

# The Alpha.

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Human Rights before all Laws and Constitutions.—Gerret Smith.  
The Divine Right of Every Child to be Well Born.

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## LOWELL MILL GIRLS.

THE EDUCATION OF HONEST LABOR—THE DESTINY OF THE  
LOWELL MILL GIRLS.

One of the ablest papers read before the American Association of Social Sciences was by Mrs. H. H. Robinson, of Malden, on the life of the early mill girls of the Lowell factories, giving a graphic picturing of the period between 1832 and 1848. By the kindness of Mrs. Robinson, we are permitted to present the following abstract of this most interesting and able article:

The life of a people or of a class is best illustrated by its domestic scenes, or by character sketches of the men and women who form a part of it.

The historian is a species of mental photographer; he can present views only of the life and times he attempts to portray. He can no more give the whole history of events than the artist or photographer can in detail bring a whole city into his picture.

And so, in this brief record of a life that is past, I can give you but a few views of that long-ago faded landscape—taken on the spot. In 1832 Lowell was little more than a factory village. Five "corporations" were started, and the cotton mills belonging to them were building.

Help was in great demand and stories were told all over the country of the new factory place, and the high wages that were offered to all class of work people; stories that reached the ears of mechanics' and farmers' sons and gave new life to lonely and dependent women in distant towns and farm-houses.

Into this Yankee El Dorado these needy people began to pour by the various modes of travel known to those slow old days. The stage coach and the canal boat came every day, always filled with new recruits to the army of useful people. The mechanic and machinist came, each with his homemade chest of tools and his wife and little ones. The widow came with her little flock and her scanty housekeeping goods to open a boarding-house or variety store, and so provided a home for her fatherless children. Troops of young girls came from different parts of New England, and from Canada, and men were employed to collect them at so much a head, and deliver them at the factories.

At the time the Lowell cotton mills were started the caste of the factory girl was the lowest among the employments of women. In England and in France, particularly, great injustice had been done to her real character. She was represented as subject to influences that must destroy her purity and self-respect.

In the eyes of her overseer she was but a brute, a slave to be beaten, pinched and pushed about. It was to overcome this prejudice that such high wages had been offered to women, so that they might be induced to become mill-girls, in spite of the opprobrium that still clung to this degrading occupation. At first only a few came; others followed, and in a short time the prejudice against factory labor wore away, and the Lowell mills became filled with blooming and energetic New England women. They were naturally intelligent, had mother wit, and they fell easily into the ways of their new life. They soon began to associate with those who formed the community in which they had come to live, and were invited to their houses. They went to the same church, and sometimes, perhaps, married into some of the best families. Or, if they returned to their secluded homes again, instead of being looked down upon as "factory girls," by the squire or lawyer's family, they were often welcomed, coming as they did from the metropolis, bringing new fashions, new books and new ideas with them. And so, factory life in Lowell began early to teach the people that this sort of labor is not degrading. That the operative is not only "capable of virtue," but also capable of self-cultivation.

The ages ranged from 16 to 25 years, though a few girls of 10 years were employed as "doffers."

Those of the mill girls who had homes generally worked from eight to ten months in the year; the rest of the time was spent with parents or friends. A few taught school during the summer months. Then life in the factory was made pleasant to them. In those days there was no need of advocating the doctrine of the proper relation between employer and employed. Help was too valuable to be ill-treated.

Life in the boarding-houses was very agreeable. These houses belonged to the corporation, and were usually kept by widows (mothers of some of the mill girls), who were often the friends and advisers of their boarders. Each house was a village or community of itself. There fifty or sixty young women from different parts of New England met and lived together. When not at their work, by natural selection, they sat in groups in their chambers, or in a corner of the large dining room, busy at some agreeable employment. They wrote letters, read, studied or sewed, for, as a rule, they were their own seamstresses and dressmakers.

These boarding-houses were considered so attractive that strangers, by invitation, often came to look in upon them, and see for themselves how the mill girls lived.



Dickens, in his "American Notes," speaks with surprise of their home life; he says: "There is a piano in a great many of the boarding-houses, and nearly all the young ladies subscribe to circulating libraries."

There was a certain *esprit de corps* among these households; any advantage secured to one of the number was usually shared by others belonging to her set or group. Books were exchanged; letters from home were read, and "pieces," intended for the Improvement Circle, were presented for friendly criticism. They stood by each other in the mills. When one wanted to be absent half a day, two or three others would tend an extra loom or frame apiece, so that the absent one might not lose her pay.

At this time the mule and spinning jenny had not been introduced, and two or three looms, or spinning frames, was as much as one girl was required to tend. More than that was considered "double work." The society of each other was of great advantage to these girls. They discussed the books they read; debated religious and social questions; compared their thoughts and experiences, and advised and helped one another.

And so their mental growth went on and they soon became educated far beyond what their mothers or their grandmothers could have been.

It may be well to mention here that there were a few of the mill girls who came to Lowell solely on account of the social or literary advantages to be found here. They lived in secluded parts of New England, where books were scarce, and there was no intelligent society. They had plentiful homes, and did not, perhaps, need the money they would earn, but they longed to see

"This wonderful city of spindles and looms,  
And the thousands of factory folks."

And the fame of the circulating libraries that were soon open drew them and kept them there when no other inducement would have been sufficient. I knew one who spent her winters in Lowell for this very purpose. She was addicted to novel-reading, and read from two to four volumes a week. While she was at her work in the mill, the children of the family where she boarded were allowed to read the books. It was as good as a fortune to them. For 6½ cents a week the novels of Richardson, Madame D'Arblay, Fielding and Smollett could be devoured by four hungry readers.

Let us consider, for a moment, some of the characteristics of the early mill girls. We have seen that they were necessarily industrious. They were also frugal and saving. It was their custom the first of every month, after paying their \$1.25 a week board bill, to put their wages in the savings bank. There the money staid, on interest, until they withdrew it, to carry home or to use for a special purpose.

In 1843 over one-half of the depositors in the Lowell Institution for Savings were mill girls, and over one-third of the whole sum deposited belonged to them—in round numbers \$101,992. It is easy to see how much good such a sum as this would do in a rural community where money, as a means of exchange, had been scarce. Into the barren homes many of them had left it went like a quiet stream, carrying with it beauty and refreshment. The mortgage was lifted from the homestead;

the farm-house was painted; the barn rebuilt; modern improvements were introduced into the mother's kitchen, and books and newspapers began to ornament the sitting-room table.

Young men and women who had spent their two or three years of probation in the Lowell mills often returned to the old place, bought land, built their modest house, and became new and prosperous heads of families. Some of the mill girls helped maintain widowed mothers, or drunken, incompetent or invalid fathers. Many of them educated the younger children of the family, and young men were sent to college with the money furnished by the untiring industry of their women relatives.

There are men now living who were helped to an education by the wages of these early mill girls. I have known a sister or a mother to work years to educate the boys of the family.

It now remains for me to speak of the intellectual tendencies of a portion of the early mill girls. Their desire for self-improvement had been to a certain extent gratified, and they began to feel the benefit of the educational advantages which had been opened to them. They had attended lyceum lectures, learned what they could at the evening schools, and continued their studies during their yearly vacations, or while at their work in the mill. I have known one girl to study Greek and Latin, and another algebra while tending her work. Their labor was monotonous and done almost mechanically, but their thoughts were free, and they had ample time to digest what they had learned, or think over what they had read. Some of these studious ones kept notebooks, with abstracts of their readings and studies jotted down—what they were pleased to call their "thoughts." Many of the pieces that were printed in the Lowell *Offering* were thought up amid the hum of wheels, while the skilful fingers and well-trained eyes of the writers tended the loom or the frame. It was natural that such a studious life as this should bear some fruit, and this leads me to speak of the Lowell *Offering*, just mentioned, a publication that may be called the natural outgrowth of the mental habit of the early mill girls. The first number of this unique magazine was issued in October, 1840, the last in December, 1849.

There are seven volumes in all. The story of its publication is as follows:

The Rev. Abel C. Thomas and the Rev. Thomas B. Thayer, pastors of the first and second Universalist churches in Lowell, had established improvement circles composed of the young people belonging to their respective parishes. These meetings were largely made up of young men and women who worked in the mill. They were often asked to speak, but as they persistently declined, they were invited to write what they desired to say, and send it, to be read anonymously at the next meeting. Many of the young women complied with this request, but it is recorded that the young men were of "no great assistance." These written communications were so numerous that they very soon became the sole entertainment of what Mr. Thomas called "these intellectual banquets."



In 1843 there were at least five of these improvement circles composed entirely of mill girls. A selection of the budget of articles, read at their own circles, was soon published by Mr. Thomas and Mr. Thayer in pamphlet form, and called "The Lowell Offering." These gentlemen conducted the *Offering* two years, and then it passed into the hands of Miss Harriet Farley and Miss Harriet F. Curtis, both operatives in the Lowell mills. Under their joint editorship it lasted until it was discontinued for want of means, and, perhaps, new contributors. All the articles in the *Offering* were written by mill girls. In speaking of this matter its first editor, Mr. Thomas, says: "Communications much amended in process of training the writers were rigidly excluded from print, and such articles only were published as had been written by females employed in the mills. And thus," he continues, "was published not only the joint work written by factory girls, but also the first magazine or journal written exclusively by women in all the world."

