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Constructing the Norm: Medical Advice Literature to Canadian Adolescents, c. 1873-1922

by

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A Thesis submitted to the Department of History in conformity with the requirements for the
degree of Master of Arts

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Abstract

This thesis examines prescriptive literature targeted at Canadian adolescents, c. 1873-1922, and the norms of health they endorsed. By comparing the manuals, one notices the authors' attempt to harmonize physical, mental, and spiritual elements into an idealized trinity of good health through the promotion of 'proper' habits. In the following thesis, I will build upon earlier historical research and contemporary scientific theories in order to examine how manuals influenced the construction of broader societal norms for Canadian adolescents and how 'medicine' was used as a crutch for doing so. To accomplish this goal, I will investigate material written for young people on what "good" habits should be cultivated, or which "temptations" were best avoided to secure their health and happiness. In a chapter devoted to advice written exclusively for young women, I will examine how physiology linked adolescent girls to specific life roles. Finally, I will discuss how prescriptive literature attempted to cultivate a standard for young people in order to impress upon them the importance of pure adults and responsible parents to the future progress of society.

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Introduction

“Give much time and careful study to books in which men of eminence and character give wise counsel.”¹ — Sylvanus Stall, 1897

“In many cases, call for the advice of the physician, who can see and study the patient and her special conditions. It is not safe to trust book-doctoring.”²
—Dr. Wood-Allen, 1913

Adolescents, commonly considered to be “sexual beings-in-process,” even before their “discovery” in 1904, were often at the center of discourses on sexuality.³ Victorian parents were encouraged to treat girls and boys in a similar fashion during their infancy and early childhood; “in contrast, the onset of puberty was seen as the period when individuals should adopt the behaviour and physical deportment appropriate to their sex” and their future adult roles.⁴ Considered to be in a fragile state of development, young people were believed to be in a constant state of conflict and discovery. Walking the precipice between proper growth and spiritual development, medical advice manual writers perceived that adolescents could easily be swept away onto a path of self-destruction.

The protection of childhood innocence and the promotion of approved modes of behaviour were considered by most adults at the turn of the century to be particularly significant. Young men and women were regarded as, “the parents of the future; the regulation of their sexuality was critical to the reproduction of dominant forms of social organization.”⁵ Adolescents were an investment—“capitalized hope” in a better tomorrow.⁶ Thus, authors of prescriptive manuals, religious leaders, and health professionals took it upon themselves to advise teens and their parents as to what behaviours were suitable and what pitfalls should be

¹ Sylvanus Stall, What a Young Man Ought to Know (Toronto: William Briggs, 1897) 269.

² Mrs. Wood-Allen (MD), What a Young Woman Ought to Know (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1913) 144.

³ Mary Louise Adams Ph.D. thesis, The Trouble with Normal: Postwar Youth and the Construction of Heterosexuality (Toronto: University of Toronto Department of Education, 1994) ii, and Stanley G. Hall, Adolescence: Its Psychology and its Relations to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion and Education (New York: Appleton, 1907).

⁴ Deborah Gorham, The Victorian Girl and the Feminine Ideal (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982) 85.

⁵ Adams, ii.

avoided on the journey to adulthood. Indeed, the norm propagated by advice literature used medical tenets to entrench a trinity of proper habits as the foundation of good health. This trinity balanced physical, mental, and moral elements.

In this thesis, I will address two important questions above all others. Specifically, what "norms" were promoted by North American advice literature, and how did they attempt to influence the construction of adolescent health, gender, race, and class in Canada at the turn of the century? Norms will be defined as conventions that assign each man, woman, and child their designated role in society based on what was considered by the majority of public opinion to be biologically 'natural' and appropriate for each.⁷ In other words, "the story is no longer about the things that have happened to men and women and how they have reacted to them; instead, it is about how the subjective and collective meanings of women and men as categories of identity have been constructed."⁸ Norms are not static, but have an undeniable influence in a society that respects their spirit if not always the letter of their law.

Rarely are norms presented as didactically as they appeared in advice literature; yet, the manuals provided cultural cues for readers, and the more readers were exposed to these accepted standards, the more those standards were entrenched in their experience. For example, in writing about the effect of this process on women, historians Lisa Peattie and Martin Rein claim that

some things appear to us to be natural because of appropriateness; surely if you tried to do it differently, you would feel so peculiar or out of place that no one in their right mind would care to...Some things appear natural because the system requires them; everything would fall apart if it changed...Some other things appear natural in the sense of being the only possibility...⁹

⁶ William Forbush (Ph.D.) The Boy Problem (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1907) 26.

⁷ Michel Foucault, The Use of Pleasure: Volume 2 of the History of Sexuality (New York: Vintage Books, 1990) 158-159. This loose definition is derived from Foucault's discussion of "Ischomachus' Household" and the *normos* laws of each person's nature.

⁸ Joan Wallach Scott, Gender and the Politics of History (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988) 6.

⁹ Lisa Peattie and Martin Rein, Women's Claims: a Study on Political Economy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983) 2-3 as cited by Joy Parr "Nature and Hierarchy: Reflections on Writing the History of Women and Children," Atlantis Vol. 11, No. 1 (Fall 1985) 40.

Joan Wallach Scott argues that exploring the invocation of these images and their context allows us to see how normative concepts are established in an attempt to limit their metaphoric possibilities. To elaborate,

these concepts are expressed in religious, educational, scientific, legal, and political doctrines and typically take the form of a fixed binary opposition, categorically and unequivocally asserting the meaning of male and female, masculine and feminine...Subsequent history is written as if these normative positions were the product of social consensus rather than conflict.¹⁰

Furthermore, analysis of norms must include references to social institutions, in this case medical and prescriptive literature, since health and gender are not exclusively constructed through family or patriarchal relationships. Finally, the fact that young people did not literally fit the models prescribed for them by society's, or the historian's analytic categories reminds us of the problems of subjective identity.¹¹

No definite answer can be found to the question that asks how frequently parents or adolescents turned to literary sources for medical advice, or how faithfully they followed the advice found therein. Some medical advice offered to young North Americans or their parents was not nor could be accepted. Molly Ladd-Taylor observed that even mothers who genuinely attempted to follow the instructions laid out by the Children's Bureau found that inadequate medical care, impure milk sources, work responsibilities, abusive relationships, and strained economic circumstances during the Depression often made the advice impossible to follow.¹² Some evidence suggests clearly that certain pieces of advice were rejected outright. The most entertaining example I found is the following poem reprinted by Katherine Arnup. The subject matter is infant care, but the message is applicable to other forms of advice literature. "Modern Mother" was published in a 1932 edition of Chatelaine,

I have tried philosophy,

¹⁰ Wallach-Scott, 43.

¹¹ Wallach-Scott, 43-44 and Adams, 22.

¹² Molly Ladd-Taylor, Raising a Baby the Government Way: Mother's Letters to the Children's Bureau (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1986) 43.

And applied psychology -
 But when Johnnie bumps his knee
 I forget - and kiss it!
 'Never sing the lullabies -
 Fairy tales are silly lies' -
 But when drowsy baby cries
 I forget - and rock him!
 I should like to ask to tea
 Little mothers who would be
 Deaf to child psychology,
 Quaint, perhaps, but modern surely
 Mothers who could find delight
 In that ancient ceremony -
 'Tucking children in,' at night!¹³

While this poem was published in a national magazine and directly condemned the teachings of scientific mothering, it is important to note that it too did not necessarily represent the 'norm.' Hundreds of women wrote letters to the Children's Bureau and the Canadian Council on Child Welfare to express thanks for the advice they received from these institutions.¹⁴

Medical manuals fashioned whom the ideal adolescent should resemble. Moreover, this advice appeared fixed because patterns of proper health were outlined so authoritatively that the reader might have assumed they were the only acceptable standard for young people to follow. For this study, health, education, and religious professionals claimed to be experts, and thereby reserved the right to label certain modes of behaviour as healthy or desirable.¹⁵ In doing so, authors of medical advice literature subtly imposed rigid standards upon their readers while at the same time enhancing their own power status. Authorities on both child hygiene and adult health, authors of medical advice literature prescribed rules and regulations that were to be followed from birth. If one adhered to these strict definitions of 'healthy' and 'normal' behaviour, then success as a vibrant member of society was virtually guaranteed.¹⁶

¹³ Katherine Arnup, Delivering Motherhood: Maternal Ideologies and Practices in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries (New York: Routledge, 1990) 133.

¹⁴ Arnup, 133.

¹⁵ R. D. Gidney and W. P. J. Millar, Professional Gentlemen: The Professions in Nineteenth-Century Ontario (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994) 102.

¹⁶ These strictures were biased toward white, middle class, heterosexual standards of health and lifestyle.

For the most part, government intervention into the health habits of Canadian citizens was imposed at a relatively late date. When the British North American Act was drawn up in 1867, health care fell onto the shoulders of family members and the community.¹⁷ The void was filled by “a system wherein individual medical practitioners looked after individual care, the provinces and municipalities provided hospital beds, and the federal government confined itself largely to the control of environmental conditions.”¹⁸ The self-help approach, made popular in the 1820s, was personified by the motto “Every man his own physician” and first advocated in Samuel Thomson’s New Guide to Health.¹⁹ The sentiment persisted into the latter half of the nineteenth century, and the loosely regulated system that resulted also created a boon in patent medicine, often referred to by skeptics as quackery.

Roy Porter contends that doctors and quacks had more in common with one another than they probably would have liked to admit.²⁰ Recipes for the nostrums and salves of a quack and an orthodox practitioner differed little in the final analysis.²¹ Urbanization and mass “production made possible by industrialization also made profitable a patent medicine industry to treat those who were too skeptical, too isolated, or too poor to go to a doctor.”²² Due to the irregular success of medical advice, the public looked upon all aspects of formal health care with skepticism. In other words, “consumers showed little confidence in or loyalty to regular

¹⁷ Peter Aucoin, “Federal Health Care Policy,” Issues in Canadian Public Policy. G. Bruce Doern and V. Seymour Wilson, eds. (Toronto: Macmillan Press, 1974) 55 referred to in Janice P. Dickin McGinnis’ “Whose Responsibility?” in Martin S. Staum and Donald E. Larsen eds., Doctors, Patients and Society: Power and Authority in Medical Care (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 1981) 208. There are two references to health in this act, the first considers the issue of quarantine and the second loosely establishes provincial responsibility in the maintenance of asylums and hospitals.

¹⁸ Dickin McGinnis in Staum, 208.

¹⁹ Anita Clair and Michael Fellman, Making Sense of Self: Medical Advice Literature in Late Nineteenth-Century America (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981) 7. For more information on the reforming impulse inherent in Thomsonian literature see Jennifer J. Connor’s “Thomsonian Medical Books and the Culture of Dissent in Upper Canada” in the Canadian Bulletin of Medical History (Volume 12:1995) 289-311 and J. T. H. Conner’s Ph.D. thesis Minority Medicine, 1795-1903: a Study of Medical Pluralism and its Decline (University of Waterloo, 1989).

²⁰ Roy Porter, Health for Sale: Quackery In England, 1660-1850 (New York: Manchester University Press, 1989) 153-155.

²¹ Christopher C. Booth, “Making a Killing,” Nature (Vol. 341, 14 September 1989) 115.

²² Fellman, 9.

practitioners whether physicians, surgeons or apothecaries" and thus, "when outside advice was necessary the sick shopped around."²³ Their ability to correctly gauge the needs of their patrons, especially when they provided unobtrusive medications, enabled quacks to gain cachet in a society that often excluded them.

The perceived profusion of quacks instilled a sense of duty in the hearts of medical professionals who believed that it was their mission to properly instruct the public in order to quell the competition, and protect their patients from the ineffectual and sometimes dangerous patent medicines peddled.²⁴ At first, traditional manuals were informational tracts on health and disease with a few 'do-it yourself' hygienic and emergency hints thrown in for good measure. While educated physicians saw the need to provide the public with legitimate information, they certainly had no intention of denying themselves their own livelihoods. Thus, despite the fact that Thomsonian, homeopathic, hydropathic guides competed with physicians in the marketplace, by the 1870s virtually all domestic medical guides ceased giving instructions for curing cancer or setting broken bones. These problems were thought best left in the competent hands of medical professionals. Instead, a new literature emerged that "followed in format, if not in philosophy, the educational form of orthodox guides, with the emphasis placed on hygienic rules."²⁵ Authors instructed readers to find a physician who was morally clean if they wanted to ensure good health.²⁶

Remarkably, the first comprehensive analysis of adolescent behaviour came at the late date of 1904 by American psychologist and eugenicist, G. Stanley Hall. His 'discovery' was grounded in nineteenth-century ideas about youth and race. In his work Adolescence: Its

²³ Peter Clark, "Healthy, Welcome and Wise," History Today (Vol. 40, June 1990) 58.

²⁴ "The popular remedies contained from 7 to 50 per cent alcohol by volume, as well as significant amounts of morphine, cocaine, chloral hydrate, and/or bromides." Cheryl Krasnick Warsh, "Oh, Lord, pour a cordial in her wounded heart": The Drinking Woman in Victorian and Edwardian Canada" in her edited collection Drink in Canada: Historical Essays (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993) 72.

²⁵ Fellman, 9.

Psychology and its Relations to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion and Education, Hall expounded upon his theory of recapitulation. He argued “that the development of the individual paralleled the historical development of the race—a term that variously meant the human race and the white or civilized race.”²⁷ Adolescents were in a primitive state of behaviour, a state of immaturity where they were ruled by instinct rather than reason. Advice manuals substantiated these findings when they declared youth to be an emotional age, and age of adventurous discovery, of boundless energy, and insatiable curiosity.²⁸ Hand in hand with this theory, however, was Hall’s positivistic belief that adolescence was a time of second birth, from which a higher evolutionary product would be formed.²⁹ This view probably had adherents even before Hall announced his findings. The genre of advice literature began decades earlier, by adults who realized the integral role they played in guiding health and morality standards in adolescents.

Few historians have examined advice literature devoted to adolescents.³⁰ Many more have concentrated on advice to mothers concerning the raising of infants.³¹ Some historians

²⁶ Dr. Emma Angell Drake, What a Young Wife Ought to Know (Toronto: William Briggs, 1908) 173.

²⁷ Adams, 98.

²⁸ William Forbush (Ph.D.) The Boy Problem (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1907) 18.

²⁹ Adams, 98-99.

³⁰ Some examples include a section of Mary Louise Adams’ Ph.D. thesis, The Trouble with Normal: Postwar Youth and the Construction of Heterosexuality (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1994), an examination of sexuality in Michael Bliss’ “Pure Books on Avoided Subjects: Pre-Freudian Sexual Ideas in Canada” in S.E.D. Shortt’s Medicine in Canadian Society: Historical Perspectives. (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1981), the Marxist feminist philosophical discussions of Barbara Ehrenreich and Dierdre English’s For Her Own Good: 150 Years of the Experts’ Advice to Women (New York: Anchor Press, 1978), a look at the cultural ideas surrounding adolescence in Patricia Campbell’s Sex Education Books for young Adults, 1892-1979 (New York: R.R. Bowker Company, 1979), Anita Clair and Michael Fellman’s comprehensive book, Making Sense of Self: Medical Advice Literature in Late Nineteenth Century America (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981), and Joan Jacobs Brumberg’s look at the construction of health for American girls in The Body Project (New York: Random House, 1997).

³¹ For instance, Rima D. Apple studies the advice issued concerning breast versus bottle feeding debate in Mothers and Medicine: A Social history of Infant Feeding: 1890-1950 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), Katherine Arnup examines how and what advice was given to mothers in Delivering Motherhood: Maternal Ideologies and Practices in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries (New York: Routledge, 1990), Cynthia Comacchio’s, Nations are Built of Babies: Saving Ontario’s Mothers and Children, 1900-1940 (Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1993) goes into great detail on how “Scientific Motherhood” influenced advice literature and the Eugenics Movement in

have used a few of these same sources to look at ideas of North American sexuality, the impact of literature in raising children, the body as historical evidence, and how women's bodies were regarded by the medical profession.³² I intend to elaborate upon these works by examining how the information written in medical advice manuals reflected the construction of health and gender norms for adolescents.

Barbara Ehrenreich and Dierdre English contend that the relationship women had with the medical profession was one of growing dependency and submissiveness, as science attempted to answer the 'Women Question.' Ehrenreich and English maintain that this was an unequal relationship which perpetuated the "ideology of a masculinist society, dressed up as objective truth."³³ Femininity itself was a disease, as physicians, authors of medical advice literature, and scientific theories perpetuated the myth that a "woman's normal state was to be sick. This was not advanced as an empirical observation, but as physiological fact."³⁴ I agree with this argument, and will expand upon its application to adolescents in chapter four through a discussion on the resistance to the formal education of women based on physiological arguments, and the problem of defining symptoms of hysteria. I think, however, that Ehrenreich and English overlook the fact that women of all ages looked to the medical profession for guidance and they were not disappointed by the responses their inquiries generated. Though the cure was often worse than the disease, the advice doled out by health professionals was believed to be in the best interests of the reader.

Canada. Diane Dodd examines the advice doled out to immigrants by the Canadian government in "Advice to Parents: the Blue Books, Helen MacMurchy, MD, and the Federal Department of Health, 1920-1934" in the Canadian Bulletin of Medical History (Vol. 8, 1991, pp. 203-230), and Molly Ladd-Taylor's examination of government intervention in educating mothers in Raising a Baby the Government Way: Mother's Letters to the Children's Bureau, 1915-1932 (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1986). I have restricted this list to contain those texts I found to be the most interesting and representative of current research.

³² See Bliss, Campbell, Diane Dodd, "Advice to Parents: The Blue Books, Helen MacMurchy, MD, and the Federal Department of Health, 1920-34," Canadian Bulletin of Medical History (Vol. 8:1991) pp.203-230 and Wendy Mitchinson, The Nature of Their Bodies: Women and Their Doctors in Victorian Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991).

³³ Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English, For Her Own Good: 150 Years of the Experts' Advice to Women (New York: Anchor Press, 1978) 4.

Patricia Campbell's Sex Education Books for Young Adults 1892-1979 is an excellent bibliographic reference. She begins with a brief examination of the advice of "social hygienists" such as Sylvanus Stall and Dr. Mary Wood-Allen's Self and Sex Series.³⁵ Campbell notes that in their literature purity advocates didactically illustrated the dangers of unrestrained sexuality, in order to demonstrate the benefits of self-mastery, and the dangers of the public sphere especially with respect to men and venereal diseases. Moreover, she contends that the increasing instances of women breaking out of the private sphere, such as the first women's rights convention in 1848 in Seneca Falls "from which emerged a vocal feminist leadership," made Victorians feel the need to reinforce a rigidly defined feminine ideal.³⁶ Young men were similarly regulated, encouraged to follow the example set by Theodore Roosevelt, who disciplined his mind and body into a picture of strength and efficiency. According to the literature, emotions were for the weak, and discredited their "hard-won masculinity."³⁷ Campbell then shifts focus to discuss how after the horrors of World War II, Americans took comfort in returning to the stability of home life and mundane social conformity. Ever vulnerable to these external pressures, teenagers again turned to the literature for guidance. This time, however, instead of tracts on hygiene the literature "codified" the interaction between young men and women "into the intricate ritual known as dating, and every adolescent was expected to participate."³⁸ In response to Campbell, I will argue that medical advice literature did codify social behaviour between the sexes well before World War II. In chapters two and five I will discuss the promotion of manners thought 'proper' for adolescents in mixed company, what qualities readers were told to look for in a future mate, and which attributes made young people more attractive to the opposite sex.

³⁴ Ehrenreich and English, 99.

³⁵ Patricia Campbell, Sex Education for Young Adults 1892-1979 (New York: R. R. Bowker Company, 1979) 32.

³⁶ Campbell, 17.

³⁷ Campbell, 34.

³⁸ Campbell, 86.

In his article, "Pure Books on Avoided Subjects: Pre-Freudian Sexual Ideas in Canada," Michael Bliss also examines the Self and Sex Series, "a compendium of orthodox sexual knowledge and precept in late-Victorian and Edwardian Canada."³⁹ Bliss outlines Stall's concepts of sexuality, and their foundation in North American ideas of medicine and popular thought, to explain the doctrine of creative sexual repression. He contends that the series for boys and girls "became little more than anti-masturbation tracts."⁴⁰ I agree with Bliss that the principle subtext of the series, physical and character predetermination, was counterbalanced by the "Gospel of Heredity, the divine provision by which humans could overcome many, if not all, of the less fortunate effects of heredity and then transmit better qualities to succeeding generations."⁴¹ As a continuation of Bliss' analysis, I will elaborate upon what exactly the advice literature endorsed as the specific norms for proper hereditary. Bliss concludes by stating that his article has been merely a "discussion of the *ideas* of sexuality held by well-informed Canadians of the period" and emphasizes that "it will be up to future research to correlate these ideas with the actual sexual behaviour of all Canadians."⁴²

Anita Clair and Michael Fellman's Making Sense of Self: Medical Advice Literature in the Late Nineteenth-Century America proved invaluable to my understanding of Victorian beliefs concerning the mutual dependency of the mind and body in sickness and health, and an individual's autonomy to chose and fashion a healthier lifestyle. The importance of following the tenets of medical advice literature was laid out succinctly in the following argument:

just as a potentially lawless society would presumably reduce humankind to the chaos of anarchy, disregard of the laws governing the human body would lead individuals to a breakdown of body and mind...A harsh but just balance

³⁹ Bliss notes that no circulation figures for Canada have been recorded, "only the claim that they outsold all other books of their kind". Michael Bliss, "Pure Books on Avoided Subjects" in S.E.D. Shortt ed. Medicine in Canadian Society: Historical Perspectives (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1981) 256.

⁴⁰ Bliss, 257.

⁴¹ Bliss, 263.

⁴² Bliss, 274. Emphasis in original.

characterized such definitions of disease: health was a reward and sickness a punishment.⁴³

Furthermore, the Fellmans note that the importance of prescriptive literature resided in the reader's belief that "popular ideology covering the self is not a secondary and dispensable set of fads, but a deep and necessary series of ordering devices."⁴⁴ Readers looked to the manuals for advice that would assist in their pursuit of societal conformity. Throughout my thesis, I will apply the Fellman's arguments on primacy of the will to the construction of habits, which promoted a trinity of mental, physical, and spiritual good health within a Canadian context.

Mary Louise Adams challenges the assumptions that youth classifications are 'natural' or biologically determined, but instead they are constructed within the social world. Her analysis on 'normalization' is particularly insightful. Looking at teenagers in the 1940s and 1950s, Adams elaborates upon how "moral regulation helps establish dominant modes of being as not only legitimate, but as desirable."⁴⁵ Moreover, "those on the sanctioned side of the opposition—the normal—benefit from the privileges of inclusion in the social order. Those on the undesirable side experience marginalization and exclusion."⁴⁶ Her comments that femininity was regarded as a matter of "behaviour modification," or "not something one feels, but something one learns" can easily be applied to my time framework.⁴⁷ In chapters three and four I will examine how the tenets of behaviour modification were important for medical advice authors who encouraged young women to take action and cultivate certain habits over others.

Finally, the creative approach in Joan Jacobs Brumberg's The Body Project: An Intimate History of American Girls examines how the body can be used as an historical source of evidence. In Brumberg's words, "every girl suffers some kind of adolescent angst about her

⁴³ Fellman, 43.
⁴⁴ Fellman, 141.
⁴⁵ Adams, 27.
⁴⁶ Adams, 178.
⁴⁷ Adams, 201.

body; it is the historical moment that defines *how* she reacts to her changing flesh.”⁴⁸ Her analysis of nineteenth-century ideas of menarche and ovarian determinism are compelling, especially when she contrasts the experience of American girls with their Victorian predecessors. Prescriptive literature was relied upon “to teach...what they [mothers] could not say out loud.”⁴⁹ Brumberg contends that parents were concerned that literature on hygiene would lead to the taboo subject of sexual intercourse. By the twentieth century, discussions of subjects such as menstruation were still discreet and moralistic, but were now inundated with scientific language. This medicalization allowed young women to acquire a sterile and “basic anatomical vocabulary to describe their bodies.”⁵⁰ I am particularly interested in looking at how this new, less accessible lexicon entrenched societal and health norms.

While they do not address the subject of adolescent health exclusively, several other secondary sources deserve mention as being particularly significant to my thesis. Intimate Matters by John D’Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman examines the changing attitudes towards sexuality in America and was important in the contextualization of prescriptive manuals within societal standards. Mariana Valverde’s The Age of Light Soap and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925 provided me with a detailed description of the social purity movement in Canada, and how medical theories were used to legitimize the agendas of health reformers. Our Own Master Race by Angus McLaren charted the rise and fall of the eugenics movement in Canada from 1885 to 1945, outlined the implication concepts of race betterment had on the population, and the analyzed the extreme measures taken by eugenicists to secure national strength. Wendy Mitchinson’s The Nature of Their Bodies: Women and Their Doctors in Victorian Canada, Deborah Gorham’s The Victorian Girl and the Feminine Ideal, and Janet Oppenheim’s Shattered Nerves: Doctors, Patients, and depression in Victorian England all aided

⁴⁸ Joan Jacobs Brumberg, The Body Project: An Intimate History of American Girls (New York: Random House, 1997) xviii. Emphasis in original.

⁴⁹ Brumberg, 35.

⁵⁰ Brumberg, 36.

my understanding of how medical theories on biological determinism limited a woman's sphere of influence and dominated concepts of her health. Building Character in the American Boy by David Macleod and The Image of Man by George Mosse provided important analysis on the construction of modern masculinity. I relied heavily on the collection of essays in Drink in Canada edited by Cheryl Krasnick Warsh for an understanding of Temperance movements, and drinking habits of Canadians. Finally, in understanding how concepts of beauty, health, and race intermingled and legitimized each other, Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race, and Madness by Sander Gilman was essential to this study.

In the next chapter, I will provide a general overview of my sources, their authors, and the themes common to them all. While previous historians have tended to concentrate on studying one sex over the other, my thesis builds upon their foundations through a comparison of what norms were universal for both sexes, as well as those norms that were gender specific. In subsequent chapters, I will examine topics concerning the adolescent experience that I found most intriguing and relevant. Others might consider the topics I have necessarily had to overlook: anatomy, contagious diseases, biological comparisons between species, and some hygienic practices. In the following sections, I will examine the medical advice written on diet, rest and exercise; menstruation; beauty, fashion, and strength; the effects of alcohol and tobacco; self-abuse; heredity, and finally the formation of character. These categories best illustrate how prescriptive literature targeted towards adolescents promoted a universal norm which balanced the mind, body, and soul into a trinity of good health through the tenets of proper habit formation and self-control. Values were entrenched and legitimized within the pages of prescriptive manuals on the authority of their 'scientific' merit. Moreover, these habits influenced the construction of broader societal norms concerning gender, race, and class. To facilitate comparisons, whenever possible I have divided the advice into sections concerning young women and young men.

Chapter One: Writers, Readers, Reason, and Rhetoric: An Overview of Canadian Literature, 1873-1922

My principle sources are listed in Tables 1 and 2. When I began my search, I quickly realized that any sources strictly written and published in Canada would be few and far between.¹ Even in manuals published in Toronto, few attempts were made to include Canadian examples or points of reference. How important was Canadian environment to the construction of gender or normative standards? Generally, I argue that it was immaterial, since the intended audiences were predominately homogeneous in race and class. For the most part, the advice doled out by Canadian authors was uniform, and their recommendations were usually in full agreement with (if not taken directly from) American and British texts.

The Blue Books, an informal name for a series concerning maternal and familial welfare advice written by Dr. Helen MacMurchy, were sponsored by the Dominion council in 1920.²

Diane Dodd argues that

the Blue Books also helped to fuel and channel political demands for improved access to medical services. By endorsing the medical monopoly over health care,...the federal government was forced to consider the problem of restricted access to essential medical services...[leading eventually] to compulsory medical insurance for all Canadians.³

¹ My source list was compiled through titles in the work of other historians, interlibrary loans from Canadian and American schools, luck in stumbling over a title advertised in a newspaper or at the end of a serial, and generous donations from personal libraries. Few sources were available from 1914 to 1921. Despite numerous efforts, I was unable to track down a single example, although I assume some were published. Speculating on possible causes for this dearth of samples has led me to several hypotheses including: 1) publishing houses (both secular and religious) redirected funds into the war effort and assumed earlier editions of their literature would suffice, 2) more inexpensive forms of advice was dispensed by pamphlets or newspaper articles, and 3) a new genre of advice literature emerged no longer directed at teenage boys on the verge of puberty, but now directed at teenage boys on the brink of military combat. Doctors might also have taken on the role previously filled by medical advice literature. For example, the Canada Lancet pointed out that small defects that eliminated 3.08% of the candidates for the American military could have been prevented through proper instruction. Practitioners were encouraged to be strict in their advice to the "rising generations": "Defects Among Drafted Men" Canada Lancet Vol LI No. 8 (April 1918) 341.

² Dianne Dodd, "The Blue Books, Helen MacMurchy and the Department of Health," in Katherine Arup, Andree Levesque, Ruth Roach Pierson eds., Delivering Motherhood: Maternal Ideologies and Practices (New York: Routledge, 1990) 205. The Dominion Council of Health was an umbrella group that had representatives from the provincial health department, rural and urban women's groups, public health professionals, as well as labour and agricultural members. This group was instrumental in pushing for federal involvement in reform movements as a response to the poor health records of Canadians after WWI.

³ Dodd, 225.

Table 1: Popular Medical Advice Literature, Listed Chronologically

Author	Title	Site and Publisher	Year (ed.)	Cost
Dr. Edward Clarke	<u>Sex in Education</u>	Boston: James Osgood	1873	---
Burt Green Wilder	<u>What Young People Should Know</u>	Boston: Estes & Lauriat	1875	---
Mrs. Shepherd	<u>For Girls: A Special Physiology</u>	N.Y.: Fowler and Wells	1884	---
Provincial Board of Health	<u>Manual of Hygiene for Schools and Colleges</u>	Toronto: William Briggs	1886	\$1.00
George Napheys	<u>The Physical Life of Women: Advice to the Maiden, Wife and Mother</u>	Toronto: George Maclean Rose	1889 (3 rd Canadian)	---
Dr. B.G. Jefferies (Ph.D.)	<u>Searchlights on Health: Light on Dark Corners</u>	Toronto: J.L. Nichols	1894 (18 th)	Subscription
Sylvanus Stall (DD)	<u>What a Young Husband Ought to Know</u>	Toronto: William Briggs	1897	\$1.00
Sylvanus Stall (DD)	<u>What A Young Man Ought to Know</u>	Toronto: William Briggs	1897	\$1.00
Mrs. Wood-Allen (MD)	<u>What a Young Girl Ought to Know</u>	Philadelphia: Virginia Publishing Co.	1897 (1 st)	\$1.00
Dr. S. Pancoast	<u>Pancoast's Tokology (sic) and Ladies' Medical Guide</u>	Chicago: Charles Thompson	1903 (1901)	---
William Forbush (Ph.D.)	<u>The Boy Problem</u>	Boston: Pilgrim Press	1907 (6 th)	---
Mrs. Emma Angell Drake (MD)	<u>What a Young Wife Ought to Know</u>	Toronto: William Briggs	1908 (revised)	\$1.00
Dr. C.W. Saleeby	<u>Health, Strength and Happiness</u>	N.Y.: Mitchell Kennerley	1908	---
Sylvanus Stall (DD)	<u>What a Young Boy Ought to Know</u>	Toronto: William Briggs	1909	\$1.00
Francis and Jesse Burks	<u>Health & the School: A Roundtable</u>	N.Y.: D. Appleton & Co.	1913	---
Mrs. Wood-Allen (MD)	<u>What A Young Woman Ought to Know</u>	Toronto: The Ryerson Press	1913	---
Ozora Davies (Ph.D.), Mrs. Emma Angell Drake (MD)	<u>The Story of Life: As Told to His Sons & As Told to Her Daughters</u>	Naperville: J.L. Nichols	1922	---
Dr. B.G. Jefferies (Ph.D.)	<u>Safe Counsel or Practical Eugenics</u>	Naperville: J.L. Nichols	1922	---
Dr. Helen MacMurchy	<u>The Little Blue Books: Home Series Vol. 2, 3, 5, 8, 9 and 11</u>	Ottawa: F.A. Acland	1922 (36 th)	Free with Postage

Table 2: Family Medical Encyclopedias, Listed Chronologically

Authors	Shortened Title	Site and Publisher	Year	Cost
Dr. M.V. Pierce	<u>The People's Common Sense Medical Advisor in Plain English</u>	Buffalo: World's Dispensary Medical Association	1882 (10 th)	---
Physicians of London Hospitals	<u>The Family Physician</u>	London: Gassell, Petter, Galpin & Co.	1883	---
Dr. Henry Lyman et al	<u>The Practical Home Physician</u>	Guelph: World Publishing Co.	1884	---
Canadian Medical Men	<u>Family Physician: Every Man His Own Doctor</u>	Toronto: Rose Publishing Co.	1889	\$1.25
Severin Lachapelle et al	<u>Le Medecin de la Famille</u>	Guelph: World Publishing Co.	1893	---
Dr. Samuel Thomson	<u>New Guide to Health</u>	Indianapolis: unknown	1894 (3 rd)	---

MacMurchy's manuals were intended to impart information necessary to improve the health of families, but at the same time they emphatically "imposed exacting standards" which were often a financial and time consuming challenge.⁴ Dodd maintains that the constant appeals to the reader to consult experts demonstrated the growing authority of the 'scientific methods' of health professionals over the advice of kin networks and herbal remedies.⁵ Indeed, Dr. Helen MacMurchy's Canadian Blue Books, distributed for the cost of their postage, stand out precisely because they are blatantly didactic and distinctly Canadian. They addressed immigrant families (especially parents) with the kind of condescension reserved for children; at the same time, they celebrated the unique quality of life to be found in a Canadian home.⁶

From the selection of my sources listed in Tables 1 and 2, it appears that authors were Caucasian, specifically British, in descent.⁷ A medical degree was not essential to establish authority, but one might reason that it could add a level of credibility to distinguish physician's works from rival, 'quack' pamphlets. By the same token, provincial bureaucrats, as paid emissaries of the government, also had some added clout due to their official status as respected experts. Doctors utilized their medical expertise to explain 'scientifically' how the body functioned. By contrast, Methodist ministers, like Sylvanus Stall, focused on spiritual elements of good health, and stressed the importance of a pure mind as well as a pure body. Male academics, religious ministers or those with theological training were deemed qualified to write and distribute manuals; women, however, required additional qualifications, such as a medical

⁴ Dodd, 206, 212. To meet these standards, "a woman would need to squeeze at least 14 hours' work into MacMurchy's prescribed eight-hour day!" Dodd, 221.

⁵ Dodd, 213.

⁶ Dr. Helen MacMurchy. The Little Blue Books: Home Series. Vol. I "Beginning a Home in Canada" (Ottawa: F.A. Acland, 1922) 3. Indeed, MacMurchy proclaimed enthusiastically that "Canada is a happy land. Every new home makes her happier. The happy country is the country of Happy Homes. God Bless Your New Home." Dodd contends that MacMurchy's literature "reinforced the traditional sexual division of labour in the home, undermined women's autonomy as mothers, and advocated standards more in keeping with the values, lifestyles, and resources of its middle class, professional authors, and sponsors, than those of its intended audience.": Dodd, 204.

degree, a teacher's certificate, or perhaps of equal significance, a wedding ring. I assume that the authors were members of the middle class based upon their professional titles (the level of education they achieved) and the examples they cited in their works, which will be discussed in later sections.

Who were the principle consumers? The price of medical advice manuals may shed light onto the problem of readership. Prices (found in the back of the Self and Sex Series) for books stayed constant from 1897 to 1908 at one dollar. In the final pages of Dr. Emma Drake's 1908, What A Young Wife Ought to Know prices range from the rare (and presumably affordable) five cents, to an average of one dollar, and also to a few that went as high as one dollar and twenty-five cents.⁸ Were these prices expensive, and did they limit the possible audience for such literature to the middle or upper classes? M.C. Urhquart and K.A.H. Buckley break down Ontario earnings from 1884 to 1889 in the following way.⁹

Table 3: Annual Earnings (dollars)

Year	Butcher	Carpenter ...	Labourer	Machinist ...	Plumber	Printer
1889	378.42	418.46	297.14	467.86	484.87	437.24
1888	395.00	452.69	320.22	474.64	501.94	455.88
1887	308.91	311.34	270.67	432.64	458.38	424.78
1886	374.89	395.70	295.64	449.77	541.49	425.29
1885	438.63	444.18	290.09	419.16	428.27	439.90
1884	426.14	396.28	300.24	394.67	374.63	423.99

According to this table, the average annual earnings of working class men was well under \$500.00. After food, rent, clothing and leisure activities, buying all eight books of the Self and Sex Series was probably out of reach of the average family budget.

The notable exception is Severin Lachapelle. After comparing chapter headings, however, it is evident that Lachapelle directly translated Lyman's Practical Home Physician into Le Medecin de la Famille. Lyman was also cited as an author of the 1893 French text.

⁸ Mrs. Emma F. Angell Drake (MD), What a Young Wife Ought to Know. New Revised Edition. (Toronto: William Briggs, 1908) 288-291.

⁹ M.C. Urhquart and K.A.H. Buckley. Historical Statistics of Canada (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965) 96. Series D 208-231 "Annual Earnings, hours per week, and days employed for males over sixteen years of age. selected occupations, Ontario, 1884 to 1889".

