

THE
YOUNG LADY'S
GUIDE

Miss Nellie O. Knight





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YOUNG LADY'S GUIDE.



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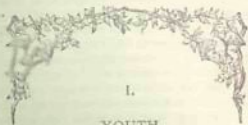
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PAPERS

FOR

THOUGHTFUL GIRLS.

BY SARAH TYTLER



I.

YOUTH.

THERE is no greater mistake than to suppose that youth is necessarily the choice period, the green spot of life. To some it has not even the luxury and light-heartedness which are its ordinary portion. To not a few, cares and trials come while the frame is yet in its fresh vigor, and the eyes are sparkling with their first bold, blithe lookout on the world. To almost all, youth is a power which hurries them to its goal; the young heart is "hot and restless;" it will not take time to appreciate its treasures; it will not be satisfied with its greedy possession; it is full of uncertain desires, and wayward inclinations, and passionate impulses; it is grasping and straining and striving after a vague, uncomprehended good, an airy or empty, ill-proportioned ideal; it is troubled with its ignorance of its own destiny, its unresolved will, its undeveloped circumstances. Youth is not often the cycle of peace. Do not fear then, young girls, to leave behind you the gayly-jested-over or minglingly-mentioned epoch of your teens.

Do not dread growing graver or even splotter. With ripe womanhood, and the still, mellow decline of life, are won, and very often only then won, rest, power, wisdom, content. There may be a great garner in store for your future, there will be an abundant harvest if you will but sow in grace. It is a half pagan, and wholly untrue notion, to associate all blessedness of existence with rash, heady, crude youth. Fight the fight, and run the race, and the older you grow the more royally you will prove the conqueror, and the grander will prove your prize.

But the important question now is, how to employ this youth so as to make of its notes some of the sweetest and gladdest of the melody which began softly in the cradle, and which, if not drowned in the clang and discord of idol music, should swell until it joins the chorus of the skies. The writer supposes herself speaking to those who are very weak, very unstable, very erring, very imperfect, as she is; but who are in earnest, as even girls can be in earnest, about Christianity and their duty; who would con their lesson and practise their calling humbly, modestly, perseveringly to the end. She is aware from experience that not a title of girls of a contrary spirit would listen to her, even from curiosity; and they do not consequently come within the scope of her argument. Only to them she would say, once and for all, solemnly, wistfully, and affectionately, it is a piteous sentence which they are preparing to pass on themselves—to refuse to come to the Father for life, the Elder Brother for love, the

Holy Spirit for light. Illness, disobedience, and rebellion, unless great mercy interpose, must sow the wind to reap the whirlwind.

"I do not know what I shall do with myself after I leave school," says many a good girl, doubtfully and regretfully. She need not be ashamed of the difficulty; her position is a problem of the present day. How to train the faculties of women, to gather up and employ their energies; how to provide for them a quiet and noble sphere, consistent at once with their dependence and their dignity; how to furnish with suitable objects the disengaged capacities and activities of mature single women, are considerations engaging a host of the great and good—enough with a blessing to bring women's affairs to a happy issue. The solution is not found, but it may not be distant. The difficulties run in this direction: Shall the girl return to the pickling and preserving, the herb-gathering and doctoring, the primitive housewifery and seamstresship of her great-grandmother? Shall the Protestant girl borrow a lesson from Catholic harmony, and, while she abjures asceticism, enthusiasm, and unnatural vows, become a deaconess instead of a sister of charity, have her rôle regularly laid down, of teaching the ignorant, nursing the sick, feeding the hungry, and clothing the naked? Or, shall she discover her bent like a boy, pursue her profession fearlessly and innocently, achieve independence, and from her own lawful earnings endow and cheer her own dear home, and let the rays from that centre of love and charity

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Stream forth on every poor, stunted, burdened, desolate home on earth? Probably the solution lies in a union of the whole three; in domesticity, almshouses, and independence, woven into a Christian *norm*.

The secret of happiness here and hereafter, the gold thread of youth, lies in loving God and loving our neighbor, loving them early if it be yet possible, loving them well; losing one's own life in theirs, becoming guileless and docile, meek and reverent in our intercourse with them, loving them long, yea, for ever.

These Papers are written with a diffident but yearning wish to aid young girls in their aim at so lofty and beautiful a purpose. They are intended to steady their views, to comfort and confirm them, to help them in trying to contemplate by the broad light of God and the gospel, some of the things which are before them. These things consist of those gifts and faculties (in which youth is included) which necessarily and inevitably occupy much of their notice; those pursuits which form part of the *nurture and growth of the soul*; those *stumbling-blocks* which beset their road; those encouragements which will enable them to lift holy hands, without wrath or doubting, which will preserve them our own height, trusting, eager, joyous young people, till God shall please to lay upon them the responsibilities and the labors of more advanced years.



II.

PLEASURE.

SUPPOSE no one denies that we all desire pleasure, notwithstanding our difficulty in attaining it. However, there is this curious contradiction, that there is nothing more necessary than to urge young girls to cultivate purely pleasant habits, purely pleasant tastes which shall not pall, which they may reasonably hope will increase and brighten with years, and be made perfect in a better and an ennobling world. There is nothing more wanting, and yet more patent in the present day, than the neglect and destruction, as far as it is possible, of a multitude of delicate instincts which, quite as much as great faculties, fill us with pleasure. The eye is untrained, or only artificially trained; the natural ear is neglected in the midst of its elaborate tutoring, or only accustomed to discord; the quick feelings are allowed to run riot, or condemned to be blunted; the bright humor to sleep; the buoyant elasticity to sink flat and dead. How full our life is; how much we might enjoy it, and thank God for it! But we overlook our treasures,

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and forsake them for the cold glitter of fairy gold, or the dead heaviness of substantial but unworked, unexcitable bullion, till we find our error too late. And well it is if it only end in a long, wistful sigh of regret; if, in spite of all our follies and imputations, we have still built on the rock of our Master and our duty.

One of the very first lessons to be learned is, that true pleasure is a simple, lowly, homely, hearty thing, open, in a great degree, to most of us. Alas, alas! that ever there should be such hard circumstances as to crush it out of existence. But to many, to multitudes, to the mass of those addressed, pleasure is *no easy thing*; is *high you, is ready to burst out* into blossom over your head and under your feet. Only condescend to lift up your eyes and look for it, and stoop and pluck it; for, like every thing else worth having, it is coy, and will not force itself on your reluctant or careless grasp.

It is scarcely necessary to say to a good girl that true pleasure cannot consist in what belongs to mere rivalry and gratified vanity. Such pleasure is, to treat it most gently, very empty and unsatisfactory; and unless it is mixed with some genuine emotion, some honest asserting of honest claims, honest satisfaction in honest gifts, honest gratification in the honest pride of friends, it is absent as noisy, hollow, and absent-bred as that crackling of thorns beneath the pot, which the wise man banned.

But it is incumbent to publish, that pleasure, like duty, does not consist in any thing like intellect

and great mental attainment. To some, of course, it lies there, as even to the soldier it may lurk in the smoke of artillery and the flash of steel; and to another soldier of the same master, it may actually abide in the dark and noisome den in which he blesses God that he hails the dawn of a better day. But to all it is plainly in what affords them innocent gratification. It is a giant with a hundred hands; a rainbow with a thousand dyes. It changes, Proteus-fashion; it varies with a million temperaments. It may be something very different to you from what it is to me. But it perfectly agrees in this respect—it is a harmless, nay, a softening, sweetening enjoyment, though we may not and need not go far out of our way to seek it, and must not sacrifice for it our cross of duty. We are bound to cherish it as one of the instalments of the future, one of the alleviations of the present, a bright drop of dew, a brave beam of sunshine sent to refresh and gladden us by our gracious Father. And the more childlike our hearts are, the more submissive and loving, the more readily we admit, the more freely we entertain the heavenly visitant. We cannot be true Protestants, but must be clinging very pertinaciously to the doctrines and practices of will-worship, asceticism, supererogatory mortification, if we do not recognize the obligation and privilege of drawing forth all the pleasures within our nature and locality, and carrying them heavenwards.

But if pleasures are countless as the leaves on the tree, and, like the leaves, not two alike, they fall

also pretty generally into classes, and offer themselves in their divisions to particular classes of the community. To young girls, allowing for many exceptions, there exists a peculiar range of delights, capable of expanding and maturing with the growth of the woman, until, in full dropping ripeness, balmy and mellow they salute the last, lingering, earthly sensations of widowed wives, aged mothers, frail spinsters hovering on the border-land. This range belongs largely to primitive nature, to flower gardens, kitchen gardens, fields, woods, moors, mountains; to animals, wild and domestic, useful and ornamental, cows and poultry, birds and bees. That a love for nature is latent in the great body of men and women, is clear from its appearance under the most unfavorable circumstances, and after the longest intervals. The successful merchant withdraws to his villa, and dedicates his hard-won leisure to mango-wurzel and pineapples, while his wife expatiates and luxuriates among her Alderneys and Cochin-Chinns. Of the retired tradesmen and their partners, whose ease and cash do not drag upon them, ninety-nine out of the hundred are amateur farmers or gardeners, or holders of some description of live stock. That so many only take to the teeming world—animate and inanimate around them—late in life, demonstrates that the original bent was choked and overlaid, and wanted excavation. Those who succeed disentangle it into breezy air and hardy life, develop also the most wholesome bodies and souls, the sweetest and sunniest tempers. Quo-

tionless, there are instances of crabbed gardeners and gruff farmers, but what would those rugged specimens of *humility* have been without the *Ellas* and the wheat? And are not their roughnesses mere outer excrescences? See them with the favorite child on the knee, the chosen friend at the elbow: *why, they are tender philanthropists and kindly humorists in disguise.*

Now, with regard to this wide arena of health and happiness, in the green fields and the singing birds, it is a mistake to consider the girls of the present day before their great-grandmothers. It is not only that heedless youth, in its own headstrong, self-engrossed fashion, rushes along and misses the very *relative of which it stands in need*; but the habits of our present generation, the very accomplishments, the excessive pushing and straining after social importance, are all against simple, natural tastes. You will find the mother watching the young lambs coming into the fold with the careful eyes, while the daughter is off in a fit of the gapes; the aunt, contrasting the crimson-tipped oak leaves with the blue-green of the juniper and the olive-green of the wild rose, while the niece is in fretful horror lest the sprays from the bushes tear her cumbersome crinoline. You will even discover the tottering old grandmother pulling up the grey *celandine* or the *bellary* meadow, sweet from the waterside; while the granddaughtler has borrowed her brother's rod, and is fishing the pool, for "a lark," as she says in her brother's slang, but in reality to attract the

attention of all the half-scornful, half-scared fishers up and down the stream.

It is not that the present race of young people are more frivolous than the last, but they are more removed from unconscious, close, constant study of nature. Yes, they are, in spite of science and art, perhaps, in some instances, because of superficial, undigested science and art; in spite of far greater accommodation—immensely increased facilities of travelling, greenhouses made easy, aviaries, aquariums—they are very generally more removed from our old homely, humble, blessed mother-earth and her subordinate creatures. This is the case, just as much reading is apt to end in little thinking, as popular lectures have often resulted in popular ignorance, self-satisfied, defiant, all but incurable ignorance, for the reason that it wore a shallow disguise of knowledge.

All the appliances of modern training include a danger of leaving our girls vain, arrogant, pretensions, and insincere. They have studied botany, but they do n't care for their specimens one-hundredth part that their mother cared for her hydrangea in the green-and-white striped stoneware pot, which was such a cold, hard substitute for the soft-stained, coxy brick. They do n't mind their ferns and mosses as she prized the upper slice of carrot, which she cut and floated on a wineglass full of water, and saw rear *its shafts of feathers* when the snow was lying thick in the valley; or the cross-wood which she sowed on the moistened flannel over the cup, to

astound and delight poor sick little Hughie. Ah, you girls want the easy admiration, the frank, loving wiles of your mothers!

Our great-grandmothers, in the dearth of many other resources, thought much more of the fragrance of the mint and thyme in their herb-gardens, the sweetness of the fruit of their cherry-trees, the gaiety of their larks' songs, the stature of their calves, the fatness of their chickens, the familiarity of their pet-lambs, even the smartness of their parrots and tame starlings and sparrows, than many of their descendants dream of doing of any plant or animal at home or abroad.

The sciences are noble in their own way; open-air sketching is a valuable power; picnics are occasionally pleasant social reunions; but Charlotte Brontë has told how little the agreeableness of a picnic has to do with burying one's face and heart in green leaves. We have all known picnic visits to ruins which were never looked at, to views which were never seen, to waterfalls which were missed. Picnics, in the old days, were named whims or follies; my lady's whim, or my lady's folly, to eat a syllabub or a bun under a tree, or on clover. As far as regards learning to know God's world, picnics (unless strictly family gatherings) will be whims and follies to the young always.

No, take nature quietly; make a secret contract with her, or at most, a threefold friendship between you two and a home-brother or sister. Don't mix her up too much with books. Look at her in her

own simple, lovely light. Learn the shades and slopes of the trees from the belt in your own shrubbery; grow intimate with the moon, looking at her silver bow or her mellow autumn radiance, from your own parlor or drawing-room window, with your old father taking his nap at your elbow; or with your baby-nephew stretching out his arms to that shield in the sky, and drumming with his feet against your knees from his station in your lap. You may visit a botanical or zoological garden occasionally with pleasure and profit, but you will never cull from the foreign plants and beasts and birds, not even from the *Victoria Regia* and the hippopotami, a tithe of the benefit to be won, with little trouble, from your beds of anemones and sweet-william; or your canaries, with their quilted-fannel nest in the corner of their family cage; or your brood of young turkeys, spotted brown, black, and creamy-white, like Paul Potter's cattle, and boistered and protected by the bullying turkey-cock; or your downy yellow ducklings, so soon waddling to the willow-fringed pond; or the litter of puppies which your brother Harry is so glad that the covetousness of his friends enables him to permit Juno, poor lass! to please her soft heart by bringing up, though they are only to weary and harass her. Get acquainted with every leaf in your garden, every stone in the mossy wall. You have great precedents. A French philosopher made a walk round his garden fill two wonderful volumes. An English painter caused a brick wall to occupy

his canvas for three entire months. But do not fail to regard them in a humble, human spirit.

Have pets, as your great-grandma and great-grandmothers owned them in store. They may be profitable pets, as cows, goats, hens, pigeons; or unprofitable, as love-birds, Java sparrows, Italian greyhounds, Russian cats. It was very refreshing to find an accomplished professional man writing the other day a delightful chapter on domestic dogs and their merits. Don't fear the waste of food—unless, indeed, you are conscious of starving some human being. What! would you presume to stint the lavish stores of the great Creator? Remember, He created all these creatures you are so ready to call useless; and if human beings were condemned by that same criterion of apparent uselessness, woe is me; how many of us would be left? No massacre in history would be equal to that great immolation of women and children, and men thrown into the bargain. Don't listen to that bitter or foolish saying, that they will die one day and grieve you. According to that selfish, morbid argument, you would not love your brother, for, alas, alas! he will die one day, and your heart will be wrung, though the parting be but for a season. Believe, it is something very near the truth—

"The peasant well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast."

The writer remembers well a poor woman telling how her daughter was won back from the rathenness of madness, by watching every morning, from

the back windows of the lunatic asylum, the foud gambols and carouses passing between a goat and her kid.

Harriet Martineau has a sensible, lively hint to girls in the country on the impossibility of their wanting objects of interest and amusement, if they are only intelligent and active. Happily much of the ridiculous affectation of being ignorant of common rural objects is on the wane in the broad light of our day; and we are more likely to meet with an extreme, exaggerated enthusiasm for colts and heifers, donkeys and goslings, than to be troubled with a high-down scorn of their very existence. All that is untrue is bad, but, at least, we may receive the assumption of superior knowledge as the evidence of a more ample and genial standard of worth and beauty.

One word, in addition, to those young persons who may be disheartened by having grown up with only a vague general sense of enjoyment in the world of nature; a pleasant notion of blue skies and green fields, and pretty weeds in the hedges, but no intimate acquaintance or close communion with any of them. Do not be discouraged. This is a taste which it is possible to begin to cultivate sedulously and successfully at any period of life, even to old age. The writer speaks from experience. Brought up in a treeless district of the country, the commonest distinctions between the crisp, shining leaves of the beech and the leaves of the elm "rough as a cow's tongue," were long



III.

FRIENDSHIP.

IN one of Miss Edgeworth's tales there is an instance of a lady deciding her selection from her suitors, by the happy man's being able to prove that he possessed a faithful friend; and the test was by no means without its merits. In a former paper I alluded to the fact that long before Miss Edgeworth's day, novels, biography, and essays laid much stress on evidences of friendship as indications of excellence. A heroine, like Harriet Byron, had a host of friends, and although she may tempt us to think of "the hare and many friends," and we may feel that she must have been in some way a victim to her popularity, still it would do no harm to a heroine of the present day, to ask herself whether she could call forward a grandaunna to bless her, an Uncle and Aunt Selley to approve cordially of each stage of her career, or even a set of cousins to sing her praises, after the faintest copy of the kindred of the incomparable Harriet; and if not, what is the reason of the failure. Granting, indeed, that the man or woman with a multitude of friends is a paragon, a

unknown to her by sight. She was as full of her lush growth of fancies and feelings as any one. She was as blind and deaf as most girls to any but the dimmest perception of nature's holy influences. The opening of her mind to these influences was *not the least of the debt which she owed to the dear, wise, patient friend who taught her a cottage child's acquirements leaf by leaf; who stretched her own knowledge to make her pupil distinguish the hues and lines on the bird's burnished wings and breast; who went on with her listening to the roll of the waves, periodically peeping into a hedge-sparrow's nest, lifting reverent eyes to the flaming comet, hearkening to the blackbird's melalious song over the primroses and polyanthuses in the cold spring twilight, and the robin's cheerful note among the scarlet-streaked apples and dark-green mottled pears of the russet fall, until something of the richness of earth's colors, and the deep but gentle symphony of her tones was forced upon the heedless, inattentive heart and brain.*

Nature is God's book, in which we are to read our Father as in his written word; and she who neglects and turns her back on the study, will be ill-furnished in some respects for that consummation to which we are all devoutly looking.

phoenix, and has his or her own peculiar danger from the chivalry and devotion of the individual's court, the man or woman without a friend is surely singularly unfortunate, or singularly reprehensible.

It has been said that women are incapable of true friendship; but, like many other glib speeches, this is an assertion not only without foundation, but made in the face of a mass of proof to the contrary. There may be difficulties in the way of a calm, clear, steady, unreacting friendship between man and woman, from the nature of the relation between them, though such friendships have existed by thousands; but friendships between woman and woman, with which we deal here, have flourished by tens of thousands. Those who believe the contrary, are no better than Turks in their estimate of women.

Possibly, one reason for the charge of women's being incapable of friendship, is that their friendships are more domestic, hidden, and retiring than those of men. Of course, we do not speak of the pathos of school-girl ecstasies, but of the strong, satisfying regard between modest, earnest, often-tried women. Men go out into the world, and frequently form their friendships far beyond the family circle, and quite independent of the ties of blood. Of the best women, it may be said that their friendships are those of their own households; with them, friendship but adds its evergreen crown to a blood relationship. Sisters and cousins—at the farthest, old schoolfellows and neighbors—are

generally the Davids and Jonathans, the Isaacsons and Pythiases. But within these limits, examples of an enduring, long-suffering, tender, noble friendship as ever knit together hearts, offer their manifold records. Madame Sévigné and her daughter, Fanny Burney and her sister Susanna, Anne Grant of Laggan and her former youthful companions, the Ewings and Harriet Reid, have left vivid, indelible traces in black and white of the great volume of their affections, and its faithful flow to death.

Suffer young girls to make friends, and keep them as their best human stay. They need not fear that they will prove false, if their own love be without dissimulation; if they can cleave to their chosen companions in their adversity, and not love them one whit better because of their prosperity; if they will choose them like that hackneyed wedding-gown of Mrs. Primrose, because of qualities which will wear well. They need not fear, if they themselves will try to be humble, reasonable, and forbearing, will resolve not to expect too much of their friends, will not be very angry with them because of errors, will not refuse to forgive them even when they commit faults, will always strive to bear in mind that "the true friend is a brother," and that the end of true friendship is to go on hand in hand—each raising the other, each supporting the other—ever upwards and onwards to the brightness and the peace of the better home in the many mansions of the Father's house.

Honest friends, fond friends, constant friends

they must be, my girls; and after that proviso, care little whether they are fashionable friends, or distinguished in any way; even be willing to lend them a portion of your own superior wisdom and goodness, if they are deficient, but well disposed and sincere in their esteem for you. Much progress in worth has been accomplished under the shelter and countenance of a friend; here, "freely you have received, freely give." Be willing, in a secondary sense, to "spend and be spent" for your friends; don't meanly grudge your love and pains, and cautiously weigh every grain of the return. Bestow thorough respect and sympathy; lively, considerate, affectionate attention in health; devoted care and self-abnegation in sickness; and without doubt or denial, be you wedded wife or solitary spinster, you will not fail in any circumstance to have and hold a tender and true friend.

In the world there are two opposite corruptions of friendship, which are glaringly conspicuous. The one is the selection of high friends, who may pull us up, not in morals, but in power, or place, or fashion; the other the taste for low company, where we may reign queen, be flattered instead of flattering, command rather than obey, indulge in all our ugly habits without censure. Not human nature is the same; these two abuses of friendship have their origin in the same source—vanity and pride; and sometimes the poles meet curiously in one person. As human nature is the same, young girls will, at least, coast these shoals; but I surely need

not say to good girls, to avoid them as contamination; don't let them, if they can help it, pollute the name of friendship, if they would not lose their reverence for all that deserves reverence.

My own opinion is, that a perfectly developed friendship can scarcely exist, or at least attain its full free expression, between those of widely different ages and stations, in spite of Wordsworth's lad, and his "Matthew seventy-two." It may be a very beautiful, beneficial, independent looking up and bending down, and in that light it ought to greet us continually; but it is another connection altogether from close friendship. When a young girl makes a friend of one above her station, she is hardly likely, altogether to escape at once experiencing and inflicting pain, which would not occur among her equals. Her grand friend will unavoidably appear to overlook her sometimes, or will mortify her, or haply provoke her to envy by narrations of "springs" of adventure and interest, travel, pictures, music, books, cultivated society, which may be entirely beyond the so-called inferior's reach; and at the same time, the better born, or more richly endowed of the companions will feel hurt by her friend's coyness, stiffness, pride, when she herself only meant to be kind and social. Again, with the humble friend the girl in the middle class will run the very same risks, only changing the checkers; and with greatly increased peril of effecting something seriously detrimental to the permanent wellbeing of the other, because a simple,

scantly-educated girl is not by many degrees so well armed against an injury to her native dignity, self-respect, contentment, and her just balance of social advantages, as a well-taught, well-read, thoughtful girl in a station above her.

Therefore judicious parents and guardians are chary of unsuitable intimacies for their children, unless under their own eye and within certain bounds. Yet these intimacies are safe enough, even for the thoughtless and weak, if the heart be but wholesomely set on duty and salted with grace.

The writer, after having stated her general objection to these friendships, would like to record her conviction, that occasions are constantly occurring which defy our ordinary standards, when such half-proscribed bonds become strong and tight, and bind soul to soul in danger and trial with true love-knots, which death only will unloose for a higher life to tie again firmly for ever. Without question, such accidental alliances (as these are apt to be considered) have often proved providential unions, calculated to confer mighty blessings, and to survive the artificial obligations which forbade them.

People say truly, it is a respectable thing to see an elderly couple surrounded by old-fashioned, well-kept furniture, according much better with the tear and wear of years than brand new upholstery of a higher cost, and more elegant material and manufacture. Our mothers' gray hairs, and stout or lean persons, become their matronly though sober and rather quaint caps and shawls a thousand times

better than they become an elaborate travestied edition of their youngest daughter's wreath of flowers and lace mantilla. In the same way, family friends are respectable, albeit sometimes troublesome institutions. A long-established house, with only recent guests, varying with each varying phase of the household, is a very sorry sight. "Your own friend, and your father's friend, forget not," is a very gracious proverb of the wise man.

We would have our girls put up with some inconvenience, be capable of some self-sacrifice, to maintain their own friends, and their fathers' friends, intact. Be sure the one true friend, the invaluable counsellor, the joyous confidante, the loving counselor, is mostly to be cut out of such tried and trusty stuff: not out of the slight, dignified acquaintance of yesterday, the facile superior, won by base flattery or material gain to be the reluctant abettor of follies, the yawning spectator of vanities, and the sneering satirist of absurdities. Your mother's contemporary may be narrow-minded and dogmatic, but she will tie on her bonnet with trembling fingers to run to your sickbed; she will be all the same to you, or rather far more cordial and warmer-hearted because your father has lost money in an unlucky speculation, or even been compelled, with bowed head and aching heart, to read his name in the bankrupt list. She may find fault with you to your face; but she will sternly rebut cruel, cowardly scandal, which attacks you like an assassin behind your back. Will you not bear, then, with a few

truisms, and certain tiresome or aggravating peculiarities, were B only for the sake of her last kin, and her "God bless you! you've been mindful of old friends, my dear; I trust we'll meet again"?

To have lightened a solitary hour, to have brightened a homely lot, to have cheered for one afternoon an invalid's depression, is worth a good deal of self-gratification. Reflect that you yourself, in the march of the future, with its innumerable chances and changes, may be destined to misfortune and adversity. Certainly, even though you continue in reasonable affluence of health and wealth, you will at some time or other grow prosaic if not peevish, old-fashioned if not obsolete. Then, even if for no more exalted motive than doing as you would be done by, show yourself generous to those who have lost your advantages, if they ever possessed them.

Deserve friends among your equals, and cherish them, be better, for worse, as God's gift, among the very first of gifts after His own presence; be conscientious towards friends of another degree; and be gentle, very gentle to your own friends, and your father's friends, of other days.



IV.

LOVE.



THOUGHTFUL, kindly writer has spoken of the three great facts of life as birth, love, and death; and again, of the common instinct by which everybody listens to a love story of any kind. If young girls would treat love as one of three serious facts, and all false representations of it as lies, and like all lies, base and degrading, their best friends would be saved a great deal of fruitless trouble.

It is hard to deal with young girls when, according to their different dispositions quite as much as their different bringing up, they begin, under the classes of fanciful, forward, foolish children, or matter-of-fact, prudent, bashful, blithe young women, to ponder "love's young dream."

My thought is that love, more than marriage, is made in heaven; that it is an inspiration which descends upon us without our knowledge, and often without our consent. Therefore, I would never presume to dictate the when, how, and whom of love. I would only presuppose that no good girl will consciously indulge and consummate by matrimony, a love for one who, she is forced to see, is

an utterly unworthy man. Granting this great barrier, true love will be its own best defender and avenger. I believe there is not half the danger incurred by its presence, that is risked by its absence. I believe that if the multitude of warnings against love in general were addressed solely against false love, it would be more for the moral benefit of society; that is, if society would listen to the advice and lay it to heart. It is against spurious love that I would warn girls. I would disabuse love of all but its individual mystery, delicate, hidden, and sacred as the religion of the soul.

With regard to the universal existence of a consecrated passion, human yet partaking of the divine, and which reaches forward ever into eternity, why not openly acknowledge it; talk with reverence of it; accept it as a matter of faith, and often of example? Why make a forbidden topic of that which caused Jacob to serve fourteen years for Rachel, and count them but as so many days, for the great love which he bore her; Isaac, to be comforted for the loss of his mother, when Rebekah rode forth to meet him in the glow of the eastern twilight; faithful Elkanah to say to weeping Hannah, "Am I not better to thee than ten sons?" proud Michal to place the image in her bed, and speed young David's flying footsteps? Rather gather and cultivate all its noble heroisms, its patience, its fortitude, its tender mercy, and nurture yourselves in them. If you have been accustomed to regard the holy fire, you will be the less tempted to fill the censers of

your heart with unholy fire, Greek fire, scattering destruction on all around.

There is nothing we have more need of in our luxurious, bargaining, scoffing days, than the preservation of the belief in all Christian heroism; and let us humbly thank God that we have lived to see abundant testimony borne to it in the horror of "the blood and flames and vapor of smoke" of the Crimean and the Indian wars. Once believe, in your deepest natures, that true love is an embodiment of this heroism, and you will revolt at its idle mockery in the shape of trifling, interested, vain flirtations. You will shrink from exposing it, rendering it hard, coarse, petty, and mean, through the incessant, bold, unblushing chatter of pert, irreverent, scoldish, shallow, brainless, heartless, unhappy young people. You will loathe coquetry; you will reject with contempt all the low models of queens of routs and promenades, all the wretched praise of haughty, insolent, unfeeling, untrue women, with which the bad side of our literature furnishes you: you will turn eagerly and gladly to Milton's Eve, and Shakespeare's Desdemona and Cordelia, and Sir Walter's Alice Lee and Catherine Glover, or even to his frolicsome, warm-hearted Catherine Setoun, his defiant, candid Die Vernon; to Mrs. Gaskell's noble Margaret Helstone, and her erring, repentant Mary Barton; to Miss Mulock's Dora Johnstone; and Miss Manning's Princess Leonara, and her still more quacaly, modest, pitiful Mrs. Clarinda Singleheart. You will have your own lawful, chivalrous,

Christian romance, and will shake off as the very dust from your feet, worldly society and false gods, and shameful heroes and heroines.

Do not fear, too, to have the comical side of love and love-making touched upon. True humor no more destroys soundness, dignity, sweetness, and pathos, than it soils our precious old ballads, our more precious old human life. There are very few grave and lofty elements in our manhood or womanhood, which, as they are worked out in flesh and blood, have not their ludicrous balance. It is recorded with honor to us, and on sufficient testimony, that the more entire our trust in our fellows, and the fonder our appreciation of their fine qualities, the more readily we begin to play with what strikes us as whimsical and grotesque in their composition. Thus friends bandy jests; thus there is nothing pleasanter than to see loving children merrily stroking against the grain certain odd hairs in the coats of indulgent parents, who submit to the process (which they know they can end by a glance or a word) with the exceeding satisfaction of well-conditioned tabby-cats, whose kittens will sport with their whiskers, or of benevolent ewes, whose wayward lambskins will lie down beneath their mother's chin.

Then let old and young fire off their brisk battery of harmless time-out-of-mind jokes on courtship and matrimony; their sly observations, their *provoking sagacity*, their *diverting cross purposes*. Only don't think that the whole affair is a joke, else

you may awake one black morning to find it very sad and earnest, and be compelled, in sorrow and despair, to turn affrighted faces to the bitter contrast:

*"There was singing in the parlor,
And daffing in the lot;
But they cannot die! the hours now,
So fast they drive by!"*

A whipped syllabus all froth would be a very light dish indeed. Nothing but trifle would make a most unsatisfactory, unrefreshing meal. Take, then, both the shade and the sunshine; the deep, cool strength and purpose which lie in the belt of shade, and the joy which glints in the beam of sunshine.

If our girls are busy performing their duties, cultivating their talents, thankfully and gratefully indulging in a thousand fresh, healthful pleasures, they will scarcely be betrayed into the pure folly, the spurious sentiment, the jaded love of excitement, the noxious excesses which every now and then sprout out into the notice of the world, and shock and distress pure minds that have the fear and the love of God before their eyes. It is, in almost every case, our disengaged girls, the gaddlers on our streets, the flausters before society, the showy, frivolous, arrogant, reckless gamblers for matrimonial stakes, who thus fall under just condemnation. We need not dread over much this miserable end for those who have grown up and continue to dwell in safe, pure, religious homes;

and we can pray for them, that they may be delivered from the sudden, overwhelming rush of temptation and violent passion, which we grant, with sad awe, it is just possible may overcome and engulf the wisest and best of our corrupt humanity.

An evil bulking far more largely in our ordinary circles, and among the girls who compose them, is the unreasonable and exaggerated view which is taken of the promotion obtained by marriage; and the temptation thus presented to a girl of being fairly dazzled by the first opportunity of occupying this eminence among her sex, and investing herself with this matron's crown. The peril is greatly increased by the stolid silence which is preserved in many families on the highest of human affections, or the derision with which the lightest allusions to the most prevailing of human influences is received. A young girl grows up in ignorance of what is likely to be the mightiest motive power of her destiny; excepting, indeed, what she learns by instinct, or rather from her giddy schoolfellows. Perhaps novels in general have been forbidden to her, and she has lost not a little of thoughtful instruction from those good novels, which paint the actual drama of life under many different hues and draperies, and illumine the workings of the heart; those touches of nature which make the whole world kin, and lend us an insight into our own troubled, tender, immortal souls. She has merely read a few indifferent or bad novels, which she has not been enabled by a better standard to reject.

In this state of inexperience and immaturity of character, some man of her acquaintance, lately introduced to her, or long known to her in a superficial way, pays her the compliment of selecting her from the girlish circle in which she has been comparatively obscure, distinguishing her by his attentions, and solliciting her to stand to him in the nearest and dearest relation of life. Girls are mostly sensitive; they are impressed by an honor; they are clinging, and fond, too; and they instinctively turn to a guide and ruler. And, as if all this were not quite enough to overbalance this girl's judgment, she is immediately hailed with a perfect chorus of acclamation, not only from her companions, but from her whole little world. Her mother, with all her relations at a greater distance, if the match appears unexceptionable, is filled with pride and gladness. The centre of this excitement—call her volunteer or victim, but call her not conqueror—is petted, praised, caressed, envied on every hand, until she must be a good and wise girl indeed if she be not raised on the noisy turbulent wave of popularity, and floated quite off her feet. Poor little woman! many a struggle and scramble and wound she is fated to encounter, ere she be disabused of her foolish self-importance, and recover the lost humility and contentment of what ought to have been the heyday of her life.

Now all this is wrong and cruel. It is no joke; it causes thousands of women to shed salt tears; it is at the bottom of thousands of miserable histories.

To be a good man's choice for his wife, is a crowning honor to any woman, *but there the matter ends*; there is no further exaltation. Until we recognize other prizes for women than the price of matrimony; until we openly and broadly teach and preach, as the greatest satirist of the age has represented it to our girls, that the temple of matrimony without a shrine is no better than a sepulchre; until we teach our girls that a self-interested marriage, a marriage of pride and vanity, a marriage of convenience, or even a marriage of slight inclination, is of all shame the greatest shame to a woman, we shall have pining faces, weary spirits, failing health and happiness on all sides of us. We shall have those loud, conflicting complaints of incompatibility of temper. Why do the couples not examine into that probability beforehand? take into consideration the three hundred and sixty-five breakfasts a year, to be eaten in company with one and the same individual, when both body and mind are apt to be in disabille? May we be mercifully preserved from those ghastly violations of solemn ties, those ghastly falls into vice and crime, those triumphs of the evil lusts of the *Book which have sometimes prevailed in the higher class of our countrywomen.*

There is yet another view of this old question of love and lovers, which the writer would wish to take up before dismissing the subject. There are those who have loved, there are those who will love, fruitlessly. Very tenderly would a friend

approach them; very reverently, very hopefully. All gentleness and honor to those who bear the scars of battle. They have evidenced that they have hearts, and heads too, possibly; they have felt, and thought, and fought their hard contest; and so that they have done it modestly and bravely, uprightly, and staunchly to the end, it will not mar them—never. Better, a thousand times, to have loved in vain, to have been jilted, pitied, derided even, than to have made a comfortable, worldly marriage. Let our girls neither scorn nor shrink from such results. Let them be sure that their Maker did not give them their fervent spirits, their kindly affections, to be blasted by the breath of one disappointment; to be in the power of any man, however selfish, gulfal, or unfortunate, to crush and annihilate. They will bloom again, these old fields, and the herbs of grace on them will but shed more fragrance for being bruised. Noble ranks, in the sight of the noble, are those armies of single women who have made no covenant with man, but whose oath of allegiance is sworn directly to the Lord. We are, in general, losing something of our strong, outward, artificial tendency; and it is only the very coarse, now-a-days, who "roast old women," tease the weak, and despise old maids. Rest assured, everything may be borne, with God's help, by the good and true. Mortification and anguish, that wistful yearning which, like hope deferred, maketh the heart sick, have but their day. Endure them, lift them up, and carry them as a daily bur-

den, permitted by the Master, though, perhaps, consummated by the fellow-servant; have faith in heaven and earth; forget yourself in others; pray, work, enjoy—it is wonderful how many enjoyments are left to the smitten—and the new dawn will rise sooner or later, the calmer, broader dawn, which will only set on the cloudless morning of eternity.

Is any one lovesick? Don't deny it, or stifle it, or trample upon it, to your own conscience. Keep it a dead secret from all others, if you will. That "the heart knoweth its own bitterness," that "a stranger intermeddleth not with its sorrows," are sacred, wholesome sentiments; but don't stretch the concealment to yourself, and grow sour and hard under the perpetual silence. Look the truth steadily in the face, and then say to yourself, *Thus and thus must love be purified of its passion, and robbed of its sting.* Be up and doing in this world; be in the spirit, remembering another world. For a plain, practical prescription, be busy from morning till night. Inasmuch as is possible, lay your own individuality down, and take up the claims and wants of others; identify yourself with them, look at life through their thousand gleaming eyes, and their thousand craving hearts. Never fear; peace will come, joy will come; peace which cannot pass away, joy whose fruition is bliss.



V.

GODLINESS.



AMONG gifts I reckon a long list; some of these may be ours for a time; some may be, in a great measure, from first to last denied to us; all may be taken from us.

We may have them, or we may want them, and, terrible as the blank appears, we may certainly, in the light of another world, do without them.

Of studies I reckon only two. These we must run after, if we are faithful, to our dying day; these, without reservation, are our actual possessions, ours to foster, develop, mature here; ours to practise and enjoy hereafter.

The first is godliness. Without godliness, there can be no sure virtue, no firm principle. All excellence, not built on the foundation of the conception of God, the fear of God, the love of God, is the foolish man's house on the sand—the wind blew, and the storm rose, and great was the fall of it. Even irreligious men and women have a dim, restless, inconsistent perception of this fact. A woman without God in the world, is an awfully sad and strange

spectacle. By woman came sin and death into the world; the Seed of the woman bruised the serpent's head; the Lord was born of a woman; women followed his footsteps; women ministered unto him, women were last at the cross and first at the sepulchre. And of the Master's exceeding tenderness for women, we have a proof in his generous, mindful, touching speech, even, on the Dolorous way, fainting under his own mighty sorrows and humiliations, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but rather weep for yourselves." *A woman's heart, unsoftened by that divine love, unmelted by that incomparable sacrifice—we repeat it, an unbelieving, reckless, crafty, vain, light woman is an awfully sad and strange spectacle.*

But just because the livelier feelings and softer temper of women render them usually more open to impressions, there is the more need that these impressions should not prove flighty, fickle, spurious, or morbid. To women particularly applies that verse of the parable of the sower which represents the seed sown and germinated, and sprung fresh and fair; too quick and ready of promise, as it were, without depth of earth; and so when the sun shines, when persecution or tribulation comes, it withers away. Women are liable to be made up of impulses; they require ballast; even those of them who have comparatively strong, deep natures require discipline, constant discipline, to break and train the rebellious womanly nature.

Now, do not mistake me. Godliness is a diving

grace. No man can come unto God, except the Spirit of God draw him; it is a spiritual effort; they who worship God "must worship him in spirit and in truth;" but for all that, godliness is a study carried on by human perseverance and action, and the use of material means. Though it is our hearts which we lift to God in prayer, yet we also do him the homage of the body; and while we are in the body, with this mysterious double nature of ours, if we deliberately and wilfully lay aside the outward homage, I would dread the non-continuance of the inward reverence. We speak to our Father in heaven in articulate sounds, because these are now the expression of our living souls. So our godliness must have not only a creed and a worship, but a regular acknowledgment in our day. Far be it from me to wish to fetter any free spirit, to dictate a channel of grace, to constrain to a course of duty; but writing to young girls, I would ask them affectionately to keep in mind the good, lowly, wise truth:

"Little things on little wings
Bear little souls to heaven."

The act of eating and drinking seems to us a very small, irrelevant, commonplace, contemptible business, and we are often guilty of presumptuously slighting the process; but it is a serious one, nevertheless, for it is this which preserves, or rather restores, the flesh and blood and bones of this mortal framework, in which it has pleased our Creator to place for a season our immortal soul, and which it

is certainly not his will that we should destroy before its time. So our godliness must be fed at stated intervals; it must be refreshed and replaced by fresh aliment; and although we do not see here the connection of cause and effect—though the first may often, to our grief, be distasteful to us, as our natural food in ailing states of the body—we must humbly and powerfully eat our day's lessons, and strive to win from them their gems of pure vitality. I love the word "lesson," which the Episcopal church gives to the morning and evening readings of its people.

I have read the advices of good men on many kinds of daily spiritual diet, and have been honestly struck, again and again, sometimes with their impracticability, sometimes with their austerity, sometimes with their spasmodic vehemence, but I have never doubted that they contained their own indestructible seeds of excellence; indeed, that no excellence could well exist without them. On the other hand, I have heard good people, in private life and in public, *boldly* despise, *openly* attack the simpler practices as the mere hypocrisy or superstition. I am not speaking of worldly people, who would have rather denounced them as pharisaical. I am thinking of good people, who have grown stern or savage over an active young man still feeling it somehow a comfort to read a psalm before he *slung* off his coat to prepare for rest, or a lively young girl experiencing a *solate* gladness in reading and producing her chapter before she tripped down

stairs, to show the first and the brightest face at the breakfast-table. I have heard a preacher speak of the sense of contentment and security which a man or woman experiences after he or she has said his or her prayers, as if it were about the most worldly, hardened, and hopeless state of mind. What would they have? Are we not to say our prayers? Are we not to search the Scriptures? And can there be a more becoming, reasonable, reverent period for these exercises than in our mornings and evenings? And does not our reconciled Father himself, who knows the exigencies of our constitutions and has bestowed their instincts, allow us this sense of happiness in a void supplied, an obligation fulfilled? Will he thus despise his children when they "had after him," gropingly, still loyal in their darkness and dulness? And will he not rather bless them, and give them more and more light? We must know that the letter killeth, while it is the spirit which maketh alive; and that without repentance, faith, holiness, and charity, our prayers and readings are but as so many dead ceremonies condemning us like our other abused privileges. But in the name of simplicity and modesty, how are we to advance in repentance, faith, holiness, and charity, otherwise than by a manlike, womanlike, childlike adherence to rules and orders; like Arnold, not being ashamed to say our prayers; like our wisest, mightiest philosophers, never doubting our gain when we regularly read our Bibles.

"Be good, my dear, and read your Bible," said Sir

Walker to Lockhart; and the great genius had the tenderest human heart, as well as the most sagacious mind. Read your Bibles, if not absolutely impossible, every morning and evening, in verses or chapters, according to your discretion; use your reading and do not abuse it. That is, think of it as a blessing, a consolation, a direction, and a support; be unassuming and unsexacting; look for teaching from the Spirit of all wisdom; take up your own private interpretation in a lowly, liberal temper; beware of judging your neighbor when you fancy careless in her devotions; be not browbeaten by your other neighbor who, independent, mystical, or bigoted, censures you as at once childish and bold in your safeguard and in your freedom. Trust grace, sure in its promise, no less sure in its performance, and read your Bible, wishing and striving to do its behests. Look upon it as your storehouse and your armory, and when times of "refreshing," or of trial, of life and work, or of decay and death, arrive, do not question but it will supply you with spiritual food and weapons. Try the practice sincerely, unassumingly, and lovingly, and you may perhaps marvel at its power.

Prayer is so lofty a subject, so private and intensely personal an interest, that a writer, who is not a commissioned servant of the Lord, may well shrink from obtruding an opinion on her fellows in a matter which is between them and their Maker. And yet who can dwell on godliness, and from delicate scruples omit the mention of prayer? After

the Divine model of prayer, see that you pray your own prayer, and no other man or woman's; and consider the two invaluable suggestions you have received—that your prayers are to be still and secluded communion, and that you are not to be heard for your much speaking. Let them be very real prayers, cries for help, grateful thanks, adoring praise. Our Father in heaven, your Father and mine, as well as the Almighty God of the universe, will not be impatient of our little fretting troubles, our trifling attainments, our feeble, faltering worship. He who cares for the sparrows and the ravens will heed the aching or the bounding heart. He will have our own words and not another's; our own pleadings, wrestlings, and rejoicings, rather than the experience of even a David or a Moses second-hand. Blessed be his name! He does care for our struggles and our victories, our weal and our woe; and our Elder Brother cannot, either on earth or in heaven, lose his fellow-feeling, his entire and exquisite sympathy with his race.

After the reading of the Bible and prayer, and keeping that day in seven, which is given us to float as far as we can from worldliness, selfishness, and malice, and as near as we can to adoration, peace, and love, I believe that any other aim to this end of godliness is minor and relative. I take it for granted that no honest, good girl will wilfully and deliberately commit a known sin, however often, alas, she may stumble and fall unawares in her career. What is not in itself sinful, is so far lawful. No

doubt all that is lawful is not expedient. An apostle has said so, and we are bound to try to be enlightened on this expediency with regard to our own welfare, and, above all, for our neighbor's sake, because the question of expediency seems to refer principally to our influence over our neighbor. But I think, generally, whatever is lawful is not only allowable, but under due limits and proportions beneficial. I do not agree with those who would introduce a system of monachism into our social life, who regard God's world as the wicked world, God's kingdom of art as the devil's kingdom, and the deep, tender affections which our great Father has implanted in our bosoms as so many cords of idolatry.

I would be a ransomed woman; and then, while performing the work which has been given to me to do, I would not fear to relish all the comforts, pleasures, and joys which he has set in my path; believing that God is well pleased with our contentment and gladness, that he asks and accepts the praise and thanks of our merry hearts, as well as the confessions and petitions of our mourning spirits. The church in my heart should have its festivals as well as its fasts.

Thus, as minor and relative, would I regard all other religious reading after the study of the Bible. At the same time, I think a girl in earnest about godliness will have her eye on its promotion in some part of her general reading. I would recommend her in this search, as an advice which cannot be re-

posted too often, (so much are we tempted to adopt a parrot-like imitation of each other,) to read what she feels applies to herself and profits herself. Not to insist on drugging herself with another person's medicine, too strong, or it may be too weak, or otherwise totally unsuited to her constitution and ailment.

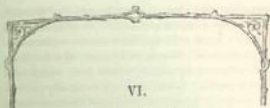
While frankly taking what God in his providence sends, and joining in the toil and the recreation of the work-a-day and holiday world, many good people are distressed by a sense of disruption between their spiritual and their natural life. Probably nothing but experience, growth in Christianity weaned from selfishness, and a higher, closer, and clearer comprehension of and communion with the divine life will overcome this discord. John Wesley recommended short ejaculatory prayers, if no more than "The Lord direct me!" "The Lord help me!" and this corresponds literally with the apostle's "pray without ceasing," "be instant in prayer." Others have chosen a verse in the morning, to be as it were blended and intertwined with their day's occupations and enjoyments, so as to leaven them throughout. Certainly, when prone to covetousness, the admonition, "Let your treasure be in heaven," ought to be an aid to us; when driven to unrest, so should the meditation on the peace which was his bequest; and when entangled in ambitious effort and its accompanying strife, so should also the recommendation not to desire vain glory.

Another habit, whose acquisition is frequently pressed upon us, is to review at night our day's transactions, and humbly acknowledge their success while we lament their failures, in order to have our conscience always clear and in working order. To this has been added the glancing over, in the morning, a rough plan of what the day's duties, trials, temptations, pleasures, pains may be, with the intent of a consequent preparation for them; guarding, at the same time, lest this should interfere with taking no heed for the morrow, and casting our cares on one who careth for us.

But let me reiterate, these are minor and relative obligations, and must always depend very much on the temperament, condition, and surroundings of the individual concerned. They may be easily erected into eleventh commandments, and twisted into will-worship and bodily exercise. If held tenaciously, doggedly, in a spirit of self-conceit, fussiness, or intolerance, they may not only be very injurious to the girl and woman relying on them; but to all those with whom she comes in contact, causing false inferences, unjust judgments, and inflicting grave wounds in the broad humanity of the gospel.

I cannot find, that in the wide or concentrated laws of the Bible, there are any express injunctions to formal acts in the promotion of godliness beyond "search the Scriptures;" "be instant in prayer;" "forsake not the assembling of yourselves together;" "do good and communicate." The mantle is a wide

one; preserve its simple integrity, and its folds will fit the shape of youth and age, rich and poor, those whom the north gives up, and those whom the south keeps not back. Do not confine and cut it for mankind, according to your own poor taste and figure, at your peril.



VI.

KINDLINESS.



GODLINESS without kindness I believe to be a delusion, and, like all delusions affecting religion, baneful both to those who are blinded and to those who are revolted by it. "He who loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" is a question which admits of no exception. As there is no sourd, enduring godliness without kindness, there is no godliness without kindness. Kindness is an integral part of godliness: "pure religion and undefiled is to visit the widow and the fatherless in their affliction, and to keep one's self unspotted from the world."

In one sense kindness must also be a work of God's grace; but like godliness itself, it is to be nourished, strengthened, ripened by human energy and consistency exerted on talents. Kindness must be a study to a good girl. But, in case of misconception, understand kindness as standing for goodwill, benevolence, mindfulness, and mercy; which may exist in company with plainness, stiffness, starchedness, seriousness, and even an exterior of

storminess; and which is quite irrespective of a soft temper and a caressing address. It is curious, and a little vexatious to find how matter and manner are confounded; how so many honeyed words from a plausible, crafty woman, and so many sharp ones from a true and tender one, are carelessly allowed to reverse the world's estimation of their character, and are received even by those who ought to know better, as correct indices of the individuals.

Sweetness of manner is so notorious a varnish, as to become the butt of the scolding acids and scraping-knives of many of our writers of fiction. Nowhere is it more extensively displayed than in the inimitable love of children and children's society affected by some of the women of our day; and in the exaggerated estimation of childish worth displayed largely in some departments of the world of letters. Because our Master taught us to reverence little children by reminding us that their helplessness and ignorance of fraud and violence, rendered them, and all who are like them, especially the charge of his Father's angels, one-half of the world professes to regard these little people as angels outright. This extravagance has even been pushed, in the face of a thousand examples of childish meanness and tyranny, to the daring extent of a denial of original sin. It strikes me that this foolish notion of which men and women are so proud is but a rag of spurious humility; for you see it is actually easier for your arrogance and headiness, your sleek and obstinacy, your desperate covetousness and turbu-

lence to bow, half skeptically, half laughingly, to a child's sceptre of rushes, than to pay a modest and womanly homage to a man's authority.

Kindliness, then, never consisted or even lay to any extent in "becks and bows, and wretched smiles," though real pleasantness is a great element in winning the favor of our fellows. Neither is it by any means engrossed or fully expressed by alms-deeds, though without question, if we do feel tenderly to our neighbor at all, we feel with peculiar tenderness to our neighbor in any suffering and wretchedness which we can comprehend. "Though I give all my goods to feed the poor, and have not charity, I am nothing." This kindness is charity, liberality and generosity of spirit, fairness and impartiality of judgment, mildness and meekness of heart rather than of tone, kindly affectionateness in all ties and relations—tenderest in the nearest, melior and sympathetic in the most removed. It is of the very essence of Christianity; and the neglect of it has inflicted more injury on the cause of Him who is love divine, has wounded him more sorely in the house of his friends than the absence of any other quality or faculty whatever. I would urge it the more impressively that it is (but certainly by no means to the same extent as formerly) overlooked, or undervalued, or in some respect slurred over in many lessons for young people. Kindliness is only second to gallantry. On one occasion an apostle accorded it the precedence: If we do not love the brother whom we have seen, how can we love him.

in whose glorious image that brother was originally created, the God whom we have not seen?

On woman, by natural constitution, and time-out-of-mind institutions, kindness is so imperative, that the want of it brings down express scandal on godly women, or rather on women professing godliness. I need not allude to the satire, deserved and undeserved, by some of the strangely neutral, some of the still more strangely and sadly antagonistic, and some of the merely smart and pungent writers of the day. This defect is generally seen where our very instincts should have pointed out to us the flagrant outrage, by our own hearts and in our own homes. Domestic duties, always holy and dear, are often monotonous—have often their wearing irritations and carking cares; they are unseasoned by excitement; they claim no renown. The self-sacrifice they involve, although it is often very complete, is so subtle, that it becomes no cause of pride; in fact it is made almost inadvertently and unsexedly. Therefore stragglers and adventurers are won from these still, shady, simple paths by vanity, by the restlessness of craving, unemployed energies, and also (to do them justice) by a mistaken sense of duty. To enter upon public services, they desert their private posts, and they are thus guilty of a double infidelity; they have forsaken their first love, and by taking upon them engagements for which they were not free, they have also done despite to and brought shame upon what was in itself fair and honorable, pure and lovely, and of good

report. This evil is so very grave, that it needs the strongest protest against its existence and recurrence. But, on the other hand, to those who are disposed to insist on "busy-bodies," "showy professors," "ill-ordered, ill-balanced enthusiasts," we would state respectfully and good-humoredly that it is the scum and froth of the pot which rises to the surface; that the sound hearts and true, the deep hearts and tender, the sensible practical women, the cheery patient women, the constant, untiring, unassuming asserters and maintainers of righteousness and love, work everywhere unseen, unthor'd of, until the day shall declare it. And our generation has proved sufficiently that great deeds of mercy can be done by women, whose household names have never been spoken without a blessing.

Kindness is thoroughly opposed to meanness, to malice, to mischief of every description. It bids us have faith in one another; it bids us bear long with one another; it tells us to be obedient, respectful, and tender to our elders; firm yet indulgent to our juniors; reasonable and gracious to our equals; just, thoughtful feeling, and helpful to our inferiors. It negatifies man's human ambition and selfish rivalry; it altogether forbids slander, talebearing, and backbiting; it even cries *oh, ho, ho!* against ridicule, when ridicule verges on levity and cynicism.

Our Bible has at least this superiority over the Hebrew Talmud, that we have the one in a moderate compass, so that we can all read it from end to end, without any stretch of application, every year

of our lives, if we choose; while the other consists of such a mass of writing, and host of saws, that a youth's entire education is spent in becoming "ready at the law." Here are only two studies for you girls, Godliness and Kindness; master them, and you may be what you will, intelligent or stupid, learned or ignorant, a belle or a dowdy, it will signify wondrous little either here or hereafter.

How we toil and scheme and strive for our young ones, and see how simply they may be furnished with all that is absolutely-necessary for the battle of life! We would give our beloved—what would we not give our beloved of rich and rare, of exultation and ecstasy? But God gives his beloved sleep; rest in his tabernacle from the strife of tongues; the rest which remaineth in the green pastures and by the still waters.





VII.

FASHION.

THE customs of society in Christian countries, if not altogether just and good, are generally moderately commendable. Communities, even in heathen times, seem to have been endowed with the faculty of deciding, candidly and creditably enough for the masses, if they could only have adhered to their decisions. Therefore, to act in violent contradiction to established laws and precedents, to set at defiance the fashion, alike of time and place, is not, unless in a case of strict necessity, a wise, far less a modest proceeding. It is particularly senseless and aggravating in women, whose power, like that of the old Roman tribunes, is that of quiet, steady veto. But the sinners in this respect are comparatively few and far between; and they are those to whom arguments on moderation, the relative importance and non-importance of great things and small, the advantage of open-hearted concessions and good-tempered submissions, would mostly savor of lukewarmness. On the contrary, the stumblers from the offence of fashion are legion.

The amount of activity misdirected, time and means wasted and tempers spoiled, and sources of usefulness lost by fashion, is so enormous, that it would be ludicrous, if it were not lamentable. Remember, I do not refer to women of high rank, whose responsibilities are on an exaggerated scale, but to women of the middle class, who are bond-slaves to this shifting, intangible, potent system and power. So wedded are they to the bondage, that there is not a point on which the writer has approached the reader with such a hopelessness akin to despair—only Christians have no warrant to despair.

To name the degree of absurdity and error to which fashion carries the women who are not steeled against it in every light, would fill not a paper but a volume. And, with regard to women of the middle rank, there is one light in which fashion seizes them with an engrossing supremacy which it does not affect in the case of women of wealth and station. It robs my lady flagrantly of her money, and incidentally of her health and peace; but, from my plain though pretentious mistress it pilfers in addition, without scruple, both her time and her talents. The hours she spends in contriving; the cleverness she unfolds in bringing to bear; the fortitude she evinces in enduring counter-checks; the self-denial, the toil she undertakes for such a wearing out, fickle, ungrateful idol, would be incredible, were it not proved by a multitude of cases every day. The labor of a working man, a slave, a pack-horse, is not

greater, by comparison, than the groaning efforts, the address, the stoicism of a poor woman running after fashion, keeping up appearances, or rather deluding herself and her neighbors into believing herself a fine lady, and her family a dashing, luxurious household. Luxurious household indeed! they are as far from attaining to this as they are from possessing the dignity, repose, honest hospitality, and loyal brotherly-kindliness which were originally within their reach.

I am anxious to state, that in these remarks I do not at all refer to the womanly desire to have all things at home, furniture and apparel, nice and pleasant; to the sense of the beautiful and the graceful, which cultivation supplies; to the tender pains, the genial, joint efforts by which family-life is unspeakably gladdened and brightened; to the trouble and energy by which a frugal mother has her children respectable, neat, smart. No, no; those are the sweet blessings over truth, affection, self-respect, and faithful regard for kindred. What I inveigh against is the senseless waste, the tasteless, vain show, the pinching behind backs and the profusion before faces, which has no husband's comfort, no child's happiness, no brother's or sister's enjoyment as its object—whose beginning and end are in pride and vanity, and whose fruit is unneighborly strife in the race of extravagance and ruin. Even when there is a little sense to hold back in time from this common conclusion, such lives are fertile in falsehood, deceit, unlovely calculations

and speculations, and barren in all nobleness, gentleness, and generosity.

In the case of girls, the stumbling-block of fashion scarcely extends yet to having houses like the squire's, or to dispensing dinners like the lord mayor's feast. What principally concerns girls is fashion in dress, and in spending their time, especially the early portion of their day, which is peculiarly their own.

Dress might have a long homily, and yet a few sentences may sum it up. Much must be left to individual circumstances and tastes. Dress within your means, handsomely if you will, becomingly if you can. Dress affectionately (I cannot think of a recommendation which can render dress more productive of real, permanent pleasure), to gratify papa and mamma—with a lingering adhesion to some rather worn-out, rather exploded article of attire, because it was Mary's or Willie's thoughtful gift! Ah, yet, there is much more sentiment in many a faded shawl or old-fashioned gown than in the newest, gladdest, most elegant, most graceful, and captivating acquisition to the toilette, fresh from the show-room of Madame Duval herself.

