

DUTIES  
OF  
YOUNG WOMEN.

BY  
E. H. CHAPIN.

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## PREFACE.

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THE following discourses passed almost immediately from the pulpit to the press, and therefore were but slightly revised. Of course, this is no excuse for literary faults, but it will serve to explain them. It has prevented that thoroughness of treatment, and compactness of style, which are desirable in a work of this kind. But, in order to qualify criticism, I would ask that this volume may be received according to its pretensions. I do not offer it as a *manual* for young women, but as a discussion of certain great principles of life and conduct. It may suggest truths which they will find urged more at length and more minutely in other books.

I have preserved in these discourses the style of the pulpit, the style of direct personal address and temporal allusion. To change this into the more sober and general tone of the essay, would have demanded a labor for which there appears no necessity.

For presenting such a work at all, when so much has been written upon the same topic, I offer no apology. I would say, however, that some who have read my former lectures upon the Duties of Young Men, have desired me to publish a series of discourses like *these, as a companion to that volume*. I am in hopes, also, that notwithstanding the number of books of the kind, this may accomplish some good. I do not think that I have exaggerated the importance of the class whom I address, or that I have dwelt too strongly upon the subject of their influence. If I may be instrumental, to any degree, in rightly directing that influence, I shall not regret the present labor, which, feeble as it may be, I now dedicate to the service of God, and to the good of humanity,

E. H. C.

Boston, Jan. 14, 1848.

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## LECTURE I.

### THE POSITION OF WOMAN.

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Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. — JOHN 19 : 25.

I PROPOSE to address a few discourses to Young Women, including in that class not only those who are usually comprehended in it, but also those who have entered into the relations of wife and mother. My object in addressing them is to urge, not merely the responsibilities which rest upon them in common with all other human beings, but those obligations which pertain to their peculiar position. It is of this position, especially as affected by Christianity, that I shall speak in the present discourse.

There has been much discussion as to the station of woman,—as to her capacities and rights compared with those of the other sex. In the increasing light of Christianity, she is no longer considered a slave, a toy, or a divinity; but the equal as well as the companion of man. But it is asked, In what does this equality consist? For instance, is not woman the *intellectual* compeer of man? Has not God endowed her with as rich mental gifts? Is not her imagination as fruitful, her reason as vigorous and profound? Are there not as deep wells of poetry in her heart? Are not hers the same realms of thought? Is not the same universe open before her? Can she not attain to as great a scientific or literary eminence?

And, again, is she not, or ought not she to be, *socially* man's equal? Shall she not be his companion in the cabinet and the forum, as well as by the fireside and in the temple? Shall she not have the same suffrage in public affairs? Shall we deprive one half the hu-



man race of one half its noblest privileges? Is it right that woman should have no action in those political movements which frequently so closely affect her — no share in ordaining or suppressing those laws by which, often, she keenly suffers? Until this is the case, it may be said, she is deprived of a power which is not to be granted as a boon, but which is a right, that man has no authority to withhold; and his exclusive exercise of this power is an instance of the barbarism and injustice which yet largely mingle with our boasted privileges of liberty and light.

My answers to these questions are brief. The intellectual power of woman is a matter of fact, not of opinion. Has she exhibited a mental capacity as great as that of the other sex? Have her achievements been as splendid and as profound? In reply to this, we have unrolled before us a long list of glorious names — names that shall shine forever in the records of wit and morals, of poetry and philanthropy, of art and science. We know that some of

the noblest departments of literature, at the present day, are honorably filled by women, whose influence upon the age and upon humanity we cannot easily estimate. But as it is no compliment to the mental dignity, any more than to the moral sensibility, of woman, to flatter her at the expense of truth, I think we cannot in justice say that thus far she has attained to the same intellectual eminence as man. She has not yet equalled Homer, or Shakspeare, or Milton, or Raphael, or Descartes, or Newton. If it is said that this is owing to prejudice and error on our part, I say perish such prejudice and error as unjust and mean, and let time and opportunity dispose of this question.

As to the other point—the social equality of woman—I would say that it is, of course, just that woman should claim all the rights which her nature dictates as belonging to her. We are to inquire, not what man will allow, but what God has ordained. If woman aspires to the conflicts of the hustings and the caucus,

to the honors and influence of the cabinet, the representative hall, the judicial bench, or the executive chair, let her take them as the objects which her nature bids her seek, and to which, therefore, she has all the right that man can claim—the right of humanity, the commission of God.

But my own opinion is, that her nature does not aspire to these objects; that the reason why she has not sought and possessed them more, is not, merely, masculine prejudice and injustice, savage brutality, oriental sensualism, or chivalric idolatry; but a fine intuition of her own soul, a moulding of destiny which is from the Creator. Sometimes holy enthusiasm for a great cause may urge her to venture into the current of public action, the polluted arena of political conflict; even as the Maid of Orleans believed herself prompted by a celestial voice to draw the sword and unfurl the oriflamme of her country. But as a general thing, I believe woman no more desires the publicity and strife of political action, than she desires the control

of armies, the hazards of the battle-field, or the discipline of the camp.

I would say, in one word, that my remarks upon this point involve the very fact upon which, in this discourse, I would chiefly insist. Woman has been created for a different sphere, or rather hemisphere, than man, to which do not belong the troubled elements of commercial, legislative, and political life. I do not say that she has *no right* to mingle among them; but I do say that, as a general thing, no one who feels the true dignity and mission of her womanhood wishes to mingle there. She glories in her station as the moon in her orbit. Should she leave it, she would break that beautiful duality which we behold in all things, and yet, which is difficult to describe without mysticism. But that there is such a duality no one can deny; a provision by which every part has its counterpart, which alone makes up a complete and harmonious whole, which reconciles diversity with equality, makes tenderness equal to strength, endurance to action,

skill to force. Thus woman is the counterpart of man. She is equal to him, not because she has the same work to do, but a work equally great and necessary, a work essential to the complete circle of human duty, to the consummation of human destiny. She differs from man not merely in bodily form and organization. This finer texture symbolizes and manifests finer issues of spirit.

What, then, is woman's position? Where is her sphere? Not denying her intellectual equality with man—contending that if she claims political suffrages and honors, her claim is a right—I still say that her peculiar position, her own sphere, is with the affections, and wherever these affections have dominion. Hers are the empire of home, the great and beautiful offices of benevolence and restoration, the work of developing the heart's best and holiest feelings; and here she reigns with a royalty no less dignified, a spiritual exaltation no less lofty, than that of man in the issues of debate, the marts of gain, the dazzling

but devious paths of ambition. Even when she has been successful outside this sphere, we admire not that which is masculine in her achievements, but that which is womanly — the fearlessness of faith, the sublimity of patience, the strength of affection. Men have achieved martial deeds bolder than those of Joan of Arc, but the sainted rays that stream over the armed maiden come from her true-hearted devotion, and her religious intrepidity; and these are peculiarly woman's virtues.

One thing appears certain — if woman neglects the work which has been given her to do, there is no one to perform it. As it pertains to the genius of particular men to achieve something that others cannot, so it pertains to the genius of woman to accomplish an inalienable mission. Shall she go forth into the tortuous ways of traffic? Who, then, will make bright the threshold and the hearth, and nurture the infant mind? Shall woman move in the storms of political action? Who, then,

shall soothe man when the bitter world has driven him back upon himself; when anger, scorn, or calumny has excited him to madness, or crushed him with despair? Shall woman debate in our legislative halls? Who, then, shall bind up the broken heart, and watch by the sick bed? These are high and holy offices, fully equal to the dignities of man. It is only because we have been deceived by false standards of value, that we do not see them to be so. And shall we destroy or degrade them? Shall we turn the music of affection into discord? Shall the lighted eye of devotion become changed into the fierce glare of ambition or disappointment? Shall woman's heart become cold, and callous, and world-hardened? Thus would our domestic shrines be overthrown and turned out of doors, and our homes would become like our streets, and caucuses, and courts, — the haunts of selfish cares, of discordant tongues, of hollow forms, and busy, bustling feet. But we know that woman's nature does not aspire to such dis-

tinctions, such results. She will be true to that law of her Creator that appoints to the sexes different yet equal stations.

I have said that if woman's mission seems less ample or dignified than that of man, it is because we do not recognize its true importance. In maintaining that she is peculiarly adapted to do the work of the affections, it is necessary for us to consider how wide a range this comprehends, what important fields of action it opens, how powerfully it affects the destinies of man, and how intimately it is connected with the highest spiritual results. There is the great sphere of HOME, the vital importance of which we can hardly estimate. It is the seminary of all other institutions. There are the roots of all public prosperity, the foundations of the state, the germs of the church; there is all that in the child makes the future man, all that in the man makes the good citizen. The sphere of home comprehends all this, and the power of woman in that sphere is beyond calculation. But I



do not propose to dwell upon this point now, as in a future lecture I shall make it a particular subject of discussion ; but I allude to it as indicating the dignity of woman's office, the greatness of her work. There are other and kindred spheres of influence, to which also I shall refer at another time.

But we can best apprehend the importance of woman's position by considering how that position is affected by Christianity. Christianity is peculiarly the religion of the affections — and here let me say that by "*the affections*" I do not mean the blind workings of sentiment, but the whole nature of man — his reason, his conscience, his will — refined, enlightened, aroused by love, which is the nature of God, and which is the fulfilment of the law. In this view, I repeat, Christianity is preëminently the religion of the affections. It achieves its conquests, not by mere intellectual methods, any more than by physical force, but by an action upon our moral nature that stirs the profoundest depths within us. Christianity,

moreover, brings into prominence those qualities which have been too much neglected and kept in the background; it gives a royal dignity to charity, kindness, love, and clothes them with the peculiar approbation of God.

The direct contrast between the precepts of Jesus and the fierce and dark passions of our nature, is a fact too common to require remark. But, nevertheless, these passions have polluted and distracted the earth for ages. Man has sought to subdue his brother with the sword, the scourge, and the chain. He has endeavored to link right with might; in the greedy lusts of the moment, he has lost sight of all kindly sentiment, and has drowned all sympathy in his ambition or his revenge; in one word, in his *selfishness*. And religion itself too often has played a false part in the world, abusing its own name with monstrous deformities, making man a slave or a tool, smothering the life of devotion with the dry husks of ceremony, and wielding its sacred influence with a covetous and bloody hand. And much of

what men call "*civilization*" has been a covenant of selfishness, a consecration of fraud and force and meanness, and has justified wars and reddened the earth with murder no more lawful than the slaughter of Abel. Through these passions and customs of men Christ came to shed the light and the power of a divine life,—to substitute justice for fraud, love for hatred, reason for force; to reveal the brotherhood of man, and the paternity of God. And in proportion to the influence of Christianity in the world, will love, justice, reason, become exalted, and the sphere of their influence enlarged; and sanctified by this influence, the affections will go out to do their work—the great, the sublime work of reconciling man to man, and all to God.

Not only in the sphere of home, then, but in wider departments of human action, Christianity is preparing for woman a great field for her peculiar influence and labor. As Christianity prevails, those ideas which have obscured the worth of her office, and given to

man an undue elevation, will pass away, and she will come up to a proud and prominent equality with him. She will toil with him in the great harvest-field of humanity, not, like Ruth, gleaning after him, but, side by side, gathering the fallen and binding the scattered sheaves. As Christianity prevails, woman will not have to abandon her sphere in order to assume a position in the world, but her sphere will extend out into that wide domain where violence, and hate, and fraud have so long reigned. The universal diffusion of Christianity would spread the sanctity of home to the borders of the earth, and cause meek and patient woman to go up with her beautiful ministrations where warriors have contended for empire, and kings have climbed to bloody thrones. Yes! when Aceldama becomes Eden again, woman's sphere shall be the wide world of human action; for not then will be wanted the ambition that has struggled in dusty conflict, the talent that has striven in angry debate, the power that has ruled men

as with a rod of iron. But then will be demanded the love that has watched and waited, that has nourished the destitute, and fed the hungry, and cheered the sad, and pitied the guilty. For the distinctions which man has sought, the world has given its honors; but for those labors which peculiarly belong to woman, rewards are reserved in the kingdom of Christ. So long as the pursuit of man was violence, she must cherish the affections of her nature in the recesses of home, and, in a situation little less contemptible than that of the slave, breathe the nobler elements of character into the future warrior whom she nourished at her breast. In the age of chivalry, she rose to an eminence as false as it was dazzling, which, while it exalted her from slavery, converted her into a puppet, a mere creature of vanity and passion. But in this age, when, notwithstanding all its evils, there is much Christian light and power abroad—and, indeed, it is because of this that we see these evils—in this age, woman begins to exert her

due influence, and occupy her true position, and her equal power with man is displayed. She who stood by Christ in his humiliation is called to accompany him in his triumph. She came with her affections to honor the shame of his cross. In the new age that is dawning upon us, these affections shall be closely associated with the power of his spirit who hung there.

In speaking, then, to the class which I now particularly address, I would urge the fact that there is binding upon young women, not only a routine of duties and a set of accomplishments necessary for their individual education and welfare, but that they also occupy a peculiar position with reference to others—a position resulting from the age, and from the influences of Christianity. In order that the young woman may effectually discharge the duties thus incumbent upon her, I grant that there must be, first of all, a thorough *individual* culture, and a strict sense of individual responsibility; nor would I imply that these

considerations are of little value, or even secondary. In what I shall say hereafter, I shall endeavor to speak with emphatic reference to this point. But I wish to justify the peculiar scope which these discourses may take, and *my reason for delivering them at all*, by showing the important relations, the powerful influence, the great mission of woman at the present day.

And now, as a general appeal, let me say that I trust there is no young woman who hears me, who does not realize the true beauty, power, and triumph of her sex. It is not to possess the bloom and lustre of youth, it is not to be the idol of fashionable adulation, it is not to receive the incense of a homage which is no compliment. It is, in conjunction with her own self-culture, to labor in that sphere which God has made peculiarly hers—the sphere of the affections. First of all in the great and essential department of HOME—in the beautiful offices of the daughter, the sister, the mother, the wife. Then in the wider field of

human melioration, summoning her nature to noble deeds of charity and self-sacrifice. She is to be a co-worker with man in hastening that new and better age, that kingdom of God upon earth, for which we all pray. She is to second his reason with her love, his appeals for goodness and truth with her deeds of benevolence and peace. While he goes out into the great marts of traffic, into the haunts of wickedness, amid ghastly spectacles of vice and scenes of selfish conflict—while he goes there with a good will and a strong purpose to plead for God and humanity—let her triumphs—none the less great, none the less beautiful—be seen as she ministers at the bed of sickness, or fills the outstretched hand of want, or visits the desponding, the forsaken, and the guilty. Especially may she accomplish a good work with the sinful and the needy of her own sex. She can go where man cannot, and exert a power he does not possess. She may revive the life of virtue in many a blighted spirit, so that it shall depart



in peace, if not in innocence. Her words of mercy may open tears of penitence that have long been dry in the stony heart, and covered by the shameless and callous front of guilt. And in abodes of poverty, in homes of the virtuous but neglected, where man is too proud or too harsh to go, she may enter with her sympathy and her care, and the dim vision of age, and the eyes of the dying, will look upon her with a benediction.

Or if the restrictions of poverty, or the calls of domestic affliction, forbid these ministrations, then will it be hers still more to illustrate the true dignity and power of woman, in watching and waiting, in patient endurance and unwearied effort, in filling that narrower orbit with the fulness of love, and illuminating that dark fortune with the steady radiance of constancy and faith. And whenever she thus acts, at home or abroad, let her feel assured that man does no work which excels the grandeur of hers. The warrior watching on the tented field with the destinies of a nation com-

mitted to his trust, or striking in the conflict for liberty and right, may act in a wider sphere; but his work is not greater than hers as she keeps her vigil by the bedside of suffering, or toils in the rigorous and uncheered routine of domestic duty. The poet may make music that shall charm the ages, and elevate the race, and from the height of his lofty inspiration win immortal renown; but his melody is not equal to that which a Dix, or a Fry, or a Sarah Martin, wakes in the guilty heart when she has "touched it to finer issues," and taught the alienated spirit the worth of human sympathy, and subdued the stern nature to Christian meekness, until the prisoner's hymns of penitence and praise go up at midnight, and the rugged walls of his dungeon are tapestried with dreams of heaven. The statesman may regenerate nations by his polity, the orator may shake senates with his eloquence, the philosopher win new worlds by discovery; but greater is she who stands by the earliest springs of thought, and shapes their

tendency, and drops into them the balm of her affection, the *purity of her virtue* ; greater she to whom is committed the plastic mind that shall control nations, and sway hearts, and course the stars. The deepest life of nature is silent and obscure ; so, often, the elements that move and mould society are the results of the sister's counsel and the mother's prayer.

Let me call your attention, in closing, to the circumstances described in the text. It displays at a glance, without any effort, and only as a by-scene of the tremendous drama, the most exalted traits of the female character — traits which will always constitute her true power and glory ; traits which brighten and increase all that is glad and prosperous in life, but which develop themselves with peculiar force in times of trial ; traits which demonstrate what I have now urged, that the dominion of woman is the affections, that it is her office to reveal the secret power there is in love. The brightest lineaments of her character appear as the shadows of life grow darker.

In hours of sickness, in homes of pain, in weary vigils, she rises with a sublime fortitude. The spirit that shrinks with sensitiveness in calmer moments, gives out rich music in the storm. When impending danger, pitiless calumny, or cruel persecution assails the object of her affection, she gathers her virtue around her for a shield, and with a power that makes the weak things of the earth stronger than the mighty, and lends to the timid a bravery which defies all peril, she goes forth to share his fortune to the last, exhibiting a constancy that is more eloquent than words, and a love that cannot die.

The evangelist's description of the crucifixion, then, is touchingly true. Imposture would have overlooked such simple details, in its anxiety to produce a stronger effect. But here we have the immediate impression of nature, the sudden stamp of reality, in a picture so full of awful and thrilling incidents, that we might, without careful study, fail to discover those minute and beautiful traits which the

delineator himself, perhaps, did not consider at the time, but which by their presence authenticate the whole, and demonstrate that its lights and shadows, its bolder and its more delicate features, were caught from actual and passing life. Fountains of the common heart were unsealed at that crucifixion. Amid scenes of fearful wickedness and woe, appear lineaments of human affection in all their freshness. From the appalling transactions of the Judgment Hall, from the coarse abuse of the multitude, from the cruelty of the soldiers, we are attracted by woman, illustrating that unfaltering devotion, which, if it has not power to save, has at least influence to soothe. The eyes of Jesus, dim with death, turn from those uplifted countenances of wonder, from the exulting sneer, from the fierce glare of hatred, to the gaze of these sorrowful women, to the face of his mother. There is sympathy, there is affection, that clings to its object to the last. And how true to itself is that maternal spirit! — for the love that bent over the manger

brightens even through the ignominy of the cross. And who but woman, when Judas betrayed, and Peter denied, and the weary slept, and the fearful fled, could thus summon energy to linger around the cruel and despised spot, to mingle the tears of pity with the blood of suffering? Who but woman, when man turned coward and his trust grew faint, could thus stand until the last by the dying Saviour, and then go to trim the lamp of her devotion at the door of his sepulchre?

"Not she with traitorous kiss her Saviour stung;  
Not she denied him with unholy tongue;  
She, when apostles shrunk, could danger brave —  
Last at his cross, and earliest at his grave."

But while the text illustrates the best characteristics of woman, and thus authenticates its own description, it appears to me that it also beautifully symbolizes her true position. That position is close by the cross, near to the Saviour, in intimate sympathy with his attributes. As that cross grows more and more

prominent, it sheds increasing light upon her, and reveals more and more the dignity of her office, the excellence of her nature. From that, too, she derives her power, and goes forth with its influence to accomplish her mission. Yes, though now she cannot literally stand by the cross of the Redeemer, and mingle her tears with his mortal agony, she can go forth to diffuse his spirit wherever she may act, and to recognize his image in the needy and the suffering. And if thus her faith be steadfast, and her labor diligent, she shall see him glorified—she shall be blessed by his approbation, even as those women of old were blessed by his dying gaze

## LECTURE II.

### CULTURE.

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Lord, thou deliverest unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more.—MATTHEW 25: 20.

