal intimacy perhaps they do not understand fully."

"Don't you believe it," said Miss Lane. "I tell you these children are wiser in sin than we older people can imagine. That boy needs to be whipped within an inch of his life, the little reprobate! I'd give him such a lecture as would make his eyes open wide for once. I'd make him understand that he'd better not let me catch him in such mischief again. And I'd tell Mrs. Glenn about it so that she could punish Susie."

"I really am afraid that the result would not be what we wish. Suppose we go and talk it over with Dr. Barrett. Maybe she can tell us what to do."

Dr. Barrett received the ladies with cordiality and professed herself willing to aid them in the solution of their problem. She did not appear as shocked as they did, and even smiled a little as Miss Lane, in indignant tones, read aloud the offending note.

"Don't you think that little rascal should be nearly annihilated?" she asked, turning to the Doctor.

"I think he should be instructed," replied the latter. "Will you send him to me, Miss Bell?"

"Most gladly, but I don't believe he will come."

"Yes he will, if you don't frighten him beforehand. Don't say a word to him about the affair, but send him with a note to me and tell him to wait for an answer."

The next evening Carl appeared at the Doctor's residence with the note from Miss Bell. "I am to wait for an answer," he said.

Dr. Barrett only nodded as she wrote on steadily for a moment, seeming too much engrossed in her work to notice him. Then she read the note, thought a moment, excused herself and left the room. Returning immediately she said, "It will be half an hour before the answer is ready. Can you wait?"

"O certainly."

"Then sit down here and look over the Youth's Companion while I finish my letter."

For some moments there was silence and then the Doctor, laying down her pen, turned to the boy and said, pleasantly; "You are Carl Woodford, are you not?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"It has been so long since I saw you that you have almost grown out of my knowledge. You are getting to be almost a man. You must be fifteen years old."

"Not quite. I will be next June."

"Almost a man," said Dr. Barrett softly as she looked thoughtfully into the fire. After a moment's silence she asked, "Carl, what is it to be a man?"

The boy drew himself up with a self-conscious air as he replied.

"Why, to have your growth, and get into business for yourself."

"Well, that is not quite it," said the Doctor smiling, "for I have my growth and am in business for myself, and yet I am not a man."

"Maybe it means having a mustache," said Carl, with a slight flush.

"That has something to do with it certainly, but Mrs. Flynn has a mustache, and she is not a man."

"Well, I don't know how to explain it then," said Carl.

"You have studied grammar, will you parse the word man?"

"Man is a common noun, masculine gender, third---

"What does masculine gender mean?"

"It means male."

"Then to be a man means to be a male. How does the grammar define gender?"

"The distinction of nouns with regard to sex."

"Have you studied physiology?"

"Yes'm."

"Was it the physiology of man or woman?"

"Why, it didn't say anything but physiology."

"You studied, then, only those organs in which men and women are alike, as in their muscular and nervous systems, and in the organs of digestion; in fact you learned only of the organs which are for the preservation of the individual. You learned nothing of them in regard to sex, which is termed special physiology."

A wave of color was creeping over Carl's face, seeing which the Doctor said:

"As you have never studied this special physiology supposing you try to forget that any one has ever told you anything about it, and let us for a few minutes talk of it as of God's laws. We believe God to be pure, and we cannot believe that he would make a law that was founded on impurity. It is true we are able to think of his laws in an impure way, but that is our fault, not his. Let us now try to think his pure thoughts after him. If there are two sexes created by the Almighty he must have a pure purpose in creating them. We seldom think how much of beauty and melody and loveliness is due to sex.

"It is because of sex that we are gathered in families and enjoy all the delights of home. It is because of sex that we have ties of kindred, brothers, sisters, father, mother, uncles, aunts and cousins. Think of the pleasant home gatherings at Christmas or Thanksgiving, or upon family birthdays, with all the relatives, old and young, meeting in love and sympathy; think of the sweet prattle of children in the home; think of the tender ministrations of mother or sister in times of sorrow or illness or death, and remember that these are possible because of sex. Men may build themselves fine club houses where they congregate to smoke or drink or eat together, but these are not homes. Women may go away by themselves into a convent and give up the world, but in so doing they give up the home; for in a real true home there must be parents and children, and this comes through sex. We may go even farther and say with Mr. Grant Allen that everything high and ennobling in our nature springs directly from the fact of sex. He claims that to it 'we owe our love of color, of graceful forms, of melodious sound, of rhythmical motion, the evolution of music, of poetry, of romance, of painting, of sculpture, of decorative art, of dramatic entertainment. From it,' he says, 'springs the love of beauty, around it all beautiful arts circle as their centre. Its subtle aroma pervades all literature, and to it we owe the heart and all that is best within it.'

"We read of knights of old fighting for 'fayre ladye,' of heroes who died to save wives and children; we cannot take up a book of poetry without realizing how love of men and women has been the inspiration of the poet in all ages. And this is not all that we owe to sex. In all organic life we find the same force at work. The song of the nightingale is a call to his mate, the chirp of cricket, the song of the thrush, the note of the grasshopper, every charming voice in wild nature are notes of love, and were it not for these, field and forest would be silent. Among the animals we can trace the beauty of form and of covering to the same source. And even in the inanimate world of plants and trees we find sex as the source of life and beauty. The bright tinted flowers are the homes of the father and mother and babies of the plant and without the male and female principle in plants there would be no bud or blossom and no fruit. Remember when you see the beauty of the apple orchard in the spring and the glowing fruit in the autumn that these are the expression of sex-life in the tree."

"My!" exclaimed Carl, "I never thought of all that before."

