

BUTLER
GEORGE FRANK

EVERY GIRL'S BOOK

George Butler
Every Girl's Book

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George F. Butler

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PREFACE

The greatest duty of mankind lies in the proper uprearing of our children. The fact is recognized, but is the duty fulfilled? Do we rear our children as we should? There is but one answer: We fail. Teaching them many things for their good, we yet keep from them ignorantly, foolishly, with a hesitancy and neglect unpardonable – knowledge, the possession of which is essential for their future welfare.

The first necessity for well-being is a healthy mind in a healthy body. We can give our children that, if we will, by teaching them all about the body, its source of life, its different functions, and its care. The child should grow to maturity knowing that the human body is something fine, something that accomplishes good, something to be proud of in every way. Above all should the child be taught all concerning the process of reproduction, just as it is taught the action of the stomach or of the brain. By so doing, we can produce a better and healthier and happier generation to follow ours. By what strange and mistaken impulse in the past such absolutely required teaching has been so studiously withheld is beyond all comprehension.

We want the best for our children. We want them to grow up with right thoughts and habits, yet we keep from them the knowledge without which their thoughts and habits will surely be imperiled when there arises in them the generative instinct, which has its effect upon both male and female youth alike.

We give them no information as to sexual matters; and, when it comes to them, it is too often but in the way of half-truths, mysterious, exciting to the imagination, and dangerous.

Yet how simple and natural the giving of this information might be made; and how easily the child might be safeguarded! Mankind has demands which must be gratified. We have hunger; we have thirst; we have the impulse of reproduction. Each is right and natural. There should be no difference in the consideration of either of these wants. All about them the child should be taught, from the beginning, so that all will be natural and right and commonplace and a matter of course long before the age is reached when the sexual instinct is developed.

Is not this reason? Is it not healthful, logical, common sense? Is it not the wholesome and right and proper view?

Nature is devoted to reproduction. From the cell to the flower, and so on upward, the creatures of the world are but renewing themselves, and the learning of this is the greatest and most beautiful of all studies. All this the child can be taught.

Elementary biology, or the study of subjects of what we call zoology and botany combined, can be made the most attractive of studies to any child who has learned to read. The boy or girl may be taught that the trees and flowers are living things that are beautiful and are male and female. The child may be shown how the bees carry the pollen from flower to flower, and how other plants and flowers are produced in that way.

He can be taught the wonder of seed, and its consequences. He can be shown the birds in their mating, and the marvel of the egg, and why it can produce a chicken. And thus the child, boy or girl, may be led on, through the gradations, to a study of the human body, and how reproduction is provided for there as in the bodies of all other living things, vegetable or animal.

Before the child, boy or girl, has reached the age of ten, long before the sex instinct has been aroused, the sexual lesson will have been learned innocently and thoroughly and, when the change

comes, it will be as no bewildering, exciting thing, but something anticipated, and received with a sense of understanding and responsibility.

This knowledge almost unknowingly acquired as a child, will mean health of mind and of body, and the avoidance of what may result most evilly.

How is sexual instruction given now? In tens of thousands of instances – no doubt in the majority – not at all. Lectures to youth of either sex are given sometimes, but only when they have reached what is called “the age of understanding.”

Here is where parents err, and seriously. The teaching has been deferred too long. The young of either sex, long before puberty, have acquired some knowledge of the mystery – which should have been no mystery at all – and late teaching, however sound and wise, but gives an added and inviting direction to the subject suddenly made to assume a new and startling importance. It arouses curiosity, and more. It may sometimes be harmful.

As for the youth never taught at all, those who acquire their knowledge only through accidental sources – usually incapable, and too often vicious – their case could not be worse. They are unprepared for one of the tests and demands for life. Their parents are guilty.