Even in 1922, MacMurchy's Blue Books cited one dollar as the suitable weekly food budget for an immigrant family.¹⁰ It is important to note, however, that the working class was not the intended audience for this genre of literature.¹¹ In many ways the advice concerning, for instance, hygienic practices and the treatment of wounds or colds was applicable to any member of society. For the most part, however, middle class authors were writing for middle class readers. By these standards, then, the books would have been slightly more affordable for a professional class whose average yearly earnings are detailed below in a selective table based on the findings of the 1901 census.

Table 4: Selections taken from "Table II: Earnings of employees by classes and kinds of occupations for the Dominion, 1901"¹² The table does not include extra earnings.

Professional Class	Earnings at Occupation Male	Earnings at Occupation Female
Architects	\$921.08	---
Artists and teachers of art	\$565.84	\$304.80
Authors and literary men	\$737.50	\$500.00
Chemists, druggists	\$587.23	\$263.20
Decorators	\$541.43	\$107.50
Dentists	\$397.44	\$240.00
Draughtsmen	\$723.72	\$359.35
Civil Engineers	\$1,316.31	---
Mechanical Engineers	\$847.52	---
Government Clerk	\$845.91	\$409.14
Government Officials	\$1,335.35	\$207.60

Medical Encyclopedias enjoyed an undeniable popularity, despite their relatively expensive costs. This popularity is reflected by the number of reprints advertised on the front pages of many manuals. One volume of a medical encyclopedia was affordable for almost all

¹⁰ MacMurchy, "Canadians Need Milk". The Little Blue Books Home Series, Vol. 5, 8. The budget is broken down as follows in "How to Spend your Food Dollar":

Meat and Fish.....	12 cents
Milk and Dairy.....	44 ""
Bread and Cereals.....	13 ""
Vegetables and Fruit.....	17 ""
Eggs.....	6 ""
Sugar.....	3 ""
Misc.....	5 ""

¹¹ Medical reformers took a more 'hand-on' approach to working class health by organizing inspections and visits from public health nurses.

budgets, had the added bonus of being comprehensive in content, and spoke to the health concerns of all family members. By 1882, Dr. Pierce's The People's Common Sense Medical Advisor had sold 180,000 copies in ten reprints. A few popular pieces of medical advice literature were sold by subscription only, including Dr. B.G. Jefferies' Searchlights on Health: Light on Dark Corners renamed in 1922 Safe Counsel or Practical Eugenics. Historian Marinana Valverde maintains that Searchlights was the most popular piece of advice literature in Canada, but she does not provide her evidence for this claim.¹³ Proponent of the slogan "KNOWLEDGE IS SAFETY," B.G. Jefferies boasted that thousands had read the pages of his books.¹⁴ Considering that the 1894 edition, which I examined, was already the eighteenth reprint, his claim seems plausible. The 36th edition published in 1922 proudly noted that more than one million copies had been sold (without specifying where these sales had been- in North America or internationally).¹⁵

That prescriptive manuals underwent several editions with only minor alternatives or additives testifies to their unchanging nature. It might also indicate the power and longevity of the norms they represented. With the exception of Dr. MacMurchy, authors tailored their material to fit the needs and proprieties of middle class audiences. Children, teenagers, and families were each considered topics that would generate a viable market, and were often addressed in separate volumes that contained overlapping advice. Repetition of essential ideas may have been considered a didactic learning tool.¹⁶ In addition, since the time frame for adolescence ranged from "about thirteen to nearly twenty-five," it was understandable that

¹² Census and Statistics Bulletin I: Wage Earners by Occupations (Ottawa: S.E. Dawson, 1907) 79-80. Occupations designated as professional have been labeled so by the Census Records.

¹³ Mariana Valverde, The Age of Light, Soap, and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925 (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1991) 21-22.

¹⁴ B.G. Jefferies, Searchlights on Health: Light on Dark Corners (Toronto: J.L. Nichols, 1894) 3.

¹⁵ B.G. Jefferies (M.D., Ph.D.) Safe Counsel or Practical Eugenics (Naperville: J.L. Nichols & Co., 1922) Preface.

¹⁶ Perry Nodelman, The Pleasures of Children's Literature (New York: Longman, 1992) 85.

advice volumes generalized their information to reach the widest audience possible.¹⁷ Most books (except the large, cumbersome, and sometimes multi-volumed medical encyclopedias) were printed in a format that facilitated this process. Presented in small, quickly digestible 'bite-sized pieces,' prescriptive literature could be consulted as easily as their literary companion—the etiquette manual.

Etiquette books, first popularized as a genre in the 1830s, codified rather than created behavioural rules thought 'natural' to those accustomed to socializing in fashionable society.¹⁸ In contrast to its predecessor the courtesy book, etiquette literature was secular and remained neutral on most matters of morality. Instead of advocating personal or spiritual betterment, etiquette books set out in exhaustive detail the rituals and modes of behaviour considered necessary in polite society. During their height of popularity, roughly from 1832 until they lost favour towards the turn of the century, they established a standard for all those striving for upward social mobility. Medical advice literature also acted as a moderator of social behaviour. Polite manners and a regard for formal etiquette were thought to reflect a universal cosmopolitan upbringing and act as "a passport to 'good society' everywhere."¹⁹ Medical advice literature complimented these teachings, and filled in the gaps on hygiene and moral character for their middle class readers. As the etiquette manual declined, medical advice literature boomed during the age of Canadian medical reform movements (1885-1925) and continued to be prevalent in the following decades and into the present.

In terms of format, prescriptive literature aimed at families was attractively bound in small, cheerfully coloured (red, blue, yellow, burgundy and green) volumes that enhanced the appearance of any family library. Bold or italicized section headings, and the occasional

¹⁷ Oroza Davies (Ph.D.) and Dr. Emma Angell Drake, The Story of Life: As Told to His Sons and as Told to her Daughters (Naperville: J.L. Nichols, 1922) 424.

¹⁸ Marjorie Morgan, Manners, Morals and Class in England, 1774-1858 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994) 19.

¹⁹ The Manners of Polite Society or, Etiquette for Ladies, Gentlemen, and Families. (London: Ward, Lock, and Tyler, 1975) 2.

comprehensive index, made them easy to use, especially if the reader was not inclined to absorb all of the advice in one sitting. Occasionally, pictures were inserted to clarify the working of internal organs, or in the case of B. G. Jefferies, to illustrate the dire physical consequences of a life lived in dissipation (See Figure 1).²⁰ Sophistication of terminology varied depending on whether the author was addressing a youth or an adult, but most authors used accessible language breaking down, and in some cases, demystifying scientific terms for their readers.²¹

Language also played a significant role in capturing both the imagination and the attention of the targeted reader. I believe the common use of personal pronouns made the audience feel like participants rather than mere observers. For example, one method to achieve these ideals was the appeal to familial models and its well-established hierarchy of power to establish authority. In the tone of a confiding parent, favoured relation, or trusted mentor or teacher, writers scolded their audiences for improper behaviour and chided them into making what was generally considered by middle-class reformers to be proper lifestyle choices. In other words, some authors influenced their readers by establishing a persona that was at once familiar, intimate, and confiding.

A good example of this format is Reverend Sylvanus Stall's Self and Sex Series; authored by Americans, they were the best-selling sex manuals in Canada between 1900 and 1915.²² By 1909, one million English-language books had sold, while at the same time, the book was translated into all of the leading European languages, as well as, Arabic, Armenian, Japanese, Hindu, Persian-Urdu, Bengali and Korean to name but a few.²³ (See Figure 2) In the

²⁰ For example, drawings of healthy lungs would be contrasted to those of a smokers, or the consequences of life choices that decided whether a by turned into a robust man, or a physical wreck. Jefferies, Searchlights on Health (1894) 447, 437.

²¹ The only exception to the simplicity of language that I could detect was in general medical encyclopedias aimed at families. Scientific terminology and complex mathematical equations for medical treatments complicated many of the descriptions.

²² Michael Bliss. "Pure Books on Avoided Subjects: Pre-Freudian Sexual Ideas in Canada" in S.E.D. Shortt's Medicine in Canadian Society: Historical Perspectives (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1981) 255-256.

²³ Sylvanus Stall, What a Young Boy Ought to Know (Toronto: William Briggs, 1909) pull-out tab at front of book.

series for boys, the tone was familiar and confident, addressed to “My Dear Friend Harry” a fictional boy whose probing and pubescent questions spurred his parents to turn to Reverend Sylvanus Stall for advice.²⁴ Instruction could not be imparted too early, and the lives of young men and women were only ruined when parents failed to give their children proper warnings and instructions for good health.²⁵ The book was organized in ‘cylinders’ as if each chapter was to be played on a phonograph. Reverend Stall spoke “distinctly, so that you may have no trouble in understanding, and will try to use plain, short words, so that a boy of your years may know my whole meaning, and have a truthful and satisfactory answer to your questions.”²⁶ Stall specified that one cylinder a night was the proper time to devote to such matters, and left each cylinder with a hook that promised what the next chapter would hold for the reader.

In contrast, Dr. Mary Wood-Allen’s complimentary series, starting with What a Young Girl Ought to Know, transformed the teacher-student relationship modeled by Stall into the more intimate relationship shared between a mother and her daughter. Indeed, the lengthy introduction (noticeably absent from the series for boys) detailed how Nina, the protagonist of unspecified age, had just returned from her first trip away from home. Her father assured her that her mother would be very glad to see her; only when Nina greeted her mother in her bedroom that readers realize Nina has a brand-new baby brother. This discovery acts as a gentle springboard for Nina’s series of “twilight talks” with her mother on matters of sexuality, reproduction, and hygiene.²⁷ The following books in this series continue the pattern, eventually trading twilight talks for confidential letters between a mother and a daughter. Within the final chapter of the series, strategically placed advertisements for books of a similar genre published by the same Methodist press, were prominently featured. Regrettably, many of these publications have proven impossible to procure, perhaps because they were not as popular.

²⁴ Stall, What a Young Boy Ought to Know (1909) 81.

²⁵ Stall, What a Young Boy Ought to Know (1909) 24.

²⁶ Stall, What a Young Boy Ought to Know (1909) 38.

The Story of Life, bound in the 1922 version of Safe Counsel, was written in two gender specific versions. The first, intended for a youthful male audience, was written by an academic from a theological seminary, Ozora S. Davis. Dr. Emma Drake completed its female counterpart. Davis and Drake also adopted parental personae to engage their readers in intimate and friendly discussions. The material was highly repetitive, but Davis justified this pedagogical tool because “instruction of this sort requires the frequent statement of truth in order to drive it home.”²⁸ Furthermore, both authors declared that readers had a responsibility to learn more about the world around them since “the whole modern scientific movement is a glorious endeavor to find out the meaning of the universe.”²⁹ When a person learned how to live in harmony with these laws, then a healthy and prosperous future was ensured.

Not all manuals spoke directly to their readers, or used a personal narrative to get their point across. A notable exception was Francis Williston and Jesse D. Burks, Health and the School: A Round Table, published in 1913. The format of this book was unique, and read almost like a play. Six fictional characters met several times to discuss the health and hygiene of school children, as well as the educational facilities to which they were exposed. The panel consisted of: the married male superintendent of schools, a widower on the school board, a self-made business man and his wife, a single female social worker, and finally the new single male doctor in town. Each panel member was a walking stereotype. The superintendent was open to new ideas, but was primarily concerned with pleasing parents. The widower represented the voice of tradition and urged the maintenance of the status quo. The businessman was concerned with the financial repercussions of change, while his assertive wife put the needs of her children first. The social worker was clearly the protagonist, as well as the voice of medical reform. Finally, the young doctor represented modern science because the town’s older, jealous

²⁷ Mrs. Mary Wood-Allen, M.D. What a Young Girl Ought to Know. (Philadelphia: The Virginia Publishing Co., 1987) 25-27.

²⁸ Ozora Davis, The Story of Life published with B.G. Jefferies, Safe Counsel (Naperville: J.L. Nichols & Co., 1922) 377.

practitioners scorned his sparkling clean office equipment.³⁰ Each member elaborated on a biased concern, and readers noted that the social worker and young doctor's arguments consistently and persuasively won the lively debates that ensued.

Why did the authors write medical advice literature? The impressive demand for reprints suggests that it was a lucrative business venture. A market opportunity was shrewdly ascertained and supplied by publishers and writers; however, I believe that authors also had altruistic motives for supplying the public with prescriptive manuals. For instance the slogan of B.G. Jefferies', Safe Counsel (1922) was a solemn mandate or oath: he pledged to the public that his intentions were to:

fight social diseases with facts, not sentiments, study the problems of venereal infection for information, not sensation, combat social evils with science, not mystery. This is the keynote of our campaign to train men, women and children to think straight along the line of social hygiene.³¹

Jefferies, a physician and academic, regarded his text as one that filled a void in the array of information currently available to readers.

Dr. Jefferies believed that his work stood above what he labeled the three other 'classes' of books being sold as prescriptive literature:

In the first place there are numerous purely scientific works so technical and intricate in character that they are of no practical value to the laymen. Secondly, there are unnumbered non-technical books so biased and prejudiced that they reveal only a part of the truth, ignoring many of the facts of science. These descriptions are practiced in order to keep the public "good" and "pure". The motive is exemplary- the result unsatisfactory. And finally there are the cheap, vulgar, sensational, catch penny abominations, whose conscienceless authors are willing to desecrate life's most sacred function for commercial purposes.³²

Jefferies appears to have been inflating the influence that his advice literature actually had upon its audience, but his frank appeal expresses the importance he placed on reading 'respectable' and trustworthy advice. Furthermore, he declared that "many of the wrecks of humanity which

²⁹ Davis, Story of Life (1922) 397.

³⁰ Frances Williston Burks and Jesse D. Burks, Health and the School: A Round Table. (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1913) Summary of unnumbered introduction that developed character motivation.

³¹ Jefferies, Safe Counsel, Slogan before Preface.

fill our public institutions owe their pitiful condition to the terrible exaggerations, the downright falsehoods, and the shameful sex thrills which pervade the so-called literature of the day.”³³ In other words, Jefferies promised to present his readers with the ‘true facts’ of healthy living.³⁴ Evaluating himself as a pioneer in a world frozen by false modesty, Jefferies touted the importance of substituting modern scientific theorems in the face of opposition.

Sylvanus Stall also made this point when he declared the purity of his motives for writing his series. He condemned those authors whose books were “begotten of a love of gain, and whose pages secretly foster or unwittingly inflame the lusts which the author professes to denounce, is devoid of the spirit of genuine philanthropy.”³⁵ Nothing short of an all-consuming concern for the society within which he or she lived, “and a willingness to sacrifice and even to suffer reproach, if that should be necessary, that God may be honored in the effort to lift up from vice and sin those whom in purity He has created in His own likeness and image” was a sufficient qualification for such a task.³⁶ False modesty also had no room in Stall’s account, but along with scientific theorems offered as explanation, were moral lessons on purity to explain the divine functions of the body, and how they should best be preserved. As the standards of individual and societal purity were “steadily lifted higher and higher by Christ-like men and women,” advice literature assisted young people in achieving similar goals as those demonstrated by the role models found in the Women’s Christian Temperance Union, and the Young Men’s Christian Association.³⁷

In some cases, authors were responding to personal pleas for respectable and correct information. The Globe and Mail praised the decision of the Provincial Board of Health to publish the comprehensive Manual of Hygiene for Schools and Colleges. Hygiene was a

³² Jefferies, Safe Counsel, 7.

³³ Jefferies, Safe Counsel, 7.

³⁴ Ironically to modern readers, included in these ‘facts’ was an additional section in the 1922 edition, dedicated to the explanation of positive and negative eugenics.

³⁵ Sylvanus Stall, What a Young Man Ought to Know (Toronto: William Briggs, 1897) xxi.

³⁶ Stall, What a Young Man Ought to Know (1897) xxi-xxii.

“formidable-looking word, and one which it is to be feared is sometimes used with but a vague idea of what it implies.”³⁸ Readers were, by this logic, grateful for explanations on “the application of scientific laws to agencies and things in common use.”³⁹ For example, the Globe reviewer felt the book filled an educational gap since comparatively few people understood how their own lives were being shortened or harmed from careless attitudes towards cleanliness, alcohol, or ventilation.

Similarly, in response to the “request of numerous matrons to supply a *desideratum* in medical literature,” Dr. Pancoast wrote, Pancoast’s Tokology and Ladies’ Medical Guide: A Complete Instructor in all the Delicate and Wonderful Matters Pertaining to Women in 1901.⁴⁰ The distribution of unreliable information from quacks and others not involved in the medical field also spurred his desire to write. He believed it was “high time some really *scientific* work should be interposed, in order to render nugatory the purient and imbecile efforts of medical pretenders who have, of recent years, flooded the country with unreliable literature.”⁴¹ Hence, Pancoast’s motivation was to “proclaim those solemn and important *truths* that so nearly affect the vital interests of the entire human race.”⁴² Women were participants in “the era of woman’s equality with man in all things, —mercantile, professional, intellectual, educational and physical” and Pancoast’s manual attempted to prepare them physiologically for these challenges.⁴³

Ozora Davis (author of The Story of Life) encouraged readers to engage in discussions of health. Realizing the difficulty parents might have in communicating with children, Davis acknowledged that “no father will talk often with his boys on these matters; but he must talk

³⁷ Stall, What A Young Man Ought to Know (1897) xxv.

³⁸ “A Manual of Hygiene”, Globe and Mail (6 March 1886) 9.

³⁹ “A Manual of Hygiene”, Globe and Mail (6 March 1886) 9.

⁴⁰ Dr. S. Pancoast, Pancoast’s Tokology and Ladies Medical Guide (Chicago: Charles Thompson, 1903 (1901 original)) xi. Emphasis in original. The Oxford English Dictionary defines tokology as the science of parturition, or of midwifery and obstetrics.

⁴¹ Pancoast, Pancoast’s Tokology (1903) xi. Emphasis in original.

⁴² Pancoast, Pancoast’s Tokology (1903) xii. Emphasis in original.

⁴³ Dr. Wm. Welsley Cover, “Preface to the Revised Edition”, Pancoast’s Tokology (1903) xiv.

sometimes and then he must use accurate, clear and affectionate speech.”⁴⁴ Davis and Dr. Emma Drake (who wrote the section to young women) considered their manuals to be significant because they not only provided information to their readers, but also models of language. They outlined possible scenarios and questions that might be posed to adults and offered appropriate responses for parents to follow in their discussions of hygiene and puberty with their children. Therefore, the public was provided with a new and respectable lexicon with which to discuss topics often considered delicate in nature or taboo.

Other sources that I examined were exclusively intended for one sex or the other, and were written with the chief objective of demystifying the body for the general reader. For example, Dr. George H. Napheys’ The Physical Life of Women: Advice to Maiden, Wife and Mother sprinkled moral lessons between pages dedicated to explaining physiology and the standards of proper hygiene in clear, “decorous” language.⁴⁵ Originally American, the 1889 edition was already the third edition to be printed in Canada. Despite the fact that no Canadian national or regional examples were included to increase its appeal with Canadian audiences, Napheys clearly believed “that the Work is highly appreciated where it is best known, a sale of over one hundred thousand copies amply proves [this to be the case].”⁴⁶ In complete agreement with the majority of authors, Napheys’ concept of safety for his readers was essentially dualistic: “safety amid the physical ills that beset us, safety amid the moral pitfalls that environ us.”⁴⁷ Thus, authors of prescriptive manuals were motivated to supply information in order to preserve the innocence of readers and to keep them safe from potential harm.

Finally, authors were motivated by a desire to improve the race physically and morally. In 1875, Wilder concluded that society was too self-involved and that this standard was reflected in the current advice literature. Not enough attention was paid to the transmittance of both

⁴⁴ Davis, 377.

⁴⁵ George Napheys (M.D.) The Physical Life of Women (Toronto: George Maclean and Sons, 1889) Preface, unnumbered.

⁴⁶ Napheys. 1889. Preface.

positive and negative physical traits and moral behaviours. Readers were “taught how to eat and drink, how to walk and breathe, all these things being primarily for our own benefit, and only indirectly for the good of our descendants. The interests of the latter ought to receive a larger share of our attention.”⁴⁷ Laws of heredity, and discussions on eugenics, were elaborated upon so that the present generation took some responsibility in the betterment of future relatives.

A certain reverence was attached to both the genre and the information provided. Respectability was a learned behaviour, and ignorance of physiological matters hampered a young person’s ability to succeed in life. Author Mrs. Shepherd expected

that every girl who reads this book will do so with earnest, serious thoughts and proper motives, remembering that she is studying the most wonderful creation of her heavenly Father, for the sake of learning how to be well, that she may make the most of herself in her opportunities for usefulness and happiness. I expect her modesty, thus enlightened, will become a true, not spurious article, and her virtue will be purified and strengthened.⁴⁹

Virtue was a tangible quality that would enable adolescents to reap the rewards of good health and moderation in the near future. Personal choices were chief priority in this process. Since the popular idiom, “the body [was] a good servant but a bad master,” was considered a truism, manuals countered by their promotion of sensible habits of health.⁵⁰ Thus, authors took upon themselves the responsibility of educating young men and women in hopes of fostering respectable traits that would be carried with them into adulthood.

Victorian biological determinism shaped and controlled virtually every aspect of a young person’s existence, placing him or her firmly in the public or domestic sphere of influence. Nineteenth-century and twentieth-century society saw itself in gender as well as class terms. The concept of respectability, as well as the belief in separate spheres, was an integral component of the Victorian consciousness, and was vital in shaping health and gender norms.

⁴⁷ George Napheys, *The Physical Life of Women* (Toronto: Hunter-Rose Co. Ltd., 1890) 17.

⁴⁸ Burt Green Wilder, *What Young People Should Know* (Boston: Estes & Lauriet, 1875) 170.

⁴⁹ Mrs. Shepherd, *For Girls: A Special Physiology* (New York: Fowler, 1884) 31.

⁵⁰ Dr. Saleeby, *Health, Strength and Happiness: A Book of Practical Advice* (New York: Mitchell Kennerley, 1908) 13.

For example, the cult of domesticity allowed Victorians to achieve a moral balance in a rapidly changing industrial world. For if the home became a haven for religious values, such as charity and tolerance, then “the world of commerce could thereby be absolved from the necessity of acting on Christian principles.”⁵¹ To aid this development, society was ideologically divided. Authorities in the worlds of politics, science, and literature declared that men were best suited for the public sphere operating as active participants in the aggressive worlds of politics, military services and commerce.

Masculinity was associated with a heightened sense of rationality, practicality, and resourcefulness. Women, by contrast, were given passive characteristics that would allow them to excel in the domesticity of the private sphere where their innate emotional talents would serve them best.⁵² Masculinity and femininity were strictly classified and any deviation from the norm aroused suspicion. Uniformity in behaviour gave Victorian Canadians an illusion of security and control in both their private and public lives. Historian Deborah Gorham in The Victorian Girl and the Feminine Ideal describes Victorian femininity as a psychological concept that envisaged feminine qualities as natural and instinctive.⁵³

Authorities justified the separation of spheres on the basis of biological determinism. From childhood a boy's "nature was taken to be dirty and rough, it needed the restraining hand and softening influence of a mother or sister. Girls were presumed naturally clean, dainty and quiet."⁵⁴ Manliness, as opposed to masculinity, was not linked to the brute strength associated with the manual labour of the working classes, but with notions of personal hygiene, self-

⁵¹ Gorham, 4.

⁵² Judith Rowbotham, Good Girls Make Good Wives: Guidance for Girls in Victorian Fiction (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989) 6. There was an inherent contradiction in this 'traditional' view of women. Considered the natural upholders of middle class respectability, women were also charged with moral weakness. If not properly guarded by men and protected from the contamination of the public sphere, it was assumed that a woman would fall from grace more quickly than a man.

⁵³ Gorham, 4-5.

⁵⁴ Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850 (London: Hutchinson, 1987) 198.

control, responsibility, and self-assurance.⁵⁵ By the mid-to-late Victorian Period, women in the upper and middle socio-economic classes were expected to epitomize decorum, and delicacy. For example, "it was not only stylish to retire to bed with unmentionable female troubles; it was considered a mark of intellect and sensitivity."⁵⁶ Furthermore, throughout most of the nineteenth century, women's emotional or mental problems were defined as rooted in their biology. Women were viewed as sick simply because they were women.⁵⁷

Primacy of the will was subverted as form and function ruled the ideology of the day. Determinists extolled the belief that sexual differentiation defined virtually all aspects of a woman's (and by default a man's) character.⁵⁸ When Dr. Pierce referenced Figure 3 within the text of his manual, he stated that:

the physical contour of these representations plainly exhibits the difference in structure, and also implies difference in function. Solidity and strength are represented by the organization of the male, grace and beauty by that of a female. His broad shoulders represent physical power and the right of dominion, while her bosom is the symbol of love and nutrition...Her maternal functions are indicated by greater breadth of the hips. Physical differences so influence their mental natures, that, 'before experience has opened their eyes, the dreams of the young man and maiden differ.' The development of either is in close sympathy with their organs of reproduction.⁵⁹

This prescriptive approach to anatomy was not new. Londa Schiebinger notes that regardless of anatomists' wishes to depict the body in the eighteenth-century as accurately and universally as possible, "representations of the human body...were laden with cultural values. Illustrations of male and female skeletons represented the bones...but they also served to reproduce contemporary ideals of masculinity and femininity."⁶⁰ Therefore, the causes of a woman's maladies and behaviour were often reduced until they could be explained as malfunctions

⁵⁵ E. Anthony Rotundo, "Boy Culture: Middle-Class Boyhood in Nineteenth-Century America" in Mark Carnes and Clyde Griffen eds., Meanings for Manhood: Constructions of Masculinity in Victorian America (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990) 32.

⁵⁶ Ehrenreich & English, 1978 as quoted by Serevino and Moline, 11.

⁵⁷ Wendy Mitchinson, The Nature of Their Bodies (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991) 43.

⁵⁸ Fellman, 118.

⁵⁹ Dr. M.V. Pierce, The People's Common Sense Medical Advisor in Plain English (Buffalo: World's Dispensary Medical Association, 1882) 219.

“ineluctably linked to and controlled by the existence and functions of her uterus and ovaries,” or a man the expenditure of his vital energy.⁶¹

Despite the currency of this view, it is important to note that several physicians felt uterine disease was a dangerous diagnosis. Freely used as a “catchall” interpretation for any number of illnesses a woman might have, the ready label of uterine disease undermined the need for careful diagnosis, and at the same time played into a woman’s worst fears about the state of her health.⁶² At the same time physiology was touted as a principal cause of illness, society was also being taught that behaviour modification and will power were strong deterrents to sickness and the foundations of good health. Yet,

the will was itself a product of evolution, a biological process. This inconsistency and overlapping of metaphysics and materialism strike the modern reader as illogical and unintentionally ironic, but for late Victorians belief in the power of the will was obviously a constructive way of coping with otherwise insuperable problems presented by biological materialism.⁶³

The concept of ‘will’ was one of personal empowerment. The body’s limited supply of energy was unable to keep up with the continued effort to make life’s little decisions. The formation of proper habits was crucial because it enabled people to act instinctively and conserve the resources of their already taxed systems.

In 1884, physician and academic Henry Maudsley made this point when he remarked that

the Conscious energy of past function becomes the unconscious mechanism of present function, which thereupon is able to work without attention and almost without exertion...Will loses its character, so to speak, in attaining to its unconscious perfection; and meanwhile the free, unattached, path-seeking consciousness, and will...the pioneers and perfectors of progress, are available to initiate new and to perfect old functions.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Londa Schiebinger, The Mind Has No Sex? Women in the Origins of Modern Science (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989) 201.

⁶¹ Andrew Scull and Diane Favreau, “The Clitoridectomy Craze,” Social Research (Vol. 53, No. 2, Summer 1986, 243- 260.) 243.

⁶² Fellman, 121.

⁶³ Fellman, 123.

⁶⁴ Henry Maudsley, Body and Will: Metaphysical, Physiological and Pathological Aspects (New York: Appleton, 1884) 93.

It was an individual's responsibility to maintain and strengthen the body, and the spirit, that he or she was born with. To accommodate these needs "hygienic truth reduced itself to a morally coherent narrative of challenge and accomplishment."⁶⁵ Charles Rosenberg notes that "education, morality, and emotions all affected decision making; but volition—and thus responsibility—remained central...Decisions had consequences."⁶⁶ As Dr. Wood-Allen remarked in 1897: "ignorance and innocence are not synonymous."⁶⁷ Readers were offered modest explanations that educated without offending their sensibilities. Due to the divisive, patriarchal, and racist nature of society, prescriptive literature also reflected these constructed realities. Thus, manuals legitimized norms of behaviour considered necessary for a long, healthy, and successful life.

⁶⁵ Charles E. Rosenberg, "Catechisms of Health: the Body in the Prebellum Classroom," Bulletin of the History of Medicine (1995: No. 69) 194.

⁶⁶ Charles E. Rosenberg, "Body and Mind in Nineteenth-Century Medicine: Some Clinical Origins of the Neurosis Construct," Bulletin of the History of Medicine (1989: No. 63) 188.

⁶⁷ Dr. Wood-Allen, What a Young Girl Ought to Know (Philadelphia: Virginia Publishing Co., 1897) 20.

Chapter Two: Good Habits to be Cultivated

Building the Healthy Body: a Foundation of Diet, Rest, and Exercise

Life should increase in beauty and usefulness, in ability and joyousness, as the years bring us a wider experience, and this will be the case if we [young women and men] in youth have been wise enough to lay the foundations of health by a wise, thoughtful, prudent care of our bodies and our minds.¹

—Dr. Mary Wood-Allen, 1913

A link between self-control and mastering one's physical self was forged by prescriptive literature. As Roger Cooter suggests, "whether abused or diseased, children's bodies have never been the sole object of the advocates of child health and welfare. Children's minds and emotions have been equally important."² Medical advice literature to adolescents was simply an extension of this belief. Historians Janet Golden and Elizabeth Toon argue that in order for young people to keep the unhealthy urges of their biological selves from betraying their respectable social selves through vice, a strict regime was endorsed by authors to assist adolescents in their quest for health, strength, and beauty.³ The body, according to Brumberg, became the "central personal project" of young women in the twentieth century, a project in which the individual had increased desire to shape herself into the idealized norm.⁴ Emily Martin suggests that this "view of the body as a hierarchically organized bureaucratic system of control has profound implications for how a basic change in the system is perceived."⁵ Thus, a simple change in how a young person ate, slept, or exercised was touted by authors as having significant and far-reaching effects on all aspects of his or her life.

Many late nineteenth and early twentieth century authors of medical advice literature considered the body a temple in which to house the soul. It was "God-created" and as such must

¹ Wood-Allen, *What a Young Woman Ought to Know* (1913) 32.

² Roger Cooter, "Introduction" in his edited collection of essays *In the Name of The Child: Health and Welfare, 1880-1940* (New York: Routledge, 1992) 6.

³ Janet Golden and Elizabeth Toon, "I Can Make You A New Man: The Health Advice of Charles Atlas" from the Lecture Series. "Masculinities and Medicine" during the 71st Annual Meeting of the American Association for the History of Medicine (8 May 1998).

⁴ Brumberg, *Body Project*, 97.

⁵ Emily Martin, "Science and Women's Bodies," *Body/Politics* (New York: Routledge, 1990) 75.

be cherished, and maintained in good order.⁶ All prescriptive manuals addressed the importance of a healthy diet. Accounts ranged from scientific analysis of food types accompanied by complex charts, to general dietary suggestions, and the occasional recipe. Tracts that used scientific language, for example the Manual of Hygiene for Schools and Colleges, broke down the diet of a young man or woman into its most basic chemical properties.⁷ Regular, leisurely meals were encouraged, and for “persons who from any cause have feelings of exhaustion between meals” a glass of milk could be taken “with advantage.”⁸ The most interesting piece of advice offered, in my opinion, was the recommendation of cheerful conversation, during and after meal times, as an aid to digestion.⁹ Historian Joan Jacobs Brumberg argues that when authors encouraged simple, healthy menus that were well-prepared, and served upon sparkling dishes in the midst of cheerful conversation for their readers, it was because “the ambience of the meal symbolized the spirit and values of the family.”¹⁰

Spices were usually condemned, and often without explanation, readers were told to eliminate them from their diets. Possible reasons why spices were avoided included the following advice. In 1886, Manual of Hygiene for Schools and Colleges, noted “cayenne pepper is adulterated with red lead, Venetian red, vermilion, rice, *brick dust*, and other substances.”¹¹ In 1897, Stall advised his readers to use condiments and spices in moderation because they were “calculated to stimulate the reproductive nature” and therefore threatened self-control.¹² The lists of avoided foods were a perplexing mixture of organic and synthetic items. Vinegar, cloves, salt, and coffee were listed alongside slate pencils as items for which young people developed

⁶ Wood-Allen, What a Young Woman Ought to Know (1913) 31.

⁷ For further details see pages 154- 160 of Provincial Board of Health, Manual of Hygiene for Schools and Colleges (Toronto: William Briggs, 1886).

⁸ Provincial Board of Health, Manual of Hygiene (1886) 178.

⁹ Provincial Board of Health, Manual of Hygiene (1886) 179.

¹⁰ Joan Jacobs Brumberg, Fasting Girls: The Emergence of Anorexia Nervosa as a Modern Disease (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988) 136.

¹¹ Provincial Board of Health, Manual of Hygiene (1886) 168. Emphasis mine.

¹² Stall, What a Young Husband Ought to Know (1897) 98.

unnatural appetites.¹³ It is impossible to know how many adolescents nibbled slate pencils, but I assume the problem was a common enough habit if Stall thought it deserved special attention.

In fact, 'pica' is a medical term to describe morbid appetites for items such as starch, plaster, or chalk. Reasons for the unusual behaviour were sometimes moralistic, including an 1918 study which blamed the morbid appetite on a lack of "wholesomeness," to a 1924 study which provided the physiological explanation that iron deficiency anemia generated the cravings.¹⁴ For manual writers and Victorian physicians, "nonnutritive eating constituted proof of the fact that the adolescent girl was essentially out of control and that the process of sexual maturation could generate voracious and dangerous appetites."¹⁵ Above all else, emphasis was placed upon the purity, freshness, and cleanliness of food.¹⁶

One of the most frequent causes of illness during the puberty of teenage girls was simply starvation. Food was given to a young woman, "but not of the right quality or in insufficient quantity, or at improper hours. The system is not nourished; and, becoming feeble, it is laid open to attacks of disease, and to no form of disease more readily than consumption."¹⁷ The risk of chlorosis, a primary anemia or green sickness named for the pallor of the female patient, was particularly significant and needed quick attention "before the impoverished condition of the blood of puberty has left its imprint upon the powers of resistance of the adult organism; has done permanent damage to the future woman and the future mother."¹⁸ Karl Figlio argues that

¹³ Stall, What a Young Boy Ought to Know (1909) 137.

¹⁴ Dr. Joan Bicknell, Pica: A Childhood Symptom (Surrey: Butterworths, 1975) 8,16-17. The 1918 study was conducted by Dr. Kolpick, and the 1924 by Dr. Ruddock. Later theories included Smith (1931) who thought pica was a bad habit, Burrows, Rendle-Short and Hanna (1951) who thought it resulted from gastro-intestinal disturbances, and mental deficiency caused from lead-poisoning. By the 1960s, scientists speculated that iron deficiency anemia may be the result of pica rather than the cause. The 1997 Merck Manual noted that "iron deficiency may produce its own symptoms, such as pica (a craving for nonfoods such as ice, dirt, or pure starch)." Robert Berkow ed. The Merck Manual of Medical Information: Home Edition (Whitehouse Station: Merck Research Laboratories, 1997) 744.

¹⁵ Brumberg, Fasting Girls,175.

¹⁶ Burks, Health and the School (1913) 229.

¹⁷ Napheys (1889) 36.

¹⁸ Karl Figlio, "Chlorosis and Chronic disease in nineteenth-century Britain: The social constitution of somatic illness in a capitalist society," Social History (Vol. 3: 1978) 173, and "The Care of Growing Girls," Canada Lancet Vol. XLI No.1 (September 1907) 93.

physicians associated chlorosis with “well-to-do town ladies, who led idle, ornamental lives” that “weakened their constitutions,” rather than their hearty, industrious sisters (although hospital records in Westminster and Manchester clearly show that chlorosis was frequently diagnosed among the working-classes).¹⁹ To remedy the situation, simply prepared foods were prescribed which included fresh milk, fat meats, and vegetable oils.

Fresh pure cow’s milk was considered by Pancoast to be a dietary necessity, which he acknowledged was difficult to obtain in the city.²⁰ In 1901, a number of Montreal doctors sponsored by the daily newspaper La Patrie, established clinics in Montreal (les Gouttes de lait) to “combat infant mortality by distributing high-quality milk to mothers in the poor neighbourhoods of Montreal who could not (or did not wish to) breast-feed.”²¹ The Canada Lancet, in 1910, insisted that dairy farmers keep “healthy cows, house them properly, and give them good food. Then the milk should be cared for properly until it reaches the consumer.”²² The medical journal demanded that practitioners inform their patients that bad milk was not be tolerated, and that any one who did not comply with these conditions should be put out of business. Indeed, “it is a worse sort of enemy that comes along and sells typhoid fever bacilli in his milk and thereby sows them in the intestinal canals of his trusting consumers.”²³ In 1913, Health & The School estimated ten percent of American babies were killed before the age of one because of unclean milk.²⁴ The sanitary regulation of milk and water was also correlated to the

¹⁹ Figlio, 178, 181.