"I presume not, and many who are older than you have no thoughts of sex but those which are low and vile. But when you consider how the same principle reaches through all nature, and upon it depends so much that is beautiful and charming you cannot believe that is in itself vile and unholy, can you? If we are to think God's thoughts after him we must come to look upon sex as something to be thought of and spoken of only with reverence, never to be jested about or debased in any way. You begin to see that more is involved in the coming into manhood than you had supposed. But we have not gone over the whole matter yet. You have read the first chapter of Genesis how that God made man in his own image, and out of the dust of the earth. We do not suppose that he made him out of dirt and water, as a child makes mud-pies, but we may accept this as a statement of the scientific fact that in man are found the same elements as in the earth, such as iron, soda, lime, etc. What we want to think of now is the statement that God created man by his direct power. Then we are told he made woman also. These are the first living human beings of whom we have record. Who is the third?"

"Cain."

"And who made Cain?"

"God," answered Carl glibly, as if that must be the only orthodox answer.

"In the same way that he made Adam and Eve?"

Carl blushed and was silent.

"You were not embarrassed when I spoke of the creation of Adam and Eve, you have no reason to be embarrassed when I speak of the creation of Cain. All was in accordance with the divine

will, and must therefore be right. We cannot say positively that God thought this or that, but we have a right to judge from his acts what his purposes were. We have a right to suppose that he created the earth intending to people it with human beings. Of course every possible plan for doing this was open to him. He might have created each individual as he did Adam, but what would have been the result? We should have stood, each one alone, in selfish solitariness, like a lot of ten-pins, able to knock each other down but not to help each other up. Each one would have been thinking only of himself and his own selfish interests. This plan could not commend itself to a compassionate Creator, and we can imagine that he would say to himself: 'That would never do. I must put these, my children, in such relation to each other that they will have love for each other; that they will be bound by ties so strong that nothing can break them; they must be created in such a way that they will also understand their relation to me and love me as their life-giver. To do this I will share with them my greatest power, that of creation. I will let them help me people the world. By this creative power they shall come to understand how I, their heavenly Father, love them, and yearn over them, and by their dependence as children upon their parents they shall learn to depend upon and trust me.' From the plan God adopted for peopling the earth we may suppose this to have been his process of thought. So you see that sex comes as a wondrous gift from God, a gift endowed with a marvelous power, and therefore to be held most sacred. When I spoke of you as being almost a man it was with the thought that now is being conferred upon you this gift of sex."

Carl looked up with some surprise. "Why, I have always been a boy."

"True. And a boy is a being who will become a man. But he is not endowed with the functions of sex until he is about fourteen years old. Then sex begins to make itself felt in his whole being. He grows taller rapidly; he gains in breadth; he begins to see the long-looked-for mustache; he notices the growth of the special organs of sex; he begins to feel more manly; to enjoy the society of girls as never before; and desires to treat them with more attention. This is a time when, if he is wrongly taught, he may fall into great wrong-doing and injure himself, and not that alone, but those who are to come after him. I have not yet told you of the great responsibilities that come with this gift of sex."

Dr. Barrett rose and, bringing a book from the shelves, opened it and showed Carl an illustration, saying; "Did you ever see such a picture as this?"

"What are they?" asked he. "They look like pollywogs."

"As much like them as anything. But they are not pollywogs. They have a bigger sounding name than that. They are called *spermatozoa*, or each one is a *spermatozoon*. They are so tiny that they are not visible except with the aid of a microscope, and yet they are alive and very active. They live and move in a fluid called *semen*, and they are the living principle contributed by the male to the formation of a new creature. Each one contains in itself all the particular traits, characteristics or talents which the father would confer on the child of which this spermatozoon would form a part. You are like your father in some things, I suppose."

"Yes, I am like papa in size and in my love for mathematics. He says I have his quick temper, too."

"That leads me to speak of another fact. You see that you were a part of your father during his whole life, and you were affected by all that affected him. You were changed or modified by his habits. If he tried to curb his quick temper, it has made it easier for you to control yourself; but if he allowed it full sway, it has made it harder for you. If he were truthful and honest, it has made it easy for you to be the same; but if he were wild and dissipated, it would make it easier for you to yield to the same temptations."

"Was that what he meant when he said he was not surprised that Will Grey was so bad a boy, for his father was a very wild young man?"

"Yes, that was exactly what he meant."

"If that is so why don't fathers tell their boys about it so that they can behave better when they are young?"

"That is just what I think they ought to do, but unfortunately people have thought they must not talk of these things to young folks for fear it will make them bad instead of good."

"Well, I guess that would depend upon the way they told it. Now they don't tell it right, but leave the boys to be told in wrong ways, and that really does lead them to be bad. No one ever talked to me as you have to-night, and I am sure it makes me want to be better."

"That ought to be the effect, and I believe it would be if boys were only 'told right,' as you say. But I have told you only half the story. Here is another picture. These are called *ova*. One is an *ovum*, and these are the principle the mother gives to the future child. They are greatly magnified. It would take 240 of them lying side by side to make a row an inch long, so we say they are $\frac{1}{240}$ of an inch in diameter, but tiny as they are, each ovum contains all the traits or talents that the mother gives to the child of which this particular ovum may form a part. Your mother is English, your father American. Their childhood and youth were spent thousands of



miles apart, and yet both were working by the habits of their lives to create you in your peculiar traits and talents. Are you like your parents in any of their capabilities?"

"Yes, I am like mother in her love for music; you know she is a fine musician."

"Yes, and in the cultivation of her own musical ability she made it easier for you to learn music; just as your father, in his study as an engineer, has given you a love for mathematics."

"But my grandfather and great-grandfather were engineers, and I am going to be one, too."

"It is true that you inherit from your grandparents, also, but it must be through your parents, and they may have changed the direction of the inheritance.

This important fact you should know and remember. You can change yourself by education so that the inheritance of your children may be quite changed. For example, if you know that you lack perseverance, you can, by constantly making a mighty effort to overcome this defect, compel yourself to persevere, and this would tend to give your children perseverance. So you see we need not despair because we have inherited faults from our ancestors, but we should determine all the more that we will not pass these defects on to later generations."

