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FOR YOUNG LADIES ***

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THE
LADIES' VASE;
OR
POLITE MANUAL

**FOR
YOUNG LADIES.**

Original and Selected.

BY AN

AMERICAN LADY.

EIGHTH EDITION.

HARTFORD:
H.S. PARSONS AND CO.
1849.

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PREFACE.

So many volumes have already appeared before the public, similar in character to this little work, that it is with feelings of diffidence we bring our humble offering, especially when we consider the rich merit possessed by many of its predecessors. But our apology must be found in the fact that these publications are, from their size, and consequent expense, inaccessible to many of the class whose improvement they are so well adapted to promote. Considering the formation of female character and manners a matter of inestimable importance, especially at the present age, swayed as it is by moral rather than by physical force, we have carefully availed ourselves of the best advice of some of our most judicious writers on female education; and, by presenting our work in a cheaper form than any of this class which is now before the public, hope to render it attainable to all those for whom it is especially designed.

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April 16, 1847.

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LADIES' VASE.

POLITENESS.

Politeness, like every thing else in one's character and conduct, should be based on Christian principle. "Honor all men," says the apostle. This is the spring of good manners; it strikes at the very root of selfishness: it is the principle by which we render to all ranks and ages their due. A respect for your fellow-beings—a reverence for them as God's creatures and our brethren—will inspire that delicate regard for their rights and feelings, of which good manners is the sign.

If you have truth—not the truth of policy, but religious truth—your manners will be sincere. They will have earnestness, simplicity, and frankness—the best qualities of manners. They will be free from assumption, pretense, affectation, flattery, and obsequiousness, which are all incompatible with sincerity. If you have sincerity, you will choose to appear no other, nor better, than you are—to dwell in a true light.

We have often insisted, that the Bible contains the only rules necessary in the study of politeness. Or, in other words, that those who are the real disciples of Christ, cannot fail to be truly polite. Thus, let the young woman who would possess genuine politeness, take her lessons, not in the school of a hollow, heartless world, but in the school of Jesus Christ. I know this counsel may be despised by the gay and fashionable; but it will be much easier to despise it, than to prove it to be incorrect.

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"Always think of the good of the whole, rather than of your own individual convenience," says Mrs. Farrar, in her *Young Ladies' Friend*. A most excellent rule; and one to which we solicit your earnest attention. She who is thoroughly imbued with the Gospel spirit, will not fail to do so. It was what our Savior did continually; and I have no doubt that his was the purest specimen of good manners, or genuine politeness, the world has ever witnessed; the politeness of Abraham himself not excepted.



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TRUE AND FALSE POLITENESS.

Every thing really valuable is sure to be counterfeited. This applies not only to money, medicine, religion, and virtue, but even to politeness. We see in society the truly polite and the falsely polite; and, although all cannot explain, all can feel the difference. While we respect the one, we despise the other. Men hate to be cheated. An attempt to deceive us, is an insult to our understandings and an affront to our morals. The pretender to politeness is a cheat. He tries to palm off the base for the genuine; and, although he may deceive the vulgar, he cannot overreach the cultivated. True politeness springs from right feelings; it is a good heart, manifesting itself in an agreeable life; it is a just regard for the rights and happiness of others in small things; it is the expression of true and generous sentiments in a graceful form of words; it regards neatness and propriety in dress, as something due to society, and avoids tawdriness in apparel, as offensive to good taste; it avoids selfishness in conduct and roughness in manners: hence, a polite person is called a *gentle* man. True politeness is the smoothness of a refined mind and the tact of a kind heart.

Politeness is a word derived from the Greek word *polis*, which means a city—the inhabitants of which are supposed, by constant intercourse with each other, to be more refined in manners than the inhabitants of the country. From *polis*, comes our English word *polish*, which signifies an effect produced by rubbing down roughnesses until the surface is smoothed and brightened: hence, we speak of polished minds and polished manners. Persons in good society rub against each other until their sharp points are worn down, and their intercourse becomes easy. The word *urbanity* comes from the Latin word *urbs*; that, also, means a city, and it signifies politeness, gentleness, polish, for a similar reason. [10]

In mingling with our fellow-men, there is a constant necessity for little offices of mutual good will. An observing and generous-minded person notices what gives him offense, and what pleases him in the conduct of others; and he seeks at once to correct or cultivate similar things in himself. He acts upon the wise, Christian principle of doing to others as he would have them do to him. Hence, in dress and person, he is clean and neat; in speech, he is courteous; in behavior, conciliating; in the pursuit of his own interests, unobtrusive. No truly polite person appears to notice bodily defects or unavoidable imperfections in others; and, above all, he never sneers at religion, either in its doctrines, ordinances, or professors.

False politeness is but a clumsy imitation of all this. It is selfish in its object, and superficial in its character. It is a slave to certain forms of speech, certain methods of action, and certain fashions of dress. It is insincere; praising where it sees no merit, and excusing sin where it beholds no repentance. It is the offspring of selfishness; perverting the golden rule by flattering stupidity and winking at vice, with the hope of being treated in the same way by the community. It is a bed of flowers, growing over a sepulchre, and drawing its life from the loathsome putrefaction within. [11]

Yet, insincere and wrong as are the motives to false politeness, it is, after all, better than vulgarity. It is the cotton batting, that keeps the glass vases of society from dashing against each other "*Familiarity*," says the proverb, "*breeds contempt*;" and this is found true, whenever coarse minds with rude manners come in contact. Careless of the little decencies of society; selfish in selecting the best seat in the room, or the best dish at the table; unwashed in person, and slovenly in dress: what is this but an open proclamation of utter disregard for others? How soon contempt must follow!

Let the young polish their manners, not by attending to mere artificial rules, but by the cultivation of right feelings. Let them mingle with refined society as often as they can; and, by refined society, I do not mean those whom you find in the ball-room—in the theater—in the crowded party, or those—however wealthy, or richly dressed—you feel to be only artificially polite; but I mean those who make you feel at ease in their society, while, at the same time, they elevate your aims and polish your manners. What a good style is to noble sentiments, politeness is to virtue. [12]



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There is something in the very constitution of human nature which inclines us to form a judgment of character from manners. It is always taken for granted, unless there is decisive evidence to the contrary, that the manners are the genuine expression of the feelings. And even where such evidence exists—that is, where we have every reason to believe that the external appearance does injustice to the moral dispositions; or, on the other hand, where the heart is too favorably represented by the manners—there is still a delusion practiced upon the mind, by what passes under the eye, which it is not easy to resist. You may take two individuals of precisely the same degree of intellectual and moral worth, and let the manners of the one be bland and attractive, and those of the other distant or awkward, and you will find that the former will pass through life with far more ease and comfort than the latter; for, though good manners will never effectually conceal a bad heart, and are, in no case, any atonement for it, yet, taken in connection with amiable and virtuous dispositions, they naturally and necessarily gain upon the respect and goodwill of mankind.

You will instantly perceive—if the preceding remarks be correct—that it is not only your interest to cultivate good manners, as you hereby recommend yourself to the favorable regards of others, but also your duty, as it increases, in no small degree, your means of usefulness. It will give you access to many persons, and give you an influence over those whom you could otherwise never approach; much less, whose feelings and purposes you could never hope, in any measure, to control. [14]

"If I should point you to the finest model of female manners which it has ever been my privilege to observe," says a late writer, in a letter to his daughter, "and one which will compare with the most perfect models of this or any other age, I should repeat a venerated name—that of Mrs. Hannah More. It was my privilege, a few years ago, to make a visit to the residence of this distinguished female; a visit which I have ever since regarded as among the happiest incidents of my life. At that time, she numbered more than fourscore years, but the vigor of her intellect was scarcely impaired; and, from what she was, I could easily conceive what she had been when her sun was at its meridian. In her person, she was rather small, but was a specimen of admirable symmetry. In her manners, she united the dignity and refinement of the court, with the most exquisite urbanity and gentleness which the female character, in its loveliest forms, ever exhibited. She impressed me continually with a sense of the high intellectual and moral qualities by which she was distinguished, but still left me as unconstrained as if I had been conversing with a beloved child. There was an air of graceful and unaffected ease; an instinctive regard to the most delicate proprieties of social intercourse; a readiness to communicate, and yet a desire to listen; the dignity of conscious merit, united with the humility of the devoted Christian: in short, there was such an assemblage of intellectual and moral excellences beaming forth in every expression, and look, and attitude, that I could scarcely conceive of a more perfect exhibition of human character. I rejoice that it is the privilege of all to know Mrs. More through her works; and I can form no better wish for you than that you may imbibe her spirit, and walk in her footsteps." [15]



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SELF-POSSESSION.

Self-possession is the first requisite to good manners; and, where it is wanting, there is generally a reason for it, in some wrong feeling or appreciation of things. Vanity, a love of display, an overweening desire to be admired, are great obstacles to self-possession; whereas, a well-disciplined and well-balanced character will generally lead to composure and self-command. In a very elegant assemblage, in a large drawing-room in a Southern city, I saw a young lady walk quietly and easily across the apartment to speak to a friend, who said to her: "I wanted very much to get to you, but I had not the courage to cross the room. How could you do it?—all alone, too, and with so many persons looking at you!" "I did not think of any body's looking at me," was the reply; and in that lay the secret of her self-possession. Very modest people believe themselves to be of too little consequence to be observed; but conceited ones, think every body must be looking at them. Inexperienced girls, who are not wanting in modesty, are apt to dread going into a crowded room, from an idea that every eye will be turned upon them; but after a while they find that nobody cares to look at them, and that the greater the crowd, the less they are observed. [17]

Your enjoyment of a party depends far less on what you find there, than on what you carry with

you. The vain, the ambitious, the designing, will be full of anxiety when they go, and of disappointment when they return. A short triumph will be followed by a deep mortification, and the selfishness of their aims defeats itself. If you go to see and to hear, and to make the best of whatever occurs, with a disposition to admire all that is beautiful, and to sympathize in the pleasures of others, you can hardly fail to spend the time pleasantly. The less you think of yourself and your claims to attention, the better. If you are much attended to, receive it modestly, and consider it as a happy accident; if you are little noticed, use your leisure in observing others.

The popular belle, who is the envy of her own sex and the admiration of the other, has her secret griefs and trials, and thinks she pays very dearly for her popularity; while the girl who is least attended to in crowded assemblies, is apt to think her's the only hard lot, and that there is unmixed happiness in being a reigning belle. She, alone, whose steady aim is to grow better and wiser every day of her life, can look with an equal eye on both extremes. If your views are elevated, and your feelings are ennobled and purified by communion with gifted spirits, and with the Father of spirits, you will look calmly on the gayest scenes of life; you will attach very little importance to the transient popularity of a ball-room; your endeavor will be to bring home from every visit some new idea, some valuable piece of information, or some useful experience of life.

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GOOD COMPANY.

"Good company," says Duclos, "resembles a dispersed republic: the members of it are found in all classes. Independent of rank and station, it exists only among those who think and feel; among those who possess correct ideas and honorable sentiments." The higher classes, constantly occupied with the absorbing interests of wealth and ambition, formerly introduced into their magnificent saloons a grave and almost diplomatic stiffness of manners, of which the solemnity banished nature and freedom. The amusements of the lower classes, which rather resembled a toil than a recreation, present to the spectator a procedure irreconcilable to good taste.

There are, moreover, too many points of resemblance between the manners and education of the higher and lower classes, to admit of our finding the elements of good society in either of them. The lower orders are ignorant, from want of means of instruction; the higher, from indolence and perpetually increasing incapacity. It is besides not a little curious that, even in the bygone days of ceremonious manners, the higher classes, by whom they were practiced, were uniformly taught by those illiterate persons of the lower classes who almost alone practice the art of dancing-masters.

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It is therefore to the middle class, almost exclusively, that we must look for good society; to that class which has not its ideas contracted by laborious occupations, nor its mental powers annihilated by luxury. In this class, it is truly observed, society is often full of charm: every one seems, according to the precept of *La Bruyère*, "anxious, both by words and manners, to make others pleased with him and with themselves." There are slight differences of character, opinion, and interest; but there is no prevailing style, no singular or affected customs. An unperceived interchange of ideas and kind offices produces a delightful harmony of thoughts and sentiments; and the wish to please inspires those affectionate manners, those obliging expressions, and those unrestrained attentions, which alone render social unions pleasant and desirable.



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FRIENDSHIP.

This subject was forcibly presented to my mind by a conversation I recently heard in a party of young ladies, and which I take as a pattern and semblance of twenty other conversations I have heard in twenty similar parties. Friendship was (as it very often is) the subject of the discussion; and, though the words have escaped my memory, I can well recall the substance of the remarks. One lady boldly asserted that there was no such thing as friendship in the world, where all was insincerity and selfishness. I looked, but saw not in her youthful eye and unfurrowed cheeks any traces of the sorrow and ill-usage that I thought should alone have wrung from gentle lips so harsh a sentence, and I wondered where in twenty brief years she could have learned so hard a lesson. Have known it, she could not! therefore I concluded she had taken it upon trust from the poets, who are fain to tell all the ill they can of human nature, because it makes better poetry than good.

The remark was taken up, as might have been expected, by a young champion, who thought, or said without thinking, that friendship was—I really cannot undertake to say what, but all the things that young ladies usually put into their themes at school: something interminable, illimitable, and immutable. From this the discussion grew; and how it was, and what it was, went on to be discussed. I cannot pursue the thread of the discourse; but the amount of it was this:— One thought friendship was the summer portion only of the blessed; a flower for the brow of the prosperous, that the child of misfortune must never gather. Another thought that all interest being destructive to its very essence, it could not be trusted, unless there was an utter destitution of every thing that might recommend us to favor, or requite affection. This lady must have been brought to the depth of wretchedness ere she ever could be sure she had a friend. Some, I found, thought it was made up of a great deal of sensibility, vulgarly called jealousy; that was, to take umbrage at every seeming slight, to the indescribable torment of either party. Some betrayed, if they did not exactly say it, that they thought friendship such an absolute unity, that it would be a less crime to worship two gods than to love two friends! Therefore, to bring it to its perfection, it was necessary that all beside should be despised and disregarded.

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Others, very young, and of course soon to grow wiser, thought it consisted in the exact disclosure of your own concerns and those of every body else with which you might chance to become acquainted; others, that it required such exact conformity in opinion, thought, and feeling, as should make it impossible to differ; and others, that it implied such generous interference, even with the feelings as well as affairs of its object, that it should spend itself in disinterested reproaches and unasked advice. But, however differing else, all were sure that friendship but usurped the name, unless it were purely disinterested, endlessly durable, and beyond the reach of time and circumstances to change it; and all were going forth in the full certainty of finding friends, each one after the pattern of her own imagination, the first speaker only excepted, who was fully determined never to find any, or never to trust them, if she did.

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I marked, with pained attention, the warm glow of expectation so soon to be blighted; and, reflected deeply on the many heart-aches with which they must unlearn their errors. I saw that each one was likely to pass over and reject the richest blessing of earth, even in the very pursuing of it, from having merely sketched, in imagination, an unressembling portrait of the object of pursuit. "When friendship meets them," I said, "they will not know her. Can no one draw for them a better likeness?"

It is the language of books, and the language of society, that friends are inconstant, and friendship but little to be depended on; and the belief, where it is really received, goes far to make a truth of that which else were false, by creating what it suspects. Few of us but have lived already long enough to know the bitterness of being disappointed in our affections, and received in our calculations by those with whom, in the various relationships of life, we are brought in contact. Perhaps the aggregate of pain from this cause is greater than from any other cause whatever. And yet, it is much to be doubted whether nearly the whole of this suffering does not arise from our own unreasonable and mistaken expectations. There are none so unfortunate but they meet with some kindness in the world; and none, I believe, so fortunate but that they meet with much less than they might do, were it not their own fault.

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In the first place, we are mistaken in our expectations that friendship should be disinterested. It neither is, nor can be. It may be so in action, but never in the sentiment; there is always an equivalent to be returned. And if we examine the movements of our own hearts, we must be sure this is the case; and yet, we are so unreasonable as to expect our friends should be purely disinterested; and, after having secured their affections, we neglect to pay the price, and expect they should be continued to us for nothing. We grow careless of pleasing them; inconsiderate of their feelings, and heedless of the government of our own temper towards them; and then we complain of inconstancy, if they like us not so well as when dressed out in our best for the reception of their favor. Yet it is, in fact, we that are changed, not they.