²⁰ Pancoast, Toxology (1903) 516.

²¹ Denyse Baillargeon, “Care of Mothers and Infants in Montreal between the Wars: The Visiting Nurses of Metropolitan Life, Les Gouttes de lait and Assistance maternelle,” in Diane Dodd and Deborah Gorham eds. Caring and Curing: Historical Perspectives on Women and Healing in Canada (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1994) 167. Les Gouttes de lait refers to a “milk depot.”

²² “Good Milk”, Canada Lancet Vol. XLIV No. 4 (December 1910) 248.

²³ “Good Milk”, Canada Lancet Vol. XLIV No. 4 (December 1910) 248.

²⁴ Burks, Health & the School (1913) 347. Some of the responsibility for unclean milk was blamed upon mothers, rather than dairy farmers, who were assumed to be ill-informed about sanitary procedures. An American practitioner in 1884 stated that, “it is a wonderfully mistaken idea that has been stalking abroad...that ‘anybody’ is competent to treat infants...no part of work requires so much care, science and judgement as our labours with the children; and no part will give such prompt and good results, such satisfaction and success, as a rational and scientific treatment of the little ones.” Rima Apple, Mothers and

prevention of typhoid, diphtheria, tuberculosis, and scarlet fever, and promoted poster campaigns to combat the issue (See Figure 4).²⁵

Regular meals were recommended since the body's 'internal clock' worked best under a steady routine. Authors, like Wood-Allen did not want her readers to be hampered by too many restrictions in their diets, yet she did want them to use discretion when they made their selections.²⁶ At the same time, manual writers saw the danger in being too particular in appetite. This view was held despite historian Brumberg's assertion that trends towards 'slimming' by adolescent women would not gain popularity until the 1920s when "for the first time, teenage girls made systematic efforts to lower their weight by food restriction and exercise."²⁷ Wood-Allen advised young women to "eat what is set in front of you, making a judicious choice both as to the variety and quantity, and then determine that your food shall digest."²⁸ Eating was a necessity, but once a woman lived "upon the higher plane of thought," she realized there were more important considerations than a fancy menu that deserved her attention, such as the pleasure taken from eating simple food in good company.²⁹

Once the body was nourished, a sound night's sleep went hand in hand with tranquility of mind and spirit. In order to achieve a high standard of health, Clarke maintained young women,

between the ages of fourteen and eighteen, must have sleep, not only for repair and growth, like boys, but for the additional task of constructing, or, more properly speaking, of developing and perfecting then, a reproductive system,—the engine within an engine... Work of the brain eats the brain away. Sleep is the chance and laboratory of repair. If a child's brainwork and sleep are

Medicine: A Social History of Infant Feeding, 1890-1950 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987)

53.

²⁵ MacMurchy, Blue Books Vol.5 (1922) 3.

²⁶ Wood-Allen, What a Young Woman Ought to Know (1913) 35.

²⁷ Joan Jacobs Brumberg, The Body Project: An Intimate History of American Girls (New York: Random House, 1997) 99, 100. Although Brumberg argues that the popularity of slimming only gained currency in the 1920s in America, she also demonstrates how the image of the beautiful feminine body changed from the "Voluptuous Victorian hourglass" to the new slim, long-limbed, flat-chested silhouette popularized as early as 1908 by Parisian designer Paul Poiret. With the rising fashion of "flapper" chemise dresses in the 1920s, the "century of the svelte" was ushered in.

²⁸ Wood-Allen, What a Young Woman Ought to Know (1913) 36.

²⁹ Wood-Allen, What a Young Woman Ought to Know (1913) 36-37.

normally proportioned to each other, each night will more than make good each day's loss... But if the reverse occurs, the night will not repair the day; and aching heads will signalize the advance of neuralgia, tubercle, and disease. So Nature punishes disobedience.³⁰

The cause and effect analysis provided by Clarke was powerful in its visual imagery. Even if he had not desired to intentionally alarm his readers into compliance with his teachings, the concept of the brain eating itself away, and the foretold threat of punishment was nonetheless unnerving.

Sleeplessness was regarded as a symptom of larger medical problems. If one's sleep patterns were troubled, it was thought easy enough to discover the cause of the disturbance and remedy it. Deranged nervous systems resulted, according to the Ladies' Companion, if two people slept in the same bed. In a form reminiscent of a fairy tale, the plight of two sisters was spun in which the practice of sharing a bed resulted in the younger sapping the life energy from the elder. Once the two teenagers were separated, they both developed into robust, "happy, good-tempered" young women with "considerable increase of avoirdupois."³¹ Sleeping alone in single beds was recommended for siblings and married people alike because "where two persons sleep in the same bed, the one who has the stronger physical power is likely to absorb the vital forces from the weaker one."³² A person could not replenish their lost energy unless they slept alone and undisturbed.

Very few women, according to the literature, suffered from sleeplessness. If they did, it belied a nervous temperament and susceptibility to hysteria. Rest allowed the body to recuperate, and middle class women were advised to take a vacation at least once a year away from the duties of the household for a month, or only a week, to strengthen the body. Rest was important because "the nerves and other tissues of the body cannot be under continual strain without

³⁰ Clarke, Sex in Education (1873) 59-60.

³¹ "An Unhealthy Practise." Ladies Companion Vol. 1 No. 3 (Toronto: March 1893) 7.

³² Stall, What a Young Man Ought to Know (1897) 54.

injury."³³ A young woman needed to shake off the troubles of the day because they made poor bedfellows and inhibited the sense of serenity necessary for a proper night's sleep.³⁴

The restorative quality of fresh night air was stressed to both sexes. Fresh air in the bedroom stimulated the nervous center and increased the body's appetite for breakfast.³⁵ Young people were encouraged to change their sleeping environment until a "constant stream of outer air into occupied rooms" was achieved.³⁶ The fictional doctor in Burks', Health and the School, insisted that "fresh air renders recovery from disease not only more sure, but more swift," especially in cases of typhus.³⁷ The most beneficial exposure to night air was a small tent "hung like an awning inside the window, leaves the sleeper's head in the open air, at the same time preventing the room from being cooled off" as exemplified in the Figure 5.³⁸ Therefore, the habit of sleeping in the night air was promoted in order to build robust lungs, revitalize appetites, and replenish lost energy.

In 1908, authors like Dr. Saleeby felt that the importance of sleep was being ignored because of the media attention given to diet by health faddists and fanatics.³⁹ If a body was deprived of sleep, worry set in and the emotional state of a young man or woman was activated; thus, negating the energy needed to restore muscular expenditure. Young people should not sleep by a clock, but should sleep until they naturally awoke well rested.⁴⁰ Ten to twelve hours of sleep each night was what Stall considered an appropriate amount of time for a growing

³³ Pancoast, Tokology (1903) 525. The easy acceptance of vacation time for up to a month was a luxury that sets apart Pancoast's readers as middle to upper middle class.

³⁴ Pancoast, Tokology (1903) 526.

³⁵ Dr. C.W. Saleeby, Health, Strength and Happiness (New York: Mitchell Kennerley, 1908) 36.

³⁶ Burks, Health and the School (1913) 215.

³⁷ Burks, Health and the School (1913) 207.

³⁸ Burks, Health and the School (1913) 208.

³⁹ Saleeby (1908) 102. Surprisingly, Saleeby's concern over the dietary debate did not go so far as to elaborate upon it for readers.

⁴⁰ Saleeby (1908) 112.

adolescent.⁴¹ In 1922, MacMurchy decided that the average amount required for a twelve-year-old was approximately eleven hours, while an eighteen-year-old required at least nine hours.⁴²

Sleep was necessary to develop perfect health. During waking hours, the body expended energy at a constant rate, and this translated into change at a cellular level. It was common knowledge that “life in the body is only possible through constant death of the atoms of which it is composed...each word, thought, activity, emotion causes expenditure, and unless expenditure is in some way made good, there will be bankruptcy.”⁴³ The protoplasm from which cells were made was garnered through digestion, but they were only be replenished when the body was at rest. Sleep freshened “the complexion, smoothes out wrinkles, clears out the brain, strengthens the muscles, puts light into the eyes and color into the cheek.”⁴⁴ Simply put, Wood-Allen concluded that the term beauty sleep was not a misnomer.

The importance of exercise lay in the connection forged between mind and body. For example, “strengthening the body would develop the mind, the character, and the will. As the mind, through the nervous system, permeated the entire body, the sound body in this reciprocal relationship was the responsive servant to the mind’s commands.”⁴⁵ The common belief, which linked a young woman to her womb, was prevalent in the discussion of exercise. Erratic movement jolted the womb and pulled the ligaments that held them in place. A good lie down was the prescribed remedy for ensuring that the womb returned to its original position.⁴⁶ Mrs. Shepherd did not ignore the importance of physical activity for young people. Her prescription for young women boiled down to housework. “There will doubtless be among my readers mothers who will *not* send their daughters into the kitchen,” Shepherd acknowledged, realizing many of the middle class families reading her advice would have at least one servant to assist in

⁴¹ Stall, What a Young Boy Ought to Know (1909) 148.

⁴² MacMurchy, Blue Books Vol. 11 (1922) 17.

⁴³ Wood-Allen, What a Young Woman Ought to Know (1913) 40.

⁴⁴ Wood-Allen, What a Young Woman Ought to Know (1913) 45.

⁴⁵ Fellman, 127.

⁴⁶ Shepherd, For Girls (1884) 102-103.

the running of the household, or would want their daughters to spend time in activities more refined than housework.⁴⁷ Regardless, every daughter was admonished to follow her mother into the kitchen in order to finish part of the washing (considered most beneficial) or ironing, cooking, dish-washing, sweeping, and any other of the dozen chores that needed a woman's attention. Young men, by comparison, were asked to spend part of the spring or summer at a family friend's farm from the ages of fourteen to seventeen, for the "purpose that their frames and muscles as they set for life, may set strong and vigorous."⁴⁸

Dr. Wood-Allen, in 1897, also endorsed domestic work as beneficial for a young girl. Work increased the appetite, encouraged proper sleep patterns, and in Wood-Allen's opinion could act as lessons in the domestic arts for young girls in order to ease their transition as homemakers in the future. Dishwashing was of benefit both physically and spiritually, as demonstrated by the following story:

I heard a lady tell the other day how she would make dishwashing a delight. She said, 'I would say, this hot water represents truth, heated by love. The soiled dishes represent myself, with all my worn-out thoughts and desires. I plunge them in the loving truth and cleanse them thoroughly; then polish them with the towel of persistence and store them away in symmetrical order to wait further use.'⁴⁹

Order marked the happiness of a woman, and even mundane chores were infused with didactic meaning for readers.

Students were specifically targeted for advice literature because "in order to obtain mental improvement, [they] often forget to pay attention to the wants of the body."⁵⁰ Leaping, running, and jumping jarred the body, but unlike Shepherd's account, the warning against such activity by the Provincial Board of Health was not gender specific. Rowing, horseback riding, and fencing were deemed the most suitable activities for adolescent men, yet these activities due to the expense of the equipment restricted their participation to those of the middle and upper

⁴⁷ Shepherd, For Girls (1884) 116.

⁴⁸ Shepherd, For Girls (1884) 114-115.

⁴⁹ Wood-Allen, What a Young Girl Ought to Know (1897) 187-188.

classes. A more inclusive form of exercise was handball, which was a popular form of amusement on city school grounds.⁵¹ By 1889 this advice changed, and exercise that included skipping rope, croquet, walking, dancing, or riding were recommended because they often led girls out into the fresh air and sunshine of the country. Specifically detailed for young women with narrow chests was an exercise that simply required deep breathing, in an upright position, in order to inflate the lungs to full capacity with fresh air. This exercise was also believed to cure consumption.⁵² Historian Patricia Campbell contends that in an era where an eighteen-inch waist was thought by readers to be a symbol of beauty, exercises advocating the intake of a deep breath was a challenging request.⁵³

Exercise in early morning air was prescribed as extremely beneficial due to its restorative freshness and purity.⁵⁴ This was especially pertinent for young women, who were more likely to be housebound, and thus did not always get the fresh air their young bodies required.⁵⁵ Quick walking was of particular benefit, since it was both inexpensive and universally available for all. Mental as well as physical benefits were gained because

however sullen the disposition may be among our griefs at home, exercise in the open air cheers us up; however listless the limbs may have been, sustaining a too heavy heart, they are braced up by exercise...however perverse the memory, presenting all that is gloomy and agonizing, exercise and change of scene lull it to rest, and the sleep of memory is a day in Paradise to the unhappy.⁵⁶

The human body was a machine, and exercise allowed each muscle to perform its special and distinct function.

The benefits of exercise in the life of a healthy adolescent were universally praised; however, it was also important for young people to keep a balance between physical and mental stimulation. The over-development of one restricted the normal development of the other. For

⁵⁰ Provincial Board of Health, Manual of Hygiene (1886) 238.

⁵¹ Provincial Board of Health, Manual of Hygiene (1886) 241-242.

⁵² Napheys (1889) 37.

⁵³ Campbell, 23.

⁵⁴ Pancoast, Tokology (1903) 502.

⁵⁵ Canadian Practitioner (Vol. 9: December 1884) 363.

example, “the highly muscular man makes large demands upon his blood for his digestive tract and for the muscles themselves. By so much must the brain be depleted.”⁵⁷ Nearly half a century after Herbert Spencer’s theorems were published, authors like Saleeby still quoted them in 1908 and referred to his book on education as a “masterpiece.”⁵⁸ Spencer felt that

Nature was a strict accountant; and if you demand of her in one direction more than she is prepared to lay out, she balances the account by making a deduction elsewhere...Excess of bodily exercise diminishes the power of thought...In peasants who spend their lives in muscular labour, the activity of mind is very small.⁵⁹

The passage not only substantiated ill-formed class stereotypes, but also added currency to Spencer’s theory of finite energy. Teenagers were instructed not to think of exercise in terms of muscle growth, but to evaluate how their minds could also be improved. Thus, team sports involving strategy and physical stamina were thought to encompass the best of both worlds.⁶⁰

Purity and strength of body and mind required adolescents to make their bodies a temple through disciplined exercise. Stall considered the possession of a set of inexpensive dumb-bells a signal “that that boy’s future is full of hope and promise.”⁶¹ In the first reference I found to the employment of child labour, Stall noted “the child that has been confined for days in the school-room or the factory, an hour or two in the park would be a genuine recreation,” and an excellent opportunity to exercise.⁶² The depleting aspects of exercise linked the mental to the physical. For example, formal gymnastics were “fully as fatiguing to brain and body as the most exhausting of all studies, mathematics.”⁶³

The best exercise employed the mind pleasantly, but was not over-taxing. Repeating the advice she had offered several years earlier, Dr. Wood-Allen still maintained that housework

⁵⁶ Pancoast, *Tokology* (1903) 506-507.

⁵⁷ Dr. Saleeby (1908) 86.

⁵⁸ Dr. Saleeby (1908) 86.

⁵⁹ Dr. Saleeby (1908) 86.

⁶⁰ Dr. Saleeby (1908) 87-88.

⁶¹ Stall, *What a Boy Ought to Know* (1909) 144.

⁶² Stall, *What a Boy Ought to Know* (1909) 146.

⁶³ Burks, *Health and the School* (1913) 63.

provided girls with the best gymnasium. More importantly, domestic labour was associated with feminine behaviour. Wood-Allen quoted an anonymous lecturer who remarked that “she never felt more of a lady than when scrubbing her kitchen floor, and she was not ashamed to be seen by her friends at this work.”⁶⁴ In 1913, the merits of bicycle riding were also praised as long as a young woman sat upon the gluteal muscles and not upon the perineum, and did not ride when she menstruated.⁶⁵ Advocacy of cycling was a relatively new phenomenon. In 1896, the Canadian Practitioner had declared that women who rode bicycles did so because it was a “means of gratifying unholy and bestial desire.”⁶⁶

A unique feature of the literature addressed to female readers occurred specifically in 1913, when a series of exercises were described that targeted weak areas of the body. The Self and Sex Series did not have a similar section in their manuals to young men. Exercises to overcome slight lateral curvature, or round shoulders, strengthen weak back muscles, develop the chest, strengthen abdominal muscles included numbered steps, and detailed descriptions on how to improve physical endurance. Most entertaining to modern readers is the section devoted, “To Facilitate the Return of Displaced Organs to Their Normal Positions,” which consisted of routines designed to pull back organs, displaced by corsets, strenuous exercise, and by the forces of gravity.⁶⁷

Metaphors of the body as a temple, home, machine, or factory abounded in medical advice literature. As such, an adolescent’s weaknesses and physical deficiencies were emphasized as “the body is reduced to an endless multiplicity of points that can be mapped,

⁶⁴ Wood-Allen, What a Young Woman Ought to Know (1913) 72.

⁶⁵ Wood-Allen, What a Young Woman Ought to Know (1913) 74.

⁶⁶ Canadian Practitioner (Vol. 21: November 1896) 848.

⁶⁷ Wood-Allen, What a Young Woman Ought to Know (1913) 185-186. Women were told to lie back and lift up their legs and torso until they rested the majority of their body weight on their upper back and shoulders. Alternately, they were told to lie face downward, raise their hips as high as possible while resting their weight of their toes and elbows.

charted, and ultimately corrected."⁶⁸ Authors depicted the norm or blueprint of a healthy body and went into great detail to show how young men and women could achieve the ideal through proper diet, rest, and exercise. The inter-connection between the body, mind, and spirit also meant a poor diet, insomnia, or lethargy tampered with the nervous system and the creation of vital energy.

The persuasiveness of the health regime prescribed for readers was quite possibly its simplicity. For instance, the above procedures could be easily established into a daily routine, and had the potential to address or possibly cure, a wide array of adolescent maladies. As historian Janet Oppenheim argues, using asylum and patient records,

to base the pursuit of health on a systematic regime of diet, rest, exercise, and cleanliness is, of course, a valuable strategy to employ against a variety of disorders, but it made particular sense in the case of nervous illness. Where the causes of distress were often elusive, the therapeutic campaign needed to be all the broader, encompassing virtually every aspect of the patient's life.⁶⁹

Her observation is equally applicable to prescriptive advice literature, as it was for the practitioners and institutions Oppenheim describes.

I found nothing in the literature that addressed what might now be called drastic measures, fad diets, or health trends that could have been detrimental to a young person's health. Instead, common sense and a rather ordinary, dull, routine was established for his or her well being. There are no surprises here. If readers followed the advice to the letter, they would eat well (if plainly); participate in recreational exercise to keep them fit; and sleep well. A body that was well fed, strong, and rested was simply less vulnerable to disease.

Of greater significance was the literature's stress upon self-improvement. Each individual had the tools to shape his or her body into the ideal. Routine and the formation of proper habits established an individual's control over their body. Only through will power and

⁶⁸ Sherrie A. Inness, "'It is Pluck, But—Is it Sense?': Athletic Student Culture in Progressive-era Girls' College Fiction," in Claudia Nelson and Lynne Vallone eds., The Girl's Own: Cultural Histories of the Anglo-American Girl, 1830-1915 (Athens: university of Georgia Press, 1994) 219.

self-control could happiness and good health be achieved.⁷⁰ If young people established discipline in their physical self, then they also had a better chance of stimulating their mental self with proper influences, and maintaining the morality of their spiritual self.

Beauty, Fashion, and Strength

“We should endeavor to look just as pretty as we possibly can.”⁷¹—Dr. Mary Wood-Allen, 1936

In *the Beauty Myth*, Naomi Wolf argues that the attributes thought to be beautiful in women during any historical framework were merely symbols of the female behaviour that society considered desirable. In other words, concepts of beauty were “*prescribing behaviour and not appearance*.”⁷² Men, contrary to Wolf’s perspective, were not excluded from this process. In *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity*, George Mosse contends that the masculine ideal (strength, self-control, muscular beauty, and rationality) was also infused with the aspirations of society and the nation.⁷³ Historian Sander Gilman agrees that “idealized body types are paralleled by ideal ‘moral’ types, by ‘good citizens.’ The beautiful citizen is the good citizen.”⁷⁴ Therefore, beauty and strength symbolized more than good health, it reflected one’s morality.

In a society where marriage was a goal for many young women and men, adolescents and parents alike realized that beauty was a currency and that “good looks were an important vehicle of social success.”⁷⁵ Mitchinson contends that attempts by feminist rational dress reformers in the 1840s and 1850s to reject traditional fashions in favour of Amelia Bloomer’s

⁶⁹ Janet Oppenheim, *Shattered Nerves: Doctors, Patients, and Depression in Victorian England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991) 116.

⁷⁰ Fellman, 137, 35.

⁷¹ Dr. Mary Wood Allen, *What a Young Girl Ought to Know* (Philadelphia: John Winston, 1936)

96.

⁷² Naomi Wolf, *The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty are Used Against Women* (Toronto: Doubleday, 1992) 14. Emphasis in original.

⁷³ George Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996) 23, 40

⁷⁴ Sander Gilman, *Picturing Health* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1995) 66.

⁷⁵ Brumberg, *Body Project*, 61.

invention were openly ridiculed by fashionable members of society.⁷⁶ Fashion magazines generally ignored rational dress perhaps because the split skirt was deemed unfeminine, and was associated by youth with the ever unfashionable 'blue-stockings' of yesteryear. With a societal standard of beauty which dictated that the turn-of-the-century female form must contort into the shape of an hourglass, prescriptive manuals went against this tide of public opinion and supporting dress reform when they unanimously denounced the use of corsets.

For example, in 1875 Burt Wilder's declared adamantly: "the dress adapted by the women of our times may be very graceful and becoming...but it certainly is conducive to the development of uterine diseases, and proves not merely a predisposing but an exciting cause of them."⁷⁷ Wilder backed up his arguments with the testimony of medical experts, including Dr. E. Cutter, who condemned corsets because they, along with the weight of the garments attached to them, squeezed and crowded "the viscera down to the lower part of the cavity in the pelvis."⁷⁸ The Canada Lancet endorsed a return to more 'natural' modes of dress because the current fashion layered too much clothing around one focal point, which led to an unequal distribution of temperature disrupting the normal circulation of blood throughout the body.⁷⁹ By the 1880s, the bustle lost currency in fashionable society. Sleeves "began to swell in compensation and corsets were pulled tighter, since there was no longer the bustle to give the illusion of a small waist."⁸⁰ As corsets got tighter, opposition by manual writers became more vocal.

In 1884, Mrs. Shepherd offered warnings against the physical damage corsets imposed upon a growing body. Horizontal whalebones and vertical 'steels' embedded in the corset pressed against the abdomen. The steels started rigid and straight. Eventually, they bent and curved to fit the shape of the girl's body after being laced-- the smaller desired the waist the

⁷⁶ Mitchinson, The Nature of Their Bodies, 70.

⁷⁷ Wilder, What Young People Should Know (1875) 66.

⁷⁸ Dr. E. Cutter quoted by Wilder, What Young People Should Know (1875) 68.

⁷⁹ Arnold Haultain, Canada Lancet (Vol. 15: May 1883) 264.

⁸⁰ Alison Adburgham, A Punch History of Manners and Modes, 1841-1940 (London: Hutchinson and Co., 1961) 151

more steels a girl sewed into her corset. Consequently, excess pressure was placed upon the womb, which Shepherd contended might eventually dislodge it!⁸¹ In scientific language, Shepherd told young women that the compression inflicted by the steels in corset contracted the flexible cartilage which bound the rib cage to the breast bone. This pressure created a painful ridge when the “cartilages on one side [of the breast bone] may be bent outward, while those on the opposite side are bent inward.”⁸² In some cases, the lower ribs on each side could be malformed as to almost touch, lessening the cavity for the vital organs. The lungs were then so compressed that they were unable to function properly. “Carbonic acid” was no longer released in sufficient proportions, and thus the blood stream was poisoned.⁸³

Finally, if these warnings were not enough to convince her readers of the evils of corsets, Shepherd included a true story (told to her by a doctor’s wife) whose moral was impossible to miss. Once upon a time,

a stout, healthy German girl came over to America, and hired out to do housework. Of course she soon began to ape the puny, delicate, native girls in dress, bought a corset, and learned the art of lacing. She would draw the strings as tight as she could with her hands, then put them over the bedpost and tighten them still more...For fear she might lose some of this acquired smallness during the night she wore it to bed...I was not informed whether she changed it for the wash or not. In a very few months her health began to fail. (Strange, wasn't it? The climate didn't agree with her, some thought) Soon the marked symptoms of consumption set in, and after a while she was confined to her bed, when my friend's husband was called to prescribe for her. Her darling corset still girted [sic] her wasting frame until she became too weak to change her linen without help, when it was discovered by her attendant, who told the doctor. He ordered it taken off, which was done. This at once threw the girl into the most acute suffering. She screamed with pain and could not be eased and they were obliged to put it back on again...and soon after, the girl *died with her corset on*, a martyr to fashion. Then a *post mortem* examination revealed the awful fact that the ribs were imbedded in the inflamed and suppurated lungs.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Shepherd, For Girls (1884) 87. Shepherd claimed that this distinction was more likely to happen to delicate women, who just happened to be precisely the same women who endorsed the use of corsets to achieve their 18- inch waists.

⁸² Shepherd, For Girls (1884) 32-33.

⁸³ Shepherd, For Girls (1884) 33-34.

⁸⁴ Shepherd, For Girls (1884) 98-99. Emphasis in original.

This gruesome tale, whether true or not, clearly outlined the dangers of corsets in vivid detail, and probably appealed to the active imaginations of youthful readers.

What I found most ingenious about Shepherd's manual was her insightful attempt to explain the psyche of teenage girls. After acknowledging the perceived invincibility of young people, Shepherd maintained that no amount of time would enable their bodies to fully recuperate from tight-lacing. She also mused about the reasons young women persisted in a mode of dress that so obviously damaged their health.

Do girls persist in dressing as they do to please the boys and young men? They have often been accused of doing so, and the girls always deny it; declaring that they dress solely to please themselves. Without entering upon the pros and cons of the case, I will state it as my belief that this *is* the reason...But I am glad to see this. It seems to me a very beautiful thing that young ladies and gentlemen like to make themselves attractive to one another...Girls, a small waist, artificially obtained, is a sham. But boys do not seem to know that any more than you do. Somehow they got the idea that it indicates refinement...or that it belongs to a good form, which is one essential of a good-looking woman...The attraction of the sexes is well-nigh the strongest motive power in the world...Boys ought to be so taught that they will be pleased only with that which is naturally, not artificially beautiful; with the solid, pure and good.⁸⁵

Several aspects of this passage are compelling. First, the protestations of young women (that they were dressing simply for their own benefit) were ignored and dismissed as lies. Second, the passage assumed teenage girls contributed, or even had the final say, as to what they would wear and how they would wear it. Third, heterosexual feelings of desire and mutual attraction are positively reinforced as not only proper, but beautiful. Finally, Shepherd informed young men in a frank and serious tone that they needed to reconstruct popular images of beauty and fashion, so that young women would stop contorting their figures for their benefit.

The general alternative to straight lacing was to simply suspend clothing from their shoulders, instead of fastening them to their hips. For instance, Mrs. Shepherd provided her readers with sample drawings depicting elastic harnesses modeled on male suspenders to hold up

⁸⁵ Shepherd, For Girls (1884) 36-37.

stockings and chemilettes (flannel slips worn under a skirt).⁸⁶ Rational dress reduced the weight a woman wore from an average of twenty lbs. to seven.⁸⁷ Echoing the Shepherd's sentiments, the provincial authorities proclaimed in 1886 freedom of movement was of topmost priority. As evidenced by Figure 6, the frequent use of tight-lacing by adolescent girls made the waist "as easy to snap as a pipe-stem, [and resulted] in dangerous compression of all the vital organs...,and must, if persevered in, end in disease and deformity."⁸⁸ Even literature that did not usually resort to diagrams for the majority of its information, the problem of tight-lacing was deemed serious enough to require visual reinforcement.

According to prescriptive literature, a grave injustice was perpetrated against young women by the fashion industry. Tight-lacing impaired "their muscular vigor by confining their growing frames in the fatal chains of fashion, and you increase debility, and even deformity in the race to come. If we want our girls to be made straight, let them be made strong."⁸⁹ By 1889, teenage girls read "that so long as American women consent to deform themselves and sacrifice their health to false ideas of beauty, it is almost hopeless to urge their fitness for, and their right to, a higher life than they now enjoy."⁹⁰ Until young women made the personal decision to improve their lifestyle and abandon corsets, it was useless to convince them otherwise because the warnings fell on deaf ears. Wood-Allen told young women not to deprive themselves of amusements due to tight-lacing, "an error which I am sure you will never fall into, for you understand how important it is that you should breathe sufficiently in order to have your blood purified."⁹¹ Thus, she appealed to a young woman's 'common sense' to impart her words of wisdom on good health.

⁸⁶ Shepherd, For Girls (1884) 81, 83.

⁸⁷ "Rational Dress", Globe and Mail (17 April 1886) 8. Twenty lbs. referred to the complete weight of one young woman's fashionable outfit, but the article did not indicate whether this was a winter or summer ensemble.

⁸⁸ Provincial Board of Health, Manual of Hygiene for Schools and Colleges (1886) 140.

⁸⁹ Provincial Board of Health, Manual of Hygiene (1886) 250.

⁹⁰ Napheys (1889) 37.

⁹¹ Wood-Allen, What a Young Girl Ought to Know (1897) 139.

In 1894, Jefferies accused tight-lacing of destroying the natural beauty of a young woman and making her irritable. Bone development was restricted because the flow of nutrients stopped and left the skeleton twisted and deformed.⁹² By constant pressure “the vagina and womb may be compressed into one-third their natural length or crowded into an unnatural position...Under these circumstances the ligaments lose their elasticity, and as a result we have prolapsus or falling of the womb.”⁹³ Physical disfigurement was the consequence if a young woman chose to wear (or was encouraged by a parent) a corset. In 1894, the Ontario Woman’s Christian Temperance Union vocalized their disapproval of what they labeled ‘unhealthy’ fashions.⁹⁴ The fashion-industry itself was blamed for popularizing “customs of dress that are little less than barbarous,” and capitalizing on the fashion of tight-lacing through “sixty millions of corsets sold in a year in America,—one for nearly every man, woman and child in the land!”⁹⁵

In Jefferies’ opinion, tight-lacing not only deformed a woman physically but also warped her personality. Beauty was “in reality but another name for expression of countenance, which is the index of sound health, intelligence, good feelings, and peace of mind.”⁹⁶ The discomfort caused by corsets disfigured the face through expressions of pain and ill feeling. Consequently, “bitter thoughts or a bad temper spoil the human expression of its comeliness and grace.”⁹⁷ The Forum rhapsodized that “her flesh is of flower-like delicacy in composition and color...she shows only a complexion whose shell-like color, coming and going, reveals every passing emotion.”⁹⁸ Corsets spoiled this natural beauty. Women could not hide these feelings because they were thought to be overwhelming.

⁹² Jefferies, Searchlights on Health (1894) 104-105.

⁹³ Jefferies, Searchlights on Health (1894) 389. High heels threw the body’s weight forward and were also culprits of prolapsus: Dr. Emma Angell Drake, What A Young Wife Ought to Know (Toronto: William Briggs, 1908) 46.

⁹⁴ Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, Annual Report (Ontario: 1894) 110.

⁹⁵ Drake (1908) 40-41, 44.

⁹⁶ Jefferies, Searchlights on Health (1894) 105.

⁹⁷ Jefferies, Searchlights on Health (1894) 105.

⁹⁸ Helen Ekin Starrett, “The Future of Our Daughters” Forum (October, 1890) 185.

Dr. Emma Angell Drake insisted that women who dressed in corsets did as much to destroy the prospects of the human race as men who drank alcohol.⁹⁹ Dr. Ellis, cited by Drake, took this assumption one step further when he stated, “the practice of tight-lacing has done more within the last century towards the physical deterioration of civilized man, than has war, pestilence and famine combined.”¹⁰⁰ Pressure on the chest cavity interfered with expansion of the lungs and caused the blood to stagnant within them.¹⁰¹ Displacement of the womb from corsets threatened the external beauty of a woman, created stomach difficulties, broke down the nervous system, and weakened a young woman until she was no longer a fit candidate for marriage and motherhood.¹⁰² Loose fitting clothing, evenly distributed along the body, eased movement, breathing, and promoted a healthy physique.¹⁰³

Dr. Wood-Allen provided a simple test for readers to follow which ensured a proper fit in their clothing. When the lungs filled after a large breath was taken, the fastening at the waist was then closed without pulling a particle. If during the fastening any air escaped, it indicated the clothing was too tight. The reason a tapered waist was admired, in Wood-Allen’s opinion, was that society was “wrongly educated. We have acquired wrong ideas of beauty. We have accepted the ideals of the fashion-plate rather than those of the Creator.”¹⁰⁴ Despite the adamant rejection of corsets by authors, their repeated warnings were apparently not influential enough to immediately change the norm.

Only when fashion drastically changed were the warnings extolled by advice literature updated. The craze of the Gibson girl, or Swan Silhouette, named for a Straight-fronted corset that threw the bust forward and pushed the hips back lasted only a year. It fell out of favour in 1908 when the Parisian dressmaker, Paul Poiret, introduced the fashion world to the next huge

⁹⁹ Drake, *What a Young Wife Ought to Know* (1908) 43.

¹⁰⁰ Drake, *What a Young Wife Ought to Know* (1908) 43.

¹⁰¹ Saleeby (1908) 52.

¹⁰² Motherhood was “not a remote contingency, but the common duty and the common glory of womankind.” Drake, *What a Young Wife Ought to Know* (1908) 98.

¹⁰³ Saleeby (1908) 72.

trend- “le vague”- a long, slim silhouette draped in a sheath gown that slowly set the stage for the flapper.¹⁰⁵ Ironically, though the fashionable chemise of the 1920s conformed to advice that promoted loose-fitting clothing that allowed a woman to expand her lungs to full capacity, the dress still drew disapproval from authors.

Historian Christina Boufis contends that “the modern girl, playing with the tropes of female representation, self-consciously attempts to reclaim a space for (self) representation” through her fashion and demeanor.¹⁰⁶ Jefferies was a severe critic of modern flappers with their

bobbed hair, three coats of paint and powder, with plucked eyebrows, artificial eyelashes, and carmine lips, with low necked, short sleeved, and generously peekabooed waist, with an abbreviated skirt and rolled down silk hose just meeting below the knees, and all the rest of it, she blithely pursues her ill fated course.¹⁰⁷

A woman’s moral character came under suspicion as she exhibited her sensuality through her selection of clothing. Indeed, “her sketchy costume cannot fail to arouse the passions of men and boys. To all outward appearances she is attempting to imitate the woman of the streets.”¹⁰⁸ The shock value Jefferies believed was inherent in the fashion of the early 1920s did little to establish the purity or innocence of a woman’s reputation; and for Jefferies’ generation, the ability of a woman to retain her child-like innocence was considered to be a mark of beauty.¹⁰⁹

Concepts of beauty went beyond the clothing in the current fashion plates. Searchlights on Health went to great lengths to discuss what men found attractive in women. Since facial beauty was only skin-deep, an intelligent expression, “a beautiful form, a graceful figure, graceful movements and a kind heart” were considered the strongest characteristics of female

¹⁰⁴ Wood-Allen, What a Young Woman Ought to Know (1913) 67, 58.

¹⁰⁵ Adburgham, 229-230.

¹⁰⁶ Christina Boufis, “‘Of Home Birth and Breeding’: Eliza Lynn Linton and the Girl of the Period.” The Girl’s Own: Cultural Histories of the Anglo-American Girl, 1830-1915 (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1994) 105.

¹⁰⁷ Jefferies, Safe Counsel (1922) 207.

¹⁰⁸ Jefferies, Safe Counsel (1922) 207.

¹⁰⁹ Gorham, 6.

beauty.¹¹⁰ To fulfill her destiny in society a young woman was encouraged to be charming as well as beautiful, “for a charming girl will never become a charmless wife.”¹¹¹ In 1894, elements deemed physically beautiful for young women to attain included a round, plump figure which demonstrated good health and vigor. Broad hips indicated fertility, while a narrow pelvis symbolized weakened sexuality. A full bust represented perfect motherhood (although if the breast size was deemed abnormally large it was an indication of maternal and genetic deficiency).¹¹² Small feet were considered ‘lovely’ because they suggested modesty and reserve, while large feet predicted ‘coarseness,’ physical power, authority, and a dominant nature. Beautiful arms were admired for the simple reason that they were in proportion to the rest of the body. Finally, in addition to physical characteristics, the air of innocence that accompanied a pious and religious nature also added significantly to a woman’s overall charm.¹¹³

In 1903, concepts of beauty still included elements of health and “*perfect organization*.”¹¹⁴ Pancoast explained in exhaustive detail physiological aspects of beauty, and included notes on the skeleton, muscles, digestive system, and nervous system of adolescent women. His descriptions were dry, and more clinical than Jefferies, seeming to resemble lessons in female anatomy more than beauty tips with which a young woman could ‘improve’ her appearance. The importance of organization in a male body constituted what was useful, and in a female body what was agreeable (one assumes to the male viewer).¹¹⁵

The basic definition of what physically composed a beautiful young woman remained constant throughout the years under study. Perhaps, the stability reflected the minor or non-existent revisions made for multiple editions by the publishing houses. ‘Natural beauty’ was admired, and simplicity of dress and person advised because “a handsome woman needs no

¹¹⁰ Jefferies, Searchlights on Health (1894) 129.