The *Lowell Offering* was welcomed with pleased surprise. It found subscribers all over the country. The *North American Review* indorsed it, and other leading magazines and journals spoke favorably of its contributions. It made its way into lonely villages and farm-houses, and set the women to thinking, and thus added its little leaven of progressive thought to the times in which it lived. It found subscribers in England. Dickens read it and praised its writers. Harriet Martineau prompted a fine review of it in the *London Athenæum*, and a selection from its pages was published, under her direction, called "Mind Among the Spindles." It is not necessary to speak here of the literary merits of the articles in the *Lowell Offering*.

One became an artist of note, another a poet of more than local fame, a third an inventor, a fourth the foremost advocate of woman's rights—Susan B. Anthony. The first money she ever earned was in her father's cotton factory. A fifth the founder of a free public library in her native town. A sixth went to Mexico as wife of a major-general in the army of that republic. It is said that this officer was at one time acting President of the Republic, and that his factory-girl wife revelled for a space "in the halls of the Montezumas." A few became teachers, authors, and missionaries. A great many married into the trades and professions. Some went West with their husbands, took up land, and did their part toward settling that vast region. A limited number married those who were afterward doctors of divinity and members of Congress. It may be said here that at one time the fame of the *Lowell Offering* caused the mill-girls to be considered very desirable for wives; and young men came from near and far to pick and choose for themselves, and generally with good success.

These women were all self-made in the truest sense, and it is well to mention their success in life, that others who now earn their livings at what is called "ungentle" employments may see that what one does is not of so much importance as what one is.

I don't know why it should not be just as commendable for a woman who has risen to higher employments

to have been once a factory girl, as it is for an ex-governor and major-general to have been a "bobbin boy."

A woman ought to be as proud of being self-made as a man—not too proud, in a boasting way, but just proud enough to assert the fact in her life and in her works.

In this brief sketch of early factory life I have tried to show that it was the means of education to a large class of men and women, who, without the opportunity thus afforded, could not have become developed, and their influence on modern civilization would have been lost.

In short, that New England herself, and perhaps the whole country, would not have been what it is to-day but for the influence of these early cotton mills, managed as they were by an enlightened factory system. Hundreds on hundreds of unknown men and women who once earned their living in this way have settled in different sections of the country. These old factory girls and old factory boys are to be found everywhere, in all classes and in all avocations, and they ought to be as proud of their dear old Alma Mater as the Harvard graduates are of their college.

It is often said that the life described cannot be repeated, and that the modern factory operative is not capable of such development. If this is a fact may there not be a cause for it?

The factory of to-day ought to be as much of a school to those who work there as it was to the operative of forty years ago. This class may be different, but the chances of education should correspond to its needs.

The same results, perhaps, cannot be reached, because the children of New England ancestry had in them some germs of intellectual life. But is it not also possible that the children of the land of Thomas Moore, of Racine and of Goethe may be something more than mere clods?

I do not despair of any class of artisans or operatives. There is among them all some germ of mental vigor, some higher idea of living, waiting for chance to grow. The same encouragement on the part of employers, the same desire to lift them to a higher level, would soon show what the present class of operatives is capable of.

#### THE OLD SERVANT QUESTION.

AN OPEN LETTER TO WOMEN WHO ARE HELPING TO SUPPLEMENT, IN THEIR HOMES, THE GOOD WORK DONE BY HUMANE SOCIETIES AND INDUSTRIAL SCHOOLS.

DEAR SISTERS: As we wish to help in reclaiming (lying claim again) to the young lives who have lost much through early neglect, or through the ignorance of teachers and parents, while brushing our crimps and arraying our laces this morning, let us think a little on the old servant question. We all remember when the picture-papers used to give it out as the grand joke that the mistress was in the kitchen and the servant in the parlor, suggesting of course that we ladies, being incompetent as housekeepers, were quite dependent upon our servants, while they (though even less competent) were in such demand as to hold the balance of power and place us under bonds to keep the peace on pain of their sudden desertion. Some of us can remember Har-



per's pictures of attempts made by the nominal mistresses to assert authority over the big-armed, loud-voiced sovereign of the dinner-pots, and the scenes afterwards, when these encounters became themes of conversation in the drawing-room above. But now, as women are growing more intelligent on all subjects, those conditions in the kitchen are fast floating down Time's stream with other things of lower development, and in the drawing-rooms of bright women of to-day conversation on music, literature, ceramics, and our country, alternates with earnest conversation—not about big Bridget, whose morals were an unknown quantity, quite forgotten in view of her muscle—but conversation about the “education by work,” through which we are developing creditable, intelligent womanhood from the waifs of society so generally now being gathered into our homes as helpers in the household. In this lovely age of vital reforms and practicalized ethics many people, East and West, are rising to a sense of the true meaning of “greatness.” The grand definition of that word was given by the Wonder-man of the ages past when he quieted—nay, spurred on ambition by saying, “Who would be greatest let him become servant of all.” “Who serves most rules best,” said another, and to-day womanly women (in the plenitude of a divine mother nature, whose helpfulness cannot stop at short limitations,) womanly women are “setting the solitary in families,” by bringing to kitchens (and to all places except to the sacred care of little ones) girls whose childhood was stolen from them, and who, but for the interposition of pure men and wise women, would have never known womanhood.

Truly, sisters, the servant question is changing base. You, who are really “great in the kingdom,” are becoming the servant of your servants, are ministering unto them more than silver or gold, more than food or raiment. You are giving them incessant educating care, watchfulness, and inspiring love—yes, *love*—without which there is no redemptive power. Hours of your life you “lay down” to their level in order to lift them up. You are literally giving your life for these strayed sheep of true humanity's fold. Now, none but you who have tried it know how hard it is to be watchful enough in protecting the daughters of this nation (whether your own flesh or not), and yet at the same time to exercise that generous faith which saves the soul from the degrading sense of being a suspected thing, untrustworthy, dangerous. Many of us are unwilling to join the ranks of those who “shall bring up a servant tenderly and in the end find in him a son” or a daughter. We prefer to have neither the labor, the responsibility, the honor nor the discredit, all of which attach to this kind of reform work. We feel that if we assume any responsibility toward our employees, except to pay them the wages agreed upon, and then let them go on as they please, we stake something on the result. And do those of us who are asked to be *protectors* to the young girls in our charge fear the responsibility? But why? What does that mean? Protectors against what?

Wisconsin woods seem well cleared of man's natural foes, wild beasts, and as “man and woman are one in interest and affection,” man's foes being dead, woman's

foes are dead too, and there is nothing to protect her from but ignorance, humanity's last dread foe with which the powers of light are now fighting.

And, of course, as we try to secure everything which tends to the dignity, health and womanly rectitude of young womanhood we can infallibly rely on the aid of all brothers, husbands and sons, and on the crowds of other “natural protectors,” who are found everywhere on streets and in houses, by day and by night, and who seem even to be standing round street corners and in strange looking little shops, possibly for this very purpose. If all these “protectors” are helping us to protect ignorant young women, our courage ought never to fail. But, for some reason, it sometimes does a little. O, but—Allelujah! Times have changed, or rather intelligent perseverance is somewhat changing them, since women felt panic-struck at the thought of being left without a servant. Idleness and inability were the offences in our servants against which we railed; but these moats were in our own eyes, too, and since we have plucked them from thence we have been able to see much more clearly how to cast them out of our poor little sister's patient, ignorant, uplifted eyes! And so, in this work, we have become servants of our servants in that we have uplifted them to better service; and in that very act we have won our own freedom from that slavery to our own ignorance and to theirs, which makes them the masters of our helpless inability. Look about you and you will see that the effective bright women of to-day are self-poised mistresses of their own households, to the ways of which they look so well, adroitly and systematically that they are as the vitalizing soul of the body. Once a large class of women were but housekeepers and drudges; now there are armies of bright women who are home-makers and queens of all hearts there. Now would it be fair to say that the best home-maker is the one that makes the best home for the largest number? If that is so, she who can reckon that her home is a home (a life-giving sanctuary) to her servants as well as to her husband and children, may take high rank as a home-maker; and she who redeems many who would otherwise become burdens on the State as propagators of vice—she who redeems any such to usefulness, self-support and self-government, ranks high in the work of making this country in fact what it claims to be in theory, a home of free, pure, intelligent, self-governed citizens.