Another fruitful source of disappointment in our attachments is, that while we are much more quick in detecting the faults of others than our own, we absurdly require that every one should be faultless but ourselves. We do not say that we expect this in our friends; but we do expect it, and our conduct proves that we expect it. We begin also with believing it. The obscurities of distance; the veil that the proprieties of society casts over nature's deformities; the dazzling glitter of exterior qualities baffle, for a time, our most penetrating glances, and the imperfect vision seems all that we should have it. Our inexperienced hearts, and some indeed that should

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be better taught, fondly believe it to be all it seems, and begin their attachment in full hope to find it so. What wonder then that the bitterest disappointment should ensue, when, on more close acquaintance, we find them full of imperfections, perhaps of most glaring faults; and we begin to express disgust, sometimes even resentment, that they are not what we took them for.

But was this their fault, or ours? Did they not present themselves to us in the garb of mortal flesh?—and do we not know that mortals are imperfect?—that, however the outside be fair, the interior is corrupt, and sometimes vile? He who knows all, alone knows how corrupt it is! the heart itself, enlightened by His grace, is more deeply in the secret than any without can be; but if the thing we love be mortal, something of it we must perceive; and more and more of it we must perceive as we look closer. If this is to disappoint and revolt us, and draw harsh reproaches and bitter recriminations from our lips, there is but One on whom we can fix our hearts with safety; and He is one, alas! we show so little disposition to love, as proves that, with all our complainings and bewailings of each others' faultiness, our friends are as good as will, at present, suit us.

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But are we, therefore, to say there is no such thing as friendship, or that it is not worth seeking? morosely repel it, or suspiciously distrust it? If we do, we shall pay our folly's price in the forfeiture of that, without which, however we may pretend, we never are or can be happy; preferring to go without the very greatest of all earthly good, because it is not what, perhaps, it may be in heaven. Rather than this, it would be wise so to moderate our expectation, and adapt our conduct, as to gain of it a greater measure, or, as far as may be possible, to gather of its flowers without exposing ourselves to be wounded by the thorns it bears. This is only to be done by setting out in life with juster feelings and fairer expectations.

It is not true, that friends are few and kindness rare. No one ever needed friends, and deserved them, and found them not; but we do not know them when we see them, or deal with them justly when we have them. We must allow others to be as variable, and imperfect, and faulty, as ourselves. We do not wish our readers to love their friends less, but to love them as what they are, rather than as what they wish them to be; and instead of the jealous pertinacity that is wounded by every appearance of change, and disgusted by every detection of a fault, and ready to distrust and cast away the kindest friends on every trifling difference of behavior and feeling, to cultivate a moderation in their demands; a patient allowance for the effect of time and circumstance; an indulgence towards peculiarities of temper and character; and, above all, such a close examination of what passes in their own hearts, as will teach them better to understand and excuse what they detect in the hearts of others; ever remembering that all things on earth are earthly; and therefore changeable, perishable, and uncertain.

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KINDRED HEARTS.

Oh! ask not, hope thou not too much
Of sympathy below;
Few are the hearts whence one same touch,
Bids the same fountain flow;
Few, and by still conflicting powers
Forbidden here to meet,
Such ties would make this life of ours
Too fair for aught so fleet.

It may be that thy brother's eye
Sees not as thine, which turns,
In such deep reverence, to the sky
Where the rich sunset burns;
It may be that the breath of spring,
Born amidst violets lone,

A rapture o'er thy soul can bring,
A dream to his unknown.

The tune that speaks of other times—
A sorrowful delight!
The melody of distant chimes;
The sound of waves by night;
The wind that with so many a tone
Some cord within can thrill;
These may have language all thine own,
To *him* a mystery still.

Yet scorn thou not for this the true
And steadfast love of years;
The kindly, that from childhood grew,
The faithful to thy tears!
If there be one that o'er the dead
Hath in thy grief borne part,
And watched through sickness by thy bed,
Call *his* a kindred heart.

But for those bonds, all perfect made,
Wherein bright spirits blend,
Like sister flowers of one sweet shade,
With the same breeze that bend;
For that full bliss of thought allied,
Never to mortals given,—
Oh! lay thy lovely dreams aside,
Or lift them unto heaven.



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CONVERSATION.

Good conversation is one of the highest attainments of civilized society. It is the readiest way in which gifted minds exert their influence, and, as such, is worthy of all consideration and cultivation. I remember hearing an English traveler say, many years ago, on being asked how the conversational powers of the Americans compared with those of the English—"Your fluency rather exceeds that of the old world, but conversation here is not cultivated as an art." The idea of its being so considered any where was new to the company; and much discussion followed the departure of the stranger, as to the desirableness of making conversation an art. Some thought the more natural and spontaneous it was, the better; some confounded art with artifice, and hoped their countrymen would never leave their own plain, honest way of talking, to become adepts in hypocrisy and affectation. At last one, a little wiser than the rest, explained the difference between art and artifice; asked the cavaliers if they had never heard of the art of writing, or the art of thinking? and said he presumed the art of conversing was of the same nature. And so it is. By this art, persons are taught to arrange their ideas methodically, and to express them with clearness and force; thus saving much precious time, and avoiding those tedious narrations which interest no one but the speaker. It enforces the necessity of observing the effect of what is said, and leads a talker to stop when she finds that she has ceased to fix the attention of her audience.

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Some persons seem to forget that mere talking is not conversing; that it requires two to make a conversation, and that each must be in turn a listener; but no one can be an agreeable companion who is not as willing to listen as to talk. Selfishness shows itself in this, as in a thousand other

ways. One who is always full of herself, and who thinks nothing so important as what she thinks, and says, and does, will be apt to engross more than her share of the talk, even when in the company of those she loves.

There are situations, however, wherein it is a kindness to be the chief talker: as when a young lady is the eldest of the party, and has seen something, or been in some place, the description of which is desired by all around her. If your mind is alive to the wishes and claims of others, you will easily perceive when it is a virtue to talk and when to be silent. It is undue pre-occupation with self which blinds people, and prevents their seeing what the occasion requires.

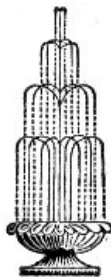
Sometimes the most kind and sympathizing person will not do justice to her nature, but will appear to be cold and inattentive, because she does not know that it is necessary to give some sign that she is attending to what is addressed to her. She averts her eye from the speaker, and listens in such profound silence, and with a countenance so immovable, that no one could suppose her to be at all interested by what she is hearing. This is very discouraging to the speaker and very impolite. Good manners require that you should look at the person who speaks to you, and that you should put in a word, or a look, from time to time, that will indicate your interest in the narrative. A few interjections, happily thrown in by the hearer, are a great comfort and stimulus to the speaker; and one who has always been accustomed to this evidence of sympathy, or comprehension, in their friends, feels, when listened to without it, as if she were talking to a dead wall.

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For the encouragement of those who feel themselves deficient in conversational powers, we will subjoin a notice of the lately-deceased wife of a clergyman in this state:

"I saw and felt, when with her, as few others have ever made me feel, the power and uses of conversation. With her it was always promotive of intellectual and moral life. And here let me inform you, for the encouragement of those who may be thinking they would gladly do as she did in society, if they were able, that when I first knew Mrs. B., her powers of conversation were very small. She was embarrassed whenever she attempted to convey her thoughts to others. She labored for expression so much, that it was sometimes painful to hear her. Still, her social, affectionate nature longed for communion with other minds and hearts, on all subjects of deepest import. Her persevering efforts at length prevailed, and her ardent love of truth gave her utterance: yes, an utterance that often delighted, and sometimes surprised, those who heard her; a readiness and fluency that are seldom equalled. Learn, then, from her, my friends, to *exercise* your faculties, whatever they may be. In this way only can you improve, or even retain them. If you have but one talent of any sort, it may not, with impunity to itself—it may not, without sin to you—be wrapped in a napkin. And sigh not for higher powers or opportunities, until you have fully and faithfully exercised and improved such as you have. Nor can you know what you possess until you have called them into action."

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EXAGGERATION.

It is a great mistake to suppose that exaggeration makes a person more agreeable, or that it adds to the importance of her statements. The value of a person's words is determined by her habitual use of them. "I like it much," "It is well done," will mean as much in some mouths, as "I am infinitely delighted with it," "'Tis the most exquisite thing I ever saw," will in others. Such large abatements are necessarily made for the statements of these romancers, that they really gain nothing in the end, but find it difficult sometimes to gain credence for so much as is really true; whereas, a person who is habitually sober and discriminating in his use of language, will not only inspire confidence, but be able to produce a fine effect by the occasional use of a superlative.

Fidelity and exactness are indispensable in a narrative, and the habit of exaggerating destroys the power of accurate observation and recollection which would render the story truly interesting. If, instead of trying to embellish her account with the fruits of her imagination, a young lady possessed the power of seizing upon the points best worth describing, and could give an exact account of them, she would be far more entertaining than any exaggeration could make her; for there is no romance like that of real life, and no imaginings of an inexperienced girl can equal in piquancy the scenes and characters that are every day presented to our view. Extravagant expressions are sometimes resorted to in order to atone for deficiencies of memory

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and observation; but they will never hide such defects; and an habitual use of them lowers the tone of the mind, and leads to other deviations from the simplicity of truth and nature.

Another way of falsifying a narrative, is by taking for granted what you do not know, and speaking of it as if you did. This jumping at conclusions is a fruitful source of false reports, and does great mischief in the world. Let no one imagine that she is walking conscientiously, who is not in the habit of discriminating nicely between what she knows to be fact and what she only supposes to be such.

The frequent use of some favorite word, or phrase, is a common defect in conversation, and can only be guarded against by asking your friends to point it out to you, whenever they observe such a habit; for your own ear, having become accustomed to it, may not detect it. Some persons apply the epithets *glorious* or *splendid* to all sorts of objects indiscriminately, from a gorgeous sunset to a good dinner.

A young lady once tried to describe a pic-nic party to me in the following terms: "There were ten of us—four on horseback and the rest in carriages. We set off at a *glorious* rate, and had a *splendid* time in getting there; I rode the most *elegant*, perfect creature you ever beheld, and capered along *gloriously*. When we all got there, we walked about in the woods, and gathered the most *splendid* flowers, and dined under the shade of a *glorious* old elm-tree. We had our cold provisions spread out on the grass, and every thing was *elegant*. We had *glorious* appetites, too, and the ham and ale were *splendid*, and put us all in fine spirits. Some of the gentlemen sang funny songs; but one sang such a dreadfully sentimental one, and to such a horrid doleful tune, it made us all miserable. So then we broke up, and had a *splendid* time packing away the things; such fun! I had almost killed myself with laughing, and we broke half the things. But the ride home was the most *splendid* of all; we arrived at the top of the hill just in time to see the most *glorious* sunset I ever beheld!"

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In this short account, the word "glorious" is used five times, and in all but the last, it is grossly misapplied. The same is the case with the word "splendid," except that it is not once used properly. "Elegant," too, is equally inapplicable to horses and cold provisions. Yet this style of conversing is so common, that it hardly arrests the attention of many, who nevertheless would condemn it at once, if they thought at all about it.

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EGOTISM.

Has it ever happened to any but myself, to listen to I, I, I, in conversation, till, wearied with the monotony of the sound, I was fain to quarrel with the useful little word, and almost wish I could portray its hydra head, and present it in a mirror to my oracles, that they might turn away disgusted for ever with its hideous form.

I took up my abode for some time with a lady, whose habits of benevolence were extensive, and of whose true philanthropy of heart I had heard much. I expected to follow her to the alms-house, the hospital, and the garret, and I was not disappointed. Thither she went, and for purposes the kindest and most noble. She relieved their pressing wants; ministered consolation in the kindest tone; and gave religious instruction wherever needed. But, then, she kept a strict calendar of all these pious visitings; and that, too, for the entertainment of her company. All were called upon to hear the history of the appalling scenes she had witnessed; the tears of gratitude that had fallen on her hands; the prayers—half articulate—that had been offered for her by the dying; and to hear her attestations of disregard to the opposition she had to encounter in these her labors of love. Who, with such an appeal, could withhold their commendations? I, therefore, of course, as I listened again and again to the same tale to different auditors, heard many pretty complimentary speeches about magnanimity, &c.; and, getting somewhat weary, I drew nearer to the lady's guests, till I actually thought I heard from one—he was a clergyman, I believe—an inward whisper that he would like to refer his friend to the four first verses of the sixth chapter of Matthew, but that it would be impolite. If my listening powers were too acute when I heard this, let me turn monitor at once, and assure my young friends, if they would have their conversation listened to with pleasure, they must be economists with *self* as their subject.

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On behalf of the very young, we certainly have it to plead, that they know very little of any thing but what is, in some sense, their own. If they talk of persons, it must be their parents, their brothers and sisters, because they are the only people they know; if they talk of any body's affairs, it must be their own, because they are acquainted with no other; if of events, it must be what happens to themselves, for they hear nothing of what happens to any body else. As soon, therefore, as children begin to converse, it is most likely to be about themselves, or something that belongs to them; and to the rapid growing of this unwatched habit, may probably be attributed the ridiculous and offensive egotism of many persons in conversation, who, in conduct, prove that their feelings and affections are by no means self-engrossed. But the more indigenous this unsightly weed, the more need is there to prevent its growth. It has many varieties; the leaf is not always of the same shape, nor the flower of the same color, but they are all of one genus;

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and our readers who are botanists will have no difficulty in detecting them, however much affected by the soil they grow in. The *I's* and *my's* a lady exhibits in conversation, will bear such analogy to her character, as the wares on the stall of the bazaar bear to the trade of the vender. Or, if she have a great deal of what is called tact, she will, perhaps, vary the article according to the demands of the market. In fashionable life, it will be *my* cousin Sir Ralph, *my* father the Earl, and *my* great uncle the Duke; the living relatives and the departed fathers; the halls of her family, their rent-rolls, or their graves, will afford abundant materials for any conversation she may have to furnish.

Among those who, having gotten into the world they know not how, are determined it shall, at least, be known that they are there, it is *my* houses, *my* servants, *my* park, *my* gardens; or, if the lady be too young to claim in her own behalf, *my* father's houses, &c., &c., will answer all the purpose. But, happily for the supply of this kind of talk, rank and wealth, though very useful, are not necessary to it. Without any ostentation whatever, but merely from the habit of occupying themselves with their own individuality, some will let the company choose the subject; but, be it what it may, all they have to say upon it is the *I*, or the *my*. Books, travel, sorrow, sickness, nature, art, no matter, it is *I* have seen, *I* have done, *I* have been, *I* have learned, *I* have suffered, *I* have known. Whatever it be to others, the *I* is the subject for them; for they tell you nothing of the matter but their own concern with it. For example, let the city of Naples be spoken of: one will tell you what is seen there—what is done there—what happens there—and making her reflections on all without naming herself; you will only perceive, by her knowledge and remarks, that she has been in Naples. Another will tell you how she came there, and why she went, and how long she staid, and what she did, and what she saw; and the things themselves will appear but as incidents to the idea of self.

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Some ladies I have known, who, not content with the present display of their powers, are determined to re-sell their wares at second-hand. They tell you all the witty things they said to somebody yesterday, and the wise remarks they made to a certain company last night. *I* said—*I* remarked. The commodity should be valuable indeed to be thus brought to market a second time. Others there are, who, under pretext of confidence—little complimentary when shown alike to all—pester people with their own affairs. Before you have been two hours in their company, you are introduced to all their family, and to all their family's concerns, pecuniary affairs, domestic secrets, and personal feelings—a sort of bird's-eye view of every thing that belongs to them—past, present, and to come; and woe to the secrets of those who may chance to have been in connection with these egotists; in such a view, you must needs see ten miles around.

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There is an egotism, of which we must speak more seriously. Faults, that in the world we laugh at, when they attain the dignity and purity of sacred things, become matter of serious regret. I speak nothing further of the ostentatious display of pious and benevolent exertion. We live at a time when religion, its deepest and dearest interests, have become a subject of general conversation. We would have it so; but we mark, with regret, that self has introduced itself here. The heartless loquacity—we must say heartless, for, in a matter of such deep interest, facility of speech bespeaks the feelings light—the unshrinking jabber with which people tell you their soul's history—their past impressions and present difficulties—their doctrines and their doubts—their manifestations and their experiences—not in the ear of confidence, to have those doubts removed and those doctrines verified; not in the ear of anxious inquiry, to communicate knowledge and give encouragement, but any where, in any company, and to any body who will listen, the *I* felt—*I* thought—*I* experienced. Sorrows that, if real, should blanch the cheek to think upon; mercies that enwrap all hearers in amazement, they will tell as unconcernedly as the adventures of the morning. The voice falters not; the color changes not; the eye moistens not. And to what purpose all this personality? To get good, or do good? By no means; but that, whatever subject they look upon, they always see themselves in the foreground of the picture, with every minute particular swelled into importance, while all besides is merged in indistinctness.