There is nothing impure in nature. To guard the children, to prepare them for every phase of life, is the parents' duty. The child is pure, and to the child all things are pure. Teach the child, simply as a matter of course, all about the ways of reproduction, and to the boy or girl purity will remain when the age of sexual sway and impulse comes. This is the only law in the case. Let it be followed, and the generation to follow will be clearer, wiser, and healthier than is the present one.

It is my hope that this “Every Girl's Book” (with “Every Boy's Book” which preceded it) will afford the means so long needed and desired for teaching children what they should be taught. I have tried to tell the story of sex naturally, in a clear and simple way, from the development of life, and of life's relations, from protoplasm all through organic life up to mankind. Its teachings should result in wide promotion of the innocence of knowledge which is better, infinitely, than the imperiling innocence of ignorance.

George F. Butler, M. D.

Chicago, Ill.

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I

HOW THE STORY BEGAN

Her name was Elsie and she was asleep in a cozy nook in the woods, which was the beginning of it all.

Many strange things may happen to a little girl who falls asleep in the woods, but there never happened to any other little girl, either asleep or awake, in the woods or at home, a more important thing than that which had its start for Elsie while she lay there under the green boughs beside a bubbling spring of crystal-clear water, the scent of pines and flowers sweetening the still air. A robin redbreast whistled melodiously for “rain, rain, rain,” and the cows in the pasture, who do not like rain as well as they do sunshine, lifted up their voices in protest, calling “oo-oo-ohh! moo-oo-hh! noo-oo-hh!” as if they were trying to say “no, no, no!” and could not speak the English language well. It was a peaceful woodland scene, a scene into which, if you were awake, you would expect that a railroad train would be about the last thing that could possibly enter.

But Elsie was asleep, and in her dreams she was sure she saw a great locomotive engine charging down upon her with frightful speed. As soon as she saw it she tried to cry out, but could not do so. Somehow she could not send a single sound from her lips. Then she tried to jump out of the way, but was unable to do that either. She could not even move in the slightest degree. So, full of terror, she thought she stood there, helplessly, while the engine rushed nearer and nearer, puffing forth vast clouds of black smoke, and roaring and hissing and clanking. Again she tried to scream, and could not: again she tried to run aside, but could not move. She seemed so small, so tiny and weak, beside that monster! And she wondered how it could possibly bear to hurt her, a big, powerful thing like that – it was not fair! But – bang! The cowcatcher caught her up —

And she awoke to see a fuzzy bumble-bee just alighting on her nose!

Though Elsie did not, as a general thing, care much for bumble-bees, and would rather have their room than their company, she was so highly relieved to find that the gigantic engine was *only* a bumble-bee that she said, “Oh!” with such violence of surprise and gladness that the bee, doubtless as much afraid of her as she had been of the dream-engine, shot out of sight in an instant and she never saw him afterward, that she knew of.

She sat a moment staring after him, trying to collect herself, for she was confused with her sudden awakening, and then she jumped up laughing.

“What a funny bumble-bee!” she exclaimed. “*I* wouldn’t have hurt him!” Then in conscious dignity, proud to think that she was now big enough for something to be afraid of, she took up the pail of water that she had come to get from the spring and hurried homeward.

Now if this were all the story it would not amount to much, and it never would have got itself told in these pages. And, if Elsie had been like some girls, who are not chums with their mothers, the story would never have been told here either, because she would not have repeated the adventure to her mamma, in which case her mamma would not have taken the story up where the daughter left it, and shown its importance. But Elsie and her mother were like two sisters, a big and a little one, and there were not many things that happened to the one that the other did not hear of very soon. So away went Elsie singing and laughing and swinging her pail of water, her bright hair blowing in wisps around her sweet face with its red lips and cheeks and white teeth, the prettiest, loveliest picture in the whole lovely landscape of foliage and flowers and pastures and meadows.

Nobody in the world ever yet found a prettier picture anywhere than a fresh and clean girl is, as everybody will admit if asked, and Elsie was fresh and clean even if she had just been rudely aroused from sleep. She bathed her whole body twice every day, washed her face and hands often, brushed

her teeth always after eating, smiled a great deal, and got plenty of fresh air and sunshine, and this was enough to make any girl fresh and clean and pretty, or almost enough.