Dress as you choose, if you will but attend to the following restrictions. Do not give to dress more than a modest portion of your hours and ideas. Do not bestow upon it all, or all save a fraction, of any allowance of pocket-money which you may obtain, so that you have next to nothing for works of affection, benevolence, and charity.

and are ashamed to give such a veritable widow's mite out of what was originally much more than the widow's store. I would ask you, some quiet Sunday evening, some day when you are recovering from sickness, some still hour succeeding the palpitation of great joy or great sorrow, if these are not habits of self-indulgence unbecoming a Christian girl—if, while you were by no means dressed like a fright or a nun, you might not at the same time have been simple and economical.

Do not be feverishly anxious to be more "stylish" than your companions, and feverishly elated when you attain your end. "Stylish" has replaced our old word "genteel," and I doubt if it is such to our advantage. I have heard "stylish" used by pure, sweet, sensible lips, when it did not sound amiss; but if it ordinarily means to be out of your rank in costume, or so conspicuous and singular in the shape and trimming of your wearing apparel, as to cause people to gape and stare when they encounter you in the streets or in society, that stylishness is simply very bad taste. Whatever is unbecoming to your station offends the judgment, and the judgment guides every eye but the eye of a fool. To be notorious for the cut and color of your garments, has been in every age the temporary exhibition of eccentricity, or the sign of a weak, low, or giddy mind.

If, again, stylishness in its better sense merely indicates a craving after personal distinction, you are surely old enough to observe that this peculiar-

ity, like beauty, is a gift, a grand attractive gift; but no more to be won by you in its details, (the bend of the head, the inclination of the shoulders, the freedom and elasticity of motion, which lends such a fascination to the bonnet, such a charm to the folds of the mantle, such a something unsurpassable even to the sweep of the skirts,) than are the pearly skin, the rose-leaf bloom, or the Grecian, Roman, or clear composite Saxon features which have not been granted to you. If you do possess them, they need little embellishment; if you do not possess them, why hanker after them in your silliness, now that you have given up the paint-pot with which your ancestresses, in the reigns of Anna and the first Georges, daubed their sallow cheeks "a fine red"? Renounce also the peacock's feathers, which will not transform you, my poor jay! which will only render you ridiculous, and exhaust your capacity for a thousand other enjoyments. Rise up in your native dignity, equal and sometimes superior to my lady swimming or tripping along. Love to contemplate my lady in nature with an honest, unenvious admiration, and love to regard her also in art from the brush of Sir Joshua, Gainsborough, or Sir Henry Lawrence. But whether you are a dumpy or a scarecrow, be so without a sigh; there is something as good if not better for you; yield my lady her sphere and assume your own—be sure it exists for you somewhere, if you will only have the patience to hunt about for it, or quietly await it. This attempt to be

all equally elegant and graceful, and not what many of us must be content to remain, merely unobtrusive, unassuming persons, is a monomania among women.

With regard to the fashionable waste of time, perhaps the abuse exists most notoriously in towns and great towns. There, no one can pass along the streets on business or pleasure without being struck with the crowds of young girls who are promenading neither for the one purpose nor the other. No one can enter a public exhibition without being harassed, well-nigh persecuted by the *multitude of idle women*, who are there openly and ostensibly to see and be seen; to meet their acquaintances; to lounge, loiter, gossip, and to do any thing but look at the pictures, or suffer others to look at them. One might be driven to desire that societies should make a little sacrifice, and inscribe over their doors, "Only for the lovers of art and science; no loud greetings, no standing about, or planting of bodies for hours on convenient benches; no continuous chatter allowed."

This is only the public side of the nuisance. How many daily inflictions there are in the shape of dawdling visits, where there is nothing to say, nothing to hear, and where the outward presence is a mere pernicious habit, we dare not attempt to register.

Now, there is no cause for this idle expenditure of time, for really, in consequence of it, days and weeks slip from you in the most unprofitable manner imaginable, you know not how; and if you are


not vivacious, you get into such an indolent habit of sailing with the stream, that you lose all independence and originality of character. If you have performed the duties, developed the talents, cultivated the cheap, blithe pleasures we were describing, you have no such superabundant leisure to throw away. Remember, though your bountiful Father allows you a million of innocent enjoyments and delights, to wasteon trifling you are not free. It is demoralizing, and it is destructive; it saps your earnestness, and it spends your strength for naught. For "every idle word," you will have to give account; that is very solemn. Do not let it frighten you from your innocent joyousness; but do let it check you from a deliberate waste of many hours every day in unmeaning gadding, and loitering here and there and everywhere but at home. Of course, if you follow such pursuits with other motives and purposes, at the request of parents, for the benefit of friends, the case is altogether different. It must be very worthless company, indeed, which a good intent does not justify and enable. But, speaking of the practice in its purely primitive aspect, I would warn you against it. It is no reason why you should gaud, that it is the fashion; it is very little excuse for your frivolity, that other girls are not sensible and serious at proper times. Set the example, and act like the little boy at Rugby, who said his morning prayers, though the other boys slyly threw boots at his head. Who can tell whether your companions will not be drawn by

your courage and wisdom, until gadding and trifling and dropping in upon each other at all hours, without sound friendship, without strong sympathy, without anything but vanity of heart and brain, will be the exception instead of the rule?

No doubt, there may be great idleness at home and in retirement; great pecking, like a bird, at a thousand occupations, but an applying of ourselves to none of them. We all know the process—trying over this piece of music, putting a silken into that bit of work, interfering for a moment with the cook or the housemaid without affording either any available assistance—plenty of this, but nothing like business or steady work during the whole morning, and that for nooning after morning. Still there can be little question that the temptation to dissipation is far less at home than abroad; and I have wished to offer, to any who will use them, suggestions, which may help them to avoid this shallow, superficial course, and to adopt another walk—that of being in earnest in all their ways.



A LIFE OF PRIDE AND LEVITY.


HERE has been always a tendency in the world to withdraw pride from its place among the deadly sins, and that in spite of direct denunciations against it. "Pride cometh before destruction." "God hateth a high look." This favor seems to arise from two causes. Pride itself is a hard, selfish, and actually mean temper in its narrowness and arrogance; but no other disposition has such a faculty of clothing itself like an angel of light, putting on the garb and showing the features of dignity, nobleness, magnanimity. For a second stronger reason, other qualities are habitually mistaken for pride. Shyness, for instance, which is often found in company with its opposite, humility; self-respect, which is an honest man's inheritance; independence, which is a brave man's portion; bluntness, which we cannot, for the life of us, discover from truth.

Call pride insolence, whether superb or vulgar, and you will make no mistake. The impatience of interference with your plans, the loud or dogged assertion of your will, the slighting or sweeping

condemnation of all beneath your sovereign notice; these are very unlovely and unlovable. But this tone, like that of mock ignorance of household work and rural economy, is, we are glad to say, much exploded. Few girls bestir in a shop, or storm over a servant, before their associates, because they are very well aware that in so doing many eyes will be fixed on them in censure. They have learned at last that it is not like gentlewomen to be imperious and tyrannical. Where they can undoubtedly command, and where they feel a strong call to be insolent, they are merely languid, supercilious, and sneering. But it is in that "debatable land" which a good, earnest writer has classed as "the missing link" in the social chain, that insolence remains rampant. Among acquaintances a shade removed in rank and refinement, inferiors by an inappreciable degree which no mortal would take the trouble to reckon—it is towards the commonplace, the tiresome, the shabby, that insolence still flourishes in full bloom. It is by what are called "Cuts," by shades of cordiality, varying far more suddenly and violently than our weather-gauges, that simple, sincere folks are tried.

"Really the way that girl bowed to me in the Greenest was insufferable. I can bear a good deal of nonsense from girls, having had girls of my own; but for a child like that to think it a fit thing to recognise a staid old woman like me, by simply lowering her eyelids!" complains the respectable mother of a family; "and it was only in spring she sent

her love, and could I give her some bramble-jam for her cold; nothing did her good like my bramble-jam, and I am sure I did not grudge it. I was delighted that she should have recourse to me; but I must say I expected a little livelier sense of my existence."

"They are all the same, mother," answers a little bitterly the somewhat worn eldest daughter, at the same time much more indignant at the slight put upon her mother than at any neglect to herself. "If you had seen how reluctant Agnes Jones was to see me to-day, because she was walking with the Stephensons. I shall be blind enough the next time I meet her, though it should be before her admirer, Mr. Forester, who was so much obliged to my brother George."

No, no, Agnes, you will forgive and forget; you will warn your sometimes weary heart by the consciousness that you have not done any thing to spoil Agnes Jones' fine prospects, little as she thanks you for it; and long after this small vexation is past and gone, you, who are so candid and loving, will understand to the full that verse of the psalm, "Thou hast put gladness in my heart more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased."

But in our day the life of pride, of strong domineering self-importance, has generally accepted also the cue of the life of levity—the life which finds a joke in every thing, which laughs at all reverence, earnestness, and romance. It is one of the hardest and most hostile aspects of the human mind which

you can encounter. Talk to a young lady who aspires to be "fast"—who quotes the broadest slang, and must have "larks," if not "sproes"—talk of self-sacrifice, of high, pure thoughts, of lives happy in their holiness, and she will vote you "slow," shrug her shoulders, remark upon your neck-ribbon or your bootee, be witty at your expense, and have nothing more to do with you. She may have too much passive principle to denominate your conversation humbug, but she will think you old-fashioned, pedantic, sentimental, superstitious, officious, intrusive. She will jeer at you unmercifully, or be seriously incensed if you provoke her further. All the while she may pay respect to the outward forms of religion, to churches, prayer-meetings, Sabbath-schools, benevolent societies, private devotions, and far be it from me to say she is insincere; but there is *scarcely the oddest incongruity in her conduct.*

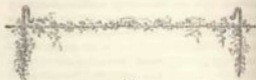
Now a good laugh is an excellent thing, and the most of us firmly credit it is enjoyed in its perfection by the best men and women in the world. We can set our seals to the description of such sick-rooms as George Wilson's, where the good and patient not only lie in an attitude of mockery and resignation, but spread around them a clear, sunny atmosphere of humor and fun. Who should be happy but those who are at peace with God and man? But this incapacity for viewing any thing under a serious aspect, this incredulity of all high duty, sustained effort, generous self-abnegation, and growing unworldliness is, we should venture to say,

very far from what our worthiest humorist contemplates.

If I recollect aright, a son of Leigh Richmond spoke severely on his death-bed against the former merry cast of his conversation with a young sister; but the young will gambol in mind as well as body. Their Maker gave them this early buoyancy, and we may well shrink from taking it from them. I would never object to its use, only to its abuse. I am aware there are some kindly spirits who retain this blessed buoyancy to old age. I know there are constitutions whose deep feelings almost always speak half jestingly, with a touch of the comic for ever relieving the tragic side of their natures. There are those who would be sombre without this tendency, and whose sense of pathos is so quick and keen that they are glad to weld it with laughter, to take off, as it were, the piquant edge of its pitifulness, and they generally preserve the characteristic to the last. I am not sure whether it is not a healthful counterbalance to save them from moping melancholy or desperate despair. But this is quite another thing from that cold levity which regards all life as a joke, and whose desire after sport is as keen as any hunter's or fisher's. The zest with which such girls follow amusement, in the shape of practical jokes, and making butts of weak acquaintances, has been before now exposed. But a good girl will hold back from such a course; "her delicate sense of honor" will prevent her from being a party to any modified version of the frolics which form a

distinguishing feature in some circles. Her fuller, richer nature will reject with aversion the emptiness of laughter which has no strong background of thought and feeling. She will not live a life of rushing here and there, and giggling violently. Her quiet perception of propriety will revolt at the personal notoriety which captivates other girls. For you will find that the great desire of the poor girl, born and bred to the life of pride and levity, is to make you stare, to confound your sober senses, to strut before you, to push you out of your place, to tread on your skirts, and finally to eclipse your view with her high, vain head, and to raise a noisy clatter which shall effectually drown all grave discussion, considerate forethought, and tender memories and anticipations.





IX.

PERSEVERANCE IN WELL-
DOING.

IS youth dejected or discouraged by these papers of advice and warning? Come, then, we will walk in a shady wood on soft turf, under the pale sweet flowers of the woodlands, more delicate and more graceful than the bright hardy blossoms of the downs.

What should a young girl ask for more within her grasp and capacity; more essential, desirable, and delightful, than the fulfilment of the injunction to perseverance in well-doing and patience of hope? You will observe that it is not to violent effort or extravagant ecstasy, strange to her constitution or faculties, that she is invited. No, in quietness shall be her strength. She is called to a steady, sober adherence to her faith; a meek, wistful clinging and following of the star in the east—the star of Bethlehem—which she is humbly anxious, with God's help, she may attain. Often when we are addressed on some admirable performance, our hearts sink in despair. We cannot do it; we feel it

is not in us. But our God knows our frames, that they are dust. He does not set us a task which we cannot with his blessing and guidance accomplish. He leaves us a wide margin. Perseverance in well-doing—our own particular power and mode of well-doing; patience of hope—whether glad assurance, lively trust, or tremulous submission; all are according to our nature. We are not summoned to the sudden achievement of a miracle, we are not asked to disengage ourselves from our individual temper, taste, and habits. Over our imperfections is hung the mantle of his perfections: till we awake after his sickness. He knows us in the relations in which we stand, in all their perplexities and complications, and he is merciful to our poor wretched shakings and yearnings. Who was such a friend to women as He whose Mary called not Rabbi, like the teachers, but Rabbi?

Day by day, by little and little, in spite of short-comings and downfalls, by watchfulness, by earnestness, by constancy, we are to mould our passions, to train our inclinations, to grow in grace, and reach that love which casteth out fear—that service which is perfect freedom. Could we seek an easier yoke, a lighter burden, one more fit for us to bear, or which promises us a richer reward?

"But what is my vocation? In what particular way am I to be useful and happy?" That is just what no one can tell you. You must find that out for yourself, and probably you will not arrive at a

certainly about it for years and years to come. Do not be troubled on that account; you have only to persevere in well-doing. The kind of well-doing may be shifted; it is often shifted for you sadly against the grain; still it does not matter.

"Four windows of a stormy day,
From wave to wave up to heaven;
And Henry's flash and woman's ray
Serve but to light our troubled way;
There's nothing bright but Heaven."

And in no quarter upon earth can I read the charter and title-deeds of happiness more legibly written than in the words "love, joy, peace." What else can we desire? What else do we pursue? In a million elements, varying as our million characters; in youth and age; in health and sickness; in nature and art; in literature; in domestic duties; in philanthropy, in the many-fringed house, in the house of few earthly friends; where dispositions are simple and homely, where they are lofty and refined; in poverty, and riches—everywhere, everywhere love, joy, and peace may be met and hailed.

This "love, joy, and peace" which is at once our crown and our shield, is within our reach. It is not like beauty, accomplishments, eloquence, power—a doubtful, deceitful chance. It is, although the fruit of the Spirit, our own; for the great, good Holy Spirit, the earnest and consummation of all blessings, is to be had by our prayers.

Although you have your plagues, your doubts, and your distractions, are you to be distressed

when "love, joy, and peace" may be yours? In your day-dreams and castle-buildings, tell me did you ever imagine anything more perfect? "Love, joy, and peace" are the better, brighter, and surer that they are not dependant upon a finite hand of a fallible will. I leave you to think of them, confident that whatever obstruction of your material schemes may await you, whatever confusion or transformation of your spiritual ideas may befall you, they are yours both here and hereafter.

Some may declare that these arguments are very good for health and happiness; but in sorrow and sickness, in war and peculiar affliction, when the providence of God is all dark to us, when we are stricken, smitten, and afflicted, when we do not feel as if we could grasp anything, when we lie stretched on our death-beds, then even this "love, joy, and peace," which surely requires a healthy frame of mind to receive it, is not enough for us. We want something for the swelling waters, the howling winds, the awful loneliness, the still more awful call to meet our God in judgment. And there is something to meet this extremity, but "man's extremity is God's opportunity," and this is the extremity of human ill. There is a rod and staff reserved for the most perilous expedition, for the last journey of all. "Behold, I am with you always, until the end of the world." "I will come again and take you to myself, that where I am there ye may be also."

Can you hear that and attend to it? The Sa-

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view is near, at your side; the everlasting arms are underneath you.

"My eyes are watching by thy bed,
My blessing is around thee shed,
My arms are underneath thy head;
"T is I, be not afraid."

The same Saviour who had a human mother, who taught the Samaritan woman, who answered the Canaanitish woman for her devil-possessed daughter, who gave back to Martha and Mary their dead brother, who paroled Mary Magdalene, who spoke on the Dolereus way and hanging on the cross itself, in reply to the sorrows and necessities of women, and who appeared on his resurrection first (first of all—think of that!) to one of his Marys—the wisest, kindest, and best friend whom women ever possessed, left them this assurance. Do not regard him as a doctrine, but as a person. Do not fear him in that sense of fear which repels and crushes love, but cling to him, hold him by the feet. He will say to you as he proclaimed the good news to the women of old, and made them his messengers, "I go to my Father and your Father; to my God and your God." He will add, in the pitiful tenderness which brought him down from the high heaven to take upon him our pains and penalties, "and where I am, there shall also my servant be."

A
WOMAN'S THOUGHTS
ABOUT
WOMEN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
"JOHN HALIFAX, GENTLEMAN," &c.



I

SOMETHING TO DO.

PREMISE that these thoughts do not concern married women, for whom there are always plenty to think, and who have generally quite enough to think of for themselves and those belonging to them. They have cast their lot for good or ill, have realized in greater or less degree the natural destiny of our sex. They must find out its comforts, cares, and responsibilities, and make the best of all. It is the single woman, belonging to those superannuated ranks which political economists tell us are yearly increasing, who most need thinking about.

First, in their early estate, when they have so much in their possession—youth, bloom, and health giving them that temporary influence over the other sex which may result, and is meant to result, in a permanent one. Secondly, when these advantages are passing away, the chance of marriage lessening, or wholly ended, or voluntarily set aside, and the individual making up her mind to that which respect

for Grandfather Adam and Grandmother Eve must compel us to admit, is an unnatural condition of being.

Why this undue proportion of single women should almost always result from over-civilization; and whether, since society's advance is usually indicated by the advance, morally and intellectually, of its women, this progress, by raising women's ideal standard of the "holy estate," will not necessarily cause a decline in the very *wholly estate* which it is most frequently made—are questions too wide to be entered upon here. We have only to deal with facts—with a certain acknowledged state of things, perhaps incapable of remedy, but by no means incapable of amelioration.

But, granted these facts, and leaving to wiser heads the explanation of them if indeed there be any, it seems advisable, or at least allowable, that any woman who has thought a good deal about the matter, should not fear to express in word—or deed, which is better—any conclusions, which out of her own observation and experience she may have arrived at. And looking around upon the middle classes, which form the staple stock of the community, it appears to me that the chief canker at the root of women's lives is the want of *SOMETHING TO DO*.

Herein I refer, as this chapter must be understood especially to refer, not to those whom ill or good fortune—*query*, is it not often the latter?—has forced to earn their bread; but "to young ladies,"

who have never been brought up to do anything. Tom, Dick, and Harry, their brothers, has each had it knocked into him from school-days that he is to do something, to be somebody. Counting-house, shop, or college affords him a clear future on which to concentrate all his energies and aims. He has got the grand passion of the human soul—occupation. If any inherent want in his character, any unlucky combination of circumstances, nullifies this, what a poor creature the man becomes! what a mooping, sitting-over-the-fire, thumb-twiddling, lary, ill-tempered animal! And why? "Oh, poor fellow! 'tis because he has nothing to do!"

Yet this is precisely the condition of many women for a third, a half, often the whole of their existence.

That Providence ordained it so—made men to work, and women to be idle—is a doctrine that few will be bold enough to assert openly. Tacitly they do, when they preach up lovely *inactivity*, fascinating *frivolity*, delicious *helplessness*—all those polite *inertnesses* and poetical *degradations* to which the foolish, lazy, or selfish of our sex are prone to incline an ear; but which any woman of common sense must repudiate as insulting, not only her womanhood, but her Creator.

That both sexes were meant to labor, one "by the sweat of his brow," the other "in sorrow to bring forth" and bring up "children," cannot, I fancy, be questioned. Nor, when the gradual changes of the civilized world, or some special destiny, chosen

or compelled, have prevented that first, highest and in earlier times almost universal lot, does this occidental fate in any way abrogate the necessity, moral, physical, and mental, for a woman to have occupation in other forms.

But how few parents ever consider this! Tom, Dick, and Harry, aforesaid, leave school and plunge into life; "the girls" likewise finish their education, come home, and stay at home. That is enough. Nobody thinks it needful to waste a care upon them. Bless them, pretty dears, how sweet they are! papa's possession of beauty to adorn his drawing-room. He delights to give them all they can desire—clothes, amusements, society; he and mamma together take every domestic care off their hands; they have abundance of time and nothing to occupy it; plenty of money, and little use for it; pleasure without end, but not one definite object of interest or employment; daffery and flattery enough, but no solid food whatever to satisfy mind or heart—if they happen to possess either—at the very emptiest and most craving season of both. They have literally nothing whatever to do, except to fall in love; which they accordingly do, the most of them, as fast as ever they can.

"Many think they are in love, when in fact they are only idle"—is one of the truest sayings of that great wise hero, Imho, in *Rosaria*, and it has been proved by many a shipwrecked life, of girls especially. This "falling in love" being usually a mere delusion of the fancy, and not the real thing at all,

the object is generally unattainable or unworthy. Papa is displeased, mamma somewhat shocked and scandalized; it is a "foolish affair," and no matrimonial results ensue. There only ensues—what?

A long, dreary season, of pain, real or imaginary, yet not the less real because it is imaginary; of anger and mortification, of impotent struggle—against unjust parents, the girl believes, or, if essentially inclined, against cruel destiny. Gradually this moral wears out; she learns to regard "love" as folly, and turns her whole hope and aim to matrimony! Matrimony in the abstract; not the man, but any man—any person who will snatch her out of the dullness of her life, and give her something really to live for, something to fill up the hopeless blank of idleness into which her days are gradually sinking.

Well, she may marry, or she may not. If the latter melancholy result occurs, the poor girl passes into her third stage of young-ladyhood, fritters or wastes away her existence, silently bears it, or dashes herself blindfold against its restrictions; is unhappy; and makes her family unhappy; perhaps herself cruelly conscious of all this, yet unable to find the true root of bitterness in her heart; not knowing exactly what she wants, yet aware of a morbid, perpetual want of something. What is it?

Alas! the boys only have had the benefit of that well-known juvenile aphorism, that

"Faint hearts were made of old
For life leads to die."

It has never crossed the parents' minds that the rhyme could apply to the daughters.

And so their whole energies are devoted to the massacre of old Time. They prick him to death with crochet and embroidery needles; thrum him deaf with piano and harp playing—*not music*; cut him up with morning visitors, or leave his carcass in ten-minute parcels at every "friend's" house they can think of. Finally, they dance him defunct at all sort of unnatural hours; and then, rejoicing in the excellent excuse, smother him in sleep by a third of the following day. Thus he dies, a slow, inoffensive, perfectly natural death; and they will never recognize his murder till, on the confines of this world, or from the unknown shores of the next, the question meets them: "What have you done with Time?"—Time, the only mortal gift bestowed equally on every living soul, and excepting the soul, the only mortal loss which is totally irrevivable.

Yet this great sin, this irredeemable loss in many women arises from pure ignorance. Men are taught as a matter of business to recognize the value of time, to apportion and employ it; women rarely or never. The most of them have no definite appreciation of the article as a tangible divisible commodity at all. They would laugh at a manufacturer who cut up a dress-length into trimmings, and then expected to make out of two yards of silk a full skirt.

Yet that the same laws of proportion should apply to time and its measurements—that you cannot dawdle away a whole forenoon, and then attempt to cram into the afternoon the entire business of the day—that every minute's unpunctuality constitutes a debt or a theft (looky, indeed, if you yourself are the only party robbed or made creditor thereof); these slight facts rarely seem to cross the feminine imagination.

It is not their fault; they have never been "accustomed to business." They hear that with men "*time is money*," but it never strikes them that the same omniscience, equally theirs, is to them not money, perhaps, but *life*—life in its highest form and noblest use—life bestowed upon every human being, distinctly and individually, without reference to any other being, and for which every one of us, married or unmarried, woman as well as man, will *sooner* be held accountable before God.

My young lady friends, of from seventeen upwards, your time and the use of it is as essential to you as to my father or brother of you all. You are accountable for it just as much as he is. If you waste it, you waste not only your substance, but your very souls—not that which is your own, but your Maker's.

Ay, there the *case* of the matter lies. From the hour that honest Adam and Eve were put into the garden, not—as I once heard some sensible preacher observe—"not to be idle in it, but to dress it and to keep it," the Father of all has never put one man

or one woman into this world without giving each something to do there, in it and for it: some visible, tangible work, to be left behind them when they die.

Young ladies, 'tis worth a grave thought what, if called away at eighteen, twenty, or thirty, the most of you would leave behind you when you die. Much embroidery, doubtless; various pleasant kindly, illegible letters; a moderate store of good sense; and a cart-load of good intentions. Nothing else—save your name on a tombstone, or lingering for a few more years in family or friendly memory. "Poor dear ——! what a nice lively girl she was!" For any benefit accruing through you to your generation, you might as well never have lived at all.

But "what am I to do with my life?" as once asked me one girl out of the numbers who begin to feel aware that, whether marrying or not, each possesses an individual life, to spend, to use, or to lose. And herein lies the momentous question.

The difference between man's vocation and woman's seems naturally to be this—one is abroad, the other at home; one external, the other internal; one active, the other passive. He has to go and seek out his path; hers usually lies close under her feet. Yet each is as distinct, as honorable, as difficult; and whatever custom may urge to the contrary—if the life is meant to be a worthy or a happy one—each must resolutely and unshrinkingly be trod. That—how?

A definite answer to this question is simply un-

possible. So diverse are characters, tastes, capabilities, and circumstances, that to lay down a distinct line of occupation for any six women of one's own acquaintance, would be the merest absurdity.

"Have the patient heart submit to know!"

To how is the choice so easy, the field of duty so wide, that she need puzzle very long over what she ought to do. Generally—and this is the best and safest guide—she will find her work lying very near at hand: some domestic tastes to condense into regular studies, some feebly household quietly to remodel, some child to teach, or parent to watch over. All these being needless or unattainable, she may extend her service out of the home into the world, which perhaps never at any time so much needed the help of us women. And how many of its charities and duties can be best done only by a wise and tender woman's hand.

Here occurs another of those plain rules which are the only guidance possible in the matter—a Bible rule, too: "*Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.*" Question it not, philosophize not over it! do it! only *do it!* thoroughly and completely, never satisfied with less than perfectness. Be it ever so great or so small, from the founding of a village-school to the making of a collar—do it "with thy might;" and never lay it aside till it is done.

Each day's account ought to leave this balance—of something done. Something beyond mere pleasure, one's own or another's—though both are good

and sweet in their way. Let the superstructure of life be enjoyment, but let its foundation be in solid work—daily, regular, conscientious work: in its essence and results as distinct as any "business" of men. What they expend for wealth and ambition, shall not we offer for duty and love—the love of our fellow creatures, or, far higher, the love of God? "Labor is worship," says the proverb: also—ay, necessarily so—labor is happiness. Only let us turn from the dreary, colorless lives of the women, old and young, who have nothing to do, to those of their sisters who are always busy doing something; who, believing and accepting the universal law, that pleasure is the mere accident of our being, and work its natural and most holy necessity, have set themselves steadily to seek out and fulfil theirs.

These are they who are little spoken of in the world at large. I do not include among them those whose labor should spring from an irresistible impulse, and become an absolute vocation, or it is not worth following at all—namely, the professional women, writers, painters, musicians, and the like. I mean those women who lead active, intelligent, industrious lives: lives complete in themselves, and therefore not giving half the trouble to their friends that the idle and foolish virgins do—no, not even in love affairs. If love comes to them accidentally (or rather providentially,) and happily, so much the better! they will not make the worse wives for having been busy workless. But "the tender passion" is not to them the one grand necessity that it is to

aimless lives; they are in no haste to wed; their time is duly filled up; and if never married, still the habitual faculty of usefulness gives them in themselves and with others that obvious value, that fixed standing in society, which will for ever prevent their being drifted away, like most old maids, down the current of the new generation, even as dead May-flies down a stream.

They have made for themselves a place in the world: the harsh, practical, yet not ill-meaning world, where all find their level soon or late, and where a frivolous young maid sunk into a helpless old one, can no more expect to keep her pristine position than a last year's leaf to flutter upon a spring bough. But an old maid who deserves well of this same world, by her ceaseless work therein, having won her position, keeps it to the end.

Not an ill position either; often higher and more honorable than that of many a mother of ten sons. In households, where "Auntie" is the universal refuge, nurse, playmate, comforter, and counsellor; in society, where "that nice Miss So-and-so," though neither handsome, nor young, is yet such a person as can neither be omitted nor overlooked: in charitable works, where she is "such a practical body,—always knows exactly what to do, and how to do it;" or perhaps, in her own house, solitary indeed, as every single woman's home must be, yet neither dull nor unhappy in itself, and the nucleus of cheerfulness and happiness to many another home besides.

She has not married. Under Heaven, her home, her life, her lot, are all of her own making. Either or sweet they may have been—it is not ours to meddle with them, but we can any day see their results. Wide or narrow as her circle of influence appears, she has exercised her power to the uttermost, and for good. Whether great or small her talents, she has not let one of them rust for want of use. Whatever the current of her existence may have been, and in whatever circumstances it has placed her, she has voluntarily wasted no portion of it—not a year, not a month, not a day.


Published or unpublished, this woman's life is a goodly chronicle, the titlepage of which you may read in her quiet countenance; her manner, settled, cheerful, and at ease; her unflinching interest in all things and all people. You will rarely find she thinks much about herself; she has never had time for it. And this her life-chronicle, which, out of its very fulness, has taught her that the more one does, the more one finds to do—she will never flourish in your face, or the face of heaven, as something uncommonly virtuous and extraordinary. She knows that, after all, she has simply done what it was her duty to do.

But—and when her place is vacant on earth, this will be said of her assuredly, both here and elsewhere—“*She had done what she could.*”



II.

SELF-DEPENDENCE.

 If you want a thing done, go yourself; if not, send."

This pitiful axiom, of which most men know the full value, is by no means so well appreciated by women. One of the very last things we learn, often through a course of miserable helplessness, heart-burrings, difficulties, contentions, and pain, is the lesson, taught to boys from their school-days, of self-dependence.

Its opposite, either plainly or implied, has been preached to us all our lives. "An independent young lady"—"a woman who can take care of herself"—and such-like phrases, have become tacitly suggestive of coarseness, strong-mindedness, down to the lowest depths of blasphemism, cigarette smoking, and talking slang.

And there are many good reasons, ingrained in the very tenderest core of woman's nature, why this should be. We are "the weaker vessel"—whether acknowledging it or not, most of us feel this: it becomes man's duty and delight to show us honor

accordingly. And this honor, dear as it may be to him to give, is still dearer to us to receive.

Dependence is in itself an easy and pleasant thing: dependence upon one we love being perhaps the very sweetest thing in the world. To resign one's self totally and contentedly into the hands of another: to have no longer any need of asserting one's rights or one's personality, knowing that both are as precious to that other as they ever were to ourselves: to cease taking thought about one's self at all, and rest safe, at ease, assured that in great things and small we shall be guided and checked, guarded and helped—in fact, thoroughly “taken care of”—how delicious is all this! we delicious that it seems granted to very few of us, and to fewer still as a permanent condition of being.

Were it our ordinary lot, were every woman living to have either father, brother or husband, to watch over and protect her, then, indeed, the hoarse but salutary doctrine of self-dependence need never be heard of. But it is not so. In spite of the pretty ideals of poets, the easy taken-for-granted truths of old-fashioned educators of female youth, this fact remains patent to any person of common sense and experience, that in the present day, whether voluntary or not, one-half of our women are *obliged* to take care of themselves—obliged to look solely to themselves for maintenance, position, occupation, advancement, reputation, life.

Of course I refer to the large class for which these Thoughts are meant—the single women; who,

while most needing the exercise of self-dependence, are nearly the very last in whom it is fostered, or even permitted. From infancy they are given to understand that helplessness is feminine and beautiful; helpfulness—except in certain received forms of manual-station—unfeminine and ugly. The boys may do a thousand things which are "not proper for little girls."

And herein, I think, lies the great mistake of the rest of most women's education, that the law of their existence is held to be, not Right, but Propriety: a certain received notion of womanhood, which has descended from certain excellent great-grandmothers, admirably suited for some sorts of their descendants; but totally ignoring the fact that each sex is composed of individuals, differing in character almost as much from one another as from the opposite sex. For do we not constantly find womanish men, and masculine women? and some of the finest types of character we have known among both sexes, are they not often those who combine the qualities of both? Therefore, there must be somewhere a standard of abstract right, including manhood and womanhood, and yet superior to either. One of the first of its common laws, or natural duties, is this of self-dependence.

We women are, no less than men, each of us a distinct existence. In two out of the three great Vices of our life we are certainly independent agents, and all our life long we are accountable only, in the highest sense, to our own souls, and the Maker of

them. Is it natural, is it right even, that we should be expected and be ready enough too, for it is much the easiest way—to hang our consciences, duties, actions, opinions, upon some one else—some individual, or some aggregate of individuals yclepeth Society? Is this society to draw up a code of regulations as to what is proper for us to do, and what not? which latter is supposed to be done for us; and if not done, or there happens to be no one to do it, is it to be left undone? Alack, most frequently, whether or not it ought to be, it is left undone!

Every one's experience may furnish dozens of cases of poor women suddenly thrown adrift—widows with families, orphan girls, reduced gentlewomen—clinging helplessly to every male relative or friend they have, year after year sinking deeper in poverty or debt, eating the bitter bread of charity, or compelled to bow an honest pride to the cruellest humiliations, every one of which might have been spared them by the early practice of self-dependence.

I once heard a lady say—a tenderly-reared and tender-hearted woman—that if her riches made themselves wings, as in these times riches will, she did not know anything in the world that she could turn her hand to, to keep herself from starving. A more pitiable, and, in some sense, humbling confession, could hardly have been made; yet it is that not of hundreds, but of thousands.

Sometimes exceptions arise, here is one:

Two young women, well educated and refined,

were left orphans, their father dying just when his business promised to realize a handsome profit for his family. It was essentially a man's business—from many points of view, decidedly an unbusinesslike one. Of course friends thought "the girls" must give it up, go out as governesses, depend on relatives, or live in what gusted poverty the sale of the goods-will might alter. But "the girls" were wise. They argued: "If we had been boys, it would have been all right; we should have carried on the business, and provided for our mother and the whole family. Being women, we'll try it still. It is nothing wrong, it is simply disagreeable. It needs common sense, activity, diligence, and self-dependence. We have all these; and what we have not, we will learn." So these sensible and well-educated young women laid aside their pretty weaknesses and pleasant idleness, and set to work. Happily, the trade was one that required no personal publicity; but they had to keep the books, manage the stock, choose and superintend fit agents,—to do things difficult, not to say distasteful, to most women; and resign enjoyments that, to women of their refinement, must have cost daily self-denial. Yet they did it; they filled their father's place, sustained their delicate mother, never once complaining their womanhood by their work, but rather exalting the work by their doing of it.

Another case—different, and yet alike. A young girl, an older sister, had to receive for step-mother a woman who ought never to have been any heart

man's wife. Not willing to be turned out of her father's house, she did a most daring and "improper" thing—she left it, taking with her the brothers and sisters, whom by this means only she believed she could save from harm. She settled them in a London lodging, and worked for them as a daily governess. "Heaven helps those who help themselves." From that day this girl never was dependent upon any human being; while during a long life she has helped and protected more than I could count—pupils and pupils' children, friends and their children, besides brothers and sisters-in-law, nephews and nieces, down to the slenderest tie of blood, or even mere strangers. And yet she has never been anything but a poor governess, always independent, always able to assist others—because she never was and never will be indebted to any one, except for love while she lives and for a grave when she dies. May she long possess the one, and want the other!

And herein is answered the "*est loco?*" of self-dependence, that its advantages end not with the original possessor. In this much-suffering world, a woman who can take care of herself can always take care of other people. She not only ceases to be an unprotected female, a nuisance and a drag upon society, but her working-value therein is doubled and trebled, and society respects her accordingly. Even her kindly male friends, no longer afraid that when the charm to their vanity of "being of use to a lady" has died out, they shall

be saddled with a perpetual claimant for all manner of advice and assistance—the first not always followed, and the second often accepted without gratitude—when they yield an involuntary consideration to a lady who gives them no trouble that she can avoid, and is always capable of thinking and acting for herself, so far as the natural restrictions and decorum of her sex allow. True, these have their limits, which it would be folly, if not worse, for her to attempt to pass; but a certain fine instinct, which, we flatter ourselves, is native to us women, will generally indicate the division between brave self-reliance and bold assumption.

Perhaps the line is most vividly drawn, as in most difficulties, at that point where duty ends and pleasure begins. Thus, we should respect one who, on a mission of mercy or necessity, went through the lowest portions of St. Giles' or the Gallowgate; we should be rather disgusted if she did it for mere amusement or bravado. All honor to the poor seamstress or governess who traverses London streets alone, at all hours of day or night, unattended except by her own modesty; but the strong-minded female who would venture, on a solitary expedition to investigate the honors of Grosvenor Gardens or Greenwich Fair, though perfectly "respectable," would be an exceedingly condemnable sort of personage. There are many things of which, as mere pleasures, a woman has a right to hesitate; there is no single duty, whether or not it lies in the ordinary line of her sex, from

which she ought to shrink, if it be plainly set before her.

Those who are the strongest advocates for the passive character of our sex, its claims, propensities, and restrictions, are, I have often noticed, if the most sensitive, not always the justest or most generous. I have seen ladies, no longer either young or pretty, shocked at the idea of traversing a street's length at night, yet never hesitate at being "fetched" by some female servant, who was both young and pretty, and to whom the danger of the expedition, or of the late return alone, was by far the greater of the two. I have known anxious mothers, who would not for worlds be guilty of the indecorum of sending their daughters undescaproned to the theatre or a ball—and very right, too—yet send out some other woman's young daughter, at eleven P. M., to the stand for a cab, or to the public-house for a supply of beer. It never strikes them that the doctrine of female dependence extends beyond themselves, whom it suits so easily, and to whom it saves so much trouble; that either every woman, be she servant or mistress, seamstress or fine lady, should receive the "protection" suitable to her degree; or that each ought to be educated into equal self-dependence. Let us, at least, hold the balance of justice even, nor allow an over-consideration for the delicacy of one woman to trench on the rights, conveniences, and honest feelings of another.

We must help ourselves. In this curious phase

of social history, when marriage is apparently coming to become the common lot, and a happy marriage is the most uncommon lot of all, we must educate our maidens into what is far better than any blind clause for ill-defined "rights"—into what ought always to be the foundation of rights—duties. And there is one, the silent practice of which will secure to them almost every right they can fairly need—the duty of self-dependence. Not after any Amazonian fashion; no mutilating of fair womanhood in order to assume the unnatural armor of men; but simply by the full exercise of every faculty, physical, moral, and intellectual, with which Heaven has endowed us all, severally and collectively, in different degrees; allowing no one to rest or to lie idle, merely because its owner is a woman. And above all, let us lay the foundation of all real womanliness by teaching our girls from their cradle that the priceless pearl of decorous beauty, chastity of mind as well as body, exists in themselves alone; that a single-hearted and pure-minded woman may go through the world, like Spenser's Una, suffering indeed, but never deficient; foot-sooed and smirched, but never tainted; exposed, doubtless, to many trials, yet never either degraded or humiliated, unless by her own acts she humiliates herself.

For heaven's sake—for the sake of womanhood, the most heavenly thing next angelhood (as men tell us when they are courting us, and which it depends upon ourselves to make them believe in

all their lives)—young girls, trust yourselves, rely on yourselves! Be assured that no outward circumstances will harm you while you keep the jewel of purity in your bosom, and are ever ready with the stoutest, clean right hand, of which, till you use it, you never know the strength, though it be only a woman's hand.

Fear not the world: it is often juster to us than we are to ourselves. If in its harsh jostlings "the weaker goes to the wall"—as so many allege is sure to happen to a woman—you will almost always find that this is not merely because of her sex, but from some inherent qualities in herself, which, existing either in woman or man, would produce just the same results, pitiful and blameable, but usually more pitiful than blameable. The world is hard enough, for two-thirds of it are struggling for the dear life; but it has a rough sense of moral justice after all. And whosoever denies that, spite of all hindrances from individual wickedness, the right shall ultimately prevail, impugns, not alone human justice, but the justice of God.

The age of chivalry, with all its benefits and barableness, is gone by for us women. We cannot now have our *knights-errant*, expending blood and life for our sake, while we have nothing to do but sit idle on *Iskonia*, and drop flowers on half-dead victors at tilt and tourney. Nor, on the other hand, are we dressed-up dolls, pretty playthings, to be fought and scrambled for—petted, caressed, or flung out of window, as our several lords

and masters may please. Life is much more equally divided between us and them. We are neither goddesses nor slaves; they are neither heroes nor scoundrels: we just plod on together, men and women alike, on the same road, where daily experience illustrates Halliwell's keen truth, that

"The value of a thing
* Is just as much as it will bring."

And our value is—exactly what we choose to make it.

Perhaps at no age since Eve's were women rated so exclusively at their own personal worth, apart from poetic flattery or tyrannical depreciation; at no time in the world's history judged so entirely by their individual merits, and respected according to the respect which they earn for themselves. And shall we value ourselves so meanly as to consider this unjust? Shall we not rather accept our position, difficult indeed, and requiring from us more than the world ever required before, but from its very difficulty rendered the more honorable?

Let us not be afraid of men; for that, I suppose, lies at the root of all those amiable hesitations: "Gentlemen don't like such and such things," "Gentlemen fancy so and so unfeminine." My dear little foolish cowards, do you think a man—a good man, in any relation of life, ever loves a woman the more for reverencing her the less? or likes her better for transferring all her burdens to his shoulders, and pinning her conscience to his sleeve? Or,

even supposing he did like it, is a woman's divinity to be man—or God?

And here, placing its foundation on all truth, I think we may find the truth concerning self-dependence, which is only real and only valuable when its root is not in self at all; when its strength is drawn not from man, but from that higher and diviner Source whence every individual soul proceeds, and to which alone it is accountable. As soon as any woman, old or young, once feels this, not as a vague sentimental belief, but as a tangible, practical law of life, all weakness vanishes, all doubt departs: she recognizes the glory, honor, and beauty of her existence; she is no longer afraid of its pain; she desires not to shift one atom of its responsibilities to another. She is content to take it just as it is, from the hands of the All-Father; her only care being so to fulfil it, that while the world at large may recognize and profit by her self-dependence, she herself, knowing that the utmost strength lies in the deepest humility, recognizes, solely and above all, her dependence upon God.





III.

GOSSIP.



ONE of the wisest and best among our English ethical writers, the author of "Companions of my Solitude," says, apropos of gossip, that one half of the evil-speaking of the world arises, not from *malice perversa*, but from mere want of amusement. And I think we may even grant that in the other half, constituted small of malice or selfish in disposition, it is seldom worse than the natural falling back from large abstract interests which they cannot understand, upon those which they can—also! only the narrow, commonplace, and personal.

Yet they mean no harm; are often under the delusion that they both mean and do a great deal of good, take a benevolent watch over their fellow-creatures, and so forth. They would not say an untrue word, nor do an ethical action—not they! The most hardfaced slanderer always tells her story with a good motive, or thinks she does; begins with a harmless "bit of gossip," just to pass the time away—the time which hangs so heavy! and ends by becoming the most arrogant and mischievous tale-bearer under the sun.

Let me put on record the decline and fall, voluntarily confessed, of two friends of mine, certainly the last persons likely to take to tittle-tattle; being neither young nor elderly; on the whole, perhaps rather "bright" than stupid; having plenty to do and to think of—too much, indeed, since they came on an enforced holiday out of that vortex in which London whirled her professional classes round and round, year by year, till at last often nothing but a handful of dry bones is cast on shore. They came to lodge at the village of X—, let me call it, as being an "unknown quantity," which the reader will vainly attempt to find out, since it is just like some hundred other villages—has its church and rectory, great house and squire, doctor and lawyer; also its small select society, where everybody knows everybody—that is, their affairs: for themselves, one half the parish resolutely declines "knowing" the other half—sometimes pretentively, sometimes permanently. Of course, not a single soul would have ventured to know Bob and Maria—so I shall call the strangers—had they not brought an introduction to one family, under the shelter of whose respectability they modestly placed their own. A very worthy family it was, which showed them all hospitality, asked them to tea occasionally, and, there, in the shadow of the pleasant drawing-room which overlooked the street, indoctrinated them into all the mysteries of X—, something in this wise:

"Dear me! there's Mrs. Smith; she has on that horrid yellow bouclet which has been so long in

Miss Miffin's shop-window. Got it cheap, no doubt Mr. Smith does keep the poor thing so close!

"Annabella, child, make haste; just tell me whether that is n't the same young man who called on the Joneses three times last week! Red whiskers and moustaches! One of those horrid officers, no doubt. My dear Miss Maria, I never do like to say a word against my neighbors; but before I would let my Annabella go about like the Jones girls.

"Bless, my life! there's that cab at the corner house again—and her husband out! Well, if I ever could have believed it, even of silly, flirty Mrs. Green, whom people do say old Mr. Green married out of a hoider's, where he went in to buy a pair of gloves. But I beg your pardon, my dear." And so on, and so on.

This, slightly varied, was the stock conversation, which seemed amply sufficient to fill the minds and hours of many families at X—.

Men, whose habits of thought and action are at once more selfish and less personal than ours, are seldom given to gossiping. They will take a vast interest in the misgovernment of India, or the ill-making of their own dinners; but any topic betwixt these two—such as the mismanagement of their neighbor's house, or the extravagance of their partner's wife—is a matter of minor importance. They are not often vexed with trifles that don't immediately concern themselves. It is women who poke about with unguarded farking candles in the

choke-damp passages of this dangerous world; who put their feeble ignorant hands to the Archbishopian lever that, slight as it seems, can shake society to its lowest foundations. For, though it irks me to wound with strong language the delicate sensibilities of my silver-tongued sisters, I would just remind them of what they may hear, certainly one Sunday in the year, concerning that same dainty little member, which is said to be "a fire, a world of iniquity, and is set on fire of hell."

But it is not "the gift of the gab," the habit of using a chosen word whose use would answer the purpose—which may arise from want of education, nervousness, or surplus but honest energy and earnest feeling—it is not that which does the harm; it is the lamentable fact that, whether from a superabundance of the imaginative faculty, carelessness of phrase, or a readiness to jump at conclusions and represent facts not as they are but as they appear to the spectators, few women are absolutely and invariably veracious. They love truth in their hearts, and yet they often give to things a slight coloring cast by their own individuality; twisting facts a little, a very little, according as their tastes, affections, or convictions indicate.

And this is the fatal danger of gossip. If all people spoke the absolute truth about their neighbors, or held their tongues, which is always a possible alternative, it would not so much matter. At the worst, there would be a few periodical social thunder-storms, and then the air would be clear.

But too many heedlessly speak what they see, or think, or believe, or wish. Few observant characters can have lived long in the world without learning to receive every fact communicated second-hand with *reservations*—reservations that do not necessarily stamp the communicator as a liar; but merely make allowance for certain inevitable variations, like the variations of the compass, which every circumnavigator must calculate upon as a natural necessity.

Thus, Miss A——, in the weary small-talk of a morning call, not quite knowing what she says, or glad to say any thing for the sake of talking, lets drop to Mrs. B—— that she heard Mrs. C—— say "she would take care to keep her boys out of the way of the little B——s"—a very harmless remark, since, when it was uttered, the little B——s were just recovering from the measles. But Miss A——, an absent sort of woman, repeats it three months afterwards, forgetting all about the measles; indeed, she has persuaded herself that it referred to the rudeness of the B—— lads, who are her own private terror, and she thinks it may probably do some good to give their over-indulgent mamma a hint on the subject. Mrs. B——, too well-bred to reply more than "Indeed!" is yet mortally offended; declines the next dinner party at the C——s', and confides her private reason for doing so to Miss D——, a good-natured chatterbox, who, with the laudable intention of getting to the bottom of the matter, and reconciling the belligerents, immediately com-

suggests the same. "What have I done?" exclaims the hapless Mrs. C——. "I never said any such thing!" "Oh, but Miss A—— protests she heard you say it." Again Mrs. C—— warmly denies; which denial goes back directly to Miss A—— and Mrs. B——, imparting to both them and Miss D—— a very unpleasant feeling as to the lady's veracity. A few days after, thinking it over, she suddenly recollects that she really did say the identical words, with reference solely to the *manuscript*; bursts into a hearty fit of laughter, and congratulates herself that it is all right. But not so; the mountain cannot so quickly shrink into its original table-land. Mrs. B——, whose weak point is her children, receives the explanation with considerable dignity and reserve; is "sorry that Mrs. C—— should have troubled herself about such a trifle; shakes hands, and professes herself quite satisfied. Nevertheless, in her own innermost mind she thinks—and her countenance shows it—"I believe you said it, for all that." A slight coolness ensues, which everybody notices, discusses, and gives a separate version of; all which versions, somehow or other, come to the ears of the parties concerned, who, without clearly knowing why, feel vexed and aggrieved each at the other. The end of it all is a total estrangement.

Is not a little episode like this at the root of nearly all the family feuds, lost friendships, "cool" acquaintanceships, so pitifully rife in the world? Rarely any great matter, a point of principle or a

violated pledge, an act of justice or dishonesty: it is almost always some petty action misinterpreted, some idle word repeated—or a succession of both these, gathering and gathering like the shingle on a beach, something fresh being left behind by every day's tide.

The next grand source of gossip is love, and with or without that preliminary, matrimony. What on earth should we do if we had no matches to make, or none; no "unfortunate attachments" to shake our heads over; no flirtations to speculate about and comment upon with knowing smiles; no engagements "on" or "off" to speak our minds about, sowing out every little circumstance, and ferreting out our guano to their very hole, as if all their affairs, their hopes, trials, faults, or wrongs, were being transacted for our own private and peculiar entertainment! Of all forms of gossip, this tittle-tattle about love-affairs is the most general, the most vicious, and the most dangerous.

Every one of us must have known within our own experience many an instance of dawning loves choked, unhappy loves made readily public, happy loves sullied, warm, honest love turned cold, by this horrible system of gossiping about young or unmarried people. Many women, otherwise kindly and generous, have in this matter no more consideration towards their own sex or the other, no more sense of the sanctity and solemn due to the relation between them, than if the divinely instituted bond of marriage were no higher or purer than the nota-

ral instincts of the beasts that perish. It is most sad to see the way in which, from the age of fourteen upwards, a young woman, on this one subject of her possible or probable matrimonial arrangements, is quizzed, talked over, commented upon, advised, consoled with, lectured, interrogated—until, if she has happily never had cause to blush for herself, not a week passes that she does not blush for her sex, out of utter contempt, disgust, and indignation.

Surely all right-minded women ought to set their faces resolutely against this desecration of feelings, to maintain the sanctity of which is the only preservative of our influence. Not that love should be exercised out of young women's lives and conversations; but let it be treated delicately, earnestly, rationally, as a matter which, if they have any business with it at all, is undoubtedly the most serious business of their lives. There can be, there ought to be, no medium course; a love-affair is either sober earnest, or contemptible folly, if not wickedness: to gossip about it is, in the first instance, intrusive, unkind, or dangerous; in the second, simply silly. *Practical people may choose between the two alternatives.*

Gossip, public, private, social—to fight against it either by word or pen seems, after all, like fighting with shadows. Everybody laughs at it, protests against it, blames and despises it; yet everybody does it, or at least encourages others in it: quite innocently, unconsciously, in such a small, harmless

fashion—yet, we do it. We must talk about something, and it is not all of us who can find a rational topic of conversation, or discuss it when found. Many, too, who in their hearts hate the very thought of tattle and tale-bearing, are shy of lifting up their voices against it, lest they should be thought to set themselves up as more virtuous than their neighbors.

If I, or any one, were to unfold on this subject only our own experience and observation, not a little more, what a volume would it make! Families set by the ears, parents against children, brothers against brothers, not to mention brothers and sisters-in-law, who seem generally to assume, with the legal title, the legal right of interminably squabbling. Friendships sundered, betrothals broken, marriages annulled, in the spirit at least. Acquaintances that would otherwise have maintained a safe and not coldly indifferent, forced into absolute dislike—originating how they know not; but there it is. Old companions, that would have borne each other's little foibles, have forgiven and forgotten, little annoyances, and kept up an honest affection till death, driven at last into open rupture, or frozen into a coldness more hopeless still, which no after-warmth will ever have power to thaw.

Truly, from the smallest neighborhood that enriches our year by year, its bloodless wars, its harmless scandals, its daily chronicle of interminable nothings, to the great metropolitan world, fashionable, intellectual, noble, or royal, the blight and curse of civilized life is gossip.

How is it to be removed? How are scores of well-meaning women, who in their hearts really like and respect one another—who, did trouble come to any one of them, would be ready with countless mutual kindnesses, small and great, and among whom the sudden advent of death would subdue every idle tongue to honest praise, and silence at once and for ever every bitter word against the neighbor departed—how are they to be taught to be every day as generous, considerate, liberal-minded—in short, womanly, as they would assuredly be in any exceptional day of adversity? How are they to be made to feel the littleness, the inaffably pitiful littleness, of raking up and criticising every slight peculiarity of manner, habits, temper, character, word, action, motive, household, children, servants, living, furniture, and dress, thus constituting themselves the amateur rag-pickers, *défilantes*, of all the blind alleys and foul byways of society; while the whole world lies free and open before them, to do their work and choose their innocent pleasures therein—this busy, bright, beautiful world?

Such a revolution is, I doubt, quite hopeless on this side Paradise. But every woman has it in her power personally to withstand the spread of this great plague of tongues, since it lies within her own volition what she will do with her own.

First, let every one of us cultivate, in every word that issues from our mouth, absolute truth. I say cultivate, because to very few people—as may be noticed of most young children—does truth, this

rigid, literal veracity, come by nature. To many, even who love it and prize it dearly in others, it comes only after the self-control, watchfulness, and bitter experiences of years. Let no one conscious of needing this care be afraid to begin it from the very beginning; or in her daily life and conversation fear to confess: "Stay, I said a little more than I meant"—"I think I was not quite correct about such a thing"—"Thus it was; at least thus it seemed to me personally," *etc., etc.* Even in the simplest, most everyday statements, we cannot be too guarded or too exact. The "hundred cats" that the little lad saw "fighting on our back-wall," and which afterwards dwindled down to "our cat and another," is a case in point, not near so foolish as it seems.

"Believe only half of what you see, and nothing that you hear," is a cynical saying, and yet less bitter than at first appears. It does not argue that human nature is false, but simply that it is human nature. How can any fallible human being with two eyes, two ears, one judgment, and one brain—all *more or less* misled in their apprehensions of things external, and biased by a thousand internal impressions, purely individual—how can we possibly decide on even the plainest actions of another, to say nothing of the words which may have gone through half-a-dozen different translations and modifications, or the motives which can only be known to the Omniscient himself?

In His name, therefore, let us "judge not, that

we be not judged." Let us be "quick to hear, slow to speak;" slowest of all to speak any evil, or to listen to it, about anybody. The good we need be less careful over; we are not likely ever to hear too much of that.

"But," say some—very excellent people too—"are we never to open our mouths? never to mention the ill things we see or hear; never to stand up for the right, by proclaiming, or by warning and testifying against the wrong?"

Against wrong in the abstract, *yes*; but against individuals—*doubtful*. All the gossip in the world, or the dread of it, will never turn one domestic tyrant into a decent husband or father; one light woman into a matron true and wise. Do your neighbor good by all means in your power, moral as well as physical—by kindness, by patience, by unflinching resistance against every outward evil—by the silent preaching of your own contrary life. But if the only good you can do him is by talking at him, or about him—*no*, even to him, if it be in a self-satisfied, super-virtuous style—such as I earnestly hope the present writer is not doing—you had much better leave him alone. If he be foolish, soon or late he will reap the fruit of his folly; if wicked, be sure his sin will find him out. If he has wronged you, you will neither lessen the wrong nor increase his repentance by parading it. And if you have wronged him, surely you will not right him or yourself by abusing him. At least let him alone.



IV.

HAPPY AND UNHAPPY WOMEN.

GIVE fair warning that this is likely to be a "sentimental" chapter. Those who object to the same, and complain that these "Thoughts" are "not practical," had better pass it over at once; since it treats of things essentially unpractical, impossible to be weighed and measured, handled and analyzed, yet as real in themselves as the air we breathe and the sunshine we delight in—things wholly intangible, yet the very essence and necessity of our lives.

Happiness? Can any human being undertake to define it for another? Various last century poets have indulged in "Odes" to it, and good Mrs. Barbauld wrote a "Search" after it—a most correct, elegantly phrased, and graceful little drama, which, the dramatic persons being all females, and not a bit of love in the whole, is, I believe, still acted in old-fashioned boarding-schools, with great *éclat*. The plot, if I remember right, consists of an elderly lady's leading four or five younger ones on the in-

memorial search, through a good many very long speeches; but whether they ever found happiness or what it was like when found, I really have not the least recollection.

Let us hope that excellent Mrs. Barbauld is one of the very few who dare to venture upon even the primary question, *What is Happiness?* Perhaps, poor dear woman! she is better able to answer it now.

I fear the inevitable conclusion we must all come to is, that in this world happiness is quite undefinable. We can no more grasp it than we can grasp the sun in the sky or the moon in the water. We can feel it interpenetrating our whole being with warmth and strength; we can see it in a pale reflection shining elsewhere; or in its total absence, we, walking in darkness, learn to appreciate what it is by what it is not. But I doubt whether any woman ever craved for it, philosophised over it, commenced the systematic search after it, and ever attained her end. For happiness is not an end—it is only a means, an adjunct, a consequence. The Omnipotent himself could never be supposed by any, save those who out of their own human selfishness construct the attributes of divinity, to be absorbed throughout eternity in the contemplation of his own ineffable bliss, were it not identical with his ineffable goodness and love.