"I guess that is what Dr. Brice meant when he said that mother's good care of her health had overcome in us children to a great extent the tendency to consumption which is in her family. Nearly all my cousins on her side die with it, but when she was a little girl her father made her live out of doors all the time and she grew strong, and we none of us seem to have any tendency to consumption."

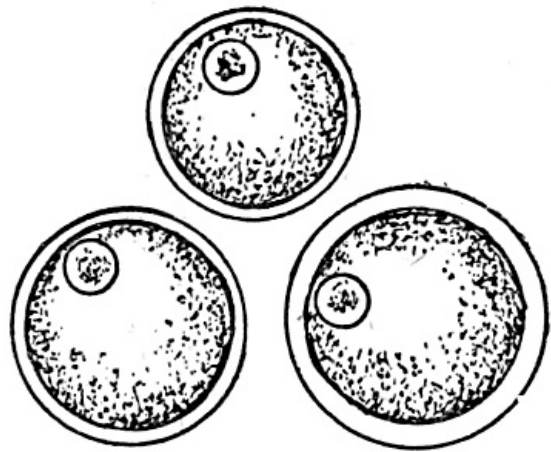
"You see then the value of caring for yourself in youth, not only for your own sake but for that of your children. Your mother did not know that she would ever have children to be benefitted by her out-door life. But one day she met a young man who pleased her, and as they grew to know each other better they came to love each other so that they wished to leave home and friends and make their own home and live their united lives separate and apart from all the rest of the world. So they were married, as we say. Marriage is the union of one man and one woman under the sanction of the law. This is the closest and most sacred human relation. In this relation the *spermatozoon* of the man unites with the germ or *ovum* of the woman and a new life is begun. When your parents knew that such a little life had begun in their home they felt a great and holy joy, and desired that every good might surround it in its development. You were the first to come into your father's home. After your life had begun you were still so small as not to be visible to the naked eye, and would have been lost had you come into the world. But a home had been prepared for you in your mother's body, where day by day you grew and grew. The food which she ate nourished you as well as herself. The air which she breathed was life to you as well as to her.

"You have seen the father-bird bringing food to the mother-bird as she sits upon her eggs and waits for the birdlings to come forth, and you have thought it a pretty sight to watch his tender care of her. Even so your father watched over your mother and you. He provided everything as pleasant as possible, he removed every care from her path so that she might be happy and so make you happy. His love for her took on a new and strange tenderness it had not known before. And she, holding you warm and close in the embrace of her body, thought of you and loved you. She wondered how you would look; she dreamed of you; she fancied she could feel the touch of your fluttering fingers; she made your little wardrobe and with each stitch wove in some tender thought of the baby whom she had never seen. Then one day she cried out with great anguish of body but joy of heart, 'O my baby is coming.' Then through long hours she suffered, going down almost to the gates of death that you might have life. But she never murmured; in spite of all her pain and anguish of body her very soul was full of rejoicing that soon she would hold you in her arms. When all those hours of peril and anxiety were past and you were laid in your mother's arms, your father came and bent over you both with a measureless love, and looking into your little face they knew what the Scripture meant when it said, 'And they twain shall be one flesh,' for were not you a living fulfillment of that saying? You were a part of each united in a living being who belonged to them both. Then for the first time could they realize, even dimly, the yearning, tender love of their heavenly Father who had granted to them to know by experience his feelings towards his children."

Great tears had gathered in the boy's eyes as she talked, and now with choking voice he said, "I don't think I can ever be disobedient again, Dr. Barrett. I did not understand it all as I do now. You know we only hear these things talked of among the boys, and I had come to feel that there was some reason why I ought to be ashamed of my father and mother; but it all looks so different to me now. I wish you could talk to the other boys as you have to me."

"It may not be possible for me to do so, although I should be glad to do it, but you can help them to think more truly on these subjects. You can especially help them to treat women and girls with more respect than they often do, because you can see how an injury to any girl is an injury to the whole world."

"I don't quite see that," said Carl.



"You can see that if any one had injured your mother in her girlhood it would have been an injury to all her children, can you not?"

"O yes."

"And that injury might be passed on to future generations. There lived a poor girl, about a hundred years ago, who was uncared for by good people and wronged by evil ones, and to-day she is known as a 'mother of criminals,' and no one can tell where the mischief will end. You would feel very indignant if you knew that some one had done your mother an injury in her girlhood, and you would feel the same way should any one wrong your sisters."

"I knocked Bill Jones down last week because he said something to my sister Kate."

"You felt a righteous anger and manifested it. Well, in all probability you will some day marry. If so, there is in the world to-day the girl who will be your wife. How do you want her to be treated by the boys who are her school-companions? Do you like to think that they are rough with her, or playing at loving with her? Is it a pleasant thought that she is allowing them to caress her or write her silly sentimental notes?"

Carl's face was scarlet, but he answered bravely; "No, it isn't."

The Doctor continued. "Some day, in all likelihood, a little girl-child will climb upon your knee and call you papa. No creature can ever be to you what that little daughter will be. If any one should injure her---"

"I'd kill him," broke in Carl hotly.

"If you feel that way, dear boy, you should remember that every girl is some one's daughter, perhaps some one's sister, will probably be some one's wife and some one's mother, so that all girls should be sacred to you, treated with chivalrous courtesy and protected even as you feel you would protect those who may belong especially to you."

"But don't you believe in boys and girls being friends at all?"

"Most assuredly I do. Nothing is more charming than the frank comradeship of girls and boys, and that is why I am so sorry to see them spoil it with sentimentality. They ought to be good friends, helping each other, having jolly good times together, but never in ways that will bring a blush to the cheeks of either, now, or in the years to come."

A rap sounded on the door and the maid entered with a note which she gave to the doctor, who handed it to Carl, saying, "Here is the note for Miss Bell. I have kept you waiting a long time, but I hope it has not been unprofitable."

