



"Everyone that is left in thine house shall come and crouch for a morsel of bread"



IN the enquiries concerning the present state of morals, which I reported in February's "Everywoman's World," three cardinal facts seem pretty well established:

There is a present moral crisis.
History encourages us to hope that it is temporary.

Our recovery depends on immediate and thorough efforts on our part.

The younger generation of today may be likened to a lamb tethered near the edge of a precipice. The tether is parental precept and example; the precipice is moral ruin resulting from social irresponsibility. The haunting question is, Will the Tether Hold?

I am quite certain that, for this present-day dissoluteness, parents must take their full share of blame. Their sin is not immorality, but UNmorality. They have ceased to take fright at the old-time dogmas threatening them with the dire consequences of non-observance of certain salutary religious rules, and have not the higher motive of protecting the human race from a hell far surer and more terrible—the hell of a degenerate race. They completely lack the instinct of even the honey bee, whose motto is, Everything for the hive!

Negatively moral, they are not aggressively moral. They feel no indignation at sin, so long as it is voluptuous. During the war, we had several instances of a whole neighborhood going out to wreak summary vengeance on some disloyal babbling who had insulted the flag. So too, we occasionally hear of a church riot when the ecclesiastical institutions of a community have been slurred. I sometimes wish the same fervor would be shown when the moral sense of a people is offended by some peddler of filth or a small coterie of vicious folly-seekers. Too often, in a moral crisis, some otherwise good citizens will show that they are entirely destitute of righteous anger.

THIS, I think, is the logical result of an age of doubt.

A large proportion of people have absolutely no theory of life, no creed, no basic convictions to live by. They refuse to be led by the clergy, because they do not believe in the sincerity of the church's leaders. The doubts which harass the thinking layman, his pastor doggedly refuses to entertain for a moment. The result is an aimless floundering. And such a parent has little to offer his child except the epicurean dictum, "Let us eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die."

Not that the type I have mentioned is dominant here in Canada, but across the international border it certainly is, and, unless all signs fail, the same deadening indifference is fast developing in our midst. The process of alienation from the church is gradual and silent but, in the absence of some tremendous revival of wide-spread influence, the mass of our Protestant population must soon be as sheep without shepherds.

All this has contributed to the *laissez faire* attitude of the parent of today. Long ago, Mr. Roosevelt spoke of *cuckoo parents*, likening fathers and mothers who expect the school teacher, the Y.M.C.A. secretary and the Sunday School superintendent to look after the morals of their children to the freak bird which lay its eggs in the nests of birds of a more maternal nature. The modern father and mother might be called *Eli parents*. Do you recall the striking announcement that the house of Eli the high priest was to be cast down "because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not." This whole story of the family of Eli is so apropos to the present situation that we may well afford to study it closely. When you seek for precedents in government, read Gibbon's Rome; when you want examples of all possible moral crises, go to the Jews.

Eli was a good man, conscientious in his dealings, true to his narrower duties as head of the Hebrew theocracy. I like to think of him as having the dignity of an Archbishop of Canterbury. But after onlookers commented on his noble bearing and earnest manner, I am sure they must have added, "Is it not a pity that he has such scoundrels for sons?" He was a pure man, this Israelitish leader. One day he saw a woman acting strangely in the temple. Apparently she was intoxicated and he rebuked her then and there. She protested that she was sober; she was only praying in great earnestness for a

Wherein Are Parents To Blame?

For the Unnatural Mode of Life, the Lax Standards, the Recklessness, Which Have Brought About A Moral Crisis

By Byron Stauffer

son. Eli at once saw his terrible mistake and became tender as a woman. He was magnanimous, too. The child born to this woman, Hannah, became his acolyte. And when Eli learned that his administration was about to come to an end, and that the boy Samuel was to figure largely in the new government, he did not show rage nor envy, but kept the coming man with him, showing him tenderness and esteem.

No, there is absolutely no fault to be found with Eli except that as a parent he was a stupendous failure. Isn't that modern? You have seen such—kindly, generous, personally pure men and women—who succeeded in everything—Sunday School teaching and even lecturing on these very problems—except how to bring up their progeny; there they fell down hopelessly.

