

think it shows manliness and the superiority of age. The point is, they ought not to be left to themselves, but the very opposite of what unregenerate nature suggests should be diligently drilled into them. They should be shown, by precept and example, at all times, in what true manliness consists. By whom should this be done?

This essay is not an indictment against our Public Schools. They may not be, as has already been intimated, perfect. The principles on which they are administered may in some respects be faulty. The means by which those principles are carried out may be susceptible of improvement. But, upon the whole, the State does, more or less well, what it contracts to do. It implants in children's memories certain classes of facts; whether the facts be wisely or foolishly chosen is a minor question. It teaches them arithmetic and geography and other things of the kind, it prepares the child to "pass" certain examinations. But, having thus fulfilled its contract, it stops, and does no more. It takes no cognizance of the children's minds, rightly so called; of their hearts, souls, moral and social ideals. Training in morals, decencies, elevation of thought and conduct, cannot be administered to children in the mass, but must be separately adapted to each individual. American parents take it for granted, however, that, because the State instructs their children in arithmetic and geography and the other things, it must teach them all the Christian and social graces into the bargain. The consequence is that the children grow up knowing more than the hoodlums of the slums, but knowing, also, what the hoodlums know, and, therefore, worse off than if they were ignorant altogether. We already see the effects of this in our national life. Public School children become our shopkeepers, lawyers, politicians, contractors, saloon men, bank clerks, brokers,

manufacturers, millionaires. They wear good clothes and appear respectable—are respectable in many cases. But a certain, not small, percentage of them are base in character, rotten in principle, loving mean actions, pursuing degraded ambitions. Our most dangerous criminals are not the hereditary class, but graduates of our Public Schools. Most of the men whose careers disgrace their country, either in a small or a conspicuous way, have been Public School boys. Most of our women who go astray have attended Public School. These people are gradually giving a tone to the entire community; their tendency is to sap the foundations of our national honor and freedom. It is vain to contend that many, even the majority, of Public School children turn out well. That may be true; sometimes it may appear more true than it is, for, as children mature, they learn to cover up vices learned at school, and wear an outside of decency from motives of prudence. Yet, the vices may not be extirpated. The frailty, the defect, whatever it may be, remains, and, when the man or woman is brought to the test, it will betray itself. What are we going to do about it? The first thing we ought to do is to recognize the fact that the Public School children who go wrong are not to be charged against our Public School system, but against parental neglect and abandonment. They are the product of education by the State, unsupported by training in the family.

This essay, then, is not an indictment of American Public Schools, but of American parents' neglect of their children. We do not do our duty by them. It is too soft an expression to say that we entrust them to the State, we abandon them to it. America is the children's country, perhaps, but it is so in a sense less flattering to our vanity than we might wish. We pay for their book-learning, their amuse-