Yes, sisters, the servant question is fast changing base. It is the most ignorant, miserable and degraded who must have service, while it is now only the wisest, purest and best who can possibly “go out to service” for the needs of the complicated social conditions in the midst of which the ship of state is floundering. When women were all about equally ignorant together, so that in some cases the chief difference between the lady in the kitchen and the lady in the parlor was, that the cook earned her clothes and the one who did not know how to cook did not earn hers, then, the balance of power lay with muscle and labor; but now we are changing all that, and the balance of power lays with that true womanhood whose wisdom, tact, skill and creative spiritual-force is achieving new possibilities, not for



self alone, but for the poor little sister of the white slave ranks! O, you blessed, good workers in this good, good cause, keep your courage up, and never be amazed or angry at ignorance on the part of those who have had no possible means to become wise. Of course your whole order of thought is realms from the associations into which these persons have been led—let us say—for courtesy in spite of their “natural protectors.” Yet it is fair to remember that even quite old people sometimes fail to discriminate between that true love which seeks only the good of the beloved, and that passion which sacrifices its object to selfish impulse. When we home-makers will as tenderly and helpfully shield the characters and even the reputations of our young servants as we would like to have our daughters shielded, then the work of social redemption will go on and our country will become indeed the home of the true and the free.

I am sincerely, yours for humanity,

EVELEEN L. MASON.

### A RIVER OF TEARS.

The same that flows under “The Bridge of Sighs.”

Hark! 'tis the ceaseless flow  
Of the fell tide of woe;  
Quick! lest the undertow  
Drag us beneath.  
Dark though the river be,  
Fathom its depths with me,  
Sweeping on toward a sea  
Surging with death.

Come to the attic-room,  
Come to the cellar-tomb,  
Where the poor call it home—  
Beggarly-born.  
O, how unsavory—  
Bred into slavery,  
Reared into knavery,  
Wretched, forlorn.

Pantaloon only rags,  
Petticoats, tatter-jags,  
What wonder villains, hags,  
Grow of such seed?  
Gossiping, chattering,  
Filthy tongues clattering,  
Brutal fists battering—  
Darksome the deed.

Now a child's moaning cries;  
Now its last gasping sighs;  
Weepings wild when it dies,  
“Waking” the corse.  
Now a child, motherless,  
Fatherless, brotherless;  
Girl or boy—Heaven bless—  
What can be worse?

Here lies a woman dead;  
Filthy rags for her bed;  
Husband drunk, babes unfed,  
Poverty's kin.  
Here a false woman's life,  
Here a man's slighted wife;  
Children reared into strife,  
Hollowness, sin.

Here in her flaunting dress,  
Rich in soul-rottenness,  
Seeks, for a vile caress,  
Outcast, a girl!  
Here in the drawing-room,  
Courtly and courted groom—  
Leads to a kindred doom  
Others, a-whirl.

Now a girl, wild with woe,  
To the true track would go;  
Curses deep friends bestow,  
Driving her mad.  
Never so bitterly  
Though she mourn, scorn her plea;  
“She is vile—let her be,”  
“Gone to the bad!”

Now the wild waters dash  
Over a victim rash!  
Golden-hued tresses wash  
Round her fair face.  
Pity, O, pity her!  
None gentler, wittier,  
Purer, or prettier,  
Ever found place.

Here without ill design,  
Ladies fair, with their wine,  
Tempt to doom, yours or mine,  
Whetting to sin.  
Here their gay chat and smile,  
Yours and mine, may beguile,  
Till they, crazed, seek the vile,  
Death though they win.

Here sparkling diamonds flash  
Where fiercest tortures lash:  
Here a rude, wrenching crash  
Flings wide the door,  
Where a dread skeleton,  
Haunting now and again,  
Hidden long from all men,  
Hideth no more.

Here the homes, villain-soiled,  
Weep and wail—tainted, moiled—  
Here they reek, wretch-embroided,  
Motley the crew.  
Here the knaves, holding power,  
Who betray and devour  
Those who trust—yet up-tower  
High, as if true.

Here proud pomposity,  
Puffed with prosperity,  
Prating of probity,  
Grindeth the poor.  
Here the weak widow's mite,  
Tangled in legal right,  
Slippeth off out of sight,  
Shutting the door.

Here foolish vanity,  
Breeding insanity;  
Here wild insanity  
God's laws defied.  
Here a poor crippled one;  
Here a wretch, cutting stone;  
Here a would-be babe, gone—  
Sin at flood-tide.

Here a mock piety;  
Here inebriety;  
Here a weak woman's cry,  
Agony-fraught!  
Here in a pool of gore,  
Just by the cellar door,  
Lies a corpse on the floor,  
Staring at naught.

Here in a dungeon low,  
Waiting his doom of woe,  
Devil stamped on his brow,  
Lieth a fiend.  
Here, in a neighbor cell,  
Tender youth learning well  
All the jargon of hell,  
Scarce they are weaned!



Here the huge prison-door,  
Gallows high hangs before—  
Give the noose one turn more ;  
End his career.  
Now in the prison wing,  
Give him the fatal swing ;  
Down goes the scaffolding ;  
Fraud even here.

Blessed Lord, where and when  
Can be found even "ten"  
Who live out the Amen  
Of Thy good Word ?  
When shall "Thy kingdom come?"  
When shall "Thy will be done  
Here in earth," as Thy Son  
Taught us, good Lord ?

God of might, God of love,  
Bend from Thy throne above,  
And Thy blest promise prove,  
Righting the wrong.  
Plant in each human soul  
Seeds of the Golden Rule ;  
Scarlet sins make as wool ;  
O, be not long !

NEW YORK.

MRS. E. P. MILLER, M. D.

## NOT FIT TO BE KISSED.

BY ANNA LINDEN.

"What ails papa's mouf?" said a sweet little girl.  
Her bright laugh revealing her teeth white as pearl ;  
"I love him, and kiss him, and sit on his knee,  
But the kisses don't smell good when he kisses me."

"But mamma"—her eyes opened wide as she spoke—  
"Do you like nasty kisses of 'bacco and smoke?"  
They might do for boys, but for ladies and girls  
I don't think them nice," as she tossed her bright curls.

"Don't nobody's papas have moufs nice and clean ?  
With kisses like yours, mamma, that's what I mean !  
I want to kiss papa, I love him so well,  
But kisses don't taste good that have such a smell !

"It's nasty to smoke, and eat 'bacco and spit,  
And the kisses ain't good, and ain't sweet, not a bit!"  
And her blossom-like face wore a look of disgust,  
As she gave out her verdict, so earnest and just.

Yes, yes, little darling! your wisdom has seen  
That kisses for daughters and wives should be clean ;  
Caresses lose something of nectar and bliss,  
From mouths that are stained and unfit for a kiss.

## TOBACCO VS. WOMEN.

BY META LANDER.

"I believe that the natural instinct of man concerning tobacco, if he has not inherited a taste for it, is repulsive." Thus Joseph Cook writes, adding: "When I was in Harvard University Dr. Shattuck, of the medical school, gave a lecture on health to the freshman class, and he told its members that he, as a physician, could not deny that tobacco was a sedative; but that, if they must take it, he would advise them to put it in a bowl on the mantel-piece and use it as a decoction, for then it would have all its sedative effect and not injure any one else besides the taker of it." That was the cool-

est advice I ever heard concerning the use of tobacco. Yet five-sixths of the Harvard students are addicted to this habit. Would that the old order, issued by the overseers of the University in the time of President Dunster, could be revived:

"No scholar shall take tobacco, unless permitted by the president, with the consent of their parents or guardians, and on good reasons first given by a physician, and then in a sober and private manner."

There is a kind of tobacco (I cannot give the brand) whose fumes are very offensive to the smoker, (I mean to the refined smoker;) nor is he a model of patience when it is inflicted on him. Strange he cannot realize that to most of the uninitiated all tobacco is obnoxious; that they instinctively repel the whole genus.

This weed is wonderfully pervasive. There is, in fact, no such thing possible as absolutely cleansing a dwelling afflicted with chronic smoking. Even a few whiffs leave their mark. What was my consternation one day, on opening a closet door, to perceive the unmistakable fumes. Had one of my male members turned traitor? I summoned them both. They emphatically declared their innocence. On close examination, the offender proved to be a garment just brought in from an establishment where smoking was in vogue.

What shall we say as to those women whom these inveterate smokers call wives? I have seen a man whom I loved and respected, who showed by many a sad token the effects of his cruel bondage. I have heard his wife, who had borne the trial patiently, though with suffering health, speak with feeling of the clean and sweet atmosphere of houses untainted with tobacco.

An editor, in explanation of the cigar in his mouth and the pipe on his table, stated that he formed the habit of smoking when a youth; but that the young lady with whom he fell in love said nay to his entreaties till he quitted tobacco. That he lived happily for some years; but that, when she died, he was driven to the old habit for consolation; that, after a time, he fell again in love, but that the lady in question made no such condition. He added, fervently: "I wish she had."

The wife of a certain smoker was affected with palpitation of the heart, deathly faintness, and hysterical symptoms. Her physician was at first puzzled; but concluded that she was the victim of tobacco poisoning. The unconscious husband, on hearing the views of the doctor, instantly abandoned smoking, and was rewarded by the speedy recovery of his wife.

Young women and older women, too, can you not find in this confession both rebuke and encouragement?