THE parable to which these words belong teaches us, among other things, the duty of improving to their utmost capacity the faculties that God has given us; and, accordingly, I shall apply the text as enforcing the main topic of this discourse, which is—CULTURE. I select this as a more comprehensive term than *Education*, which is too much identified with merely one branch of improvement.

The importance of this topic demands extensive discussion; but as this importance has caused it to be treated of in every appeal that has been made to the young, I refer you for



more minute instructions to the many excellent works that have been written upon the subject. It will be my object in the present discourse, to urge upon young women the general truth of culture as an obligation, specifying only a few of its modes or applications. I shall speak of *physical, intellectual, and moral culture*.

I. Of *physical culture*. To break a moral rule, to pervert an intellectual faculty, would deeply wound the consciences of many who seem to think it no sin to violate the laws of our bodily organization. Regardful of an iota in spiritual things, they will neglect conditions of diet, dress, or atmosphere, without a scruple. They realize that God has intrusted their souls to their own agency, but as to the vessel that contains this priceless essence, they manifest no sense of personal responsibility. *That* is left to take care of itself; or, what is equally bad, is not permitted to take care of itself. In one word, they have, apparently, no idea of *moral sanctity* attaching to anything connected with the functions of mere physical life

This error is partly owing to false religious views. The notion that matter is inherently vile or contemptible, and that we rise in spiritual attainments as we wholly subdue it, has prevailed, with most gross and melancholy results, in the Christian church and out of it. And though we may not witness these extreme consequences, the ideas of many are tinged by the same prejudice. It would be as difficult to persuade such that there are acts called religious which cease to be so when performed at the expense of health and life, as it is to convince the student, who pores over his books night and day, and seeks for the intellectual palm even to the verge of the grave, that his exorbitant aspirations are wrong because they are suicidal. It is a noble thing for spirit to assert its supremacy over matter, but it cannot with impunity violate any law. It is one of the grand results of modern science, that it not only reveals its own harmony with religion, but it also demonstrates the essential religiousness of the physical world. It shows us that

every work which God has made is holy, and not to be despised. It opens nature before us as a temple filled with the presence of the Deity, through which alone he becomes manifest to us, over which his spirit has moved, the least member of which has partaken of his care and his love. And of all these, the human body is built with such symmetry, is strung with a skill so delicate, and gifted with faculties so wonderful, as to signalize it as God's most perfect handiwork. To disregard this, then, which he has created, which he has provided for so solicitously, and so beautifully endowed, is not merely to be imprudent, it is morally wrong, it is irreligious, it is sinful.

I would rest what I have to say, then, under this head, upon this strong premiss — that it is *morally wrong* to neglect or violate the laws of our physical being, that the culture of our physical powers is a religious duty. God has declared this not merely by the care and skill with which he has constituted our bodies, but

by the *sanctions* with which he has guarded their welfare. Not a nerve is overtasked, not an organ neglected, with impunity. Quick messengers serve, sleepless sentinels protect them. They give the signal of alarm at the first approach of evil, and punishment certainly follows upon transgression. They who tamper with that which wrongs their physical nature, who violate its laws or neglect its development, may not immediately feel the retribution, but it is surely germinating within them, to break out by and by in some acute agony, to betray them with weakness and impotence, to coil around them with stifling torment, or to waste them down to the grave with chronic disease. These are the sanctions which God has interwoven with our bodily condition, and they who wilfully disregard them sin and suffer. Nor let us say, because they are righteous in other respects, it is a *mystery* that they are sick, and deformed, and die. Having violated the physical laws, they are not righteous in *all* respects. They have

not rightly used all the talents that have been intrusted to them.

Nor do the evil results which neglect of physical culture induces act merely upon the body. Delicately linked as it is with our highest faculties, our insulted physical nature communicates feebleness, derangement, and disease, through all the apartments of the soul. All that is comprehended in a sound mind depends upon a sound body. When the senses are unembarrassed, when the blood circulates purely through all its channels, when the winds of heaven blow vigor into the limbs, then we have one essential condition of a balanced will, of a quick, genial, and robust intellect; yea, of a religious life unobstructed by any morbid fancies, — neither paralyzed by superstition nor haunted by scepticism. And if all these consequences depend upon a true physical culture, then I say that physical culture is a religious duty, and the pulpit is employed with its legitimate work when it insists upon that duty.

Youth, in its buoyant confidence, regards but little the sure but not immediate result, the evil of untimely death, or premature old age, or chronic disease; the unfelt germs of exhaustion and decrepitude, the unknown causes of temporary sickness and pain. Upon the young, then, I would especially urge the duty of a careful physical culture. Develop, by diligent exercise, every limb and muscle and organ. Be not so afraid of cold, or heat, or damp, as of sedentary indolence, or noxious confinement. Read what the learned and experienced have said upon this subject, and follow the directions which they have given. Adopt some mode of exercise or training which shall be secondary to nothing. Know yourselves, and therefore your wants and obligations.

And while availing yourselves of whatever may develop and improve your bodily powers, carefully avoid whatever injures them. This precept, perhaps, is more difficult to heed than the other. In a course of discipline, it is ea-

sier to do certain additional things than to make sacrifices. But in order to a true physical culture, there is no question that much that is customary with both sexes at the present day must be sacrificed. No law of fashion should stand in the place of God's laws. No deference to a miserable custom should turn night into day, or day into night. No expedient for producing an arbitrary and artificial comeliness should be employed at the expense of the comeliness of health. There should be no indulgence of the taste which will create a diseased appetite. There should be no amusement that ends in nervous prostration, fever, or consumption. Not even the zeal for duty should lead to rash exposures, or unrelieved exertions.

And this suggests one of the few points upon which I wish to be more specific. I would dwell for a short time upon the *uses* and *abuses* of *amusement*. That relaxation from ordinary labor, that recreation, is not only proper but necessary, of course no one will

dispute. By keeping our powers strained for a long time without intermission, we not only weaken them, as the trite illustration of the *bent bow* teaches us, but may defeat the very object we have in view. The *instrument* which by judicious care we might have kept vigorous to the last, will become inoperative. We need relaxation. We need either to give these powers *repose* and set in play other faculties, or else to shift their objects. We need to relieve our limbs from their cramped or confined state, and to exercise them so that the *blood* shall leap refreshingly through the veins, and the aching brow feel the cool air, and the stifled lungs have free expansion. Or, if the body has become wearied by protracted effort, let us change the work. Suffer the physical powers to rest, and let the mind be employed, not in intense study, but in pursuits that will cheer, or soothe, or elevate it. This will infuse new life into the jaded powers, and maintain a proper balance in the system. Mere rest will not accomplish all this. We require



not sluggish repose, but change of action; not mere sleep, but exercise. Otherwise, one set of faculties becomes dwarfed the other wearied; one rusts out, the other wears out. The tired body or mind requires cheerfulness, new life; and this will be created by judicious amusements. Let us seek, then, some pleasant social intercourse, or some communion with nature or art. Go out among the changing seasons. Receive the fragrance of flowers, draw breath from "the cool cisterns" of the morning or evening air; select that which is most convenient, that at the same time is healthful to body and mind, cheering yet innocent, that relieves you from, yet fits you for, sterner duty; and it shall be better for you — you will work better, you will accomplish more.

But there is another use in amusement. It prevents our becoming *selfish* and *materialized*. If we go on day after day, toiling for sustenance or gain, we become heedless of everything else, more and more wrapped up in self. Labor, it is true, is the general lot of human-

ity. We must attend to it from the necessity of things; but precisely because this is so, we should introduce other elements of action. Were human beings generally idle, then to urge the benefit of amusement would be to recommend an evil instead of a good. But we are in danger from the opposite course. Now amusement, light as its agency may appear, may be the means of opening our eyes to the perception of something higher than mere sensual life, to other than pecuniary acquirements. We make a mistake in associating the idea of *frivolity* with that of *amusement*. I do not speak now of much that goes by the name of amusement—the folly and excess into which we sometimes plunge; but that which is really for the health of the body and the mind; and, I repeat, it is a mistake to associate the idea of such amusement with *frivolity*. It may be the means not only of physical invigoration, but of intellectual and moral culture. It may open up worlds of discovery that shall refine and

elevate us ; it may unveil truths that we have neglected in our exclusive selfishness ; and it may quicken our conception of the spiritual realities that lie behind our material circumstances. All these results may come through the avenues of amusement—through that which cheers and delights, through that which rests the tired body and relaxes the overtasked mind. For instance, there is a source of amusement that lies at hand for every one. I mean the gratification of the sense of beauty. Every one is more or less affected by the beautiful, apart from any consideration of usefulness. And this quick sense of the beautiful may be made the source of endless amusement. Art and nature unite to this end. There are books, and paintings, and statuary, and music. And, most glorious and most open of all, there are the sights and sounds of the material universe. If we are too poor to avail ourselves of artificial sources of culture, yet there are around us, in sea, and earth, and heaven, countless agencies for this purpose. The

poorest of us stands in a gallery grander than Titian or Claude could create, and hears nobler music than Handel composed. In the world about us, there is not merely the *useful*, but a pervading *beauty* that moves us with a mysterious sympathy, and lifts us above the dust. How glorious is nature in all its forms of sublimity or loveliness, in all its *changes of times and seasons*! How beautiful the silent passages of a single day, if, throwing off the coil of labor, and the insensibility of habit, we would pause and consider them! The sun coming forth from its chamber like a bridegroom, rejoicing like a strong man to run a race; the mountains crowning themselves with its light, the waters leaping with a glad murmur into the new day. The ever-shifting phases of familiar things as the different tints of light and shadow fall upon them, the leaves moving like waves in the wind, the air full of winged life, the clouds sailing through the blue sky "like ships at sea;" until the light steals away, the moon rises and goes down,

and the night passes over us, with its myriad stars like the flashing wheels of its chariot. When we are in the mood for amusement, a *l* nature throws off its homely and work-day aspect, and becomes suddenly steeped in beauty. And no one can respond to this beauty, and be as sordid and selfish as he would be if confined to a mere round of toil. Thankful am I that the lowest child of poverty and disease has one source of amusement so high and hopeful—God's own garden of beauty, and palace of strange delights.

Of course, I have merely indicated one or two sources of amusement, not specified all. I have shown you how amusement may have for us an elevating tendency, winning us from meanness and sensualism, plucking us from brooding melancholy and care, leading us out into broad and cheerful life.

There is one more use of amusement, at which I will but hint. It preserves us from degrading and sinful pleasures. Some relaxation we ought to have, and the majority will

have If they have that which is innocent and elevating, they will not need or seek any other; if not, they will avail themselves of that which comes to hand. I cannot enlarge upon this topic; but that its application is important you will readily perceive.

Thus much for the *uses* of amusement. I have taken the subject into the pulpit, because I feel that it ought to be understood. It is exceedingly deleterious to withdraw the sanction of religion from amusement. If we feel that it is all injurious, we should strip the earth of its flowers, and blot out its pleasant sunshine. We have faculties given us to aid in amusement. We have the gift of wit, and to laugh is as natural to man as to weep. If we refuse to sanction this religiously, then our nature will act without that sanction; and it is needless to say, that unlawful restriction, like all despotisms, induces anarchy. If you virtually teach young persons that all gayety and relaxation is wicked, the buoyancy of their dispositions leads them nevertheless to seek

amusement, and in following their natural bent they will indulge indiscriminately in the good and the bad, believing both to be wrong; and, what is worse, they will incur the habit of violating conscience. We should raise no false issues, then. The uses of amusement, its harmony with religion, should be distinctly pointed out. The line should be plainly laid down, and then carefully guarded.

And this leads me to say a few words, on the other hand, respecting the *abuses* of amusement. I remark, then, in the first place, that it is an abuse of amusement to attend to nothing else. We have seen that amusement is only a means to a higher result. We earn its privileges only by attention to more important duties. We need no relaxation when the mind and the body are continually relaxed. A life of mere pleasure, according to the usual acceptation of that term, is worthless and insipid. If labor wears out the functions of the body and the mind, continual amusement enervates them. And yet, how many are there

who evidently desire nothing but a life of pleasure! They little think what it is they desire! Let them have their wish, and they would soon sigh for the ordinary lot. God be thanked for labor—for its beautiful though stern ordinances! Not merely because it converts the desert into a garden, and the wilderness into a fruitful land, and clothes the naked and feeds the hungry; but because it invigorates both mind and body, quickens their action and refines their skill, prevents them from sluggishness and vice, fills the day with enjoyment and satisfaction, and crowns sleep with a sweet garland, plucked by the hands of honest industry, and steeped in the dew of content. How different from the racked frame, the jaded spirit, the debased and tormented soul of the mere pleasure-seeker! What has such an one done, what is he or she doing, for life, and life's realities? What good flows from this idleness? Attend, then, to every duty, to all necessary labor. The amusement is truly sweet that comes only after this.



Another abuse of amusement is that which perverts it to *dissipation*. There are some who seem to connect no other ideas with amusement than those of frivolity and excess. They cannot have a holiday without disgracing themselves, they cannot go upon a party of pleasure without converting it into an occasion of riot. With them "gayety" is license, "wit" foolishness, and "spirit" recklessness and confusion. This, to be sure, in its intense degree, is more applicable to the other sex. But I am fearful that some in the class which I now address have ideas of amusement almost as perverted. I would say, then, that there is no lawful amusement in that which disgraces, sensualizes, or in any way injures ourselves, or which is carried on against the feelings and interests of others. All pleasures that tend to exhaust the body, that keep one from necessary sleep, or incapacitate her for her duties, are wrong; perhaps not reprehensible in themselves, but in their results in the degree to which they have been indulged in.

And surely I need not say that my idea of amusement has no relation to anything that vitiates the soul, that kindles or pollutes it with sinful appetites, or deludes it with false ideas. The principle of discrimination between the *uses* and the *abuses* of amusement I have now laid down. Its application I leave to you.

I would not have you suppose that I consider *amusement* as the only means of physical culture, or its abuse as the only cause of physical injury; but I have dwelt more particularly upon this topic because of the peculiar relation which it has to the young. I add to this, then, the injunction that you avail yourselves of all means of physical culture which your knowledge and judgment may recommend. The main truth that I would now urge upon you is the importance of this duty. It is, as I have shown you, a *moral* obligation. Consider, also, that your own welfare, and the welfare of others, is indissolubly linked with it. Who that has witnessed that nervous suf-

fering which embitters all enjoyment, that unnatural paleness which no cosmetic can hide or jewels adorn, that fever-flush which is a premonitory signal of death, that hacking cough which is a voice from the grave,—in short, who that has seen health and beauty withering under premature disease, and all the vital powers enfeebled and broken down before the very noon of life, does not feel the solemn urgency of the plea for a diligent physical culture? Who does not feel it that considers the responsibility of mothers, over which they have no control save that of earnest attention to the laws of their own being? Who does not feel it as he has stood by the bedside of the young victim of consumption, the loved, the gifted, the good, sinking away, untimely, like a star in the summer twilight; or as he has bent over the grave of the early dead, snatched, as it is said, “mysteriously” from earth?

II. I pass from this topic to speak of *intellectual* culture. The brevity of my remarks

will be in proportion to the importance of the subject, which has caused it already to be presented and urged in every possible light. If the body, which is but a vehicle, an instrument, should be nourished because of the value of that principle which it contains and serves, surely, the mind, which is that principle, and which is an end in itself, should receive the most diligent culture. The servant who buried his *one talent in the earth* perverted temporal treasure ; but she who suffers her intellectual powers to lie still and perish, wastes her own being, and rejects immortal wealth. *Happy she who has made and abides firmly by this resolution* under all circumstances, even the most trying, that ignorance shall not be her portion. Poverty and pain, long hours of *needful toil and sad experiences* of domestic calamity and disappointment, may fall to her lot ; but even from these issues of deprivation and suffering, she adds strength and riches to that *gift which alone dignifies humanity*, which masters all material obstacles

and survives all earthly distinctions, which cheers us in the desert and the darkness, opens new worlds of beauty, realms of inexhaustible life, and transmutes the sternest, coarsest fortune to friendliness and peace. Happy she, who, conscious of the value of that heritage which God has committed to every living soul, improves it at all cost, and is able to say in the spirit of the faithful factor, "Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents; behold, I have gained beside them five talents more."

I deprecate the display of learning in a woman as much as I do pedantry in a man. I dislike that cold, masculine, intellectuality, which is sometimes characterized in the expression, "a strong-minded woman." I would not contradict in this discourse what I said in the first concerning woman's peculiar sphere, nor have her neglect the duties of that sphere. But I do say, that, while without intellectual culture her beauty is insipid, and her dress and ornaments make her only a liv-

ing gewgaw, even her affection wants half its efficacy. What true luxury is there in that home where taste presides, disposing even the most humble appliances in its own beautiful order ! What a charm possesses that conversation, which, although its best wealth is of the heart, is yet enriched by the variety, adapted by the judgment, and refined by the expression, of a well-stored, discriminating, and educated mind ! What a wonderful agent is associated with philanthropy, when to the capacity of feeding the hungry and clothing the naked is added the power of imparting instruction, shedding rays of celestial light upon the darkened intellect, and leading the faltering steps of the degraded up to dignity and usefulness ! How may the willing watcher bless the sick chamber, and relieve the tedious hours of pain or convalescence, by the noble thoughts of a reflective mind, or the treasured fruits of diligent study ! And how all-essential is intellectual culture to the holy office of a mother, when the new-born spirit lies like a germ in

the atmosphere of her love, plastic, open to all her influence, and she is to determine its destiny !

And if thus we perceive the importance of woman's intellectual culture to others—to those who are to receive the offices of her affection—who can estimate its value to herself ! I have already suggested that value. The power which it gives her over all material circumstances, the treasures of truth it opens to her, the real dignity it imparts, the consolation and strength that it yields in times of loneliness, want, and suffering,—I will leave these suggestions to your own reflection.

As to the *methods* of intellectual culture, I must refer you to others who have spoken particularly upon this point. But let me say that we can help determine this matter by considering what intellectual culture is. An excellent writer upon self-education has drawn a distinction which demands our notice. "It is necessary," says he, "to distinguish two branches of the cultivation of the mind, which

we are too much accustomed to confound; namely, that which consists in the acquisition of knowledge, and that which consists in the development of the faculties." Intellectual culture is not attained solely by the acquisition of knowledge. This may be a mere discipline of the memory. But this culture is the exercise of all our intellectual faculties in harmonious development. It is the power of fixing the attention upon some specific point; of detecting and uniting truths; of comparing, analyzing, constructing. Who does not understand the difference between a great reader and a great scholar? Intellectual culture is, I repeat, something more than the acquisition of knowledge. It is a discipline, a ripening, an efficiency of all our mental powers. Everything, then, which tends to strengthen and develop the mind—to make it rich, self-balanced, ready, effective—is to be employed as aiding the process of intellectual culture. To educate is not merely to learn by rote, to cram the memory with a collection of facts; but to



*draw out* the mind so that it may know how to use facts, so that it may become greater than those facts. He is not the best educated person who knows the most truths, but who is most *capable* of knowing and using all truths. It is only necessary, then, to say, that all methods which secure this supremacy and efficiency of mind, such as reading, reflection, investigation, are to be employed. And the test which should determine the character of books and studies is whether they are calculated to produce this essential result.

Before I pass to the third and final topic of this discourse, I would allude to a subject which occupies a medium ground, growing out of remarks that have already been made, and belonging to what I have yet to say. That subject is *the connection between intellectual and moral culture*. Let me ask you, then, to consider the *moral* results of ignorance. I do not wish to unjustly mitigate the fact of human sinfulness, but all the evil that we witness in the world is not the effect of depravity.

