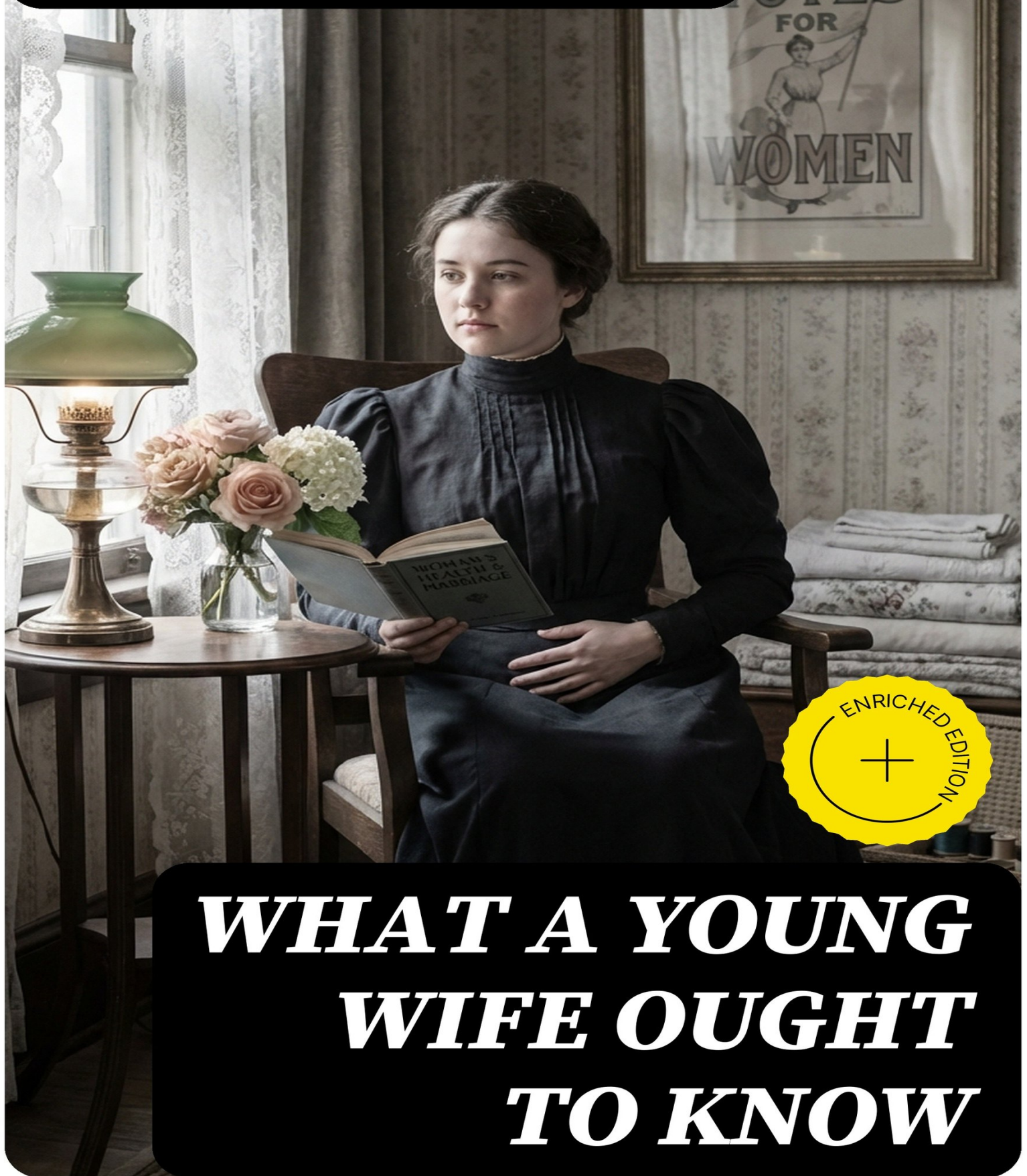


**EMMA F. ANGELL
DRAKE**



**WHAT A YOUNG
WIFE OUGHT
TO KNOW**

Emma F. Angell Drake

What a Young Wife Ought to Know

Enriched edition.

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PREFACE

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To this generation as to no other, are we indebted for the awakening of woman. Not the awakening alone which has led her out of the old lines into nearly every avenue open to man in his pursuit of the necessities and luxuries of life; but that other and larger awakening which has set her down face to face with herself, and in her study of woman she has shown herself courageous.