I know a gentleman in Philadelphia who did more than that. In his young days, cherishing a high respect for womanhood, though he had not then found his ideal, he fell into reflections (as young men sometimes will) on the subject of matrimony. Believing that the habit of smoking rendered him less worthy the love of any true woman, with a high chivalric feeling, he abandoned it. This was genuine aesthetics. When, in our civil war, he entered the army, many prophesied a fall; but his wife knew him better. While multitudes succumbed to the subtle tempter, he never wavered.

May we not, in some degree, account for the well-nigh



universal sway of this habit from the fact that so many women, partly from want of knowledge on the subject and partly from a willingness to sacrifice their own comfort for the pleasure of their dear ones, never lift their voice against it?

But the case, I fear, is sometimes worse than this. The perpetual strain that comes upon some men from the ambitious cravings and promptings of their wives and daughters for a more elegant style of dress and of living is, doubtless, irritating as well as wearing. I pity the man who, feeling that he ought not to be thus taxed, and who, failing, in spite of all his toil, to satisfy these cravings, is driven to a cigar for consolation; but I pity far more the woman who has any share in driving him to this. Better that she and her daughters should live in an Irish shealing and wear tow cloth all the days of their life than thus to be a drag upon their best friend, ruthlessly turning the sweet sentiment of life into bitterness and gall.

That the general tendency of tobacco is to bring men down to a lower plane will not be denied. What but the strange charms of this narcotic could reconcile the refined and the scholarly to the companionship to which it not infrequently introduces them?

A writer describes a scene he witnessed at a hotel in the vicinity of one of our most popular New England colleges. Around a coarse, illiterate man, who sat there enwreathed in clouds of smoke, gathered a circle of young loafers, to whom he passed cigars. As they joined him in smoking, they talked slang and profanity. It was difficult for the beholder to credit the fact, which incidentally became known to him, that these same smoking, swearing loafers were veritable college students.

On the lower class the effect is to degrade them still lower; to deafen the sense of their own pitiful condition and stifle any flickering sparks of ambition. Smoking is called the poor man's solace, because it makes him contented with his lot. That is one of its very mischiefs. He has no right to be contented. He is living in a miserable tenement and in the most meager fashion, when he might be owning a home and educating his children. But there day in and day out, he sits selfishly and stupidly smoking his pipe, while his pinched and joyless wife patiently waits on him and does her best to keep the wolf from the door.

"The fact is," says Thackeray, "the cigar is a rival to the ladies and their conqueror, too."

Bulwer writes: "Woman in this scale, the weed in that. Jupiter, hang out thy balance and weigh them both, and, if thou give the preference to woman, all I can say is, the next time Juno ruffles thee, O Jupiter, try the weed."

Yes, tobacco is the foe of women. It withdraws man from her society and makes him glory in his isolation, thus greatly marring, if not positively undermining the relation between the sexes.

In the words of Cowper:

"Thy worst effect is banishing for hours  
The sex whose presence civilizes ours.  
They dare not wait the riotous abuse  
Thy thirst-creating streams at length produce,  
When wine has given indecent language birth  
And forced the floodgates of licentious mirth."

The tendency of this habit will be more and more to separate woman from man, unless, in self-defense, she, too, forms the habit and learns to revel in tobacco smoke.

Gentlemen, would you hail the advent of such a day?  
—*Independent.*

SENATOR BEN HILL's physicians say that the cancer which killed him was caused by tobacco. He had a habit of holding a cigar almost constantly in his mouth and keeping the nicotine-coated end against the left side of his tongue.

TOBACCO is a great drunkard-maker."—*Dr. J. C. Jackson.*

#### BOYS HELPING THEIR MOTHERS

As the subject of boys helping their mothers has been introduced, and it is a subject that lies very near every heart, I feel as if I can scarcely refrain from saying a few words, although I am not a literary woman, by any means, but a farmer's wife, and my time, instead of being devoted to writing for the press, is employed in cooking, cleaning, washing, mending, sewing, knitting, etc., for a family of eight—all males except one 2-year-old girl. I fear that a wail of over-taxed strength and nerve might break forth from my lips, as it has in the case of some other "tired farmers' wives," were it not for the loving aid of several pair of chubby, brown, dimpled boys' hands, that not only assist in the "washing and churning" but which render their ready service at nearly any kind of general housework. They can make up beds neatly and well, and sweep and arrange and dust a room better than many hired girls. And, what is best of all, they can cook. I have one boy that prepares nearly the whole of the breakfast while I am attending to my dairy work, and, when I return from a long, dusty ride three miles from church on Sunday, or from the store through the week, instead of finding the house in disorder on my return, I find the dinner-table neatly set, while the odor of a very fair dinner greets our senses. Our 10-year-old boy prides himself on his skill and precision in cutting a plate of bread. In threshing time I do not have to send all around the neighborhood in order to get some one to help me, for the boy can wait upon the table and pass through among the men quicker and attend to the table with more ready tact than any girl I ever hired. As for myself ever having to carry in wood or water, or milk cows, it is something never expected of me. Let no one entertain the false idea that it spoils boys to help their mothers in the house, for I can truly testify that, aside from all the assistance my boys render me, there never were more manly, industrious boys, according to their age (they all being under 14 years), at any kind of outdoor farm work. I also truly believe that it has made them have a greater respect for me, and made them more refined, than they otherwise would have been, since kindness is the truest politeness.

—*Mrs. James Heydon, Black Earth, Wis.*

The miseries of humanity lie less in realities than in illusions; less in what we have than in what we desire.



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TAKE IT AND READ IT?"**

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# THE ALPHA.

VOL. VIII. OCTOBER 1, 1882. No. 2.

MISS MARY C. WHELAN, of North Vernon, Jennings county, Indiana, is agent for THE ALPHA in the third Congressional district of that State.

We hope our friends will give special attention to the notice on page eight of each number of THE ALPHA, headed "Paid For," and will not delay in renewing their subscription when notified by a stamp on the margin of the paper.

**PARENTAL LEGACIES.**

There is so much imperfection in things that one is sadly puzzled to know just what to do in many cases. I was just glancing over your "Parental Legacies," and run across this sentence (July Number, page 5, last column, twelfth line from top)

\* \* "With the habits common to ignorant people, blood poisoned with whisky and tobacco, the tissues of the body built up on pork and corn; is it, &c."

Now here is an unkind word for corn, calculated to weaken very much the unquestioned facts that would otherwise help to inform the ignorant; and who is fully informed? While I read and greatly admire your "Parental Legacies," before it was revised—I overlooked this unkind word for corn (if it was in) or I should have certainly called your attention to it. I do not think it was meant. I am no great admirer of corn except in its green state, hence I can speak disinterestedly, I think. The moral of the point in hand is to guard all we say on these great questions from narrowness. I was intending to send for a few of your "Parental Legacies," and was glancing it over and run across this "corn," hence these hasty remarks.

Considering the very abnormal state humanity is in, great care should be used to *lead them out*. I cannot but think the

too strong pressure of vegetarianism is a mistake since the diet to be found on all sides is enough to make an angel weep to say nothing of a poor weak mortal crushed with greater discouragement than this. Hope the January extra will be on the average as good as the September ALPHA.

Yours, for the best,

WM. HUNT.

True, we cannot be too careful of our modes of expression that we be not misunderstood, nor wound the feelings of those that are not on our plane of life. Mr. Hunt proves his friendship and his interest in our cause by his kindly criticism. We really have no unkind feeling towards corn, especially green corn, nor ripe corn ground into meal and properly cooked in several ways as a variety.

The text which called forth the above criticism, read originally "Hog and Hominy." But a dear friend when reading the manuscript, thought the expression bordered on slang, and wished me to make the sentence more refined. I see now how the correction changed the sense and the meaning. We only wished to refer to the bad living of poor people at the South. They literally live on pork, salted or smoked, all the year, with hominy or corn cakes lubricated with the fat or *essence* of the pork, with very few vegetables or fruit. The variety is apt to be tobacco and whiskey, of which the wife often partakes with the husband, occasionally joined by the children. This is poor nourishment for the mental and spiritual portion of man.

We sincerely think we shall, as a race, become finally emancipated from animal food and live entirely on fruits, grains, and vegetables. But it will be a slow process. It will not do for every one to make such a great change suddenly. Much as we have tried to be a vegetarian in *fact* as well as in theory, we have not for any length of time been able to do without animal food. With this humiliating weakness surely we should have charity for others; we know that the brain and the muscular tissues are made from the blood, and the quality of the blood depends upon the character of the food we eat. The question of diet is as of great magnitude and importance. We shall realize that more and more as we progress in wisdom.

EFFINGHAM, ILL., August 19, 1882.