"Indeed it has not. I am ever so much obliged to you, I am sure."

"And if you ever wish to talk to me again you will feel free to come, will you not?"

"Yes, ma'am, I surely will," answered the lad with a frank clasp of the hand.

"Wait a moment," said the doctor, "I have just thought of a little book that I am sure you will be interested in reading. It is called 'A Gateway and a Gift,' and it deals with some of the questions we have been talking about this evening. You can lend it to some of your boy friends if you wish."

"Thank you," said Carl, taking the book which the doctor handed him, and then with another "Good night," he walked away in the darkness.

The note which he gave to Miss Bell the next morning read merely:

"Don't say anything to Carl. Just wait."

If Miss Bell had seen a note slipped by Carl into Susie Glenn's hand an hour later she might have thought it an evidence that the doctor's plan had failed. But had she read the note her opinion would have been that it had succeeded. It read:

"Dear Susie:--It was real mean of me to write that note yesterday. Will you forgive me?
Say, Susie, I think all this nonsense about lovers and sweethearts is silly rot, don't you?
Let's be just friends. Respectfully yours,

CARL."

Susie's answer was short but to the point. It read:

"All right. Let's.

SUSIE."

Several months later Miss Bell and Miss Lane called again on Dr. Barrett.

"Have you come with another problem?" asked the doctor.

"No, we have come to report progress and to learn, if possible, just how it has come about. There has been a wonderful change in the school. The girls and boys are no less friendly, but it is without that silly sentimentality which was so annoying. They are now just real good comrades, and seem to help each other in being orderly, polite, and studious. How did you do it?"

"Perhaps all credit is not due to me, but I will say that I gave Carl the instruction I thought he needed and he has passed the good word along. Several of the boys have met with me once a month to study concerning themselves, and I can see that they have grown to have a reverence for themselves and a deep regard for all womanhood. Carl was in last evening, and said, 'Dr.

Barrett, I am so glad Miss Bell sent me with that note to you, for your talk to me that night has changed my whole life, I know. I feel so much cleaner all through, and have so much more respect for myself. And I think so differently of girls and women, and especially of my mother, and I realize as I never did before how important a thing it is to be almost a man.”

A GATEWAY AND A GIFT.

Three gateways span the path of earthly existence: one at the entrance which we call the gate of birth; one at the close which we call the gate of death, and one at the entrance to the wondrous Land of the Teens, which we call the gate of manhood or of womanhood. At each of these gates a wonderful gift is presented to each individual. At the gate of birth it is the gift of earthly life, at death it is the gift of continued life, and at the gate which opens into the Land of the Teens it is the gift of creative life. You see that each gift is of life.

The path of earthly life, beginning at the gateway of birth, passes through the sunny meadowland of Childhood, and also through a strange, mysterious land to which we have referred as the Land of the Teens, before reaching the Heights of Maturity. This Land of the Teens is peculiar in that the inhabitants are neither children nor adults, and yet, with the inexperience of children, they have many of the desires and emotions of grown-up people. This constitutes an element of great danger, while another source of danger is the fact that adequate guidance is not always given in this transition period, or, if proffered, is proudly rejected by those who think that being in their “teens” makes them wise above that which is written.

When we visit foreign lands we are grateful for guidance and direction, especially if we are not acquainted with the language; so, if we do not hire a guide we, at least, buy a guide-book. It seems to me, then, that we ought not to rebel against guides through the Land of the Teens, realizing that one who has traveled through a country can point out beauties and warn against dangers which would not be recognized by the inexperienced traveler.

We can visit England, Italy, or Germany many times, and at each journey can profit by former experiences, but we pass through the Land of the Teens but once, and the lessons we learn on that journey we can only utilize for the benefit of others. This is why many people on the Heights of Maturity are anxious to light a beacon for those who are still in their “teens.” They would gladly help others to shun the by-paths where they have met disaster, for they have learned the very solemn truth that in youth one is determining what maturity shall be. The seeds sown in the sunny meadow of Childhood and in the broader fields of the Land of the Teens are harvested in the uplands of Maturity, and the harvest is always greater than the seed sown. The petulance and pouting of the child hardens into the gruffness, bad-temper, and moroseness of the man; the idleness and shirking of the youth becomes the shiftlessness and unreliability of the adult; the boy’s neglect of duty and unwearied search for pleasure may be harvested in dissipation and ruin in mature life. It is, then, a very serious thing to be passing through one’s “teens,” and the wise youth will welcome any guide who will show him a safe path. May I claim the privilege of acting for a little time in that capacity?

The King of this land has made laws for its government and wisdom, has builded paths wherein one may walk in safety. The laws made by the King are not harsh and cruel, but are beneficent, and he denies no real good. He says to the traveler, “You belong to me, and I am desirous of your highest welfare; therefore, obey me and you shall be rewarded; disobey me and you shall be punished.” It needs some moral courage to bravely stay in the path of Wisdom, for there are many allurements to leave it; more particularly as the inexperience of the traveler does not warn him of the dangers of following pleasures that lead away from wisdom’s ways. The guide worthy of trust must not fail to point out these dangers; and the prudent youth will listen to the warning voice and walk in Wisdom’s ways, for “all her ways are pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.”

We talk much about our personal liberty, and assert that we have a right to live in Maine or California, but we have not that much liberty in regard to dwelling in the Land of the Teens. If we are ever to reach the Heights of Maturity we must spend ten years in the Teens. We cannot sell our domain, nor give it away, and we cannot even hire some one to cultivate it for us. This being the case, it becomes important for us to study the soil and how best to develop its advantages.

