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LETTERS
TO A
YOUNG MAN
ON
LOVE & HEALTH

WALTER M. GALLICHAN
AUTHOR OF
"THE PSYCHOLOGY OF MARRIAGE"



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BY

WALTER M. GALLICHAN

AUTHOR OF

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LETTERS TO A YOUNG MAN ON LOVE AND HEALTH

FIRST LETTER

MY DEAR LEONARD,—I am very pleased that you have asked me several important and confidential questions. It shows that we are “real pals,” and that you do not regard me, as I did *my* uncles, as very old and aloof from the desires, emotions and problems of a young man. When we went camping out together in Wales, I was somewhat afraid that you might find me an oldish fogey, and as “tedious” as Polonius was to Hamlet. But, as a matter of fact, we were like a couple of lads, and I am rather vain when I remember that I was no more “done” than you after that long tramp over Cader Idris from Dolgelley to Towyn.

I think one of the chief compensations for getting on in years is in helping those who are in an early stage of life's journey. We who have been on the road for so long must have picked up all sorts of experience, and gathered varied information. I look back to-night, and see you just where I was—at the sixteenth milestone—

many years ago. You have sat down by the dusty highroad, a little tired and rather puzzled, and feeling somewhat lonely.

Naturally, I have learned some things that will be helpful to you. But I want you to understand clearly that I am still learning, and that I hope to go on learning till I reach the last stage. And I would like to say that I don't wish to dogmatise, nor to profess that mine is the only, or the perfect, point of view. I can merely tell you what I have learned through "trial and error"—*i.e.* experience and experiment—through observation of human nature, through wide reading, considerable reflection, and criticism of my own opinions. There are no cheap, ready-made answers to the enigmas of life. We have to work out our own theories, often in storm and stress, and sometimes in an encompassing darkness. Many of the ancient maxims fail us when we put them to the severe test of individual experience.

It is absurd to say to all men, "Eat nothing but bread and cheese." Yet that is what we say, in effect, when we attempt to advise in the conduct of the erotic or sexual life. Broadly speaking, we have to adapt our conduct to the moral code of the community in which we live, and, no matter how powerful our inclinations may be, constant repression is enforced by religious beliefs, by public opinion and by social

custom. All control that tends to social good is necessary and commendable. In the domain of our sex life our actions gravely concern the well-being, the health and the happiness of others. The restraint and the direction of the fundamental and imperious desires constitute one of the greatest problems of human existence.

I judge by the general drift of your letter that you are conscious of the meaning of the vague unrest and the ill-defined longings which are normal at your age. You know now that a young man's "thoughts of love" are as perfectly natural as the phases of the moon, the flow and ebb of the tides, and the awakening of nature with "ever-returning spring."

What puzzles you is, I think, the too prevalent attitude of mind concerning these impulses and yearnings. I often regret very keenly, for both of our sakes, that your mother died when you were an infant. She was so refined and sane-minded, and so deeply sympathetic; and I am sure that she would have brought you up with a clear vision and a true appreciation of this most wonderful phenomenon of life. I can but keep my promise to her that I would be a friend to you, and help you in all that I can, though I know how much more helpful she would have been in the shaping of your mind.

You were left to the care of servants and teachers before you went to college. This

means that all your very earliest impressions were derived from strangers, and that you learned haphazard many things which only parents should impart; while there were important matters that never entered into your home nurture and school training.

Your remarks about "our degraded human nature," "the low passions," and the "animal appetites" prove to me that you have imbibed the too common views upon the life-force. Naturally implanted desires are not "degraded" or "low." They may become so through ignorance, a wrong outlook, vicious practices and morbidity. The emotion that unites men and women, leads to family life, love of children, self-sacrifice, moral discipline and the socialised community is sex love; and this force is only remotely comparable with the "animal appetite" of the organisms below mankind.

We have no evidence that even the higher mammals and the birds ever *think* about love. They are automatically impelled to union at certain seasons by physical impulses. At other seasons it is extremely probable, if not certain, that sexual emotion is entirely submerged and forgotten. With man, love is a thousandfold more massive. It assumes many guises and has many manifestations. The passion may make one man a marvellous artist, another a philanthropist, a third a saint, and a fourth a

devoted lover and tender-hearted husband and father.

All human desires may degenerate and become degraded, low and brutish. Unfortunately, in our recoil against vice, abnormality, excess and uncleanness, we have fallen into the lamentable error of blaming normal propensities and acts as being themselves wrong, unæsthetic or contemptible.

It is not our natural desires that are wrong. We blaspheme Nature in saying so. *What is wrong is our method of appeasing the desires to the injury of ourselves and others.* It is certainly not immoral to be hungry, but greediness is a highly unpleasant quality. It is wrong for me to satisfy my hunger by snatching food from one who is more hungry than myself. But no one supposes that hunger is a vicious desire.

I want to impress upon you that revulsion from sex passion is morbid and injurious. It creates an utterly erroneous standard of moral values, and darkens the perceptions in regard to the greatest facts of life. We are born of desire. The purest mother who folds her babe in her arms has experienced the emotion that Nature implants in humanity. I am quite sure that your mother loved, and therefore desired, your father as her true mate. You are the child of a love match in the best sense; and when I say this I hope I have satisfied you that the yearning of the sexes

for one another is something of much higher significance than simple physical impulse and its gratification. In the case of your parents the union was very beautiful indeed. Their love for each other flowed out to you, and not only caused them to cherish their child, but aroused in them a love for humanity. They lived *really* because they loved *truly*. "He who loves not lives not."

I am quite able to understand your present position. I was a long time passing through the process of correcting the false opinions of well-meaning, but ignorant, persons, and counteracting the vulgarities and indecencies of common minds at school and in the world at large. At home I learned that sex was a forbidden and unclean topic. At boarding-school I found that this topic was discussed daily as a source of "fun." Beyond vague warnings against "impurity," I had no sound and grave admonition or instruction. My natural questions at home were peremptorily silenced. At school they aroused low jokes, stupid stories, indecent rhymes, entirely misleading statements and sheer lies—all of which intensified the view that everything appertaining to sexual love and reproduction was improper but comic. Such is the "sexual education" of tens of thousands—probably the vast majority of our compatriots! Can we wonder that so many are ignorant and flippant throughout their

whole lives ; that a multitude of men become contaminated by disease due to sexual promiscuity ; that seduction is common, prostitution rampant, marriage too often a veritable " tomb of love," and parentage an irresponsible action of purblind people.

The shielding at home from " unnecessary knowledge " actually exposes us to the very worst influences when we go into the world. Our minds are curious concerning the origin of our lives very soon after we begin to reflect. Every little child's thoughts turn quite normally at some time or another to this enigma, and give rise to speculations quite unsuspected by parents. This stage is succeeded by a period of comparative apathy. The boy or girl is interested in games, school life and the beginnings of education. But at fourteen, when bodily changes become marked, the mind reverts to the subject of sex. The preoccupation may be deep or slight, or it may be scarcely manifest. But there is always an awakening of new emotions, an arousing of unfamiliar feelings, a restlessness, and often a vague melancholy.

Infancy, childhood and adolescence are the three opening stages of our life's journey. You are now nearing the adult age. It is a wonderful time of life. The psyche, or soul, is awakening in you. You are not precocious ; indeed you seem to develop somewhat slowly. This is not

a misfortune, for there is truth in the Italian adage: "He who goes slow goes far."

To your first question I have given a brief but explicit answer: I certainly do not regard sex as "low," or in any sense an "improper" subject of inquiry. On the contrary, for a young man of your age, it is a matter of stupendous importance. One may lead a healthy, useful life without a knowledge of Greek or Euclid. But without some knowledge of sex hygiene, sex psychology and the reproductive process in man the chances of leading a healthy, moral and useful life as a celibate, a lover, a husband, a father and a citizen are very considerably reduced.

Sooner or later we are all of us brought up against the problems of sex in our own lives, in those of our friends and intimates, in public life, and in questions of national and racial progress. Even when we imagine that sex problems do not exist for us, we may be actually dominated, or positively menaced, by emotions, desires, repressions, impulses and thoughts, which we entirely dissociate from the erotic life.

You bear within you the most tremendous force known to humanity. What will you do with it? It may make you or wreck you. There is not a true philosopher, sage, poet, saint or reformer who has not appreciated the vast import and sway of this passion. Give no heed to those who tell you that love is "just a detail

of human life," and that sex is something entirely guided by "instinct." I warn you that such counsellors sow briars and place obstructions in your path. Keep your mind fresh and wholesome, and get knowledge from pure springs. Never listen to the prudish nor the prurient. Both prudery and prurience are morbid and harmful.

Your second question is in effect, "Should we live down our desires, or should we sow wild oats?" The immediate and final reply of a negative morality would be a decided pronouncement against the sowing of wild oats, and absolute approval of the complete suppression of desire. It is always much easier to say "Thou shalt not" than to adduce soundly convincing reasons *why* one should not commit certain acts. I should be a "hedger" and "trimmer" if I caused you to think that I believe all the traditional morality in sex questions, and all the common conventions, are actually moral, sound and practicable.

A part of our code is not moral. I shall have to refer to this in another letter. But in regard to chastity and purity, I may say here that these words are often misused.

True chastity is not only purity of living, it is cleanness in thought. Chastity is an attitude of mind as well as an active practice of restraint upon unruly desire. I have known unclean-minded, profane-speaking men and women whose

sex conduct might be described as perfectly continent, but whose thoughts upon sex love were unwholesome, even degraded. I cannot admit that those who could speak contemptuously or jestingly about the pure passion that united your father and mother are in any sense pure-minded, and I could not call them chaste at heart.

When many people refer to a man as "a moral liver," they mean that he is not addicted to sensual dissipation, or irregularity in sexual conduct. "Immorality" has been narrowed almost to one interpretation. This has caused considerable error in forming estimates of character and behaviour. Hosts of men are esteemed as moral because they have not been known to infringe the code of sexual virtue by pre-matrimonial indulgences or by adultery. But, in the broadest sense, many of these men are not examples of morality and fine conduct. Some are dishonest, or habitual liars; some are cruel, tyrannous towards those who serve them, unfeeling in family life, or grossly selfish. Others are mercenary, grasping and unscrupulous in business affairs, and others again are little above the animals in mental characteristics, and are quite neglectful of culture, through idleness and a lack of the social spirit, and no desire to help others by spreading sound knowledge.

I do not wish you to think that chastity is a minor virtue. It is one of the supreme moralities.

The man who is not passion's slave is heroic. There is not the least doubt that continent living is frequently the severest ordeal in a young man's life. I, who have been through many fires of temptation, assure you, my dear lad, that modern life in the big cities of civilised nations exposes all youths to grave perils. It is useless to pretend that the preservation of personal chastity is an easy matter for many ardent men. Temperaments vary greatly, and what is easy for one man is extremely arduous and difficult for another. Many of the noblest of men have testified that resistance to unruly desires has needed constant guard upon thought and impulse.

The truly chaste are not prudish. They frankly accept Nature's scheme, and have no morbid shame for natural processes. A wholesome attitude of mind to the subject of sex is one test of a man's innate purity. Many are chaste in the physical sense, but not chaste in thought and speech. In a little book that I have read lately, *Youth and Sex*, Mr F. Arthur Sibly has some sensible remarks upon the habit of jesting over sex relations with which I thoroughly agree. He says that there can be no real reverence for purity in the minds of those who are addicted to "coarse and ribald talk." I fear that the chaste attitude of thought is very rare. The influence of indecent *speech* upon

sex makes for widespread unchastity in *acts*. We must be in earnest about the passion of love. The mockers and jesters poison thought about the great emotion that always uplifts humanity, when rightly understood and respected.

The profanement of sex through vulgar joking and ribaldry makes the preservation of chastity more difficult for a young man. When his associates are irreverent and flippant, he is likely to be influenced by their example. Not wishing to be thought a "milk-sop," he may imitate his companions and become obscene-minded. You know that I dislike prudery and namby-pambyism; but I am sure that real manliness is expressed by a clean way of thinking and speaking upon sex matters, and a disgust for indecency.

Morality is chiefly an exercise of repression. We have to repress many of our strongest wishes for the good of ourselves and society. Repression of the sexual impulse is easier when the impulse is kept in the background of our minds. A wholesome curiosity is natural to all youths; but this desire for knowledge must be satisfied by means that do not stimulate desires that cannot be fulfilled without injury to self and others.

Therefore, avoid the company of those who talk disrespectfully, ignorantly and coarsely about sex. Converse with high-minded persons

who have poetry in their souls, an idealistic estimate of love, and a deep sense of responsibility in all matters of sexual conduct. You have thoughts and dreams of love, like all normal young men of your temperament. Let these thoughts be an inspiration, and an incentive to right living, and so prepare yourself mentally and physically for marriage and fatherhood. Keep the mind busy with study or hobbies, and use your muscles continually in healthy games in order to develop both the brain and the body harmoniously. The more you are occupied, physically and mentally, the more easy will be the effort of control.

Cultivate a love of beautiful things, and you will be less likely to commit ugly sins and vices. Honour women and remember that you will one day crave above all else the love and companionship of a wife who will embody your ideal of feminine purity and virtue.

Young women are mostly as young men wish them to be. Almost all the conventions are the outcome of masculine prejudice, desire and example. If the male standard is low, the female conduct is apt to sink to the male level. Men and women are two parts of the whole humanity. They are responsible to one another and dependent upon one another.

My object in writing these letters to you is to be *practical*. In order to help you, I must speak

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candidly upon matters in which reserve, half-truths, evasions and prudery are *not only inadequate but positively harmful*. I will try to give you the advice that I craved in vain for many long years of childhood, youth and early manhood. Like you, I had much admonition to "purity" and "chastity"; but no one explained these terms. No one told me the plain truths of the impulse of sex. No one gave me physiological or hygienic counsel as an aid to "straight living." No one attempted to solve, in clean, reasonable language, the host of enigmas and problems that absorbed my mind during the transition from childhood to manhood. Like the vast mass of boys in my time, I was misinformed by ignorant companions, chance acquaintances, casual reading, and my own hazy surmises and presuppositions.

Before I grew to manhood I resolved that, if it lay in my power, I would instruct myself so that I might spare others some of the terrible doubts, the overwhelming bewilderments and the shocks which I experienced while groping my way to the light. If I can show you and your friends a safer and pleasanter way than the thorny, miry path that I travelled, I shall be rewarded for the hours of study and research that I have spent.

SECOND LETTER

MY DEAR LAD,—It is very difficult to write about sex morality without appearing superior, priggish, or dogmatic, or repeating platitudes and copy-book maxims. There is the virile, manly chastity of a normal, ardent and energetic type of male, and the “chastity” that is associated with fear, prudery or extreme feebleness of the amorous emotion. Without impulse or temptation there can be no true chastity. There is no merit in the honesty of the well-fed man who refrains from stealing food. There is no heroic resistance to temptation in the case of a man or woman lacking in sexual passion.

