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The Young Woman
in Society

by Mary B. Welch

The Young Woman in Society

Society is a much abused word and made to cover a multitude of sins. It is often spoken of as something to be avoided - full of temptation and fraught with danger. I have frequently been told "I am not in Society. My time is too precious. I cannot afford to waste it on Society." Just as the word "politics" has come to be degraded from its high original meaning, "practical statesmanship", to a lower significance standing for "the machine" in state and national af-

fairs, so the word "Society" has
come to mean that comparatively
insignificant fraction given over
to social dissipation. The word
really covers all human intercourse
and fellowship. We cannot get
away from ~~it~~ ^{society} if we would, unless
we bury ourselves in a hermit's
cell. So strong is the social instinct
in the human heart - that even pris-
oners condemned to solitary con-
finement for crimes against so-
ciety, manage to establish some
means of communication with each
other, so that by sign or subtle move-
ment, desires and plans are tele-
graphed from one to the other, when
they are taken out for exercise, or
marched to the prison chapel for

Sunday Service. One of the first symptoms of insanity is often a persistent avoidance of people, an obstinate shrinking from human faces and human voices -

Any instinct so fundamental and so ineradicable as this must have meaning and purpose. We are not set in solitary places and told to care for ourselves alone, but commanded to bear one another's burdens, to labor for the common good, to love and live for each other. There is immense power both for good and evil in any life that touches other lives, and as power can never be exercised without corresponding responsibility, each

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one of us must face this question
of social power and social re-
sponsibility. The Young Woman
in Society! How does she differ
from the Young Woman in the
Home, The Young Woman in
Business, The Young Woman
in Church, The Young Woman
in ~~School~~ ^{College}? ~~She is really all these~~
for whether at home, in business,
in Church or in School she is all
the time radiating, if I may so
speak, social influence. But if
I wish to dwell chiefly now upon
the ideal Young Woman as she
comes in contact with others
in hours of purely social enjoy-
ment - as she meets her friends

and acquaintances at luncheons
and teas, at parties and concerts,
at pic-nics and socials, at golf
and tennis. Is there any truth
in the modern addition to the old
saying "Be good and you'll
be happy", of the significant
words "but you must have a
good time?" Is it impossible
for a thorough-going Christian
girl to live up to her ideals in
what we mean by society, say
here in Los Angeles? Let me put
it in another way, is it possible
to live a consistent, Christian,
or Christ-like life, without hav-
ing that life dominated by a

serious purpose, filled with be-
neficent activities, busy about the
Master's business, and are the two
compatible? Let us look at the
life of our great exemplar for
the answer. What was his at-
titude towards social affairs?
Can you find in all his teach-
ing any condemnation of that
interchange of thought and feel-
ing, that play and interplay
of character upon character, that
exchange of friendly amenities
which we call society? He did
give some instructions as to
proper behavior when invited
to a feast, and chided that self-

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Taking, aggressive pushing that
strives for the best place with-
out regard to the rights of others.
He also said something as to
the true spirit of hospitality,
and disapproved that selfish
and ostentatious sort of entertain-
ing that has in mind the thought
of being entertained again - We
have no record of his refusing
any invitation, and once we
were told he announced his inten-
tion of dining with Facchens with-
out waiting for the formal ask-
ing - He was present at a wedding
early in his Ministry - He dined
at Simon the Leper's a few days
before his death. He dined with
Publicans and sinners. He was

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present at the feasts of the Pharisees.
He mingled freely with men and
women everywhere. Our Lord
endured social intercourse
during His life as easily, and
bids us look forward to the
company of the Hosts of Heaven
as one of the blessed rewards in
store for those who love Him here.
How indeed could He have accom-
plished His mission had He shut
Himself away from the sight of
men to worship and meditate.
It is a part of the divine economy
in spiritual things that only as
we mingle with the world can
we influence its thought and
mold its life. Yet Christ never
for a moment forgot His mis-
sion or trifled with His work, or

trasted his opportunities. At
each recorded social gathering
he taught some lesson. He
made his influence felt for good.
I have not time to dwell upon
each of these incidents, but you
will remember that faith was
emphasized at one supper,
love at another, and the fear-
ful "Woe unto you Scribes and
Pharisees hypocrites" pronoun-
ced at still another -

This is indeed the key
to the whole situation - Life is
lent to us for a purpose - It
is full of meaning to those who
put themselves in accord with
the divinely established order
of things - When we are in har-

Money with God, all things ¹⁰
fall into their right and proper
place. The discords come when
we resist: rebel, and struggle.
The little bird in his cage has no
better friend than the mistress who
loves and cares for him. Yet if she
reaches forth her hand to take
him, intending only kindness, the
timid, fluttering creature, mistaking
the meaning of the action, bruises
his wings in the effort to escape.
Let him once lie passive in his
owner's hand and yield himself
drillingly to her caress, and he
will discover that love, and love
only prompted her desire to
for closer and more intimate
contact. So we with our Heaven.