Often these sad fruits spring up in the hot-beds of uncontrolled passion — uncontrolled because untaught. If error is sometimes the result of moral delinquency, so crime and vice are sometimes the offspring of intellectual deficiency. Consider, too, how often error, breaking out in deeds that shock us, is allied with an earnest moral sentiment. He who throws himself under the crushing wheels of *Juggernaut* may do so with a loyalty to the idea of duty as fervent as that which has nerved the soul of a Christian martyr. The wife who bows down to die upon the funeral pile of her husband, the mother who commits her child to the sacred but fatal river, acts thus not because of moral depravity, or from the lack of human feeling. No; this is the moral sense without intellectual light, and though ignorance may excuse the error, it cannot make us admire it. Bigotry, too, may be associated with moral feeling — undoubtedly it often is; but it comes from the lack of intellectual comprehensiveness. In short, the common failure to act

thoroughly upon principle is in much owing to the fact that great principles are not clearly seen and understood.

III. We detect, then, the important influence of our intellectual condition upon that which constitutes the remaining topic of this discourse — *moral culture*. That this, on the other hand, is equally essential to our intellectual development, is most evident. In order that we may possess a well-balanced and clear mind, it is necessary that we should hold a principle of unwavering rectitude, a healthy will, a sense of the great end of all action — love for and experience of the highest good. Without this, there can be no true intellectual culture, no solid intellectual attainment, and we lack that spiritual symmetry which depends upon the harmony of all our faculties.

Yes, moral culture is the basis as well as the consummation of all that I have now recommended. It is the sanctification of all our powers, the aiming of them aright. It is that comprehensive act which implies all

this other conduct because it is a duty. It gives to *duty* its meaning and its force. And this is, perhaps, the best illustration that I can give of the result of moral culture, and, therefore, of its importance—that it exalts *duty* as our highest ideal, and binds us to it in sacred allegiance. In reference to that we perform every act, for that we sacrifice all things else.

It is needless to say how imperfect is all character without this broad and vital principle. Ignorance thus becomes wedded to crime, while mental accomplishments increase the power for evil, and illustrate our spiritual deformity. It is true, a disciplined intellect may hold the passions in abeyance, and impart to its possessor a certain dignity and purity, but this is superficial. Intellectual education is not the talisman of life, the armor that shields us against temptation, the sword with which we overcome our worst foes, the helmet of our salvation. It may train the reason to see and apprehend truth, but it cannot make that truth vitalize and regenerate the heart until this

hard selfishness breaks away, and we become filled with love, and faith, and prayer, and day by day we learn to curb some appetite, to make some sacrifice, to elevate some noble virtue, until each subordinate quality takes its proper place, and each diviner lineament assumes its due prominence, and clothed with a beautiful meekness, yet invigorated by a celestial power, we stand forth in the perfection of human character. This comes of moral culture. Only he who breathed upon the waves of Galilee can say to these troubled elements within us, "Peace, be still!" only that Spirit which brooded over chaos can bring out of our spiritual anarchy this harmony and beauty!

Moral culture, then, is the mainspring and the end of all other education. And if human character under no circumstances can be complete without it, female character of all others requires it. Peculiarly does woman need that principle which guards us against temptation amid the formalities of conventionalism, the whirl of excitement, the allurements of life.

Peculiarly should virtue be enthroned in her heart, with all its sanctions; for there are times when, if she denies it, it will indeed be cast out and trampled under foot. And of all persons, she needs that discipline which enables us not only to do, but to endure, and to suffer. Force of nerve, and headlong impetuosity of will, may often serve man in the departments of his action; but woman's sphere, if she truly fills it, demands those virtues which only issue from deep moral effort. That *patience* which is the ingathering of a sublime strength, and that enables her to wait and suffer to the last. That *forgiveness* which makes her anoint the hands that have abused her, and shield and succor in its hour of desolation the spirit that once scorned and rejected her. That *love* that watches by the sick bed and illuminates the prison cell; that burns like a taper through the long night of affliction, and flows with no slackening for the object it has once cherished, however that object may be hated by the world; that transfigures pov-

erty, and rebukes fear, and glorifies itself by performing the meanest offices, like Christ washing the disciples' feet. That *faith* which believeth all things, and endureth all things; which is not to be shaken, or obscured, because it draws its assurance from near communion with the things in which it trusts. For these virtues—(and she who truly fills a woman's sphere most surely needs them)—nothing is sufficient but a spirit that has been trained by a diligent moral culture. Nay, why shall I not use a term that if not more comprehensive is more vital than this? Woman, of all beings, needs the life and the power of *religion*. When we consider what she is called upon to do, what interests come under her influence, what brave yet tender virtues she must cherish, where can she go but to him who alone has lived these virtues, and from whom alone their spirit emanates? True culture is consummated only when she attains to that spiritual excellence of which Christ was the perfect manifestation; and in that at-

tainment alone can she say, "Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more."



## LECTURE III.

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

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She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple. — PROVERBS 31 : 22.

THE difference between *civilization* and *barbarism* is indicated not only by the increase of intellectual and moral power, and of all those useful elements which build up and consolidate society, but by those ornamental accessories, those beautiful productions of art, which evince a refined and luxuriant culture. For instance: the garments of the civilized man may be of the same primeval fabric as those which so scantily clothe the dweller of caves and forests. They may be no more durable or comfortable. And yet the civilized man is not only dressed more completely than the

other, but more exquisitely and skilfully ; and that exquisiteness and skill illustrate the social difference between the two, illustrate the whole advancement of ages in discovery and invention, in commerce and manufactures, in chemistry and botany, and the long array of the useful arts. The canoe with which the savage crosses the rivers and glides along the coasts of his country has in it all the fundamental elements of the ship that traverses the globe ; yet how different the noble vessel with all its appointments, with its chronometer, telescope, and compass, with its elaborate workmanship and its store of luxuries, from the fishing-boat of the Indian or New Zealander ! And here, again, the superiority of civilization is illustrated by *skill* and *equipage*. The amenities of social life, the rules of good breeding, are but politer methods of exercising a respect or affection that is the same in Australia as in New York or Boston. Civilization has only created a more refined expression.

I say, then, in short, that culture is mani-

fested not only by an increase of power and of real acquisition, but by certain graces or ornaments, which, if they are not its solid fruits, are its ripeness and its bloom. The learning of the genuine scholar is accompanied by facility and elegance. So the enlightened nation is not only strong, intelligent, and orderly, — crowned with prosperity, fortified with wise laws and good institutions, — but it is also endowed with countless appendages of beauty and convenience, which are as its “coverings of tapestry,” its “clothing of silk and purple.” It is true that these are often the veils of decay ; that pomp and luxury are significant symptoms of national decline ; and that under these fine formalities, these elegances of a ripe society, are sometimes concealed a corruption and spiritual deadness that may well make us envy a more simple and uncultivated life. But still there is a point where *use* and *ornament* coincide ; where culture flows into beauty, and overflows with luxuriance. Much as we may praise a Spartan condition of society, a certain

iron ruggedness, as peculiarly favorable to robust action and to the manly virtues, it is not the highest state of civilization. A truly great and cultivated people is always characterized by a national taste, by exquisite trophies of art, by an atmosphere of genial and beautiful inspiration. Here the sterner virtues may thrive no less than in the other case, while the humanities flourish better.

Indeed, let us not underrate the influence of beauty as itself a means of culture; as a civilizing power. The people that is bald of art and ornament,—that has no statuary, painting, music, poetry,—may be a people compact and hardy, brave in war, industrious in peace, and strict after their idea of justice. But they will be a rude and selfish people; a people with no great vision, no expansive sympathies, no progress. The Doric order of society, I repeat, is not the highest, is not the Christian order. On the other hand, as one great agency for elevating men from a brutal and narrow materialism, let them

be brought in contact with the productions of art, with the amenities of a refined society. Let an air of taste breathe around them. Let them gaze upon exquisite statuary. Let them hear glorious music. Let pictured beauty melt gradually into their souls. Let grand monuments overshadow them. I know that this is but little without robust moral life, and general intelligence; that voluptuousness will often profane such privileges, and sluggish sensuality lie down by them and sleep. But mingled with other agencies, I repeat, this one of beauty, of art, of ornament, has an uplifting efficiency. It would be better than a police to familiarize the crowd in a city with embodiments of this beauty, with ideas of loveliness and sublimity. A magnificent church, with its lofty arches and "long-drawn aisles," with its "dim, religious light," its sculptured adornments, does, silently, a great work in preparing the mind of the worshipper for holier communions.

Against a dry utilitarianism, as against an

ascetic religiousness, we must continue to urge the fact that God in his creations has been lavish of beauty. He has garnished the universe. He has not merely woven it into homely fibres of use; he has made for it, so to speak, "coverings of tapestry," he has clothed it with "silk and purple." Beauty is not an accident of the great whole, or a certain accompaniment thrown in to heighten the general effect. It saturates all nature, it is the expression and out-yearning of its deepest life. It is in the outline and analysis of the least thing. It is absent from no solitude. It meets us unexpectedly. It is in the moss that climbs around the mountain-tarn; it peeps up in the lonely flower through the shaggy crevice of the rock; the sunlight covers the winter woods with an embroidery of diamonds; the tiny crystals of the frost break out with the same beauty that shines in the glittering constellations. It is not for us, then, to deny this universal beauty, but reverently to inquire its use. And we detect that use in

its elevating tendency—in the affinity which it gives us to higher realities. It learns us that this world is not merely for sensual purposes; that what is real is not always what is true; and it incites us continually to aspire. I do not wish to confound esthetic culture with religious quickening, but that there is such a use in beauty no one can deny. And that people, therefore, which, with other and greater results, has attained to the love and the reproduction of beauty, has not only reached a high point of culture, but is possessed of an important agent of civilization.

The remarks which I have now made not only apply to communities but to individuals, and to the main topic of the present discourse; to the subject of *female accomplishments*. The general principles which I have laid down will illustrate what I have to say upon this point. What we call accomplishments are the ripening or completion of fine culture. When we speak of an accomplished young woman, we mean that she possesses refinement of mind,

grace of manner, comeliness of dress, facility of expression ; in short, a method of pleasing which has a great and beneficial influence, and which is far from vanity — which vanity, indeed, spoils. In proportion to their worth, these elegances should be the objects of assiduous endeavor. The young woman should strive not only to do well, but to appear well. Let her, of all things, value most those solid acquirements, that necessary culture, which I recommended in the last discourse. Let her never sacrifice essentials to appearances. Let her not be made up of mere accomplishments. Far am I from praising those gauzy, sparkling, flippant qualities, which have no depth or solidity. The woman of mere show, who seeks only to fascinate and dazzle, whose attractions are all in beauty of person, or in dress ; in sweetness of speech, or grace of manner ; but who has neither a reflective mind nor a feeling heart, is bankrupt as to woman's richest wealth. She does not recognize the true ends of existence, nor the claims



of duty. She only seeks to tread the round of pleasure, and to conquer admiration. Her life is all beauty without soul, and ornament without reality ; like a gilded but empty vase, fit merely to be seen ; or a garland of artificial flowers, made to flaunt only in the garish light of the ball-room and saloon.

I do not speak, then, of these empty attractions, but of those genuine accomplishments which grow out of a ripe culture. This culture is well, is essential, is the first thing to be attended to ; but it is better when refined into beauty, and expressed with elegance. It is well for the young woman to hold the distaff of industry, and spin with her own hands the simplest garment ; but it is better, if, together with this, she is able to make herself " coverings of tapestry," and clothing of " silk and purple ;" or, to express the same idea in other words, if her intellectual and moral education is not merely useful but attractive. An accomplished woman has a great power for good ; her accomplishments are among the most effi-

cient agencies of female influence. She thus lends a charm to home which concentrates there countless blessings and graces, and makes it, what it should be, the most delightful centre of rest, and enjoyment, and duty. She causes those virtues which command respect to win love. She adds dignity to poverty, and lustre to wealth. Her manner of giving makes her charities flow like ointment, and she confers a favor as if she were the beneficiary. She mingles an indescribable zest with her conversation, and imparts additional pleasure to amusement. By her resources she overcomes or meliorates many a difficulty, soothes the dark hours of pain, and brightens those sterner trials of life which cannot be avoided. In short, these accomplishments, joined to a cultivated intellect, a kind and pure heart, and a sincere piety, endow woman with a power the benefits of which are as inestimable as they are various. Take *music*, for instance. Not only is it a beautiful and sublime science, the study of which ennobles and puri-

fies the mind of its votary, but how many and excellent are its ministries to others! It occupies hours that else, perhaps, they would employ sinfully. It wins them from low and sensual pursuits. It fills the home with melody, and helps recreation and social intercourse. It breaks into the monotony of life with a kindling enthusiasm, and interrupts the weary periods of anxiety and toil. It soothes the dull pauses of disease; it twines its magic spell around the fevered heart; it steals into the troubled spirit with uplifting and with peace. Its harmonies drop through the gloom of confinement like links of sunshine, and draw us up as to the canopy of the free and unbounded heaven. It is the key of memory, and the messenger of hope, awaking us to all that was dear in the past, and all that is worthy in the future. For in its sweetest and loftiest moods, music is eminently a moral and religious agent. It touches our best feelings, rebukes our sins, and confirms our virtues. It is the natural advocate of freedom, peace, and

every sacred work. It is the best expression of faith and prayer. It moves like a magnetic current over our souls, and suggests our mysterious kindred with higher realities. Surely, then, she who devotes a reasonable portion of her time to the knowledge and practice of this art is learning no vain accomplishment.

I cannot in this discourse, any more than in the others, enter into minute specifications. I leave it for yourselves to decide what accomplishments are useful, and accord with the principles already laid down; what are really those beautiful appendages which accompany and assist a true culture. There are two or three of these, however, to which, in the remainder of this discourse, I will more particularly allude.

I. The first which I will specify is *reading*. I speak of this as something different from the *study* of books, which is, of course, a branch of essential culture. There are many works which it is not necessary that we should study, yet with which it is well to hold some ac-

quaintance. There is a kind of knowledge which we need not possess in order to acquit ourselves of the charge of ignorance, or for the sake of scientific accuracy, which does, nevertheless, greatly furnish and enrich the mind. An extensive course of reading, and a wide range of facts, illustrate what we have already studied, help our expression of what we know, make composition more varied, flexible, and affluent, and accumulate resources for conversation. We may, for instance, learn the leading facts of history by the study of a few volumes, and thus understand very well the past and present states of the world. Yet who does not know that there are many collateral works, such as "Notes," "Diaries," "Memoirs," which will shed much light upon the prominent facts, and enable one far better to appreciate and command her historical knowledge? The habits of a court, the manners and customs of a people, the person, dress, and private life of a statesman, monarch, or hero, all make the past more graphic

to us, set the figures in a correct light and in due proportion upon the canvass; we can understand and describe them better; and the whole stream of historical knowledge is illuminated as well as deepened by these side facts. Again, we may know enough of geography for all ordinary purposes, such as the different divisions and boundaries of the earth, latitudes, climates, and the like. But how is our knowledge enriched and made fluent by the reading of authentic books of travels, explorations, ethnological researches! There are, again, many sciences of which it is not possible that we should possess an exhaustive knowledge; it is not necessary to a true culture that we should; yet of which it is well that we should know something; and of which we may know something by the reading of a few general topics. But I need not dwell upon this point. I merely wish to illustrate the value of Reading as an *accomplishment*, apart from that strict study which is essential to culture.

Of this kind is the perusal of a great deal

of that literature which is called *belles lettres*. One, perhaps, could get along with the practical duties of life without any of this reading. But it is extremely necessary to an accomplished culture. If it does not deposit any solid facts in the mind, it refines and mellows it. It liberalizes us, expands our reflective powers, increases our stores of imagery and expression, and purifies our style. And, in connection with this, I may as well say a word about works of fiction — *novel-reading*. It is an extreme, and I think an erroneous opinion, to condemn such reading altogether. In the first place, if we reject works of fiction without any qualification as to the term, we repudiate some of the wisest and most widely adopted methods of instruction, such as the parable and the allegory, which set forth truth with accessories of the imagination, and which in this way effectually insinuate virtue that would have been unperceived or disregarded if stated in an axiom or a syllogism. Again, we must believe that our imaginative faculty

is given us to cultivate with the rest of our nature; it has its use, and I think an important use, in the scale of our general culture. Besides, in rejecting all works of fiction, we reject some of the noblest monuments of literature, both in poetry and prose, — works which have not only delighted, but instructed and elevated innumerable readers, and which, therefore, we cannot think were guilty creations of their authors' minds, and total perversions of those gifts with which God endowed them. I do not mean — for I have not time — to go into the whole argument upon this subject; but I think that we should apply to *novel-reading* the same principle which we apply to *amusement*. It is a mental recreation, which may be innocent and beneficial. But it is also a pursuit which is liable to great abuse. When we would occupy some leisure and listless hour with a book which through the agency of fiction imparts to us a keener insight into men and manners, a more graphic knowledge of the past, a more vivid sense of



our relations to humanity, and of the claims of duty, it is well enough. But when novels constitute our whole stock of reading, and that reading becomes an absorbing pursuit; when we devour indiscriminately all kinds of novels, anything and everything that crowds through the flood-gates of the press; books of all sorts of morality, and books with no morality at all; when other reading is omitted; when duty is neglected; when the hours of repose are foregone, and sacred seasons intruded upon; then it is but clinching a truism to say that novel-reading is most pernicious and wicked. In the first place, there are but few novels that deserve the exception for which I have contended. Most of them, in a mere literary point of view, are unmitigated trash, the froth of superficial thinking, the scum of diseased sentiment; they are neither microscopes nor telescopes, but kaleidoscopes, only shifting into new and fantastic combinations old plots and sequels, which originally were false and colored views of men and actions. Those

works of fiction are but few, indeed, which possess such a soul of genius and such a body of truth, as to render them worthy of perusal, reprint, or preservation. And when we consider the *morale* of many of those works which teem around us, those dishes of scepticism, horrors, and licentiousness, served up with the piquant sauce of a Parisian or an English style, we can hardly wonder that there are some who condemn all fictitious writings in the mass. And while these considerations should teach us the most delicate discrimination, let us also feel that an entire devotion to novel-reading is as deleterious as it is frivolous. There are some, I fear, who, neglecting all substantial study, pore only over stories. And what a training of the mind is this! For what are they preparing it, when it is wholly engaged upon scenes and plots, and only familiar with the men and women of fiction? Let me tell them that they are poorly armed for the realities of life, for reverses of fortune, and stern calls of duty. Their minds are becom-

ing lax and feeble, enriched by no acquisitions of real knowledge, and unfitted for the tension of thought. And if their hearts are uncorrupted, this exemption is the only benefit they owe to *superficial* reading.

I pass from this subject to say, that while we have had occasion to deplore the character of so many works, which have leaped from the press like the frogs of Egypt, swarming in our streets and houses, our kitchens and bed-chambers, we have also occasion to rejoice at those recent enterprises which are now furnishing us with some of the best books in the English language. There is hardly an excuse, then, except that of extreme poverty, unremitted toil, or sickness, for the young woman who is not possessed of that accomplishment which depends upon general though well-chosen reading. For I am not recommending *excessive* reading. There are book-gluttons, whose only quality is the power of devouring. Stored to repletion with the contents of countless volumes, they are often quite leaden as to expres-

sion. Or else they are mere encyclopedias, from whom you can get any fact upon any subject; but those facts are packed up in their minds as dry items; they have been *preserved*, not *planted* there. They have not entered into and enriched the mental soil of the reader, and become portions of himself; they have no congruity or assimilation. Reading, even as an accomplishment, should be discriminate, and interspersed with reflection; else it is no accomplishment.

With these remarks, then, I urge upon you this pursuit. I will not stop to recount its advantages, its uses. The influence which it will give you, the new modes of power which it will confer, the occasions in which it will prove inestimable, I leave to your own reflections. It imparts to you the skill that distinguishes the mere scholar from the ready speaker and the good writer. It is as if, in addition to the substantial *materiel* of knowledge, you should make yourselves "coverings of tapestry," and "clothing of silk and purple."