May I repeat that my own view of sex purity is that true purity is essentially an attitude of the mind in a man of naturally strong feeling? The ascetics, who were often extremists, based their conduct on a wrong attitude to life, love and chastity. They feared their desires and despised the body that gave rise to these yearnings. They were frequently impure-minded persons who shrank from sex because their minds were lascivious and unbalanced.

Any man who speaks of the wonderful and beautiful human body as “a vile fuliginous

sink," and of woman as "the gateway of hell," is morbid and perverse. We know that many of the illustrious anchorites were unclean in mind and body. Filthiness of the skin was esteemed as a fine instance of piety and spiritual purity. Neglect of the body and of health was commended as one of the principles of religion. We are the descendants of fanatics who associated sex with the bestial and the unclean.

This attitude towards the human body and the erotic emotion has terribly complicated the moral problem in matters of sex. The enthusiasts who neglected and mutilated their bodies, and pledged themselves to lifelong sexual abstinence and sterility, set up an entirely false and pernicious standard. Contempt for the body cannot promote true purity of thought and conduct. There is the plainest evidence that the most austere of the ascetics frequently lapsed into vices and perversities, or their defiance of natural laws brought penalties in disease of mind and body. Their example in unnatural and continuous denials had no real moral influence upon the mass of men.

The sacerdotal celibates of the finer type were sensible enough to recognise that the sexual instinct cannot possibly be eradicated, but that it may be used finely, controlled and sublimated; and they dissented from the fanaticism that sought to kill the very impulse that has made

man a social and moral being. The wiser ascetics did not prescribe complete sexual abstinence as an essential of lay piety. Realising the potency of love, they took it into their keeping, and framed the canon laws that still control marriage in Christian countries.

The ascetic celibate attitude to the sex passion was a survival or a vestigial relic of the dread of savage people for the sexual impulse and its natural satisfaction. Almost universally primitive man feared the love instinct as something dangerous. The traditional dread of the perils of the physical union of the sexes is still extant in many parts of the world. This superstition undoubtedly colours the moral sexual codes of civilised people of to-day. Many centuries are needed for the tedious process of shedding deep-seated prejudices from the mind.

Respect for the body is a fundamental of true chastity. The clean mind has no recoil against sexual organs and functions. Disgust for natural physical processes is morbid. The religious man who is affronted by that which God has designed is guilty of irreverence to his Deity. A pious Mohammedan writer thanks Allah for the sexual scheme of reproduction, realising that the love of man and woman is the strongest moralising and socialising force in humanity.

If we all started life with a healthy and sensible view of the love instinct, a veneration for the

reproductive power, and esteem for the body, there would be much less sin, suffering and disease among men and women. The amative passion can be gratified finely, nobly and with spiritual gain, or it can be appeased basely, unsocially and with serious spiritual loss.

As I wish entirely to be practical and helpful, I will leave generalisations, and try to form a workable ideal of sexual conduct for a young man. First, we must recognise that the erotic or love yearning often begins to manifest itself crudely and physically, in an automatic or spontaneous manner, before love arises in the psyche (mind or spirit). This early arousing of instinct is often a bewildering problem for the child, and a much graver problem for the parents. It may occur in infants still in the cradle, and several such instances are recorded by medical observers. An irritation of the sex organs leads to handling, and the youngest child may quite unconsciously contract a habit of masturbation, or the practice sometimes described as "self-abuse."

The development of the sexual instinct at the age of puberty in the male sex seems to demonstrate that, in the early days of mankind, marriage in youth was the rule. As civilisation advanced, marriage was deferred, chiefly from economic or money reasons; but civilisation by no means diminished the force of the mating impulse. From a social and moral point of view, it might

be better for humanity if the love yearning did not arise until the age when marriage is practicable. The great physiologist Metchnikoff regarded this early arousing of the instinct as a kind of natural disharmony. In whatever light we regard it, we have to recognise that boys from the age of fifteen, or even earlier, frequently experience sexual excitement, through the mingling of certain stimulating fluids, or hormones with the blood stream. These hormones cause emotions and feelings that cannot be gratified in the normal and rightful way by marriage. The lad must restrain himself until he is in a position to maintain a wife and children.

Now this discipline of restraint may be very stern in some cases. For some youths the struggle may be light, for others severe. This depends upon constitution, temperament and hereditary qualities. The conflict is made harder in the instance of the boy who has formed a habit of self-gratification in childhood. It is keener in the case of the youth who has few interests or pursuits than for his companion whose energy is used up in work or sport of an engrossing character. The battle with this passion is made easier if the young man understands some of the important facts of his sexual or erotic nature.

A youth should know that desires which arise spontaneously, or through the unavoidable

stimulations of civilised life, are not sinful *in themselves*. They may be recognised as vestigial impulses, or relics of the age when human pairing began soon after the onset of the first signs of manhood. They may be regarded also as Nature's preliminary vague whispers of forces which will ultimately impel to courtship and marriage. To put the matter plainly, when a youth of sixteen experiences irritation or excitement of the organs of sex, the cause may be physical, arising from the body, or psychical, arising from the mind. It is within the power of a young man to diminish both forms of excitation. He should know that a distended bladder, through long retention of its contents, is apt to cause swelling of the virile organ when lying in bed, and that the tension is relieved by attending to evacuation. Here is a physical source of excitement which can be controlled and even avoided.

I am convinced by long experience that an older man can only give effective help to a younger friend by plain, common-sense and practical counsel. There must be clear, physiological speaking as well as moral advice. Another irritation causing sexual excitement is the result of uncleanness. In some cases the prepuce or foreskin, which partly covers the vascular, sensitive part of the penis, is tight, and cannot be easily drawn back. The glans, or exposed mucous surface, is constantly discharging secre-

tions, and these are likely to accumulate and harden beneath the prepuce. This accretion is called smegma. There are constant instances of such irritation existing until an advanced adult age.

Unfortunately, a vast number of men have never been taught the simplest principles of sexual hygiene. Every young man should be aware that irritation, leading often to masturbation, frequently arises from this cause. The operation of circumcision removes the risk of such irritation. But in most cases all that is needful is the retraction of the foreskin and daily ablution of the glans penis. It should be remembered that any itching of the external parts of generation is a sign of faulty hygiene, and that such itching is likely to induce sex excitement in the most morally minded man.

Another cause of stimulation is undue heat of the body. Heavy bed coverings or too warm clothing may arouse sensual feeling. Friction of the garments with the sex organs is a fairly common cause of masturbation among boys. The clothes should not be allowed to irritate the parts. Overeating, especially indulgence in flesh foods, is likely to arouse desire and to complicate the struggle of repression. A highly spiced diet is not conducive to sexual control. Most condiments should be used very sparingly, or not at all, if the effort of repression is severe. Diet is

an important matter. A growing lad requires plenty of nourishing food, but he should avoid stimulants.

I do not intend to preach a sermon upon alcoholic intemperance. But I will give you a few scientific facts as to the effect of alcohol upon the sex passion. Wine is undoubtedly an aphrodisiac, or erotic stimulant. Used medicinally, in small doses, wine has been found helpful in cases of sexual weakness or impotence. This is a clear proof that alcohol has a sexually stimulating property. For this reason the combat of controlling the desires is intensified by indulgence in drink. Without any fanatical zeal for total abstinence, I may point out that there is considerable risk for some persons in even moderate indulgence. No stimulant reaches the brain and enters the blood so quickly as alcohol. A bottle of wine may seriously lessen the power of inhibition in some men. Under even the mild influence of drink there may be a partial distortion of judgment and a semi-paralysis of the will.

Every physician accustomed to treat sufferers from the diseases arising from prostitution will tell you that the majority of their patients admit that alcohol aroused the desire that resulted in infection. Every candid "man of the world" will confess that promiscuous sexual intercourse and alcoholic stimulation go together. A great

number of courtesans affirm that they "went wrong" through slight intoxication.

In youth and the vigour of manhood erotic desire needs no artificial fillip. It is usually very potent, and often troublesome. Is it wise for a young man of an ardent nature to heighten his already awakened impulse by a drug? There is not the least doubt that alcohol incites to the gratification of sexual appetite, diminishes control in the continent, and sweeps like a destroying wave over the will of those who find restraint a difficult task. Heavy drinking not infrequently induces sexual impotence. Small doses of alcohol excite, but long-continued free drinking often inhibits sex function.

All things considered, the use of alcoholic beverages by adolescents cannot be recommended. A little light ale or light wine may not injure the active youth, but the strictest moderation should be observed, and drinking between meals avoided.

To state the case briefly: alcoholic stimulation is apt to cause physical sensations and mental ideas that arouse sexual desire. Whenever continence is necessary, wine should be consumed in the smallest quantities, or abstinence should be practised.

Genuine erotic inclination arises as a result of falling in love. The spiritual and the bodily elements are in their right proportion in the love of a man and woman capable of experiencing the

true emotion. Casual, wayward and transient sensual longings are not to be regarded as evidence of affection or esteem for one of the opposite sex. It is the idle, irresponsible gratification of such longings that inflicts a burden of evil and misery upon society. If civilised men and women recognised their social responsibility in the sex relationship there would be no illegitimate offspring, infanticide or prostitution, and fewer diseased persons, lunatics, criminals and mental defectives. *It is not too much to say that the community could be redeemed from its worst sufferings and maladies by the substitution of a new morality and hygiene of the sexual life.*

I have referred to some of the physical factors of sex excitation. The mental (psychic) causes are more numerous, complex and subtle. Sight, sound, odour or touch may convey a message to the brain and thence to the nerves of sex. In some cases of suggestible, very impressionable, persons of both sexes the stimulus is often non-sexual. For example, a beautiful natural vista of sea and mountains may, in certain highly sensitive subjects, awaken physical yearning and sensation. A spectacle of conflict or daring may have the same result in some individuals. Such feeling is aroused in specific instances by a bull-fight, a boxing bout or a wrestling contest.

Nature has determined for the increase of the species that the sex impulse shall be urgent and

insistent. Hence there is scarcely a limit to the influences and stimuli affecting the complicated brain and nervous system of mankind. Scientific inquirers assert that this instinct is even more powerful than hunger.

Are we, then, bound to decry and to avoid the beauties of Nature, works of art, music, painting, poetry and all æsthetics because these are liable to become erotic excitants in some natures and under certain conditions? Certainly not. This banning of art and beauty and joyousness was the profound error of puritanism. The attempted negation of the human craving for loveliness in form, colour and sound proved a colossal failure. People were not more moral and chaste because they were forbidden to attend plays, to take part in village carnivals, to sing, to dance and to laugh. The existing puritanic communities of to-day do not afford a fine example of high moral living and sex purity.

Our attitude towards all the positive or potential psychic excitants must be sane. Art is not essentially evil because it often inspires the emotion of love, or arouses physical desire. There is scarcely anything in existence which may not, in some persons and at some time, awaken the racial or pairing instinct. The anchorite retires to his cave. Has he escaped all possible suggestion and temptation? We know from history that the penances and mortifi-

fications of the ascetics frequently heightened their voluptuous yearnings. Martin Luther testified to this from his own experience of monastic life.

It should be understood clearly that though art may quicken the erotic wish, it is also one of the supreme means of sublimating sex. Let me try to explain sublimation. We have admitted that the amorous impulse is enormously powerful and complicated in mankind. What would be the result of entirely uncontrolled gratification in the case of a very ardent and virile man living in a community, if he gave rein to every passing desire and freely indulged his strongest cravings? Would not his unbridled conduct produce social misery and involve great cruelty?

We can imagine rape as a daily occurrence, seduction a constant practice, adultery universal, the satisfaction of abnormal and perverse passions common in all classes, and an absence of any sense of social responsibility and regard for the well-being of others.

The most primitive of our ancestors realised that this tremendous force must be controlled and directed in the commonweal. Hence arose systems of marriage, strict codes of sex morality, tabus and penalties for delinquents. Absolute sexual licence would mean social chaos. The courses open to humanity in sex behaviour are: (1) sheer promiscuity in intercourse and the

indulgence of all desires without regard to the general well-being of the tribe; (2) regulation of the union of the sexes by marriage within or without the tribe, the founding of conjugal laws for husbands and wives, and the protection of offspring.

Now, as celibacy after the age of puberty is extremely infrequent among savage people, the struggle of adolescent chastity is less keen than among the civilised. Moreover, the sexual impulse is not supremely powerful and active in the uncultured races. A civilised, educated imaginative man is far more susceptible or erethic in this respect than the barbarian. Among primitive human beings we still find marked vestiges of the period of evolution when the sex instinct was seasonal, or periodic, as in the case of the animals. That is to say, the savage is often non-erethic, or apathetic towards sex, for a considerable part of each year. On the contrary, civilised men and women are at all times swayed more or less strongly by the emotion of love.

Now, if lawful gratification cannot be attained, our moral principle directs that the desires must be repressed, or diverted, or sublimated. With some natures repression of all thought of love and promptings to the satisfaction of yearning may seem a quite impossible conflict. The thoughts arise unbidden, the desires are a

sequence of the thoughts, and the result is unrestfulness, dissatisfaction with life, and sometimes despondency of spirit. A great vital energy gives the impetus to profound wishes. These longings crave satisfaction, and this satisfaction can be found in sublimation. The wish is not killed or annihilated in a healthy man. It is transferred to other objects than the sexual or erotic.

We can divert this force when necessary from the primitive sexual channel into many engrossing interests. Sport is one form of diversion. Fatiguing exercises use up the surplus vigour, and the desire to excel in athletics may help to keep a young man chaste. Intellectual persons may discover a means of sublimation through an absorbing love of poetry or of art. If a man has a bent for inquiry into the wonders of life he will be able to sublimate his physical passion by scientific studies. Severe exercise of the brain tends to banish sex impulses from the mind. Idleness and day-dreaming, and allowing the mind to form erotic images, keep the longings uppermost in thought and complicate the struggle for restraint. Intense occupation of the brain is, therefore, an aid to sublimating the amative nature.

The love hunger can be appeased, for long periods at least, by transferring the desire to love and to be loved into social zeal, acts of

kindness to friends and efforts to make other people happy. The great humanitarian is a born lover who has sublimated his amorous instincts in the service of mankind. His love yearning is satisfied by his deeds of benevolence, or his endeavour to make life more full and enjoyable for the generations to come. The sensualist and the profligate have not learned the use and the worthwhileness of sublimation. They are less highly evolved human beings than the well-controlled student, the social reformer, and the scientific investigator who transfer their life-energy into useful and beneficial activity.

Unsublimated passion reduces a man to a state of sensual slavery. The unrestrained sensualist develops inordinate longings for continual gratifications of the animal appetites. We compare the mere sensual man to an animal; but the comparison is not just.

The lower animals, in a state of nature, undoubtedly find much enjoyment in the satisfaction of their two great desires—hunger (nutritional desire) and pairing (sexual desire). But these yearnings are periodic, and, generally speaking, very temperate among the brutes. The animals know neither excess nor abstinence.