DR. CAROLINE B. WINSLOW: Please send the tract called "Father's Advice to Every Boy," by Mrs. Dr. E. P. Miller; or "What every Father should tell his Son." I do not remember the author, but presume from the similarity of the title, they must be nearly identical in contents. I want something that will teach a boy of 15, respecting his physical organization, what he is, and why he was created. That terrible mystery, so long shrouded in ignorance, and sedulously guarded as a most disgraceful secret, should be in possession of every intelligent boy and girl, as soon as their understandings are capable of receiving it. It is not knowledge, but the want of it, that contaminates the minds of the young. Many a youthful folly would have been uncommitted, had the perpetrator known the consequences. No wiser maxim was ever written than, "know thyself." Yet, how many women and men too, well read and



well-informed on nearly all the topics of the day, know little or nothing of themselves.

I am disgusted with the sickly sentimentality that finds virtue in ignorance, and affects abhorrence of truth. We should know the laws of our being; and the penalties that attend their transgression. Let every father and mother realize their responsibility in this matter.

Yours, for truth,

Mrs. E. E. G.

ANOTHER friend writes: "What is the use of teaching girls special physiology and sexual ethics, when the boys are growing up uninstructed on these subjects and wholly unprepared to become husbands to well-instructed young women? Let us have something special for boys. They need to know the truth more than the average girl."

The frequency of such demands as the above have made a deep unrest in our soul because of the dearth of books to supply the need. Except Mrs. and Dr. E. P. Miller's "Father's and Mother's Advice," and "Vital Force," we scarcely know of any book or pamphlet that will help mothers, fathers, and guardians, to instruct their children in this most important of all branches of education; helping our youth of both sexes to know themselves, and the responsibilities and penalties that accompanies neglect of duties of our own person, for ignorance no longer passes for innocence, neither can ignorance escape the scourges and penalties of violated law.

Up to the present time the helps have been so few. Now we have Mrs. E. R. Shepherd's "Special Physiology for Girls," which supplies a great need in every household. But we need just as imperatively a special physiology for "boys;" one written out of a clear mind, a pure heart, and an enlightened conscience, that shall tell boys the truth about their own construction, the use of all the faculties of their mind and the functions of their body, their sacredness and possibilities, to bestow all true and faithful instructions in sexual ethics. Who will be the John the Baptist in this work? Who will write a bright, attractive, and truthful work for boys that will not stop short of their whole duty to show them the origin not only of deformities, disease, insanity, but of the hells of civilized life, adroitly covered and hidden from public gaze by respectable exteriors, but hells nevertheless from which a moral miasm arises that poisons the atmosphere of communities.—[Ed.]

#### OUR DIVORCE LAWS NEED REVISING.

To the Editor of the Rock Islander:

The injustice of our divorce laws is well illustrated by the following case, which occurred in my practice:

A woman who had been married about two and one-half years, has, during that time, twice become pregnant, but owing to a malformation of her pelvis she cannot give birth to a living child, an operation having to be performed to mutilate the child, and afterwards extract it by instruments—a procedure not only very painful but also involving much danger to the life of the woman.

Two weeks after her last confinement her husband demanded his marital rights, and whilst still suffering from the effects of the operation she left home, in her weak state—so weak that it took her three hours to walk to her mother's, living only one and a half miles away. Her friends have consulted three lawyers who all state that she cannot obtain a divorce, but her husband could claim a divorce on account of her inability to bear him children. But the worst feature of the law is this: the woman was living on a small farm of thirty acres, bought by her before her marriage, and this is all the woman owns. Her husband is now on the place and he refuses to give up possession or allow her any rent, coolly telling her he, as her husband, has a right to the place and cannot be dispossessed; and the lawyers who have been consulted say he is right. There is, then, no remedy for the woman but to return to her brute of a husband and be murdered legally, or be dependent on her mother, (who is also poor,) the two operations she has undergone having shattered her health and unfitted her to earn her living.

Laws controlling women, though much modified within twenty-five years, are still barbarously unjust, especially those made for married women. In the modifications there is just enough personal liberty allowed to make great confusion in the minds of most women, without legal knowledge, and with a keen moral sense that makes them suffer more keenly from the wrongs that they are trapped into, either with or without design on the part of their partners. When a conflict comes, she finds herself in an exasperating tangle. The worse thing any woman can do is to give her property into the hands of her husband. A truly generous and noble man would not accept it. But if this poor woman had not conveyed her property to her husband by a legally drawn and recorded deed, surely such a cruel sensual husband cannot retain it, even if he has possession, which is nine points of the law. Any humane judge would decide that self-preservation is the first law of nature, for woman as well as man. She did right to flee for her life—the wonder is, she did not die on the road.

Dr. Powell writes in a private note, "That if the divorce laws of Illinois are so unjust, he will circulate a petition and agitate the question till the law is changed." I hope he will, and let every woman sign the petition and work with him till this one-sided law is stricken from the statute-books. We promise our hearty co-operation.

What awful tragedies every physician could write of results of impatient claiming of what are called marital rights. This martyrdom will be revealed in the Great Day.—[Ed.]

THE second volume of "The History of Woman's Suffrage" is ready for sale. In every respect it sustains the interest of the first volume. Send to the publishers, Fowler & Wells, 753 Broadway, N. Y. Price \$5.00.



## THE BRYANT LYCEUM.

We have in our city a society of young and middle-aged men, for mutual improvement, called "The Bryant Lyceum." They meet and discuss all the leading questions of the day freely and in a most liberal spirit. Their meetings are weekly. Any member has a right to prepare a subject for discussion. Early in August Mr. S. M. Baldwin proposed the subject Heredity, Pre-Natal Culture, and Sexual Ethics. The subject, as he presented it, was quite new to many of the members. A few were ready from previous reading and thought. Others were astonished. "Never heard of such a thing." Others were afraid they would be "overheard by somebody." But very few, to their credit be it said, were inclined to make a jest of the subject. The serious and dignified manner of Mr. B. and the solemnity of his remarks, which we give below, rebuked all levity. The members decided to study the subject one year from THE ALPHA's standpoint and then renew the discussion, adding their own convictions; a wise decision that cannot help but bring good results. This is a good precedent for other debating associations to follow. We take heart when such methods are adopted, and know those that seek wisdom will find it.—[Ed.]

## OPENING REMARKS OF S. M. BALDWIN.

Ignorance in regard to the sexual element in human nature and its great objects and abuses, has been the source of more crime and misery and a greater hindrance to the progress and elevation of mankind than ignorance on any other subject. To create a conscience in man and woman as to the use of their sexual natures ought to be one of the chief aims of society. We all have been taught in school and pulpit about the use of other organs, but this, the strongest element of our natures, teachers have entirely ignored. The reproductive element in man is the heaven-appointed means, not only to perpetuate, but to refine and elevate the race, to ascertain the nature of that element, its action in the body and soul when retained in the system, the only justifiable object of its expenditure, the natural laws that are designed to govern it, how it can be used for our improvement and progress, is the aim of this discussion. These subjects must soon occupy the attention and respect of every true man and woman. The past has given one answer to the question, "What shall we do to be saved?" The future will soon give another. Those only who attain to the knowledge of the laws of life and health, body and soul, and live accordingly, have become reconciled to themselves, have found the true comforter and entered into rest. They are saved. Fidelity to ourselves in this world is the only sure and true preparation for the next. Violations of nature's laws constitute man's only source of disease of body and soul. The kingdom of heaven is within those, and only those, who understand and comply with the conditions of present life and health to body and soul. Only this is salvation. Whoever improves their own nature im-

proves the universe of which they are a part. They who strive to subdue their evil passions, vile remnants of the old four-footed life, are on the road to a true system of utilizing to the utmost this short primary school of existence. The sooner the world recognizes this true way of salvation and the failure of the present theological plan, the sooner shall we all realize the truth of what was said by one of old: "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

The signs of the times indicate that society will soon be so educated that, both at home and at school, children will be taught the philosophy of THE ALPHA; then in the very near future all will understand that none of us will be prepared to die until we are prepared to live wisely and well.

## OUR SONS AND DAUGHTERS-IN-LAW.

Parents are usually anxious concerning the choice made by their sons and daughters in obtaining life partners of the opposite sex. A few practical hints will interest your readers, and your correspondent hopes, may prove of mutual benefit.

Our offspring have our tender care, good and necessary correction for many years, and when they become thirteen to twenty years of age, we find they need our kind and indulgent guidance more than ever. At this age they should possess a knowledge of the law of self-government, self-development and hereditary descent.

Our chief aim should be to make them more fully developed men and women than ourselves. Duty demands that we provide for them sound information concerning the choice of *moral, mental and physical quality* in their associates, hoping, in return, to see grandchildren superior in type, more complete in organization and possessed of an increased amount of vitality or life energy accumulated during the pre-natal period.

In temperance circles there are whole families who have not tasted fermented or spirituous liquors during their lives. Young persons of both sexes in such society should be placed in correspondence with each other by letter under the guidance of their parents.

There may be found in "New Civilization" circles, families who have eaten no adulterated food in their lives, others, who, as a rule, use no semi-developed, deteriorated or devitalized food. These all would be pleased to correspond with others of the same pure, purer or purest grades.

If you will devise some means in your valuable paper by which such postal connection may be brought about between the parents you will be doing a great amount of everlasting good.