II. Another accomplishment is the power of ready and appropriate *conversation*. There are few who can talk well; who speak with exact pronunciation, grammatical correctness and purity of diction, and with adaptedness and amenity. And yet what a privilege has God bestowed upon us in the faculty of speech; what powers are comprised in this universal gift! What influence is there in books compared with the magic of the eloquent tongue? What beauty of face equals the charm of the earnest spirit breaking out in words? How does the loveliness which we drink in from nature, how do the acquisitions of silent thought, lie inefficient within us, until we can speak of them to another, and receive confirmation of them from his speech! And what are all other earthly communions to vocal communion, face to face, with our kind? In the beautiful language of another — “How large a portion of life does it [conversation] fill up! How innumerable are its ministries and its uses! It is the most refined species of recreation — the most

sparkling source of merriment. It interweaves with a never-resting shuttle the bonds of domestic sympathy. It fastens the ties of friendship, and runs along the golden links of the chain of love. It enriches charity, and makes the gift twice blessed.”\*

It is evident that I can say but little, in proportion to what might be said, of a faculty which is so varied in its uses, and which employs so much of our action. I shall confine myself to a very few hints. I am speaking now of conversation as an *accomplishment*, and not as an essential agent of communication; and I would say, in the first place, study *adaptedness* of speech. Learn when to speak, what to speak, and how much to speak. There are few of the minor evils of life more disagreeable than remarks out of season. “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver,” says the wise man; but he adds, “As he that

\*Rev. A. P. Peabody, whose tract upon “*Conversation*” I would earnestly recommend to the reader.

taketh away a garment in cold weather, and as vinegar upon nitre ; so is he that singeth songs to an heavy heart." The language of merriment is out of place upon any occasion of solemnity ; so too is an undue seriousness of speech improper in a time of relaxation and cheerfulness. We certainly have but a poor discipline of spirit, if light words continually drop from our mouths ; and, on the other hand, we may injure even religion by talking about it under all circumstances. We should consider why we speak, and to whom ; and perhaps it is not altogether unnecessary to add, that we should know what we are saying. We should adapt ourselves, as much as principle will allow, to the *prejudices* of those with whom we converse, and enter into their trains of thought. A course of conversation that would be perfectly fitting with one class of associates, would be stilted, obscure, and even offensive, to others. Books will help us, reflection will help us, to adapt our conversation, but nothing more than a close acquaintance with human nature. We

may thus express a disagreeable truth in an effective and unoffending way, and by a few words touch the heart, and carry our point. How valuable this tact of adaptedness is in all conversation I need not say, nor show how absolutely essential it is if we would influence others. Let us also learn that there is sometimes an adaptedness in *silence*, which gives a charm to conversation.

Again; I would say, study *correctness* of speech. There is surely no accomplishment in the conversation that is coarse or vulgar; that betrays ignorance, or that is in any way so conducted in its *manner* as to mar its meaning, or its influence. I would not recommend primness or stiffness of speech, that precision which makes us attend not so much to what is said as to the way in which it is said. But I would have ease and elegance, purity and flexibility, conjoined. The discipline which must be exercised in order to attain this excellence of method is itself a valuable means of culture,



and confers upon us one of the most delightful accomplishments.

Once more, let me urge you to cultivate a *pleasantness* of manner and tone in conversation. This remark comprehends more than I can now illustrate. But that agreeable element in conversation which makes it truly an accomplishment, comes from the absence of certain defects, and the presence of certain qualities, which I will just name. For *moral* reasons, as well as from considerations of gracefulness, I would say, avoid all mere expletives, all cant expressions, all words that are worse than useless, and more than half profane. Discard from your speech all that bitterness, which is too common in conversation, which springs from prejudice or disappointment, which is the mark of an envious and detracting spirit. How much this alloys all social enjoyment, I need not tell you. Closely allied to this is the habit of scandal. There are some whose tongues are mere dissecting knives for the cutting up of character, or jour-

nals for the circulation of reports. The conversation of such is anything but an accomplishment; and when we see how rife this kind of talk is in society, we may question whether it would not be better to do away with all occasions which afford an opportunity for it. At least, there can be no question that the evil itself should be abolished. Let us be careful, also, how we speak the language of *contempt*, and of whom we speak it. Wit, too, is a dangerous element in conversation. While its electric and sparkling peculiarity may enliven and illustrate, it is as dangerous and as terrible as lightning; they who possess it are apt to scathe at random and say "Are we not in sport?" and there is no more fruitful means of making enemies. Beware, especially, of sarcasm. Humor is well enough in its place, when it is genial and legitimate, but we should take care lest even thus we wound others unmeaningly, and run into caricature and buffoonery. As to all mere gossip and frivolity, idle words, vain boasting, hasty utterance,

angry debate, we must of course condemn them.

But that which gives a charm to conversation comes not so much from a quick intellect as from a kind heart. It consists in a due consideration for others, a genial sympathy with all, in purity, earnestness, and truth. The young woman who possesses a gift animated by these elements, has an accomplishment as valuable as the power of speech itself.

III. I have something to say of *dress*, and *personal comeliness*, considered as accomplishments. It is no mark of great intellectual or moral discrimination to despise these accessories. There is no fixed law by which genius and slovenliness go together, and it is right that we should endeavor to preserve the beauty which God has given. Attention to dress is an indication of a refined taste, which will be sure to discard the mere bombast of fashion, as much as negligence or filth. The young woman whose clothing is tawdry, dirty, or out of date, is thus careless of her outward adorn-

ing either from indolence or affectation. Poverty, unless of the most abject kind, is out of the question, for although it cannot procure rich, it can at least wear neat, clothing. And it is beautiful to see the delicate instinct by which the poorest woman will sometimes array herself with a tidiness that is more attractive than robes of silk and velvet. For, indeed, the accomplishments of dress and personal comeliness are not dependent upon richness or variety of clothing. Rather the contrary. Vulgaritv is often enrobed in sumptuous dresses; clothes itself with gorgeous colors, as though it had never seen anything finer than a rainbow; and loads itself down with blazing jewels, as though to be stared at were to secure admiration. No; that delicate taste which selects and adjusts the dress, which duly sets off without unduly valuing the comeliness of form and feature, may do this without many or expensive materials, and is in fine accordance with that beauty which is so ripe an element in nature.

But now let me say, on the other hand, do not place too great an estimate upon personal appearance; do not distract attention from more sober wants, in order to foster pride, vanity, or a habit of wasteful indulgence. You may have personal beauty; it is a *good* gift. Comeliness is a passport to favor, and secures an agreeable prejudice. It may exert a good influence. The beautiful form is an appropriate shrine for innocence, affection, virtue. But these possessions should be estimated only at their true value. They are not to be considered as the chief good; or to be the prime objects of our care. Do not spend most of your time in adorning your person; inflated with pride when its comeliness is more than ordinary, giddy with vanity when its charms have elicited applause, and sad and anxious when you see it wasting away. Alas! how many are there who make an idol of their own beauty; who honor it, and bestow offerings upon it, hour by hour, at its shrine, the mirror; who lament over each ungainly feature as the

deepest misfortune ; who rejoice in each beautiful trait as the richest of possessions ! They sorrow for the flight of years, not on account of the serious suggestions which the march of time actually excites, but because their good looks are fading away. They endeavor to prolong these by various arts. As years roll on, they adapt the folds of the cap, the curl of the ringlet, the style of the hair, to hide the sure traces of time, and to set off the beauty that his hand has yet spared. But beauty will fade, alike from the heart of the rose, the tint of the leaf, and the countenance of woman. And what sadness, what vexation, what misery possesses her heart, who has made this personal comeliness the great object of her thought, who has derived from it supplies for her vanity, and who now finds that not only "beauty is vain," but "favor is deceitful ;" and that others, who were enchained to her presence by the spell of beauty, now that it is gone, seeing in her no charms of mind, no excellence of dis-

position, leave her neglected, to pine and droop like the faded flower.

I would not disturb the joy of youth by reflecting upon it the shadows of the future ; but it is an unwise mind that does not look forward into life, and prepare for inevitable changes. Consider, then, young woman, if you are unduly attentive to your personal beauty, that those eyes, as they look upon the passing seasons, will become dim. Those tresses will lose their massiveness and lustre. That bloom will grow pale with time ; even if tears and watching, and "the breath of care," do not destroy it. Do not, then, make this beauty a boast, or an idol--do not set your heart upon it. Would you treasure up all your regards in a flower? That frail plant!--the next rude hand may snap it, to-morrow's burning ray may scorch it, the first frost may blight it, and leave you desolate !

But there is another consideration. If you are solicitous only as to your beauty, for that only must you expect to be sought and ad-

mired. Thus you may be saluted with flattery; but how unsatisfying is it, how fickle, *and often how base!* How uncertain, then, your hold upon the affections of others. Transitory as this gift of beauty is, are you willing that it shall be your only claim to respect and regard?

Again, what *wrong sentiments*, yea, what evil passions, does this pride of beauty excite! It creates vanity, which, however we may deny it, however we may conceal it in the depths of the heart, is vanity still; and this may become inordinate, making you really *unlovely in the eyes of the judicious*, and causing you misery upon every suspicion, and at every slight. It will fill your heart with envy, jealousy, hatred. You will look with a prejudiced eye upon all who may come in competition with you; you will be tempted to ridicule and decry them, and beneath your affected carelessness or contempt, you will secretly cherish a gnawing discontent.

But once more, this attention to mere ap-



pearances is calculated to attract your thoughts from the wants of your mind and soul. The time you waste at the toilet, in personal decorations, must be lost to the intellect and the heart ; and thus ensues a negative evil. How waste is the mind, how uncultivated the heart, that lies thus neglected under that vain mask and show ! How little are the nobler purposes of our nature cared for by that young woman who devotes herself merely to the adornment and exhibition of her beauty ! Where, then, is knowledge, that jewel of the mind — where is religion, that crown and white raiment of the soul ! We can hardly entertain a feeling of contempt, but rather of pity and of melancholy, for a beautiful but ignorant and heartless young woman. It is the beauty of the cold statue, that, with all the witchery of loveliness lingering upon it in grace of expression and symmetry of form, has no thought, no soul, no life ; that breathes no music from its lips, and cherishes no sentiment in its silent and stony heart. Nay, *not like this.* We feel no disap-

pointment in gazing upon the statue ; we wonder that a mass of marble should seem so like breathing, should contain so much of human and life-like beauty. But when we have waited to be charmed with the melody of thought or affection from the lips of a beautiful woman, and when she spoke have heard but the weak words of ignorance, or the utterance of affectation and vanity, we *are* disappointed, as when from some jewelled instrument, from which we expected sweet sounds, there break the piping, jangling notes of discord.

Let me say, then, what perhaps I need not say, that if the young woman is devoting to personal appearance that attention which she should give to the enriching of the mind, and to the culture of the heart, she is sacrificing the duties of life to a mere accomplishment, and to one of comparative unimportance. I do not say that she is more liable to run into extremes upon this subject than the other sex, either as regards attention to personal comeliness or to

dress. But I do earnestly deprecate an undue attention to these.

As to this matter of dress, how wide is the difference between a true taste and decent conformity, and that slavishness to fashion that adopts every garb, whatever its appearance, which has received the sanction of the gay world; that observes as scrupulously the hue of a ribbon as the clansman does the colors of his chief, and waits as anxiously for the appearance of a new bonnet as the astronomer for the appearance of a new star. No matter what may be the accumulation of costly articles of dress, they will not do to wear—they are not “in the fashion.” No matter how unbecoming the old mode, how uncouth and ridiculous may be the reigning style, “the fashion” must decide the choice. It is not right to pay such an extravagant deference to fashion in this respect, or in any other. Many will do so who cannot consistently with economy, as well as other duties. The young woman who sets her heart upon appearing always

in something new and elegant, must throw by much that prudence would retain, and that would become beauty, and must assume much that will sacrifice good looks to an expensive and odious taste. Of course, circumstances will determine much in regard to this matter, but this may be said, that it is not right for any one to cherish this extravagant fondness for display. It is a violation of present claims, and it is a poor preparation for the future. It is not calculated to make the young woman meet the frequent changes of life with contentment. She may be called upon to exchange affluence for poverty, indulgence for privation, health for sickness; and she will find it harder then to curb her desire for dress and show, than if she had schooled that desire when she had power of gratifying it. I have thus said enough to distinguish what I urged in regard to attention to dress and personal comeliness, from the idolatry of self and the extravagant despotism of fashion. Let me urge upon you the words of an apostle, which in the present

age forbid rather the pride or concern with which the specified articles are worn than the articles themselves.\* "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves with modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or cost-

\* Whitby, in commenting upon these passages, (1 Tim. 2: 9, 10; 1 Pet. 3: 3,) tells us that these articles of dress were, in other ages, the marks of vice and sin, and therefore specially forbidden to be worn by Christian women. "But," says he, "when they cease to be," as they have now, such marks of vice and sin, "they may be worn by Christian women, provided they do it without pride or much concern about them." There is forbidden "all attire which by the richness and the costliness of it shows any pride, or vanity of spirit, or an ambition to excel others; and \* \* \* all great concernment, care and study to appear in much attire, as if it were indeed *our truest ornament*, and that which made us truly to excel, and be more honorable than others. This vanity and pride, this esteem of and concern for these things, being not well consistent with sobriety, and much less with the profession of true godliness."

ly array ; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works." And, says another apostle, — " Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, and of putting on of apparel ; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."

IV. The words just quoted suggest one more accomplishment, with the specification of which I will close this discourse. "*The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit.*" This is, after all, the most attractive quality with which the young woman can be adorned. In a kind disposition, a quick sympathy, an active virtue, a placid deportment of soul, there is a charm which neither reading, nor conversation, nor dress, nor comeliness, nor any artificial grace, can bestow. This will act as an intuition of knowledge, make social communion delightful, and invest its possessor with a loveliness that cannot fade. How beautiful was it

that in that early Christian age, that season of danger and trial, the apostle, repudiating the tinsel of a sensual and idolatrous generation, should recommend this ornament of a meek and quiet spirit! This was an endowment which excited no temptation to abandon duty, but furnished the animating spirit that could cling to it. This was a wealth that the persecutor could not confiscate, nor the executioner tear away. This was the fittest maiden robe, the most appropriate bridal habit, when woman's path run through tears and blood, when death might break in at any moment, when man so often needed that reserved energy which is contained in her soul, but only made known in the season of adversity. This was a garment, this "meek and quiet spirit" adorned only with the jewels of faith, and hope, and love, with which she might follow unimpeded the footsteps of her Master, and which she might draw around her as shining raiment in the dreadful hour of martyrdom.

And does not woman still need the same

spirit? If she be true to herself and her mission, is not her way still a path of trial, and stern duty, and often of martyrdom? And though she may now wear innocently the ornaments that in the early age were symbols of idolatry and sin, yet there is no accomplishment which can furnish and adorn her like this. Often must she learn through keen and bitter sacrifice, that "it is better to minister than to be ministered unto." Often must she be left to the loneliness of thought, and the silence of neglect. Often must she be linked to brutality and coarseness, her affections turned back, and the thorns of disappointment pressed, rankling, into her heart. She must watch for the uncertain steps of the dissipated husband, and bend over him in his delirium. She must share his lot of poverty, and labor with a fainting head far into the night. She must hold the cup to the lips of sickness, and minister to a mind diseased. She must learn to bear, one by one, the ruin of her hopes, the loss of all life's golden links. She must



be a restorer and healer—winning the perjured and the wayward back to virtue, and while her eyes are red with weeping, rebuilding the demolished altar of love. But I need not enumerate the peculiar trials and sterner duties of woman, for all which, that she may keep the course of love, and faith, and prayer, she needs no outward decoration, no mere intellectual gift, but simply this one ornament of a “meek and quiet spirit.”

And there are more cheerful labors and experiences for which she needs the same accomplishment. For all that makes home pleasant, and social intercourse sweet, for all that sheds around her a gentle, holy influence, and charms better than beauty, and is *more eloquent* than speech, and imparts a nameless grace that is a constant gift and benediction—for all that will render her truly attractive and useful to herself and others, she needs a genial and kindly disposition, an earnest and loving nature, a meek and quiet spirit. Without this, all other adornments are insufficient and empty; in this they

all unite, as in a central life and harmony. To all other accomplishments, this is as the "covering of tapestry," the "clothing of silk and purple."

## LECTURE IV.

### DUTY.

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And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her.—LUKE 10: 41, 42.

IT is a peculiarity of the Gospels, that they present us, at a single stroke, with complete delineations of character. A writer of fiction would have wrought out these personalities with elaborate description. A mere historian would have drawn formal portraits. But the individuals of the New Testament look out upon us from the living page with all the vividness of reality. Though we get, perhaps, but a mere glimpse of them, they are stamped

in full relief upon our conceptions. One expression, or act, exposes their *spiritual attitude*, and reveals them to us far better than any extrinsic representation. Even of the Master himself, we have no labored description. His moral lineaments are not concentrated for us in any graphic summary; we must collect them from fragments, each illustrating the spirit that was in him, and the whole unconsciously forming the symmetry of that character which is the exhaustless study and model of mankind. How little, in the way of formal description, is said of Peter; yet how prominently does Peter stand out from the canvass! How distinct has the scepticism of Thomas rendered our conception of him! And how fearfully have a few glances of the artless pen opened before us the dark and lacerated soul of the apostate and traitor!

One of the finest of these momentary yet complete delineations is the representation of the two sisters mentioned in our text — Mary and Martha. They occupy but a brief space

in the record, yet how familiar to us the moral features of both, how distinct the peculiarity of each! The serene and lofty spirit of Mary, the anxious and busy mind of Martha. The one living in the excitement of action; the other in the repose of thought. The one doing; the other aspiring. The one waiting upon the Master with officious hospitality; the other sitting in teachable reverence at his feet. In the season of *affliction*, both felt the keenness of bereavement; yet the one kept her eyes and her ears open to the ordinary communications of the world, the other shrouded her grief more closely about the heart, and "sat still in the house." In the day of *deliverance*, both were filled with thankfulness; but the one expressed her gratitude in the bustling service of a feast; the other in the silent fragrance of the ointment. In short, both were possessed of excellences, for both were the friends of Jesus; but each represented a peculiar order of virtues. The one manifested that *practical disposition* which mingles intensely

with the realities of life, and readily lays hold of them. She who is endowed with such a disposition will worthily discharge important duties. She will be characterized by tact and shrewdness, and a notable industry. She will ardently apply herself to the work that calls for her. She will fulfil her relations with an affectionate solicitude. She will animate all things about her. She will live a life of good service, enriched with the savor of many virtues, and she will be missed and mourned when she is dead.

The other sister exhibited the *reflective* order of mind. Such an one always cherishes an ideal higher than any attainment. She performs all duties no less than the other; but she goes about them with a clear vision, and a sanctified will. They do not press upon her, and distract her. They do not encroach upon one another. They open before her in a beautiful order, and each in its season. But after all, her *practical labors do not chiefly attract us*, because she is herself so excellent. We

do not so much notice her action, as feel her influence. Her affections are noiseless because of their depth. Her charities wander abroad unseen. She performs unremarked agencies. She is a watcher and consoler. She refreshes all the relations of life by a gentle inspiration, like the south wind upon the clover. Yet her heart may have been steeped in the bitterness of grief; and for the sacrifice of duty, or the crisis of sorrow, she is brave even to martyrdom. In fact she is one of those whose most spontaneous affinities are spiritual; and who constantly imbibe a diviner life from the recesses of their own souls. She is more than she does. In her is the silent expression of an inexhaustible grace. She controls the issues of life, because she often retreats from them, and sits at Jesus' feet. While she lives, her presence glides among us, and makes us better; and when she dies, we feel almost ready to say that she has not gone but *returned to heaven*.

