

Tullio Suzzara Verdi

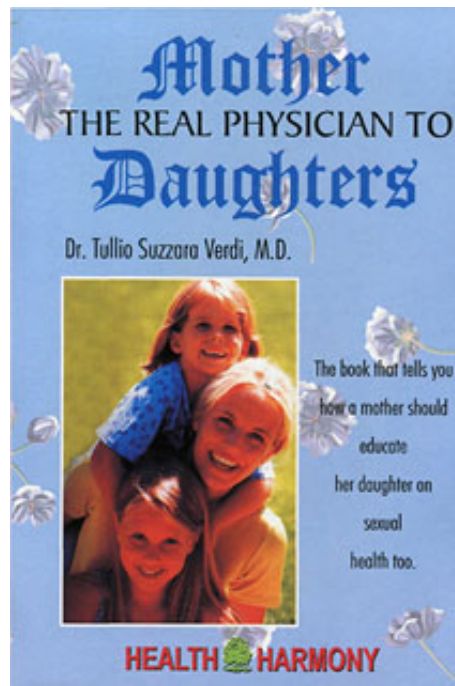
Mother - The Real Physician to Daughter

Reading excerpt

[Mother - The Real Physician to Daughter](#)

of [Tullio Suzzara Verdi](#)

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CHAPTER II.

A NUMBER of people living together in certain bonds of union, whether in tribes, in hamlets, towns or cities, constitute a community or a society. The very word *community* conveys the idea that the people composing it have objects in view that are common to all.

This is the crude principle that induces men to live in groups, forced into that position probably by the simple necessity of self-preservation.

Society may be denned as an improved condition of these groups, guided by the indefinite and unexpressed law of common consent.

One might live in a community unmolested and undisturbed, perhaps, simply by obeying the written common law, or abiding by the cardinal principle "do unto others as you would have others do unto you." Society, however, exacts more; it modifies or enlarges the scope of the law, without actually forcing any one into obedience, or administering physical punishment for non-acquiescence; still, these mandates, although not served with the official seal of the magistrate, are nevertheless compulsory, as another form of punishment—social ostracism—is sure to follow infractions. Moreover, compli-

ance being optional in society, like a debt of honor, it is sooner observed than when forced by process of law.

All laws, to be suitable to a community, must be general, and cover the interests of many people, often spread over large space, as in states, nations or empires. They cannot, therefore, be so restricted as to meet the wants of closely united, although numerous, populations, which, in their turn, are sub-divided by occupations, industries and preferred modes of living. The society of Paris, as an example, might prosper under the general laws of France, but the variety of callings, professional and industrial, of its people require more; namely: rules and regulations governing the intercourse among its immediate members, that would be unnecessary and unsuitable to the much smaller groups sparsely located in agricultural districts. In short, cities need municipal laws.

The social system of law, unwritten and not subject to forcible compliance, is elastic, and therefore in the condition to be easily modified whenever circumstances or events require it, thus forming a complement to the written law of the land.

It is an important complement too; for without it the amenities, the good manners, and the refinement of large aggregations of people, would be lost in the simple observance of *meum et fuum*, the common law. Therefore, although much may be said against the "unphilosophical and even unreasonable decrees that have gradually crept into the codes of social ethics, the necessity of some social code must be recognized.

Social customs, so often beneficial to well organized communities, may as often prove dangerous if yielded

to without discretion or discrimination. Mushrooms growing in the bark of a tree may appear to the careless observer as an integral part of the same; but a little discretion will show the error. The mushrooms that grow on the diseased spots of social constitutions may appear the same and be respected accordingly; but a little examination will show that they are only unhealthy out-growths, which should not be tolerated if the integrity of society is to be maintained.

Spencer, the erudite and searching philosopher, has analyzed these social fungous growths, and it is well worth while to read his works on sociology, for nothing is more interesting than his examination of social structures. But, here, we can notice only the errors which are honored more through custom or force of habit than for any good influence they bear on the health of the human economy. Fashion constitutes one of its departments, probably the most dictatorial, the most potent and irrepressible; its exactions, like all imperiousness, being as much for evil as for good.

In the varied departments of social government, fashion is probably the one that plays the most active part in the physical welfare of the people, and consequently it is a subject that cannot be overlooked in a guide to health.

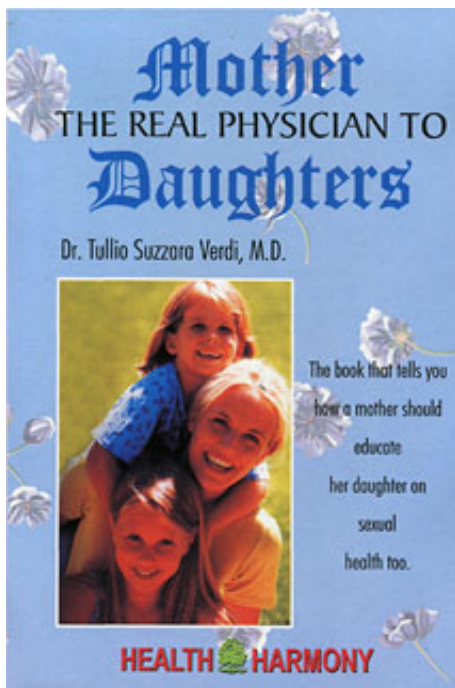
Napoleon [II.], as a financial statesman, might at first sight have been deemed right in encouraging extravagance in his Court. The magnificent and varied costumes of Eugenie created a *furor* in the female community of the wealthy class for certain fabrics, certain colors and shapes of courtly robes. The silk manufactories of Lyons vied with one another in quickly supplying the

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market with the extraordinary requisitions; thousands of mechanics and laborers were kept at the loom and the spinning-wheel, and thus thousands were employed who otherwise would have been idle, troublesome, grumbling people. But, on the oilier hand, the extravagance of that court, becoming contagious, spread beyond the limits of the classes able to bear the enormous tax. The desire to be in the fashion contaminated all ranks, and extended beyond the boundaries of the nation for which it was intended. That extravagance filled many a coffer with gold; and for a while even the national exchequer was buoyant. But, like all unhealthy tilings, the disease unnoticed corroded the very foundations of society, and threatened it with general destruction. The panacea invented by the Emperor was one sure to fail. The sad episode of that country's trial in its war with Prussia, proved that the potion was only an alluring one; for weakness instead of strength had grown under its administration and in the passage-at-arms to which France was forced she was overwhelmed and conquered.

Eugenie, the Empress, plump and warm, might order transparent materials that her exquisite throat and well moulded arms be not entirely hidden; or some other Eugenie, lean and anaemic, but wealthy, might properly order heavy silk to cover her ropy throat and sinewy limbs. Eugenie in the Tuilleries, in gilded coaches and on velvet carpets, may adorn herself as is fitted to her position, and to her condition in life; but Eugenie, the wife of a humble citizen in moderate circumstances, with household duties to perform, may perish **in** the attempt to follow the Empress.

Eugenie of the Court of France may have *a. corset*



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