We find that the land has three divisions: the Domain of the Body, the Field of Intellect, and the Garden of the Heart,—the same divisions that exist in the Sunny Land of Childhood, and that we have been cultivating ever since we were born. These are the kingdoms which came to us with the gift of life. We recognize that the gifts which come to us at birth and death are of life for ourselves alone, and we have had no thought during our childish years except to develop our powers for our own advantage. It may be we have not felt perfectly satisfied with our lot in life, but we have felt that we were not responsible for this. We did not choose to be born in America instead of Asia, though we do not rebel at this fact. We did not select to be white instead of black. It is not our fault if we are born of a family in which consumption is an inheritance; and, on the other hand, we can claim no credit to ourselves if we have inherited strong bodies with healthful tendencies. It is our misfortune, and not our fault, if we are not quite perfectly poised

by nature; it is our good fortune, not our foresight, if we have genius instead of mediocrity. The gifts that come to us through inheritance are ours without blame or credit to us but they bring with them the responsibility of their use. We are responsible for maintaining or increasing our dower of health by obedience to physical laws; responsible for the cultivation of our intellects, for the development of inherited virtues, and the annihilation of inherited vices.

If you study your characteristics and talents you find that they repeat those of your ancestry. Your eyes, hair, mouth, chin, your stature, figure, complexion, your talents, capabilities, tendencies, your likes and dislikes, your faults as well as your virtues are repetitions of those who preceded you in this living network of existence of which you form a part. If you are not like father or mother you may be like grandfather or great-grandmother. If you do not find yourself repeating the characteristics or personality of any one ancestor, you may find yourself a composite photograph of several. And even if you cannot trace in yourself a likeness to any family representative, you may still be assured that from some of them your traits have come to you. You have only to recall the complexity of your sources of inheritance and then remember how many words can be spelled from the twenty-six letters of the alphabet to see that you can hardly measure the peculiar forces of mind and body that may come to you through that power of transmission which we call heredity.

It may occur to you to ask why, if we are not responsible for our inheritances, is it needful to give them any particular thought? There are two reasons why we should consider the good and bad characteristics which may be ours through inheritance. In the first place, heredity is not fatality, and we are not absolutely obliged to follow the paths which our ancestors marked out for us, and in the second place, we can, by understanding our own characters, mark out better paths for our posterity. We are not only receivers of life, but we may be also givers of life, and this is the gift that comes to you at the entrance to the Land of the Teens. Can you imagine a more important period in the life of an individual than that point where is intrusted to him the physical powers which make him the arbiter of the destiny of those who come after him?

The gift of possible life for others is even more marvelous than that of actual life for one's self and brings with it greater responsibility. It is accompanied with marked physical changes. You have observed them in yourself, though you perhaps have not understood them. Up to this time you have been but a child, and all your physical forces have been occupied in keeping you alive and growing. But you are now to become a man, with powers that will unite you to the race; powers that will give you the ability to form a new link in the living chain that now ends with you. You have noticed the rapid unfolding of your bodily powers; you have become conscious of new and strange emotions; you have, it may be, found yourself becoming irritable and have felt bewildered with the new aspects of life and have wondered what it all means. It may be you have felt as did one boy who said to his mother, to whom he confided all his problems of life: "Mamma, I want to kick and cry, and I don't know why." The mother knew. She understood the strange unfolding that was going on in his physical organism, and she kindly explained it to him, telling him that he must have patience with himself, and govern himself by his judgment and not allow himself to be carried away by impulse, assuring him that God would hold him as responsible for purity of character as He would the dear sister of whom they all felt so careful. He should reverence his manhood, even as he expected her to reverence her womanhood. This is necessary, not only for the good of each individual, but also for the eternal interest of future generations.

This entrance into the Land of the Teens is a serious, even a dangerous period, for if you have not had right instruction you may be led, or fall into habits of wrong doing or thinking. If you are rightly taught you will begin to have an added reverence for yourselves in that God is dignifying you with new powers that will bring you more nearly into co-partnership with himself. These powers, the most sacred of all that have come to you, need years for development, and should be guarded by pure thoughts and kept for their holy office of promoting the earthly usefulness and eternal blessedness of those who hereafter will owe both earthly and immortal life to you.

I have said that we are not responsible for the dower of virtues or of vices which are ours by inheritance, but we are responsible for the inheritances of our children, and this is a most solemn thought. Do you not begin to see that we cannot value ourselves too highly if we have the right idea of what our real worth is? We can scarcely overestimate the results of our own deeds. We may think it does not matter if we do not always tell the exact truth; if at some times we equivocate and at others exaggerate, but when we remember that truth is the foundation of character, and realize that by our little equivocations or exaggerations we may be weakening the foundations of many who are from us to receive their talents and tendencies, we begin to see that the matter is a very serious one. I am sometimes told that young people will not be influenced by a consideration for the welfare of unborn generations whose existence is very problematical in their thought; but my observation is that young folks are much more sensible than we give them credit for being. More than one young man has said to me: "I was never taught that my conduct and thought would impress themselves upon my children, but now that I see that such is the case, I am sure that I will hereafter be more careful of my life than I ever have been."

This field of investigation is a broad one, and even if you never have an opportunity to study the subject scientifically you can still be of incalculable benefit to humanity by ever remembering that you are living for an earthly, as well as for a heavenly immortality. The young people who to-day are in the Land of the Teens are they who are determining the characteristics of the men and women of the Twentieth Century, creating the standards of thought and action, the methods of business, the level of morals, in fact the whole status of society in the world of a hundred

years to come.

It is a very wonderful fact that God has so created us that the result of our deeds is not limited to our own lives, but makes its impress upon those who are to come after us. We are not separate units, but are links in a living chain of endless transmission. This fact makes our lives of far greater consequence than if, in their results, they were limited to ourselves. If we are anxious concerning the future of our country, we may take to heart the thought that it will be what we ourselves have made it. The Bible expresses the same idea in many ways. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," does not mean merely that his own future will be influenced by his conduct, but that his future in his children will be a record which he himself has made.