For the sake of example I may state with pleasure, that I have not tasted fermented or spirituous liquors in any form for twenty-three years, nor has Mrs. H. for twenty years. We have not taken any medicines during that time. We never give any to our children, seven in number, sons and daughters. The eldest is eighteen years of age. They have never tasted alcoholic drinks. No adulterated food has been used in our family for some years, and for four years we have used no devitalized foods. We are always healthy, plump, lively and hardy,



not knowing what sickness is. Hoping this letter will do good I close it by praying, God bless the rising generation.

TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA. VICTOR B. HALL.

Acquaintances or unions brought about by means similar to these suggested by our friend may not always be the best in results. Young people do not select for companions those similar in temperament and tastes or appearance to themselves, but are most strongly attracted to and complimented by their opposites. This wise law of selection should be the means of keeping the balance in human development and continuous through cycles of time that pleasing variety of character so interesting and stimulating to the mind as to form the chief attraction in society. *Fraternity* will be strongly developed between persons of similar hygienic and physiologic habits and convictions, as in church and other organizations. Although it is hardly the province of THE ALPHA to see that young people suitable for life partnership are thrown into each other's society, yet, if suggestions like the above can be made serviceable THE ALPHA will gladly help.

But it should be a grave duty with all parents to instruct their children (boys or girls) thoroughly in sexual ethics, the law of selection and adaptation, and then select associates for them that are known to be pure-minded, pure-blooded, of good intellect and good habits, industrious, with a reasonable amount of ambition—qualities that are always attractive to youth and when judged, tested by the wisdom and experience of their parents, will be received without hesitation; and, as friend Hall suggests, will save an immense amount of heart-ache for themselves and their children, besides raising the standard of morals and progress. Parents are not sympathetic enough with their sons and daughters at the period of adolescence and inexperience. Their duties extend over this period of hallucination and danger, and is quite as much needed as during the helplessness of infancy.—[Ed.]

#### HOW TO MAKE THE WORLD BETTER.

I take that this is what the mission of THE ALPHA means, and leads to the investigation of why and whence all this trouble? I find, in searching for some plan to improve the world in general and myself in particular, the first and hardest thing for me to learn is, that "I am wrong." After learning this great truth then I begin to get on saving ground, and can begin to do better. But so long as we practice Adam-like—"She gave me and I did eat"—we shall not get on very fast. So long as there is punishment attached to wrongdoing, and we think by laying the blame on others we can escape the penalty, so long you will work up hill and with little success in improving the race.

This difficulty is what I meet so much I am almost

afraid to say anything on the subject. These cases often seem to be the result of positive heredity. I make a distinction between "positive heredity" and "circumstantial heredity." The excuses we form for ourselves and the habit of laying our faults to others, I claim, are the result of circumstantial heredity, and are under the perfect control of the mother. I care not how good the father may be, his entreaties, patience, kindness, and love will fail without the mother's corresponding influence during gestation. In other words, the mother can make this world a hell or a heaven. I can tell the conduct and worthy status of any mother during pregnancy by her children, I don't care at what age I meet them; that is, I have found secret devils when I thought to find a saint. Her neighbors have said: "Such or such a woman is 'a pattern of piety.'" But in her own heart she was the devil incarnate. I can see in Col. Ingersoll the misery of doubt and scepticism his mother suffered during pregnancy. Oh, how that woman longed for pure, simple love. The contradictions and discussions on the Bible in her hearing caused pain. She saw the inconsistencies of pretended religionists. She saw how to remedy these incongruous conditions; but she dare not make a revolutionary movement. The son is acting out his mother's longing for love and honesty and uprightness. I am conscious that I am incompetent to give instruction, but every little helps, and I offer my mite.

J. S. WEEKS.

Our brother starts out wisely. "Know thine own heart, oh, man." "Cast the beam out of your own eye, then shalt thou see more clearly to cast out the mite in thy neighbor's eye." We agree with him about the mother's power over the destiny of her child, but cannot conceive of a woman seeking maternity, with the tender care of a good husband, spoiling the future of her child by indulging in diabolic tempers or vicious acts. When we consider how dependent a wife is upon her husband for all that makes up her life, how closely she is, or should be, associated with him, and how naturally dominant men are, it is hardly possible for a father not to do much toward making or unmaking his child after his own image, and he should feel the full weight of his responsibility. The great misfortune is, men are not educated to be husbands and fathers any more than women are for mothers. The paternal instinct is not as strong in men as in women. So women are more apt to verflow with love for their offspring, even if they have not wisdom to make their love the highest good for their children.

#### INHERITANCE.

Is it right to transmit evil qualities? Pity often asks. But there are so few that answer or take heed to the fact, that dreadful dispositions are daily transmitted and intensified and increased to an alarming extent. THE ALPHA answers in clear voice and conscience; but THE ALPHA is only an atom in the big world, yet if a little leaven will leaven a whole loaf, perhaps THE



ALPHA will in time induce the whole world to rise to this reform.

Yesterday we heard an intelligent lady say that a girl had married at the age of fifteen, and when we expressed surprise, she said it was the best thing she could do; that she had a strong animal nature (meaning passion) and not at all intellectual. So I suppose there will be a large family of children brought into the world with uncontrollable instincts. Was it a wise marriage?

We know a family who are noted for vicious tempers; every one of that family expects to marry. If they had leprosy they would not be allowed to marry. When will law restrict the propagating of crime? Is not the soul of more account than the body? There should be laws compelling parents to give the best physical and moral chances to their offspring.

ELI.

#### WHAT OF THE FUTURE—OUR DUTIES IN RELATION THERETO.

Permit me to introduce myself to you and the readers of the bright and shining ALPHA. Through the kindness of some friend THE ALPHA comes, accompanied with a receipt, showing that it has been paid for for one year. Thanks to the sender, for I assure you THE ALPHA meets my hearty approval; in fact, I had been lecturing to small, but appreciative audiences, (to gentlemen only,) upon the hereditary transmission of evil desires, as well as of disease, before I had seen THE ALPHA, and I could but rejoice that there was a paper being published treating upon the subject of all subjects. While there are many reformatory papers published, there are none which approximate as closely to bed-rock principles as does yours, and I heartily wish that it could be read in every household in the land. Readers of THE ALPHA, we have a mighty work to do. It is soul-sickening and alarming to behold poor, suffering humanity to-day, but what must be the condition of the human race in a few generations more, if physical degeneration continues, as it must, unless something is done to stay its onward march? We boast of being an enlightened nation. We boast of a high order of civilization. I would to heaven the claim was true, but alas! call this an enlightened people, when nine-tenths of the abortionists do not know, or believe, that they are committing murder! Enlightened, when nine-tenths will not admit that the habit of using tobacco, drinking whisky, and of gambling, lying, tattling and stealing is transmitted from parents to children! Enlightened nation, indeed! when the booming of cannon are heard, and truly a nation rejoiced when the wires flashed the news forth that Guiteau was found guilty of murder in the first degree. Rejoicing over what? Ah! a poor, unbalanced, badly organized man is to be slain. Poor brother! He was ushered into the world with a bad organization and lived it out, or, manifested himself in accordance with the machine given him to manifest through. If he but had your organization, Sister Winslow, or mine, he would not have done just what he did. Certainly, then, he is entitled to our sympathy. A Christian, enlightened nation clamoring for that poor, unfortunate man's blood. Enlightened, when the people, as a mass, will not admit, or do not believe,

that every day tattlers, hypocrites, liars, gamblers, thieves and murderers are being born into the world. The thought is soul-sickening indeed. It is lamentably true that people do not understand the *real* bottom cause of the rotten condition of society as we find it to-day. We know of no other way but for those who have some light in regard to this all-important matter to spread it in every way possible. Readers of THE ALPHA, we have a mighty work before us. Let us remember that we of to-day are largely responsible for the crime, misery, and unhappiness of the incoming generation. Let us direct our efforts for the remainder of our time to the benefit of coming generations. The cries of unborn millions come wafted upon every breeze, crying out, "Reform, reform!" Let us heed their cries, and do our duty.

A. ALLEN NOE.

WEST FARMINGTON, O., April 21, 1882.

#### THE LAW OF A "NECESSITY THAT KNOWS NO LAW."

When the Earl of Chatham said, "Necessity is the argument of tyrants, the creed of slaves," he was speaking politically, but the wisdom of the apothegm has a wide significance, and is as applicable to one sort of tyranny as to another. It has become quite the fashion in this nineteenth century to talk about a "physical necessity" in man, so over-mastering in its demands, that it converts him into an unreasoning slave, and makes him look upon woman as the mere creature of his necessity. The ingenuity with which he wrests tradition to sustain his position is a curious illustration of the *reductio ad absurdum* style of argument.