The human being who lives chiefly to gratify the senses is not like a normal, healthy wild animal. He is a degenerate type of the genus Man. He is a product of an artificial state of

society, which provides him with constant stimulation to the grosser forms of sensual pleasure. No mere sensualist can experience the rarer satisfactions of the love of the sexes. His pleasures are indeed far less acute than those of the refined, idealistic lover, because his imagination is concentrated upon bodily sensations alone. Perfect felicity in love cannot be secured by the simple physical gratifications alone. There must be a response in the soul (psyche) to the impulse of the body (soma). That is to say, the full realisation of the beauty and the joy of the love of the sexes is not purely sensual, or exclusively spiritual, but a mingling of the psychic and the somatic elements.

The mere seeker for sexual pleasure is often quite unable to experience love in its finest and most exquisite forms. He is in reality a poor man. He would possess many women, but he fails to possess one in the highest sense. The true lover not only possesses the body of the loved one, but he is admitted into the sanctuary of her soul. The sensualist does not strive to win the heart of a woman. He seeks the opposite sex as the instrument of a dull animal appetite, and he knows nothing of the spiritual raptures of a real passion. The man who knows only animal gratifications is on a level with the lower animals, and is even below some of the higher animals, such as the birds, in whose loves unselfishness,

tenderness, courage and constancy are often manifest.

It would be contrary to the whole scheme of Nature to exclude the sensuous from the love of man and woman. I am not attempting to set up unnatural asceticism as the finest form of sublimation. That is a rock upon which human nature has been wrecked in the past. *There must be passion in true love between the sexes, but there is a wide difference between the passion of a romantic, unselfish, mutually tender love of man and woman and the simple craving for sensual pleasure.* A real love seeks the good and the joy of the loved person. The "love" of the philanderer and the libertine seeks only personal enjoyment, and does not merit the title of affection.

THIRD LETTER

MY DEAR LEONARD,—I am glad that you are quite frank with me. There must be plain speech between us if I am to help you. Concealment can serve no purpose in this matter, and it is quite unnecessary between you and me. All that you are experiencing I have experienced. Every doubt that troubles you has troubled me; and in some matters I am still groping my way to the light. Life is a very big adventure. Our tremendous primal passions and the vestigial longings within us cause keen conflict and perplexity to the wisest.

Very few virile, healthy young men are unfamiliar with the happening to which you refer in your last letter. It is rather difficult to state precisely whether the phenomenon should be classed as normal or abnormal. The modern scientific and moral view is that the spontaneous expulsion of the seminal fluid during sleep is a simple automatic action practically beyond our control. I say *practically* because there is a possibility that this occurrence may become frequent as a result of conscious self-gratification during the waking hours, or as a consequence of allowing the mind to dwell upon erotic images.

But it is well proved that the chastest of men are liable to experience this involuntary expulsion. It is, therefore, a common phenomenon of the celibate life.

It is not too much to say that millions of civilised, morally disposed young men have endured keen torture of the mind through ignorance concerning the nocturnal experience. I well remember the fears expressed to me by companions when I was your age, and occasionally I meet adult men, unmarried or widowers, who are disturbed by this occurrence. The sources of the mental trouble aroused in this manner are a dread of being impure, or unduly sensuous, and the fear that the process is very injurious to the system.

Now we have very little, if any, control over our dreams. The weird fantasies of sleep spring from the under-consciousness, or, as it is now more often termed, "the unconscious." The conscious mind is a thin layer or stratum upon the tremendous accumulation of forgotten or submerged impressions that form the unconscious. In sleep images and symbols of submerged desires thrust themselves upwards into consciousness in a highly mysterious fashion, and entirely without our sanction. If you dreamt that you were murdering me, I should not say that you were responsible for such a dream, and I know that in your conscious mind you have no desire to injure me.

The dream is, therefore, beyond our control, though, strictly speaking, it may represent a repercussion of our waking thoughts. If you have been worrying during the day about an examination, you may dream of "exams" in your sleep. The most "innocent," or uninformed, person of either sex may have a bewildering sexual dream. This is far from uncommon. It is the voice of the mighty force that dwells in the unconscious, a strange prompting of a primitive instinct that may be quite unsuspected in the conscious.

The question of the alleged weakening effect of the loss of seminal fluid in sleep has occupied the close attention of a great number of physiologists and physicians. It is a well-known natural fact that healthy plants, animals and men produce the germs of life in an enormous quantity. An immense proportion of the acorns that fall from an oak and of the ova that are dropped by a salmon do not produce life. Throughout the whole of nature there is a very lavish production of seed. It is so with mankind. In one emission of the spermatoc fluid, or seed, of a healthy man there are enough germs to impregnate or fructify tens of thousands of female germs or ova. Now, as only one ripened ovum or germ is usually fertilised by the male in the act of reproduction, it follows that a countless number of sperms are unused and lost. The

generous provision of sperms, or spermatozoa, is a device of Nature to ensure the continuance of the species.

The reason why an unnatural loss—*e.g.* excessive wastage—of semen, or human male seed, is injurious is easily explained by the fact that the seminal fluid has an important bodily, or somatic, use as well as its great racial purpose. The vigour of the body, the power of the brain, the growth of the bones are partly dependent upon the supply of spermatic fluid generated in the testicles, the two oval bodies contained in the scrotum, or bag, at the base of the abdomen. Manliness, virility and intellectual force are derived in a great degree from this testicular secretion. The fertility of the sperms can be lessened by excessive losses and their number reduced. During early youth the spermatozoa, or reproductive cells, are not so abundant as in the years of vigorous adult age from twenty-five to about forty-five, and in some instances later. In old age the sperms are considerably reduced in quantity, and lose a great part of their potency for creating a new life. As man nears the last stage of life the sperms are often absent from the seminal fluid and the capacity for fatherhood ceases.

A heavy drain on the seminal secretions, especially during the period of growth from fourteen to twenty-one, means a sapping of the

vital bodily power and a weakening of the brain force. Now the spontaneous, or automatic, discharges during sleep need not alarm a healthy young man, if they only occur once or twice in a month. From scientific investigation undertaken by men living perfectly chaste lives it has been discovered that the night emissions tend to occur with monthly regularity. That is to say, the records show that at periods of about twenty-eight days there may be two or three expulsions in the course of a few days.

The nocturnal phenomenon would appear to be a normal occurrence in the case of men living an entirely celibate life. In the vast majority of cases the emissions cease after marriage. This overflowing of the seminal vessels must be regarded as a physiological manifestation in celibacy, and not necessarily as a symptom of unruly desires, or of bodily weakness. Some early teachers of the Catholic religion recognised the fact that this occurrence is beyond the control of the will, and therefore attached no moral stigma to the spontaneous expulsion of seminal fluid during sleep, provided that it was not stimulated by the imagination during the hours of wakefulness.

It is the opinion of some inquirers into this question that the nocturnal phenomenon is a sign of deviation from perfect health of the sexual system. The question is by no means

easy to decide in a certain and final manner, because among people living in artificial conditions of life it is hard to say what is quite normal and what is abnormal. I can safely refer you to the statements of the eminent physician, Sir James Paget, who declared that all the celibate men he had known experienced the nightly emission, and showed no signs of ill health unless the occurrence was frequent. Another medical authority, Dr Lauder Brunton, has noted that these discharges happen about once a fortnight or once a month. These emissions in sleep "in moderation are to be regarded as a wholesome safety-valve," write Professors Patrick Geddes and Arthur Thomson in their book upon *Sex*.

There is a risk of these expulsions becoming frequent and morbid. Can they be checked by an effort of will? Undoubtedly the emissions may be stimulated by letting the mind dwell closely upon sensual desire, by insufficient physical exercise, by overeating and drinking, by mental idleness, by too warm bed coverings, by sleeping on the back, and by the habit of masturbation, or self-excitation. When we realise that any of these factors may excite the sex impulse we should be careful to avoid them.

The practice of handling the genital organ, or any other form of self-excitation to produce pleasure, is a purposive act. All actions that

can be willed can be controlled, inhibited or suppressed by an effort of the mind. Masturbation, as this habit is called, is a conscious and deliberate act, and is of a different character from an occurrence during sleep. Although this practice is widespread among mankind, and has been noted among animals in domesticity, it must be described as abnormal. As you already know that this habit is not uncommon among boys at school, I need not dwell upon its prevalence. Sometimes the practice begins through accidental causes in early childhood, and is continued during youth, while in some cases it is never abandoned when once acquired.

Now we should understand clearly that the sexual, or amative, passion is implanted in us for a racial purpose. There is the natural method of gratification of the instinct—*i.e.* mating or marriage—and there are perverse, abnormal and morbid satisfactions. Every sane man would naturally choose the normal and natural mode of life. There is always danger in wandering from the natural course. Masturbation often becomes a pathological, or diseased, habit, and may produce mental and physical results that hinder a fine development of manly power.

Many lads of your age have been frightened and driven to utter despair by being told that this practice ends in insanity or death. Many have considered themselves so abandoned and immoral

that they have lost their reason through terrible brooding, and some have even committed suicide through shame. I disapprove of the gross overstatements which, in the view of many able physicians and several distinguished moral teachers, tend to paralyse a youth's strongest efforts to control temptation by driving him to sheer despair.

This despairing spirit must not be allowed to take possession of the mind. *Mastery of the passions is attainable.* I have already pointed out that the primary instinct can be sublimated, and diverted from one way of gratification into several ways. One effort to resist temptation strengthens the will for the next encounter. The will becomes stronger with each successful combat. There is a supreme satisfaction in the thought that the brain is the victor over our dangerous impulses or feelings that arise from physical causes. In a race the plucky runner says, "I will not be beaten," and by a tremendous endeavour he makes his muscles, his heart and his lungs obey his will, and outdistances all competitors. *The thrill of victory in resisting a formidable temptation is even keener than the triumph of the athlete.* For conquest in moral conflicts demands all our valour and energy. The sternest battles are those fought within the soul of man. Moral courage is a much rarer virtue than physical bravery, but this courage can be cultivated.

The injury that often results from these practices is chiefly nervous and mental, in the case of those who tend to nervous ailments. There is a form of nerve weakness, or neurasthenia, which has been traced to long-continued masturbation. Now a neurasthenic person never feels "quite fit." There is likely to be headache and digestive trouble; a feeling of tiredness is usual, and often there are depression of mind, or "the blues," disturbed sleep and irrational fears. Neurasthenia is a handicap upon work and play. The disinclination for any kind of exertion may become paralysing to all effort of mind and body. There are other causes of nervous feebleness than the one I have mentioned. But some physicians of wide experience consider that this excess is a not uncommon factor.

The inveterate victim of this habit may undergo change in the emotional or spiritual nature. He may become very solitary, shy and self-absorbed. There may be a distaste for the society of the opposite sex. Sometimes the capacity for falling in love in a natural manner disappears, and this must be regarded as a morbid condition of the feeling and the mind. Nature intends every human being to experience the happiness of devoted love, mating and parentage. The man or the woman who cannot love must be regarded as a freak and an instance of deviation from the healthy, normal type.

Would any man really choose to develop a disinclination for marriage? If he reflected, I doubt whether there is a sane living man who would actually choose to become indifferent to the emotion that unites the two sexes and brings the greatest well-being and joy to humanity. When a youth abandons himself to secret indulgences, he does not suspect that he is threatening himself with future unhappiness, and depriving himself of a great experience. Generally, he has no suspicion that the habit can bring about an alteration in his emotional, or psychic, being.

Many unfortunate marriages must be attributed to the fact that one or both of the partners has, or have, impaired the power to love in a normal or natural way. The great danger in all trifling with perverted sex desires is that the perversion may become a continual craving, or an "obsession" which is very hard to overcome. The man who has learned to prefer the abnormal in the gratification of his erotic yearning can scarcely hope for true felicity in wedded life. His imagination has become fixed upon perverted ideas. He loses the happiness of real married love because he has made himself incapable of experiencing it. He has grasped at a shadow and missed the substance. The substitute has become an overmastering tyranny. The actual is denied to him through a long practice of the substituted, or the counterfeit, satisfaction.

There is, therefore, always a great risk that the habit may become a "fixation" and an inordinate craving. In bad cases there is a constant taxing of the nervous force. This undue and abnormal expenditure of vital power during the period when all the energy is required for growth cannot fail to injure the constitution. The life force should be stored up in boyhood and youth for one of its chief purposes, the reproduction of the race during the years of vigorous adult life. The young man who learns restraint stands a much higher chance of happiness in married love, and will become the father of healthier offspring, than one who has frittered away his vital power. He will be more sane and normal in mind than the morbid victim of furtive and excessive indulgences, who is often assailed by doubts as to his fitness and potency for marriage, and is generally a sufferer from remorse and shame.

The fact that the sexual hunger or desire frequently arises before the age of manhood and of marriage has been regarded by some scientific minds as a disharmony in human development. There seems little doubt that in the early stages of man's development mating began during youth. As mankind progressed in knowledge, and in social and moral responsibility, immature marriage was considered harmful to the community. It is possible also that as the standard

of living became higher marriage was postponed until young men were the possessors of some kind of property, such as cattle, sufficient for the needs of the family. If we recognise clearly that this prematurity in sex development is vestigial, and without any use to the men and women of our time, we should be prepared to withstand the promptings that arise while the body and mind are still undeveloped.

A young man should look upon marriage as the consummation of his manhood and his rightful destiny. Adolescence, or youth, should be a preparation for the important duties of conjugal life and parenthood. There should be a determination to enter the married state soon after the attainment of the adult age; and to this end a youth should work hopefully and perseveringly, and live a temperate, well-ordered life. His ideal of sex love should be refined and elevated. No man of low ideals can know the supreme happiness of married love.

FOURTH LETTER

MY DEAR BOY,—In the first of these letters I wrote that some of our ideas of sex morality are far from ethics or *rightness*, and I said that I would refer to this question another time. Now, in daily conversation with men and women, in reading books and newspapers, and while walking in the streets, a thoughtful man or woman is sure to encounter instances of oppression, injustice, cruelty and suffering arising from our very imperfect moral codes and faulty laws.

What is “moral”? One definition is “virtuous”; another is “conformed to right.” But what is *virtuous* and what is *right*? Broadly speaking, the moral man is one who respects the rights of others, and will do nothing that may injure a fellow-man or the community in which he lives. If he is a Christian he will strive to obey the rules of his creed. If he is a Buddhist he will base his behaviour on the teaching of Buddha. It is obvious that the moral and social systems regulating sex conduct vary very greatly, according to geographical position, climate, religion, traditional superstitions, culture and ideas of property.

In some tribes women are bartered like sheep

and this exchange is considered perfectly moral. Sometimes brides are won by conflict and capture. Some nations believe that plurality of wives, or polygamy, is an absolutely moral form of the sex relationship. In parts of India it is deemed moral for a woman to marry three or four husbands. Among some primitive communities sexual intercourse before marriage and adultery after marriage are not regarded as offences against morality. Aberrations from normal sexual associations are sanctioned by the moral custom of some races. That which we regard as vice is an accepted practice among many savage societies and even cultured nations. Throughout the inhabited globe there is an enormous variation in the codes of sex morality.

