

The Depravity of the Youth

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In certain matters—such as the advisability of the organization of clubs of boys and girls in connection with their school work, in the pursuit of various courses of amusement, art, craft, and culture, and in the use of the school play ground, there will in all likelihood be no serious difference of opinion. Such wholesome diversion, which will at the same time have an educational value, will make of the girls more competent and accomplished women and housewives, and of the boys more manly and self-reliant men.

Much honest difference of opinion will doubtless be expressed upon the subject of “Sexual Knowledge.” The questions are:

1. Is it wise to keep the youth in ignorance as to the relation of sex? Or should instruction be provided for?
2. At what age of a child should such instruction begin?
3. Are parents always qualified to give such instruction?
4. When parents fail, should such instruction be provided for in our Public Schools by competent physicians or biologists, the sexes being segregated?

It has been freely argued and asserted of late years that because of the indifference of parents, or, at any rate, a dislike on their part to undertake the instruction of their children in matters pertaining to the sexes, children have—in their desire to have the veil of mystery lifted—gone to other sources for information, often sources inclined to give tainted advice.

Our own personal opinion is at variance with this teaching of the modern workers along these lines. We can see pitfalls presenting themselves where formerly the path for

little feet was smooth. Young girls whose minds are healthy and pure need no instruction in matters pertaining to the relation of sex. Not only do they not need it, but it must be conceded that they grow into far more beautifully minded women if their innocence is conserved. There are many girls less well poised whose morals would suffer more than profit by any teaching that aims to concentrate their attention—even though it be with a finger of warning—upon matters that were hitherto little dreamed of in their philosophy; in such girls it needs but a little freedom of speech to kindle a desire for more knowledge, with the result that when in company with kindred spirits the information thus gained becomes a topic of conversation. An easy outcome of this is vicious thought, and then follow vicious habits.

To a degree, though not with the same force, this argument applies to boys. We believe however, that in their case a certain amount of instruction can be profitably given, but the responsibility of this we would prefer to see placed upon the parent and physician.

In any event, it is our belief that this instruction, as proposed by many, if collectively administered to young people, is harmful, because it forms an opening wedge for a line of thought among those who already have much in common, and who would therefore make this new acquisition common property too.

The school should not consider this part of a pupil's education within its province, nor is the teacher the one to whom this power of attorney is to be delegated by the parent. When necessary to give instruction in these matters, it should be in private séance, never in class.

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