

**GIRLS: FAULTS AND  
IDEALS: A FAMILIAR  
TALK, WITH QUOTATIONS  
FROM LETTERS**

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Girls: Faults and Ideals: A Familiar Talk, with Quotations from Letters by J. R. Miller

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*A FAMILIAR TALK,* ✓  
*WITH*  
*QUOTATIONS FROM LETTERS.*

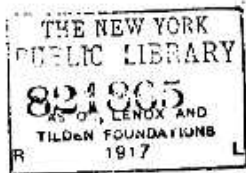
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## GIRLS: FAULTS AND IDEALS.

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"Cleanse thou me from secret faults."—*PSA. xix. 12.*

"The King's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold."—*PSA. xlv. 13.*

THE religion of Christ has something to say to every man, woman, and child, in every relation, on every day, in every experience of life. It is not something for Sundays, and for prayer-meetings, and for sick-rooms, death-beds, and funerals: it is just as much for the school-room, the play-ground, the store, the kitchen, the street. Wherever you may chance to be, if you listen you will hear a voice behind you whispering, "This is the way; walk ye in it." The Bible is the Word of God, our Father's will concerning his children; and it has something to say each day, at every point of experience, to every one of us. I want to help the girls and young women, if I can, to hear a little of what Christ has to say to them.

It is good for us to see ourselves as others see

us. Hence, I have asked a number of Christian young men to give me answers to certain questions, and from these I have quoted in this familiar talk. I take two of these questions, viz. :

1. "What are some of the most common faults in young women of your acquaintance?"

2. "What are some of the essential elements of character in your ideal of true young womanhood?"

We shall think then of common faults and of ideals. The first text I have chosen is a prayer for the cleansing of faults. The second is a description of the life that pleases God.

"Cleanse thou me from secret faults." Is there one of us who does not from deepest heart pray this prayer? I pity that man or that woman who does not long to be cured of faults, whatever they are, however painful or costly their removal may be.

Some one says, — and the words are worthy of being written in gold, — "Count yourself richer that day you discover a new fault in yourself, — not richer because it is there, but richer because it is no longer a hidden fault; and if you have not found all your faults, pray to have them revealed to you, even if the revelation must come in a way that hurts your pride."



Mr. Ruskin has this word also for young women: "Make sure that however good you may be, you have faults; that however dull you may be, you can find out what they are; and that however slight they may be, you had better make some patient effort to get quit of them. . . . Therefore see that no day passes in which you do not make yourself a somewhat better creature; and in order to do that find out first what you are now. . . . If you do not dare to do this, find out why you do not dare, and try to get strength of heart enough to look yourself fairly in the face, in mind as well as in body. . . . Always have two mirrors on your toilet table, and see that with proper care you dress both the mind and body before them daily."

These words show us the importance of the prayer: "Cleave thou me from secret faults." We all have our faults, which mar the beauty of our lives in the eyes of others. Every noble soul desires to grow out of all faults, to have them corrected. The smallest fault mars the beauty of the character; and one who seeks to possess only "whatsoever things are lovely" will be eager to be rid of whatever is faulty. Ofttimes, however, we do not know our own faults: we are unconscious of them. We cannot see ourselves as others see us. The friend does us a true kindness

who tells us of the things in our character, habits, manners, which appear as blemishes, although many people have too much vanity to be told of their faults. They resent it as a personal insult when one points out any blemish in them. But this is most foolish short-sightedness. To learn of a fault is an opportunity to add a new line of beauty to the life. Our prayer each day should be that God would show us our secret faults, whatever messenger he may send to point them out, and then give us grace to correct them.

The young men who have replied to my question concerning the faults of young women have done so in most kindly spirit, for to a noble soul it is always an unwelcome task to find fault: it is much easier to name the beautiful things in those we love than the blemishes.

Several writers have referred to the matter of *dress*. One says, "Too much time is given by many young ladies to dressing. They scarcely think of anything else." Another names, "The love of dress, the inordinate desire to excel their companions in this particular," as among the common faults in young women, adding that it has led many of them to ruin. Another says they like to make themselves attractive by conspicuous colors, and suggests that if they would spend less time in

shopping and more in some elevating occupation, for example in making home brighter for brothers and parents, it would be better.

"Following fashion to an extreme that is unbecoming and often extravagant; too great attention to outward adornment at the expense of inner adornment," another marks as a too prominent fault. We all remember that St. Peter has a word about dressing: "Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit." Every young woman should dress well, that is, neatly, tastefully, modestly, whether she be rich or poor. Conspicuous dressing is always vulgar. True refinement avoids anything showy and flashy: it never dresses better than it can afford, and yet it is always well dressed, even in simple muslin or plain calico.

Another fault mentioned is *the lack of moral earnestness*. "Frivolity, arising from want of purpose in life," one names, "even the most sacred duties and relations being marred by this frivolousness. The best years of life are wasted in small talk and still smaller reading, tears and