Therefore, whosoever starts with "to be happy" as the highest good of existence, will assuredly find out she has made as great a mistake as when in her

ladyhood she cried as most of us do, for the moon, which we cannot get for all our crying. And yet it is a very good moon, notwithstanding; a real moon too, which will help us to many a poetical dream, light us in many a lovers' walk, till she shine over the graves of our graves upon a new generation ready to follow upon the quest which is only possible to pure hearts, although the very purest can never fully attain it except through the gates of the holy city, the New Jerusalem.

"Happy and unhappy women"—the adjectives being applied less with reference to circumstances than character, which is the only mode of judgment possible—to judge them and discourse of them is a very difficult matter at best. Yet I am afraid it cannot be doubted that there is a large average of unhappiness existed among women: not merely unhappiness of circumstances, but unhappiness of soul—a state of being often so unaccountable as it is irrational, finding vent in those innumerable faults of temper and disposition which arise from no inherent vice, but merely because the individual is not happy.

Possibly, women more than men are liable to this dreary mental eclipse—neither daylight nor darkness. A man will go poetically wretched or morbidly misanthropic, or any great misfortune will overthrow him entirely, drive him to insanity, lure him to slip out of life through the terrible beyond of suicide; but he rarely drags an existence from year to year, with "scurra," "low spirits," and the

various maladies of mind and temper, that make many women a torment to themselves and a burden to all connected with them.

Why is this? and is it inevitable? Any one who could in the smallest degree answer this question, would be doing something to the lessening of a great evil—greater than many other evils which, being social and practical, show more largely on the aggregate census of female woe.

Most assuredly, however unpoetical may be such a view of the matter, the origin of a great deal of unhappiness is physical disease; or rather, the loss of that healthy condition of body, which in the present state of civilization, so far removed from a state of nature, can only be kept up in any individual by the knowledge and practice of the ordinary laws of hygiene—generally the very last knowledge that women seem to have. The daily necessities of water, fresh air, proper clothing, food, and sleep, with the due regulation of each of these, without which no human being can expect to live healthily or happily, are matters in which the only excuse for lamentable neglect is still more lamentable ignorance.

An ignorance the worse, because it is generally quite unacknowledged. If you tell a young girl that water is essential to every pore of her delicate skin every morning; that moderate outdoor exercise, and regularity in eating, sleeping, employment, and amusement, are to her a daily necessity; that she should make it a part of her education to acquire a

certain amount of correct information on sanitary science, and especially on the laws of her own being, physical and mental; tell her this, and the doctors say she will stare at you uncomprehendingly, or be shocked, as if you were saying to her something "improper," or answer flippantly, "Oh, yes; I know all that."

But of what use is the knowledge?—when she lies in bed till ten o'clock, and sits up till any hour the next morning; eats all manner of food at all manner of irregular intervals; is horrified at leaving her bedroom window two inches open, or at being caught in a slight shower; yet will cover all day over the fire in a high wooden dress, and put on a low media in the evening. When she wears all winter thin boots, summer stockings, a gown open at the chest and arms, and a loose mantle that every wind blows under, yet wonders that she always has a cold! Truly any sensible old-fashioned body, who knows how much the health, happiness, and general well-being of this generation—and, alas, not this generation alone—depend on these charming, lovable, fascinating young fools, cannot fail to be "aggravated" by them every day.

However humiliating the fact may be to those poetical theorists who, in spite of all the laws of nature, wish to make the soul entirely independent of the body—forgetting, that if so, its temporary probation in the body at all would have been quite unnecessary—I repeat, there can be no really sound state of mind without a similar condition of

body; and that one of the first requisites of happiness is *good health*. But as this is not meant to be an essay on domestic hygiene, I had better here leave the subject.

Its corresponding phase opens a gate of misery so wide that one almost shrinks from entering it. Infinite, past human counting or judging, are the causes of mental unhappiness. Many of them spring from a real foundation, of sorrows varied beyond all measuring or reasoning upon; of these, I do not attempt to speak, for words would be idle and presumptuous. I only speak of that frame of mind—sometimes left behind by a great trouble, sometimes arising from troubles purely imaginary—which is called "an unhappy disposition."

Its root of pain is manifold; but with women, undoubtedly can be oftenest traced to something connected with the affections; not merely the passion called *per excellence* love, but the entire range of personal sympathies and attachments, out of which we draw the sweetness and bitterness of the best part of our lives. If otherwise—if, as the phrase goes, an individual happens to have "more head than heart," she may be a very agreeable personage, but she is not properly a woman—not the creature who, with all her imperfections, is *nearer* to heaven than man, in one particular—she "loves much." And loving is so frequently, nay, inevitably identical with suffering, either with or for or from the object beloved, that we need not go farther to find the cause of the many anxious, soured

faces, and irritable tempers, that we meet with among women.

Charity cannot too deeply or too frequently call to mind how very difficult it is to be good, or amiable, or even constantly agreeable, when one is inwardly miserable. This fact is not enough recognized by those very worthy people who take such a world of pains to make other people virtuous, and so very little to make them happy. They sow good seed, are exultingly weeding and watering, give it every care and advantage under the sun—except sunshine—and then they wonder that it does not flower!

One may see many a young woman who has, outwardly speaking, "everything she can possibly want," absolutely withering in the atmosphere of a loveless home, exposed to those small ill-factors by which people mean no harm—only do it; chilled by reserve, wounded by neglect, or worried by anxiety over some thoughtless one, who might so easily have spared her it all; safe from either misfortune or ill-treatment, yet harassed daily by petty pains and unconscious cruelties, which a stranger might laugh at; and she laughs herself when she counts them up, they are so very small—yet they are there.

"I can bear anything," said to me a woman, no longer very young or very fascinating, who had gone through seas of sorrow, yet whose blue eyes still kept the dewiness and cheerfulness of their youth; "I can bear anything, except unkindness."

She was right. There are numberless cases where gentle Providence, who would have ordered bravely any amount of real trouble, have their lives frozen up by those small unkindnesses which copy-books avouch to be "a great offence" where an avalanche of worldly benefits, an act of unobscured generosity, or the most conscientious administering of a friendly rebuke, has had its good effects wholly neutralized by the manner in which it was done. It is vain to preach to people unless you also love them—Christianly love them; it is not of the smallest use to try to make people good, unless you try at the same time—and they feel that you are trying—to make them happy. And you rarely can make another happy, unless you are happy yourself.

Viewing the affections as the chief source of unhappiness among our sex, it would be wrong to pass over one phase of them, which must nevertheless be touched tenderly and delicately, as one that women instinctively hide out of sight and comment. I mean what is usually termed "a disappointment." Alas! as if there were no disappointments but those of love; and yet, until men and women are made differently from what God made them, it must always be, from its very secretness and inwardness, the sharpest of all pains, save that of conscience.

A lost love. Dost it who will, ridicule it, treat it as mere imagination and sentiment, the thing is and will be; and women do suffer therefrom, in all its infinite varieties: loss by death, by faithlessness

or unworthiness, and by mistaken or unreciprocated affection. Of these, the second is beyond all question the worst. There is in death a consecration which falls the sharpest personal anguish into comparative calm; and in time there comes, to all pure and religious natures, that sense of total possession of the objects beloved, which death alone gives—that faith, which is content to see them safe landed out of the troubles of this changeable life, into the life everlasting. And an attachment which has always been on one side only, has a certain incompleteness which prevents its ever knowing the full agony of having and losing, while at the same time it preserves to the last a dreary serenity which sweetens half its pain. But to have loved and lost, either by that total disengagement which leaves compassion as the sole substitute for love which can exist no more, or by the slow torture which is obliged to let go day by day all that constitutes the diviner part of love—namely, reverence, belief, and trust, yet clings desperately to the only thing left it, a long-suffering apologetic tenderness—this lot is probably the heaviest any woman can have to bear.

There is no sorrow under heaven which is, or ought to be, endless. To believe or to make it so, is an insult to heaven itself. Each of us must have known more than one instance where a saintly or heroic life has been developed from what at first seemed a stroke like death itself; a life full of the calmest and truest happiness—because it has bent itself to the divine will, and learned the best of all

lessons, to endure. But how that lesson is learned, through what bitter teaching, hard to be understood or obeyed, till the hand of the Great Teacher is recognized clearly through it all, is a subject too sacred to be entered upon here.

It is a curious truth—and yet a truth forced upon us by daily observation—that it is not the women who have suffered most who are the unhappy women. A state of permanent unhappiness—not the morbid, half-cherished melancholy of youth which generally wears off with wiser years, but that settled, incurable discontent and dissatisfaction with all things and all people, which we see in some women, is, with very rare exceptions, at once the index and the exponent of a thoroughly selfish character. Nor can it be too early impressed upon every girl that this condition of mind, whatever be its origin, is neither a poetical nor a beautiful thing, but a mere disease, and as such ought to be considered and medicine with all remedies in her power, physical, corporeal, and spiritual. For though it is folly to suppose that happiness is a matter of volition, and that we can make ourselves content and cheerful whenever we choose—a theory that many poor hypochondriacs are taunted with till they are nigh driven mad—yet, on the other hand, no sane mind is ever left without the power of self-discipline and self-control in a measure, which measure increases in proportion as it is exercised.

Let any sufferer be once convinced that she has this power—that it is possible by careful watch, or

better, by substitution of subjects and occupations, to abstract her mind from dwelling on some predominant idea, which otherwise runs in and out of the chambers of the brain, at last growing into the monomania which, philosophy says, every human being is affected with, on some one particular point, only, happily, he does not know it; only let her try it she has not, with regard to her mental constitution, the same faculty which would prevent her from dancing with a spoiled ankle, or imagining that there was an earthquake because her own head is spinning with fever, and she will have at least taken the first steps towards cure. As many a man sits wearying his soul out by trying to remedy some great flaw in the plan of society, or the problem of the universe, when perhaps the chief thing wrong is his own liver or overtaxed brain; so many a woman will pine away to the brink of the grave with an imaginary broken heart, or become sour to the very essence of vinegar on account of everybody's supposed ill-usage of her, when it is her own restless, dissatisfied, selfish heart which makes her at war with everybody.

Would that women—and men too, but that their busier and more active lives save most of them from it—could be taught from their childhood to recognize as an evil spirit this spirit of senseless melancholy—this demon which dwells among the tombs, and yet, which first shows itself in such a charming and picturesque form, that we hug it to our innocent breasts, and never suspect

that it may enter in and dwell there till we are actually "possessed," cease almost to be accountable beings, and are fitter for a lunatic asylum than for the home-circle, which, be it ever so bright and happy, has always, from the inevitable misfortunes of life, only too much need of sunshine, rather than shadow or permanent gloom.

Oh, if such women did but know what comfort there is in a cheerful spirit! how the heart leaps up to meet a sunny face, a merry tongue, an even temper, and a heart which either naturally, or what is better, from conscientious principle, has learned to look at all things on their bright side, believing that the Giver of life being all-perfect love, the best offering we can make to him is to enjoy to the full what he sends of good, and bear what he allows of evil—like a child who, when once it thoroughly believes in its father, believes in all his dealings with it, whether it understands them or not.

And here, if the subject were not too solemn to be no more than touched upon—yet no one dare avoid it who believes that there are no such distinctions as "secular" and "religious," but that the whole earth with all therein, is not only on Sundays but all days continually "the Lord's"—I will yet it to most people's experience, which is better than a hundred homilies, whether, though they may have known sincere Christians who, from various causes, were not altogether happy, they ever knew one happy person, man or woman, who, whatever his or her form of creed might be, was not in heart, and

speech, and daily life, emphatically a follower of Christ—a Christian?

Among the many secondary influences which can be employed either by or upon a naturally anxious or morbid temperament, there is none so ready to hand, or so wholesome, as that one incessantly referred to in the course of these pages, constant employment. A very large number of women, particularly young women, are by nature constituted with minds so exceedingly restless, or with such a strong physical tendency to nervous depression, that they can by no possibility keep themselves in a state of even tolerable cheerfulness, except by being continually occupied. At what, matters little; even apparently useless work is far better for them than no work at all. To each I cannot too strongly recommend the case of

"Honest John Trunkin, the hedger and ditcher,
Who, though he was poor, didn't want to be richer,"

but always managed to keep in a state of sublime content and superabundant gaiety; and how?

"He always had something to do,
It not for himself, for his neighbor."

And that work for our neighbor is perhaps the most useful and satisfactory of the two, because it takes us out of ourselves; which, to a person who has not a happy self to rest in, is one good thing achieved.

The sufferer, on waking in the morning—that cruel moment when any incurable pain wakes up

too, sharply, so sharply! and the burden of a monotonous life falls down upon us, or rises like a dead blank wall before us, making us turn round on the pillow longing for another night, instead of an inexpectable day—should rouse herself with the thought: "Now, what have I got to do to-day?" (Mark, not to enjoy or to suffer, only to do.) She should never lie down at night without counting up, with a resolute, uncompromising, unceasing veracity, "How much have I done to-day?" "I can't be happy," she may ponder wearily; "it is useless trying—as we'll not think about it; but how much have I done this day? how much can I do to-morrow?" And if she has strength steadily to fulfil this manner of life, it will be strange if, some day, the faint, involuntary thrill that we call "feeling happy" does not come and startle into vague, mysterious hope, the poor wondering heart.

Another element of happiness, incalculable in its influence over those of sensitive and delicate physical organization, is order. Any one who has just quitted a disorderly household, where the rooms are untidy, where meals take place at any hour and in any fashion, where there is a general atmosphere of noise, confusion, and irregularity—doing things at all times and seasons, or not doing any thing in particular all day long—who, emerging from this, drops into a quiet, busy, regular family, where each has an appointed task, and does it; where the day moves on smoothly, subdivided by proper seasons of labor, leisure, food, and sleep—oh, what a Para-

like it seems! How the restless or anxious spirit settles down in it, and, almost without volition, falls into its cheerful round, recovering tone and calm and strength.

—(Order in Rousseau's *preface*.)

and a mind without order can by no possibility be either a healthy or a happy mind. Therefore, beyond all sentimental sympathy, or contemptuous blame, should be impressed upon all women inclined to melancholy, or weighed down with any irremediable grief, this simple advice: to make their daily round of life as harmoniously methodical as they possibly can; leaving no odd hours, scarcely an odd ten minutes, to be idle and dreary in; and by means of orderly arranged, light, airy rooms, neat dress, and every pleasant external influence that is attainable, to leave untroubled none of those secondary passions which are in the power of every one of us, for our own benefit or that of others, and the importance of which we never know until we have proved them.

There is another maxim, easy to give, and hard to practise: Acceptation yourself always to look at the bright side of things, and never make a fuss about trifles. It is pitiful to see what mere nothings some women will worry and fret over—lamenting as much over an ill-made gown as others do over a lost fortune; how many people we can always depend upon for making the best, instead of the worst, of whatever happens, thus greatly lessening our anxieties for ourselves in their troubles; and, oh! how infinitely comforting when we bring to them any of our

OWN. For we all of us have—wretched, indeed, if we have not!—some friends or friend to whom we instinctively carry every one of our griefs or vexations, assured that, if any one can help us, they can and will; while with others we as instinctively “keep ourselves to ourselves,” whether sorrowing or rejoicing; and many more there are whom we should never dream of burdening with our cares at all, any more than we would think of putting a butterfly in harness.

The disposition which can bear trouble; which, while passing over the lesser annoyances of life as unworthy to be measured in life's whole sum, can yet meet real affliction steadily, struggle with it while resistance is possible; conquered, sit down patiently, to let the storm sweep over; and on their passing, if they pass, rise up, and go on its way, looking up to that region of blue calm which is never long invisible to the pure of heart—this is the blessed possession that any woman can have. Better than a house full of silver and gold, better than beauty, or high fortune, or prosperity and satisfied love.

While, on the other hand, of all characters not radically bad, there is none more useless to herself and everybody else, who inflicts more pain, anxiety, and gloom on those around her, than the one who is often deprecatingly or apologetically described as being “of an unhappy temperament.” You may know her at once by her dull or vinegar aspect, her fidgety ways, her proneness to take the hard or ill-

natured view of things and people. Possibly she is unmarried, and her mocking acquaintance insult womanhood by setting down that as the cause of her disagreeableness. Most wicked flout! There never yet was an unhappy old-maid, who would not have been equally unhappy as a wife—and more guilty, for she would have made two people miserable instead of one. It needs only to count up all the unhappy women one knows—women whom one would not change lots with for the riches of the queen of Sheba, to see that most of them are those whom fate has apparently loaded with benefits, love, honor, ease, luxury, leisure; and denied only the vague fine something, as indescribable as it is unattainable—the capacity to enjoy them all.

Unfortunate ones! You see by their countenances that they never knew what it is to enjoy. That thrill of thankful gladness, oftenest caused by little things—a lovely bit of nature, a holiday after long toil, a sudden piece of good news, an unexpected face, or a letter that warms one's linnest heart—to them is altogether incomprehensible. To hear one of them in her rampant phrase, you would suppose the whole machinery of the universe, down even to the weather, was in league against her small individuality; that every thing everybody did, or said, or thought, was with one sole purpose—her personal injury. And when she sinks to the melancholy mood, though your heart may bleed for her, swear how horribly real are her self-ruined sufferings, still your tenderness sits massily, more as a

duty than a pleasure; and you often feel, and are shocked at feeling, that her presence acts upon you like the proverbial wet blanket, and her absence gives you an involuntary sense of relief.

For, though we may pity the unhappy ever so lovingly and sincerely, and strive with all our power to lift them out of their grief—when they beg it, and refuse to be lifted out of it, patience sometimes fails. Human life is so full of pain, that once past the youthful delusion that a sad conscience is interesting, and an incurable woe the most delightful thing possible, the mind instinctively turns where it can get rest and cheer and sunshine. And the friend who can bring to it the largest portion of these is, of a natural necessity, the most useful, the most welcome, and the most dear.

The "happy woman"—in this our world, which is apparently meant to be the road to perfection, never its goal, you will find too few specimens to be ever likely to mistake her—you will recognize her presence the moment she crosses your path. Not by her extreme liveliness—lively people are rarely either happy or able to diffuse happiness; but by a sense of brightness and cheerfulness that comes with her, as an evening sunbeam across your path or wall. Like the fairy Order in the nursery tale, she takes up the tangled threads of your mind, and reduces them to regularity, till you distinguish a clear pattern through the ugly mass. She may be neither handsome nor entertaining, yet somehow she makes you feel "comfortable," because she is

so comfortable herself. She shames you out of your complainings, for she makes none. Yet, mayhap, since it is the divine law that we should all, like our Master, be "made perfect through suffering," you are fully aware that she has had far more sorrow than ever you had; that her daily path, had you to tread it, would be to you as gloomy and full of pitfalls as to her it is safe and bright. She may have even less than the medium lot of earthly blessings, yet all she has she enjoys to the full; and it is so pleasant to see any one enjoy! For her sorrows, she neither hypocritically denies, nor proudly smothers them—she simply bears them; therefore they come to her, as sorrows were meant to come, naturally and wholesomely, and passing over leave her full of compassion for all who may have to endure the same.

Thus, whatever her fate may be, married or single, rich or poor, in health or sickness—though a cheerful spirit has twice as much chance of health as a melancholy one—she will be all her days a living justification of the ways of Providence, who makes the light as well as the darkness, nay, makes the light out of the darkness. For not only in the creation of a world, but in that which is equally marvellous, the birth and development of every human soul, there is a divine verity symbolized by the one line—

"And God said, Let there be light; and there was light!"

FASHION.

FROM

MRS. SYDNEY COX'S

FRIENDLY COUNSEL

FOR

GIRLS.



FASHION.

"Shall the worldly will's whimsy my reason control?
Shall I yield up the freedom and life of the soul?
Shall I come to the aid of Jehovah to lend?
Shall I bow down and worship the creature of dust?
Shall I give up the hope I received at my birth,
The promise of heaven, for the trifles of earth?"



N extremely fashionable girl!" "A very worldly girl!" "A thorough bellecoen young lady!" Why is it that the above exclamations are so frequently heard in reference to the *déshabées* of the present day? So general are they that I doubt not even the youngest of my readers has heard them applied to some one of her relations or acquaintances. That they are terms of reproach more than of commendation there can be little doubt. That they imply censure rather than approval no one will deny. Yet no pause, then, a moment, to consider what is their true meaning, and why it is that they convey a sense of coldness, heartlessness, and selfishness greater than their *literal* signification would suggest. If the being an ex-

truly fashionable girl meant only one who likes fine clothes and fine houses, fine carriages and fine parties, there would surely be no great cause to think the term opprobrious. Such things are ever pleasing to the young, and youth is the season for their enjoyment. But if you substitute *love for life*, and take that to be the true interpretation of the expression, you will be at no loss to perceive wherein the opprobrium lies. If fashion be kept within due bounds, and at a respectful distance, she is a very harmless dame. It is only when she demands a sacrifice of duty or of health, of too much time or too much money, that she is to be shunned and avoided. A graceful compliance with the fashion of the day, so far as may be compatible with your position in life, whether in manner or in dress, is claimed by the habits of good society. But once go beyond this, once yield either or all of the sacrifices I have named, and fashion becomes a heathen goddess, a false idol before which you bow.

The next expression which we have to consider is a "worldly girl." Now, if this implied nothing more than one whose lot in life it was to mix a good deal in the world, we need give no further thought to the matter; for it is the destiny of such to be much in the world, and of some to be much isolated from it. But it has a deeper meaning. Worldly girls are those who do not take the world at its true value, who allow it to have undue weight and undue influence, unmindful how fleeting are its triumphs and its pleasures, and unmindful of that

high authority which tells us to be "in the world but not of it." Think well of those words, my young friends. None that I might use could so forcibly teach you to avoid worldliness and its manifold evils; none that I might select could so vividly describe a high aim of life, a standard of excellence which we should do well to keep steadily in view.

The third expression which we have to examine and dissect is that of being a *thorough ballroom young lady*. Many of the foregoing remarks are equally applicable in this case; but there is yet one other view of its meaning to which I would call your attention. I take it to imply that the thorough ballroom girl is not very thorough in anything else; that the ballroom is the *only* place for which she is fitted, and the *only* sphere in which she shines. Does her happiness consist in these things, and is she peevish and displeas'd when out of the way of partaking of them? These are the true tests of what a thorough ballroom young lady is. No one would wish her to be otherwise than happy and merry—to look her best and do her best—while partaking of any harmless pleasure; but is she equally agreeable in her own home circle? Will she be merry the next morning, playing with her younger brothers and sisters? and happy in the evening, reading to her invalided father or mother? The liveliness and grace, the joyousness and amiability, which win a ballroom triumph, are of little value unless they spring from higher qualities, and are

equally ready to shine forth in daily life and in home duties.

There is an old saying that "society should be treated as a child, and never permitted to dictate;" and assuredly, so far as fashionable society is concerned, it is a wise maxim, for her dictates are often strangely opposed both to good taste and to common sense. I cannot resist a few words to point out to you the absurdity of conforming to fashions that do not suit your personal appearance or position in life. Perhaps no more striking instance of this could I name than the mode of wearing the hair which was lately so prevalent. The empress of the French chose to comb and strain her hair entirely off her face; and immediately about half the young ladies in the fashionable world arranged their hair *à l'empereur* likewise. It suited well the delicate features and pensive expression of the queen of fashion, but, with rare exceptions, it was frightfully unbecoming to English girls. I merely allude to this as one of the many instances in which fashions have been adopted in a singularly foolish and thoughtless manner. Strange indeed it is how much people will sacrifice—*ay*, young and old alike—to this self-invented goddess! Happy may they count themselves, who, looking back over the sunny plains of youth from the colder heights of maturer years, have not to mourn for time, wealth, duty, comfort, peace, or health, laid down and sacrificed at the same unhallowed shrine.

BOULIN'S FAVORITE PUPIL.

Picture to yourself a fashionably furnished house in a fashionable street in London, during the height of what is called *the season* in that modern Babylon. Further, command to your mental gaze a lady in the prime of life, dressed in and surrounded by whatever fashion just then most arbitrarily dictated to her worshippers; and you have the truest portrait I can give you of the house and the mother of my heroine. The former is No. 250 Park-street, Grosvenor-square; the latter is Mrs. Marmaduke Browne. Be particular in noticing the Marmaduke, please, gentle reader, and also the *e* at the end of the surname, for the lady in question was herself very particular about these matters, and was frequently heard to declare that they were the only redeeming point, the one accompanying mercy bestowed upon her in having to bear so terribly plebeian an appellation. Her husband, a good-natured man, with what is vulgarly termed more money than wits, had formerly been major in a crack regiment; and having now no professional occupation, he divided his time pretty equally between lounging at his club, escorting his wife hither and thither, and lavishing every species of luxury and indulgence upon his only child, a daughter just entering on her fourteenth year.

Ella Browne was a slightly-formed and rather elegant girl; a little too pale and delicate looking for decided prettiness, and her beauty also somewhat

marked by an expression of peevishness; but pretty nevertheless, or, as her mother often said, "decidedly aristocratic and attractive."

"Would you like to accompany your papa and me to the Twickenham *fit* on Tuesday, Ella?" asked Mrs. Brown, as she swept majestically to her seat at the luncheon-table; "Lady Grant has written a most kind invitation for you, and says it will be partly a juvenile party."

"Oh, how delightful!" exclaimed Ella, clapping her hands. "What a dear thing Lady Grant is to have thought of me. It is a *marriage d'essai*, isn't it, mamma?"

"Don't call people *things*, Ella," replied her mother, without deigning to notice the latter part of the exclamation. "That is one disadvantage in your governesses being French and German, they allow you to speak such inelegant English; however, one cannot have quite every thing in this world," added the lady with a sigh.

"It is a *marriage d'essai*, mamma, isn't it?" repeated Ella; "and I may wear my lovely blue dress that I had the other day for cousin Sophy's wedding; the blue satin boots to match will just *do* for dancing; and I am learning such an exquisite *pas seul* for *l'été*. It is very like one that we saw at the opera, mamma, only altered a little for private dancing, only look." And Ella jumped up from the luncheon-table, and performed a most wonderful step for her mother's admiration.

Dancing was Ella's favorite accomplishment,

I must tell you. She was very graceful; and when I add that she was Cullen's favorite pupil of that year, you will form some idea of her proficiency.

At length the morning of Lady Grant's *fit* arrived, and Ella was in the wildest spirits. She practiced all her favorite *chassés* and *plissés* before the dressing-room mirrors, and then admired her toilet to her heart's content.

The weather was all that could be desired by the partakers of an outdoor entertainment; a soft west wind, a brilliant sun, and no dust to lessen the enjoyment of the drive, for there had been a violent shower-storm the previous afternoon, such a deluge indeed, as at one time threatened to destroy half Lady Grant's floral arrangements, and carry away the marquee that had been erected for dancing and refreshments. Her gardeners and workmen had been active, however, in setting matters to rights; and now the only remaining mischief was, that the lawns and grounds were everywhere soaked and saturated.

"I hope you have good thick boots on, Ella," said the major, as he joined his wife and daughter, who were already waiting for the carriage. "My dear child," he continued, catching a glimpse of the blue satin *chassés*, "you cannot possibly go in those things; the soles are no thicker than paper, and you've no idea how wet you will find the grounds at Twickenham."

Ella pouted and protested vehemently. "She must wear boots to match her dress, it was all the

fashion; she could not dance in thicker boots, she would rather stoy away from the *fête* altogether, than change them."

Her mother also took her part, saying "she did not think the ground would be so wet as the major imagined;" so he was obliged at length reluctantly to yield, though still declaring that "it was the most foolish thing he ever knew, and Ella would certainly catch her death."

The *fête* was quite a success, every one said, and the arrangements perfect. Not, alas for Ella's boots! the juveniles were to dance on the lawn. The marquise was to be reserved entirely for the elder portion of the guests. Not to dance was out of the question for Ella, and to place herself among the grown-up young ladies would never do. So Ella danced on the damp lawn, little heeding her wet feet; and then she sat down to rest, and eat ices, and then danced again, so getting alternately heated and chilled, until the end of the entertainment.

Driving back to London, Mrs. Browne was so engrossed with the pleasures of the day that she scarcely noticed her young daughter; but the major perceived that Ella's usually pale face was very dusky, and her hand strangely feverish.

"Are you too warm, Ella?" he asked, as the carriage drove up at their door.

"No, papa, I am very cold; quite shivering with cold," said Ella, shifting the action to the word.

"Ah, you've caught cold," said the major; "it

is these thin boots. Do make haste, my dear, and change them."

The young lady did not make any reply, but marched off to the housekeeper's room in quest of tea.

"O Miss Ella! why whatever has come to you?" exclaimed the old servant. "Your face is as red as *anything*, and your hands is as hot as my *fe*."

"Don't bother!" replied Ella calmly; "but just give me a cup of tea—I'm so thirsty—and take off these boots for me. Papa says they're damp."

"Damp! Miss Ella; well, to be sure, if they ain't as wet as wet can be!" said the housekeeper, obeying her young mistress' instructions, and then endeavoring to pull into shape the little blue satin boots, so damp and soiled as to be scarcely recognizable.

Ella drank cup after cup of tea with fervid eagerness, and then, hastily changing her dress, she joined her father and mother at dinner. It was usually a great object of ambition with her to be allowed to partake of this late meal; but, on the present occasion, Ella's appetite had quite forsaken her, and delicacy after delicacy was sent away untouched.

"You are eating no dinner, Ella," said the major, looking earnestly at his only child.

"I've been having tea in Mrs. Jewell's room," replied Ella, concealing the fact that she had eaten nothing; "and I am dreadfully tired."

So the major was obliged to be satisfied with those excuses; and directly, when dinner was over, Ella went to bed, feeling very ill, but little dreaming that for five long weary weeks that bed was to be one of continual suffering and sickness for her.

The illness commenced with sore-throat and fever; then inflammation of the lungs, and delirium made their appearance; and, in an agony of alarm, Ella's parents consulted two of the most skillful physicians in London in the young patient. At first they were truly silent as to her prospect of recovery; but at length youth gained the victory, and she was pronounced to be slowly mending. A slow mending indeed it was, leaving her a mere shadowy resemblance of her former self; and having also, it was found, the seeds of consumption, or, at all events, such debility of chest and lungs as would be likely to develop itself in consumption, unless extreme care and caution were used.

Need I tell you that Ella was watched and tended in every way that parental love could suggest? The London home was given up for one at Torquay. Winters were forgotten under Indian skies, and the cold winds of English spring-tides were exchanged for balmy gales in the sunny south.

Four years passed thus, and Ella grew into a lovely girl; somewhat wild, perhaps, as children and youths are wont to be, but apparently growing daily stronger, and exceeding the major's expectations gratulation that they had effected consump-
tion of its prey.

The fifth winter after my heroine's illness was to have been spent, like its predecessors, at Nice; but, just when the usual preparations for flight were progressing, Ella became engaged to a young officer, whose regiment was quartered in Exeter. Very naturally the young people did not relish the prospect of being so soon separated, and for so many months, but of course Captain Elliot's accompanying his fair fiancée and her parents to Nice was quite out of the question. It was then the last week in September, and in another ten days they ought to be making their way southward.

"I think it is great nonsense taking me abroad at all this winter," said Ella, one morning at breakfast; "and so Alfred thinks."

Alfred, be it known, was Captain Elliot.

"What can be the use of it?" she continued, rather pettishly. "I am quite strong and well now; and it is very certain when I am married I cannot always spend the winters on the Continent."

"Better spend them there so long as you can, though, my dear," said the major, looking up from the columns of the "Times," in which he had been absorbed. "Dr. Collier assures me that every year we succeed in keeping you free from coughs we lessen the chance of their recurrence."

"Dr. Collier is a regular old fogey!" exclaimed Ella. "I haven't had any cough worth mentioning the last two years."

Later in the day the subject was again under discussion, and this time Captain Elliot was present.

"Would you have any objection to consult the doctor about it?" he asked, addressing himself more especially to Ella's father. "Of course I would not for worlds that Ella incurred the slightest risk; but if Dr. Colliver thought she might safely spend this one winter in Devon, it would be the greatest possible happiness to us both."

Major Browne hesitated for a few moments; but Ella looked so thoroughly well and blooming, and, moreover, she put her little hand so coaxingly in her father's just at that moment, that it did seem difficult to refuse. I suspect, too, that the major was himself getting weary of these annual migrations, and regretted not a little the loss of his English comforts and circle of friends for so great a portion of every year. At all events he gave a rather reluctant consent to Dr. Colliver's being consulted, and the very same afternoon he accompanied his wife and daughter in due form to ascertain the much-dreaded opinion. Dr. Colliver was the most eminent physician in Torquay at the time of which I am writing. He was an elderly man, and had the character of being equally skilful and kind-hearted. He listened attentively to all the details of the case; smiled kindly at Ella when her engagement was spoken of; made some courteous little jokes about the misery of lovers' separations; and then proceeding to business, as he called it, made his usual professional examination of his patient's throat and lungs.

"Very satisfactory, very satisfactory, indeed,"

said the doctor, putting down his stethoscope. "Yes, indeed, Miss Ella, I think you may safely pass this winter in England, provided—oh, wait a moment, don't be in such a hurry!" he added, observing Ella's beaming face of delight—"provided you adhere rigidly to the stipulations I am about to make."

Ella pouted a little, and looked longingly at the stethoscope, as if she would have liked to throw it at the doctor.

"You must avoid hot rooms and night air, Miss Ella, as you would a pestilence," continued the physician; "and you must consent to wear always a bodice of wash-leather high up to your throat, under your outer dress. If these matters are strictly attended to, I think I may safely sanction your spending the winter here."

Ella gave another longing look at the stethoscope, for she did not at all relish the stipulations. However, any thing was better than being carried away to Nice next week, and leaving poor Alfred to woe and pine, or, horror of horrors! to flirt with some one else in the absence of his bride-elect.

That evening Captain Elliot dined with the Browns, and was informed of Dr. Colliver's verdict.

"What, not walk all the winter? not go to any parties?" exclaimed Ella's intended husband; "what a horrid bore!"

And when the young lady proceeded to tell him about the leather bodice, he could scarcely have

looked more distressed had a strait-waistcoat been prescribed for him. However, Ella's father was presumptory in having these orders obeyed, and for some weeks all went well. But, unluckily, early in December Major Brown was obliged to go to London to superintend some law business, and the morning after his departure, the post brought a note from Captain Elliot's mother and sisters, containing a pressing invitation for Ella to spend a few days with them. Their place was only ten miles from Turquay; the weather was still mild, and almost spring-like; and, crowning temptation of all, there was to be a dance there the following week in honor of the coming of age of one of the family, at which, of course, Captain Elliot was to be present.

"I really think you had better not go, Ella," said her mother; "you know you must not dance any thing but quadrilles, and you will look very odd and dowdy in a high dress among those stylish-looking Elliot girls."

"I suppose I look quite old-maidish in them, mamma, do I not?" replied Ella; "high bodices are not in the least the fashion this winter, not even for *demi-toilette*. What shall I do?"

"Well, my dear, I don't know about looking old-maidish," replied the older lady; "but you look very unfashionable; and it is a greater pity because you have such a fair skin and such pretty shoulders."

This speech went far in rousing poor Ella's half-struggling vanity. She declared "the high dresses

were all her father and the doctor's dignity was gone, and she should wear a low body and short skirted, like other girls. There would be no night air for her to encounter, as the ballroom was at the Elliotts' own house; and as to papa," asked the young lady, "he need know nothing about it, for he will be still in London."

Mrs. Brown laughed, and said Ella was a *scruply darling*; and so the discussion ended.

A lovely ball-dress of white tulle and scarlet blossoms was ordered for my heroine that afternoon; and when on the much anticipated evening, Captain Elliot saw her arrayed in it, he said, and truly, that she was "passing fair."

It was a very brilliant assembly, and Ella soon became aware of the admiration she excited, and which an occasional glance in arois mirror fully confirmed. The fashionable dress had indeed won her a ballroom triumph. And one transgression having so far succeeded, of course the next thing was to join in every dance, and forget all the doctor's injunctions in the delights of waltz and polka.

My tale is nearly ended. Ella caught a severe cold, which immediately settled upon her lungs, and ten days after the Elliotts' ball, Dr. Colliver pronounced his young patient's case to be hopeless. There was the mourning, lamentation, and weeping when such decrees go forth; and then there was a hurried flight to a warmer climate. But Ella's days were numbered.

A magnificent monument of white marble, surmounted by a broken column, often attracts the admiration of visitors to the English burying-ground at Pau. They sigh and say, "How sad!" when they read the mournful tablet; little dreaming that it covers only one of fashion's slaves, and records a life wilfully sacrificed to the same exacting goddess.



NOVEL READING.

FROM

"THE GREYSON LETTERS,"


BY HENRY ROGERS.



THE GREYSON LETTERS.

LETTER I.

MY DEAR NINA:

 AM going to write you a long letter; but I scarcely think it will be pleasant to you to read it, for it is to chide you. Yet, as you know I should not chide you except for your good, or what I *believed* your good, I hope you will read these lines attentively, for your loving uncle's sake.

I saw, my dear, with regret, during my recent visit, that you are too fond, far too fond, of novel reading. There; I see your imploring look, and hear the exostulation, "O uncle, do you really think so?" Of course I think so, Mary, or I should not say so, for I never say what I do not think.

But I certainly do not expect to hear from you, my love—for you are a girl of sense (be pleased to recollect again that I do not say what I do not think—will not that propitiate you?)—the answer I once received from a young lady to whom I addressed a similar exostulation. "I suppose, then,"

said she, "you would disapprove of all novel reading." That, thought I, is an answer perfectly worthy of one whose logic has been fed on novels. "H," said I to her, "I were to blame a lad for eating too much, or too voraciously, or filling his stomach with tarts and sugar-plums, would you infer that *therefore* I meant that he was not to eat at all, or that pastry and sweetmeats were absolutely forbidden him?"

No, I am far from thinking that novels may not be innocently read; so far from that, I think they may be *usefully* read. But all depends, as in the case of the tarts and sugar-plums, on the quality and quantity.

The *imagination* is a faculty given us by God, as much as any other, and if it be not developed, our minds are injured. Now, works of fiction—of a high order, I mean, such as the best of Walter Scott's or Miss Edgeworth's—healthfully stimulate this faculty; and in measure, therefore, they should be read.

Taste should be cultivated; and fictitious works, inspired by real genius, have a beneficial tendency that way.

Novels may, and often do, inculcate important lessons of life and conduct, in a more pleasing form than the simply didactic style admits of.

When based on knowledge of human nature, and developed with dramatic skill, a novel may teach away an important truth of moral philosophy more effectively than an abstruse treatise on it.

When the *style* of novels is what it ought to be—and what it will be, if they are worth reading—they tend (always an important part of education) to add to our knowledge of language, and our command over it.

Lastly, as we must all have *some* mental relaxation, (and if the greater part of our hours be diligently given to duty, we are both entitled to it and in need of it,) such relaxation is easily and legitimately found in the occasional perusal of a judicious work of fiction.

You see how liberal I am, and that if it is no odd, rusty, strait-laced critic that speaks to you; therefore "peruse my words."

Every thing, you observe, depends on *quality* and *quantity*. These must determine whether the novels you read be *mental aliment* or *mental poison*. Now, as to the *first*, I have no hesitation in saying that the immense majority of novels have no tendency to fulfil any of the ends I have pointed out; they are mere rubbish; and, forgive me, several of those I recently saw in your hands from your circulating library deserve no other character. For my part, I should not care if some Caliph Omar treated all novels—except some three thousand volumes or so—as the original caliph treated the Alexandrian library, and made a huge bonfire of them. "Three thousand volumes!" you will say; "why, that is at the rate of a three-volume novel a week for twenty years! You see liberal, indeed."

"Very true; but I did not say you would do well

to read them all, though as many may be worth reading. And let me tell you that you may infer something else from my admissions. With so many more good novels at command than you can possibly read, will you not be utterly unreasonable if you indulge in any of the trumpery of which I have been just speaking? Rely upon it, my dear, that the reading of the second and third and fourth-rate class of novels not only does not secure any of the ends of which I have spoken above, but has a directly contrary tendency. These books enfeeble the intellect, impoverish the imagination, vulgarize taste and style, give false or distorted views of life and human nature, and what is perhaps worst of all, waste that precious time which might be given to solid useful improvement. I assure you, I have often been astonished and grieved at the manner in which young minds, originally capable of better things, have been injured by continual dwelling over the slip-slop of *literate* novels. They sink insensibly to the level of such books; and how can it be otherwise? for this voracious appetite, "which grows by what it feeds on," prevents the mind's coming in contact with any thing better, and these wretched compositions become the standard. Observe that these minds are enfeebled not only in tone—for that would result from reading too much of any novels, even the best, just as the stomach would get disordered from eating too much pastry, though the queen's delatious cooks might make it; but I mean enfeebled, degraded in taste—in the perception of the true and the

beautiful in works of high intellectual art. Such impoverished minds talk with rapture of the interesting "characters" in these volumes of miserable fatalists; of some "charming young Montague," or some "sweet Emma Montfort," (both more insipid than the "white of an egg,") who talk reason of soft nonsense, and get involved in absurd adventures which set all probability at defiance. You young ladies often melt into tears at manly scenes, which to a just perception or a masculine taste could only produce laughter; condescend to weigh the merits of slip-slop sentiment or descriptive platitudes beneath all criticism; and sagely compare the power of the three volumes of the name "Julia Montrose, or the Broken Heart," with the equally name three volumes of "Pizarro, or the Bandit's Cave;" when the only question with any reader of sense (if any such reader could wade through the pages of either) is as to which of the two works is most utterly bankrupt in knowledge, taste, character, style, and, in fact, every element that can redeem a work of fiction from being utterly contemptible and intolerable!

And this depravity of taste, believe me, may go on to any extent; for, as the appetite for reading such works becomes more and more voracious and indiscriminate, it leaves neither power nor inclination to appreciate better books. The mind at last becomes so vitiated that it craves and is satisfied with any thing in the shape of a story—a series of fictitious adventures, no matter how put together; no matter whether the events be probably conceived,

the characters justly drawn, the descriptions true to nature, the dialogue spirited, or the contrary. So propaetereous is the interest that may be taken in a mere train of fictitious incidents, quite apart from the points which has conceived or adorned it, that many a young lady will go through nearly the same story a thousand times in a thousand different novels, the names alone being altered. I assure you it is an inscrutable mystery to me, my dear, how they can still endure that charming Miss —, whom, under a hundred aliases they have already married to that sweet young gentleman with an equal number of names, in spite of the opposition of parents on both sides, dangerous rivals, and the most impossible hindrances which beset by flood and field.

You will perhaps say (what is very true) that it is possible to get so entangled in a mesh of fictitious incidents, that though you know, or soon suspect, the novel to be unworthy of perusal, you do not like to lay it down till the deuce is out. Do you ask how you may break the spell and escape? Then I will tell you, provided you will promise to act on my advice. Read any such novel, my dear, Hebrew fashion, that is, backwards; go at once to the end of the third volume, and marry off the hero and heroine, or drown them, or hang the one and break the heart of the other, as may be most meet to you and the writer. If, after having thus secured your catastrophe, you cannot find heart to "plod your weary way" through the intervening desert of words, depend upon it you will lose nothing by throwing

the book adds at once. And, further, you may take this also for a rule: if you do not feel, as you read on, that what you read is worth reading for its own sake—that you could read it over again with pleasure; if you do not feel that the incidents are naturally connected, the scenes vividly described, the dialogue dramatic and piquant, the characters sharply drawn, be sure the book is not worth perusal. No fiction is, *intellectually*, worth anybody's reading, that has not considerable merit as a work of art; and such works are ever felt to be worth reading again, often with increased interest. It is indeed the truest test of all the highest efforts of this kind; new beauties reveal out upon us on each perusal. Dip anywhere into the "Macbeth" of Shakespeare, or the "Antiquary" of Walter Scott, and you still find that, though you know the whole from beginning to end, the force of painting, the truth yet originality of the sentiments, the spirit of the dialogue, the beauty of imagery and expression, still lure you to read on, wherever you chance to open, with ever renewed delight.

Now let me add that if, for a little while, you never read any fiction but such as will bear to be often read, you will need no caution against any of an inferior kind. Your taste will soon become pure and elevated, and you will nanasate a bad novel as you would a dose of tartar emetic.

I shall ever feel grateful to the memory of Walter Scott. I happened to fall in with his best novels when quite a boy; and I never could endure after-

wards the ordinary run of this class of literature. When Lindsay was acting as amanuensis to Scott in the composition of "Ivanhoe," he could not help congratulating the author on the happy effects which his beautiful fictions would have, by sweeping clean the circulating libraries of infinite rubbish. "Sir Walter Scott's eyes," he tells us, "filled with tears." And no doubt his fictions had considerable effect in elevating the taste of that novel-reading generation; but a "new generation, which know not" Walter, are being introduced to taste of the ephemeral current noxious before they have the means of instituting a comparison. Be not you one of them. . . .

By the way, I may tell you that I fell in with "Ivanhoe" at thirteen, on a bright July morning in my midsummer holidays. I had been sent to the house of a scholar, about a mile off, with some messages, I forget what. I found the family out, but I found "Ivanhoe" at home. It was lying conveniently at hand; I looked into it, became absorbed, and spent the whole day in the garden reading it, utterly forgetful of dinner, tea, and supper, and never stopped till I had finished it. There are among Scott's fictions several I admire much more now, but none ever did me such service.

Ever your loving uncle,

T. S. B. G.



LETTER II.

TO THE LADY.



AND now, my dear Mary, I come to the second "head" of my discourse; so imagine yourself in church, and that your good clergyman is reading (as I doubt not he often does) an admirable glance towards your pew, as he arrives at the same critical stage in his sermon. My second "head," then, is to show that you may read too many even of the very best novels. "True," you will say, "if I read nothing else." Aye, and very far within that limit may you read too many; let me add, that any excess has a tendency to make you relish reading nothing else.

I have said that, in moderation, they are useful to develop and stimulate the imagination; but the imagination may be too much stimulated and too much developed—"developed" till it at length struts all the other faculties, and "stimulated" till it is not exhilarated raptly, but tipsy. The severer faculties demand a proportionate culture, and a more sedulous one; for to cultivate the imagination, in whatever degree it is susceptible of it at all, is the easiest thing in nature; the difficulty is to train it justly. Some hardy flowers will bloom in any

soil, and with little or no culture; and so will those of *lucy*.

The greater part of your time should be given to solid studies or practical duties; this should be your rule. As relaxation, to be of any value, should be moderate, so novels must not claim much of your time. They should be the condiments and spices, the confectionary of your ordinary diet; not the substantial joints, not the *pièce de résistance*. You might as well attempt to live on creams and syllabubs.

But you will say, perhaps, "Is it possible to read a novel by chapter? Is it in human nature to leave off in the very middle of that critical adventure in which the hero saves the life of the heroine, or close the book just in the middle of his declaration, and without listening to the delicious lovers' nonsense which passes on that occasion, or finding out how it all ends?" To us, my dear, it would be very *easy*; or rather I should find a difficulty perhaps, in general, in *not* skipping—*they* don't look so cross—all that same delicious nonsense. But I admit that it is difficult for many young ladies to do so, or for any novel reader, when the fiction has real taste: to most young novel readers the task would be impossible.

And so, that you may not say I counsel you to perform "impossibilities," my dear, take my advice. Do not tie yourself to any such restriction as a chapter at a time. "Oh, delightful!" you will say. Stay a minute.

I would have you read novels only *so* moderately.

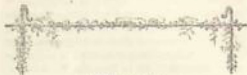
that there shall be no occasion for restricting yourself when you do read them. Let them be read now and then as a reward of strenuous exertion, or for having mastered some difficult book; or let them be reserved for visits and holidays. Do not—if I may use a metaphor of that vulgar kind I have already so frequently employed—do not have a novel *always in cat*. Keep it for an hour of well-earned leisure, or as a relief after arduous duty, and then read it without stint. This occasional full meal will then do you no harm; and, depend on it, the fare will be doubly delicious, from the keanness of the appetite, the previous fast, and the rucity of the indulgence. But you will say, "What shall I do for my daily hour or so of rightful mental relaxation, to which you admit I am entitled?" Well, if you will take my advice, you will *indulge* choose—and oh, the infinite treasures, which neither you nor I can fully exhaust, literature spreads before us!—something which, while it fully answers the purpose of healthful and innocent mental amusement, will not hold attention too long untroubled, or lead you to turn to other less exciting compositions with a sigh. Take, for example, some beautiful poem; or a paper of one of our British magazines; or an interesting book of travels; or an article of Macaulay, who, of almost all writers, certifies, in greatest perfection, instruction and delight. The names of Milton, Gray, Cowper, Addison, Johnson, Crabbe, and a thousand more, show what a boundless field of selection lies before you.

And now do you want a practical rule as to when you have been reading novels, however good, too much or too long? Here, then, is an infallible one: When ordinary books of a sober and instructive character are read with disregard; when, for example, a work of well-written history seems to you, as compared with the piquant and vivid details of fiction, as if you were looking on the wrong side of a piece of tapestry; when you cannot endure dull, sober reality; when you return to practical duties with reluctance, and the work-a-day world looks sordid and sad-colored to you, rest assured that you have been lingering too long in fairy-land, and indulging too much in day-dreams. And, further, remember this: that as long as you are *able* to say such unalloyed *amen*, you have not carried the culture of your intellectual powers or your practical habits to the right point; for the moment that is done, such a result becomes impossible. A mind thus equipped for life and duty can indulge in fiction only within certain moderate limits—for purposes of innocent unbending, of legitimate amusement. Beyond that point fiction elays; and the healthy mind, so far from repining that it cannot live longer in the fool's paradise, or if you like not that harsh term, among Elysian shadows, is conscious of no strong desire to come back to the regions of daylight and reality, as the fevered novel reader feels to dream on in cloud-land. It sighs for a return to the substantial and the real; and can no more live in fiction than it can bear to

be always dancing polkas, or playing for ever at backgammon. Persevere for a certain time—for the next two or three years—I think you are now eighteen (you need not blush to acknowledge your age yet)—in disciplining your mind; and you are safe, I will answer for it, from the too dominant sway of any, even the greatest, enchanters of fiction. But my strongest reasons of all for the advice I am giving you, are yet behind, and I must reserve them for another letter.

Ever yours, R. E. G.





LETTER III.

TO THE SAME.

MY DEAR MARY:

NOW proceed to those "strongest" reasons to which I alluded in my last. I have reserved them for the close of my "sermon," because they are the most important.

All inordinate indulgence in works of fiction, then, tends to pervert our views of life instead of enlarging them, which, if judiciously chosen and read in moderation, they will do; and to quench benevolence, which, under similar restrictions, they will tend to cherish.

The excessive indulgence perverts our views of life. The young mind is but too prone of itself to live in a world of fancy; indeed, in one sense, it is necessary that the imagination should thus be ever creating the future for us, or we should not act at all; but then its influence must be well regulated by a due regard to the laws of the *protée*, or we shall lose the present and the future too: the present, in dreaming of an irrational future; and the future, because we have not prepared ourselves for any

possible future by the proper employment of the present. If a young gentleman's or young lady's mind, of any intelligence, could be laid bare, and all the fantastical illusions it has ever indulged exposed to the world, I am afraid it would fairly expire in an *agency of elixir at the blackness*; it would be otherwise found, quite apart from novel reading, to have indulged largely in the veriest chimeras of hope and fancy. But then this tendency, difficult to control at the best, is apt to be fatally strengthened by undue indulgence in fictitious literatures. If a too-early love affair and a circulating library should both concur to exacerbate the exaltation, you may look for stark "mid-summer madness." I fear that anticipations of unlooked-for windfalls of fortune, of success achieved without toil, of fame got for the hunting after it, of brides a few degrees above angels, and husbands in whom Apollo and Adonis are happily combined, are a not uncommon result of dwelling too long in congenial fiction. Nor do I at all doubt that a thousand instances of failure in professional life, of unbroken and imprudent engagements, of marriages or ill-assorted matches, may be traced to the same cause. At all events, this poisonous practice perhaps and intensifies the natural tendency to day-dreaming. Had it not been for this, the spell would have been broken—the imaginative sleep-walker awakened by the rude shocks and jags of practical life. But the dream and the walk are often continued too long, and the unhappy romanticist vanishes—over a precipice!

But still more perilous is the effect of this bad habit on *benevolence*. This may seem strange, but it is very true nevertheless. I grant that sympathy and sensibility depend in a very high degree on the activity of the imagination—on our power of vividly picturing to ourselves the joys and sorrows of others; but do not hastily conclude that excess in reading fiction, provided that fiction be a just picture of life, (which I now believe) can, whatever harm it may do in other directions, do none in this. It may quicken sympathy and strengthen sensibility—nay, in one sense it will do so—and yet, I stick to my paradox notwithstanding; namely, that it tends to weaken practical benevolence, and may end in quenching it altogether.

However, I must make the preliminary remark, that, even if the habit did not render benevolence less active, sensibility is of no value except as it is under the direction of judgment and reason; which presupposes, therefore, the harmonious culture of all the faculties and conceivabilities of our nature. Apart from a well-balanced mind, neither prompt sympathy nor acute sensibility are of much value, and they often only inspire visionary, whimsical, perhaps very noble, but also very impracticable projects.

But I would not have you ignorant, my dear, that the indolence in question is liable to be attended with a much more serious evil than this. To be truly benevolent in heart, and strive to show it, even though the ends were so absurd as to prove that

the heart had robbed the head of all its brains, would be something; to be laughed at as an *idiot* *ougl* would still have some consolation. But the mischief is, that a morbid indulgence of sympathy and sensibility is but too likely to end in extinguishing benevolence. I imagine I hear you say, "Sensibility to distress, and sympathy with it, quench benevolence! this is, indeed, a hard lesson; who can bear it?" It is true, notwithstanding; and so sympathy with distress—*without distress* you understand—and sensibility to it, increases, active benevolence may be in precisely the inverse ratio.

If you ask *how* this can be, I answer, that it depends on a curious law of our mental mechanism, which was pointed out by Bishop Butler, with whose writings, by-the-by, I hope you will be better acquainted some time within the next two years, and which will do you a world more good than a whole Bodleian library of novels. Among many other curious facts in man's moral anatomy, which the great philosopher lays bare, are these two, which, by the way, show distinctly for what God designed us, and what course we ought to take in our own culture: "*That, from our very faculty of habits, peculiar impressions by being repeated grow weaker, and that practical habits are formed and strengthened by repeated acts.*"

But I find my sermon has been so long that, like other preachers, I must, if I continue, knuckle up the fat, though most important part, *in haste*; therefore, as they sometimes do, I will reserve what I

have to say for another discourse, begging you, my fair learner, to ponder the words I have just transcribed for you—if so be you may spell out their meaning, and profit thereby.

Yours affectionately,

R. P. R. G.





LETTER IV.

TO THE LADY.

My Dear MARY:

RESUME the "thread" of my last discourse by expounding the seeming paradox with which it closed. "Who can be more tender-hearted," perhaps you will say, "than heroes and heroines in novels, or more ready to cry than an inveterate novel-reader?" Nevertheless, be pleased to remember, that however prompt the fancy may be to depict distress, or the eye to attest the genuineness of the emotion that distress has awakened, they indicate what may be merely passive states of mind; and no benevolence is worth a farthing that does not proceed to action. Now, the frequent repetition of that species of emotion which fiction stimulates tends to prevent benevolence, because it is out of proportion to corresponding action; it is like that frequent "going over the shoey of virtue in our own thoughts," which, as Butler says, so far from being auxiliary to it, may be obstructive of it.

As long as the balance is maintained between the stimulus given to *imagination* with the conse-

quent emotions on the one hand, and our positive habits which those emotions are chiefly designed to firm and strengthen on the other, so long, I say, the stimulus of the imagination will not stand in the way of benevolence, but aid it; and therefore, my dear, if you will read a novel extra now and then, impose upon yourself the corrective of an extra visit or two to the poor, the distressed, and afflicted! Keep a sort of debtor and creditor account of sentimental indulgence and practical benevolence. I do not care if your pocket-book contains some such memoranda as these: "For the sweet tears I shed over the romantic sorrows of Charlotte Devereux, sent three basins of gruel and a flannel petticoat to poor old Molly Brown." "For sitting up three hours beyond the time over the 'Basil's Bride,' gave half a crown to Betty Smith." "My sentimental agonies over the pages of the 'Broken Heart' cost me three visits to the Orphan Asylum and two extra hours of Dorcas Society work." "Two quarts of candles to poor Joleason's wife and some gaberlins for his ragged children, on account of a good cry over the pathetic story of the 'Forsaken One.'"

But if the luxury—and it is a luxury, and in itself nothing more—of sympathy and mere benevolent feeling be separated from action, then Butler's paradox becomes a terrible truth, and "the heart is not made better," but worse, by it.

And the following rances are peculiarly apt to render the species of emotion which fiction excites, not merely disproportionate to the habits of benev-

alone, but subservient to their formation. First, in order to make the representations of fictitious distress pleasant—and that is the object of any fiction which depicts it, for it is a work of art—there must be a careful exclusion of those repulsive features of distress which shock genuine sensibility and sympathy in real life. Poverty and misfortune and sickness are to be “interesting,” educating; the dirt, the filth, the vulgarity, the ingratitude which real benevolence encounters in the attempt to relieve them, must be removed, not merely from the senses, but so far as possible from the imagination of the reader; no offensive odor must steal from the sick chamber where the faithful heroine suffers or watches, or from the chamber of death itself; none which even the fancy can detect; chloride of lime, and *eau de Cologne*, double-distilled of fancy, must cleanse from the sweet pages every ill odor, lest the delicate reader that lies languidly on the sofa, reft in the luxury of *sons*, (perhaps with streaming eyes and frequent application of the fine cambric,) should feel too acutely; but the refined pleasure thus cunningly extracted out of the sorrows of the world should turn to pain! Now the more this feeling is indulged, the more fastidious it becomes; till at last, if the *quantity* of benevolence has not been in full proportion, the obstacles encountered by benevolence, when it attempts its proper task, become insurmountable, and its efforts are quenched at once. Accordingly, many a young lady has found, on her first attempt to visit the cabins of the poor, and

relieve the wants of the sick, that, as a great general declared, "nothing was so unlike a battle as a review," so nothing is so unlike real benevolence as the luxurious semblance of it excited by a novel, and acted "with great applause" on the theatre of the imagination. So squeamish may this feeling become, that even novels may depict scenes of sorrow all too real. Even the *reflected* light of real life may be too strong for it. The fair reader, in danger of dying of "aromatic pain," cannot tolerate the vividness of this pre-Baphaelite style of literary painting! Perhaps as *art*, it ought not to be tolerated; for art ought to be confined within the limits which secure an over-balance of pleasure. But whether this be a correct canon of art or not, the moral effect of too much novel reading, (let the novels be ever so excellent as works of art,) is just what I say. It is apt to produce a fastidiousness which cannot bear the *real*; no, nor even the faithful *delimitation* of the real. Many a dear novel-reader, one would imagine, supposes that the "*final cause*" (but one) of all the misery in the world, is to furnish the elements of the picturesque and the "interesting," the raw *material* for the fictitious painter—and the "*final cause*" itself, the delicious luxury of that sentimental sympathy with which he inspires the elegant and fastidious reader!