Of course a girl must eat sufficient food, and must brush her hair and take care of her nails, and all those little things – everybody knows that. But the main things, beside food, the things, too, that some little girls fail in, are air, sunshine, water and smiles. Elsie had all these and therefore she looked clean and fresh and pretty.

She had on a dress too, naturally, but I don't know just what kind of a one it was, for that is a small matter compared with the body itself. I think it was some kind of a calico, made for vacation frolicing, for Elsie was a city girl staying in the country for the summer, and almost anything was good enough for that.

So Elsie, fresh and clean, dancing and singing up the lane, swinging her pail of crystal water, the loveliest sight in the whole lovely landscape, came in view of the house where they were staying. And no sooner had she caught a glimpse of her mother on the porch than, eager to tell her funny experience, she ran forward in pleasant excitement, crying out:

“Oh, mamma! Such a queer thing – Oh, Oh, it was an engine, the biggest, biggest you ever saw – and – and it stepped on my nose – I mean it was only a bumble-bee and – it – it almost ran right over me – ”

“Isn't my little girl somewhat mixed in her speech!” smiled her mother as Elsie paused for breath.

“I – I guess I – I am!” Elsie faltered. “But then, I'm so excited!”

“Yes, you are excited,” smiled her mother, putting her arm around her shoulders and walking with her to the kitchen. “And when you are calm you may tell me all about it.”

So Elsie carried the pail of water to the sink and set it on its shelf. And when she had worked off her surplus energy in this way she felt sober enough to tell her story clearly, and she did so, snuggled in her mother's arms in the hammock on the porch. She finished by saying:

“Wasn't that a funny thing, mamma, that I should dream that the bumble-bee was an engine just going to run over me!”

Then the really important part of the story began. Her mother answered:

II

WHAT THE BEE WANTED OF ELSIE'S NOSE

“Yes, it may seem funny, but it is natural. When you were asleep you heard the bee buzzing and rumbling, and the sound reminded you of an engine, so you began to picture an engine in your mind, and with the queer mixture of fact and fancy that are common to dreams you thought it was coming right at you. And it was only a bumble-bee taking a look at your little red-and-white nose.”

Elsie clapped her hands and laughed. Then she asked:

“What did the bee want to see my nose for, mamma?”

“He thought, perhaps, that it was some new kind of a bud, and he wished to examine it,” Mrs. Edson smiled. “A little girl's face is very much like a pretty flower. Your hair was tumbled all about your head, I suppose, and your little rosebud of a nose, peeking through, attracted the bee.”

At this idea Elsie laughed again, joyously.

“But, mamma,” she asked, “why should the bee wish to see my nose, even if he did think it might be a flower? Do bees eat flowers, mamma?”

Elsie's mother threw her a sudden look that was almost a startled one. Then she hugged her close and kissed her.

“What a great big little girl you are getting to be, darling!” she said, gazing fondly at her. This did not seem to Elsie much like an answer to her question, and she fixed her eyes brightly on her mother's face as if waiting for her to go on with her words. But her mother only said: “I scarcely realized that you were no longer my little baby-girl, and that you were instead almost a young lady, old enough to understand many new things, among them the reason why a bee goes to flowers.”

She paused again, looking at her big little girl wistfully. She was thinking: “Elsie has begun to be a woman now, and I shall soon, all too soon, lose my baby-girl, for she will grow up and marry and go away to a home of her own and have a little girl like herself, just as I have had her!”

This made her feel sad, but she said nothing to Elsie of this feeling, for she would not be able to understand it and it would only make her feel sad too. By and by she would tell her what it meant to have a husband and children and home of her own, after her parents were passed away, and she must begin to prepare her for this knowledge now. So, finally, she said:

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