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THE VIRGIN AND CHILD, BY CARAVAGGIO.

THE

YOUNG WOMAN'S FRIEND;

OR THE

DUTIES, TRIALS, LOVES, AND HOPES

OF

W O M A N .

BY

THE AUTHOR OF "YOUNG MAN'S FRIEND,"
"ANGEL WHISPERS," ETC.

"In that stillness
Which most becomes a Woman, — calm and holy, —
Thou sittest by the fireside of the heart,
Feeding its flame."

BOSTON:
WENTWORTH & COMPANY,
86 WASHINGTON STREET.

1857.

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P R E F A C E .

A FEW years ago the "Young Man's Friend" was published. It has already passed through more than forty editions, and one hundred thousand copies have been sold. The generous patronage bestowed upon that work, the commendatory words spoken of it, and the evidence from various directions that it has been useful, have led to the publication of this volume.

It is the hope of the author that this humble work may contribute to the formation of honorable and beautiful human character, lead the mind of the reader to a higher conception of the aims and purposes of life, unfold and develop the graces that adorn and bless humanity, and lead those who find no rest here to the great source of rest, the Redeemer and Saviour of the world.

In unostentatious garb, it endeavors to set before the reader several striking Scripture characters, with such comments on each as may be calculated to impress truth, and enforce the great lessons of morality and religion. For an evident purpose these characters are taken from the order in which they are found in the Bible, and transposed to suit the purpose had in view, in the selection of the group; and it is believed that there will be found here nothing to vitiate the taste, deprave the morals, or wound the heart.

With an earnest prayer that the work may be "a friend indeed," it is sent forth on its mission. If it shall succeed in planting in the bosom of one person a principle of integrity, kindling in one soul an aspiration for the true, the beautiful, and the sublime, it will not have been published in vain.

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THE
YOUNG WOMAN'S FRIEND.

CHAPTER I.
WOMAN'S MISSION.

EVE.

She wept — to leave the sunny flowers
That gemmed the sylvan scene,
And danced, like fairy revellers,
Upon the glittering green,
Which almost offered rivalry
Unto the bright and glorious sky.

She wept — that all the shining host
That gazed upon her then
Should never light her steps unto
That sinless bower again ;
But hence her heritage should be,
To toss on life's wild, billowy sea.

SHE SHALL BE CALLED WOMAN. — GEN. 2 : 23.

THIS earth which we inhabit has rising from its surface some towering mountain peaks, now ranged in order, like the rocky ridges of the west, and now standing alone, like Etna or Vesuvius. For ages these mountains have stood look-

ing down upon the plains below, smiling or frowning on the world, which holds the even tenor of its way in the wooded forests and fertile valleys of the earth. There are vast plains which men have never trod ; there are vast forests, wide deserts, which have seldom been mentioned, and when mentioned are not remembered. But the towering mountains are known, and are remembered. Sinai, Ararat, Carmel, Horeb, Zion, and Calvary can never be forgotten. Their moral grandeur rises higher than their physical elevation, and they stood before the ages as the summits from which God has spoken. And so with meaner mountains around which cluster no sacred memories. What Scotchman that has ever seen old Ben Lomond towering over the Loch has ever forgotten it ? What Swiss peasant, wherever he has wandered and in whatever clime he has died, has ever forgotten Mont Blanc, the monarch of mountains ?

What mountains are to the surface of the globe, exalted character is to human society. Stretching away back through society are characters rising from the dull monotony of level life that can never be forgotten. They dot the record of ages as mountains dot and diversify the world of nature. There are but few of them, but the few are immortal. The mass — the thou-

sands, the millions, and tens of millions — have sunk down forgotten and lost; but these live, fresh and fragrant. To a few of these characters, noticeable for their position in history, for their virtues or vices, we propose to call attention in a series of articles on

THE WOMEN OF THE BIBLE,

as they illustrate female life and character.

First in the illustrious catalogue — the mother of us all — stands EVE, to whom we not only trace our origin, but our woes. Adam was created first. He was placed in Eden, with its pleasures and its delights around him. But he was alone. The beautiful birds of heaven sang his matin and his vespers; the lion gamboled at his feet, the lamb ran by his side; but he could hold no intercourse with these; they were below him in the order of being, and he wanted a conscious intellect to communicate with his own. The angels were sent down to speak with him, and they folded their glad wings over his head at night, forming such a pavilion as never sheltered any human being before or since. But they were celestial spirits, and the heart of Adam yearned for a fellow of his own nature, like himself, man, and subject to human passion. It may be a reason why God did not create Adam and Eve

at the same time, that he wished to show his creature that it was not good for him to be alone, that he might realize the value of his companion when she was received. When this purpose was accomplished, God caused Adam to sleep; and when he was unconscious, his side was opened and a rib taken out, and that bone became in a single hour a beautiful, cultivated, charming woman. Various reasons may be mentioned why God did not make Eve, as he did Adam, out of the dust of the earth; but one is obvious. He wished the woman to be a part of the man, that he might not be tempted to shake her off, as a being not connected with him. She was bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh, not independent of him, but linked by the nearest ties to his own nature. He took the rib out of his side, instead of taking a bone from the head or foot, that Adam might be taught the equality, not the superiority or inferiority, of his wife.

The surprise of Adam when he awoke must have been great, to have found Eve gazing upon him, watching his slumbers, and kindly waiting for him to awake. It could not have taken long for an acquaintance to have been formed. The nature of Adam yearned for such a being, more human and yet more beautiful than the angels, and he took her to his bosom as a gift divine.

There are three portraits of Eve which have come down to our times, and at which we take a passing glance. They are fresh, though the dust of six thousand years has been falling on them; they are vivid, though all time has been drawing traces on them. The first is

EVE AS AN INNOCENT WOMAN.

As our first mother came from the hand of God, she was perfectly holy. Her nature needed no regeneration to fit her to become the partner of a holy man; and when Adam woke from his sleep, and gazed upon the beautiful being at his side, there was no shame on her brow, and no guilt on her soul. She could look up into the face of God, as an innocent child looks up into the face of a kind and affectionate parent, without the least emotion of fear.

She was also perfectly happy. She was created for just such a world, in just such a state as she found herself in; she found all her wishes gratified, and all her desires met; she was in the very element which her soul needed, and her fertile imagination could stretch itself to no higher or more ecstatic enjoyment. Her spirit was the swell of a delicious harmony, on the pure breath of which struck no discord. Hers was a heart bounding with pleasure at all she heard, and saw, and felt.

She was also perfectly beautiful. There is now nothing material so beautiful as a finely-formed human countenance. But the personal beauty of our first mother must have been greater than our conception. The human countenance and form have been undergoing constant changes for six thousand years; personal beauty has been deteriorating, until we have now only a meagre burlesque on what God first made so perfect and complete. It is said that on one occasion an Athenian artist wished to make a beautiful statue, and in order to render himself successful, he sent for all the most beautiful maidens in Greece, that he might select the finest feature of each, and blend all into one image of loveliness. Our first mother realized the dreams of that artist; and the symmetry of her person and the beauty of her countenance were equalled only by the innocence and purity of her soul. What a magnificent portrait do we have of Eve before her fall! All the mines of the earth have not gems enough to decorate the frame for such a picture; and since Eden was desolated by sin, the world has no gallery gorgeous enough in which to hang it. The second portrait presents

EVE AS A TEMPTED WOMAN.

We pass over a few weeks, months, or years, — for we know not how long Eve lived in sinless enjoy-

ment, — and we find a wonderful, sorrowful change. The portrait we now have, though containing many evidences and characteristics of the original, has some new features. Satan has entered Eden, and we behold the signs of a gathering storm. We gain nothing at all in clothing the account of the temptation in allegorical drapery. The serpent naturally is one of the most beautiful of all the tribe of reptiles. His shining dress, his crested head, his charming eye, are all beautiful ; and we can account for the enmity which exists on the part of our race towards the serpent only on the ground of the natural aversion which God has made to exist between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. Satan entered into the form of a serpent. Eve had been accustomed to see the reptile. He had coiled around her form in playful moods, and now he spoke to her. The fanciful Adam Clarke believed that Satan took the form of an ape when he appeared to Eve ; but the word of God does not justify the idea. The sin to which Eve was tempted is not known. It might have been to pride, which has ruined so many of her daughters ; to covetousness, which lurked in bowers where the imagination could scarcely ask for more ; to jealousy, which sometimes exists where there is no rival ; to lust, in the presence of spot-

less purity and innocence ; to hate, amid the meltings of infinite love. The exact sin which our first mother committed is not told us. It is enough to know that she did what God had forbidden. See her as she converses with the serpent ! Her form inclines towards her foe, and her eyes sparkle with unusual brilliancy, as the archfiend discourses to her. She is already charmed. The heavens gather blackness, but she does not behold the threatening storm ; shadows fall heavily all around her, but she heeds not the falling shades ; angels flit by and whisper to her, but she hears not their voices. “Lead me to the tree of knowledge,” she cries ; and her fair hands clasp in the agony of the struggle between innocence and sin. With joy he led the way, through tangles and mazes, and she followed.

“Hope elevates, and joy
Brightens his crest ; as when a wandering fire,
Compact of unctuous vapor, which the night
Condenses, and the cold environs round,
Kindled through agitation to a flame,
Which oft, they say, some evil spirit attends,
Hovering and blazing with delusive light,
Misleads the amazed night-wanderer from his way
To bogs and mires, and oft through pond or pool,
There swallowed up and lost, from succor far,
So glistered the dire snake, and into fraud
Led Eve, our credulous mother, to the tree
Of prohibition, root of all our woe.”

But Eve will not eat. The stern, terrible command of God rings in her ears, and she stands half subdued, and almost lost. Satan beholds her faltering, and says, —

“Queen of this universe! do not believe
Those rigid threats of death: ye shall not die:
How should you? By the fruit? It gives you life
To knowledge. By the threatener? Look on me,
Me, who have touched and tasted, yet both live,
And life more perfect have attained than fate
Meant me, by venturing higher than my lot.
Shall that be shut to man which to the beast
Is open? or will God incense his ire
For such a petty trespass? and not praise
Rather your dauntless virtue, whom the pain
Of death denounced?”

EVE AS A FALLEN WOMAN.

The deed was done. The tempter had succeeded, and Eve had taken of the forbidden fruit. The beauty upon her countenance is gone, and there gather the clouds of shame; the flowers at her feet have faded, and thorns spring up all around; dim shadows seem to flit through those abodes of peace, as if inhuman inhabitants had made their *entrée*, and every vestige of grace and loveliness to that fallen woman seemed to have changed. With her stricken and sinful husband she flees to the groves, gathers the fig leaves,

“And, with what skill they had, together sewed,
To gird their waist ; vain covering, if to hide
Their guilt and dreaded shame ! O, how unlike
To that first, naked glory ! Such of late
Columbus found the American, so girt
With feathered cincture ; naked else, and wild
Among the trees on isles and woody shores.
Thus fenced, and, as they thought, their shame in part
Covered, but not at rest or ease of mind,
They sat them down to weep ; nor only tears
Rained at their eyes, but high winds wrose within
Began to rise, high passions, anger, hate,
Mistrust, suspicion, discord, and shook sore
Their inward state of mind, calm region once
And full of peace, now tossed and turbulent ;
For Understanding ruled not, and the Will
Heard not her lore ; both in subjection now
To sensual Appetite, who, from beneath
Usurping over sovereign Reason, claimed
Superior sway.”

But we are dwelling too long on these life pictures, and we proceed briefly to consider the mission of woman. As Eve stands at the head of the race, it is proper that she should be its representative. The purpose for which she was created is the main purpose for which every woman was created ; and when we discover why Eve was given to man, we can detect the sphere and walk of all her daughters. What, then, is woman's sphere ? Certainly not in the field. God never made her to be a slave, to plant the corn and raise the grain which should be the support of man. The constitution of woman,

her physical organization, the structure of her material nature, show that she was not designed for hard, out-of-door service. In the old countries of Europe, it is not seldom that the traveller sees a woman hard at work in the field, or driving her mule to market, or bearing a heavy burden on her head, while her husband looks on unconcerned; and while she toils, he smokes, enjoys himself, depending on her for his support. This is an entire disarrangement of the whole order of nature, an entire perversion of the whole purpose for which woman was brought into being. That woman, more than man, should live without work, we do not contend. Labor is a condition of life, and women, as well as men, are subject to it. But the kind of work which should be assigned to woman is written in her very nature, and those perverted views which originate in debased minds and countries are unworthy of our race.

Nor was woman designed for the tented field. Joan of Arc, the Maid of Orleans, fancying herself called of God to a military mission, buckled on the armor, and placing herself at the head of the French army, gained several brilliant victories, but expiated her folly by being burned at the stake, and having her ashes cast into the Seine. The famous Charlotte Corday left her home, and journeyed to Paris, and there finding the bloody Ma-

rat, plunged her weapon to his crime-blackened heart. Now and then, some woman has appeared to perform a soldier's work ; but Joan of Arc, and Charlotte Corday, and every such woman, have been out of the sphere in which God placed them. A woman on the tented field, amid carnage and blood, shouting with the victor, escaping with the fugitive, or carousing with the dissipated, is as much out of place as an angel in the councils of the bottomless pit.

Nor is the forum her place. The public debate and the legislative assembly can derive no dignity from her presence and participation. God has not granted to woman those natural faculties which will render her fitted for a public office in the debates of men. If it had been her province to chain men by eloquence, He who does all things well would have given her a voice which would have sent its electric thrill, or rolled its deep thunders, over vast crowds. But woman has no such gift. Public speaking does not come within the line of her duty ; and when she thrusts herself forward as an orator or a declaimer, she has mistaken her calling, and departed from her Heaven-appointed sphere.

Nor is woman at home in the pulpit. Christ called no woman to preach in his day, nor have we any evidence that he has called any since.

He chose men from different walks in life, and with different degrees of mental culture ; but he did not, of all the Marys and Marthas which sat at his feet, or watched around him, choose any one to bear his gospel to a world in sin.

Where, then, is woman's sphere ?

At Home. Home is woman's throne, where she maintains her royal court, and sways her queenly authority. It is there that man learns to appreciate her worth, and to realize the sweet and tender influences which she casts around her ; there she exhibits the excellences of character which God had in view in her creation ; and there she fills the sphere to which divine providence has called her. Chateaubriand discourses thus on this theme : " Man, in uniting himself to her, regains a part of his substance ; his soul, as well as his body, is incomplete without his wife : he has strength, she has beauty ; he labors in the field — he does not understand the details of domestic life ; but his companion prepares the repast, and her smiles sweeten existence. He has his crosses, and the partner of his couch is there to soften them ; his day may be sad and troubled, but in the chaste arms of his wife he finds comfort and repose. Without woman, man would be rude, gross, and solitary. Woman spreads around him the flowers of existence, as the creepers of the

forest decorate the majestic oak with their odoriferous garlands. Finally, the pair live united, and in death are not separable; in dust they lie side by side, and their souls are reunited beyond the limits of the tomb."

The value of all social life, the beauty of all domestic intercourse, depend upon the maintenance of the position of woman at home. Uniting on their marriage day, the husband and wife have each duties to perform—she in her household, and he in the field or the workshop, on the forum, at the bar, or in the pulpit. Thus, and thus only, do they fulfil the great design of God, who made a helpmeet for man, and called her Woman.

“When the man wants weight, the woman takes it up,
 And topples down the scale. * * *
 Man for the field, and woman for the hearth;
 Man for the sword, and for the needle she;
 Man with the head, and woman with the heart;
 Man to command, and woman to obey:
 All else confusion.”

We might remark that her place is in the sick room, where her soft hand has such soothing influence on the brow of the dying; in the social circle, where her influence has such power to soften and subdue the rougher nature of man. But we leave these points, to consider her at

The Altars of Piety. In ancient Rome stood the temple of Vesta. This divinity had six

priestesses, who were chosen for their beauty, intelligence, and virtue, while between the ages of six and ten years. Their duty was to keep alive the fires on the altar. Day and night they watched the flame, relieving each other at intervals, and devoting thirty full years to the holy watch of Numa's hearthstone. So woman now is nowhere more exalted than when she watches and worships at the altars of religion, keeping alive the sacred fires of faith and love. There is something in the nature of woman which renders religion a more congenial subject, and which leads her to attend more earnestly to the claims of God. Man always has had a controversy with God, and holds out to the last. Woman yields the points, folds her hands, and waits the bidding of her Lord. It is no disparagement to woman that she submits to the claims of religion so early ; it is her highest and truest honor ; and they who sneer at piety because a larger proportion of women than men become its subjects, pay it the highest compliment in their power. If woman becomes convicted more readily than man, it is because her nature has not sunk so low as his. An irreligious man is an object of sadness to angels ; but an irreligious woman must move their deepest sympathies, and call forth their most tender regrets. The woman shines brightest when

she waits upon God, and spends her life in the cultivation of a firm and trusting hope.