¹¹¹ Jefferies, Searchlights on Health (1894) 130.

¹¹² Jefferies, Searchlights on Health (1894) 130-131.

¹¹³ Jefferies, Searchlights on Health (1894) 130-131.

¹¹⁴ Pancoast, Tokology (1903) 310.

¹¹⁵ Pancoast, Tokology (1903) 314.

diamonds, no silks nor satins; her face outshines diamonds and her form is beautiful in calico.”¹¹⁶ Added to the list was a new emphasis on intelligence, specifically instruction on matters pertaining to motherhood. These qualities were important in ‘catching’ a husband; “if a woman desires to be loved, she must cultivate her intellectual gifts, be interesting and entertaining in society, and practical and helpful in the home, for these are some of the qualifications which make up the highest type of beauty.”¹¹⁷ Beauty continued to be defined by male criteria. Men loved “reserve and discretion in women more than they admire some of the more modern of womanly [?] characteristics. Falsehood, cigarette smoking, gambling and masculinity are poor foundations on which to form family ties.”¹¹⁸ Modern women, with their unhealthy habits, were tainted with vice.

The qualities that made a man beautiful were extremely different. Young men were told to wash regularly, and keep their hair and finger nails trim and neat because “those who are slovenly or careless in their habits are unfit for refined society, and cannot possibly make a good appearance in it.”¹¹⁹ Little was said in relation to fashion. Any clothing advice proffered concerned the importance of warm woolen undergarments rather than elaborating on the whims of fashion.¹²⁰ Instead, authors such as Jefferies, listed fifteen qualities that he believed women loved in men; the main theme revolved around concepts of strength. In discussions of male beauty, personality and intellect were referred to more often than physical attributes.

Adolescent boys were informed that women respected courage, force, and despised a man who was cowardly or bashful. Intending to provide insight into the power dynamics of male-female relationships, the authors told teenagers that “woman naturally loves her lord and master. Women who desperately object to be overruled, nevertheless admire men who overrule them, and few women would have any respect for a man whom they could completely rule and

¹¹⁶ Jefferies, Safe Counsel (1922) 50.

¹¹⁷ Jefferies, Safe Counsel (1922) 51.

¹¹⁸ Jefferies, Safe Counsel (1922) 51. The question mark is in the original text.

¹¹⁹ Jefferies, Searchlights on Health (1894) 84.

control."¹²¹ Men were regarded as protectors; consequently, women 'naturally' loved strong, tall, and fit men, and pitied men who were short, slight of frame, or weak.¹²² In addition, gallantry and generosity were commendable virtues. Yet, the generosity remarked of in this case was not one of spirit, but instead one based on material wealth. Young men were told that a young woman "loves a generous giver...A woman receiving presents from a man implies that *she will pay him back in love.*"¹²³ In explicit language, young men were advised that they could win the love of the girl they admired through tangible tokens of their affection.

Next on the list of admired qualities was intelligence. This point was brought home to young readers through the testimony of English officer, O.S. Fowler who was engaged to a beautiful young woman. While he served in India wrote to her:

'I have lost an eye, a leg, an arm, and been badly marred...besides you never could love this poor, maimed soldier. Yet, I love you too well to make your life wretched by requiring you to keep your marriage-vow with me, from which I hereby release you. Find among English peers one physically more perfect, whom you can love better.' She answered, as all genuine women must answer; 'Your noble mind, your splendid talents, your martial prowess which maimed you, are what I love. As long as you retain sufficient body to contain the casket of your soul, which alone is what I admire, I love you all the same...'¹²⁴

Despite assurances that women admired intellect above physical beauty, advice given within this same chapter contradicted this claim. Adolescents were told that women despised all physical signs of softness or weakness (though even homely men were admired if they were strong).

Despite the twenty-eight years and one World War, Safe Counsel did not stray far from its predecessor, Searchlights on Health. The qualities listed were almost identical: courage, strength, height, intelligence, nobility of character, and vigor personified attractive young men. Strength of conviction, responsible actions, and leadership skills were new additions to Jefferies'

¹²⁰ Stall, What a Young Man Ought to Know (1897) 86.

¹²¹ Jefferies, Searchlights on Health (1894) 126.

¹²² Jefferies, Searchlights on Health (1894) 126. "All men would be of good size in frame and flesh, were it not for the infirmities visited upon them by the indiscretion of parents and ancestors of generations before."

¹²³ Jefferies, Searchlights on Health (1894) 127. Emphasis mine.

¹²⁴ Jefferies, Searchlights on Health (1894) 127.

list. Perhaps this change reflected society's glorification of the entry of young men into service during World War One. As exemplified by Figure 7, women could not resist a man in uniform—the very symbol of bravery, virility, and the epitome of a natural protector.¹²⁵ Thus, criteria of beauty reflected the life role that society assumed each sex would fulfill. Sander Gilman describes nineteenth-century beliefs:

not only that the healthy body becomes beautiful, but that the beautiful becomes healthy; the diseased is not only the ugly, but the ugly the diseased. And the ugly must be made to give way to the beautiful through the agency of scientific medicine. What is desired is a world peopled by the beautiful, and only an absolute norm of beauty is permitted.¹²⁶

Moreover, beauty was equated with happiness, and was considered “the outward and visible sign of health- perfection- virtue.”¹²⁷

With respect to fashion, Mitchinson argues that

while some women's fashions probably did lead to health problems for women, the arguments used to criticize them revealed concerns other than medical...Doctors perceived that the traditional role was changing, and many wanted to return to a time when they believed women had concentrated their activities on having and raising children.¹²⁸

Young women were regarded as beautiful in terms of their ability to attract a future mate, while young men were pressured to emulate the courage and aggressiveness associated with the public sphere. An ideal young woman ensured that her body was a healthy receptacle by not crushing her internal organs or displacing her womb by tight-lacing her clothing.

The standard of beauty for young men was not considered by authors to be dependent on the whims of fashion. Youths were to take pleasure in rigorous pursuits that fostered both a sense of independence accompanied by physical strength. When contemporaries looked upon both sexes, and considered their physical characteristics only, many thought that “this is

¹²⁵ Jefferies, Safe Counsel (1922) 49.

¹²⁶ Gilman, Picturing Health, 51.

¹²⁷ Bernard Mill, the final chapter in Jules Hercourt's The Social Diseases: Tuberculosis, Syphilis, Alcoholism, Sterility (London:1920) 244-245 cited by Sander Gilman, Picturing Health and Illness: Images of Identity (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995) 51.

¹²⁸ Mitchinson, Nature of Their Bodies, 71.

strength, and that is beauty; this is power and that is grace. Surely they are the complements one of the other."¹²⁹ Delicacy, softness, and sweetness defined the healthy and feminine adolescent girl, while the masculine ideal was personified by virility, intellect, and stature.

¹²⁹ Starrett, Forum (1890) 185.

Chapter Three: Bad Habits to Avoid

Temptations: Alcohol and Tobacco

It speedily blights and blasts, and ruins a man or a woman, both for this world and for the world to come, for the Bible says 'That no drunkard can inherit the kingdom of God.'¹ – Sylvanus Stall, 1897

Temperance was by no means a new concept to Canadians. Glenn Lockwood notes that evangelical clergymen first spread notions of temperance in British North America during the 1820s.² By 1831, seventy-four temperance societies were established in Upper Canada alone.³ According to Angus McLaren, indulgence in liquor or tobacco was more commonly associated with young men than women, and reports that alcoholism in the nineteenth century was on the rise was “pointed to by the nervous as evidence of the erosion of traditional values.”⁴ As historian Cheryl Krasnick Warsh notes it was only when aspects of drinking were equated with cultural remission (specifically male violence within the home) that the behaviour was reprimanded by temperance crusaders.⁵ With the founding of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union in Canada in the 1870s, Mary Odem argues “state-legislated prohibition became the preferred path to purity” alongside anti-tobacco campaigns.⁶ By 1897, the money spent annually on alcohol by the English and American population was estimated by Stall to be \$1,500,000,000; an expenditure which “not only pauperizes individuals, but impoverishes

¹ Stall, *What a Young Man Ought to Know* (1897) 255. I was unable to find the direct biblical reference. Stall might be paraphrasing Isaiah 5:7, 22 and 28:1; Daniel 5:2, Corinthians 6:10, or Proverbs 20:1 to name but a few.

² Glenn Lockwood, “Temperance in Upper Canada as Ethnic Subterfuge” in Cheryl Krasnick Warsh’s *Drink in Canada: Historical Essays* (Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1993) 43.

³ Lockwood, 48.

⁴ McLaren, 27.

⁵ Cheryl Krasnick Warsh, “John Barleycorm Must Die: An Introduction to the Social History of Alcohol,” in her edited collection of essays, *Drink in Canada* (Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1993) 6.

⁶ Mary E. Odem, *Delinquent Daughters: Protecting and Policing Adolescent Female Sexuality in the United States, 1885-1920* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995) 10 and Valverde, 58.

nations.”⁷ With these statistics in hand, health officials declared the problem of alcohol consumption had reached epidemic proportions.

Despite the strength derived from their manly attributes, the willpower of young men was considered weak and vulnerable to temptation. Valverde asserts that masculine virtue was acquired by mastering sobriety.⁸ If adolescent boys could not be entertained at home, then it was a certainty that adventure would be sought elsewhere. For example, in 1875 Wilder claimed that bored youths went “to public houses, at first, for love of liquor— very few people really like the taste of liquor— they go for the animated and hilarious companionship they find there, which, they discover, does much to repress the disturbing restlessness in their breasts.”⁹ Mothers were instructed by manuals to make their homes appealing. By opening blinds, lighting fires, hanging pictures, setting out acceptable reading on tables, and providing games, or musical entertainment, families created a congenial atmosphere.¹⁰ Parents hoped the parlour could become pleasant enough to keep young men at home under adult supervision, and away from those who enticed them to drink. In 1890, the Ladies’ Bazar even suggested (obviously to wealthier families) the transformation of an upper floor into a “club-room” where boys could box, play games, use their microscopes and dumbbells, or practice their musical instruments.¹¹ No advice was given on how the home could be made more interesting for young women; perhaps because they were assumed to be completely content in the domestic sphere (presumed to be their rightful place) and did not need it to be improved for their benefit. The problem of

⁷ Stall, What a Young Man Ought to Know (1897) 252. Warsh notes that “ in Toronto of 1851...there were more taverns than streets, and the per capita consumption of three gallons of whiskey per year was five times greater than that of 1951...the Upper Canada census of 1851 recorded 1,990 taverns, or 1 to every 478 people. By 1893 the Pacific province of British Columbia, with its resource-based economy, led the nation in per capita consumption.” Warsh, “John Barleycorn Must Die,” Drink in Canada, 12.

⁸ Valverde, 78.

⁹ Wilder, What Young People Should Know (1875) 134-135.

¹⁰ Wilder (1875) 135.

¹¹ “A Plea For Amusement in the Home Circle” Ladies’ Bazar (sic) Vol. III No. 5 (Toronto: May 1890) 18-19.

alcohol consumption by young women may have been regarded as rare enough that authors did not think it needed to be elaborated upon in detail.¹²

Adults, male and female, were urged to set the proper example of sobriety for the young people under their charge. Responsible and 'dry' role models were considered a necessity by authors because "precept cannot exert an influence where practice is at variance with it."¹³ Teachers were advised to refrain from drinking alcohol in the interests of maintaining their own good health, and in appreciation of the influence they had over their students.¹⁴ The promotion of temperance at home impressed in a young man's consciousness a set of conservative values that helped him refuse temptation in public. For instance, manuals in 1907 designated Sunday as the perfect day for fathers to establish a tradition of weekly walks with their sons in order to act as their trusted confidantes, and elaborate upon both the physical, mental, and moral dangers of alcohol.¹⁵

Brain damage and the resultant nervous tremors, paralysis, loss of sight, and epilepsy awaited adolescents if they drank to excess. The 1886 Ontario Manual of Hygiene quoted a professor of surgery at Glasgow University who claimed that ninety-nine out of every hundred cases in the casualty ward of their infirmary were results of heavy alcohol consumption.¹⁶ Outside of accidents, a slow death was often predicted:

first the intellectual and moral faculties are blunted, then the part of the brain controlling the muscles and muscular movements of the body is affected, and the respiratory power finally comes under the influence of the poison, heavy or

¹² Women may also have been more discreet or secretive about their addictions. For instance, the WCTU printed the following excerpt. "Seeing that the lady made a large purchase of eau de cologne, and wondering if she was going to have a perfumed bath, the reporter asked the well-dressed gentleman behind the counter what she wanted it all for. 'To get drunk on,' was the laconic answer. 'To get drunk on?' 'Yes, that's what I said. You never heard of cologne drunkards, then?' Well, that woman is a cologne drunkard, and one of the worst of them, too. She buys from 1 to 2 dozens of those long slim bottles of 4711 cologne every week, and she takes it entirely herself...on lumps of sugar": "Perfumed Drunkards," Women's Journal (October 1890) 5 cited by Warsh in "Oh, Lord, pour a cordial in her wounded heart: The Drinking Woman in Victorian and Edwardian Canada," Drink in Canada, 77..

¹³ Provincial Board of Health, Manual of Hygiene Hygiene for Schools and Colleges (Toronto: William Briggs, 1886) 191.

¹⁴ Provincial Board of Health, Manual of Hygiene (1886) 190

¹⁵ Forbush, The Boy Problem (1907) 133-134.

¹⁶ Provincial Board of Health, Manual of Hygiene (1886) 190

stertorous breathing occurs, insensibility or stupor comes on, and the functions of organic life may cease.¹⁷

The dangers of alcohol were not simply physical, although the physical damage was outlined in incredible detail. Mental consequences were equally severe to the physical damage caused by alcohol.¹⁸ A youth's morality was at stake as drink caused him to lose control. What was thought to be most repugnant about alcohol abuse was the lack of resistance which led young men to the depths of degradation, demonstrated most impressively to readers in 1894 by the sprawled and helpless drunkard pictured in Figure 8. Thus, 'improper' choices at an early age had profound consequences. Those who chose alcohol were writing their own tragic destiny.

Furthermore, authors spoke directly to the invincible spirit of good health and vigor that young people assumed they possessed. In Searchlights on Health, Jefferies commiserated with his youthful readers when he stated:

You think you are safe; I know you are not safe, if you drink at all; and when you get offended with the good friends that warn you of your danger, you are a fool. I know that the grave swallows daily, by scores, drunkards, every one of whom thought he was safe while he was forming his appetite. But this is old talk. A young man in this age who forms the habit of drinking, or puts himself in danger of forming the habit, is usually so weak that it doesn't pay to save him.¹⁹

Indulgence was not only viewed as weak, but unmanly. The standards of masculinity, the mark of a true gentleman, according to prescriptive literature, dictated that men rationally debated decisions, took responsibility for their actions, and above all else, remained in control.

When an adolescent boy began drinking socially, a habit soon developed that was too powerful for him to break. In time, his will power was crushed until the bottle enslaved him.

Alcohol disfigured

the body, ruins the nervous system, dethrones the reason, produces insanity, becomes the parent of idiocy; it blunts the finer feelings and sensibilities, it fills our poor-houses with paupers and crowds our prisons with criminals; it breaks the hearts of parents and pauperizes helpless women and innocent children; it

¹⁷ Provincial Board of Health, Manual of Hygiene (1886) 189.

¹⁸ Le Medecin de la Famille, Encyclopedia de Medecine. (Guelph: World Publishing Co., 1893)

482.

¹⁹ Jefferies, Searchlights (1894) 16.

leads to vice and violence, and plunges its victims into temporal and eternal ruin.²⁰

By drinking to excess, it was not only their lives that adolescents jeopardized. As the designated protectors of society, intemperance caused adolescent boys to fail in their duty as guardians over the young and innocent. In 1897, Stall encouraged men to sign the following promise into the fly-leaf of their bibles: "I, the undersigned, do pledge my word and honor, God helping me, to abstain from all intoxicating liquors as a beverage, and that I will, by all honorable means, encourage others to abstain."²¹ Christian values and temperance were linked and held up as the ideals of health and morality, which every decent young man was instructed to follow.

A young man's logic and reason were appealed to in the 1908 discussion of alcohol and its effects on the body. The 'facts' observed from experiments, and expressed in increasingly scientific language, were undeniable in verdict- alcohol was a sinister chemical that poisoned the body on a cellular level, and physicians made a grave error when they recommended whiskey to reduce fevers in pneumonia patients.²² Alcohol weakened the body's natural immunity to infection, and made it susceptible to pathogenic microbes.²³ Lowered body temperature assisted in the accumulation of fat, and acted as a "pseudo-stimulant" because it paralyzed the nerves, which normally restrained the action of the heart.²⁴ Suggesting that his target audience was affluent, Dr. Saleeby warned against the dangers of driving a "motor-car" while drunk, and stressed that no chauffeur should consume even a single glass of whiskey if he was to get behind

²⁰ Stall, *What a Young Man Ought to Know* (1897) 255.

²¹ Stall, *What a Young Man Ought to Know* (1897) 256.

²² Saleeby (1908) 152-153. Saleeby referred to an article written in 1904 entitled "The Verdict of Science Upon Alcohol." His intention was to present an unbiased account of the pros and cons of alcohol consumption from a physiological perspective. He stated that, only four years after the publication of his first article, his views on alcohol had radically changed due to the new information on the effects of alcohol on blood cells.

²³ Saleeby (1908) 159.

²⁴ Saleeby (1908) 161.

the wheel.²⁵ The damaging effects of alcohol on brain tissue were held responsible for one-third to one-half of all cases of insanity.²⁶

Lessons learned “by thoughtful observation, rather than by sad experience,” were considered the best preventative measures to dissuade youth from alcohol.²⁷ Alcoholic “indulgence is playing with fire for even the best kind of youth.”²⁸ It was also pointed out that “normal individuals do not naturally and of choice indulge to any large extent in alcohol...hence young men who are frequently seen under the influence...may, as a general rule, be classed as belonging to inferior types, either through heredity or environment.”²⁹ Young women were told to think twice before they gave their hearts away to a young man who indulged. Such a man was “deteriorating, slowly, perhaps, but surely, in all ways—morally, mentally and physically.”³⁰ In larger cities, it was assumed that “liquor and prostitution went hand-in-hand.”³¹ Drink destroyed the health of young people, inflicted shame upon their families, and hurt their chances of finding future happiness as parents.

Similarly, in 1886 experts criticized the use of tobacco, especially in young people whose physical development was not yet complete.³² The use of tobacco stunted growth and dwarfed the formation of muscles. If the habit was strong, vision problems resulted, as well as loss of hearing and even memory. Turning to the evidence of medical experts in 1897, Stall collected stories from surgeons who were more than happy to testify that from their experience in the operating room, the men who were addicted to tobacco lacked an air of manliness, and were seen to act cowardly before their operations. The professional status of surgeons probably gave this evidence added legitimacy. Aside from the development of a questionable character,

²⁵ Saleeby (1908) 164.

²⁶ Saleeby (1908) 166.

²⁷ Stall, What a Young Boy Ought to Know (1909) 138.

²⁸ Dr. Norman Barnesby, “Eugenics and the Child” Forum (February, 1913) 347.

²⁹ Dr. Norman Barnesby, “Eugenics and the Child” Forum (February, 1913) 347.

³⁰ Dr. Norman Barnesby, “Eugenics and the Child” Forum (February, 1913) 347.

³¹ Stall, What a Young Man Ought to Know (1897) 254.

³² Provincial Board of Health, Manual of Hygiene (1886) 191.

internal organs were damaged by tobacco use, and cancer of the mouth was another serious illness that readers had to consider.³³ Moreover, there was the danger that smoking would naturally lead to intemperance because of the dry sensation it left in the mouth, and the tendency for young people to smoke in the congenial (if improper) company of taverns, clubs, and taprooms.³⁴

In 1897, Wood-Allen explained to young girls that the danger of tobacco lay in the fact that it paralyzed the nervous system. Smoking men did not realize they were tired because their nervous system malfunctioned. The point was brought home when the young protagonist Nina was informed that her own uncle died of throat "trouble" caused by tobacco use.³⁵ Wood-Allen assumed that young girls did not use tobacco to a great extent, but it was never too early to impress upon them the responsibility they had in keeping their environment and that of their future husbands and sons free from smoke and alcohol. Girls had great influence over their male peers, and were instructed to put this influence to good use by encouraging healthy habits in their friends. Indeed, many young men had

gone to drunkards' graves because they could not refuse the wine-glass when offered to them by some pretty, laughing girl, whom they greatly admired. Girls are also largely responsible for the use of tobacco by young men, and, I am sorry to say, that girls themselves sometimes smoke cigarettes, thinking it funny; whereas if they really knew the poisonous effect of tobacco they certainly would not use it themselves, nor countenance its use in others. Boys get an idea that smoking is manly, but if they were made to feel that girls thought less of them when they smoke, it would have a great influence on them, I am sure.³⁶

Therefore, the responsibility for a youth's actions was placed upon the female company he kept.

³³ Stall, What a Young Man Ought to Know (1897) 257.

³⁴ In 1908, Dr. Saleeby also warned against drinking in public-houses because they were "a great resort of consumptives, and therefore of active tubercle bacilli introduced by their spitting and coughing.": Saleeby (1908) 185.

³⁵ Wood-Allen, What a Young Girl Ought to Know (1897) 124-125.

³⁶ Wood-Allen, What a Young Girl Ought to Know (1897) 123. A young girl's influence was not always enough to change the habits of a young man. The Globe and Mail (11 August 1888: p. 5) reported a story from Glasgow when a young man broke off his engagement to his betrothed because he did not want to keep his promise to give up his cheroot for her. The indignant woman took him to court for breach of promise. The judge immediately dismissed the case.

In 1908, Dr. Saleeby, perhaps the strongest advocate of anti-tobacco practices amongst the authors studied, dispelled the misconception that when tobacco was lit all of the poisonous nicotine was burnt off before it even touched a young man's lips. Saleeby declared the poison was volatile, habit-forming, and that every mouthful drawn into the lungs contained a certain amount of nicotine in gaseous form. The proportion of nicotine was small, but its effects were no less dangerous to the body because that small amount of poison circulated throughout the entire blood stream. Smokers argued that tobacco increased their "sense of well-being, or that it favours digestion, the action of the bowel," but the "naked fact is...the drug is a poison."³⁷ Excessive smoking led to "tobacco-heart," and young men were informed that once a nerve cell was damaged, it was destroyed forever.³⁸

Adolescents often ignored the dangers of smoking because cigarettes were small and looked harmless. As in his advice concerning alcohol, in 1909 Stall advised young men to learn through observation: they would realize their friends who smoked were stunted in growth, had sallow skin, and glassy eyes- traits that denoted ill and abnormal health. Without presenting any statistical evidence, Stall remarked that after careful observation of schools and colleges, it was found "those who use tobacco in any form fall much below the average standing of those in the same classes who do not use tobacco."³⁹ Readers were asked to remember that they were not separate units, but linked "in a living chain of endless transmission," and that the damage they inflicted upon their bodies through smoking would be transmitted to their children.⁴⁰

Thus, alcohol and tobacco were condemned by the authors of medical advice literature as 'evil' temptations that were detrimental to a young person's internal organs and nervous system. This conservative view was endorsed by the medical profession, "who in the late nineteenth century developed biological models describing the evils attendant upon the social

³⁷ Saleeby (1908) 201.

³⁸ Saleeby (1908) 201-202.

³⁹ Stall, What a Young Boy Ought to Know (1909) 140.

⁴⁰ Stall, What a Young Boy Ought to Know (1909) 141.

transformations accompanying urban industrialization.”⁴¹ Scientific language and mysterious statistics added an ominous tone to warnings about addictive habits. The medical profession, however, had not always been in agreement with purity advocates. Warsh remarks that in the early 1870s, some physicians subscribed to “stimulant therapy” which “recommended doses equivalent to five shots a day for adults and dosed children with amounts sufficient to cause drunkenness.”⁴² For instance, Jacalyn Duffin notes that although rural Ontario physician James Miles Langstaff was an advocate of temperance, he “made liberal use of alcohol as a medication” and sometimes prescribed it “to arouse patients slipping into death-like coma.”⁴³ Moreover, as late as 1880 the Lancet published articles on the medical and therapeutic benefits of certain regional wines.⁴⁴

The most serious societal consequence of partaking of spirits and cigars was that it denoted a lack of will power and moral strength. If a young person indulged in addictive vices such as these, what other horrible, filthy acts were they also committing? Cheryl Krasnick Warsh argues that “nowhere was the ‘unnatural’ aspect of social change more apparent to many physicians than in the prospect of women engaging in the male occupation of public drinking and falling into the male vice of drunkenness,” and addictive habits represented to many ultimate female degradation.⁴⁵ Adolescents of both sexes were implored to question the character of companions who did not have the good sense to be temperate or refrain from smoking themselves. The path to moral fortitude and good health was a slippery slope, and those who

⁴¹ Cheryl Krasnick Warsh, “Oh, Lord, pour a cordial in her wounded heart’: The Drinking Woman in Victorian and Edwardian Canada” in her edited collection Drink in Canada: Historical Essays (Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1993) 71.

⁴² Warsh, 74.

⁴³ Jacalyn Duffin, Langstaff: A Nineteenth-Century Medical Life (Toronto: University of Toronto press, 1993) 82.

⁴⁴ “The Lancet Commission on the Medical Use of Wines: Part III, Red Bordeaux Wines,” Lancet (Volume 2: 24 July 1880) 145-147. For more details on the use of alcohol as a medical remedy see “Because there Is Pain: Alcohol, temperance and the Victorian Physician,” Canadian Bulletin of Medical History (Vol. 2, No. 1: 1985) 5-6.

⁴⁵ Warsh, 71.

ignored the warnings of advice manuals were told they would be condemned to a life of spoiled health, irresponsible companions, and an impoverished character.

Solitary Vice

Masturbation is a habit that tyrannizes over the mind, perverts the imagination, and forces upon the victim venereal desires, even while he is forming the strongest resolutions to reform.⁴⁶—Dr. Pierce, 1882

Publicly a taboo subject, discussions on masturbation composed a significant portion of prescriptive literature as several historians have shown. Labeled everything from a sin to a crime, it entered the domain of medicine in 1700 when an anonymous author addressed the ‘scientific nature’ of masturbation in a biblically entitled book called Onania.⁴⁷ The initial success of this book was followed up by Simon-Andre Tissot’s Tentamen de Morbis et Manustrupatoine in 1758, which stated that all sexual activity was potentially debilitating. In his research, he equated the loss of one ounce of seminal fluid as having a similar effect to the loss of forty ounces of blood.⁴⁸ After the publication of Tissot’s book, R. P. Newman contends that masturbation “ceased to be an exclusively religious problem” and increasingly fell into the domain of medical expertise.⁴⁹ Historian Arthur Gilbert suggests, that in order to fill the “status anomaly- the gap between prestige and skill level,” Victorian doctors were “driven to explain diseases of which they had inadequate knowledge in terms of the moral failings of their patients.”⁵⁰ At one time, Gilbert claims, nearly every disease which nineteenth-century doctors could not cure was blamed on the ill effects of masturbation.⁵¹ These beliefs rested upon the

⁴⁶ Dr. Pierce, The People’s Common Sense Medical Advisor (Buffalo: World’s Dispensary Printing-office and Bindery, 1882) 803-804.

⁴⁷ H. T. Engelhardt, “The disease of Masturbation: Values and the Concept of Disease.” Bulletin of the History of Medicine (Vol. 48: 1974) 234-235.

⁴⁸ Engelhardt, 235.

⁴⁹ R. P. Newman, “Masturbation, Madness, and the Modern Concept of Childhood and Adolescence,” The Journal of Social History (Spring 1975) 2.

⁵⁰ Arthur Gilbert, “Masturbation and Insanity: Henry Maudsley and the Ideology of Sexual Repression”, Albion (Vol. 12, No. 3, 1980 268-282) ²⁶⁹.

⁵¹ Gilbert, 268.

presupposition that masturbation was not in accordance with the dictates of nature and, therefore, was subversive to the constitution.⁵²

Considered to be one of the definitive works on sexual functioning during the Victorian age, William Acton's 1857 edition of Functions and Disorders of the Reproductive Organs in Youth, Adult Age, and Advanced Life extended Tissot's concerns and tried to convince men that all sexuality was a constant threat to health. Believing the pleasure of orgasm to be too intense to be safely experienced often, masturbation was deemed another evil temptation that undermined a man's sense of self-discipline.⁵³ The guilt associated with the practice led to a proliferation of remedies, brutal in their function, and an increase in the number of men who sought advice to combat sinful temptation.⁵⁴

Henry Maudsley, advocate of medical materialism, proposed the theory "that the mind and body were intimately related and mental illness resulted from physical harm to the brain and nervous system."⁵⁵ Adhering to a medical model that classified the energy in a human body as finite, Maudsley declared masturbation to be a dangerous waste of energy. Historian Peter Cominos wryly argues that "the middle class moral code based on saving, thrift and parsimoniousness was transferred to the sexual sphere. 'A penny saved is a penny earned' had a spermatic equivalent."⁵⁶ Loss of 'vital' fluid resulted in nervous disorders. Adolescents could

⁵² Engelhardt, 235.

⁵³ Lesley Hall, "Forbidden by God, Despised by Men: Masturbation, Medical Warnings, Moral Panic, and Manhood in Great Britain, 1850-1950", Journal of the History of Sexuality (Vol. 2, No. 3, January 1992, 365-287) 366. Paradoxically, 'excessive' heterosexual intercourse was thought to be quite healthy since the expending of nerve force is compensated by the magnetism of the partner.

⁵⁴ Hall, 368. "In 1870, the Lancet recommended, for cases of sexual debilitation, 'guarding the penis for a time against improper manipulation' by 'keeping up slight soreness of the body of the organ... sufficient to render erection painful.' Cauterization might be routinely prescribed for 'over-sensitivity' of the organ... The 'American remedy,' consisting of a 'ring of common metal, with a screw passing through one of its sides, and projecting into the centre, where it had a button extremity...to be applied to the 'part affected' at bed-time.'" Despite this recommendation from the Lancet, I was unable to find a similar piece of advice in any of the advice literature I investigated.

⁵⁵ Gilbert, 271.

⁵⁶ Peter Cominos, "Late Victorian Sexual Responsibility and the Social System," International Review of Social History (Vol. 8:1963) 223.

become conscious of such 'devastating' afflictions that deviated from the 'norm' after they read the widely disseminated advice literature.

Henry Maudsley's words concerning the inmates of an asylum leave no uncertainty as to his opinion. He described masturbators as those who reached

the last and worst stage of degradation, they sink into an apathetic state of moody and morose self-absorption with extreme loss of mental power...lost to all healthy feeling and human interests, slovenly and dirty; if they enter into any conversation, they probably reveal delusions of a suspicious or obscene nature. They believe that they are subjected to strange influences which sap their vigor...they linger on, pitiable wrecks...becoming weaker in mind and body, until they die from complete *nervous prostration* or from some *intercurrent disease* to which they fall easy victims at last.⁵⁷

Evidently, Maudsley observed insane people masturbating, and connected apparent cause (masturbation) with effect (neurological degeneration).

Predominantly directed at male youths, authors recognized that the 'problem' (though not as prevalent) also endangered the health of modest young women. Female masturbation simply did not receive the same visibility in manuals. By 1884, the medical world and society at large were pleased to think that not "one bride in a hundred, of delicate, educated, sensitive women, accepts matrimony from any desire of sexual gratification; when she thinks of this at all, it is with shrinking or even with horror, rather than with desire."⁵⁸ Historian Deborah Gorham suggests that young women were assumed ignorant of sexual matters, and even less interested in sexual pleasure.⁵⁹ Since manuals reflected the moral values of the day, changing ideology was a slow process.

One exception was Mrs. Shepherd. Declaring that hundreds of readers may never need such advice, Shepherd still thought it in the best interests of her readers to enlighten them. Her account in 1884 was frank, compared to both its predecessors and to future authors, in its

⁵⁷ Henry Maudsley, The Pathology of the Mind (London: Macmillan and Co., 1879) 459. Emphasis mine.

⁵⁸ Theophilus Parvin, "The Hygiene of the Sexual Functions," New Orleans Medicine and Surgery (Vol. 11, 1884) 606 as quoted by Engelhardt, 246.

description of masturbation as “a fingering and handling or playing with the sexual organs, and is given that name [self-abuse] because the whole body and mind is affected and abused by it.”⁶⁰ ‘Abuse’ occurred because the practice diverted blood flow away from other parts of the body, which thus left unnourished, grew weak. If the practice continued, the young woman in question was no longer fit to “have charge of a family and a home, or, if able to marry, you will be so weakened and diseased that you can not have children...Or, if you have children, they may be born diseased, constitutionless, liable to suffer for the mother’s error all their lives.”⁶¹ The habit could be broken only through a vow of resistance, and prayer to God that the sinful indulgence (and the impure thoughts associated with it) were banished.⁶²

A young woman’s demeanor was also marred by solitary vice. Rosy complexions of young women were jeopardized because ‘self-abuse’ turned them: pale, greenish-hued, dull-eyed with dark-purplish rings around their eyes, and even challenged norms of female beauty by making their breasts flaccid.⁶³ Irritation of the sexual nerves was communicated to the brain and manifested itself in nervousness, and irritability. Memory loss, an aversion to school, listlessness, and a general weakening of the constitution inflicted great pain on sufferers.⁶⁴ If these physical problems were not enough to frighten young women into abstinence, the mental anguish inflicted by masturbation may have given them added incentive. Self-abuse shattered for life the health of a young woman, spoiled any prospects she might have for future happiness, and led to insanity. Shepherd implored teenage girls to “think of how terrible it must be to lose one’s mind and become wild and delirious! The insane asylums have many persons in them crazy from this cause.”⁶⁵ By 1889, readers were informed that surgeons had “recently been forced to devise

⁵⁹ Deborah Gorham, The Victorian Girl and the Feminine Ideal (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982) 54.

⁶⁰ Shepherd, For Girls (1884) 167.

⁶¹ Shepherd, For Girls (1884) 170.

⁶² Shepherd, For Girls (1884) 171.

⁶³ Pierce (1880) 748-749.

⁶⁴ Shepherd, For Girls (1884) 168- 169, 169.

⁶⁵ Shepherd, For Girls (1884) 169.

painful operations to hinder young girls from thus ruining themselves; and we must confess that, in its worst form, it is absolutely incurable.”⁶⁶

The insidious nature of masturbation was also addressed. Often the habit was “indulged in without its victim having the slightest knowledge of its destructiveness, and only when nature is so outraged that the system refuses to perform its offices, does the victim become conscious of the evil.”⁶⁷ A parent’s responsibility was to watch for signs of the vice, and outline the seriousness of the disease frankly and without “squeamishness.”⁶⁸ The quickest remedy was to simply remove excess stimuli from a young person’s environment. All things of a sensational nature such as: “coffee, liquors, novels, love-pictures, (formal dance) balls” and the theatre had to be eliminated. A light “not too nutritious” diet was recommended as long as “fish, eggs, jelly, game, salad, mushrooms, cantharides, aloes, and all stimulants except camphor” were avoided.⁶⁹ A bath twice daily by “dashing cold water on the genitals, with the free use of the vagina syringe for females” was also believed to restore the “tone of the organs.”⁷⁰ Finally, the most perplexing and unique remedy of 1889 described what to do if a patient felt irritation in her cerebellum. If the annoyance was caused “by heaviness or heat, cut the hair very short, wear no cap, use a hard pillow, ice application on the nape, with hot foot bath, dry or narcotic friction on each side of the vertical column, also cold liquid applications.”⁷¹ Reasons as to why this therapy was effective were not given, perhaps it was to numb the nerves, or to act as counter-irritant in order to divert attention away from the problem area.

⁶⁶ Napheys, (1889) 35. Napheys may be referring to William Goodell surgical procedure in which he removed the ovaries in several women whose sexual feelings appeared abnormal. Canada Lancet (Vol. 26: January 1894) 143.

⁶⁷ Canadian Medical Men, Family Physician: Every Man His Own Doctor (Toronto: Rose Publishing Co., 1889) 160.

⁶⁸ Family Physician: Every Man (1889) 160.

⁶⁹ Family Physician: Every Man (1889) 160. Cantharides, or Spanish Flies: “these insects are found in Spain, Italy, and France on trees. They are brought here pulverized, and a plaster made of them, which produces a blister. In certain cases they may prove beneficial; but we rarely use them, as they seem rather an unnatural remedy.” The manual did not elaborate on how they were useful. Beach, The American Practice Condensed (1848) 780.

⁷⁰ Family Physician: Every Man (1889) 161.

By 1894, Jefferies declared the problem so prevalent among young women as to arouse alarm. Instead of separating advice between the sexes, Jefferies addressed the 'problem' in his advice to men and advised women to read it carefully. Young women were told not to debase themselves, and thus "become lower than beasts in the field."⁷² Advised to seek the counsel from their mother, older sisters, or a physician, adolescents glimpsed the seriousness of this vice. According to Napheys, Catherine Beecher had long ago sounded "a note of warning to the mothers of America on this secret vice, which leads their daughters to the grave, the madhouse, or, worse yet, the brothel."⁷³ Girls on the brink of puberty may have indulged out of ignorance, but once discovered, this excuse was not strong enough to forgive their actions. Told that those who were "wise" to the problem could read it on their countenance, girls were instilled with a sense of shame and guilt over the practice.⁷⁴

Metaphors were often employed to demonstrate the sanctity of the body, which was compared to an exquisite instrument or comprehensive 'kit of tools' prepared by a master craftsman. These tools needed to be taken care of because they had to last a lifetime, there were no replacements, and repairs would never restore them to their original glory.⁷⁵ The only natural method "of arousing a recognition of sexual feeling is as God has appointed in holy marriage, and the self-respecting girl feels that no approach of personal familiarity is either right or proper."⁷⁶ To overcome immoral desires adolescents had to think of their sexual organs as "consecrated to the highest of all functions, that of procreation."⁷⁷ It was a sin to think or act otherwise.