This analysis of character enables me to

pass to the immediate topic of the present discourse. In the other discourses I have urged upon you various duties. I wish to speak now upon the general subject of *Duty*; upon the claims of *Duty*; upon the view and the spirit with which it should be performed. She who is characterized by those qualities of which Mary was the example, I have said will be no less diligent in discharging the practical obligations of life than one who belongs to the other class. I now add, that she will be better *prepared* for those obligations. She will recognize their *sanctions*; she will know why they should be performed, and their relative importance. Each duty will move in its proper orbit, nor infringe upon any other. Martha was rebuked not for her attention to household affairs, but because she was unduly and unreasonably attentive to them. Mary did not receive commendation as neglecting these matters, but because she held them at their true value. She obeyed the call of a higher obligation. She seized the opportunity to accom-



plish a nobler work. I say, then, that she who is like Mary will understand the sanctions of these every-day duties, will know their relative importance, and will, therefore, be better prepared for them. But especially will she cherish the *spirit of duty*, the idea of supreme and immutable principle, for which all things are to be done or sacrificed. She will perform what devolves upon her from no mercenary motives, with no reluctant will; without a thought of shrinking or of compromise; looking forward to the great object of life, and upward for guidance and strength.

We talk quite fluently about "*duty*;" do we comprehend what it means, what is involved in it, what are its claims upon us? The least thing, containing that sanction, appeals to us with an authority that we may not reject, and, if we are in the right spirit, that we shall not wish to reject. I have been speaking to you, for instance, of certain requisites—of "*culture*," and "*accomplishments*;" but the summary or moral of all I

have said, or may yet say, might be condensed in the injunction that the young woman should go forth into life with the *sentiment* of duty, with the idea that wherever she acts some obligation commands her; and she should know what it is, and why she must obey it. To illustrate this, I would say, that she should apprehend that *time* is not hers to employ or waste as she will, but that each hour should be filled by some seasonable work. Again, her *faculties* are not given for the service of her vanity, or indolence, or caprice; but they must all be consecrated to the best ends, and to their highest capabilities. As one more instance, her *lot in life* indicates certain claims which she cannot innocently neglect, and forbids certain aspirations, or conduct, which she cannot innocently indulge. In short, life should not be to her like a labyrinth, into which she is thrown to obey the promptings of fortune or of impulse, each day being but a successive current of time, moving her onward with an aimless will. But life should

lie before her like an open field, with a definite path, and an explanatory purpose; at every point of which she knows what to do, for she goes forward with a clear vision and a devoted heart. Otherwise, she may perform many practical duties, but she hardly knows why she does them. She has the bustle of service, but not the directing consciousness and steady aim of true action; and often these labors fall like a tangled web about her feet—a web of many duties, but mixed up with poor frivolities and encroaching cares. It is evident, then, that one of her most important duties is *a comprehension of Duty itself*—a distinct knowledge of life in its true aspects, and of the reasons for all her conduct. One of the most deplorable things in a wrong education is the false views of life that it imparts, its neglect to quicken and prepare the mind for the real issues of life. Indeed, no mere intellectual culture, no mere punctiliousness about moral rules, can thus furnish the mind. This true vision and readiness come from the reli-

gious enlightenment of the spirit ; and she who would perceive the relations, understand the claims, and do the work of duty, must often retire from the routine of action, and sit at the feet of Jesus.

I propose, then, in the remainder of this discourse, to consider the *advantages*, as well as the *necessity*, of *a clear view and a true spirit of Duty* ; and then to apply what I shall say to one or two of the most important subjects in life. I remark, in the first place, that Duty, intelligently adopted, and maintained with a right spirit, gives us *an unembarrassed view of our position and relations*. I have already illustrated this to some extent. They whose aim is simply the performance of duty, and who know why they thus conduct, will find all things definite, and no labor too great. Christ's "yoke is easy," and his "burden light," not because his disciples have nothing arduous to do, but because they act with the discerning spirit of rectitude. Duty throws before us a true perspective, and presents ev-

everything in its proper station and value. Its law is perfect order, and they who obey it move with a harmonious and harmonizing power. They are never embarrassed, in the deepest sense of that word. No cares come too thick for them, no labors entangle them; for they have a clue that guides them clearly through all difficulties, an adjusting principle that sets everything in order. The fact which I am now urging is illustrated in various branches of human pursuit. The merchant could not carry on his business for a day without a central principle which determines and tests all that he does. This method extends through every channel, and to every item of his affairs. No enterprise is proposed without consulting it, no transaction is accomplished except in conformity to it. It controls the receipt or expenditure of a penny, as well as the richest freight that rocks upon the seas. Every night he may consult his books, and trace his fortune in the four quarters of the globe; may know what he is worth, what is

finished, what must be done to-morrow. To the uninformed spectator this complicated mass of work is a mere chaos of bustle and perplexity; but to him who looks from the interior, every part moves in beautiful order and makes a harmonious business, because it is obedient to that one directing purpose. Such a directing purpose is Duty in the multifarious transactions of life. It sets everything clearly before us. It predetermines what we must do, and when, and how. To its test we bring every enterprise, and by it we solve every doubt.

On the other hand, it is the lot of those who act from no high principle of duty, to be, like Martha, "careful and troubled about many things." I hardly need say, that a positively wicked career is one of certain embarrassment. He who acts from appetite or passion soon precipitates himself into difficulty, and knows not how to retreat. The restlessness of the guilty proceeds not only from the wounds of sin, but from their vain endeavors to extricate

themselves from the mazes in which their short sight and their hasty feet have entangled them. But, leaving such as these, consider those who obey no supreme rule of duty; consider, for instance, those who act from mere *selfishness*. Every gift or faculty they possess they conceive to be for their exclusive use, and nothing seems advantageous that does not serve *their interests*. Hence, from policy, they will perform many practical duties of life. But how often will instances occur, when conscience will draw one way, and interest another; and then how are they embarrassed! Moreover, hastily snatching at everything that promises them good, they are frequently deceived and thwarted; they find themselves interfering with the relations of others, and embroiled in controversy. In their greediness, too, they employ a multitude of means, and are distracted with noisy and conflicting cares. Or consider those who make *pleasure* the great pursuit of life, and how soon are they encumbered as with a weary service! How careful

are they, and troubled about many things! Hours of formality or of vapid leisure press upon them. The continuousness of frivolity distracts them. Their minds are racked for new methods. The wine of existence runs stale upon the lees, and they are tormented by the monotony of worn-out expedients. But enough of these instances. They who act with any view less broad than the comprehensiveness of duty, act without clear vision, do not know the proper value and relation of things, and are not prepared for the issues of life — they are soon perplexed with difficulties, and overwhelmed with cares.

To the young woman, then, entering upon the responsibilities, or mingling with the relations, of her lot, I would say, if you would have your way clear and calm, if you would not be perplexed with doubts, and encumbered with cares, if you would know and perform each obligation in its proper season, you can do so, not by escaping from the path of destiny, not by neglecting these doubts and cares



and obligations, but by viewing them with the serene vision, and meeting them with the consecrated spirit, of one who has asked and learned "*what is Duty.*"

Another peculiarity of Duty, which makes it not only necessary but advantageous, is the fact that it is *a willing service*. Mary chose the better part, and no true duty is performed unless it is accomplished by the *heart*, as well as the conduct. The idea of duty as a sacrifice makes our loyalty cold and suspicious. We rise into the highest moral atmosphere only when we do not count the cost, when we cherish and cling to duty for its own sake. They, therefore, who in this spirit go forth to the duties of life, and make every action a duty, experience no oppressive weight, no distracting care. I said a little while ago, that Christ's yoke is easy and his burden light, because his disciples act with the discerning spirit of rectitude. I now add, that they who put on their Master's obligations find an easy yoke and a light burden, because they carry

them with a loving heart. To say that they who steadfastly adhere to duty have no trials, would be to deny the noblest element of human discipline, and to make virtue no virtue. But much of this toil is in the attaining of this obedience and constancy, which is no easy thing; and the toil itself is not like the heavy, hopeless, remorseful sorrow of the wayward and the indifferent. It is the agony of effort succeeded by glorious acquisition, it is the pain of martyrdom recompensed by a crown. I repeat, then, that they who choose duty and enshrine it in their affections are not overwhelmed or distracted by the issues of life. They go forth to its practical obligations prepared for burdens and crosses; while love of the right makes the ordinary tenor of daily requirements light and grateful.

I would say again to the young woman, then, choose duty from an appreciation and love of its excellence, and then, knowing its requirements and adhering to them, there will be no trial too severe for you, no sorrow too

strong; every perplexity will be cleared by a reconciling purpose, every loss repaid by that inward gain which accompanies only the true riches.

Another advantage pertaining to the knowledge and practice of duty, consists in the exhaustless and abiding *satisfaction* which it bestows. I touch here upon a familiar but most important truth. Mary chose that better part "which *should not be taken away* from her."

It is unnecessary to say that there are trials in life under which nothing can sustain us but the consciousness of duty, and that this endows us with that good which alone does not share the frailty of mortal things. Who that has seen some young being in the unworn freshness of her life, surrounded by all the felicities of home, herself, perhaps, the central light of that home, knit to the hearts of the family circle by daily developments of mind and affection, pouring gladness upon all about her, and standing thus in the midst of that joy the very ideal of innocent and happy girlhood;

— who that has witnessed the change that overshadowed her maturer beauty, the domination and recklessness of an undisciplined spirit, the disregard of those earlier ties, the filial irreverence towards those who nourished her, the ingratitude that is “ sharper than a serpent’s tooth ;” who that has beheld her swept away in the whirl of pleasure, treading the giddy maze of excitement, receiving the incense of a mawkish adulation, all her heart evaporating in a heartless atmosphere, or else shaken by the impulses of unguided sentiment ; who that has traced her history in after years, as the ill-matched wife, the unfit mother, still manifesting that uncontrolled and untaught spirit, meeting with scornful temper another’s rebuke, or casting contempt upon his proffered affection, now overswept with passion, now brooding in melancholy : oh ! who that has still followed her, broken-spirited, her beauty faded, her conquests over, her friends gone, pressing close to her heart the stings of disappointment, and witnessing one by one the

withering of all her hopes ; who that has seen her thus neglect the obligations of life and fail in *its issues*, thus passing, without help and without comfort, into its shadow and desolation ; who, that has seen all this, has not felt that without the law and the spirit of duty, woman lacks the element of her true symmetry, power, and happiness ; she lacks that "better part" which alone can guide and sustain her, and which alone "shall not be taken away from her?"

On the other hand, who that has beheld one nurtured in the same domestic sanctities, giving and receiving the same joy, surrounded by the same hopes and affections, but growing up to mature years with a controlled will, an enlightened intellect, and a cultivated heart ; clothing herself more and more with the serene light of a chastened spirit ; bending every action to the dictates of an inner law ; not merely adorning but blessing the circle in which she moves ; true to every relation ; maintaining with sacred and even martyr fidel-

ity every trust ; an ornament in prosperity, a light in adversity ; her life filled with beautiful charities ; anointing the bruised heart and directing the wandering feet ; her name spoken softly as her own words fail, and benedictions poured upon her head as it begins to stoop ; meeting with no disappointments, because she has rested upon no earthly hopes, but carrying within a treasure and a consolation that become richer and stronger as life grows dim ; who that has seen such an one has not felt the loveliness and dignity of a true womanly career, controlled by the discipline of a spirit that has sat in humble teachableness at Jesus' feet ?

These are not sketches of fancy. Their counterpart may be found among the everyday realities around us. And we learn from them, far better than I could state it, the necessity and advantages of the knowledge and practice of duty. We see that it imparts an exhaustless satisfaction, a power and consolation which issue from no other source.

Nothing but an enlightened and sanctified principle can direct the steps, and meet the contingencies, and mould the order, of life. Nothing but adherence to this principle can yield permanent good. Pleasure ends in satiety and regret. Selfishness dies in isolation and neglect. Beauty withers. Health forsakes us. Lovers and friends are put far from us. Wealth cankers and frets us. But the soul that is fixed upon the axis of duty, and moves in the orbit of faith and love, is superior to all "the stings and arrows of fortune," is safe amid all the wrecks of change; it possesses, it *is* itself, that better part which shall not be taken away.

Thus have I urged the advantages, as well as the necessity, of a clear view and a true spirit of duty; from its disembarassing power, preventing us from being "careful and troubled about many things;" from its pleasant service to those who in love have "chosen" it; and from its permanent and satisfactory nature, being "that better part which cannot be taken

away from us." And now I earnestly entreat those whom I particularly address, of all things, in venturing upon the journey of life, to set out with the idea and the comprehension of duty. To look forth upon every prospect through its medium, and to sanctify every act by its sentiment. I know that this is equally binding upon the other sex, but let me say that woman enjoys peculiar advantages for learning the sanctions and cherishing the spirit of duty. It is more in the lot of man to be careful and troubled about many things. He is thrown out amid the bustle of the mart. His heart comes in contact with the rushing currents of life, and the calmer suggestions of reason and conscience lie buried under the deposit of worldly cares. But woman's is naturally a more quiet sphere. She enjoys more of the companionship of inner thought, and her reflections act upon a more susceptible spirit. She is not exposed to those dropping waters of many interests that often petrify man's heart into rock. Her sense of obe-



dience is more unincumbered with the dust of the world; more room is left in her soul for the fountains of holy emotion. There is much hope, too, in that innate and spontaneous love of propriety which is peculiar to her sex. This may easily lead her to the higher result of moral order, of rectitude, of duty. As when we see the vase wreathed with delicate plants, and filled with nourished flowers, we know that the hand of woman has been there, so we may naturally trust that this sense of grace will move her to adorn the soul with a permanent excellence, with a beauty that shall not merely rejoice a little while in the sunshine, or droop in the storms, of earth, but that shall be an immortal ornament and blessing.

I have now closed what I have to say upon the general subject of duty, but I wish to urge and illustrate the principles laid down, in a few remarks upon two important subjects.

I. The first of these is MARRIAGE. That this topic so easily excites a smile, and is so

often treated with frivolity, indicates how little it is regarded in the serious light of duty. And yet there are few acts in life more solemn, or which more deeply involve human welfare and destiny. But how lightly, often, are its relations assumed! from what varied motives of passion and selfishness! Sometimes from a *sentimental love*, that is as brief as youth, and as superficial as beauty. Sometimes for an *independence*, when the marriage altar is turned into a counter, and the heart, emptied of its affections, is bartered for gold. Sometimes for *name and pomp*, when pride is joined to vanity, and the lips pledge a fealty that the heart cannot ratify. Yes, who does not know that every day this most sacred relation is thus made a hasty and mercenary bond? And yet those words of thoughtless promise are coined into imperishable vows; they are links of incalculable weal or woe. They bind not for the companionship of a festival, but for the solemn issues of life. Not merely for the sunshine of the nuptial hour, but for the shad-

ow and the storm, for the routine and the changes of years, for the contact of human imperfections, for long seasons of trial, for the uncertainties of fortune, for the day of adversity, for the hour of sickness, until death, with inevitable hands, breaks the tie that "man may not put asunder."

Surely, then, there is no act of life upon which the young woman should enter with more of the deliberation and the spirit of duty. Unhappy marriages no doubt there often are, the misery of which springs from unforeseen circumstances. But too many of these "unhappy marriages" are the result of haste and imprudence. Let the young woman view the prospect of married life with the clear vision of a thoughtful mind. Let her reflect upon its obligations. Let her consider the relations which it establishes, and her fitness and disposition for those relations. Let her not expect too much happiness, too little care. A pernicious sentimentalism has garnished the vestibule of marriage with flowers, and thrown

it open in a vista of amber light. Let her look upon it with the correct eye of duty. She will see many a green nook of happiness, many a spot of domestic sunshine, and winding, perchance, through every change, a companionship that becomes more necessary and beautiful as the dreams of youth and the outward supports of life break and vanish; a companionship made genial by prosperity, and strengthened by suffering. But the vision of a girlish fancy, or the anticipations of coquettish vanity, will not be realized. Marriage will not be a perpetual service of affection for her, or a constant offering of admiration. But there will open before her occasions of trial, in which she must do, and endure, and sacrifice. And she only can insure a happy marriage who enters upon that state, with a mind prudently forecasting its contingencies, and a heart consecrated to all its obligations. Because of its importance I repeat the idea already presented. I say, no doubt it is frequently the case, that the element of unhappiness in marriages grows

out of inconsiderate *expectations*. That state has been viewed only through a rose-colored atmosphere, as a condition of constant felicity and overflowing love. There has been too much calculation upon ease and delight, upon affection and homage. And if this is the case, if the young woman enters upon this condition without beholding it in the solemn aspect of duty, will not much of the misery she may experience be her own fault?

I am urging nothing that shall stand as an excuse for the neglect of duty on the other part. I am not excusing the traitor to manly obligations, who used the vows of marriage as a mere form, or as mock-words. Who has tossed aside the heart he won, like a toy. Who makes the claims of domestic life secondary to every other. Whose interest is all absorbed in business, or pleasure, or ambition, and who leaves for the communions of home only the residuum of a tired spirit, the gloom of disappointment, or a vexed and acid temper. I am not excusing that wayward and morose

man, who expects not the *graces* of a companion, but the offerings of a menial service. Who repels with cold dignity the love that timidly approaches him, who disregards the delicate signs and little offices of devoted attachment, who thrusts aside the welcoming hand, and who stings to agony the heart that has plotted some new method of winning him to kindness. I do not excuse that feeble-minded peevishness, which magnifies faults, and extenuates no neglect, and yields no compromise. And least of all do I excuse him who grossly violates these sacred obligations. Who crushes with a polluted hand the affection that has trusted him. Who has taken one from the innocence and peace of home, and linked her to vice and shame. Who, leaving her to wither with a *broken* heart, runs the riotous round of dissipation, and returns at length to that neglected tabernacle of love, reeling with intoxication, bloated with licentiousness, to break upon her head the vials of delirious anger and brutal abuse. Nay, it is

gross injustice to liken such an one to a brute, in whom a carrion sensuality is joined to a demon spirit; who has not only steeped his own soul in the awful baptism of vice, but has dared to wreck and scatter the priceless wealth of human affection, and who is a living epitaph of the gamester, the libertine, and the drunkard.

But while in these instances, or in any other, I do not excuse a manly, or unmanly, *unfaithfulness*, while I will not question whether the evils of married life spring from the misconduct of the one sex more than of the other, yet I *do say that for much of this unhappiness the young woman may be responsible*. She is responsible if she does not prudently consider her *choice*—not deciding hastily, or upon the dictates of mere sentiment or selfishness. If she will look closely, she may detect already, in the character of the unaffianced admirer, the lineaments of the unfaithful and dissipated husband. She may from the first discover that moroseness, that peevishness, that heariless-

ness, which will make her truly miserable. And then, if, from considerations of gain, of unreasonable attachment, of vanity, or pride, she links herself with these liabilities, surely the evil is of her own selection. Again; the young woman is responsible for the miseries of her married lot, if she does not duly examine her own *disposition* — her own *fitness* for that lot, and for his companionship whom she is about to choose. And to sum up all, reiterating what I have said, she is to blame for evil consequences, if she does not duly contemplate the *liabilities*, the *duties*, the *meaning*, of the marriage state. If otherwise, and her union is unhappy, whom can she reproach? If trials ensue, she should have foreseen them. If extravagance runs into poverty, she might have calculated as much. If frivolity ends in heartlessness and neglect, it is a matter of course. If incipient dissipation breaks out into shameless vice, why did she trust to it? And if she does not discharge *her* obligations, if her temper grows fretful, if her heart becomes cold or



broken, if she is "careful and troubled about many things," it is because she did not act with the clear view and the true spirit of duty, — she did not choose "that better part which could not be taken away from her." I repeat, I do not maintain that the misery of all unhappy marriages issues from lack of foresight, but that much of this does; and therefore I urge upon the young woman the solemn necessity of looking upon this act from the high considerations of duty.