Of all the women mentioned in the annals of the past, who are those whose memories are cherished with the greatest affection? Herodias shone in festive halls; but who loves to think of her, or dwell upon her life and death? But there was Mary, who sat at the feet of Jesus, and looked up into his mild, clear eyes, whose memory is embalmed, and whose name will go down with blessings to the end of the world: there was Martha, who was anxious to see provisions made for Christ, her guest, and who will be beloved as long as the race exists: there was Dorcas, who made garments for the saints, and whose hands and house were stored with memorials of charity. Her memory is fragrant still, though she has been dead eighteen centuries.

And of modern women, who are loved and honored in death? Is Joan of Arc, or Charlotte Corday? Is Madame Roland, or Madame de Stael? No. But Harriet Newell, and Ann H. Judson, and Esther Butler, and that host of women who have made their graves in dark lands, — O, they will be remembered and loved forever. O, yes, piety is woman's brightest ornament, her truest glory, her noblest support, and her richest treasure. If she has piety, she has what God most

designed her for, and which will be her comfort here and her life hereafter. Piety has been beautifully compared to “a carpet, soft and deep, which, while it diffuses a look of ample comfort, deadens many a creaking sound. It is the curtain which, from many a beloved form, wards off at once the summer’s glow and the winter’s wind. It is the pillow on which sickness lays its head, and forgets half its misery.” In her sphere, woman is like the moon, reflecting the rays of the sun, and holding her steady course ; wading oft through misty clouds, but emerging more beautiful than before ; giving light to all, but producing confusion for none. Her life should be a calm, holy, beautiful walk from the hearthstone to the altar fire ; from the bosom of her family to the throne of God. Between these points lie all her duty and destiny.

CHAPTER II.

THE DUTIFUL CHILD.

JEPHTHAH'S DAUGHTER.

She hath caught the fair splendor,
She hath heard the low, tender,
Melodious warble at heaven's high gate,
And she says, "I am weary!
The night time is dreary;
Dear Saviour, that lov'st me, I know thou dost wait
By the River of Life, at the Beautiful Gate!"

SHE WAS HIS ONLY CHILD: BESIDES HER HE HAD NEITHER SON
NOR DAUGHTER. — *Judges* 11 : 34.

THERE is a world of domestic meaning treasured up in these few words. Jephthah was a judge in Israel, and was called, in his official capacity, to lead the army against the enemies which surrounded the people on every side. On one occasion he was sent against the Ammonites, who came against him with long legions of warriors, well prepared for battle. Before the engagement, Jephthah went to God, and besought a glorious victory. He solemnly vowed before God, that

provided victory should crown him with its laurels, he would, on returning home, sacrifice whatever came forth first out of his house, as a burnt offering to the Lord. His vow was solemn, and made from an honest heart, and with an unyielding determination. It was recorded on high, and rang in the warrior's ears as he rushed into the battle. Victory was won at length, and Ammon was smitten, from Aroer unto Minnith. Flushed with victory, elated with success, decorated with the spoil of vanquished foes, the conquering judge returned to Mizpeh. As he came near, the vow, the solemn, awful vow came into his mind, and his manly heart resolved to execute it. Soon the royal residence was seen in the distance, and his soul was in haste to meet those he loved. Steadily he gazed, to see what or who should come forth first from his gates. The beast, the man servant, or the maiden was to be offered as a burnt sacrifice. While he advanced, the doors were thrown open, and the sound of music and song came pouring forth; and soon a gay and happy company rushed to welcome the returning victor, and decorate his head with flowers. But ah! who is she that leads this gay throng of maidens? whose voice is sweeter than the rest? whose timbrel is more nicely tuned? and whose bosom swells with the wildest emotion?

And what means it that the victorious chieftain stops, and rends his garment, and mourns aloud? What means it that tears of grief roll down the face so lately wreathed in smiles, and anguish fills the bosom so recently heaving with ecstatic joy? It is his daughter that has come forth to greet him, and his fatal vow falls on her. O, what to him now is victory? She is his only child; and besides her he has neither son nor daughter. She it is who has been the light of his home, who has fanned his head when weary and faint, who has sung him to sleep at night when nothing but her voice could dispel his cares, and who has made his life a scene of happiness. That home now is to become an altar on which she is to be laid as a victim, and he himself is to be the priest who shall make the sacrifice.

The daughter, who has already heard of the victory, sees that some terrible calamity has fallen on her sire, and she runs to him, winds her arms about his neck, and compels him to tell her all. With all a father's fondness he gazes down into her mild eyes, and expects to see her at once convulsed with sorrow. But he beholds no such manifestations of grief. Without a tear, without a sigh, she calmly says, "Your vow, dear father, must be fulfilled, and let the thing be done: only give me a respite of two months, and I shall be ready."

This whole scene, so affecting, so full of interest and pathos, one of our own sacred writers has woven into the thrilling melody of poetry. He takes the tender scene, and blends it into charming verse : —

“ Onward came
 The leaden tramp of thousands. Clarion notes
 Rang sharply on the ear at intervals ;
 And the low, mingled din of mighty hosts
 Returning from the battle poured from far,
 Like the deep murmur of a restless sea.
 They came, as earthly conquerors always come,
 With blood and splendor, revelry and woe.
 The stately horse treads proudly ; he hath trod
 The brow of death, as well. The chariot wheels
 Of warriors roll magnificently on ;
 Their weight hath crushed the fallen. *Man* is there,
 Majestic, lordly man, with his sublime
 And elevated brow and godlike frame,
 Lifting his crest in triumph — for his heel
 Hath trod the dying like a wine press down.

The mighty Jephthah led his warriors on
 Through Mizpeh's streets. His helm was proudly set,
 And his stern lip curled slightly, as if praise
 Were for the hero's scorn. His step was firm,
 But free as India's leopard ; and his mail,
 Whose shekels none in Israel might bear,
 Was like a cedar's tassel on his frame.
 His crest was Judah's kingliest ; and the look
 Of his dark, lofty eye, and bended brow,
 Might quell the lion. He led on ; but thoughts
 Seemed gathering round which troubled him. The veins
 Grew visible upon his swarthy brow,
 And his proud lip was pressed, as if with pain.

* * * *

A moment more,

And he had reached his home ; when lo, there sprang
 One with a bounding footstep, and a brow
 Of light, to meet him. O, how beautiful !
 Her proud eye flashing like a sun-lit gem !
 And her luxuriant hair ! 'twas like the sweep
 Of a dark wing in visions. He stood still,
 As if the sight had withered him. She threw
 Her arms about his neck ; he heeded not.
 She called him ' Father,' but he answered not.
 She stood and gazed upon him. Was he wroth ?
 There was no anger in that bloodshot eye.
 Had sickness seized him ? She unclasped his helm,
 And laid her white hand gently on his brow,
 And the large veins felt stiff and hard, like cords.
 The touch aroused him. He raised up his hands,
 And spoke the name of God, in agony.
 She knew that he was stricken, then, and rushed
 Again into his arms, and, with a flood
 Of tears she could not bridle, sobbed a prayer
 That he would breathe his agony in words.
 He told her ; and a momentary flush
 Shot o'er her countenance ; and then the soul
 Of Jephthah's daughter wakened ; and she stood
 Calmly and nobly up, and said 'twas well,
 And she would die." * * *

Some have questioned whether Jephthah's
 daughter was really put to death. The conclu-
 sion is so awful that they have shrunk from it,
 and have assumed that the vow was evaded in
 some way unknown to us. They have argued
 that the Jewish law did not admit of human sac-
 rifices, and that certain allusions in the sacred
 narrative indicate that the maiden was put to trial
 in another way, but was allowed to escape with

her life. But though this is the merciful view of the case, it does not seem to be warranted by Scripture. The days in which the transactions occurred were dark and clouded. Israel was surrounded by nations of idolaters, with whom human sacrifices were common; and doubtless Jephthah had caught some of the rude and barbarous notions of those with whom he had mingled. Uniting the superstitions of idolatry with the lofty integrity of Hebrew faith, he had made a terrible vow, which he considered himself bound fully to execute. Let loose from his hand, his daughter wandered upon the mountains, bewailing her fate, and preparing herself for her sad sacrifice. When the time had expired, she returned to her father, who did unto her according to his vow; and the Scripture record is, "the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephthah, the Gileadite, four days in a year."

But what improvement shall we make of this beautiful case, this striking illustration of devotion? Our condemnation of the father, who pursued a course entirely inconsistent with the spirit of true religion, is lost in our admiration of the maiden who gave herself up a victim to a vow which her sire had made, and over which she had no control.

The first thing that strikes the mind is the

ready obedience of the daughter. She did not hesitate to give herself up to the hard fate to which she was doomed, but when the hour came was prepared for it. Obedience to parents is not always so readily yielded, especially in the times in which we live. These days are emphatically days of disobedience and disregard of parental restraint, and not a few of the children of the most pious and devoted parents openly trample the restraints of home, the counsels of affection, and the law of God beneath their feet. No crime is more severely condemned in the Bible than this irreverence for parents; and no virtue is more frequently applauded than the opposite trait of character. "What state of society," asks one, "can be blind to the meaning of the imprecation which was pronounced at the entrance into the promised land, and joined in the same doom the idolater and him who should 'set light by his father and mother'?" What philosophy can gainsay the sage of the book of Proverbs, whose sententious moralizing rises into prophetic grandeur as he speaks of the unnatural son?—"The eye that mocketh at his father, or refuseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it." Who needs any interpretation of the feelings of David, or Joseph, or Solomon, in their joy or trial? How

heart-rending was the grief of the Psalmist over his recreant son: 'Would to God I had died for thee, my son, my son!' What beauty, as well as simplicity, in the inquiry of Joseph for his father, when the prime minister of Egypt dismissed his courtly train, and weeping aloud, could only ask, 'Doth my father yet live?' What grandeur — far above its gold and gems — surrounded the throne of Solomon, when he rose to meet his mother, and called her to a seat at his right hand! 'And the king said unto her, Ask on, my mother, for I will not say thee nay.' What pathos and sublimity in the Saviour of men, when, embracing home and heaven in his parting words on the cross, he commended his spirit to the eternal Father, and intrusted his mother to the beloved disciple's care! We need no more than this to show how the gospel glorifies the law, and crowns its morality and piety alike in perfect love: 'Woman, behold thy son,' 'Disciple, behold thy mother.' Hear the amen that goes from Calvary to Sinai, and honor thy father and thy mother."

And yet it must be confessed that the parents of our times fail so to live as to draw out the regard, affection, and respect of their children. The great law of God concerning family government is disregarded, the provisions of infinite wis-

dom for the good of the people are not complied with, and children grow up unrestrained. The universal condemnation of children for a want of reverence and respect for parents should at least be shared by parents, who let their children grow up without sound, serious advice, and wholesome and salutary restraints. Many parents, who mean well, are frightened from the path of duty by the foolish cry of "over-severity," raised by impracticable philanthropists and half-crazy religionists. No greater mistake was ever made than to suppose a child is harmed by being restrained within proper limits. It is folly to imagine that evil will come from restraints and just discipline. The mistake is only made by those who deny to children even innocent recreation and wholesome pleasure, of which there are enough in the world. The parent who goes beyond this is wronging the child; indulgence and parental fondness become a sin when they allow a child to walk amid pitfalls and dangers. Such indulgence is a weakness which will ruin the child, which will involve the parent in disgrace, which will defeat the end of the parental relation, and which will be punished by the Almighty, as a sin against himself.

"It is a mistake," says one who has well studied this subject, "to suppose that children love their parents less who maintain a proper authority over

them. On the contrary, they respect them more. It is a cruel and unnatural selfishness that indulges children in a foolish and hurtful way. Parents are guides and counsellors to their children. As a guide in a foreign land, they undertake to pilot them safely through the shoals and quicksands of inexperience. If the guide allow his followers all the liberty they please, — if, because they dislike the constraint of the narrow path of safety, he allow them to stray into holes and down precipices that destroy them, to slake their thirst in brooks that poison them, to loiter in woods full of wild beasts or deadly herbs, — can he be called a sure guide? And is it not the same with our children? They are as yet only in the preface, or, as it were, in the first chapter of the book of life. We have nearly finished it, or are far advanced. We must open the pages for these younger minds. If children see that their parents act from principle; that they do not find fault without reason; that they do not punish because personal offence is taken, but because the thing in itself is wrong, — if they see that, while they are resolutely but affectionately refused what is not good for them, there is a willingness to oblige them in all innocent matters, — they will soon appreciate such conduct. If no attention is paid to rational wishes, if no allowance is made

for youthful spirits, if they are dealt with in a hard and unsympathizing manner, the proud spirit will rebel, and the meek spirit be broken. Our stooping to amuse them, our condescending to make ourselves one in their plays and pleasures at suitable times, will lead them to know that it is not because we will not, but because we cannot, attend to them, that at other times we refuse to do so. A pert or improper way of speaking ought never to be allowed. Clever children are very apt to be pert, and if too much admired for it, and laughed at, become eccentric and disagreeable. It is often very difficult to check our own amusements; but their future welfare should be regarded more than our present entertainment. It should never be forgotten that they are tender plants committed to our fostering care; that every thoughtless word or careless neglect may destroy a germ of immortality; 'that foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child;' and that we must ever, like watchful husbandmen, be on our guard against it."

How beautiful was the conduct of Jephthah's daughter, and what devotion to her father did she show when she said, "My father, if thou hast opened thy mouth unto the Lord, do with me as thou hast named"! Thank God that he does not require of children any such sacrifice as Jephthah's

daughter made ; but he does require obedience, filial love, and respect, and a kind, rational reverence.

We are also taught a lesson upon the solemn nature of a vow to God. A vow is a solemn affirmation before God, and I do not know as it is forbidden in the Scriptures. There are vows mentioned in the Bible of various kinds, and many instances are on record to show that their non-fulfilment was followed with the most terrible consequences. Men now are taking vows — judicial vows, marriage vows, church vows, social and political vows, — and how often are vows broken. Go into our courts of justice, where men are sworn in the most solemn manner to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, and what do you hear? Men who have been found in a state of intoxication swear solemnly that they do not know where they obtained the poison which made them drunken the day before ; or, if they can tell that, do not know what they drank. The perjury in our courts of justice is terrible, and the broken vows which are piled up in our temples of law are legion. Nor is perjury on this subject alone common. False swearing is frequent on all subjects. Men swear falsely for their friends, for money, and for reputation — for any thing they want, and can secure

by it. But a few days since, we were told of a father and mother, who, to save a guilty son, took false oaths as to his age, that they might shield him from the penitentiary. The marriage vow, how often is that broken! What mean the constant applications for bills of divorce? What mean the constant efforts to change the divorce laws? What mean the bickerings and strifes in families, the separation of the married parties, the desolation of homes? All traceable to the violations of the marriage vow. And then the vows to God and his church. What becomes of them ere the ink on the paper is dry, or the echo of the solemn words of fellowship have died away?

A vow never should be made without serious thought; and when made, it should be sacredly binding. There is an old proverb, that "a bad promise is better broken than kept." Perhaps so; but it is even far better than that, that a bad promise had better never be made.

The warrior Jephthah made a solemn vow; he never should have made it. It was a rash promise — a promise which God did not demand of him, but which he sacredly kept.

We are also taught something, in this connection, of the sorrow of parting with children. This brings us to a part of our subject which is interesting to all who sustain the parental rela-

tion ; for where is the parent who has not lost a child ? Where is the family of long standing which this affliction has not visited ?

Jephthah was an iron-hearted warrior. He was a man inured to hardship and suffering. He had been exposed in his day to the vicissitudes of persecution and bloodshed. But hard hearted as he was, when he found his own dear daughter must die, he was terribly agitated. The large, hot tears rolled down that bronzed cheek as he turned away from his child to weep. What must have been the surprise of those soldiers as they saw their leader, just returning from a splendid conquest, weeping there like a child ? O, that is a place where the strong man always weeps. At the grave of his child he must feel, he must mourn ; it is Nature, and Nature must have her way. So Jephthah felt. This maiden, who had come out to meet him, was his only child, and besides her he had neither son nor daughter. His wife was gone. His children, one by one, had died, until she, the fairest of them all, was left alone to cheer him.

And how many other fathers have bowed and wept over the graves of their children, and mourned the sad fate which had taken them away ! I have seen the strong man, who has watched unmoved the flashing lightning, who has braved the ocean when lashed to its utmost fury,

who has walked the field of danger like a hero amid the strife of battle, bent and bowed, broken and bleeding at the death bed of his tender child, weeping like a woman over passing grief, lamenting as one without hope over the perishing idol of his affection. And if to stern, rugged man comes the death of a child so terribly, what must be the blow to woman — to the mother, whose heart is linked by sufferings and watchings, and ties too near and sacred to be named on earth, to that dying child. One who has been in the deep waters of sorrow, and who knows all about it, writes tenderly, —

“No one feels the death of a child as the mother feels it. The father cannot realize it thus. True, there is a vacancy in his home, and a heaviness in his heart. There is a chain of association that at set times comes round with its broken link; there are memories of endearment, a keen sense of loss, a weeping over crushed hopes, and a pain of wounded affection over them all.