⁷¹ Family Physician: Every Man (1889) 160- 161. Langstaff used a similar remedy to combat fevers. Duffin, 81.

⁷² Jefferies, Searchlights on Health (1894) 391.

⁷³ Napheys, (1889) 35,

⁷⁴ Wood-Allen, What a Young Girl Ought to Know (1897) 106.

⁷⁵ Wood-Allen, What a Young Woman Ought to Know (1913) 29.

⁷⁶ Wood-Allen, What a Young Woman Ought to Know (1913) 154.

⁷⁷ Wood-Allen, What a Young Woman Ought to Know (1913) 157.

Male sexuality was, if not necessarily a vice, a virtue that had to be respected and controlled. Sex, within the confines of marriage, and if not practiced more than once a week, was something to be revered.⁷⁸ As far as young people were concerned, abstinence was the order of the day. In 1875, Wilder asserted that “there are those whose consciences revolt at the idea of licentious intercourse, who yet addict themselves to this practice with the idea that there is in it less criminality.”⁷⁹ Masturbation was condemned as a corruption, and a sin against the body that enfeebled the constitution and the mind. Solitary vice was deemed “the incarnation of selfishness” because it “effaces from its victim his fondness for the other sex, [unfitting] him for true love,” and “likens him in very fact to that...still lower in scale, the ape.”⁸⁰ Unflattering comparisons were the least of a ‘victim’s’ worries. Effects of the habit included: malnutrition, weakness of limbs and soreness in the back, inability to concentrate on study or work, dizziness, headaches, and poor sight. In cases of extreme indulgence, memory loss, onset of feeble-mindedness, and insanity were morbidly predicted. The final word on the subject indicated that any indulgence was injurious to the virility of a young man, and the fertility of a young woman.⁸¹

Young men who did not defile themselves had clear complexions, firm muscles, vigorous movements, courageous manners, lively intellects, and perfect self-control. By 1894, perceived ill effects of abuse had intensified and were increasingly labeled in specific medical terminology. Masturbation now laid the foundations of consumption, paralysis, heart disease,

⁷⁸ In married life, “all the sexual aggressiveness is with the male. Wives seldom seek the closer embraces of their husbands. They are generally indifferent; often absolutely averse....the wisdom of the Creator is manifest in the fact that were the wife equally quickened by the same amative tendencies, the male nature would be called into such frequent and continuous exercise that the power of reproduction would be either totally destroyed or so impaired that the race would degenerate into moral, intellectual and physical pignies. God has made the passivity of the wife the protection of her husband and a source of manifold blessing to their children.” This is not to say that Stall did not think that women enjoyed sex, he believed both partners received gratification, but “there can be little doubt that much marital indifference upon the part of wives is due to chronic constipation, which is so prevalent among women.” Stall, What A Young Husband Ought to Know (1897) 49, 126.

⁷⁹ Wilder, What Young People Should Know (1875) 130.

⁸⁰ Professor Storer as cited by Wilder, What Young People Should Know (1875) 132.

⁸¹ Wilder, What Young People Should Know (1875) 132-133.

and “it even makes many lose their minds; others, when grown, commit suicide.”⁸² The habit was considered revolting, a sin against God and self; thus, to practice it destroyed all aspects of a man- mental, moral and physical. Only when ignorance gave way to enlightenment would young men be safe from the temptation of this vice, and it was the purpose of advice literature to guide them back onto the path of purity.⁸³

For readers of What a Young Boy Ought to Know, even the *thought* of misusing their sexual organs for their own pleasure dishonoured God.⁸⁴ Self-pollution was a revealing euphemism to describe masturbation during this period. The “destructive vice” was thought to cloud judgement, decay moral fiber, create nervous spasms, poison intellect; and if it became a fixed habit, resulted in idiocy or even death.⁸⁵ While manuals demanded that the vice be stopped immediately, they also warned against the advice young men might receive from their physicians (in this case ‘quacks’ who posed as learned medical men).⁸⁶ In 1897, Reverend Stall did not mince words: “when a physician advises illicit intercourse [as a measure to curb masturbation], he would only be properly rebuked if his patient were promptly to ask for an introduction to the physician’s wife and daughter, and inquire when they might be at leisure that he might meet them.”⁸⁷ By 1909, his opinion had not changed. Illicit sex made a man unfit for refined society, exposed him to venereal disease, and reduced his chances of finding a respectable woman to court.

⁸² Jefferies, Searchlights (1894) 395.

⁸³ Stall, What a Young Man Ought to Know (1897) 55.

⁸⁴ Stall, What a Young Boy Ought to Know (1909) 102.

⁸⁵ Stall, What a Young Boy Ought to Know (1909) 114-115.

⁸⁶ “If you need the consultation and advice of a physician go to your family physician...always select one whose moral character and acknowledged ability renders him a suitable and safe adviser in such a time of need. Above all things avoid quacks. The policy they pursue is to frighten you, to work upon your imagination, and to make such alarming and unreliable statements...as will enable them pilfer your purse and without rendering you in return any value received, but possibly leaving you in a worse condition than they found you...” Stall, What A Young Man Ought to Know (1897) 71.

⁸⁷ Stall, What a Young Man Ought to Know (1897) 70.

In 1909, Stall recognized it was possible for a young man or boy to have learnt this offense in an innocent way, and often at an impressionable age. He regretted to say that masturbation was

sometimes even taught by another, and during the infancy of children, even nurses...in ignorance of the terrible evil and sad consequences of their act, practice this destructive habit upon very young children for the purpose of diverting their thoughts, so that they will not cry, or in order that they may be quieted when put to bed and soon fall asleep.⁸⁸

Newman argues that because domestic servants most often came from

foreign or farm or working-class backgrounds...such suspicions derived from their middle-class employers' own feeling that as members of the 'lower orders,' servants did not share the respectable ideology, and so might be expected to lead their charges astray unless carefully supervised.⁸⁹

This did not entirely alleviate the child of blame, but it did acknowledge the danger of external influences. By accusing others, "parents could continue to believe that it was not indicative of an innate sexual drive in their children."⁹⁰ Boys were reminded that it was their responsibility to choose the path of purity and that each night before they went to bed to remember their eyes and ears "are gateways into our minds and hearts, and we should guard them with great care."⁹¹

Before he launched into the consequences of masturbation, Stall took a step back and personally addressed his fictional reader. He confided:

I do not believe, my dear friend Harry, that you have become a victim of this destructive vice, and I would be glad to believe that you have never accidentally learned or have been deliberately taught to engage in it. Knowing, however, the dangers to which, like all boys, you are exposed, and also appreciating the fact that intellectual boys, because of a more highly wrought nervous organization and because of keener sensibilities, are much more liable to become addicted to this vice than boys of a lower grade of intellect with less sensitive bodies...⁹²

Did this observation mean that young, intelligent boys were considered weak and unmanly in their inability to control their 'keener' sensibilities? Why were sturdier boys considered slower

⁸⁸ Stall, What a Young Boy Ought to Know (1909) 98.

⁸⁹ Newman, 9.

⁹⁰ Newman, 9.

⁹¹ Stall, What a Young Boy Ought to Know (1909) 104.

in intellect and less sensitive to stimulants? Stall offered no explanations, and quite frankly I think that neither of the two images described above matched his ideal of the healthy, smart, vibrant, and pious young man.

One of the most serious consequences of solitary vice was the new tendency towards anti-social behaviour. Gilbert contends that physicians and authors viewed it as “the supreme narcissistic act, the retreat into selfish enjoyment of one’s own body without reference to the social order, and a heinous sin against the body politic.”⁹³ This fear is perhaps a reflection of the importance placed on civic duty and community as the older bonds of social cohesion loosened under the pressures of modernity. A young man’s entire person was debased and polluted because he shunned company to indulge his secret vice. “From the very first his conscience disapproves,” and the residual guilt isolated the young offender from his family.⁹⁴ The once bright, happy, obedient, social (dare I say it? ‘normal’) boy was no longer able to look people squarely in the eye, and adopted a shift manner that belied his guilty conscience.

Solitary vice deprived the body of “strengthening” energy, but unlike the innocence attached to “emissions in the night” which denoted the self-regulating efficiency of the body, the immoral choice of the young man to abuse denoted a weakness of character.⁹⁵ Young men had the power to refuse temptation, and they would be foolish to do otherwise. In the words of Davies, “the boy who forms the habit of self-abuse is as unwise as a man would be if her were to break into his own house, rob it of its most precious goods, and throw them into the fire at the end.”⁹⁶ The choice to abstain was not easy for most young men, and to make the commitment to purity was a testament to their resolution and endurance. Besides the physical damage (the only

⁹² Stall, What Young Boy Ought To Know (1909) 108.

⁹³ Gilbert, 278, 279. In 1862, Dr. James Jackson also declared the solitary act of self-abuse to be dangerous; however, “in a remarkable statement on the subject of masturbation, Jackson congratulated those boys who were social enough to masturbate together: ‘it is not, therefore, to be deplored that boys who are in the habit of masturbating perform the act in each other’s presence, but is rather considered as a favorable symptom in their cases.’” Dr. James Jackson, The Sexual Organism and its Healthful Management (Boston, 1862) 60. None of the literature I reviewed shared Jackson’s opinion.

⁹⁴ Stall, What a Young Boy Ought to Know (1909) 110.

new symptom added to the 1922 was lack of coordinating resultant from weakened muscles) the moral core of a youth was jeopardized. To suffer a loss of self-control was “nothing less than a tragedy.”⁹⁷ Will power was a symbol of manliness and health while weakness denoted an effeminate and substandard state of body and mind.

The ill effects of self-pollution could be reversed to some degree, if the youth followed a strict regime, such as the one laid out in Searchlights on Health:

- 1...a prompt and permanent abandonment of the ruinous habit...The patient must plainly understand that future prospects, character, health and life itself, depend on an unfaltering resistance to the morbid solicitation...
2. Keep the mind employed by interesting the patient in the various topics of the day, and social features of the community.
3. Plenty of bodily out of door exercise, hoeing in the garden, walking, or working on the farm; of course not too heavy work must be indulged in.
4. If the patient is weak and very much emaciated, cod liver oil is an excellent remedy.
5. Diet. The patient should live principally on brown bread, oatmeal, graham crackers, wheat meal, cracked or boiled wheat.... No meats should be indulged in whatever; milk diet if used by the patient is an excellent remedy. Plenty of fruit should be indulged in... The patient should eat early in the evening, never late at night.
6. Avoid all tea, coffee, or alcoholic stimulants of any kind.
7. “Early to bed and early to rise” should be the motto of every victim of this vice. A patient should take a cold bath every morning after rising...
8. If the above remedies are not sufficient, a family physician should be consulted...⁹⁸

Thus, through discipline and vigilance, a young man could break his morally and physically dangerous habit and once more retain the vigor and strength that classified manhood.

Stall offered similar advice in What a Young Man Ought to Know, but he did not go into detail as to why such measures were effective. Above all else, every young man was told to find a purpose in life that would be so absorbing as to distract his mind from less worthy pursuits.

⁹⁵ Davies, Story of Life (1922) 438, 437.

⁹⁶ Davies, Story of Life (1922) 439.

⁹⁷ Davies, Story of Life (1922) 441.

⁹⁸ Jefferies, Searchlights (1894) 454-455. Direct quote, Jefferies switched from imperative to third person randomly.

Mediocrity was not to be tolerated, and if a boy never built “a few castles in the air, [he would never] own any that are built on the earth.”⁹⁹ In all, the recommendations cited frugal living as the key to keeping sexual stimulants to a minimum. In 1904, G. Stanley Hall supported the anti-masturbatory sentiments of prescriptive literature. Hall’s theory is a mixture of Darwinian natural selection, eugenic notions of heredity, and belief in a body’s limited energy supply. Hall declared that

yielding to mere and gross sensuous pleasure shortens the growth period, and the only way to prolong it and attain an even higher and fuller maturity for the race is by the plain old virtue of self-restraint...This is probably the field of most active and natural selection. The ascendant individual, family or stock, is the one that refuses to yield to excess to the temptations of the flesh, and the descendants are those whose instincts for selfish gratification preponderate over those of race-conservatism.¹⁰⁰

In my opinion, Hall’s findings added credibility to the advice later issued by manual writers because his two-volume study made him, in the public’s opinion, a recognized and respected ‘expert’ on the adolescent experience.

William Forbush considered the passage of time to be the only way for a boy to outgrow the problem of masturbation. The habit was sinister; moreover, “sex-perversions” were the “most common, subtle and dangerous foes that threaten our American life.”¹⁰¹ Forbush in 1907, however, was the first author of those under study to declare that the practice of self-abuse was universal. Education was important, but

to teach physical horrors which may not follow is not to deter those to whom they do not follow and is to put others under the control of the quack practitioner, while to preach that this vice is the unpardonable sin is to dishearten those who struggle against it in vain, but who may, if they are dealt with indirectly, outgrow it or be weaned away from it.¹⁰²

“Educational experiments” indicated it was possible to “approach the sex-structure of man precisely as the student does the rest of human physiology, in a most wholesome way through

⁹⁹ Stall, What a Young Man Ought to Know (1897) 86. The proceeding information can be found on pages 84-86.

¹⁰⁰ Hall (1904) 438-439.

¹⁰¹ Forbush, The Boy Problem (1907) 93.

nature study and biology."¹⁰³ Forbush advised a regime of loose clothing, strict hygiene, and arduous physical exercise to break the habit, as opposed to the majority of authors who believed that dire warnings and sometimes physical deterrents were the key to elimination of the vice.

For example, Stall proposed more extreme measures in 1909 than he had in previous manuals. Physical restraints were prescribed as a measure of last resort; yet, the severity of the habit was reflected in the punishment. Young men might have

to be put in a "strait-jacket," sometimes have their hands fastened behind their backs, sometimes their hands are tied to the posts of the bed, or fastened by ropes or chains to rings in the wall...in the effort to save the person from total mental and physical self-destruction. And I am sorry to say that even these extreme measures are not always successful in restraining them or effecting a cure.¹⁰⁴

Heroic measures were employed in order to enforce abstinence, and permanently cure victims who could not restrain themselves. Complete recovery was improbable in Stall's opinion, but his response echoes Shepherd's advice to young women. When a penitent attitude was observed, and confession to God with the sincere promise of reformation made, a young man might be successful in his struggle to overcome the consequences of masturbation.¹⁰⁵

Prevention through education was a popular alternative in the eyes of authors and readers. If the subject of solitary vice was approached scientifically, then all parties could avoid embarrassment and possible injury. A simple study of biology and physiology demonstrated the proper form of genitalia as well as their function. The "lesson of science is too plain and clean to be lost when the first questions of the aroused mind are asked."¹⁰⁶ When readers were taught the fundamentals necessary for taking care of their bodies (one that promoted proper hygiene and in essence 'neutralized' the sexual organs) then the chances that they strayed from the path of purity were greatly reduced. Above all, a young man must simply want to end the vile habit

¹⁰² Forbush, The Boy Problem (1907) 160-161.

¹⁰³ Forbush, The Boy Problem (1907) 160.

¹⁰⁴ Stall, What a Young Boy Ought to Know (1909) 117.

¹⁰⁵ Stall, What a Young Boy Ought to Know (1909) 168.

through self-control, and win back “his freedom and his self-respect.”¹⁰⁷ Without the initial desire to live a healthier life, the temptation could not be resisted.

Advice literature also infused a sense of shame into readers in order to break them of the ‘evil’ habit. In the cases of young men who came from Christian backgrounds, Jefferies recommended asking them

if he would perform the act in front of his mother—or his father—or the minister. The answer will always be no. Then say, ‘how about performing the act in the presence of God.’ The boy never thought of the manner in just that light before, but he will think about it that way every time the desire or the thought of self-abuse comes to his mind in the future.¹⁰⁸

Purity of the mind, body, and spirit was threatened by the embarrassment, and guilt experienced by the young man (or woman) who indulged. It was an erroneous myth that the reproductive organs were developed through “exercise.”¹⁰⁹ On the contrary, Jefferies confided that excessive self-indulgence damaged both the organs, and more critically, the self-respect of young people.

Although the physical damage produced by self-abuse was undeniable according to some manuals, by 1922 it was generally felt that “the popular belief that masturbation is the source of all evils” grossly overstated the case.¹¹⁰ Jefferies frankly admitted what Arthur Gilbert would later observe that in the past almost every disease known to the human race, from visual abnormalities to insanity, was directly or indirectly traced by some authority to the vital fluids lost through self-abuse. Furthermore, “masturbation is positively not responsible for a hundredth part of the trouble it is supposed to cause.”¹¹¹ Based on the work of scholars, Jefferies revealed that insanity, epilepsy, and convulsions did not occur as a result of self-abuse, but were hereditary predispositions. In other words, it was “an error to jump to the conclusion that simply

¹⁰⁶ Ozora Davies (Ph.D.) The Story of Life: As Told to His Sons... (Naperville: J.L. Nichols, 1922) 388.

¹⁰⁷ Davies, Story of Life (1922) 442.

¹⁰⁸ Jefferies, Safe Counsel (1922) 180.

¹⁰⁹ Jefferies, Safe Counsel (1922) 180-181.

¹¹⁰ Jefferies, Safe Counsel (1922) 256.

¹¹¹ Jefferies, Safe Counsel (1922) 256.

because a boy has abused himself during adolescence, he is necessarily doomed to a life of shame, and an early grave."¹¹²

Yet, Jefferies also was explicit in his warning that even in healthy individuals, masturbation had harmful results. Young women

cannot develop into the ideal of some good man, cannot truthfully fulfill her God given privileges if she allows her thoughts to run away with her reason. The adolescent boy must either forswear his desire and control his passions or abandon forever that dream of progress and achievement in the athletic and business worlds. The two cannot go hand in hand.¹¹³

Infertility and impotence were still believed to be rooted in over-indulgence, and threatened not only the health of the abusers but also future generations.

Gilbert contends that the sinful habit of solitary vice was despised because of the belief that the "mind and body were intimately related and mental illness resulted from physical harm to the brain and nervous system."¹¹⁴ Indulgence denoted a primitive lack of self-control, a regression to a state of uncivilized passion, but it was also deplored because it wasted the body's vital energy, which was thought finite. Young men and women who masturbated were condemned as self-absorbed, over-run by a dangerous abnormal urge that was thought to send them spiraling downward into vice. Later however, as D'Emilio and Freedman argue, sexual self-control within the middle classes was thought to symbolize success. Restraint and order in one's private life was a reflection of stability in one's public life. This self-restraint was important also because it lent an air of superiority, one that differentiated the reserved and 'sophisticated' middle class from the 'looser' working class, and whites from other races.¹¹⁵

Normal development was curbed by masturbation, and throughout the nineteenth century disease manifested itself into physical symptoms of varying severity. A sense of guilt and shame denoted spiritual illness, and the potential onset of insanity completed the damage to

¹¹² Jefferies, Safe Counsel (1922) 256.

¹¹³ Jefferies, Safe Counsel (1922) 257.

¹¹⁴ Arthur Gilbert, "Masturbation and Insanity: Henry Maudsley and the Ideology of Sexual Repression," Albion (Vol. 12, No. 3, 180) 271.

a young person's trinity of health. Adult concern over solitary vice also illustrated the public conception of the "precarious quality of 'normal' development."¹¹⁶ Public attitudes towards masturbation gradually began to change by the mid-1880s. These new theories notwithstanding some health professionals were slow to follow suit, and continued to label masturbation as a root cause of societal and physical malaise. For instance, William Osler's guide for medical students in 1909 still declared sexual excess a root cause of hysteria and nervous exhaustion, and in 1912 Freud refused to rule out masturbation as a cause of psychosis, both of which clearly demonstrate the longevity of misconceptions about masturbation.¹¹⁷ Thus, the reticence to accept changing ideology was reflected in the damning evidence presented in prescriptive literature, greatly outnumbered the works by authors and physicians who did not consider masturbation a fatal disease.

¹¹⁵ D'Emilio and Freedman, 57.

¹¹⁶ Cohen, 183.

¹¹⁷ Bliss, 266 and Newman, 14. At the 1912 conference in Vienna, Freud rejected Wilhelm Stekel's supposition that "the injuriousness of masturbation amounts to no more than a senseless prejudice which, purely as a result of personal limitations, we are unwilling to cast off with sufficient thoroughness." Freud supported the notion that masturbation was a symptom of disease, and declared that to stop the habit it was necessary to delve deeper into a patient's unresolved issues which he assumed prompted their actions. Sigmund Freud, "Contributions to a Discussion on Masturbation (1912)" in Anna Freud and James Strachley's The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud: The Case of Schreber, Papers on Techniques and Other Works Vol. Xii 1911-1913 (London: The Hogarth Press, 1958) 250-251.

Chapter Four: Mixed Messages, Advice to Young Women

For Girls Only: Menstruation and Hysteria

Delicate, feeble, nervous women, those, in other words, who can least afford the loss of blood, are precisely those who lose the most. Nature, who is no tender mother, but a stern step-mother, thus punishes them for disregarding her laws.¹—Dr. George Napheys, 1890

While observable characteristics such as lethargy and general peevishness were cited as common symptoms of menstruation by advice literature; its cause was often less easily discerned. Brumberg notes that in the 1870s, Dr. Alfred F. King, a professor of medicine at Columbia University in Washington, D.C.,

actually claimed that menstrual bleeding was something “new.” According to King, women’s natural state was pregnancy, and menstruation became regularized- what he called- a ‘fixed habit’- only as a result of higher education, later marriage, and deliberate family limitation, all things he considered ‘cultural interference’ connected to modern life.²

In 1883, menstruation was linked to a woman’s supply of vital force, but not all authors were able to comment further.³ For instance, Burt Green Wilder in What Young People Should Know (1875) under the heading “The Purpose of Menstruation,” claimed that “no satisfactory explanation has, as yet, been offered. Certain facts in Comparative Anatomy and Physiology have led me to entertain a new view of its purpose, but I am not yet ready to publish it.”⁴ Dr. Heinrich Fritsch, author of The Diseases of Women: A Manual for Physicians and Students, wrote that the question of menstruation was not fully decided because there was a lack of sufficient research.

In 1883, Fritsch advised professionals to explain menstruation

in this wise: An ovum ripens; this swelling of the Graafian follicle irritates the nerve termini in the ovary. The irritation is propagated to the central organs. Through reflexes, by vaso-motor processes, an arterial congestion of the internal

¹ Napheys (1890) 30.

² A.F.A. King, “A New Basis for Uterine Pathology,” American Journal of Obstetrics and Diseases of Women (Vol. 8: August 1875) 237-256 cited in Brumberg, The Body Project, 7.

³ Physicians and Surgeons of the Principle London Hospitals, The Family Physician (New York: Gassell, Petter, Galpin & Co., 1883) xxiv.

⁴ Wilder, What Young People Should Know (1875) 61.

female sexual organs is set up. This in turn increases the liquor folliculi, so that the theca folliculi breaks and permits the ovum to escape—*ovulation*; and second, the uterine mucosa becomes so hyperaemic that there occurs a bursting of the peripheral vessels, hemorrhage upon the surface of the uterine mucosa—*menstruation*.⁵

The Manual of Gynecology, published in 1886, concurred that the starting point of menstruation was the eruption of a Graafian follicle. The entrance into puberty was marked by this process, and had emotional consequences as well since “the romping carriage of the girl becomes subdued, and greater shyness characterises her conduct to the opposite sex.”⁶ Physicians believed that puberty triggered the psychical manifestations of femininity.

Historian Deborah Gorham finds this revelation particularly pertinent because

if the character traits associated with femininity (traits like timidity, modesty and dependence) are believed to spring directly and inevitable from the physical manifestations of puberty— directly from the menstrual flow, so to speak— any necessity for explaining why girls adopt the traits associated with femininity as they mature is removed.⁷

Advice manuals reflected these same concerns. For instance, in 1884 Mrs. Shepherd, author of For Girls: A Special Physiology believed the womb to be “the controlling organ in the female structure,” which exercised “influence over the whole being, body and mind.”⁸

Shepherd’s explanation of menses was more sophisticated than Wilder’s vague description, and in a format that used similar concepts, but was considerably more accessible than the physician’s textbook. Shepherd explained in detail how once a month, starting once a girl reached puberty (fourteen— though menses could start as early as eleven and as late as eighteen) the ovule reached full development. It then burst and was thrown out of the system

⁵ Dr. Heinrich Fritsch, The Diseases of Women: A Manual for Physicians and Students (New York: William Wood & Company, 1883) 18-19. That menstruation was included in a manual about diseases is telling in itself. Fritsch continued to remark that ovulation, more so than menstruation, was an academic problem. “According to the laws of diffusion, it is impossible that fluid should enter the follicle while its contents are under greater pressure than its environment. Therefore, it is physically inconceivable to make the rupture depend solely upon the increase of the liquor folliculi, upon the centrifugal pressure. Hence there must be peculiar processes in the follicle itself which lead to rupture.”

⁶ Drs. Berry Hart and Freeland Barbour, Manual of Gynecology (New York: J. H. Vail, 1886) 81-82.

⁷ Gorham, 86.

⁸ Shepherd, For Girls (1884) 37, 48.

through the Fallopian tubes until it escaped through the vulva. This process usually finished after three or four days and was accompanied by a discharge of blood that essentially washed the ovule out of the system. Shepherd, like Wilder, shed no light as to why this physiological cleansing occurred for her readers. Instead, she focused on practical intricacies including napkin making, and how normal cycles in healthy teenage girls should be painless. Despite these assurances, she described various discomforts associated with menses such as backaches, nervousness, irritability, and mental depression.⁹

Concepts of menstruation did not remain constant. Authors in 1889 regarded menstruation as a dramatic rite of passage. The recurring loss of vital fluid was infused with a newly expressed philosophical meaning. The literature solidified traditional roles for women, by labeling menstruation as a “wise provision,” which perhaps occurred so that a woman was “reminded of her lowly duty, lest man should make her the sole object of his worship, or lest pride of beauty should obscure the sense of shame.”¹⁰ Napheys took a mathematical approach to the age of onset for menses. The average age of menarche in a healthy girl was “fourteen years and six months. If it occurs more than six months later or earlier than this, then it is likely that something is wrong, or, at the least, the case is exceptional.”¹¹ Ethnicity also determined the onset of menses. For example,

the females of certain races, certain families,...mature earlier than their neighbours. Jewesses for example, are always precocious, earlier by one or two years. So are coloured girls, and those of creole lineage. We can guess the reasons here. No doubt these children still retain in their blood the tropic fire which, at comparatively recent periods, their forefathers felt under the vertical rays of the torrid zone.¹²

⁹ Shepherd, *For Girls* (1884) The information from the above paragraph was found on pages 122-129. What would young women at the time have made of the fact that, according to advice literature, the physical and emotional symptoms of menstruation and masturbation were similar? (See section on solitary vice.)

¹⁰ Napheys (1889) 22.

¹¹ Napheys (1889) 23.

¹² Napheys (1889) 26. In a similar mode of thought, Fritsch concluded six years earlier “in hot climates, precocity is physiological. In the tropics, girls are menstruating already in the tenth to the twelfth year...Brunettes likewise are said to menstruate earlier than blondes”: Fritsch (1883) 19.

Such “precocity, however, is the precursor of early decay; for a short childhood portends a premature old age, and *vice versa*.”¹³

Non-racial elements that hastened puberty included laziness, highly seasoned food, alcohol, coffee, tea, and poor sleep patterns.¹⁴ Mental stimulation was a catalyst of maturation; consequently, women were warned against stimulating their nerves through sensational novels, plays, or even “the ball-room talk of beaux.”¹⁵ The start of menstruation specifically, and the physical changes of puberty generally, determined the outcome of a woman’s life. They decided whether she was to “become a healthy, hopeful, cheerful wife and mother, or a languid, complaining invalid, to whom marriage is a curse, children an affliction, and life itself a burden.”¹⁶ Thus, young women were cautioned to follow the advice of manuals explicitly so that they would continue to experience a ‘normal’ menstrual cycle.

The 1889 edition of Family Physician; Every Man His Own Doctor offered a clinical explanation that essentially equated menses with the ripening and expulsion of the egg from the ovaries, every twenty-eighth day, from the ages of fifteen to forty-five.¹⁷ If menstruation occurred later than the age of sixteen it generally indicated a weakness, a disease, or a disorder of the generative apparatus. One’s upbringing also had a direct impact upon the start of menses. Those who were raised in luxury, and “those whose moral and physical training has been such as to make their nervous system more susceptible, have their courses at a much earlier period than those who have been accustomed to coarse food and laborious employment.”¹⁸ It was believed a woman owed her “beauty and perfection” to a regular cycle, so great care against disturbances

¹³ Family Physician; Every Man (1889) 318. Emphasis in original.

¹⁴ Family Physician; Every Man (1889) 319. This advice, remarks on the following pages are almost quoted word for word in Napheys’ account. Although this passage does not have quotes around it, other quotation marks do randomly appear on the same page, so I speculate that Napheys was the anonymous author that the encyclopedia was quoting for this particular chapter.

¹⁵ Napheys (1889) 26. The reference to ball-rooms is also another indication that this particular piece of advice literature was intended for mid to upper middle-class readers for whom ball-room would have been an integral aspect of socializing.

¹⁶ Napheys (1889) 24.

¹⁷ Family Physician; Every Man (1889) 168-169.

¹⁸ Family Physician; Every Man (1889) 170.

was promoted.¹⁹ Activities to avoid included long walks or rides, especially over rough roads, dancing, or running up and down the stairs which caused “falling of the womb.”²⁰ Encouraged to master their alarm and discomfort from the onset, young women were informed that it was a natural process, medications were not necessary, and if they took them, they would “do mischief to themselves.”²¹

In the 1890’s, menstruation was romanticized in the literature as the boundary-line between girlhood and womanhood. Crossing over marked the threshold of a young woman’s life.²² In 1894, Searchlights on Health reiterated Shepherd’s earlier advice. At the onset of menses not only did a young woman’s body mature and grow, but so did her intellect as her “mental capacity enlarges and improves.”²³ The author claimed the onset of menstruation occurred at slightly earlier age (between the ages of thirteen to sixteen) than Shepherd’s account, and noted that “menstruation in large towns is supposed to commence at an earlier period than in the country, and earlier in luxurious than in simple life.”²⁴ Jefferies defined menstruation as a secretion of the womb, “the flow from the uterus that occurs every month as the seed-germ ripens in the ovaries.”²⁵ He advocated precautions to be followed to ensure a regular cycle;

violent exercise is injurious; iced drinks and acid beverages are improper; and bathing in the sea, and bathing the feet in cold water, and cold baths are dangerous; indeed, at such times as these, no risks should be run,... otherwise serious consequences will, in all probability ensue.²⁶

Jefferies did not go into detail as to what these ‘consequences’ entailed; thus, the warning remained ominous and mysterious to the reader.

Pancoast, in keeping with his pledge to explain the physiology of young woman with clinical evidence, used charts to determine the average onset of menstruation at fifteen years of

¹⁹ Family Physician; Every Man (1889) 170.

²⁰ Family Physician; Every Man (1889) 170.

²¹ Family Physician; Every Man (1889) 170.

²² Jefferies. Searchlights on Health (1894) 356.

²³ Jefferies. Searchlights on Health (1894) 356.

²⁴ Jefferies. Searchlights on Health (1894) 357.

²⁵ Jefferies. Searchlights on Health (1894) 387.

age dependant on the climate of a young woman's environment.²⁷ After studying the uterus of a cadaver, Pancoast outlined the connection between menstruation and ovulation for readers. He built upon past descriptions when he declared that the ovaries produced pain during menstrual "evacuation."²⁸ He too speculated upon the purpose of menses. Eventually he decided the only satisfactory conclusion "in regard to the purposes of Nature in throwing off so large a quantity of blood, is the supposition that it is intended to relieve the congestion of the ovaries that is known to exist during the ripening of the ova."²⁹ With the exception of Pancoast, most authors agreed that discomfort rarely accompanied this process. The natural, 'painless' cycle was established as the norm, and symbolized a woman's fertility and good health.

Historian Joan Jacobs Brumberg states that a lack of communication between mothers and daughters concerning menstruation grew in the mid-to-late nineteenth century when "young women lost their central role in the domestic economy and began to spend more time outside the home, either in classrooms as students or in factories as workers."³⁰ Imparting 'the truth' about menstruation became a priority for authors of prescriptive literature. When young women on the verge of puberty were not informed of the facts of menses beforehand, they had the tendency to become "greatly frightened at seeing this blood and imagine that they have some dreadful disease."³¹ If they had no one to confide in (or advice manual to consult) they might injure themselves in their attempts to remove the cause of terror.

Menstruation continued to be 'glamourized' and soon was depicted in the 1900's as a precious gift to young women, one to be embraced rather than vilified. Wood-Allen exemplified

²⁶ Jefferies, Searchlights on Health (1894) 357.

²⁷ An unidentified Mr. Robertson's chart is cited by Pancoast, Tokology (1903) 113-114. Pancoast continued with a bizarre exception of a baby who began menses and physical development at the age of ten months. He offered no medical explanation, but instead detailed the social consequences for this anomaly. Phoebe Anna Baker was born on 19 January 1851, and by 27 July 1855 was on display at circus mogul Barnum's first "Baby Show" in New York. Dr. Gardner was called into see her after her mother found her with an adult man and suspected she was pregnant; the man was detained by the police until her menses started again several days later.

²⁸ Pancoast, Tokology (1903) 118.

²⁹ Pancoast, Tokology (1903) 119.

³⁰ Brumberg, The Body Project 12.

this trend through her narrative in 1913. She wrote of a woman who at the age of twenty-two had not begun her monthly cycle. Aware that she was unlike other girls, she sought Dr. Wood-Allen's counsel. Recently engaged and knowing that menstruation and motherhood were linked,

she thought it might be possible that her physical condition would preclude the possibility of her becoming a mother, and, if so, it would be *dishonorable* to marry. Upon examination I discovered that all organs of reproduction were lacking. When I disclosed this fact she exclaimed, with sadness, "Oh why was I not made like other girls? I have heard them complain because they are girls, but I think that if they were in my place, and knew that they could never have a home and children of their own, they would feel they had greater reason than to complain."³²

Wood-Allen stressed that menses, or womanhood as she euphemistically phrased it, encompassed the mental, moral, and physical expression of sex, and should be regarded as a divine gift from God. On no account, should a young woman feel like a semi-invalid because of her menstrual cycle.

In other words, during her period, a woman should feel more vigorous, energized, and ambitious than she did at other times. Poor habits were responsible for painful cycles because "we certainly cannot believe that a kind and just God has made it necessary for women to suffer merely because they are women."³³ Malnutrition, overexertion, social dissipation, and mental excitement continued to be declared the roots of discomfort. One way to lessen the pain was the removal of tight clothing, after which bandages were applied to support the bowels. The pressure on the uterus was thus relieved and free circulation once more restored to the internal organs.³⁴ Belief that normal cycles could be made painless if young women developed the proper hygienic habits from the start carried well into the twentieth century.

³¹ Wood-Allen, What a Young Woman Ought to Know (1913) 114.

³² Wood-Allen, What a Young Woman Ought to Know (1913) 116. Emphasis mine.

³³ Wood-Allen, What a Young Woman Ought to Know (1913) 119.

³⁴ Wood-Allen, What a Young Woman Ought to Know (1913) 127-128.

Therefore, in order that the natural maturation process was not regarded as a hygienic crisis, advisors wrote extensively on the intricacies of menstruation.³⁵ Advice manuals contended that ignorance on the subject of menstruation was dangerous, and the need for enlightenment critical. Burt Wilder claimed that he had consulted several sixteen and seventeen-year-old adolescents who had “thought their first menses was a hemorrhage.”³⁶ Historian Joan Jacobs Brumberg argues that “mother-daughter dialogue was a terribly painful process characterized by great awkwardness and maternal reserve,” which left young women with few alternatives, outside of prescriptive literature, to find answers to their inquiries.³⁷ She continues that “most middle-class Victorian mothers believed that menarche initiated their daughter’s sexuality; thus, they attempted to keep it at bay, for as long as they could.”³⁸ Thus, manual writers broke the silence on this subject, in order that young women had the correct information to establish a pattern of good hygiene, and a regular cycle. The way in which she handled the journey defined and shaped how her future life would unfold.

Hysteria

An unreasonable, obstinate will, an overactive imagination, and emotional demonstration characterized hysteria, a functional disorder of the nervous system.³⁹ An old disease, hysteria (derived from the Greek word for uterus) had long been connected to a woman’s reproductive organs. Hysteria went beyond the moodiness associated with ‘normal’ pubescent women. According to The Family Physician (1883) fits of laughing and crying attacked their sensibilities (and very rarely those of young men) until their nerves were overwrought with the expenditure of emotion and energy and they were unable to utter coherent

³⁵ Joan Jacobs Brumberg, “Something Happens to Girls: Menarche and the Emergence of the Modern American Hygienic Imperative,” Journal of the History of Sexuality (Vol. 4, no.1 : 1993) 101.

³⁶ Wilder (1875) 168.

