

**LECTURES TO  
YOUNG  
WOMEN, PP. 1-191**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649629060

Lectures to Young Women, pp. 1-191 by William G. Eliot

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**WILLIAM G. ELIOT**

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LECTURES

TO

YOUNG WOMEN.

By WILLIAM A. ELIOT, Jr.

PASTOR OF THE CHURCH OF THE MESSIAH, ST. LOUIS.

Third Edition.

BOSTON:  
CROSBY, NICHOLS, AND COMPANY.

NEW YORK:  
CHARLES S. FRANCIS AND COMPANY.

1854.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1838, by  
CROSBY, NICHOLS, AND COMPANY,  
in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the District of Massachusetts.

CAMBRIDGE:  
METCALF AND COMPANY, STEADYPRINTERS AND PRINTERS.

Q 22-1-20-2000-1-1

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## INTRODUCTORY LECTURE.



### AN APPEAL.

*"Wise is deceitful and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised."*—Prov. xxxi. 30.

My present discourse will be introductory to a series of sermons, upon the duties and responsibility of woman. It is an undertaking upon which I enter with diffidence and almost with reluctance; for I can hope to say nothing new and have no desire to afford mere entertainment. My desire is to do good to those who hear me, and especially to the young, by exciting them to more serious reflection than they are probably accustomed to bestow upon the common duties of life and their responsibility to God. My only hope of accomplishing this is by the expression of well-known truths, in a plain and simple manner.

But how far plain truth, plainly spoken, will be acceptable, no one can tell until he tries.

The years of girlhood and early womanhood are generally so bright, that the shadow of mature reflection scarcely falls upon them. The enjoyment of life is so fresh and sweet, that the serious responsibility which life imposes seldom engages the thoughts. The path of life is strewn with flowers, and if thorns sometimes appear, it is only those which grow upon the flowers themselves and are inseparable from their beauty. The days of the young maiden dwelling under a father's roof, with the kind protection of a mother's love, shielded by the proud affection of brothers who love her almost with jealous tenderness, glide onward, not without care, not without disappointment, not without tears, but with almost uninterrupted enjoyment. She feels herself to be loved by every one, and that those whom she loves take pride in pleasing her. Their kindness is lavished upon her in daily tokens of affection; she is everywhere met with smiles; her most trifling endeavors to

please are successful ; she is praised as being amiable, if willing to be happy. I know that she has trials which seem to her very great ; but in after life she will look back upon those years, before the serious duties of life began, as we recall a pleasant dream. When her brow is saddened under the weight of cares from which the wife and mother never escape, of the anxieties to which the tenderness of woman's nature always makes her subject, she will think of those blessed days when her chief responsibility was in childlike obedience, in the performance of duties so light that they were little more than recreation, rewarded by the approving smile or checked by the gentle rebuke of love, until the remembrance fills the eye with tears and the heart almost with sadness.

Fond and bright days of youth, enjoyed but once ; when we know nothing of the world's sins, and very little of its grief ; when all our friendships are inseparable and our confidence without reserve ; when the denial of a pleasure is the severest trial, and the path of duty so