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We may be assured there is nothing so ill-bred, so annoying, so little entertaining, so absolutely impertinent, as this habit of talking always with reference to ourselves; for every body has a self of their own, to which they attach as much importance as we to ours, and see all others' matters small in the comparison. The lady of rank has her castles and her ancestors—they are the foreground of her picture. There they stood when she came into being; and there they are still, in all the magnitude of near perspective; and, if her estimate of their real size be not corrected by experience and good sense, she expects that others will see them as large as she does. But that will not be so. The lady of wealth has gotten her houses and lands in the foreground. These are the larger features in her landscape; titles and the castles are seen at a smaller angle. Neither lady will admire the proportions of her neighbor's drawing, should they chance to discover themselves in each other's conversation. She, again—whether rich or poor—whose world is her own domesticity, sees nothing so prominent as the affairs of her nursery or her household; and perceives not that, in the eyes of others, her children are a set of diminutives, undistinguishable in the mass of humanity, in which that they ever existed, or that they cease to exist, is matter of equal indifference.

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It is thus, that each one attributes to the objects around him, not their true and actual proportion, but a magnitude proportioned to their nearness to himself. We say not that he draws ill who does so: for, to each one, things are important, more or less, in proportion to his own interest in them. But hence is the mischief. We forget that every one has a self of his own; and that the constant setting forth of ours is, to others, preposterous, obtrusive, and ridiculous. The painter who draws a folio in the front of his picture, and a castle in the distance, properly draws the book the larger

of the two: but he must be a fool, if he therefore thinks the folio is the larger, and expects every body else to think so too. Yet, nothing wiser are we, when we suffer ourselves to be perpetually pointing to ourselves, our affairs, and our possessions, as if they were as interesting to others as they are important to us.



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GENTLENESS.

Nothing is so likely to conciliate the affections of the other sex, as a feeling that woman looks to them for support and guidance. In proportion as men are themselves superior, they are as accessible to this appeal. On the contrary, they never feel interested in one who seems disposed rather to offer than to ask assistance. There is, indeed, something unfeminine in independence. It is contrary to nature and, therefore, it offends. We do not like to see a woman affecting tremors, but still less do we like to see her acting the Amazon. A really sensible woman feels her dependence; she does what she can, but she is conscious of inferiority, and, therefore, grateful for support; she knows that she is the weaker vessel, and that, as such, she should receive honor.

In every thing, therefore, that women attempt, they should show their consciousness of dependence. If they are learners, let them evince a teachable spirit; if they give an opinion, let them do it in an unassuming manner. There is something so unpleasant in female self-sufficiency, that it not unfrequently deters, instead of persuading, and prevents the adoption of advice which the judgment even approves. Yet this is a fault into which women, of certain pretensions, are occasionally betrayed. Age, or experience, or superior endowment, entitles them, they imagine, to assume a higher place and a more independent tone. But their sex should ever teach them to be subordinate; and they should remember that influence is obtained, not by assumption, but by a delicate appeal to affection or principle. Women, in this respect, are something like children; the more they show their need of support, the more engaging they are.

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The appropriate expression of dependence is gentleness. However endowed with superior talents a woman may be, without gentleness she cannot be agreeable. Gentleness ought to be the characteristic of the sex; and there is nothing that can compensate for the want of this feminine attraction.

Gentleness is, indeed, the talisman of woman. To interest the feelings is to her much easier than to convince the judgment; the heart is far more accessible to her influence than the head. She never gains so much as by concession; and is never so likely to overcome, as when she seems to yield.

Gentleness prepossesses at first sight; it insinuates itself into the vantage ground, and gains the best position by surprise. While a display of skill and strength calls forth a counter array, gentleness, at once, disarms opposition, and wins the day before it is contested.

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SISTERLY VIRTUES.

Sisterly affection is as graceful in its developments to the eye of the beholder, as it is cheering to the heart where it resides. There are some who, though not deficient in its more important duties, are but too regardless of those lesser demonstrations of attachment, which are so soothing to the susceptible heart. Every delicate attention which tenderness prompts; every mark of politeness which refined society requires, ought to pervade the intercourse of brothers and sisters. It is a mistake that good manners are to be reserved for visitors, and that, in the family circle, negligence and coarseness may be indulged with impunity. Even nature's affections may be undermined or shaken by perseverance in an improper deportment, more than by lapses into error and folly. For the latter, repentance may atone, while the former check the flow of the heart's warm fountains, until they stagnate or become congealed.

I knew a father, himself a model of polished manners, who required of his large family to treat each other, at all times, with the same politeness that they felt was due to their most distinguished guest. Rudeness, neglect, or indifference were never tolerated in their circle. Respect to each other's opinion; a disposition to please and be pleased; care in dress, and courtesy of manner, were not considered thrown away, if bestowed on a brother or a sister. Every one of the group was instructed to bring amiable feelings and powers of entertainment to their own fire side. The result was happy. The brothers felt it an honor to wait upon their sisters, and

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the sisters a pleasure to do all in their power for the comfort and improvement of their brothers. This daily practice of every decorum, imparted to their manners an enduring grace, while the affections, which Heaven implanted, seemed to gather strength from the beauty of their interchange. I would not assert that fraternal or sisterly affection may not be deep and pervading without such an exterior, yet it is surely rendered more lovely by it; as the planets might pursue in darkness the order of their course, but it is their brilliance which reveals and embellishes it.

Every well-regulated family might be as a perpetual school. The younger members, witnessing the example of those whose excellence is more confirmed, will be led, by the principle of imitation, more effectually, than by the whole force of foreign precept. The custom of the older daughters, to assist in the education of their less advanced sisters, I rejoice to see, is becoming more common. It cannot be too highly applauded. What should prevent their assuming the systematic office of instructors, when circumstances are favorable to such an arrangement.

By what method can a daughter more fully evince her gratitude to her parents, than by aiding their children in the search of knowledge and of goodness. How amiable, how praiseworthy, is that disposition which prompts a young and beautiful creature to come forth as the ally of a mother, in that most overwhelming of all anxieties, so to train her little ones as to form at last an unbroken family in heaven. No better apprenticeship could be devised, and no firmer hostage given to God or man for its faithful performance.

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HOME.

Where burns the lov'd hearth brightest,
Cheering the social breast?
Where beats the fond heart lightest,
Its humble hopes possess'd?
Where is the smile of sadness,
Of meek-eyed patience born,
Worth more than those of gladness,
Which mirth's bright cheek adorn?
Pleasure is marked by fleetness,
To those who ever roam;
While grief itself has sweetness
At home! dear home!

There blend the ties that strengthen
Our hearts in hours of grief;
The silver links that lengthen
Joy's visits when most brief;
There eyes, in all their splendor,
Are vocal to the heart,
And glances, gay or tender,
Fresh eloquence impart;
Then, dost thou sigh for pleasure?
O! do not widely roam,
But seek that hidden treasure
At home! dear home!

Does pure religion charm thee
Far more than aught below?
Would'st thou that she should arm thee
Against the hour of woe?
Think not she dwelleth only
In temples built for prayer;
For home itself is lonely,
Unless her smiles be there;

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The devotee may falter,
The bigot blindly roam,
If worshipless her altar
At home! dear home!

Love over it presideth,
With meek and watchful awe,
Its daily service guideth,
And shows its perfect law?
If there thy faith shall fail thee,
If there no shrine be found,
What can thy prayers avail thee
With kneeling crowds around?
Go! leave thy gift unoffered
Beneath religion's dome,
And be thy first fruits proffered
At home! dear home!



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FIRESIDE INFLUENCE.

Is it not true that parents are the lawgivers of their children? Does not a mother's counsel—does not a father's example—cling to the memory, and haunt us through life? Do we not often find ourselves subject to habitual trains of thought? and, if we seek to discover the origin of these, are we not insensibly led back, by some beaten and familiar track, to the paternal threshold? Do we not often discover some home-chiseled grooves in our minds, into which the intellectual machinery seems to slide, as by a sort of necessity? Is it not, in short, a proverbial truth, that the controlling lessons of life are given beneath the parental roof? We know, indeed, that wayward passions spring up in early life, and, urging us to set authority at defiance, seek to obtain the mastery of the heart. But, though struggling for liberty and license, the child is shaped and molded by the parent. The stream that bursts from the fountain, and seems to rush forward headlong and self-willed, still turns hither and thither, according to the shape of its mother-earth over which it flows. If an obstacle is thrown across its path, it gathers strength, breaks away the barrier, and again bounds forward. It turns, and winds, and proceeds on its course, till it reaches its destiny in the sea. But, in all this, it has shaped its course and followed out its career, from babbling infancy at the fountain to its termination in the great reservoir of waters, according to the channel which its parent earth has provided. Such is the influence of a parent over his child. It has within itself a will, and at its bidding it goes forward, but the parent marks out its track. He may not stop its progress, but he may guide its course. He may not throw a dam across its path, and say to it, hitherto mayest thou go, and no farther; but he may turn it through safe, and gentle, and useful courses—or he may leave it to plunge over wild cataracts, or lose itself in some sandy desert, or collect its strength into a torrent, but to spread ruin and desolation along its borders.

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The fireside, then, is a seminary of infinite importance: it is important, because it is universal, and because the education it bestows, being woven in with the woof of childhood, gives form and color to the whole texture of life. There are few who can receive the honors of a college, but all are graduates of the hearth. The learning of the university may fade from the recollection, its classic lore may molder in the halls of memory; but the simple lessons of home, enameled upon the heart of childhood, defy the rust of years, and outlive the more mature but less vivid pictures of after days. So deep, so lasting, indeed, are the impressions of early life, that we often see a man, in the imbecility of age, holding fresh in his recollection the events of childhood, while all the wide space between that and the present hour is a blasted and forgotten waste. You have perchance seen an old and half-obliterated portrait, and, in the attempt to have it cleaned and restored, may have seen it fade away, while a brighter and more perfect picture, painted beneath, is revealed to view. This portrait, first drawn upon the canvas, is no inapt illustration of youth; and, though it may be concealed by some after-design, still the original traits will shine through the outward picture, giving it tone while fresh, and surviving it in decay. Such is the fireside—the great institution furnished by Providence for the education of man.

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PERSONAL APPEARANCE.

THE TEETH.

The prevalence of defective teeth in this country is the general subject of remark by foreigners; and whoever has traveled in Spain and Portugal is struck with the superior soundness and whiteness of teeth in those countries. Though not a cleanly people in other respects, they wash their teeth often, and, by means of toothpicks, carefully remove all substances from between them after meals. A little silver porcupine, with holes all over its back to insert toothpicks, is a common ornament on the dining tables of Spain and Portugal. The general use of them creates so large a demand, that students at Coimbra sometimes support themselves by whittling toothpicks, which are sold tied in small bunches like matches. They are made of willow, on account of its toughness and pliability. Toothpicks of metal are too hard, and are apt to injure the gums. There is the same objection, in a less degree, to quills. But willow toothpicks are preferable to all others; and they have the advantage of being the most cleanly, for they generally break in the using, and are thrown away. Few sights are more offensive to a person of any refinement than a toothpick that has been much used; it is, moreover, uncleanly, and therefore not healthy for the teeth. Food allowed to remain between the teeth, particularly animal food, is very destructive: it should be carefully removed after every meal, and the mouth thoroughly rinsed. This may seem to some like a great talk about a small matter; but these are simple precautions to take, and very slight trouble compared with the agony of aching teeth, or a breath so offensive that your best friend does not wish to sit near you. I can see no reason why a man's complexion should exclude him from the dining-table, but I do see a very good reason why he should be banished for not taking proper care of his teeth. A bad breath is such a detestable thing, that it might be a sufficient reason for not marrying a person of otherwise agreeable qualities. It is, moreover, perfectly inexcusable thus to transform oneself into a walking sepulchre. Nobody needs to have an offensive breath. A careful removal of substances from between the teeth, rinsing the mouth after meals, and a bit of charcoal held in the mouth, will *always* cure a bad breath. Charcoal, used as a dentifrice—that is, rubbed on in powder with a brush—is apt to injure the enamel; but a lump of it, held in the mouth, two or three times in a week, and slowly chewed, has a wonderful power to preserve the teeth and purify the breath. The action is purely chemical. It counteracts the acid arising from a disordered stomach, or food decaying about the gums; and it is the acid which destroys the teeth. [55]

Every one knows that charcoal is an antiputrescent, and is used in boxing up animal or vegetable substances, to keep them from decay. Upon the same chemical principle, it tends to preserve the teeth and sweeten the breath. There is no danger from swallowing it; on the contrary, small quantities have a healthful effect on the inward system, particularly when the body is suffering from that class of complaints peculiarly incident to summer. It would not be wise to swallow that or any other gritty substance, in large quantities, or very frequently; but, once or twice a week, a little would be salutary, rather than otherwise. A bit of charcoal, as big as a cherry, merely held in the mouth a few hours, without chewing, has a good effect. At first, most persons dislike to chew it, but use soon renders it far from disagreeable. Those who are troubled with an offensive breath might chew it very often and swallow it but seldom. It is particularly important to clean and rinse the mouth thoroughly before going to bed; otherwise a great deal of the destructive acid will form during the night. [56]

If these hints induce only *one* person to take better care of the teeth, I shall be more than rewarded for the trouble of writing. It is painful to see young persons losing their teeth merely for want of a few simple precautions; and one cannot enter stage or steam-car without finding the atmosphere polluted, and rendered absolutely unhealthy for the lungs to breathe, when a proper use of water and charcoal might render it as wholesome and pleasant as a breeze of Eden. [57]

THE HAIR.

No part of the human frame offers a finer subject for the display of decorative taste and elegance than the hair:—the countenance, the contour of the head, and even the whole person, may be said to be greatly affected by its arrangement and dress. As the possession of fine hair is peculiarly prized, so is its loss proportionally felt.

Like every other portion of the human frame, the use of *water* to the hair is absolutely essential to its health, as it tends to relieve the secretions and open the pores of the skin. The frequency of the use of water, however, should be guided by circumstances. It may be set down as a regulating principle, that the stronger and more healthy the hair may be, the more water may be used with propriety; by the same rule, when the hair is weak and thin, it should not be washed more than once a-week. At such times, *cold water* alone should be used, when care should be taken to dry it well immediately after. Washing too often, dries up the requisite oily fluid that forms the nourishment of the hair.

Some judgment is necessary in the choice of brushes. Two are necessary: a penetrating and a polishing brush; the one composed of strong, and the other of fine hair. The penetrating brush (especially that used by ladies) should be made of elastic hairs, rather inclining to irregular lengths. The other should be made of firm, soft, silken hair, thickly studded. Unfortunately, [58]

however, we cannot but observe that penetrating brushes are often selected, so harsh and strong, that they fret the skin of the head, and injure the roots, instead of gently and gradually effecting the object for which they were intended.

Combs are merely used for the purpose of giving a form to the hair, and assisting in its decorative arrangement; to use them too often, is rather prejudicial than otherwise, as they injure the roots of the hair. Above all kinds, that of the small-toothed comb is the most injurious in this respect, as it not only inflames the tender skin, but, from the fineness of its teeth, splits and crushes the hairs in being passed through them. Persons must indeed be of very uncleanly habits, whose heads absolutely require the aid of this comb, as the brush alone sufficiently possesses the power of effectually cleaning the hair from scurf, dandriff, and dust, if constantly used.

To persons whose hair is in a declining state, the frequent and regular use of oil or bear's grease is often of much service, as it is calculated to assist in supplying that nourishment which is so necessary. No oil perhaps has ever acquired a greater celebrity than Rowland's Macassar; for this reason we cannot but recommend it to the notice of our readers.

One of the most pernicious methods of dressing the hair, at the expense of its health, is by curling. This not only dries up the moisture that circulates through the hairs, but the heat and compression thus used completely prevent proper circulation. When, however, the habit is persisted in, its ill effects may be much obviated by constantly brushing the hair well, and having it frequently cut, by which means the necessary circulation is kept up, and the roots invigorated. [59]

THE HANDS.