Naturally, in those countries where virility begins in youth there is early marriage. In the temperate and cold climates there is a tendency to defer marriage. We discountenance the mating of young people of fifteen; but in India girls become wives before that age, and their marriages are sanctified by religion. Each country strives to work out a system of sexual morality adapted to the needs of the people. In England and America, and in most parts of Europe, the ideal union of the sexes is the single marriage or monogamy. But we cannot pretend that strict monogamy is the invariable rule. We know that a form of polygamy exists in

prostitution, and that married persons are not always faithful.

The defects of our moral standards in sexual behaviour are very frequently instanced. It is generally assumed that marriage is a relationship based upon mutual affection and esteem. We know, however, that many persons marry without true affection; that rich men often buy their wives, and that mercenary-minded women will not marry impecunious men. The sacredness of wedlock consists in obedience to the natural inclination of love. If love is absent no ceremony can make the union truly sacred. When two persons cease to love and respect one another the whole meaning of marriage disappears, and the association is a travesty of "holy matrimony." Any compulsion by law or custom enforcing an estranged couple to live together cannot be called "moral." Such coercion is contrary to natural law and to sane ethics. A loveless marriage is a monstrous affront to nature and to morality, and a great source of evil in the community.

A really moral society would combat the problem of enforced celibacy for a vast number of men and a larger host of women by making subsistence easier for both sexes, and promoting more marriage and earlier marriage. Lord Sydenham said lately that early marriage is the chief remedy for prostitution, and therefore the

best preventive of the terrible diseases that result from promiscuous sex relations. Moralists have repeated this view for generations; but the age of marriage among men tends more and more to be deferred.

Another defect in our moral code is the double standard of sexual conduct. It is considered a heinous sin for a woman to lose her chastity; but licence in men is tolerated and condoned, and by some people it is not classed as immorality. If a young woman "falls," as it is called, she is usually regarded as an outcast or a vicious person. But a young man may escape the censure of his neighbours, although he leads an irregular life. In cases of seduction the woman often succumbs to the persuasion of a man whom she loves, and very frequently the seducer gains his object by a deceptive promise of marriage. Cruel punishment may be the lot of the deceived woman, while the man incurs no social penalty.

When an unmarried woman bears a child she is exposed to disgrace, but her partner is merely compelled to pay a few shillings a week towards the support of the child. All the responsibility of maintaining and educating the child falls upon the mother. If she is poor the unwanted baby is frequently neglected. The death-rate among illegitimate children is twice as high as among the legitimate; and many are cast adrift

in the world, and suffer through a want of parental love and right training. Illegitimacy is not the fault of the illegitimate, but children born out of wedlock are almost certain to suffer.

Social offences and transgressions must be judged humanely and justly. But every case of unchastity must be considered in relation to the evil wrought upon the community. A young man and a young woman may diverge from the straight path of virtue through a want of serious reflection upon the consequences of their action. They may be morally disposed, but feeble in their power of resisting vehement temptation. When the woman taken in adultery was brought before Jesus He did not condemn her to infamy, and His words to her were a reproof to those who sought her total disgrace and harsh punishment. Has a Christian society the right to degrade one of its members who has erred? The example of the Founder of Christianity is the best answer to this question. We must discriminate before we form hard judgments. The callous habitual libertine merits strong reprobation, but when two inexperienced young people are swept along by a sudden passionate yearning, we should refrain from any action that will drive them to despair. We can only influence people by reason and love, and pointing out the advantage of virtue. All the austere punishments of olden times failed to banish sexual irregularity.

Love, suasion and sound moral education are the best safeguards of personal purity. We must raise a finer ideal of sex love, marriage and parentage, and not rely merely upon denunciation of sin and error. If a brother falls in the conflict with his passions, we must help him on to his feet, gird his armour, and instil hope and courage.

I have great hope that you will realise the value of a high ideal of the love of the sexes. I do not wish you to accept all that passes to-day for morality as the finest attainable ideal. We have still a long road to travel in sexual ethics, and some of us are in a dangerous jungle, and without a true guide. Love is a pure, strong, elevating emotion. But everywhere in the civilised nations this ennobling passion is undervalued and debased. Prostitution and sexual promiscuity, mere sensual pleasure-seeking and mercenary amours are the coarse substitutes for love in communities lacking idealism. Love cannot be bartered for money. It is above and beyond the realm of gold.

When your mother married your father, the fact that he was a struggling architect, with a very uncertain future, had not the slightest influence. She was entirely swayed by her affection and admiration for a fine man who offered her his devotion. The love that your parents bore for one another was infinitely greater to them than anything else in the world.

It was an inspiration to both. Your mother's tenderness, courage, fortitude and unselfishness proved a treasure beyond price to your father, and his peaceful, happy home life consoled him for his early want of worldly success, and enabled him to win through in the struggle. Your father's passionate attachment to your mother supplied her deep emotional needs and inspired her with the rarest happiness. I can only trust that you may know the serenity, the unchequered affection and oneness that blessed your parents' marriage. Remember always that they both possessed a high ideal of married love.

Looking back on my past life, I regret often that I failed at times to live up to my ideals. I cannot live my life again. But I can use my experience in trying to show you the right road at the outset of your journey. I don't wish to bore you with prosy exhortations and negative counsels of virtue. Sometimes I am afraid that I may seem more platitudinous than practical, though I really try to avoid the "heavy father" style. We all tend to get into the way of repeating the old wise saws. But I wish to be helpful and not simply sententious.

I have given you reasons why you should combat the habit common in youth, and now I will refer to the question of irregular or promiscuous intercourse of the sexes. You say that you have already met companions who

boast of having relations with professional courtesans. Let me assure you that such associations invariably cause revulsion in the minds of men who have any real respect for love and for women. I am not alluding just now to the moral standpoint. You have been told often enough that this commerce with an unfortunate class of women is a vice. Apart from the moral aspect there are other considerations. Bought "love" can never be *love* in any true sense. Consorting with women who sell themselves is a very bad introduction to a human experience which nature plainly indicates as the consummation of attraction, admiration and passion. This cold-blooded buying of a strange woman's body is at the least a very unæsthetic, unemotional and unspiritual matter. No refined man can entirely close his eyes to the ugliness of the transaction.

To seek and select a woman of the street, just as one would buy a meal or a cigar, is a gross form of pleasure, and such an experience often leaves an indelible stain upon the soul. Every high-minded, chivalrous man who is led away by animal desire—in most cases aroused by alcoholic stimulation—suffers a loss of respect and frequently a self-loathing. As a preparation for conjugal life this sordid experience is worse than useless. The woman who willingly trades herself is very far removed in sentiment, emotion

and outlook on life and love from the maiden who gives herself to her bridegroom. No right understanding of women can be gained from associating with courtesans.

This reckless promiscuity has a debasing, smirching effect upon the emotional and moral nature. It is unclean and unhealthy. More than all, it is an act of injustice to women. You will be told that "no woman need lead this life," that "prostitution is a social necessity," and that "the Grecian civilisation raised the profession to dignity." It is true that we do not directly compel women to minister to the lusts of men, but indirectly our social system fosters the evil. A very large proportion of these our sisters are urged into the unhappy "gay life" by want or by underpaid work. Many recruit the ranks because they have been seduced and left with a child to support. Some have been hardly judged by their relatives for one slip, and they have sunk through despair and a lack of love.

Philanthropic men and women who endeavour to rescue and reform the courtesan class tell us that we must not affirm that all these women are very wicked or abandoned by nature. They are often called "unfortunates." Many of these despised creatures possess kindness of disposition, and are in many respects just like ordinary women in regard to all the virtues except chastity.

The pity is that so many women who might have been happy wives and affectionate mothers are to be found in this ignoble profession.

I remember the remark of a Spanish friend as we sat in a London restaurant in which some women of the street were plying their sad business. After being solicited by a girl, he turned to me and said: "I am a man of passion, but I have never bought a woman, and I would loathe myself if I did. There is something terrible to me in the dependence of these poor women who offer themselves like slaves in a market. How can a truly passionate man, with a capacity for love, allow himself to take pleasure through the poverty or misfortune of a fellow human being?" If all men thought in this way there would be an end of one of our greatest social evils.

I will refer to other aspects of this sad problem in my next letter.

FIFTH LETTER

MY DEAR LEONARD,—In my last letter I tried to appeal to your sense of fair play, justice and chivalry in referring to the mercenary association of the two sexes. I want you to realise that many women are driven into the ranks of prostitution through the harshness of relatives and of society, and that a large proportion are urged by sheer want and cruel industrial conditions. No right-minded man would wish that his sister or any woman dear to him should enter this deplorable profession. Yet there are many men who do not shrink from assisting in the social disgrace of other men's sisters. This shows that we are not a socialised people. If we recognised the rights of everyone in the community, we could not tolerate conditions that foster the slavery and degradation of a host of women.

What is the real position of the courtesan? She is ostracised and despised by the very people who say that she is a social necessity. Her women associates are members of her own class, and the men who consort with her secretly do not admit her to their circle of friends. However successful she may be for a time, while her attractions last, she is a social outcast. It is

the constant regret of these unhappy women that they are lonely and unloved. So strong is woman's natural craving for affection and the companionship of man that many courtesans form a relationship with worthless scoundrels, who live upon the earnings of their paramours and victims.

Prostitution debars a woman from the happiness of family life, from healthy, honoured motherhood, and from the chances of love and protection in old age. Every woman who adopts this means of earning subsistence knows that the day will come when she will cease to allure the opposite sex. Some of the most successful members of this class sink into poverty at middle age, and a number become hopeless invalids, or physical and mental wrecks, while they are still in the prime of life.

The proportion of "unfortunates" who avoid the ravaging diseases arising from their calling is very small indeed. Some inquirers believe that no loose-living woman avoids infection. Every diseased courtesan spreads poison. This contagion does not only affect the men who resort to public women. It is spread in many ways, and attacks an immense number of unoffending persons, and even young children. Syphilis is one of the great racial toxins or deadly poisons. Gonorrhœa, another of the venereal complaints, is also a fearful scourge. Both of these maladies ravage civilisation.

Syphilitic infection is very common among the dissolute. It is necessary that you should know something about this grave disease, which is often caught through sexual connection with infected women. Many of these women do not belong to the regular class of street-walkers. Men or women who indulge in casual sex relations run considerable risk of contracting syphilis or gonorrhœa. Some girls who are described as "light" or "flighty" have irregular intimacies with several men. Many of these girls are infectious. Some may be even unaware of the nature of the disorder from which they are suffering. A large number of men of all ages become the victims of one or another of the three venereal ailments, through associating with "light" women who have been infected by men.

Syphilis was until recently called "the secret disease," or "the hidden plague." It arises from a germ called the spirochæte, which enters the blood through the slightest scratch on any part of the skin, or may be conveyed by kissing a syphilitic man or woman. The malady is sometimes produced by using a razor, a pipe or a cup which has been used by a diseased person. It is spread by public water-closets. Doctors and nurses who attend cases of syphilis sometimes acquire the disorder, in spite of all their care in washing and the use of disinfectants.

Usually the first sign of the disease is seen on

the sex organs. A small sore marks the point of infection. If medical attention is given immediately, the poison, which may be only local, may be eliminated. *But the risk of poisoning of the whole system is very great.* When the germs begin to multiply rapidly they penetrate to the internal organs, and may affect the arteries, the hair and the brain. The glands are usually poisoned, and some become hard and painful. There is often a disfiguring skin rash. In a later stage the spirochætes reach the bones and cause decay. When they enter the spinal cord they induce the terrible disorder called locomotor ataxy, which frequently cripples the victim and shortens his life. Blindness, deafness and insanity may result.

The syphilitic person who is not completely cured is a great danger to his neighbours. If he marries it is almost certain that he will give the malady to his wife and children. Offspring poisoned by the germs of syphilis sometimes die in infancy. If the unhappy children live, they are handicapped for life; for the poison in their system is likely to cause a whole list of illnesses. Many syphilitic children are mentally feeble, and some become insane. Wives infected by immoral husbands may become chronic invalids, and lose the capacity to bear children. Many of the sufferings of women are due to syphilis and gonorrhœa.

I dare say you will hear, sooner or later, that

gonorrhœa (commonly called "clap") is a simple affection, which can be completely cured in a few days or weeks. *This is entirely false. The disease is very serious and is often difficult to remedy.* In only a few cases is recovery rapid. Sometimes the poison is never eliminated from the body. The germs (gonococci) appear first in the urethra, the tube in the penis, and thence they often travel upwards to the bladder, causing painful inflammation. In the course of their ravages the germs may find their way to the kidneys, and produce pyelitis, an agonising complaint. The after results are often joint rheumatism, which is very hard to cure, and pyæmia, a serious form of blood-poisoning.

Gonorrhœa is the cause of an enormous percentage of cases of blindness in new-born children. It is also the source of terrible illness in women, leading in an immense number of instances to serious operations. Women who have contracted this complaint are often rendered incapable of motherhood, and it is said that 50 per cent. of barren wives are sufferers from gonorrhœal poisoning.

Eminent physicians, supported by the Government and the mass of right-thinking people, are using their knowledge and experience in fighting the venereal plague. There are now public institutions where the two virulent maladies are treated without fees, and the utmost

secrecy is observed. If you ever discover that a companion has taken the infection, implore him to lose no time, not one hour, in obtaining proper medical advice and treatment. It is the duty of every infected person to seek an immediate cure. If he delays, the disease may invade the whole of his system, and he will become a menace to his neighbours, and a probable poisoner of the race. This devastating plague must be fought by all possible means.

This is a sad topic; but I cannot avoid it on that account. For too long we have been silent and allowed those poisons to pervade the community. Such reticence is criminal. Young men and women must know the extent of this evil, and be warned against it in plain language. We must show that the way of the transgressor is hard and that the so-called "follies of youth" bring incalculable torment of mind and body to a vast multitude.

How can we lessen prostitution and diminish the destructive maladies that it causes in every part of the civilised world?

First, we must do all we can to elevate esteem for love, and to dis sever mere gross animal satisfactions, purchased casually for money, from any conception of true affection and comradeship between the sexes.

Second, we must encourage earlier marriage, not simply by speech, but by providing practical

facilities. There must be better wages for the working class and higher incomes for middle-class workers. More cheap houses are needed in every part of the kingdom. We need better food for the toilers, more sanitary dwellings and more opportunity for marriage in the years of ambition, vigour and soundness of body.

Third, we need to teach the great mass of the people how to maintain health, to practise temperance and to prefer the higher pleasures of the mind to the gratification of low desires. This necessitates sound hygienic teaching, with proper regard to questions of the sex life, parentage, heredity, the care of mothers, the nurture of children, and the training of both sexes in youth.

Fourth, we must banish the dire poverty that literally impels many women to sell their bodies and hinders men from early marriage.

I hope, my dear lad, that you will take a part in working for these reforms. Your innings is to come ; mine is nearing the end. I want you to make a much bigger score than I have made in the great game of life. We live in an interesting age. With every generation the world grows wiser, and there is more zealous endeavour to cope with social problems. It is possible that before you are an old man we shall have almost banished the terrible diseases which I have described in this letter, just as we have practically conquered leprosy and small-pox.