“But the mother feels that one has been taken away, who was still closer to her heart. Hers has been the office of constant ministrations. Every graduation of feature developed before her eyes, she detected every new gleam of infant intelligence; she heard the first utterance of every stammering word; she was the refuge of its fears,

the supplier of its wants; and every task of affection wove a new link, and made dearer to her its object. And when her child dies, a portion of her own life, as it were, dies with it. How can she give her darling up, with all these loving memories, these fond associations? Timid hands that have so often taken hers in trust and love, how can she fold them on its sinless breast, and surrender them to the cold grasp of death? The feet whose wanderings she had watched so narrowly, how can she bear to see them straightened to go down into the dark valley? The head that she has pressed to her lips and bosom, that she has watched in peaceful slumber, and in burning, heart-saddening sickness, a hair of which she could not see harmed — O, how can she consign it to the darkness of the grave? It was a gleam of sunshine and a voice of perpetual gladness in her home; she had learned from it blessed lessons of simplicity, sincerity, purity, and faith; it had unsealed within her a gushing, a never-ebbing tide of affection; when suddenly it was taken away, and the home is left dark and silent; and to the vain and heart-rending aspiration, Shall that dear child never return? there breaks in response the cold grave silence — Nevermore! O, nevermore! The heart is like a forsaken mansion, and those words go echoing through its silent chambers.”

The writer is not describing a new or a strange thing under the sun. On many a shelf at home is the silver plate snatched as a memento from the coffin ere it was lowered into the ground ; the miniature form taken just before the loved one died, or while it was in its little shroud ; full many a relic which becomes you well, is worn in memory ; and as the stranger wanders in your field of graves, he reads, from many a marble monument, —

“Beneath this stone, in sweet repose,
Is laid a mother's dearest pride ;
A flower that scarce had waked to life,
And light, and beauty, ere it died,
God, in his wisdom, has recalled
The precious boon his love had given ;
And though the casket moulders here,
The gem is sparkling now in heaven.”

We remember one who was called to test the sorrows of bereavement, and meet in her own dwelling the solemn afflictions of divine Providence. A mother was called, like Jephthah, to bury her daughter. A few days ago the mother saw her die ; she was her only child, and beside her she had neither son nor daughter. A little while ago the writer was introduced to the family of this mourning mother. There were then father and mother, surrounded with a family of six happy, bright, intelligent children. One by

one all these have passed away, the husband and the children. The last was a daughter, who outlived the rest. Surely God will spare her to be the support of her mother. She lives on, the sole earthly hope of that fond parent's heart. There is no husband to put his strong arm around her when she faints; there are no youthful sons to whisper in her ear, "In a little while, mother, we shall be able to support you;" there are no little prattlers to lay their heads on the mother's bosom, and say, "Don't cry, ma!" there are no loving ones to hold up her hands and support her steps. This daughter alone remains; she is an only child; all the rest are beneath the sod. And even *her*, God calls. The delicate form, the frail system, cannot stand the assaults of this cold northern clime, and she comes down day by day to a bed of sickness. O, who can tell the feelings of that mother as she watches the fading cheek, the languid expression, the feeble tread, and the faltering step — as she realizes the deadly stroke which is to take from her her only child, and leave her alone in this world. At length the parting came. It was sad, but not final. The mother had hope. She saw her daughter move, not down into the tomb, but up into glory. I have read somewhere a mother's dream. "I found myself," she said, "in a

narrow road, with my little Willie by my side. In company with me, a train of mothers was travelling slowly along, each with her little ones gathered closely around her. I trembled, for the way seemed long, and full of dangers. I looked forward, where it passed over rugged steeps, and through unshaded meadows. I saw deep pitfalls stretched across it, screened with waving flowers. Here it wound along abrupt precipices, and there by the side of dark, still waters. As we journeyed on, a murmuring sound fell on my ears, like the soft harmony of winds. By degrees, I distinguished the mothers' low-voiced teachings. One, as she culled the fragrant flowers, exposed the dangers underneath; another, dipping the clear, cool water, pointed out the perils of the slippery banks; and all alike, with murmuring words, gazed ever and anon towards heaven. I looked, and for an instant, within a cloud, beheld a form more glorious than I can describe, and at his feet a cross. He was their Guide; that cross their light in darkness, their shadows in the fervent heat. For days we journeyed on. Just before me walked an orphan group. I watched, and wondered at their safety among the hidden snares, till I saw the path of light that streamed before their steps. Then I knew they went not unattended, and remembered that He within the cloud

— their mothers' trust — had said of such, 'In heaven, their angels do always behold the face of my Father.' But now my Willie faltered, weary with his walk. His eyes grew dreamy, and his smile faint. With troubled heart I bore him in my arms; and then I heard a voice — 'Suffer little children to come unto me.' But before I understood the summons, with mingled agony and rapture I gazed on his radiant form, borne upwards from my arms, till, through the parted clouds, he was lost to my view." So this mother was comforted, and her heart relieved. It was God, and she did not murmur; but with her heart upraised, she said, —

" Nearer, my God, to thee !
 Nearer to thee !
 Even though it be a cross
 That raiseth me,
 Still, all my song shall be,
 Nearer, my God, to thee,
 Nearer to thee ! "

To be nearer to God was to be with the loved ones in heaven; and she, with an innumerable company of the afflicted, could say, —

" Though, like the wanderer,
 The sun go down,
 Darkness be over me,
 My rest a stone,
 Yet in my dreams I'd be
 Nearer, my God, to thee,
 Nearer to thee ! "

We would not lead the thoughts of the afflicted backward, amid graves and tombstones. We would not have them live over again the partings and the sobbings which have made the past so sorrowful, but with the hand of Christian faith we would point forward. Whoever goeth backward, saileth on a sea of terrors, while wrecks are all around.

“What saith the past to thee? Weep!
 Truth is departed;
 Beauty hath died like the dream of a sleep;
 Love is departed;
 Trifles of sense, the profoundly unreal,
 Scare from our spirits God's holy ideal;
 So, as a funeral bell, slow and deep,
 So tolls the past to thee. Weep!”

But there is a morning that rises over the tomb; there is a morrow for those that weep; there is a gathering of the parted, and to that we would point all you that mourn.

“What doth the future say? Hope!
 Turn thy face sunward;
 Look where light fringes the far rising slope;
 Day cometh onward.
 Watch! Though so long be the twilight delaying,
 Let the first sunbeam arise on thee praying;
 Fear not, for greater is God by thy side
 Than armies of evil against thee allied.”

CHAPTER III.

THE GOOD MOTHER.

REBEKAH.

God keeps a niche
In heaven to hold our idols ; and albeit
He break them to our faces, and deny
That our close kisses should impair their white,
I know we shall behold them raised, complete,
The dust shook from their beauty, glorified,
New Memnons in the great God-light.

AND ISAAC BROUGHT HER UNTO HER MOTHER SARAH'S TENT,
AND TOOK REBEKAH, AND SHE BECAME HIS WIFE : AND HE
LOVED HER : AND ISAAC WAS COMFORTED AFTER HIS MOTH-
ER'S DEATH. — *Gen. 24 : 67.*

AFTER the death of Sarah, his mother, Isaac began to feel that lonesomeness which comes from an absence of the one whose voice has been accustomed to cheer, and whose hand has ever been ready, day and night, for a kind act. To supply the place of his mother, Abraham advised his son to take a wife. The young man was pleased with the suggestion, as most young men are, and he

began to look about him for some suitable companion. But his father was unwilling that he should wed any of the daughters of the Canaanites. They were idolaters, and profaned the name of the true God. He advised the young man to go to Nahor, in the country of Mesopotamia, and find some one there among the worshippers of God, on whom to set his affections. In giving this advice, Abraham exhibited true religious purpose. Some parents seem to be willing that their daughters should marry any body that has means to support them. The object to be secured is a home filled with comforts and luxuries, and many do not look at all beyond this. If a man is in good business, if his income is large, if he has a well-filled purse, he is deemed an acceptable suitor for a daughter's hand. Often the young bride is sacrificed—wedded to a man with whom she can have no religious or social affinities—merely because the husband is rich. It is said that an Athenian, who was hesitating whether to give his daughter in marriage to a man of worth, with a small fortune, or to a rich man, who had no other recommendation, went to consult Themistocles on the subject. “I would bestow my daughter,” said Themistocles, “upon a man without money, rather than upon money without a man.” Many parents take the opposite view, and

are willing to marry a daughter to a fine home, or a well-filled purse, or to an easy, comfortable condition in life, rather than to a man with a heart, without these creature comforts.

There are cases where husbands and wives, though of differing religious views, agree, and live happily together. It often happens that one party or the other is converted to new views or new duties after marriage, and by mutual forbearance and kindly sympathy, live as happily as if they thought more nearly alike. But while this is true of individual cases, it is also true that a similarity of religious experience and opinions is a great bond between husband and wife. In the selection of a companion for life, this should not be overlooked; for where two persons are conscientiously opposed to each other in religious views, there is a breach, a chasm, over which, oftentimes, affection casts but a slender bridge. Abraham was a wise man when he directed his son to Nahor for a wife. He knew the influence of a religious woman upon the life of his son, and was well aware how much her piety would quicken his faith while waiting for the promise of God.

The manner in which men selected wives in those days was quite unlike the way pursued now, and I have sometimes thought more sensible. Our marriages are often mere matters of caprice,

founded on no just views of the mutual adaptation of the parties entering into the contract. The partial acquaintance of the ball room, the show house, or the street, ripens into a marriage which is often productive of unhappiness. The way Isaac was betrothed was this: his father Abraham called his elder servant, and bade him take ten camels, well laden with gifts, and go to Nahor, and search out some one who would be a suitable person for his son. It might be well for young people now, if they would oftener leave these matters to the decision of older and more experienced persons. This servant went to Nahor, and stood by a well which was a great place of resort, and to which females were accustomed to come for water. As he stood there, he prayed that God would send some one to him. The crowd came to the well, the aged and the young: among the rest, a young maiden came tripping along, singing a sweet song, and her countenance full of smiles. The eye of the trusty servant was at once fixed upon her. She was of the proper age for Isaac, and was a person of great beauty. As she stood filling her pitcher at the well, the servant ran to her, and prayed to be allowed to drink. With the greatest good nature she allowed him, and when she saw he had no pitcher, she drew for his camels also. Her

kindness won the affections of the aged servant, and he decided at once to secure her for his lord. So when she had done, he made her a return for her kindness, and frankly asked her who she was. She did not feel insulted by this boldness, nor did she turn away with a coquettish reply, but frankly answered. The man asked her if there was room in her father's house for him, and she said "Yes." He followed her home, and her father joyfully received him, and took care of his men and his cattle. The more he saw of Rebekah, the better he liked her, and the more firmly did he resolve to take her home with him. So, when the evening meal came, and they sat down together, the man broached the subject, and told the purpose for which he was there. He laid before them the honor and riches of his master, the virtues of Isaac, his son, and the pleasantness of the country in which he lived. He described the way in which he had been led to think of Rebekah, and made a strong appeal to them in favor of his project. In those times, the feelings of the young women were hardly consulted at all in a matter of this kind, and Rebekah's father, after hearing all that was said, consented to give up his daughter, deeming this call from God. His course is an example to parents whose children are called of God to other fields of usefulness and duty.

The parents of some of our female missionaries have held on to their children, though the hand of the Great Father was beckoning them away. Mrs. James, who was drowned in the harbor of Hongkong, just as she had come in sight of her field of labor, going down in the arms of her husband into a watery grave, while deciding the struggle in her mind to become a herald of salvation, says, "Father said, decidedly, he could not consent. My mother was agonized at the idea of a separation, and she, too, felt that she could not let me go, although she was not prepared to say I should not go. Sarah [her sister] was almost frantic with grief, and you can imagine how I must have felt."

These parents felt as many other parents have felt. The call of God was heard, but they could not obey. They could not endure the idea of sending out their darling child to distant China. The sacrifice was too great, the treasure of too much value, to lay upon the altar of God. They were both warm-hearted Christians, but the service of Christ had never called upon them for *such* a sacrifice before, and it is not strange that they should shrink back. Bethuel, Rachel's father, lived in a time when religious people were accustomed to yield every thing to God, and when it seemed to be duty, he gave up his child to the

messenger, and they set forth. What strange emotions must have filled the mind of Rebekah! She had heard the whole discussion, and chose to go. She had her choice. Her father did not use compulsion; when his own mind was decided, he said, "We will call the maiden, and let her decide;" and she accepted the proposals, and strangely must she have felt as she journeyed on to meet her future husband. She had never seen him; there were no miniatures in those days; she could only judge from the representations of the servant. What was before her she knew not; yet, with her damsels she moved on. Isaac came to the well at Lahairoi, and when she saw him, with true maiden modesty, she covered her face. The young man took her by the hand, and led her into the tent of his mother, and there they were married. What the ceremony was we know not; nor does it matter in the least. The place selected for it gives us an insight into the heart of that young man; shows us the benevolence of his disposition, and the high place his mother had in his memory. His mother's tent! There, with each object reminding him of her, each scene leading his recollections back to her counsels, with her spirit hovering near, like a guardian angel, he vowed to love and wed Rebekah, and protect her to the end of life. He was at this time forty years of age,

and in those times, when life was prolonged to centuries, was a young man.

The first event which occurred to mark the married life of Isaac and Rebekah was the birth of the twin brothers, Esau and Jacob. The two brothers were unlike. Esau was a wild, hunting, sporting young man, while Jacob was a home body, who loved to cheer his mother in her toils. The father loved Esau best, and looked upon Jacob as effeminate, while the mother's heart clung with a mother's fondness to her younger son. In those times, the elder son was the heir of peculiar privileges. The modern will system was not known, but the eldest son inherited all the property, took the entire control, and all the rest were subject to him. He had what was called a birth-right claim. One day, however, Esau came from the field faint and hungry, and for some red pottage which his younger brother had, sold out all his claim, which completely reversed the order of things, and gave Jacob the position which his brother had lost. But it was necessary to the validity of this contract, that the sanction and blessing of the father should fall upon the new possessor. This Rebekah knew Isaac would never give while reason remained. Esau was his favorite son, the idol of his affections. It is probable that she communicated her views to her husband,

urged him to make Jacob his heir, and met with a stern and decided refusal. She then resorted to stratagem ; set her wits to work to accomplish her project ; and in her success we have the darkest feature of her life, and the blackest spot upon her character. One day, when Isaac was old, he said to Esau, " Take your arrows, and go forth and kill a beast, and make me some savory food before I die, and I will bless thee." The quick ear of the mother heard the request, and she took Jacob, her favorite, aside, and plotted with him. She proposed that he personify Esau, and thus by fraud obtain the blessing. The young man's mind recoiled from such a deception. His poor old father was on the brink of the grave, and he dared not deceive him ; but his mother persuaded him, saying, " Thy curse shall fall on my head if thou art detected." Jacob consented after much entreaty. His smooth arms were covered with the skin of a kid, and with the savory food in his hands, he went to the bedside of his father. " I am Esau, thy first born ; I have done as thou badest me ; now eat what I have brought, and bless me." The old man, even in his blindness and forgetfulness, thought, as well he might, that the voice he heard was that of Jacob. So he called him, and felt his arms, and was convinced, though saying still, " The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the

hands are the hands of Esau." But he gave Jacob the blessing, and secured to him the birth-right. Soon Esau came, and said, "Hast thou no blessing for me?" But it was too late; the words had been spoken, and could not be unsaid; and the old man died, feeling in his heart that he had been wickedly deceived. The part which Rebekah played in this transaction presents her in an unfavorable light, and we can hardly reconcile her conduct with her usual mild and amiable deportment. This dreadful sin stands out prominently in her life, casting over the whole a sombre shadow, and making it all look gloomy and sad.

And yet the life of Rebekah is an exceedingly beautiful one. Even this sin lends to the rest of it a hue of beauty. It forms a contrast which heightens the general effect, as from an eminence three thousand years distant we gaze upon it.

God gave woman to man for a help meet. She was not to be a toy, played with a while and broken. We have mistaken the position which woman should occupy to some extent in our day. In the old world she is used as a drudge; in the new world as a toy. Take one single illustration: woman is allowed to appear any where, where she can minister to the passions of man.

She is admitted to the stage of the theatre ; she is allowed to sing, to act, to speak, and perform all the nameless frolics of the playhouse. No one condemns or considers her out of place. But let her rise in a church, and from the pulpit speak of Jesus to the lost and dying, and the same persons that showered flowers upon her in the theatre curl their lips in scorn. She is applauded in the first case because she ministers to their gratification, while she is condemned in the second case because she only aims to do them good. Why is not a woman as much out of place acting in a theatre as haranguing a political mob at a caucus ? God designed woman to be a helper for man ; and one of the most beautiful things we can say of Rebekah is, that she fulfilled this design. She was a faithful wife and a true mother, ever assisting her husband in his work. Through a long life they lived together, acting in perfect harmony. And where this is not the case the marriage relation cannot be a happy one, and its existence will be a source of life-long regret. There are hundreds of couples who are miserable and wretched because they have formed the contrary habit of working against each other. "They recognize their marriage," as one remarks, "as the great mistake of their lives. The chain is not to them a silken one, but a cable of iron, that tightens

around them more and more, crushing out all hope and energy, substituting hate for love, and eating out with its rust the very inner life of the soul."