Men often make their wills and bequeath to their children their gold or houses and lands, but sometimes against their wills they bequeath to their children a bodily dwelling of inferior material, and so poor in construction that it very soon falls into decay through disease, or in very early life becomes a tottering ruin. It would seem rather amusing to us if one should sit down and write his will and say: "I bequeath to my daughter Mary my yellow, blotched and pimpled complexion, resulting from my own bad habits of life. I bequeath to my son John, the effects of my habits of dissipation in my youth, with a like love for alcoholic liquors and tobacco. I bequeath to my son Harry my petulant, irritable disposition, and the rheumatic gout which I have brought upon myself by disobedience to physical law; and to my daughter Elizabeth, my trembling nerves and weak moral nature." But this is, in truth, what many parents do, and the children find it a sad, instead of an amusing fact.

On the other hand, if one has led a life of uprightness and morality, and has obeyed physical law, his children will inherit his physical vigor, and his moral stamina. It becomes of exceeding great importance that these facts should be known to the young, in order that they may endeavor to overcome their own weaknesses, and strengthen their own good qualities for the sake of future generations.

This heredity, the transmission of the qualities of the parent to the child, is found among plants and animals as well as in the human race. The seed of a plant produces another plant of the same kind, and the farmer knows when he sows wheat, that his harvest will be wheat, and he should know just as certainly that if he "sows wild oats" in his youth he may expect "wild oats" in his children. The character of the food we eat, the air we breathe, the occupations we follow, the habits we create, are the forces which shape not only our own destiny, but create the tendencies of our children.

With these thoughts in mind, the question of the use of narcotics becomes one of great importance. There are few, if any, tobacco users who are anxious that their boys should early begin the use of the weed. But they do not realize the fact that in their own use of it they may have diminished the vital force of these boys, transmitting a tendency to disease, or perhaps an appetite for the tobacco itself, and not only will the boys feel the effects, but the girls as well. As the thought of men is turned in this direction, proofs are accumulating of the evil results to the children of tobacco-using parents. A prominent physician says: "I have never known an habitual tobacco user whose children did not have deranged nerves, and sometimes weak minds. Shattered nervous systems, for generations to come, may be the result of this indulgence. The children of tobacco-using parents frequently die with infantile paralysis. I have known two cases in which the crying of the baby could not be stopped until the tobacco-pipe was placed between its lips." Dr. Pidduck asserts that in no instance is the sin of the father more strikingly visited upon his children than the sin of tobacco using. "The enervation, the hypochondriasis, the hysteria, the insanity, the dwarfish deformities, the consumption, the suffering lives, and early deaths of the children of inveterate smokers bear ample testimony to the feebleness and unsoundness of the constitution transmitted by this pernicious habit."

The effect of alcohol upon the child is equally marked, and from all sides comes the testimony that the degenerations do not stop with the individual, but pass on to succeeding generations. Sometimes the influence is seen in the stunting of the growth, both mentally and physically. Dr. Langden Downe reports several cases of this sort where the children had lived to be twenty-two years old and still remained infants, symmetrical in form, just able to stand beside a chair, utter a few monosyllabic sounds, and to be amused with toys. Dr. F. R. Lees, referring to the injury inflicted upon the liver by alcohol, says: "And recollect, whatever injury you inflict upon this organ, to your posterity the curse descends, and as is the father, so are the children." Dr. Kerr asserts that the effects of injury to the mind and body may not always show themselves in the drinker himself, yet it is doubtful if his children ever entirely escape the effects in one form or another. These effects may be manifest in insanity, or in a tendency to diseases of the stomach, liver, bowels, lungs, or other organs; or with a like love for alcoholic stimulants. Not only may the child be weak in body but also in intellect. It is the statement of a score of observant physicians that the children of intemperate parents are apt to be feeble in body and weak in mind.

Another very striking thought in this connection is that while the physical effects may not show in the individual himself, nor in his children, they may be manifest in the deterioration of his grandchildren and great-grandchildren. A prominent temperance advocate who was laid up with rheumatic gout, which is apt to be the result of alcoholic indulgence, replied to a friend who wondered that he, a drinker of cold water, should suffer with this disease, "Yes, my ancestors drank the liquor and I foot the bills." In 1834 the Parliament of the British House of Commons made a report of intemperance in which they stated that the evils of alcoholism "are cumulative in the amount of injury they inflict, as intemperate parents, according to high medical

testimony, give a taint to their offspring before birth, and the poisonous stream of spirits is conveyed through the milk of the mother to the infant at the breast; so that the fountain of life, through which nature supplies that pure and healthy nutriment of infancy, is poisoned at its very source, and a diseased and vitiated appetite is thus created, which grows with its growth, and strengthens with its increasing weakness and decay."

A tendency to commit suicide seems to be a marked bequest of an inebriate parent to his children, and it is well to state that in the opinion of medical men who are dealing with all forms of inebriety, the evils resulting to the children may be transmitted by parents who have never been noted for drunkenness. Continual moderate drinking keeps the body so constantly under the influence of alcohol that a crowd of nervous difficulties and disorders may be transmitted even more surely than from the parent who has occasional sprees with long intervals of sobriety between. It is not only through the drinking father that injury is done to the children, but the mother may have a vitiated inheritance from her father and transmit it to her children.

When we recall the fact that one hundred thousand men fall into drunkard's graves every year, we are appalled at the thought of that vast army marching on to death and destruction. As we listen, we can, in fancy, almost hear the tramp, tramp of that "mighty host advancing, Satan leading on." In the front rank comes the one hundred thousand men who shall fall into drunkard's graves this year, and behind them the one hundred thousand men who are to fall next year. They come with sound of revelry and song, and close beside them press a crowd of weeping wives and mothers and little children, starved, crippled, and murdered, who are to be fellow victims with the drunkard. Not very far back from the front row come one hundred thousand young men in the very prime of young, vigorous life, just beginning to drink their first glass of wine or beer, with no intention of ever standing in that front row, yet having started on the way. Back of them, one hundred little school boys who think it manly to ape the follies of their predecessors. Back of them, one hundred thousand little toddlers whose feet stagger in their innocent helplessness. Back of them, one hundred thousand mothers with babies in their arms. Oh, how sweetly those baby eyes look up into the loving eyes that are brooding over them. Is it possible those baby brows will ever lie low in the gutter, those sweet lips be stained by oath or glass; those crumpled rose-leaf fingers ever strike the murderous blow incited by alcohol? It must be, if that front rank of one hundred thousand drunkards is to be recruited, for the drunkards of the future are to-day babies in their mother's arms. Do you who read these words intend to join this vast army of prospective drunkards, or will you belong to the cold-water army that is marching on accompanied by health, vigor, industry, prosperity, success and long life?

