

**MANUALS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION  
FOR PARENTS AND TEACHERS**

Edited by Charles Foster Kent  
In collaboration with Henry H. Meyer

**GIRLHOOD AND CHARACTER**

By **MARY E. MOXCEY**

Introduction by  
**GEORGE A. COE**



**THE ABINGDON PRESS**  
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To  
MOTHERS, TEACHERS,  
AND OLDER  
FRIENDS OF GIRLS



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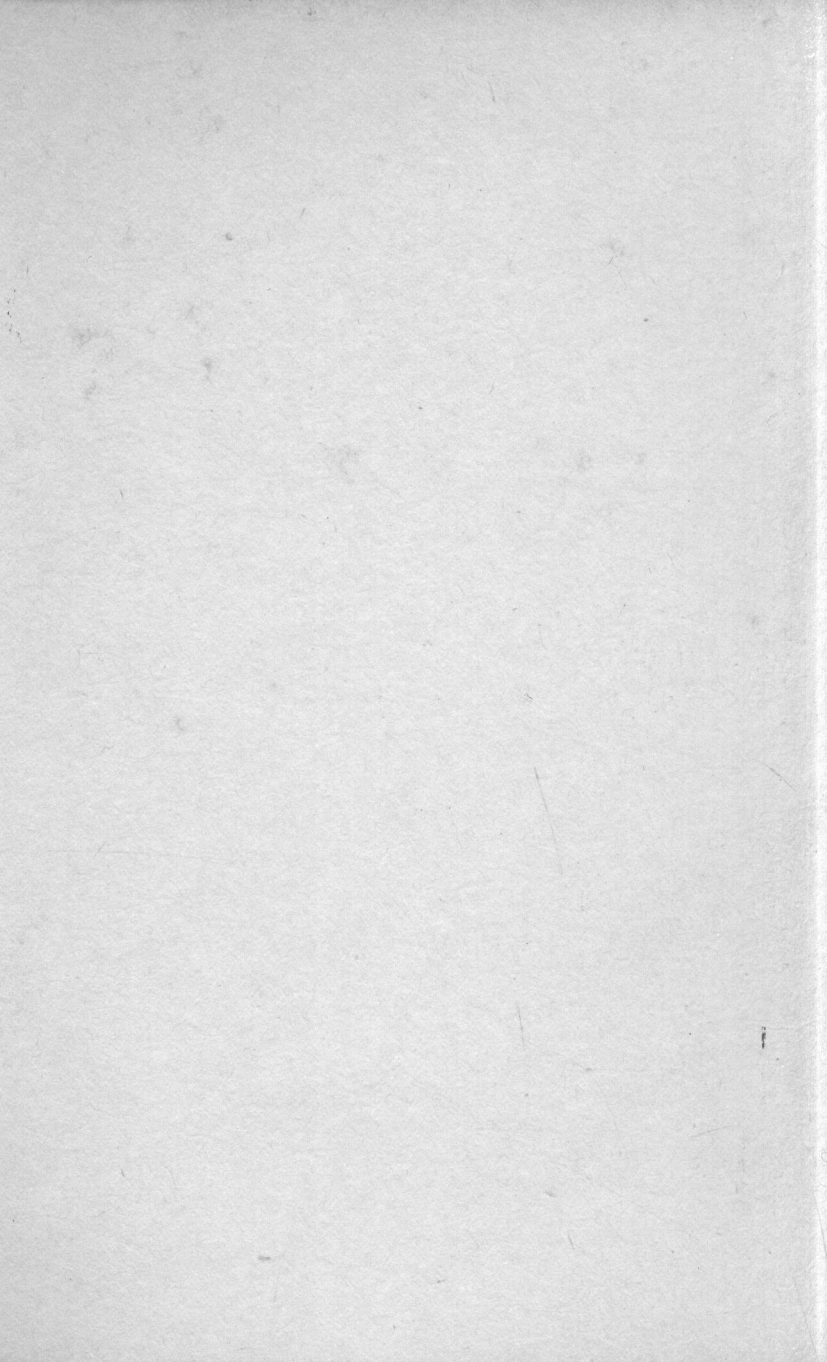


## INTRODUCTION

HAVING examined with critical care nearly all the manuscript of this work, I gladly avail myself of an opportunity furnished by the Editor of the Series to help introduce to the public a most timely publication. For some years a need has been felt for an analysis of the problems of adolescent girlhood from the combined standpoints of physiology, psychology, and the growth of character through education both formal and informal. Miss Moxcey demonstrates the possession of competent knowledge in all these fields. In addition she brings to her task extraordinarily valuable and well-digested experience with girls, and likewise critical understanding of the principles and processes of religious education. The result is a book that is at once scientific, insightful, and practically helpful. I trust that it will have the wide reading that it deserves—the reading that is needed by parents and teachers in the interest of happy, wholesome young womanhood.