But when the married pair are mutual helpers, the relation makes life a smooth road, fringed with flowers which bloom even in the depths of the winter of adversity and sorrow. I have read an illustration to the point. A lady, travelling in Europe, visited with a brother a town in Germany, and took lodging with an extraordinary pair, — an old man and woman, husband and wife, — who lived by themselves, without child or servant, subsisting on the letting of their parlor and two bed rooms. They were tall, thin, and erect, though each seventy years of age. The lady, in giving an account of these persons, says, "When we knocked at the door for admittance, they answered it together; if we rang the bell, the husband and wife invariably appeared side by side; all our requests and demands were received by both, and executed with the utmost nicety and exactness. The first night, arriving late by the coach, and merely requiring a good fire and our tea, we were puzzled to understand the reason of this double attendance." When the hour to retire came, the lady was surprised to see both husband and wife attending her to her chamber; and on looking with some seriousness towards the husband, the

woman replied, "No offence is meant, madam. My husband is stone blind." The lady began to sympathize with the wife on the misfortune of having a husband quite blind. The man himself took up the conversation now, by exclaiming, "It is no use for you to talk with my wife, she is entirely deaf." "I was astonished," says the lady. "Here was compensation! Could a pair be better matched? Man and wife were, indeed, one flesh; for he saw with her eyes, and she heard with his ears! It was beautiful to me ever after to watch the old man and woman in their inseparableness. Their sympathy with each other was as swift as electricity, and made their deprivation as nought."

Something like this is the dependence of every married pair one upon the other. There may be no deafness, no blindness; but there will be a dependence as sure and as complete as that of the aged pair in Germany. Isaac and Rebekah living long together, are illustrations of this mutual dependence. Their lives are beautiful; and one almost wishes, as he reads the Scripture narrative, that they might close together — that those who were united in life might not in death be divided.

We have in this account a stern and terrible admonition against parental partiality. It is sometimes the case that one child has certain

peculiarities which endear it to the parents, or some one has qualities or defects which cause the parents to mourn. Inconsiderate and thoughtless parents will often take sides for the interesting child against the dull one. In the family of Isaac this partiality was carried to an extreme. Isaac loved Esau, and petted him; Rebekah made a pet of Jacob. Consequently the two boys hated each other, and discord was brought into the family circle. All appearance of partiality should be avoided among children. With an even hand the parent should balance the scales of justice, remembering that oftentimes the favorite one becomes vicious and depraved, while the dull one grows up to honor and virtue. Some one has taken pains to collect the facts in relation to eminent men, and it has been found that many who have arrived at high positions were not favored and flattered in youth. We are told that when "Berzelius, the eminent Swedish chemist, left school for the university, the words 'Indifferent in behavior and of doubtful hope' were scored against his name; and after he entered the university he narrowly escaped being turned back. On one of his first visits to the laboratory, when nineteen years old, he was taunted with the inquiry whether he understood the difference between a laboratory and a kitchen." We are told that the father of the great Isaac Bar-

row used to say, if it pleased God to take from him any of his children, he hoped it might be Isaac, as he was the least promising ; that Milton and Swift were justly celebrated for stupidity ; that Walter Scott had the credit of having the “ thickest skull in the school,” though Dr. Blair told the teacher that many bright rays of future glory shone through that thick skull ; that “ Clavius, the great mathematician of his age, was so stupid in his boyhood, that the teachers could make nothing of him till they tried him in geometry ;” that “ Caracci, the celebrated painter, was so inapt in his youth that his masters advised him to restrict his ambition to the grinding of colors ;” that the distinguished “ Sir Isaac Newton, in his boyhood, was inattentive to his study, and ranked very low in school until the age of twelve ;” that “ Goldsmith was dull in his youth, and Shakspeare, Gibbon, Davy, and Dryden did not appear to have exhibited in their childhood even the common elements of future success ;” that “ when Samuel Wythe, the Dublin schoolmaster, attempted to educate Richard Brinsley Sheridan, he pronounced the boy an ‘ incorrigible dunce ;’ the mother of Sheridan fully concurred in this verdict, and declared him the most stupid of her sons ;” that “ Dr. Scott, the commentator, could not compose a theme when twelve years old, and

even at a later age, Dr. Adam Clarke, after incredible effort, failed to commit to memory a poem of a few stanzas only." An English writer, speaking of a distinguished female authoress of that country, says she "could not read when she was seven. Her mother was rather uncomfortable about it, but said as every body did learn with opportunity, she supposed her child would do so at last. By eighteen, the apparently slow genius paid the heavy but inevitable debts of her father from the profits of her first work, and before thirty had published thirty volumes." These cases, and a multitude of others which might be cited, from the living age of some of our own countrymen, should teach parents the folly of any partiality which would elevate one favored child above another. In the mind of the dull, rough boy, there slumbers a spirit which will wake by and by, and perhaps astonish the world. Mirabeau, when a boy, was of most hideous personal appearance, and so awkward and ill mannered, that his father hated him, and took every occasion to show his dislike. Yet Mirabeau had powers of mind which, if rightly directed, would have made him a brilliant star in the world. But the false views of his father, who had no idea that his son would ever be any thing but a disgrace to him, made the young man a fiend incarnate.

Parents often lay the foundation of long and hostile feuds among their children by a favoritism growing out of the preference for one over another; and if there is any thing which they should check, it is an exhibition of such partiality, if it exists in their minds. Isaac and Rebekah, each turning from the other, with partiality for a favorite child, are a beacon light to warn us; and the conduct of Rebekah, while her husband was lying on his death bed, is a monument which stretches its dark shadow down three thousand years. And yet we would not harshly condemn this fond and erring mother. She lived in an age when there were no Bibles printed; no volumes teaching the parent her duty; no discourses delivered to those who sustained the endearing relation; no manuals of long approval to guide; but an age when all the views of life were low, and society itself was a crudity almost chaotic. An Israelitish woman, a writer of tender pathos, willing to cast the mantle of her sex over this erring sister, thus kindly writes of the wife of Isaac:—

“Rebekah was a partial, but not a weak or unkind mother. She loved Jacob better than his brother, but Esau was still her son, her first born; and O, how painfully must her heart have yearned towards him, when she heard his ‘great

and exceeding bitter cry!'—'Hast thou but one blessing, my father? Bless me, even me also, O my father. And Esau lifted up his voice and wept!'—Esau, the rude, the careless hunter, who had seemed to care for nought but his own pleasures—the chase, the field, the wild! He bowed down by his blind father like an infant, and wept, beseeching the blessing of which a mother's and a brother's subtlety had deprived him. Could Rebekah have been a witness, or even hearer, of this scene without losing all the triumph of success in sympathy with the anguish of her first born? It is impossible to ponder on her previous character without being convinced of this. It is not from one act, one unresisted temptation, that we ought to pronounce judgment on a fellow-creature; yet, from our unhappy proneness to condemn, we generally do so."

Of the death of Rebekah we know but little. She lived many years, saw her children advancing in life, reaped the bitter fruits of her partiality and deception, and dying, was buried in the field of Machpelah. The early part of her life darkens with the shadow cast upon it by one single act near the close. So it often is, in this our life, that some man or woman lives long honored and beloved by all, useful and virtuous, but in life's decline so far forgets, and falls, as Rebekah did, as

to cast a dark gloom over the whole of life. The young may outlive, and overcome ; but an error made in life's decline is a dark pall, in which the spirit passes away from earth. God help us so to live that our last days shall be our best days.

CHAPTER IV.

THE MARRIED STATE.

RACHEL.

But O, when I gaze on my peaceful cot,
Where the clematis bowers entwine,
The land of the stranger tempts me not —
No, ne'er can thy home be mine !

O woman, in our hours of ease,
Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,
And variable as the shade
By the light quivering aspen made,
When pain and anguish wring the brow,
A ministering angel thou !

AND JACOB SERVED SEVEN YEARS FOR RACHEL; AND THEY SEEMED UNTO HIM BUT A FEW DAYS, FOR THE LOVE HE HAD TO HER. — *Gen.* 29 : 20.

VERY much of this world's history clusters around a very few individuals. Look back over the ages of the past, and you will be surprised, perhaps, to see how much space is occupied by a few persons, while the mass are dead and forgotten. God has wisely ordered that there should

be but few men to lead ; and these stand out singly in their places, towering above the rest. In the city of Rome is a mighty cathedral, the wonder of the world. More than three centuries were taken to complete it ; forty-three popes lavished their treasures upon it ; seventy millions of dollars have been put into it ; it covers nearly six acres of ground, and its annual repairs amount to thirty thousand dollars. But how few of all the hundreds of thousands who have toiled upon that building are remembered ! There are a few names inseparably connected with the great structure. Bramante, Raphael, and Michael Angelo have left their impress upon it, and while it stands their names will live. But where are the painters, the sculptors, the mechanics, the laborers employed by them ? All dead, and their graves forgotten. These men gave the direction to the others, and their will, combined or individual, moved the wills of the millions of hands performing the work. So in the great world. There are a few minds that move it, and leave their impress upon it when they die. Thus we find all we know of the history of the world for a long period clustering around one single family, which contains on its record the names of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This family is almost the only one of that age of which we have any authentic record, and

it combines in its circle some of the most illustrious characters, and exhibits in its records some of the noblest deeds ever known.

In following this record, we come to the vicissitudes of Jacob, the younger son of Isaac and Rebekah. After he had so cruelly deceived his father, the impossibility of living in the same family with Esau became apparent. Even Isaac, who had somewhat recovered from his sickness, was willing that his children should leave him. It is likely that home was rendered wretched by the constant feuds of the two brothers; Jacob exulting over Esau, and Esau blaming and reproaching Jacob. The strife was so bitter, that Esau determined to kill his brother; and Rebekah, fearing such violence, sent the younger son away, saying, "Esau will kill you if you stay here; he is so angry, that in some moment of hate and rage, he will take your life; therefore go to my brother Laban, and stay until the anger of thy brother is appeased." Isaac also urged his son to depart. He had a different motive from that which actuated his wife. He knew that through Jacob, who had fraudulently received his blessing, deliverance was to come to the world, and he wished him to wed a religious wife, and supposed he would find such a one at Padan Aram. So Jacob started, and pursued his way, having, as he

slept one night, the miraculous dream in which he saw the ladder placed on the earth, and reaching to heaven, while up and down were angel forms seen by the dreamer's eye. The traveller arrived safely in Padan Aram, where he was destined to meet with a variety of adventures. His first interview with Rachel is thus described by the pen of Moses, who, after referring to certain people of the country, who were tending their flocks, speaks of Jacob as addressing them thus : —

“My brethren, whence be ye? And they said, Of Haran are we. And he said unto them, Know ye Laban, the son of Nahor? And they said, We know him. And he said unto them, Is he well? And they said, He is well; and behold Rachel, his daughter, cometh with the sheep. And while he yet spake with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she kept them. And it came to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel, the daughter of Laban, his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban, his mother's brother, that Jacob went near, and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the sheep; and Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice and wept; and Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's brother, and that he was Rebekah's son. And she ran and told her father.”

To this interview followed a long and curious

history. When Laban heard that Jacob had come, he ran and welcomed him, and took him to his own home. When he had been there about a month, Laban said to him one day, "I do not wish thee to work for me for nought. What shall thy wages be?" Now Laban, as the account says, had two daughters, Leah and Rachel. Already an attachment had sprung up between Jacob and the latter of these daughters, and having no gift to bestow on Laban for her, he said, frankly, "I will serve thee seven years for Rachel." To this Laban consented, and a contract was entered into accordingly. At this time, Jacob was seventy-seven years old, and Rachel was in extreme youth. The wisdom of Jacob in waiting so long before forming a matrimonial connection may be questioned; but no one will dispute that he was wiser than many boys and girls now, who, before their physical constitutions are developed, before they have any settled and well-defined ideas of life, before they have any business which will tolerably support themselves, rush into an alliance which involves them in pecuniary liabilities, that keep them poor as long as they live. This, however, must be said for Jacob, that, comparing the whole length of his life with ours, he was not older when married than most of us are. The lover worked out his seven years, living all that time in

the same family with Rachel. But when the seven years were ended, Laban took Leah, and by deceit induced Jacob to wed her ; and when the plot had succeeded, laughed at him, and told him he must serve him seven years more if he wanted Rachel, and he was obliged to submit. Some have said this served Jacob right, for his deception towards his father, and for which Laban had well repaid him. The strength of Jacob's affection for Rachel cannot be questioned. Leah he seems never to have loved ; but through all the changes of fourteen years, his heart clung to her younger sister — to Rachel, whom he saw first and loved most. “ Something more,” remarks an eloquent female writer, “ than Rachel's beauty, marvellous as that was, must have so retained Jacob's love for her in those seven years of domestic intercourse, as to make the time appear but a few days. Beauty may attract and win, if the time of courtship be too brief to require no other charm ; but it is not sufficient, of itself, to *retain* affection. Gift from God as it is, how may it be abused, and how may it be wasted, in caring only for the lovely shape *without*, and leaving the rich, invisible gems *within* uncared for and unused !” “ And if there be one,” remarks the same writer, “ of beauty exceeding as that of Rachel, who holdeth in her possession this rich gift of God, let her remember

that he will demand of her how she hath used it ; that its abuse, its *pretended* neglect, yet in reality proud value, will pass not unnoticed by its beneficent Giver. It has been granted for some end ; for if to look on a beautiful flower will excite emotions of admiration and love, and consequently enjoyment, how much more deeply would such feelings be called forth by a beautiful face, could we but behold it as the hands of God had formed it, unshaded by the impress of those emotions of pride, contempt, or self-sufficiency, or that utter void of intellect, which are but too often its concomitants, from the mistaken notion that outward beauty is omnipotent, and needs no help within ! ”

At the end of the second term of seven years, Jacob took his wife Rachel, Laban requiring no further service of him. He had now made the common mistake, and entered into contract with a plurality of wives. Henceforth his home was a scene of contention and recrimination, the two sisters, who never had one word of variance before, now being unable to agree. Still, Jacob continued to live with Laban until a large family of children had gathered around him. Troubles between himself and his father-in-law arising, he took his flocks and herds, and departed towards Mount Gilead. Laban, finding his retreat, pur-

sued him, and overtaking him, forced him to a compromise, which he willingly made. As they left the house of Laban, Rachel stole several images of gold, probably the gods which had been worshipped, and which were now used as ornaments. To keep these images, she was obliged to use deceit, thus coupling two enormous sins, for the sake of these miserable images, which were probably worth but little to her. How her husband felt when he discovered her guilt, the account does not tell us; but we have every evidence to believe that her conduct filled him with sorrow. Every wife is bound so to live that she bring no disgrace upon her husband. By a common law of life, a man may do wrong, and no disgrace attach itself to his family. The feeling for them is one of pity and commiseration. But when a wife is found guilty of wrong, the disgrace does attach itself, however unjustly, to her partner; and under the existence of this state of society, woman is bound to double circumspection. Not only her own happiness, but the honor of her husband and the welfare of her children, are bound up in her deportment.

We hear little more of Rachel, after Jacob's return from the country of Laban, until we are called to mourn over her death. Joseph was born while she was at home, in the house of Laban; in

the hour that gave birth to Benjamin, the spirit of the mother passed from earth. Among the noticeable things connected with the life of Rachel is the trial which Jacob made of her capabilities before he married her. Fourteen long years were spent in the same family with her. He knew well her habits, her industry, her temper and disposition. Every point of her character was tried; every gauge of her soul was taken; and long before he secured her hand, he knew her worth and excellence. How differently is this now conducted! The young man becomes acquainted with the lady at some festival or party, and weds her without any knowledge of her abilities or her temperament. The result is, that a few months of married life cause the parties better to understand each other, and then there is found to be a total want of fitness and appropriateness in the engagement. Unless the parties exercise the utmost forbearance, misery and wretchedness is the result.

It is very true, as some one justly remarks, "marriage should never be the result of *fancy*. The ball room and the evening party rarely develop real character. Under the exhilarating influence of the dance, the glare of lights, the merry quib and joke, the dissolute young man may appear amiable, and the slatternly scold

lovable. Matches made at such places, or under similar circumstances, are not of the class that originate in heaven. They more generally are conceived in the opposite place, and bring forth only iniquity. The true way to learn each other is to do it at home — in the parlor, in the kitchen, and on occasions that *test* the temper. We see the result of these unions in the almost daily divorces taking place, in the running away of husbands, leaving their wives and children to starve, and in the elopement of wives. Not only this, but we witness it in broken-spirited men, made old in the prime of life, struggling on for mere food, and clothing, and shelter, and in women, cross, dirty, sluttish, and wrinkled.”