"Why don't my hands look and feel as it would seem that the perfect Author of all things would have them?" How many a young man and woman have asked this question! and are troubled to know why it is that some persons have such bloodless hands, perfect nails, so free from hang-nails, as they are called, while their own hands look so much like duck's feet or bird's claws.

All sorts of cosmetics, the most penetrating oils, rubbing and scouring the hands, paring and scraping the nails, and cutting round the roots of the nails, are resorted to, in hopes of making their hands appear natural; but all avails nothing, and many a poor hand is made to perform all its manipulations *incognito*. About the piano, in the social party, in the house, and in the street, the hand—the most exquisite, or what should be the most beautiful and useful part of the human frame—is *gloved*. And why? Because it is not fit to be seen. [60]

Now, reader, I am about to tell you of a positive cure. In the first place, never cut or scrape your finger-nails with a knife or scissors, except in paring them down to the end of the fingers. Secondly, use nothing but a good stiff nail-brush, fine soap, and water, and rub the nails and hands briskly with these every morning the *year round*. In the third place, I would have you know that surfeiting will invariably produce heavy, burning hands. An impure state of the blood will manifest itself in the hands sooner than in most other parts of the body. If you have bad hands, be assured that the quantity or quality, or both, of your diet is wrong.

If you try to profit by these suggestions, you will, before one year expires, be no longer ashamed of your hands.



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DRESS.

There are some rules, which, being based on first principles, are of universal application. And one of these belongs to our present subject, *viz*: nothing can be truly beautiful which is not appropriate. Nature and the fine arts teach us this. All styles of dress, therefore, which impede the motions of the wearer—which do not sufficiently protect the person—which add unnecessarily to the heat of summer, or to the cold of winter—which do not suit the age or occupations of the wearer, or which indicate an expenditure unsuited to her means, are *inappropriate*, and,

therefore, destitute of one of the essential elements of beauty. Propriety, or fitness, lies at the foundation of all good taste in dressing; and to this test should be brought a variety of particulars, too numerous to be mentioned, but which may be thus illustrated: The dress that would be very proper on occasion of a morning visit in a city, would be so out of place, if worn by the same person when making preserves or pastry, or when scrambling through the bushes in a country walk, that it would cease to look well. A simple calico gown and white apron would be so much more convenient and suitable, that the wearer would actually look better in them.

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Some persons, also, toil early and late, and strain every nerve to procure an expensive garment, and think that once arrayed in it, they shall look as well as some richer neighbor, whose style of dress they wish to imitate. But they forget that, if it does not accord with their general style of living—if it is out of harmony with other things, it will so strike every body; and this want of fitness will prevent its looking well on them.

Let a true sense of propriety of the fitness of things regulate all your habits of living and dressing, and it will produce such a beautiful harmony and consistency of character, as to throw a charm around you that all may feel, though few may comprehend. Always consider well whether the articles of dress which you wish to purchase are suited to your age—your condition—your means—to the climate—to the particular use to which you mean to put them; and then let the principles of good taste keep you from the extremes of fashion; and regulate the form so as to combine utility and beauty, while the known rules of harmony in colors save you from shocking the eye of the artist by incongruous mixtures.

The character is much more shown in the style of dress that is worn every day, than in that which is designed for great occasions; and when I see a young girl come down to the family breakfast in an untidy wrapper, with her hair in papers, her feet slip-shod, and an old silk handkerchief round her neck, I know that she cannot be the neat, industrious, and refined person whom I should like for an inmate. I feel equally certain, too, that her chamber is not kept in neat order, and that she does not set a proper value upon time. However well a lady has appeared at a party, I would recommend to a young gentleman—before he makes up his mind as to her domestic qualities—to observe her appearance at the breakfast-table, when she expects to see only her own family; and, if it be such as I have just described, to beware how he prosecutes the acquaintance.

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COMPRESSION OF THE LUNGS.

Few circumstances are more injurious to beauty than the constrained movement, suffused complexion, and labored respiration that betray tight-lacing. The play of intelligence, and varied emotion, which throw such a charm over the brow of youth, are impeded by whatever obstructs the flow of blood from the heart to its many organs. In Greece, where the elements of beauty and grace were earliest comprehended, and most happily illustrated, the fine symmetry of the form was left untortured.

But the influence of this habit on beauty is far less to be deprecated than its effects upon health. That pulmonary disease, affections of the heart, and insanity, are in its train, and that it leads some of our fairest and dearest to Fashion's shrine to die, is placed beyond a doubt by strong medical testimony.

Dr. Mussey, whose "*Lectures on Intemperance*" have so forcibly arrested the attention of the public, asserts that "greater numbers annually die among the female sex, in consequence of tight-lacing, than are destroyed among the other sex by the use of spirituous liquors in the same time." Is it possible that thousands of our own sex, in our own native land, lay, with their own hand, the foundation of diseases that destroy life!—and are willing, for fashion's sake, to commit suicide!

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Dr. Todd, the late Principal of the Retreat for the Insane, in Connecticut, to whom science and

philanthropy are indebted, adduces many instances of the fearful effects of obstructed circulation on the brain. Being requested by the instructress of a large female seminary to enforce on her pupils the evils of compression in dress, he said, with that eloquence of eye and soul, which none, who once felt their influence, can ever forget: "The whole course of your studies, my dear young ladies, conspires to impress you with reverence for antiquity. Especially do you turn to Greece for the purest models in the fine arts, and the loftiest precepts of philosophy. While sitting, as disciples, at the feet of her men of august minds, you may have sometimes doubted how to balance, or where to bestow your admiration. The acuteness of Aristotle—the purity of Plato—the calm, unrepented satisfaction of Socrates—the varied lore of Epicurus, and the lofty teachings of Zeno, have alternately attracted or absorbed your attention. Permit me to suppose, that the high-toned ethics of the Stoics, and their elevation of mind, which could teach its frail companion, the body, the proud lesson of insensibility to pain, have won your peculiar complaisance. Yet, while meting out to them the full measure of your applause, have you ever recollected that modern times—that your own country came in competition for a share of fame! Has it occurred to you that your own sex—even the most delicate and tender part of it—exceeded the ancient Stoics in the voluntary infliction of pain, and extinction of pity? Yes; some of the timid and beautiful members of this seminary may enter the lists with Zeno, Cleanthus, and Chrysippus, and cherish no slight hope of victory. I trust to prove to you that the ancient and sublime Stoics were very tyros in comparison with many a lady of our own times. In degree of suffering, extent of endurance, and in perfection of concealment, they must yield the palm. I do assure you, that, its most illustrious masters—fruitful as they were in tests to try the body—never invented, imagined, nor would have been able to sustain that torture of tight-lacing which the modern belle steadily inflicts without shrinking, and bears without repining sometimes to her very grave. True, they might sometimes have broken a bone, or plucked out an eye, and been silent; but they never grappled iron and whalebone into the very nerves and life-blood of their system. They might possibly have passed a dagger too deeply into the heart, and died; but they never drew a ligature of suffocation around it, and *expected to live!* They never tied up the mouths of the millions of air-vessels in the lungs, and then taxed them to the full measure of action and respiration. Even Pharaoh only demanded bricks without straw for a short time; but the fashionable lady asks to live without breathing for many years!

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"The ancient Stoics taught that the nearest approach to apathy was the perfection of their doctrine. They prudently rested in utter indifference; they did not attempt to go beyond it; they did not claim absolute denial of all suffering; still less did they enjoin to persist and rejoice in it, even to the 'dividing asunder of soul and body.' In this, too, you will perceive the tight-laced lady taking a flight beyond the sublime philosopher. She will not admit that she feels the slightest inconvenience. Though she has fairly won laurels to which no Stoic dared aspire, yet she studiously disclaims the distinction which she faced death to earn—yea, denies that she has either part of lot in the matter; surpassing in modesty, as well as in desert, all that antiquity can boast or history record."

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We quote the following from Miss Sedgwick: "One word as to these small waists: Symmetry is essential to beauty of form. A waist disproportionately small is a deformity to an instructed eye. Women must have received their notions of small waists from ignorant dress-makers. If young ladies could hear the remarks made on these small waists by men generally, and especially men of taste, they would never again show themselves till they had loosened their corset-laces and enlarged their belts."



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LETTER-WRITING.

It sometimes happens that, in fashionable penmanship, the circumstance that it is *to be deciphered* seems to have been forgotten. "To read so as not to be understood, and to write so as not to be read, are among the minor immoralities," says the excellent Mrs. Hannah More. Elegant chirography, and a clear epistolary style, are accomplishments which every educated female should possess. Their indispensable requisites are, neatness, the power of being easily perused, orthographical and grammatical correctness. Defects in either of these particulars, are scarcely pardonable. The hand-writing is considered by many, one of the talismans of character. Whether this test may be depended on or not, the fact that letters travel farther than the sound of the voice, or the sight of the countenance can follow, renders it desirable that they should convey no incorrect or unfavorable impression. The lesser niceties of folding, sealing, and superscription, are not beneath the notice of a lady.

Letter-writing is a subject of so varied and extensive a nature, that it can scarcely be reduced to rules or taught by precept; but some instructions respecting it may afford assistance in avoiding error, and obtaining a degree of excellence in this most important exercise.

When you write a letter to any person, express the same sentiments and use the same language

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as you would do if you were conversing with him. "Write eloquently," says Mr. Gray, "that is, from your heart, in such expressions as that will furnish."

Before you begin a letter, especially when it is on any occasion of importance, weigh well in your own mind the design and purport of it; and consider very attentively what sentiments are most proper for you to express, and your correspondent to read.

To assist invention and promote order, it may, as some writers on epistolary composition recommend, occasionally be of use to make, in the mind, a division of a letter into three parts, the beginning, middle, and end; or, in other words, the exordium or introduction, the narration or proposition, and the conclusion. The exordium, or introduction, should be employed, not indeed with the formality of rhetoric, but with the ease of genuine politeness and benevolence, in conciliating favor and attention; the narration or proposition, in stating the business with clearness and precision; the conclusion, in confirming what has been premised, in making apologies where any are necessary, and in cordial expressions of respect, esteem, or affection.

Scrupulously adhere to the rules of grammar. Select and apply all your words with a strict regard to their proper signification, and whenever you have any doubts respecting the correctness or propriety of them, consult a dictionary or some good living authority. Avoid, with particular care, all errors in orthography, in punctuation, and in the arrangement of words and phrases. [70]

Dashes, underlinings, and interlineations, are much used by unskillful and careless writers, merely as substitutes for proper punctuation, and a correct, regular mode of expression. The frequent recurrence of them greatly defaces a letter, and is equally inconsistent with neatness of appearance and regularity of composition. All occasion for interlineations may usually be superseded by a little previous thought and attention. Dashes are proper only when the sense evidently requires a greater pause than the common stops designate. And in a well-constructed sentence, to underline a word is wholly useless, except on some very particular occasion we wish to attract peculiar attention to it, or to give it an uncommon degree of importance or emphasis.

Postscripts have a very awkward appearance, and they generally indicate thoughtlessness and inattention. To make use of them in order to convey assurances of respect to the person to whom you write, or to those who are intimately connected with him, is particularly improper; it seems to imply that the sentiments you express are so slightly impressed upon your mind, that you had almost forgotten them or thought them scarcely worth mentioning.

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MUSIC.

This accomplishment, so popular at the present time, is a source of surpassing delight to many minds. From its power to soothe the feelings and modify the passions, it seems desirable to understand it, if it does not involve too great expense of time. Vocal music is an accomplishment within the reach of most persons. "I have a piano within myself," said a little girl, "and I can play on that, if I have no other."

An excellent clergyman, possessing much knowledge of human nature, instructed his large family of daughters in the theory and practice of music. They were all observed to be exceedingly amiable and happy. A friend inquired if there was any secret in his mode of education. He replied, "When any thing disturbs their temper, I say to them *sing*; and, if I hear them speaking against any person, I call them to sing to me, and so they have sung away all causes of discontent, and every disposition to scandal." Such a use of this accomplishment might serve to fit a family for the company of angels and the clime of praise. Young voices around the domestic altar, breathing sacred music at the hour of morning and evening devotions, are a sweet and touching accompaniment.

Instrumental music, being more expensive in its attainment, both of money and time, and its indifferent performance giving pain to those of refined sensibility, seems scarcely desirable to be cultivated, unless the impulse of native taste prompts or justifies the labor. The spirited pen of Miss Martineau, in her "Five First Years of Youth," has sketched a pleasing description of a young lady, possessing a strong predilection for music. "She sang much and often, not that she had any particular aim at being very accomplished, but because she loved it, or, as she said, because she could not help it. She sang to Nurse Rickham's children; she sang as she went up and down stairs; she sang when she was glad, and when she was sorry; when her father was at home, because he liked it; and when he was out, because he could not be disturbed by it. In the woods, at noonday, she sang like a bird, that a bird might answer her; and, if she awoke in the dark night, the feeling of solemn music came over her, with which she dared not break the silence." [72]

Where such a taste exists, there is no doubt that opportunities for its improvement should be gladly accepted. Where there is no taste, it seems cause of regret, when time, perhaps health, are sacrificed to the accomplishment. Even where a tolerable performance of instrumental music might probably be attained, without the prompting of decided taste, there may be danger of absorbing too much of time and attention from those employments which a female ought to

FLOWERS.

"Who does not love a flower
 Its hues are taken from the light
 Which summer's suns fling, pure and bright,
 In scatter'd and prismatic hues,
 That smile and shine in drooping dews;
 Its fragrance from the sweetest air—
 Its form from all that's light and fair—
 Who does not love a flower?"

In the two great floral kingdoms of nature, the botanical and the human, if we must yield the palm to that which is alike transcendent in the beauty of form and motion, and in the higher attributes of intelligence, innocence, and rural perfection, yet it can be no derogation to admire, with a rapture bordering upon enthusiasm, the splendid products of the garden; and especially when their beauties are combined and arranged with an exquisite and refined taste. What is the heart made of which can find no sentiment in flowers! In the dahlia, for example, we see what can be done by human skill and art, in educating and training a simple and despised plant, scarcely thought worthy of cultivation, to the highest rank of gayety and glory in the aristocracy of flowers. We may learn, from such success, a lesson of encouragement, in the education and training of flowers, of an infinitely higher value and perfection.

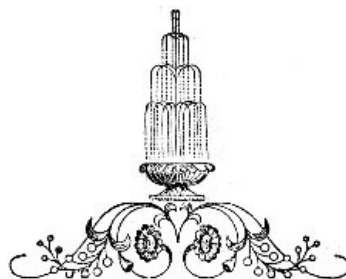
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The vast creation of God—the centre and source of good—is every where radiant with beauty. From the shell that lies buried in the depths of the ocean, to the twinkling star that floats in the more profound depths of the firmament—through all the forms of material and animated existence, beauty, beauty, beauty prevails! In the floral kingdom, it appears in an infinite variety—in an unstinted and even a richer profusion than in other departments of nature. While these contributions are thrown out so lavishly at our feet, and a taste for flowers seems almost an instinct of nature, and is one of the most innocent and refined sentiments which we can cultivate, let us indulge and gratify it to the utmost extent, whenever leisure, opportunity, and fortune give us the means. There is no danger of an excess, under those reasonable restrictions which all our sentiments demand.

"But," says some cynical objector, "flowers are only to please the eye." And why should not the eye be pleased? What sense may be more innocently gratified? They are among the most simple and cheapest luxuries in which we ever indulge.

The taste for flowers—every where increasing among us—is an omen of good. Let us adorn our parlors, door-ways, yards, and road-sides with trees, and shrubs, and flowers. What a delight do they give to the passer-by! What favorable impressions do they, at once, excite towards those who cultivate them for their own gratification, and find, after all, their chief pleasure in the gratification which they afford to others! What an affecting charm—associated as it is with some of the best sentiments of our nature—do they give to the sad dwelling-places of the departed and beloved!

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TIME.

"I saw the leaves gliding down a brook;
 Swift the brook ran, and bright the sun burned:
 The sere and the verdant, the same course they took—
 And sped gayly and fast—but they never returned.

And I thought how the years of a man pass away—
Threescore and ten—and then where are they?"