There are one or two other points in reference to this subject to which I will just allude. It is a mistake to consider marriage merely as a scheme of happiness. It is also *a bond of mutual service*. It is the most ancient form of that social ministration which God has ordained for all human beings, and which is symbolized by all the relations of nature. That the wife should be the mere servant of the husband, or the husband of the wife, is a gross mistake, doing not only injustice to the party who thus exclusively ministers, but vio-

lating the design of their union. But that each should serve the other, that the marriage lot is for mutual help and edification, is one of the most beautiful peculiarities of that condition. And hereby is illustrated the train of remark which I introduced in the first discourse, for the purpose of showing that man and woman fill different but equal hemispheres. The marriage relation brings these together in the orb of a complete and sacred service. Each without the other is insufficient. Each yields a support, and ministers gifts which the other needs. I have not time to illustrate this point, but it is obvious that it is an important consideration for those who enter upon this course of life. The miseries of many marriages spring not merely from undue expectations, as I have already shown; but from a false view of the objects of marriage. If we assume its relations from the mere desire of happiness, or from any selfish motive, we deserve the misery that will follow. If the young woman unites herself to a husband,

with dutiful consideration, she does so in order to minister to his wants, to help his infirmities, to share his trials, to counsel and comfort and edify him ; expecting from him like service in return. If, then, she shrinks from any ministration, if she mourns over the loss of ease, if she becomes soured at his failings, and morose in affliction, she thereby confesses that she did not make the solemn pledge of marriage with the perception and spirit of duty. If she does thus rightly take that pledge, she will not murmur at the sterner passages of her lot, but rejoice that holy may be her influence, and blessed her toils, in that noblest of bonds, the bond of mutual service.

But, as I close this topic, it is necessary that I should add one word more. We only attain the true idea of marriage when we consider it as a spiritual union ; a union of immortal affections, of undying faculties, of an imperishable destiny. This fact should banish all low and unworthy views of that ordinance. It should consecrate it as with a solemn seal. It should

suggest the holiest thoughts of love, and service, and duty. I know not how I can urge this truth so well as in the words of another. Says he, "The many irksome marriages which there are, are miserable, most of them, for the want of an indwelling spiritual sentiment. The woman is a traitress to herself who is careless about her husband's piety; for the wife can seldom be loved long and warmly, unless she can invest herself with a spiritual interest, unless she can engage her husband to think of her as 'a living soul,'—a spirit who shall outlast his earthly fortunes, and the earth itself, and of which he is, under God, the earthly protector; a soul, the heavenly value of which is contingent, to some extent, on his earthly usage thereof.

"Pliny saith, that among the Greeks the betrothal ring was sometimes of iron,—a proper type of heathen matrimony; but with us Christians it is of gold, like the city of God, towards the gate of which it is the purpose of Christian marriage to make man and woman

helpmates together, while solemnly journeying on earth.

“It is because of their irreligiousness that so many homes are joyless ; it is for want of that infinite depth of sentiment of which Christianity is in the human soul the fountain, that marriages are so many of them vapid ; it is because conversation is never in heaven, that in so many houses it is so monotonous, so without soul or interest ; and it is for want of the preservative power of religion, that husband and wife so often find the warmth and delicacy of their early affection fail.”\*

This important subject, upon which I have offered mere suggestions, I now leave to your consideration. As one of the most common yet solemn acts of life, it strikingly illustrates the general remarks upon duty to which I have devoted the first portion of the present discourse. Only by self-communion and communion with God, only in the light of dutiful conviction and the spirit of dutiful endeavor, is

\* *Martyria* — pp. 229, 230.

man or woman fitted to enter upon that relation which is so close and indissoluble—which is so productive of inestimable blessings, or incalculable woes.

II. The other important topic upon which I wish to speak in illustration of my remarks upon duty is the subject of RELIGION. The closing words upon Marriage consistently lead us to this subject. In the course of these lectures, I have implied, and indeed distinctly expressed, the necessity of a religious culture and state of the heart, in order that the young woman may be fitted for the trials, and duties, and various issues of life. Most solemnly would I here reiterate that truth. And I urge upon her a religious course of life, not as a matter of policy, or ornament, but of the deepest necessity. I cannot tolerate that treatment of religion that merely represents its advantages in a worldly point of view, as an accomplishment of the mind, or a grace of disposition; as an amiable and comely deportment, securing the esteem and affection of others. I know

that it produces all this ; but this is but a minor reason why we should submit to its control, and cherish its spirit. A solemn necessity of our being demands it ; we cannot truly live apart from its communion with God and everlasting realities. Without its discipline, we attain to no virtue, we hold no certain allegiance to rectitude, we have no armor against temptation, we do not know the meaning of self-sacrifice and obedience. And as for the sorrows of life, we have nowhere else to go for consolation. There are mysteries, which, if they are not solved by the truths of Christianity, darken the universe. There are griefs which, if we do not receive them as Divine chastisements, are too much for our humanity. There are ties sundered here below, which, if we do not hold immortal relations, are inexplicable. And nothing but the power of religion enables us to use our afflictions as the instruments of our spiritual advancement, to convert the crown of thorns to a diadem of victory.

But I do not intend to eulogize religion. By

doing so I shall fall into the error which I have just condemned, the error of making religion a mercenary and politic advantage. Nor is it necessary that I should describe its character or its uses. It is the object of the pulpit Sabbath by Sabbath, and of every means of grace, to illustrate its nature, to urge its claims, and to seek its divine growth in the soul. Urging it upon you by all the solemn considerations that pertain to it, I present it now simply upon the ground that *it is the highest and only permanent sanction of duty*. I have shown you how essential to the conduct of life are the knowledge and sentiment of duty; I now add that this knowledge and this sentiment depend upon religion. An acquaintance with spiritual realities, and a love of divine excellence, alone can make us prefer the right to the expedient, sacrifice to indulgence, the postponed to the immediate good. A firm and practical faith in the doctrine of immortality is essential to all that class of virtues which recognize an absolute standard of rectitude, and which excite



moral enthusiasm. Those who have held on to duty through good report and evil report, who have put aside present ease and possession for toil, and privation, and death, have always been those whose souls were filled with the religious consciousness of another life, and sustained by faith in its reconciling agencies. There never yet was a martyr for scepticism — there never yet was one whose life was the mere life of the senses — indifferent, irreligious — who performed any high duty, or held on steadily in the course of rectitude.

So is it with an intense and practical faith in God. If we abolish this belief, we abolish the great sanction of duty. I do not say that the atheist will inevitably be an immoral man. Education, temperament, policy, may keep him in the course of ordinary virtue. But I do say that his morality will be conventional, not absolute; that it will depend much upon theory and circumstances; that there is nothing to bind him with immutable sanctions in temptation, in loneliness, in sacrifice. But it is not

of the theoretical atheist that I would chiefly speak, but of those who, professing belief in the Deity, have him not in all their thoughts, the enthroned sovereign of their hearts, the intimate life of their souls, the holy and controlling influence of all their conduct. Nothing but this religious, this practical faith in God, as an immediate Presence, as a supreme Lawgiver, as an instant Judge, can bind one in steadfast allegiance to duty. and make that duty the all-animating and paramount consideration. Only they, again, who have cherished such a faith, have accomplished great moral results, have run in the course of virtue, and faithfully discharged every obligation.

Thus, then, we see that religion, vital, indwelling, practical religion, alone can furnish the sanctions of duty—it alone gives meaning and excellence to duty. All that I have said, then, in the present discourse, terminates in this—that a religious character is only prepared for the duties and trials of life. Avail yourselves, then, of every means of religious

culture. In all your reading, let that sacred Book which contains the revelation of God and immortality, have the first place and the deepest attention. Indulge not for a moment the idea that it has been superseded by any other utterance, that its freshness is exhausted by age, or that its truths are inapplicable at this distance in time. Give it your mind, and it shall illuminate your understanding with divine realities. Open your soul, and it shall breathe into it a holy influence, and fill all its wants. Bring to it your individual case of doubt, or sorrow, or sin, and it shall meet it with an aptness which proves it the word of God. Bind it close to your heart,—it will be a shield against all the assaults of evil. Read it in the lonely hour of desertion,—it will be the best of companions. Open it when the voyage of life is troubled,—it is a sure chart. Study it in poverty,—it will unhoard for you inexhaustible riches. Commune with it in sickness,—it contains the medicine of the soul. Clasp it when dying,—it is the charter of

immortality. Nor let your confidence in the Bible, or your love for it, be merely the echo of a eulogy like this, or the impression of a traditional reverence. Let your faith in its contents, and your affection for it, spring from your intimate knowledge of it, your own increasing experience of its excellence and its power. The more you study it, the deeper will its wonderful truth open to you, and the more closely will its evidences entwine around your soul. And if you read it with faith indeed, your own life will be another witness to its efficacy.

As another means of religious growth, accustom yourselves to *meditate*. In the continuous bustle of many things, the freshness of religious life becomes exhausted, the sanctions of duty lose their vivid impression, we grow weary in well-doing, the spontaneousness of conscience petrifies into routine, and our whole perception of spiritual realities grows obscure in the glittering life of the senses. You must often retire, then, from this more active course,

and reflect upon those high truths which pertain to permanent though unseen things.

Again ; one of the vital springs of religious life is *prayer*. You must commune with God, if you would realize his constant presence. You must indulge immortal aspirations if you would cherish your relation to eternal things. The necessity and privilege of prayer I need not illustrate. But I would say that without it you can have but a faint religious consciousness, and no religious growth. Gratitude, hope, want, fear, sorrow, love, all move you to seek its sacred communion. Let no morning open upon you without its uplifting experience — let no night close around you without its benediction : let it consecrate the joys and the sorrows of life, its perplexities and its crises, its beginning and its end.

But there is no means of religious growth more immediate and effectual than that which Mary sought. If you would feel the power of a divine life within you, sanctifying the heart, controlling the conduct, quickening the spirit,

clothing your whole mien with a holy beauty, you must sit at Jesus' feet. You must get near to the great Exemplar. You must keep within the inspiration of his presence. You must study his exhaustless life. In him, more than in anything else, are corroborated that faith in immortality, that belief in the nearness of God, which constitute the religious sanctions of morality, which plant these sanctions in your own souls. If you miss the path of rectitude, if you falter in the toil of virtue, if you doubt what you should do, if you are careful and troubled about many things, go to him humbly and teachably, as Mary went, and you shall secure that better part which cannot be taken away ; which is permanent and effectual in all the discipline of existence, and which alone can guide, and animate, and support you in the great life-work of Duty.

## LECTURE V.

### FEMALE INFLUENCE.

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Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy. She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness. She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children arise up, and call her blessed: her husband also, and he praiseth her. — PROVERBS 31: 10, 20, 26—28.

ACCORDING to the description of the text, then, the virtuous woman is she who fills the complete sphere of life. Who from the centre of an enlightened mind, and a good heart, looks out upon the whole scope of her duty. Who practically regards all her obligations. She is not selfishly isolated from the world,

nor does she thoughtlessly mingle with it. She considers what ties bind her to the common humanity. No righteous cause lacks her sympathy. No want cries to her in vain. The remotest claim is answered by her charities. "She stretcheth out her hands to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hand to the needy." Nor does she confer material benefits merely. She is the almoner of intellectual and moral blessings. She ponders that spiritual destitution which eclipses all external poverty. She disperses that ignorance which is the soul of superstition, and feebleness, and vice. Armed with a brave virtue, she visits the lonely moral leper, and finds out the lot of the doomed transgressor. She distributes to the despairing the medicine of holy encouragement, and pours healing mercy upon the head of the cast-away. "She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness." But in this out-door solicitude, she does not desert the more intimate claims of home. Her philanthropy is not a license



for domestic indolence or neglect. Her charity is not exotic, but indigenous, growing first by the threshold and the hearth. Because rooted in the heart, and illustrated in the love of the wife, mother, sister, daughter, it diffuses such a fragrance, and drops far and wide such fruitful benedictions. Only she who has been true to the duties nearest to her, can effectually reach the more remote. "She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her." In short, we have in the text a beautiful account of a true woman — of one who touches faithfully all the springs that encompass her — of one who illustrates the extent and power of *Female Influence*.

Having urged upon you certain obligations of *culture, accomplishments, duty*, I would now proceed to resume, or apply, the general principles laid down in the first discourse in reference to a subject which presents you with a powerful motive to heed those obligations.

That subject, I have just shown, is suggested by the text; it is the subject of *Female Influence*. I have said that in the first discourse I presented the general principles upon which this influence is based. Of course, therefore, in the present remarks, I can only reiterate the essential truths which I then set before you. I can merely dwell upon them, and illustrate them by some peculiar considerations.

Of all the motives that can act upon us to bind us to duty, and make us faithful in the discharge of it, I know of none more stringent than the fact of our *influence*. If we wander so far in neglect or disobedience as to become reckless of our personal welfare, if we do not value health or length of days, if we grow careless of prosperity and shameless as to character, if we lose even the appreciation of virtue,—still there is left to check us and to draw us back this great consideration—that our evil is not all self-absorbed, that our lives are not isolated. Let the father who is drowned in vice, and careless of all other ties,

consider that his little child, who looks up so wonderingly into his face, is receiving from him a baptism that shall consecrate its young soul to sin; that not from the precepts of sober hours does that child imbibe an influence, but that those more impressive eccentricities communicate a fruitful inheritance of shame and woe; and that, by and by, shall he, or others, behold as in a mirror the ghastly lineaments of his own life reflected and propagated; and if there yet burns in him one spark of better feeling, if his deadened soul can still catch one whisper of monition, he will repent.

Yes, it is thrilling to consider the extent of our influence for good or evil; how surely it reaches to all around us, and subtilely intermingles where we least suspect it; how it will live and operate long after we are dead; how it may mould the destinies of those now dearest to our hearts when those hearts shall cease to beat; how it will appear in future generations. In this point of view, we see that we live not merely for self and for the present.

Our acts have a deeper significance than may be perceptible in the momentary effect. They may touch some chord of another's soul that will not come in play for years, but which in future life will respond to that touch in music or in wailing. Great results are not always caused by prominent acts. The crisis that affects the destiny of thousands may not be decided in battle, may not come in pomp and pageantry. It may be far back and obscure. A simple thought, which made scarce a ripple in its first utterance, is the nucleus of mighty revolutions. The printed book, whose author has long mouldered into dust, still flies abroad, accumulating witnesses to its truth or falsehood. Nor can we escape from this responsibility by rating ourselves as nothing. By the very necessity of things, we communicate an influence. We live in an order of circumstances where not an atom is insignificant. A pebble shakes the huge fabric of the universe. A leaf shudders in sympathy with the remotest constellations. If we act, we touch the spring

of an endless consequence. If we refuse to do anything, our negation circulates itself. If we move, we quicken the pulses of the common being. If we stand still, we poison the air or enrich the soil. The obscurest of us by some little filament is connected with all the rest. Our existence is felt, and we leave our impress. Surely, then, I repeat, one of the most powerful motives binding us to duty and faithfulness is this consideration of our influence.

What, then, is the peculiar influence which woman exerts? What are the sources of her influence? These questions have already been answered in the main. Her peculiar and most powerful influence is that of the *affections*; and in those relations which pertain to the affections. In saying this, I do not question her intellectual capacity, or her fitness to act in the sterner crises of life. But, as I have before said, here she finds a compeer in man, and holds a divided dominion. But no one can deny that there is an influence in woman's love;

a control in her dependence, a power in her weakness, an attraction in her refinement, a glory in her mercy, faith and trust, that is all her own. Add to this the efficiency of culture, accomplishments, and the knowledge and spirit of duty, and place it among the instrumentalities which Christianity is daily furnishing for it, and we must perceive that it touches the most essential welfare, and sways the largest destinies. Sceptres are not so mighty; the eloquent tongue, the cunning pen, the wisdom of the philosopher, are not so potent as the daughter's affection, the sister's solicitude, the wife's ministration, the mother's prayerful discipline; as the influence that opens the well-springs of the heart, and moulds the lineaments of character, and gently guides the wayward will, and drops like dew upon the fiery spirit; as the love that now ventures abroad in the earth, uttering the word of benediction and doing the deed of philanthropy, following, like the sunshine and the shower, the whirlwind of man's ambition and the storm

of his wrath, the chariot-wheels of battle, the dust-cloud of traffic, and the long caravan of selfishness and sin.

In saying that woman's peculiar influence springs from the affections, I mean that these are the secret of her influence, its central and essential life, whether she speaks or writes, whether she teaches or advises, whether she acts or suffers. In this way her power, if not always acknowledged, has always been perceptible. Man has confessed it in sensual love, or domestic attachment; in chivalric admiration, or sentimental gallantry; in the degrading polygamy of heathenism, or the holy and beautiful offices, the equal respect, the pure and enlightened companionship, of-Christian marriage. This power, so vital in the closest relations, modifies every circumstance, and controls the world. While she is reflected in the most silent expressions of home, while her presence makes its atmosphere, and she is the very life of all its order, the influence of her nature is seen in the amenities of civiliza-

tion, the refinements of speech, custom, and manner, and all the graces of society. It is felt as deeply as the domestic sanctities are felt—it is as prominent as the mouldings of maternal love.

We can best illustrate the true element of woman's influence by considering what would be the consequence if she should abandon her present attitude, and take a more forward position. If, for instance, she should become absorbed in political life, in speculation, or debate, we might wonder at her tact, admire her eloquence, and confess her genius. But all her peculiar sway over us would be lost. Homage would give way to rivalry. The mutual offices of dependence and ministration would be exchanged for a selfish antagonism. The fluent charities of home would become petrified to an intellectual frostwork. And everywhere would it be felt that there was a loss and a void, a dying out of nature, a dropping away of that mysterious, inexpressible love, that unseen magnetism, which refines the elements of



social life and binds them together, and which holds the individual heart true to the plane of its ecliptic, when conscience is perturbed and reason has wandered from its orbit. Yes! woman's true power is the power of the affections; by them does she hold more than queenly rule over a dominion as wide as that of thought, and for results as incalculable as human destiny.

We have thus slightly considered the peculiarity of female influence. Let us now look at the spheres in which it operates. And first, because most important of all, let us reflect upon her influence in the sphere of *home*. Here she acts in the relations of the *mother*, the *wife*, the *sister*, the *daughter*. The first of these, the maternal relation, I shall reserve to be discussed by itself, in the concluding discourse. Let us briefly consider the influence of woman, then, in the relation of *wife*. I have already called your attention to the duties and liabilities of marriage. We have considered it not merely as a provision for happiness,

but as a bond of mutual service, as involving not only the ties of earth, but the relations of spiritual being. Surely, then, a communion so intimate and indissoluble as this, passing through so many issues of joy and sorrow, affords a most effectual agency for the influence of woman — for the affections of the intelligent, accomplished, faithful wife. She may do more than can be estimated to affect the character and mould the conduct of her husband. Not by any undue assumption of authority, not by any harsh, imperious force; but by the counsels, the encouragements, and often the silent rebukes and suggestions, of her love. She acts upon his spirit in its most impressible conditions, and her influence may flow into all his moods of thought. It is at home that he must collect calmness and energy for the conflicts of his more busy life. It is for her to soothe him in despondency, to animate him in success, to nerve him for trial, to pour balm upon his troubled spirit in its anger or its sorrow. And in doing this, how much of wise advice, of

persuasive admonition, may she mingle! Who has more the control of his ear, who holds so intimately the portals of his soul? If she be faithful to her obligations, affectionate in her manner, winning him by kindness and by her graces, he will heed from her in the quiet of home what he will not heed amid the noisy currents of the world. Great, then, may be the moral power of a wife over her husband, thus producing results as important as his own action.