It is not so necessary that the parties be similar in disposition, but that they should thoroughly know each other, before the words are spoken which death alone can undo. My mind rests now upon a man of education and influence, who had a high standing in society. He was the joy and pride of the circle in which he moved, and for a long time remained in an unmarried state. At length he became intensely interested in a series of articles which were issuing from the public press from an anonymous female writer. The gentleman, enamoured with the articles, all of which seemed to breathe a tender and heavenly

spirit, determined to find out the authoress, and at length was successful. He at once wrote to the lady, made proposals of marriage, and they were in a short time united. The result was, from that hour the kind-hearted, affable gentleman lost his cheerfulness, and died at length, feeling that in one of life's greatest experiments he had made a failure. Disappointed in her whom he had chosen, and of whom he had formed such exalted conceptions, the pressure of his chagrin upon his sensitive organism was so great, that the silver cord was loosed, and the golden bowl was broken at the fountain. If a man is about to purchase a watch for which he is obliged to pay one hundred dollars, he tries it — carries it in his pocket, and tests its accurateness in telling time. And shall a man enter into a relation which is the most sacred, intimate, and enduring of life, with less consideration than he gives to the purchase of a watch? It is painful to see a want of symmetry in this matter; for symmetry is a law of heaven, and beautifully has God ordained that certain dispositions should come together, and that certain traits of character should balance and control other traits. "Let every one take his mate, or none," says one writer. "Let not the brave eagle pair with the stupid owl, nor the gentle dove with the carrion crow. Like should

have like. It is a glorious sight to see two old people, who have weathered the storms, and basked in the sunshine, of life together, go hand in hand, loving and truthfully, down the gentle declivity of time, with no angers, nor jealousies, nor hatreds garnered up against each other, and looking with hope and joy to the everlasting youth of heaven, where they two shall be one forever. That is true marriage — for it is the marriage of spirit with spirit. Their love is woven into a woof of gold, that neither time, nor death, nor eternity can sever.”

Again: Rachel was the mother of two fine sons. We sometimes say that the child who has a good mother is fortunate. Very true. A good mother is a blessing which tongue has never yet described. Some of the noblest ideas, some of the sublimest conceptions, some of the purest principles ever known on earth have been taught by maternal love. The bliss of years has been the result of a mother’s training, and the germs of the loftiest deeds were

“Lodged by a tender mother’s care
In the young folds of thought and sense ;
Like fire in flint they slumbered there,
Till gems had struck them bright from thence.”

But it is also true that a mother is fortunate who has a good son. Who can describe the an-

guish of Eve, as she saw the blood of Abel staining the ground? What anguish was on her countenance as she fell on the body of her younger and best-loved son! Could a mother's feelings have been put to a more severe test? Ah, yes; when they told her that the murderer was not a ferocious beast, but Cain, her cup ran over. What were David's feelings over Absalom! What days and nights of anguish must that father have had over the rebellious, wayward son? Absalom might have died a dozen times, and David would not have felt it so keenly as when he knew that Absalom was in arms against him. Now, in this respect Rachel was peculiarly fortunate. Her two sons, Joseph and Benjamin, were marked for the propriety of their conduct, and their devotion to her. On all occasions they regarded the feelings and obeyed the commands of their mother. If I can judge, there is in our times a sad want of respect among young men for their parents. It is painful, sometimes, to see how old age is treated by wild and reckless youth; and fortunate is the mother whose son imitates the conduct of Him who in dying even said to a loved disciple, "Behold thy mother." How differently Christ treated his mother from the coarse and barbarous way in which some men treat their parents! How kind the title he ap-

plies to her, and how gentle the words in which he addresses her. Some writer speaks of hearing a young man apply to his mother the coarse epithet "old woman," and very justly adds, "It sunk into my heart, and as I passed on, I thought how unfeeling was such language. Once that youth was a babe in his mother's arms. Then, whose voice beguiled him to slumber by lullabies as sweet as love could make them? Whose hand passed softly over his heated brow when fever flushed his features? Who wet the parched lips, and folded him close to her beating heart? Who, in after years, taught him to kneel by her side, and say, 'Our Father, who art in heaven'? Who led him out at eventide to gaze on the stars, and told him the simple story of the Saviour, his birth, his sufferings, his death and resurrection, and tried to instil into his mind the truth that he had gone before to prepare mansions for those who loved him, far beyond those twinkling orbs of light? Who was the first to warn if danger threatened, to encourage if difficulties presented themselves, to cheer if a weight pressed down the spirit? Who taught him to come to her with all his childish griefs, assuring him of her sympathy? Who was it, when sickness was on him, that shaded the curtains so no sunbeams could touch that restless head and ach-

ing brow? Who smoothed down the coverlet, and allowed no heavy tread to disturb his repose? Who watched him through the long, long night, when life seemed suspended on a single strand, and whose voice was lifted up to the all-wise Disposer, in the prayer 'If it be possible, let this cup pass from me'?

"When the bloom of health had again mantled the cheek of the boy, who whispered hopefully of the glad future yet to appear? Was it the old woman? Is this the gratitude of one whose every thought should be to scatter roses down her declining path?

"I looked forward a few years, and the rude, disrespectful boy had become a coarse and brutal man. Then I heard him use to his mother words sharper than a sword, and that descended into her soul. I marked the cold look, the scornful repulse, the loathing expressions, and I felt that her cup of anguish was running over.

"Yet a little farther, and her hairs were white, but more with sorrow than with age, and soon she sank into the grave with a broken heart."

The children of Rachel were models in this important respect, and she was a favored woman in this particular.

In reading the history of Rachel we are also struck with the fact that female beauty is no

criterion of real character. Leah was a plain woman. She had few of the graces and adornments of personal appearance. Though not ugly, she was not beautiful. This we may judge from the Scripture record: "Leah was tender-eyed, [i. e., quiet and unassuming in her appearance,] but Rachel was beautiful and well favored." But Leah was evidently the more pious, and better disposed of the two. She appears to us a modest, uncomplaining woman, who strove to do her duty to her husband and children. She did not manifest the arrogant disposition of Hagar towards Sarah, but kindly strove to win the heart of her sister; and with her sorrows, Rachel, more beautiful, was more petulant; and had Leah been like her, it might have been impossible for Jacob to have retained them both. But with Leah there was no murmuring, no complaining whatever. She loved her sister, though that sister was her rival, and sometimes spoke harshly to her. The ornaments she wore were the meek and quiet adornments of a spirit which had no sudden bursts of passion, and over which no evil genius presided. Some one beautifully says of her, "Thrown back upon herself, from wanting the attractions of beauty and vivacity granted to her younger sister, Leah's graces expanded inwardly and spiritually; her yearning

affections always strongest from never finding vent by being called for and appreciated by man. Rejoicingly and gratefully acknowledging and believing the blessed religion which told her of an unchanging Friend and most tender, loving Father, she found in such belief enough, and could realize content in the midst of trial, happiness in the midst of grief. Such a character as Leah's, from the time she is revealed to us, so perfectly free from all wrong feelings in a situation so likely to excite them, is not natural to woman; and we may, therefore, infer that her youth had had its trials, which the grace of God had blessed, in making her rise from them the gentle, enduring, lovable being which his word reveals."

The same general fact is true of the men and women of our times. The grace and beauty of the person are no criterion of character, and many a one whose smile lights up the festive scene, and whose beauty is reflected upon all around, has, working beneath, the most hideous passions and the most wicked purposes. We too often misjudge others in this respect. We see a lovely young person, whom God has made beautiful, whose countenance is pleasant to look upon, whose eye flashes with enthusiasm, whose form is erect and queenly, and who is admired by all.

We imagine that such a one must be lovely in spirit as well as person. But it is not always so. The plain, homely face often accompanies a heart as pure as piety itself, while the smiling face of beauty hides the most extreme mental and spiritual deformity. Beauty is an ornament and a blessing; but one can do without it far better than without a meek and beautiful spirit. The person only appears to the gaze of the world; but the angels behold the spirit, and when that is beautiful, they admire and love it. The body may be ornamented until it shines in purple and gold; the cheeks may be painted until they blush like the vermilion flowers; the hair may be wrought and adjusted like that of Delilah; and, after all, these things do not compensate for intelligence and piety. The dew drop will wrinkle the cheek of beauty; the frost will wither the form of strength; time will tarnish the jewels, and the sun will fade the purple robe; but no storm, no age, no decay, will ever offset the beauty of the soul, which has an immortality of its own, and which is not dependent on any outward adornments.

“ It is the mind that makes the body rich ;
And as the sun breaks through the darkest clouds,
So honor peereth in the meanest habit ;
What ! is the jay more precious than the lark,
Because his feathers are more beautiful ?
And is the adder better than the eel,
Because his painted skin contents the eye ? ”

In Sarah, Rebekah, and Rachel we have the mothers of the Jewish nation — a nation which has shone with more glory, which has occupied a larger space in history, which has received from God more honor and blessing, than any other. We trace the world's history from Eve, the mother of us all, to Sarah, the wife of Abraham; from Sarah down through the patriarchal times, to David's house, through which the royal succession runs, to Mary, the mother of our Lord. The genealogy of other families is lost; but this, preserved amid the changes and commotions of centuries, has been sacredly guarded by God himself. Those three mothers, living away back in time, taught by the great voice of truth, looked down with holy anticipations to their royal descendant, who should combine in himself the glories of God with the infirmity of men. They did not live to see him, but he came. They did not find for him a royal title, but men and angels crowned him Lord. He was an heir, yet he was greater than Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob. He had not where to lay his head; poverty was a part of his heritage below, yet Abraham and his sons, in all their patriarchal wealth, were not so rich as he. He was the lineal descendant of Sarah, but he lived long before Abraham found her in the city of Uz. He was alike David's son and David's

Lord, and when he came, a whole legion of sainted ones of that royal line followed him on unseen wings, and made the plains of Bethlehem echo with the shout, "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good will to men."

CHAPTER V.

MOTHER-IN-LAW — DAUGHTER-IN-LAW.

NAOMI AND RUTH.

We grew together in wind and rain;
We shared the pleasures and shared the pain;
I would have died for her, and she,
I knew, would have done the same for me —
Mother and I!

AND HE SAID, WHO ART THOU? AND SHE ANSWERED, I AM
RUTH, THINE HANDMAID. — *Ruth* 3 : 9.

It is curious to observe how customs and habits change with the flight of time. We find the whole order of society different in the days of Ruth from that we saw in the times of Sarah and Rebekah. When we descend a little farther, we shall discover still other phases of domestic and religious life, differing still from that which existed in the days of Ruth. Yet each arrangement had its merits, and in shifting the curtain, we have not always made an improvement.

Our subject now is, "The Life and Times of

Ruth," in which we shall have an occasion to glance at some singular social customs, and to contemplate a character intensely beautiful and majestically simple. There lived, it seems, in the town of Bethlehem, an old man named Elimelech. He had a wife, whose name was Naomi, and two sons, Mahlon and Chilon. A famine spread over the promised land, and the Jewish nation was perishing for bread. Unable to find the means of subsistence in his own country, this old man took his wife and two sons, and moved across the line into Moab. The journey was not a long nor a hard one. He had no goods to transport, no heavy encumbrances to retard his progress, and he was soon settled in a new country, with new neighbors. The two sons married in Moab, and from all we can learn, made excellent choice. They lived very happily with their wives, and at length followed their father, who did not live long after he became a dweller in Moab, to the grave. As was natural, the heart of Naomi yearned for her old home. The husband and sons who had accompanied her to Moab were dead, and though all were kind to her, she felt that she was among strangers, and her heart longed to wander over the fields of Bethlehem, and listen to the plaintive songs of Judah's daughters. She visited the grave of her husband and

children for the last time, and turned away forever from the spot where rested in undreaming sleep those precious forms. Her daughters-in-law went with her, comforting her heart, and holding up her steps. It was an affecting sight, to see that mother, with two young and beautiful women leading her back to the land of her nativity and the city of her fathers. As they went on, we may imagine that the people of Moab came out and blessed them; that the grave and the gay had some words of cheer for that afflicted and anxious group. But as they went on, Naomi, who seems to have been gifted with a beautiful habit of forgetting her own good in the welfare of others, reflected upon the injustice of taking these two young women from their own land and friends, and drawing them to a strange people, having strange customs and strange habits. So she advised them to return. "I have no sons for you to marry," she said; "I have no home to which I can take you; I have no fortune to bestow upon you. Go back, therefore, and find you homes and husbands among the people of Moab."

It cannot be supposed that Naomi did not wish these daughters to go with her; had they both refused to return to Moab, it would have given her inexpressible joy. But she consulted their pleasure, and not her own, and she was willing to

be a childless widow all her days rather than do what would be for the injury of her children. The conduct of the two young ladies gives us an insight into their characters. It is likely that they loved Naomi ardently. The devotion of Orpah was as pure as that of Ruth, and as great. But the exhibitions of natural character on the part of these two persons were strikingly varied. Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, and went back to Moab. The reasoning of Naomi struck her forcibly, and she bade the aged woman "Good by," and sought a home in her own land, among her own people. What became of her the sacred record does not tell us. Whether she was again married; whether she relapsed into idolatry; whether she prospered after the separation, we know not. While the whole course of Ruth is marked out before us, the life of Orpah relapses into oblivion. The Scripture record concerning the other sister is, "But Ruth clave unto her." As I said, we do not know that the love of Ruth was any greater towards Naomi than that of Orpah, but her character was more perfectly developed. She had stronger principle, and was better able to sink herself in her benevolent sympathies for others. To all Naomi's gentle expostulations she only said, "Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest

I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge ; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God ; where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried."

The after history of Ruth is quite romantic, and those who love fiction will find fiction itself surpassed in this truthful reality. The mother and daughter went on to Bethlehem ; and as they drew near, the whole city came out to welcome them, with surprise. "Is this Naomi?" they said, as they saw her and her daughter. She replied, "Call me not *Naomi*. That signifies fullness — completeness. But call me *Mara*, for the hand of the Lord has been upon me ; I went out full, and have returned empty." The conduct of the people of Bethlehem shows us the sacred estimation in which Naomi was held. Had she been a woman who had no heart to sympathize in the woes of others, no hand to relieve the distressed, no voice to cheer the fallen, or warn the erring, she would not have been thus received. We have also a beautiful picture of the primitive order of society, in contrast with the cold, unfeeling heartlessness of the present age, when the soul-absorbing principle seems to be, not to make others happy, but to get, grasp, and keep. "Can we not fancy," asks one, "the whole city flocking to look upon the travellers, to discover if indeed the ru-

mor of Naomi's return could be correct, and anxious, if it were, to give her kindly welcome? struck by her look of years and sorrow, remembering her only as the fair and pleasant-looking wife of Elimelech, then in her freshest prime, marvelling one to another, 'Can this indeed be Naomi?' It is a complete picture of that primitive union of family and tribe peculiar to early Judaism. Men were not then so engrossed with self as to feel no sympathy, no interest, out of their own confined circle. They could spare both time and feeling to 'be moved' at the return of a countrywoman who had been absent so long, and to grieve with her at those heavy afflictions which caused her to reply to their eager greetings, 'Call me not Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.'"

In our days of progress, when machinery has enabled us to grasp the world in our arms, when railroads and steamships have made the world one great city, the little charities of life, the kindly feelings of home, are often forgotten, and the true affections of home life are undeveloped; and sometimes we almost wish all these improvements swallowed up in the Dead Sea, that we may have men's hearts around us, instead of one everlasting, ceaseless rattle of machines.

The two travellers came to Bethlehem in the

time of the barley harvest, about the sixteenth of April, and found for themselves a humble residence. It was common in those times for poor people, who had no fields in which to plant grain, to go in harvest time into the fields of their richer neighbors, and follow the reapers, who left here and there some ears of grain for them. To this occupation Ruth devoted herself, and under the direction of Naomi, went to gather corn in the fields of Boaz, a rich, but distant relative of her husband. The first day, Boaz saw her, and was so impressed with her appearance that he inquired her out. She was so modest and diligent, so different from the common field beggars who followed his reapers, that he was touched and moved by her. He went to her, and spoke encouragingly with her; told her he had heard of her kindness to her mother-in-law; and made her eat and drink with his own maidens, that were binding the sheaves. She realized how great was the condescension of Boaz. "Why have I found grace in thy eyes," she said, "that thou shouldst take this knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?" And how must her heart have throbbed at Boaz's rejoinder, "It hath been fully showed me all that thou hast done unto thy mother-in-law since the death of thine husband; how thou hast left father and mother, and the land of

thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore. The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust.”