SIXTH LETTER

MY DEAR LEONARD,—I am glad that you feel pity for the unfortunate girl in the village who has been charged with killing her baby. Such cases are terribly tragic. They are a reflection upon our boasted humanity. If one of our sisters in the great human family commits folly or sin, we should remember that the Founder of Christianity set an eternal example of compassion and mercy. This poor girl has tried to conceal her condition from parents and neighbours; and now, after months of anxiety and suffering, she has taken the life of her infant in a fit of hopeless despair. Already she has endured a bitter punishment.

This case cannot fail to make thoughtful persons consider the inequalities of our code of sex morality. In the novels of the eighteenth century, if there was not actual condonation of seduction, there was little or no censure for the seducer. It was regarded normally as a sign of manliness and “gallantry” that the squire’s son should have illicit relations with young women of a lower social rank. We have plentiful instances in the drama and fiction. Even to-day many men talk lightly of this injury inflicted

upon women, and often upon young girls who are led astray through an ignorance of life and their own natures. I do not overlook the fact that seduction is not always the instigation of the male. There are women who tempt young men, and some are so unscrupulous that they mislead boys. But, universally speaking, man is the chief inciter in these cases.

The inequality in such instances as you describe is very great, and the whole moral blame and social censure falls upon the woman. Now the girl who yields to a lover is not necessarily demoralised or vicious. In very many cases a girl is led to believe that the man has full and sincere intention to marry her, and she gives way through feminine tenderness and a desire to give happiness to one whom she loves and trusts. How shall we describe a man who, urged merely by sensual desire, takes advantage of a young and trusting woman? Is he not a coward and a scoundrel? The whole meaning of morality is the avoidance of injury to others. In this matter of the sexual relationship the woman is at a disadvantage. Society demands strict chastity in women, and a slip is regarded as a serious offence. In our one-sided code we do not exact such a complete restraint from men. Without directly encouraging irregularity in young men, we are inclined to view their unchastity with leniency. We call it "sowing

wild oats," or "seeing life." Frequently the wandering daughter is expelled from the home; but the profligate son is pardoned.

If illicit love is wrong for a woman, it is wrong for a man also, and no sophistry can prove the contrary. There are no specific masculine and feminine sins. All offences and vices are human. The double standard of sex morality is utterly unjust and cruel to women. I am not one of the extremists who hold that a mere religious ceremony "consecrates" every marriage. Many marriages are not "holy" in any sense of the word. There is nothing sacred in the union of a diseased and elderly *roué* with a young and ignorant girl, or in the cohabitation of two persons who have severed the natural bond of affection for one another. Such marriages are a wrong against nature and a contradiction of sexual ethics. The woman who falls, as it is termed, may be a nobler human being than her so-called "virtuous" sister, who with cold and mercenary calculation unites, under the name of holy matrimony, with a man whom she neither loves nor respects.

What would be the inevitable consequence of a constant and general indulgence of the sex instinct? Such licence would result in chaos and universal promiscuity. As I have said, the most primitive of savages recognise that the amative impulse must be regulated for the pro-

tection of the group. Taking a broad biological view, we find that sex promiscuity is a rare phenomenon among the higher animals and in uncivilised peoples. It is amongst the civilised that promiscuous sexual association tends almost to universality. But even in the most irresponsible communities there is always an endeavour to preserve a conventional form of marriage, because the mass of people approve in theory of the single union.

All divergence from the existing canon of chastity or extra-marital intercourse of the sexes must not be judged alike, as though only one form of irregularity existed. But the seduction of an unsuspecting and untaught girl by a mature and experienced man, for the simple gratification of lust, is a dastardly action and must be classed among the worst of offences. It is an act of callous cruelty.

Experience has taught men and women that sexual promiscuity must be avoided in the interest of the group, the community, the nation and the race. All transitory or ephemeral relationships of the sexes are likely to bring trouble to the partners and to cause social evils. The way of happiness and peace in love is not in intrigues, clandestine unions and furtive intimacies. Love languishes when it is allied to fear, shame and remorse. It cannot be said that the Don Juans, Lotharios and Lovelaces are as

happy as ardent and faithful married lovers. Women who break from the accepted tradition of chastity are rarely contented with life, and many sink into despondency in middle age, and mourn for the home and the children that console and charm declining years.

You will say that it is well enough to inculcate strict conjugal chastity, and to preach constant restraint, but how can the passionate and the strongly amorous exercise a perfect continence. I have never professed that chastity is easy for any vigorous, healthily-functioning young man. It is acknowledged by the greatest of the world's teachers and thinkers that this struggle is keen and often exacting. But nothing worth winning is won easily. You know that training for athletics demands severe self-denials, rigorous exercise and strict moderation in the gratification of the appetites. You realise that the severities of training are worth enduring, with a view to fitness and probable triumph in the contest of strength and endurance. The student who has set his hopes upon passing an important examination is assured that his long hours of study and the curtailment of recreation and pleasures will have their future reward, and he applies himself to learning with intense energy.

The discipline of restraining the sex desire in youth and early manhood is part of the preparation for marriage. It is a training of the

will, the mind and the emotions. The reward comes in a happy, healthy marriage. Often the loose-living man squanders both physical strength and money, and at the age of thirty-five he is prematurely aged and stinted financially through his extravagance. He is usually blasé and more or less afflicted with a sense of the tediousness of existence. If he marries, the chances are that he will be dissatisfied with conjugal life and his discontent will ruin the happiness of his wife. His children will probably suffer through the sins of the father committed in youth; and in old age he will admit, with secret regrets, that the harvest of wild oats is a curse upon his declining years.

I sympathise entirely with hot-blooded youth. I know that the battle for chastity is the severest trial that a man can experience. That is why I would urge all young men to work valiantly and industriously with the object of early marriage. From sixteen onwards for eight to ten years a youth should keep his eyes fixed on the goal of wedlock. If he meets a girl whom he loves and respects, let her become his tender friend, his confidential comrade and his inspiration while making his career.

The only real safeguards of social chastity are a deep esteem for the love of the sexes, a high respect for women and parentage, and early marriage. Respect for love restrains a man

or woman from trifling with serious emotions, or from sexual gratification without the seal of affection. Esteem for womanhood and parentage prevents the infliction of injustice or suffering upon the mothers of the race, and encourages a spirit of true chivalry in men. The man who respects parentage thinks seriously upon questions concerning the welfare of the mother and the child. It is a sin to bring diseased children into the world, and to hand on serious bodily and mental defects to the third and fourth generation.

I hope you will marry while you are young. The postponement of marriage is one of the social problems of to-day, and one cause of sexual licence and the deterioration of the race. I will write upon this question in my next letter.

SEVENTH LETTER

MY DEAR LEONARD,—I wish to give you some sound reasons for early marriage. The pleas for wedded life in early manhood are Physiological, Racial, Social, and Mental and Moral. I will begin with the physical argument. As you know, the changes of puberty at fourteen or fifteen in a boy mark the beginning of the reproductive or parental period. At sixteen a youth *might* become a father, but that age is much too young for life-giving. Youth is the developing stage of manhood and virility. It is the time for bodily and mental growth, and not for reproduction. A young man is not fully developed at twenty, and body growth may continue after that age. We are careful not to breed cattle or domestic animals from immature parents. It is infinitely more important that we should not create human beings from undeveloped progenitors.

When I write “early marriage” I don’t mean *immature marriage*. There are some men of twenty-one who might be vigorous parents; but I think the function of fatherhood should not be exercised until two or three years later. The ideal age has been fixed by some physiologists

at twenty-five for a man. A woman of twenty-three is as fully mature as a man of twenty-five. I do not say that mental maturity is gained at twenty-five. There must be inexperience of life at this early age. When can we say that a human being is completely mature in intellect and feeling? This question cannot be decided definitely. I often meet people who seem very immature, mentally and spiritually, in their middle age.

Physically speaking, a man of twenty-five should be in the full vigour of manhood. If he is normally developed, he is fit for the duties of the conjugal life. At this age there is vigour. Growth has ceased, and at the cessation of growth we enter upon the stage when the exercise of the procreative function is permissible in the biological sense.

There can be no more striking proof of the healthfulness of early marriage than the chances of life for the married and the unmarried. Men marrying at from twenty-five to thirty years of age are less liable to mortal disease than those who remain celibate. Out of 100,000 persons from twenty to eighty-five the deaths of the single far exceeded those of the married. From twenty-five to thirty there were 1369 deaths amongst the unmarried, against 865 among the married. The unmated are more numerous among the insane than the mated. There are

more suicides by the unmarried than the married. Crime is commoner among celibates than the married. These facts show plainly that conjugality is a healthier state of life than celibacy.

Nature insists upon a harmonious exercise of all the organs and functions of the body as a desideratum of complete well-being of the physical organism and the mind. Prolonged celibacy is contrary to natural law. This state should not be protracted, because the reproductive power of man is at its height from twenty-five to forty. Some vigorous men may have sound offspring after forty; but it has been noted that the male life germs are less numerous and not so active and potent in the later years of the middle period of life.

In an early marriage there is probably always less risk of disharmony than in a late marriage. Men and women who marry after thirty-five are usually fixed in their habits of living and in thought. Wedlock involves mutual adaptation of modes of life, and a general agreement upon the main and vital questions is essential. There may be marked differences in minor matters, but the two should share the deeper opinions upon conduct or religion. In marital communion one must help the other intellectually and spiritually. Now a young couple can grow together in mind, but a middle-aged pair are not ordinarily so impressionable and able to accept new ideas. It

is better to marry before the mind and habits have become "set."

Marriage has the effect of steadying a young man. It makes him industrious and persevering, and checks personal extravagance in the expenditure of money. There must always be some anxiety in founding and providing for a family, but there are great compensations in parenthood and a happy home life. The bachelor misses many of the rarer felicities, and in his old age he is often lonely and older in body and mind than a married man of the same age.

I quite realise the practical difficulties in the way of early marriage. There is the great question of the cost of living. I know many young men who from the age of eighteen to twenty-six or older spend every penny that they earn upon transient pleasures. No doubt an enormous number of young men cannot save money from their scanty incomes. On the other hand, there are men who could marry at a reasonable age if they exercised thrift for a few years. They would at least have enough money to furnish a small house and to start wedded life in a humble way.

A good and affectionate woman is willing to share impecuniosity with the man she loves. Often a wife is a man's best counsellor and inspirer in the days of keen struggle with adverse circumstance. But if the income is very small,

and the family increases rapidly, there will be distressing anxiety about ways and means. We are beginning to realise that it is wrong to bring children into the world if we cannot provide for them. Social reformers, several well-known physicians and some clergymen are now advocating early marriage, and among them are those who believe that the prospect of a large family deters many young men and women from marrying in the best years of life.

The question of limiting the number of children within the means of subsistence is becoming more important every year. It is not only a matter of cost to impecunious married people. Thoughtful and earnest men and women, concerned for the well-being and morality of the community, recognise that a host of women bear children who are fated to lifelong ill health and terribly handicapped by inferior physique. Mortality rates show plainly that the big families are the feeblest. We are learning that the reckless production of *quantity* must be superseded by the production of the *quality* of human beings. Whenever the birth-rate is very high there is a marked tendency to disease and premature death. A reasonably low birth-rate accompanies a steady survival rate, and does not seriously diminish population. This is a fact which is easily proved by the records of physical health, the improved stature of the community and general welfare

in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Holland and other countries where there is restriction upon the too rapid increase of the people.

When a woman has given birth to a child she needs a period of rest. The organs of reproduction have been taxed severely, and there is more or less exhaustion necessitating recuperation. When pregnancy, or the shaping of the offspring in the womb, follows quickly upon a birth, both the mother and the child are sure to suffer. There should be a lapse of at least three years between each birth. Now a woman marrying at twenty might bear ten or twelve children before the period of life when the capacity for reproduction ceases. Unless she happened to be an exceptionally vigorous woman, this great strain would undoubtedly injure her constitution, and affect the vigour of her children. The chances of the death of children increase after each birth in a given number of families. The sixth or eighth child is almost always inferior in stamina to the earlier born child, and the later born children are the most likely to die prematurely.

Small, or moderate, healthy families are unquestionably more valuable to society and the race than large unhealthy families. When the rate of death among infants is high it is a sign that the community is enfeebled, and that the surviving children are influenced by the weakening of the stock. I believe that the time is not

far off in the future when the unreflective and selfish reproduction of children will be condemned on moral as well as hygienic principles. The civilised nations of the world will have to decide between unconsidered dysgenic breeding and eugenic breeding. The first is the reproduction that tends to national degeneration. Eugenics is the science of healthy reproduction of the human family.

The highly developed brain of man is the organ of thought and reason. Reproduction among the animals, that are guided almost entirely by instinct, is very different in many respects from reproduction in mankind. Animals cannot by forethought control the number of births. If the fish in a pool cannot find an outlet, and their number is not reduced by natural enemies, they frequently increase beyond the means of subsistence. When there are too many fish in the pond the shortage of food leads to degeneration, and the fish are dwarfed in growth and half starved. In a human community ruled by reason such deterioration of the stock is prevented by various means of obtaining food, by emigration and by restraint upon procreation. In some countries over-population is checked by the killing of female infants, or by destroying the unborn life in the body of the mother. The Western nations have abandoned these methods, and both ways

of lessening the population are offences against law and the accepted code of morality.

How then shall we regulate the number of the family within the means of provision, nurture and education? At the 1916 Conference of the National Birth-Rate Commission, instituted by the National Council of Public Morals for the Promotion of Race Regeneration—Spiritual, Moral and Physical, the question of birth control was discussed at great length by well-known physicians, clergymen and reformers. It was stated that “among conscientious and high-minded laymen and women in the Anglican Church there are many who openly justify” certain measures adopted by married people for limiting the family, and that “this attitude has become far commoner during the last few years.”

At this Conference there were speakers who disapproved of the means of birth restriction now advocated by “high-minded” thinkers, although it can hardly be imagined that they disagreed with the statement of an authority who said that “a return to the reckless breeding of former times would cause increased poverty, distress, overcrowding, infant mortality, inefficiency and demoralisation.” What I wish you to understand is that a growing number of men and women of sincere moral conviction and zeal for the improvement of the race believe conscientiously that the restriction of the number

of the family by preventive measures is not only legitimate but necessary in all the over-populated countries.

I would, at the same time, urge you to weigh this question very carefully in your mind before you marry. All social doctrines must be examined cautiously. I advise you to read three New Tracts for the Times, promoted by the National Council of Public Morals—*The Problem of Race-Regeneration*, by Dr Havelock Ellis; *The Methods of Race-Regeneration*, by C. W. Saleeby, M.D.; and *The Declining Birth-Rate*, by A. Newsholme, M.D.

After a careful reading of these small books I would suggest that you read *The Task of Social Hygiene* and *Essays in War-time*, by Havelock Ellis. These books should show you very clearly that race culture is a tremendously important topic, and encourage you to continue your study of this most vital of questions. You should be able, after looking at the subject from all points—moral, social, economic and hygienic—to make a decision as to the applicability of the new teaching in your married life.

