

**ALMOST
A WOMAN**

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Almost a Woman by Mary Wood-Allen

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MARY WOOD-ALLEN

**ALMOST
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MARY WOOD-ALLEN, M. D.

TEACHING TRUTH SERIES

ALMOST A WOMAN

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Author of "Teaching Truth"; "Almost a Man"
"Child-Confidence Rewarded;" "Caring for
the Baby"; "The Man Wonderful";
"Ideal Married Life;" Etc.



"Standing with reluctant feet
Where the brook and river meet.
Womanhood and childhood meet!

* * * * *
Like the swell of some sweet tone
Morning rises into noon,
May glides onward into June."

—*Loofellow.*

"Earth's noblest thing, a woman perfected."

—*James Russell Lowell.*

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PRELUDE.

Mr. Wayne, glancing out of the window, saw some one passing down the front steps. Suddenly a look of recognition came into his face, and he turned to his wife with the exclamation, "I declare, Mary, our daughter Helen is almost a woman, isn't she?"

"Yes," replied Mrs. Wayne, coming to his side and watching the slender figure going down the street. Her face bore a look of motherly pride, but she sighed, as she said,

"Yes, Time and Death are equally inexorable; they both take our babies from us."

"But not after the same fashion," replied Mr. Wayne. "Death takes them from our sight, where we cannot witness their growth and development, cannot know into what beauty they have blossomed."

"Still," said Mrs. Wayne, "we do not recognize the changes Time makes until they are accomplished. So gradually does the blossom unfold that there is no day to which we can point as the day on which the bud became the full blown flower. On what day did Helen cease to be a baby

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and become a child? On what day will she cease to be a child and become a woman?"

"We will know when the actual physical change takes place, but even after that I trust there will remain to us something of our little girl. I do not like to think of her approaching the sentimental age. How old is she?"

"Thirteen."

"Well, we need have no present fear of a sudden development of sentimentality."

"Fortunately, no," replied Mrs. Wayne, "though many a mother of girls no older than Helen is troubled with the question of beaux. Helen, however, has had the good fortune to have for friends boys who seemed to enjoy her comradeship, and I have been very careful not to suggest that their relation could possibly border on the sentimental. So far, she has been perfectly obedient and ever ready to adopt my ideas on all subjects. We have been such close friends that I believe I am acquainted with her inmost thoughts, and if she had felt any romantic emotions I believe she would have confessed them to me."

"Happy mother!" said Mr. Wayne approvingly, "I wish all girls found in their mothers their closest friends and confidants. By the way, you have always talked freely to her about life's mysteries; have you explained her approaching womanhood to her?"

"Not yet," was the reply. "Perhaps I have been a little unwilling to believe that she is really

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nearing that crisis. I cannot bear to lose my little girl," and Mrs. Wayne looked into her husband's face, smiling through her tears.

"Yes, I can understand that," he said, "and yet we believe that only through the normal development of her physical nature can she be the woman perfected.' I beg of you not to postpone your instruction too long. I am more and more convinced that right knowledge not only safeguards purity, but really produces true modesty. To give a young person a reverent knowledge of self is to insure that delicacy of thought which preserves the bloom of modesty. If the girls who are engaged in street flirtations could only be taught the lesson of true womanhood, I am sure they would become quiet and lady-like in conduct. I would rather lose my little girl altogether than have her fall into this error. You have no hesitancy about speaking to her?"

"Not in the least. But I have thought that perhaps she would indicate by some question that her mind was becoming ready for the disclosure. It always seems to me that to force information before the mind is ready to receive it, is to jeopardize its reception."

"Don't wait, Mary. You risk too much by allowing some one else the opportunity to give her the knowledge with the taint of evil suggestion."

"You are right,—and I could not bear that anyone else should explain to her all these mysteries. I have always been her teacher and I will not re-

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linquish that privilege. I will seize the very first opportunity that will allow us uninterrupted time.

"But do you not think that you as a father should have some part in this blessed work of guiding our daughter? I believe that it will be most helpful to her to get the man's view on the problems of her life. You know, one never gets a true perspective of material objects with only one eye; and I believe this is equally true of life. I can give her the woman's view, but she needs to know also how men look upon life. She will be better able to judge of the right or wrong of conduct if she knows that my view is supported by your own."

"You are right, as usual," replied Mr. Wayne smiling, "and you may rest assured that I will always be glad to supplement your counsel by my own."