He adopts the Hebrew Bible as his guide, interprets its text to suit his pleasure, and then proceeds to prate of "curses" as specially sent upon woman. He likes to quote from Genesis: "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." "I will greatly multiply thy sorrows and thy conceptions;" and, forgetting his share in the transgression that called out this part of a double curse, he makes himself a willing instrument in its perpetuity. He does his utmost to "multiply her sorrows and conceptions," having, as her natural protector, (?) the right to subdue her to the level of his passions, and to make her "his ox," "his ass," "his anything." Petruchio took his idea from the Tenth Commandment, and from time immemorial man has accepted this as his creed. It is easy to ignore the other part of this so-called curse which apportioned to man the necessity of earning his bread by the sweat of his brow, and he persistently and intelligently does this, hiring subordinates, whenever possible, to endure the sweating process, and often enlisting the elements as executors of his will. But the woman's portion must be carried out to the letter, be she slave, concubine, or wife—they are convertible terms—and if her life is sacrificed on the altar of this "physical necessity" it is only in the line of duty, and another takes her place.

What utter nonsense it is to say that an infinite God intended to curse all women because one failed to obey a law; or, if a curse was to follow disobedience, why did He not execute it himself? Why leave it to the option of man, and give him absolute power to apportion her lot?



How queer it all sounds! In spite of this so-called curse a woman was, in the fullness of time, to become the "Mother of God" without the instrumentality of man, whose qualities were so little God-like that he was not allowed to approach her during the period of gestation.

"That holy thing" she carried was to be called "Emmanuel," or, "God with us," and she was to be "blessed among women" for all time. And yet, her sister woman in these days is not allowed to be the owner of her own body—is not the equal of man in personal or political rights. She is simply to be "the breeder of the race," with man, as the party of the first part, to dictate the destiny of the children thus bred and born.

Let us suppose the case reversed—that man received that portion of the so-called curse from which there was to be no escape, because as the weaker vessel he yielded to the woman, and that the execution of the curse (so called) had been left dependent on her will, would she have been so ready to shirk the consequences, and to shift the burden of guilt? so eager to constitute herself the judge of her partner in sin, and to become the ready instrument of his punishment? Suppose she had. How many ages would it have been before he discovered the absurdity of such a one-sided arrangement?—the utter injustice of such a "divine institution," as our unctious Chadbands put it. This is an age of free thought and of common sense rule, and all talk about a "Merciful God" who has "cursed" a majority of the souls he has created in order that the "physical necessity" of a minority may be gratified, is a ridiculous contradiction of terms. Woman was not created to be a mere tool of convenience to man, nor was man created to be the tyrant and oppressor of woman. Each belongs to the other, and together they fulfill a high and sacred function. "A house divided against itself cannot stand."

K.

#### KISSES ON INTEREST.

A father, talking to his careless daughter, said "I want to speak to you of your mother. It may be that you have noticed a careworn look upon her face lately. Of course it has not been brought there by any act of yours, still it is your duty to chase it away. I want you to get up to-morrow morning and get breakfast; when your mother comes and begins to express her surprise, go right up to her and kiss her in the mouth. You can't imagine how it will brighten her dear face. Besides you owe her a kiss or two. Away back when you were a little girl she kissed you when no one else was tempted by your fever-tainted breath and swollen face. You were not as attractive then as you are now. And through those years of childish sunshine and shadows she was always ready to cure, by the magic of a mother's kiss, the little, dirty, chubby hands, whenever they were injured in those first skirmishes with the rough old world. And then the midnight kiss with which she routed so many bad dreams as she leaned above your restless pillow, have all been on interest these long, long years. Of course she is not so pretty and kissable as you are, but if you had done your share of work during the last ten years, the contrast would not be so marked.

Her face has more wrinkles than yours, far more, and yet if you were sick that face would appear more beautiful than an angel's as it hovered over you, watching every opportunity to minister to your comfort, and every one of those wrinkles would seem to be wavelets of bright sunshine chasing each other over the dear face."

—Ex.

#### EDUCATION.

BY HESTER M. POOLE.

To and fro, spinning and weaving,  
The diligent Forces within  
Are moving on with a rhythmical motion,  
With none of our dreadful din.  
Work they ceaselessly day and night,  
Clothing the spirit in robes of light.

Weaving on silently, swiftly,  
To fashion this beautiful robe;  
Ever the finest filaments choosing,  
From the fairest fruits of the globe;  
Yet the perfect garment only appears,  
After the lapse of a hundred years.

WILL TO LIVE! The life eternal  
Shines on the straight, narrow way,  
While we our silken garments are weaving  
For the regions of endless day.  
After the lapse of a hundred years,  
Death as a welcome friend appears.

—Felicissima.

How seldom do we reflect that slowly, noiselessly, ceaselessly by night and by day, within the visible the invisible body is being wrought. Out of food and drink, out of atmosphere and essences, material is aggregated for a home wherein the royal Spirit shall sit enthroned in unapproachable and immortal beauty.

How consecrated should be that life which has such a mission! How trivial is all else compared with the purpose of furnishing the finest and best materials which it is possible to command, that hereafter the incasing garment—the soul-body of the Spirit shall be fitly equipped for exalted companionship and noble uses! To all, even the poorest, humblest and most debased, are open the same endless career. All are vitalic centres where spirit and matter meet and mingle for the purpose of individualizing a continued existence, having for its centre a Deific spark, a portion of universal and omnipotent intelligence. Only by striving after the best, by putting the lower under the control of the higher, by purity of thought and deed, by growing strong in love of truth and of our fellows, and by the habitual use of good mental and physical food, through a long series of years, can we be entirely ripened so that the physical husk may drop from the perfectly formed soul. That joyously emancipated from all encumbrances will then float on magnetic currents to that beautiful "home not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

The object of what we term education, of which only a small portion can be obtained from schools, is to facilitate the above process—to help unfold and expand those powers which inhere in all human beings. Judged by this truism, how vain and insufficient is much of the process through which many of our youth pass! There are few schools where natural methods of teaching are in vogue; the best of them are cumbered with much



which only exercises the memory or which serves to "train the mind." The intuitional nature is ignored, and an artificial system substituted. Year by year the old cramming and cramming measures are dying out, and a better way explored. Youth are more often led into the green fields of nature, to con living lessons from the sky and sea, from shell and bird and beast, even from man himself. Of these opportunities let the doors be opened for women as well as men.

The following telegram was recently received by the press of New York:

"CASTELAR ON EDUCATION.

"The closing sitting of the Educational Convention was held to-day. It is composed of 2,000 professors of both sexes, assembled in Madrid from the humblest parishes where \$200, irregularly paid, is the salary of the teachers of the primary school. At the session Senor Castelar made a speech unrivaled for eloquence. He depicted the noble sacrifice of the humble pioneers of enlightenment so necessary for success in the work of education. The enthusiasm was very great. In his speech he dwelt particularly on the progress of women recently in educational and professional branches, and even in the Spanish university pursuits, showing the part they could take in the propagation of progressive ideas."

EFFECTS OF TEA ON THE SKIN.

If you place a few drops of strong tea upon a piece of iron—knife blade, for instance—the tannate of iron is formed, which is black. If you mix tea with iron filings or pulverized iron you can make a fair article of ink. If you mix it with fresh human blood it forms with the iron of the blood the tannate of iron. Take human skin and let it soak for a time in strong tea, and it will become leather. Now, when we remember that the liquids which enter the stomach are rapidly absorbed by the venous absorbents of the stomach, and enter into the circulation and are thrown out of the system by the skin, lungs, and kidneys, it is probable that a drink so common as tea and so abundantly used will have some effect. Can it be possible that tannin, introduced with so much liquid-producing respiration will have no effect upon the skin? Look at the tea-drinker of Russia, the Chinese, and the old woman of America, who have so long continued the habit of drinking strong tea. Are they not dark-colored and leather-skinned?

COMMUNICATION.

For The Alpha.

An Indiana paper sets forth with lachrymous adjectives that "Mr. Blank, one of our first citizens, ascertaining the infidelity of his wife, has taken steps to separate himself from her, and to secure the custody of his children, in which effort he has the sympathy of the entire community.

This is all proper and right: but what of all the Mrs. Blanks in that city who, "ascertaining the infidelity of their husbands," should "take occasion," &c.? Would they be able to command the same community of sympathy, or would the stigma of "divorced wife," rest upon them thenceforth?

"'Tis strange the difference to see  
'Twixt tweedle dum and tweedle dee."

DEAR DR. WINSLOW: The above was sent me by Miss F. E. Willard, to send to ALPHA, and it recalls to my mind a case

under my own knowledge—that of a friend. She was a lovely, innocent girl, pure as a snow-drop—the comparison is old, but to any one who knew her it would not seem tame. Unfortunately and unaccountably she became deeply attached to a young man, who sought her hand, but was no more worthy of her than filth is of snow. He afterward confessed to her that he led an impure life, even during his courtship. They were married and had two children, a boy and girl.

By the time the latter lay in her arms, she carried a breaking heart. He tired of her and did not conceal it. He openly paid attentions to another woman, though careful to do nothing which could be brought up in testimony. He lied to her and treated her cruelly, with the deliberate and avowed intention of forcing her from him.