The sins of Eli's sons were grafting and gross immorality. They stole the very sacrifices offered on Israel's altar. They made the temple courts a rendezvous for licentiousness. They corrupted the populace and set a fast pace in scandalous living. And in all this, we are told that Eli, their father *restrained them not*. He made weak attempts at chiding them, it is recorded; he said, "Boys, this is too bad; you mustn't; please don't;" but to use stern measures, to cast out the priestly scoundrels, to cleanse the temple portals of their lecherous presence, was beyond his capacity for discipline.

AND the terrible sentence which the Almighty meted out to this degenerate family is worth our serious notice. For it is so exactly in keeping with the laws of eugenics that it seems as if it had been written in our own Twentieth Century instead of three thousand years ago. Not only were these young men to be deprived of a part in the government, but they were to be punished for their lechery by a bodily and mental deterioration which would leave their offspring weak and

doors of Packards at hotel entrances and hold out their supine hands for a penny! They will follow well-dressed men and whine, "Would you please give me the price of a sandwich!" This is always the penalty which soft indulgence brings. A father of Spartan self-discipline makes his pile; unless he is as stern with his children as he was with himself, they will surely revert to type, with the additional punishment which degeneracy always inflicts.

And more: there would only be a remnant left, said the prophet. The birth-rate would go down, as it always does in luxurious living. This is, however, Nature's precaution against an inferior human race. The law of eugenics is now, as always; "Make Good or Make Room!" It was so in this case. Jehovah declared that "I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in mine heart, and I will build him a sure house." That is the redeeming feature of the tragedy of Eli parents. The process of natural selection and the survival of the fittest goes constantly on, and if there is in our hearts one atom of the old Jewish pride in continuing their families in sturdiness and prosperity we must obey Nature's laws.

SO, if you search for the missing link between moral parents and immoral children, you will nearly always find it to be this Eli sin of lack of restraint. I say, nearly always, for of course it is possible that environment outside the home will sometimes neutralize the best parental influence. In my city we have just had a sickening revelation of youthful depravity in the exposure of the successful attempt of a syndicate of high school boys to procure by bribery and theft a complete series of the matriculation examination papers which they were about to write on. Among about fifteen lads a corruption fund of five hundred dollars was raised.



Entirely destitute of righteous anger

degenerate. "There shall not be an old man in thine house," declared the prophet who carried the dreadful news to the derelict priest. No fine, white-haired, ruddy-faced old gentlemen would be among them. "They shall all die in the flower of their age," was the stern sentence. They shall be a hideous-looking set of fragile, twisted, grinning fellows—"to consume thine heart and grieve thine eyes." Social disease plays havoc with the expectancy tables of the life insurance company.

But here is the most startling prophecy concerning Eli's house. You have often quoted the saying, "Only three generations between shirt sleeves and shirt sleeves." Well, see the same thought here couched in a terrible picturesqueness:

"And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left in thine house shall come and crouch to him, (the new leader) for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and shall say, Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a piece of bread."

They will pass the hat! They will sell pencils and shoe-strings on the street-corners! They will open the

Then followed midnight automobile journeys to various towns in connection with the project, renting of hotel rooms, and other items testifying to the too-early liberty of action and abnormal freedom in the use of money allowed these lads by their prosperous parents. Otherwise it would be cruel to lay the blame indiscriminately on all of the thirty parents involved. But this fact projected plainly; the youths were given too much money, too much use of automobiles, and too much liberty at midnight.

Eli parents forget that the world's heroes, artists, inventors and magnates, have all been compelled to climb the hill of tremendous effort, disciplining themselves in the use of time, food and money. How unthinking, then, are the people who indulge their children in softness and self-indulgence. We have become altogether too fearful of applying the rod of chastisement, whether the rod be physical or mental. Mothers should be glad to have their children endure hardship knowing it is for their good.

The first requisite of wholesome restraint is that it must be begun early; I should say about the first month!

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