Bravely acknowledging her own limitations, she has set herself the task of fortifying the weak points, curbing the more daring aspirations, and getting herself into trim, so to speak, that she may traverse the sea of life, without danger to herself, her cargo, or to any of the countless ships which follow in her wake, or that pass her in the day or the night.

Not all women have yet awakened, and for those who have eyes to see, and have seen, a great work is still waiting to be done. They must reach out and rouse their sisters. Will they do it? With our young wives rests the weal or woe of the future generations. To them we say, "What of the future, and what sort of souls shall you give to it?"

EMMA F. A. DRAKE.

DENVER, Colorado,
United States of America.
February 1st, 1901.

CHAPTER I.

INTELLIGENCE OF THE YOUNG WIFE.

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Out of Girlhood into Wifehood.—The Setting up of a New Home.—Woman's Exalted Place.—Earlier Influences.—Importance of Intelligence.—Woman Fitted by Creator for Wifehood and Motherhood.—The Position of Reproductive Organs in the Body.—Dangers of Crowding Contents of Abdomen.—What all Young Wives Need to Know.—Premium Previously set upon Ignorance.—Heredity.—Failures and Successes of our Ancestors.—Faults and Virtues Transmitted through Heredity.

What a young wife ought to know is a large question, and one which we neither hope nor expect to answer fully in this little book, but if what we shall say shall set our girls to thinking a little more seriously and more exaltedly, of the great possibilities which await them: if it shall prepare them to enter the sacred realm of marriage with holier thoughts of the high duties they are assuming, we shall be content, feeling we have accomplished our purpose.

Out of girlhood into wifehood, seems a short step, but it is one fraught with grave responsibilities[1q]. If all along your girlhood way, your aspirations have been high, and you have been living for the best, you are prepared for the new life and its duties; if, on the other hand, you have been drifting thoughtlessly, as so many girls are allowed to do, you will have little conception of what the future holds for you.

A new home at your touch is to be called into being; a new altar reared, upon which the sacrificial offerings shall be those of love, and confidence, and life, and mutual endeavor, and work, not for self, but for that other self whom you have chosen out of all the world to be the sharer of everything that life means and that you hold dear.

“And the Lord said, it is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him[2].” And have you ever thought that in all these years we have made the mistake of writing these words together as one? We lose half of the designed meaning when we do this. “Meet means to have bestowed upon or sent to one: to have befall one, to have happen appropriately or deservedly. How full of meaning with this definition do the two words become. As if the Creator left the calling into life of woman, until he saw the great need, and then bestowed her as a blessing upon man: that goodness was only accomplished when he made woman to be a helper to man.”

We are very sure that there was nothing in the creative thought, of degradation, in this giving of woman to man. Nothing of degradation in the thought of her sphere and work. It is a work distinct from that of man, and yet supplemental to it; in many ways unlike his and yet not inferior to it. It is a large half of the work of the great busy world—a work that is beautiful, noble, helpful, uplifting; and when done in the spirit of love and willingness that should always characterize it, it beautifies and ennobles the worker.

Dear young wives, begin your married lives with the thought that it is no mean place that you are called to fill,

and make it your highest pleasure to fit yourselves for it worthily.

Some of you have come from homes of wealth, where you have been accustomed to have every wish gratified, often before it was expressed; and it may be that the one you have chosen will not be as able to gratify your wishes. Be very sure that in the light of his love and companionship you will not miss the abundance to which you have hitherto been accustomed, and take great care that you keep fast hold of this thought, and work it out into reality daily, through your oneness with him, and your sweet, strong, self-assertive love. Together you can work up to the greater affluence in worldly things and grow the richer in character as you attain.

Others of you have come from homes where the necessities of life must be planned for carefully, and where luxuries were few. Perhaps the man who has chosen you for his mate, may rejoice that the hard work and careful planning to make the ends meet, which has been your lot hitherto, will no longer be necessary, for he will lift you to a home and position of plenty, and his heart delights in so doing. Take care, dear young wife, your lot will be beset with more difficulties than those spoken of above. The invitations to ease and prodigality, to which you have not been accustomed, but which seem so delightful now, will prove a snare to your higher womanhood and nobler self-contained independence of character, if you do not put your better self on guard; and all your strong lessons that were learned in your earlier life of patient endeavor will be forgotten in the new life of ease and pleasure.