Pleasurable sympathy with *fictitious* distress, and benevolent desire to relieve *real*, differ infinitely. How picturesque some lathsema, squallid esbia, or a gipsy's tent, often looks in a picture! "How pret-

tily," we all say. "that little piece of humanity is introduced there!" yet how few would relish the thought of entering the reality! With what reluctance would they do it, even though benevolence bade! See there an illustration of the difference between sentimental emotion and benevolent principle.

The *luxury* of mere sympathy and sensibility, (now do not look so shocked,) of the "fine feelings" excited by fiction is, when divorced from practical benevolence, so great, that it may actually form a notable element in a person's daily felicity, and yet he may be one of the most selfish creatures in the world!

How delightful it is to sit still, and play, not only with no trouble, but with the liveliest pleasure, the part of great philanthropists! What ignorance and sorrow have been relieved, in fancy, by soft enthusiasms! What sums expended, without costing a farthing! What content and felicity diffused everywhere, and the ungrateful world none the better or the wiser for it all! Sentimental philanthropists, who thus revel in secret well-doing, transcend the gospel maxim of not letting their left hand know what their right hand doeth, for they let neither their right nor their left hand know any thing of the matter! Out upon them!

Now, this selfish luxury not only blinds those who surrender themselves to it by the mask of seeming worth it wears, but by daily exciting, like any other pleasant emotion, a more unrestrained

indulgence, it makes real benevolence, and its kindly tasks, more and more impossible. And thus, as Bishop Butler justly says, the heart may be growing all the more selfish for all the heroic sacrifices of an imaginary virtue.

Pray observe too—and it is well to remember it in the present tendencies of popular literature—that similar effects, in the absence of a genuine practical benevolence, may be produced by an opposite class of delineations from those which exhibit genuine goodness: I mean those which exhibit almost exclusively the follies and weaknesses of mankind. When such descriptions are too often read, no matter how kindly the vein of the humorist, the man who has not trained his heart to pity by actual benevolence is soon apt to fall into a cynical contempt of human infirmity, and to think that all the world's absurdities are games for laughter, when at least as often they call for compassion.

You may perhaps be still puzzled a little to reconcile the paradox of the *secondary* effects of excessive *readability*. You will find all difficult removed if you sufficiently meditate on the fact so beautifully pointed out by the great moralist I quoted in my last. No little, as he shows, is emotion, even the best and most refined, in itself any index of virtue, that emotion may be weakened, and indeed is so, by every practical advance in virtue. It is, as he says, a *gross* law of our nature, (and nothing can be more beautifully adapted to our condition as creatures who are designed for real practical virtues.)

that while our passive emotions decay in vividness by repetition, (though it is true we *crave* them more and more strongly,) our practical habits *strengthen* by exercise; so that, as this writer observes, a man may be advancing in moral excellence by that very course which deadens his emotions. He whose sensibility glows over fictitious scenes of sorrow as the exciting cause of agreeable *passive* sensations, is in the opposite position: he craves them more and more, though he feels them less vividly, just as is the case with the drunkard and his dram; he hankers for it more and enjoys it less. Practical habits, on the other hand, render emotion less vivid, but become more and more easy and pleasant; nay, like all habits, crave their wonted gratification. So true is it, however, that practical habit generally deadens passive impressions, that you may lay it down as a rule, that he who feels poignantly—I do not say *deeply*, but poignantly—the distress he relieves, is a novice in benevolence; and hence novel-reading young ladies and gentlemen often entirely mistake the matter, when they call a man hard-hearted only because he does not display all the sensations and clamorous sentiments of their own impotent benevolence, but just quietly *does* all that they talk of, and perhaps *feels* about. We know that a benevolent medical man may take off a limb as calmly as he would eat his dinner, and yet feel ten times as much real sympathy for the sufferer as a fine lady who would run away, hide her face in her hands, and throw herself on a sofa in the most approved

attitude for fainting or hysterics at the sight of even a drop of blood.

My dear Mary, take it as a caution through life, quite apart from the subject I have been preaching about: suspect—I do not say condemn and hang—but suspect all who indulge in superfluous expression of sentiment, all excessive symbols of sensibility. Those who indulge in these are always neophytes in virtue at the best; and, what is worse, they are very often among the most heartless of mankind. Sterne and Rousseau were types of this class—perfect incarnations of sensibility without benevolence—having, and having in perfection, the “horn” of virtue, but “denying the power thereof.”

Your loving uncle,

Z. E. R. O.



FROM
"DAUGHTERS" AND "WOMEN"
OF ENGLAND
BY
MRS. SARAH STICKNEY ELLIS



LOVE AND COURTSHIP.

LOVE is a subject which has ever been open to discussion, among persons of all classes, and of every variety of mind and character; yet, after all, there are few subjects which present greater difficulties, especially to a female writer. How to compress a subject which has filled so many volumes, into the space of one chapter, is also another difficulty; but I will begin by discussing a large portion of what is commonly called by that name, as wholly unworthy of my attention; I mean, that which originates in mere fancy, without reference to the moral excellence of the object; and if my young readers imagine, that out of the remaining part they shall be able to elicit much amusement, I fear they will be disappointed; for I am one of those who think that the most serious act of a woman's whole life is to love.

What, then, I would ask, is love, that it should be the cause of some of the deepest realities in our experience, and of so much of our sentiment and folly?

The reason why so many persons act foolishly,

and consequently lay themselves open to ridicule, under the influence of love, I believe to originate in the grand popular mistake of disjoining this subject from our serious reading and conversation, and leaving it to the unceremonious treatment of light novels and low jests; by which unnatural system of philosophy, that which is in reality the essence of woman's being, and the highest and holiest among her capabilities, bestowed for the purpose of teaching us of how much our nature is capable for the good of others, has become a thing of sly purpose, and frivolous calculation.

The very expression—"falling in love," has done an incalculable amount of mischief, by conveying an idea that it is a thing which cannot be resisted, and which ~~would~~ ^{must} be given way to, either with or without reason. Persons are said to have fallen in love, precisely as they would be said to have fallen into a fever or an ague-fit; and the worst of this mode of expression is, that among young people, it has led to a general yielding up of the heart to the first impression, as if it possessed of itself no power of resistance.

It is from general notions such as these, that the idea and the name of love have become vulgarised and degraded; and in connection with this degradation, a flood of evil has poured in upon that Eden of woman's life, where the virtues of her domestic character are exercised.

What, then, I would ask again, is love in its highest, holiest character? It is woman's all—her

wealth, her power, her very being. Man, let him love as he may, has ever an existence distinct from that of his affections. He has his worldly interests, his public character, his ambition, his competition with other men—but woman's centre all in that one feeling, and

"In that she lives, or else she has no life."

In woman's love is mingled the trusting dependence of a child, for she ever looks up to man as her protector and her guide; the frankness, the social feeling, and the tenderness of a sister, for would she not suffer to preserve him from harm? Such is love in a noble mind, and especially in its first commencement, when it is almost invariably elevated, and pure, trusting, and disinterested. Indeed, the woman who could mingle low views and selfish calculations with her first attachment, would scarcely be worthy of the name.

So far from this being the case with women in general, I believe, if we could look into the heart of a young girl when she first begins to love, we should find the nearest resemblance to what poetry has described as the state of our first parents when in Paradise, which this life ever presents. All is then colored with an atmosphere of beauty and light; or if a passing cloud sails across the azure sky, reflecting a transient shadow on the scene below, it is but to be swept away by the next balmy gale which leaves the picture once lovely for this momentary interruption of its stillness and repose.

But that which constitutes the essential charm

the first attachment, is its perfect disinterestedness, she who maintains this sentiment in its profoundest character, lives no longer for herself. In all her aspirations, her hopes, her energies, in all her noble doing, her confidence, her enthusiasm, her fortitude, her own existence is absorbed by the interests of another. For herself, and in her own character alone, she is at the same time retiring, meek, and humble, content to be neglected by the whole world—despised, forgotten, or contemned; so that to one being only she may still be all in all.

And is this a love to be lightly spoken of, or harshly dealt with? Oh, no; but it has many a rough blast to encounter yet, and many an insidious enemy to cope with, before it can be stamped with the seal of faithfulness; and until then, who can distinguish the ideal from the true?

I am inclined to think it is from the very purity and disinterestedness of her OWN motives, that woman, in cases of strong attachment, is sometimes tempted to transgress the laws of etiquette, by which her conduct, even in affairs of the heart, is so wisely restricted. But let not the young enthusiast believe herself justified in doing this, whatever may be the nature of her own sentiments. The restrictions of society may probably appear to her both harsh and unreasoned for; but, I must repeat: society has good reasons for the rules it lays down for the regulation of female conduct, and she ought never to forget that points of etiquette ought scrupulously to be observed by those who have principle, for the

sake of those who have not. Besides which, men, who know the world as much better than women, are close observers on these points, and nothing can lessen their confidence in you more effectually, than to find you unscrupulous, or lax, even in your behavior to them individually. If, therefore, your lover perceives that you are regardless of the injunctions of your parents or guardians even for his sake, though possibly he may feel gratified at the moment, yet his opinion of your principles will eventually be lowered, while his trust in your faithfulness will be lowered in the same degree.

In speaking of the estimation, the depth, and the distinctness of woman's love, I would not for a moment be supposed to class under the same head that precocious tendency to fall in love, which some young ladies encourage under the idea of its being an amiable weakness. Never is the character of woman more despicable, than when she stoops to plead her weakness as a merit. Yet some complain that they are naturally so grateful, it is impossible for them to resist the influence of kindness; and thus they fall in love, perhaps with a worthless man—perhaps with two men at once; simply because they have been kindly treated, and their hearts are not capable of resisting kindness. Would that such puerile supplicants for the charity they ill deserve, could be made to understand how many a correct and prudent woman would have gone inconceivably farther than they, in gratitude and generous feeling, had not tight principles been made the

stay of her conduct and the aridder of all her actions. Love which arises out of mere weakness is an easily fixed upon the object as a matter, and consequently is at all times transferable; that which is governed by principle, how much has it to suffer yet how nobly does it survive all trial!

I have said, that woman's love, at least all which deserves that name, is almost universally exalted and noble in its commencement; but that still it wants its highest attribute, until its faithfulness has been established by temptation and trial. Let no woman, therefore, boast of her constancy until she has been put to the test. In speaking of faithfulness, I am far from supposing it to denote merely tenacity in adhering to an engagement. It is easy to be true to an engagement, while false to the individual with whom it is contracted. My meaning refers to faithfulness of heart, and this has many trials in the common intercourse of society, in the flattery and attentions of men, and in the solicitudes of female fancy.

To have loved faithfully, then, is to have loved with singleness of heart and sameness of purpose, through all the temptations which society presents, and under all the assaults of vanity, both from within and without. It is so pleasant to be admired, and so soothing to be loved, that the grand proof of female constancy is, not to add one more conquest to her triumphs, where it is evidently in her power to do so; and therefore, her only protection is to restrain the first wandering thought which might

even lead her fancy astray. The ideas which commonly float through the mind of woman are so rapid, and so indistinctly defined, that when the door is opened to such thoughts, they pour in like a torrent. Then first will arise some new perception of deficiency in the object of her love, or some additional impression of his unkindness or neglect, with comparisons between him and other men, and regret that he has not some quality which they possess, unless under a conviction of her future destiny, plunging her sympathy under that sadness, and, lastly, the commencement of some other infirmity, which at first she has no idea of converting into love.

Such is the manner in which, in thousands of instances, the faithfulness of woman's love has been destroyed, and destroyed for more effectually than if wounded by an open, and, apparently, more formidable foe. And what a wreck has followed! for when woman loses her integrity and her self-respect, she is indeed perished and degraded. While her faithfulness remains unshaken it is true she may, and probably will, have much to suffer; but let her portion in this life be what it may, she will walk through the world with a firm and upright step; for even when solitary, she is not degraded. It may be called a cold philosophy to speak of such consolation being available under the suffering which arises from unkindness and desertion, but who would not rather be the one to bear injury, than the one to inflict it; and the very act of bearing it meekly and reverently, as from the hand of God, has a purifying and

sublimating effect upon the soul, which the faithless and the fickle never can experience.

As friendship is the basis of all true love, it is equally, nay, more important that the latter should be submitted to the same test in relation to its ultimate aim, which ought especially to be the moral and spiritual good of its object. Indeed, without this principle at heart, no love is worthy of the name; because, as its influence upon human nature is decidedly the most powerful of any, its responsibilities are in the same proportion serious and imperative. What, then, shall we think of the woman who entertains a nervous timidity about the personal safety of her lover, without any corresponding anxiety about the safety of his soul?

But there is another delusion equally fatal, and still more frequently prevailing among well-meaning young women: I mean, that of listening to the addresses of a gay man, and making it the condition of her marrying him that he shall become religious. Some even undertake to convert some of this description, without professing any personal interest in the result, and surely, of all the weaknesses by which religion is healed in this world, these are among the greatest. They are such, however, as invariably bring their own punishment; and therefore, a little observation upon the working of this fallacious system upon others will probably be of more service to the young than any observations I can offer. I cannot, however, refrain from the remark, that religion being a matter of personal interest, if a man

will not submit himself to its influence for his own sake, it is not likely he will do so for the sake of another; and the probability is, that, while endeavoring to seduce him, the woman, being the weaker party, will be drawn over to his views and principles; or if hers should be too firm for this, that he will set the hypocrite in order to deceive her, and thus add a new crime to the sum of guilt already contracted.

With a gay man, therefore, a serious woman can have nothing to do, but to contemplate his character as she would that of some being of a different order or species from her own. Even after such a man has undergone a moral and spiritual change there will remain something in his tone of mind and feeling, from which a delicate and sensitive woman will naturally and unavoidably shrink. He will feel this himself, and while the humility and self-abasement which this conviction occasions will constitute a strong claim upon her sympathy and tenderness, they will both be deeply sensible that, in his heart of hearts, there is a remembrance, a shadow, a stain, which a pure-minded woman must ever feel and sorrow for.

"But how are we to know a man's real character?" is the common question of young women. Alas, there is much willing deception on this point. Yet, I trust ourselves, that men are seldom thoroughly known, except under their own roof, or among their own companions. With respect to their moral conduct, however, if they have a low standard of

excellence with regard to the female sex in general, *it is an almost infallible sign that their education, or their habits, have been such as to render them respectable companions in the most intimate and inalienable of all connections.* Good men are accustomed to regard women as equal or superior to themselves in their moral and religious character, and therefore they seldom speak of them with disrespect; but bad men, having no such scale of estimation, can in a very different kind of phraseology, when women, as a class, are the subject of conversation.

Again, *the world is apt to speak of men as being good, because they are merely moral.* But it would be a safe rule for all Christian women to reflect, that such are the temptations to man in his intercourse with the world, that nothing less than the safeguard of religion can render his conduct uniformly moral.

With regard to the social and domestic qualities of a lover, these must also be tried at home. If disrespectful to his mother, and inconsiderate or ungentle to his mother or his sisters, or even if accustomed to speak of them in a coarse, unfeeling, or indifferent manner, whatever may be his intellectual recommendations, as a husband he ought not to be trusted. On the other hand, it may be not given as *an almost certain rule, that the man who is respectful and affectionate to his mother and his sisters, will be so to his wife.*

Having thus described in general terms the requi-

ner in which women ought to love, the next inquiry is, under what circumstances this feeling may be properly indulged. The first restriction to a woman of delicacy, of course, will be never to entertain this sentiment towards one by whom it has not been sought and solicited. Unfortunately, however, there are but too many instances in which attentions, so pointed as not to be capable of being misunderstood, have wantonly been made the means of awakening something more than a preference; while he who had thus obtained this meanest of all triumphs, could smile at the consequences, and exult in his own freedom from any direct committal.

How the peace of mind of the young and the trusting is to be secured against such treatment, it is difficult to say; unless they would adopt the advice of the more experienced, and think less of the attentions of men in general, and more of their own immediate and practical duties, which, after all, are the best preservatives, not only against indolence, melancholy, and romance, but against the almost inevitable accompaniment of these evils—a tendency to sentimental attachments. I am aware that I bear the risk of being considered by young ladies as too homely in my notions, even for an admonitress, when I so often recommend good old-fashioned household duties; yet, I believe them nevertheless to be an efficacious medicine both to body and mind, and in no case more useful than in those of sensibility.

In the bestowment of the affections, few women

are tempted to make choice of men of weak capacity. Still there is sometimes a plausible manner, a gentlemanly address, or a handsome exterior, which serves for a while to bewilder the judgment, so as to conceal from detection the emptiness within. It is the constitutional want of woman's nature to have some superior being to look up to; and how shall a man of weak capacity supply this want? He may possibly please for an hour, or a day, but it is a fearful thought to have to dwell with such a one for life.

The most imperfect inquiry, however, to be made in the commencement of an attachment, (for it may be too late to make it afterwards,) is, whether the object of it inspires with a greater love of all that is truly excellent—in short, whether his society and conversation have a direct tendency to make religion appear more lovely and more desirable. If not, he can be no safe companion for the lot of married life; for you must have already discovered that your own position as a Christian requires support rather than opposition. It is the more important, therefore, that this inquiry should be most satisfactorily answered in an early stage of the attachment; because it is the peculiar nature of love to invest with ideal excellence the object of its choice, so that after it has once obtained possession of the heart, there ceases too generally to be a correct perception of good and evil, where the interests of love are concerned.

In addition to this tendency, it is deeply to be

regretted, that so few opportunities are given to women in the present state of society, of becoming acquainted with the natural dispositions and general habits of those to whom they interest their happiness, until the position of both is fixed, and fixed for life. The short acquaintance which takes place under ordinary circumstances, between two individuals about to be thus united, for better for worse until death do them part, is any thing but a natural development of real character. The very name of *courtship* is a suspicious one; because it implies merely a solicitude to obtain favor, but has no reference to deserving it. When a man is said to be paying his court to an individual of higher rank or authority, he is universally understood to be using flattery and attention, if not artifice, to purchase what his merits alone would not be sufficient to command. I do not say that a similar line of conduct is designedly pursued by the lover, because I believe that in many cases he would be glad to have his character more clearly understood than it is. Yet how we see, most especially, the consequences resulting from that system of intercourse which prevails between the two sexes in general society. By the time a young woman is old enough to enter into a serious engagement, she has generally become so accustomed to receive the flattery and the homage of men, that she would feel it an insult to be treated with perfect honesty and candor; while, on the other hand, her lover mistakes his inability to convince her, that if not actual-

ly a goddess, she is at least the most charming of her sex. Need we be surprised if there should often be a fearful awaking from this state of delusion?

I must, however, in justice repeat, that the delusion is not all intentional on either part, for a successful suit naturally places a man in so agreeable a position, that his temper and disposition, at such times, appear to the best possible advantage; while on the other hand it would be strange indeed, if a woman so courted, and apparently admired, could not maintain her sweetest deportment, and wear her blindest smiles, through that short period which some unjustly call the happiest of life, simply because it is the one in which she is the most flattered and the most deceived.

It is a very erroneous notion, entertained by some young persons, that to make early pretensions to womanhood, is an embellishment to their character, or a means of increasing their happiness. Nothing in reality can be more entirely a mistake. One of the greatest charms which a girl can possess, is that of being contented to be a girl and nothing more. Her natural ease of manner, her simplicity of heart, her frankness, her guileless and confiding truth, are all opposed to the premature assumption of womanhood. Even her joyous playfulness, so admirably adapted to promote the health both of mind and body, oh! why does she hasten to lay all this aside for the mock dignity of an artificial and would-be woman? Believe me, the latter loses much of the innocent enjoyment of her early years, while she

gains is nothing, except a greater necessity for care and caution.

Were it possible to induce young women to view this subject in its true light, and to endeavor to prolong rather than curtail the season of their simplicity and buoyancy of heart; how much would be avoided of that absurd miscalculation about the desirableness of contracting matrimonial alliances, which plunges hundreds and thousands into the responsible situation of wives and mothers, before they have well learned to be rational women.

A cheerful, active, healthy, and sound-minded girl, is ever the first to glow with the genuine impulse of what is noble and generous in feeling, thought, and action; and at the same time she is the last to be imposed upon by what is artificial, false, or merely superficial; for there seems to be a power in unsophisticated nature, to repel as if by instinct the mere stratagems of art. The vain, the sentimental, would-be woman, sickly for want of natural exercise, and disappointed in her pretentious attempts at dignity and distinction, is the last to yield herself to any genuine impulse; because she must inquire whether it is lady-like and becoming; but, alas for her peace of mind! she is the first to listen to the voice of fantasy, and to sink into all the absurdities of an early, a misplaced, or an imaginary attachment.

It is not indeed in the nature of things, that a young girl should know how to bestow her affections aright. She has not had experience enough in the

ways of the world, or penetrated sufficiently through the scuffing surface of society, to know that some who are the most attractive in their address and manners are the least calculated for female associations. They know, if they would but believe what their more experienced relatives tell them, that the happiness of marriage must depend upon suitability of character; yet even of this they are incompetent to judge, and consequently they are betrayed into mistakes sometimes the most fatal to their true interests both here and hereafter.

How much wiser than in the past of her, who pale off these weaknesses altogether until a period of greater maturity of judgment, when truth that once looked dazzling and attractive shall have lost its false splendor; and when many qualifications of heart and mind, to which she once attached but little value, shall have obtained their due share of importance in her estimations. Her heart will then be less subject to the dictates of capricious fancy; and looking at human life, and society, and mankind as they really are, looking at herself too with a clearer vision, and a more decided estimate of truth, she will be able to form a correct opinion on that point of paramount importance—suitability of character and habits.

Influenced by a just regard to this consideration, a sensible woman will usually see that the man of her choice must be as much as possible in her own sphere of life. Deficient in education, he would be a rude and coarse companion for a refined woman;

and with much higher attainments than her own, he would be liable to regard her with disrespect, if not with contempt.

By a fatal misapprehension of what constitutes real happiness, it is often spoken of as a good and great thing, when a woman raises herself to a higher sphere in society by marriage. Could such individuals tell the story of their after lives, it would often be a history of humiliation and sorrow, for which no external advantages had been able to compensate. There are, however, admirable instances of women, thus exalted, who have maintained their own dignity, and the respect of all their connections; so much more important is moral worth than intellectual cultivation, to a woman. In these cases, however, the chief merit of the wife has been, that she never sought her elevation.

Having chosen your lover for his suitability, it is of the utmost consequence, that you should guard against that natural propensity of the youthful mind, to invest him with every ideal excellence. Endeavor to be satisfied with him as he is, rather than imagine him what he never can be. It will save you a world of disappointment in after life. Nor, indeed, does this extravagant sensitiveness of the fancy belong, as is sometimes supposed, to that most, and true, and abiding attachment which is woman's highest virtue and noblest distinction to feel. I strongly suspect it is vanity, and not affection, which leads a young woman to believe her lover perfect because it enhances her triumph to

be the choice of such a man. The part of a true-hearted woman, is to be satisfied with her lover, such as he is, and consider him with all his faults as sufficiently exalted and sufficiently perfect for her. No after-development of character can shake the faith of such a woman, no ridicule or exposure can weaken her tenderness for a single moment; while, on the other hand, she who has blindly believed her lover to be without a fault, must ever be in danger of awaking to the conviction that her love exists no longer.

Though truth should be engraven upon every thought, and word, and act, which occurs in your intercourse with the man of your choice, there is implanted in the nature of woman, a striking delicacy, which ought ever to prompt her to keep back some of her affection for the time when she becomes a wife. No woman ever gained, but many, very many have been losers, by displaying all at first. Let enough of your love be manifested, to prevent suspicion or distrust; and the self-complacency of man will be sure to supply the rest. Suffer it not, then, to be unfolded to its full extent. In the trials of married life, you will have ample need for an *additional supply*. *You will want it for sickness*, for sorrow, for all the different exigencies of real experience; but above all you will want it to reawaken the tenderness of your husband, when worldly cares and pecuniary disappointments have too much absorbed his better feelings; and what surprise so agreeable to him, as to discover, in his farther

progress through the wilderness of life, so sweet, so deep a foundation, as woman's perfect love?

It is a fact too little taken into account by young women, that until actually married, their relative and home-duties are the same after an engagement has been contracted, as before. When a daughter begins to neglect a father or a brother, for the sake of her lover, it is a bad omen for his happiness. Her attentions in this case are dictated by impulse, not duty; and the same misapprehension of what is just and right, will in future be equally likely to divert them again from their proper object. It is good even to let your lover see that such is your estimate of duty, that you can afford even to lose his society for a few minutes, rather than neglect the claims of your family.

I have now imagined a young woman brought into the most serious position she has yet occupied; and if her mind is rightly influenced, she will feel it to be one of deep and solemn consideration. If, during the lapse of her previous existence, she has lived for herself alone, now is the time when her regrets are about to begin; if, as I have so earnestly recommended, she has studiously cultivated habits of duty, and thoughts of affectionate and grateful regard towards her home connections, now is the time when she will fully enter upon the advantages of having regulated her conduct by the law of love. Already she will have begun to venerate the character of men in a new light. Admitted to his confidence, she will find him at the same time more

admirable, and more requiring no regards herself, than she found him in society; and while her esteem increases with the development of his real worth, she will find her affection equal to every demand, for she will be rich in that abundance which the heart alone can supply, whose warmest emotions have been called forth and cherished in the genial and healthy atmosphere of domestic life.

One word before this chapter closes, to those who have arrived at years of womanhood without having known what it was to engage the attentions of a lover; and of such I must observe, that by some unaccountable law of nature they often appear to be the most admirable of their sex. Indeed, while a sparkling countenance, an easy manner, and—to say the least of it—a willingness to be admired, attract a crowd of lovers; it not unfrequently happens, that retiring merit and unostentatious talent securely secure the homage of one. And yet, on looking around upon society, one sees so many of the vain, the illiterate, and the utterly useless chosen and solicited as wives, that we are almost tempted to consider those who are not thus favoured as in reality the most honorably distinguished among their sex.

Still I imagine there are few, if any, who never have had a suitable or unsuitable offer, at some time in their lives; and wise indeed by comparison, are those, who rather than accept the latter, are content to enjoy the pleasures, and endure the sorrows of life alone. Compare their lot for an instant

with that of women who have married from unworthy motives. How incomparably more dignified, more happy, and more desirable in every way, does it appear! It is true there are times in their experience when they will have to bear what woman bears so hardly—the consciousness of being alone; but they escape an evil far more insupportable—that of being a slighted or an unloved wife.

If my remarks have appeared to refer directly to a moral training for the married state, it has not been from any want of interest in those who never enter upon this condition, but simply because I believe the moral training which prepares a woman for one sphere of duty, is equally productive of benefit if she fills another; and I rest this belief upon my conviction, that all the loveliest and most estimable propensities of woman's nature were bestowed upon her for early and continued exercise in a strictly relative capacity; and that, whether married or single, she will equally find the law of Christian love the only certain rule by which to regulate her conduct, so as to render her either happy herself, or the promoter of happiness in others.



DEDICATION OF YOUTH.

THE great question, whether the principles of Christian faith, or, in other words, whether the religion of the Bible, shall be adopted as the rule of conduct by the young, remains yet to be considered, not in relation to the nature of that faith, but as regards the desirableness of embracing it at an early period of life, willingly and entirely, with earnestness as well as love.

I am writing thus, as the supposition, that, with all who read these pages, convictions of the necessity and excellence of personal religion have at one time or other been experienced. The opinion is general, and I believe correct, that the instances are extremely rare in which the Holy Spirit does not awaken the human soul to a sense of its real situation as an accountable being passing through a state of probation, before entering upon an existence of endless duration. Nor among young persons born of Christian parents, and educated in a Christian country, where the means of religious instruction are accessible to all, is it easy to conceive that such convictions have not, at times, been strong and deep.

though, possibly, they may have been so neglected as to render their recurrence less frequent, and less powerful in their influence upon the mind.

Still it is good to recall the time when the voice of warning, and of invitation, was first heard; to recollect the scenes of a father's faithful instruction, and of the prayers of a lost mother; to hear again the Sabbath-evening sermons, to visit the cottage of the dying Christian; or even to look back once more into the chamber of infancy, where our first tears of real penitence were shed. It is good to remember how it was with us in those bygone days when we welcomed the chastisements of love, and kissed the rod that was stretched forth by a Father's hand. How bliss did we then feel, in the belief that we were not neglected, not forgotten, not overlooked! Has any thing which the world we have too much loved since offered us, afforded a happiness to be compared with this belief? Oh, no. Then why not hearken, when the same voice is still inviting you to come? and why not comply when the same hand is still pointing out the way to peace? What is the hinderance which stands in your way? What is the difficulty which prevents the dedication of your youth to God? Let this question be seriously asked, and fully answered, for it is of immense importance that you should know on what grounds the invitations of the Holy Spirit have been rejected; and why you are adopting another rule of conduct than that prescribed in the gospel of Christ.

I repeat, it is of immense importance, because

this is a subject which admits of no trifling. It is of importance in every branch of mental improvement, that we should be active, willing, earnest, and faithful, if it is still more important here. When we do not persevere in learning, it does not follow of necessity that we grow more ignorant, because we may remain where we are, while the rest of the world goes on. But in religion there is no standing still, because opportunities neglected, and convictions resisted, are involved in the great question of responsibility; so that no one can open her Bible, or attend the means of religious instruction, or spend a Sabbath, or even enter into solemn communion with her own heart as in the sight of God, but she must be so much the worse for such opportunities of improvement, if neglected or despised.

The very groundwork of the Christian faith is love; and love can accomplish more in the way of conformity in life and practice, than could ever be effected by the most rigid adherence to what is believed to be right, without assistance from the life-giving principle of love.

Still the state of the Christian in this world is always described as one of warfare, and not of repose; and how, without earnestness, are temptations to be resisted, convictions acted upon, or good intentions carried out? As time passes on, too, faithfulness is tried. What has been adopted, or embraced, must be adhered to; and in this, with many young persons, consists the greatest of their trials; for there is often a reaction on first learning

to understand something of the realities of life, which throws them back from the high state of expectation and excitement under which they first embraced religious truth.

But let us examine the objections which most frequently operate to prevent the young surrendering themselves to their convictions of the importance and necessity of personal religion. "If I begin, I must go on." Your mind then is not made up. You have not counted the cost of coming out from the world, nor honestly weighed the advantages of securing the guidance, support, and protection of personal religion, against every other pursuit, object, or idol of your lives. Perhaps it is society, amusement, or fashion, which stands in your way. Be assured there is society of the highest order, where religion is supreme; and if not exactly what is popularly called amusement, there is a heartfelt interest in all which relates, however remotely, to the extension of the kingdom of Christ—an interest unknown to those who have no bond of union founded upon the basis of Christian love.

Is it possible, then, that fashion can deter you—fashion, a tyrant at once both frivolous and cruel—fashion, who never yet was rich enough to repay one of her followers for the sacrifice of a single happy hour—fashion, whose realm is folly, and who is perpetually giving place to sickness, sorrow, and the grave? Compare for one instant her empire with that of religion. I admit that her power is extensive, well-nigh all-pervading; but what has her

sovereign away done for the destinies of man? She has adjusted ornaments, and selected colors; she has clothed and unclothed thousands, and arrayed multitudes in her own livery—but never has fashion bestowed dignity or peace of mind upon one single individual of the whole family of man.

It would be an insult to the nature and the power of religion to proceed farther with the comparison. Can that which relates merely to the body, which is fleeting as a breath, and unstable as the shadow of a cloud, deter from what is pure, immortal, and divine?

Still I am aware it is easy, in the solitude of the chamber, or in the privacy of domestic life, to think and speak in this exalted strain; and yet to go into the society of the fashionable, the correct, and the worldly-minded, who have never felt the necessity of being religious, and to be suddenly brought, by the chilling influence of their reasoning or their satire, to conclude that the convenient season for you to admit the claims of religion upon your heart and life has not yet arrived.

I believe the most dangerous influence which society exercises upon young women, is derived from worldly-minded persons of strong common sense, who are fashionable in their appearance, generally correct in their conduct, and amiable and attractive in their manners and conversation. Young women guardedly and respectfully brought up see little of vice, and know little of

“The General public which shows the way to sin.”

They are consequently but little acquainted with the beginnings of evil, and still less so with those dark passages of life to which such beginnings are calculated to lead. It follows, therefore, that, except when under the influence of strong convictions, they may be said to be ignorant of the real necessity of religion. It is but natural then, that those correct and well-bred persons who pass on from the cradle to the brink of the grave treating religion with respect as a good thing for the poor and the disconsolate, but altogether unnecessary for *themselves*, should appear, on the slight examination of the subject, to be living in a much more enviable state than those who believe themselves called upon to renounce the world and its vanities, and devote their time and their talents, their energies and their affections to a cause which the worldly-minded regard at best as visionary and wild.

I have spoken of such persons as passing on to the brink of the grave, and I have used this expression because I believe the grave has terrors even to them; that when one earthly hold after another gives way, and health declines, and fashionable friends fall off, and death sits beckoning on the tombstones of their newly-buried associates and relatives; I believe there is often then a fearful questioning about the realities of eternal things, and chiefly about the religion which in idea they had set apart for the poor, the aged, and the disconsolate, but wished none of it themselves.

Yes, I believe, if the young could witness the

solitude of such persons, could visit their chambers of sickness, and gain admittance to the secret counsels of their souls, they would find there an aching void, a want, a destination, which the wealth and the fashion, the pomp and the glory of the whole habitable world would be insufficient to supply.

It is often *unwisely objected* by young people, that by making a profession of religion they should be brought into fellowship and association with vulgar persons. In answer to this objection it would be easy to show that nothing can be more vulgar than vice, to say nothing of worldly-mindedness. It is, however, more to the purpose to endeavor to convince them, that true religion is so purifying in its own nature, as to be capable of elevating and refining habits which have never been either softened or enlightened by any other influence.

All who have been much engaged in the practical exercise of Christian benevolence, and who, in promoting the good of their fellow-creatures, have been admitted to scenes of domestic privacy among the laborer and the poor, will bear their testimony to the fact, that religion is capable of rendering the society of some of the humblest and simplest of human beings truly refined, and far more affecting in its pathos and interest than that of the most intelligent circles in the higher walks of life. I do not, of course, pretend to call it so refined in manners, and phrasology; but in the ideas and the feelings which its conversation is intended to convey. That is not refined society where polished

language is used as the medium for her bliss; but that in which the ideas are raised above vulgar and worldly things, and assimilated with thoughts and themes on which the holy and the wise, the saint and the philosopher, alike delight to dwell.

It is no exaggeration then to say, that the conversation of the humble Christian on her death-bed—her lovely bed of suffering, surrounded by poverty and destitution—is sometimes so fraught with the intelligences of that eternal world on which her hopes are fixed, that to have spent an hour in her presence, is like having had the glories of heaven and the wonders of immortality revealed. And is this a vulgar or degrading employment for a *refined and intellectual being?* to dwell upon the noblest theme which human intellect has ever grasped? to look onward from the perishable things of time to the full development of the eternal principles of truth and love? to forget the sufferings of frail humanity, and to live by faith among the ransomed spirits of the blest, in the presence of angels, and before the Saviour, ascribing *honor and glory, dominion and power, to Him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever?*

In turning back to the world, from the contemplation of such a state of mind, we find that vulgarity consists neither in religion itself, nor in its requirements; but in attaching undue importance to the things of time, and in making them our chief or only good.

If young people are often deterred from becom-

big religious by seeing a great number of gentle, correct, and agreeable persons, who, for any thing they can discover to the contrary, are doing very well without it, they are still more firmly deterred by feeling no want of it within themselves.

Perhaps you are so protected by parents, and so fettered in by domestic regulations, that you find it more difficult to do what is positively wrong, than what is generally approved as right. Yet do you become blind and presumptuous so to mistake this apparently judicious state, for being religious: and remember, if it is difficult to do wrong now, it is the last stage of your experience in which you will find it so. Obligated to quit the parental roof, deprived by death of your natural protectors, required as yours advance to take a more active part in the duties of life, or to incur a greater share of culpability by their neglect; thrown among strangers, or friends who are no longer watchful or sollicitous for your temporal and spiritual good; involved in new concerns, and exposed to temptations both from within and from without, how will your mind, lately so calm and secure, awake to a conscious feeling of your own weakness and a secret terror of impending harm. For woman, from her very feebleness is fearful; while from her sensitiveness she is peculiarly exposed to pain. Without religion, then, she is the most pliable, the most subject, the most exactly obedient of all created beings. The world—society—our even domestic life has nothing to offer on which her heart in its unregimented state

can rest in safety. Each day is a period of peril, if not of absolute agony; for all she has to give—her affections, which constitute her wealth—are involved in speculations which can yield back into her bosom nothing but sorrow and mourning.

It is not so with the woman who has made religion her stronghold—her defence—her stay. Unchecked in the happiest and most congenial impulses of her nature, she can still love, because the Lord her God has commanded that she should love him with all her heart, and with all her strength, and that she should love her neighbor as herself. Thus, though disappointment or death may blight her earthly hopes, or though a cloud may rest upon the brightness of her affections in this vale of tears, the principle of love which fills her soul remains the same, and she is most happy when its sphere of exercise is unbounded and eternal.

And is it possible that any of the rational beings whom I see, who would dare to rush upon the dangers and temptations of this short and precarious life, without the protection and support of religion? Oh! no, they tell us they are all believers in religion—all professers of the Christian faith. But are you all religious? Do not deceive yourselves. There is no other way of being Christians, except by being personally religious. If not personally religious, are you then ready to begin to be so? Delay not; you have arrived at years of discretion, and are capable of judging of many important points. You profess to believe in a religion which expressly

teaches you that it is itself the one thing needful. What then stands in the way? If, after mature and candid deliberation, you decidedly prefer the world, leave not the cause of Christ by an empty profession, nor act the cowardly part of wearing the outward badge of a faith which holds not possession of your heart and affections. It is neither honorable nor just to allow any one to doubt on whose side you are. If, therefore, your decision be in favor of religion, *it is still more important that you should not blush to own a Saviour, who left the glory of the heavenly kingdom, inhabited a mortal and suffering frame, and finally died an ignominious death for you.*

Not let the plea of youth retard the offering of your heart to Him who gave you its capacity for exquisite and intense enjoyment. If you are young, you are happy in having more to offer. Though it constitutes the greatest privilege of the Christian dispensation, that we are not required to bring any thing by which to purchase the blessings of pardon and salvation; it surely must afford some additional satisfaction; to a generous mind, to feel that there is more of health and strength, of elasticity and vigor, to bring into the field of action, than if the decision upon whose side to engage were deferred until a later period.

It should always be remembered, for the consolation and encouragement of youth, that in making a decision in favor of religion in early life, there is comparatively little to undo; while if this road un-

portant duty is left until a later period, there will be the force of the long-established habit of aiming to contend with, masses of evil to unravel, and all that mingled texture of light and darkness, which originates in a polluted heart and a partially enlightened understanding, to separate thread from thread. And, oh! what associations, what memories are there! what gleaming forth again of the false fire, even after the true has been kindled! what yawning of the wide sepulchre in which the past is buried, but cannot rest! what struggling with the returning demons of the imagination, before they are cast out for ever! what bleeding of the heart, which, like a shocked child, would kiss the nail, yet dare not think how many stripes are justly demanded by its delinquency! O happy youth! it is thy privilege, that this may never be thy portion!

Yes, happy youth! for thou art ever happy! in the contemplation of age; and yet thou hast thy tears. Thou hast thy trials too; and perhaps their sweetness renders them less bearable than the dull burden of unaccomplished scenes which hangs upon mature years. Thou hast thy sorrows; and when the mother's eye is closed, that used to watch thy infant steps so fondly; and the father's hand is cold, that used to rest upon thy head with gentle and expressive affection; whom hast thou, whom will thou ever love to supply thy parents' place on earth! Whom hast thou? The world is poor to thee; for none will ever love thee with a love like theirs. Thou hast thy golden and exuberant youth,

thy joyous sleep, thy rosy smile, and we call thee happy. But thou hast also thy hours of loneliness, thy disappointments, thy chills, thy blights: when the wings of hope on which thy young spirit has soared begin for the first time to droop; when the love in which thou hast so fondly trusted begins to cool; when the flowers thou hast delighted begin to fade; when the bird thou hast fed through the winter, in the summer flies away; when the lamb thou hast nursed in thy bosom, prefers the stranger to thee. Thou hast thy tears; but the bitterness of thy sorrows, how soon are they assuaged? It is this then which constitutes thy happiness, for we all have griefs; but long before old age, they have worn themselves channels which cannot be effaced. It is therefore that we look back to youth with envy; because the tablet of the heart is then fresh and unimpressed, and we long to begin again with that fair surface, and to write upon it no characters but those of truth.

And will not youth accept the invitation of experience, and come before it it too late? come with all its health, and its bloom, and its first-fruits untabulated, and lay them upon the altar; an offering which age cannot make? Let us count the different items in the riches which belong to youth, and ask, if it is not a holy and a glorious privilege to dedicate them to the service of the Most High?

There is the freshness of unwearyed nature; for which so many millions pine in vain; the glow of health, that life-spring of all the energies of thought

and action; the confidence of unbroken trust—the power to believe, as well as hope—a power which the might of human intellect could never yet restore; the purity of undivided affection; the earnestness of zeal unchilled by disappointment; the first awakening of joy, that has never been depressed; high aspirations that have never stooped to earth; the clear perception of a mind unbiased in its search of truth; with the fervor of an untroubled soul.

All these, and more than pen could write or tongue could utter, has youth the power to dedicate to the noblest cause which ever yet engaged the attention of an intellectual and immortal being. What, then, I would ask again, is it which hinders the surrender of your heart to God, your conduct to the requirements of the religion of Christ?

With this solemn inquiry, I would leave the young reader to pursue the train of her own reflections. All that I have proposed to her consideration as desirable in character and habit—in heart and conduct—will be without consistency, and without foundation, unless based upon Christian principle, and supported by Christian faith. All that I have proposed to her as most lovely, and most admirable, may be rendered more, infinitely more so, by the refinement of feeling, the elevation of sentiment, and the purity of purpose, which those principles and that faith are calculated to impart.



III.

DOMESTICS AND GUESTS.



THE considerateness I shall attempt to define is one of the highest recommendations the female character can possess; because it combines an habitual examination of our own situation and responsibilities, with a quick discernment of the character and feelings of those around us, and a benevolent desire to afford them as much pleasure, and spare them as much pain, as we can. A considerate woman, therefore, whether surrounded by all appliances and means of personal enjoyment, or depending upon the use of her own hands for the daily comforts of life, will look around her, and consider what is due to those whom Providence has placed within the sphere of her influence.

The man who voluntarily undertakes a difficult and responsible business, first inquires how it is to be conducted so as best to insure success: so the serious and thoughtful woman, on entering upon the duties of domestic life, ascertains, by reflection and observation, in what manner they may be performed so as to render them most conducive to the great end she has in view, the promotion of the happiness of others; and as the man engaged in business does

not run hither and thither simply to make a show of alacrity, neither does the woman engaged in a higher and more important work allow herself to be satisfied with her own willingness to do her duty, without a diligent and persevering investigation of what are the most effectual means by which it can be done.

Women are almost universally admonished of their duties in *general terms*, and hence they labor under great disadvantages. They are told to be virtuous; and in order to be so, they are advised to be kind and modest, orderly and discreet. But few teachers, and fewer writers, condescend to take up the minutiae of every-day existence, so far as to explain to what *degrees* and individual actions such kindness, modesty, order, and discretion consist. Indeed, the cases themselves, upon which these principles of right conduct are generally brought to bear, are so minute, and so apparently insignificant, that the writer who takes up this subject must not only be content to sacrifice all the dignity of authorship, but must submit occasionally to a smile of contempt for having filled a book with trifles.

In order, however, to ascertain the real importance of any point of merit, we should take into consideration its direct opposite. We never know the value of true kindness so much as when contrasted with unkindness; and just as we should think lightly of the virtue of consideration as a moral faculty, let us turn our attention to the character and habits of a woman who is without it. Such are not

difficult to find, and we find them often in the lovely and the seemingly amiable creatures of impulse, who rush about, with the impetus of the moment operating as their plea, uncontrollable affection, their excess, and selfishness, unknown to them, the moving spring at the bottom of their hearts. These individuals believe themselves to be so entirely governed by amiable feelings, that they not unfrequently boast of being kind—nay, too kind-hearted; but upon whom does their kindness tell except upon themselves? It is true, they feel the impulse to be kind, and this impulse they gratify by allowing it to operate in any way that circumstances or their own caprice may point out. Yet, after all, how often is their kindness, for want of consideration, rendered wholly unavailable towards the promotion of any laudable or useful purpose.

Nor is this all. Want of consideration is often the occasion of absolute pain; and those who, because they deem it a recommendation to act from the impulse of the moment, will not take the trouble to reflect, are always, in a greater or less degree, liable to inflict misery upon others.

I remember walking home on a beautiful summer's evening with one of these lovely and impetuous creatures, who was then just entering upon all the rights and privileges of a belle, and, to my great surprise, observing that she trod indiscriminately upon all the creeping things which the damp and the dew had tempted forth into our path. I remonstrated with her, of course; but she turned to me

with her own bewitching air of naiveté, and said, "And pray, why may I not tread upon the snails?" Further remonstrance was unnecessary, for the mind which had attained maturity without feeling enough to prevent this needless and disgusting waste of life, must of necessity have been inspersious to reason.

And thus it is with consideration in general. If the season of youth glides over before habits of consideration are acquired, they will come tardily and with little grace in after life. Want of consideration for those of our fellow-creatures whose lot is of importance to us, is not, however, a subject upon which we have so much cause for complaint. It is towards those to whom we are connected by social ties, without affection; and under this head, the situation of our servants and domestics claims our care.

Servants are generally looked upon, by thoughtless young ladies, as a sort of household machinery; and when that machinery is of sufficient extent to operate upon every branch of the establishment, there can be no reason why it should not be brought into exercise, and kept in motion to any extent that may not be injurious. This machinery, however, is composed of individuals possessing hearts as susceptible of certain kinds of feeling, as those of the more privileged beings to whose comfort and convenience it is their daily business to minister. They know and feel that their lot in this world is comparatively hard; and if they are happily free from all presumptuous questionings of the wisdom and jus-

ties of Providence in placing them where they are, they are alive to the conviction that the burden of each day is sufficient, and often more than sufficient, for their strength.

In speaking of the obligation we are under to our domestics for their faithful services, it is no uncommon thing to be answered by this unmeaning remark: "They are well paid for what they do," as if the bare fact of receiving food and clothing for their daily labor placed them on the same footing, with regard to comfort, as those who receive their food and clothing for doing nothing.

There is also another point of view in which this class of our fellow-creatures is very unfairly judged. Servants are required to have no faults. It is by no means uncommon to find the mistress of a family, who has enjoyed all the advantages of moral and even religious education, allowing herself to exhibit the most unqualified excess of indignation at the petty faults of a servant, who has never enjoyed either; and to hear her speak as if she was injured, imposed upon, insulted before her family, because the servant, who was engaged to work for her, had been betrayed into impertinence by a system of reproof as much at variance with Christian meekness as the retort it was so well calculated to provoke. Women of such habits would perhaps be a little surprised if told that, when a lady descends from her own proper station to speak in an irritating or injurious manner to a servant, she is herself guilty of impertinence, and that no domestic of hon-

est and upright spirit will feel that such treatment is right.

On the other hand, there is a degree of kindness blended with dignity, which servants who are not absolutely depraved are able to appreciate; and the slight effort required to obtain their confidence is almost invariably repaid by a double share of affectionate and faithful service.

The situation of being unloved by their domestics is one which I should hope there are few women capable of enduring with indifference. The cold attentions rendered without affection and curtailed by every allowable means, the short unqualified reply to every question, the averted look, the privilege asked rather than solicited, the secret murmur that is able to make itself understood without the use of words—all these are parts of a system of behavior that chills the very soul, and forces upon the mind the unwelcome conviction, that a stranger who partakes not in our custom, but is within our domestic circle; or that an alien who enters not into the sphere of our home associations attends upon our social board; nay, so familiar is the impression as almost to extend to a feeling that an enemy is among the members of our own household.

How different is the impression produced by a manner calculated both to win their confidence and inspire their respect. The kind voluntary offer of assistance, the watchful eye, the participation of every wish, the thousand little attentions and acts of service beyond what are asked in the hour—who can

resist the influence of these upon the heart, and not desire to pay them back, not exactly in their own kind and measure, but in the only way they can be returned consistently with the relative duties of both parties—in kindness and consideration?

It is not, however, in seasons of health and prosperity that this bond between the different members of a family can be felt in its full force. There is no woman so happily circumstanced but that she feels some link broken in the chain which binds her to this world—some shadow cast upon her earthly pictures. The best beloved are not always those who love the best; and expectation will exceed reality even in the most favored lot. There are hours of sadness that will steal in even upon the sunny pages of life; and they are not felt the less because it is sometimes impossible to communicate the reason for such sadness to those who are themselves the cause. In such cases, and while the heart is in some degree estranged from natural and familiar fellowship, we are thrown more especially upon the kindness and affection of our domestics for the consolation we feel it impossible to live without. They may be, and perhaps ought to be, unacquainted with the cause of our disquietude; but a faithfully attached servant, without presuming beyond her proper sphere, is quick to discern the tearful eye, the gloomy brow, the countenance depressed; and it is at such times that their kindness, solicitude, and delicate attentions, might often pay to shame the higher pretensions of superior refinement.

In cases of illness or death, it is perhaps more especially their merit to prove, by their indefatigable and unrequited assiduities, how much they make the interest of the family their own, and how great is their anxiety to remove all lighter causes of annoyance from interference with the greater affliction in which those around them are involved. There is scarcely a more pitiable object in creation than a helpless invalid left entirely to the care of domestics whose affection never has been sought or won. But, on the other hand, the readiness with which they will sometimes sacrifice their needful rest, and that, night after night, to watch the feverish slumbers of a lucid invalid, is one of those redeeming features in the aspect of human nature which it is impossible to regard without admiration and gratitude.

There are many young ladies, and some old ones, with whom the possession of pets appears to be an essential part of happiness; and these pets, as various as the tastes they gratify, are all alike in one particular—they are all troublesome. If a lady engages her servants with an understanding that they are to wait upon her domestic animals, no one can accuse her of injustice. But if, with barely a sufficient number of domestics to perform the necessary labor of her household, she establishes a menagerie, and expects the hard-working servants to undertake the additional duty of waiting upon her pets—perhaps the most repulsive creatures in existence to them—such additional service ought at least to be solicited as a favor; and she will have no right to

feel indignant, should the favor be sometimes granted in a manner neither gracious nor conciliating.

When a servant who has been all day laboring hard to give an aspect of comfort and cleanliness to the particular department committed to her care, sees the young ladies of the family come home from their daily walk, and never dreaming of her or her hard labor, trample over the hall and stairs without stopping to rid themselves of that incumbrance of clay which a fanciful writer has classed among the "miseries of human life," is it to be expected that the servant who sees this should be so far influenced by the passions of humanity as not to feel the stirrings of rage and resentment in her bosom? And when this particular act is repeated every day, and followed up by others of the same description, the frequently recurring sensations of rage and resentment, so naturally excited, will strengthen into those of habitual dislike, and produce that cold and grudging service which has already been described.

There are thousands of little acts of this description, such as ordering the hired servants at an unreasonable hour to prepare an early breakfast, and then not being ready yourself before the usual time—being habitually too late for dinner, without any sufficient reason, and having a second dinner served up—ringing the bell for the servant to leave her washing, cooking, or cleaning, and come up to you to receive orders to fetch your thimble or scissors from the highest apartment in the house—all which need no comment; and surely these servants

must be more than human who can experience the effects of such a system of behavior, carried on for days, months, and years, and not feel, and feel bitterly, that they are themselves regarded as mere machines, while their comfort and convenience is as much left out of calculation as if they were nothing more.

It is an easy thing, on entering a family, to ascertain whether the female members of it are, or are not, considerate. Where they are not, there exists, as a necessary consequence, a constant series of murmurings, pleadings, remonstrances, and attempted justifications, which early mar the happiness of the household. On the other hand, where the female members of the family are considerate, there is a secret spring of sympathy linking all hearts together, as if they were moved by a simultaneous impulse of kindness on one side and gratitude on the other. Few words have need to be spoken, few professions to be made, for each is hourly discovering that they have been the subject of affectionate solicitude, and they are consequently on the watch for every opportunity to make an adequate return. If the brother comes home sad and weary, the sister to whom he has pledged himself to some exertion, detects the languor of his eye, and refrains from pressing upon him a fulfillment of his promise; if the sister is laboring under depression, the brother feels himself especially called upon to stand forward as her friend; and if one of the family be suffering even slightly from indisposition, there are watchful eyes aground,

and the excursion is cheerfully given up by one, the party by another, and a quiet social evening is unanimously agreed upon to be spent at home, and agreed upon in such a way as that the invalid shall never suspect that it has been done at the cost of any pleasure.

There is no proof of affection more kindly prompted and more gratefully received, than that of *readily detecting uncomplained-of indisposition*. We might almost single out this faculty as the surest test of love—for who observes the incipient wrinkle on a stranger's brow, or marks the gradually increasing paleness of an unloved cheek? Or what can convince us more effectually that we are in a world of strangers, to whom our interests are as nothing, than to be pressed on every hand to do what our bodily strength is unequal to.

There are points of consideration in which we often practise great self-deception. "Don't you think it would do you good, my dear?" asks the young lady of her sickly sister, when the day of promised pleasure is at hand, and she begins to fear her sister's cough will render it impossible to go from home. "The pain in your foot, my love, is considerably better," says the wife to her husband, when she thinks the fashionable are about leaving Bath. "You are looking extremely well," says the niece to her aged uncle, who has promised to take her to Paris; "I think I never saw you look so well." But all this is not love. It does not feel like love to the parties addressed; for nature is true to

herself, and she will betray the secrets of art. How different are the workings of that deep and earnest affection that sees with one glance how unreasonable it would be to drag forth the invalid to any participation in the enjoyments of health; and how welcome is the gentle whisper which assures us that one watchful eye perceives our suffering, one sympathizing ear participates in our weakness and distress; for it is distress to be compelled to complain that we are unequal to do what the happiness of others depends upon our doing; and never is the voice of friendship employed in a more kindly office than when pleading the cause of our infirmity.

It has a startling and by no means an agreeable effect upon the mind, when a woman who is not habitually accustomed to any sort of practical kindness, so far deviates from her usual line of conduct as to perform any personal service solely for ourselves. We feel that she has been troubled, and suspect that she has been annoyed. But women accustomed to practical duties are able to turn the whole tide of their affectionate solicitude into channels so wholesome and salutary, that our pride is not wounded by the obligation under which we are placed, nor is our sense of gratitude impaired by the pain of being singled out as the object of unwearied and elaborate attentions. In order to illustrate the subject by a familiar instance, let us imagine one of those events experienced by all who have lived to years of maturity, and experienced in such a way as to have thrown them in a peculiar

number upon the domestic comforts of the circle to which they were introduced—the arrival, after long travel, on a visit to an early and highly valued friend.

It is not necessary to this picture, that park gates should be thrown open, and footmen stationed on the steps of the hall; it will better serve our purpose that the mistress of the house should herself be the first to meet her guest, with that genuine welcome in her looks and manner that leaves nothing to be expressed by words. We will suppose that with her own hand she displace all the encumbrance of extra wrappings, rendered necessary by the winter's journey, and having quietly dismissed the expectant chaise-driver or porter, she leads her friend into the neatly furnished parlor, where another and a more familiar welcome seems at once to throw open her heart and her house for the reception. A fire that has been desiguelly built up, is then most energetically stirred, until a bright and genial blaze diffuses its light around the room, and the guest begins to glow with the two-fold warmth of a welcome and a winter's fire.

In the mean time, the servant, well taught in the mysteries of hospitality, conveys the baggage up stairs unobscured, and the guest is led to the chamber appointed for her nightly rest. There most especially is both seen and felt the kind feeling that has taken into account her peculiar tastes, and anticipated all her well-remembered wishes. The ease or the most apartment has been chosen, according to the preference she has been known to express in

days long since gone by, when she and her friend were girls together; and thus the chain of fond and cherished recollections is made to appear again unbroken after the lapse of years, and a conviction is silently impressed upon the mind of the traveller—perhaps the most welcome of all earthly sources of assurance—that we have been remembered not merely in the abstract, but that through long, long years of change and separation, time has not obliterated from the mind of a dear friend the slightest trace of our individuality.

Perhaps none can tell until they have arrived at middle age, what is in reality the essential sweetness of this conviction. In our association with the world, we may have obtained for our industry, our usefulness, or it may be for our talents, a measure of approval at least commensurate with our deserts; but give back to the worn, and the weary in this world's warfare the friends of their early youth—the friends who loved them, faults and all—the friends who could note down their very follies without contempt, and who attached a degree of interest and importance to the trifling peculiarities of their temper and feelings, which rendered them indelible memorials of an attachment such as never can be formed in after life.

We have traced the traveller to the chamber of her rest, and it is not in the choice of this room alone, but in its furniture and general aspect, that she reads the cheering truth of a superintending care having been exercised over all it contains, in strict reference to herself, not merely as an honored

guest, but as a lover of this or that small article of comfort or convenience, which in the world of comparative strangers among whom she has been living, she less seldom thought it worth her while to stipulate for, and still less frequently has had referred to her choice.

Now it is evident that the mistress of the house herself must have been here. With her own hand she must have placed upon the table the favorite toilet cushion, worked by a friend who was alike dear to herself and her guest. With her own hand she must have selected the snow-white linen, and laid out, not in conspicuous ostentatiousness, a few volumes calculated for the hours of silent meditation, when her friend shall be alone.

It is impossible that the services of the most faithful domestic should be able to convey half the heartfelt meaning indicated by these few familiar acts, so richly worth their cost. It is not from the circumstance of having all our wants supplied, that the most lively satisfaction is derived; it is from the cheering fact that we ourselves, in our individual capacity, have been the object of so much faithful recollection and maturing love.