He returned to his father's house and told her she might come if she chose, but she had better not, for she would soon have to leave. She clung to him and her children and persisted that they should be true to their vows, amidst all that he and his parents could do to render her stay unendurable. Finally she was forced to leave and seek refuge in her mother's house. She sought and obtained a divorce on the ground of cruel treatment.

Now comes the bitter injustice. The custody of the children was not submitted to legal decision, as the poor young mother was assured that in spite of all influence that could be brought to bear, (and she had good and wise friends,) the little boy would be awarded to the father at the age of seven. You will observe that a man may be a fiend incarnate, and yet not legally disqualified for the custody of the children. The very best that could be done was a private agreement by which the boy is to go to his father at twelve and spend two-sevenths of his time with his father's family meantime. So the prospect before this young wife, worse than widowed, is that of sending her little son to his father and the woman for whom he sacrificed her life, and whom he married soon after the divorce.

If death mercifully claims the little fellow before the dreaded period, it will be a relief.

This the fates meted out to a blameless woman by the laws of Pennsylvania.

M. L. GRIFFITH.

CORRESPONDENCE.

BELLEVUE, OHIO, Sept. 8, 1882.

DEAR MRS. WINSLOW: Your kindly letter at hand, and since reading it I have not been able to dispel the thought that "this is the work whereunto we are called." Therefore we trust your closing appeal, "dear friend, work with us for human redemption without ceasing," has not been made in vain. Wish we were able to extend your present list of subscribers to the desired number, viz: 5,000. As we cannot do that at present, will do what we can. We send you the names of a few of our friends through whom we wish to help the cause by helping them to become acquainted with THE ALPHA and thus with your work. Inclosed find \$10.00.

E. D. S.

BOSCOBEL, Sept. 13, 1882.

DEAR MRS. WINSLOW: The September number of THE ALPHA is at hand. A lady subscriber once wrote me near a year since that each new number of THE ALPHA seems to her grander than any preceding it. These words were but an echo to my own thoughts, and this September number proves no exception; indeed, I think it cannot be excelled. Please send me ten copies for distribution. Wish I were able to send for one hundred. Yours,

E. G. T.

September 20, 1882.

MY DEAR MRS. WINSLOW: "The Sources of Wealth" in June ALPHA I think is so good, indeed, it is all so good that I feel like Mrs. J. S. C., that I would like to sow it broadcast throughout the land. One enjoys giving it to those to read who



are in sympathy with its principles, but I do not believe in giving it to those who are the very opposite, for it is good seed sown and must take root and grow. Everybody is longing for something better, and my experience is this: Not one I have given THE ALPHA to read, but that believes in its doctrines eventually. Sometimes I have put it down on a table just where I knew it would be seen by some young man and read. I have felt uncomfortable in doing it, being a single woman, and knowing how wrongly these subjects are talked over by young people, still I have done it and know that it has done good by many ways. I have a feeling that everything is presented in such a good and pure way in THE ALPHA, that any one, however young, may read it.

A friend of mine (who reads my ALPHA) who has a young lady friend visiting her, said to me the other day when handing me an ALPHA: "I read some in this number to Miss M., but there are some things I did not think best for her to read." Miss M. is 18 years old. I said I thought it was a mistake not to read every word to her or let her read it. And then my friend said: "Yes, perhaps so. Perhaps it is the fault of our education that makes us have those feelings."

It seems to me, even though it is a little shock when first some subjects are spoken of, the sooner it is done the better. I often think if I were a married woman, I know I could do so much more than I do if such were the case. Perhaps this too is a mistaken feeling, still I have it. I often feel though it matters little if one is really in earnest. It is wonderful to me the power a man or woman has who is thoroughly in earnest in any good work.

I remain yours, very sincerely,

JANE T.

MILWAUKEE, WIS., Sept. 5, 1882.

MY DEAR MRS. WINSLOW: I received your very kind note; you comfort me very much, for I am working harder and harder, and as every one seems to know whence came the hundred ALPHAS which have sowed this city with lessons of high purity, they put different degrees of interpretation on my orders of thought and life, according to their own ill or better development.

But we live for the future; and in the present our life is hid with the Sons of Jehovah, and can have no fellowship with the darkness of ignorance. Truly, only a life of faith in the possibility of making the world become the Sons of God, instead of animals, could ever carry us on through this reform.

I have a girl from the reform school who seems to be good material, though there seems to have been nothing too hard to say of her, and I am making a woman of the new age, and of ALPHA principles of her. It is the only way to clean up the Auegan stables.

The Americans hold a convention at Madison this week, commencing to-night. I shall go up with Dr. Wolcott, Rev. Olympia Brown and others.

Our great need to-day is for women, fearless, high poised women of englobed moral power, who can stand unmoved above all shafts of criticism or slander and shine on.

Many ladies talk on these truths with me, much and often.

I am sincerely yours,

E. S. M.

TORONTO, August 17, 1882.

MRS. CAROLINE WINSLOW: Twenty-two years of my life I have given to lifting up woman to a higher life; it has been done quietly, without noise or pomp; yet, by the pamphlet I send you, you can tell something of the nature of my work. There must come a most radical change in the marriage relation in the higher as in the lower walks of life, before any marked change in woman's condition can take place. Under my roof is a pretty little girl, only fourteen in June, yet her babe is four months old the 18th of this month. The blame I charge to the ignorance of her parents. My lecture this winter is to be entitled "A Radical Change." In Canada the woman's cause is far behind the movement in the States. I am an American, born and brought up in radical Boston, but my home has been here for ten years. I will take THE ALPHA after the 1st of September, and I will interest some noble women and friends of my own in Buffalo and other cities, which I shall visit this fall and winter. The day is not so far distant as it may seem to those of us who are working against wind and tide that will see our cause the cause of the truest and best men and women. May all your efforts be crowned with success.

Sincerely yours,

M. M. MARCY.

BOSTON, September, 1882.

DEAR MRS. WINSLOW: Your July number of THE ALPHA is very valuable. It comes to me like a revelation. The great truths that are so ably, so convincingly brought home to the heart and conscience seem almost new, though many years ago (say thirty) Henry C. Wright used to announce most of them, but not with the vigor and clearness and power of illustration with which this July ALPHA gives them. I am not unaware of the services, in the same good cause, of my young friend Fred. A. Hinckley and many others who have been laboring with you so long.

Very truly yours,

ROBERT F. WALLCUT.

CLEVELAND, O., September 18, 1882.

MY DEAR MRS. WINSLOW: Inclosed please find the "where-with" (\$1) to secure me for one year my moral educator. (THE ALPHA.) If our proposed spiritual institute proves a success, I hope to keep your paper prominently before the people; it shall have the post of honor on the counter and in the reading-room along with the other reformatory works. I hope to be in a shape soon that I can add my mite occasionally to your columns, already pregnant with "welcome," living thoughts. May every year extend your subscription list, and bring you the prosperity you deserve. Believing it will,

I remain yours for the cause,

THOMAS LEES.

NEW YORK, September 1, 1882.

CAROLINE B. WINSLOW: Having circulated over fifty copies of THE ALPHA and obtained many subscribers for its valuable pages, we now inclose one dollar for the coming volume for 1882-'83. We think the paper is much needed, ably edited, nobly sustained, and ought to circulate to every reader on the globe, by being translated into the varied languages.

GILES B. AVERY.

SOUTHOLD, L. I., Sept. 20, 1882.

MRS. WINSLOW: Inclosed find one dollar (\$1) to renew my subscription to THE ALPHA. I cannot express my appreciation of its value, it is simply immeasurable. The principles it advocates lie at the very foundations of all life. The success of all other reforms depends upon the success of this, for this is the key to each and every other. That you may prosper more abundantly than your highest hope, is most sincerely the desire of S. C.

GERMANTOWN, PA., Sept. 16, 1882.

MRS. DR. WINSLOW: Please find inclosed subscription for ALPHA, and imagine all the good things which can be said of your work as here written, and which I have not time to write. One word only I must say that I think the "correspondence" in the back part of ALPHA, is very useful in proving, as some of the letters do, that women and men, the latter especially, can and do live a pure and continent life, when they so desire; and I frequently show them to doubtful people to convince them.

Yours, in haste,

MRS. E. L. W.

### CONCEALED LOVE.

She loved him, but he knew it not. Her heart  
Its secret hoarded, as the miser doth  
His precious gold. When'er he looked aside  
Her eyes were bent on his, and there reposed,  
Till a returning glance their radiance quenched  
In love-born tears, trembling beneath the veil  
Of each deep azure orb, cast down to earth  
In quiet sadness. He was her heart's dear theme  
From matins to the vesper chime; and night  
Brought to her couch the fancies of each day  
In dreams whose chaste and ever new delights  
Melted in sorrow with the morrow's snow.  
Alas! it could not be that one so fair  
Should long endure such load of misery.  
A twelve-month stole the roses from her cheek,  
And laid her in the narrow resting place  
Where now she sleeps, untouched of every care,  
With wealth of bright flowers growing over her.

—James C. Pearson.



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