

it is most vital of all subjects is often the one subject about which a young man shrinks from talking with any but contemporaries as ignorant as himself, a subject kept in the dark, except for coarse jokes at the theatre or at convivial gatherings of boys and men.

Almost equally important with an understanding between parent and son is an understanding between every student and at least one college officer. There must be some one on the spot to whom the student may talk freely and fully about such perplexities as beset every young man in a new life away from home. Even a college-bred father is college-bred in another generation, and cannot know those local and temporal characteristics of a college on the mastery of which depends so large a measure of the student's happiness. Besides, a father may not be promptly accessible, whereas every good college has at hand many officers whose best satisfaction lies in giving freely of their time and strength to less experienced men that trust them. Some confidences, no doubt, a college officer cannot accept; but even in a case of grave wrongdoing, if the relation between him and the student is on both sides clearly understood, a full confession, the only honorable course, is usually, in the long run, the only prudent course also. At Harvard College the relation between a Freshman and his "adviser" is much what the Freshman makes it; for the adviser feels an older man's diffidence about forcing his friendship on defenceless youth; but it may be made of high and permanent value. So may the relation between a student and any worthy college teacher whom the student, because he has seen in him something to inspire confidence, has chosen for a counsellor. Here, too, a father intimate with his son may help him to overcome shyness, and to make use of that disinterested friendship of older men which is one of the best opportunities

of college life and is often thrown away.

By fostering these friendships and influences, by interesting himself in every detail of a son's career, a father may do much. A mother may often do more, by establishing her son in the friendship of good women. This is partly a matter of social influence, no doubt, a poor and ignorant woman a thousand miles away may not see how she can effect it; may shrink from an appeal to the unknown wives of unknown professors for friendly greetings to her boy; but many women whose sons are sent to a college town know, or have friends that know, or have friends who have friends that know, good women there. The friendship of good women is, as everybody knows, the sweetest and most wholesome corrective of loneliness and of wandering desires. A boy of seventeen or eighteen, far from home for the first time, fresh from the society of mother and sisters and girl friends, may be terribly lonely. Near any college he will find a number of foolish girls, easy of acquaintance, proud to know a student, and not fastidious about conventionalities; girls not vicious as yet, but on the unseen road to vice; girls whom he could not comfortably introduce to his mother and sisters, but who, *merely as girls*, are of interest to him in the absence of social and intellectual equals. The peril of such friendships is as commonplace as truth and as undying: reckless giddiness on one side, reckless selfishness half disguised by better names on the other, the excitement of things known to be not quite proper but not clearly recognized as wrong, have led to one kind of misery or another, so long as men have been men and women women. Yet these sorrows, toward which men move at first with no semblance of passion, but with mere lonely curiosity, may be forestalled. Counsel of parents, too seldom given