"Threescore years and ten," thought I to myself, as I walked, one rainy morning, as a sailor walks the quarter-deck, up and down a short alcove, extending before the windows of a modern house. It was one of those days in June, in which our summer-hopes take umbrage at what we call unseasonable weather, though no season was ever known to pass without them. Unlike the rapid and delightful showers of warmer days, suddenly succeeding to the sunshine, when the parched vegetables and arid earth seize with avidity, and imbibe the moisture ere it becomes unpleasant to our feelings, there had fallen a drizzling rain throughout the night; the saturated soil returned to the atmosphere the humidity it could no longer absorb; and there it hung, in chilling thickness, between rain and fog. The birds did not sing, and the flowers did not open, for the cold drop was on their cheek, and no sunbeam was there to expand them. Nature itself wore the garb of sadness, and man's too dependent spirits were ready to assume it—those, at least, that were not so happy as to find means of forgetting it. Such was the case with my unfortunate self.

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I had descended to the breakfast-room, at the usual hour, but no one appeared; I looked for a book, but found none but an almanac. The books were kept in the library—beyond all dispute their proper place, had I not been in a humor to think otherwise. The house was too hot, and the external air was too cold; and I was fain to betake myself to that last resort of the absolutely idle—a mechanical movement of the body up and down a given space. And, from the alcove where I walked, I heard the ticking of the timepiece; and, as I passed the window, I saw the hands advance; every time I had returned, they had gone a little farther. "Threescore years and ten," said I to myself; "and a third or fourth of it is nature's claim for indispensable repose—and many a day consumed on the bed of sickness—and many a year by the infirmities of age—and some part of all necessarily sacrificed to the recruiting of the health by exercise. And what do we with the rest?" Nothing answered me but the ticking of the clock, of which the hands were traversing between eight and nine. They had nearly met, at the appointed hour, when the party began to assemble within; and each one commenced, for aught I could discover, the functions of the day, for neither their appearance nor their remarks gave any intimation that they had been previously employed. One, indeed, declared the weather made her so idle she had scarcely found strength to dress herself; another confessed he had passed an additional hour in bed, because the day promised him so little to do up. One by one, as they dropped in, the seats at the breakfast-table were filled; and, as a single newspaper was all the apparent means of mental occupation, I anticipated some interesting conversation.

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I waited and I watched. One ran the point of his fork into the table-cloth; another balanced her spoon on the tea-cup; a third told backwards and forwards the rings on her fingers, as duly as a friar tells his beads. As such actions sometimes are the symptoms of mental occupation, I began to anticipate the brilliant results of so much thinking. I cried, hem! in hopes to rouse them to expression—and not quite unsuccessfully: for one remarked, it was a wretched day; another wished it was fine; and a third hoped it shortly would be so. Meantime, the index of the clock went round; it was gaining close upon ten before all had withdrawn from the table. My eye followed one to the window-place; where, with her back to the wall, and her eyes fixed without, she passed a full half hour in gazing at the prospect without, or wishing, perhaps, the mist did not prevent her seeing it. A very young lady was so busy in pulling the dead leaves from a geranium, and crumbling them in her fingers, I could not doubt but some important purpose was in the task. A third resumed the newspaper he had read for a whole hour before, and betook himself, at last, to the advertisements. A fourth repaired to the alcove, gathered some flowers, picked them to pieces, threw them away again, and returned. "Cease thy prating, thou never-resting time-piece!" said I to myself, "for no one heeds thy tale. What is it to us that each one of thy tickings cuts a link from our brief chain of life? Time is the gift of Heaven, but man has no use for it!"

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I had scarcely thought out the melancholy reflection, when a young lady entered with an elegant work-box, red without and blue within, and filled with manifold conveniences for the pursuance of her art. Glad was I most truly at the sight. By the use of the needle, the naked may be clothed; ingenuity may economize her means, and have more to spare for those who need it; invention may multiply the ways of honest subsistence, and direct the ignorant to the use of them. Most glad was I, therefore, that the signal of industry drew more than one wanderer to the same pursuit, though not till much time had been consumed in going in and out, and up and down, in search of the materials. All were found at last; the party worked, and I, as usual, listened. "I think this trimming," said one, "will repay me for my trouble, though it has cost me three months' work already, and it will be three months more before it is finished." "Indeed!" rejoined her friend; "I wish I were half as industrious; but I have been working six weeks at this handkerchief, and have not had time to finish it: now the fashion is passed, and I shall not go on." "How beautifully you are weaving that necklace! Is it not very tedious?" "Yes, almost endless; but I delight in the work, otherwise I should not do it, for the beads cost almost as much as I could buy it for." "I should like to begin one this morning," interposed a fourth, "but the milliner has sent home my bonnet so ill-trimmed, it will take me all the day to alter it: the bow is on the wrong side, and the trimming on the edge is too broad. It is very tiresome to spend all one's life in altering things we pay so much for." "I wish," said a little girl at the end of the table, "that I might work some trimmings for my frock, but I am obliged to do this plain work first. The poor lame girl in the village, who is almost starving, would do it for me for a shilling, but I must save my allowance this week to buy a French trinket I have taken a fancy to." "Poor thing! she is much to be pitied," said the lady of the trimming; "if I had time, I would make her some clothes."

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And so they worked, and so they talked, till I and the time-piece had counted many an hour which they took no account of, when one of them yawned, and said, "How tedious are these wet days; it is really impossible to spin out one's time without a walk." "I am surprised you find it so," rejoined the lady of the beads; "I can rarely take time for walking, though keeping the house makes me miserably languid."

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And so the morning passed. It was nearly two o'clock, and the company dispersed to their apartments. I pretend not to know what they did there; but each one returned between three and four in an altered dress. And then half an hour elapsed, in which, as I understood from their impatience, they were waiting for dinner; each in turn complaining of the waste of time occasioned by its delay, and the little use it would be to go about any thing when it was so near. And as soon as dinner was over, they began to wait for tea with exactly the same complainings. And the tea came, and, cheered by the vivifying draught, one did repair to the instrument, and began a tune; one did take up a pencil, and prepare to draw; and one almost opened a book. But, alas! the shades of night were growing fast:—ten minutes had scarcely elapsed, before each one resigned her occupation, with a murmur at the darkness of the weather; and, though some persons suggested that there were such things as lamps and candles, it was agreed to be a pity to have lights so early in the midst of summer, and so another half hour escaped.

The lights, when they came, would have failed to relumine an expectation in my bosom, had not their beams disclosed the forms of various books, which one and another had brought in for the evening's amusement. Again I watched and again I listened. "I wish I had something to do, mamma," said the little girl. "Why do you not take a book, and read?" rejoined her mother. "My books are all up stairs," she replied; "and it is so near bedtime, it is not worth while to bring them down." "This is the best novel I ever read," said a lady, somewhat older, turning the leaves over so very fast, that those who are not used to this manner of reading, might suppose she found nothing in it worthy of attention. "I dare say it is," said another, whose eyes had been fixed for half an hour on the same page of Wordsworth's Poems; "but I have no time to read novels." "I wish I had time to read any thing," said a third, whom I had observed already to have been perusing attentively the title-page of every book on the table, publisher's name, date, and all; while a fourth was too intensely engaged in studying the blue cover of a magazine, to make any remark whatever.

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And now I was much amused to perceive with what frequency eyes were turned upon the dial-plate, through all the day so little regarded. Watches were drawn out, compared, and pronounced too slow. With some difficulty, one was found that had outrun its fellows, and, determined to be right, gave permission to the company to disperse, little more than twelve hours from the time of their assembling, to recover, as I supposed, during the other twelve, dressing and undressing included, the effect of their mental and bodily exertions.

"So!" I exclaimed, as soon as I found myself alone, "twelve times round yonder dial-plate those little hands have stolen, and twelve times more they may now go round unheeded. They who are gone to rest, have a day less to live, and record has been made in heaven of that day's use. Will He who gave, ask no reckoning for his gifts? The time, the thoughts, the talents; the improvement we might have made, and made not; the good we might have done, and did not; the health, and strength, and intellect, that may not be our's to-morrow, and have not been used to-day; will not conscience whisper of it ere they sleep to-night? The days of man were shortened upon earth by reason of the wickedness the Creator saw. Threescore years and ten are now his portion, and often not half the number. They pause not; they loiter not: the hours strike on, and they may even go, for it seems they are all too much."

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The young, with minds as yet unstored, full of error, full of ignorance in all that it behooves them most to know, unfit alike as yet for earth or heaven—the old, whose sum of life is almost told, and but a brief space remaining to repair their mistakes and redeem the time they have lost—the simple and ungifted, who, having from nature but little, need the more assiduity to fulfill their measure of usefulness, and make that little do the most it may—the clever and highly talented, who have an almost appalling account to render for the much received—they all have time to waste. But let them remember, time is not their own; not a moment of it; but is the grant of Heaven; and Heaven gives nothing without a purpose and an end. Every hour that is wasted, fails of that purpose; and in so far as it is wasted or ill-spent, the gift of Heaven is misused, and the misuse is to be answered for. Methinks I would be allowed to whisper nightly in the ears of my young friends as they lie down to rest, "How many minutes have you lost to-day, that might have been employed in your own improvement, in our Maker's service, or for your fellow-creature's good?"

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NOVEL-READING.

Novel-reading produces a morbid appetite for excitement. The object of the novelist, generally, is to produce the highest possible degree of excitement, both of the mind and the passions. The object is very similar to that of intoxicating liquors on the body: hence, the confirmed novel-reader becomes a kind of *literary inebriate*, to whom the things of *entity* have no attractions, and whose thirst cannot be slaked, even with the water of life. And as intoxication enfeebles the body, and engenders indolent habits, so this unnatural stimulus enfeebles the intellectual powers, induces mental indolence, and unfits the mind for vigorous efforts. Nothing less stimulating than its accustomed aliment can rouse such a mind to action, or call forth its energies; and then, being under the influence of mental intoxication, which dethrones reason and destroys the power of self-control, they are always misdirected.

It also promotes a sickly sensibility. Dr. Brigham, speaking of the too powerful excitement of the female mind, says: "In them the nervous system naturally predominates. They are endowed with quicker sensibility and far more active imagination than men. Their emotions are more intense, and their senses alive to more delicate impressions. They therefore require great attention, lest this exquisite sensibility—which, when properly and naturally developed, constitutes the greatest excellence of woman—should either become excessive by too strong excitement, or suppressed by misdirected education." Novel-reading produces just the kind of excitement calculated to develop this excessive and diseased sensibility; and the effect is, to fill the mind with imaginary fears, and produce excessive alarm and agitation at the prospect of danger, the sight of distress, or the presence of unpleasant objects; while no place is found for the exercise of genuine sympathy for real objects of compassion. That sensibility which weeps over imaginary woes of imaginary beings, calls forth but imaginary sympathy. It is too refined to be excited by the *vulgar* objects of compassion presented in real life, or too excitable to be of any avail in the relief of real distress. It may faint at the sight of blood, but it will shrink back from binding up the wound. If you wish to become weak-headed, nervous, and good for nothing, read novels. I have seen an account of a young lady, who had become so nervous and excitable, in consequence of reading novels, that her head would be turned by the least appearance of danger, real or imaginary. As she was riding in a carriage over a bridge, in company with her mother and sister, she became frightened at some fancied danger, caught hold of the reins, and backed the carriage off the bridge, down a precipice, dashing them to pieces.

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This excessive sensibility renders its possessor exquisitely alive to all those influences which are unfriendly to human happiness, while it diminishes the power of endurance. Extreme sensibility, especially in a female, is a great misfortune, rendering the ills of life insupportable. Great care should therefore be taken that, while genuine sensibility is cherished, its extremes should be avoided, and the mind fortified by strengthening the higher powers.

Novel-reading strengthens the passions, weakens the virtues, and diminishes the power of self-control. Multitudes may date their ruin from the commencement of this kind of reading; and many more, who have been rescued from the snare, will regret, to the end of their days, its influence in the early formation of their character.

It is, too, a great waste of time. Few will pretend that they read novels with any higher end in view than *mere amusement*; while, by the strong excitement they produce, they impose a heavier tax on both mind and body than any other species of mental effort. If any thing valuable is to be derived from them, it can be obtained with far less expense of time, and with safety to the morals, from other sources. No Christian, who feels the obligation of "redeeming the time, because the days are evil," will fail to feel the force of this remark. We have no more right to squander our time and waste our energies in frivolous pursuits, than we have to waste our money in extravagant expenditures. We are as much the stewards of God in respect to the one as the other.

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FEMALE ROMANCE.

Most women are inclined to be romantic. This tendency is not confined to the young or to the beautiful, to the intellectual or to the refined. Every woman, capable of strong feeling, is susceptible of romance; and, though its degree may depend on external circumstances, or education, or station, or excitement, it generally exists, and requires only a stimulus for its development.

Romance indeed contributes much to the charm of the female character. Without some degree of it, no woman can be interesting; and, though its excess is a weakness, and one which receives but little indulgence, there is nothing truly generous and disinterested which does not imply its existence. It is that poetry of sentiment which imparts to character or incident something of the beautiful or the sublime; which elevates us to a higher sphere; which gives an ardor to affection, a life to thought, a glow to imagination; and which lends so warm and sunny a hue to the portraiture of life, that it ceases to appear the vulgar, and cold, and dull, and monotonous reality, which common sense alone would make it.

But it is this opposition, between romance and sobriety, that excites so strong a prejudice against the former: it is associated, in the minds of many, with folly alone. A romantic, silly girl, is the object of their contempt; and they so recoil from this personification of sentiment, that their chief object seems to be to divest themselves altogether of its delusion. Life is to them a mere calculation; expediency is their maxim; propriety their rule; profit, ease, or comfort their aim; and they have at least this advantage, that while minds of higher tone and hearts of superior sensibility are often harassed and wounded, and even withered, in their passage through life, they proceed in their less adventurous career, neither chilled by the coldness, nor sickened by the meanness, nor disappointed by the selfishness of the world. They virtually admit, though they often theoretically deny, the baseness of human nature; and, strangers to disinterestedness themselves, they do not expect to meet with it in others. They are content with a low degree of enjoyment, and are thus exempted from much poignant suffering; and it is only when the casualties of life interfere with their individual ease, that we can perceive that they are not altogether insensible. [90]

A good deal of this phlegmatic disposition exists in many who are capable of higher feeling. Such persons are so afraid of sensibility, that they repress in themselves every thing that savors of it; and, though we may occasionally detect it in the mounting flush, or in the glistening tear, or in the half-stifled sigh, it is in vain that we endeavor to elicit any more explicit avowal. They are ashamed even of what they do betray; and one would imagine that the imputation of sensibility were almost a reflection on their character. They must not feel, or, at least, they must not allow that they feel; for feeling has led so many persons wrong, that decorum can be preserved, they think, only by indifference. And they end in being really as callous as they wish to appear, and stifle emotion so successfully, that at length it ceases to give them uneasiness. [91]

Such is often the case with many who pass through life with great decorum; and though women have naturally more sensibility than the other sex, they, too, sometimes consider its indulgence altogether wrong. Yet, if its excess is foolish, it is surely a mistake to attempt to suppress it altogether; for such attempt will either produce a dangerous revulsion, or, if successful, will spoil the character. One would rather almost that a woman were ever so romantic, than that she always thought, and felt, and spoke by rule; and should deem it preferable that her sensibility brought upon her occasional distress, than that she always calculated the degree of her feeling.

Life has its romance, and to this it owes much of its charm. It is not that every woman is a heroine and every individual history a novel; but there are scenes and incidents in real life so peculiar, and so poetic, that we need not be indebted to fiction for the development of romance. Christians will trace such scenes and incidents immediately to Providence, and they do so with [92]

affectionate and confiding hearts; and the more affecting or remarkable these may be, the more clearly do they recognize the Divine interference. They regard them as remembrances of Heaven, to recall to them their connection with it, and remind them that whatever there may be to interest or excite their feelings here, there is infinitely more to affect and warm their hearts in the glorious prospects beyond.

