

sical well-being, but is the sign of a diseased body. This is often lost sight of by young men; and there is a stage in their career when they regard "sowing wild oats" as a more manly thing than virtue. There is a truth underlying every fallacy which meets with wide acceptance; and the truth which gives rise to this heresy is that those natures which are capable of feeling strong temptation are the natures which are capable of attaining to the highest manhood; and many men, therefore, who have sunk deeply into sensual vice, have afterwards risen to eminent saintliness in the Church, and usefulness in society. So much evangelistic advertising has been done through reformed prize-fighters and reclaimed drunkards, that the opinion seems actually to have gone abroad that a sinful youth is after all not a bad training for a saintly manhood, and that sensual indulgence is the condition of evolving a sympathetic nature. Dipping into carnal delights, indulging the animal passions just to learn the taste of sin, is believed by many to be the condition of developing robust manhood. It is the Devil's lie—the same as was spoken at the beginning when he said: "If you eat, you shall have the knowledge of good and evil." Now, assuredly there is a knowledge of good and evil which results from eating forbidden fruit, but it is an unhappy and guilty knowledge—not the healthy knowledge, the sound moral consciousness, which may be acquired by resisting temptation. Temptation resisted, strengthens; yielded to, it weakens, it cannot but weaken the whole man. "Whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap" is the universal law in the natural and spiritual worlds alike. If a young man sows wild oats, in the nature of things he shall reap the harvest of a debilitated manhood—a diseased body, a weakened intellect, a depraved moral sense. Vice, instead of developing, destroys the very capacity of manly sympathy; it blights and blasts all generous

affections and lofty aspirations. Sin of every form is unnatural—antinatural—forbidding the true development of the individual. Sowing wild oats is unmanly and unmanly. Is it a noble thing to dethrone reason as the guide of life and to crown animal passion lord of all? Which is the conduct worthier of a true man—to stunt one's all-round development by sin, or to recognize the requirements of Christianity for a robust nature? Is it a stronger thing to float like a cork with the stream of passion than like the swimmer to breast the current? To yield to every enticement of carnal lust, to be completely dominated by sensual desires, is the meanest kind of slavery; while to hold a firm rein on passion, and by self-control to guide the whole nature toward the goal of perfect manhood, is the only true freedom. Many young men look forward to accepting religion as an insurance for the future life; that is the meanest conception of religion one can possibly have. Now, is it manly, is it honorable to spend the vigor of youth in serving self and the Devil, and to give the wreck of old age to Christ? Is that conduct worthy of a young man with any sense of decency, to say nothing of lofty ideals? Sowing wild oats is the sign of moral weakness and the precursor of physical debility; and is, therefore, something no young man should glory in.

The Christian religion, on the contrary, guards jealously the best interests of the body. Physical strength is God's gift; Christianity prizes it and aims at its development. It would be a great blessing to the rising generation if a magnificent bonfire were kindled of all those morbidly sentimental Sunday-school books which teach the heresy that good boys always die young, and that pious folk must look weak, and sickly, and heavenly! On the contrary, Christ wants in His army young men with strong arms, stout lungs, iron muscle. The Bible teaches us that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost, and demands