

the every-day father, willing to give his children the best of all he has, a profound ignorance of his son's acts, motives, and character must be rooted in some deep mistake, not of heart, but of judgment. That such ignorance exists is plain: it attributes truth to the tricky, sobriety to the vinous, and chastity to the wanton. Its existence is further confirmed by the attitude of these misapprehended sons when no argument can persuade them to be the first messengers, to father or mother, of their own transgression. "Your father must know this from me; but he has a right to know it first from you. You say you cannot give him pain; but nothing will help him so much in bearing the pain that must be his as the knowledge that you yourself can tell him all. Before I write to him or see him, I will give you time; and I beg you to tell him: you can not help him more now than by going to him, or hurt him more than by avoiding him. This I know if I know anything: it is not mere theory; it is based on what I have seen of many fathers and of many sons." Yet often the student, especially the young student, still keeps clear of his father as long as he can.

This want of filial courage at critical moments must be accounted for by a false reticence in those early years in which affectionate freedom between father or mother and son must begin. Unhappily it is fostered by literature. Even Thackeray, whose total influence is honest and clean, seems, when he writes of college life, to have in mind such general propositions as that young men always run into debt and seldom make all their debts known at home; that all normal young men live more or less wantonly, that only girls (whose intellects are seldom strong) are pure in heart and life, and that their purity is a kind of innocence born of blindness and of shelter from the world; that no mother knows the morbid

unrest which is stirring in her sweet-faced little boy. Pendennis, Philip, the Poems—all furnish marked instances of Thackeray's attitude toward the exuberant folly and sin of young men; and his notion of a man's standard in things moral is revealed by his remark that "no writer of fiction among us has been permitted to depict to his utmost power a man," since the author of Tom Jones.

Thackeray is only too near the truth. The earliest important cause of reticence between parent and child, the longest continued, the fiercest, and the most morbidly silent temptation, the temptation most likely to scorch and blight a whole life and the lives of those who come after, the temptation most likely to lead through a passion to reckless selfishness, and through shame to reckless lying, is the manifold temptation in the mysterious relation of sex to sex. No subject needs, for the health of our sons and for the protection of our daughters, to be brought earlier out of the region of alluring and forbidden exploration into the light of wholesome truth—out of the category of the unspeakable into the category of things which, though talked of seldom, may be talked of freely between father or mother and son. Temptation, passion, will exist always; but temptation and passion which must be nursed or suppressed in secret are far more insidious, far less conquerable. Moreover, temptation and passion, when confided to a father or a mother or a son who is struggling to do right, lose half their danger: the strength of those nearest and dearest buoys up our own; and the fear of confessing a sin—a false fear when once the sin is committed—may be wholesome as a safeguard. No parent can begin to be in a frank relation to his son if he has left that son to pick up in the street and in the newspaper all his knowledge of the laws to which he owes his life; yet, as things stand,