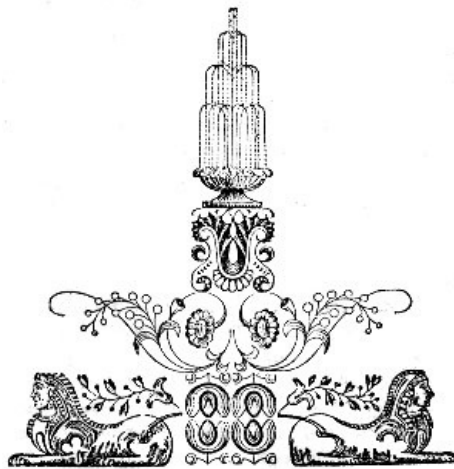
It is natural that women should be very susceptible to such impressions; that they should view life with almost a poetic eye; and that they should be peculiarly sensitive to its vicissitudes. And though a Quixotic quest after adventures is as silly as it is vain, and to invest every trifle with importance, or to see something marvelous in every incident, is equally absurd; there is no reason why the imagination should not grasp whatever is picturesque, and the mind dwell upon whatever is impressive, and the heart warm with whatever is affecting, in the changes and the chances of our pilgrimage. There is indeed a great deal of what is mean and low in all that is connected with this world; quite enough to sully the most glowing picture; but let us sometimes view life with its golden tints; let us sometimes taste its ambrosial dews; let us sometimes breathe its more ethereal atmosphere; and let us do so, not as satisfied with any thing it can afford—not as entranced by any of its illusions—but as those who catch, even in this dull mirror, a shadowy delineation of a brighter world, and who pant for what is pure, celestial, and eternal. This is surely better than clipping the wings of imagination, or restraining the impulses of feeling, or reducing all our joys and sorrows to mere matters of calculation or of sense.

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They are indeed to be pitied who are in the opposite extreme—whose happiness or misery is entirely ideal; but we have within us such a capacity for both, independent of all outward circumstances, and such a power of extracting either from every circumstance, that it is surely more wise to discipline such a faculty, than to disallow its influence.

Youth is of course the season for romance. Its buoyant spirit must soar till weighed down by earthly care. It is in youth that the feelings are warm and the fancy fresh, and that there has been no blight to chill the one or to wither the other. And it is in youth that hope lends its cheering ray, and love its genial influence; that our friends smile upon us, our companions do not cross us, and our parents are still at hand to cherish us in their bosoms, and sympathize in all our young and ardent feelings. It is then that the world seems so fair, and our fellow-beings so kind, that we charge with spleen any who would prepare us for disappointment, and accuse those of misanthropy who would warn our too-confiding hearts. And though, in maturer life, we may smile at the romance of youth, and lament, perhaps, its aberrations, yet we shall not regret the depth of our young emotions, the disinterestedness of our young affections, and that enthusiasm of purpose, which, alas! we soon grow too wise to cherish.

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BEHAVIOR TO GENTLEMEN.

What a pity it is that the thousandth chance of a gentleman's becoming your lover should deprive you of the pleasure of a free, unembarrassed, intellectual intercourse with all the single men of your acquaintance! Yet, such is too commonly the case with young ladies who have read a great many novels and romances, and whose heads are always running on love and lovers.

Where, as in this country, there is a fair chance of every woman's being married who wishes it, the more things are left to their natural course the better. Where girls are brought up to be good daughters and sisters, to consider the development of their own intellectual and moral natures as the great business of life, and to view matrimony as a good, only when it comes unsought, and marked by such a fitness of things, inward and outward, as shows it to be one of the appointments of God, they will fully enjoy their years of single life, free from all anxiety about being established, and will generally be the first sought in marriage by the wise and good of the other sex; whereas those who are brought up to think the great business of life is to get married,

and who spend their lives in plans and manœuvres to bring it about, are the very ones who remain single, or, what is worse, make unhappy matches. [96]

Very young girls are apt to suppose, from what they observe in older ones, that there is some peculiar manner to be put on in talking to gentlemen, and not knowing exactly what it is, they are embarrassed and reserved; others observe certain airs and looks, used by their elders in this intercourse, and try to imitate them as a necessary part of company behavior, and so become affected, and lose that first of charms—simplicity, naturalness. To such I would say, your companions are in error; it requires no peculiar manner, nothing to be put on, in order to converse with gentlemen any more than with ladies; and the more pure and elevated your sentiments are, and the better cultivated your intellect is, the easier will you find it to converse pleasantly with all. If, however, you happen to have no facility in expressing yourself, and you find it very difficult to converse with persons whom you do not know well, you can still be an intelligent and agreeable listener, and you can show by your ready smile of sympathy that you would be sociable if you could. There is no reason in the world why any one, who is not unhappy, should sit in the midst of gay companions with a face so solemn and unmoved, that she should seem not to belong to the company; that she should look so glum and forbidding that strangers should feel repulsed, and her best friends disappointed. If you cannot look entertained and pleasant, you had better stay away, for politeness requires some expression of sympathy in the countenance, as much as a civil answer on the tongue. [97]

Never condescend to use any little arts or manœuvres to secure a pleasant beau at a party, or during an excursion; remember that a woman must always wait to be chosen, and "not unsought be won," even for an hour. When you are so fortunate as to be attended by the most agreeable gentleman present, do not make any effort to keep him entirely to yourself; that flatters him too much, and exposes you to be joked about.

How strange a thing it is, in the constitution of English and American society, that the subject, of all others the most important and the most delicate, should be that on which every body is most given to joke and banter their friends! Much mischief has been done by this coarse interference of the world, in what ought to be the most private and sacred of our earthly concerns; and every refined, delicate, and high-minded girl should set her face against it, and, by scrupulously refraining from such jokes herself, give no one a right to indulge in them at her expense.

As soon as young ladies go into general society, they are liable to receive attentions that indicate a particular regard, and, long before they are really old enough to form any such ties, they often receive matrimonial overtures; it is therefore highly necessary to know how to treat them. The offer of a man's heart and hand is the greatest compliment he can pay you, and, however undesirable to you those gifts may be, they should be courteously and kindly declined; and since a refusal is, to most men, not only a disappointment, but a mortification, it should always be prevented, if possible. Men have various ways of cherishing and declaring their attachment; those who indicate the bias of their feelings in many intelligible ways, before they make a direct offer, can generally be spared the pain of a refusal. If you do not mean to accept a gentleman who is paying you very marked attentions, you should avoid receiving him whenever you can; you should not allow him to escort you; you should show your displeasure when joked about him; and, if sounded by a mutual friend, let your want of reciprocal feelings be very apparent. [98]

You may, however, be taken entirely by surprise, because there are men who are so secret in these matters that they do not let even the object of their affections suspect their preference, until they suddenly declare themselves lovers and suitors. In such a case as that, you will need all your presence of mind, or the hesitation produced by surprise may give rise to false hopes. If you have any doubt upon the matter, you may fairly ask time to consider of it, on the grounds of your never having thought of the gentleman in the light of a lover before; but, if you are resolved against the suit, endeavor to make your answer so decided as to finish the affair at once. Inexperienced girls sometimes feel so much the pain they are inflicting, that they use phrases which feed a lover's hopes; but this is mistaken tenderness; your answer should be as decided as it is courteous. [99]

Whenever an offer is made in writing, you should reply to it as soon as possible; and, having in this case none of the embarrassment of a personal interview, you can make such a careful selection of words as will best convey your meaning. If the person is estimable, you should express your sense of his merit, and your gratitude for his preference, in strong terms; and put your refusal of his hand on the score of your not feeling for him that peculiar preference necessary to the union he seeks. This makes a refusal as little painful as possible, and soothes the feelings you are obliged to wound. The gentleman's letter should be returned in your reply, and your lips should be closed upon the subject for ever afterwards. It is his secret, and you have no right to tell it to any one; but, if your parents are your confidential friends on all other occasions, he will not blame you for telling them.

Never think the less of a man because he has been refused, even if it be by a lady whom you do not highly value. It is nothing to his disadvantage. In exercising their prerogative of making the first advances, the wisest will occasionally make great mistakes, and the best will often be drawn into an affair of this sort against their better judgment, and both are but too happy if they escape with only the pain of being refused. So far from its being any reason for not accepting a wise and good man when he offers himself to you, it should only increase your thankfulness to the overruling providence of God, which reserved him for you, through whose instrumentality he is still free to choose. [100]

There is no sure remedy for disappointed affection but vital religion; that giving of the heart to God which enables a disciple to say, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none on earth that I desire in comparison of Thee." The cure for a wounded heart, which piety affords, is so complete, that it makes it possible for the tenderest and most constant natures to love again. When a character is thus disciplined and matured, its sympathies will be called forth only by superior minds; and, if a kindred spirit presents itself as a partner for life, and is accepted, the union is likely to be such as to make the lady rejoice that her former predilection was overruled.



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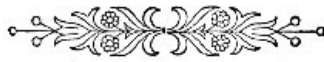
MARRIAGE.

Some young persons indulge a fastidiousness of feeling in relation to this subject, as though it were indelicate to speak of it. Others make it the principal subject of their thoughts and conversation; yet they seem to think it must never be mentioned but in jest. Both these extremes should be avoided. Marriage is an ordinance of God, and therefore a proper subject of thought and discussion, with reference to personal duty. It is a matter of great importance, having a direct bearing upon the glory of God and the happiness of individuals. It should, therefore, never be approached with levity. But, as it requires no more attention than what is necessary in order to understand present duty, it would be foolish to make it a subject of constant thought, and silly to make it a common topic of conversation. It is a matter which should be weighed deliberately and seriously by every young person. It was ordained by the Lord at the creation, as suited to the state of man as a social being, and necessary to the design for which he was created. There is a sweetness and comfort in the bosom of one's own family which can be enjoyed no where else. In early life this is supplied by our youthful companions, who feel in unison with us. But as a person who remains single, advances in life, the friends of his youth form new attachments, in which he is incapable of participating. Their feelings undergo a change, of which he knows nothing. He is gradually left alone. No heart beats in unison with his own. His social feelings wither for want of an object. As he feels not in unison with those around him, his habits also become peculiar, and perhaps repulsive, so that his company is not desired; hence arises the whimsical attachments of such persons to domestic animals, or to other objects that can be enjoyed in solitude. As the dreary winter of age advances, the solitude of this condition becomes still more chilling. Nothing but that sweet resignation to the will of God, which religion gives, under all circumstances, can render such a situation tolerable. But religion does not annihilate the social affections; it only regulates them. It is evident, then, by a lawful and proper exercise of these affections, both our happiness and usefulness may be greatly increased.

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On the other hand, do not consider marriage as *absolutely essential*. Although it is an ordinance of God, yet he has not absolutely enjoined it upon all. You *may*, therefore, be in the way of duty while neglecting it. And the apostle Paul intimates that there may be, with those who enter this state, a greater tendency of heart toward earthly objects. There is also an increase of care. "The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy, both in body and spirit; but she that is married, careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband." But much more has been made of this than the apostle intended. It has been greatly perverted and abused by the church of Rome. It must be observed that, in the same chapter, he advises that "every man have his own wife and every woman her own husband." And, whatever may be our condition in life, if we seek it with earnestness and perseverance, God will give us grace sufficient for the day. But, he says, though it is no sin to marry, nevertheless, "such shall have trouble in the flesh." It is undoubtedly true that the enjoyments of conjugal life have their corresponding difficulties and trials; and if these are enhanced by an unhappy connection, the situation is insufferable. For this reason, I would have you avoid the conclusion that marriage is indispensable to happiness. Single life is certainly to be preferred to a connection with a person who will diminish instead of increase your happiness. However, the remark of the apostle, "such shall have trouble in the flesh," doubtless had reference chiefly to the peculiar troubles of the times, when Christians were exposed to persecutions, the loss of goods, and even of life itself, for Christ's sake; the trials of which would be much greater in married than in single life.

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MARRIAGE HYMN.

Not for the summer hour alone,
When skies resplendent shine,
And youth and pleasure fill the throne,
Our hearts and hands we join;

But for those stern and wintry days
Of sorrow, pain, and fear,
When Heaven's wise discipline doth make
Our earthly journey drear.

Not for this span of life alone,
Which like a blast doth fly,
And, as the transient flower of grass,
Just blossom—droop, and die;

But for a being without end,
This vow of love we take;
Grant us, O God! one home at last,
For our Redeemer's sake.



FEMALE INFLUENCE.

Writers of fiction have not unfrequently selected this topic as the theme for poetry and romance; they have extolled woman as the being whose eloquence was to soften all the asperities of man, and polish the naturally rugged surface of his character; charming away his sternness by her grace; refining his coarseness by her elegance and purity; and offering in her smiles a reward sufficient to compensate for the hazards of any enterprise. But while the self-complacency and vanity of many of our sex have been nourished by such idle praise, how few have been awakened to a just sense of the deep responsibility which rests upon us, for the faithful improvement of this talent, and our consequent accountability for its neglect or perversion!

It were not a little amusing, if it were not so melancholy, to listen to the reasoning employed by many ladies, in evading any charges of non-improvement of this trust. She who perhaps but a moment before may have listened with the utmost self-complacency to the flattering strains of the poet, who had invested her sex with every charm calculated to render them ministering angels to ruder and sterner man, no sooner finds herself addressed as the possessor of a talent, implying responsibility, and imposing self-exertion and self-denial in its exercise, than she instantly disclaims, with capricious diffidence, all pretensions to influence over others. But we cannot avert accountability by disclaiming its existence; neither will the disavowal of the possession of a talent alter the constitution of our nature, which God has so formed and so fitted to produce impressions in, and receive them from, kindred minds, that it is impossible for us to *exist* without exerting a continual and daily influence over others; either of a pernicious or salutary character.

"Woman," to use the words of an accomplished living writer, "has been sent on a higher mission than man; it may be a more arduous, a more difficult one. It is to manifest and bring to a full development certain attributes which belong, it is true, to our common nature, but which, owing to man's peculiar relation to the external world, he could not so well bring to perfection. Man is sent forth to subdue the earth, to obtain command over the elements, to form political communities; and to him, therefore, belong the more hardy and austere virtues; and as they are made subservient to the relief of our physical wants, and as their results are more obvious to the senses, it is not surprising that they have acquired in his eyes an importance which does not in strictness belong to them. But humility, meekness, gentleness, love, are also important attributes of our nature, and it would present a sad and melancholy aspect without them. But let us ask, will man, with his present characteristic propensities, thrown much more than woman, by his

immediate duties, upon material things; obliged to be conversant with objects of sense, and exposed to the rude conflicts which this leads to; will he bring out these virtues in their *full* beauty and strength? We think not—even with the assistance which religion promises. These principles, with many others linked with them, have been placed more particularly in the keeping of woman; her social condition being evidently more favorable to their full development."

Let us ever remember that every aggregate number, however great, is composed of units; and of course, were *each* American female but faithful to her God, to her family, and to her country, then would a mighty, sanctified influence go forth through the wide extent of our beloved land, diffusing moral health and vigor through every part, and strengthening it for the endurance of greater trials than have as yet menaced its existence. A spirit of insubordination and rebellion to lawful authority pervades our land; and where are these foes effectually to be checked, if not at their fountain head—in the nursery? Oh! if every American mother had but labored faithfully in that sacred inclosure, from the period of our revolutionary struggle, by teaching her children the great lesson of practical obedience to parental authority; then would submission to constituted authority, as well as to the will of God, have been far more prevalent in our land, and the whole aspect of her affairs would have been widely different. [108]

How much more honorable to woman is such a position, than that in which some modern reformers have endeavored to place her, or rather *force* her. Instead of seeking hopelessly, and in direct opposition to the delicacy of her sex, to obtain for her political privileges; instead of bringing her forward as the competitor of man in the public arena; we would mark out for her a sphere of duty that is widely different. In the domestic circle, "her station should be at man's side, to comfort, to encourage, to assist;" while, in the Christian temple, we would assign her an ennobling, but a feminine part,—to be the guardian of the sacred and spiritual fire, which is ever to be kept alive in its purity and brilliancy on the altar of God. She should be the vestal virgin in the Christian temple—the priestess, as it were, of a shrine more hallowed and honorable than that of Delphos.



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A DIFFICULT QUESTION.

I remember, many years ago, to have occupied the corner of a window-seat, in a small but very elegant house in Montague-square, during a morning visit—more interesting than such visits usually are, because there was something to talk about. The ladies who met, had each a child, I believe an only girl, just of the age when mothers begin to ask every body, and tell every body, how their children are to be educated. The daughter of the house, the little Jemima, was sitting by my side; a delicate little creature, with something very remarkable in her expression. The broad projecting brow seemed too heavy for its underwork; and by its depression, gave a look of sadness to the countenance, till excited animation raised the eye, beaming vivacity and strength. The sallow paleness of the complexion was so entirely in unison with the features, and the stiff dark locks which surrounded them, it was difficult to say whether it was, or was not, improved by the color that came and went every time she was looked at or spoken of. I was, on this occasion, a very attentive listener: for, being not yet a woman, it was very essential to me to learn what sort of a one I had better be; and many, indeed, were my counter-resolutions, as the following debate proceeded: [110]

"You are going to send your daughter to school I hear?" said Mrs. A., after some discourse of other matters.

