

ciating with them, such as the chest, the abdomen, the legs, is as severely censured as that of the parts themselves. To such an insane pitch is this "nasty-niceness," as Aunt Tabitha calls it, carried that we have probably all heard reference to the "limb" of a piano, or the "limbs" of a pair of dividers.

While there is some doubt as to the true nature of much which passes for personal modesty, there is none whatever in regard to this society variety. It is a reticence born originally of a diseased imagination or a guilty conscience, discreditable to the individual displaying it, and disgraceful to the society which exacts it. Instead of being, as it mincingly affects to be, the very pink of refinement, it is the essence of vulgarity. "*Honi soit qui mal y pense*," as the chivalrous King Edward said when he picked up the garter dropped by one of the ladies of his court.

When we come to the absolute ignorance of their most important function, which this taboo entails upon many of our boys and girls, the case becomes a most serious one. How many of our boys have the true meaning, uses, and dignity of the sexual organs delicately, but plainly, explained to them before the age of puberty by their fathers, or how many of our girls by their mothers? I fear scarcely ten per cent. The first knowledge most of them have of this wonderful subject is from the filthy lips of some vulgar servant or prurient older school-mate. Is it any wonder that, driven by natural curiosity and the powerful impulse of awakening sexual consciousness, and ashamed to inquire of those who ought to be their natural instructors, they resort, in an ignorance, as pitiable as it is deplorable, to experiment upon themselves, upon one another, nay—even upon the lower animals. Truly, ignorance, is the very mother of vice.

But the most fatal result of this extraordinary attitude of both morals and etiquette is the extent to which the sacred obligations of exercising the reproductive function is destroyed. Our young men and young women of the "better classes" calmly debate the question as "to marry or not to marry." To be capable of such hesitation is a sign, not of self-control, but of degeneracy. After the alliance has been duly arranged for and formed, then the question is to be discussed whether it shall be permitted to result in anything

visible to the naked eye; and if so, after how long delay, and how many, or, more correctly, how few of them. And from these two sources spring the head-waters of the reeking stream of *Prostitution*. Its current is swelled mainly by the men whose incomes or positions are not regarded as "suitable" to marry on, and those who having married "can't afford" to have children or don't want to be bothered" with them. The man or woman who, for any such reason, absolutely refuses to assist in continuing the species has committed the unpardonable sin, and is henceforth fit for nothing but conversion into fertilizer. And nature will attend to the conversion with unerring certainty and comparative promptness if not interfered with. Marriage under these circumstances is little better than legalized concubinage. Indeed, the arrival at this decision is but the forester's mark upon the trunk which is beginning to rot at its core, and all her axemen will understand and obey its significance. It is her seal to the death warrant of the race and also of the individual.

Even that modified form of interference with her orders which consists in markedly limiting the number of children, is almost sure to result in serious injury to both individuals concerned and to the community as well. In the first place it is a fruitful cause of prostitution. Many a man is practically driven to the brothel by his own wife, and many another deliberately resorts to it from a cowardly and criminally selfish desire to shirk the responsibilities of manhood. Such a man ought to be branded like any other eunuch. In the second place it is easily the chief cause of abortionism, one of the most prevalent and deadly sins of the present day, whose evil results, both physical and moral, are rapidly coming to rival those of prostitution itself, a statement which needs no emphasizing in this audience. Thirdly, any and every means adopted, from onanism to tansy, result ultimately in serious injury to the nervous system of both parties concerned. Fourthly, it rears the children who are permitted to appear in an oligarchy or aristocracy instead of a democracy, and thus deprives them of one of the most valuable parts of their education in hardiness, self reliance and self control. Children who are less than three in a family are nearly always "spoiled."

In short, limiting the size of families has ever been and still is the chief and most potent factor