When Ruth went home at night, she told Naomi whom she had met, how she had been received, and how kindly Boaz had spoken to her. Naomi received this intelligence with grateful surprise, and she remembered that Boaz was a kinsman, and that, according to the customs of the times, Ruth could claim his hand in matrimony, under an existing Jewish law, which required a kinsman to take the widow and provide for her. The method of bringing this about was peculiar, and might shock our views of propriety, but was entirely in accordance with the spirit of the times in which Ruth lived. Being a custom, it was not considered a breach of decorum, as it properly would be in our day. Acting under the wise direction of Naomi, Ruth went one night when the heart of Boaz was merry with wine, and watching until he was asleep, uncovered his feet, and laid herself down against them. The beds of the ancients were different from ours, and we can hardly excuse Ruth for what appears to us an uncivil act; but we must attribute to the customs of the age what offends our views of propriety. The bed

on which Boaz threw himself was a mere couch, probably. A traveller in Palestine thus describes an Eastern bed on which he slept in the convent of San Saba, so romantically situated on the banks of the Brook Kedron, as follows :—

“My bed consisted merely of a bolster and a blanket spread on the floor. The latter could be drawn partially over the body if any one wished, though the expectation seemed to be that we should sleep in our ordinary dress, without any additional covering. Such a bed is obviously a portable one ; it is easy to take it up, fold it together, and carry it from place to place, as convenience may require. The allusions in the Bible show that the couches or beds in use among the Jews were of different kinds ; that they were more or less simple, more or less expensive, according to the rank or circumstances of different persons. Anciently, however, as at the present time in the East, the common people slept on a light mattress or blanket, with a pillow, perhaps, but without any other appendage.”

At midnight, Boaz awoke, and finding a person on his bed, cried, wildly, “Who art thou?” Ruth told him all, and Boaz consented to take her for his wife, provided a kinsman who had a stronger claim, and a nearer relationship, did not do the same thing. There is a custom yet com-

mon among the Jews, founded on Deut. 25 : 5-10, — when a man dies, his near kinsman is required to marry her, as already stated, or give her her freedom, or, as it is called, *chalitzah*. This process is somewhat singular, and is conducted on this wise, as described by a writer on Jewish antiquities. “The parties having informed the proper persons and authorities, it is announced in the synagogue that a *chalitzah* (or taking off of the shoe) is to take place the following morning. After the morning service, according to announcement, three rabbis, the required witnesses, and the parties meet; after hearing their statement, the chief rabbi questions the young man, and when he finds him determined not to marry his brother’s widow, he calls for the shoe. This shoe is of peculiar make, and used for this purpose only. It is made of black cloth list, of pointed form, with two long laces attached thereto, and is always kept in the synagogue. When brought forward, the rabbi commands the man to put it on, after doing which, he twists and ties the laces about his legs. The woman is then led by the rabbi to the man, and made to repeat the following in Hebrew: ‘My husband’s brother refuseth to raise up unto his brother a name in Israel; he will not perform the duty of my husband’s brother.’ In answer to this, he replies, ‘I like not

to take her.' The woman then undoes the knot, which is a troublesome office, as she must do it with the right hand only; takes off the shoe, casts it upon the ground, and spits upon or before the man, repeating after the rabbi, 'So shall it be done unto that man that will not build up his brother's house; and his name shall be called in Israel, "the house of him that hath his shoe loosed."' All present respond, 'His shoe is loosed! his shoe is loosed! his shoe is loosed!' After this, the rabbi declares the woman free to marry whomsoever she chooses, and the secretary of the synagogue gives her a writing to this effect. So the ceremony ends."

This, or a very similar process, Ruth went through, and became cleared of all legal obstructions, and was united with Boaz in marriage. The fruit of this marriage was the birth of Obed, the father of Jesse, the father of the pious Psalmist. Of the declining days of Ruth we know but little, but we have every reason to believe that she descended gently and quietly into the vale of years, loved by her husband, esteemed by her kindred, venerated by her children, and blessed of God. Her gentle, docile obedience must have won the love of her husband; her many virtues must have commanded the esteem of friends; her consistency and uprightness must have secured the

veneration of her children ; and her piety and faith must have drawn down the blessing of Him who loves the humble and contrite heart. But let us now attend to the practical lessons which this beautiful and romantic narrative teaches. And among these is, —

1. The tendency of affliction to develop beautiful traits of character. Some of the most noble characters have been brought to our view by afflictions. Who would have remembered Mrs. Judson with half the interest which attaches itself to her name, if she had not been placed in awful perils ? When her husband was confined in the dark dungeon at Ongpenla, then her heroic spirit contrived means to communicate with him, and her great soul rose up to the full measure of its sublime mission. But for that fearful wave of persecution which swept over the missionary family, the beautiful traits of her character might never have been developed. And so has it been in all time. The flames of persecution have lighted up the sublimest virtues ; the deep, dashing waters of sorrow have washed out those embedded qualities ; and the tempests have swept them into notice. Had Ruth and Naomi never been afflicted, had their homes never been broken up by the hand of death, we never should have heard of them. Incased in prosperity, they would

have lived and died, and none would have commented upon their virtues, nor mentioned them as examples of constancy and integrity. Was it not so with John? In his exile, his character was more truthfully displayed than when the popular preacher in Ephesus. Was it not so with Bunyan? No one would have heard of him, had he not been shut up in Bedford jail. And are there not thousands who are brought out and developed by the trials of life? You have seen the seed cast into the earth; you have also seen it bring forth a harvest. The rain, the wind, the dark night, all have some part to act in producing that grain in abundance from a single kernel. The uninterrupted sunshine would not have done it; the heat of summer, undiminished and constant, would not have done it. But night came with its dews, the wind with its breath, and the rain with its moisture; and they all combined to produce the harvest. So out of trials have come, at times, the finest specimens of true nobility, and the rarest instances of godlike devotion. Ay, the mental storm, which sweeps over the world now and then, has much to do with training men for usefulness on earth and glory in heaven. Curtis, in his *History of the Constitution*, indulges in these very truthful and pertinent remarks: —

“There is a law of the moral government of

the universe, which ordains that all that is great, and valuable, and permanent in character, must be the result, not of theoretical teaching or natural aspiration, of spontaneous resolve or uninterrupted success, but of trial, of suffering, of the fiery furnace of temptation, of the dark hours of disappointment and defeat. The character of the man is distinguishable from the character of the child that he once was, chiefly by the effects of this universal law. There are the same natural impulses, the same mental, moral, and physical constitution, with which he was born into the world. What is it that has given him the strength, the fortitude, the unchanging principle, and the moral and intellectual power, which he exhibits in after years? It has not been constant pleasure and success, nor unmingled joy. It has been the hard discipline of pain and sorrow, the stern teachings of experience, the struggle against the consequences of its own errors, and the chastisement inflicted by its own faults.

“This law pertains to all human things. It is as clearly traceable in its application to the character of a people, as to that of an individual; and as the institutions of a people, when voluntarily formed by them out of the circumstances of their condition, are necessarily the result of the previous discipline and the past teachings of their

career, we can trace this law also in the creation and growth of what is most valuable in their institutions. When we have so traced it, the unalterable relations of the moral universe entitle us to look for the elements of greatness and strength in whatever has been the product of such teachings, such discipline, and such trials."

2. We have useful lessons in relation to the peculiar relationship existing between Ruth and Naomi—mother-in-law, daughter-in-law. These "law relationships" are the most delicate and trying we can enter, and unless the parties are prudent and cautious, evil and sorrow will be the consequence. The father-in-law and the son-in-law, the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law, are often arrayed against each other most unjustly and cruelly. It is often the case, that a mother of a family of children dies; her husband makes the best selection in his power, and soon brings to his home a partner who shall share his sorrows and joys, and educate for him his little ones. The sacrifice, if any is made, is not on the part of the husband, not on the part of the children, but on the part of the wife, who comes, with woman's true and trusting heart, to educate children not her own. And yet there are in this world of ours human serpents, who will creep into that little home before the marriage takes

place, and whisper to those children all the horrid tales that can be imagined about the unnatural cruelty of step-mothers, until the innocent children begin to dream that their father is about to bring into their home a savage, at whose cruelty they will repine, and at whose violence their dear mother's bones will turn in their graves. And after the marriage has taken place, when these children begin to feel that the step-parent is not so horrible a creature after all, these same slimy creatures — I know no softer words to use — these slimy creatures will come in to ask these children if the step-mother does not abuse them, and thus inflame their minds by hellish insinuations.

A step-mother is generally a better educator of children than a natural mother. The latter is often swayed by her warm, tender affections to a dangerous indulgence, while the former looks at the dispositions of the children in a calmer light, and with a surer judgment. More children are ruined by the indulgence of natural parents than are driven away from home by the cruelty or neglect of step-parents ; and the jealousy and evil surmisings about step-parents are unreasonable and cruel. There are step-parents who are brutal and ferocious ; and there are also natural parents who are the same brutal creatures. The woman who assumes the education of a family of children,

and rears them well, is worthy of exalted praise ; and of all who will greet her with joy in the spirit world, none will give her a more cordial welcome than the natural mother herself, who was snatched away by the hand of death.

3. We are also struck with the religious decision of Ruth. "Where thou goest I will go ; where thou lodgest I will lodge ; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." Under the tutorage of Naomi, the Moabitish heathen maiden had become a worshipper of God. She had renounced her idol worship, had cast away her heathen gods, and bowed at the shrine of Him who filleth immensity with his presence. She preferred still the service of the God of Israel, and with holy constancy followed Naomi.

O that all the worshippers of Jesus would do the same ! Moab, with its exciting pleasures, its music and its mirth, its folly and its feasts, is spread out before them, and not a few who embrace Christ, like Orpah, imprint upon his cheek the parting kiss and return. The hour of adversity and sorrow comes, and they yield, bend, and bow before it. The sweet conduct of Ruth returning with her mother is an example to every young disciple. Her language should be our language, and her declaration our declaration. To Christ we should declare, "Where thou goest,"

—up to the mountain of temptation, down into the vale of sorrow, to the retirement of prayer, to baptismal burial, to sad and bloody Golgotha, —“I will go ; thy people,” — be they Hindoos or Armenians, Greeks or Jews, bond or free, rich or poor, —“shall be my people ; thy God,” who gave thee strength, “shall be my God,” and forever will I serve him.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PRAYING MOTHER.

HANNAH.

“Now, mother, sing the tune
You sang last night; I’m weary, and must sleep;
Who was it called my name? Nay, do not weep;
You’ll all come soon!”

AND HANNAH PRAYED. — 1 *Sam.* 2 : 1.

WHAT a record is this! Few could be more simple, and few could be more sublime. “Hannah prayed.” Whom did she pray to? To Baal? To a block of marble? To a stock or a stone? Or to the living God? What did she pray for? For gold? For the adornments of person? For comfort and ease? For the luxuries of life, or for higher comforts, and for diviner treasures? “Hannah prayed.” Well, if we knew no more about her, we should respect her for that; for praying befits a human lip, and well adorns a mortal tongue.

Let us trace the history of this woman, see who she was, how she lived, and where she died. There was a man of Mount Ephraim named Elkanah. He was a devout and godly man, who walked in the religion of the nation, but who had fallen into the folly of the times, and had married two wives, Penninah and Hannah. As a natural consequence, these two wives quarrelled with each other. Though they might have been amiable and forbearing in other respects, the relations they sustained to each other made them jealous, peevish, discontented, and unhappy. The husband had trespassed on the great law of being, and he paid the penalty in his unhappy home and the contentions between his wives. To Hannah our attention will in this article be given.

This personage is early introduced to us as a praying woman. In those days, the people of the Lord were accustomed to go up to Shiloh to worship God. On one occasion, Eli, the prophet, saw her on her bended knees, weeping and muttering to herself. Her posture was unlike that he had been accustomed to see observed, and the whole appearance of the woman was singularly strange. He thought she was drunk, and charged her with it; reproached her for being in the temple at so early an hour in a state of intoxication, and sternly bade her put away her wine. But she

was drunken only with sorrow, and she replied so feelingly that all doubt was removed from his mind. "No, my lord," she said; "I am not drunken, as you suppose, but I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit; I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before God. It is deep, crushing grief, and not intoxication, that you now behold." Eli was convinced of the truth of her solemn declaration, and uttering upon her his blessing, sent her away. She went, with the hope of a speedy answer to her prayer swelling her bosom, and ere long that answer came, and she took her child to the man of God at Shiloh, saying, "My lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the Lord. For this child I prayed, and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him, and therefore also have I lent him to the Lord: as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord."

Then she poured out her soul in full, deep thanksgiving to God. The record is, "Hannah prayed;" and the words of her prayer have come down to us in all their beauty, showing the cultivation of Hannah's mind, the fervency of her spirit, and the depth of her piety. She left her child with Eli, to be trained for God, and returned to her home, to pray still for him. Almost all the history of Hannah is bound up in these few

transactions. She appears to us not as a warrior, nor a judge, but as a lonely and pious woman, praying for her son, dedicating him to God, giving him up to a sacred life, and leaving him at the altar of duty.

We are naturally led from this brief narrative to a contemplation of

THE PRAYING MOTHER.

Any child so blessed of God as to have a praying mother, starts in life with a natural advantage. Other things being equal, a woman who prays for her children, who bears them on the arms of her faith to the mercy seat, best fulfils the parental relation, and subserves the mission to which God has called her. A mother who does not pray may be faithful to her children in many respects; she may attend to all their little wants; she may feed them and clothe them; when they are sick, she may watch over them with the greatest tenderness day and night; but if she cannot pray for them, she is destitute of a power which is vitally essential to the proper discharge of her duties. A prayerless mother leading her little child amid pitfalls and dangers, and never commending that child to God, never lifting up her heart to the great Father for wisdom to direct and grace to save,— O, how sad a sight!

It has been the testimony of good men in all ages, that they owe to their mothers their prosperity and happiness. Before the child goes out into life, the mother has the training of his young mind. The father may make the laws of the family, and may compel obedience to those laws; but it is the mother who comes into contact with the heart of the child, and day by day makes impressions upon it which are never erased. The child of a wicked woman may grow up to virtue, usefulness, and honor; there have been such cases. The child of the devout, praying mother may grow up to deeds of shame and blood; there have been such cases. But these are exceptions to the rule, and they only serve to throw into a brighter foreground the rule, which makes a virtuous son grow up under the influence of a mother's prayers, and which makes a vicious son out of the example of a wicked mother. That learned and eloquent man, Richard Knill, says, "I have a vivid recollection of the effect of maternal influence. My honored mother was a religious woman, and she watched over and instructed me as pious mothers are accustomed to do. Alas! I often forgot her admonitions; but in my most thoughtless days, I never lost the impressions which her holy example has made on my mind. After spending a large portion of my life in foreign lands, I returned

again to visit my native village. Both my parents died while I was in Russia, and their house is now occupied by my brother. The furniture remains just the same as when I was a boy; and at night I was accommodated with the same bed on which I had often slept before; but my busy thoughts would not let me sleep. I was thinking how God had led me through the journey of life. At last, the light of the morning darted through the little window, and then my eye caught a sight of the spot where my sainted mother, forty years before, took me by the hand, and said, 'Come, my dear, kneel down with me, and I will go to prayer.' This completely overcame me. I seemed to hear the very tones of her voice; I recollected some of her expressions; and I burst into tears, and arose from my bed, and fell upon my knees just on the spot where my mother kneeled, and thanked God that I had once a praying mother. And O, if all parents could feel what I felt then, I am sure they would pray with their children, as well as pray for them."

Very much to the same effect is the testimony of Bishop Hall, whose deeds of pious worth are remembered, though he is dead: "How often have I blessed the memory of those divine passages of experimental divinity which I have heard from her mouth! What day did she pass without

a large task of private devotion, whence she would still come forth with a countenance of undissembled mortification? Never have been read to me such feeling lectures of piety, neither have I known any soul that more accurately practised them than her own."

Men in other vocations in life have made the same assertion, and have ascribed to their mothers the excellences of their own characters, and the usefulness of their own lives. The venerable John Q. Adams paid the following tribute to his mother: "It is due to gratitude and nature, that I should acknowledge and avow that, such as I have been, whatever it was, such as I am, whatever it is, and such as I hope to be in all futurity, must be ascribed, under Providence, to the precepts and example of my mother."

The excellent poet Cowper, whose poetry has so often been sung by the fireside and in the sanctuary, which has enlivened the tedious, weary day, and has been hummed by the watcher at night, wrote to Lady Hesketh on the receipt of his mother's picture, "I had rather possess my mother's picture than the richest jewel in the British crown; for I loved her with an affection that her death, fifty years since, has not the least abated." He was not ashamed to acknowledge that his mother formed an object of hallowed

reverence in his soul. When she died, he wrote, —

“My mother! when I learned that thou wast dead,
Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?
Hovered thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,
Wretch even then, life's journey just begun?
Perhaps thou gav'st me, though unfelt, a kiss;
Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss.
Ah, that maternal smile! it answers, 'Yes!'"

A great many young men seem to consider it a weakness to pay any considerable attention to the counsels, prayers, and requirements of parents. Quick as possible they get out of the way of the “old woman,” as they call her, and laugh at her pious appeals and admonitions. But somehow the memory of that praying mother will come home to the conscience, and many a dissolute youth has been saved by the thought, “My mother prayed for me.” A young man, writing to a friend, says, “I have been tempted to the greatest crimes known among men; once I stood a long time on the end of a wharf, waiting for a few individuals near by to retire, that I might cast myself overboard, and end a wretched, miserable life, but was held back when tempted to crime — was saved when tempted to suicide — by the single thought of my mother's prayers.” Rev. Dr. Young tells a story like this: “An aged, pious woman had one son. She used every means

in her power to lead him to the Saviour ; but he grew up gay and dissipated. She still followed him with prayers and entreaties, faithfully warned him of his awful state as a sinner before God, and told him what his end would be, dying in that condition. But all seemed alike unavailing. He one day said, 'Mother, let me have my best clothes ; I am going to a ball to-night.'