Mrs. W. replied, "Really, I have not quite determined; I scarcely know what to do for the best. I am only anxious that she should grow up like other girls; for of all things in the world, I have the greatest horror of a woman of talent. I had never thought to part from her, and am still averse to sending her from home; but she is so excessively fond of books, I can get her to do nothing else but learn; she is as grave and sensible as a little woman. I think, if she were among other girls, she would perhaps get fond of play, and be more like a child. I wish her to grow up a quiet, domestic girl, and not too fond of learning. I mean her to be accomplished; but, at present, I cannot make her distinguish one tune from another."

Mrs. A. answered, "Indeed! we differ much in this respect. I am determined to make Fanny a superior woman, whatever it may cost me. Her father is of the same mind; he has a perfect horror of silly, empty-headed women; all our family are literary; Fanny will have little fortune, but

we can afford to give her every advantage in her education, the best portion we can leave her. I would rather see her distinguished for talents, than for birth or riches. We have acted upon this intention from her birth. She already reads well, but I am sorry to say she hates it, and never will open a book unless she is obliged; she shows no taste for any thing but making doll's clothes and spinning a top."

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At this moment a hearty laugh from little Fanny, who had set herself to play behind the curtain, drew my attention towards her. She was twice as big as my companion on the window-seat, though but a few months older; her broad, flat face, showed like the moon in its zenith, set in thin, silky hair: and with eyes as pretty as they could be, expressing neither thought nor feeling, but abundance of mirth and good-humor. The coloring of her cheek was beautiful; but one wished it gone sometimes, were it only for the pleasure of seeing it come again. The increasing seriousness of the conversation recalled my attention.

"I am surprised," Mrs. W. was saying, "at your wishes on the subject. I am persuaded a woman of great talent is neither so happy, so useful, nor so much beloved, as one or more ordinary powers."

"I should like to know why you think this," rejoined her friend; "it appears to me she should be much more so."

"My view of it is this," Mrs. W. replied: "a woman's sphere of usefulness, of happiness, and of affection, is a domestic circle; and even beyond it, all her task of life is to please and to be useful."

"In this we are quite agreed," said Mrs. A.; "but, since we are well set for an argument, let us have a little method in it. You would have your child useful, happy, and beloved, and so would I; but you think the means to this end, is to leave her mind uncultivated, narrow, and empty, and consequently weak."

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"This, is not my meaning," replied Mrs. W.; "there are many steps between stupidity and talent, ignorance and learning. I will suppose my child what I wish her to be, about as much taught as women in general, who are esteemed clever, well-mannered, and well-accomplished. I think it is all that can contribute to her happiness. If her mind is occupied, as you will say, with little things, those little things are sufficient to its enjoyment, and much more likely to be within her reach than the greater matters that fill greater minds. My less accomplished character will enjoy herself where your superior woman would go to sleep, or hopelessly wish she might. In short, she will find fellowship and reciprocation in every little mind she meets with, while yours is left to pine in the solitude of her own greatness."

At the close of this speech, I felt quite determined that I would not be such a woman.

Mrs. A. rejoined, "You have left my genius in a doleful condition, though I question whether you will persuade her to come down. I will admit, however, for I am afraid I must, that the woman of talent is less likely to find reciprocation, or to receive enjoyment from ordinary people and ordinary circumstances; but then she is like the camel that traverses the desert safely where others perish, because it carries its sustenance in its own bosom. I never remember to have heard a really sensible and cultivated woman complain of *ennui*, under any circumstances—no small balance on the side of enjoyment positive, is misery escaped. But, to leave jesting, admitting that the woman of more elevated mind derives less pleasure from the adventitious circumstances that surround her, from what money can purchase, and a tranquil mind enjoy, and activity gather, of the passing flowers of life—she has enjoyments, independent of them, in the treasures of her own intellect. Where she finds reciprocation, it is a delight of which the measure compensates the rareness; and where she finds nothing else to enjoy, she can herself. And when the peopled walks of life become a wilderness; and the assiduities of friendship rest unclaimed; and sensible gratifications are withered before the blight of poverty; and the foot is too weary, and the eye is too dim, to go after what no one remembers to bring; still are her resources untouched. Poverty cannot diminish her revenue, or friendlessness leave her unaccompanied, or privation of every external incitement consign her to the void of unoccupied powers. She will traverse the desert, for her store is with her; and if, as you have suggested, she be doomed to supply others what no one pays her back, there is One who has said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

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At this point of the discussion, I made up my mind to be a very sensible woman.

Mrs. W. resumed: "You will allow, of course, that selfish enjoyment is not the object of existence; and I think, on the score of usefulness, I shall carry my poor, dependent house-wife, far above yours. And for this very reason: The duties which Providence has assigned to woman, do not require extraordinary intellect. She can manage her husband's household, and economize his substance; and if she cannot entertain his friends with her talents, she can at least give them a welcome; and be his nurse in sickness, and his watchful companion in health, if not capable of sharing his more intellectual occupations. She can be the support and comfort of her parents in the decline of life, or of her children in their helplessness, according as her situation may be. And out of her house she may be the benefactress and example of a whole neighborhood; she may comfort the afflicted, and clothe and feed the poor, and visit the sick, and advise the ignorant; while, by the domestic industry, and peaceful, un aspiring habits, with which she plods, as you may please to call it, through the duties of her station, whether higher or lower, she is a perpetual example to those beneath her, to like sober assiduity in their own, and to her children's

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children to follow in the path in which she leads them. She may be superintending the household occupations, or actually performing them; giving employment by her wealth to others' ingenuity, or supplying the want of it by her own, according as her station is, but still she will make many happy.

"I am not so prejudiced as to say that your woman of talent will refuse these duties; of course, if she have principle, she will not. But literary pursuits must at least divide her attention, if not unfit her altogether for the tasks the order of Providence has assigned her; she will distaste such duties, if she does not refuse them; while the distance at which her attainments place her from ordinary minds, forbid all attempts to imitate or follow her." [115]

"You have drawn a picture," answered Mrs. A., "which would convert half the world, if they were not of your mind already, as I believe they are. It is a picture so beautiful, I would not blot it with the shadow of my finger. I concede that talent is not necessary to usefulness, and a woman may fulfill every duty of her station without it. But our question is of comparative usefulness; and there I have something to say. It is an axiom that knowledge is power; and, if it is, the greater the knowledge, the greater should be the power of doing good. To men, superior intelligence gives power to dispose, control, and govern the fortunes of others. To women, it gives influence over their minds. The greater knowledge which she has acquired of the human heart, gives her access to it in all its subtleties; while her acknowledged superiority secures that deference to her counsels, which weakness ever pays to strength.

"If the circumstances of her condition require it, I believe the greater will suffice the less, and she will fulfill equally well the duties you have enumerated; shedding as bright a light upon her household, as if it bounded her horizon. Nay, more, there may be minds in her household that need the reciprocation of an equal mind, or the support of a superior one; there may be spirits in her family that will receive from the influence of intellect, what they would not from simple and good intention. There may be other wants in her neighborhood than hunger and nakedness, and other defaulters than the ignorant and the poor. Whether she writes, speaks, or acts, the effect is not bounded by time, nor limited by space. That is worth telling of her, and is repeated from mouth to mouth, which, in an ordinary person, none would notice. Her acknowledged superiority gives her a title, as well as a capacity to speak, where others must be silent, and carry counsel and consolation where commoner characters might not intrude." [116]

"The mass of human misery, and human need, and human corruption, is not confined to the poor, the simple minded, and the child. The husband's and the parent's cares are not confined to their external commodities, nor the children's to the well-being of their physical estate. The mind that could illumine its own solitude, can cheer another's destitution; the strength that can support itself, can stay another's falling; the wealth may be unlocked, and supply another's poverty. Those who in prosperity seek amusement from superior talent, will seek it in difficulty or advice, and in adversity for support."

Here I made up my mind to have a great deal of intellect. [117]

"If I granted your position on the subject of utility," said Mrs. W., "I am afraid I should prove the world very ungrateful by the remainder of my argument; which goes, you know, to prove the woman of distinguished talent less beloved than those who walk the ordinary paths of female duty. I must take the risk, however; for, of all women in the world, your women of genius are those I love the least; and I believe, just or unjust, it is a very common feeling. We are not disposed to love our superiors in any thing; but least of all, in intellect; one has always the feeling of playing an equal game, without being sure that no advantage will be taken of your simplicity. A woman who has the reputation of talent, is, in this respect, the most unfortunate being on earth. She stands in society, like a European before a horde of savages, vainly endeavoring to signify his good intentions. If he approaches them, they run away; if he recedes, they send their arrows after him. Every one is afraid to address her, lest they expose to her penetration their own deficiencies. If she talks, she is supposed to display her powers; if she holds her tongue, it is attributed to contempt for the company. I know that talent is often combined with every amiable quality, and renders the character really the more lovely; but not therefore the more beloved. It would, if known; but it seldom is known, because seldom approached near enough to be examined.

"The simple-minded fear what they do not understand; the double-minded envy what they cannot reach. For my good, simple housewife, every body loves her who knows her; and nobody, who does not know her, troubles themselves about her. But place a woman on an eminence, and every body thinks they are obliged to like or dislike her; and, being too tenacious to do the one without good reason, they do the other without any reason at all. Before we can love each other, there must be sympathy, assimilation, and, if not equality, at least such an approach to it as may enable us to understand each other. When any one is much superior to us, our humility shrinks from the proffers of her love, and our pride revolts from offering her our own. Real talent is always modest, and fears often to make advances towards affection, lest it should seem, in doing so, to presume upon itself; but, having rarely the credit of timidity, this caution is attributable to pride. Your superior woman, therefore, will not be generally known or beloved by her own sex, among whom she may have many admirers, but few equals." [118]

"I say nothing of marriage, because I am not speculating upon it for my child, as upon the chances of a well-played game; but it is certain that the greater number of men are not highly intellectual, and therefore could not wisely choose a highly intellectual wife, lest they place themselves in the condition in which a husband should not be—of mental inferiority."

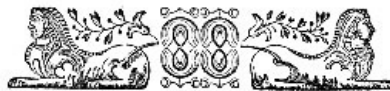
"Mrs. W.," answered her friend, "I am aware this is your strongest post; but I must not give ground without a battle. A great deal I shall yield you. I shall give up quantity, and stand upon the value of the remainder. Be it granted, then, that of any twenty people assembled in society, every one of whom will pronounce your common-place woman to be very amiable, very good, and very pleasing, ten shall pronounce my friend too intellectual for their taste, eight shall find her not so clever as they expected, and, of the other two, one at least shall not be sure whether they like her or not. Be it granted that, of every five ladies assembled to gossip freely, and tell out their small cares and feelings to the sympathizing kindness of your friend, four shall become silent as wax-work on the entrance of mine. And be it granted that, of any ten gentlemen to whom yours would be a very proper wife, not more than one could wisely propose himself to mine. But have I therefore lost the field? Perhaps she would tell you no; the two in twenty, the one in five or ten, are of more value, in her estimation, than all the number else.

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"Things are not apt to be valued by their abundance. On the jeweler's stall, many a brilliant trinket will disappear, ere the high-priced gem be asked for; but is it, therefore, the less valued, or the less cared for? When beloved at all, she is loved permanently; for, in the lapse of time, that withers the charm of beauty, and blights the simplicity of youth, her ornaments grow but the brighter for wearing. In proportion to the depth of the intellect, I believe, is the depth of every thing; feelings, affections, pleasures, pains, or whatever else the enlarged capacity conceives. It is difficult perhaps for an inferior mind to estimate what a superior mind enjoys in the reciprocation of affection. Attachment, with ordinary persons, is enjoyed to-day, and regretted to-morrow, and the next day replaced and forgotten; but with these it never can be forgotten, because it can never be replaced."

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As the argument, thus terminated, converted neither party, it is needless to say it left me in suspense. Mrs. W. was still determined her child should not be a superior woman. Mrs. A. was still resolved her child should be, at all ventures; and I was still undetermined whether I would endeavor to be a learned woman or not. The little Fanny laughed aloud, opened her large round eyes, and shouted, "So I will, mamma!" The little Jemima colored to the ends of her fingers, and lowered still farther the lashes that veiled her eyes.



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EASILY DECIDED.

I was walking with some friends in a retired part of the country. It had rained for fourteen days before, and I believed it rained then; but there was a belief among the ladies of that country that it is better to walk in all weather. The lane was wide enough to pass in file, with chilly droppings from the boughs above, and rude re-action of the briers beneath. The clay upon our shoes showed a troublesome affinity to the clay upon the road. Umbrellas we could not hold up because of the wind. But it was better to walk than stay at home, so at least my companions assured me, for exercise and an appetite. After pursuing them, with hopeless assiduity, for more than a mile, without sight of egress or sign of termination, finding I had already enough of the one, and doubting how far the other might be off, I lagged behind, and began to think how I might amuse myself till their return.

By one of those fortunate incidents, which they tell me never happen to any body but a listener, I heard the sound of voices over the hedge. This was delightful. In this occupation I forgot both mud and rain, exercise and appetite. The hedge was too thick to see through, and all that appeared above it was a low chimney, from which I concluded it concealed a cottage garden.

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"What in the name of wonder, James, can you be doing?" said a voice, significant of neither youth nor gentleness.

"I war'nt ye know what I am about," said another, more rudely than unkindly.

"I'm not sure of that," rejoined the first; "you've been hacking and hewing at them trees this four hours, and I do not see, for my part, as you're like to mend them."

"Why, mother," said the lad, "you see we have but two trees in all the garden, and I've been thinking they'd match better if they were alike; so I've tied up to a pole the boughs of the gooseberry-bush, that used to spread themselves about the ground, to make it look more like this thorn; and now I'm going to cut down the thorn to make it look more like the gooseberry-bush."

"And what's the good of that?" rejoined the mother; "has not the tree sheltered us many a stormy night, when the wind would have beaten the old casement about our ears? and many a scorching noon-tide, hasn't your father eaten his dinner in its shade? And now, to be sure, because you are the master, you think you can mend it!"

"We shall see," said the youth, renewing his strokes. "It's no use as it is; I dare say you'd like to see it bear gooseberries."

"No use!" exclaimed the mother; "don't the birds go to roost on the branches, and the poultry get shelter under it from the rain? and after all your cutting, I don't see as you're likely to turn a thorn-tree into a gooseberry-bush!" [123]

"I don't see why I should not," replied the sage artificer, with a tone of reflectiveness; "the leaf is near about the same, and there are thorns on both; if I make that taller and this shorter, and they grow the same shape, I don't suppose you know why one should bear gooseberries any more than the other, as wise as you are."

"Why, to be sure, James," the old woman answered, in a moderate voice, "I can't say that I do; but I have lived almost through my threescore years and ten, and I have never heard of gooseberries growing on a thorn."

"Haven't you, though?" said James; "but then I have, or something pretty much like it; for I saw the gardener, over yonder, cutting off the head of a young pear-tree, and he told me he was going to make it bear apples."

"Well," said the mother, seemingly reconciled, "I know nothing of your new-fangled ways. I only know it was the finest thorn in the parish; but, to be sure, now they are more match-like and regular."

I left a story half told. This may seem to be another, but it is in fact the same. James, in the Sussex-lane, and my friends in Montague-square, were engaged in the same task, and the result of the one would pretty fairly measure the successes of the other; both were contravening the order of nature, and pursuing their own purpose, without consulting the appointments of Providence. [124]

Fanny was a girl of common understanding; such indeed as suitable cultivation might have matured into simple good sense; but from which her parents' scheme of education could produce nothing but pretension that could not be supported, and an affectation of what could never be attained. Conscious of the want of all perceptible talent in her child, Mrs. A. from the first told the stories of talent opening late, and the untimely blighting of premature intellect; and, to the last, maintained the omnipotence of cultivation.