Instead, therefore, of regarding it as a subject for murmuring and complaint, that her means of personal indulgence do not supply her with a greater number of domestics, the true woman ought rather to esteem it a privilege that her station in life is such as to place her in the way of imparting this rational and refined enjoyment.

We cannot imagine the first day of hospitable welcome complete without our visitor being introduced to that concatenation of comforts—an early tea. On descending from her chamber, then, she finds all things in readiness for this grateful and refreshing meal. Her attention is not distracted by apologies for what is not there, but what on such occasions frequently might have been, at the cost of half the effort required for an elaborate excuse. As if the Fairy Order had been at work, the table is spread with all things most agreeable after weary travel; and the guest, instead of being pressed to eat with such assiduity that she begins to think her visit has no other object, is only interrupted by kind inquiries relating to home associations, and is beguiled into a prolongation of her meal, by being drawn out into a detail of the events of her journey.

As the evening passes on, their conversation becomes more intimate, and while it deepens in interest, that full expansion of the soul takes place, under which, whatever Englishwoman may be in the superficial intercourse of polished life, I have no scruple in saying that, as female companions, they are the most delightful upon earth. There are such vivid imaginations, such touches of native humor, such deep well-springs of feeling beyond their placid exterior, that when they *diver* to come forth and throw themselves upon the charity or affection of their hearers, one is beguiled into a fascination the more intense, because it combines originality of thought with gentle manners, and in a peculiar and

foreible way invents the cherished recollections of the past with the fresh warm coloring of the present hour.

It is not amid congregated masses of society that the true Englishwoman can exhibit her native powers of conversation. It is when two are met together, with perhaps a husband or a brother for a third, and the midnight hour steals on, and yet they take no note of time, for they are opening out their separate store of treasures from the deep of memory, sharing them with each other, and blending all with such bright anticipations of the future, as even but a woman's imagination can enjoy with faith in their reality. Or perhaps they are reasoning upon some difficult point of duty, or sympathizing with each other in affliction; and then where shall we look but to the Englishwoman for the patient listener, the faithful counselor, the staunch supporter of each virtuous purpose, the keen discernor in points of doubtful merit, and the untiring comforter in every hour of need.

With regard to the particular instance already described, the case may perhaps be more clearly illustrated by adding a picture of an opposite description, in order to ascertain in what particular points the two cases differ.

For this purpose we will imagine a woman distinguished by no extreme of character, receiving her guest under precisely the same circumstances as the one already described. In this case the visitor is permitted to see that her landlady has reluctantly laid down her book at the latest possible period of

time which politeness would allow; or, after her *guest has remained* twenty minutes in a vacant and by no means inviting parlor, she comes toiling up from the kitchen with a countenance that makes it dreadful to be adding to her daily fatigues by placing oneself at her table; and she answers the usual inquiries of her friend as to her state of health, with a minute detail of the various phenomena of a headache with which she has that morning been attacked. The *one domestic* is then called up—and woe betide that family whose daily services, *superstitioned by its individual members towards each other*, all emanate from *one domestic*.

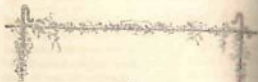
The *one domestic* is then ordered, in the hearing of the *guest*, to take all the luggage up stairs, to bring hot water, towels, and soap, to turn the carpets, run for the best looking glass, and see that tea is ready by the time the *friend* comes down. The *guest then ascends*, accompanied by the pouting servant, into a room upon which no kind care has been bestowed. It may possibly be neat—so neat that the *guest* supposes it never has been, and is not yet intended to be used. Yes, every thing is in its place; but a general blank pervades the whole, and it is not the least of the disappointments experienced by *our guest*, that she finds no water to refresh her aching temples. The *system* of the house is angry at this neglect, and rings the bell. The *servant* ascends from the kitchen to the highest room, to learn that she must go down again, and return, before half the catalogue of her faults has been told.

On such errands as this she is employed until the guest descends to the parlor, where the bell is again rung more imperatively, and the tea is ordered to be brought instantaneously. In the mean time, the fire has dwindled to the lowest bar. The mistress looks for coals, but the usual receptacle is empty. She feels as if there were a conspiracy against her. There is—there can be no one to blame but the servants—and thus her chagrin is alleviated by complaints against servants in general, and her own in particular. With these complaints, and often-repeated apologies, the time is occupied until the appearance of the long-expected meal, when the guest is pressed to partake of a repast not sweetened by the comments of her hostess, or the harassed and forlorn appearance of an over-worked domestic.

The mistress of this house may all the while be glad to see her guest, and may really regard her as an intimate and valued friend; but never having made it an object to practise the domestic virtue of making others happy, she knows not how to convey any better idea of a welcome than by words. She therefore sets deliberately to work to describe how happy she esteems herself in receiving so dear a friend—wishes some third party were at home—hopes to be able to amuse her—tells of the parties she has engaged for each successive evening—brings out a pile of engravings—fears her guest is weary—and lastly, at a very early hour, rings for the chamber candlesticks, presuming that her visitor would like to retire.

It is needless to observe, that the generality of visitors do refer upon this hint; and it is equally needless to add, that the individual here described fails to exhibit the character of the *true Englishwoman*, whose peculiar claim is that of *diffusing happiness*, without appearing conspicuously as the agent in its diffusion. It is from the unseen but active principle of disinterested love ever working at her heart, that she enters, with a perception as delicate as might be supposed to belong to a ministering angel, into the peculiar feelings and tones of character influencing those around her; applying the magical key of sympathy to all they suffer or enjoy, to all they fear or hope, until she becomes identified as it were with their very being, blends her own existence with theirs, and makes her society essential to their highest earthly enjoyment.

If a heightened degree of earthly enjoyment were all we could expect to obtain by this line of conduct, I should still be disposed to think the effect produced would be richly worth our pains. But I must again repeat, that the great aim of a Christian woman will always be, so to make others happy, that their feelings shall be attuned to the reception of better thoughts than those which relate to mere personal enjoyment—so to make others happy, as to win them over to a full perception of the loveliness of those Christian virtues which her own life and conduct consistently show forth.



IV.

BEFORE AND AFTER MARRIAGE.

WHAT branch of the subject upon which I am now entering being one of so much importance in the sum of human happiness as scarcely to admit of comparison with any other, it might be expected that I should especially direct the attention of the reader to the duties of consideration and kindness in the married state, by entering into the minutiae of its especial requirements, and recommending them with all the earnestness of emphatic detail to serious attention. Happy indeed should I be to do this, did I not feel that, at the same time, I should be touching upon a theme too delicate for the handling of an ordinary pen, and venturing beyond that veil which the sacredness of such a connection is calculated to draw over all that is extreme in the happiness or misery of human life.

I shall therefore glance only upon those points which are most obvious to the eye of a third party; and in doing this, it will be found that many of the remarks I have made upon the behavior of daughters to their fathers, are equally applicable to that of wives towards their husbands. There is, how-

ever, this great difference—the connection existing between married people is almost invariably a matter of choice. A daughter may sometimes imagine herself excused, by supposing that her father is too un congenial in mind and character for her to owe him much in the way of companionship. She may think his manners vulgar, and believe that if she had a father who was a gentleman, she would be more attentive and considerate to him; but her husband cannot have married her without her own consent, and therefore the engagement she has voluntarily entered into must be to fulfil the duties of a wife to him *as he is*, not as she could have wished or imagined him to be.

These considerations lead me to a view of the subject which I have often been compelled to take with deep regret, but which I fear no human pen, and still less mine, will be able to change: it is the false system of behavior kept up between those who are about to enter into the relation of marriage; so that when they settle down upon the true basis of their own character, and appear to each other what they actually are, the difference is sometimes so great as almost to justify the inquiry whether the individual can really be the same.

I presume not to expatiate upon that process denominated courtship, as it is frequently carried on by men. I venture not to accuse them of injustice in cherishing, in their early intercourse with the object of their choice, the very faults which they afterwards complain of in the wife. My chief soli-

citude is for my own sex, that they should not only be faithful after marriage, but upright and sincere before; and that they should scorn to engage a lover by little acts of consideration and kindness, which they are not prepared to practise even more willingly towards the husband.

I have known cases in which a kind-hearted woman would have esteemed herself robbed of a privilege, if her lover had asked any other person than herself so much as to mend his glove. Yet is it not possible for the same woman, two years after marriage, to say, "My sister, or my cousin, will do that for you. I am too busy now."

Nor is it the act alone, but the manner in which the act is done, that conveys a false impression of what will be the manner of that woman after marriage. I charge no one with *intentional deception*. The very expression of the countenance is that of real and intense enjoyment while the act of kindness is performed. All I regret is that the same expressions of countenance should not always accompany the same performance in the wife. All women of acute sensibility must feel the loss of personal attractions, when time begins to tell upon their youthful charms. But oh, that they would learn by the warning of others, rather than by their own experience, that it is most frequently the want of this expression of cheerful, genuine, disinterested kindness, than the want of youthful beauty, that alienates their husbands' love, and makes them objects of indifference, or worse.

The cultivation of acquaintance before marriage, with a view to that connection taking place, for the most part goes but a very little way towards the knowledge of real character. The parties usually meet in the heyday of inexperienced youth; and while they exult in the unclouded sunshine of life, their mutual endeavors to please are rewarded by an equal willingness to be pleased. The woman especially is placed in a situation highly calculated to excite the greatest possible degree of complacency. She is treated by a being upon whom she depends, and he most probably her superior, as if she was incapable of error and guiltless of a single fault. Perhaps she warns him of his mistake, speaks of her own defects, and assures him that she is not the angelic creature he supposes her to be; but she does all this with so sweet a grace, and looks all the while so pleased to be contradicted, that her information goes for nothing; and we are by no means assured that she is not better satisfied it should be so.

If, for instance, she really wishes him to know that her temper is naturally bad, why is she invariably so mild and bland and conciliating in his presence? If she wishes him to believe that she has a mind not capable of entering fully into the interest of his favorite books, and the subjects of his favorite discourse, why does she appear to listen so attentively when he reads, and ask so many questions calculated to draw him out into conversation? If she wishes him to suppose that she is not always a lively and agreeable companion, why does she not

occasionally assume the tone and manner so familiar to her family at home—answer him shortly, hang down her head, and swoop away the evening when he is near her? If she really wishes him to believe her, when she tells him that she is but ill-informed and wanting in judgment, why, when he talks with her, does she take so much pains to express opinions generally believed to be correct, and especially such as coincide with his own? If she occasionally acts from caprice, and really wishes him to know that she does so, to the injury of the comfort of those around her; why, whenever she practises in this way upon him, does she win him back again, and soothe his feelings with redoubled kindness and additional solicitude to please?

Perhaps she will tell me she acts in this manner because it would be unamiable and ungenerous to do otherwise. To which I answer, If it be unamiable and ungenerous to the lover, how much more so must it be to the husband? I find no fault with the sweetness, the irresistible charms of her behavior before marriage. It is no more than we ought to practise towards those whose happiness is bound up with ours. The falling off afterwards is what I regard as so much to be deplored in the character of woman; for wherever this is observed, it seems to indicate that her mind has been low enough to be influenced by a desire of establishing herself in an eligible home, and escaping the stigma foolishly attached to the situation of an old maid.

When a young lady dresses with a view to gratify

and approbation, she is studiously solicitous to observe what she believes to be the rules of good taste; and more especially if a gentleman, whose favorable opinion she values, evinces any decided symptoms of becoming her admirer. She then meets him with her hair arranged in the most becoming style; with the neat shoe and pure-white gloves which she has heard him commend in others; with the pale scarf, the quiet-colored robe, and with the general aspect of her costume accommodated to his taste. He cannot but observe this regard to his wishes, and he notes it down as a proof of amiable temperament, as well as sympathy of habitual feeling. Auguring well for his future happiness with a woman who even in matters of such trifling moment is willing to make his wish her law, he prevails upon her at last to crown that happiness by the bestowment of her hand.

In the course of three years we look in upon this couple in the home they are sharing together. We suppose the lady to be the same, yet cannot feel quite sure, her whole appearance is so changed. The hair that used to be so carefully braided or so gracefully curled, is now allowed to wander in dishevelled tresses, or swept away from a brow whose defects it was wont to cover. There is a forlornness in her whole appearance, as if she had not, as formerly, any worthy object for which to study these secondary points of beauty; and we inwardly exclaim, How the taste of her husband must have changed, to allow him to be pleased with what is so

entirely the opposite of his original choice! On a second observation, however, we ask whether he *actually is* pleased, for there is nothing like satisfaction in the look with which he turns away from the unbecoming cap, the soiled kerchief, and the neglected aspect of the partner of his life.

If married women, who allow themselves to fall into that state of moral degradation which such an appearance indicates, feel pained at symptoms of estrangement in their husbands' affections, they must at least be satisfied to endure the consequences of their own want of consideration, without sympathy or commiseration. They may, perhaps, feel disposed to say their punishment is too severe for such a fault. They love their husbands as faithfully as ever, and expect from them a love that would have been more faithful in return, than to be shaken by any change in mere personal appearance. But let us tell them that the change which owes its existence to our own fault, has a totally different effect upon the feelings of a friend from that which is the consequence of our misfortune; and one of the most bitter and repulsive thoughts that can be made to rankle in a husband's bosom is, that his wife should only have deemed it necessary to charm his eye until she had obtained his hand; and that through the whole of his after life he must look in vain for the exercise of that kind consideration in consulting his tastes and wishes, that used to lend so sweet a charm to the seasons of youthful intercourse.

It is a subject well calculated to inspire the most

serious regret, that men should practise throughout the season of courtship that system of indiscriminate flattery which kills the better judgment of woman into a belief that she must of necessity be delightful to him—delightful, faults and all—nay, what is infinitely worse than this, into a secret suspicion that the faults which her female friends have been accustomed to point out, have no existence in reality, and that to one who knows and loves her better, she must appear in her naturally amiable and attractive character.

Could she be persuaded, on that important day when she is led home from the altar, adorned, attended upon, and almost worshipped—could she be persuaded to cast one impartial glance into her own heart, she would see that the treasure she was bestowing had many drawbacks from its value, and that all the happiness it was in her power to confer, must necessarily, from the nature of that heart, be accompanied with some alloy.

"Alas!" she would say, after this examination, "he knows me not. Time will reveal to him my secretly cherished faults." And when this conviction was confirmed through the days and years of her after life, she would esteem it but a *small sacrifice* of time and patience to endeavor to render herself personally attractive to him. Nay, so grateful would she feel for his charitable forgiveness, that when the evil dispositions inherent in her nature were thrown into more glaring light, she would esteem it a privilege to be able by the simplest

means to convince him that, with all her faults, she was not so guilty of a disregard to his wishes as to refuse in these minor points to conform her habits to his taste.

Many of the remarks into which I have been led by a consideration of the subject of *dress*, are equally applicable to that of *manner*, as relates to its connection with social and domestic happiness before and after marriage. We are all aware that neither beauty, nor personal adornment, nor the most brilliant conversation, can be rendered altogether charming to any individual, without the accompaniment of a peculiar kind of manner, by which that individual is made to feel that he partakes in the pleasant thoughts and kind feelings of the party whose object it is to please.

Women who possess the tact to know exactly how to give pleasure, are peculiarly skilled in those earnest looks, and cheerful smiles, and animated responses, which constitute more than half the charm of society. We sometimes see, in social evening circles, the countenance of an intelligent young lady lighted up with such a look of deep and glowing interest, as to render her perfectly beautiful during the time she is addressed by a distinguished friend or even an attractive stranger.

I will not say that the same expression is not always worn by the same individual at the domestic hearth, when she listens to the conversation of her husband. I will not so far libel my countrywomen, because I know that there are noble and admirable

instances of women who are too diffident and too simple-hearted to study how to shine in public, who yet, from the intensity of their own feelings, the brilliancy of their own powers of perception, and the deep delight of listening to the gentle tones of a beloved voice when it speaks at once to their understanding and their hearts—I know that such women do wear an aspect of almost spiritual beauty, and speak and act with an almost superhuman grace, when no eye beholds them but that which is most familiar, and which is destined to look upon the same path of life with theirs.

After acknowledging these instances, I must suppose a case; and for the sake of argument imagine what would be the feelings of a husband who, in mixed society, should see his wife the centre of an animated group, pleased herself, and giving pleasure to all around her—the expression of intense interest depicted on her countenance, and mingled with an apprehension so lively and vivid, as almost to amount to presentiment of every probable turn in the discourse; her eyes lighted up with animation, and her cheeks dimpled over with the play of sunny smiles—what would be the feelings of a husband who should have marked all this, and when at his own fireside he felt the want of pleasant converse to beguile the winter's evening of its length, should be answered by that peculiar tone of voice, that depression of countenance, and that forbidding manner, which are more powerful in imposing silence than the most imperative command?

In fact, there is a manner all-powerful in its influence upon domestic happiness, in which there seems to be embodied a spirit of evil too subtle for detection, and too indefinite to be described by any name. It is not precisely a sullen manner, nor, in its strictest sense, a repulsive manner, for the individual who adopts it may be perfectly civil all the while. It does not consist in pointed insult, or indeed in any thing pointed. It conveys no reproach, nor suffers the party upon whom it operates to suppose that redress is the thing desired. It invites no explanation, and makes no complaint. Its only visible characteristic is, that the eye is never raised to gaze upon its object, but invariably directed past it, as if that object had no existence, and was not required to have any.

This is the manner I should describe as most expressive of natural antipathy without the energy of active dislike; and yet this manner, as before stated, is so potent in its influence, that it seems to lay, as it were, an unseen axe at the root of all domestic confidence; and difficult as it must necessarily be for a woman to maintain this manner, there have been instances in which it has destroyed a husband's peace, without affording him even the satisfaction of any definite cause of complaint. There are degrees of the same manner practised every day in all classes of society, but never without a baneful effect, in poisoning our kindly feelings and decreasing the sum of human happiness.

We are all too much disposed to put on what I

would describe as company manners. Not only are our best dresses reserved for our visitors, but our best behavior too. I have often been struck with the bland smiles that have been put on in welcoming guests, and the appearance of extreme interest with which such guests have been listened to; when, five minutes after their departure, the same subject having been taken up by some unfortunate member of the family, no interest whatever has been elicited, no smile awakened, and scarcely so much as a patient and respectful answer drawn forth. I have observed also with what forbearance the absurdities of a stranger have been endured; the twice-told tale, when begun again in company, has apparently been as fresh and entertaining as the first time it was heard. The folly of ignorance has then had no power to disgust, nor the impertinence of curiosity to offend.

When I have marked all this, I have thought, If we could but carry away our company smiles to the home friends, speak always in the gentle and persuasive tones made use of in the evening party, and move along the domestic walk with that snavity of manner which characterizes our intercourse with what is called society, how pleasant would those hours become to the friends who look for their hours of refreshment and relaxation there; and how seldom should we have to complain of our companionship being neglected for that of more brilliant circles and more interesting scenes!

In writing on the subject of consideration and

kindness before and after marriage, I have purposely confined my remarks to a very slight and superficial view of the subject. The world that lies beyond I cannot regard as within the province of my pen—I might almost say within the province of any pen; for such is the difference in human character, and in the circumstances by which character is developed, that it would scarcely be possible to speak definitely of a line of conduct by which the lives of any two married women could properly be regulated; because such conduct must bear strict reference to the habits and temperament of the husband, whose peculiarities of character would have to be taken into account.

I must therefore be satisfied to recommend this wide and important field of contemplation to the serious attention and earnest solicitude of my countrywomen; reminding them only, before we leave this subject, that if, in the first instance, they are induced by selfish feeling to consult their immediate interest or convenience, they are, in a secondary manner, undermining their own happiness by failing to consult that of the being whose destiny is linked with theirs.

What pen can describe the wretchedness of that woman who finds herself doomed to live unloved; and to whom can she look for confidence and affection, if shut out from the natural sources of enjoyment at home? There is no loneliness—there can be none, in all the waste or peopled deserts of this world, bearing the slightest comparison with that

of an unloved wife? She stands amid her family like a living statue among the marble memorials of the dead—insinct with life, yet paralyzed with death—the burning tide of natural feeling circling round her heart—the thousand channels frozen through which that feeling ought to flow.

So pitiable, so utterly destitute of consolation is this state, to which many women have reduced themselves by mere carelessness of the common and familiar means of giving pleasure, that I must be pardoned for writing on this subject with more earnestness than the subtleties of its detail would seem to warrant. We may set off in life with high notions of loving and of being loved, in exact proportion to station—dewy as exemplified in great and noble deeds. But on a closer and more experimental view of human life, we find that affection is more dependent upon the minutiae of every-day existence, and that there is a greater sum of affection really lost by slipping away, through the failure of seeming trifles, than by the shock of great events.

We are apt also to deceive ourselves with regard to the revival of affection after its decay. Much may be done to restore equanimity of mind, to obtain forgiveness, and to be reinstated in esteem; but I am inclined to think, that when once the bloom of love is gone—when it has been brushed away by too rude or too careless a hand, it would be as vain to attempt to restore it, as to raise again the blighted flower, or give wings to the butterfly which the storm had beaten down.

How important is it, then, that women should guard with the most scrupulous attention this treasure of their hearts, this blessing of their houses; and since we are so constituted that trifles make the sum of human happiness, that they should lose no opportunity of turning these trifles to the best account.

Besides these considerations, there is one sad and alarming fact connected with this subject, which ought to be indelibly impressed upon our minds. It is that we have but a short time, it may be but a very short time, allowed us for promoting the comfort or the happiness of our fellow-creatures. Even if we ourselves are spared to reach the widest range of human existence, how few of those we love will number half that length of years! Even the hand that is clasped in ours, the eyes that reflect the intelligence of our souls, and the heart that beats in echo to every pulse we feel, may be cold and motionless before to-morrow's sun has set!

Were the secrets of every human bosom laid open, I believe we should behold no darker passage in the page of experience, than that which has noted down our want of kindness and consideration to those who are gone before us to another world.

When we realize the agonizing sensation of bending over the feeble frame of a beloved friend, when the mortal conflict is approaching, and the fluttering spirit is about to leave its earthly tenement; and looking back upon a long, dark past, all blotched over with instances of our unkindness or neglect, and

forward unto that little span of life into which we would fain concentrate the deep affection that, in spite of inconsistencies in our past conduct, has all the while been cherished in our hearts—with what impassioned earnestness would we arrest the pale messenger in his career, and stay the wings of time, and call upon the impatient spirit to return, to see and feel and understand our love!

Perhaps we have been negligent in former seasons of bodily affliction, have not listened patiently to the outpouring of natural feeling, and have held ourselves excused from attendance in the sick-chamber; and there has gone forth that awful sentence, "It is the last time!" the last time we can offer the coollet draught, or smooth the restless pillow, or bathe the feverish brow! And now, though we would search all the treasures of the earth for healing medicine, and rob ourselves of sleep and rest and sustenance, to purchase for the sufferer one hour of quiet slumber, and pour our tears upon that aching brow, until its burning heat is quenched—it is in vain, for the eye is glazed, the lips are paralyzed, the head begins to droop, and expiring nature tells us it is all *too late!*

Perhaps we have not been sympathizing, kind, or tender, in those bygone years of familiar confidence, when we were called upon to share the burdens of a weary bosom, whose inner feelings were revealed to us, and no others. Yes, we can remember, in the sunny days of youth, and through the trials of maturer life, when the appeals of affection

were answered with fretfulness or captious speech, when estrangement followed, and we could not, if we had desired it, then draw back the love we had repulsed. And now we hear again the awful sentence, "It is the last time!" the last time we can ever weep upon that bosom, or lay our hand upon that head, or press a fond, fond kiss upon those closing lips. Fain would we then throw open the floodgates of our hidden feeling, and pour forth words of more than tenderness. Alas! the once wished-for tide would flow, like the rising surf around a shattered wreck—*too late*.

Perhaps we have been guilty of a deeper sin against our heavenly Father, and the human family whose happiness he has in some measure committed to our trust. Let the young ask diligently of the more experienced, how they can escape theaching consciousness that may pursue them to the grave, and only then commence the reality of its eternal torment—the consciousness of having wasted all our influence, and neglected all our means of assisting those who were associated with us by the closest ties, in preparing for another and a better world.

Perhaps they once sought our society for the benefit of spiritual communion. Perhaps they would have consulted us in cases of moral difficulty, had we been more gracious and conciliating. Perhaps we have treated lightly the serious scruples they have laid before us, or what is still more probable, perhaps the whole tenor of our inconsistent lives has been the means of drawing them away from the

altar on which they saw such unholy incense burning. And now "it is the last time"—the last time we can ever speak to them of eternity, of the state of their trembling souls before the eye of a just and holy God, or raise their fainting hopes to the mercy still offered to their acceptance, through Him who is able to save to the uttermost. Oh! for the trumpet of an archangel, to awake them from the increasing torpor of bodily and spiritual death. Oh! for a voice that would embody, in one deep, awful, and tremendous word, all—all for which our wasted life was inefficient! It is in vain that we would call upon the attributes of nature and of Deity to aid us. They are gone! It was the final struggle; and never more will that pale marble form be roused to life by words of hope or consolation. They are gone. The portals of eternity are closed—*it is too late!*

Let it be a subject of grateful acknowledgment with the young, that to them this fearful sentence has not yet gone forth—*but opportunity may still be offered them to redeem the time.* They know not, however, how much of this time remains at their disposal; and it might occasionally be some assistance to them in their duties, would they cultivate the habit of thinking, not only of their own death, but of the death of their companions.

There are few subjects more calculated for solemn and affecting thought, than the fact that we can scarcely meet a blooming circle around a cheerful hearth, but one individual at least in that circle

will be cherishing in her bosom the seeds of some fatal malady.

It is recorded of the Egyptians, that among their ancient customs they endeavored to preserve the salutary remembrance that they were liable to death, by placing at their festal boards a human skeleton, so that while they feasted and enjoyed the luxuries of this life, they should find it impossible to beguile themselves into a belief in its perpetual duration.

It is not necessary that we should resort to means so unnatural and repulsive, though the end is still more desirable for us, who are trusting in a better hope, to keep in view. Neither is it necessary that the idea should be invested with melancholy and associated with depression. It is but looking at the truth. And let us deceive ourselves as we may, the green churchyard with its freshly covered graves, the passing bell, the slowly moving hearse, the shutters closed upon the apartment where the sound of merriment was lately heard, the visitation of disease within our homes, even the hectic flush of beauty—all remind us that the portion of time allotted for the exercise of kindly feeling toward our fellow-creatures is fleeting fast away; and that to-day, if ever, we must prove to the Great Shepherd of the Christian fold that we are not regardless of that memorable injunction, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."



V.

PUBLIC OPINION.

TO use a popular Germanism, it is but a *con- sidered* view of the subject that we take, when we suppose that the hope of being admired is the strongest stimulus to the female character in all cases where her conduct is referred to public opinion. The dread of being censured or contemned, exercises, I am inclined to think, a far more extensive influence over her habits and her feeling. Any deviation from the fashionable mode of dress, or from the established usages of polished life, present an appalling difficulty to a woman of ordinary mind brought up under the tutelage of what is called the world. She cannot—positively cannot—*does not*—will not do any thing that the world has pronounced unladylike. Nor, while she lives in the world, and mixes in polished society, is it at all desirable that she should deviate from such universally acknowledged rules, except where absolute duty leads her into a different line of conduct. I should be the last person to advise a woman to risk the consequences of such deviations, simply for the sake of being singular; because I regard the

assumption of singularity for its own sake, as one of the most absurd of all the varied specimens of affection which human life affords.

To choose to be singular without a sufficient reason, and to *deceit* to be so in a noble cause, are so widely different, that I desire to be clearly understood in the remarks I am about to make, as relating strictly to those cases in which duty renders it necessary for women to deviate from the fashions and established customs of the time or place in which they live.

While the tide of prosperity bears us smoothly on, and our means are ample, and our incomes abundant, we suffer little inconvenience from the tyranny of the world in these respects. Indeed, it is rather an agreeable amusement to many ladies to consult the fashions of the day, and to be among the first to change their mode of dress, to order costly furniture, and to receive company in the most approved and ladylike style. But as I have before observed of the class of persons to which this work chiefly relates, the tide of prosperity is apt to ebb as well as to flow; and as it recedes from us the whole aspect of the world is not only changed to us, but the aspect of our conduct is changed to the world; so that what it approved in us before, and honored with its countenance, is now the subject of its extreme and bitter condemnation.

It is then that we discover we have been serving a hard master; but unfortunately for thousands of human beings, the discovery brings with it no free-

ness from that service. We loathe the cruel bondage; but habit is too strong for conviction, and we continue to wear the galling chain. It is, then, in cases of adverse fortune, that we see the incalculable benefit of having made the moral duties of social and domestic life the rule of our conduct, and of having regarded all outward embellishments as things of very subordinate importance.

It is a case of by no means rare occurrence, that the young women of England return home from school more learned in the modes of dress and habits of conduct prevailing among the fashionable and the wealthy, than in any of those systems of intellectual culture in which they have been instructed. Or, if their knowledge has not extended to what is done in fashionable life, they have at least learned to despise what is done among the vulgar and the poor, to look upon certain kinds of dress as impossible to be worn, and to regard with supreme contempt every indication of the shewiness of fashionable manners. So far as their means of information could be made to extend, they have laid down, for the guidance of their future lives, the exact rules by which the outward conduct of a lady ought to be regulated, and by these rules they determine to abide.

If this determination was applied exclusively to what is delicate, refined, and lovely in the female character, they would unquestionably be preparing themselves for being both esteemed and beloved; but unfortunately for them, their attention is too

often directed to the mode of dress worn by y^{oung} women much higher than themselves in worldly prosperity, and to all the minutiae of look and manner which they regard as indications of easy circumstances and exemption from vulgar occupation.

Not is the school itself, or the mode of treatment there, to be regarded as the source of these ideas and conclusions. The customs of modern society and the taste of modern times are solely in fault. And whenever young ladies are congregated together with the same means of communication as at school, the same results must follow, until the public taste undergoes a material change, or until the women of our country have become learned in a higher school of wisdom.

With the preparation here alluded to, our young women enter upon social life; and as years roll on, the habits thus acquired of making custom and fashion the rule of their lives, strengthen with the establishment of their character, and become as parts of their very being. What then is the consequence of such habits in the day of their adversity, when the diminution of their pecuniary means leaves them no longer the power of conforming to the world they have so loved? The consequence is, that along with many real privations, their ideal sufferings are increased a hundredfold by the fact that they must dress and live in a manner different from what they have been accustomed to; in short, that they must lose caste.

How little has the mere circumstance of relie-

quishing our luxuries to do with the distress attendant upon the loss of worldly substance. We find every day that persons travelling expressly for enjoyment, joining in social excursions, and even seeking the invigoration of their health and the refreshment of their spirits, from the sea-breezes, or in places of customary resort for the summer months, voluntarily resign more than half their habitual indulgences, and subject themselves without a murmur to the occupation of apartments which they would scarcely think possible to be endured for a single day in their native town; and all the while they are perhaps more happy and more cheerful than in their elegant drawing-rooms at home.

It is evident, then, that it cannot be their individual share in the gratification of artificial wants, which they find it so heart-breaking to resign. It must be that a certain number of polite and refined individuals having combined to attach a high degree of importance to the means of *possessing* the luxuries of life, all who belong to this class, when compelled to exhibit in public a manifest destitution of such means, regard themselves, and expect to be regarded by others, as having become degraded in the sight of their fellow-creatures, and no longer entitled to their favor or regard.

It is of no use asserting that we all know better than to come to this conclusion—that mankind are not so weak or so unjust—that we appreciate the moral worth of an individual beyond the luxuries of his table or the costliness of his dress. It is easy

to say this, but it is not so easy to believe it, because the practical proof of experience is against it. If, for instance, we cared for none of these things, why should the aspect of human life present such a waste of time, and health, and patience, and mental power, and domestic peace, in the pursuit of wealth, when that wealth is expended as soon as gained, in maintaining an appearance of elegance and luxury before the world?

I am not prepared to argue about the benefits resulting from the encouragement of artificial wants and the increase of luxuries, on the broad scale of national prosperity. There are pens *gone aside* and more fit for such a purpose. My narrower views are confined to the individual evils resulting from an over-strained ambition to keep pace with our wealthier associates in our general habits; and I would write with earnestness on this subject, because I believe that at the present time these evils are of rapidly increasing extent.

It may seem unimportant to those who have no experience in these affairs, to speak of the private and domestic disputes arising out of artificial wants on one side, and inability to provide the demanded supply for them on the other. Yet what family in moderate circumstances has not some record of scenes, alike humiliating to human nature and destructive to human happiness, in which the ill-judged request or the harsh denial, the importunate appeal or the agonizing reply, the frosty remonstrance or the bitter retort, have not at seasons cast a shade

over the domestic hearth, and destroyed the peace of the circle gathered around the social board.

It may appear still more like trifling to speak of the sensations with which a member of a fallen family regards her dilapidated wardrobe, and looks, and looks in vain, for a garment sufficiently respectable to make her appearance in before a rich relation. Perhaps she has but one—a call has to be made upon a person of distinction, and as she proceeds on her way, eying with watchful anxiety every speck and spray that would be likely to reduce her garment below the average of respectability, a storm overtakes her. There are carriages for all who can afford to pay for them, but none for her; and the agony of losing her last claim to gentility takes possession of her soul.

The reader may possibly smile at the absurdity of this case. A half-clad savage from some barbarous island would probably smile, could he be made to understand it. But nothing can be farther from exciting a smile than the real sensations it occasions. Nothing can be farther from a smile than the look with which a falling tradesman regards the forlorn condition of his hat, when he dares not brush it lest he should render its destitution more apparent. Nothing can be farther from a smile than the glance he casts upon his threadbare coat, when he knows of no possible resource in art or nature that can supply him with a new one. And nothing can be farther from a smile than the cold welcome we give to a guest who presents himself unexpectedly, and

must perforce look in upon the scantiness of our half-furnished table.

It is easy to class these sources of disquietude under the head of absurdities, and to call them unworthy of rational beings; but I do believe there is more real misery existing in the world at the present time from causes like these, than from all those publicly acknowledged calamities which are attributed to the dispensations of Providence.

I do not mean that these miseries arise directly from, or are by any means confined to, our personal appearance or the furniture of our houses; but when we contemplate the failure of pecuniary means as it is regarded by the world, and attempt to calculate the immense variety of channels through which the suffering it produces is made to flow in consequence of the customs and habits of society, I believe they will be found to extend through every variety of human life to the utmost range of human feeling. Is it not to escape this suffering that the man of unsound principles too frequently applies himself to dishonourable means, that the suicide prepares the deadly draught, and that the emigrant sometimes forsakes his native land, and consigns himself to the solitude of unpeopled wilds? In short, what more remains within the range of human capability, which man has not done, with the hope of flying from the horrors attendant upon the falling away of his pecuniary means.

When the *reality* of this suffering is acknowledged, as it must be by all who look upon society as

it exists at the present moment, the next subject of importance is, to consider how the suffering can be obviated, and its fatal effects upon the peace and happiness of society prevented.

The most immediate means that could be made to operate upon woman would unquestionably be by implanting in her mind a deeper and more rational foundation of thought and feeling—to put a stop to that endless variety of ill-natured gossip which relates to the want of elegance or fashionable air in certain persons' dress and manner of living; so that there should be no more questioning, "What will be thought of my wearing this dress again?" "What will Miss P— or Mrs. W— say if they see our old curtains?" "What can the Johnsons mean by travelling outside?" "What will the people at church or chapel say when they see your shabby veil?" "I positively do n't believe the Wilsons can afford a new carpet, or they would surely have one; and they have discontinued their subscription to our book society."

It is neither grateful nor profitable to pursue these remarks any farther than as they serve for specimens of that most contemptible of small talk which yet exercises a powerful influence over the female mind; so much so, that I have known the whole fabric of a woman's philosophy entirely overthrown, and her power of mind for the moment destroyed, by the simple question, whether she had no other dress than the one she was so often seen to wear.

There is another instance that serves to me as illustrating in a striking manner the subject immediately under consideration: it is that of wearing mourning for a deceased relative. This custom is so generally acknowledged as desirable, that it needs no recommendation from my pen. One would suppose, however, on a superficial view of it, that the wearing of black, as a general costume indicative of the absence of festivity or merriment from the bereaved family, was all that had been originally intended by this custom, and that it should thus become an outward testimony of respect and sorrow for the dead.

The fashion of the world, however, has imposed upon this custom, as applies to females, certain restrictions, and additions so expensive in their nature as to render it rather an article of luxury to wear genteel mourning, or that which is indicative of the deepest grief. It interferes but little with the sorrow and seclusion of a recent bereavement, for the mistress of ample means to give colors for an external exemplification of precisely the degree of sorrow supposed to attend upon the loss of a parent or a distant relative. But when the means of pecuniary expenditure are extremely small, and the materials for appearing properly in public have to be made up at home, and prepared for use within a very limited time, it is evident that greater regard to the sacredness of sorrow would suggest the desirableness of a less elaborate style of dress, or perhaps a dress not absolutely new for the occasion.

Ladies, however, and those who have been accustomed to make gentility the primary rule of their conduct, must move *gently*; and consequently, there are often scenes of bustling preparation, of invention, and studious arrangement—*scenes upon which* if a stranger should look in, he would see an appearance of activity and interest almost amounting to animation, in the very house where the shutters are still closed; and which are wholly at variance with the silence and the sanctity of a deep and solemn grief.

Nor is this all. So extremely becoming and ladylike is the fashionable style of mourning, that, under the plea of paying greater respect to the memory of the dead, it has become an object of ambition to wear it in its greatest excellence; and equally an object of dread and source of humiliation to be compelled to wear it in an inferior style. Thus, when the loss of a father is attended with the failure of his pecuniary resources, it adds no little to the grief into which his daughters are plunged, to be under the necessity of appearing, so soon after their twofold loss, under such an outward sign of poverty as is generally understood by the world to be betrayed by cheap and humble mourning.

I mention the *Instance of mourning*, not because it differs materially from many others, but because it appears to me to illustrate clearly and strikingly the degree of shame and trouble and perplexity in which women are involved by the habit of attaching too much importance to the usages of society. I

know that it is beneficial to the character and morals of women, that their good name should be guarded from every breath of reproach; and that the wholesome restrictions of society are absolutely necessary to prevent them from sometimes vacillating too far under the influence of generous and disinterested feeling. But my remarks apply exclusively to cases where their moral worth would be established, not endangered; and I would earnestly request my countrywomen to bear in mind the immense difference between deviating from the rules of justice and breaking through the wholesome restrictions of prudence.

I have spoken in strong terms of the sufferings and inconveniences incident to women from their slavery to the opinion of the world; but were this consideration all that had to be taken into account, they would unquestionably have a right to adjust the balance, and act according to their own choice.

There is, however, a far more important question connected with this subject, and that is the question of *integrity*.

If there be one moral quality for which England as a nation is distinguished, I should say it was her integrity—integrity in her intercourse with other nations—integrity in the administration of her government and laws—integrity in the social habits and honorable feelings of her patriotic sons.

And shall her daughters be less solicitous to uphold this high standard of moral worth? They answer, "No!" But they see perhaps not all women

of the encroaching and insidious nature of artificial wants and tastes and habits, founded upon the fashion of the times rather than upon any lasting principle of right.

I do not say that to each one of the immense variety of daily and familiar actions which might be classed under this head, there attaches the highest degree of actual culpability. They are rather instances of encroachment than of absolute injustice and wrong. But I do say that the *habit* of encroaching, just so far as decency will permit and as occasion seems to warrant, upon all that is noble and generous, upright and kind in human conduct, has a fatal tendency to corrupt the heart, while it produces at the same time a deadening effect upon the highest and holiest aspirations of the soul.

What answer can be made by such a soul to the secret questionings of its internal monitor? Or how shall we appeal to the gracious and merciful Creator of the universe, who has given us all this glorious world for our enjoyment and all the elements of nature for our use; who has looked upon us in our degradation and pitied our infirmities, and opened the gates of heaven that his mercy might descend to us in a palpable and human form, and that we might receive the conditions of his offered pardon, be healed, and live?—how shall we appeal to him in our private prayers, or stand before him in the public sanctuary, with this confession on our lips—that just so far as man could approve or condemn our actions, we have deemed it expedient to be just; but

that to him and to the Saviour of our souls we have grudged the income of a willing mind; and therefore we have enhanced our pleasures, and gratified our pride, and fed our selfishness by all those trifling yet forbidden means which he has pronounced to be offensive in his sight?

Besides these considerations, there is one of immeasurable importance connected with our conduct in the sight of God. No human mind can set a bound or prescribe a measure to its voluntary deviations from the line of duty. We have been supposing a case in which these deviations are extremely minute, and yet so numerous as to form as it were a circle round the heart—a circle of *evil*. Imagine, then, this circle widening and widening year after year, through the seasons of youth and maturity and the dreary winter of old age. What an awful and melancholy spectacle does the state of that heart present, enclosed as it were in a deleterious atmosphere, and growing perpetually sicker and more callous by exclusion from the blessed light of heaven!

Oh, let us not *boyc* to breathe this deadly atmosphere! And you who are yet inexperienced in the ways of human life, whose habits are not formed, whose paths not chosen, whose line of conduct not decided, what a blessing would it be to you, both in this world and in the world to come, were you to choose that *better part*, that would enable you to look with a single eye to what is most acceptable in the Divine sight, and most in accordance with the will

of God; leaving the embellishments of person, the luxuries of taste, and the appropriation of worldly concerns to be enjoyed or relinquished with a grateful and contented mind, just as your heavenly Father may permit; and bearing always about you, as a talisman against the encroachments of evil, even in the most simple or most specious form, the remembrance that none of these things are worthy of a single wish, if they must necessarily be obtained by the violation of his laws, or accompanied by the tokens of his displeasure.



FROM

MRS. HANNAH MORE.



I.

THOUGHTS ON CONVERSATION.

IT has been advised, and by very respectable authorities too, that in conversation women should carefully conceal any knowledge or learning they may happen to possess. I own, with submission, that I do not see either the necessity or propriety of this advice. For if a young lady has that discretion and modesty, without which all knowledge is little worth, she will never make an ostentatious parade of it, because she will rather be intent on acquiring more, than on displaying what she has.

I am at a loss to know why a young female is instructed to exhibit, in the most advantageous point of view, her skill in music, her singing, dancing, taste in dress, and her acquaintance with the most fashionable games and amusements; while her piety is to be anxiously concealed, and her knowledge affectingly disavowed, lest the former should draw on her the appellation of an enthusiast, or the latter that of a pedant.

In regard to knowledge, why should she for ever affect to be on her guard lest she should be found

guity of a small portion of it? She need be no less solicitous about it, as it seldom proves to be so very considerable as to excite astonishment or admiration; for after all the acquisitions which her talents and her studies have enabled her to make, she will generally speaking, be found to have less of what is called learning than a common schoolboy.

It would be to the last degree presumptuous and absurd, for a young woman to pretend to give the *ton* to the company; to interrupt the pleasure of others, and her own opportunity of improvement, by talking when she ought to listen; or to introduce subjects out of the common road, in order to show her own wit, or expose the want of it in others: but were the sex to be totally silent when any topic of literature happens to be discussed in their presence, conversation would lose much of its vivacity, and society would be robbed of one of its most interesting charms.

How easily and effectually may a well-bred woman promote the most useful and elegant conversation, almost without speaking a word! for the modes of speech are scarcely more variable than the modes of silence. The silence of listless ignorance, and the silence of sparkling intelligence, are perhaps as separately marked, and as distinctly expressed, as the same feelings could have been by the most unequivocal language. A woman in a company where she has the least influence, may promote any subject by a profound and invariable attention, which shows that she is pleased with it.

and by an illuminated countenance, which proves she understands it. This obliging attention is the most flattering encouragement in the world to men of sense and letters, to continue any topic of instruction or entertainment they happen to be engaged in: it owed its introduction perhaps to accident—the best introduction in the world for a subject of ingenuity—which, though it could not have been formally proposed without pedantry, may be continued with ease and good humor; but which will be frequently and effectually stopped by the listlessness, inattention, or whispering of silly girls, whose weariness betrays their ignorance, and whose impatience exposes their ill-breeding. A polite man, however deeply interested in the subject on which he is conversing, catches at the slightest hint to have done: a look is a sufficient intimation; and if a pretty simpleton who sits near him seems *distrainé*,* he puts an end to his remarks, to the great regret of the reasonable part of the company, who, perhaps, might have gained more improvement by the continuance of such a conversation, than a week's reading would have yielded them; for it is such company as this, that give an edge to each other's wit, "as iron sharpeneth iron."

That silence is one of the great arts of conversation is allowed by Cicero himself, who says, there is not only an art, but even an eloquence in it. And this opinion is confirmed by a great modern,† in the following little anecdote from one of the ancients.

* *Inattentive*.

† *Lord Bacon*.

When many Grecian philosophers had a solemn meeting before the ambassador of a foreign prince, each endeavored to show his parts by the brilliancy of his conversation, that the ambassador might have something to relate of the Grecian wisdom. One of them, offended no doubt at the leguacity of his companions, observed a profound silence; when the ambassador, turning to him, asked, "But what have you to say, that I may report it?" He made this laconic, but very pointed reply: "Tell your king that you have found one among the Greeks who knew how to be silent."

There is a quality infinitely more interesting to the female mind than knowledge—this is, wit, the most captivating, but the most dreaded of all talents; the most dangerous to those who have it, and the most feared by those who have it not. Though it is against all the rules, yet I cannot find in my heart to abuse this charming quality. He who has grown rich without it, in safe and sober business, shuns it as a disease, and looks upon poverty as its invariable concomitant. The moralist declaims against it, as the source of irregularity; and the legal citizen dreads it more than bankruptcy itself, for he considers it as the parent of extravagance and beggary. The cynic will ask of what use it is. Of very little, perhaps: no more is a flower-garden, and yet it is allowed as an object of innocent amusement and delightful recreation. A woman who possesses this quality has received a most dangerous present, perhaps not less so than beauty itself;

especially if it be not sheathed in a temper peculiarly inoffensive, chastised by a most correct judgment, and restrained by more prudence than falls to the common lot.

This talent is more likely to make a woman vain than knowledge; for as wit is the immediate property of its possessor, and learning is only an acquaintance with the knowledge of other people, there is much more danger that we should be vain of what is our own, than of what we borrow.

But wit, like learning, is not near so common a thing as is imagined. Let not, therefore, a young lady be alarmed at the acuteness of her own wit, any more than at the abundance of her own knowledge. The great danger is, lest she should mistake pertness, flippancy, or imprudence, for this brilliant quality, or imagine she is witty, only because she is indiscreet. This is very frequently the case; and this makes the name of wit so cheap, while its real existence is so rare.

Lest the flattery of her acquaintance, or an over-weening opinion of her own qualifications, should lead some vain and petulant girl into a false notion that she has a great deal of wit, when she has only a redundancy of animal spirits, she may not find it useless to attend to the definition of this quality, by one who had as large a portion of it as most individuals could ever boast:

*"Tis not a wit, 'tis not a jest,
Admired with laughter at a feast,
Nor frolic talk, which can that life gain;
The proofs of wit far ever went thence."*

"Neither can that have any place,
 At which a virgin looks her face;
 Such dress the sex must purge away: 'Tis just
 The author blush should, where the reader must."

SCENE.

But those who actually possess this rare talent, cannot be too abstinent in the use of it. It often makes admirers, but it never makes friends; I mean where it is the predominant feature; and the unprotected and defenceless state of womanhood calls for friendship more than for admiration. She who does not desire friends has a world and insensible soul, but she who is ambitious of making every man her admirer, has an invincible vanity and a cold heart.

But to dwell only on the side of policy, a prudent woman, who has established the reputation of some genius, will sufficiently maintain it, without keeping her faculties always on the stretch to say *good things*. Nay, if reputation alone be her object, she will gain a more solid one by her fortitude, as the wiser part of her acquaintance will ascribe it to the right motive, which is, not that she has less wit, but that she has more judgment.

The fatal fondness for indulging a spirit of ridicule, and the injurious and irreparable consequences which sometimes attend the *too prompt reply*, can never be too seriously or too severely condemned. Not to offend is the first step towards pleasing. To give pain is as much an offence against humanity as against good breeding; and surely it is as well to abstain from an action because it is *shameful*, as because it is *unpolite*. In company, young ladies

would do well, before they speak, to reflect if what they are going to say may not distress some worthy persons present, by wounding them in their persons, families, connections, or religious opinions. If they find it will touch them in either of these, I should advise them to suspect that what they were going to say is not so very good a thing as they at first imagined. Nay, if even it was one of those bright ideas, which "Jesus has infused with a fifth part of her nectar," so much greater will be their merit in suppressing it, if there was a probability it might offend. Indeed, if they have the temper and prudence to make such a previous reflection, they will be more richly rewarded by their own inward triumph at having suppressed a lively but severe remark, than they could have been with the dissembled applause of the whole company, who, with that complaisant deceit which good breeding too much authorizes, affect openly to admire what they secretly resolve never to forgive.

I have always been delighted with the story of the little girl's eloquence, in one of the Children's Tales, who received from a friendly fairy the gift, that at every word she uttered, pinks, roses, diamonds, and pearls should drop from her mouth. The hidden moral appears to be this, that it was the sweetness of her temper which produced this pretty fascial effect; for when her malicious sister desired the same gift from the good-natured, tiny intelligence, the venom of her own heart converted it into poisonous and loathsome reptiles.

A man of sense and breeding will sometimes join in the laugh which has been raised at his expense by an ill-natured repartee; but if it was very cutting, and one of those shocking sort of truths, which, as they can scarcely be pardoned even in private, ought never to be uttered in public, he does not laugh because he is pleased, but because he wishes to conceal how much he is hurt. As the remark was uttered by a lady, so far from seeming to resent it, he will be the first to commend it; but notwithstanding that, he will remember it as a trait of malice when the whole company shall have forgotten it as a stroke of wit. Women are so far from being privileged by their sex to say unwholesome or cruel things, that it is in this very circumstance which renders them more intolerable. When the arrow is lodged in the heart, it is no relief to him who is wounded to reflect that the hand which shot it was a fair one.

Many women, when they have a favorite point to gain, or an earnest wish to bring any one over to their opinion, often use a very disingenuous method: they will state a case ambiguously, and then avail themselves of it in whatever manner shall best answer their purpose; leaving your mind in a state of indecision as to their real meaning, while they triumph in the perplexity they have given you by the unfair conclusions they draw. They will also frequently argue from exceptions instead of rules, and are astonished when you are not willing to be contented with a prejudice, instead of a reason.

In a sensible company of both sexes, where women are not restrained by any other reserve than what their natural modesty imposes, and where the intimacy of all parties authorizes the utmost freedom of communication, should any one inquire what were the general sentiments on some particular subject, it will, I believe, commonly happen, that the ladies, whose imaginations have kept pace with the oration, have anticipated its end, and are ready to deliver their sentiments on it as soon as it is finished; while some of the male hearers, whose minds were busied in settling the propriety, comparing the circumstances, and examining the consistencies of what was said, are obliged to pause and discriminate, before they think of answering. Nothing is so embarrassing as a variety of matter; and the conversation of women is often more perspicuous, because it is less laborod.

A man of deep reflection, if he does not keep up an intimate commerce with the world, will be sometimes so entangled in the intricacies of intense thought, that he will have the appearance of a confused and perplexed expression; while a sprightly woman will extricate herself with that lively and "weak dexterity," which will almost always please, though it is very far from being always right. It is easier to confound than to convince an opponent; the former may be effected by a *jeu* that has more happiness than truth in it. Many an excellent reasoner, well skilled in the theory of the schools, has felt himself discomfited by a reply, which,

though as wide of the mark and as foreign to the question as can be conceived, has disconnected him more than the most startling proposition, or the most accurate chain of reasoning, could have done; and he has borne the laugh of his fair antagonist, as well as of the whole company, though he could not but feel that his own argument was attended with the fullest demonstration: so true is it, that it is not always necessary to be right, in order to be applauded.

But let not a young lady's vanity be too much elated with this false applause, which is given, not to her merit, but to her sex; she has not perhaps gained a victory, though she may be allowed a triumph; and it should humble her to reflect that the tribute is paid, not to her strength, but her weakness. It is worth while to discriminate between that applause which is given from the complaisance of others, and that which is paid to our own merit.

Where great sprightliness is the natural bent of the temper, girls should endeavor to habituate themselves to a custom of observing, thinking, and reasoning. I do not mean, that they should devote themselves to abstruse speculation, or the study of logic; but she who is accustomed to give a due arrangement to her thoughts, to reason justly and pertinently on common affairs, and judiciously to deduce effects from their causes, will be a better logician than some of those who claim the name, because they have studied the art: this is being "learned without the rules;" the best definition,

perhaps, of that sort of literature which is properest for the sex.

That species of knowledge, which appears to be the result of reflection rather than of science, sits peculiarly well on women. *It is not uncommon to find a lady, who, though she does not know a rule of syntax, scarcely ever violates one; and who constructs every sentence she utters, with more propriety than many a learned dunce, who has every rule of Aristotle by heart, and who can lace his own threadbare discourse with the golden shreds of Cicero and Virgil.*

But of all the qualifications for conversation, humility, if not the most brilliant, is the safest, the most agreeable, and the most feminine. The affectation of introducing subjects with which others are unacquainted, and of displaying talents superior to *the rest of the company, is as dangerous as it is foolish.*

There are many, who never can forgive another for being more agreeable and more accomplished than themselves, and who can pardon any offence rather than an eclipsing merit. Had the nightingale in the fable conquered his vanity, and resisted the temptation of showing a fine voice, he might have escaped the talons of the hawk. The melody of his singing was the cause of his destruction; his merit brought him into danger, and his vanity cost him his life.



II.

FEMALE KNOWLEDGE—VIEW
OF THE SEXES.

THE chief end to be proposed in cultivating the understandings of women, is to qualify them for the practical purposes of life. Their knowledge is not often, like the learning of men, to be reproduced in some literary composition, nor ever in any learned profession; but it is to come out in conduct. It is to be exhibited in life and manners. A lady studies, not that she may qualify herself to become an orator or a pleader; not that she may learn to debate, but to act. She is to read the best books, not so much to enable her to talk of them, as to bring the improvement which they furnish to the rectification of her principles and the formation of her habits. The great uses of study to a woman are to enable her to regulate her own mind, and to be instrumental to the good of others.

To women, therefore, whatever be her rank, I would recommend a predominance of those more sober studies, which, not having display for their

object, may make her wise without vanity, happy without witnesses, and content without panegyrists; the manner of which will not bring celebrity, but improve usefulness. She should pursue every kind of study which will teach her to elicit truth; which will lead her to be intent upon realities; will give precision to her ideas; will make an exact mind. She should cultivate every study, which, instead of stimulating her sensibility, will chastise it; which will create neither an excessive nor a false refinement; which will give her definite notions; will bring the imagination under dominion; will lead her to think, to compare, to combine, to methodize; which will confer such a power of discrimination, that her judgment shall learn to reject what is dazzling, if it be not solid; and to prefer, not what is striking, or bright, or new, but what is just. That kind of knowledge which is rather fitted for home consumption than foreign exportation, is peculiarly adapted to women.*

It is because the superficial nature of their education furnishes them with a false and low standard of intellectual excellence, that women have too often become ridiculous by the unfounded pretensions of literary vanity; for it is not the really learned, but the smatterers, who have generally brought their own into discredit by an absurd affectation which

* "If they I be allowed to strengthen my own opinion with the authority of Dr. Johnson, that a woman should have no such education? It is a solid, practical acquirement, in which there is neither ostentation nor display: it is a quiet, useful kind of knowledge, which she requires for herself and her family, and not for the world.

has set them on despising the duties of ordinary life. A woman of real sense will never forget, that while the greater part of her proper duties are such as the most moderately gifted may fulfil with credit, (since Providence never makes that to be very difficult which is generally necessary,) yet that the most highly endowed are equally bound to fulfil them; and let her remember that the humblest of these offices, performed on Christian principles, are wholesome for the minds even of the most enlightened, as they tend to the casting down of those "high imaginations" which women of genius are too much tempted to indulge.

The truth is, women who are so puffed up with the conceit of talents as to neglect the plain duties of life, will rarely be found to be women of the best abilities. And here may the author be allowed the gratification of observing, that those women of real genius and extensive knowledge, whose friendship has conferred honor and happiness on her own life, have been, in general, eminent for economy, and the practice of domestic virtues; and have shewn aversion to the poor affectation of neglecting the duties and despising the knowledge of common life, with which literary women have been frequently, and not always unjustly accused.

They little understand the true interests of women who would lift her from the important duties of her allotted station, to fill with fantastic dignity a loftier but less appropriate niche. Nor do they understand her true happiness, who seek to annihilate

distinctions from which she derives advantages, and to attempt innovations which would depreciate her real value. Each sex has its proper excellences. Why should we do away distinctions which increase the mutual benefits, and enhance the satisfactions of life? Whence, but by carefully preserving the original marks of difference stamped by the hand of the Creator, would be derived the superior advantage of mixed society? Is either sex so abounding in perfection as to be independent of the other for improvement? Have men no need to have their rough angles *blot off*, and their harshnesses and asperities smoothed and polished by assimilating with beings of more softness and refinement? Are the ideas of women naturally so very judicious, are their principles so *inviolably* firm, are their views so perfectly correct, are their judgments so *completely* exact, that there is occasion for no additional weight, no superadded strength, no increased clearness, none of that enlargement of mind, none of that additional invigoration which may be derived from the side of the stronger sex? What identity could advantageously supersede such an enlivening opposition, such an interesting variety of character? Is it not *flow, more wise, as well as more honorable*, to move contentedly in the plain path which Providence has *obviously marked out to the sex*, and in which custom has for the most part rationally confirmed them, rather than to stray *awkwardly, unbecomingly, and unsuccessfully* in a forbidden road? Is it not desirable to be the lawful possessors of a

lesser domestic territory, rather than the turbulent usurpers of a wider foreign empire? to be good originals, rather than bad imitators? to be the best thing of one's own kind, rather than an inferior thing, even if it were of a higher kind? to be excellent women, rather than indifferent men?

Is the author, then, undervaluing her own sex? No. It is her zeal for their true interests, which leads her to oppose their imaginary rights. It is her regard for their happiness, which makes her endeavor to cure them of a feverish thirst for a fame unattainable as inappropriate; to guard them against an ambition as little becoming the delicacy of their female character as the meanness of their religious profession. A little Christian insanity and self-mindedness are worth all the empty renown which was ever obtained by the misapplied energies of the sex; it is worth all the wild metaphysical discussion which has ever been obtruded under the name of reason and philosophy; which has unsettled the peace of vain women, and forfeited the respect of reasonable men. And the most elaborate definition of ideal rights, and the most hardy measures for attaining them, are of less value in the eyes of a truly amiable woman, than "that meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."