We must not be so interested in the inheritance of evil qualities as to forget the transmission of good. We read in Exodus, twentieth chapter, that the sins of the fathers are to be visited upon the children unto the third and fourth generations of them that hate the Lord, but mercy will be shown to *thousands of generations* of them that love Him and keep his commandments. As we have seen the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children in transmission of diseased bodies, perverted moral natures and weakened wills, and realize that the promise is being fulfilled in the visitation of the sins of the fathers upon the children, let us see if the other promise is being fulfilled also, in the mercy shown to thousands of them that love the Lord and keep His commandments.

An English specialist in children's diseases has carefully noted the difference between twelve families of drinkers and twelve families of sober parents during a period of twelve years.

INTEMPERATE.

Produced 57 children; 25 died in the first week of life. These deaths due to convulsions, or œdema of brain and membranes. 2 were idiots. 5 dwarfs. 5 epileptics. 1 had chorea. 5 were deformed. 2 became drunkards. This leaves only 10 who showed during the whole of life a normal disposition and development of body and mind.

TEMPERATE.

Produced 61 children; 6 died in first week, of weakness. 4 had curable diseases. 2 showed inherited nervous defects. This leaves 50 who were in every way normal, sound in body and mind.

If it were not a fact that health, purity, integrity, intellect and virtue were being transmitted to a far greater extent than sin and vice, there would be little good in the world, but the transmission of these good qualities is so extended, so like the air and the sunshine and the water, a common thing, that we almost forget to recognize it. When we turn our thoughts to the investigation of this phase of the subject, we find that vigorous parents have healthful children, that powers of intellect are transmitted, and that honesty and uprightness in the father warrants us in expecting the same in the son. We recognize the transmission of powers of intellect in the fact that where the parents have a peculiar talent, we very generally find the same talent in their children. We are acquainted with musical families, mathematical families, artistic families, and in the study of renowned people of the world we find evidences of this transmission of intellect. We also learn that the effects of education are transmissible, and if the parents are educated along a certain line the children receive education along that line much more readily. This fact becomes a wonderful incentive to us to build up all that is best in our own natures in order that through us the world may receive an impetus towards higher and better things.

Sometimes when your faults and defects press upon you with tremendous force and you find it so very hard to overcome them, you may be tempted to lay the blame on your ancestry who gave you such a dower, who by their lives handicapped you in your life-struggle. You may feel

inclined to say with some writer, to me unknown, who says:

HEREDITY.

“Your strictures are unmerited,
Our follies are inherited,
Directly from our gran-pas they all came;
Our defects have been transmitted,
And we should be acquitted
Of all responsibility and blame.

We are not depraved beginners,
But hereditary sinners,
For our fathers never acted as they should;
’Tis the folly of our gran-pas
That continually hampers--
What a pity that our gran-pas weren’t good!

Yes, we’d all be reverend senators,
If our depraved progenitors
Had all been prudent, studious and wise;
But they were quite terrestrial,
Or we would be celestial,
Yes, we’d all be proper tenants for the skies.

If we’re not all blameless sages,
And beacons to the ages,
And fit for principalities and powers;
If we do not guide and man it,
And engineer the planet,
’Tis the folly of our forefathers--not ours.”

But the lesson of these lines is not that you should lie back in inaction, making no effort to overcome your defects because they are inheritances. There is for you a wiser lesson in the theme than that. When Marshall Ney was taunted with the fact that the Imperial nobility had no pedigree he proudly replied, “We are ancestors.”

There is a grand thought for you. If your ancestors did not do the best for you, will you not profit by your knowledge of this fact and do the best for those who shall look back to you as their ancestor? Supposing that your parents in their youth had said: “I will take care of my health so that my children may be born with vigorous bodies; I will make good use of my intellect so that my children will inherit an added capacity for acquiring knowledge; I will obey all laws of morality so that my children will by inheritance tend toward virtue;” and supposing that you today, with healthful bodies, keen intellects and upward tending moral natures, were reaping the reward of their forethought, would you not bless them for it?

You have no right to remain listless and discouraged because of your inheritances, whatever they may be. Hear the inspiring words of Ella Wheeler Wilcox:

There is no thing you cannot overcome.
Say not thy evil instinct is inherited;
Or that some trait inborn, makes thy whole life forlorn,
And calls for punishment that is not merited.

Back of thy parents and grandparents lies,
The great Eternal Will; that, too, is thine
Inheritance--strong, beautiful, divine;
Sure lever of success for one who tries.

Pry up thy fault with this great lever--will;
However deeply bedded in propensity;
However firmly set, I tell thee firmer yet
Is that great power that comes from truth’s immensity.

There is no noble height thou canst not climb;
All triumphs may be thine in time’s futurity,
If whatsoever thy fault, thou dost not faint or halt,
But lean upon the staff of God’s security.

Earth has no claim the soul can not contest.
Know thyself part of the supernal source,
And naught can stand before thy spirit’s force
The soul’s divine inheritance is best.