Others of you will begin from the same level the united climb towards success, and your care will be, that you do not let into your hearts the dangerous guests, envy and greed. Either will spoil your home if entertained, and prevent your gathering the sweets of life by the way.

In the days which precede marriage, everything relating to it has been idealized, and the awaking to the knowledge that ideality and reality are two very different things, will come to you with a severe shock, unless you bring to the issue all the good common sense and womanliness you possess. The rose-color which everything assumed in courtship, is now toned down to a more sober hue, and it is yours to see that it becomes not too sombre; but rather mingle with it enough of the vermilion and the rose to brighten the entire day of married life, and glorify its sunset. After all, you have only reached the haven towards which your bark has been tending since your earliest recollection. Every day of your girlhood life has had in it some hope, some confident thought, some sweet vision, of the days when you would be a woman, and some one, the only one in all the world for you, would come a-wooing and prove to you surely that your life was planned as the complement of his; that the home he intends to set up shall be perfect only when you consent to be its queen; that his life, in short, is only waiting for its fulfilment—which really means fulfillment when you shall come in to fill it full.

Should your love compel consent to this, and should you have courage, and unselfishness, and power, and real character, and self-abnegation, and hopefulness, and helpfulness, and uplifting patience, and hidden leadership

sufficient, you will make of the two-in-one life a beautiful strength that shall bless the world.

Now you have come to the realization of these dreams, and never for a moment must your courage falter, never for a moment your ideals be lowered.

If perchance some of you have come to wifedom uninformed upon all the questions of girlhood and womanhood, which will prepare you for the sacred duties and responsibilities before you, it is not yet too late to learn; although this disadvantage confronts you, that very much must be crowded into a short space of time, and that many experiences will overtake you before you are prepared for them. Even at this do not be discouraged. Everything is possible to her who wills, and if you will to prepare yourself better for wifedom and motherhood, even at so late a day, the way is open. By enquiry you will find many books to help you, and many motherly women, who, having learned in the dear school of experience, are fitted to teach you the pitfalls you must avoid, and encourage you with promises of success, if you are patient.

Perhaps some of you approach wifedom with a dread of its cares and duties. Wrongly taught, or wrongly thinking, you have a nameless dread that you cannot shake off, and it distresses you. There is nothing to alarm you. Physically, woman as created, answers the question of fitness for the work laid upon her.

Let us consider a little, her peculiar adaptation, and the suitability of each part to the purpose intended by the all-wise Creator.

The nervous system is a little more highly organized than in man; the heart and blood vessels adjusted to swifter work; the brain quicker; the muscles not so hard and tense. In place of the logical, she possesses the intuitive mind, which makes her capable of reaching a conclusion while man is thinking about it. She has less strength, but greater endurance; less daring in achievement, but more patience; less forcefulness, but more quiet insistence; less practicality, but more of the æsthetic; less ambition to assume the great responsibilities of life, but more painstaking in the little and no less important things which go so far towards making the days sweet and peaceful. All these differences from man, her companion, but make her the more desirable and attractive.

Unlike man in her physical form, her departure from his type, was to fit her for motherhood. Narrower shouldered and less muscular, because not needing the brawn for lifting and laboring with her hands in the harder, coarser way; she is broader through the hips to give ample room for cradling her children.

The pelvis is the broad flat basin, at the lower part of the body, formed by the union of the two large bones, the ossa innominata^[1], which bound it on either side and in front, and the sacrum and coccyx which complete it behind. The sacrum and coccyx are the nine lower vertebræ of the spinal column, five in the sacrum and four in the coccyx.

All the bones in the pelvis in woman are lighter and more delicate than in man—in whom they are designed mainly for strength—and the protuberances for the attachment of muscles are less prominent, making a smoother inner

surface in the pelvis of woman. Neither are the joints so inflexible as in man; that of the coccyx with the sacrum being quite movable, while the union of the two bones in front will permit slight separation during the act of childbirth.

Within this pelvis lie the internal generative organs, namely, the uterus, or womb, the ovaries and fallopian tubes, and beside these the rectum and bladder. The pelvis belongs to these organs and to these alone; but how often their sphere is trespassed upon by the crowding down of the organs above, is matter for grave consideration. To each of these organs is given space sufficient, if their room be not infringed upon by each other or by the abdominal viscera above.