On every new proof of the smallness of her mind, another science was added to enlarge it. Languages, dead and living, were to be to her the keys of knowledge; but they unlocked nothing to Fanny but their own grammars and vocabularies, which she learned assiduously, without so much as wondering what they meant. The more dull she proved, the more earnestly she was plied. She was sent to school to try the spur of emulation; and brought home again for the advantage of more exclusive attention. And, as still the progress lagged, all feminine employ and childlike recreations were prohibited, to gain more time for study. It cannot be said that Fanny's health was injured by the over action of her mind; for, having none, it could not be easily acted upon; but, by perpetual dronish application, and sacrifice of all external things for the furtherance of this scheme of mental cultivation, her physical energies were suppressed, and she became heavy, awkward, and inactive. [125]

Fanny had no pleasure in reading, but she had a pride in having read; and listened, with no small satisfaction, to her mother's detail of the authors she was conversant with; beyond her age, and, as some untalented ventured to suggest, not always suited to her years of innocence. The arcana of their pages were safe, however, and quite guiltless of her mind's corruption. Fanny never thought, whatever she might read; what was in the book, was nothing to her; all her business was to *have* read it. Meantime, while the powers he had not were solicited in vain, the talents she had were neglected and suppressed. Her good-humored enjoyment of ordinary things, her real taste for domestic arrangement, and open simplicity of heart, were derided as vulgar and unintellectual. Her talent for music was thought not worth cultivating; time could not be spared. Some little capacity she had for drawing, as an imitative art, was baffled by the determination to teach it her scientifically, thus rendering it as impossible as every thing else. In short—for why need I prolong my sketch?—Fanny was prepared by nature to be the *beau ideal* of Mrs. W.'s amiable woman.

Constitutionally active and benevolent, judicious culture might have made her sensible, and, in common life, intelligent, pleasing, useful, happy. Nay, I need only refer to the picture of my former paper, to say what Fanny, well educated, was calculated to become. But this was what her parents were determined she should not be; and they spent twenty years, and no small amount of cash, to make her a woman of superior mind and distinguished literary attainments. [126]

I saw the result; for I saw Fanny at twenty, the most unlovely, useless, and unhappy being I ever met with. The very docility of a mind, not strong enough to choose its own part, and resist the influence of circumstances, hastened forward the catastrophe. She had learned to think herself what she could not be, and to despise what in reality she was; she could not otherwise than do so, for she had been imbued with it from her cradle.

She was accustomed from her infancy to intellectual society; kept up to listen, when she should have been in bed; she counted the spots on the carpet, heard nothing that was said, and prided herself on being one of such company. A little later, she was encouraged to talk to every body, and give her opinion upon every thing, in order to improve and exercise her mind. Her mind

remained unexercised, because she talked without thinking; but she learned to chatter, to repeat other people's opinions, and fancy her own were of immense importance.

She was unlovely, because she sought only to please by means she had not, and to please those who were quite beyond her reach; others she had been accustomed to neglect as unfit for her companionship. She was useless, because what she might have done well, she was unaccustomed to do at all, and what she attempted, she was incapable of. And she was unhappy, because all her natural tastes had been thwarted, and her natural feelings suppressed; and of her acquired habits and high-sounding pursuits she had no capacity for enjoyment. Her love of classic and scientific lore, her delight in libraries, and museums, and choice intellects, and literary circles, was a fiction; they gratified nothing but her vanity. Her small, narrow, weak, and dependent mind, was a reality, and placed her within reach of mortification and disappointment, from the merest and meanest trifles. [127]

Jemima—my little friend Jemima—I lived to see her a woman too. From her infancy she had never evinced the tastes and feelings of a child. Intense reflection, keen and impatient sensibility and an unlimited desire to know, marked her from the earliest years as a very extraordinary child; dislike to the plays and exercises of childhood made her unpleasing to her companions, and, to superficial observers, melancholy; but this was amply contradicted by the eager vivacity of her intellect and feeling, when called forth by things beyond the usual compass of her age. Every thing in Jemima gave promise of extraordinary talent and distinguished character. This her parents saw, and were determined to counteract. They had made up their minds what a woman should be, and were determined Jemima should be nothing else. Every thing calculated to call forth her powers was kept out of her way, and childish occupations forced on her in their stead. The favorite maxim was, to occupy her mind with common things; she was made to romp, and to dance and to play; to read story books, and make dolls' clothes. Her physical powers were thus occupied; but where was her mind the while? Feeding itself with fancies, for want of truths; drawing false conclusions, forming wrong judgments, and brooding over its own mistakes, for want of a judicious occupation of its activities. [128]

Another maxim was, to keep Jemima ignorant of her own capacity, lest she should set up for a genius, and be undomesticated. She was told she had none, and was left in ignorance of what she was capable, and for what she was responsible. Made to believe that her fine feelings were oddities, her expansive thoughts absurdities, and her love of knowledge unfeminine and ungraceful, she kept them to herself, and became reserved, timid, and artificial.

Nobody could prevent Jemima's acquiring knowledge; she saw every thing, reflected upon every thing, and learned from every thing; but without guide, and without discretion, she gathered the honey and the gall together, and knew not which was which. She was sent to school that she might learn to play, and fetched home that she might learn to be useful. In the former place she was shunned as an oddity, because she preferred to learn; and, finding herself disliked without deserving it, encouraged herself to independence by disliking every body. In the latter, she sewed her work awry, while she made a couplet to the moon, and unpicked it while she made another; and being told she did every thing ill, believed it, and became indolent and careless to do any thing. Consumed, meanwhile, by the restless workings of her mind, and tasked to exercise for which its delicate frame-work was unfit, her person became faded, worn, and feeble. [129]

To be brief, her parents succeeded in baffling nature's promise, but failed of the fulfillment of their own. At twenty, Jemima was a puzzle to every body, and a weariness to herself. Conscious of her powers, but not knowing how to spend them, she gave in to every imaginable caprice. Having made the discovery of her superiority, she despised the opinions of others, while her own were too ill-formed to be her guide. Proud of possessing talent, and yet ashamed to show it; unaccustomed to explain herself; certain of being misunderstood, and least of all understanding herself; ignorant, in the midst of knowledge, and incapable with unlimited capacity; tasteless for every thing she did, and ignorant how to do what she had a taste for, her mind was a luxuriant wilderness, inaccessible to others, and utterly unproductive to its possessor. Unpleasing and unfitted in the sphere she was in, and yet unfitted by habit and timidity for any other, weariness and disgust were her daily portion; her fine sensibilities, her deep feelings, her expansive thoughts, remained; but only to be wounded, to irritate, to mislead her. [130]

Where is the moral of my tale, and what the use of telling it? I have told it because I see that God has his purposes in every thing that he has done; and man has his own, and disregards them. And every day I hear it disputed, with acrimony and much unkindness, what faculties and characters it is better to have or not to have, without any consideration of what God has given or withheld; and standards are set up, by which all must be measured, though, alas! they cannot take from or add one cubit to their statures. "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory." Why do we not censure the sun for outshining the stars, and the pale moon for having no light but what she borrows?

Instead of settling for others what they ought to be, and choosing for ourselves what we will be, would it not be better to examine the condition in which we are actually placed, and the faculties actually committed to us? and consider what was the purpose of Heaven in the former, and what the demand of Heaven in the occupation of the latter? If we have much, we are not at liberty to put it aside, and say we should be better without it; if we have little, we are not at liberty to be dissatisfied, and aspiring after more. And surely we are not at liberty to say that another has too much, or too little, of what God has given! We may have our preferences, but we must not [131]

mistake them for standards of right.

Every character has beauties peculiar to itself, and dangers to which it is peculiarly exposed; and there are duties, pertaining to each, apart from the circumstances in which they may be placed. Nothing, therefore, can be more contrary to the manifest order and disposition of Providence, than to endeavor to be, or do, whatever we admire in another, or to force ourselves to be and do whatever we admire in ourselves. Which character, of the endless variety that surrounds us, is the most happy, the most useful, and most deserving to be beloved, it were impossible, I believe, to decide; and, if we could, we have gained little by the decision; for we could neither give it to our children, nor to ourselves. But of this we may be certain: that individual, of whatever intellectual character, is the happiest, the most useful, and the most beloved of God, if not of men, who has best subserved the purposes of Heaven in her creation and endowment; who has most carefully turned to good the faculties she has; most cautiously guarded against the evils to which her propensities incline; most justly estimated, and conscientiously fulfilled, the duties appropriate to her circumstance and character.



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INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY ON WOMAN.

The abject condition of the female sex, in all, out of Christian countries, is universally known and admitted. In all savage and pagan tribes, the severest burdens of physical toil are laid upon their shoulders; they are chiefly valued for the same reason that men value their most useful animals, or as objects of their sensual and selfish desires. Even in the learned and dignified forms of Eastern paganism, "the wife," says one who has spent seventeen years among them, "is the slave, rather than the companion of her husband. She is not allowed to walk with him, she must walk *behind* him; not to eat with him, she must eat *after* him, and eat of what he leaves. She must not sleep until he is asleep, nor remain asleep after he is awake. If she is sitting, and he comes in, she should rise up. She should, say their sacred books, have no other god on earth than her husband. Him she should worship while he lives, and, when he dies, she should be burnt with him. As the widow, in case she is not burnt, is not allowed to marry again, is often considered little better than an outcast, and not unfrequently sinks into gross vice, her life can scarcely be considered a blessing."

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The same author remarks, that "there is little social intercourse between the sexes; little or no acquaintance of the parties before marriage, and consequently little mutual attachment; and as there is an absolute vacuity and darkness in the minds of the females, who are not allowed even to learn to read, there is no solid foundation laid for domestic happiness."

If we pass into the dominions of the crescent, we find the condition of females, in some respects, rather worse, it would seem, than better. For, in pagan India, debased and abused as woman is, she is still allowed some interest in religion, and some common expectations with the other sex, concerning the future state. But in Mohammedan countries, even this is nearly or quite denied her. "It is a popular tradition among the Mohammedans, which obtains to this day, that woman shall not enter Paradise;" and it requires some effort of the imagination to conceive how debased and wretched must be the condition of the female sex, to originate and sustain such a horrible and blasphemous tradition.

Even in the refined and shining ages of Egypt, Greece, and Rome, where the cultivation of letters, the graces of finished style, the charms of poetry and eloquence, the elegances of architecture, sculpture, painting, and embroidery, the glory of conquest, and the pride of national distinction, were unsurpassed by any people before or since—even then and there, what was the woman but the abject slave of man? the object of his ambition, or his avarice, or his lust, or his power? the alternate victim of his pleasures, his disgust, or his cruelty? the creature of his caprice? and, what is worse, the menial slave of her own mental darkness, moral debasement, and vicious indulgences? If history is not false, the answer is decisive. This, and only this, was she!

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But how entirely has our religion reversed all this, and rendered her life a blessing to herself and to society. And as Christianity has done so much for woman, she ought in return to do much for Christianity. Every thing that can render life desirable, she owes to Christ. Think for one moment of the hole of the pit from which Christ has taken you! Think of what would be your present condition, had it not been for the Christian religion! You might have been with the debased and wretched victims of pagan oppression, cruelty, and lust; burning alive upon the funeral pile; or sacrificed by hands of violence or pollution; or cast out, and neglected, to pine in solitary and hopeless grief. Or, with the female followers of the false prophet, or, in more refined but unchristian nations, you might have been little else than the slave or the convenience of man, and left to doubt whether any inheritance awaits you beyond the grave.

From these depths of debasement and wretchedness, Christianity has taken you, and placed you on high, to move, and shine, and rejoice, in the sphere for which the Creator designed you. Not

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only has it made your condition as good as that of man, but, in a moral view, in some respects superior to it. How much, then, do you owe to Christ! To turn away from him with indifference or neglect, what ingratitude is this! How preposterous, how base, how unlovely, is female impiety! There was much sense in a remark made by an intelligent gentleman, who, although not pious himself, said: "I cannot look with any complacency upon a woman who does not manifest gratitude and love to Jesus Christ. Above all things, I hate to see so unnatural an object as an irreligious woman."

Such being the constitution and circumstances of woman, it is the manifest intention of God that she should be pre-eminent in moral excellence; and, through the influence of this, take a glorious lead in the renovation of the world. This she has to some extent ever done. Let all females of Christian lands consider well their high calling, their solemn responsibility, and their glorious privilege. While many of their sex have proved recreant to their trust, and wasted life in vanity and in vice, others—an illustrious constellation, the holy and the good of ancient time, the mothers and the sisters in Israel, "the chief women, not a few," of apostolic times, the bright throng, that have since continued to come out from the world, and tread in the steps of Jesus, and lead on their fellow-beings to the kingdom of purity and joy—have proved to us that, as woman was first to fall, so she is first to rise. [136]

Yes; though it is not hers to amass wealth; to aspire to secular office and power; to shine in camps and armies; to hurl the thunders of our navies, and gather laurels from the ocean, or to receive the vain incense offered to public and popular eloquence: yet, hers it is, to be robed with the beauty of Christ; to shine in the honors of goodness; to shed over the world the sweet and holy influences of peace, virtue, and religion; to be adorned with those essential and imperishable beauties, those unearthly stars and diadems, whose lustre will survive, with ever-increasing brightness, when all earthly glory will fade and be forgotten. Come, then; come to your high duty, your glorious privilege—come, and be blessed for ever!



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IMPORTANCE OF RELIGION TO WOMAN.

There is nothing so adapted to the wants of woman as religion. She has many trials, and she therefore peculiarly needs support; religion is her asylum, not only in heavy afflictions, but in petty disquietudes. These, as they are more frequent, are perhaps almost as harassing; at least, they equally need a sedative influence, and religion is the anodyne. For it is religion which, by placing before her a better and more enduring happiness than this world can offer, reconciles her to temporary privations; and, by acquainting her with the love of God, leads her to rest securely upon his providence in present disappointment. It inspires her with that true content, which not only endures distress, but is cheerful under it.

Resignation is not, as we are too apt to portray her, beauty bowered in willows, and bending over a sepulchral urn; neither is she a tragic queen, pathetic only in her weeds. She is an active, as well as passive virtue; an habitual, not an occasional sentiment. She should be as familiar to woman as her daily cross; for acquiescence in the detail of Providence is as much a duty, as submission to its result; and equanimity amid domestic irritations equally implies religious principle, as fortitude under severer trials. It was the remark of one, who certainly was not disposed to care for trifles, that "it required as much grace to bear the breaking of a china cup, as any of the graver distresses of life." [138]

Minor cares are indeed the province of woman; minor annoyances her burden. Dullness, bad temper, mal-adroitness, are to her the cause of a thousand petty rubs, which too often spoil the euphony of a silver voice, and discompose the symmetry of fair features. But the confidence which reposes on divine affection, and the charity which covers human frailty, are the only specifics for impatience.

And, if religion is such a blessing in the ordinary trials of life, what a soothing balm it is in graver sorrows! From these, woman is by no means exempt; on the contrary, as her susceptibility is great, afflictions press on her with peculiar heaviness. There is sometimes a stillness in her grief which argues only its intensity, and it is this rankling wound which piety alone can heal. Nothing, perhaps, is more affecting than woman's chastened sorrow. Her ties may be severed, her fond hopes withered, her young affections blighted, yet peace may be in her breast, and heaven in her eye. If the business and turmoil of life brush away the tears of manly sorrows, and scarcely leave

time even for the indulgence of sympathy, woman gathers strength in her solitary chamber, to encounter and subdue her grief. There she learns to look her sorrow in the face; there she becomes familiar with its features; there she communes with it, as with a celestial messenger; till at length she can almost welcome its presence, and hail it as the harbinger of a brighter world.

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Religion is her only elevating principle. It identifies itself with the movements of her heart and with the actions of her life, spiritualizing the one and ennobling the other. Duties, however subordinate, are to the religious woman never degrading; their principle is their apology. She does not live amidst the clouds, or abandon herself to mystic excitement; she is raised above the sordidness, but not above the concerns, of earth; above its disquietudes, but not above its cares.

Religion is just what woman needs. Without it, she is ever restless and unhappy; ever wishing to be relieved from duty or from time. She is either ambitious of display, or greedy of pleasure, or sinks into a listless apathy, useless to others and unworthy of herself. But when the light from heaven shines upon her path, it invests every object with a reflected radiance. Duties, occupations, nay, even trials, are seen through a bright medium; and the sunshine which gilds her course on earth, is but the dawning of a far clearer day.



Transcriber's Note:

The following words were inconsistently hyphenated:

house-wife / housewife
time-piece / timepiece

Other errors:

Original

Page

- [11](#) Missing period after 'other'
....each other "*Familiarity*," says....
- [72](#) Missing period after 'it'
....could not help it She sang to Nurse....
- [124](#) Extra 'n' in the name Fanny
....cannot be said that Fannny's health....

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE LADIES' VASE; OR, POLITE MANUAL
FOR YOUNG LADIES ***

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