Natural propensities best mark the designations of Providence as to their application. The fish was not more clearly bestowed on the fish that he should swim, nor the wing given to the bird that he should fly, than superior strength of body, and a firmer

texture of mind, was given to man, that he might preside in the deep and daring scenes of action and of council; in the complicated arts of government, in the contention of arms, in the intricacies and depths of science, in the bustle of commerce, and in those professions which demand a higher reach, and a wider range of powers. The true value of woman is not diminished by the imputation of inferiority in those talents which do not belong to her, of those qualities in which her claim to excellence does not consist. She has other requisites, better adapted to answer the end and purposes of her being, from "Him who dooth all things well;" who suits the agent to the action, who accommodates the instrument to the work.

Let not then aspiring, because ill-judging women view with pining envy the keen satirist, hunting vice through all the doublings and windings of the heart; the sagacious politician, leading senates, and directing the fate of empires; the acute lawyer, detecting the obliquities of fraud; and the skilful dramatist, exposing the pretensions of folly; but let her ambition be consoled by reflecting, that those who thus excel, to all that nature bestows and books can teach, must add besides that consummate knowledge of the world, to which a delicate woman has no fair access, and which, even if she could attain, she would never be supposed to have come honestly by.

In almost all that comes under the description of *polite letters*, in all that captivates by imagery, or

warns by just and affecting sentiment, women are excellent. They possess in a high degree that delicacy and quickness of perception, and that nice discernment between the beautiful and defective, which comes under the denomination of taste. Truth in composition and action they excel in details; but they do not so much generalize their ideas as men, nor do their minds seize a great subject with so large a grasp. They are acute observers, and accurate judges of life and manners, as far as their own sphere of observation extends; but they describe a smaller circle. A woman sees the world, as it were, from a little elevation in her own garden, whence she makes an exact survey of home scenes, but takes not in that wider range of distant prospects which he who stands on a loftier eminence commands. Women have a certain *feel* which often enables them to feel what is just more instantaneously than they can define it. They have an intuitive penetration into character, bestowed on them by Providence, like the sensitive and tender organs of some timid animals, as a kind of natural guard, to warn of the approach of danger beings who are often called to act defensively.

In summing up the evidence, if I may so speak, of the different capacities of the sexes, one may venture, perhaps, to assert, that women have equal *parts*, but are inferior in *richness of mind*, in the integral understanding; that though a superior woman may possess single faculties in equal perfection, yet there is commonly a juster proportion in

the mind of a superior man; that if women have in an equal degree the faculty of fancy which creates images, and the faculty of memory which collects and stores ideas, they seem not to possess, in equal measure, the faculty of comparing, combining, analysing, and separating these ideas, that deep and patient thinking which goes to the bottom of a subject, nor that power of arrangement which knows how to link a thousand connected ideas in one dependent train, without losing sight of the original idea out of which the rest grow, and on which they all hang. The female, too, wanting steadiness in her intellectual pursuits, is perpetually turned aside by her characteristic tastes and feelings. Woman, in the career of genius, is the Atalanta, who will risk losing the race by running out of her road to pick up the golden apple; while her male competitor, without perhaps possessing greater natural strength or swiftness, will more certainly attain his object by direct pursuit, by being less exposed to the seductions of extraneous beauty, and will win the race, not by excelling in speed, but by despising the bait.

Here it may be justly enough retorted, that, as it is allowed the education of women is so defective, the alleged inferiority of their minds may be accounted for on that ground more justly than by ascribing it to their natural make. And, indeed, there is so much truth in the remark, that, till women shall be more reasonably educated, and till the native growth of their mind shall cease to be stunted and cramped, we have no juster ground for pro-

nouncing that their understanding has already reached its highest attainable point, then the Chinese would have for affirming that their women have attained to the greatest possible perfection in walking, while the first care is, during their infancy to cripple their feet. At least, till the female sex are more carefully instructed, this question will always remain as undecided as to the degree of difference between the masculine and feminine understanding, as the question between the understandings of blacks and whites; for, until men and women, and until Africans and Europeans, are put more nearly on a par in the cultivation of their minds, the shades of distinction, whatever they be, between their capabilities, can never be fairly ascertained.

But, whatever characteristic distinctions may exist—whatever inferiority may be attached to women from the slighter frame of her body, or the more circumscribed powers of her mind, from a less systematic education, and from the subordinate station she is called to fill in life—there is one great and leading circumstance which raises her importance, and even establishes her equality. Christianity has exalted women to true and undigested dignity: in Christ Jesus, as there is neither "rich nor poor," "bond nor free," so there is neither "male nor female." In the view of that humerality which is brought to light by the gospel, she has no superior. "Women" (to borrow the idea of an excellent preacher) "make up one half of the human race, equally with men redeemed by the blood of

Christ." In this their true dignity consists; here their best pretensions rest; here their highest claims are allowed.

All disputes then for preeminence between the sexes have only for their object the poor precedence for a few short years, the attention of which would be better devoted to the duties of life and the interests of eternity.

And, as the final hope of the female sex is equal, we see their present means perhaps more favorable, and their opportunities often less obstructed, than those of the other sex. In their Christian course, women have every superior advantage, whether we consider the natural make of their minds, their scenes for acquisition in youth, or their subsequently less exposed mode of life. Their hearts are naturally soft and flexible, open to impressions of love and gratitude; their feelings tender and lively: all these are favorable to the cultivation of a devotional spirit. Yet, while we remind them of these native benefits, they will do well to be on their guard lest this very softness and ductility lay them more open to the seductions of temptation and error.

They have in the native constitution of their minds, as well as from the relative situations they are called to fill, a certain sense of attachment and dependence, which is peculiarly favorable to religion. They feel, perhaps, more intimately the want of a strength which is not their own. Christianity brings that superinduced strength; it comes in aid of their

conscious weakness, and offers the only true counterpoise to it.

Women also bring to the study of Christianity fewer of those prejudices which persons of the other sex too often early contract. Men, from their classical education, acquire a strong partiality for the manners of pagan antiquity, and the dogmatics of pagan philosophy: this, together with the impetuous taint caught from the loose descriptions of their poets, and the licentious language even of their historians, (in whom we usually look for more gravity,) often weakens the good impressions of young men, and at least confuses their ideas of piety, by mixing them with so much heterogeneous matter. Their very spirits are imbued all the week with the impious follies of a depraved mythology; and it is well if even on Sundays, they can hear of the "true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent." While women, though struggling with the same natural corruptions, have commonly less knowledge to unlearn, and fewer schemes to unlearn, they have not so shake off the pride of systems, and to disengage their minds from the shackles of favorite theories: they do not bring from the porch or the academy any "oppositions of science" to obstruct their reception of those pure doctrines taught on the mount; doctrines which ought to find a readier entrance into minds uninfected with the pride of the school of Zeno, or the libertinism of that of Epicurus.

And as women are naturally more affectionate than fastidious, they are likely both to read and to

hear with a less critical spirit than men: they will not be on the watch to detect errors, so much as to gather improvement; they have *scholastic* that hardness which is acquired by dealing deeply in books of controversy, but are more inclined to the perusal of works which quicken the devotional feelings, than to such as awaken a spirit of doubt and skepticism. They are less disposed to consider the compositions they read as materials on which to ground objections and answers, than as helps to faith, and rules of life. With these advantages, however, they should also bear in mind that their more easily received impressions being often less sliding, and their reason less open to conviction by means of the strong evidence which exist in favor of the truth of Christianity, they ought, therefore, to give the more earnest heed to the things which they have heard, but at any time they should let them slip. Women are also, from their domestic habits, in possession of more leisure and tranquillity for religious pursuits, as well as secured from those difficulties and strong temptations to which men are exposed in the tumult of a bustling world. Their lives are more regular and uniform, less agitated by the passions, the business, the contentions, the shock of opinions, and the opposition of interests, which divide society and convulse the world.

If we have denied them the possession of talents which might lead them to excel as lawyers, they are preserved from the peril of having their principles swept by that too indiscriminate deluge of right

and wrong, to which the professors of the *lex ars* are exposed. If we should question their title to eminence as mathematicians, they are happily exempt from the danger to which men devoted to that science are said to be liable: namely, that of looking for demonstration on subjects which by their very nature are incapable of affording it. If they are less conversant in the powers of nature, the structure of the human frame, and the knowledge of the heavenly bodies, than philosophers, physicians, and astronomers, they are, however, delivered from the error into which many of each of these have sometimes fallen: I mean, from the fatal habit of resting in second causes, instead of referring all to the first; instead of making "the heavens declare the glory of God," and proclaim his handiwork; instead of concluding, when they observe how beautifully and wonderfully we are made, "Marvelloxe are thy works, O Lord, and that my soul knoweth right well."

And let the weaker sex take comfort, that in their very exemption from privileges, which they are sometimes foolishly disposed to envy, consists not only their security, but their happiness. If they enjoy not the distinctions of public life and high offices, do they not escape the responsibility attached to them, and the mortification of being disowned from them? If they have no voice in deliberative assemblies, do they not avoid the load of duty inseparably connected with such privileges? For posterous pains have been taken to create in women

an unwise jealousy, that their talents are neither rewarded with public honors or emoluments in life, nor with inscriptions, statues, and mausoleums after death. It has been absurdly represented to them as a hardship, that, while they are expected to perform duties, they must yet be contented to relinquish honours; and must unjustly be compelled to renounce fame, while they must sedulously labor to deserve it.

But for Christian women to act on the low views suggested to them by their ill-judging panegyrists; for Christian women to look up with a giddy head and a throbbing heart to honors and remunerations so little suited to the wants and capacities of an immortal spirit, would be no less ridiculous than if Christian heroes should look back with envy on the old pagan rewards of ovations, oak garlands, parsley crowns, and laurel wreaths. The Christian hope more than reconciles Christian women to these petty privations, by substituting a nobler prize for their ambition, "the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus;" by substituting for that popular and fascinating voice which may cry "Hosanna" and "Glory" in a breath, that favor of God which is "eternal life."

If women should lament it as a disadvantage attached to their sex, that their character is of so delicate a texture as to be sullied by the slightest breath of calumny, and that the stain once received is indelible; yet are they not led by that very circumstance, as if instinctively, to shrink from all those irregularities to which the loss of character is so

certainly expected to be attached; and to shun with keener circumspection the most distant approach towards the confines of danger? Let them not lament it as a hardship, but account it to be a privilege, that the delicacy of their sex impels them more scrupulously to avoid the very "appearance of evil;" let them not regret that the consciousness of their danger serves to secure their purity, by placing them at a greater distance, and in a more deep retirement, from the evil itself.

Though it be one main object of this little work, rather to lower than to raise any desire of celebrity in the female heart, yet I would awaken it to a just sensibility to honest fame: I would call on women to reflect that our religion has not only made them heirs to a blessed immortality hereafter, but has greatly raised them in the scale of being here, by lifting them to an importance in society unknown to the most polished ages of antiquity. The religion of Christ has even bestowed a degree of renown on the sex, beyond what any other religion ever did. Perhaps there are hardly so many virtuous women (for I reject the long catalogues when their lives have transferred from oblivion to infamy) named in all the pages of Greek or Roman history, as are handed down to eternal fame in a few of those short chapters with which the great apostle to the Gentiles has concluded his epistles to his converts. Of "devout and honorable women," the sacred Scriptures record "not a few." Some of the most affecting scenes, the most interesting transactions, and the most touching

convictions which are recorded of the Saviour of the world, passed with women. *Their* examples have supplied some of the most eminent instances of faith and love. *They* are the first remarked as having "ministered to him of their substance." *Theirs* was the praise of not abandoning their despised Redeemer when he was led to execution, and under all the hopeless circumstances of his ignominious death: *they* appear to have been the last attending at his tomb, and the first on the morning when he arose from it. *Theirs* was the privilege of receiving the earliest consolation from their risen Lord: *theirs* was the honor of being first commissioned to announce his glorious resurrection. And even to have furnished heroic confessors, devoted saints, and unshinking martyrs to the church of Christ, has not been the exclusive honor of the bolder sex.





III.

PUBLIC AMUSEMENTS

IT is not proposed to enter the long-contested field of controversy as to the individual amusements which may be considered as safe and lawful for those women of the higher class who make a strict profession of Christianity. The judgment they will be likely to form for themselves on the subject, and the plan they will consequently adopt, will depend much on the clearness or obscurity of their religious views, and on the greater or less progress they have made in their Christian course. It is in their choice of amusements that you are able, in some measure, to get acquainted with the real dispositions of mankind. In their business, in the leading employments of life, their path is, in a good degree, chalked out for them: there is, in this respect, a sort of general character, wherein the greater part, more or less, must coincide. But in their pleasures the choice is voluntary, the taste is self-directed, the propensity is independent; and, of course, the habitual state, the genuine bent and bias of the temper, are most likely to be seen

in those pursuits which every person is at liberty to choose for himself.

When a truly religious principle shall have acquired such a degree of force as to produce that conscientious and habitual improvement of time before recommended, it will discover itself by an increasing indifference, and even deadness, to those pleasures which are interesting to the world at large. A woman under the predominating influence of such a principle, will begin to discover that the same thing which in itself is innocent may yet be comparatively wrong. She will begin to feel that there are many amusements and employments which, though they have nothing censurable in themselves, yet, if they be allowed to intract on hours which ought to be dedicated to still better purposes; or if they are protracted to an undue length; or, above all, if by softening and relaxing her mind and dissipating her spirits, they so indispose her for better pursuits as to render subsequent duties a burden—they become, in that case, clearly wrong for her, whatever they may be for others.

The fine arts, for instance, polite literature, elegant society—these are among the lawful and liberal and becoming recreations of higher life; yet it may these be cultivated to the neglect or exclusion of severer duties; if they interfere with serious studies, or disqualify the mind for religious exercises, it is an intimation that they have been too much indulged; and, under such circumstances, it might be the part of Christian circumspection to

inquire if the time devoted to them ought not to be abridged. Above all, a tender conscience will never lose sight of one safe rule of determining in all doubtful cases: if the point be so nice, that though we hope upon the whole there may be no harm in engaging in it, we may, at least, be always quite sure that there can be no harm in letting it alone. The adoption of this simple rule would put a period to such unprofitable casuistry.

The principle of being responsible for the use of time, once fixed in the mind, the conscientious Christian will be making a continual progress in the great art of turning time to account. In the first stages of her religion, she will have abstained from pleasures which began a little to wound the conscience, or which assumed a questionable shape; but she will probably have abstained with regret, and with a secret wish that conscience could have permitted her to keep well with pleasure and religion too. But you may discern in her subsequent course that she has reached a more advanced stage, by her beginning to neglect even such pleasures or employments as have no moral turpitude in them, but are merely what are called innocent. This relinquishment arises, not so much from her feeling still more the restraints of religion, as from the improvement in her religious taste. Pleasures cannot now attack her merely from their being innocent, unless they are likewise interesting; and to be interesting, they must be consonant to her superinduced views. She is not contented to spend a large portion of her time

mercilessly; it must be spent profitably also. Nay, if she be indeed earnestly "pressing towards the mark," it will not be even enough for her that her present pursuit be good, if she be convinced that it might be still better. Her contempt of ordinary enjoyments will increase in a direct proportion to her increased relish for those pleasures which religion inspires and bestows. So that at length, if it were possible to suppose that an angel could come down to take off, as it were, the interdict, and to invite her to resume all the pleasures she had renounced, and to resume them with complete impunity, she would reject the invitation, because, from an improvement in her spiritual taste, she would despise those delights from which she had at first abstained through fear. Till her will and affections come heartily to be engaged in the service of God, the progress will not be comfortable; but when once they are so engaged, the attachment to this service will be cordial, and her heart will not desire to go back and trol again in the drudgery of the world. For her religion has not so much given her a new mind, as a new heart and a new life.

As her views are become new, so her dispositions, tastes, actions, pursuits, choices of company, choice of amusements, are new also: her employment of time is changed; her turn of conversation is altered; "old things are passed away, all things are become new." In dissipated and worldly society, she will seldom fail to feel a sort of uneasiness, which will produce one of these two effects: she will either, as proper

seasons present themselves, struggle hard to introduce such subjects as may be useful to others, or supposing that she finds herself unable to effect this, she will, as far as she prudently can, shew herself from all unprofitable kind of society. Indeed her manner of conducting herself under these circumstances may serve to furnish her with a test of her own sincerity. For while people are contending for a little more of this amusement, and pleading for a little extension of that gratification, and fighting in order that they may hold in a little more tenacity to their pleasure-ground, they are exhibiting a kind of evidence against themselves, that they are not yet "renewed in the spirit of their mind."

It has been warmly urged, as an objection to certain religious books, and particularly against a novel work of high worth and celebrity by a distinguished layman,* that they have set the standard of assiduity higher than reason or even that Christianity requires. These works do indeed elevate the general tone of religion to a higher pitch than is quite convenient to those who are at infinite pains to construct a comfortable and comprehensive plan, which shall unite the questionable pleasures of this world with the promised happiness of the next. I say it has been sometimes objected, even by those readers who, on the whole, greatly admire the particular work alluded to, that it is unreasonably strict in the preceptive and prohibitory parts; and especially that it individually and specifically forbids certain

* *Practical View, &c.*, by Mr. Willmores.

Indismissible amusements, with a severity not to be found in the Scriptures, and is scrupulously rigid in condemning diversions against which nothing is said in the New Testament. Each objector, however, is as far reasonable, as only to beg quarter for her own favorite diversion, and generously abandons the defence of those in which she herself has no particular pleasure.

But these objectors do not seem to understand the true genius of Christianity. They do not consider that it is the character of the gospel to exhibit a scheme of principles, of which it is the tendency to infuse such a spirit of holiness as must be utterly incompatible, not only with customs decidedly vicious, but with the very spirit of worldly pleasure. They do not consider that Christianity is neither a table of ethics, nor a system of opinions, nor a bundle of rods to punish, nor an exhibition of rewards to allure, nor a scheme of restraints to terrify, nor merely a code of laws to restrict; but it is a new principle infused into the heart by the word and the Spirit of God; out of which principle will inevitably grow right opinions, renewed affections, correct morals, pure desires, heavenly tempers, and holy habits, with an invariable desire of pleasing God, and a constant fear of offending him. A real Christian, whose heart is once thoroughly imbued with this principle, can no more return to the amusements of the world, than a philosopher can be refreshed with the diversions of the vulgar, or a man be amused with the recreations of a child. The New Testament

is not a mere statute-book: it is not a table where every offence is detailed, and its corresponding penalty annexed: it is not so much a *compendium*, as a *spirit* of laws, it does not so much prohibit every individual wrong practice, as suggest a temper, and implant a general principle, with which every wrong practice is incompatible. It did not, for instance, so much attack the then reigning and corrupt fashions, which were probably, like the fashions of other countries, temporary and local, as it struck at that worldliness, which is the root and stock from which all corrupt fashions proceed.

The prophet Isaiah, who addressed himself more particularly to the Jewish women, inveighed not only against vanity, luxury, and immodesty, in general, but with great propriety enumerated even those precise instances of each, to which the women of rank in the particular country he was addressing were especially addicted; nay, he enters into the minute detail (Isaiah, chap. 3) of their very personal decorations, and brings specific charges against several instances of their levity and extravagance of apparel; meaning, however, chiefly to censure the tenor of character which these indicated. But the gospel of Christ, which was to be addressed to all ages, stations, and countries, seldom contains any such detailed animadversions; for through many of the censurable modes which the prophet so severely reprobated, continued probably to be still prevalent in Jerusalem in the days of our Saviour, yet how little would it have suited the universality of his

mission, to have confined his preaching to such local, limited, and fluctuating customs! not but that there are many texts which actually do define the Christian conduct as well as temper, with sufficient particularity to serve as a condemnation of many practices which are pleaded for, and often to point pretty directly at them.

It would be well for those modish Christians who vindicate excessive vanity in dress, expense, and dissipation, on the principle of their being mere matters of indifference, and nowhere prohibited in the gospel, to consider that such practices strongly mark the temper and spirit with which they are connected, and in that view are so little creditable to the Christian profession, as to furnish a just subject of suspicion against the piety of those who indulge in them.

Had Peter, on that memorable day when he added three thousand converts to the church by a single sermon, narrowed his subject to a reprobation against this diversion, or that public place, or the other vain amusement, it might indeed have suited the case of some of the female Jewish converts who were present; but such restrictions as might have been appropriate to them would probably not have applied to the Parthians and Medes, of which his audience was partly composed; or such as might have belonged to them would have been totally inapplicable to the Cretes and Arabians; or again, those which suited these would not have applied to the Elamites and Mesopotamians. By such partial

and circumscribed addresses, his multifarious audience, composed of all nations and countries, would not have been, as we are told they were, "preaching to the heart." But when he preached on the broad ground of general "repentance and reclusion of sin in the name of Jesus Christ," it was no wonder that they all cried out, "What shall we do?" These collected foreigners, at their return home, must have found very different usages to be corrected in their different countries; of course, a detailed restriction of the popular abuses at Jerusalem would have been of little use to strangers returning to their respective nations. The ardent apostle, therefore, acted more consistently in communicating to them the large and comprehensive spirit of the gospel, which should at once involve all their scattered and separate duties, as well as reprove all their scattered and separate corruptions; for the whole always includes a part, and the greater involves the less. Christ and his disciples, instead of visiting their condemnation to the peculiar vices reprobated by Isaiah, embraced the very soul and principle of all in such exhortations as the following: "Be ye not conformed to the world"—"If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him"—"The fashion of this world passeth away." Our Lord and his apostles, whose future unselected audience was to be made up out of the various inhabitants of the whole world, attacked the evil heart, out of which all those incidental, local, peculiar, and popular corruptions proceeded.

In the time of Christ and his immediate followers, the luxury and intemperance of the Romans had risen to a pitch before unknown in the world; but as the same gospel which His divine Author and his disciples were then preaching to the hungry and necessitous, was afterwards to be preached to high and low, not excepting the Roman emperors themselves, the large precept, "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God," was likely to be of more general use than any separate exhortation to temperance, to thankfulness, to moderation as to quantity or expense; which last, indeed, must always be left in some degree to the judgment and circumstances of the individual.

When the apostle of the Gentiles visited the "palace of Caesar's household," he could hardly fail to have heard, nor could he have heard without abhorrence, of some of the fashionable amusements in the court of Nero. He must have reflected with peculiar indignation on many things which were practiced in the Circensian games: yet, instead of pruning this corrupt tree and singling out even the heathen gladiatorial sports for the object of his condemnation, he laid his axe to the root of all corruption, by preaching to them that gospel of Christ of which "he was not ashamed;" and showing to them that believed, that "it was the power of God and the wisdom of God." Of this gospel the great object was to attack not one popular evil, but the whole body of sin. Now the doctrine of Christ crucified was the most appropriate means for

destroying this; for by what other means could the fervid imagination of the apostle have so powerfully enforced the heinousness of sin, as by insisting on the costliness of the sacrifice which was offered for its expiation? It is somewhat remarkable, that about the very time of his preaching to the Romans, the public taste had sunk to such an excess of depravity, that the very women engaged in those shocking encounters with the gladiators.

But, in the first place, it was better that the right passions of his hearers should grow out of the right principle; and next, his specifically reprobating these diversions might have had this ill effect, that succeeding ages, seeing that they in their amusements came somewhat short of those dreadful excesses of the polished Romans, would only have plumed themselves on their own comparative superiority; and on this principle, even the bull-fights of Madrid might in time have had their panegyrics. The truth is, the apostle knew that such abominable corruptions could never subsist together with Christianity; and, in fact, the honor of abolishing these barbarous diversions was reserved for Constantine, the first Christian emperor.

Besides, the apostles, by inveighing against some particular diversions might have seemed to sanction all which they did not actually censure; and so, in the lapse of time and the revolution of governments, customs change and manners fluctuate, had a mischievous apprehension of the fashions of the then existing age been embodied in the New Testament, that particu-

of Scripture must have become obsolete, even in that very same country, when the fashions themselves should have changed. Paul and his brother apostles knew that their epistles would be the oracles of the Christian world, when these temporary diversions would be forgotten. In consequence of this knowledge, by the universal precept to avoid "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life," they have prepared a lasting antidote against the principle of all corrupt pleasures, which will ever remain equally applicable to the loose fashions of all ages and of every country, to the end of the world.

Therefore, to vindicate diversions which are in themselves unchristian, on the pretended ground that they are not specifically condemned in the gospel, would be little less absurd than if the heroes of Newmarket should bring it as a proof that their periodical races are not condemned in Scripture, because St. Paul, when writing to the Corinthians, did not speak against these diversions; and that in availing himself of the Isthmian games, as a happy illustration of the Christian race, he did not drop any censure on the practice itself; a practice which was, indeed, as much more pure than the races of Christian Britain, as the moderation of being contented with the triumph of a crown of leaves is superior to that criminal spirit of gambling which iniquitously enriches the victor by beggaring his competitor.

Local abuses, as we have said, were not the

object of a book whose instructions were to be of universal and lasting application. As a proof of this, little is said in the gospel of the then prevailing corruption of polygamy; nothing against the savage custom of exposing children, or even against slavery; nothing expressly against suicide or duelling, the last Gothic custom, indeed, did not exist among the crimes of paganism. But is there not an implied prohibition against polygamy in the general denunciation against adultery? Is not exposing of children condemned in that charge against the Romans, that they were "without natural affection"? Is there not a strong censure against slavery conveyed in the command, "As ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them"? and against suicide and duelling, in the general prohibition against murder, which is strongly enforced and affectingly amplified by the solemn manner in which murder is traced back to its first seed of anger, in the Sermon on the Mount?

Thus it is clear, that when Christ sent the gospel to all nations, he meant that that gospel should proclaim those prime truths, general laws, and fundamental doctrines, which must necessarily involve the prohibition of all individual, local, and inferior errors; errors which could not have been specifically guarded against, without having a distinct gospel for every country, or without swelling the divine volume into such inconvenient length as would have defeated one great end of its promulgation.* And

* "To the poor the gospel is preached." Luke 7:11.

while its leading principles are of universal application, it must always, in some measure, be left to the discretion of the preacher, and to the conscience of the hearer, to examine whether the life and habits of those who profess it are conformable to its main spirit and design.

The same divine Spirit which indited the holy Scriptures, is promised, to purify the hearts and renew the natures of repenting and believing Christians; and the compositions it inspired are in some degree analogous to the workmanship it effects. It prohibited the vicious practices of the apostolical age, by prohibiting the passions and principles which rendered them gratifying; and still working in like manner on the hearts of real Christians, it corrects the taste which was accustomed to find its proper gratification in the resorts of vanity; and thus effectually provides for the reformation of the taste, and inspires a relish for rational and domestic enjoyments, and for whatever can administer pleasure to that spirit of peace, and love, and hope, and joy, which animates and rules the renewed heart of the true Christian.

But there is a portion of Scripture which, though to a superficial reader it may seem but very remotely connected with the present subject, yet, to readers of another cast, seems to settle the matter beyond controversy. In the parable of the great supper, this important truth is held out to us, that *even things good in themselves* may be the means of our eternal ruin, by drawing our hearts from God,

and causing us to make light of the offers of the gospel. One invited guest had bought an oxen, another had made a purchase, equally blameless, of oxen; a third had married a wife, an act not blamable in itself. They had all different reasons, some of which appeared to have any moral turpitude; but they all agreed in this, *to decline the invitation to the supper*. The worldly possessions of one, the worldly business of another, and, what should be particularly attended to, the love to his *dearest relative* of a third, (a love, by the way, not only allowed, but commanded in Scripture,) were brought forward as excuses for not attending to the important business of religion. The consequence, however, was the same to all. "None of these which were hindered shall taste of my supper." If, then, things *allowed*, things *necessary*, things *laudable*, things *commendable*, become sinful, when by unseasonable or excessive indulgence they detain the heart and affections from God, how vain will all those arguments necessarily be rendered, which are urged by the advocates for certain amusements, on the ground of their *lawfulness*; if these amusements serve (not to mention any positive evil which may belong to them) in like manner to draw away the thoughts and affections from spiritual objects!

To conclude: when this topic happens to become the subject of conversation, instead of addressing serious and pointed attacks to young ladies on the sin of attending places of diversion, would it not be better first to endeavor to excite in them that pur-

signs of Christianity, with which such diversions seem not quite compatible: as the physician, who visits a patient in an eruptive fever, pays little attention to those spots which to the ignorant appear to be the *disease*, except, indeed, so far as they serve as indications to let him into its nature, but goes straight to the root of the malady? He attacks the liver, he lowers the pulse, he changes the system, he corrects the general habit; well knowing, that if he can but restore the vital principle of health, the spots, which were nothing but symptoms, will die away of themselves.

In instructing others, we should imitate our Lord and his apostles, and not always aim our blow at each particular corruption; but making it our business to convince our pupil that what brings forth the evil fruit she exhibits, cannot be a branch of the true vine; we should thus avail ourselves of individual corruptions, for impressing her with a sense of the necessity of purifying the common source from which they flow—a corrupt nature. Thus making it our grand business to rectify the heart, we pursue the true, the compendious, the only method of producing universal holiness.

I would, however, take leave of those amiable and not ill-disposed young persons, who complain of the rigor of human prohibitions, and declare, "they meet with no such strictness in the gospel," by asking them, with the most affectionate earnestness, if they can conscientiously reconcile their nightly attendance at every public place which they

frequent, with such precepts as the following: "Be
deeming the time"—"Watch and pray"—"Watch,
for ye know not at what time your Lord cometh"—
"Abstain from all appearance of evil"—"Set your
affection on things above"—"Be ye spiritually
minded"—"Crucify the flesh with its affections and
lusts." And I would venture to offer one criterion,
by which the persons in question may be enabled
to decide on the positive innocence and safety of
such diversions; I mean, provided they are sincere
in their scrutiny and honest in their avowal. If, on
their return at night from those places, they find
they can retire and "commune with their own
hearts;" if they find the love of God operating with
undiminished force on their minds; if they can
"bring every thought into subjection," and con-
tinue every wandering imagination; if they can
soberly examine into their own state of mind, I do
not say if they can do all this perfectly and without
distraction (for who almost can do this at any time?),
but if they can do it with the same degree of consci-
ousness, pray with the same degree of fervor, and
renounce the world in as great a measure as at other
times, and if they can lie down with a peaceful con-
sciousness of having avoided in the evening "that
temptation" which they had prayed not to be "led
into" in the morning, they may then most reason-
ably hope that all is well, and that they are not
speaking false peace to their hearts. Again, if we
cannot beg the blessing of our Maker on whatever we
are going to do or to enjoy, is it not an unseasonable

proof that the thing ought not to be done or enjoyed? On all the rational enjoyments of society, on all healthful and temperate exercise, on the delights of friendship, arts, and polished letters, on the exquisite pleasures resulting from the enjoyment of rural scenery and the beauties of nature; on the innocent participation of these we may ask the divine favour—for the sober enjoyment of these we may thank the divine beneficence: but do we feel equally disposed to invoke blessings or return praises for gratifications found (to say no worse) in levity, in vanity, and waste of time? If these tests were fairly used; if these experiments were honestly tried; if these examinations were conscientiously made, may we not, without offence, presume to ask—*Could our numerous places of public resort, could our ever-multiplying scenes of more select, but not less dangerous diversion, nightly overflow with an excess hitherto unparalleled in the annals of pleasure?*

“To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven,” said the wise man; but he said it before the invention of *BADY-BALLS*, an invention which has formed a kind of era, and a most inauspicious one, in the annals of polished education. This modern device is a sort of triple conspiracy against the innocence, the health, and the happiness of children. Thus, by factitious amusements, to rob them of a relish for the simple joys, the unbought delights, which naturally belong to their blooming season, is like blotting out spring from the year. To sacrifice the true and proper

enjoyments of sprightly and happy children, is to make them pay a dear and disproportionate price for their artificial pleasures. They step at once from the nursery to the ballroom; and, by a change of habits as new as it is preposterous, are thinking of dressing themselves, at an age when they used to be dressing their dolls. Instead of bounding with the unrestrained freedom of little wood-synopses over hill and dale, their cheeks flushed with health, and their hearts overflowing with happiness, these gay little creatures are shut up all the morning, demurely practising the *pas grave*, and transacting the serious business of acquiring a new step for the evening, with more cost of time and pains than it would have taken them to acquire twenty new ideas.

Thus they lose the amusements which properly belong to their smiling period, and unseasonably anticipate those pleasures (such as they are) which would come in, too much of course, on their introduction into fashionable life. The true pleasures of childhood are cheap and natural; for every object seems with delight to eyes and hearts new to the enjoyment of life; nay, the hearts of healthy children abound with a general disposition to mirth and joyfulness, even without a specific object to excite it; like our first parent, in the world's first spring, when all was new, fresh, and gay about him.

"They live, and move,

And feel that they are happier than they know."

Only furnish them with a few simple and harmless materials, and a little, but not too much, leisure,

and they will manufacture their own pleasures with more skill and success and satisfaction, than they will receive from all that your money can purchase. Their bodily recreations should be such as will promote their health, quicken their activity, enliven their spirits, whet their ingenuity, and qualify them for their mental work. But if you begin thus early to create wants, to invent gratifications, to multiply desires, to waken dormant sensibilities, to stir up hidden fires, you are studiously laying up for your children a store of premature caprice and irritability, of impatience and discontent.

While childhood preserves its native simplicity, every little change is interesting, every gratification is a luxury. A ride or a walk, a garland of flowers of her own forming, a plant of her own cultivating, will be a delightful amusement to a child in her natural state; but these harmless and interesting recreations will be dull and tasteless to a sophisticated little creature, nursed in such lewd, and costly, and vapid pleasures. Alas! that we should throw away this first, grand opportunity of working into a practical habit the moral of this important truth, that the chief source of human discontent is to be looked for, not in our real, but in our factitious wants; not in the demands of nature, but in the insatiable cravings of artificial desire.

When we see the growing zeal to crowd the midnight ball with these pretty fairies, we should be almost tempted to fancy it was a kind of pious emu-

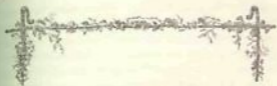
lation among the mothers, to cure their infants of a fondness for vain and foolish pleasures, by taking them out in this premature familiarity with them. And we should be so desirous to invent an excuse for a practice so execrable, that we should be ready to hope that they were actuated by something of the same principle which led the Spartans to introduce their sons to scenes of riot, that they might conceive an early disgust at vice! or, possibly, that they imitated those Scythian mothers who used to plunge their newborn infants into the flood, thinking none to be worth saving who could not stand this early struggle for their lives: the greater part indeed as it might have been expected, perished; but the parents took comfort, that if many were lost, the few who escaped would be the stronger for having been thus exposed!

To behold Lilliputian coquette projecting dresses, studying colors, assorting ribands, mixing flowers, and choosing feathers; their little heads loading with hopes about partners, and fears about rivals; to see their fresh cheeks pale after the midnight supper, their aching heads and unbraced nerves disqualifying the little, languid beings for the next day's task; and to hear the grove apology, that "it is owing to the wine, the crowd, the heated room of the last night's ball:" all this, I say, would really be as ludicrous, if the mischief of the *Ching Jai* did not take off from the merriment of it, as any of the ridiculous and preposterous disproportions in the glowing travels of Captain Lemuel Gulliver!

FROM

THE YOUNG LADY'S MENTOR,

BY A LADY



AMUSEMENTS

IN addressing the following observations to you, I keep in mind the peculiarity of your position—a position which has made you, while scarcely more than a child, independent of external control, and forced you into the responsibilities of deciding thus early on a course of conduct that may seriously affect your temporal and eternal interests. More happy are those placed under the authority of strict parents, who have already chosen and marked out for themselves a path to which they expect their children strictly to adhere. The difficulties that may still perplex the children of such parents are comparatively few. Even if the strictness of the authority over them be inexpedient and overstrained, it affords them a safeguard and a support for which they cannot be too grateful; it preserves them from the responsibility of acting for themselves at a time when their age and inexperience alike unfit them for a decision on any important practical point; it keeps them disengaged, as it were, from being pledged to any peculiar course of conduct until they have formed and matured their opinion as to the habits of social intercourse most

expedient for them to adopt. Thus, when the time for independent action comes, they are quite free to pursue any new course of life without being shackled by former professions, or exposing themselves to the reproach (and consequent probable loss of influence) of having altered their former opinions and views.

Those, then, who are early guarded from any intercourse with the world ought, instead of murmuring at the unnecessary strictness of their seclusion, to reflect with gratitude on the advantage it affords them. Faith ought, even now, to teach them the lesson which experience is sure to impress on every thoughtful mind, that it is a special mercy to be preserved from the duties of riper years until we are, comparatively speaking, fitted to enter upon them.

This is not, however, the case with you. Ignorant and inexperienced as you are, you must now select from among all the modes of life placed within your reach, those which you consider the best suited to secure your welfare for time and for eternity. Your decision now, even in very trifling particulars, must have some effect upon your state in both existences. The most unimportant event of this life carries forward a valuation into eternity, and acquires a solemn importance from the reaction. Every feeling which we indulge or act upon becomes a part of ourselves, and is a preparation, by our own hand, of a scourge or a blessing for us throughout countless ages.

It may seem a matter of comparative unimport-

ance—of *trifling influences over your future life*—whether you attend Lady A——'s ball to-night, or Lady H——'s to-morrow. You may argue to yourself that even those who now think balls entirely sinful have attended hundreds of them in their time, and here nevertheless become afterwards more religious and more useful than others who have never entered a ballroom. You might add, that there could be more positive sin in passing two or three hours with two or three people in Lady A——'s house in the morning, than in passing the same number of hours with two or three hundred people in the same house in the evening. This is indeed true; but are you not deceiving yourself by referring to the mere overt act? That is, as you imply, past and over when the evening is past; but it is not so with the feelings which may make the ball either delightful or disagreeable to you—*feelings which may be then for the first time excited, never to be stilled again; feelings which, when they once exist, will remain with you throughout eternity; for even if, by the grace of God, they are finally subdued, they will still remain with you in the memory of the painful conflicts, the severe discipline of inward and outward trials, required for their subjugation.* Do not, however, suppose that I mean to attribute exclusively or universally injurious effects to the atmosphere of the ballroom. In the innocent smiles and unclouded brow of many a fair girl, the experienced eye truly reads their freedom from any taint of envy, malice, or conspiracy; while, on the other hand, unmistakable and

unconcealed exhibitions of all these evil feelings may often be witnessed at a so-called "religious party."

This remark, however, is only made to obviate any pretence for mistaking my meaning, and for supposing that I attribute positive sin to that which I only object to as the possible, or rather the probable occasion of sin. I always think this latter distinction a very important one in discussing, from a more general point of view, the subject of amusements of every kind; it is enough merely to notice it here, while we pass on to the question which I urge upon you to apply personally to yourself—namely, whether the ballroom is not more likely to excite and lead into many feminine fallings, than the quieter and more confined scenes of other social intercourse.

It is chiefly by tracing the effect produced on our own mind that we can form a safe estimate of the expediency of doubtful occupations. This is the primary point of view from which to consider the subject, though by no means the only one; for every Christian ought to exhibit a readiness, in his own small sphere, to emulate the unselfishness of the great apostle: "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend." 1 Cor. 8:13. The fear of the awful threatenings against those who "offend"—that is, lead into sin any of God's "little ones," (Matt. 18:6, 7,) should combine with love of those for whom the Saviour died, to induce us freely to sacrifice things which would be personally

harmless, on the ground of their being injurious to others.

Let us return to the more personal part of the subject, namely, the effect produced on your own mind. I have spoken of feminine "failings." I should, however, be inclined to apply a stronger term to the first that I am about to notice—the love of admiration, *considering how closely it must ever be connected with the fatal vice of envy.* She who earnestly craves general admiration for herself is exposed to a strong temptation to regret the bestowal of any admiration on another. She is instinctively exact in her account of receipt and expenditure; she calculates, almost unconsciously, that the time and attention and interest excited by the attractive powers of others, is so much damage subtracted from her own. That beautiful aphorism, "The human heart is like heaven—the more angels the more room for them," is to such persons as unintelligible in its loving spirit as in its wonderful philosophic truth. Their craving is insatiable when once it has become habitual, and their appetite is increased and stimulated, instead of being appeased, by the anxiously-sought-for nourishment.

These observations strictly apply to the fatal desire for general admiration. As long as the approbation of none but the wise and good is our object, there are fewer opportunities of exciting the feeling of envy at this approbation being granted to others; there is, further, an instinctive feeling of its incompatibility with the very object we are aiming

at. The case is altogether different when we seek to attract those whose admiration may be won by qualities quite unconnected with moral excellence. There is here no restraint on our evil feelings; and, when we cannot equal the accomplishments, the beauty, and the graces of another, we may possibly be tempted to envy and, still further, to depreciate those of the hated rival; perhaps, worse than all, may be tempted to seek to attract attention by means less simple and less obvious. If the seeking of admiration be injurious to the mind, what must the seeking for it be! "The flit of many seasons" loses all mental perception of refinement by long practice in hardihood, as the hackneyed practitioner unconsciously deepens the wrage upon her cheek, until, unperceived by her blinded visual organs, it loses all appearance of truth and beauty. Some instances of the kind I allude to have come before even your inexperienced eyes; and from the striking surprise with which you now contemplate them, I have no doubt that you would wish to shun even the first step in the same career. Indeed it is probable that you, under any circumstances, would never go so far in coquetry as those to whom your memory readily recurs. Your innate delicacy, your feminine high-mindedness, may, at any future time, as well as at present, preserve you from the bad taste of challenging those attentions which your very vanity would reject as worthless if they were not voluntarily offered.

Nevertheless, even in you, habits of dissipation

may produce an effect which, to your inmost being, may be almost equally injurious. You may possess an *antidote* to prevent any repulsive manifestations of the poisonous effects of an indulged craving for excitement, but general admiration, however spontaneously offered and modestly received, has nevertheless a tendency to create a necessity for mental stimulants. This, among other ill effects, will, worst of all, incapacitate you for the appreciative enjoyment of healthy food.

"The heart, that with its throbless valves
The world has fed so long,
Could never taste the simple food
That gives fresh vigor to the good,
Fresh vigor to the strong."

The pure and innocent pleasures which the hand of Providence diffuses plentifully around us will, too probably, become tasteless and insipid to one whose *habits of excitement have destroyed the fresh and simple tastes of her mind*. Stronger doses, as in the case of the opium-eater, will each day be required to produce an exhilarating effect, without which there is now no enjoyment, without which, in course of time, there will not be even freedom from suffering.

There is an analogy throughout between mental and physical intoxication; and it continues most strikingly, even when we consider both in their most favorable points of view, by supposing the victims to self-indulgence at last willing to retrace her steps. This fearful advantage is granted to our

spiritual enemy by wilful indulgence in sin, that it is only when trying to adopt or resume a life of sobriety and self-denial that we become exposed to the severest temporal punishments of self-indulgence. As long as a course of self-indulgence is continued, if external things should prosper with us, comparative peace and happiness may be enjoyed, (if indeed, the loftier pleasures of devotion to God, self-control, and active usefulness can be forgotten—supposing them to have been once experienced.) It is only when the grace of repentance is granted, that the returning child of God becomes at the same time alive to the sinfulness of those pleasures which she has cultivated the habit of enjoying, and to the mournful fact of having lost all taste for those simple pleasures which are the only *safe ones*, because they alone leave the mind free for the exercise of devotion, and the affections warm and fresh for the contemplation of "the things that belong to our peace."

Sad and dreary is the path the penitent workling has to traverse; often, despairing at the difficulties her former habits have brought upon her, she looks back, longingly and lingeringly, upon the broad and easy path she has lately left. Alas! how many of these thus tempted to "look back" have turned away entirely, and never more set their faces Zionward.

From the dangers and sorrows just described you have still the power of preserving yourself. You have as yet acquired no factitious tastes, you

still retain the power of enjoying the simple pleasures of innocent childhood. It now depends upon your manner of spending the intervening years, whether, in the trying period of middle-age, simple and natural pleasures will still awaken in your heart emotions of joyousness and thankfulness.

I have spoken of thankfulness, for one of the best tests of the innocence and safety of our pleasures is the being able to thank God for them. While we thus look upon them as coming to us from his hand, we may safely bask in the sunshine of even earthly pleasures :

"The coloring may be of this earth,
The lights come of heavenly birth."

Can you feel this with respect to the emotions of pleasurable excitement with which you left Lady M——'s ball? I am no fanatic nor ascetic; and I can imagine it possible (though not probable) that among the visitors there, some simple-minded and simple-hearted people, amused with the crowds, the dresses, the music, and the flowers, may have felt, even in this scene of feverish and dangerous excitement, something of "a child's pure delight in little things." Without profaneness, and in all sincerity, they might have thanked God for the, to them, harmless recreation.

This I suppose possible in the case of some, but for you it is not so. The keen susceptibilities of your excitable nature will prevent your resting contented without sharing in the more exciting pleasures of the ballroom; and your powers of adapta-

tion will easily tempt you forward to make use of at least some of those means of attracting general admiration which seem to succeed so well with others.

"Wherever there is life there is danger," and the danger is probably in proportion to the degree of life. The more energy, the more feeling, the more genius possessed by an individual, the greater are the temptations to which that individual is exposed. The path which is safe and honorable for the dull and inexcitable—the more ordinary of the human race—is beset with dangers for the ardent, the enthusiastic, the intellectual. These must pay a heavy penalty for their superiority; but is it therefore a superiority they would resign? Besides, the very trials and temptations to which their superior vitality subjects them are not only its necessary accompaniment, but also the necessary means for forming a superior character into eminent excellence. Self-will, love of pleasure, quick excitability, and consequent irritability, are marked ingredients in every strong character; and its strength must be employed against itself to produce any high moral superiority.

There is an analogy between the metaphysical truths above spoken of and the fact in the physical history of the world, that continents are generally placed in the neighborhood of *tempests*. This is a provision involved in the nature of the thing itself; and we know that, without the *tempests* thus placed within reach, the natural exaltation of the

useful ore would never be developed. In the same way, we know that an accompanying furnace of affliction and temptation is necessarily involved in that very strength of characters which we admire; and also that, without this fiery furnace, their vast capabilities, both moral and mental, could never be fully developed. Suffering, sorrow, and temptation are the invariable conditions of a life of progress; and suffering, sorrow, and temptation are all of them in proportion to the energies and capabilities of the character.

There is another analogy in animated nature, illustrative of the case of those who, without injury to themselves, (the injury to our neighbor is, as I said before, a different part of the subject,) may attend the ballroom, the theatre, and the race-course. Those animals lowest in the scale of creation—those which scarcely manifest one of the signs of vitality—are also those which are the least susceptible of suffering from external causes. The medusæ are supposed to feel no pain even in being desecrated; and the human zoophyte is, in like manner, comparatively out of the reach of every suffering but death. Have you not seen some beings endowed with humanity nearly as destitute of a nervous system as the medusæ, nearly as insusceptible of any sensation from the accidents of life? Some of these, too, may possess virtue and piety as well as those qualities of patience and sweetness of temper, which are the mere results of their physical organization. No degree of effort or discipline,

however, (indeed, they bear within themselves an capabilities for either,) could enable such persons to become eminently useful, eminently respected, or eminently loved. They have doubtless some work appointed them to do, and that a necessary work in God's earthly kingdom; but theirs are inferior duties, very different from those which you, and such as you, are called to fulfil.

Have I in any degree succeeded in reminding you to what is necessary to qualify the glad consciousness of possessing a warm heart and a strong mind? Your high position will indeed afford you far less happiness than that which may belong to the lower ranks in the scale of humanity; but the noble mind will soon be disciplined into disposing with happiness—it will find, instead, bitterness. If yours be a more difficult path than that of others, it is also a more honorable one. In preparation to the temptations endured will be the brightness of that "crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." James 1:12.

But there is, perhaps, less necessity for trying to impress upon your mind a sense of your superiority, than for urging upon you its accompanying responsibility, and the severe circumspection it calls upon you to exercise. You cannot evade the question I am now pressing upon you; bringing forward the example of many excellent women who have passed through the ordeal of disputation untainted, and, still themselves possessing loving hearts and simple minds, are fearlessly prosecuting

their daughters for the same dangerous source. Remember, however, that those who are at best very imperfect cannot be safely taken as examples for your own course of life. Your concern is to ascertain the effect produced upon your own mind by different kinds of society, and to examine whether you yourself have the same healthy taste for simple pleasures and unexciting pursuits as before you engaged, even as slightly as you have already done, in fashionable dissipation.

I once heard a young lady exclaim, when asked to accompany her family on a boating excursion, "Can any thing be more tiresome than a family party?" Young as she was, she had already lost all taste for the simple pleasures of domestic life. As she was intellectual and accomplished, she could still enjoy solitude; but her only ideas of pleasure connected with a party, were those of admiration and excitement. We may trace the same feelings in the complaints perpetually heard of the stupidity of parties; complaints generally proceeding from those who are too much accustomed to attention and admiration to be contented with the unexciting pleasures of rational conversation, the exercise of kindly feelings, and the indulgence of social habits, all in their way productive of contentment to those who have preserved their minds in a state of freshness and simplicity. Any greater excitement than that produced by the above means cannot surely be profitable to those who only seek in society for so much pleasure as will afford them *relaxation*; those

who engage in an arduous conflict with ever-watchful enemies, both within and without, ought carefully to avoid having their weapons of defence rusty. I know that at present you would shudder from the idea of making pleasure your professed pursuit, from the idea of engaging in it for any other purpose but the one above stated—that of necessary relaxation; I should not otherwise have addressed you as I do now. Your only danger at present is that you may, I should hope, be lulled unconsciously, form the habit of requiring excitement during your hours of relaxation.

In opposition to all that I have said, you will probably be often told that excitement, instead of being prejudicial, is favorable to the health of both mind and body; and this, in some respects, is true. The whole mental and physical constitution benefits by and acquires new energy from, any, they seem to develop hidden forces on occasions of unusual excitement; but natural it ought to be, owing to the providential course of the events of life, and neither considered as an essential part of daily food, nor inspiring distaste for simple, ordinary nourishment. I fear much, on the other hand, any excitement that we choose for ourselves: that only is quite safe which is dispensed to us by the hand of the Great Physician of souls; he alone knows the exact state of our moral constitution, and the exact species of discipline it requires from hour to hour.

Let us now return to a farther examination of

the nature of the dangers to which you may be exposed by a life of gaiety—an examination that must be carried on in your own mind with careful and anxious inquiry. I have before spoken of the duty of ascertaining what effects different kinds of society produce upon you: it is only by thus qualifying yourself to pass your own judgment on this important subject, that you can avoid being dangerously influenced by those assertions that you hear made by others. You will probably, for instance, be told that a love of admiration often manifests itself as glaringly in the quiet drawing-room as in the crowded ballroom; and I readily admit that the feelings cherished into existence, or at least into vigor, by the exciting atmosphere of the latter, cannot be readily laid aside with the ball-dress. There will, indeed, be less opportunity for their display, less temptation to the often accompanying feelings of envy and discontent; but the mental process will probably still be carried on of distilling, from even the most innocent pleasures, but one species of dangerous excitement. I cannot, however, admit that to the unsophisticated mind there will be any danger of the same nature in the one case as in the other. Society, when entered into with a simple, prayerful spirit, may be considered one of the most improving, as well as one of the most innocent pleasures allotted to us. Still further, I believe that the exercise of patience, benevolence, and self-denial which it involves, is a most important part of the disciplining process by which we are being

brought into a state of preparation for the society of glorified spirits—of “just men made perfect.”

I advise you earnestly, therefore, against any system of conduct, or indulgence of feeling, that would involve your exclusion from society, not only on the ground of such exclusion, obliging you to unnecessary self-denial, but on the still stronger ground of the loss to our moral being which would result from the absence of the peculiar species of discipline that social intercourse affords. My object in addressing you is to point out the dangers to you of peculiar kinds of society, not by any means to seek to persuade you to avoid it altogether.

Let us, then, consider carefully the respective tendencies of different kinds of society to cherish or create “envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness,” by exciting a craving for general admiration, and a desire to secure the largest portion for yourself.

You have already been a few weeks out in the world; you have been at small social parties, and at crowded balls; they must have given you sufficient experience to understand the remarks I make.

Have you not, then, felt at the quiet parties of which I have spoken (as contrasted with the dissipated ones) that it was pleasant enough for you to spend your whole evening talking with persons of your own sex and age over the simple occupations of your daily life, or the studies which engage the interest of your already cultivated

mind? Lady L—— may have collected a circle of admirers around her, and Miss M——'s music may have been extolled as worthy of an artist; but upon all this you looked merely as a spectator, without either wish or idea of sharing in their publicity or their renown—you probably did not form a thought, certainly not a wish, of the kind. In the ballroom, however, the case is altogether different. Here the most simple-minded woman cannot escape from feelings of pain or regret at being neglected or unobserved. She goes for the professed purpose of dancing; and when few or no opportunities are afforded her of sharing in that which is the amusement of the rest of the room, should she feel neither mortification at her own position, nor envy, however disguised and modified, at the different position of others, she can possess none of that sensitiveness which is your distinctive quality. It is true, indeed, that the experienced emperon is well aware that the girl who commands the greatest number of partners is not the one most likely to have the greatest number of proposals at the end of the season, nor the one who will finally make the most successful match. This reassures the prudent looker-on to the occasional and partial appearance of neglect. Not so the young and inexperienced aspirant to admiration; her worklikeness is now in an earlier phase, and she thinks that her fame rises or falls among her companions according as she can compete with them in the number of her partners, or their exclusive devo-

tion to her, which, after a season or two, is discovered to be a still safer test of successful company.

Thus may the young innocent heart be gradually led on to depend for its enjoyment on the licentious passing admiration of a light and thoughtless hour; and still worse, if possessed of less susceptibility and powers of quick adaptation, the lesson is often too easily learned of possessing the arts likely to attract notice, thus losing by *over* the simplicity and modest freshness of a woman's nature. That may be a fatal evening to you in which you will first attract sufficient notice to have it said of you that you were more admired than Lucy D.— or Ellen M.—; this may be a moment for a poisonous plant to spring up in your heart, which will spread around its baleful influence until your dying day. It is a disputed point among calculometaphysicians, whether the seeds of every vice are equally planted in each human bosom, and only prevented from germinating by opposing circumstances, and by the grace of God asserting self-control. If this be true, how carefully ought we to avoid every circumstance that may favor the beginnings of sin and temptations. The grain that had concealed its vitality for a season of seclusion is awakened into unceasing, because constantly renewed existence, by the fostering influence of light and air and a suitable soil. Evil tendencies may be slumbering in your bosom, as wheat in the folds of the mummy's winding-sheet. Be most careful, by going into the way of temptation, you may

Instantly foster them into the power which they would otherwise never possess.

When once the craving for excitement has become a part of our nature, there is, of course, no safety in the quietest or, under other circumstances, most innocent kind of society. The same amusements will be sought for in it as those which have been enjoyed in the ballroom, and every company will be considered insufferably wearisome which does not furnish the now necessary stimulant of exclusive attention and general admiration.

I write the more strongly to you on the subject of worldly amusements, because I see with regret a tendency in the writings and conversation of the religious world, as it is called, to extol almost every other species of self-denial, but to observe a studied silence respecting this one.

A reaction seems to have taken place in the public mind. We see some, of whose piety and excellence no doubt can be entertained, mingling unsolicitedly in the most worldly amusements of those who are, by profession as well as practice, "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." How cruelly are the minds of the simple and the timid perplexed by the persons who thus act, as well as by those popular writings which countenance in professedly religious persons these worldly and self-indulgent habits of life. The hearts and consciences of the "weak brethren" receive the warnings given them by the average opinions of the wise and good in all ages of the world, namely,

that with respect to worldly attachments, they must "come out and be separate." How else can they be sons and daughters of Him to whom they appeal, as the necessary condition of entering into that high relationship, that they would "renounce the pomps and vanities of this wicked world"? If the questions of pomps should be perplexing to some by the different requirements of different stations in life, there is surely less difficulty of the same kind in relation to its vanities. But while the "weak in faith" are wavering and wincing at the thoughts of all the opposition and sacrifices a self-denying course of conduct must, under any circumstances, involve, they are still further discouraged by finding that some whom they are accustomed to respect and admire have in appearance gone over to the enemy's camp.

It is only, indeed, in their hours of relaxation that they select as their favorite companions those who are professedly engaged in a different service from their own—those whom they know to be devoted heart and soul, to the love and service of that "world which lieth in wickedness." 1 John 5:19. Are not, however, their hours of relaxation also their hours of danger; those in which they are more likely to be surprised and overcome by temptation than in hours of study or of business? All this is surely very perplexing to the young and inexperienced, however personally safe and prudent it may be for those from whom a better example might have been justly expected. It is deeply to

be regretted that there is not, in this matter, more unity of action and opinion among those who "love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."

I am inclined to apply terms of stronger and more general condemnation than any I have hitherto used to those amusements which are more especially termed "public."

You should carefully examine, with prayer to be guided aright, whether a voluntary attendance at the opera, the theatre, or the race-course is not exposed to the solemn denunciation uttered by the *Saviour* against those who *cause others to offend*, Matt. 18:6, 7. Can that relaxation be a part of the education to fit us for our eternal home, which is regardless of danger to the spiritual interests of others and acts upon the spirit of the haughty remonstrance of Cain, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Gen. 4:9. For all the details of this argument, I refer you to Wilberforce's "Practical View of Christianity." Many other writers have treated this subject ably and convincingly; but none other so satisfactorily to my mind. I think it will be so to yours.

I am aware that much may be said in defence of the expediency of the amusements to which I refer; but this does not serve as an excuse for those who, having their mind and judgment enlightened to see the dangers to others, and the temptations to themselves, of attending such amusements, should still disfigure lives, it may be, in other respects, of excellence and usefulness, by giving

their time, their money, and their example to countenance and support them. Woe to those who venture to lay their sinful human hands upon the complicated machinery of God's providence, by countenancing the slightest shade of moral evil, because there may be some accompanying good! We cannot look forward to a certain result from any action; the most virtuous one may produce effects different from those which we had anticipated, and we can then only fearfully leave the consequences in the hands of God, when we are sure that we have acted in strict accordance with his will. Does it become the servant of God voluntarily to expose herself to base contumel and blasphemy attached to the Holy Name and the holy things that she loves; to see on the stage an awful mockery of prayer itself, on the race-course the despair of the ruined gambler and the debasement of the drunkard? The choice of the *salon* you frequent now, of the company you keep now, is of an importance involved in the very nature of things, and not dependent alone on the expressed will of God. It is only the pure in heart who can see God. Matt. 5:8. It is only those who have been acquired a meekness for the inheritance of the saints in light (Col. 1:12) who can enjoy its possession.