GEORGE A. COE.





## PREFACE

GIRLHOOD has not yet been adequately studied. In most writings "the adolescent" has meant the adolescent boy. Recent years have seen, it is true, the beginning of a literature of girl life. Social workers have shown the relation of the girl problem to the wider social whole. Educators have recorded visions of better courses of study and better methods of training girls for womanhood, and school administrators have brought to public attention other needs and problems. Physicians have sought and found the causes which lead so many young girls to need their care, and they have uttered warnings and protests and proffered sound advice. Psychologists have accumulated data showing the normal development of the human mind from childhood through adolescence to maturity, and have noted some of the sex-differences in this progress. Pathologists, by the study of abnormal developments of the mental and emotional life of youth, have gained an understanding of many normal processes which ordinarily escape notice.

But the abnormality and exaggeration of pathological cases make the scientific works which describe them rather misleading to the lay reader who is interested in the ordinary, healthy girl. In fact, even the writers themselves have sometimes forgotten that these cases are abnormal, and generalize as though all girls were like those who come under scientific observation

just because they are unusual. Definite experiments in sex-differences are confined to a few, limited mental traits, and some of the findings are a by-product of other studies. Small as this material is in amount, much of it is invaluable; but it lies buried in the midst of scientific volumes of wider scope, or scattered in fugitive magazine articles or papers read at specialists' conferences.

Again, while sociologists and psychologists are helping us to understand the laws of growing individuals and their relations to the world, the great science of education is itself passing through a revolution. Its aims and ideals have so altered that we must change many of our ideas of what we need to accomplish. All of these facts make it imperative that we shall in some way be able to apply the results of these specialized sciences as they are focused on the lives of girls. It is this need which has given the present writer the courage to attempt a beginning in this particular field. Since this book was begun the still meager number of volumes dealing distinctively with girlhood has doubled or trebled. These, however, all treat of special phases of girl life. Certain intensive studies of present problems make notable contributions to our knowledge. A few of the men and women, who have rare power to stimulate in girls high aims, and in adults strong ambitions to work with girls, have put some of this inspiration into print. Diligent search has been made through available literature for scientific facts and for points of view; but the facts that have been most illuminating have been those acquired during nearly twenty-five years of intimacy with all sorts of girls. Perhaps it was the coincidence of entering her teens

and at the same time taking up her interrupted schooling in a new community that developed in the writer the habit of trying to understand why girls acted and thought as they did. The comradeship of these and other groups of girls in various enterprises in school and college, and varied experiences as leader in club, settlement, Young Women's Christian Association and Church school work, have given an opportunity for observation of the behavior and insight into the motives of girls under a wide range of conditions in our recent and present American life.

These girls include groups and individuals from homes of wealth or culture, or both, or neither; from country, small town, small cities and great; with "American ancestry from the Mayflower or from the last steamer;" studying in high school, private school, small college and great university; working in store, office, kitchen, factory, or professional life; and with every degree of help or of handicap from native ability, health, or home. The great underlying uniformities which seemed to stand out among the aspirations and problems of these girls were confirmed by coworkers who talked over the problems of girls under their charge in other parts of this country and all over the world. Letters and diaries from other sources showed the same tendencies in the kind of girl who must introspect and who must record her introspections. The statistical facts from printed studies pointed in the same direction, and the conviction of universality grew to a certainty.

The following chapters are the result of reviewing all these facts from the standpoint of modern psychology and education. They do not claim completeness in

scope or treatment. Some of the most vital problems, such as "temperament," for example, and others, remain untouched because they are like the map of Central Africa before Livingstone, a great blank, labeled "Unexplored Territory." The aim has been to adhere rigidly to facts and principles that are unassailable. Alluring theories not backed by proof have been excluded.