First let us consider the unlawful demand made by one or the other organ within the pelvis for more space than rightfully belongs to it. Girls very often from want of thought, and from ignorance of the gravity of results which such carelessness may lead to, neglect the regular evacuation of the bladder and bowels, and the result is from the fulness of the bladder long continued, a pushing of the uterus backward which may, if the habit be kept up, result in permanent displacement. On the other hand, from a neglect of the bowels, a full rectum may force the uterus forward and downward. If this carelessness is persisted in, a displacement becomes a permanent condition, and a consequent adhesion of the walls of the uterus to the neighboring organs often follows. This, as you can readily see, will make serious difficulty for the uterus when

performing its functions in pregnancy, and brings on many nervous troubles which greatly affect the entire organism.

The womb too, by its false position, crowds the blood vessels of the pelvis, and thus interferes with the circulation of the pelvic organs and all parts below. Added to this it interferes with the portal circulation,—or circulation through the liver,—and thus disturbs the distribution of blood in the digestive organs, and all parts supplied by the blood-flow through the liver. For this reason, you can readily understand how many stomach troubles may be caused by wrong conditions in the pelvis.

As the bladder and rectum are capable of great distension, when full they allow little space for the womb. If when distended these organs always pushed the uterus upward, the displacement would cause less serious results; but on the contrary, from the natural position of all the organs, when crowded, the tendency is downward; especially is this so as the result of a neglected and distended rectum, which causes the prolapse, or falling of the womb with all its attendant ills. And the evil does not always stop with this organ alone, but may lead to grave bladder difficulties, and to hemorrhoids and other rectal diseases.

The abdominal cavity, or space between the diaphragm above and the pelvis below, has also sufficient room for all the organs located in it, but this cavity too is abused, by faulty dressing, and not only are the contents of the abdomen compelled to suffer; but by their being crowded downward the contents of the pelvis are encroached upon,

and the ills I have already alluded to in the pelvis are further aggravated.

So much for the knowledge of the physical needed by the young wife, and this is but a beginning. In a book of this compass scarcely more than hints can be given.

Every young woman before entering into marriage should have at least a fair knowledge of the following subjects.

1. The human organization, the various organs which compose it, and the functions of each.

2. The care requisite to the healthy maintenance of these organs, and the food required to nourish them.

3. How to dress so that organic functions may not be disturbed, and so that beauty and form may be preserved.

4. How to exercise so that muscles and nerves may be kept in vigor, and the blood in active circulation.

5. How much rest to take thoroughly to recuperate the wasted energies, and keep the spirits buoyant.

6. What to deny one's self, that health may be preserved and the temper kept sweet.

7. As a part of the great human family, what is one's responsibility to herself, to her family, to the best use of her time, and the generation which shall come after her?

8. Is reproduction a multiplying of one's self; and if so, is she willing that herself, just as she is, should be reproduced.

9. What faults and failings has she, that she would not like to entail upon her offspring?

10. A thorough knowledge and understanding of the reproductive system.

11. Hereditary influences, and her moral responsibility in the inheritance of the generations to follow her.

To quote from Dr. Wm. Capp, "An appreciation of the situation cannot, however, be expected in the young who, in the surge of mental and bodily development, with its charming surprises of novelty, heedlessly float along in the present quite unconscious of future dangers, of which it is impossible for them to know, except they be warned by trusted guides." He then adds, "The best social interests of the race are in the keeping of faithful mothers. Their education, both of intellect and heart, should be of the highest order."

Instead of any inducement having been offered our young people for extending their knowledge of self, a premium has been put upon ignorance, and the result has been in many cases disastrous to both health and morals. The time is not far distant, we believe, when our young people will refuse any longer to be considered, in the knowledge of self, ignorantly pure. Ignorance is *not* purity, but is often the *cause* of the grossest *impurity*; while intelligent knowledge is productive of purity of the highest and noblest type.

Further if our young wives would know themselves, they must of necessity become acquainted with the peculiarities, physical and mental, of father, mother, grandfather and grandmother. In other words, they must not only know themselves as they are, but the families from which they sprang; then will they know, measurably, the possibilities of their natures, and their limitations.