You will no doubt meet opponents who will offer objections. You will be told that the practice is “unnatural,” and some objectors will advance moral considerations. I do not wish to bias you unduly in this or in any other great question. You must hear both sides and

form your own judgment after due reflection and the examination of evidence for and against. I am convinced that early marriage and restricted families would tend to a diminution of much sexual irregularity, mental suffering, nervous disorder, pecuniary trouble and disease. Thoughtful men and women in all parts of the world are beginning to recognise that a nation's well-being and stability depend upon the *quality* and not the *quantity* of children born.

There is the plainest medical evidence that the very large families are not the healthiest, and that the less vigorous parents in civilised communities produce the largest families of weakly and degenerate offspring. The lower we descend in the scale of evolution the greater the reproductive activity. In the higher mammals and mankind nature provides against an enormous increase of the species; but in over-populated countries there is still a tendency towards poverty, unemployment and want.

EIGHTH LETTER

MY DEAR BOY,—You complain quite reasonably that most lads of your age are uninstructed in human reproduction. You say that you are “hazy” in your mind, and that the theories suggested by some of your schoolmates seem “absurd.” I can assure you that many men old enough to be grandfathers know no more than you of matters that concern the health, well-being and morals of the community and the individual. A very considerable number of the people in hospitals, asylums, institutions for the mentally defective, and prisons are there through the terribly widespread ignorance of sexual physiology and hygiene.

Physiology, as taught in the ordinary school, omits all reference to the racial or sexual organs, and to the process of conception, the formation of the human being before birth, and our coming into existence. Yet every normal boy or girl has a natural curiosity concerning the wonder of birth. It is truly amazing that a nation so enlightened in many respects as the British has neglected such an important branch in education. The first thing to teach the young is how to live rightly. No ignorant person can develop his

finest physical and mental powers. There must be knowledge for a lamp to the feet in treading the dangerous paths of human life. As I have often said, instinct utterly fails us in the more important affairs of the love-life. The untaught civilised child is helpless. He has to be instructed in the rudiments of healthy living, and has often much less *instinctive* knowledge than a kitten.

You know that insects, frogs, fish and birds are produced from eggs. The little green speck on a leaf contains the elements of the fully developed, gorgeously coloured butterfly. A tiny globule of jelly-like matter holds the germ of the mighty salmon. In the warm-blooded higher animals, the mammals that give milk to their young, the eggs or ova abound in most species from birth till old age. They exist in an immature state in the ovaries of newly born female infants.

At puberty, the great transition period from childhood to maturity, the ova increase in size, and each month they ripen and are ready for fertilisation by the male sperm or seed. In every mature female ovary there are vast numbers of ova awaiting full development. In every male seminal organ there are millions of sperms contained in a protecting fluid. When sexual congress occurs between the sexes, some of the male germs may meet a ripened female germ in the womb or uterus. The sperm (spermatozoon) is very active, and is wonderfully directed, as

though by magnetic influence, to the female ovum, which it quickly penetrates and fertilises.

The actual seeds of humanity can only be seen under a powerful microscope. The ovum is larger than the spermatozoon and probably much less mobile. Hence the nature of man is said to be symbolised in the ardent, adventurous racial germ, and the nature of woman in the more passive ovum. The marital conjunction of man and woman does not always result in impregnation or fertilisation of the ovum. It happens frequently that no ripe ova are in the womb or in the ducts leading from the two ovaries. Once a month, in healthy women, ova ascend from the ovaries on both sides of the uterus through narrow tubes or ducts. They are contained in a vessel or follicle, which bursts in the womb and liberates them. If the ova are not impregnated, they pass from the body. During this monthly preparation for life-giving, called menstruation, there are believed to be changes in the uterus. This causes a flow of sanious fluid—*i.e.* resembling blood—which is ejected from the body.

As you have already had thoughts about marriage, I think this the right opportunity to point out the important part that periodicity or the monthly rhythm plays in the life of women. It is this function that chiefly differentiates female sex function from the male. We are not yet able to state with full certainty that men are

subject to monthly periods, as exhibited by an increase of ardour and some physical and mental signs. It is probable that such a rhythm exists in man. But in women it is very marked, and affects not only the reproductive system, but the whole body and the mind and emotions.

This influence of the menstrual process is extremely important. Every husband ought to understand its nature, manifestations and results upon the woman he has vowed to cherish. It should be known that this preparation for conception is attended by at least considerable discomfort, if not positive suffering, amongst all civilised women, and especially amongst those leading sedentary and indoor lives in the large towns. A savage woman escapes many of the risks of disorder in this function, and probably a few very robust women of the advanced races, who lead healthy outdoor lives, are only slightly inconvenienced at the period. But derangements of this function among the middle and upper class women of this country are common, and it is not too much to say that menstruation is always accompanied by bodily or mental symptoms suggesting temporary illness.

It is clear, then, that the protective and tender feeling of man should express itself in increased sympathy, restraint of temper and close consideration during this periodic trial of the wife. When I tell you some of the penalties that

women pay for the privilege of motherhood you will appreciate the need for a husband's solicitude. Only a few women are free during menstruation from internal pains, headache, indigestion and other disturbances. There are also graver disorders connected with the period, which often result in suffering of a serious kind and cause continual invalidism.

The psychic (mental) signs are equally significant. Several experienced physicians agree that almost all women are, to a certain extent, to be judged as irresponsible for their behaviour at the monthly crisis. It is a notable fact that a large number of women convicted of crimes commit offences at this period, and there are authorities on medical jurisprudence who think that the law should recognise temporary irresponsibility in some cases brought before courts. In the case of the most capable women there is a lessening of capacity at this time. The intellectual perception may be clouded and concentration rendered difficult. Careful women are apt to break china accidentally. Skilled musicians lose their delicacy of touch, and some professional musicians realise this so keenly that they refuse to play before audiences during the crisis. The voices of singers are often affected. There is a tendency to make mistakes. Some women, even of the most amiable type, become intensely irritable, and prone to find fault and to scold. Sometimes

extreme anger is displayed with insufficient cause, or apparently without any cause. This increased sensitiveness should be understood and reckoned with. It has been said that the first clouds in married life always arise at this time. In many cases, no doubt, the husband is not conscious of the suffering that transforms the normal even temper of his partner into irritableness or irascibility.

Whenever a normally reasonable woman appears strangely unreasonable, we should suspect that physical derangement is the probable cause. There are few women who do not repay in full the consideration shown to them during this trying time of the month. The love and esteem of a wife for her husband are deepened by the sympathetic understanding that her partner shows in these hours of trial.

Man's part in continuing the race is much simpler than the part played by woman. He is the fertilising agent. Woman is the soil that brings forth life. The function of the father in generation is limited to a single physiological act. But for a long period after conception the mother fulfils several important duties. For nine months the babe is shaped within her, and long after the birth of the child she nourishes it from her breasts. In procreation the woman is the chief partner, and her whole life is directly and indirectly related to the giving of life.

Nevertheless, fatherhood is a great responsibility. We inherit our good and evil traits and tendencies from both parents, or, more correctly speaking, from the ancestral germ-plasm. A vicious or diseased father hands on a heritage of illness and suffering to his children. An old man cannot beget very vigorous offspring. After the fifty-fourth year of a man's life there is a change in the structure of the spermatozoa. After sixty some men lose the capacity of parentage, though they may retain the impulse to love. Healthy fatherhood depends upon virility. This word denotes manhood and reproductive power.

The virile man is able to perform the office of generation in a normal manner. He is dominated by affection and tenderness towards the woman whom he has chosen as his wife and the mother of his children. His desire is towards her, and she is selected as his true mate from among other women. When a man is vigorous and naturally ardent we say that he is "potent." If he is feeble, and unable to undertake the duties of husband and parent, we say that he is "impotent." In some instances impotence is the consequence of defects in the sexual organs, and in others it is functional or psychic.

Impotence is sometimes induced by long-continued excess in intercourse. It may arise also from too prolonged abstention and the

deferment of marriage to a late age. Usually this disorder is curable. Sometimes a form of impotence develops which is largely imaginary and due to apprehension. Some authorities give excessive masturbation as a cause of impotence. There is no risk of this loss of virility for men who live regular and healthy lives.

Generative power is often allied to strength of character and intellectual vigour as well as to physical force. A virile lover is energetic in seeking and wooing his future partner. Such men are usually capable, industrious and active-minded. They are not vanquished by difficulties in courtship or in business, but make constant and determined efforts to overcome hindrances to success. This fact should convince us that the seminal fluid has a twofold use. An enfeebled voluptuary or a fanatical and extreme ascetic deteriorates mentally as well as physically. There is a rigid natural law of use, and a penalty for misuse or disuse of any of our faculties and functions.

As I have said before, the sex energy should be conserved during the stage of childhood and youthful growth. But it should be used in the best years of manhood in marriage and in giving life. If the force is not entirely used up in growth, or in mental and bodily activity, there is, as we have seen, a kind of safety-valve, as instanced in the spontaneous expulsion of seminal

fluid during sleep. We must not suppose, however, that this phenomenon is a perfect substitute for the normal expulsion of the germ cells as in married life. It is apparently a simple overflowing of the surcharged secreting glands of celibates, and it is only harmful when excessive.

There is considerable difference in the virility of individuals. This is often overlooked by ill-informed writers and counsellors. A man should know himself before he lays down rules of health. One person may be in every respect more vigorous at fifty than another at twenty. Generally virility begins at about eighteen and increases until its first signs of decline twenty years later. From forty-five to sixty-five there is a slow decline of virility in a large number of men. It is safe to say that the reproductive force of men is at its height for about twenty years, though the sexual power may last in some instances to an advanced age. There are cases of young men who do not arrive at puberty till over twenty, and in these instances there is sometimes a loss of potency at fifty. These variations are by no means infrequent, and they are important when considering questions of healthy parentage and the improvement of the race.

The state of the general health of the body undoubtedly influences the parental capacity. We know that alcohol quickly enters the blood

stream, and if taken in large quantities it affects the semen. Diseases resulting from sexual vices also pollute the vital fluids of the body, and the poison may induce impotence in the man and sterility in the woman.

NINTH LETTER

MY DEAR LEONARD,—In my last letter I described briefly the process of impregnation, or the fertilisation of the ovum. Every man on the threshold of marriage should know something of the function of gestation—*e.g.* the growth of the future human being in the body of the mother. Ignorance of the right care of prospective mothers is unfortunately very widespread, not only among the poor and the uneducated, but also among the well-to-do and the educated. Many wives become confirmed invalids through the ignorance of themselves and their partners. This is a serious reflection upon a “cultured” nation. The first duty of a community is to protect the mother and the child. Actually we take a deeper interest in the breeding of horses, cattle and dogs than in the reproduction of human beings.

After impregnation the monthly periods usually cease at once, or within a few weeks. The male and the female cells have united. The spermatazoon, measuring only $\frac{1}{300}$ of an inch, has penetrated the ovum, which has a diameter of about $\frac{1}{120}$ of an inch. There is now a mingling of the parental characters. The fertilised cell

of the woman begins to form generations of other cells by division, and these cells form a ball of living matter.

Within this small mass of cells the embryo is developed. The ovum assumes an oval shape. For the first three weeks the embryo is a "flat disc floating on the surface of the yolk sac," and soon a head and a tail may be seen. The ovum is sunk in the lining membrane of the womb in a cavity which is formed.

There is a thickening of the membrane of the uterus, and after the third month the embryo is much increased in size. The foetus, as the shaping child is called, is fed by the mother's blood through the placenta, an important organ, which is known as the "after-birth." After the exit of the infant from the womb, through the vaginal passage, the placenta is ejected after the umbilical cord, which is attached to the navel of the baby, has been severed. The placenta supplies both nourishment and respiration to the embryo. Necessary gases are conveyed to the foetus from the parent's blood by a process known as osmosis.

If the blood of the mother is affected by disease germs, or by the poison arising from alcoholic excess, the health of the infant will certainly suffer. At the end of the first month of growth in the womb the embryo is about one inch long and curved. The heart is seen at an early stage

of development. Later the head begins to shape into the human type and the rudimentary tail disappears. In three months there is a considerable change in size and structure, and in about four months the sex of the foetus can be noted. The head increases in size, and hair begins to grow. In the seventh month the embryo weighs about $2\frac{1}{2}$ lb. At the end of the fortieth week the weight of the infant should be 7 lb, and birth then occurs.

During child-bearing there are many changes in the body of the mother, usually of a beneficial character, but sometimes attended by painful symptoms. Pregnant women are apt to suffer from nausea, toothache and nervous disturbances, but, generally speaking, good health attends gestation. The mental signs are important, especially in young wives bearing the first child. It is now the husband's duty to show every consideration, sympathy and tenderness. He should avoid any exciting discussions, and preserve a happy, tranquil atmosphere in the home.

An eminent women's physician has written: "A woman is filled with expectation and anxiety concerning the unknown event, the complete revolution in her organisation, the powerful impressions on her physical ego, the formation of a new being within her womb. How many joyful hopes, how many distressing fears are connected with that which is about to

take place, with the act of creation within her bosom; what changeful glimpses into the future, on the one hand the gladness, on the other the terror, of motherhood; often, also, the anxious doubts as to the probable sex of the new-comer."

The nervous manifestations of pregnancy are often irritability, anxiety and variableness of mood. This great work of creation is likely to cause some emotional unrest as well as expectant happiness. It is suspected that the circulation of the blood in the brain of the prospective mother is influenced by the circulation in the placenta. Curious disorders of taste may arise, and a craving for certain kinds of foods or an unusual diet. If the woman has a tendency to hysteria, there may be attacks during the gestation period. Everything must be done to protect the wife from shocks, unpleasant sights, undue excitement and anxiety.

It may be said that every part of the mother's organism is taxed during child-bearing. The heart is called into new activity, and if that organ is weak or diseased there is serious risk. Rest for some weeks before and after giving birth is absolutely essential. Every woman, married or single, should be encouraged to rest during at least one or two days of the monthly period, and generally to "take life quietly" at this time. In pregnancy repose is even more important. It is really terrible to reflect upon

the immense injury inflicted upon mothers of the working class, and in many instances of the better-off class, through exertion following too quickly upon delivery. *I wish to impress upon you that opportunity for rest is the first of women's rights during the puerperium or child-producing stage of life. Our neglect of this hygienic law is barbarous and cruel.*

Another of our social sins is the too frequently recurrent pregnancy, which grievously impairs the health of women, damages offspring and results in deterioration of the race. The human soil is impoverished by over-production and the fruit is poor and diseased. All the organs concerned in generation need rest and recuperation after childbirth. The distended uterus must be allowed to recover its normal size before another impregnation of an ovum. There should be complete recovery from the severe strain of pregnancy and parturition (labour). There is no sound excuse for the husbands who enforce too rapidly following pregnancies upon their unfortunate wives. Ignorance is not a valid plea. It is the primary normal duty of a man about to marry and to procreate offspring to learn the rules of conjugal hygiene. Such knowledge is quite as essential as a training for business. The sins and errors of married life menace the whole of the community and the race in the present and the future.