It is almost entirely from this point of view that I have urged upon you the close consideration of the permanent influence of every present action. At your age, and with your inexperience, I know that there is an especial aptness to deceive one's

will by considering the case of some who, after leading a gay life for many years, have afterwards become the most zealous and devoted servants of God. That such cases are to be met with is to the glory of the free grace of God; but what reason have you to hope that you should be among this small number? Having once wilfully chosen the pleasures of this life as your portion, on what promise do you depend ever again to be awakened to a sense of the awful alternative of fulfilling your Christian vows, by renouncing the pomps and vanities of the world, or to prevent you from becoming a withered branch of the vine into which you were once grafted—a branch to be cast into the fire and burned?

Without urging further upon you this hackneyed, though still awful warning, let me return once more to the peculiar point of view from which I have all along considered the subject, namely, that each present act and feeling is an inevitable preparation for eternity, by becoming a part of our never-dying moral nature. You must deeply feel how much this consideration adds to the improbability of your having any desires whatever to become the servant of God some years hence, and how much it must increase in future every difficulty and every unwillingness which you at present experience.

Let us, however, suppose that God will still be merciful to you at the last; that, after having devoted to the world, during the years of your youth, that

love, those energies, and those powers of mind which had been previously vowed to his higher and happier service, he will still in future years want you the grace of repentance; that he will effect such a change in your heart and mind, that the world shall not only become unsatisfactory to you—which is a very small way towards real religion—but that to love and serve God shall become to you the one thing desirable above all others. Alas! it is even then, in the very hour of redeeming mercy, of merciful grace, that your severest trials will begin. Then first will you thoroughly experience how truly it is "an evil thing and bitter, to forsake the Lord your God." Jer. 2:19. Then you will find that every late effort at self-denial, simplicity of mind and purpose, abstinence from worldly entertainments, &c., is met, not only by the evil instincts which belong to our nature, but by the experienced difficulty of opposing confirmed habits. Smoothly and unopposed flows on the stream of habit, and we are unaware of its growing strength until we try to erect an obstacle in its course, and see this obstacle swept away by the long-accumulating power of the current.

In truth, all those who have wilfully added the power of evil habits to the evil tendencies of their fallen nature, must expect "to go mourning all the days of their life." It is only to those who have served the Lord from their youth that "wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths peace." To others, though by the grace of God

they may be finally saved, there is but a dreary prospect until the end come. They must thenceforth consult their safety by denying themselves many pleasant things which the well-regulated mind of the habitually pious may find not only safe but profitable. At the same time they sorrowfully discover that they have lost all taste for those entirely simple pleasures with which the path of God's obedient children is abundantly strewn. Their path, on the contrary, is rugged, and their flowers are few: their sun seldom shines, for they themselves have formed clouds out of the vapors of earth, to intercept its warming and invigorating radiance. What wonder, then, if some among them should turn back into the bright and sunny land of self-indulgence, now looking brighter and more alluring than ever from its contrast with the surrounding gloom!

Let not this dangerous risk be yours. While yet young—young in habits, in coarces, in affections—devote all to the service of the best of masters. "The work of righteousness," even now, in spite of difficulties, self-denials, and anxieties, will be "peace, and the effect thereof quietness and assurance for ever." Isa. 32:19.

THE
SOCIAL POSITION AND CULTURE
DUE TO WOMAN.

BY

REV. DR. WILLIAM R. WILLIAMS.



THAT OUR DAUGHTERS MAY BE AS CORNHENNETTES, POL-
ISHED AFTER THE SIMILITUDE OF A PALACE. PSALM
144.12.

IT WAS not only of his own household, the inmates of a palace, habituated to its lofty aspirations and its luxurious indulgences, that the inspired Psalmist thought; the *desire thus breathed was for all the maidens of Israel, the inmates of its lowly hamlets, and its secluded cottages, as well as for the members of his own regal household.* In the close of the psalm his language makes it evident that it was of the collective nation, the larger family of their king, that he thought, quite as much as of the lesser band of his own children, for he exclaims: "Happy is that *people that is in such a case.*" He was of too large, too generous a heart, had not his own lowly origin bound him to the people by indissoluble sympathies, ever to desire that the kingly house should engross all blessings and prosperity. He was too wise to expect that the mere circumstance of birth in a palace could secure either virtue or happiness *to the child thus reared and trained.* He had seen the son of Rizpah, Armoni or the *Palace-born,* (as the mother in her fond pride, and vaunting hopes,

had named her ebil) hung up before the Lord, an expiatory victim for the crimes of his royal father, when that father, the sceptre now deposed from his line, was sleeping in his dishonored grave. Perhaps he had seen, ere writing this psalm—if not, he was yet to see before death should close his saddened and worried eyes, his own gentle and goodly Tamar, the daughter of a king, the dweller of a palace, and the scholar of a prophet, falling, a blighted flower, like a violet crushed into the mire, beneath the hoof of the wild bear out of the forest. The guilt and the fate of Amnon, the ingratitude and signal punishment of his Absalom had already wrong, or were yet to wrong that father's house, and all were to show that those wearing soft raiment, and living in kings' homes, were not necessarily the best or the most blessed of mankind. It was not for the inmates of a palace, then, that this prayer was exclusively, or even mainly, framed. For all the youthful daughters of the land, however lowly their lot, for those in rural life, on the sides of Carmel and amid the pastures of Bashan, as well as those reared in the more splendid homes of Jerusalem, it is that David prays. The imagery that clothes his request is derived, however, from the walls and goodly carvings of a palace.

The prayer suggests two subjects of thought: woman's position in society, "That our daughters may be as pillars of ivory," and her proper culture, "polished after the similitude of a palace."

As the artificer prepares the beam and the pil-

ly, with reference to the place they are to occupy in the edifice he rears, so the station assigned to the sex by their Creator, in the great fabric of human society, determines the peculiar spirit and character of the training they should receive.

I. In rearing her daughters, then, for usefulness and happiness, the Christian mother is to recollect the place which the Lord and maker of the race has selected for her sex, in the system and framework of human society and government. The Psalmist prayed that the maidens of his people might be like cornerstones.

Woman, we suppose this to intimate, is to be a *bond of union* between families. As the stone, standing at the head of the corner, belongs alike to the two walls on which it faces, and as it serves to unite those walls into one symmetrical and firm building; so is it the place of woman as the wife and the mother, to blend together, in interest and in feeling, *the family whence she springs, and the family into which marriage has transplanted her.* She is, then, to be especially a lover and a maker of peace, *rather than of discord.* And they sin, not only against their own happiness and that of their connections, but against the very mission of their sex, *who, by heedlessness, or by deliberate malice, become slanderers and make-bates, sundering chief friends and sowing bitter enmities.* In the community, and in the nation, woman is to be the friend and advocate, not of strife and war, but of harmony, and order, and affection. She is, there-

the female miners of England, as wringing themselves, their families and their sex, and the entire community? Who would wish woman compelled, in an equal partnership of all toils and perils with the other sex, to incur the privations, and hardships and dangers of the mariner—to climb the ice-clad rigging, and heave the anchor, and tenant the narrow prison of the fore-castle? Educate the tendril to become a sapling, and bid your vines to leave their pendant foliage and their rich clusters, and to become stout and stubborn oaks, would the forests be made more beautiful by the change, and the trees gain in strength as much as they lost in gracefulness and variety and usefulness? Woman was formed for man, by the *irreversible laws* of the Creator and the inevitable necessities of society; not as his slave, or as his toy, but as his friend and companion and solace. No philosophy has either *the liberality or the force requisite to set aside this* law of creation, and foster woman into an independent and rival power, man's jealous competitor. Yet, while this fact of creation and this law of *heaven are to be regarded as controlling principles* in every just and safe system of female education, woman needs not to be trained in the notion that marriage is in all cases necessary to her happiness, and her respectability and influence in the community. Many, who have never filled the station of the wife and the mother, have been the light and the ornament of their circles. Families have been made glad by their quiet diligence. Orphans

have found in them those, who, bound by the ties of nature, but only by that of pity and piety, have voluntarily assumed towards these benighted men, and nobly redeemed, all a mother's varied obligations. Literature has been enriched with their contributions. The Sabbath-school and the academy have been the walks where they labored for God, and won souls for Christ. The church of God has been edified and increased by their labors, while, like the beloved Peris, they "labored much in the Lord." Strong in meek self-possession, and elevated by a high and principled consecration to duty, truth, and God, they have passed on their bright way, unharmed if not all unmoved by the scorn of the shallow and the heartless, who may have sneered at their unprotected loneliness. Doubtless they may have seemed, but doubtful they need not be, if like Enoch they walk with God. It is not necessary, or even honorable for women to do what is called an establishment in marriage indispensable either to her peace or her glory. For parents, and for children as well, there may be a profitable lesson in the saying of an eminent Puritan: Philip Henry, the father of the distinguished commentator, himself probably of higher genius and a riper scholar than was his excellent son, trained up, with the aid of his devout and exemplary wife, a family of several daughters, all women of piety and usefulness. It was the saying of the good man, that other parents were anxious as to the marrying of their daughters; but it was his

sons, rather that his daughters should be worth marrying. It was not so much with him, cause for solicitude to find for them good husbands, as to qualify them to become good wives.

But the cornerstone is not only a bond of union, but its position is also peculiar as one of comparative isolation. It is in some degree hidden. The stone which forms the topmost pinnacle is, on the contrary, ever in view. But while it may seem to rejoice in its lofty distinction, and is first to greet the beams of morning, and on it linger the last rays of evening, yet, although thus often glittering in the sunbeams, it also rocks in the storm. Its publicity and eminence endanger its security. It is not always the glory, much less the safety of woman to be the Corinthian capital, displaying its rich treasury before every eye, and courting general admiration. A life of show and publicity is not that in which woman's graces best develop themselves. The scenes of private life, "the cool sequestered vale," would seem more congenial to her better feelings, and more favorable to the cultivation of the higher traits of her character. No gazette may herald her victories, nor price current show her gains; but in the secluded walks of life, her worth may seem to those who most constantly see and who best know her, beyond the price of rubies; and her meek trophies, won over sorrow and fretting care, may show to the discerning eye, more noble than the laurels that drop gobs, won by conquerors on the battle-field, and worn amid the applauses of

a nation. An authority, here at least not to be questioned, has said: "He that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city." The seclusion of the scenes in which her lot has been cast, may seem as a prison to the vaulting and ambitious spirit; but they are scenes favorable to innocence and peace, to religious meditation and to prayerful consistency. Hence a larger portion of that sex than of the other, are generally found among the members of the Christian church. The affection of our Lord for his mother, honored and blessed as she was among women, bestowed upon her no large share in the honors and toils of his public ministry. When she would have interfered in the beginning of his miracles at Galilee, he discouraged the intrusion. Cared for by his tenderness as he hung on the cross, he yet bequeathed to her no primacy among his disciples. She, whom the superstition of later times has lifted to the station of the popular mediator between heaven and earth, was not even associated in the councils of the apostles by the piety of the primitive Christians. Beloved, as a mother should be loved by the only sinless son in the history of the race, the filial tenderness of the Saviour provided no public station in the church for his human parent.

The cornerstone is again the *foundation and basis* of the edifice, and woman is in some respects the moral support of society. The least seen, here as elsewhere, may be the most needed and the most useful. Christ was, as the writer in the Christian

church, less seen than his servant Paul; but Christ, and not that apostle, and not any other apostle, is the chief cornerstone of the churches. So woman, without writing treatises on morals, without invading the schools of philosophy, or the exchange or the senate-chamber, modifies by her teachings, and by her example, the philosophy and the legislation and the morals of the age. The character of the women of the nation is a criterion, just and unerring, of its true civilization, of its purity in morals, and of its political well-being. The education, even of the nursery, is, in the providence of God, like a sunken cornerstone; overlooked by the heedless and scorned by the ambitious, but yet in truth sustaining the social order and well-being of a people, the long-drawn walls, and the air-bung pinnacles, that first catch the stranger's eye, and that engross the admiration of the ignorant and superficial. "BE, NOT SEEM," the motto of the stern old Roman, the patriot Cato, was sublime in his lips. Is it less sublime when quietly made, as by the true woman it is in her unostentatious and unseen sphere, the principle of her unwitnessed toils, and the trials and sacrifices, as the mother, the sister, and the daughter, in the dim laboratory of home, guarding and purifying the principles that are to save the community and the race from corruption? Well may she afford to renounce the "seeming" influential, and content herself with "being" influential, and being so early, and eminently, and evermore.

It may to some seem far-fetched, yet it seems to

is warranted, to remark, lastly, that in order to inherit the blessing of the Psalmist's prayer, woman needs *firmness*—firmness both in character and in place. It is the ordinary reproach of the sex that they are uncertain and variable. With greater firmness certainly in lesser matters than belongs to man, yet we incline to regard woman as being, in matters of high moment and value, not only equal, but often superior to man in firmness and constancy. They have furnished more than their share of martyrs to affection and religion. And in religious and moral questions, this firmness is a trait above all others valuable. But even in lesser matters, in an age so given to migration, and among a nation so addicted as our own to the love of travel, we might be forgiven for wishing that it should be more the ambition of American women to become, what the apostle enjoins upon Christian females to be, "*keepers at home.*" The headstone of the corner is not to be either a millstone, carelessly whirling in the drudgery of servile toil to the neglect of the order and moral stability of the household, or a quill to be flung, by pitiless and frequent removals, hither and thither, from Dan even to Beersheba, "with an uncertain dwelling-place." Excursions for health and relaxation, and the friendly interchange of hospitalities, are not forbidden her; but home, the settled home, is after all, her sphere of duty, of glory, and of happiness.

II. From the position of the female sex in soci-

ety, and her consequent duties, as a bond of union, as one dwelling in comparative seclusion, as furnishing to society its moral basis, and as bound to cherish habits of fixedness and permanence, the words of inspiration lead us next to dwell on the *edifice* becoming woman, and desired by the Psalmist for the daughters of his land. He would have the cornerstones "polished after the similitude of a palace." In this portion of the edifice solidity is by far the first and chiefest requisite, but then ornament is not excluded. And so in training women for her duties to society and to God, the principles that give moral solidity and firmness are to be cherished before, but not to the necessary exclusion of, the refinements that give elegance and attractiveness. Principles are of more importance than accomplishments; and it is of the first moment that the conscience should be formed, next that the intellect should be stored, and then let taste be consulted and cultivated, each in its order of dignity and importance. The shaly stucco or even the graceful basso-relievo are not of themselves sufficient to constitute a stone of crumbling and yielding nature into a safe foundation of the edifice. Mothers, and especially Christian mothers, may never put accomplishments before principles. But where there is, first, firm and fixed principles, then the smoothness and radiance, and the graceful and elaborate carvings of a king's dwelling are here presented as the emblems of the gracefulness and true refinement that woman may superintend on

the solid massive basis of true religion. Not that vain-glorious parade, or costly fancy, or a love of dress, or a taste for splendor in furniture and equipage are here commended. It is the mark of a love-glorious, and often a vicious mind, to attach to all these the paramount value which many do. So the ornaments that are intended to display personal beauty, or to excite a vain and often a guilty admiration, are neither truly modest nor truly innocent, and are by no means in unison with Christian sobriety. But on the other hand, tastelessness and inelegance are not piety. All regard to gracefulness is not forbidden the sex. With a juster taste, at least on details, than belongs to the sterner sex, with more of beauty, and more nice appreciation of the beautiful in nature and art around them, and more of gracefulness in their form and movements, than marks man, God has not left woman without the endowments, or without the warrant, to cherish taste, and to seek within reasonable limits what is most becoming and most lovely. The God who created the flowers of dyes so various and forms so graceful, and scattered them so lavishly over his world, who paints so richly the morning and the evening sky, and in the hues of the bird, the insect, and the fish even, has scattered so much of gorgeous splendor around his works, would not surely have man, his creature, regardless of all that rich beauty he has so studied in the arrangements of his wide creation. The lips that uttered the benedictions thought it not seem to praise the splendid

ness of the lily. The imagery employed to describe the heavenly world indicates similar lessons. The foundations of the New Jerusalem are flashing gems, and its gates of entire pearls. The blessed wear crowns of gold. Now the crown is neither a shelter from the weather nor armor of defence in war. Its use is but for ornament and beauty. All regard for appearance is not then unholy. But, on the other hand, let it never be forgotten, that few snares are more ruinous to the young of your sex, than is an extravagant fondness for dress. Let Christian women for themselves, and for their daughters, ponder often and prayerfully the command of God by the apostle Peter: "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel. But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner, in the old time, the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves." 1 Peter 3:3-5.

True refinement then, to the eye of piety, has its seat in the soul. There may be much of it in the spirit of gentleness and winning forbearance, of delicate purity, and of unfeigned courtesy, where there is little of the varnish of worldly pretence, and under the coarse ill-cut garb, and in the homely cottage. There may, on the contrary, be much of what is *fastidiously* called "good breeding" in its outer and heartless forms, and much of splendor in

the habitation, and of imposing pretension in the manner, where the true courtesy of the heart and intrinsic refinement of soul are utterly wanting; and the contrast, to a discerning eye, between the large assumption and the real meanness, has much the effect of an edging of gold lace on a garment of Jewish or sackcloth, or the gaudy stripes on the Indian's coarse and filthy blanket.

In addition to a spirit and temper of true refinement, these graceful and womanly accomplishments are not forbidden but are allowed and desirable, which tend to make home happier. Let not the education of your daughters be one of mere accomplishments—brilliant as the colors that play on the air-bubble, and as durable, and as useful:

"The sun upon the waters not so light."

But let the Christian mother remind herself and prayerfully and continually remind her children that they have souls formed for immortality; and that death, each hour impending, is to them the gate of heaven or hell. Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, a new heart and faith in Christ and the great atonement, and the witness of the renewing Spirit. Life before show. Heaven before earth. Next, upon the substratum of that sound knowledge necessary to either sex, the youthful female may well be encouraged to erect the superstructure of all those elegant and pleasing attainments, that tend really to make home more attractive, and to throw around its inmates new bonds of attachment, and to add to its precincts

real comfort and embellishment. Music, among the most popular, may easily become and unawares, the most serious of accomplishments. It may, on the other hand, be the minister of domestic concord and the handmaid of devotion. But as that palace would be really despicable and miserable as a habitation, that in winter had no fire on its hearth and no food on its tables, but merely mirrors for its walls, and pictures for its galleries, and flowers for its conservatories, and draperies for its windows; so the education that begins and ends with costly and external accomplishments is wretched in its first principles, for it is but an education of pretence; and wretched in its effects, alike on the happiness of the daughters it educates, and on the comfort of the homes where they are one day to preside as wives and as mothers. Such was not the refinement for which the Psalmist prayed; a refinement of lacquer and gold leaf, a tinselled tawdriness, which the storms of life are likely soon to beat into the most forlorn and uncouth desolation.

True piety to God, producing true courtesy and gentleness towards man, and in strict connection with the renewal and divine refinement of the heart, the addition of all substantial and useful knowledge, and the human refinements of those lighter graces that go to render home more home-like—these we suppose to include the polish after the similitude of a palace, which the Psalmist invoked on the daughters of Israel. Such a culture will make the lowliest roof truly royal, not like the

palace indeed, amid whose unavailing splendors Abair pined for the poor vineyard of his neighbor Naboth; not like the gorgeous pile where the daughter of Herodias, in her princely loveliness, doted for the hire of a prophet's gory head, sanguinary and ruthless in her young beauty; not a house where dwell splendid guilt and showy misery, and whose gay trappings veil the shambles of a butcherly despotism and the hangings of corroding remorse; but like the royal house of righteous David, or like the peaceful cottage where David's greater Son and Lord spent his stainless youth, a scene kings might envy for an elegance that does not corrupt and a gayety that does not intoxicate; the home of true dignity, courtesy, and peace—a true palace, for its occupant is "a king and a priest unto God," where if melody is heard it breathes of heaven, and whose chosen and most prized beauty is the beauty of holiness.

As Christian mothers, you will anxiously and continually remember that you are training souls for eternity; and that the hopes and the relations, the amens and the honors of earth are soon to know the intrusion of the destroyer Death. Bring up your children for God, and your recompense is in eternity and in this world as well. Train them for this world only, and verily then also you have your reward. But it is a reward to fill the memory with desolation, and the conscience with despair. Perchance your gay and indulged, your admired and idolized child finds herself on the death-bed

disciple of Christ, without holiness and without hope. Can you hope to catch from her pallid lips, that death has already touched, a grateful blessing for your wise and faithful training? Can you encounter the gaze of those eyes, over which the films of death are already gathering, but cannot hide the despair that lies deep and dark in their reproachful glances? And as you stand with sons and daughters, at the judgment-seat; and when, amid an assembled and expectant universe, the palace of the Holy One and the prison-house of Satan await the parting troops of mankind, will it content you to remember how wistfully and watchfully you trained your offspring, at the behest of fashion, in the ways in which they should not go; and left them to become the poor dupes in this life, and the victims in the next, of the great deceiver? Will you then pride and bless yourselves on the fidelity with which you discharged your parental duties, in the thrift that preferred earth to heaven, the wisdom that rejected Christ for Satan, and the resolute perseverance that stifled conscience, grieved the Spirit, nullified the Scriptures, and courted perdition? Who dare face these bare results? But how many parents, nominally Christian, are in careless unconsciousness pursuing that path of contented worldliness, which must thus end.

Gather, my sisters, to the Saviour's feet. See him taking the little children into his arms. Become yourselves scholars in his school, prayerful and watchful, that you may become the successful

and exulting teachers of your children; that over your nurseries and your homes may fall the great calving shadow of the cross; that odors of heaven may be wafted over those scenes of recreation and trial and bereavement, through which the mother's earthly path must lead her; and that finding God your own refuge, and commending him to your children as their shelter and portion, you may, in the moment of death, and the day of judgment, have children and children's children rising up to call you blessed.



THE
EDUCATION OF THE HEART,
WOMAN'S BEST WORK.

BY
MRS. SARAH STICKNEY ELLIS



FEMALE EDUCATION.



N considering the subject of female education, it is necessary to take into account its far-reaching tendency as influencing the welfare of a future generation. Regarding education in general, in its highest sense, as a preparation for life, it is necessary to go back to the education of women; because if men are the after teachers and trainers of children, mothers, or women filling the place of mothers, will have been beforehand with them in the task, and will have even taught and trained the teachers themselves. This condition of human life is absolute—that women have the care of childhood, and that, during the period of childhood, impressions are made, whether intentionally or not, which often give to character a peculiar bias, such as may influence the whole course of after life. Hence the importance attaching to this subject, and the necessity for its being thoroughly understood in its relation to the well-being of society in general.

Having had my own mind directed in an especial manner to the subject of female education, and so

having had to look the difficulties involved in the whole subject fairly in the face, both in their relations to man and to society, there were other views of the true position of women and their duties in social life, which presented themselves as so strictly belonging to them simply as women, that I have never yet been able to see how they can fill their own place in life, and fill it well, without a large amount of training bestowed upon that part of their education which belongs to the heart. And after all, for what are women intended, and for what ought they to be prepared? Men have their appropriate place in creation, and women have theirs. It is absurd to compare them as being superior or inferior on either side; or to say that in one there is more mental capability required than in the other. But it must still be of a different order, and directed to different purposes, otherwise the whole structure, the harmonious working, the happiness and the beauty of our social constitution would be destroyed.

If we look at woman herself, and consider for what she is preparing, we see that the requirements peculiar to her position are so preeminently those which in their strength and virtue emanate from her heart—from her sentiments and affections as influenced by the principles which are rooted in her heart—that it is difficult to understand how, without the right cultivation of these, she can ever use to any good purpose those masculine attainments which are now considered so desirable for

her. *It is more integrity of principle that is required in many cases, rather than more learning; more bravery of soul, more earnestness of purpose, more self-government, and a higher estimate generally of what is great and just and good, rather than more teaching in any branch of mere intellectual attainment, however thoroughly such lessons may be taught.

If a woman, by any process of education, can be made to feel that all honest work is noble just so far as it is pursued faithfully and with worthy motives; that work need not necessarily and in itself be vulgar or mean; that idleness is infinitely more vulgar and meaner than such work can be; that integrity and principle, as it constitutes the basis of right action and true speech, is beyond all comparison more to be desired than any thing which pleases only for a moment: if a woman can be so educated as to be sent out into the world thoroughly imbued with these and other sentiments of a similar nature, she will fall in with the claims of duty without any of those hesitations and discontents, which are now attributed to her want of thoroughness in the different branches of learning in which she is inferior to men.

And besides increasing her own happiness, as well as her own value in the world; besides rendering available and welcome to her acceptance innumerable opportunities for self-maintenance by the implanting of these principles in her heart, we have to consider the position of women, in their

natural and inevitable relation to generations yet to come, who in their turn will influence other generations to the end of the world.

In looking thoughtfully around upon a school of young ladies, it is almost impossible not to be moved by some of those feelings which stirred in the mind of Mrs. Hemans when she wrote her beautiful lines on a "Girls' School at Prayer." Her own lot as a woman had not been the happiest, and looking in idea far into their future lives, she points, in her own peculiar manner, to their probable experience as women.

" Her lot is on you!—oh!e't soon to weep
And patient smiles to wear through suffering's hour,
And smiles which come from affections deep
To pour on hark'ed roads; a waded shower.

" Her lot is on you!—to be found weeping
Washing the stars out by the bed of pain,
With a pale cheek, and yet a brow inspired
With a true heart of hope, though Lays be vain."

In the young ladies' school we find every variety of active life, every shade of incipient character, the delicate and fragile form, and the robust and healthy. We find the girl whose countenance is shadowed by mournful sentiment, but now frequently the flashing eye, the glowing cheek, the eager tread of buoyant feet; we find also the quick perception, the sensitive touch, the ready speech, and the facile adaptation of mind and manner to the excitement of the moment. These and a thousand other phases of girlish life present them-

selves, and all appear as if fluttering together without any definite purpose. There may be good and noble purpose on the part of those who have to direct, and those who have to teach; but the end! When we consider *that*, a strange transition of scene takes place, and we behold one of these girls, perhaps the gayest, watching by the bed of sickness or death. Another has orphan brothers and sisters looking to her for guidance and support. Another has her own nursery filled with rapidly advancing life and strength. Another has the social claims of a large household to meet with promptness and discretion. One has a difficult temper to soothe; another a wild spirit to restrain. All have their work, and none live for themselves alone.

Out of the various destinations appointed by God for these light, airy creatures, whom we have seen at school, will flow a large portion of the happiness or the misery, the good or the evil, of many lives, besides their own. From the early training of one will spring the statesman, wise *in council*; or the philosopher, exact *in his conclusions*; or the adventurer, far-reaching in his objects of pursuit; or the minister of religion, eloquent to persuade. And whether, in the achievements to which these devote themselves, their work shall be established on right principles or wrong, on truth or falsehood, will depend very much upon the early basis given to their characters by that young girl whose fingers we saw gliding swiftly

over the strings of her harp, by her who sat in the garden shade wreathing herself with flowers, by her who sang the fairy song, or by her who, wearied with the dance, fell asleep in a cloud of her own dishevelled hair.

Also, to take a darker view of the picture: the man of pleasure, once no worse than a selfish boy; the gambler, once only the child who was fond of any playful risk; the defrauder, once only weak in resisting temptation, but subsequently the shame of his country and the ruin of his home: these will all have passed under the training hand, the watchful eye, and the tender nurture, of some among those gay young girls whom we saw so carelessly floating along the stream of life. Or, if the training and the nurture have been wanting, the case is no better. Neglect can do its work as well, or rather so ill, as mistaken effort. If the care-taker of childhood forgets to do her part, nature asserts her claim, and passion and self will seize the victim for their own.

Besides these, there are the daughters of such families to be considered, the sisters of such brothers, the mothers of such sons, in a future generation. But no, we will not believe it. Rather let us look forward to the dawn of a happier day, when the education of the heart shall keep pace with that of the head; and when women shall faithfully maintain their legitimate place in the training of youth, so as that one generation after another shall be marked by greater dignity and

worth of character, and each, with God's blessing,
be more noble, happier, and better than the last.

I would give the sum of my meaning in this simple form: That women, from their natural tendencies of thought and feeling, especially from those qualities which we commonly describe as belonging to the *heart*, are admirably qualified for conducting the education of the heart; that they are fitted also by circumstances for carrying on this work, because Providence has placed them, and only them, in that close association with infancy and youth which is necessary to the work being effectually done; and that they have, within themselves, as women, a motive power which impels them to some kind of heart work, and which makes them seek and find their happiness in doing it.





II.

PREPARATION FOR LIFE.

EDUCATION, when regarded as a true preparation for life, is the noblest work to which human effort can be devoted. It embraces so much, both in relation to the present life and that which is to come, that no human mind has ever been able to grasp its far-reaching requirements, so as to convey to other minds an adequate sense of what they really are.

Considered as a matter of theory, it would be difficult to say what there is of good or wise which education does not already profess to teach. Considered practically, we find a fearful want in what it does in the way of preparing for life, for being and doing, as well as knowing; for this it is which gives the true character to life—what people do, and what they are in themselves, even more than what they understand or know. As for example, a man may know very well what it is right to do, but the choosing to do it is quite a different matter. He may not like to do it. He may have no motive power within himself sufficiently forcible to compel or induce him to do it, and thus he may go on

to the end of a long life doing wrong, and acting all the time against his knowledge of what it is right to do.

Wrong doing is the consequence of wrong being, of the heart being filled with strong inclinations to do evil, while the inclination to do right is feeble and defective. Perhaps it as frequently arises from eagerness to seize a present pleasure, without any consideration of right and wrong whatever, or any thought of what the consequences may be. This is the pure animal instinct by which thousands and tens of thousands of human beings are actuated, until roused by some strong impression or conviction to see their true position as responsible beings.

We all know enough of society under its worst aspects to be aware that this condition is not incompatible with a considerable amount of knowledge, that persons leading this kind of life can many of them read and write, and are frequently not unacquainted with the higher branches of learning. It is not, in reality, the acquirement of any amount of knowledge which of itself constitutes a true preparation for life.

But before pursuing this subject farther, let us ask, What is the nature of that life which has to be prepared for? What the child must be in order to enter upon this life prepared to meet its requirements, and what he must be prepared to do in order to maintain a worthy place among his fellow-men, are questions which will naturally follow.

In regarding education as a preparation for life, it is necessary to look into life as it is—our mortal life as it is in the present day, and as the child will find it. This life is no Arcadian scene of quiet and repose, no state of pastoral simplicity, varied only by the bleating of lambs and the song of larks. It is no garden of Eden, without the serpent. The life which has to be prepared for is full of the busy strife of men, the interests of contending parties, the seeming good, the lurking evil, the spurious pretence, and the wrong so countenanced that it ceases to be called wrong. Preparation has to be made for the struggling together of thousands and millions of human beings intent upon their own worldly advancement, and careless about trampling down whatever might impede their progress or hinder their success. We have the love of money, or of that which money can procure, ruling paramount over multitudes who throng the streets of our towns and cities; and with this we have a frightful coolness in the choice of means, and a daring in action, which too often mark the path of enterprise with pain and shame. This is one aspect of that life for which education has to prepare in the present day.

But life has other and widely different aspects. Happy for us and the times in which we live, we have enterprise which is generous and noble; we have our benevolent philanthropists, our wise men, and noble women not a few, our moral institutions, our wise arrangements, our works of charity, and a vast

agency employed in voluntary service for the good of their fellow-beings. We have ever and anon the public and spirit-stirring advocacy of what is right and just and true; and we have the quiet working out in lower walks of usefulness of that high estimate of duty which spares neither time nor means for personal indulgence. We have a high sense of honor as the support of our national dignity, and we have the faithful upholding of God's holy word as the rule of life, with the Christian ministrations of his devoted servants for our instruction and guidance. For this also education has to prepare; and for both it has to prepare in such manner as that the good shall be recognized and justly estimated, while the evil shall be seen to be evil, and resolutely rejected.

Were these two phases or elements of social life distinctly separated the one from the other, so that a child might see the difference, and know exactly where the evil of one was bounded by the good of the other, the difficulty of educating for such a condition would be comparatively small. But unfortunately the real state of the case is far otherwise; for there is not only a wide border space where these two conditions meet and mix, but in their separate departments one is apt to wear the outward aspect of the other. Party feeling establishes its own test of merit, conventional epithets are used instead of truth, and thus the whole structure of society is thrown into confusion, so as to present to the eye of a child very little that is clearly

which right is wrong. And yet education has to prepare the easily impressionable nature of youth for entering into life on these conditions, for maintaining an upright walk in the midst of this apparent confusion.

Not only so, but education has so to prepare for life that the future shall be better than the past. It is not enough that our youth should go on in the beaten track which has hitherto been trod. We are not satisfied with this in other departments of effort—in our arts, our manufactures, or in any of those branches of civilization which obtain for a nation and a people the character of being prosperous or otherwise. We are not altogether satisfied with this in the methods of teaching what is already taught in our schools. As a nation, England stands proudly forth as the advocate of improvement, of progress, of all that leads to advancement, so that the present may be better than the past, and the future better still. Inspired by this laudable ambition, we seek for more knowledge, and the demand is unreasonably wise and right. But if we want more knowledge, we want more principle to use it well. If we want higher teaching, we want better men and women. We want firmer foundation for right conduct, purer aims, and more unswerving rectitude of character generally; and we want this not negatively, just in the way of avoiding evil, but positively, in the way of loving and attaining good.

Either we are some of us much mistaken as to

what the requirements of life, such as we find it, really are, or there is a large portion of necessary preparation left out of our ordinary methods of educating youth. Or if not entirely left out, in what way are these requirements provided for with any thing like the earnestness, directness, and perseverance which are applied to the teaching of a language, a rule in arithmetic, or a fact in history?

Let us consider, for a moment, what some of these requirements are. We are told continually, that life is a warfare, consequently we want firmness and bravery to meet the conflict. We are told that life has golden opportunities, which, if neglected, may never occur again; consequently we want the habit of doing right consistently and on principle, in order that we may be ready at any moment to seize these opportunities, and turn them to the best account. We are told that we must expect disappointment and trouble to attend on every stage of our earthly career, and for these we want patience and fortitude. On the other hand, we know that in life we shall also find much to enjoy, consequently we want self-government and moderation; we know that a seeming happiness will often present itself as real, or a real happiness which is not for us, and for this, as indeed for all things, we want the power of self-denial, with a well-disciplined resoluteness of will; we know that life has duties to be discharged requiring kindness, forbearance, and brotherly love, requiring also strong

faith, earnestness of purpose, and devotedness of soul; we know that the highest and noblest attainments of life are far-reaching in their influence, and that to live, in the true sense of living, is to diffuse life, to impart vitality and strength to the lives of others.

To prepare for life at its best, even as regards the present state of existence, is indeed a great and noble undertaking; but when we stretch our view beyond, we see that all this vanishes into insignificance and uncertainty in comparison with the profounder interest and fuller purposes of preparing for a life of never-ending duration. Limited by the concerns of the present only, the spectacle of human existence presents a scene of incomprehensible confusion, and of mystery beyond our finite powers to solve; but regarded in its relation to eternity, we behold a completeness and harmony, in preparing for which the education of the heart must form an essential part, not to be left out without infinite loss.

But in order to prepare for life generally, and on an expansive scale, it is not in isolated instances only that this great work can be done. All good, if really good, is diffusive, widely extended; and when so cultivated and encouraged as to pervade society through its various branches, its modes of operation will be multiplied, and its value increased, in a ratio beyond all power of calculation. Here then we want the preparation for servicable action of all those greater, nobler, and purer attributes of

being which lift a people or a nation up to a loftier sphere of intelligence, and a nobler range of action, than can ever be attained without these sentiments or emotions being not only alive, but vigorous, *strong, and healthy within the heart.*

We think it much when the execution of work is cultivated to perfection in the case of any single individual, or amongst any class. But when, for one man who works well, there are thousands who can appreciate good work at its best, and who will not tolerate bad work, then society as a whole is really benefited in a greater degree than by the one skillful artificer, however excellent his work may be. We think it much to have painting and music and literature cultivated among us, so that we may boast of our works of art, our scientific inventions and discoveries, our poems, novels, essays, and histories; but the taste to estimate and the feeling to value such works, the imagination to conceive, the emotions of soul fully to enjoy, the enlightened understanding to follow out the moral as well as the physical results of this high order of intelligence—these, when diffused amongst the people, are really the influences by which a nation is refined and exalted.

Considerations of this kind might be extended to our religious observances, showing how the technicalities of church and chapel, the popular estimate of a favorite preacher, and other religious fashions of our day, tend to magnify the details of that which is external and palpable, to the neglect

of the spiritual, or of that which exists within the heart, influencing its affections and emotions. Not as my simple object is to speak of education, and of woman's part in it especially, I would rather leave these subjects to those who are better able to treat them worthily. My direct purpose is to show that, in order to education being made what it ought to be—a preparation for life—we have not only to cultivate the understanding and store it with knowledge, as we do now; but so to impress the whole range of human feeling, motive, and conception, in fact so to raise the entire character, as that life itself shall be exalted and made purer and happier.

So far from the utmost cultivation of these powers and faculties tending in any way to self-exaltation, or even to too much consciousness in human instrumentality, it seems to me that the tendency must be rather towards that humility of soul which befits the creature in the presence of the Creator—humility as the possessor only, and for a short period of time, of a sacred trust, for which an account has to be rendered to the Divine Giver. Education has to prepare the highest portion of human nature for reaching up to its true height, for maintaining its just position, and all for best following out the purposes for which they were intended, amidst the contending influences of the life by which we are surrounded, and in the midst of which we have to live.

An awful, but at the same time an encouraging

and exalted thought must be ever present to the mind of the Christian educator: that none of the best pains bestowed upon a child need be lost; that the higher the range of faculties brought under cultivation in this life, the closer is their assimilation to those which we believe to exist in a state of perfect blessedness beyond the grave; that it is in fact for eternity the child is being prepared, and that to make the best of both worlds is really to carry out the Divine purpose in placing us where we are.

But who is sufficient for these things? Surely there never was a time demanding more urgently than ours, that the parents of families should ponder thoughtfully what is their part in the preparation of their children for life, their part in the establishment of a firmer basis of character, so that it may be founded on principle as on a rock which none of the vicissitudes of time can shake. And what enterprise can be more noble or more spirit-stirring than this? We hear much of the supply of our commerce, of competition in the market, and of the best manufactured articles. Would to God that we could hear as much of demand for the noblest and the best in human character! Then there would be hope that education would assume its legitimate place in the general improvement of mankind.

In the meantime, there is heavy responsibility resting on parents. It can, however, scarcely be expected of the father that his line of activity or

enterprise should take this direction. The claims of business, the customs of life as it is, require his utmost attention elsewhere, at the counter, the desk, the committee-room, or perhaps at the port of some distant country. He has no time to prepare his children for life, no energy of thought or action to bestow upon their education. How should he?

How should he? Why, here is a new plan for the prevention of crime submitted to his consideration, and he has to consult about that. Or here is a newly-invented lock, which no burglar can break, brought for him to examine. Or here is a case of fraud which he has to pass judgment upon. Or here is a whole family of debtor's children, and he has to contrive how they can be maintained. Here is something wrong in his own counting-house, and he has his clerks to watch; or something still worse with his agent abroad, and he has to institute inquiries. Worse than all, here is the bad conduct of his own son to consider—letters of complaint from his employer! It is clear that the man is too busy dealing with the results of those moral diseases which afflict society, to have either time or attention to bestow upon the means of their prevention. And so, it seems to me, the whole force of social effort and social power is given to the end instead of the beginning, until that frequent expression, "the prevention of crime," has come to be considered by us as a system of locks and bars, of watching, detecting, and punishing

with the almost rigor of the law; until even the poor suicidal maniac has to be blocked out from drowning by securing the banks of the river! Does it never occur to an enlightened public, whose agents employed in the detection of crime are almost driven to distraction, that all these things come from within, and are only to be effectually prevented by causes which operate within; which operate especially upon motive and desire, upon passion and inclination, and in short upon those impulses producing action which originate in the heart?

We are told that an enlightened public does know this perfectly well, and that, in consequence of such knowledge, one portion of it, understood to be the most enlightened, is demanding earnestly that education should be more liberally granted to the people, and more extensively diffused; that especially among the working classes there should be more reading and writing, arithmetic and what not. So far so good; but what have any of these attainments to do with the case in point? How do they reach or affect those inclinations, desires, and passions which belong to the heart, and which *are immediately stimulated by such temptations as the conditions of life, under its worst aspects, supply only too liberally?*

It is clear that the motive power which impels to action is that which especially requires to be operated upon, so as to prepare for life. Whence, in fact, do the actions of a person come? Do they spring out of his knowledge? His knowledge may

help him to act—it may even supply the means—but the origin of his act, the way he chooses to go through life, and especially the purposes to which he gives himself by inclination, will have their root and strength and vital power in his heart. This, then, is that portion of human nature which requires especially to be brought under the discipline of education, in order to constitute a true preparation for life.

I say especially; for the education of the heart has been so long neglected, and so little thought of, as not in any way to have kept pace with that sharpening of the intellect, that multiplying of resources, and that general increase of the occasions for temptation which are supplied by a highly civilized condition of society.

To those who have been accustomed to study human character from the earliest development of its tendencies, it is astonishing that this branch of education should have received so little attention as has unfortunately been the case. Indeed, it is almost impossible to believe that any serious-minded person should trifle with it, should treat it with disrespect, or pass it over as only a thing by the way. Rather, one could suppose that the wisest and the best of human beings would unite to devise some plan by which education generally might be brought to bear with some weight, and with better influence, upon that portion of life and character out of which spring motives and desires, and consequently action.

It is true the subject has difficulties, but ours is an age for overcoming difficulty—an age in which so much is actually accomplished which seemed a short time ago impossible, that there can be no ground for discouragement in any case where the cause is a good one, and the agency efficient and available. We cannot doubt that a large number of intelligent women are available for good and noble work, nor can we doubt that among these many are efficient, or if not so at first, that nothing is required on their part to make them so but a little attention to the subject, given in an unprejudiced and liberal spirit. The true adaptation to the work to be done must come from the woman's own heart, from her warm sympathies and kindly affections, and from her clear perceptions and earnest love of what is right.

There are many women endowed by nature—I would rather say, by the peculiar gift of God—with perceptions of this kind so quick and sure that they see, in a manner which is surprising to others, at once where a thing is wrong and must not be done, or on the other hand, where a thing is right and *must be done at any cost*. These are the women who obtain an unconscious influence over their families and households, such as to give them important positions in society far beyond what their talents would have obtained for them intellectually. We are apt to attribute this influence to good sense, or good judgment, and in part it may be so; but I believe that such women more frequently feel

strongly believe they judge rightly, and that the high, clear tone of their far-reaching moral sense enables them to judge rightly at once.

I am not speaking of an altogether undisciplined moral sense, nor as if unaided nature could thus direct with certainty to what is right; but of those instances in which the natural tone of mind and feeling is such as to have been really, though it may have been secretly, reached by the higher influences of that Spirit whose office it is to show us what is right and true. The world, with its conflicting claims upon the attention, does much to darken and confuse these perceptions. We have already observed how men, especially when they set themselves to improve the world, are chiefly employed in restraining and preventing the outward manifestations of criminal desire; and it is scarcely less hopeless to see enlightened people, both men and women, advocating that remedy which has so long been applied, namely, education of the intellect. Another class of persons speak only of conversion as having any power over the heart. And perhaps, with regard to these, I ought to explain my meaning more clearly in the outset, but my remarks should be cast aside as religiously unsound and untrue.

Let me explain, then, thus early, that by a right preparation for life I understand a preparation for meeting the requirements of our social condition with uprightness, sincerity, and general good-will. And as it seems to me that society in the present

day, especially in connection with money and business matters, is greatly in want of more integrity, uprightness, and truth in its general transactions: I would speak of these as good in themselves, irrespective of religion under any form; good, as they enable mankind to believe in one another, to intrust their property and commit their interests to the faithful keeping of one another, and in all the ordinary concerns of life to mix closely with their fellow-beings, without suspicion on the one hand or fraud on the other. I am here speaking of the cultivation of this high tone of feeling as being more or less under the power of the educator, and as being at least as well worthy of close and earnest attention, so as to train the feelings aright, as any of the intellectual powers are of being trained.

Preparing for life religiously, or with single reference to eternity is a different matter, only that where the educator is imbued with the true sense of its importance, and has her own heart brought under the influence of religion, she will see no good issue, and find no delight in any kind of education which is not religiously conducted; and in the sphere of duty which I am proposing, she will have the satisfaction of feeling that the very qualities of heart which she undertakes to cultivate are those which, under the influence of God's own Spirit, ripen into Christian graces, such as love, pity, gratitude, patience in suffering, bravery in maintaining a good cause, and many others yet to be specified.

These I am not about to speak of as saving the soul, but as adorning the Christian character, and as being necessary to the peace, comfort, and general good of society.

It may be said that already these are attended to in our educational establishments, as well as at home. No doubt they are, but not especially as bearing any direct relation to the life which has to be prepared for, nor as filling any very important place in its requirements. In short, they are not treated with any thing like the same care and attention in their culture as Latin is treated, or Greek, or any other of those branches of attainment usually regarded as making up a good education.

Many persons also satisfy themselves with the idea that the true preparation for life takes place at school. But looking at the matter in the light in which I have endeavored to place it, we see that very little can be done in this way at school and by strangers, in comparison with what can be done at home. The routine of school teaching, applied as it is almost exclusively to the acquirement of knowledge, leaves very little time or opportunity for the cultivation of the heart. Besides which, all those processes which materially affect the desires and affections must necessarily be slow, if they are to be sure and lasting in result. And again, who asks for these, except casually and by the way? Children at school are also necessarily treated in the mass, or divided into classes, each

class being marked by intellectual distinction, and by no other. But parents have opportunities of becoming acquainted with the individual character of each particular child. They know that to endeavor to force one to be like another, even in the same family and household, would be waste of effort, and absolute folly. One, it may be, is self-sustained, bold, free, and careless of praise and blame. Another is sensitive, timid, liable to suffer severely under condemnation, and unreasonably excited by praise. One is revengeful, another forgiving. One delights in enterprise, another likes to sit still and feel safe. In a thousand ways the children of one family may differ from each other, and yet all have to be prepared for life as it is.

Nor is this study of character, in order to the adaptation of appropriate means of preparation to each, by any means the least important portion of the educator's task. Frederika Bremer, whose lifelong study was that of human character, has this remark in one of her letters: "It is not a new but a true thought, that everybody ought to endeavor thoroughly to know the intrinsic worth of his own character, and like a skillful sculptor, to form, work, and polish it, until the rough cast made by nature stands out in harmonious beauty." And if this be true of self-culture, it is equally true when the work of preparation for life has to be done in its early stages by another. If at the same time the child can be taught to know itself, it will become instructed in one of the most important branches

of knowledge which can ever come under its consideration.

In the pursuit of this knowledge discovery will sometimes be made of talents and capabilities worthy of the highest order of training, as being calculated for eminent usefulness to mankind. But there need be no fear under the care of a judicious mother that, where this discovery is made, a low stunted estimate of self should be the consequence. There is much more cause to fear the effect upon the character of a child when placed under a system of continual depression. Nothing can be worse for a child—nothing, perhaps, can be worse for a human being, either young or old, than to feel degraded—debased. It is not our original nature that we have to blush for, but the neglect, the perversion, the wrong use of the faculties which God has given us. To feel within ourselves that we are worth improving and capable of being made better, is a great help in our efforts to attain what is high and good. In this, the true source of moral progress, no human theory, however exalted, has been able to reach the springs of human feeling as they have been reached by the divine plan of salvation, showing how man was regarded by his Creator as being worth saving, and at what a cost!

In pursuing this subject we see how necessary it is that individual character should be closely understood in order to a true preparation for life; and we see also that no human being has opportunity and power to understand a child in an equal

degree with the mother. We see that life has to be prepared for, not by a system of acquiring knowledge alone, but by the discipline, culture, and training of the desires and affections of the heart; and here also the mother has advantages, natural and derived from circumstances, such as no one else can enjoy.





III.

GOOD PRINCIPLE.

 HERE are two opposite ways of looking at human life: from the beginning, and from the end of the journey. The mother is apt to look perhaps a little too exclusively at the former, and from that onwards. A stranger, by looking back, may sometimes see more clearly what have been the causes of stumbling in the outset, or of shortening toward the end. The mother sees only what is lovely and hopeful in her child. In its innocence she delights her soul; and even as character begins to be developed there is so little real harm in anything a child can do, that its very weightiness excites laughter more than fear. For a long time this pleasant state of things is apt to continue, and it seems unkind to wish it otherwise. But the stranger who knows nothing of the childhood of certain individuals, only their after career, and looking back from the end, is often painfully convinced that there has been a want somewhere, perhaps very early in life, a want of something in the training of the child, which we call principle.

But what is principle? For there may be but

principles, as well as good. Principle, in its relation to human character, is generally understood to mean a certain motive, or class of motives, so deeply rooted in the heart, and so habitually acted upon, that they become as it were the basis of that character, governing its actions in general, and giving to it the essential peculiarities by which it is known and understood. Such principles may not always show themselves in outward conduct. The principle of selfishness, for example, may conceal itself under an outward robe of generosity; or the principle of benevolence may demand an outward appearance of self-denial which looks like the stinginess of a miser. A close and lengthened acquaintance is generally required for the right understanding of a person's principles. But they show themselves very clearly in the long run, and stamp the character with marks of good or evil so definite that no one can be mistaken as to the principles by which a life, or even any considerable portion of a life, has been governed.

Indeed, principle requires time to mature it into anything worthy of the name. A little child cannot be said to have principle of any kind. Neither is there *habit* principle. Nor has *impulse* or *sudden* likewise anything to do with principle. There is no principle in acting from generosity one day, and from selfishness the next. There is no principle even in doing right when the motive is mere time-serving or expediency.

In the cultivation or establishment of principle

as a basis of conduct, the mistake is often made of accepting habit for principle. Good habits are without doubt the result or outgrowth of good principle; but there may sometimes be good habits without any principle whatever, or only a very faint and vague principle in the persons who adopt and fall in with such habits. We ought not however for this reason, or under any circumstances, to undervalue the importance of good habits as such. Many respectable persons have been kept so through life by the influence of good habits. Many a youth has been preserved from sin by the good habits of his home. The good habits of society are like a wall of safety protecting the young and old. The good habits of a community are essential to its prosperity.

Still habit is not principle, although, as already said, wherever there is good principle there will be good habits to a greater or less extent, and vice versa. Principle is something which lies deeper than habit. It is something which remains solid and unshaken when the routine of habit has been disturbed, or even swept away. A long course of habit may sometimes be accidentally interrupted, and then, where there has been no principle for its foundation, its hold upon the character is altogether lost. A broken habit will sometimes leave us to float away, as the strands of a shattered cable separate and leave the vessel they were meant to hold to dash itself upon the rocks.

But principle when once established remains

after habit has failed, and holds good under all circumstances. The boy who goes forth into the world well grounded in principle may commit many errors in conduct, but he will see that they are errors. He may for awhile even cast himself into the ways of sin as well as folly, but he will know that he is sinning, and will hate and loathe the act while committing it; and if his principles have the higher tone and reach of religion to give them vitality and depth, he will know no peace of mind until he comes back a repentant prodigal to his father's heart, his father's home, and to the principles which should have kept him there.

In our endeavors to establish right principle as the basis of character, we are nipped by many obvious facts which, for want of proper consideration, sometimes baffle our efforts, and so defeat our aims; we find, for example, that even in the youngest child there are motives so strong and so consistently persevered in that, unless counteracted or overborne by other motives, they will inevitably grow into principle. Self-love is one of these. The Author of our being has implanted this in the very nature of the child for purposes of self-preservation, self-providing, and so far it is good. No other motive is either so strong or so consistently acted upon as this; and there are others not very dissimilar, all perfectly right and legitimate in the child, but which, if allowed to grow with its growth and strengthen with its strength, will become alike odious in its own character and injurious to society. These

motives, passions, or tendencies being natural and inherent in the child, nay, at one time absolutely right, cannot be exercised when they become dangerous, like the evil spirits of old. Indeed, it is more than probable that, on mature reflection, we shall find them capable of being turned to good account under wise government, or in other words, made useful as servants, when as masters they would produce only ruin and disaster. Such a strong will, generally treated as obstinacy, treated as a thing to be utterly rooted out and destroyed, instead of being led gently by a careful hand, and so brought under other influences as to be trained into useful perseverance or noble resolution.

In the apostolic injunction to "overcome evil with good" we find a true and simple statement of what has to be done in the education of the heart, and in nothing is this more emphatically true than in the establishment of good principles for the government of life. The character of a child is however so plastic, and its convictions for some time so vague, that the word *conviction* seems scarcely to apply to the matter under consideration. Some mode of instilling good principles however must be adopted, before they can become the basis of character. This mode can only be such as will make the child both *desire* and *love* that which is commended to its adoption. There must not only be something to avoid and shun, but something on the other hand, to embrace, to love, to hold by, as for life. It must not only hate a sin, but must absolutely *love*

the truth; and thus it must be through the whole range of those motives for action which emanate from good principles. By teaching a child only to avoid we teach negatively, and that is doing only half our work, or rather it is doing less than half. It is simply endeavoring to put down the evil, whereas our work, and a glorious work it is to be engaged in, should be to *correct* evil with good.

And yet there is perhaps no great work to which human effort has been more blindly directed than to this. Many suppose that advice, reproof, and punishment are all that is required for the establishment of good principles. While freely acknowledging the necessity of judicious advice, I think we are many of us prepared to wish that advice may be so administered as to render it odious and repulsive. Reproof, too, may be so conveyed as to sound very much like the expression of ill temper; while punishment has an effect upon children very much more like hate than love; and we know that repulsion leads to avoidance, that ill temper calls up ill temper, and that passion creates passion. What then are we doing? It may be, I do not say it is, that we are awakening feelings of hatred and anger, sometimes, perhaps, even a determination to rebel and to be avenged, when that which we really wanted to effect was to make the child *love* to do right.

In cases of obstinacy the treatment is usually such as to make the child more obstinate. Resistance sets itself in opposition to mastery; force rises

against force, and that the strength of a naturally strong will is increased by opposition. Hence many of those distracting conflicts which so disturb the peace of the nursery, when the frantic exclamation, "You wicked boy!" or "You naughty girl!" announces but too plainly that victory is on the side of the child.

And yet the parent must have, and hold the real mastery, or worse than confusion will ensue. It must, however, be a very different kind of mastery from that which is obtained by fighting. It must be a mastery which is felt and recognized on both sides; felt cheerfully, and recognized with willing obedience by the child; maintained by the parent as a sacred and inalienable right. Here then we find called into exercise the principle of obedience to lawful authority and rule. This may be said to be the first good principle of which the child is capable, and it is one of great importance in relation to after life.

In this case, as in too many others, the whole matter is thrown into confusion by the readiness of parents and teachers to accept low motives instead of high, false principles instead of true. The love of pleasing is a very available motive, and the maintenance of peace is a good object to pursue; but neither of these is safe as a principle of conduct, because the child in after life may be led to please by doing what is wrong, and to maintain peace where there should be no peace. In these, and many other cases, where the end and not the means

is all that is considered, there is no good principle, nothing to build a sterling character upon, so that its foundation will not be shaken by changing circumstances. The right action for the moment may possibly be produced by those means; but the motive being mean or false, and as such being often repeated, it will strengthen into wrong principle; and thus, in after life and under different circumstances, will be likely to produce conduct the very opposite to that which the shortsighted teacher or trainer rejoiced over in the child.

But besides what is false or mean, we find occasionally inducements which are absolutely *good* presented to the child as motives for *good* conduct, and this quite unconsciously, sometimes by well-meaning mothers. In order to show the operation of this mode of treatment, it is necessary to adduce instances apparently so trivial that possibly they may fail to excite attention; and yet it is in the frequent repetition of such apparent trifles that the real mischief lies; while, on the other hand, it is to the frequent application of an opposite mode of treatment in the common affairs of daily life that we must look for the establishment of good principles, so as to make them influential in the government of life.

As a very simple illustration, let us imagine a mother whose son has just begun to compete with other boys at school. He is an idle boy, and does not like the trouble of learning his lessons well. The consequence is, he finds his place low down in

the class, and day by day comes home with mortified vanity and irritated temper, especially against one particular boy, who, although ranking beneath him out of school, keeps always above him in the class. The mother, whose moral sense is low, and who consequently thinks little about principle, endeavors to stimulate her boy to greater industry by working upon his envy or his hate. She tells him, with scorn, that were she in his place, she would never be beaten by that boy, a lowborn fellow whose father was once a workman, and whose mother a village schoolmistress, and whose sole endeavor is to put him, her darling, down, to ride over him, and disgrace him before the other boys. The mother in all this only wants to spur on her child so that he may conquer his indolence, and take an honorable place among his companions. The end she aims at is right and laudable, but the means she employs are mean and bad; in fact, the opposite of such as promote good principles.

A mother of a higher order of moral character, if placed under the same circumstances, will understand that while it is wrong to be idle, and may be ruinous to the prospects of her son to fill a low place in the school and to be backward in his learning altogether, yet it is equally bad, nay, worse, that he should grow up envious and spiteful; and therefore in her treatment of the case she has recourse to stimulus of a different kind. Such a mother would freely acknowledge to the mortified and irritated boy, coming home with vengeance on his lips

against his rival; that there was deep humiliation in his case. She would probably say to him, "It is mortifying and vexatious to be so beaten; but I dare say that boy studies hard at home. No doubt his parents take care that he shall have time and opportunity for learning his lessons well before he goes to school; but the great thing must be that he is himself industrious and persevering. Now try what you also can do for yourself. We will do what we can for you, and I wish I could do more; but you know the resolution, the effort, and the labor must all be your own, if you really wish to succeed. It is of very little consequence to you what other boys may do, but it is of immense consequence what you do yourself."

By the constant recurrence in familiar matters of this kind to motives which are high or low, noble or mean, good or bad, character is formed upon a corresponding scale. Only there is always this fact to be kept in mind, that any impressions which we desire to make, or bias which we desire to give in favor of what is good and right, must be associated in the mind and the memory of the child with what is agreeable, so far, at least, as to be encouraging and kind.

