



Health and Girlhood in Britain, 1874-1920 (Palgrave Studies in the History of Childhood)

Hilary Marland

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This first book-length study of girls' health in modern Britain explores how debates and advice on healthy girlhood, invoking new visions and practices of health, shaped ideas about the lives and potential of adolescent girls from the 1870s to the 1920s. It demonstrates how the 'modern girl' with her 'modern body' was created during this period, as a range of new experts promoted innovative approaches to hygiene, diet and exercise. Theories concerning the biological limitations of female adolescence were challenged and replaced with a growing emphasis on the importance of behaviour in producing good health, and girls deemed responsible for taking care of their own wellbeing. New practices of health, though varying significantly across the social classes, enabled the extension of girls' roles in education, work, sport, and recreation, and fed into the creation of a new cultural category of 'girlhood' as a discrete and important phase between childhood and womanhood.

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