

There is not much trouble in arousing people to the necessity of destroying evil fruit, and there are periodical spasms of law making and enforcement that do much good. But the less exciting and slower work of grubbing up roots, although more promising in results, is not as attractive. Laws may not make men moral, but they may make it more difficult or more dangerous to do wrong to others. Everything possible should be done in the way of enacting better laws, and in securing their enforcement, for the protection of the innocent. But it is hopeless work if it be not accompanied by vigorous attacks upon the roots. With these undisturbed, new crops of iniquity are continually ripening. The real need for reform is in our thoughts which actuate our individual and private lives, and which are beyond the reach of laws. From bad thoughts, bad deeds of some sort are sure to come, though one may keep them hidden for a time and pass in society for a decent man. But presently we are shocked by an eruption through the thin crust of conventionality, and an honored citizen is buried in the ashes of a ruined reputation. Buried irrecoverably if it be a woman; but a man soon digs his way out, and only the very squeamish are disturbed by the smell of fire upon his garments. Here are two wrong things. First, that the hidden fires are there, and second, that when they burst forth, the reputations of men are only scorched while those of women are consumed.

The fact that impurity is considered a graver offence in a woman than in a man, is evidence that women are, as a rule, better than men, and the reason is not far to seek. If girls were allowed as much freedom as boys; if they were allowed to train with associates of their own choosing, or more often of no choosing at all; if they were not expected to stay in the house or to give an account of themselves when away from home, they would fall in with the same things the boys encounter, and

their morality would be as low; for they are no better prepared than the boys to withstand the enticements to evil. As it is, women are better than men, because they are kept better by being more carefully watched while their habits of mind are forming.

I need not prove that there should be but one standard of morality for both men and women. Right is right, and if any say that a man can be pure and impure at the same time, while a woman cannot, or that purity in men is not as desirable as in women, the burden of proof is upon them. It is not, however, that women are judged too harshly, but that our standard for men is entirely too low. We must raise our standard, get ourselves up to it, and help the rest of the world as we go. To ask, "How high shall we raise the standard?" is to ask, "How much impurity shall we allow ourselves?" There can be but one answer if we would be pure. As I have said, he who laughs at a vulgar story is bad with the same kind of badness as the most abandoned libertine. We do not laugh at what does not please us, and if we are pleased with vulgarity we are not as deeply in love with virtue as we should be.

The standard of purity, then, can be nothing else than purity. And not merely purity of action, but purity of thought and speech. We need not wait till we have reached this standard, and then help others. I said, We must get ourselves up to it, and help the rest of the world as we go.

But now let us get back to the boys and girls. Girls are, as a rule, better than boys, because they are more carefully watched over. But, while a good deal more care might well be given to the boys, I should not like to see them hedged in and cooped up as the girls are. I should rather allow the girls just as much freedom as the boys have, but see to it that both are better prepared to enjoy it.

Social impurity arises from a misunderstanding of, and a wrong mental at-