In the religious teaching of youth that is best remembered, and most valued, which is associated with agreeable impressions made upon the mind at the time of instruction, impressions of love and tenderness, impressions of a happy home, and of general cheerfulness and contentment; so it is of

the utmost importance that good principles should be introduced and impressed under the same favorable circumstances. The application of epithets of anger and blame, of threats, or other deterrents, employed against wrong doing, will never, as already observed, make a child desire to do right. It may in this manner be made to desire to avoid the blame and escape the punishment of doing wrong; but that is a very different matter from receiving into *its heart, and holding it there, that strong sound principle which will make it, under all circumstances, "abhor that which is evil, and cleave to that which is good."*

In the great work of instilling and impressing principle there is perhaps no influence so powerful as consistent example. In vain would a mother, in whom her child had detected a falsehood, endeavor to impress upon its mind the importance and value of truth. In vain would the mother, who should exhibit before her children an unrelenting or revengeful spirit, endeavor to inspire in them a true admiration for Christian charity. But on the contrary, where truth is revered at home, where charity is the prevailing spirit shown in the simple affairs of every day, and especially when it forms a prominent and lovely feature in the mother's own character, her children, habitually living in and breathing an atmosphere of truth and charity, will grow up with characters formed upon this basis, and to them it will become principle.

This teaching of principle is necessarily a work

of time, and it requires to be consistently carried on. The same class of principles must be referred to as motives for conduct day by day and hour by hour, not one kind under especial circumstances, and their opposites when the case is different. It is this inconsistency in ourselves which I think, for the most part, defeats the object of those who really value good principle, and desire that it should be established in the character of the young.

In the present day we have another, and an almost insuperable difficulty in the way of bringing about any improved mode of education likely to operate upon the heart so as to promote the growth of good principle. By the public in general there is very little attention now given to any mode of social improvement which does not and cannot make an open demonstration of itself in some way or other. In order to catch the attention of the public, or in other words, to obtain help from public feeling or opinion, we must have large organizations, institutions, meetings, presidents, committees, and other agencies of a similar kind. The thing must be done as it were by a stroke of popular impulse and power. Public opinion seems to be entirely on the side of such movements in the present day, and there is no power so influential upon human conduct as public opinion. Public opinion can so exalt any given subject or topic before society at large that the feeblest speech ever spoken, or the meanest book devoted to that subject, shall not be without applause; while the noblest utterance,

either spoken or written, on a subject which public opinion has not taken up, is simply ignored. It is the case in point, much more than any argument or expression which is the first instance attracts attention, and where this has no hold upon the public the speech is not listened to, and the book is never opened.

If however, any amount of popularity, *even* so large or liberal, could be awakened in favor of the education of the heart, the work itself would still have to be done in secret, slowly, carefully, and with progress advancing only step by step, so as to be almost imperceptible to the mere observer. It is impossible that so great a work should be done in a day, or by any master-stroke. Nothing either great or good was ever done by sleight of hand.

Time and patience and careful study of human nature are necessary for the accomplishment of this task. And, do what we may, we have still to wait even here for the slow operations of nature; for it must never be forgotten that in education we can only work effectually with nature for our willing handmaid.

We have to keep always before us what are called natural laws, so much in dealing with the elements of mind and heart, as in dealing with those of matter. In all our attainments of excellence in material things we have to wait for the slow processes of nature. Our manufacturers, dashed off as they are eventually with fire and steam, the whirl of busy wheels, and the clatter of human as well as other

agency, have had to wait for the growth of a simple plant far away in distant lands, or the birth of a helpless lamb upon the hills, or the minute and delicate preparation of an almost invisible thread by a small and silent worm.

The manner, also, in which all that man works in and with so rapidly, has been provided for his use, is not only slow, as all operations of nature reaching up to perfection are; but it has been secret, silent, subject to influences scarcely perceptible, though operating again and again so as to produce consistency of effort. The oak with which man builds his bearded structures requires a hundred years of time to mature. It has required also the summers and the winters of all those years, the dew by night, the light by day, the rain from the clouds, and the nourishment from the earth—all these, with thousands of other agencies combining to one end, have been at work to produce the perfect tree. And thus it is throughout the whole realm of nature. Its convulsions are sudden and destructive, but its growth towards maturity and perfection is always slow, and most surely so where the end is one requiring stability, firmness, and strength.

If we can wait patiently for the products of nature in our material operations, surely we may wait and have patience when cultivating good principles in the heart. The mother has infinite patience with the tender body of her newborn child. She does not require of the little way feet that they shall walk steadily at once, nor of the hands that they shall

work. Through days, and months, and years, she watches the progress to maturity of this exquisite and beautiful piece of living machinery which has been committed to her charge. Throughout all animal nature the maternal instinct seems to dictate this patient waiting, with something like a leaning to excess on the side of tenderness; as if Providence had so ordered it in mercy to the weakness of youth, that the mother at least should not require too much, nor any thing too soon.

The mother, in training and cherishing the body of her child, endeavours to concentrate all favorable influences upon the one object of its healthy growth and general welfare. For this purpose she adapts its sustenance to the requirements of every day; its clothing, its sleep, its amusements, and general circumstances are so studied and arranged as to make them conducive to this object. The means are various, but the end is the same. And when the mind begins to dawn upon the mother's quick perceptions, it only renders her interest the more intense. But still she waits, and is content to wait; perhaps knowing better than any other teacher or trainer can know, how little the infant mind is capable of receiving at once. And here also the judicious mother follows out the slow process of nature by bringing in a variety of influences calculated to invigorate as well as to excite the thinking powers of her child, rather than urging them forward in any definite or persisted course.

In the next stage of training and instruction we

see, perhaps even more clearly, the exercise of patience in the choice of means and in the waiting for results. The wise teacher is willing to wait. But while he does so, he brings in a multitude of combining influences tending to the completeness of education so far as it relates to the intellect. Interesting lessons are given in which history and geography are combined, sciences are taught in their relation to other sciences, and the whole range of instruction for the head, when of the highest order and conducted in a liberal and enlightened spirit, is made to consist of knowledge derived from an endless variety of sources, yet all adapted, as by the slow processes of nature, to promote the health, strength, and general capability of the mind, so as to render its impressions lasting, its convictions sure, and its powers efficient for usefulness in future.

Thus in all our intellectual attainments, and in all those operations carried on in youth, which combine to make up the sum of what we understand by general intelligence, we see that time and patience and careful study are required; we see also that the bringing in of mental food from innumerable sources, all contributing to the nourishment and health of the mind, is perhaps the most essential part of education in its application to the intellect. In the range of science, every part, however trifling in itself, which tends to the establishment of some important truth, or to make manifest some law of nature, is laid hold of with eagerness and brought to serve this purpose. Nothing, in fact, is too small, from

the particles of dust thrown up by a volcano, to the structure of a sea-shell, a flower, or a butterfly's wing. The whole realm of nature is explored and examined for this end. With the mere philosopher it is enough that the search is for simple truth; while the philosopher, who is also a Christian, goes beyond and reaches up to higher truths, which he regards as being elucidated and confirmed by those.

If then the highest order of intelligence, that of the Christian philosopher, admits of these aids, searches for them diligently, waits patiently for their manifestation, and accepts them gratefully, wherever they are found—if he can endure the lapse of time for the development of truth, and derive encouragement from every fresh discovery in nature, every new invention in art, and every adaptation of means to ends in the great march of civilization—surely we ought to be equally earnest to pursue, equally patient to wait for, and equally industrious to carry forward to perfection that work which has the social improvement and the general welfare of society for its direct object.

I am the more anxious to point out the relation between the laws of nature, as operating by slow processes upon matter, and those which operate in the formation of character, because, before entering upon the mere practical details of my subject, I have honestly to confess that they will necessarily appear very small in comparison with the results anticipated, and small especially when placed singly beside any of those great exhibitions of the mastery

of mind over matter which we are accustomed to speak of as the glory of our age. In the midst of the great stir and activity of human life, as its affairs are now carried on, it appears almost puerile to enter minutely into the elements of character as it commences and takes its definite course in the experiences of a little child. My apology must be a strong conviction that something must be done, and indeed will be done before long, more effectively than has yet been the case, towards the establishment of good principle as a basis of character.

In looking at the subject very earnestly, and for a great length of time, I have been forcibly struck with the fact, that in order to effect any material change in human conduct in this respect we must begin as soon as possible at the beginning, and hence we must begin with small things, such as can only be treated successfully by the mother herself, such as can be treated successfully by her, because she has the requisites essential to success—skill and tenderness in the working, with desire beyond what any other heart can feel, that her efforts may not be in vain.



IV.

THE MOTHER.

N venturing so far into the mother's department of work, I am not unconscious of being upon delicate ground, nor insensible to the liability which I incur of being charged with presumption, as if those who are practically engaged among their children do not know better than any one else can teach them, what ought to be done, and what can be done. Others who are closely pressed with the business of each recurring day, may ask, not unreasonably, how sufficient leisure is to be found for all this education of the heart?

Let such mothers, and indeed all mothers, hear with me while I assure them that all I am pleading for is this: that effort should be given to the *absence of the least*, to the training of the affections, desires, and motives of the young, equal to that which is given to the training of their intellectual powers. I would also include equal attention to the physical nature of the child, seeing that these three are included in human character—the physical, the moral, and the intellectual, and that no one of the three can be neglected, or allowed to sink out of proportion, without serious injury to the whole.

Hitherto I have said little about the body, because it is the custom, I might almost say the fashion, of the present day to give to the maintenance of health a prominent place in public lectures and studies, to say nothing of those more general measures for the promotion of social progress, which include a high estimate of the value of wholesome air and food, as well as a knowledge of various other means of improving the physical condition of mankind. Much as these means have been neglected and undervalued, especially among the poor, a due regard for the laws of health is now so often and so strenuously enforced by the more enlightened portions of the community, and especially by scientific men, that the subject can demand no notice from me. I only speak of what is neglected, of what is left out of due proportion in our systems of education as generally conducted.

No one can deny, or wish to deny, that the nursery is the mother's department, over which her rule ought to be absolute. But in order to rule there, it is not necessary to be entirely occupied with the details even of such a department. Since the mother cannot be present in all places at once, nor with all her children at once, the question arises, which department of maternal interest can she most safely commit to inferior agency?

Instinct would keep the human mother in the nursery, just as the mother bird would sit brooding over her unfledged young. But the human mother has a range of duty extending far beyond that of

the child, and in considering the whole character of her child, as an immortal as well as human being, she has to bring into exercise on its behalf those higher powers and faculties of her own which are capable of this expansion—which are capable, indeed, of all the heights and of all the depths of which it is possible for us to form any conception.

Among such conflicting and yet urgent claims, the mother has to ask one of the most important questions which can be presented to any human being actually engaged in the practical duties of life. Yes, and she has to answer this question too, "What am I to do, and what am I to leave undone? I cannot do all that I would, not even all that wears the aspect of duty; which is it absolutely necessary that I should do?" In settling this point rightly for herself, the mother is acting out a very essential part of true greatness; and in rightly instructing her children in these matters—how they may, all through life, ask themselves this question, and how they may habitually answer it in the best way, she will be preparing them in a most effectual manner for working out the highest purposes of a useful and noble life.

On points of this kind, it is not enough to be well meaning, or even devoted. The devoted mother, without any clear idea of the relative claims of duty, may become a slave where she ought to be a queen; and slavery shown in the conduct of those who have to do with them, is never good for children. It makes them selfish and tyrannical. The mother's

legitimate place in her family is high, and nothing should degrade it in the eyes of her children. What is lost by servile drudgery, without intellectual and moral dignity, can never be regained with them. Even moral dignity, without any great amount of intellectual attainment, goes far with children, and is of inestimable value in the mother's treatment, and in her influence over them. We often see this where the maternal government is in the hands of a woman of high principle, not otherwise remarkable; and we find it in the after conduct of her family—it may be in the character of a strong brave man who sets his face like a flint against dishonesty and meanness of every kind, because his mother taught him to love truth and justice, and to hate a lie.

But if the mother, in order to fill a place of true dignity in her family, does not require any high scholarly attainment, she does require a nice discrimination, in order that her sense of duty may be rightly regulated. She requires also a clear insight into character, and above all, a supreme value for that which is highest and most noble. Much indeed has to be taken into account by us all in selecting, among the claims which press upon us, that which we absolutely must do ourselves, and that which may with safety be committed to others, or that which we absolutely must do now, and that which may be left to a future day. All this has so often to be seen and acted upon in a moment, that there is the more need for making such calculations

and such conclusions habitual. The mother who has done this before her marriage will find the full benefit of the habit in her own house, where claims, apparently conflicting, press upon her from every side, and that continually.

It is a sad mistake for the mother, in devoting herself too much to the nursery, to forget that she is a wife. The society of a tired nurse is apt to become a little wearisome even to the best of husbands; and that is a dark day for any home when a man first discovers that the companionship of his wife is not interesting to him, and that he must look for refreshment to his mind elsewhere. To the young wife, spoiled by a flattering foolish courtship, it may seem a little hard that, when she is worn and dispirited by toiling all day among her children, she should not himself be the one to be amused and refreshed; and perhaps, happily for her, such may be her reward sometimes. But the social life of a large portion of the community does not appear to be conducted upon this plan; and certainly it is wisest and best for the mother to do her part faithfully by keeping herself ever in readiness to minister to the refreshment, and even to the amusement of those around her. Children as well as men require both; and many have been kept at home, and even influenced for good unconsciously to themselves, by that which a woman can diffuse around her own fireside, by her cheerful and easy conversation, and by the zest which she can thus impart to the common and otherwise insignificant affairs of life.

The struggling after high themes, and the dragging in of especial and important topics to be discussed on all occasions, is not at all what I mean: rather, as already said, that easy kind of conversation which, leaning often to the humorous, can yet give to what is talked about touches of tender feeling and deeper interest, as occasion may offer; such, for example, as characteristic incidents described with graphic detail, but always described kindly, or circumstances of local interest which may have occurred during the day. Indeed, whatever there may be in passing life, and life is always rich and full to a quick-feeling and appreciating woman, whatever there may be of droll or serious, of strange or new, may form material for that abundance which flows naturally from the heart of a woman who is happy in her home, in her husband and her children, and who, perhaps unconsciously, is the source and centre of that happiness herself.

All this, however, which I would call only the by-play of social intercourse, will by a wise and quick-feeling woman be readily made secondary, and so give place to any higher or graver style of conversation which others may wish to introduce. It is only the cheerful and pleasant filling up of the spare moments, or the tired moments, of social life which I have here attempted to describe; yet happy is that life whose spare moments are well filled up by a cheerful, sensible, and right-minded woman.

And then when the deeper and more important

topics of conversation are introduced, and the mother takes no mean part in the discussion, but rather evinces an intelligent interest in what is going on, with a knowledge at least sufficient to enable her to ask sensible questions, and make rational remarks; or if, beyond this, she can go deeper, and contribute her share of useful information on the case in point, and her share of earnest thought and wise conclusion, what a triumph for her children, and especially her boys, to listen and find that the mother—the kind loving mother to whom they went with all their little wants and wishes, the mother who sang the pretty nursery songs, and made the merry laugh go round when they gathered around the winter fire—that this mother is equal to the best in society, that she knows as much as the men, and can talk as wisely and as truly to the purpose!

Of the many kinds of pride which we have, by common consent, agreed to call legitimate, I know of none so much so as this—the pride of children in their parents, and especially the pride of a son in his mother. There is something in this feeling so sustaining to all noble purposes and all worthy action, that the wonder is how any woman should allow the feeling to die out through indolence or carelessness, and so lose the strongest hold she will ever have upon her boys as they grow up to manhood. The greatest earthly glory, as it appears to me, is that of parents surrounded by their children, who not only love, but who admire

and honor them. Much of Christian duty also hangs upon this; for how can children honor those parents who do dishonor to themselves, and so reduce to a pretence or a mockery this sacred injunction?

It may be that the mother has been entirely swallowed up in her nursery; or on the other hand, it may be that her time has been so absorbed by the claims of society—*external* society, not the society of home—that her children, as they grow up out of the nursery, scarcely know what their mother is as a companion. In their walks they are attended by nurses, often the most ignorant of human beings. In their play they are gladly got rid of, and occupied from. During the chief portion of the day they are consigned perhaps to a governess, whose heart is naturally in her own home, her interests centred in her own brothers and sisters, who considers herself engaged—in fact, is engaged—for a certain amount of work, and who, if she works hard, and teaches all the lessons stipulated for faithfully, does her part well; and thus the children in many families do not really know their mother, nor does the mother really know them.

There was a time when the coming of the little stranger into the world awakened the liveliest interest in the mother's heart, when to know that every limb was rightly set, and every function healthy, was more to her than any other consideration; just then; when, if a suspicion had flashed across her mind that the spine was ever so little twisted, or the

head strangely shaped, or the feet not likely to stand well, a humor would have seized upon the mother, and doctors would have been sent for, and atherities called in, and every means which human intelligence could suggest would have been brought into use, so as if possible to remedy the defect.

Such, without doubt, would be the right course for the mother to pursue. Only why should a fault in the heart, or a wrong bias of the disposition, not be as thoughtfully examined, as carefully attended to, and as strenuously overcome? Why should such manifestations of health or disease in this department of maternal care be left so much more to the watchfulness and the solicitude of those who can not feel half the interest which a mother feels in the entire character, and in the whole life of her child?

It is an interesting fact, a provision designed no doubt for the preservation of helpless infancy, that all women seem to have by nature more or less of the maternal instinct ready to be called forth by the babyhood of children not their own. Thus the hired nurse does often really feel much of what a mother feels in her association with the nursery. But it is not so later in life, except in rare instances. The maternal instinct being no longer needed for purposes of actual preservation of life, there is nothing left for those who have the charge of children as they grow up, and who are not their own, but duty—a high sense of duty, with such affection as may

grow out of the intercourse between the children and their governess or tutor, or between them and their care-takers, whoever they may be. Affection on such terms is not to be bought with money. It is not even "nominated in the bond;" nor would there be any use in its being so. With the parents alone remains this inalienable property of affection, and if they are unable to use it in working out the ends for which it was given them by God, they can only choose deputies who, working without the natural affection of parents, deserve more praise than generally falls to their share if they work faithfully, not always according to their own views of that which is wisest and best, but according to the restrictions laid upon them, and also according to the requirements of society.

No single individual can educate independently, except a parent. No other can follow out the dictates of their own hearts in this true heart-work. The most enlightened plans, unless approved by society, will either have to give place to the old routine, or will fail utterly for want of public approval; and parents themselves are often the greatest hindrances in the way of improved methods of education. Those who undertake the actual labor of education, either under the parental roof or in the wider range of school instruction, are consequently obliged to work under many disadvantages, not the least important of which is found in the partial and even false estimates sometimes formed by parents with regard to their own children.

I have often wondered whether it ever enters into the heart of men or women to conceive what the labor of training and educating their children really is, without affection, the affection of nature—in short, the parental affection. "Children are so engaging," we hear people say. No doubt they are, and if the educator could select about one in ten, and send the others away, the work in hand might be very interesting. Alas! for the remainder. Alas! indeed, for the one or two or perhaps more in every ten, strange, wayward, unattractive, and uninteresting children sent forth to share the common lot among strangers without one throb of parental or even natural affection to cheer their lot, to screen their faults, to soothe their distresses, or to encourage and help them on their obscure and difficult way. All we can think of in the way of consolation in such cases is that God is very good, and that he has enriched the hearts of his faithful servants with such floods of tenderness and sympathy that they are able to embrace and care for and protect the otherwise neglected stranger from a distant or unknown home.

The high sense of justice, the faithfulness, nay even the personal tenderness with which the unattractive child is sometimes cherished by strangers can never be fully appreciated by the parents, because, happily for them and their child, theirs is the affection of nature which makes all equal in a united family; neither can the obligation which parents are under for such treatment of their children ever

be fully understood, or adequately rewarded by them. The danger is lest there should be cases of failure in this conscientious treatment; and there is always danger in high pressure schools, when the greatest amount of attainment in learning is esteemed the greatest good; there is always danger lest the dull, the inert, or the inferior child should not receive the necessary amount of encouraging and patient attention.

All this the mother has to ponder in her heart; and seeing that she holds a right over her child which none but a parent can hold—the right to educate it exactly in accordance with her own idea of what is best; seeing that she has a love for that child altogether independent of its own personal claims or merits, which none but a parent can have in the same degree; seeing that God has given her that child as her very own bound by a relation which it bears to no other being in the world, has committed it to her care bodily and spiritually, for time and eternity, the result of such pondering in her own heart must surely be, that she has a charge laid upon her in the education of the heart of her child, of greater importance to it and to her than any thing else in this world can be to either.

There may have been but little in the education of the mother herself to prepare her for this work; but instead of looking back to the wasted moments of her own life, and the mistakes of her own education, let her look forward and take courage, determining that, with God's help, she will make her own

daughters more fit to be the mothers of another generation than she felt herself to be when first the great responsibility came upon her. Even to feel this responsibility was something. To suffer from a want ourselves is often a stimulus spurring us on to supply that want to others. And although the work before her may look very voluminous, very complicated, and even impossible to be done so well as she desires to do it, there is no getting rid of the great fact that it is *her* work, appointed by Him who is not a hard task-master, but in her day of toil will give her moments of refreshment, beds of promise in her little garden, flowers of beauty, and fruits to be treasured in his own garner when her careful hand and anxious heart shall be at rest for ever.

A few more words of encouragement to the workers, for I believe that women pervert themselves and hinder their good work, by thinking too much about their own ignorance on some of the great and important topics which engage the attention of men. They are sadly mistaken too, and sometimes fatally so, in regards their influence, by the habit encouraged among young women until they marry, a habit encouraged by men and by society in general, of thinking that they require nothing else than a few accomplishments, with good manners, good dress, and an agreeable face and person. And for a succession of evening parties, perhaps this would be enough.

But human life, regarded as a whole, is some-

thing very different from an evening party, and that every woman discovers when she finds herself a wife and a mother. Yet still I would say, Let her not be discouraged. It is true there will be no time then to go back and begin her own education afresh upon a different basis, no time to take up deeper studies and more solid attainments, no time to acquire even the elementary portions of that knowledge which she will sadly feel the want of as her children grow up; but there is still left her both time and opportunity for taking up many useful things, many right views of human life, and many means of improvement to herself and instruction to her children.

Among these we might include just views of human life in general, of the relation of different members or classes of society to each other, of the mutual dependence and obligation of rich and poor, workers and non-workers, of the employment and economy of time, of individual responsibility, of self-government, and above all, of the relation of the human soul to God, of the observance of his holy laws, and the acceptance of his blessed gospel of salvation by Jesus Christ. To these might be added innumerable other matters: questions of apparently minor consideration, yet all bearing upon human life in its relation to eternity, in which, if the mother can teach her children aright, she will be doing them greater service than by instructing them in all, or any of those branches of learning which are made most prominent in schools.

There is a science of life which women are quite able to understand without being great scholars. This science presents itself under many aspects. One embraces that true and just relation of human beings to one another which we call social duty. Another takes in the law of kindness, with its sacred reciprocity of good-will, without which we can not as social beings live happily, nor even prosper in our worldly affairs. Another comprehends that true estimate of the worth of things visible and invisible which leads us to consider one great and another little, one honorable and another base, one to be desired and another abhorred, and this according to their essential nature and value, through all the gradations which separate these two extremes.

To keep always before the mind of a child this truth, that certain things are great and others little; but beyond and above all other teaching, that certain things are good and others bad, and not so in the estimate of human beings only, but good in the sight of God and approved by him, and bad as by him utterly condemned; good for ever and bad for ever, according to his own immutable law of right and wrong; and so to train a child that it shall love the one and hate the other, is, I think, to teach it the true science of life.

And this the mother can teach to her children as no one else can, having first learned it truly herself. But it requires to be taught seriously, perseveringly, patiently. It requires to be taught at home, and to be commenced with very early, because there is

in the world towards which the child is tending so much that is calculated to throw the whole matter into confusion. There is evil which is called good, and good which is called evil, greatness which is looked down upon, and meanness which is exalted. How is a child, not rightly prepared, to understand this? Nay, there is reason to fear that doubts will ultimately press upon the mind of the child as to whether there are such things as true greatness and real goodness at all, whether these are only names applied to certain conditions of worldly prosperity or success, without any essential value in the things themselves.

It may be said by those who read human life in words and names, and not in essential realities, that doubts of this kind do not enter the mind of youth; that youth is more apt to believe and trust. Let us thank God that it is so, that the educator of the heart of youth has elements of truth and sincerity and honest belief to deal with, and not the querulous uncertainty of worldly calculation, and consequent unbelief. That such is the nature of youth, we have indeed cause to be thankful, for there can be no greater help, no more sustaining hope, than that the Giver of every good and perfect gift has placed in our hands material so capable of receiving right impressions from what is sound, and just, and true. But that youth does lose this natural bloom of its existence, sometimes too soon, and does become worldly and disbelieving in spirit, though it may not be so in profession, I think no one can doubt who

holds much intercourse with society in the present day. And generally there is no heavier calamity, either to youth or age, than that general indifference to high and holy truth, which, not subsequently united where a perfect harvest would be expected, is the seed of infidelity.

We meet with this among the young, chiefly under the form of irreverence, indifference, or disrespect; or worse than this, it may be in symptoms of a mocking spirit, a spirit which is colder than ice, and harder than steel, against all those genial influences which are calculated to make the ways of life paths of perpetual verdure and refreshment, even to the weary feet of the long-experienced traveller.

In the course of these remarks I have said but little on the subject of direct religious teaching, partly because a mother whose own heart is deeply impressed with the supreme importance of a religious life, will, in all things, teach religiously; and partly because our libraries abound with books, written much better than I could write, on this particular subject. Besides which, the more I see of human life, the more I feel convinced that the religious atmosphere of home is that which ultimately proves of the highest value and most enduring influence, in forming the religious character of youth.

This atmosphere, like the air we breathe, I have considered as comprehending different elements, or deriving its wholesome and health-sustaining properties from various sources, and as being subject to deterioration from causes equally varied. Over this

department I have regarded the mother as ruling by her own right; and as she would, without doubt, be considered responsible, as regards watching over and caring for the healthy condition of her household; so, in a higher degree, because the subject itself is higher as involving interests of a more exalted range, so is the mother responsible for the right training of her children, under such religious influences as it is possible for her to bring around them. It is true that she can not, even in her own department, do always as she would, that she cannot do even what duty seems to demand, where circumstances combine against her, or where opposing influences arise such as are stronger than hers, or more attractive to youth. But she can still do much, and if a faithful earnest Christian herself, we know that she will not be left to bear the burden of responsibility unsupported, but that help sufficient for her day will be administered in all her times of need.

Were any other stimulus required for the best efforts of the Christian mother, I think it might be found in this—that never again, throughout the whole of her children's after lives, will the same opportunity be afforded as that which their infancy and youth have opened to her instrumentality. Many a troubled time, and many a happy time, there may be in their future, when her children will come back to her as their warmest sympathizer and their truest friend; but the morning dew will not be upon them as it was in their early youth; the flower will not be fresh and fragrant and spotless as it was then; other

hands will have touched it less gently than here, and other breezes will have blown upon it very different from the breath of home. It is before the child has left the parental roof that such close union of heart and mind, such entire understanding of each other, can alone exist between the mother and her children, and especially between the mother and her boys; and when the soul of the mother is deeply stirred with a sense of the importance of educating for eternity as well as time, she will feel that her work must be begun early, in the morning of youth, and begun upon principles that will hold good to the latest hour of a well-spent life.



FROM

THE YOUNG WOMAN'S FRIEND,

BY

REV. JOHN ANGELL JAMES.




THE
INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY

OR

THE CONDITION OF WOMAN.

• THERE IS NEITHER JEW NOR GREEK; THERE IS NEITHER
SLAVE NOR FREE; THERE IS NEITHER MALE NOR
FEMALE: FOR YE ARE ALL ONE IN CHRIST JESUS.
GALATIANS 3: 28.

OMAN was the finishing grace of the crea-
tion. Woman was the completeness of
man's bliss in Paradise. Woman was
the cause of sin and death to our world.

Woman was the means of our redemption. Woman
is the mother of the human race; our companion,
counsellor, and comforter in the pilgrimage of life,
or our tempter, our scourge, and our destroyer.
Our sweetest cup of earthly happiness, or our bit-
terest draught of sorrow, is mixed and administered
by her hand. She not only renders smooth or
rough our path to the grave, but helps or hinders
our progress to immortality. In heaven we shall
bless God for her aid in assisting us to reach that

blissful state, or amid the torments of numberless woe in another region we shall deplore the fatality of her influence.

It would seem, from the words of the original denouncement upon Eve for her transgression in eating the forbidden fruit, as if, while yet the first pair were innocent, there was a more entire equality of condition and rights than after the fall. "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." This sounds like something penal, though perhaps some would regard it as merely predictive, and intended to describe the cruel and brutalizing tendency of sin, in turning man, who ought to be the loving companion of his wife, into a tyrant. How fearfully, *y* predictive, this sentence has been fulfilled, the degradation of woman—her wrongs, her sorrows, and her vices, in many cases, most painfully attest.

History, which will ever be found to accredit revelation, proves the fact that in most pagan and Mohammedan nations, whether ancient or modern, woman has been cruelly and wickedly sunk below her proper level in social and domestic life. "Hated and despised from her birth, and her birth itself esteemed a calamity, in some countries not even allowed the rank of a moral and responsible agent; so tenderly alive to her own degradation that she acquiesces in the murder of her female offspring; insured from infancy; without education; married without her consent: in a multitude of instances sold by her parents; refused the confidence of her

husband, and banished from his table; on his death doomed to the funeral pile, or to contempt that renders life a burden. In such a condition she has been the household drudge or the mere object of passion. She has ministered to the gratification of man's indolence or appetites, but has not been his companion, or his counsellor, or his comforter. In barbarous countries she has been a public slave; in civilized ones, very generally a kind of private mistress. Her mind has been left untaught, as if incapable or unworthy of instruction. She has been not only imprisoned by jealousy in seclusion, but degraded and rendered vicious and miserable by polygamy—sometimes worshipped as a goddess, then fiddled as a toy, then perished as a victim. She could never attain to dignity; and even with all her brightest charms, could rarely appear but with the beauty of a doll.

Exceptions to this, of some extent, may be made *in favor of the polished Greeks and proud Romans*; but only to some extent; for, did time permit and necessity require, it could be shown that even Athenian refinement and Roman virtue rarely gave to woman her just rank by the side of her husband, or her proper place in his affection, esteem, and confidence. The laws of Rome, it is true, gave to woman greater liberty and consideration than she had before received; still she was so treated even there as to sink into degradation disgraceful to her parity and destructive of her happiness. "No happy influence did she exert on the public or pri-

vile welfare of the state. Politicians intrigued with her; ambition combined with passion to corrupt her; and her liberty degenerated into licentiousness. Through her influence, the streets of the capital were sometimes deluged with its best blood; and to such an extent was her profligacy carried, that among the decrees which passed the senate during the reign of Tiberius against the licentiousness of female rompers, it was ordained, 'that no woman whose grandfather, father, or husband was a Roman knight, should be allowed to make her person vocal.' The laws of a nation are an instructive and faithful history of its manners. If such was the condition of a Roman burghess, what must have been that of the schoolmate classes? Scilicet pessimum see Mohammedanism ever yet understood the female character, or conceded woman's just claims. In many nations the degradation has been excessive. You remember, probably, the reply of a pagan mother, who, having been expostulated with for the murder of her female child, answered that she had performed an act of mercy in sparing the babe the miseries of a woman's life. All travellers and all missionaries attest the fact of woman's humiliation beyond the boundaries of Christendom.*

If we go to the Bible, we shall learn that it is

* The reader is referred to detailed statements of the condition of women in pagan and Mohammedan countries, in a very able and interesting work by my friend Dr. Cox, of Haverly, entitled, *Female Societies: Biography, with an Essay on what Christianity has done for Women.*

to Christianity, as distinct even from Judaism, that woman owes her true elevation. Polygamy is, and ever must be, fatal to female dignity and happiness. This, or at least concubinage, was practised, no doubt from mistaken views, by the patriarchs: not that it was ever positively sanctioned by God, for from the beginning he made one woman for one man, and by the providential and extraordinary general equality of the sexes as to numbers, he still proclaims, in unmistakable language, the law of monogamy. If we examine the Levitical code, we shall find that even this, though a Divine dispensation, contained some regulations which evinced that the time of woman's full emancipation from a state of inferiority had not yet arrived; and that it was reserved for that glorious and gracious economy under which we are placed to raise the female sex into their just position and influence in society. Christianity, as in other things, so in this, is an enlargement of privilege; and among other blessings which it confers, is its elevation of woman to her proper place and influence in the family and in society.

I now go on to consider *what there is in Christianity that tends to elevate and improve the condition of women.*

To the oppressive and cruel customs of Mohammedism and paganism in their treatment of the female sex, Christianity presents a beautiful and lovely contrast; while to the partial restoration of women's rights in Judaism, it adds a complete

admission of their claims. It is the glory of our holy religion, and shows it to be an emanation from the Father's beneficence, and the friend of humanity at large, that it is the enemy of oppression in every form and every condition, and gives to every one his due. It tramples on no rights; it resents and resists all wrong: but not one of all the children of men is more indebted to its merciful and equitable reign than woman. From Christianity woman has derived her moral and social influence: yea, almost her very existence as a social being. The mind of woman, which many of the philosophers, legislators, and sages of antiquity had deemed inferiority and insolvency, Christianity has developed. The gospel of Christ, in the person of his Divine founder, has descended into this neglected mine, which even who men had regarded as not worth the working, and brought up a peerless gem, flashing with the light of intelligence, and glowing with the lovely hues of Christian graces. Christianity has been the restorer of woman's plundered rights, and has furnished the brightest jewels in her present crown of honor. Her previous degradation accounts, in part at least, for the instability of early civilization. It is impossible for society to be permanently elevated where woman is debased and servile. Wherever females are regarded as inferior beings, society contains within itself, not indeed the elements of dissolution, yet the obstructions of all solid improvement. It is impossible that institutions and usages which trample upon all the very

instincts of our nature, and violate the revealed law of God, should be crowned with ultimate success. Society may change in its external aspect, may exhibit the glitter of wealth, the refinements of taste, the embellishments of art, or the more valuable attainments of science and literature; but if the mind of woman remains undeveloped, her taste unmotivated, and her person enslaved, the social foundations are insecure, and the cement of society is feeble. Wherever Christianity is understood and felt, woman is free. The gospel, like a kind angel, opens her prison doors, and bids her walk abroad and enjoy the sunlight of reason, and breathe the invigorating air of intellectual freedom. And in proportion as a pure Christianity prevails, this will be ever found to be the case.

But all this is general assertion. We now descend to the proof:

1. *Christianity elevates the condition of woman by its very genius as a system of unsected equity and beneficence.* When it descended from heaven to earth, it was heralded into our world by the angels' song, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." The offspring of Infinite Love, it partakes entirely of the spirit, and reflects the character of its Divine Parent. It is essentially and unalterably the enemy of all injustice, cruelty and oppression; and the friend of all that is just, kind, and courteous. The rough, the brutal, and the ferocious are alien from its spirit; while the tender, the gentle, and the courteous are

entirely homogeneous with its nature. Tyranny, whether in the palace or the parlor, it frowns upon with indignant countenance, while it is the friend of liberty, and the patron of all rights. The man who understands its genius, and lives under its inspiration, whether he be a monarch, a master, a husband, or a father, must be a man of equity and love. Christianity inspires the purest chivalry—a chivalry shorn of vanity, purified from passion, elevated above frivolity—a chivalry of which the animating principle is love to God; and the scene of its operation the domestic circle, rather than the tournament. He who is unjust or unkind to any one, especially to the weaker sex, betrays a total ignorance of, or a unfeeling repugnance to, the practical influence of the gospel of Christ. It is a mistake to suppose that the faith of Jesus is intended only to throw its dim religious light over the gloom of the cloister, or to form the character of the devotee; on the contrary, it is preeminently a social thing, and is designed as well as adapted to form a character which shall go out into the world in a spirit of universal benevolence; and to such a character the oppressor or degrader of woman can make no pretensions.

2. *The incarnation of Christ* tended to exalt the dignity of the female sex. His assuming humanity has given a dignity to our nature which it had never received before, and could not have received in any other way. Christ is "the Pattern Man" of our race, in whom all the lines of humanity con-

verge and unite, so far as the existence of our race goes. "When he took man's nature, he vouchsafed to ally himself to all the members of this extended series, by the actual adoption of that transmitted being which related him to the rest. He not only became like men and dwelt among them, but he became man himself—an actual descendant from their first progenitor." *He took man's nature.* This is why the existence of human nature is a thing so precious. By the very manner of his birth he seemed to associate himself with our nature. The apostle, in his quotation of the eighth psalm in the Epistle to the Hebrews, shows the dignity conferred upon humanity by its being assumed by so glorious a person as our Lord Jesus Christ in his divine nature. If then manhood is honored by Christ's assuming it, how much more is woman exalted, who, in addition to this, gave birth to the humanity of Christ!

It is emphatically said by the apostle, "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his SON, MADE OF A WOMAN, made under the law," Gal 4:4. In the person of the Virgin Mary, and by her giving birth to that holy Being that was born of her, the sex was elevated. True, it was a personal distinction, that she should be the mother of our Lord's humanity; and though she has been by the apostate church of Rome sickly exalted into an object of idolatrous homage, all generations justly call her blessed. Yet the honor is not limited to herself, but passes over to the sex which she

represented; and it is this to which the apostle alludes. He does not even mention the honored individual, says nothing of the Virgin Mary, but dwells upon the abstract, general term, "male of a woman." Every female on earth, from that day to this, has had a relative elevation by and in that wonderful transaction. Woman is not the mother of God, as papists absurdly and as I think almost blasphemously say; but the mother of that humanity only which was mysteriously united with Divinity. Does not this great fact say, "Let the sex which alone was concerned in giving birth to the Son of God and the Saviour of the world be ever held in high estimation."

3. The yewest conduct of our Lord during his sojourn upon earth tended to exalt the female sex to a consideration before unknown. Follow Him through the whole of his earthly career, and mark the attention he most condescendingly paid to, and as condescendingly received from the female sex. He admitted them to his yewness, conversed familiarly with them, and accepted the tokens of their gratitude, affection, and devotedness. See him accompanying his mother to the marriage-feast at Cana in Galilee. See him conversing with the woman of Samaria, "instructing her ignorance, enduring her petulance, correcting her mistakes, awakening her conscience, converting her soul, and afterwards employing her as a messenger of mercy and salvation to her neighbors. See him rebuking his disciples for discouraging the

approach of mothers and their infants. See him compassionating the widow of Nain, and restoring her son to life. See him in the little family of Bethany, blending his tears with those of the bereaved sisters; and on another occasion entering into familiar conversation with this same Martha and Mary, faithfully rebuking one, and kindly commending the other. See him receiving the offerings of those women who ministered to him of their substance. Witness the attendance of pious women upon him in the last scenes of his life. It was to Mary Magdalene that the honor of the first manifestation of the risen Saviour was made; and thus a woman was preferred to apostles, and made the messenger of the blissful news to *them*. "The frequent mention," says Doddridge, "which is made by the evangelists of the generous courage and zeal of some pious women in the service of Christ, and especially of the faithful and resolute constancy with which they attended him in those last scenes of his suffering, might be very possibly intended to obviate that haughty and senseless contempt which the pride of men, often irritated by those vexations to which their own irregular passions have exposed them, has in all ages affected to throw on that sex which probably, in the sight of God, constitute by far the better half of mankind, and to whose care and tenderness the wisest and best of men generally owe and ascribe much of the daily comfort and enjoyment of their lives."

Compare this behavior toward that sex—the

chaste, holy, dignified conduct of our Lord—with the polygamy, licentiousness, and impurities of Mahammed; not merely as evidence of their claims, but as regards their influence upon the condition of woman. While the one does every thing by example and by precept to corrupt, to degrade, and to curse, the other does every thing to purify, to elevate, and to bless. The conduct of the Arabian enthusiast and impostor, and not less the boast of his followers and admirers, are too revolting for description—almost for allusion. But, on the contrary, what one syllable of the Saviour's utterance, or what one *crime* of his life, was there which tainted the immaculate purity of his language, or left the slightest stain upon the more than snow-like sanctity of his character? What part of his conduct might not be avowed and described before a company of the most modest, and most delicate and even most prudish-minded females in existence? His treatment of woman raised her from her degradation without exalting her above her level. He rescued her from oppression without exciting her vanity, and invested her with dignity without giving her occasion for pride. He allowed her not only to come into his presence, but to minister to his comfort, and inspired her with awe while he consoled her grateful and reverent affection, and thus taught man how to behave to woman, and what return woman was to make to man. The conduct of Jesus Christ toward the female sex, was one of the most attractive excellences of his beautiful charac-

ter, though perhaps one of the least noticed; and to him they must ever point, as not only the Saviour of their souls, but as the Advocate of their rights and the Guardian of their peace.

4. *The virtual abolition of polygamy by Christianity is a vast improvement in the condition of woman.* Wherever this prevails, and as long as it prevails, the female sex must ever be in a state of degradation and misery. "Experience has abundantly and painfully proved that polygamy debases and brutalizes both the body and the soul, and renders society incapable of those generous and refined affections which, if duly cultivated, would be found to be the inheritance even of our fallen nature. Where is an instance in which polygamy has not been the source of many and bitter calamities in the domestic circle and the state? Where has it reared a virtuous and heaven-taught progeny? Where has it been distinguished for any of the moral virtues; or rather, where has it not been distinguished for the most fearful degeneracy of manners?" By this practice, which has prevailed so extensively through nearly all countries and all ages where Christianity was not known, marriage loses all its tenderness, its sanctity, and its reciprocal confidence; the cup of essential felicity is exchanged for that of mere animal pleasure; woman panders to the appetite of man, instead of ministering to his comfort; and the home assumes much of the character of a brothel. There may be several mistresses, but there can be only one wife; and

though there may be mothers, they are without a mother's affection; presenting a scene of endless envy and jealousy, before which domestic comfort must ever retire, to make way for more sensual gratification. No stimulus to improvement—in fidelity—can be felt, where the individual may be supplanted the next month by a new favorite; and thus there is no room and little occasion for the display of those virtues which constitute female honor. Here, then, is the glorious evidence of Christianity; inasmuch as it revives and reestablishes the original institute of marriage—restores to woman her fortune, her person, her rank, and her happiness, and has thus raised the condition of the female sex to the elevation to which they were destined by their wise and beneficent Creator. True it is that Christianity has not by direct, explicit, and positive precept effected this great change, so beneficial not only to woman but to society: yet it has done so by an implication so clear as not to be mistaken. All its provisions, its precepts, and its promises go on the supposition of each man who is a husband being the husband of one wife.

And we would here take occasion to remark with emphasis upon the adaptation of Christianity to promote the well-being of the community at large, by advocating and protecting the rights of all; by opposing all those evil practices which insinuate mischief and misery into the great human family; and by upholding those institutions which in their turn uphold the interests of nations. The

springs of national prosperity rise from beneath the family hearth; the domestic constitution is the mould where national character is cast; and that mould must of necessity take its form from the unity, the sanctity, and inviolability of marriage.

5. *The jealousy with which Christianity guards the sanctity of the marriage tie* must ever be regarded as having a favorable influence upon the condition of woman. Let this be relaxed or impaired, and that moment woman sinks in dignity, in purity, and in happiness. There have been nations in which the facility of divorce took the place of polygamy, and of course was accompanied with some of its vices, and many of its miseries too. This was eminently the case with ancient Rome. It is true this applied rather to Rome in the time of the empire than during the continuance of the republic. Examples of this will be found in its history, and allusions to it in the pages of its poets. Let the nuptial tie be weakened, and the wife lives in perpetual fear. Her union is placed in jeopardy by a law of which her husband may take advantage. At the instigation of passion or caprice he may dissolve the bond, and without either penalty, remorse, or shame, dismiss her from her home; and so there is an end to her peace, and perhaps to her purity. For it is to be recollected that it is she who has most to dread from the license of divorce. She is likely to be the victim of such a liberty. With what devout and reverential gratitude should she turn then to that Divine Teacher, who has inter-

posed with his own personal authority to strengthen the marriage bond, and to guard it from being severed at the demand of illicit passion or the dictates of humor or caprice. How should she rejoice to hear him say, "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery; and whose marrieth her which is put away, doth commit adultery." Matt. 19:9. The indulgence granted to the Jews, of greater latitude and liberty in this matter, was thus suspended; a greater security provided for woman's honor and fidelity; and a broader basis laid for domestic harmony and happiness. If it were only for this, Christianity deserves the gratitude of mankind. It is only half its glory that it has abolished the custom of having many wives; another of its achievements is that it has protected the rights, the dignity, and the comfort of the one wife. It has shut out intruders from her home, and guaranteed the safe and permanent possession of it to herself.

6. I may surely mention the equal participation of religious blessings to which women are admitted by the Christian religion. How explicitly and how firmly has the apostle claimed for woman all the blessings obtained by Christ for the human race, where he says, "There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither bond nor free; there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Gal. 3:28. There is woman's charter of all the blessings of salvation; there is woman's proof of equal con-

sideration in the sight of God; there is woman's claim to equal rank in the institutes of man. Every blessing necessary to eternal life do they receive in the same measure and in the same manner as the other sex. There is a tradition among the Mohammedans, which is prevalent among them to this day, that women are not permitted to enter paradise. What a degradation is there in such an idea: this is Mohammedism, and it harmonizes with its own genius, which regards woman more as the slave of man's passions than as the companion of his life. Christianity places the wife by the side of the husband, the daughter by the side of the father, the sister by the side of the brother, and the maid by the side of the mistress, at the altar of the family, in the meeting of the church, at the table of the Lord, and in the congregation of the sanctuary. Male and female meet together at the cross, and will meet in the realms of glory. Can any thing more effectually tend to raise and sustain the condition of woman than this? God in all his conduct, Christ in his glorious undertaking, and the Holy Spirit in his gracious work, give her her proper place in the world, by giving her a proper place in the church. It is for her to say with peculiar emphasis, "God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places." Eph. 2: 4-6.

Well have women understood their privileges; let us look into our congregations and churches, and

see how largely they are composed of females. How many more of their sex than of the other avail themselves of the offer of gospel mercy, and come under the influence of religion. It is in the female bosom, however we may account for the fact, that piety finds a home on earth. The door of woman's heart is often thrown wide open to receive this divine guest, when man refuses it an entrance. And it is by thus yielding to the power of godliness, and reflecting upon others the beauties of holiness, that she maintains her standing and her influence in society. Under the sanctifying power of religion she ascends to the glory not only of an intelligent, but of a spiritual existence—not only gladdens by her presence the solitary hours of man's existence, and beguiles by her converse and sympathy the rough and tedious paths of life, but in some instances converts him by making him feel how excellent goodness is.

7. Let Christianity crown all by *inviting and employing the energies and influence of women in promoting the spread of religion in the world*; and thus carrying out, through them also, the great purposes of God in the redemption of the world by the mission of his Son. To them, in common with others, the apostle says, "That ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." 1 John 1:5. The honor so liberally bestowed upon the pious women of antiquity, of ministering to the personal wants of the Saviour, and of being so constantly about his

person, was the least of the distinctions designed for them by our holy religion. They bore an exalted part in the first setting up of Christ's kingdom in the world. How instructive and impressive is it to hear an apostle say, "Help those women which labored with me in the gospel." Phil. 4:3. What a register of names and offices of illustrious females do we find in Romans 16. Priscilla, Paul's helper; "Mary, who bestowed much labor on us;" "Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labor in the Lord." "Phoebe, the servant of the church at Cenchrea," who was sent to the church at Rome, and intrusted with so momentous a commission as to bear to that community of Christians the epistle to the Romans, which, if we may lawfully compare one portion of Scripture with another, is the most precious portion of divine revelation. In addition to all this, there can be but little doubt that in the primitive church, not only were women occasionally endowed by the Spirit with the miraculous gift of prophesying, but were also employed in the office of deaconess. The primitive age of Christianity was in advance of ours in the respect thus paid to the female sex, by officially employing them in the services of the church, and in the wisdom which made use of such available and valuable resources. It has been said that the usages of society have somewhat changed since that time, so as to render the services of women less necessary now than they were then. The friendly and social intercourse of the sexes was more restricted, and females were kept in greater seclu-

slow. Some truth, no doubt, there is in these assertions; but perhaps not so much as is by some imagined. Both general and sacred history present them to us mingling in the society and sharing the occupations of the other sex.

We now remark that not only does Christianity thus tend, by its own nature and provisions, to exalt the female character, but it has accomplished this wherever it has prevailed. If we consult the pages of history, whether ancient or modern, whether eastern or western, we shall find that wherever the religion of our Lord Jesus Christ has been successful, there has it achieved the emancipation of woman from her thralldom, and rescued her from degradation. I refer to modern Europe in proof of this, and to America. And may I not affirm that this emancipation and elevation are in proportion to the purity of that Christianity which has thus been diffused? Is it not a triumph and a trophy of Christianity to be able to point to the most polished nations of the globe as being, at any rate, *professingly* Christian; and at the same time to say, "Look at the improved condition of the female sex?" What a contrast in this respect is presented in those countries to all Pagan and Mohammedan nations.

If we refer to the records of modern missions, we shall find abundant proof of what the gospel does for the elevation of the female character. It has abolished the suttee in India, and the widow is no longer immolated on the same pile which consumes her departed husband. It has stopped the

micial prostration before the idol's ear—the drudgery of the wives of all savage tribes—the polygamy, the infanticide, and the concubinage of all countries whither it has gone. It has brought woman from under the disastrous influence of the pale crescent of the impostor of Mecca, and placed her in all the irradiating and enlivening splendor of the Son of Righteousness. It has rescued her from what I must consider the baleful power of the crucifix, and thrown over her the elevating attractions of the cross.

But there is another and more familiar way, and one nearer home, in which we may see how Christianity, even in this Christian and Protestant nation, has benefited and raised the condition of thousands of once wretched and degraded women; made such, not by their own misconduct, but by the vices and cruelties of their husbands. How many wives have been reduced to a kind of domestic slavery by the drunkenness, the infidelity, and tyranny of those who had pledged themselves to love and cherish them. Christianity, in its power, has, in many instances, laid hold of the hearts of these men, and changed them from vice to holiness; and now, the husband is as much changed as the wife, and among other evidences of the reality of the change, and the manifestations of its excellence, is his altered conduct at home; where woman becomes his wife, instead of being his drudge, his slave, and his victim. Christianity has thus carried out its genius and its precepts into the actual elevation of the female char-

actor wherever it has gone. The chivalry of the dark and middle ages, whimsical as the institution seemed, which combined religion, valor, and gallantry, no doubt did something to accomplish this end. I do not dispute the truth of the remarks made by a French writer, quoted in a popular work entitled, "Woman's Mission," where he says, that women, shut up in their castellated towers, civilized the warriors who despised their weakness, and rendered less barbarous the passions and the prejudices which they themselves shared. It was they who directed the savage passions and brute force to an unselfish aim—the defence of the weak, and added to courage the only virtue then recognized—humanity. But even chivalry derived its existence, in some measure, from religion. And, after all, how inferior in its nature, and in its influence, was this system of romance, to the dignified principles and holy influence of Christianity! It did very well to figure at the feast and the tournament, in the hall of the baron, and in the circle of the fair; but its influence in the domestic scene was still slight as compared with that of the institutions of the New Testament. It was rather the romance of female rights and privileges, than a concession of them made by intelligence, a sense of justice, and an obedience to the Divine authority; and it may be questioned whether many an illustrious knight did not, when the hour of imagination had passed away, and the ardor of passion had cooled, in the absence of Christian principles, crush and break the heart

which he had been so anxious to win. It is the glory of Christianity that it supplies principles which are rooted in the soul, and sway the conscience, instead of appeals to the imagination, the senses, and the passions; and that instead of leading its possessor to expend his admiration of woman amid the exciting scenes of public amusement, it teaches and influences him first of all to contemplate her where her charms are less meretriciously adorned—in the retirement of social intercourse, and there to enjoy them, within the hallowed circle of domestic life. It allows of no senseless adoration, like that which chivalry promoted, and which, from its very excess is likely to be followed with recoil or collapse. What Christianity does for woman is, to fit her, neither to be the goddess nor the slave, but the friend and companion of man, and to teach man to consider her in this honorable and amiable aspect.

It is now time to consider the practical inferences to be deduced from this subject. And,

1. Do we not see in it a beautiful exhibition of the transcendent excellence of our holy religion? In every view we can take of Christianity, whether we contemplate it in its relations to another world or to this, to God or to society, in its sublime doctrines or its pure morality, we see a form of boundless beauty, sufficient to captivate every heart but that which is petrified by false philosophy, avowed infidelity, or gross immorality. But never does it appear more lovely than in its relation to woman. What *equality* in holding the balance so impartially

between the vessel! What blindness in throwing the shield over the weaker vessel! What wisdom in sustaining the rank and claims of those whose influence is so important to society, and yet so fulfilling those claims that they shall not be carried to such a length as to defeat their own end! What wise discrimination in fixing her place where her power can be most advantageously employed for the cultivation of her own virtues, and the benefit of society! "Behold Christianity, then, walking forth in her purity and greatness to bless the earth, diffusing her light in every direction, distributing her charities on either hand, quenching the flames of lust and the fires of ambition, silencing discord, spreading peace, and creating all things new. Angels watch her progress, celebrate her influence, and anticipate her final triumph. The world's creation brightens beneath her smiles, and owns her renovating power. At her approach man looses his servitude and woman her chains; each becomes blessed in the other, and God is glorified in both."*

* 2. May we not affirm that the treatment of woman by Christianity is one of the proofs of its divine origin? In this view of it, we include Judaism, with which it must ever be associated as containing a full development of the great truths contained in the symbols of that ceremonial dispensation; though, as we have already shown, even this is behind the higher excellence of the Christian economy. We have already seen how both Mohammedanism and Paganism

degrade the female character and sex. It would seem that man, left to himself, would never have set up a religion which dealt equitably and kindly with women. And what has infidelity, without religion, done for them? What could it do for them? Degrade them by demoralizing them. The patrons of impurity and licentiousness—infidels at heart—have put on the cloak of the philosopher, and maxims the most licentious have found their way into works of pretended morality, and have been inculcated with the airs of a moral sage. Atheism, the most undisciplined, has made its appearance, and alas, alas! that I should boast of a well-known priestess to conduct its homage at the shrine and upon the altar of chance! Before skepticism had reached this depth of error, and arrived at those gloomy regions of a godless void—while yet it lingered on the shores of doubt, it manifested its demoralizing tendency. Hume taught that adultery, when known, was a slight offence; and when unknown, no offence at all. Bolingbroke openly and violently attacked every important truth, and every serious duty. Particularly he licensed lewdness, and cut up chastity and decency by the roots. Lord Herbert, of Cherbury, the most serious of the early English deists, declared that the indulgence of lust is no more to be blamed than the thirst of a fever or the drowsiness of lethargy. Nor have modern infidels been behind their predecessors. Godwin and Owen have attacked the marriage tie. And let the annals of the first French revolution, that terrible eruption from the

volcano of atheism, tell by the biography of Mirabou, its type both as regards politics and morals, what infidelity would do to corrupt and degrade the female sex. Woman's virtue, dignity, honor, and happiness, are *unsheltered* safe but under the protection of the word of God. The Bible is the *egis* of the female sex. Beneath this protection she is secure in her rights, her dignity, and her peace. Christianity is her vine and fig-tree, under which, in *solis radios*, she may enjoy the shade of the oak and relish the fruit of the ether, none daring to make her afraid. It protects her purity from taint, and her peace from disturbance. Let women know her friend, and her enemy too. An infidel of either sex is the foe of our species, either individually or collectively viewed; but a female infidel is the most dangerous and destructive of the furor; from whom, in the prosecution of her suicidal career, the virtues of her sex recoil with horror, and whom the vicious regard as the abettor of their crimes. Woman regard thy Saviour for the next world as thine emancipator for this; love the Bible as the charter of thy liberty and guardian of thy bliss; and consider the church of Christ as thine asylum from the wrongs of oppressors and the arts of seduction.

3. Let women seek to discharge her obligations to Christianity. Grateful she ought to be; for immunities are the favors which have been conferred upon her. It is enough to demand her thankfulness, that in common with man, she is the object of divine love, redeeming mercy, and the subject of immortal hope;

but in addition to this, she is rescued from oppression and exalted to honor in the present world. In regard to this, your obligations to Christianity are immense. You owe infinitely more to it than you will ever be able to cancel. Often as you look round upon your condition in society, and especially as often as you contrast your situation with that of women in Pagan countries, let a glow of gratitude warm your heart and add intensity to the fervor with which you exclaim, "Precious Bible!" Yes, doubly precious to you, as your friend for both worlds. How shall woman discharge her obligations? In two ways. First, in yielding up her heart and life to the influence and service of her Benefactor—in the way of faith, holiness, and divine love. Female piety is the best, the only sincere expression of female gratitude to God. An irreligious woman is also an ungrateful one. She that loves not Christ, whomsoever else she may love, and however chaste and pure that love may be, is living immeasurably below her obligations, and has a stain of guilt upon her heart and her conscience which no other virtue can efface or conceal.

Her obligations should also be discharged by seeking to extend to others that benign system which has exerted so beneficial an influence upon herself. Of all the supporters of our missionary schemes, whether they are formed to evangelize the heathen abroad, or reform the sinful at home, women should be, as indeed they generally are, the most zealous, the most liberal, and the most prayerful

supporters. Wherever she turns her eye over the distant regions of our earth, at least wherever Paganism or Mohammedism throws its baneful shadow—and alas! how large a portion of the earth that is—there she beholds her sex degraded and oppressed. From China's vast domain—from India's sunny plains—from Persia's flowery gardens—from the snows of Arctic regions—from the sterile deserts of Arabia—and from the burning line of Africa—woman lifts up her voice from the midst of her wrongs, her woes, and her miseries, piteously imploring, "COME OVER AND HELP US." The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now, but her groans are deeper, her cries louder than those of any other. Floated upon the wings of every breeze, and borne on the bosom of every wave that touches our shores, from those regions of sin and sorrow comes the petition to Christian females in this country for the blessings of Christianity. Cold, thankless, and unfeeling must be that heart which is unaffected by such an appeal, and makes no effort to respond to it—which prompts to no interest in our missionary schemes, and leads to no liberality in their support. The Millennium will be especially woman's jubilee; and as no groan is deeper than hers during the reign of sin and sorrow, so no joy will be louder than hers under the reign of Christ. It belongs therefore to her to be most fervent in the cry of the church, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