"She expostulated with him, and urged him not to go ; but all in vain. 'Mother,' said he, 'let me have my clothes ; I will go ; it's useless to say any thing about it.'

"He put on his clothes, and was going out. She stopped him, and said, 'My child, do not go.' He still persisted ; when she added, 'My son, remember when you are dancing with your companions in the ball room, I shall be out in that wilderness, praying to the Lord to convert your soul.' The youth went to the ball, and the dancing commenced ; but instead of the usual gayety, an unaccountable gloom pervaded the whole assembly. One said, 'We never had so dull a meeting in our lives.' Another observed, 'I wish we had not come ; we have no life ; we cannot get along.' A third continued, 'I cannot think what is the matter.' The young man in question felt his conscience smitten, and bursting into tears, said, 'I know what is the matter ; my poor old

mother is now praying in yonder wilderness for her ungodly son.' He took his hat and said, 'I will never be found in such a place as this again.' "

Thus statesmen, theologians, poets, men of science, and men of letters, unite in according to the praying mother the highest honors for her influence in moulding and training the young minds committed to her. There are a few considerations connected with this subject, worthy to be indelibly impressed upon the mind of every young person.

1. Whoever has a good, pious mother should respect her counsels while she lives, and respect her memory when dead. The counsels of a mother are more disinterested and free from selfishness than those of any other person on earth. The father, though he may love his son, looks upon him in a different light from that in which he stands before the mother; and whenever she has information, her advice is worthy of great consideration. Woman generally has a fairer opportunity to judge than man. She dwells at home, out of the reach of the noise and confusion of active life, withdrawn from the ambitions, strifes, jealousies, contentions, and cares of out-of-door life, and can weigh more calmly than man the worth of honesty, and rectitude, and reputation. She can rise above parties, above dollars and cents, above commercial alliances, and judge

for the highest good of her son or daughter. If our young men would go home to the fireside, and consult, as they map out their course in life, her who has always been their best friend, they would not so often make mistakes when they are acting their part on the stage of life.

And when her sun goes down behind the western hills, and her place in the family circle is vacant, her memory should not be forgotten. She deserves a monument as lasting as time, in every grateful heart.

2. The memory of a good mother is ennobling to the feelings, and restraining to the passions. We associate a mother with home, with childhood. A father's name is associated with wealth, with splendid exploits, with labors. But a mother's name carries us back to the old homestead, to the long winter evenings, to scenes which even now seem dearer than all manhood's projects; to the place where rested the old hearthstone, beside which was read the old family Bible. Our spirits are drawn back to that hour — to that spot where are

“Hearts that throb with eager gladness,
Hearts that echo to our own,
While grim care and haunting sadness
Mingle ne'er in look or tone.

“Care may tread the halls of daylight,
Sadness haunt the midnight hour,

But the weird and witching twilight
Brings the glowing hearthstone's dower.

“Altar of our holiest feelings,
Childhood's well-remembered shrine,
Spirit yearnings, soul-revealings,
Wreaths immortal round thee twine.”

The purest and best men have acknowledged the influence of home and maternal tenderness. It not only moulded them in youth, but it followed them like the influence of a holy spirit into manhood, and to old age. But a short time before his death, the great Daniel Webster, whose intellectual like does not live, looked back to the rude home of his parents, to the scenes amid which his brothers were reared, and gave expression to the very sentiment which I am endeavoring to illustrate.

“It did not happen to me,” he says, “to be born in a log cabin; but my elder brothers and sisters were born in a log cabin, raised among the snow drifts of New Hampshire, at a period so early, that when the smoke first rose from its rude chimney, and curled over the frozen hill, there was no similar evidence of a white man's habitation between it and the settlements on the rivers of Canada. Its remains still exist; I make it an annual visit; I carry my children to it, to teach them the hardships endured by the generations

which have gone before them. I love to dwell on the tender recollections, the kindred ties, the early affections, and the narrations and incidents which mingle with all I know of this primitive family abode. I weep to think that none of those who inhabited it are now among the living; and if I ever fail in affectionate veneration for him who raised it, and defended it against savage violence and destruction, cherished all the domestic virtues beneath its roof, and through the fire and blood of seven years' revolutionary war, shrank from no toil, no sacrifice, to serve his country, and to raise his children to a condition better than his own, may my name, and the name of my posterity, be blotted forever from the memory of mankind."

Had he attempted to speak of his mother, he might have used the language of another as great and as wise, who long ago passed away — "Ah, there I must pause; for if a man would be eloquent upon his mother's grave, *he must be still and weep.*"

There are now in the community hundreds of young persons who have parents at home, whose memory and whose former tenderness give cheerfulness to all their labors, and whose ever-present countenances exert a most hallowed influence upon their lives. When temptation speaks, when

allurements come, when the multitudinous voices of sinful pleasure appear, when all other safeguards are broken down, there often comes the pale face of the mother, like a vision of the past, looking down from the walls of life upon the lone and tempted child, just ready to give way. The young heart gathers strength, as those withered lips begin to move in silent pleading. I make no over-estimate when I say that hundreds among us are kept from vice, incited to diligence, led to prayer, by the memory of maternal love.

“ With backward glance of anxious love,
She quits the humble cottage door,
And through the wet or dusty street,
She treads, with worn yet willing feet,
The path oft trod before.

“ What sudden thought calls up the blood,
The crimson tide that fain would speak,
As swift the arrowy shuttle flies,
As swifter still her task she plies,
While tears are on her cheek ?

“ That blush wears not a tinge of shame ;
Those tears are not the tears of sin ;
Some hope, or fear, with sudden start,
Sends bounding from the busy heart
The telltale blood within.

“ Those tears bespeak a mother’s need—
A widowed mother, thin and pale ;
For who will give the orphan food,
And find the scanty share of wood,
When her weak efforts fail ? ”

If all this that I have said be the influence of maternal piety and prayer, how important is it that every mother should be a woman of prayer! We can hardly estimate the influence of the mother upon her children. It begins with the first day of life, and ends with the last day. The influence of woman in society any where is very great—beyond all estimate. Dr. Wayland, as old a man as he is, and as little disposed to flatter any body, grows enthusiastic when speaking of the mission of woman in society. “In all the preparatory studies of boyhood and youth,” he says, “the services of female instructors are to be preferred. We doubt whether a youthful mind ever received an improper bias from the influence or teachings of a woman. The moral impulses they communicate are always right. They have an instinctive and beautiful sympathy with the tender susceptibilities and faculties of the young, which enables them to exercise the most healthful influence over their moral and mental training. This is nature—a wise dispensation of Providence; God himself has formed and designed woman as the first instructor of the young.”

Though not wholly endorsing this statement, which is sometimes contradicted by the natural deductions of common life, we do see, feel, and acknowledge the influence of woman extending

into all circles, and wherever exerted for good, producing happiness and heaven on earth. But a mother's influence goes down deeper still, and touches the very framework of social life. Hence every mother should know how to pray; piety should be the element in which her children should be educated. The father will attend to the training, the business, the out-of-door concerns of the child; the mother has the heart, and no hand but that of piety can form it aright. Every child is an object of intense solicitude to the mother. When others sleep, she wakes, and thinks upon her charge; when others enjoy the pleasures of life, she stays at home, to watch and wait beside the bed of the one she loves. Often her thoughts turn upon the way in which she may best educate that child for usefulness and happiness; and O, if she forgets that piety and prayer are among the highest qualifications for her service, she forgets what she should most remember and practise.

And if a prayerful mother has such an influence, and does so much for the usefulness and happiness of her child, with what pity should we look upon the child who has no mother, who comes to manhood or womanhood with no such adviser! We judge very harshly some of the young people who stray away from integrity and

virtue. Go to some of the poor, unfortunate men who have committed crime, and are now confined in our state prison, working out at hard labor a severe but just sentence, and ask them what brought them to that place of infamy, and they will say, "We had no praying mothers." They will tell you how they were left in early youth without maternal counsel, cast out to weep and mourn in homeless desolation, without friends to love and bless them; or, what is worse, they may tell you that they had homes and parents, but those parents were intemperate. That mother who should have taught them prayer and praise, only taught them to lisp the dreadful accents of profanity. She who should have pointed them a way to God and heaven, only led them into the slippery way of vice and crime; she who should have told them to love truth, only told them to shun and escape detection. As you stand before these wretched men, so lost to good society, you must remember that you might have been where they are, if God in his mercy had not given you a pious mother, who taught you to shun the ways of sin, and flee to the Rock of Ages. Had your mother educated them, and their mothers trained you, they to-day might be sitting in this house, and you in your prison listening to the chaplain of the house of correction.

Go ask the fallen women how they became so degraded, and they will in many cases tell you, "We had no mother." Late at night, not long ago, a young woman was taken up dead drunk in the streets of Boston. Her countenance was haggard, her eyes bloodshot, her form scantily covered with clothes, and her whole appearance betokened misery and degradation extreme. She was taken to a cell in the watch house, and in the morning was given up to a few noble-hearted women, who are devoting their lives to the good of their sex. Once she was a child, with fair hopes and bright prospects. Her eye was quick, and her countenance beautiful. Nay, more; she was virtuous and happy, loving and loved. Further, she was once a professed disciple of Christ. In early life, she was consecrated in baptism, at the altar received the hand of Christian fellowship, and from sacred hands she has taken the broken body and falling blood. And what has wrought this change? Her father and mother died while she was a child. Thus beginneth the sorrow. She came to the city, and here met the deceiver. She had no father, no mother, and her heart yearned for some protector, and she yielded to sin. O, had there been a mother's pious memory, or a mother's prayers, she might not have fallen. How different has been your lot! Every want of

yours has been supplied, every wish gratified; you have been drawn away from temptation, while that mother was near you all the time in childhood, —

“As if some angel hand, with gentlest care,
From withering storms the tender flower to spare,
Had borne it hence in love, to plant it where
 Blighting comes never;
 To bloom forever,
 In the garden of God,
 By the side of life's river.”

That fallen one had no mother. You have. There is the difference. No mother! Well does one, whose eye has seen and whose heart has felt for the desolate and wretched, exclaim, “What a volume of sorrowful truth is comprised in that single sentence — no mother! We must go far down the hard, rough paths of life, and become inured to care and sorrow in their sternest forms, before we can take home to our own experience the dread reality — *no mother* — without a struggle and a tear. But when it is said to a frail young girl, just passing towards the life of woman, how sad is the story summed up in that one short sentence! Who now shall administer the needed counsel, who now shall check the wayward fancies, who now shall bear with the errors and failings of the motherless girl?

“Deal gently with the child. Let not the cup

of her sorrow be overfilled by the harshness of your bearing, or your unsympathizing coldness. Is she heedless of her doing? Is she careless in her movements? Remember, O, remember 'she has no mother.' When her young companions are gay and joyous, does she sit in sorrowing? Does she pass with a downcast eye and languid step, when you would fain witness the gushing and overflowing gladness of youth? Chide her not, for she is motherless, and the great sorrow comes down upon her soul like an incubus. Can you gain her confidence? Can you win her love? Come, then, to the motherless, with the boon of your tenderest care; and by the memory of your own mother, already perhaps passed away, by the fulness of your own remembered sorrow, by the possibility that your own child may yet be motherless, contribute, as far as you may, to relieve the loss of that fair, frail child, who is written, 'Motherless.'"

O, if you have had a mother but for a single year, and that year one of thought and reflection, what a blessing to you! Dr. Todd had a mother one hour; all the rest of his life, her sun was beclouded. But one hour she woke and blessed her child, and that hour threw its charm around the whole of his mortal day. "I can recollect," he says, "that when a child, I was standing at the

open window, at the close of a lovely summer's day. The large, red sun was just sinking away behind the western hills; the sky was gold and purple commingled; the winds were sleeping; and a soft, solemn stillness seemed to hang over the earth. I was watching the sun as he sent his yellow rays through the trees, and felt a kind of awe, though I knew not wherefore. Just then, my mother came to me; she was raving with frenzy, for reason had long since left its throne, and left her a victim of madness. She came up to me wild with insanity. I pointed to the glorious sun in the west, and in a moment she was calm. She took my little hands within hers, and told me that 'the great God made the sun, the stars, the world, every thing; that he it was who made her little boy, and gave him an immortal spirit; that yonder sun, and the green fields, and the world itself, will one day be burned up; but that the spirit of her child will then be alive, for he must live when heaven and earth are gone; that he must pray to the great God, and love him, and serve him forever.' She let go my hands; madness returned; she hurried away. I stood with my eyes filled with tears, and my little bosom heaving with emotions which I could not have described; but I can never forget the impressions which that conversation of my poor mother left

upon me. O, what a blessing it would have been, had the inscrutable providence of God given me a mother who would have repeated those instructions, accompanied by her prayers, through all the days of my childhood! But 'even so, Father; for so it seemeth good in thy sight.' "

But we must stop, blessing God that there are so many praying mothers, to take the lone and friendless ones, and lead them up to happiness and God. And God grant, that when we die, it may be said of each of us, as of one of old, "And Hannah prayed."

CHAPTER VII.

FEMALE EDUCATION.

QUEEN OF SHEBA.

Of elements

The grosser feeds the purer ; earth the sea,
Earth and the sea feed air, the air those fires
Ethereal, and as the lowest first the moon ;
Whence in her visage round these spots, unpurged
Vapors, not yet into her substance turned.
Nor doth the moon no nourishment exhale
From her moist continent to higher orbs ;
The sun, that light imparts to all, receives
From all his alimetal recompense
In humid exhalations, and at even
Supps with the ocean.

THE QUEEN OF THE SOUTH SHALL RISE UP IN THE JUDGMENT WITH THIS GENERATION, AND SHALL CONDEMN IT ; FOR SHE CAME FROM THE UTTERMOST PARTS OF THE EARTH TO HEAR THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON ; AND BEHOLD, A GREATER THAN SOLOMON IS HERE. — *Matt.* 12 : 42.

It is not certain who the Queen of Sheba was. The Scripture references to her are so few, that we are left in darkness as to the place from whence she came. Gathering all the testimony

we can, we are led to the conclusion that she was an Ethiopian sovereign, whose kingdom was identical with that over which Candace reigned. She was a literary woman, who held wisdom in such estimation, that she left her kingdom, on the banks of the Nile, and journeyed to the city of Jerusalem, to see Solomon, to converse with him on grave subjects, which were beyond the grasp of her own courtiers. Beyond these general facts, but little is known of her history. We are driven to conjecture for all we have of her life, person, and government. In all the pictures or pen portraits I have ever seen, she appears beautiful in person and excellent in character; and in the absence of positive facts, it is only just to suppose her exceedingly beautiful, and as virtuous as fair. And yet it is not often found that great personal beauty in woman accompanies great vigor of intellect. Somehow, God seems to have denied to most literary women extraordinary grace of person. He has made plainness to be a companion to intellect. This may arise from the fact that plain, homely women, denied by nature grace of person, are driven to seek beauty of mind, and substitute for outward adornment the higher elegance of thought and soul. Anna Comnena, who wrote the *Alexiad*, — books filled with learning, beauty, poetry, soul, and life; who proved herself a

fit biographer of an illustrious emperor ; who was a bright ornament to Grecian literature and art, — is said to have been wonderfully plain, with a countenance bespeaking no intelligence. Hypasia, the daughter of Theon, who stood at the head of the Alexandrian school ; who sat in a chair of philosophy where Hierocles and Ammonius had sat before her ; who filled Egypt and the world with her fame ; who was considered as an oracle of wisdom, — was famed as much for her plain looks as for her learning. The beautiful features and the form divine were not hers.

Coming nearer to our times, we find Queen Elizabeth gifted with a noble mind, but with a very plain face ; Hannah More, whose fame should be known to all her sex, was homely ; Madame Necker, the mother of Madame de Stael, was devoid of personal beauty, but highly cultivated ; Harriet Newell, the three Mrs. Judsons, and numerous other women, were famed more for intellectual and moral faculties than for grace of person. Nor did they need it. One who has a cultivated mind, or a noble heart, has a treasure of far more worth than the embellishments of person and the beauty of form or feature.