As well might the botanist talk of knowing the lovely American Beauty rose, when he had only studied its form and color, its budding and blossoming. He could tell you of

its beauty, its fragrance, its colors and its season; but to know it perfectly, he must go patiently back, through every member of the rose family which has a share in its production; and study until he knows every strain which has combined to produce the beautiful harmonious entirety, which we find in this full red rose. So, my dears, go patiently back through the lines of your ancestry and learn your heritage—mental, moral and physical. Could you add to this knowledge the share that environment and education can rightly claim, and then deduce the possibilities which belong to such a life, you would be at the threshold of achievement, at the morning of a successful life, if you are ready to enthrone a consecrated will, and put real purpose into your life.

There is something, perhaps, in a family tree that is desirable; but one to my liking must contain more than the names of the ancestors. Each must have his prominent characteristics attached, his failures and his successes, as necessary guides for his descendants. It might not in many instances engender family pride, while on the other hand, were these records possessed, they could certainly be made a great incentive to noble endeavor.

Is the human family of less consequence than the horse? It would be an interesting study and full of suggestiveness, to take down the books which contain the pedigree of our blooded horses, and note how sire and dam through generations, have transmitted their faults and virtues to their offspring. Further note how the possibilities of a colt are based upon the achievements of his progenitors. Alas! Man in his study and knowledge of the equine race has

gotten far ahead of man in his study of the human family. I fancy that if a college for the training of fine horses were established, one of the chief things in the curriculum would be a knowledge of pedigree. And why? Because upon such knowledge is based the possibilities of the individual.



CHAPTER II.

HOME AND DRESS.

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Preparations for Successful Home-Makers.—The Importance of Sensible Dress.—An Opportunity for Reform.—The Conditions of Attractive Dress.—A Question of Healthfulness.—What Wives Need to Know Concerning Dress.—The Kind to be Avoided.—Injurious Dress Destroying the Race.—The Ailments Caused by Wrong Dressing.—The Corset Curse.—A Summary of the Evils of Dress.

“Home’s not merely four square walls[2q]
Though with pictures hung and gilded,
Home is where affection calls,
Home’s a shrine the heart has builded.”

It has been argued by the over-fastidious, when these great questions relating to our being and well-being are discussed, that it is better for our daughters that they should not know what awaits them in marriage, “lest their heart fail them.” This cannot be best. Stepping into an unknown sphere with no definite knowledge of its demands and with no preparation to meet these demands, will only occasion disheartenment, if not downright discontent, when the difficulties and responsibilities are met.

As well might a raw recruit enter the army with no knowledge of warfare and without having been drilled for service, and expect at once to become a successful commander. As well might one accept any other position of high trust in life, without knowing what fitness was demanded, and hence all unprepared for it, the only qualification of the one accepting the trust being respect for and confidence in the employer, and expect to render excellent service, as for a wife to enter unprepared upon her

high duties. In either case, by dint of hard and unremitting work, a few might succeed, but the many would fail.

A revised proverb says, "Home was not built in a day." To insure a successful home the home-maker must be a success, and to accomplish this there are years of thoughtful preparation necessary.

Marguerite Lindley says, "We cannot overdo the matter of discreetly rearing our girls. They are to be the wives and mothers of the next generation, and on them rests the matter of the prosperity of the nation. The world is to be largely influenced by their abilities and strength, and it rests with the educators of to-day to prepare them for the great work that is before them. The keynote for harmony in mental and physical education has never yet been touched, and will not be until their physical well-being is made supreme, and the mental is based on its power."

Jules Michelet, in his admirable book, *L'Amour*—admirable for the time and for the people for whom it was written—says, "It would seem that French mothers were determined to educate their daughters in all the non-essentials to wifedom and motherhood, while the things that pertained to their own well-being, and the well-being of home and family, were utterly neglected." Again, he says, "Every mother practices a kind of self-delusion. She will say, most emphatically, 'Oh, how I love my daughter,' and yet what does she do for her? She does not prepare her for marriage either mentally or physically."

When our daughters have had it burned in upon their inner consciousness that sensible dress and early hours, hygienic food and habitual outdoor exercise, will do for them

and the succeeding generations what nothing else can do; and when our young men show their appreciation of these things, and commend them in the highest terms possible, then will a better day dawn for the race, and a real start be made for the true betterment of mankind. Is it not true, that the majority of our young women emulate the fancies and customs upon which our young men put a premium? Here then is an opportunity for our wide-awake sons to set the pace in a reform that will tell more for the coming generations than they dream of. Says a late writer, "We may smile at but need not rebuke the instinct of the young girl to enhance by adornments her physical charms, which nature already has made more attractive than all things else to man. Woman's innate solicitude is to please, but this is not best accomplished by artificial manners or external show."