³⁷ Brumberg, 108.

³⁸ Brumberg, 108- 109.

³⁹ For a concise history of hysteria in the nineteenth century, and the major Parisian physicians involved in researching it as a disease, see Chapter 6 “Hysteria” of Christopher G. Goetz, Michel

sentences.⁴⁰ Hysteria differed from an epileptic seizure because the young woman usually gave some indication that she was approaching an attack. The inclusion of a clear list of causes proved problematic for several authors. Historian Elaine Showalter argues that its “vast, shifting repertoire of symptoms reminded some doctors of the lability and capriciousness they associated with female nature.”⁴¹ Indeed, in 1881 Dr. Edward Tilt remarked that “mutability is characteristic of hysteria because it is characteristic of women.”⁴²

Critics were skeptical as to the validity of the emotional experience. The Family Physician speculated that young women had fits to get attention, and cited the rare occurrence of a fit at night, when the patient was alone, as proof of the theory. Furthermore, “a young lady in hysterics takes good care not to fall unless there is some one by to catch her, or at all events to condole with her after she has fallen, and she is moreover, especially careful not...to damage her clothes in falling.”⁴³ Despite observations that a patient in the throes of an attack appeared disorientated, this too was believed to be a deception. Some authors went so far as to suggest that hysterical fits were the result of boredom because “a woman, if not married, has, as a rule, very little to do—at all events, in the middle and upper classes of society. She has no housekeeping to attend to, no children to look after, nothing, in fact to occupy her mind and rouse her out of herself.”⁴⁴ The determinant cause of hysteria was usually thought to be a mental or moral disturbance, in which the patient indulged in “an exaggerated belief in her own importance.”⁴⁵ Often the complaint stemmed from what was considered by family members, or

Bonduelle and Toby Gelfand's Charcot: Constructing Neurology (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

⁴⁰ The Family Physician (1883) 329.

⁴¹ Elaine Showalter, “Hysteria, Feminism, and Gender” in Sander Gilman ed. Hysteria Beyond Freud (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993) 286.

⁴² Edward Tilt, A Handbook of Uterine Therapeutics and Diseases of Women (New York: William Wood, 1881) 85 reprinted in Showalter, 286.

⁴³ The Family Physician (1883) 329.

⁴⁴ The Family Physician (1883) 330.

⁴⁵ The Family Physician (1883) 332.

the physician called to the scene, to be rooted in a “trivial circumstance, which, takes the individual by surprise, overcomes her power of self-restraint.”⁴⁶

Literature written for physicians and students collaborated this opinion. Dr. Heinrich Fritsch claimed that abnormal nervous activity associated with hysteria could lead to psychosis. For example, a characteristic of hysteria was a craving by the sick patient to be considered an interesting case by the attendant physician. To this end, “the greatest sacrifices are made to this passion...hysterics have inflicted wounds on themselves...Frogs and worms...have been swallowed in order to appear interesting by the vomiting of these objects.”⁴⁷ Believing a theatrical element to be inherent in young women, Fritsch thought it was not surprising that “nearly all modern novel heroines are described with clearly marked hysterical traits.”⁴⁸

In 1894, prescriptions were rarely thought necessary to cure hysteria. Instead, a regime of fresh air, pure food and drink, and exercise was considered enough to calm and strengthen the nerves.⁴⁹ Class stratification also marked the victims of hysteria since it occurred most “in the higher circles of society, where their emotions are over-educated and their organization delicate.”⁵⁰ The most dangerous element of hysteria was the copycat effect in produced in other young women who witnessed an attack. For this reason, in 1889 Napheys advised that adolescent girls who had a tendency towards fits not be sent to boarding school, but educated at home. How could an attack be stopped? Often,

a strong mental impression restored them. The anecdote is told of a celebrated surgeon (Boerhave) [sic], who was called to a female seminary where there was a number of hysterical girls. He summoned them together, heated a number of instruments before their eyes, and told them that the first one who had a fit should be cauterized down to the spine. They all recovered immediately.⁵¹

⁴⁶ The Family Physician (1883) 330.

⁴⁷ Fritsch (1883) 344.

⁴⁸ Fritsch (1883) 344.

⁴⁹ Jefferies, Searchlights on Health (1894) 354.

⁵⁰ Napheys (1889) 33.

⁵¹ Napheys (1889) 33.

From this passage, it is apparent that hysteria was thought of as a weak vice that could be controlled by the victim, and was not necessarily deserving of a physician's time.⁵²

Issues of self-control led to an alternative interpretation of hysteria by Victorian doctors, but one that was not necessarily evident in advice literature. According to Oppenheim, a hysterical woman was not merely a passive victim of her overwhelming emotion that exhibited too little control over her situation, but instead orchestrated her attack. By "an act of will, she imposed fraudulent symptoms of disease on her body...A woman who manufactured hysteria in this fashion opposed her own will to that of her doctor, rejecting his sagacious counsel and refusing to recover."⁵³ This challenge to medical authority and expression of female rebellion disconcerted many practitioners, who "preferred to attribute hysterical seizures to some innate female defect than to acknowledge that women could be just as willful as men."⁵⁴ Conceptualizing a woman as weak, and unable to master her emotional whims, fit easily into mainstream ideology; "by contrast, to present hysterical women as supremely willful had no theoretical justification at any time in the Victorian era."⁵⁵

Lack of control over the emotions typified hysteria, and therefore jeopardized the balance of good health young women tried to achieve. Feminist historians have labeled hysterical fits a young woman's passive aggressive attempt to redefine her role within her family.⁵⁶ A young woman was "a creature who reacted rather than initiated, and whose feelings

⁵² Roy Porter contends that "hysteria presented doctors with a tease, a trial, and a break. The hysteria diagnosis, critics griped, was the most egregious medical hocus-pocus, attached to symptom clusters physicians could not impute to some more regular cause. The symptoms were heterogeneous, bizarre, and unpredictable. Faced with such symptoms, what was to be done? The mystery condition (spake the cynics) was wrapped up as 'hysteria.'" Roy Porter, "The Body and The Mind, The Doctor and the Patient: Negotiating Hysteria" in Sander Gilman ed. *Hysteria Beyond Freud* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993) 241.

⁵³ Janet Oppenheim, *Shattered Nerves* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991) 210.

⁵⁴ Oppenheim, 210.

⁵⁵ Oppenheim, 211.

⁵⁶ See Wendy Mitchinson, *The Nature of Their Bodies*, Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* and Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture, 1830-1980*.

dominated her intellect.”⁵⁷ It was perhaps the long list of symptoms that led medical practitioners, and authors, to the assumption that hysteria was a feigned disease. Authors expected adolescent girls to be moody and emotional and viewed hysteria in women as “simply a normal condition that had become extreme.”⁵⁸ Historian Lucy Bland argues that hysteria “was uniquely tied to femininity, its symptoms echoing the various physical and emotional characteristics deemed the hallmark of womanhood,” and prescriptive literature seems to substantiate this claim.⁵⁹ Hysteria was rooted in biology, as was evidenced by the belief that its natural onset was puberty.⁶⁰ At the heart of the sexual stereotyping of hysterical young women was the presumption that through self-control, the spirit, and body could be strengthened.

Lessons Rooted in Biology: Debating the Merits of Educating Young Women

Not yet is it clearly seen that women, as women, have still to make a distinctive contribution to the human commonwealth on the intellectual as well as the on the moral side; but it is already becoming apparent that those human qualities which men and women have in common should not be wasted, ignored or misused because embodied in a woman’s form.”⁶¹—Anna Garlin Spencer, 1912

The attitudes held by the physicians and manual writers concerning a young woman’s reproductive organs carried over into the realm of education. During the early nineteenth century, the purpose of formal education for young men and women of the middle classes in Europe and North America differed greatly. Adolescent men were educated in a way that was designed to equip them for success in the challenging and competitive worlds of finance, medicine, or law to name but a few. For their sisters,

achievement was not a central goal. A girl might become a learned lady, or a serious musician or painter, but if she pursued such endeavours , it was for her own private satisfaction. As long as she did not violate the norms of femininity or gentility, she was free to pursue such activities, but in her case they would not be seen as a testing ground for further achievement.⁶²

⁵⁷ Oppenheim, 182.

⁵⁸ Wendy Mitchinson, *The Nature of Their Bodies*, 285, 282.

⁵⁹ Lucy Bland, *Banishing the Beast: english Femininism and Sexual Morality, 1885-1914* (London: Penguin Books, 1995) 64.

⁶⁰ Napheys (1890) 34. Mitchinson, *The Nature of Their Bodies*, 289.

⁶¹ Anna Garlin Spencer. “The School and the Feminine Ideal,” *Forum* (New York: June, 1912) 713.

⁶² Gorham, 24.

In the late-nineteenth century, the curriculum and purpose of a middle class girl's education was transformed due in large part to the efforts of educational reformers whose main goal was "to give credence to the value of organised, standardised, competitive school experience for girls."⁶³ Young women now participated in goal-centered education where they were tested, competed for academic prizes, and prepared for public examinations. Consequently, debate on the benefit or harm of formal educational training quietly raged on within the pages of prescriptive manuals, popular magazines such as Forum, and in medical journals.

Anita and Michael Fellman argue that the teaching of basic skills degenerated under the pressures of modernity. Moral truths, especially, were discussed increasingly away from the home in sermons, the classroom, the press, and in manuals. The expanded curriculum to cope with the "technical demands" of an industrial society caused critics to fear that students would suffer from "overintellectualization, subdivision of knowledge, and cramming" which would result in brain fatigue, "irritability and morbidness."⁶⁴ For those who objected to educational reforms, this warning was thought particularly relevant for young women. Specialized training in the sciences and arts was considered by conservative thinkers to be "better for her, of course, than no serious training at all. But it is not the kind of training that is most likely to make her the best possible wife, mother, house-mother, and member of society."⁶⁵

Dr. Edward Clarke addressed this pertinent issue in Sex in Education; or, a Fair Chance for the Girls. Clarke claimed that it was futile to teach girls and boys the same subjects because their physiological differences required them to take up different roles in society. As Clarke pointed out in metaphorical language:

the loftiest ideal of humanity...demands that each shall be perfect in its kind, and not be hindered in its best work. The lily is not inferior to the rose, nor the oak superior to the clover; yet the glory of the lily is one, and the glory of the oak is

⁶³ Gorham, 24-25.

⁶⁴ Fellman, 67.

⁶⁵ M.G. Van Rensselaer "The Waste of Women's Intellectual Forces," Forum (New York: July 1892) 628.

another, and the use of the oak is not the use of the clover. That is poor horticulture which should train them all alike.⁶⁶

Mrs. Jennie Kidd Trout became the first woman to be licensed to practice medicine in Canada in 1875.⁶⁷ Two years before this respected achievement, Clarke cautioned that the pursuit of higher education would deny young women the chance for motherhood and familial bliss. Indeed, “it cannot be otherwise. The brain...cannot *do* more than its share without depriving other organs of that exercise and nourishment which are essential to their health and vigor.”⁶⁸

As historians have noted previously, Clarke remarked that methods of education had to be restructured to suit the maturation rates of females.⁶⁹ He believed “the organization of the male grows steadily, gradually, and equally, from birth to maturity;” whereas, adolescent girls had a more dramatic entry into adulthood and thus required special consideration.⁷⁰ Without doing any physical damage a healthy, growing boy could spend six hours of energy upon his studies each day. A girl, however, could study only four or five hours a day in order to leave enough time “for the general physical growth she must make in common with a boy, and also for constructing a reproductive apparatus.”⁷¹ The mental and physical elements of a person were delicately balanced. Thus, time and effort devoted to studies redirected the body’s energy away from the more important functions associated with puberty.

Clarke maintained that in order to give teenage girls the same opportunities for advanced education as teenage boys, the curriculum needed restructuring so that teachers and students alike were more considerate of growth spurts. Four conditions had to be maintained:

⁶⁶ Edward Clarke, Sex in Education (Boston: James Osgood and Co., 1873) 15.

⁶⁷ Carlotta Hacker, The Indomitable Lady Doctors (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin & Co., 1974) 39 and Veronica Strong-Boag, “Canada’s Women Doctors: Feminism Constrained” in S.E.D. Shortt, ed. Medicine in Canadian Society: Historical Perspectives (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1981) 210.

⁶⁸ Clarke, 43.

⁶⁹ See Mitchinson The Nature of Their Bodies pp.83-84, D’Emilio and Freedman Intimate Matters p. 146.

⁷⁰ Dr. Edward Clarke, Sex in Education; or, a Fair Chance for the Girls (Boston: James Osgood, 1873) 38.

⁷¹ Clarke. Sex in Education (1873) 156-157.

First, a sufficient supply of appropriate nutriment; secondly, a normal management of the catamenial [menstruation] functions, including the building of the reproductive apparatus; thirdly, mental and physical work so apportioned, that repair shall exceed waste, and a margin be left for general and sexual development; and fourthly, sufficient sleep.⁷²

Female readers who ignored this advice faced dire consequences. A young woman's "nervous system and brain, her instincts and character, are on a lower plane, and incapable of their harmonious and best development, if she is possessed, on reaching adult age, of only a portion of breast and an ovary, or none at all."⁷³

Clarke may have condemned women studying between the ages of twelve and twenty, but he saw no health problems in women of the same age labouring in factories. Indeed, "for him, brain work was more liable to destroy feminine capabilities than physical work."⁷⁴ Physicians believed the mental stimulation of class work had immense negative effects. Women were supposed to take this warning to heart. If ignored, "then their bodies would be sacrificed; if that occurred, their future happiness would be jeopardized, for as Dr. Bayard from Saint John, New Brunswick maintained, men were attracted to women because of their beauty."⁷⁵ Young women were debilitated by study, and it was no wonder "considering that now-a-days they are compelled to cram their heads with French, German, Italian, rhetoric, composition, the elements of astronomy, geology, geometry, chronology, and a host of other things their grandmothers never even heard of."⁷⁶ Without precautions, a young woman's life would be that of an invalid, riddled with nervous disorders, a sickly unattractive complexion, and exhaustion. Her eminent sterility (the result of her ill-formed reproductive organs) jeopardized her future position as a wife and mother. Men were also warned of the strain of study, but usually the admonition

⁷² Clarke, Sex in Education (1873) 60.

⁷³ Clarke, Sex in Education (1873) 91.

⁷⁴ Wendy Mitchinson, The Nature of Their Bodies: Women and Their Doctors in Victorian Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991) 83.

⁷⁵ Mitchinson, 40.

⁷⁶ Physicians and Surgeons of the Principle London Hospitals, The Family Physician (New York: Gassell, Petter, Galpin & Co., 1883) 207. "Boys do not suffer in the same way, although they work equally hard, because they get plenty of good, healthy out-door exercise."

concerned their failing eyesight rather than threats of sterility. Education was proclaimed as a way of improving and refining a male mind rather than as a risk to his constitution.

Clarke was not alone in his opinion; yet, other authors like Burt Green Wilder were more cautious when they declared their thoughts on the subject. Openly admitting the dissenting viewpoints on the subject of higher education and women at the time (1875), Wilder agreed that excessive study might prove to be injurious to the overall health of adolescent girls. He did stress that he was not referring to the “ordinary, judicious study” that was necessary for the average student (female or male) to pursue successfully the curriculum of colleges or professional schools.⁷⁷ In an argument similar to Clarke’s, Wilder wrote that students driven by an excess of ambition risked a “derangement of this and many other, if not all other, functions of the physical system.”⁷⁸ Discussion of higher education required, in Wilder’s opinion, detailed observation of both sexes, which would perhaps yield the result that both spent too much time in study.

In an interesting twist on the traditional advice, Mrs. Shepherd maintained in 1884 that puberty not only stimulated physical change, but improved mental capabilities as well. Starting at the age of fourteen, an adolescent girl’s mind

receives a new impulse. Her whole mental nature moves with quickened activity and power. Ability to understand the metaphysical and abstract commences to develop, and her school studies, if she is intellectually inclined, are pursued with new interest...A new light of intelligence beams in her eyes, indicating the new baptism of thought and redoubled mental vigor.⁷⁹

Shepherd viewed the onset of puberty as a time of heightened energy and intellectual awareness. Even this sign of encouragement to female readers seems a little late considering the increasing acceptance of post-secondary education and employment for young women.⁸⁰

In fairness to Clarke and Wilder, Shepherd did not specify the number of hours a day an adolescent girl should devote to study. It is apparent from the breadth of her research that

⁷⁷ Burt Green Wilder, What Young People Should Know (Boston: Estes & Lauriat, 1875) 63.

⁷⁸ Wilder, What Young People Should Know (1875) 63.

⁷⁹ Shepherd, For Girls (1884) 71.

⁸⁰ Gorham, 30.

Shepherd herself was an academic. She taught school for eight years until her own poor health caused her to re-evaluate her lifestyle, and the advice she offered her readers was gained from personal experience. At times, she also appeared sympathetic to the teachings of Clarke, especially when she urged girls to “hold back the intellect if it seems more active in proportion than the body, although it is not necessary to restrain it altogether.”⁸¹ It is quite possible, considering her own experience that she empathized with Clarke about modifying the number of hours a woman spent in work and study.

So close was the mutual dependence of the physical, mental, and moral faculties, that academic pressure from family members or teachers was viewed a serious threat to good health, created an irritated condition in the brain, and caused nervous twitches, choreic movement, and tubercular meningitis.⁸² The competition inherent in school systems, or in the words of the Provincial Board of Health, “the present system of rank and reward, based on success in reaching a certain standard, or in out-stripping others, is a great temptation, and should,...be guarded against especially in the cases of scrofulous or nervous children.”⁸³ Looking to European examples for their expert evidence, the Board of Health quoted Professor Humphrey’s speech at the Glasgow congress of Sanitariums. Humphrey remarked: “many who have succeeded in reaching the examination goal had better never have sought it, never regaining the mental elasticity which heavy pressure has weakened, and disappointing the hopes which early distinction had raised.”⁸⁴ Every mental effort resulted in wear and tear on the brain, and unless sufficient time was allowed for the repair of these faculties, young people would be exhausted and incapable of meeting the demands of higher education.

⁸¹ Shepherd, *For Girls* (1884) 125.

⁸² Provincial Board of Health, *Manual of Hygiene* (1886) 248-249. Choretic movement was a symptom of St. Vitus’ Dance. A disease “characterized by a twitching and convulsive action of certain muscles, usually confined to one side of the system; and it affects principally the arm and leg. It is chiefly incident to young persons of both sexes, but particularly those of a weak constitution, or whose health and vigor have been impaired by confinement, or by the use of scanty and improper nourishment.” W. Beach, M.D., *The American Practice Condensed or the Family Physician Being the Scientific System of Medicine; on Vegetable Principles. Designed for all Classes.* (New York: James M’Alister, 1848) 455.

Some manuals emphasized more positive aspects of female difference. Instead of limiting opportunities for young women through lowered expectations, Dr. George Napheys in 1889 declared that the mental faculties of men and women differed, but were not unequal. Past arguments based on biological differences “drawn from the somewhat less weight of the brain of woman, is met by the fact that the most able men are often undersized, with small heads.”⁸⁵ Napheys argued that the subordinate status woman occupied in society arose

partly from the fact that the part she plays in reproduction prevents her from devoting her whole time and energies to the acquisition of power, and partly from the fact that those faculties in which she is superior to man have been obscured and oppressed by the animal vigor and selfishness of the male.⁸⁶

As civilization advanced, Napheys supposed, more civil and political powers would be granted, until the rights of men and women became equal before the law. Unlike the earlier manuals that used physiological differences to substantiate arguments against the formal education of young women, Jefferies in 1894, encouraged “the girls to rival the boys in all that is good, and refined, and ennobling. We want them to rival the boys, as they well can, in learning, in understanding, in virtues; in all noble qualities of mind and heart.”⁸⁷ Experience and education were valuable tools for both sexes, and were necessary for the ‘progression’ of society.

In order to maintain their happiness, a young educated woman needed an “opportunity for expression in activities that correspond to these faculties.”⁸⁸ Often this need referred not to professional occupations, but to scientific motherhood and the creation of suitable wives for intelligent men. Public opinion, as expressed in magazines, decided that education clarified a woman’s mind, enabled her to follow a line of reasoning with precision, and garnered her the ability to persuade others to her line of thinking during social occasions. She “will grasp the

⁸¹ Provincial Board of Health, Manual of Hygiene (1886) 249.

⁸⁴ Provincial Board of Health, Manual of Hygiene (1886) 249.

⁸⁵ Dr. George Napheys, The Physical Life of Woman: Advice to the Maiden, Wife and Mother (Toronto: George Maclean Rose & Sons, 1889) 20.

⁸⁶ Napheys (1889) 20-21.

⁸⁷ Dr. B.G. Jefferies, Searchlights on Health (Toronto: J.L.Nichols, 1894) 27.

⁸⁸ Helen Ekin Starrett, “The Future of Our Daughters” Forum (October 1890) 190.

meaning of life and its opportunities and risks, and so be able to moderate her hopes, bear up against her disappointments, and discipline her imagination.”⁸⁹ Those who argued that education challenged femininity and turned young women into blue-stockings were reassured that

the really educated woman...can comprehend better than any one else the true meaning and glory of womanhood...she has learned that the growth of civilization implies a progressive specialization of capabilities and efforts...she may be fitted to do work which a man cannot possibly do, and may help the world along in a way that is parallel, not identical, with his.⁹⁰

Education was looked upon as a preparation for a companionate marriage, in which both partners maintained an equal respect for the other within the home. Young women and men were trained to “think, to appreciate, and to be righteous” so that when they became parents they would be adequately prepared for their new role.⁹¹

Stall, in 1897, advocated the notion of separate, but complimentary spheres for men and women. From his depiction, women needed enough education to allow them to take their role as the ‘centripetal force’ in the private and public sphere. Her stability, and wish to maintain order insured permanency, while men represented life’s ‘centrifugal force’ ensuring that society did not remain stagnant but continued to progress and evolve.⁹² Authors based their conclusions on ‘scientific evidence’ that entrenched societal norms and perceptions of gender. For example, based on perceived cognitive skills, intellectually, as well as physically, “men and women are best suited for their respective duties and responsibilities in life.”⁹³ In decision making, men were considered to be more methodical, and tackled problems in a logical step-by-step pattern.

Women, on the other hand, reached conclusions at a faster pace and relied on intuition to form their judgments. Stall did not mean to imply that a young woman was incapable of logical deductions, just that she formed them in a more spiritual rather than a rational fashion. Her quick perceptions were the result of a nervous system more delicate and refined, and therefore

⁸⁹ M.G. Van Renesselaer, “The Waste of Women’s Intellectual Force”, *Forum* (July 1892) 617-618.

⁹⁰ M.G. Van Renesselaer, “The Waste of Women’s Intellectual Force”, *Forum* (July 1892) 620.

⁹¹ Charles Thwing, “Should Woman’s Education Differ from Man’s?” *Forum* (February 1901) 735.

⁹² Stall, *What a Young Husband Ought to Know* (1897) 41.

impressionable, than that of her male counterpart.⁹⁴ Ella Winston, who wrote for American women's magazines, shared this view. Winston declared the 'New Woman' who pushed for entrance into male dominated professions and the vote, suffered from "strange hallucinations," and "like an over-indulged child, so long as she is denied one privilege, that privilege she desires above all others."⁹⁵ Winston maintained that at the end of the day a patriarchal world maintained stability because "man is man and woman is woman. That was the order of creation and it must so remain."⁹⁶

Mitchinson argues that for Victorian Canadians, "form was a reflection of preordained function and, from their perspective, determined that function...Nature was God's design and, consequently, so too were these respective societal roles. They were not gender specific, they were sex specific."⁹⁷ I agree that Victorian conceptions of life roles were sex specific, but gender-specific notions of masculinity and femininity were also entrenched in how these physiological differences were explained to the public. It is undeniable that only a woman can be a mother, but society played an integral role in constructing the gender-specific notion that all women needed to be mothers, or that all men needed to squire a brood of children in order to fulfill societal standards.

Those who did not fit into these norms were often ridiculed. In 1896, the Canadian Medical Review printed the following:

What is a "New Woman"?—*The Gentlewoman* offered a prize for the best epigrammatic definition of the new woman, and among the many replies received were:
 The old maid trying to be a young man.
 Six of one and half a dozen of the other.
 A creature of opinions decided, and skirts divided.
 One who has ceased to be a lady, and has not yet attained to be a gentleman.
 Man's newest and best reason for remaining single.
 Madam became Adam.

⁹³ Stall, What a Young Husband Ought to Know (1897) 34.

⁹⁴ Stall, What a Young Husband ought to Know (1897) 39-41.

⁹⁵ Ella Winston "Foibles of the New Woman" Forum (April 1896) 187.

⁹⁶ "Foibles of the New Woman" Forum (April 1896) 192.

⁹⁷ Wendy Mitchinson, The Nature of Their Bodies (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991) 39.

Mannishness minus manliness.

The palm, however, was awarded to the following: "A fresh darn on the original blue stocking."—*Medical Age*⁹⁸

Thus, women who sought formal education or employment were often saddled with negative stereotypes that declared them abnormal in their pursuits and disparaged their femininity.

When Pancoast spoke of a woman's 'sphere of action' in 1903, he did not

wish to be placed in the category of those Modern Pseudo-Reformers who would have women *unsex* themselves by running into those wild vagaries and excesses of a Political and Social nature...We go for her advancement in every attribute consistent wither her normal organism, and the attainment of every exaltation that will render her fully the *equal* of man in all the moral and social relations of general society.⁹⁹

Continuing to withhold suffrage from women was commended by Pancoast. The realm of politics tested the delicate nerves of a woman, and tumultuous political machinery only degraded her refined sensibilities. The denial of suffrage was thought to be a compliment to the superior morality of women.¹⁰⁰ "Properly educated" young women could become competitive in business and social matters, and proved this through the study of theology, medicine, law, and the arts.¹⁰¹ Young women were informed that they were talented and sturdy enough to become professionals and assist others in need, but they were too delicate to withstand the barbs of the political arena. A woman's true calling was to care for her family.¹⁰²

In 1913, Clarke's argument resurfaced. The fictional characters in Health and the School debated the merits and faults of co-education. Physiological differences ruled the amount of education to which a young man or woman should be exposed. The evidence "that boys and girls reach sexual maturity at different ages, and accordingly need their school work lightened at

⁹⁸ "Selections" The Canadian Medical Review (Vol. IV, No. 3: September 1896) 89.

⁹⁹ Pancoast, Tokology (1903) 298-299. Emphasis in original.

¹⁰⁰ Pancoast, Tokology (1903) 301.

¹⁰¹ Pancoast, Tokology (1903) 302-303, 307. Emphasis in original. In order to discover the true sphere of a woman, Pancoast recommended educating them to their "fullest capacity," but did not elaborate further what he meant by this vague reference.

¹⁰² Pancoast, Tokology (1903) 308. In 1922, the promotion of family life was still popular with manual authors such as Dr. Helen MacMurchy who declared, "marriage is all right if you have children. They make the ideal home. They make you happy. Life is worth living. A home without children! O, no!" MacMurchy, Little Blue Books: Home Series Vol. 1. (1922) 6.

different times, constitutes a rather forceful argument for educating the two sexes separately from the thirteenth to the seventeenth years."¹⁰³ This was not to imply that the brain of one sex was either inferior or superior to the other, rather that they differed because men and women clearly viewed things from different standpoints. Wood-Allen described this phenomenon quite pointedly when she stated that men and women were the "two eyes of the race, and the use of both is needed to a clear understanding of any problem of human interest [sic]."¹⁰⁴ Both perspectives needed to be cultivated.

While domestic pursuits continued to personify the result of female education, the definition of the home was changing. Under the heading, 'Dawn of a New Era,' in 1922, Jefferies broke away from the advice doled out by his predecessors when he wrote that the political and economic rights women received were long overdue. Furthermore,

authorities seem to agree that the same is true of a woman's erotic rights. The modern man has come to look upon his wife as a partner, entitled to an equal share in the rights, privileges, and pleasures...Woman is no longer placed upon a pedestal in public and degraded in private life. The word 'home' is taking on new meaning—the meaning that Nature always intended it to have.¹⁰⁵

Dr. MacMurphy also raised the question of citizenship to the newly immigrated amongst her female readers. Women were patronizingly encouraged to "read the papers and talk them over...Think. Use your mind everyday."¹⁰⁶ The importance of providing the country with a 'good vote' went hand in hand with awareness of the government and the political issues of the day.

In addition, society no longer ignored the inroads women had made in various professions (medical, education, legal, social work). Although Jefferies applauded female suffrage and education, he did not feel that a woman was able to have both a career and a family. A young woman who was "not willing to assume the responsibility of a true wife, and be

¹⁰³ Burks, Health and the School (1913) 61-62.

¹⁰⁴ Wood-Allen, What a Young Woman Ought to Know (1913) 109.

¹⁰⁵ Jefferies, Safe Counsel (1922) 59.

¹⁰⁶ MacMurphy, Little Blue Books: Home Series Vol. 1. (1922) 8.

crowned with the sacred diadem of mother hood, should never think of getting married.”¹⁰⁷ The decision to reject motherhood was a momentous one, and the life choices an adolescent girl could make were limited as demonstrated by Figure 9.

A young woman had to chose whether to be an honest, industrious (and single) career girl; a revered mother; or by far the most dangerous to tenets of health, an entertainer (the loose morals of the profession were taken for granted by Jefferies). Those who realized at an early age that they lacked the “gift” of “maternal instinct” needed the freedom to pursue their career goals; after all a respectable career was infinitely more desirable to societal standards than the third option presented.¹⁰⁸ Despite assurances that a career was an attractive alternative, motherhood was still touted as the most fulfilling occupation a woman could hold. Certainly, “to behold the trust and confidence in a baby’s eyes is of far greater importance to the world than that you should receive the votes or the applause of ten million men.”¹⁰⁹ In all fairness to Jefferies, statistics at the time did seem to reinforce his theories. For example, historian Judith Fingard claims that of the women who attended Dalhousie University between 1885 and 1900, 41 to 55 per cent remained single after they graduated.¹¹⁰ Women were no longer denied entrance into the professions, but their acceptance of higher education and a career was thought to negate their chances of becoming wives and mothers.

In an age when female education was not a priority, familial support was necessary for success. University education was expensive; parents were willing to make monetary sacrifices to send their sons to university, but were not yet convinced that their daughters had an equal claim. Sons were expected to “determine the middle class family’s place in the world, but

¹⁰⁷ Jefferies, Safe Counsel (1922) 69. The term “sacred diadem” is at odds with Jefferies earlier claim that women in the home were no longer put on pedestals.

¹⁰⁸ Jefferies, Safe Counsel (1922) 63-64.

¹⁰⁹ Jefferies, Safe Counsel (1922) 65.

¹¹⁰ Judith Fingard, “The New Woman Goes to College: Dalhousie Coeds 1881-1921,” unpublished paper, 1986, 15 cited by Mitchinson, The Nature of Their Bodies, 85.

daughters could offer the family a particular sort of tenderness and spirituality."¹¹¹ At McGill University in Montreal, Quebec, anglophone women had attended Arts programs since 1884, but they were allowed to do so only if they were segregated from their male classmates and accompanied by a chaperone so that a young woman's tender qualities were protected.¹¹² For some students, higher education did not force women to reject their belief in separate spheres as university attendance extended rather than altered social patterns. For example, young women were encouraged to take courses in fine art or music—the traditional marker of accomplished females. Recognition of this opportunity is not to imply that women were welcomed with open arms into the institutions from the beginning. In 1878 their presence at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario was considered in conservative quarters to be a mockery of the serious nature of a university education that was designed to prepare men for their positions as breadwinners. Despite these reservations, and the reiteration of Clarke's theories by the majority of manual writers, female students would eventually make up twenty percent of the student body by 1900.¹¹³

Thus, the formal education of women was questioned on both physical and moral levels. It was assumed, based on a young woman's more 'delicate' exterior that she was not physically able to meet the challenges of higher education. Her entrance into puberty was dramatized considerably more than her male counterpart's. The energy she required developing healthy reproductive organs could not be funneled into studies without dire consequences. Mitchinson argues that the competitive nature fostered in co-education promoted "the degeneracy of morals and manners on the part of both sexes, women losing their shy passivity when forced to compete with men and men losing that chivalric deference to the weaker sex"; competition also acted as a

¹¹¹ Deborah Gorham, The Victorian Girl and the Feminine Ideal (Bloomington: Indiana university Press, 1981) 5.

¹¹² Micheline Dumont, Quebec Women: A History (Toronto: the Women's Press, 1987) 244.

¹¹³ Lynne Marks, Chad Gaffield, "Women at Queen's University, 1895-1905: A 'Little Sphere' All Their Own?" Ontario History (Toronto: Ontario Historical Society, December 1986) 343-344, 333, 336.

threat to the entire social order.¹¹⁴ A woman's mental deficiency was touted by academics and doctors as justification for her exclusion from the public sphere. With the exception of Shepherd, Napheys, and Jefferies the majority of the authors held the opinion that a woman's chance of obtaining formal education were limited by her reproductive system.

Remarkably, many physicians and academics substantiated this view. For example, in 1893 the Lancet reported that

Professor William James of Harvard...announces that women develop early and then cease to grow mentally. Professor Crichton Browne, finds that women's brains are smaller than men's, and their frontal lobes less richly supplied with blood. Professor Lomprose finds that women are less sensitive than men, and regards their receptive and perceptive organs represent an incompletely developed type. Altogether, science is bearing down very hard on the ladies.¹¹⁵

Eventually these beliefs lost currency, as contemporary ideology grudgingly admitted to the intelligence of women despite theories that equated brain size with ability. Yet, even the few manual writers who supported the formal education of women did not stray far from the norm, since the pursuit of a career was believed to preclude a woman's chance of having a family or husband. Only men were able to defy the tenets of biological determinism in the construction of their character. The autonomy of women remained limited and linked to her physiology.

¹¹⁴ Mitchinson, 117.

¹¹⁵ Canada Lancet (May 1893) 311.

Chapter Five: Toward Adulthood: Pure Characters and Responsible Reproduction

Culture and Character: Art, Literature and the Crusade Against the Evils of Ignorance

“Evil is wrought by want of thought, as well as by want of heart.”¹ –Dr. Angell Drake, 1908

The social purity movement, a campaign launched by middle class temperance activists, educators, physicians, and medical advice authors at the turn of the century, made it their personal responsibility to raise the moral tone of Canadian society. Historian Mariana Valverde argues that the popularization of social purity arose because the nation was “seen as rather fragile and as subject to a quasi-physical process of decay that [could] only be halted if the individuals, the cells of the body politic, [took] control over their innermost essence of self. This is assumed to be morality.”² Uncurbed sexual desire was a virus of modern society, whose influence if not tamed and contained, would cause epidemic destruction upon humanity. Discourses on scientific hygiene and social morality bolstered one another in a persuasive lexicon that established the behavioural norms of the purity movement and the movement flowed into advice literature.

In the search for purity and social control, images of femininity and masculinity were established. Despite the active role women played in popularizing the social purity movement, they were idealized within the rhetoric for their passivity, maternal selflessness, and their need to be protected.³ On the other hand, in the home, women were encouraged to take an active role in teaching moral principles to their children. In 1889, the Family Physician, or Every Man His Own Doctor noted that since a mother had the most opportunities to approach subjects of morality and hygiene discreetly, she had a duty to the community to impart her wisdom within the home.⁴ By comparison, “character-building agencies” such as the YMCA supported supervised public recreational programs to nurture and discipline mental, physical, social and

¹ Drake, What A Young Wife Ought to Know (1908) 46.

² Valverde, 28.

³ Valverde, 30.

⁴ Family Phvsician, or Everyman (1889) 316.

religious development.⁵ At the root of a youth's character was virtue and strength, foundations of the individual will which could move a young man to action while suppressing his baser urges.⁶

Lessons on morality were best cultivated if adolescents "let their minds and dispositions be formed on the models of the virtuous fireside rather than upon those of the gaily decorated and frivolous saloon or drawing-room."⁷ Once taught the rules of society at an early age, the judgement of young people would be strong enough to cope with the problems and decisions they faced in adolescence. If undesired traits were ignored, or a youth's education neglected, it was the role of educators to step in to fill the gap because "adolescence not only gives 'reverberations' of the past; it prophesies its future."⁸ The slightest infringement could send them plunging into the abyss. This dilemma was best illustrated by Figures 10 and 11.

In 1889, modesty was thought to be the most valuable adornment of a woman.⁹ Jefferies declared in 1894 "man is the brain, but woman is the heart of humanity; he its judgement, she its feeling; he its strength, she its grace, ornament, and solace."¹⁰ This conclusion was reinforced by Stall in 1897. Based upon the states of activity in eggs and sperm, Stall expanded this observation into a biologically deterministic theory that explained separate spheres. He concluded with authority "in the very fibre of her structure she is quiet while he is more active."¹¹ The ideal adolescent girl was "gentle—not weak, but gentle, and kind, and affectionate;" in order to preserve this sweetness, society ensured that "wherever a girl is, there should be a sweet, subduing and harmonizing influence of purity, and truth, and love, pervading and hallowing, from center to circumference, the entire circle in which she moves."¹² Young women needed protection from the harsh realities of everyday life so their 'natural' naiveté, the

⁵ David Macleod, Building Character in the American Boy: The Boy Scouts, YMCA, and their Forerunners, 1870-1920 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983) 3.

⁶ Macleod, 30, 31.

⁷ Canadian Medical Men, Family Physician: Every Man His Own Doctor (Toronto: Rose Publishing Co., 1889) 316.