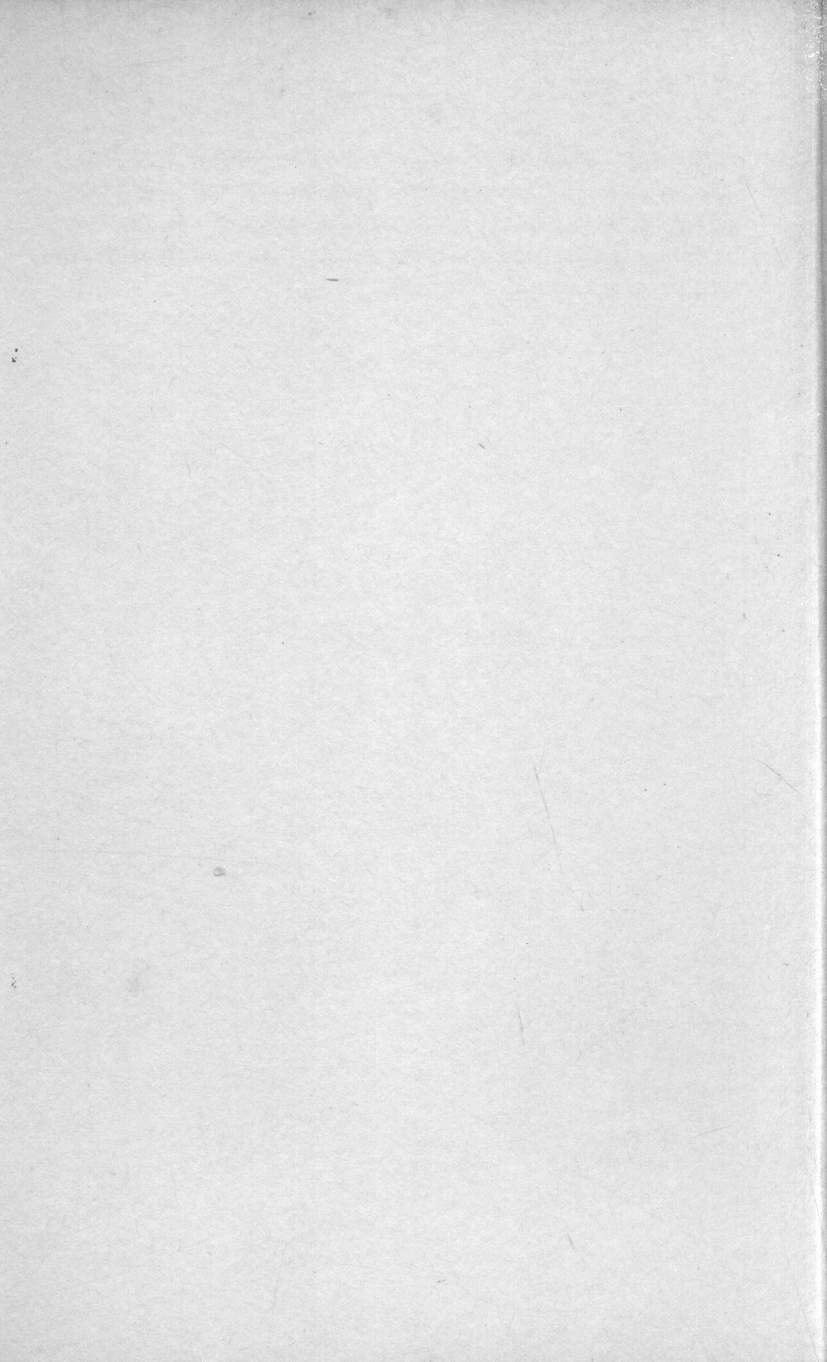
The volume is offered to those who by inner or outer compulsion are bound fast to the lives of girls, and who follow rules better for knowing the principles back of them. It is hoped that it will prove helpful alike to those who have no special preparation in psychology or the science of education, and to those whose familiarity with these subjects has made them keenly conscious of the need for more definite knowledge about girls.

Grateful acknowledgment is due to my teachers in psychology, Professor Woodworth, of Columbia University, and Professor Thorndike, of Teachers College. Dr. E. K. Strong, Jr., of Peabody Institute, gave access before its publication to the manuscript of one of his experimental studies, with permission to use the facts therein established. None of these authorities are responsible for the deductions made. Indebtedness to the authors of social, educational, and scientific studies is indicated in the bibliography and in many references throughout the text. Miss Helen E. Diller, of Teachers College, and Mrs. Martin Smallwood read the manuscript and gave helpful suggestions. Valuable illustrative incidents and insight into the problems of the worker came from many friends who acted as a preliminary public.

Above all, the thanks of any who may find the following pages useful are due to Professor George A. Coe, of Union Theological Seminary, without whose encouragement and stimulating criticism the volume would not have appeared.

THE AUTHOR.







**PART I**  
**INTRODUCTORY**