But not only may her influence upon him be great in the way of direct counsel, but by the silent attractiveness of *example*. Let him observe her diligent in every department of her duty, and will it not make him more faithful in his? Let him discover in her an uncomplaining willingness to share the evil of his lot, and will it not make his burden more light, and his heart more cheerful? Her own triumphs over despondency will be better for him than mere words of encouragement. Her hopefulness, and patience, and industrious efforts, will

take half the privation from poverty, yield him a contented view of his lot, or inspire him to alter it. This is the great and beautiful office that is given to woman—to be stronger in the day of adversity than man, and to impart to him her strength; to look through the gloom with a serene vision, and a thoughtful forecast; and from a creature of gentle ministrations and dependent trust, to become transformed into a consoler and a guide. Many of you, no doubt, have seen a picture of two children, a boy and a girl, who have lost their way in a wood. The boy, it would seem, has exerted all his energies to discover a track that shall lead them out, but now they have arrived at a point where the path terminates abruptly, and he has given up in despair. He has sat down, covering his face, and weeping bitterly. But not so with the little girl. Doubtless while the boy was up and active, she followed him with anxious steps, fully confident in his superior skill and boldness. But now, when the crisis has indeed arrived, and his more daring

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and boisterous nature has given way, she stands calm and thoughtful, and evidently collecting her faculties to see if something may not yet be done. This is often man's weakness and woman's power. Give him a hope, and he will strive with all his energy, and triumph. Show him a tangible obstacle, and he will bravely grapple with it. But when he becomes entangled in difficulty, and hope dies out, and the thing he fears is a vague, unknown evil, then he gives up, and covers his face in despair. Then woman stands up, without boastfulness yet without despondency, hoping against hope, thoughtful as to means, diligent in invention; and if she can do no more, enduring with patience, and ministering to him who, broken-hearted, has sunk by the way. It is a beautiful ordinance that the strong should at times fall back upon the weak, that the gentle reed, which it would seem the next gale might break, stands up in the storm that hurls the oak to destruction. Thus is illustrated the beautiful law of *compensation*, the

universal tie of mutual dependence, and one of the finest sources of woman's influence. And when man has thus witnessed her thoughtful, patient, diligent example; when he has experienced her willing partnership in his tribulation, her ministry in his sickness, suffering, and fear; do we not see that woman's power in this relation of the *wife*, in this sphere of *home*, is great beyond calculation.

Or, reverse the supposition. Let the wife disregard the obligations of home. Let her cast upon its walls the gloom of melancholy, or fill it with the discords of a vexed or peevish temper. Let her waste her time in indolence, or devote it to fashionable frivolity. Let her second his industry with extravagance, and seek in his success merely the gratification of her pride. Let her chafe at his disappointments, taunt him with his disgraces, and in the day of adversity, instead of lightening his sorrow, turn upon him with bitterness and reproach. Let the husband return from the perplexities of the world, thus to find his hearth

cheerless, his comfort uncared for, and those very opportunities which might be employed as means of counsel, encouragement, and help, turned into occasions of heartlessness, neglect, and rebuke ; and who can wonder if his disposition becomes soured, his moral standard low, and his conduct reckless ? Who can wonder if he endeavors to repay himself in the excitement of dissipation for the loss of domestic enjoyment ?

This last thought suggests another mode, in which woman's influence may be most effectual. I allude to the power of her love and her example upon the wayward and vicious husband. How strong are the cords which she may twine around him, to draw him back in the hour of temptation and of guilt ! Hard as his heart may become under the dropping influences of sin ; vilely as he may abuse her ; neglect as he may her expostulations and entreaties ; there is a charm in her constant affection, in her long-continued kindness, in her patient, unspeaking endurance, that shall melt

into his soul, and bind it like a chain;—he may disregard it, he may rudely snap it asunder; but its impression will be there and will be felt;—that uncomplaining love, that silence even to heart-breaking, will win upon him; that meek face will look in upon his wild excesses, and subdue and check him—it may be, more than words, will move him to repentance. At least, if she be true to those affections in which lies her influence, let her not despair of his reformation. Perhaps to her will be given the high privilege of restoring him to peace. When he seems deaf to all other persuasions, hers may conquer him; may lead him, faltering, back to virtue; may bind up his shattered spirit, and animate him to perseverance in a better course.

Such, then, are some of the influences which woman may exert in the relation of a *wife*. I cannot, of course, exhaust this subject, or even touch upon all its suggestions. But I leave it for you to reflect how wide and deep, through this single agency, these influences may be.



Of an analogous character are the influences of the *sister* and the *daughter*. The one characterized by a peculiar reverence, the other by a fond pride and solicitude, yet both prevailing by the same potency of love.

The sphere of home! Do not undervalue it because it may be narrow and obscure. It is the fountain of individual character, the heart of all social life, and she who truly fills it touches the most vital relations. Do not think it less grand and important than the battle-field, or the forum, or the mart. It is an institution older than nations, and as natural as religion. In the rudest condition of social life, it nurtures the germ of civilization. It is the sanctuary of all that is most sacred in humanity. Wherever it exists — on the plains of Idumea or the banks of the Mississippi, beneath the roof of the Christian or the tent of the Arab — it develops some of the heart's best affections, and makes that spot of earth a hallowed place. It is our first sphere of duty; and if it be the abiding-place of selfishness, of anger, of dis-

trust, of irreligion, vain are all external decencies, all smooth plausibilities. These only cover hearts which contain no holy fire, and in which live no beautiful affections. But, on the other hand, though the world without be bitter and mean, though fortune be adverse, and the food and raiment meagre; if there our richest treasures are enshrined, and love is always present, we can sit in that clear domestic light, and feel that there are peace and joy even in this changeable world, let the storm beat and the wind drive as it will.

Advancing civilization, and especially a form of government like ours, more and more clearly shows the importance of home—its vital connection with the highest social results. In the institution of the family the state is fore-ordained. It contains all the elements of society, and therefore comprehends all its obligations. There is the same necessity of law and obedience, the same mutual dependence, the same great relationship. Mighty germs of social good or evil are sown there. There, in

its most plastic state, the human mind receives its most durable impressions. There are born the ideas of the infant, there is developed the soul of childhood. There the youth rehearses his part, and goes out into the world to act as the good or bad citizen. There is nurtured the incipient philanthropist or assassin. There are gradually revealed the traits of the mean or of the generous. There is or is not displayed that genuine humanity, without which all professions and forms are hypocritical.

And how has Christianity dignified this institution! It has made it something more than the shelter of gregarious instincts. It has filled it with sacred duties, and immortal affections, and given to its relationships an eternal sanction. It has mingled a chastening moderation with its dispensations of joy, and yielded the only consolation for its sorrows. It has placed first, as the school and the life of all other piety, the piety of home. It has consecrated the tender years of that childhood which makes sunshine on its walls, and music

in its chambers. It has honored marriage as a holy institution, linked it with ties of mutual obedience and affection, clothed it with the pure light of chastity, and bound father, mother, and offspring, in a sweet and sacred unity. It has confirmed the permanence of home by the right of property, and protected its threshold by the majesty of law, and created for all its sanctities a powerful guardianship in public opinion. It has erected altars of prayer, where its daily duties may be revealed in the light of Divine Communion, where its joys may be brought to receive consecration, and its sorrows draw near for comfort and for healing, where toil may rest and hope revive, where every morning may unite the family as at the gates of heaven, and every evening see them part with love and benediction as to their final rest. And for the season of trial and bereavement, when that circle of home is broken, and the deepest shadow of all broods there, Christianity pours out its consolations; it opens above the darkened chamber the glory of its

"many mansions," and speaks to the soul its blessed assurance that the dearest relations of earth can never die. And for the individual, and for the family group, it has dignified the ties of home by calling God "the FATHER."

And, finally, consider how fondly the idea of home lingers in the human heart. Wretched and forlorn indeed is he, who, although tossed upon the billows of fortune, wandering far, and worn with cares, has not some place in his mind's eye that is brighter than any other on the earth, a place where he feels that he is welcome; where he may rest his weary feet, and lay his aching head, and say, rude though it be, "it is mine! Here do I best love to be! Hither does my spirit turn with its deepest yearnings."

"In all my wanderings round this world of care,  
In all my griefs — and God has given me share —  
I still had hopes, my latest hours to crown,  
Amid these humble bowers to lay me down;  
To husband out life's taper at the close,  
And keep the flame from wasting by repose;

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Around my fire an evening group to draw,  
And tell of all I felt and all I saw ;  
And as a hare whom hounds and horns pursue  
Pants to the place from whence at first he flew,  
I still had hopes, my long vexations past,  
Here to return — and die at home at last."

And is not this attachment rooted among the deepest affections of our nature? and do we not bless God that it is so? Is not home hallowed by our best joys and relationships: yea, even by our trials and our tears? Has it not known our struggles, and is it not dear even for these? Has it not been associated with our prayers, and so become holy? Has it not witnessed our young aspirations, or our aged griefs? Have not our hours of dependence and sickness imparted to it a tender interest? Has not the event of birth, or death, linked it mysteriously with the invisible world? Has not God visited us there with the dispensations of his providence? Have not Christ and the apostles entered with the gospel of his grace? What

spot of earth, then, contains so many ties for us! About what place cluster so many memories? Do we not say—While we live, if God will, let it be amid the blessings of home! If we are spared until late, let us there nourish the expiring embers of life; let old friends meet us at the threshold, and kindly faces beam around the hearth, and when they have gone, let them there come back in tender recollection and consecrate its walls! And when *our* time comes, be it there! There, over floors worn by our footsteps, let friends draw nigh with softened tread! There upon familiar countenances let our dim eyes look their last! There, where we have rejoiced and sorrowed, let our breath depart! Or if to us home has become desolate, because all that was dear and familiar is taken away, how sacred is it for what it has been! And behold, even in this bitterness, how we cherish its dear associations! As one by one the links that bound us here are untwined, we think of the place to which the loved have gone, and knowing no

better name for it, we look up through our tears and call it "HOME!"

Such, then, is the sphere of home, the institution of God and nature, more and more appreciated by a developing civilization, dignified and blessed by Christianity, cherished among the warmest affections of the heart. Surely, then, she who stands in its very centre, in whom all its dear relations meet, who touches all its springs, has an influence than which there is none deeper, wider, or more lasting!

I pass to consider another sphere of woman's influence—her influence in *society*. "Whatever may be the laws and customs of a country," says a writer, "it is the women who give the direction to its manners." "They make men what they are." Startling as this proposition is, there can be no doubt of its truth. I have sufficiently demonstrated this, in showing the influences of home. Through her agency there, of course she affects the world at large, especially in that relation which I have yet to dwell upon—the



maternal relation. But she has a more immediate action upon society even than this. She gives tone to its morals, she creates its amenities, she determines many of its customs. Especially is this the case in civilized and Christian communities. Where the mere rule of gallantry prevails, of course her influence is potent; and where high moral considerations have control, her intelligence, accomplishments, and virtues, will induce habits deeply essential to the order and refinement of society. What a powerful sway has she, for instance, over all the laws of *etiquette* and *fashion*! Nor let us consider this an insignificant empire. Those graces of social communion, conversation, dress, amusements, which characterize well-bred circles, have their legitimate place and authority. Much as we may admire simplicity, a rustic homeliness and freedom of manner, its advantages are more than balanced by a genteel conventionalism, an orderly though flexible politeness, a correct taste, a polished ease. To say nothing of the general conve-

nience of this state of things, merely as a work of self-discipline it is most important. It lays a restraint upon boisterous passions, and coarse desires, which, though merely superficial, is highly useful. The effort which is required in order that the voice may be softened, the words well chosen, the garments comely, and the whole manner pleasing, is a great benefit. The impulses of selfishness must so often be subdued to appearances, and a rude will give way to the law of etiquette, that an habitual sacrifice to mere gracefulness may by and by produce results absolutely moral.

Now in the very centre of this dynasty of fashion is woman. Her character and example determine its forms and influences. If she is corrupt, if she leads the way in vice, and intrigue, and heartless levity, then steals into society one of its greatest curses, and the sure omen of its decay. It grows voluptuous and feeble, it breaks from all its moral foundations, and becomes steeped in irreligion and sensuality. If, on the other hand, with her culture

and accomplishments she carries into such a society a pure and kind heart, she diffuses through all its channels a refining, a civilizing power. Isolated selfishness is dissolved in common interests. The rugged independence of will is softened to a genial sympathy. And pure tastes and a high tone of morals prevail, instead of sensual pleasures, and coarse and vicious manners. If we look back upon the history of manners and customs, I think we shall find, that in proportion to the intellectual and moral elevation of woman, society has become refined, orderly, and fraternal. The homage that is spontaneously rendered to her does much towards this. Her mere presence at a feast or celebration that has been devoted to bacchanalian and licentious revels, will at once check its tendency and change its custom. And when she seconds this natural authority of the affections with a wise and pure spirit, her power over the manners of a society, and over its institutions, is beyond measure. It is felt where she is not present. It is seen in

the mart, and the work-shop, and the field. It is a magnetism that circulates through the very heart of a community, moulds all its features, and envelops it with an atmosphere of beauty.

Sometimes there break in upon us fashionable innovations, that to every reflective mind are supremely ridiculous. There are times when man transforms himself into a puppet, and emulates the brute. When his appearance is controlled not by a refined taste, but by a fancy for the extravagant and the odd. There is no talisman more powerful to correct this fantastic mania than female influence; and if she would speak out her honest contempt, such folly would be signally rebuked. Besides, her influence upon those habits of expenditure and waste which involve important moral consequences is worthy of serious consideration. These sacrifices are made at her shrine; let her see to it that she does not approve them either by example or favor.

But while this is woman's influence in the

sphere of fashion and custom, it is more necessary to consider her power in regard to the moral evils of society. It rests in a great measure with her to determine whether irreligion shall prevail; whether profaneness, licentiousness, intemperance, shall bear sway. Let her own virtues diffuse abroad a healing influence in respect to these. Let her own example be an argument. Above all, let her dare to discountenance and rebuke any sin. Let it be felt that a profane word uttered in her presence is a gross insult; that she who would resent a light treatment of her own name will not hear any irreverent allusion to her God. And let her with a scornful and majestic virtue turn from the libertine. Let her shrink from him with loathing. Let not her ear be poisoned with his words. Let her not sully her hand with his touch. Above all, let him not receive her smiles or her friendship. There is a foul injustice in society, which, waiving all *false delicacy*, I must here speak of. I mean that injustice which empties the vials of indig-

nation upon the seduced, and yet receives with cordial hospitality the seducer. Which leaves her to wither in contempt, and die of a broken heart, while he who deliberately wove the blandishments of sin, and wound their coil about her affections, then tossed from him the wreck of love and trust and hope, is caressed and honored. Now I would not extenuate her fault, but it is no weak sentiment that calls for his condemnation. "While the sharp scorn of men is cast upon her head," fix upon his brow the brand of guilt. While she must live in isolation or in shame, let him walk in the air of perpetual rebuke. While she sleeps in a neglected grave, among all his trophies preserve the memory of her whose spirit he blighted, whose name he consigned to infamy. And yet such a man will move in the highest circles of fashion, and enjoy the smiles of beauty, the society of virtue. Mothers will attend him with solicitude, and daughters hang upon him with admiration, unheeding the taint upon his character, the deceit of his polished man-

ner, or the miasm of his honeyed speech. Now here is a work for woman, in the strength and purity of her womanhood. Female influence must correct this monstrous abuse, must rebuke this social falsehood. Let her who would close the doors of good society to him who lacks in manners or dress, close them to him who makes manners and dress the veils of an accomplished licentiousness. And if, with triumphant assurance, he dare seek her favor, let her concentrate the inmost sentiment of her heart in the vivid lightning of a look, or a word, that shall wither him. Only by her bravery and consistency can vice in this form be banished from community, or consigned to open infamy.

There is another vice in regard to which woman's influence may be most potent. I allude to *intemperance*. There is a period in her life when she may be one of the most successful champions against this evil; there is another period when she may be its most wretched victim. In the day of her power,

when homage is offered to her beauty or her grace, let her disapprove the use of intoxicating drinks. Let her shun the occasion where they are used. Let her refuse to link her lot with him who uses them. Let her employ the eloquence of speech and of example against them. She will touch motives that the orator cannot reach, and induce resolutions that will not follow mere argument. And in it all let her remember how intensely her own happiness is involved in her efforts. Let her consider who innocently shares the infamy of the intemperate husband; who must be smitten and bleed under his abuse; who must endure the loathsome contact, the awful curses, the cruel blows, of the delirious drunkard; who must hear the cries and be stung with the destitution of her worse than orphan babes; who must suffer the privation and pine amid the gloom of her neglected home; who must drop into an early grave, glad to exchange this terror, agony, and shame, for the quiet earth and the unbroken sleep, with but one more care



to rack her bruised and weary heart—the thought that now no one will stand between her children and——their “*father!*” If thus true to the welfare of society and to her own interest, woman would exert her influence against intemperance, no human agency has been brought to bear upon it that would prove so effectual.

But I cannot stop to specify the various methods by which woman may powerfully affect the moral good of the community in which she acts. Indeed, I have done little more than make suggestions upon this point. Nor will I linger upon this general topic of the influence of woman in society. Let me repeat, that I am not speaking of that mere intellectual power which she so honorably exerts by the side of man; but of that peculiar influence which pertains to the affections, and which she alone possesses. Clothed with the graces and the magic of a loving nature, she performs a great mission in moulding the features and purifying the character of society.

This is true wherever she acts. Especially is it true in regard to American society. The great principles of equality, the diffused intelligence, and, despite all its corruption, the high moral tone that pervades it, give to her influence great scope and effect. Our habits of personal freedom, while they mar none of her feminine grace, impart to her self possession, courage, and prominence. "As for myself," says De Tocqueville, "I do not hesitate to avow, that, although the women of the United States are confined within the narrow circle of domestic life, and their situation is in some respects one of extreme dependence, I have nowhere seen women occupying a loftier position; and if I were asked . . . . . to what the singular prosperity and growing strength of that people [the American] ought mainly to be attributed, I should reply—to the superiority of the women."

Let the power which woman possesses, then, be active in society. Let her influence circulate from home to home and heart to heart,

civilizing and Christianizing our associations, so often based upon selfishness, and corrupted by sin. Let her use the amenities of social life as agencies of moral refinement and of human sympathy. Let her exert her intelligence and virtue, in the spirit of love, against the sensualism and the vices of the community in which she lives. Let it be seen and felt, that "she openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness."

There is one more sphere of woman's influence to which, before I close, I must briefly allude. I have spoken of her agency in the *home*, and in the *society* immediately around her. Let us also consider her power in the *world*—upon humanity at large. The fact that hers is a different sphere than man's shows that she has a world-wide and peculiar mission. Beautiful is the power and devotion of her love. Change passes over all material things. The flowers of the summer fade before autumn, and the leaves that have sheltered us wither and fall. But her affection, superior

to all change, in the most stern and wintry adversity still yields its fragrance, still protects and cherishes us. Let coldness, scorn, or sorrow come, she cannot abandon the object of her love. In the gloom of disappointment she utters words of gentle cheer. She stands by the sick-bed to watch and to minister. Even when death approaches, and her heart is wrung with agony, she raises the sinking head, and closes the failing eyes. With a courage bolder than man's, a fortitude that will not give way, a trust that is inexhaustible and serene, she discharges an office which no sceptre or palm-wreath could make more glorious.

Now we cannot suppose that this power has been given for obscure or narrow limits. It has yet its work to accomplish, not merely in the home, but in the world, in the mission of healing, restoring, blessing. It comes last among human agencies, because it is greatest of them all. But as man advances, as the ages unfold into a brighter epoch, this power

becomes more manifest. I have already dwelt upon this point. I have shown that as Christianity develops and extends, woman becomes more prominent, and her agency more necessary. Nature is concentric. Everything is the germ or hint of a higher truth. It is folded within a wider though kindred fact. So it is, therefore, with the institution of home. It pre-contains the true elements of the nation, and the nation shall one day become absorbed in the wider relationship of the race. This time is slowly yet surely approaching. Mankind shall yet be one great family. The golden gates of that millennial era have not been seen merely in the dreams of poets, but by the sure vision of prophecy. The vexed waters of controversy shall yet grow calm, the mists of prejudice shall vanish, and the barriers of selfish nationality be broken down. One language shall again be heard upon the earth, superseding the jargon of tribes and sects; the watchwords of battle, the ritual of commerce—the language of univer-

sal brotherhood, the home-speech of humanity. Surely, then, as this idea of the family widens and covers the earth, she who has stood in the very centre of home, and communicated its holiest influences, shall find herself in the centre of that wider relationship, and the mightiest agent of God's providence. With every Christian conquest her power extends, and she is the natural ally of every movement that is for the advancement of truth, and holiness, and love.