⁸ Forbush, The Boy Problem (1907) 45.

⁹ Family Physician: Every Man (1889) 318.

¹⁰ Jefferies, Searchlights (1894) 25.

essence of their character, was preserved. Exposure to sensational literature made a young woman susceptible to 'improper' influences. Purity agencies such as the Women's Christian Temperance Union supported this advice by example as it initiated a crusade against 'obscene' literature through its department of Purity in Literature, Art and Fashion.¹³

An over-active imagination, influenced by sensational novels, was dangerous to a fragile nervous system. Fiction was deplored because what lay underneath its veneer of refinement could sully a young woman's mind with "sickly sentimentalism" and "impure desires."¹⁴ Abnormal excitement stimulated a young woman's sexual organs, and in some cases caused premature development in which a child adopted the physical attributes of a woman, months and possibly even years before she would have under normal circumstances. In 1913, Wood-Allen decided the new thoughts of "beaus and lovers" caused young women to indulge in sentimental daydreams and self-abuse.¹⁵

Young men were also susceptible, and manuals argued that the influence of adventure novels should not be over-looked. For example,

it was stated upon good authority that 'Cervantes laughed away the chivalry of Spain,' for 'Spain produced no heroes after Don Quixote.' If a single book can change the character of an entire nation, how much more easily may a young men be beguiled and misled by an author who has the ability to make virtue appear disgusting and vice attractive?¹⁶

Novels trivialized human experience and stimulated emotions unnecessarily. Eyes that wept "so easily over fiction and fancy seldom have tears for the perils and sorrows of real life."¹⁷ Clinging to the principles he was taught in school, or by his parents, or even by medical advice authors, instead of what he read between the pages of a salacious novel, allowed a young man a reasonable chance of averting vice and ill-health.

¹¹ Stall, What a Young Husband Ought to Know (1897) 39.

¹² Jefferies, Searchlights (1894) 28.

¹³ Valverde, 59.

¹⁴ Jefferies, Searchlights (1894) 404.

¹⁵ Wood-Allen, What a Young Woman Ought to Know (1913) 124, 151.

¹⁶ Stall, What a Young Man Ought to Know (1897) 240.

A young man whose mind raced from the images “and the corruption of those books which reek with moral rottenness is likely to be contaminated by the evils which are so pervasive and contagious in this atmosphere of death.”¹⁸ To remedy this situation, young men (and women) were told that nothing informed the intellect so well as a respected, daily newspaper read judiciously in small doses. Fiction was best left aside until they were past the age of twenty-five.¹⁹ In simple language, Wood-Allen told her readers that

it will be well for you to remember that the pictures which you make by your own conduct are stored away in your own memory, and will also make an impression in after years upon your children. They may not see the same memory-pictures that you see, but an impression is made upon their characters, and they will think less nobly and purely of themselves, if you have been willing to look at pictures or read books which were degrading in any degree.²⁰

In books, it was possible for children and adults to “choose our friends, and from the very best of earth,” and the same criterion that a young person used in choosing companions should be applied to their choice of reading material.²¹

In 1909, young people were advised that their staple reading should include histories, biographies, scientific discoveries, accounts of travel and exploration, and religious or moral tales. The world was “too full of good books, and there are too many things in the realm of the actual and the real, concerning which you should not be ignorant, to permit of the reading of worthless books.”²² Intelligence was something to be nurtured, and once satisfied young people were able to reflect upon more spiritual matters. As the body,

when in health, hungers for food, and the mind for knowledge, so a healthy spiritual nature reaches out after God and after spiritual truths, and if you were to deny yourself the Christian influences of your home,... the Church...and the companionship of Christian people, your spiritual nature would be starved.²³

¹⁷ Stall, What a Young Man Ought to Know (1897) 240.

¹⁸ Stall, What a Young Man Ought to Know (1897) 241.

¹⁹ Stall, What a Young Man Ought to Know (1897) 268. Scientific texts, the biographies of great men and scripture reading were prescribed for youthful readers to exercise their intellect upon.

²⁰ Wood-Allen, What a Young Girl Ought to Know (1897) 165.

²¹ Wood-Allen, What a Young Girl Ought to Know (1897) 166.

²² Stall, What a Young Boy Ought to Know (1909) 152.

²³ Stall, What a Young Boy Ought to Know (1909) 153.

A moral conscience had to be exercised, just as an adolescent read to improve his or her memory, or played sports to develop muscle tone. Moreover, this belief was expressed universally by the advice literature studied and was not exclusive to manuals written by religious leaders (Stall) or purity advocates (Jefferies).

Similarly, dancing was an amusement cautioned against because of its immoral influence. In 1897, evidence from “a bishop in the Roman Catholic Church, in conversation with a bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church” revealed “the fact that nineteen out of every twenty women who fall, confess the beginning of their sad state to the modern dance.”²⁴ The appeal of dance to one’s sensuous nature was illustrated by the “insufficient dressing...the suggestive attitudes, the personal contact, the passionate excitement and the undue license allowed while whirling upon the floor.”²⁵ As late as 1922, Jefferies longed for the grace, modesty, and respect that old-fashioned dances such as the quadrille, minuet, or even square dancing fostered. Jazz music “furnishes the vulgar atmosphere” and was considered particularly detrimental to decorum.²⁶ The Tango, Texas Tommy, Fox Trot, and the Shimmy were labeled as sexually promiscuous because “even under the most favorable circumstances modern dancing is simply spooning set to music” regardless of the public’s stamp of approval.²⁷

Some authors went so far as to question the role of the nude in art. In 1894, Jefferies found it reprehensible how so many art galleries contained “pictures and statuary which cannot fail to fan the fires of sensualism, unless the thought of the visitor are trained to the strictest purity.”²⁸ He inquired,

why should artists and sculptors persist in shocking the finer sensibilities of old and young of both sexes by crowding upon their view representations of naked human forms in attitudes of luxurious abandon? Public taste may demand it, but let those who have the power endeavor to reform public taste.²⁹

²⁴ Stall, What a Young Man Ought to Know (1897) 243.

²⁵ Stall, What a Young Man Ought to Know (1897) 243-244.

²⁶ Jefferies, Safe Counsel (1922) 207.

²⁷ Jefferies, Safe Counsel (1922) 202.

²⁸ Jefferies, Searchlights (1894) 421.

²⁹ Jefferies, Searchlights (1894) 421

Society as a whole, but the young in particular, needed to be sheltered from images that depicted sexuality in any form. That a picture could make a deep and possibly harmful impression upon a person's character was considered common knowledge.³⁰

By 1922, without offering any explanations as to why he changed his opinion, Jefferies proclaimed that the nude in art had the potential to be a valuable aid in sexual instruction. Viewing art did not mar the innocent, and those who believed that were accused of being trapped in a delusion of false modesty. He theorized that if children familiarized themselves with famous statues and paintings at an early age, they were then "vaccinated against the contagion of smutty pictures which will sooner or later come to their attention."³¹ After appreciating the beauty of the former, the "crudity and unnaturalness" of the latter became obvious.³² More importantly, the taboo of nudity was dispelled, and young children (boys especially) would no longer feel the need to pass around 'smutty' pictures.

Another essential factor of respectable character was the cultivation of proper social manners. Without women present to add a modicum of respectability, in 1875 Wilder believed that young men could not be trusted to act as gentlemen:

with very few exceptions, the minds of women look upward at the beautiful and good, however much vanity and frivolity might intrude from inheritance or association. But the minds of men, while apparently capable of loftier intellectual flights, are apt, at intervals, to drop helplessly to the unstable ground of *double entendre*, or even to sink into the mire of indecent expression. At the worst, a female association is animated at times of gossip. But in nearly every place where men alone congregate,...there are spoken words which show that where men are gathered together without women, the Devil is apt to be in the midst of them.³³

³⁰ Davies, *Story of Life* (1922) 443-434. Those who did not read extensively were thought to be particularly influenced by illustrations. Unlike Stall, however, Davies believed that "we almost never get any unclean thoughts from the great pictures and statues. But the trouble with other kinds of pictures is that they store up all kinds of imagination and desire."

³¹ Jefferies, *Safe Counsel* (1922) 228.

³² Jefferies, *Safe Counsel* (1922) 228.

³³ Wilder, *What Young People Should Know* (1875) 154-155. Emphasis in original.

Gossip might be a dreadful and rude habit, but it was not associated with a fall into depravity that marked the impurity of a young man's language.

Association of the sexes was positive, but as Mrs. Shepherd addressed in a chapter aimed at young men, "by extensive acquaintance is not meant a lax, loose familiarity, but the same friendly, respectful intercourse with the brothers of young lady friends as, if well brought up, a girl has with her own brothers."³⁴ All authors knew of good-hearted, virtuous young women who had been ruined through the "fiendish machinations of perfidious suitors."³⁵ The confiding nature of a young woman, though a cherished quality, most often led her down a shameful path. Amidst the occupants of houses of ill-repute, there could always be found young women who

would sooner had thought an angel of light capable of deceit than those who had betrayed and ruined them. But they would not be warned, or had not been advised until the die was cast; and hence without a hope, their wretched downward career began apace, until at last, with their ears familiarized to the ribald song and jest, they sought refuge from the upbraidings of conscience in the intoxicating cup, which so completed and rendered hideous the work of debauch that their persons, once beautiful perhaps to intensity, became a loathsome mass, that provoked both horror and disgust in even the coarsest nature.³⁶

The importance of a woman to comprehend the hidden agenda of a man was invaluable. To foster an enlightened perspective, a religious education, healthy conversations on moral principles, and behavioural excellence among family members was prescribed.

No matter how "agreeable an attractive face and form, these do not compromise all that is necessary to the most abiding and exalted manhood, and are not infrequently a delusion and a snare. There is no absolute manliness without manly principles."³⁷ Young men were encouraged to entrench these principles ("moral rectitude and a proper sense of our duty towards heaven") into their conduct to such an extent, that their very virtue would "let them therefore be sought

³⁴ Shepherd, For Girls (1884) 189.

³⁵ Family Physician: Every Man (1889) 322.

³⁶ Family Physician: Every Man (1889) 322. The tone and wording of the above passage I found uniquely flowery and emotional when compared to the rest of the text in the encyclopedia.

after assiduously by both mother and daughter” as potential suitors.³⁸ A man with such qualities was a treasure in society, and his company an invaluable commodity.

Young men were told that they must live up to the image of being “the noblest work of God,” and fashion their behaviour in order to reach ‘perfection’.³⁹ Consequently, the greater freedom that adolescent boys were afforded in comparison to their female peers should not be taken undue advantage. Their liberty to roam the world was awarded only due to their greater physical strength, and not because of mental superiority.⁴⁰ It was precisely the ‘fact’ that women were weaker physical vessels that young men were encouraged to adopt chivalrous attitudes towards them. For instance, young men were advised in 1889 that if there was “no intention of awakening in the female bosom a sentiment of love, there should be neither act nor word calculated to provoke it.”⁴¹ It was ungallant to toy with the affections of a young woman, unmanly to press attentions onto a woman without first offering for her hand, and repugnant to seduce her with false promises. By comparison, young women were told not to tease or flirt outrageously with young men. It was also considered improper to write letters, or give photographs to young men unless they were also relatives.⁴² Instead, they needed to be particularly sensitive to pubescent men because during the ages of twelve to eighteen they went through an awkward period of transition. Authors speculated that lessons which concerned respectful attitudes towards the opposite sex established a foundation of mutual consideration that would be necessary for a successful marriage.⁴³

In every situation, the essence of a young man’s character was self-control. Since a “child’s character is the nucleus of a man’s” it was never too early to teach young men the

³⁷ Family Physician; Every Man (1889) 324.

³⁸ Family Physician; Every Man (1889) 324.

³⁹ Family Physician; Every Man (1889) 325.

⁴⁰ Family Physician; Every Man (1889) 325.

⁴¹ Family Physician; Every Man (1889) 330.

⁴² “Youth’s Question Corner” Ladies’ Companion Vol. 1 No. 2 (Toronto: March 1893) 26.

⁴³ Wood-Allen, What a Young Woman Ought to Know (1913) 106-107.

rudiments of responsible action.⁴⁴ In 1922, the power of a young man's thoughts determined whether he would grow up to become a "true man, self-mastered in all his powers."⁴⁵ The way a youth thought about sex made him "clean or unclean in speech, and deed, and habit."⁴⁶ Davies sympathized that young men were 'naturally' tempted to think of the opposite sex, but young men could "force" themselves

to dwell upon their minds and their personal influence, upon their fine traits of character and the good influence upon you, instead of letting your thoughts dwell at all upon their physical differences...In the same way, if your boy friends tend to think about the organs and functions of sex, you can turn to a good healthy problem of athletics and the meaning of a good game of golf and shift the whole line of thought.⁴⁷

Realistic or not, the advice of Davies in 1922 and authors before him emphasized an individual's mind over matter. Impure inclination was an 'enemy' that could be conquered through denial and self-repression.

Since a man was known by the company he kept, trustworthy companions for young men must be selected from those with good judgement, Christian values, and sober natures.⁴⁸ In 1897, Stall described three classes of men who should be avoided at all costs. All three were "more dangerous than thieves and robbers" because instead of looting material goods, they stole an adolescent's pure spirit simply by association.⁴⁹ The first class of 'vicious' men consisted of those who gave in to vice, and frequented public brothels in order to feed their lustful passions with "women who are as degraded and polluted as themselves" thereby exposing themselves to disease.⁵⁰ The second class feared diseased prostitutes so instead "supported a private prostitute.

⁴⁴ Jefferies: Searchlights (1894) 24.

⁴⁵ Davies, Story of Life (1922) 445.

⁴⁶ Davies, The Story of Life (1922) 445.

⁴⁷ Davies, The Story of Life (1922) 445-446.

⁴⁸ Stall, What a Young Man Ought to Know (1897) 69.

⁴⁹ Stall, What a Young Man Ought to Know (1897) 166.

⁵⁰ Stall, What a Young Man Ought to Know (1897) 166.

While such a man in some measure protects himself from the probability of disease, yet he is sure to suffer perpetual torment from the fact that he is constantly liable to exposure.”⁵¹

The final class of man was, in Stall’s opinion, the most reprehensible and was to be avoided at all costs. These men had not the financial means to support prostitutes; so they seduced the innocent young women of their acquaintance. A young or older man

who despoils a pure girl of her honor, and robs her of her virtue, in a single act, for a momentary gratification, deposes her from a place in the estimation of society which can never be regained, and pollutes her thought, and sends her headlong in a path of ruin and vice, —such a man deserves no less to be hung than the man who deliberately, or in a moment of anger or passion, takes the life of his fellowman.⁵²

For both sexes, romantic dalliances were condemned. Historian Mary Odem argues that reformers insisted that adolescent women were uniformly regarded as passive victims rather than the instigators of illicit sexual encounters.⁵³ This certainly is representative of medical advice literature, where young women were considered modest and reticent in the presence of young men. Stall’s judgement of such a man was stern, but his real concern was with the woman whose virginity was lost, and future destroyed. For no woman, thus violated, would ever be able to respect and love her own seducer, even if he should subsequently become her husband. With the weakness of both partners thus exposed readers were asked to consider: “how shall you be able to trust one whom you yourself taught to be untrue and unfaithful to her sex, to herself, to her parents, to her friends, and to her God...how can you expect afterwards to have the respect and esteem of those whom you have disgraced?”⁵⁴ Social disgrace and ostracism were the regrettable consequences of lost self-control and actions decided in haste and passion. To clarify, responsible action was the foundation of a man’s character at any age. The moral man, assumed to be the desired product of adolescence, was one who “obeys *himself*.”⁵⁵

⁵¹ Stall, What a Young Man Ought to Know (1897) 166-167.

⁵² Stall, What a Young Man Ought to Know (1897) 167.

⁵³ Odem, 25.

⁵⁴ Stall, What a Young Man Ought to Know (1897) 168-169.

⁵⁵ Forbush, The Boy Problem (1907) 35. Emphasis in original.

Friendships between girls were usually regarded as healthy; however, sentimental attachments were discouraged. In 1893, the Ladies' Companion on the pretext of the "dangerous transmission of the germs of disease" condemned displays of affection between young women, especially kissing.⁵⁶ Wood-Allen also cautioned female readers against holding hands, kissing or in any other way being outwardly affectionate with other girls. She regarded such friendships as

not only silly, they are even dangerous. They are a weakening of moral fiber, a waste of mawkish sentimentality. They may even be worse. Such friendship may degenerate even into a species of self-abuse that is most deplorable. When girls are so sentimentally fond of each other that they are like silly lovers when together, and weep over each other's absence in uncontrollable agony, the conditions are serious enough to consult a physician. It is an abnormal state of affairs, and if probed thoroughly might be found to be a sort of perversion, a sex mania, needing immediate and perhaps severe measures.⁵⁷

Clearly, a heterosexual standard was promoted as the norm in 1913. 'Crushes' on other girls were not looked upon as normal expressions of love, a phase of sexual development, or an innocent expression of thoughtful friendship, but instead was viewed as a serious medical condition that required immediate professional attention, and mysterious (vaguely threatening) remedies.

Physical attributes were considered markers of disposition for both sexes. For instance, hair texture and pigmentation were assumed to reflect personality. Coarse black hair and skin, or coarse red hair and whiskers, indicated powerful animal passions and strength of character. Fine, light, or auburn hair indicated quick susceptibilities and a refinement of personal taste. Fine dark or brown hair represented exquisite perception and strength of character, while ruddy cheeks reflected a purity of character that was usually reserved for the young. Curly hair was an indication of moodiness, while red heads were considered excitable.⁵⁸ In 1903, the correlation between hair colour and temperament was further legitimized in advice manuals. Black hair

⁵⁶ "Against Indiscriminating Kissing" Ladies' Companion Vol. 1 No. 2 (Toronto: March 1893) 7.

⁵⁷ Wood-Allen, What a Young Woman Ought to Know (1913) 177-178.

⁵⁸ Jefferies, Searchlights (1894) 491-492.

indicated athletic strength and vigor, and an ambitious, energetic, passionate nature. Fair hair represented a mild, tender, and tranquil nature.⁵⁹

While most of the traits listed above are of what we would now view as positive, discriminatory remarks based on ethnic and racial differences were elaborated upon. Illustrating a chapter on physical and moral degeneracy, Figure 12 stands quite alone from the preceding or following text. ‘The Degenerate Turk’ appears to the modern reader as a man in the prime of his health, alert, armed with a sword, and standing outside an intricately carved door. Due to the judgmental heading, however, readers in 1894 would have perhaps viewed the picture with different eyes. Dark colouring, an exotic setting, a dangerous weapon, and the powerful wording emphasized the ‘otherness’ and potentially dangerous nature of the figure.

Racial differences also reflected the amount of education and ‘training’ young people needed to develop moral character. In 1907, academic William Forbush relied on observations of the Fall River Boys’ Club to form judgements on the integrity of French Canadian and Jewish male adolescents. French-Canadians were characterized as illiterate, untrustworthy, and lacked a sense of honour. Proper moral education could turn these traits around, but they would not fashion admirable values on their own. On the other hand, Jewish men (although “physically the inferior of his Gentile brother”) were well read, polite, and “most accomplished mental gymnast(s).”⁶⁰ Forbush attributed these differences to “clan ethics,” or the traits a boy was taught (or not taught) by his community.⁶¹

The development of character and a healthy body in which to house the soul were also expressed to youthful readers. The problem of social purity would not be solved as long as two standards of virtue, one for men and another other for women, continued to be accepted by society. The state of the individual reflected the strength and moral purity of the nation. In other words,

⁵⁹ Pancoast, Tokology (1903) 391.

⁶⁰ Forbush, The Boy Problem (1907) 44.

as a patriot and as a lover of humanity you owe it to others that you yourself be pure...The age demands men who are pure from head to foot, from heart to brain...What you do is determining what you shall be, both in this world and in the next. If, as you should, you expect purity in the dear, sweet girl whom you hope some day to claim as your bride, you should remember that all you desire to find in her she has an equal right to expect and to demand of you.⁶²

Physical health created a strong shell. Authors like Stall also made it a priority to strengthen the soul contained within the fragile exterior.

In 1897, Wood-Allen let her female readers in on a 'secret' about character. As a "little girl, [you] are making the face you will have to wear when you are an old woman."⁶³ In order to shape her personality, Wood-Allen claimed that a young woman could change her feelings by changing the expression on her face. Through suppression of her true emotions, a girl could establish more positive feelings when she "created them by making [herself] look as if [she] felt them, and so [she] can begin in [her] young girlhood to make of [herself], in [her] face and in [her] character, all that is true and noble."⁶⁴ Wood-Allen stated that every young woman wore "thought-garments" so that her most cheerful side could be showcased for those who encountered her.⁶⁵ The passages demonstrate how young women were taught that emotional control was expected, and that she had the power to manipulate how other members of society viewed her.

In 1913, Wood-Allen reiterated this advice when she implored young women to control their thoughts "and make them go where we send them. In too many cases thoughts wander here and there, with no power governing and guiding them."⁶⁶ When the body was poisoned through thoughts of anger or depression, it tainted the body's blood supply and prevented the organs from functioning. Benevolent emotions, by contrast, created "life-giving germs."⁶⁷ A cheerful

⁶¹ Forbush, The Boy Problem (1907) 45.

⁶² Stall, What a Young Man Ought to Know (1897) 42, 47.

⁶³ Wood-Allen, What a Young Girl Ought to Know (1897) 138.

⁶⁴ Wood-Allen, What a Young Girl Ought to Know (1897) 136.

⁶⁵ Wood-Allen, What a Young Girl Ought to Know (1897) 179.

⁶⁶ Wood-Allen, What a Young Woman Ought to Know (1913) 97.

⁶⁷ Wood-Allen, What a Young Woman Ought to Know (1913) 98.

attitude not only improved the quality of a young woman's blood, but made her more pleasant to observers. First impressions continued to be relied upon in future manuals. In 1922, Jefferies insisted that "persons who love music and are constantly humming or whistling a tune, are persons that need not be feared, they are kind-hearted and with few exceptions possess a loving disposition. Very few good musicians become criminals."⁶⁸ Thus, cultivation of happy facial expressions, and genteel talents, were encouraged because they were public markers of cheerful and honest personalities.

Young men were given different advice. As a guide to behaviour they were told to listen to their consciences, instead of relying on facial expressions.⁶⁹ Candid answers to the questions of young people were, authors concluded, the most prudent measure to ensure purity of character for both sexes. When the fictional character, conservative widower Mr. Martin, in Health and the School inquired if adults had to give up the nostalgic concept of youthful innocence, the superintendent wasted no time in dispelling the myth: not one child in twenty over the age of eight retained any sense of youthful innocence. Without proper guidance, they simply gathered tidbits of information on subjects they should not know about, or formed misconceptions over subjects with which they should have been familiar. The social worker in this 'debate' declared that if sex instruction was not carried out in the schools then "93 per cent of them" would never receive the proper 'facts' of life.⁷⁰ Morality was "not an accident. It is the result of sound heredity, rational training, and healthy environment."⁷¹

The first great lesson outside of self-control that a young man was supposed to learn was self-worth. He was reminded that he was of some importance; "that upon his wisdom, energy and faithfulness all else depends, and that the world cannot get along without him."⁷² In 1913,

⁶⁸ Jefferies, Safe Counsel (1922) 41.

⁶⁹ Stall, What a Young Boy Ought to Know (1909) 91.

⁷⁰ Burks, Health and the School (1913) The information for this quote and the above paragraph are found on pages 111-112.

⁷¹ Dr. Norman Barnesby, Forum (February, 1913) 3-4.

⁷² Wood-Allen, What a Young Woman Ought to Know (1913) 21.

Wood-Allen thought this lesson was invaluable for young women because the strength and vigor of the nation rested upon the soundness of her body and her willingness to embrace her duty as a mother.⁷³ Indeed, Gary Kinsman argues that the promotion, or even perhaps glamorization, of a maternal instinct in young women by the social purity movement was in direct response to the changing role of women within society. He claims that in many respects they were little more than

campaigns to defend and shore up patriarchal family and gender organization... the feminist and suffrage movements were blamed for the decreasing birth rate among middle-class women, the growing divorce rate, the growing numbers of middle-class women who were not marrying, women's economic independence, and for involving women...in the 'public' world of production.⁷⁴

For example, institutions such as the YMCA or the YWCA had the common goal of promoting the values of a Christian home, and in some cases provided a model for understanding how young men and women developed 'proper' and respectful relationships.⁷⁵ Thus, concepts of self-worth and the vocation of motherhood were linked intimately in prescriptive notions of character building.

The adage 'an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure' typified the procedures Jefferies endorsed in his efforts to build the moral character of young people. "Moral Prophylaxis" or "the prevention of trouble" included such measures as "clean living, care in the selection of associates, active employment, outdoor sports, and wholesome recreation" to "control the sex impulse."⁷⁶ Proper instruction, especially in sexual matters, reduced the risk of sexual perversions and venereal disease.

In 1922 Jefferies cited the successful campaign against venereal disease used during World War One, that educated soldiers and civilians alike to the dangers of sexually transmitted

⁷³ Wood-Allen, What a Young Woman Ought to Know (1913) 23.

⁷⁴ Gary Kinsman, The Regulation of Desire and Sexuality in Canada (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1987) 85.

⁷⁵ Jodi Vandenberg-Daves, "The Manly Pursuit of a Partnership between the Sexes: The Debate over YMCA Programs from Women and Girls," The Journal of American History (March: 1992) 1331

⁷⁶ Jefferies, Safe Counsel (1922) 30.

disease, as an example of the positive force that education had on a society. He also claimed that since the average age at which a child learned about sex illegitimately was ten, the schools and parents could no longer wait until the normative age of fifteen to start instruction.⁷⁷ Early in the twentieth century, as purity advocates argued to raise the age of consent to eighteen (from fourteen) a new generation of reformers questioned the Victorian assumption of the sexual passivity of young women. While progressives “acknowledged female sexual agency,” they still did not see this as a norm, but rather labeled young women who engaged in illicit encounters as “‘delinquents’ in need of guidance and control.”⁷⁸ Adolescents possessed “faith, teachableness, imagination and other gifts of greatness which are only given once, and which, if not cherished and used, wither away without bringing forth the flower and fruits of character and great citizenship, in Home and Church and Country.”⁷⁹ Information learned in the schoolyard was often erroneous and insufficient. Protection of innocence could be maintained only by explanation of the ‘facts of life’ that used appropriate language and examples of superior modes of hygiene.

Authors of medical advice literature endorsed a single standard of morality for their readers. The advice, though it covered a broad range of issues, essentially boiled down to the central theme of self-control in order to preserve purity. Mistakes in judgement resulted in lost virtue, the contraction of venereal diseases, or the adoption of morally depraved secret vices. Purity movements, in the words of historians John D’Emilio and Estelle Freedman, established in nineteenth-century thought the belief that “sexual control differentiate the middle class from the working class, and whites from other races. Men also learned that a double standard of

⁷⁷ Jefferies, Safe Counsel (1922) 32-33. At this age it was not necessary to discuss venereal disease. Girls should be instructed about the function and hygiene of menstruation, while boys should be given information on nocturnal emissions. Both were to be warned against quacks and advertising doctors.

⁷⁸ Odem, 8, 97.

⁷⁹ MacMurchy, Blue Books Vol. 11 (1922) 23.

morality condoned their sexual transgressions.”⁸⁰ I think that in some instances, however, that medical advice literature defied this argument and condemned the norm. Prescriptive literature addressed head-on the problems of societal double standards as unfair and impure, even as it endorsed the maintenance of separate spheres. As Saleeby remarked in 1908, “the greater part of the characters of men and women are not male and female, but simply human.”⁸¹ The promotion of a universal moral code for both young men and women, especially concerning sexual matters, was outlined in the social alienation that was predicted for both sexes if they strayed from the path of righteousness. At the end of the day, regardless of parental supervision or peer pressure, young men and women were held responsible for their own actions. The decisions they made in choosing fiction, friends, and entertainment molded their characters in profound ways. By vividly describing the consequences of those actions, authors hoped to provide their readers with the guidance necessary to follow the ‘correct’ path to good health and pure adulthood.

Heredity, Practical Eugenics, and Ethnicity

Every child has the right to be well born, but even the ill-born child is entitled to the very best of care, to every chance for survival that science may offer. But from the standpoint of race improvement, such a child has no right to reproduce.⁸²—Dr. B.G. Jefferies, 1922

In 1883, Sir Francis Galton coined the term eugenics for the science that attempted to improve the inborn qualities of a race through better breeding. In 1900, the eugenics movement was energized by the rediscovery of Mendelian genetics. The theory was embraced because it provided a “mechanism that seemed likely to explain heredity with mathematical precision. If human traits were easily predicted through genetics, as many scientists confidently imagined, then desirable characteristics could be selected and degenerate qualities eliminated.”⁸³ Through

⁸⁰ John D’Emilio and Estelle Freedman, Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America (Toronto: Harper and Row, 1988) 57.

⁸¹ Saleeby, Health, Strength and Happiness (1908) 5.

⁸² Dr. B. G. Jefferies, Safe Counsel or Practical Eugenics (Naperville: J.L. Nichols, 1922) 16.

⁸³ George Robb, “The Way of All Flesh: Degeneration, Eugenics, and the Gospel of Free Love,” Journal of the History of Medicine (Vol. 6, No. 4.: 1996) 591.

the process of controlled selection, it was thought possible to produce physically and morally superior human beings.

Eugenicists feared the racial 'caliber' of Canada was on the decline because the middle and upper classes restricted family size, while the birth rate amongst working class families remained constant.⁸⁴ Historian Angus McLaren notes that while "previous social commentators had only concerned themselves with the quantity of the population, the eugenicists of the 1900's concerned themselves with its 'quality'."⁸⁵ World War I also ignited new interest in the scientific management of childhood and adolescence because of the heavy casualties inflicted on the population. Cynthia Abeele argues that it became a symbol of patriotic duty to ensure the good health of Canadian children.⁸⁶ Individual inadequacy was thought to be at the root of many of society's evils, and weakened the nation's strength as a whole. Authors took it as a personal challenge to remedy this situation by preaching the 'gospel of heredity' in order to cultivate improvements in the younger generation.

In 1875, Clarke firmly stated that the physical neglect and arrested development caused by strenuous studies or excess exertion threatened the future of the race. The "attempt to hide or overcome nature by training [girls] as boys has almost extinguished them as girls," and had to be immediately remedied if the progress of the race was to remain strong.⁸⁷ Wilder wrote that "the physical, mental and moral conditions of the parents *at the time of coition* have been impressed upon the reproductive products."⁸⁸ By 1884, authors legitimized the transmission of moral characteristics and physical traits as a law of nature.

Cultivated improvements combated neglectful habits that degenerated the species as a whole and individually. In 1899, according to F. W. Hutton, a lecturer at the Philosophical

⁸⁴ Angus McLaren, Our Own Master Race: Eugenics in Canada, 1885-1945 (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1990) 15, 17-18.

⁸⁵ McLaren, 18.

⁸⁶ Cynthia Abeele, "'The Infant Soldier': The Great War and the Medical Campaign for Child Welfare," Canadian Bulletin for the History of Medicine (Volume 5:1988) 106.

⁸⁷ Clarke, Sex in Education (1873) 44-45.

Institute of Canterbury, New Zealand, it was “generally allowed that, with man, children sometimes have the habits of their parents. This may occasionally be due to imitation, but not...always.”⁸⁹ The process of cultivation was costly to the first generation, but the rewards reaped by succeeding generations would be worth the initial expenditure of time and effort by schools and health professionals. For instance, manuals in 1884 remarked that if people were given extra physical training until the improvements were visible; then their children would naturally be stronger, vibrant, and muscular. Moreover, these children required less exercise and training to surpass the efforts of their parents. In a similar ‘nature over nurture’ argument, children of parents who possessed musical taste and culture also had a natural inclination towards music.⁹⁰ When adolescents cultivated good health and refined habits, they created a better inheritance for generations to come.⁹¹ The theory that traits could be cultivated reflected evolutionary beliefs such as those endorsed by Jean-Baptiste Lamarck. He proposed the theory of sequential development, or the laws of transformation, which argued that every modification in an organism that it repeatedly performed to meet its own needs was inherited by the next generation.⁹²

The impulse to marry and have children was considered a natural, necessary step to ensure future health and security. Yet, premature motherhood threatened the health of the children it produced since proper development took time. If a girl married too young then illness followed because her nervous and physical systems were not yet equipped to deal with the new

⁸⁸ Wilder, What Young People Should Know (1875) 87.

⁸⁹ Frederick Wollaston Hutton, Darwinism and Lamarckism: Old And New, Four Lectures (London: Duckworth & Co, 1899) 163.

⁹⁰ Shepherd, For Girls (1884) 154-157. Wood-Allen, What a Young Girl Ought to Know (1897)

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⁹¹ Wood-Allen, What a Young Girl Ought to Know (1897) 98.

⁹² Pietro Corsi, The Age of Lamarck: Evolutionary Theories in France, 1790-1830 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988) 114. Although Lamarck conceded that there were other sources of “organic variation besides the development and maintenance of new habits, he did not regard these sources to be of much consequence in the evolutionary process, and by and large he had little to say about them.” Richard W. Burkhardt, Jr., The Spirit of System: Lamarck and Evolutionary Biology (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977) 179.

demands upon them.⁹³ Laws of genetic probability were pondered. In 1889, one author “emphatically insisted...that a man and a woman presenting the same hereditary taints, suffering from the same constitutional disease, or tendency to disease, should not, as they value their own happiness and that of their possible children marry.”⁹⁴ Genetically imperfect parents were advised that they should not lose hope because hereditary resemblance was “seldom ever complete—numerous differences being almost always observed in the features and other characteristics of the same family.”⁹⁵

In 1884, Shepherd informed young woman

that both parents should be equal in improvement, but if the father be good and the mother poor, as the offspring partakes most of the mother’s nature, being influenced by her before its birth during the nine months she carries it beneath her heart, it will be poor like her. But if the father be poor and the mother good the offspring will be good. So that if but one sex can receive culture, training, education, it should be the women.⁹⁶

In this context “poor” referred to the physically unfit, alcoholic, or the morally depraved, and “good” to those who lead lives of moderation. Even more pressure was related to young women through advice literature when they were told by Wood-Allen in 1913 that “in every form of insanity the disease is more dangerous in the mother than in the father, as far as the next generation is concerned.”⁹⁷ Young women had little choice but to attempt to correct their faults lest future generations became burdened with them.⁹⁸

Most arguments placed the responsibility for improving society squarely onto the shoulders of both parents. For some time, this view held sway. The first example I found to refute it appeared in Pancoast’s manual, published in 1903. Until this time, a popular hypothesis proposed the mother’s egg, and the nourishment a child garnished from this egg after conception, meant that a child would inherit more of her genetic characteristics than those of the

⁹³ The exact age of a desirable marriage was not stated.

⁹⁴ Family Physician: Every Man (1889) 199.

⁹⁵ Pancoast, Tokology (1903) 143.

⁹⁶ Shepherd, For Girls (1884) 157.

⁹⁷ Wood-Allen, What a Young Woman Ought to Know (1913) 228.

father. Pancoast did not accept this hypothesis, and maintained that a child resembled both the father and the mother, and often more the former than the latter. As a general rule, "it cannot be said that either the male or female in the human species exerts more influence than the other in the physical and intellectual conformations or peculiarities of the offspring."⁹⁹ Mental characteristics may be imparted on the child, but in 1903 Pancoast stressed that "in estimating mental and physical inheritances,...it should be remembered that much will depend upon education [including perhaps advice literature?], pursuits, and modes of life, as all have a strong tendency to overcome hereditary influence."¹⁰⁰ This compelling passage was the first reference I found that maintained that environment was as influential to heredity as genetics in forming a child or adolescent's physical and mental state.

Shortly after, other authors joined in linking the behaviour of one generation to the next. In 1908, Drake insisted "that we reap what we sow is an inevitable law in the mental and moral as in the physical sphere."¹⁰¹ Drake described the plight of a young woman named Margaret who grew up without a proper, stable home life, and instead lived a life of degenerate shame. This shame tainted generations to come, and

after seventy-five years it was reckoned that her descendants numbered twelve hundred; two hundred and eighty of whom were paupers, and one hundred and forty habitual criminals, while most of the whole degraded family cursed the country with vice, crime, pauperism, and insanity.¹⁰²

If every child or young adult could be taken in hand and taught to overcome the vices of their ancestors, then the potential for good was equally as far-reaching. It was important to weed out poor habits and abnormal disease so that future generations would bloom in perfect health. In 1913, it was proposed that young people who were taught the fundamental principles of eugenics reached maturity with "strong and definite convictions as to the importance of keeping up the

⁹⁸ Wood-Allen, What a Young Girl Ought to Know (1897) 145.

⁹⁹ Pancoast, Tokology (1903) 144.

¹⁰⁰ Pancoast, Tokology (1903) 145.

¹⁰¹ Drake, What a Young Wife Ought to Know (1908) 139.

¹⁰² Drake, What a Young Wife Ought to Know (1908) 141.

standard of the race, or, rather of insuring its continued progress and betterment."¹⁰³ In other words, adolescents realized their own responsibility in shaping their descendants.