Labour, or parturition, is painful, and is often attended with risk of injury to the mother. Usually a woman suffers most in giving birth to her first child. After thirty-five there are more chances of complications in childbirth. Displacement or falling of the womb is a common disorder in both married and single women, and a source of bodily disability and mental depression. Most of the risks and derangements attending motherhood could be avoided if civilised women would lead healthier and more natural lives. Not many years ago a large number of women died through puerperal fever, a serious ailment resulting from lack of hygienic care.

After delivery the mother requires some weeks of rest, and every husband should make this possible. Many wives are injured for life by beginning active household or business duties within a few days, and sometimes even a few hours, of undergoing the great strain of childbirth. When the birth is normal, and the mother vigorous, there is an improvement in health and vitality. Every woman should be able to feed her infant from the breast; but artificial living and errors have deprived a considerable number of mothers from exercising this function. The breast-fed child has a better chance of health and strength than one reared by artificial feeding.

TENTH LETTER

MY DEAR LEONARD,—The differences in the sexes are called Primary and Secondary. The first refers to the organs of reproduction and the second to the other distinguishing physical and mental characters. The differences in nervous organisation and the chemistry of the body give the masculine and the feminine qualities. Man is larger-boned, more muscular and thicker skinned than woman. His hair is less abundant on the head and coarser in texture, and his features more rugged and less mobile.

The active sperm, or male element, is sometimes cited as a type of masculine qualities. This germ of life is extremely active, whereas the female ovum is more passive, and represents the feminine tendency to repose. Man is the natural hunter, protector of the family and warrior. Woman is the maker of the home, the initiator of the peaceful arts and industries, and probably the first inventor. She possesses a deep affection for offspring, which is the source of her sense of sympathy, pity, and her desire to protect and cherish. There is little doubt that women were the early domesticators of animals and the first to till the soil.

Man is restless, adventurous and combative. He shows greater variation from the normal than woman. There are more men than women among the great scientific discoverers, artists, poets, founders of faiths and great teachers. The tendency to variation is also shown by the greater number of idiots and criminals in the male sex. Colour-blindness is comparatively rare among women. Men are somewhat less resistant to disease than women, and male babies are more liable to die than female. Women, generally speaking, live longer than men.

I will now describe some of the chief physical differences of man and woman. The trunk is longer, in the relative sense, in woman than in man, and the ribs straighter. Men are taller and bigger than women. One of the most important variations is the pelvis, the ring of bone, or girdle, that supports the upper part of the body. In women the pelvis is broad and relatively larger than in men. Everyone born into the world passes through the pelvic ring. Among the quadrupeds birth is a much easier process than among the bipeds. The pelvis of the woman has been developed both as a support and to facilitate delivery; but as the young of the human species tend to be somewhat too big for an easy passage through the bony ring, the pains and risks of childbirth are increased.

Fortunately, as human heads grow larger the pelvic girdle widens.

Besides some differences in the shape of the skull of men and women, there is a difference in the brain weight. Man's brain weighs more than woman's, and this has often been accepted as a proof of the superiority of masculine intelligence. In relation to their body weight, the brains of women are as large as men's, and sometimes larger. Now a big brain is not always a good thinking organ. The bigger the brain, the more blood required to make it work, and it sometimes happens that large brains are badly supplied with blood. Some insane persons have heavy brains; and idiots often possess fully developed frontal lobes, which were formerly considered the seat of intellect. There is nothing to be learned from brain weight concerning the alleged intellectual superiority of one sex over another.

The viscera (internal organs) differ in the two sexes. Women have rather larger stomachs than men in relation to bodily size and weight, and the same superiority in size has been noted in the female liver. An important organ in both men and women is the thyroid gland in the front part of the neck. This gland is larger in women than in men. It is undoubtedly connected in an intimate manner with the womb. At the first menstrual course the thyroid en-

larges, and occasionally it swells at each menstruation. This organ affects the mind as well as the body. If diseased, the symptoms may be goitre or excessive swelling, or cretinism, a form of idiocy. There are also other bodily and mental disorders, such as Graves' disease and myxœdema, arising from this mysterious gland.

The tone of the voice depends upon the larynx in the throat. Your voice "broke," as it is called, at the oncoming of puberty. Women's voices do not undergo this change. The larynx of woman is smaller than that of man and the voice higher but weaker.

There is a greater tendency in woman than in man to store up fat in the body. The more rounded form of woman is caused by this deposition of fat, as shown in the breasts and the thighs. This reserve of fat is essential for the process of life-giving. The chief constituents of the blood of the higher animals are plasma, white corpuscles and red corpuscles. Woman's blood is watery as compared with man's and has fewer red corpuscles. The heart of a woman beats quicker than the heart of a man.

The maternal function gives a cast to the mind and emotions of women. Even the little girl is more interested in young children, in helpless creatures, and notably in dolls, than her small brother. This mother-feeling dominates the majority of women. The character of a woman

depends primarily upon her physiological traits and her hereditary tendencies, and the same may be said concerning man. But woman is more influenced than man by the racial energy or reproductive part of her being. This is expressed by the saying: "Love is woman's whole existence." In mythology Love and Peace are represented by women. Motherhood may be regarded as a continuous process; for the germs of the race begin to appear in the girl child, and their ripening every month after puberty manifests Nature's solicitude for reproduction. In the wonderful chemistry of the female body there is a constant preparation for the giving of life, and this process has its marked results upon the mind and the feeling of woman.

A glandular secretion mingling with the blood stream arouses a tender emotion or a profound longing in the bosom of a woman. The yearnings of the heart and the thoughts of the brain influence the womb and the organs of generation. There is a constant interplay of body and mind. Sex is more massive and pervasive in women than in men. I do not imply that women are more impelled than men to seek the physical gratifications of sex. Broadly speaking, men are more preoccupied with these pleasures than women. The erotic impulse in men is powerful, but its expression is often restricted, and in the lower psychic types its sole object is sensual

satisfaction. With women love, especially at its outset, is founded upon higher sentiment, and in some instances the physiological manifestations are but feebly aroused. Undoubtedly it is a law of Nature that Man should seek actively an object of his love, and that Woman should be wooed before she can be won.

Love in women is more diffused than among men. The primal instinct of man is to select the woman who appeals to him by her beauty of countenance or comeliness of form. This consideration is not paramount in women. The woman is attracted by strength or force, not always by physical strength alone, but by the qualities that make "character." A masculine type of woman will prefer a man of compliant nature, or one who is slightly feminine, and the feminine woman will be attracted by powerful manliness. There are, of course, exceptions to this rule.

Women are more emotional and less "rational" than men; but the lesser manifestation of reasoning power in women is not a natural limitation. It is not true that men act from reason alone, nor is it true that women always act from feeling alone. Some women are more logical than men. But generally men display a deeper appreciation of scientific accuracy than women. This is, no doubt, due to the fact that women's education has been upon different lines

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from the education of men. For hundreds of centuries men have opposed the wider education of women. Man suffers to-day from woman's defective intellectual development, and our sex is beginning to recognise at last that physical charms are not the only desirable attractions in women. The age of the adorable simpleton woman is coming to an end. There are signs that women throughout the civilised world are actually overtaking men in the march of mind.

Education may modify some of the feminine characteristics, but it certainly will not destroy emotion, maternal love and sympathy for the opposite sex. There is every reason for believing that education will refine and exalt sex love. The spiritual men and women are found among the cultured classes. Whenever the intellectual faculties are exercised there is a reaction upon the emotional nature. The unintellectual are usually satisfied with the animal sensations. They miss the finer pleasures of the psychic kind.

ELEVENTH LETTER

MY DEAR LEONARD,—I discussed some of the secondary sex differences of man and woman in my last letter. It is very important that the sexes should appreciate these differing characters. When you hear people talk of “sex antagonism,” you should ask them what they mean by this expression. Undoubtedly there are marked differences in the two sexes, but this does not necessarily involve hostility. I think it is more accurate to describe the attitude of the sexes as *misunderstanding*. It has been said that a woman is a woman from her head to her little toes. This is perfectly true in the psychic or mental and moral sense also—that is to say, women, like men, think in terms of their temperament and general “make-up” of the body.

The differing emotion of men and women regarding love is one of the sources of disagreement. The qualities of reserve, cautiousness and prudence are necessary in the female sex, not only in the personal sense, but for racial well-being. Woman is the supreme parent. She acts unconsciously, and sometimes quite consciously, in the interest of her unborn offspring. This selective precaution is instinctive in the females

among animals. The young female rejects the old male and the feeble mate, and shows favour to the young and the vigorous protector of the brood. When a woman loves a man, the maternal feeling is frequently manifest in her conscious thought, and perhaps always in the subconscious self.

Men possess the parental emotion, but not in the same degree as women. Man is the fertiliser and the impregnator; woman is the bearer and the producer. The babe is formed in and from the body of the mother. Men usually dissociate the conjugal embrace from a generative goal; but women more often associate this act with the giving of life. Sexual intercourse must always be a more momentous matter for the woman than for the man; for its result may be conception, the long process of gestation and the trials of childbirth.

Nature has shrewdly contrived that the two sexes shall find joy in each other, and experience desire to unite. The exercise of the reproductive impulse has been made pleasurable with a definite object. Without accompanying pleasure of mind and body both the nutritive and the sexual functions are very liable to disorder. In women the physical response to the erotic emotion is often far more complicated than in men. We may say that the origin of wooing is the necessity for awakening ardour in the female, and over-

coming her vague sense of fear and tendency to resistance. I need scarcely give you instances of the immense importance of courtship throughout nature from insects to mankind.

Courtship in the animals is probably a simple matter of automatic or instinctive action. Once or twice a year, and in some instances more frequently, the mammals feel powerful pairing impulses. Certain states of the organs of generation give rise to the phenomenon known as "heat" or "rut." At this period, which occurs among many animals in the spring, there is a strong sexual obsession, and enormous activity is expended in seeking and alluring partners. After the wooing and pairing period love among the animals becomes a simple latent force, and desire disappears.

We cannot compare reasonably the love emotion of animals with the human passion of love. The problem of continence does not trouble animals living in natural conditions. In mankind the wish to give and to receive love is perennial. Love is, for the human species, intimately associated with all that is most precious and sacred in life. Above the mere physical yearning, the cultured man and woman experience an extremely wide range of complex emotions. These feelings are in the unconscious mind of the young child, whose first expression of love is towards the mother who feeds it from

her breasts and tends it with constant devotion. Our whole lives are a reaching out of pleading hands for love, sympathy and human communion. "He who loves not lives not."

In the females among the birds and the mammalia we trace the coyness, modesty and apprehension that are manifested in a host of subtle forms in the highly developed woman of the civilised nations to-day. The "gesture of refusal" is shown by the bashful maiden whose kiss is sought by her lover. All the hesitancies, resistances, coqueties and varying moods of a woman during courtship must not be always attributed to artifice, prudery or pretence. They are the manifestations of some of the oldest instincts in living creatures. But it is just these apparently inscrutable capricious acts that bewilder men, and give rise to all kinds of masculine assumptions and generalisations upon the moodiness, uncertainty and variableness of women. Instinctively every normal woman recognises that she requires a tactful, skilful lover to awaken the pure flame of passion in her bosom. The female bower-bird is enticed to pairing by the male who shows the greatest æsthetic taste in the decoration of the nest. The savage maiden selects the lover who has proved himself heroic in warfare, the good hunter and the adept in courting.

The natural and very ancient dread of the

force of the passion of love, and the sense of shame, which has been immensely deepened by ethical and religious ideas, are apparently more profound in women than in men. We speak of "feminine modesty," "the coyness of the maiden," "womanly delicacy," and in many other phrases the reserved or the timorous attitude of women towards sex is commonly conveyed. It follows, therefore, that in wooing the male sex play a leading part, or at least one more active or aggressive than that of the female. The art of love for man is the understanding of the soul of woman.

You will meet men and women who smile at the idea of love-making as something that can be taught. "Nature" or "instinct" causes a man to fall in love; but instinct may fail him disastrously in the guidance of conduct in courtship, and more especially in marriage. If a lover does not try to understand the feminine human heart, and all the elusive mental and emotional traits that belong to woman, he imperils his own happiness as well as that of his partner in married life. *Marriage is the closest of all human intimacies, and can only be successful when the intimacy is complete, both in the psychic and physical spheres.*

Now, as man is the initiator in married love, it is his duty to equip his mind with the essential knowledge. That brides should be in a state of

ignorance, or imperfectly informed, concerning the physiological side of conjugal life is a monstrous anomaly and sheer cruelty. This ignorance is the hidden cause of married misery in both sexes. Without parental direction a child does not know what he should eat or drink, and all sensible parents are careful to instruct their children in matters of feeding, cleanliness and attention to health. But in questions of sexual hygiene the great mass of civilised and educated people are profoundly ignorant.

Marriage is a physical and spiritual union. If we make light of either of the elements of conjugality we imperil both. This is why I would urge every young man and woman of the marrying age to learn the laws of healthy wedlock before risking their happiness and physical well-being in a haphazard marriage. There are rules of conjugal health which the married should observe in their own interest and the welfare of their children. This knowledge does not arise instinctively or automatically. It is the result of human reflection, experience and accumulated reason.

The results of ignorance are only too evident in all the civilised communities. Men and women enter matrimony without giving as much thought to questions of heredity, reproduction, sex hygiene, the rearing of infants and the care of children as they devote to the furnishing of

the parlour. At least half of the specific diseases of women arise from a want of knowledge on the part of their husbands and themselves. A young man who has contracted a venereal complaint may imagine that the virus has disappeared from his system. But the germs may still lurk in his blood and the cells of life, and, to his amazement and shame, he may infect his wife and poison his offspring. A bride who has never learned the care of health during menstruation, pregnancy and the suckling of her babe may become an invalid, or develop nervous symptoms. Excess in marital intercourse may produce infertility or a serious weakening of the sperms. From the same cause functional disorder may arise, or there may be mental depression, or an incapacity for sustained application. There may be also mental and nervous trouble through undue repression.

The right way in marriage is the sure road of hygienic knowledge, consideration, sympathy, confidence and forbearance. If marriages were based entirely upon the intellectual sympathies the union could be likened to an ordinary friendship. But wedlock is not only an intimate companionship. It is a linking of the bodies and souls of a pair of human beings for their personal ends and the continuance of the race. The love of a man and woman is their own private concern until they give citizens to the commonwealth.

When the two become parents their conduct has a profound social significance. They may give life to healthy children who will serve the common weal, or to weaklings and defectives who will become a burden upon the community.

You may ask: "What is my own individual responsibility in this matter?" I will tell you. Your responsibility begins before marriage. It is your duty to yourself and to society to preserve the purity of the racial germs in your body. In choosing a wife you should not attach the highest importance to beauty, but to character, vigour and sympathy. I do not mean that physical charms are negligible. But it is certain that kindness is a more durable quality than "beauteous looks," and that a healthy wife is more likely to experience happiness and to add to your own felicity than one who is ailing and feeble. I am not counselling a cold discrimination. Falling in love cannot be planned like a business project. Nevertheless, both men and women are often misled by impulsiveness and passion, and become plighted lovers without a necessary understanding of one another's views, tastes, prejudices and temperamental adaptability.