We see nothing wrong in adding to the first intent of dress—namely a covering—anything, yes everything which may make it attractive, so long as it does not detract from its healthfulness and comfort.

Is it not very strange that so many women of sense and wisdom, and breadth of culture far beyond the ordinary, will not hesitate to adopt and cling to customs of dress that are little less than barbarous. Does it not seem, that among the large majority of women in civilized lands, the question is, when dress is considered, "Is it becoming?" or "Is it within the reach of my pocketbook?" while rarely is the consideration of healthfulness given any weight whatever. It is a lamentable truth, but we must acknowledge it if we are honest.

Dress is not alone a study in æsthetics, not alone a study in tastefulness, not alone a study of fancy or fashion; but first, last and always it should be a question of healthfulness; and then all of the æsthetic, all of the fashion and fancy you desire may be added to it, so long as they do not in any measure defeat its first purpose.

What do our young wives need to know concerning dress, that they may be better fitted for the responsibilities which await them? They need to know what is harmful in the present fashion, that they may in their larger wisdom, avoid it, and in its place adopt that which will insure health and happiness for themselves and their offspring.

To understand the dangers and institute the reforms necessary, they must know the anatomy and physiology of the female body, and what is necessary to keep each organ in perfect health. This in a general way they learn in their school life, as far as lungs, heart and liver are concerned; but to go below the waist in knowledge, is considered indelicate in the extreme.

They must know that the corset, in their growing girlhood, prevents their proper development, and in their maturer years restricts them so that lungs, heart, and liver and abdominal organs can do but half their work, and that very poorly. They should be taught that allowing their clothes to hang from their hips is harmful in the extreme, and induces a multitude of ills that unfit them for maternity.

Let them think for a moment, that the corset when worn tight enough to insure the form which is considered correct, so narrows their lung capacity that they can but half inflate them, and so a double duty is thrown upon the heart in its

effort to purify the blood, while an insufficient quantity of oxygen is given it for the purpose. When the lungs are inflated to their *fullest capacity*, there is only sufficient oxygen furnished to burn the waste material of the system which is thrown off through the blood. What then must be the result when a half, or a third of the lung capacity is used?

One physician has said: "Woman by her injurious style of dress is doing as much to destroy the race as is man by alcoholism." Another physician, Dr. Ellis, says, "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." Frances Willard said, "But woman's everlasting befrilled, bedizened, and bedraggled style of dress, is to-day doing more harm to children unborn, born and dying, than all other causes that compel public attention."

Again the corset when worn closely, or worn at all, we feel compelled to say,—because no woman who has worn a corset for years seems to be conscious that she is wearing it closely,—crowds the contents of the abdomen downward until these organs encroach upon the pelvic contents, and the uterus is displaced, and the long train of ills which inevitably follows such displacement comes as the penalty. Not always does the punishment come at once, but sooner or later it overtakes its victim, if not before the climacteric[3], surely, then, at the period of middle life.

Among the many ailments which come from displacements of the womb are constipation, imperfect circulation, stomach difficulties, broken down nerves,

headaches, and a generally weakened condition which totally unfits the sufferer for motherhood or for any other responsibility of life.

Another evil in dress, which seems hard to overcome, is the heavy weight imposed upon the hips. This is, to-day, in a measure obviated by those who are able to wear the silk petticoats, and silk-lined skirts; for those who are not able to do this, the burden is a heavy one, unless great care is taken to lighten the dress as much as possible.

The well-made, corded and boneless waist, with shoulder straps, and supports for all the skirts, is the only reasonable thing; and this must be loose enough to allow the waist ample room for development. Think of sixty millions of corsets sold in a year in America,—one for nearly every man, woman and child in the land! Is it strange that our women are invalids, and the American race fast dying out? It is said that a French artist represented the devil in the dress and corset of a fashionable woman! A terrible commentary upon feminine folly.

Mrs. Ecob[6], in her book, *The Well-dressed Woman*, which every young wife should read, says: “The corset curse among women is more insidious than the drink curse among men. Total abstinence from both sins is the only safe ground. A woman can no more be trusted with a corset, than a drunkard with a glass of whiskey.”

To sum up the evils of dress and suggest lines of study, is all we have room for in our short space.

1. Insufficient underwear.
2. The corset—which compresses the vital organs, overheats the region it covers, displaces the pelvic contents,