Comparing humans to livestock, Family Physician: Every Man His Own Doctor in 1889 touted the value of "hybrid vigor" and stated that "the most vigorous qualities of a given stock are best maintained by an admixture of foreign blood."¹⁰⁴ This statement referred primarily to the marriage of Americans to those of Northern European descent. Other authors substantiated this sentiment in the context of beauty. For instance, in 1894 Jefferies wrote that

the crossing of temperaments and nationalities beautifies offspring. If young persons of different nationalities marry, their children under proper hygienic laws are generally handsome and healthy. For instance, an American and German or an Irish and German uniting in marriage produces better looking children than those marrying in the same nationality.¹⁰⁵

Moreover, the beneficial mixture of physiological traits went hand in hand with the benefits that resulted from mixing the stereotypical temperaments associated with each nationality. Mercurial Scots, and fiery, or impulsive Italians were encouraged by manual author Pancoast to marry the cool tempered English, or phlegmatic Germans, in order to promote the balance of attitude that distinguished a noble man or woman.¹⁰⁶

There was a notable exception with regard to the

peculiarity of the Jews; they, as is well known, marry, as a rule, only members of the same race, and yet are remarkable for both physical and mental vigor of their numerous progeny. The peculiar traits, mental and physical, we may indeed say moral, are retained and perpetuated by inter-marriage, and yet a sufficient latitude of choice is allowed to secure a proper admixture of stock. It must, however, be remembered that the religious tenets of Israel provide not only for the health of the soul, but contain also admirable regulations for the

¹⁰³ Dr. Norman Barnesby. "Eugenics and the Child" Forum (February, 1913) 346. The "term 'race' was not unusual for the scientific discourse during this period, in which it might refer to groupings based variously on geography, religion, class, or color." : Siobhan Somerville, "Scientific Racism and the Emergence of the Homosexual Body," Journal of the History of Sexuality (Vol. 5, No. 2: 1994) 249.

¹⁰⁴ Family Physician: Every Man (1889) 200

¹⁰⁵ Jefferies, Searchlights (1894) 293.

¹⁰⁶ Pancoast, Tokology (1903) 147. The above racial stereotypes that Pancoast described are mild in comparison to those found a little over ten years later. For instance, "in an eminently respectable history such as Sir G. Arthur Doughty and Adam Shortt's *Canada and Its Provinces* (1914-17) the Galicians presented as mentally slow; the Italians as devoid of shame; the Turks, Armenians, and Syrians as undesirable; the Greeks, Macedonians, and Bulgarians as liars; the Chinese as addicted to opium and gambling; and the arrival of Jews and Negroes as 'entirely unsolicited.'" McLaren, 47.

health of the body; to which perhaps their fertility and general health are to be in part attributed.¹⁰⁷

All authors of prescriptive literature did not share the admiring tone inherent in the above passage. Pancoast's, Tokology and Ladies' Medical Guide, proposed that if members of the Jewish community "[amalgamated] more largely with other Caucasian branches of the human family, no doubt the Jewish physiology would soon become greatly...improved."¹⁰⁸ Historian Angus McLaren points out that "the fact that Jews in Canada and elsewhere were actively involved in eugenics was one more indication of the success with which the movement presented itself as an objective science, not as a racist cause."¹⁰⁹

In 1913, corroboration that inbreeding of a single race increased deterioration and defects was examined by Forum magazine. Dr. Barnesby informed readers that "the latest New York statistics" revealed that "Jews furnish by far the largest racial percentage of the forms of insanity and mental deficiency which have their basis in constitutional inferiority."¹¹⁰ Barnesby concluded the figures must be ascribed to inbreeding especially as the Jews presented almost no cases of mental disease or defects resultant from the contraction syphilis or alcoholism. Historian Sander Gilman argues that "charging the Jews with a special tendency to contract specific illnesses," in this case poor mental health, was "an effective means of differentiating them from their Christian neighbors."¹¹¹ By 1890, Gilman argues that with the aid of Jean Martin Charcot's observations, the view that Jews were particularly susceptible to hysteria and neurasthenia (supposedly the result of inbreeding) was established as a norm.¹¹² In 1902, an alternate theory to inbreeding as the cause of neurasthenia amongst Jews was proposed. Martin Englander

¹⁰⁷ Family Physician: Every Man (1889) 200.

¹⁰⁸ Pancoast, Tokology (1903) 147. Emphasis in original.

¹⁰⁹ McLaren, 77.

¹¹⁰ Dr. Norman Barnesby, "Eugenics and the Child" Forum (February, 1913) 348. The statistics were not reproduced in the article.

¹¹¹ Sander Gilman, Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race, and Madness (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985) 151

¹¹² Gilman, Difference and Pathology, 155.

declared that the cause of illness was due to “ a 2000 year diaspora” that had confined them to cities, “the source of all degeneracy” whose only cure was “land, air, light.”¹¹³

References to race, or inter-racial relationships, were few and far between. In some cases, authors referred to the transmission of pigmentation from parent to offspring as hereditary. For example, Pancoast explained to readers quite neutrally that “two persons of different color cohabiting, and producing offspring, will produce a mulatto.”¹¹⁴ Only a couple of pages later, readers were informed in increasingly judgmental language that the mixing of races, such as Caucasian and Ethiopian, deteriorated the virtues of the former. To substantiate this statement, Pancoast further claimed that in such a case, the offspring of each successive generation became “more nearly allied to the *purest* breed of the two—which is that of the *white* or Caucasian type...That of the Caucasian being more highly endowed, overcomes that of the African.”¹¹⁵ Only “civilized nations” could interbreed with success, and the resultant mixture was superior in terms of “symmetry, grace, beauty and manliness of both nations...the *purer* the parent stock, the *more perfect* will be the progeny.”¹¹⁶ Even when positive attributes of other races were praised (for example, the “shrewd Orientals” or the “progressive Japanese” who understood the “sanitary necessity of clean underclothing...to guard against infections”) no mention was made as to the benefits of intermarriage between visible ethnic minorities and Caucasians.¹¹⁷ The future of the race was considered too important to let the matter of reproduction and the selection of a suitable marital partner go by unmentioned.¹¹⁸

Eugenics defined a movement that was dedicated to the improvement of the race through the cultivation of inborn qualities in order to produce the greatest state of human

¹¹³ Martin Englander, The Evident Most Frequent Appearances of Illness in the Jewish Race (Vienna: J. L. Pollak, 1902) 46 cited in Gilman, Difference and Pathology, 156.

¹¹⁴ Pancoast, Tokology (1903) 144, 147. Four distinct “types” of humans were described by Pancoast, “Caucasian or *white*; the Ethiopian, or *black*; the Mongolian, or *yellow*; and the Indian, or *red*...All have their *fitting* places, or *locations*, most adapted or suitable for their development, procreation, or reproduction.”

¹¹⁵ Pancoast, Tokology (1903) 149. Emphasis in original.

¹¹⁶ Pancoast, Tokology (1903) 147. Emphasis in original.

perfection. In 1905, the healthy and “useful classes” were encouraged by the Canada Lancet to “contribute largely to the next generation; and...the perverted, sickly, immoral and criminal classes [ought to] be placed under such restraints as will reduce their progeny to the lowest possible minimum.”¹¹⁹ Clear definitions of the terms ‘negative’ and ‘positive’ eugenics appeared in Jefferies’ 1922 revision of his newly entitled Safe Counsel or Practical Eugenics. Negative eugenics referred to measures that prevented the ‘unfit’ from bringing children into the world. Jefferies admitted that it was difficult to draw a line between what was considered acceptable and what was not.

Popular opinion agreed that the feeble-minded, the vaguely labeled insane, criminals, degenerates (alcoholics), the epileptic, and those afflicted with venereal disease were unsuitable to parent, and must be “prevented from propagating their kind if we ever hope to improve humanity to any great extent.”¹²⁰ Methods of prevention that were advocated included the requirement of a clean bill of health from a medical professional before a couple was allowed to marry, and sterilization of those classified as unfit.¹²¹ In an extrapolation of Darwin’s theories,

¹¹⁷ Burks, Health and the School (1913) 239.

¹¹⁸ Davies, Story of Life (1922) 390.

¹¹⁹ “Eugenics” , Canada Lancet Vol. XXXVIII No. 8 (April 1905) 745.

¹²⁰ Jefferies, Safe Counsel (1922) 12.

¹²¹ The adoption of eugenic practices was not universal. A poem by “London Opinion” in the Canada Lancet entitled “Eugenics” in Vol. XLVI No. 11 in July of 1913 protested against the lack of romantic feeling in a eugenic marriage proposal.

No whispered words of love I bring;
 But at your feet I lay my chart,
 Such sentiments are old and stupid;
 Nor yet of passion will I sing;
 We’ve long since superceded Cupid.
 Descriptive of my rare attractions
 (My muscles fill the greater part,
 My beauty’s shown in vulgar fractions).
 Nay! Answer not, “Pray ask papa!”
 In manner of our predecessors,
 Poor pa is now a fallen star—
 We ask consent of wise professors,
 In council they’ll discuss our claim.
 Where none their wisdom may disparage,
 And on the minutes they’ll proclaim
 Our bans in scientific marriage.

the “survival of the fittest” was touted as the driving force of a progressive society.¹²² Positive eugenics was obverse of the above theory. Those who were strong and intelligent should choose like partners, and a conscious effort was made to educate young people in the prevention and elimination of poor hygienic and moral habits.

While it was ‘true’ that mental and physical characteristics were passed down through the generations, an individual still had both the opportunity and potential to better his or her state of health. The Canada Lancet wrote in 1904 that an adolescent stood, “not as the counterpart of his father or mother but as the accumulated influences of generations,” and had the power to modify these predisposed traits.¹²³ Stall took stock in the slogan: “Heredity is not fatality.”¹²⁴ Just as those who inherited healthy bodies ruined them by abuse, those with weaker bodies and minds could strengthen them through care and diligence. Jefferies, in 1922, was in complete agreement. Without the proper environment, including moral and physical education, heredity would count for very little; a positive home life could overcome many of the negative aspects of bad breeding.¹²⁵ “Human beings are first born and then made” declared MacMurchy in her 1922 Blue Books.¹²⁶ Therefore, the potential benefits of moral, intellectual, and physical education were not to be underestimated.

Thus, from the prescriptive literature it is evident that authors pounced upon the theory of inheritance of acquired traits. Hereditary transmission of personality, physical strength, and physiological characteristics were entrenched in prescriptive literature, and provided authors with a perfect opportunity to dictate what habits were to be cultivated for the benefit of future generations. Eugenicists in Canada were reformers at heart who sincerely believed that they were scientific prophets of a better tomorrow. They were among the first to point out that sexual

¹²² Jefferies, Safe Counsel (1922) 13.

¹²³ Dr. H.R. Frank, “Influence of Heredity Upon the Expectancy of Life”, Canada Lancet Vol. xxxviii. No. 1 (September 1904) 39.

¹²⁴ Stall, What A Young Boy Ought to Know (1909) 85.

¹²⁵ Jefferies, Safe Counsel (1922) 11.

¹²⁶ MacMurchy, Blue Books Vol. 11 (1922) 3.

education of young people could not be left to chance, but that proper standards of health should be endorsed at an early age. On the other hand, McLaren persuasively argues that

by voicing their concern for sorting out the 'degenerate' experts were making the unfounded assertion that they had the ability to identify accurately intellectual, moral, and physical strengths. In fact, in most cases it was appropriate cultural behaviour that they took as the best indicator of intelligence.¹²⁷

With primacy of an individual's will, the notion that one generation had the ability to improve the next was an attractive alternative to the concept that the health of a race was at the mercy of fate.

¹²⁷

McLaren, 165, 69, 49.

Conclusion

A-s soon as you are up, shake blanket and sheet;
 B-etter be without shoes than sit with wet feet;
 C-hildren, if healthy, are active, not still;
 D-amp beds and damp clothes will both make you ill;
 E-at slowly and always chew your food well;
 F-reshen the air in the house where you dwell;
 G-arments must never be made too tight;
 H-omes should be healthy, airy, and light;
 I-f you wish to be well, as you do I've no doubt,
 J-ust open the windows before you go out;
 K-eeep the room always tidy and clean;
 L-et the dust on the furniture never be seen;
 M-uch illness is caused by the want of pure air; now to open the windows be
 ever your care;
 O-ld rags and old rubbish should never be kept;
 P-eople should see that their floors are well swept;
 Q-uick movements in children are healthy and right;
 R-emember the young cannot thrive without light;
 S-ee that the cistern is clean to the brim;
 T-ake care that your dress is all tidy and trim;
 U-se your nose to find if there be a bad drain;
 V-ery sad are the fevers that come in its train;
 W-alk as much as you can without feeling fatigue;
 X-erxes could walk full many a league.
 Y-our health is your wealth, which your wisdom must keep;
 Z-eal will keep a good cause, and the good you will reap.¹
 —Globe and Mail, 1886

The inspiration for this thesis came to me unexpectedly one day while I was rooting through my childhood collection of books; especially the “classics,” older novels, that I had inherited from my mother. After flipping through several volumes, I came across two favourites from my youth, Louisa May Alcott’s Eight Cousins (see Figure 13) published in 1874, and the sequel Rose in Bloom. Intrigued I reread them, and was astonished to find both novels an entertaining (and didactic) mixture of prescriptive medical advice and etiquette literature. The young adolescent protagonist, Rose, learns from her wise and unconventional uncle (who naturally is a respected physician) the basic tenets of good health. Scandalizing her aunt who was tight-laced (both figuratively and literally) she begins to run around in bloomers instead of

¹ “Healthy Alphabet”, Globe and Mail (16 January 1886) 5.

corsets. She learns to appreciate the importance of a healthy diet and exercise routine, is humiliated publicly when she ignores her uncle's advice and indulges in gossip, and finally is encouraged to use her mind productively as well as learn the art of efficient housekeeping from her maiden aunt. For any lessons not imparted to readers through Rose, there are seven hearty, male cousins to complete the teachings. One is nearly blinded by over-study, another is almost corrupted through adventure novels, and finally the handsome eldest son dies tragically due to his inability to resist the temptations provided by his 'fast' and intemperate friends.

In a similar vein, despite its varying format, medical advice literature for adolescents shared the common goal of wishing to assist and guide young people along their journey to adulthood. Adolescents were infused with the aspirations of society as a whole, and authors of prescriptive literature informed them that it was their patriotic duty to progress up the evolutionary ladder. It was assumed that they had difficult choices to make in life, and that they were constantly being tempted onto the path of vice and disease. Manuals were simply there to aid them in making the 'right' choices and included 'lessons' on: self-respect, the sanctity of the body, the proper life roles of young men and women, patriotic devotion to the improvement of the race, and sexual education to maintain the purity of young people. The standard for a healthy adolescent was very specific, creating a norm that attempted to harmonize physical, mental, and moral elements into an ideal package.

Only through the digestion of 'correct' information, modestly and candidly written, could adolescents be protected from vice, degeneration, and disease. The result was the entrenchment of traditional social values, upheld and given legitimacy through the authority of medicine and science. Victorian concepts of biological determinism, for instance, were endorsed into the twentieth-century, when authors cautioned a young woman against formal education for fear that her reproductive organs would be malformed. The importance of establishing a routine of diet, rest, and a disciplined body reflected the benefits of a disciplined mind in the public sphere. Medical theories on menstruation highlighted unattainable norms, such as the

consideration that a painless cycle denoted perfect health. As well, the rejection of hysteria by many prescriptive authors as a legitimate disease denied the suffering experienced by many young women.

Intemperance and smoking went against health norms, not only because these addictions revealed a lack of will power, but also because addiction to these vices was considered the first step down the slippery slope of immorality and poor health. The intimate link between mental, spiritual, and physical health made the practice of 'self-abuse' a triple threat to the health of adolescents. The greatest consequence of masturbation was its potential to destroy the reproductive organs of young people thus making them unfit to fulfill their life roles as spouses and parents. The concepts of beauty, fashion, and strength depicted in the manuals legitimized both traditional definitions of femininity and masculinity, and endorsed the gendered division of the sexes into separate spheres of influence based on superficial constructs. Simply, the criteria of beauty reflected the life role that society assumed each sex would fulfill. Hereditary transmission of personality, and physiological characteristics were entrenched in prescriptive literature, and provided authors with a perfect opportunity to dictate what habits were best cultivated for the benefit of future generations. Finally, in an effort to combat the problems of modernity and maintain the 'purity' of youth for as long as possible, authors of advice literature attempted to establish a single norm of morality and character that it wished its readers to follow.

In their polemical study For Her Own Good Ehrenreich and English argue that medical advice literature perpetuated the myth that a woman's normal state was ill health. Unlike these authors, however, I believe that in some ways women participated in the construction of this myth, and that it was not entirely imposed from above. By purchasing the literature, and in the general inquiries they posed, readers also shaped and consented to various constructions of health, and in the codification of behaviour as either virtue or vice. As we have seen authors, such as Wood-Allen rejected the supposition that a woman's menstrual cycle made her an invalid. Others, like Shepherd for example, viewed puberty as a time of awakening insight and

cognitive possibilities. Youth classifications, as Mary Louise Adams claims, were neither natural nor rooted entirely in biology. As a continuation of her argument, I propose that the socially constructed habits that she suggests were considered desirable and gender specific by society, and were further legitimized by the medicalization of personal habits as healthy or unhealthy.

Anita Clair and Michael Fellman argue with great insight in an American context that belief in the primacy of the will and in the laws of heredity created a sense of optimism that each individual had the potential for self-improvement. Through will power and self-control happiness and good health could be achieved.² If young people established discipline in their physical self, then they also had a better chance of stimulating their mental self with proper influences, and maintaining the morality of their spiritual self. Although, “there was still a very strong belief in the notion that what is, is what ought to be. Victorians believed in progress but their idea of progress was the same life, only better...sex role changes suggested the decline of civilization as they knew it.”³ Manual writers reflected this belief since, in some cases, the literature appears to have fallen behind contemporary medical views. Especially for example, in their late acceptance of formal education for women, and in their staunch support of complementary life roles for men and women. Ironically, these statements were endorsed, even while the female authors themselves had rejected traditional occupations by becoming doctors or academics. Most of the advice proffered, however, such as the belief in the universality of masturbation, or the rejection of the purity double standard for young men and women as unhealthy, or the belief that physical and mental traits were passed along to the next generation, were in accordance with contemporary medical thought. In all instances the importance of being physically and mentally fit for parenthood was stressed by manual writers over all other endeavours.

² Fellman, 137, 35.

As Charles Rosenberg argues, “writers tended to visualize a generic reader, one seeking a respectable social identity, but an identity—like the body that represented and embodied it—always at risk.”⁴ Adopting Joan Jacobs Brumberg’s inventive approach, which considers the body as evidence, I think that in this process the body became textualized and medical advice literature provided readers with the essential owner’s manual for health and success. The attempts by manual writers to instill in their readers’ the idea that through self-control and self-improvement (or as Michael Bliss labels it- the ‘Gospel of Heredity’) readers could cultivate proper habits, establish a sound trinity of physical, mental and spiritual health, and reject temptations, was one of the easiest ways to differentiate prescriptive literature from its scientific counterparts. Autonomy over their health would assist readers on the path to personal happiness. While the representation of adolescents in manuals may have been more idealistic than accurate, it provided readers with what authors perceived to be the societal norms and cultural clues necessary for good health and the smooth transition into adulthood.

³ Wendy Mitchinson, “The Medical View of Women: the Case of the Late Nineteenth Century Canada,” Canadian Bulletin of Medical History (Vol. 3, No. 2: Winter 1986) 219.

⁴ Charles Rosenberg, “Catechisms of Health: The Body in the Prebellum Classroom,” Bulletin of the History of Medicine (Vol. 69:1995) 195.

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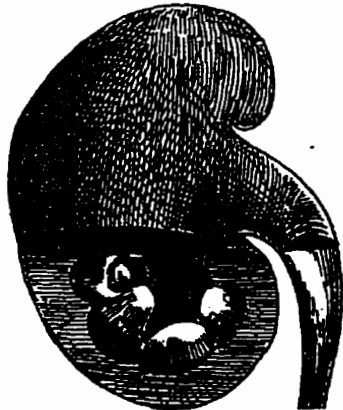
Appendix

Figure 1: "The Kidney" and "The Lungs and Heart," Dr. B. G. Jefferies, Searchlights on Health (Toronto: J. L. Nichols, 1894) 446- 447.

The Kidney.



THE KIDNEY of a man who died a drunkard, showing in upper portion the sores so often found on kidneys of hard drinkers, and in the lower portion, the obstruction formed in the internal arrangement of this organ. Alcohol is a great enemy to the kidneys, and after this poison has once set in on its destructive course in these organs no remedial agents are known to exist to stop the already established disease.

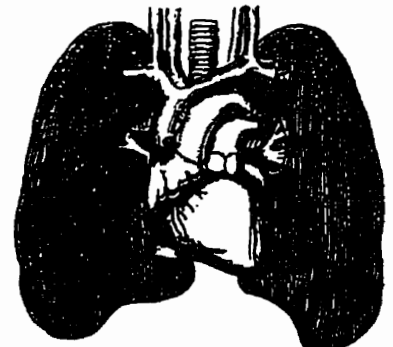


THE KIDNEY in health, with the lower section removed, to show the filtering apparatus (Malpighian pyramids). Natural size.

The Lungs and Heart.



The Lungs and Heart of a boy who died from the effects of cigarette smoking, showing the nicotine sediments in and shrunken condition of the heart.



THE LUNGS AND HEART IN HEALTH.

Figure 3: "Comparison of Male and Female," Dr. M. V. Pierce, The People's Common Sense Medical Advisor (Buffalo: World's Dispensary Medical Association, 1882) 215.

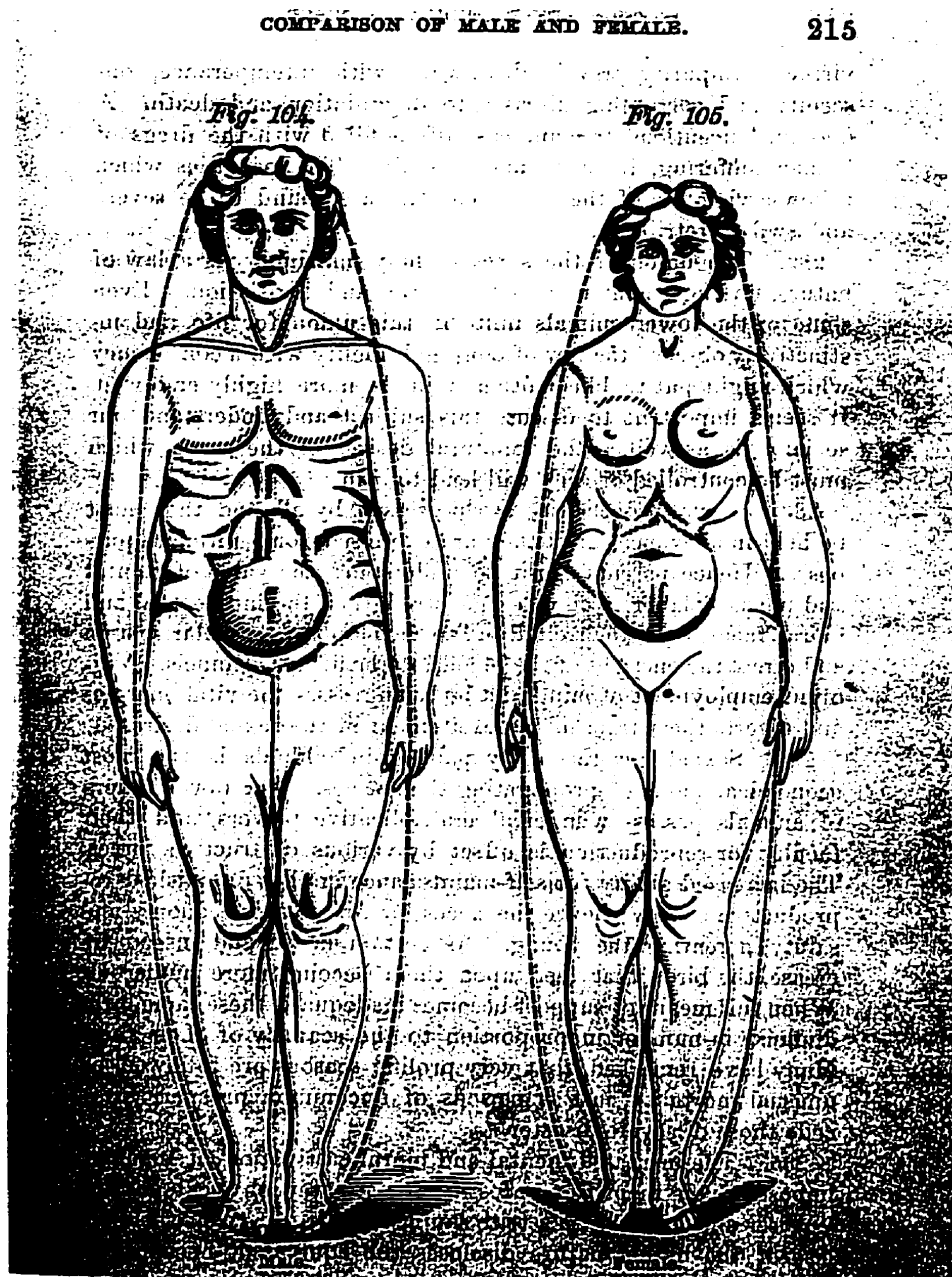
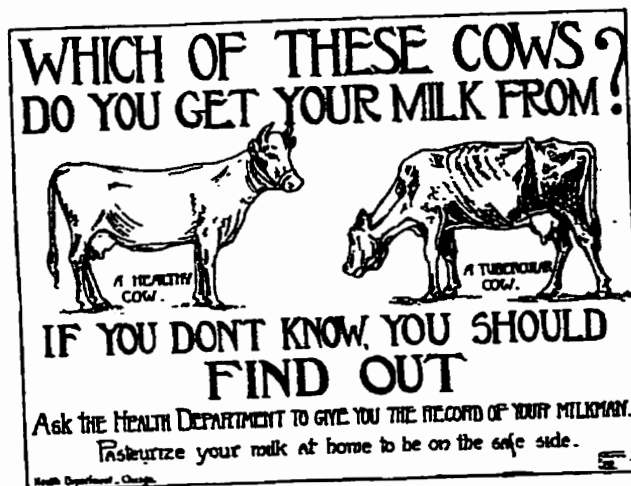


Figure 4: "An Appeal That Leaves Few Parents Uninstructed or Indifferent," Francis and Jesse Burks, Health & the School: A Roundtable (New York: Appleton & Co., 1913) 198.



AN APPEAL THAT LEAVES FEW PARENTS UNINSTRUCTED OR INDIF-
FERENT.

Figure 5: "Out-Door Sleeping Simplified," Francis and Jesse Burks, Health & the School: A Roundtable (New York: Appleton & Co., 1913) 208.



OUT-DOOR SLEEPING SIMPLIFIED.

A small tent, hung like an awning inside the window, leaves the sleeper's head in the open air, at the same time preventing the room from being cooled off.

Figure 6: "Fig. 44.—Positions of viscera in the natural waist," "Fig. 45.—Positions of viscera in a waist deformed by tight-lacing," Provincial Board of Health, Manual of Hygiene for Schools and Colleges (Toronto: William Briggs, 1886) 140.

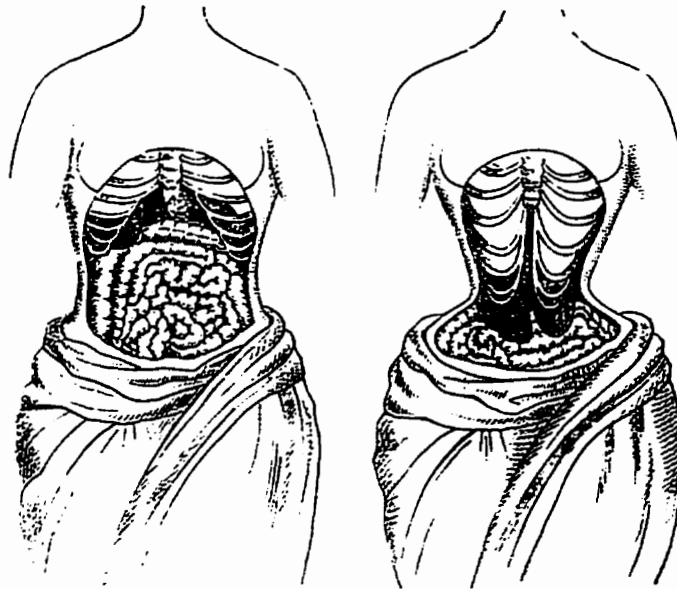


Fig. 44.—Positions of viscera in the natural waist.

Fig. 45.—Positions of viscera in a waist deformed by tight-lacing.

Figure 7: "Uniformed Men Are Always Popular," in Dr. B. G. Jefferies, Safe Counsel or Practical Eugenics (Naperville: J.L. Nicols, 1922) 49.



UNIFORMED MEN ARE ALWAYS POPULAR

Figure 8: "Lost Self-Control," Dr. B.G. Jeffereies, Searchlights on Health (Toronto: J. L. Nichols, 1894) 16.



LOST SELF-CONTROL.

Figure 9: "Which Shall I Take?" Dr. B. G. Jefferies, Safe Counsel, or Practical Eugenics (Naperville: J. L. Nichols, 1922) 64.



Figure 10: "The Two Paths: What Will the Boy Become?" in Dr. B. G. Jefferies, Searchlights on Health (Toronto: J. L. Nichols, 1894) 457.

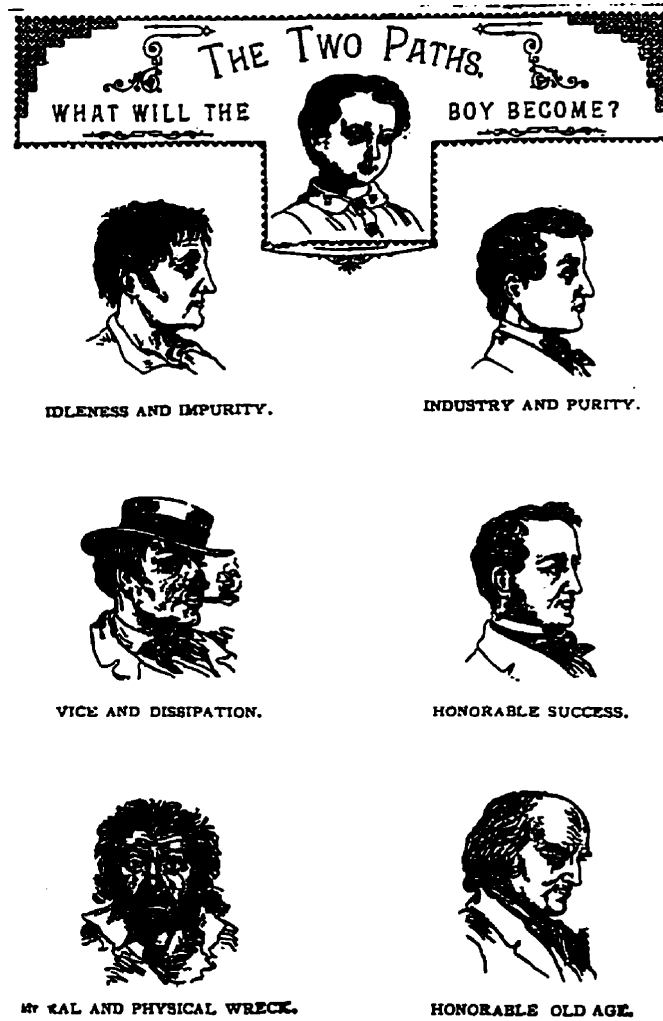


Figure 11: "The Two Paths: What Will the Girl Become?" in Dr. B. G. Jefferies, Safe Counsel or Practical Eugenics (Naperville: J. L. Nichols, 1922) 183.

Adolescence of the Female

The Two Paths



AT 13
BAD LITERATURE



AT 13
STUDY & OBEDIENCE



AT 20
FLIRTING & COQUETRY



AT 20
VIRTUE & DEVOTION



AT 26
WILDLIFE & DISSIPATION



AT 26
A LOVING MOTHER



AT 40
AN OUTCAST



AT 60
AN HONORED GRANDMOTHER

Figure 12: "The Degenerate Turk," B. G. Jefferies, Searchlights on Health (Toronto: J. L. Nichols, 1894) 413.

Physical and Moral Degeneracy.



THE DEGENERATE TURK.

Physical and Moral Degeneracy.

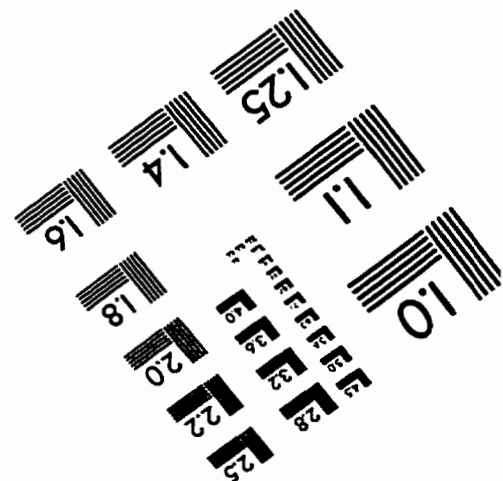
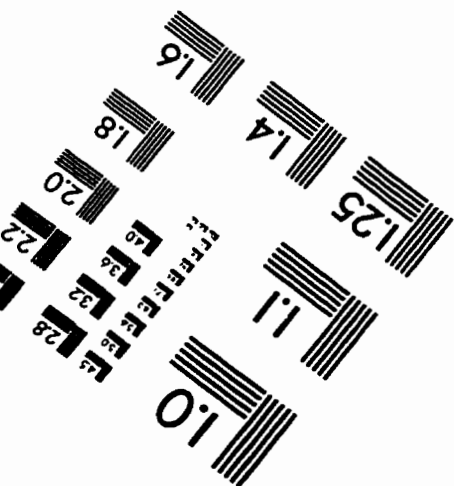
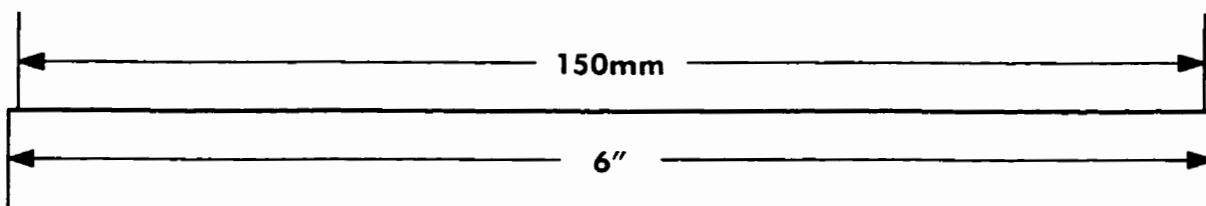
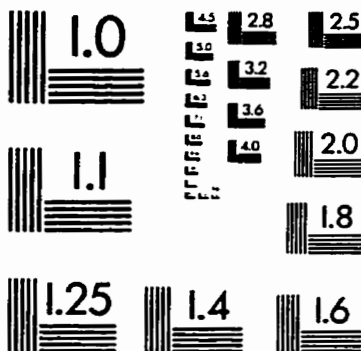
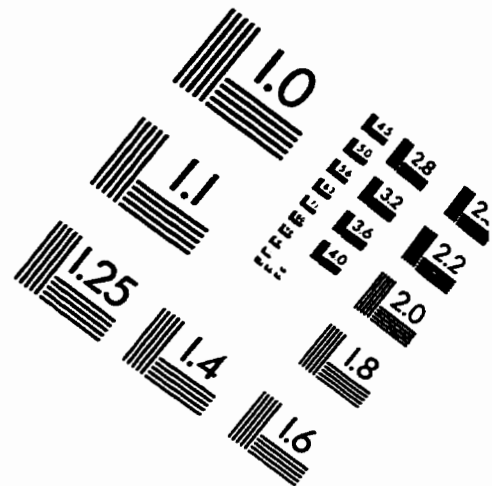
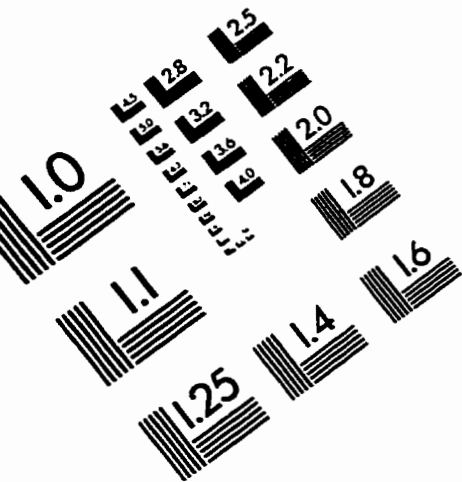
1. **Moral Principle.**—"Edgar Allen Poe, Lord Byron, and Robert Burns," says Dr. Geo. F. Hall, "were men of marvelous strength intellectually. But measured by the true rule of high moral principle, they were very weak. Superior endowment in a single direction—physical, mental, or spiritual—is not of itself sufficient to make one strong in all that that heroic word means.

2. **Insane Asylum.**—Many a good man spiritually has gone to an untimely grave because of impaired physical powers. Many a good man spiritually has gone to the insane asylum because of bodily and mental weaknesses. Many a good man spiritually has fallen from virtue in an evil moment because of a weakened will, or, a too demanding fleshly passion, or, worse than either, too lax views on the subject of personal chastity."

Figure 13 "Untitled," illustrated by Ruth Ives in Louisa May Alcott's Eight Cousins (New York: Doubleday, originally published in 1874). A picture postcard of healthy adolescents and familial bliss.



IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



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