It is evident, therefore, that new agencies for female influence are opening in the *reforms* of our day. Woman has long been the most prominent dispenser of that *charity* which seeks the relief of the poor. No one has so faithfully expressed the Christian recognition of that claim which the destitute and the suffering have upon the fortunate. She has gone with her gentle ministrations to the haunts of human woe. She has threaded the narrow lanes, and penetrated to the gloomiest recesses. She has borne through the heat and the cold the

needed relief. She has visited the sick, clothed the naked, fed the hungry, taught the ignorant, and knelt on the bare floor of the hovel, to lead upward in prayer the soul of the dying pauper. "She has stretched out her hand to the poor; yea, she has reached forth her hands to the needy." And in this way she has exerted, and may exert, an influence upon the world, as wide as suffering and as powerful as sympathy, and one which does a great work in hastening onward the brighter day.

Her influence in the cause of *temperance* I have already hinted at. By her personal example and persuasion she may effectually prevent the increase of inebriety, and secure herself from a lot that is worse than death. But there is one office in connection with this work to which I did not allude. I mean the office of restoration and encouragement. Who so well qualified as she to win to virtue the wayward and shattered spirit? Who can exercise so well the patience of long waiting, the cheerful expectation of hope, the reiterated and un-

faltering endeavors of affection? Who, too, can so well soothe the wounded nature, awakened to a sense of its weakness and its shame? Who can so truly encourage the faltering resolution, and with a forgetful mercy welcome back the penitent to the path of virtue? And thus, again, in this sphere, exercising the simple influences of home, she is helping on the epoch of human brotherhood, and affecting the destinies of the world.

The cause of human *freedom*, too, appeals to all her sympathies, and opens before her a field for her peculiar agency. She cannot resist the appeals of a dumb and chained humanity. She knows by a fine instinct the affections that suffer and bleed in that bondage. She sees the ties of a common nature violated there. She feels the insult thus cast upon womanhood. She asks not the political issues involved in such an institution, and stops not to refute the casuistries of selfishness. It is the weeping wife, the broken-hearted mother, the chattelized children, that she beholds.



Deep calleth unto deep, and her action is the spontaneous dictate of a sympathetic heart. And whenever she hears of oppression, whatever the hue or country of the oppressed, she who has herself been a slave is prompt with her labor and her prayers. And thus through another channel *does she contribute* to that tide of human progress that sets towards the better time.

Even the *criminal* claims her regard, and in the polluted air of the prison, in the damp cell, she seeks what ministry she can perform for the guilty. She meddles not with his crime, she questions not the righteous decrees of justice; but her heart will not let her deem him a cast-away, and she finds the spark of good that smoulders under his leprosy. She learns him the worth of industry, and calls back the affections of his early years, and lifts his soul to God. "I thought it right," said Sarah Martin, "to give up a day in a week from dress-making, . . . to serve the prisoners. This regularly given, with many an additional

one, was not felt as a pecuniary loss, but was ever followed with abundant satisfaction, for the blessing of God was upon me." Such sacrifice as this also quickens the pulses of that movement which is for the regeneration of the world.

Thus specifying woman's power through some of the great moral agencies of our times, I would not forget those influences which she exerts directly for the *religious* welfare of the race. I would remember that in innumerable modes her gentle and sympathizing nature is blessing mankind, and advancing the kingdom of God. But I must close. We see that in the great sphere of the *world*, also, female influence has a potency deeper and wider than the superficial eye would discover, or than the present age can fully develop.

And now as I finish this discourse, let me entreat the class whom I address to consider the great motive to diligent culture, to accomplishments, to an intelligent and faithful spirit of duty, which springs not only from selfish

considerations, but from the consideration of your influence at *home*, upon *society*, and upon the *world*. Here, as I said in the commencement, is a sanction which must affect you, if nothing else can. Remember that such an influence, an influence for good or evil, you do, you *must* exert. It is as sure as the fact that you exist. It is as inevitable as your action. What, then, shall that influence be? What report shall it bring you in seasons of meditation? What shall it answer to you in your last hour? What effect shall it produce when you are gone? Discharge with a diligent, a constant, a loving spirit, the domestic duties at your hand, the claims of community, the requirements of humanity. Remember how beautifully the conduct of such an one is illustrated and commended. "Her price," it is said, "is far above rubies. She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy. She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness. She looketh well to

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the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children arise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her."

## LECTURE VI.

### THE MATERNAL RELATION.

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And the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not, for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is. Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand; for I will make him a great nation. — GENESIS 21 : 17, 18.

THIS is a portion of one of those simple and pathetic narratives which are peculiar to the Bible, and which cannot be equalled in the whole range of literature. Thrust from the patriarchal tent, with her domestic ties crushed and her heart bleeding, the Egyptian woman went forth into the wide and unknown world. There was one bond, however, that could not be severed, and whatever was to be

her lot, her child must share it. And as hand in hand they wandered through the wilderness of Beersheba, all her solicitude was for him. In this she forgot her exile and her want. So long as she could minister to him she was not hopeless, and her weary pilgrimage had some object. But when absolute destitution came, and he gasped for drink, and she looked in vain around the dry desert, and up to the burning sky, and he drooped and fainted, then despair rushed in upon her soul. Tenderly she laid him under the scanty shade, and retired a little distance from him; for, to quote that touching language of nature, "she said, Let me not see the death of the child. And she sat over against him, and lifted up her voice, and wept." God, who listens to the mother's prayer, and who hears the faintest cry of anguish, sent her deliverance; and lo! she found that he whom she had laid down to perish was to be the founder of a great people, and that she was leading through the wilderness the destinies of a nation.

The text, then, strikingly illustrates a subject which I have reserved for this concluding discourse, containing some of the most important suggestions as to female duty and influence. This adventure of Hagar and Ishmael shows us the strength, extent, and beauty of the *Maternal Relation*. The heart of the Egyptian woman, away back in that dim patriarchal age, in that lonely desert of Beer-sheba, lacerated with anxiety, sacrificing and suffering, pouring out its grief for the boy, throbbed with the common sentiment of maternity, was the same as the heart of any mother to whom is committed the nurturing, the education, the destiny of her child. Though no domestic tie is severed, and she remains amid the sanctities of home, yet *she*, too, leads that child onward in an unknown way. *She*, too, must absorb her own cares in solicitude for him, and minister to his necessities, drawing cheerfulness and hope from the pleasing though solemn duty, and watch him in his feebleness and languishing. Alone must she

do this, for there is no other to perform it, no one who is so intimately linked with him. But in her grief and perplexity, God will help her, the means she requires will always appear for her, and she may find that he whom she has thus led forth in his weakness, and watched in his unconscious ills, contains in himself the destinies of a people, the changes of a world ; at least, certain may she be that from him will go out influences of incalculable weal or woe.

*The Maternal Relation !* A topic so important as this has, of course, been thoroughly exhausted ; and I would not venture to allude to it, were it not necessary in order to give completeness to this series of discourses. I promise, however, that as I can say nothing new upon this point, I will be brief. I would simply reiterate and urge the considerations that spring so spontaneously out of the subject.

And, as the first of these simple and apparent truths, I would mention the fact that the mother wakens earliest in the child the sentiment of *Love*. It is her embrace that first un-



locks his heart, and opens its mysterious and unfathomable issues. To her is given his first smile. His first sense of want is relieved by her ministrations. To her he clings with his first idea of dependence. To her he looks for protection, and with her he feels safe from every harm. As there is no conscious opposition to prevent the inlet of this love, as it comes when his nature is impressible and open, so it often remains there when all other sympathies are barred out, when all other loves have departed. Wherever he wanders, this tie clings around his spirit, drawing him back to the memories of childhood. Hardened though he may become, we are confident that with this talisman we can touch the springs of his better nature, petrified though it is by the sin of years. The face that bent above his infancy looks in through the shadows of his dungeon, and lingers amid his dreams, once more as the expression of unutterable affection, and the signal of healing and benediction. Certainly we feel that he who casts

out and insults this love has reached the last degree of depravity. And however wayward man may be,—although headlong impulses may drive him, and “fierce passions shake him like a reed,”—yet often will he feel, as it were, the touch of that “soft hand” that rested upon his head in his youthful prayer, and it will check and calm him. And what earthly source of satisfaction is there superior to that which he experiences when he may watch and minister to her declining life; rendering back in kind her early services? When years roll on, and time sets its seal upon that venerable face, how soothing to know that he has shed over it the light of consolation, and left no cloud of sorrow there! That the last gaze of her unfaltering love looks serenely upon him. That he has been permitted to emulate her sacrifice, and imitate her patience, and commit peacefully to her final bed she who watched him in his first.

The power of maternal love even over a chaotic mind was touchingly illustrated in that

case of a mother and her idiot child, with which, it is quite probable, you are familiar. He was the son of a poor widow in the north of England. Utterly helpless and dependent, "he did not appear to be alive to anger or self-defence." But there was one ray left to guide him, one ligament of life to which he clung. He trusted in the love of his mother. This was his consolation and his safeguard—to this he looked in all his perplexity and fear. "His whole occupation, as he sat upon the ground, was in swinging backwards and forwards," singing, "in a low, pathetic voice," an unmeaning strain. Thus day by day he sung his strange ditty, and clung to his mother's presence, living on, vacant of thought, aimless in action. "One day," says the narrator, "the poor woman and her idiot boy were missed from the market-place, and the charity of some of the neighbors induced them to visit her hovel. They found her dead on her sorry couch, and the boy sitting beside her, holding her hands, swinging, and singing

his pitiful lay more sorrowfully than ever he had done before. He could not speak, but only utter a brutish gabble. Sometimes, however, he looked as if he comprehended something of what was said." But he knew that he had met with a loss; for "when the neighbors spoke to him, he looked up with a tear in his eye, clasped the cold hand more tenderly, and sung in a softer and sadder key." " 'Poor wretch!' said they, 'what shall we do with him?' At that moment he resumed his chant, and lifting two handsfull of dust from the floor, sprinkled it over his head, and broke with a wild, clear, heart-piercing pathos," into his monotonous and mournful song!

Such, then, is the effect of maternal love, and it would be superfluous to dwell upon its influence. By this the mother has absolute control over the mind and heart of her child, while it is not felt to be control. She is qualified not merely to instruct, but to *educate* him—to draw out all the powers of his nature,

and unfold them in harmony. She penetrates into his very soul, and moves it to her guidance by a beautiful law of attraction. There grows up imperceptibly beneath her moulding sympathy a spiritual and everlasting fabric. Her precepts do not lie in his mind like extraneous facts; he has imbibed them like nutriment, and they have become assimilated with his whole character. Thus she does a work which mere intellectual or didactic instruction cannot accomplish, because she has the assistance of the affections—she weaves the warp of truth into the woof of love. Her teachings are to the child as the sunshine and the air, whose agency he enjoys, but is unconscious of the vital energies which they nourish. Surely here is a sphere of female influence the results of which we cannot exaggerate. There is no work so important as the formation of character. The right direction of a human soul may change the aspect of the world. She, then, who watches by the earliest springs of thought, and moulds their chan-

nels and determines their course, wields a power more mighty than that of the sceptre or the sword.

Let us consider the importance of the maternal relation in another point of view. Not only does a mother's love give her access to the mind of the child, and absolute control over it, but she impresses her influence upon it in its most plastic state, ere it has assumed a tendency, or petrified into routine—ere it has precipitated itself in character. So far as any other agent is permitted to interfere with that free will which is essential to moral personality, we may say that the mother foreordains the destiny of her child. The evidences of this fact might be accumulated by volumes. It is one of the most common truths. It is indeed remarkable how almost every master-mind of the world has acknowledged this maternal influence. When Bacon's intellect explored the great field of nature, and unwound link by link the chain of material phenomena, who can tell how much a mother's

acknowledged power informed and directed those vast energies? The celebrated Cuvier, "from the extreme feebleness of his childhood, came almost constantly under the care of his mother. The sweetness of this intercourse dwelt upon his memory throughout his whole life." She fostered in him that ardent desire for knowledge which was so strong a trait in his character. The same fact has made as familiar and glorious as the history of her son, the name of "Mary, the mother of Washington." "Out of sixty-nine monarchs who have worn the crown of France," says M. Martin, "only three have loved the people; and, remarkable circumstance, all three were brought up by their mothers." "I shall never forget," said Kant, speaking of his mother, "that it is she who caused to fructify the good which is in my soul." "The future destiny of a child," said he who has been called the Man of Destiny, "is always the work of its mother." I repeat, then, that a mother's influence seems almost essential to any great achievement.

Generally speaking, the distinguishing traits in any strongly-marked character are her own. Indeed, if the child is kept in her presence, and under her ministration, it must be so from the very nature of mind.

Let not woman feel, then, while she wields such an influence as this, that she acts in an obscure and secondary sphere. It is true, a selfish vanity may crave more pomp and prominence, but a noble ambition can fill no wider scope. It is not to be supposed that in the majority of cases she influences any illustrious destiny. She does not always lead out an Ishmael upon the scene of life. But she does influence a destiny the results of which are incalculable, and which is as precious to her as her own. She acts upon the world as surely as the boy develops into the man. She is not a public actor in the drama of human existence, but she appears in all its moving forms, and in all its history. Her influence is the electric life that plays unseen amid it all, and projects and shapes its phenomena. That de-



voted philanthropy is the embodiment of her spirit—that noble achievement is the crystallization of her thought. The patriotism you admire was kindled by her tradition and her song. The eloquence that thrills you caught its inspiration from her lips. The soul that climbs the starry path of science, or explores the crypts beneath, owes to her its direction and its enthusiasm; and the holy life that blesses man and glorifies God is the answer to her prayers. Unperceived, she acts in the bustle of the mart, and the aspirations of the forum, from the magistrate's chair, in the pulpit, and on the throne. And the ordinary mass of life, with its individual joys and sorrows, good and evil, so common yet so important, is her result. Let her not, I say again, complain of her sphere as undignified and obscure; for as surely as she deals with incandescent character and moulds it by her touch, so surely she acts upon the movements of society, and produces its results.

And in reference to this maternal relation,

let one thing more be considered — the fact to which I alluded in the last discourse ; and it is that an influence upon her children, an influence good or bad, she must inevitably exercise. If she neglects them, their rank and reckless growth testifies to that neglect. If she sets before them an evil example, it is reflected in their lives. If she utters light and indifferent words, still these find a soil in their impressible natures. If she sows the good seed, she may expect the rich harvest. I wish it to be understood, that I am speaking in general terms. I am urging no system of fatalism, nor am I denying that there are many exceptions. Neither would I conceal the responsibility of the other parent. But I do not think that I have set an important truth in too strong a light. More than it is recognized or known, I believe, does the maternal relation exert an influence. And oh ! what a motive is this, even when all others shall fail, why woman should be faithful in her sphere. How thrilling the thought that the young spirit which

clings to her so confidently shall receive from her so many elements of its weal or woe! Mother, put back the hair from the brow of that bright-faced boy! That countenance, as yet undisturbed by care or guilt, is as serene as heaven. How do the fibres of your heart yearn with love, as you breathe a petition for his welfare! Soon he will go forth to contend with the elements of the world, and his spirit will be tried in the issues of life. And now if an omen of evil to him should fall across his path, would not that be a shadow indeed! Can you think that ever those features will become bloated, those eyes grow fiendish! That those lips, now wreathed with a smile, shall breathe the fumes of inebriety; that his playful voice shall break out in oaths and blasphemies! But now how many a mother could tell you that she has had two bright-haired boys like yours. She laid her hand in blessing on their heads. They mingled in all her happiest dreams of the future. But one died in his youth, and how did it wring her heart

to lay him with his sunny brow down in his little grave! The other grew up—to run a career of profligacy and shame. And, perhaps, though it is hard to say it, that mother may tell you, that sooner than see him thus, she could have laid him, in the freshness of his boyish beauty, side by side with the other, in his green and silent bed! And now, oh mother! would you prevent such a result, that seems worse than death? Remember how much of that child's destiny lies within your control!

Not alone, then, for the results upon society and upon the world, but because of its own welfare, will you heed the influence you exert upon that young spirit. Nay, seek not in its promise the gratification of your pride and of his vanity. Seek not that he may be great, or rich, or famous. But, of all things, with labor and with prayer, seek that his may be that inheritance of virtue, that indwelling, regenerating, preserving power of religion, which shall direct his feet, and make his conduct

blessed. Place him, by your teachings, by your example, by the leadings of your earnest love, in the Good Shepherd's care. Years will roll on, and he will pass out from beneath your eye. His presence will be with you less frequently. But what thought will cheer you, and supply the void which he shall leave? The thought of his usefulness, his virtue, his piety. The thought that your toils, your sacrifices, your prayers, have been instruments of making him what he is. The thought that he, that community, that God, blesses you. I cannot think that I have exaggerated your influence. I look upon your relation as a mother almost with awe. In the secrecy of home you are touching the springs of vast and inconceivable consequences. But in this arduous duty you do not depend upon your own strength. He who heard the voice of Hagar will listen to your prayers; He who guided the destinies of her child will watch and conduct yours.

You may have noticed a picture which illustrates in some respects your position. It is of

a mother, who, with her infant child, has fallen from the deck of a vessel, at sea. The wild waves dash around her, and exhaust her strength. Yet still she clings to her infant, and holds him up, above the hungry billows, shouting — "Save my child!" The waves grow wilder; thick mists swim before her eyes; the sea now flings her close to the ship, now madly dashes her back. Still, not of herself she thinks, but of him whom she holds aloft, crying — "Save my child!" And lo! from that vessel a strong arm is reached down, and they are saved. Mother! amid the sweeping temptations of life, in the vortex of the world, bear up in the arms of love, and with the prayer of faith, that child of thine, and a Redeeming Hand shall be reached down from heaven.

These, then, are the suggestions which I would make respecting the Maternal Relation, and its importance as a sphere of female influence. And if anything can cause the young woman to regard the responsibilities of that

influence, surely the considerations which I have just urged must do so. She thus learns that she cannot live isolated. Her action affects innumerable relations with which she is bound up. Let her reflect upon this. Let her apply these truths to her heart and her life. Thus will she learn the importance of those duties which in these discourses I have laid before her. The words I have uttered will not fall unheeded upon her ears; but will sink into her mind, and influence her conduct.

And now, in drawing this series to a close, I thank you for your attention, and invoke upon my labors the blessing of God. I know that I have not thoroughly treated the subjects which I have handled, but let the performance be judged by the intention. I did not contemplate minuteness of detail, or an exhaustive method. Many topics which belong to a series like this, and which are of interest, I have doubtless omitted. Some I have but glanced at. And if concerning the rest I have not

spoken all that I might, I am consoled by the assurance that upon these points, and upon everything pertaining to the general subject, others have said almost all that can be. As I remarked in a previous lecture, I refer you for minute and full instruction upon all that is of interest to young women, to the many excellent works that within these few years have been written with that view. My object has been to suggest to you certain great principles of *life* and *action*. To lead you to reflect upon your position and your duties. If I have in any degree attained such a result, I shall be satisfied and thankful. And as I bid farewell to this work, I beg you once more to consider the sphere in which you are placed, your relations and responsibilities, and to act therein with all diligence and faithfulness. And may yours be a course which, if not unchequered with evil, shall be one of noble discipline, of dutiful endeavor, of constant aspiration. May every joy be chastened by gratitude and thoughtfulness, and every sorrow sanctified as



an agent of heaven. May each labor yield for you its intrinsic reward, and call down upon your heads the approval of God. Thus will you secure the great ends of your being, and fully improve the relations and vicissitudes of life.

The season suggests the propriety of this strain of remark. As I speak, time casts the shadow of a period that always invites us to serious meditation. Every stroke of the clock is an emphatic homily, and every beating pulse counts off distinctly another vanished moment. The days wane speedily into shadow, and the winds whisper the *requiem* of the dying year. And if thus startled at the passage of our mortal state, and the quick decay of all material things, we are roused to ask — “What is our life?” let us answer this question not by reference to temporal associations, but to spiritual results. Our life consists in the value of deeds; in intensity of being, not in length of years. “Our life is what we make it!” — an insignificant game, or a noble trial; a

dream, or a reality ; a play of the senses worn out in selfish use, and flying " swifter than a weaver's shuttle," or an ascension of the soul, by daily duties and unfaltering faith, to more spiritual relations and to loftier toils ; to the company of the immortal, to the presence of God, and the fellowship of Christ.