The youth of to-day have in their own hands the molding of the future, not only of themselves, but of the nation, by the every day habits of their lives. By their thoughts and aspirations, by the moral tendencies which they are cultivating in themselves, they are determining what shall be the characteristics of the nation in a hundred years to come. Shall this be, in a hundred years, a

nation of drunkards? The young people of to-day are deciding that question. Shall it be a nation of invalids? This, also, the young people are deciding. Shall it be a nation filled with greed of gain, with a low standard of morals, with dishonest methods in business, or shall it be a nation wherein vigorous health is the rule, unflinching courage, absolute integrity and pure morality shall everywhere reign? What the young people of to-day are making of themselves physically, mentally and morally, is deciding what shall be the future of the country.

THE WHITE CROSS.

The cross is considered as an emblem of self-denial, the immolating of selfish wishes upon the altar of universal good.

In a nobler sense it means not so much self-denial as the creation of nobler desires, so that the individual wants only those things which he rightfully should have; he is not obliged to deny himself, because he asks nothing but that which is noble and pure. In this sense the cross is not so much the emblem of self-denial as an emblem of self-ennoblement--the exaltation of self.

The White Cross typifies the purifying of the life from the desire of mere sense pleasures. It means the noble manhood which claims for itself the privilege of chastity and the rewards of purity.

The White Cross army is composed of men and boys over fourteen years of age who unite to resist vice, to secure safety for the home and for society, to become all that becomes true manhood. In organized co-operation there is strength. It is not only the "long pull" and the "strong pull," but the "pull altogether," that is thoroughly successful.

Hundreds of men are living the white life individually, but are not associated together in an effort to influence others. Such association would result in more rapidly spreading the idea of the responsibility of the individual, would create public opinion, would give moral support to those who might find their unaided strength inadequate to meet the temptations of the world, in short, would furnish the conditions favorable to the highest ideals of social and individual life.

The White Cross Society aims to unite men in such an organized effort for the elevation of moral standards. Its members are pledged to the keeping of a fivefold obligation. The first of these appeals to the chivalry latent in the heart of every man, making him a protector of every woman, however lonely or friendless she may be, recognizing her potential value to the race; protecting her against his own selfish desires, against the open and covert assaults of other men, against her own unwisdom, if need be.

The second obligation pledges the White Cross knight to a pure heart expressed not only in conduct but in word. He will think and speak reverently of life in all its phases, and help to cleanse the language--written or spoken--of all that pollutes the heart or vitiates the imagination. The third obligation claims for the White Cross soldier the glory of living up to the highest moral standards, of being as pure as the noblest woman that lives. The fourth recognizes the power of influence and binds the members to a helpful interest in all humanity.

The fifth covers the whole scope of life in the obligation to use every effort to fulfil the command, "Keep thyself pure." The heart of the true man must throb a quick response to the appeal made to him by the White Cross.

It means marital fidelity, it implies the sanctity of the home, it creates individual purity, and that insures social purity, it means a nobler manhood, a grander womanhood, a safer childhood.

The appeal is made to you individually. Will you not become a White Cross knight? Will you not, even if you cannot join an organized society, become a standard-bearer of the White Cross, pledging yourself to its five obligations? Soon you will find others willing to unite with you in this great work, and the society will be formed.

Each one who reads this book may become a true and faithful knight of the White Cross, no matter where he may be, in city mart or lonely farm, in busy shop or quiet school, and not only may he be a soldier, but he may be a recruiting officer, inducing others to enlist under the White Cross banner.

THE WHITE CROSS PLEDGE.

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

I PROMISE, BY THE HELP OF GOD:

1. *To treat all women with respect, and endeavor to protect them from wrong and degradation.*
2. *To endeavor to put down all indecent language and coarse jests.*
3. *To maintain the law of purity as equally binding upon men and women.*
4. *To endeavor to spread these principles among my companions, and try to*

help my younger brothers.

5. *To use all possible means to fulfil the command, "Keep thyself pure."*

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Transcriber Notes

Typographical problems have been changed and are listed below.

Hyphenation and common compound words standardized and listed below.

Author's archaic spelling is preserved.

Author's punctuation style is preserved.

Table of Contents added.

Transcriber Changes

The following changes were made to the original text:

Prelude: **meadow land** standardized to **meadow-land** (lads had crossed the sunny **meadow-land** of childhood and stood by the gate)

Page 7: Added quotes (“**It** has been so long since I saw you that you have almost grown out of my knowledge.... You must be fifteen years **old.**”)

Page 8: **anyone** standardized to **any one** (supposing you try to forget that **any one** has ever told you anything about it)

Page 9: **every thing** standardized to **everything** (We may go even farther and say with Mr. Grant Allen that **everything** high and ennobling in our nature springs directly from the fact of sex.)

Page 13: **microscope** changed to **microscope** (they are not visible except with the aid of a **microscope**)

Page 14: Changed period to comma after **to-night** (No one ever talked to me as you have **to-night**, and I am sure it makes me want to be better.)

Page 20: Changed single quote to double (that will bring a blush to the cheeks of either, now, or in the years to **come.**”)

Page 20: Changed ending single quote to double (the doctor handed him, and then with another “**Good night,**” he walked away in the darkness.)

Page 24: **pleasaantness** changed to **pleasantness** (“all her ways are **pleasantness**, and all her paths are peace.”)

Page 26: Added comma after **mouth** (Your eyes, hair, **mouth**, chin, your stature, figure, complexion, your talents, capabilities)

Page 27: **prehaps** changed to **perhaps** (You have observed them in yourself, though you **perhaps** have not understood them.)

Page 31: **tobacco using** standardized to **tobacco-using** (proofs are accumulating of the evil results to the children of **tobacco-using** parents)

Page 36: **transmissable** changed to **transmissible** (We also learn that the effects of education are **transmissible**)

Advertisements: Removed extraneous quote after **youth** (I can conscientiously recommend it to all who are interested in the physical and moral welfare of **youth.**--*C. A. Dorman, M. D.*)

Advertisements: **M D.** changed to **M. D.** (“Most charmingly written.”--*Alice B. Stockham, M. D., Chicago.*)

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