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ly Father. He wills our good and
wants to possess us wholly in
order to secure our eternal joy
and blessedness, but we resist.
We are afraid. We do not trust
Him and so we come to harm
in our foolish resistance to His
will. Our first duty - how plain
the Christ has made it - and how
beautifully shown the way - is
to love the Master with might,
mind, and strength - The second,
to love our neighbor as ourselves,
follows this as inevitably and as
naturally, as breathing follows
the rhythmic beating of the heart.
Christ says "Follow me - Where
I go, you can safely go - Take
me as your companion and you

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shall walk through fire un-
scathed, and through floods
unharm'd - Whatever is inno-
cent, whatever is pure, whatever
is lovely, whatever is of good
report, enjoying - whatever is virtuous,
whatever is good, whatever is un-
lovely and evil shun, for with
these I can have no fellowship.
In His last prayer for His dis-
ciples, that wonderful prayer
in John 17. He said "I pray
not that thou shouldst take them
out of the world, but that thou
shouldst keep them from the
evil", and again, "As thou hast
sent me into the world, even
so have I also sent them into

the world." If only, at evening³
parties at day-time luncheon,
at out-door sport and in-
door amusement, the enjoyment
is but an incident, and not the
main pursuit of life, a re-
creation and not a dissipa-
tion, an innocent and whole-
some good time, and not a
mad whirl of excitement, and
if you can turn from it at the
proper hour to genuine and
heartily service in whatever
occupation you have select-
ed as your special work,
you are using and not abus-
ing one of the good things of
life. — He who is older al-

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most envy the girls of to-day. You have so much that is worth having to choose from, and then everywhere, in affairs, in letters, in society, you have a kind and degree of influence unknown to girls of my youth - You are a complement part of that power that moves the world. Young womanhood means more than it used to, and, dear young friends, make it mean as much for Christ as it means for progress, in material things.

Let me quote a few words from Anna Robertson Brown's remarkable essay on "What is Worth While" - She says "It amazes me when I think of it, that there was a time when you

and I were not; - when
the cycles of Eternity swept
onward and the stars turn-
ed in their courses without
the sight or sound of man.
And then came a time when
Zubal came worked at his
brasses, and Job watched
Orion from the plain of
Shinar, - and yet you and
I were not. But now there
can never come a time
when you and I shall
not be. The vast gift of
Eternity has been laid in
your hands and mine;
An eternity not wholly to
come, but one which is
even now here. Shall we
not use its hours aright?
And again - "We are all Cap-

Capitalists! The only
pauper in the world is
a dumb, deaf, and blind
idiot. Let us examine our
capacities and gifts ~~and~~
~~gifts~~ and then put them to
the best use we may. As
our own view of life is by
necessity partial, I do
not find that we can do
better than to put them abso-
lutely in God's hand and
look to him for the di-
rection of our life energy.
God can do great things
with our lives, if we but
give them to him in sin-
cerity. He can make
them useful, uplifting,
heroic. God never wastes

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anything. God never forgets anything. God never loses anything. Though He holds the world in the hollow of His hand, He will yet remember each of us and the part we are fitted to play in the eternal drama."

The whole matter of social enjoyment resolves itself finally into this, as indeed the whole matter of living does also, "Not my will, but thine." In the same essay I find these words in answer to the question what may we profitably let go? "We may let go all things we cannot carry into the eternal life. To me this is a deep truth, and a positive one. Surely it

is not more the while for us¹⁸
to Cumber our lives with the
things which we can grasp
at best for but a little time,
when we may lay hold of
things that shall be ours for
ten thousand times ten thousand
years." I do not forget that you
are young and that youth de-
mands recreation, and that
your desire for free and pleas-
ant intercourse with others
young like yourself, is keen
and persistent. Far be it from
my thought to declare that the
proper gratification of this
instinct is other than innocent

and lawful. What I do wish to ¹⁹emphasize is the fact that you are sent into the world, as Christ was, a messenger with good news, a standard bearer of high ideals, holy ambitions. An example of that sort of living which, though in the world, is not worldly, that sort of thinking, which though ~~temporal~~ ^{temporal} in the flesh, is not carnal - Enjoy, as only a happy Christian can, every pure pleasure. Never condone anything that is evil. Let your light shine everywhere, then every social gathering of which you are a part will be the better and the

happier for your presence. You²⁰
will lift up rather than let down.
All questionable amusements,
all evil companionships, all
unworthy desires will cease
to tempt you. It is not "Will
you give up this, or sacrifice
that?" It is "Child, lovest thou
me - lovest thou me?" You
remember our Lord did not
say "Pledge, promise you will
never again give way to anger,
you will never again deny
your faith" - No just the re-
peated, heart-searching "Lov-
est thou me?" -

Connected with

the Diaconess Home at Mild-²¹
may Park, North London.
There are a number of women
from families of high rank in
England. ^{very at certain times as such work as may} They are called so-
^{be assigned them.} called "Diaconesses". They do
not, as a rule, live at the Home,
as this would in many cases,
be altogether impracticable.
Among them are, or were, ^{in good} at
^{Queen Victoria's time} least two noble gentlemen
attached to the household of
the late Queen as Ladies-in-
Waiting. They must attend
to their court duties first,
but when released, with the

full approval of their royal mis-
 tress, at stated intervals, they
 exchanged their fine and costly
 clothing, for the severe and
 simple garb of the Mildmay
 Deaconess, and repaired to
 their appointed work under
 the supervision of the Home
 Authorities, in hospital, or
 home, or poverty stricken ten-
 ement. Then, their duty done,
 they went back to the world
 again for social contact.
 With the highest in the land.
 Do you not suppose they
 carried back to the Court

Shining from their faces, some
reflection of the Christ-Spirit;
the light within, that impels
to such a Ministry to his
little ones? And do you not
suppose also, that they took to
the bedside of the sick, and the
cottage of the poor some reflection
of the world of wealth and cul-
ture from which they came, in
gentle grace and courtesy of
manner, and in fulness of men-
tal equipment, that gave them
stronger influence over those
whom they served? And is this

not the ideal for the young woman
in Society to strive to re-
alize? Take to the social gather-
ing the graces and virtues
which are the fruit of a round-
ed spiritual and mental dis-
cipline, and you will neither
be harmed yourself, nor
harm anyone else - Take
into your work the light-
heart and joyous manner
that are the result of genuine
and innocent pleasure, and
both labor and play will
work together for your good
and the good of Society -