Before marriage you should have a fair general knowledge of human physiology and the differences in the constitution of man and woman. You should know some of the main facts of embryology and reproduction, and the laws of

marital hygiene. Unless you know some of the deepest yearnings and tenderest emotions of the woman who will be your constant companion in hours of joy, sorrow, stress and trial you will scarcely hope to become her most cherished and intimate friend. A perfect confidence should be established between you and your betrothed. There should be complete frankness in the expression of the most sacred wishes of the heart; or the day may come when your wife will reflect, "This is not the man whom I loved as a wooer," or in your own mind may arise the misgiving that you have erred in choice. Remember that it is fatal to suppress or hide the deeper sentiments and desires during courtship and engagement.

In your endeavour to understand the psyche of woman, which is the beginning of the art of conjugal love, you must not be swayed by the common generalisations of men in the smoking-room, nor by the ordinary commonplaces of women themselves. Men who know nothing of feminine psychology frequently utter very pronounced opinions about women. And women who have been long miseducated concerning their desires and emotions frequently deceive themselves unconsciously. As I said when we were walking from Barmouth to Dolgelley, "education teaches us almost everything except a knowledge of our own nature."

Association with the opposite sex will teach

you practical lessons in the behaviour of women, the attitude that they adopt towards the most intimate problems in their lives, and their views upon marriage. But until you have gained the love and the trust of an affectionate and intelligent woman, you will not know much concerning the real nature that lies beneath a conventional veneer. For you must realise that candour concerning the secrets of the soul is more difficult for a woman than a man. But beneath this reserve imposed by custom you will discover many emotions and longings, which will win your sympathy as a being of like human passions, doubts, conflicts and aspirations.

This *entente* between man and woman is the dearest and holiest thing in life. I think that love is another word for "understanding." Every sensitive soul—and most women are sensitive—longs and aches to be "understood." When we know that there is at least one person in the world who loves us through understanding the best and the worst that constitutes our ego, one of the profoundest of human cravings is satisfied.

TWELFTH LETTER

MY DEAR LAD,—I was very pleased to receive your letter, the other day, announcing that you intend to marry in June. Our correspondence has been rather irregular during the past five years, owing to your absence in Canada. I am very glad that you have “found a jewel of a girl,” and from your letter I judge that she will be a true helpmate and a loving wife. As you say, you have both decided to marry while you are young. You are not rich, but your prospects are good, and I believe you will succeed with the farm and the stockyard.

You told me some months ago that you were engaged, and, as you have been much together, you should know each other’s merits, tastes and, I may say, foibles also. I see no reason why you should prolong the engagement period. Accept my warmest congratulations!

The tone of your letter assures me that you are anxious for the happiness of your bride. I have never suggested that there is a royal road to married happiness; but I maintain that love is an art that can be learned, and that marriage should be a prolongation of courtship. Further, I believe that preparation for matrimony is

essential, and that plighted lovers should recognise clearly the nature of the emotional and physical bond that unites them. I have seen so much disaster and misery among uninformed husbands and wives that I would do all in my power to spread enlightenment.

Many apparently "good matches" are unsuccessful. There are causes of conjugal disharmony and contention apart from poverty, infidelity, intemperance and ill temper. These are the subtle, hidden, often unrecognised, disharmonies. Something indefinable is lacking in the union. People say that the couple are "incompatible." But whence arises this disunion? The secret source may be only suspected by one or both of the pair, or it may entirely elude them.

Ignorance and distorted or perverted ideas of the sex relationship are responsible for the seemingly inscrutable discord that exists in many marriages. Men and women, who pledge themselves to love and cherish one another at the altar, too frequently bind themselves, without full reflections, to a difficult responsibility. Passion, affection and sympathy may exist in the courting days, and yet after marriage the pair are conscious of "a rift in the lute." Now desire and fervour are prime essentials in love, but without knowledge of marital behaviour even these essentials may not prove sufficient.

Powerful instinct and ardent love alone do not teach us biological facts. Man is a reasoning animal. If he ceases to use his reasoning faculty, he is bound to err in any undertaking, and perhaps more in married conduct than in any other great matter! The man who ceases to woo a bride, as he wooed her while a virgin, risks conjugal concord. Courtship is not simply a preliminary of wedlock. Every union during married life is abnormal or incomplete unless preceded by wooing. Man alone among the animal kingdom imposes physical union upon an irresponsive or unwilling female partner. In this fact you will find a clue to many mysterious instances of conjugal unhappiness.

No husband can retain the love and esteem of his wife if he fails to recognise that, throughout the realm of animal life, the male does not approach the female when she is unaroused. In human beings there is a law of sexual periodicity, which is plainly manifested by women, and probably in a much less marked degree by men. It is the opinion of some physiological investigators that there is a normal fortnightly rhythm in woman. That is to say, the desires are dormant for several days in each month in the majority of women. Obviously there must be more or less reluctance, if not repugnance, to the advances of the husband in the period of passivity.

There is a more general belief that the impulse

is at its height a few days before and sometimes immediately after the monthly crisis. Probably there is variation among women in this respect. It is the duty of every husband to discover his wife's wish, and to refrain from intercourse when she is disinclined. I do not think we can over-rate the misunderstandings, quarrels, estrangements, separations and even divorces that are brought about by the neglect of this very important marital rule. It is perfectly true that "rape is often committed in marriage"; not always by men of a brutal disposition, but by those who have never attempted to learn the nature of women.

This union loses its sacramental significance, and is wrong in the hygienic sense, when there is not perfect accord between husband and wife. It is believed by some physicians that unless the act is reciprocal there is a risk of infertility on the part of the wife. There is no doubt that enforced embraces often affect the psychic (emotional) being, and cause nervous injury. Irritability, discontent and despondency are traceable in many married women to the errors of conjugal living. Occasionally the mental and neural symptoms are more serious. There are also physical derangements resulting from a neglect of hygienic law in marriage. After prolonged unhealthy cohabitation heart symptoms may occur, or internal injuries, especially in the

reproductive organs of women, may ensue. Many husbands, even among the educated classes, impair the health of their wives through sheer ignorance of conjugal hygiene. I am glad to know that you will not enter upon the most solemn of human responsibilities in a state of ignorance.

There is so close an affinity of spirit and body in wedlock that it is impossible to make a clear distinction between the two elements, and to affirm that if there is spiritual attraction nothing else counts as important. We often see instances of married pairs who esteem one another sincerely, and live without open strife. But no one can say such marriages are ideal, or even fairly happy, examples of consummated love. We can respect without loving. The real adaptation is psychic-physical. The twain shall be one flesh. This oneness is dependent upon temperamental adaptation, nervous organisation and the observance of the natural laws of sex life, in the same degree as it is dependent upon the affection and esteem that are evoked during wooing and courtship.

Husbands and wives are largely responsible for the mental and physical welfare of one another. Any neglect of this responsibility affects the children of the union as well as the parents. Unsuccessful and unhappy marriage is not only an affair of two persons. It has influences upon society, posterity and the race.

Fortunately married persons diffuse an atmosphere of love in the home, and among their friends and associates, and this is the love that unites groups or clans into societies and nations. Love is integrating; hate is disintegrating.

Men should know that women think and act in accordance with the ineradicable feminine instincts and emotions. Women should recognise that men are dominated by powerful masculine impulses. *Disharmony or antagonism arises when man thinks that his helpmate ought to feel, think and behave in relation to life and love exactly as he feels, thinks and behaves.* If the sexes were alike in the secondary characteristics of mind and body the main sex attraction would not exist. Two halves are necessary for forming the perfect whole. Man desires woman's comeliness, tenderness and sympathy, and all the virtues that he classes as "feminine"; but he complains when he is confronted with the affectability, sensitiveness and waywardness that spring from the same source as the qualities that he craves in a wife. Woman is apt to forget that the masculine attributes of forcefulness, restlessness and aggression have the same physiological origin as the chivalrous sense, the desire to protect and the passionate longing for possession.

When we state that women are more nervous than men, we should understand clearly what we mean by "nervous." It is often said that

“modern women tend to be neurotic and hysterical.” Unquestionably the nerve structure of woman is more delicate than man’s; but this is no evidence of abnormality. On the contrary, highly-strung women and men are among the finest types of humanity. You know that a thoroughbred horse is more spirited, nervous and restive than a half-bred one. But you know also that these qualities accompany courage, tenacity in endurance and capacity for severe exertion. The “nervous” human being is, therefore, only abnormal or morbid when he or she is unduly responsive to stimuli.

Most of the charming and intelligent women of our time are neurotic in the sense that their nervous systems and their brains are acutely responsive to stimulations. The woman who starts and exclaims at the sudden slamming of a door is not necessarily a neurasthenic, or a sufferer from nervous disorder. The same woman may behave with the utmost calmness in the face of danger, such as a fire or a shipwreck. There are plenty of instances of nervous women who have shown heroic bravery and set an example to timid men in moments of peril. If affectability is sometimes the cause of alarm and fear in women, or a source of irritableness and anger, it is none the less the quality that impels them to splendid actions and noble self-sacrifices.

We must not allow ourselves to be misled by

the common opinions upon the "contrariness" of women. There is a physical and mental basis for the affectability of women and their tendency to variability in mood. Some normally amiable and well-controlled women are liable to aberrations in behaviour at critical periods, such as menstruation, during pregnancy, and at the climacteric, or "change of life," between the age of forty and fifty. The bodily, mental and emotional symptoms are in many cases greatly exaggerated by a neglect of health, the ignorance of husbands, insufficient rest, too much strain in child-bearing, and the cares of daily life. You will realise that a husband's understanding and sympathy can lighten the burdens that Nature has imposed upon women.

Unless a husband possesses some knowledge of sexual physiology, the psychology of women and the rules of conjugal health, he cannot be a truly sympathetic and understanding companion and counsellor. A single error in matrimonial conduct may cause misunderstanding, and even a loss of affection, or produce physical and mental trouble in one partner or the other. There are some masculine blunders that women can scarcely forgive. Therefore the art of happy marriage consists in a comprehension of the partner's idiosyncrasy, and it is important to remember that there is great variation in erotic temperament.

Compulsory sex union is contrary to the law of Nature. A wife must be the owner and the mistress of her own body. All sexual coercion is menacing to the happiness and the health of a married couple. Love must be a free, voluntary gift, offered joyously. The woman broken in health, and prematurely aged and faded through the indiscretions or culpable ignorance of a husband, is a sad reflection upon our morality, chivalry and respect for human rights. The matrimonial barque is certain to encounter reefs, shoals and storms in its twenty or forty years of sailing on the troubled waters of human life. These dangers can only be weathered by knowledge and sympathy.

When I write "indiscretions," I refer to the common mistakes of husbands who imagine that a vague faculty or intuition called "instinct" will serve them in the inevitable difficulties of marriage. There is a case recorded of an ignorant and egoistic man who avowed that Nature had gifted him with a great capacity for parentage, and that it was his destiny to fulfil fatherhood to the extent of his procreative power. This semi-imbecile was the progenitor of a very large family of degenerates. Some of his offspring were epileptic, some insane and intemperate, and one or two showed criminal and vicious tendencies. In every case the members of this undesirable family were physically and mentally

defective. Such is the outcome of following "instinct" undirected by reason and a moral sense.

We often see women and children who have been sacrificed on the altar of matrimony. Wives are made invalids by excessive child-bearing, too frequent pregnancies and a constant drain on the vital forces. The children of those unfortunate women are frequently puny, subject to rickets and other ailments, and handicapped in the struggle of life. I have warned you that there are serious risks to health in the overproduction of offspring. When a woman is recovering from a confinement, and using up her reserve strength in the suckling of an infant, she should be safeguarded against all risks to her health of body and mind. The gestation and the natural feeding of a child is a task of two and a half to three years. A wife who is impregnated against her will is very likely to regard herself as a mere agent of her husband's sensual pleasure.

The puerperal (child-bearing) life of woman may be said to begin at twenty and to end at forty. Of course there are many women who have borne infants at fifteen or sixteen; but in this country girls are not generally fit in all respects for motherhood under the age of twenty at the earliest. After forty there is increased danger of difficult parturition, and the children are not so vigorous as those conceived between

the age of twenty-five and thirty-five. It has been noted that the highest fertility is in marriages that occur when the husband is twenty-three and the wife three years older.

Generally speaking, a young wife does not conceive immediately after marrying. Some time is required for adaptation to an entirely new phase of the sex life. A large number of conceptions occur within sixteen to twenty-four months after marriage. After twenty-five years of age wives have to wait longer before bearing a child. Between the ages of twenty and twenty-five years is perhaps the period of highest fertility in woman. After thirty-five there is a decline in the procreative power of women. There is a similar slight decline in male fecundity after thirty-five, and a considerable decline after forty-five.

There are various factors in both men and women that reduce the reproductive energy. Venereal disease is one cause of infertility. Chronic excess in alcohol lessens the fertility of women. A dissimilarity in physique and temperament between the partners is said to favour the chances of fruitfulness. Bad hygiene is a common cause of abortion, or miscarriage, and also of still-births and premature births.

A husband can further the health and happiness of his wife by observing the following rules :
(1) the period of psychic emotion and physical

inclination in the woman should be ascertained before exercising marital duties ; (2) there should be at least one day of complete rest for wives during the monthly cycle, and lessened activity for three or four days ; (3) during the pregnant state the husband should protect his wife from care and worry, keep her mind hopeful and happy, and encourage her to rest frequently during the last stages ; (4) after childbirth there should be several weeks of repose for the purpose of restoring the strained internal organs and the nervous system ; (5) there should be conjugal abstinence during several weeks after delivery ; (6) during suckling, the husband should strive to maintain a serene atmosphere in the home. Sexual intercourse is considered as beneficial during this period, provided that it is moderate, and does not follow too soon after childbirth ; (7) in conjugal relations the wife's emotions and desires should be known and respected ; (8) intercourse for the purpose of conception should occur when both parents are in good health, free from disturbing or depressing thoughts, unstimulated by alcohol, and drawn to one another by strong ardour and affection. Both partners should be careful to avoid union when fatigued, or when one or the other is disinclined ; (9) depression of the nervous system, despondency, irritability, anxious states of mind and probably derangements of nutritional function may arise

from unsatisfactory conjugal intercourse. It is now believed by many physicians that psychic disturbance in the married frequently results from disharmony in this relation; (10) excess is injurious to the nervous and mental organisation, and may lead in extreme cases to impotence in men and infertility in women. Over-indulgence shortens the duration of sexual capacity in man and moderate use prolongs it. In all gratifications the way of health is in moderation.

And now, my dear boy, I wish you again every happiness in your married life. Give my love to Marjorie, and tell her that I shall look forward to seeing her and you in England before very long. If I can help you in any way, don't forget to write to me.

I hope that I have given you advice that will be useful. One cannot treat upon the whole question of marital hygiene in a single letter. If you are in doubt at any time, don't fail to write to me at once. I am delighted that you have won the love of a girl after your own heart. I don't doubt that you will be a good husband. Always your affectionate

UNCLE.



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