I wish to present at this time a few thoughts connected with female education. There has been an opinion prevalent in days past, that sons

should be educated, and daughters should not. We have reared colleges for young men, and nobly endowed them; but the colleges for females are few, and those few of an inferior grade. If a daughter can obtain a tolerable education in a boarding school, be able to thrum the piano, and recite a few common sentences in French, she is deemed a well-educated woman. Philosophy, science, art, are left for men who are looking to the learned professions. But the results of this are proved to be disastrous upon the children, and a better system is being introduced. A writer who had seen much of the world writes as follows: —

“When I lived among the Choctaw Indians, I held a consultation with one of their principal chiefs, respecting the successive stages of their progress in the arts and virtues of civilized life; and among other things, he informed me at their first start they fell into a mistake — they only sent their boys to school. They became intelligent men, but they married uneducated and uncivilized wives; and the result was, that the children were all like the mother; and soon the father lost his interest in both wife and children.” And this has been the result every where. The effects of the false system of education have fallen upon the children, who are trained by the mother. I remark, then, —

1. The system of female education should embrace the sciences, and grapple with all the more profound acquirements. It seems to be taken for granted that woman cannot learn, and should not engage in the study of any profound subject. It is supposed that her mind was made for the ornamental and superficial, rather than the erudite and laborious. But there are enough illustrations at hand to demonstrate that, in any walk of literary pursuit, woman will keep pace with her male competitor. Society has required woman to confine herself to mere ornamental studies; but when she has taken the reins into her own hand, she has proved herself equal to the most profound studies. I might mention Sophia Germain, who became proficient in the exact sciences, obtained repeated prizes of the Academy of Science in Paris, and was a constant contributor for the *Journal of Mathematics*. Her biographer states, that during those three days that revolution reigned in Paris, she sat calmly at home, preparing an elaborate treatise on the curvature of surfaces. I might speak of Lady Callcott, who published an approved *History of Spain*, and many other works which mark her as a woman of genius and learning, and give her a noble rank among those whose names are engraven high on the monument of literary fame. I might refer to Mrs. Gove Nich-

ols, of our time, who has become an accomplished lecturer to her sex on anatomy and physiology, giving instructive courses to those who crowd around her to receive her teachings.

Time would fail me to mention the names of others among the living and the dead, such as Madame de Stael, Harriet Martineau, Margaret Fuller, Mrs. Hall, Mrs. Sigourney, all of whom ascend to eminent heights, not only for what is ornamental and fashionable in female education, but for what is substantial and profound in all literature. These cases teach us that woman is able to cope with her male competitor in any of the literary pursuits of our age and time. And if there be fewer women than men of science, it is not to be laid to native imbecility or want of intellectual power, but is a consequence of the misjudged and false style of female education.

Every parent should endeavor to give his daughters as finished and substantial an education as he gives his sons. It is only in this way that the race can be forced up to a higher position in the scale of intelligent being. The present defective mode of female education is keeping our race from the high attainments for which it was fitted, and for which it is capable.

2. Female education should embrace a knowledge of political economy and life. There is a

general notion, as I have remarked, that a woman should take interest in nothing beyond her polite accomplishments and her household duties. Hence, when a company of gentlemen and ladies are met for an evening's social intercourse, the conversation often takes the most trivial and profitless turn. Men abandon their discussion of great and important subjects, and lower the theme down to the trivialities of life and the little tattle of the day. No greater insult could be paid to woman; and yet there is none which she oftener invites by her own folly. The trouble lies with the system of education, which is false. A man is educated to think he must make his mark in the world; that he must rise to eminence at some trade or profession. He is led to exert himself. His ambition is stimulated, not always indeed by the most laudable motives, but to such a degree that he is impelled to go out to do some noble things. Young women are too often taught that the chief end of life is a fashionable marriage, and a dashing life afterwards. The extravagance of our country is the legitimate offspring of such teachings. Our metropolitan cities give illustrations of the most unbounded extravagance, and the utmost extremes of fashion and vanity. Did our rich merchants educate their daughters as Harriet Martineau was educated, we should not behold such

ruinous waste; were they educated to think, to study, to descend into mines of knowledge, they would have less desire for fashion and splendor. A respectable Boston paper, speaking of the extravagant fashion of the present day, vouches for the following statement: "The bill for 1854 of a lady of this city, at a lace and embroidery store, was two thousand dollars, and of several ladies at one of the chief dry goods stores of the city, between five and six thousand dollars each."

And this is not a solitary case. Other cities surpass Boston. A Philadelphia letter writer says of a party which was given by the wife of a millionaire of that city a few days since, "About two thousand invitations were issued, and the entire cost of the entertainment, I am informed, was in the vicinity of twenty thousand dollars, the bare item of bouquets alone costing one thousand dollars, which were distributed in elegant profusion around her splendid mansion. It was nothing but one incessant revelling in luxury, from beginning to end. At half past four in the morning, green tea, sweet bread, and terrapins, as the closing feast, preparatory to the departure of the remaining guests, were served up."

Extravagance and ignorance always go hand in hand; and the reason why we behold these extremes of fashion, is because our ladies are trained

to the idea that display is better than learning and solid acquirements. Feasting and dancing are the characteristics of great gatherings; frivolity and nonsense the characteristics of lesser circles. An eminent female writer, who spent some years in Europe, says, "In Italian circles, I have found the conversation very superficial, consisting much of playful and not ungraceful trifling on subjects of traditional gallantry, (from which, by the by, the clergy is by no means excluded,) and of the topics of the day, treated much in the style of a court journal. The comings and goings of illustrious personages, the changes in the genealogical calendar, accidents by flood and fire, theatres, singers, and though last, not least, the ballet, — these are the points round which conversation perpetually revolves. Now and then one sees a group whispering together on matters of greater importance, and from such a one there can occasionally be gleaned intelligence not to be found in books or papers."

Is not the same thing true of society in America? In some countries, the saloons of wealthy women have been the resorts of philosophers, the walks of men of thought, and the abodes of information. In our country, woman seems to be the priestess at the altar of pleasure, to scatter fading flowers, and not priceless gems, in the way

of the other sex. The remark is not true alone of the rich. The false education extends away down to the abodes of pauperism and the hovels of penury. The daughter of the rich man is educated to make a show, to live in splendor. She studies etiquette more than philosophy—the plate of fashion more than the map of life. The daughter of the poor man is educated to the idea that a perfect knowledge of household matters is all she needs. The sum of her education is to know enough to make her a good drudge for her husband. I contend that all these ideas are unworthy of intelligent beings, who have intellectual as well as physical natures, and who are to live for eternity as well as time. It is not enough that you give your daughter a knowledge of household economy, or fashionable life. The former makes her a show; the latter a plaything. The former keeps her sweating over a furnace, or practising the scrub; the latter makes her most arduous work the reception of a guest, the arrangement of a dress, the embroidering of a purse, the reading of a novel. No woman should neglect to cultivate a knowledge of household economy, or the etiquette of society. She must have these. But she should have more. The cultivation of her mind, her acquaintance with the elements of knowledge, are essential to make her a compe-

tent wife and a good mother. A woman without much intellect may cook her husband's food ; yea, more, she may dance and sing without knowing much ; but she cannot rise to the dignity of a true, noble woman, a good wife, a competent mother, without the mature development of her intellectual capacities.

3. Female education should embrace the theory, experience, and practice of true religion. To this point I wish most to come, and on it I wish longest to dwell. Religion befits every body — a savant or a Hottentot, an old man or a little child. But there seems to be a special adaptation of piety to woman, and no system of education is at all perfect which does not include it. High above science and education towers a knowledge of God ; and the woman who secures it has resources which are closed against the lovers of pleasure and dissipation. Let me enumerate the benefits of religion to woman.

1. It contributes to the grace of person. The countenance is a mirror in which the soul is seen. As a bow long bent loses its elasticity, so does the countenance long trained to one set of emotions learn to wear them. The virtues which religion most cultivates are those very virtues which give to the countenance its truest beauty. Contentment, honesty, purity, integrity, are the elements

of character which beam out from the countenance, and play with grace and beauty on the face divine. You love to see a frank, noble, open countenance. Christian integrity is calculated to give such a countenance. You love to see a quiet, modest demeanor. Religious humility is well calculated to give it. These virtues, all of which are closely allied to genuine religion, and always follow in her train, are more essential to true beauty, than cargoes of paint or bazaars of dress. They give to form and feature a nobility which cannot come from any adornments, and stamp into the very life the elements of true beauty and grace. Beauty of features does not depend on any regularity of cast and form. The same countenance which is handsome to-day may be hideous to-morrow. I once heard a gifted woman read one of the plays of Shakspeare. Art had given her such a command over herself that she could throw her whole soul into her face. As she read, that soul appeared; at one time lighting up the countenance with smiles, covering it with beauty, adorning it with grace, and making it radiant with light; at another moment, covering it with frowns, transforming it with hate, disfiguring it with passion, or making it hideous with lust. By turns, the beautiful became repulsive; the fair and graceful was changed to distortion, and what was gazed

on with pleasure was turned from with aversion. So when these same virtues or vices come into the soul to make a permanent abode there, they change the very features to the likeness of themselves. "Handsome is that handsome does," though quaintly expressed, is true to the letter and the life.

2. Religion contributes to affability of manner. The manners of a man grow out of his views, his habits of thinking, his modes of living, and his conceptions of duty. Virtue is refining, elevating, ennobling; vice is lowering, debasing, degrading, and devilish. Good manners are not to be learned from the dancing master or from the clown; good manners do not consist in knowing how to bow gracefully, speak politely, and dance genteelly. Many persons can do this who have no conception of good manners or true politeness. True politeness is that natural superiority which comes from a good heart and an easy conscience. Religion inculcates the highest kind of politeness, such as cannot be learned in any hall of festivity. A good man will always be a courteous man. The principles of the gospel, which teach us to regard the rights and feelings of others, which lead us to suffer wrong rather than do wrong, which unite all in a common brotherhood, are the very principles which lie at the basis of all good manners.

3. Religion contributes to make us contented and happy in our lot in life. Man has a soul of vast desires and boundless aspirations. He is always reaching away from the finite to the infinite. He cannot be satisfied with the low and narrow things of this earth. To him they are but dust and ashes, and withered flowers, and worthless toys.

“ Attempt how vain,
With things of earthly sort, with aught but God,
With aught but moral excellence, truth, and love,
To satisfy and fill the immortal soul,
To satisfy the ocean with a drop,
To marry immortality to death,
And with the unsubstantial shade of time
To fill the embrace of all eternity.”

But religion does fill the soul with true and substantial pleasure, and makes the dreariest spot in life a garden of delight. There are scenes of sorrow where religion alone has power to buoy up and sustain the soul. Without this the heart faints under the load. But the gospel has joys independent of all earthly considerations. It is designed to give perpetual happiness, keep the mind buoyant and elastic even amid afflictions, light and joyous even amid the dark nights of sorrow and bereavement. The old Covenanters, when flying from death over the hills of Scotland, sang and shouted; the burning martyrs made the

hills echo with their triumphant psalms. One of their descendants, who recognized the duty, as well as privilege, of always rejoicing, has said, —

“I love to sing when I am glad ;
Song is the echo of my gladness ;
I love to sing when I am sad,
Till song makes sweet my very sadness.
'Tis pleasant when sweet voices chime
To some sweet rhyme in concert only,
And Christ to me is company,
Good company, when I'm lonely.”

4. Religion is the bond of connection between the believer and Christ. This is an idea presented, or suggested, by the language of the text. The Queen of Sheba came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon. But Christ is greater than Solomon, and all the world is urged to come to him. The system of education is defective which does not embrace a knowledge of him, for he stands out the sum of all knowledge and the sum of all wisdom. Hamilton, with characteristic beauty of language, compares Christ with Solomon, to the infinite advantage of the former. He says, “Solomon was wise, but Jesus was wisdom. Solomon had more understanding than all the ancients, but Jesus was that eternal wisdom of which Solomon's genius was a borrowed spark, of which the deep flood

of Solomon's information was only an emitted rill. To which we only add the contrast in their tone. Each had a certain grandeur. Solomon's speech was regal. It had both the imperial amplitude and the autocratic emphasis—stately, decisive, peremptory. But the Saviour's was divine. There was no pomp of diction, but there was a godlike depth of meaning; and such was its spontaneous majesty, that the hearer felt how easily he could speak a miracle. And miracles he often spake; but so naturally did they emerge from his discourse, and so noiselessly did they again subside into its current, that we as frequently read of men astonished at his doctrine as of men amazed at his doings. But though both spake with authority,—the one with authority as a king of men, the other with authority as the Son of God,—there is a wonderful difference in point of the pervasive feeling. Like a Prometheus chained to the rock of his own remorse, the Preacher pours forth his mighty woes in solitude, and, truly human, is mainly piteous of himself. Consequently, his enthroned misery, his self-absorbed and stately sorrow, move you to wonder, rather than to weep; and, like a gladiator dying in marble, you are thankful that the sufferer is none of your kindred. But though greater in his sorrows, the Saviour was also greater in his sym-

pathies ; and though silent about his personal anguish, there is that in his mild aspect which tells each who meets it, if his grief be great, his love is greater. And whilst Solomon is so king-like that he does not ask you to be his friend, the Saviour is so godlike that he solicits your affection, and so brotherly that he wins it. Indeed, here is the mystery of godliness, — God manifest in flesh, that flesh may see how God is love, and that through the loveliness of Jesus we may be attracted and entranced into the love of God. O melancholy monarch, how funereal is thy tread, as thou paces up and down thine echoing galleries, and disappearest in the valley of Death-shadow ! ”

The Queen of Sheba came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon. She came from her throne, from her royal honors, from her attendants, to see mortal wisdom, and listen to mortal renown. But a greater than Solomon presents his claims to the women of our times. He who went from house to house ; who discoursed with the woman of Samaria ; who conversed with the sisters of Bethany ; who visited salvation on all with whom he associated ; Jesus, the Saviour, far greater than Solomon, appeals to each of you. He offers you all wisdom and all grace. O that some of you would say to-day,

with young Arthur Hallam, who saw earth, and knew its worthlessness, "Lord, I have viewed this world over in which thou hast set me ; I have tried how this and that thing will fit my spirit, and the design of my creation, and can find nothing on which to rest ; for nothing here doth itself rest ; but such things as please me for a while in some degree, vanish and flee as shadows from before me. Lo, I come to thee, the eternal Being, the spring of life, the centre of rest, the stay of the creation, the fulness of all things. I join myself to thee ; with thee I will lead my life, and spend my days ; with whom I am to dwell forever, expecting, when my little time is over, to be taken up into thine own eternity."

But if you do not come to Christ, the Queen of Sheba will rise up in judgment against you ; she will come forth to condemn you. It has been said, that the time to die does not come until we have set in motion some agent which shall speak of us to other ages ; but O, it is better than that not to die until we have had our names recorded in the book of life. Mrs. Sigourney has beautifully summed up the whole, when she says, "There is much clamor in these days of progress respecting a grant of new rights, or an extension of privileges for our sex. A powerful moralist has said, that 'in contention for power,

both the philosophy and poetry of life are dropped and trodden down.' Would not a still greater loss accrue to domestic happiness, and to the interest of well-balanced society, should the innate delicacy and prerogative of woman, *as woman*, be forfeited or sacrificed?

“‘I have given her as a helpmeet,’ said the voice that cannot err, when he spake unto Adam, in the cool of the day, amid the trees of paradise. Not as a toy, a clog, a prize-fighter. No; a *helpmeet*, such as was fitting for man to desire, and for woman to become.

“Since the Creator has assigned different spheres of action for the different sexes, it is to be presumed, in his unerring wisdom, that there is work enough in each department to employ them, and that the faithful performance of that work will be for the benefit of both. If he has made one the priestess of the inner temple, committing to her charge its unrevealed sanctities, why should she seek to mingle in the warfare that may thunder at its gates, or rock its turrets? Need she be again tempted by pride or curiosity, or glowing words, to barter her own Eden?

“True nobility of woman is to keep her own sphere, and to adorn it, not like the comet, haunting and perplexing other systems, but as the pure star, which is first to light the day, and last to

leave it. If she share not the fame of the ruler and the blood-shedder, her good works, such as 'become those who profess godliness,' though they leave no deep 'footprints on the sands of time,' may find record in the 'Lamb's book of life.' "

O, yes, that is it, — to find record in the Lamb's book of life. Will the reader find such a record? In Christ there is ample opportunity, a glorious privilege. 'Tis only, Believe and be saved; look and live.

"O, how unlike the complex works of man,
 Heaven's easy, artless, unencumbered plan!
 No meretricious graces to beguile,
 No clustering ornaments to cloy the pile;
 From ostentation as from weakness free,
 It stands like the cerulean arch we see,
 Majestic in its own simplicity.
 Inscribed above the portal, from afar
 Conspicuous as the brightness of a star,
 Legible only by the light they give,
 Stand the soul-quickening words, *Believe and live.*
 Too many, shocked at what should charm them most,
 Despise the plain direction, and are lost;
 'Heaven on such terms!' they cry with proud disdain;
 'Incredible, impossible, and vain!'
 Rebel, because 'tis easy to obey,
 And scorn, for its own sake, the *gracious way.*"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DISAPPOINTED ONE.

ABIGAIL.

There's hope for thee, poor erring one,
With sin and sorrow cursed and crushed ;
Through the thick darkness gleams the sun,
With pale, sad beauty flushed ;
The lone wind sobbeth not so loud ;
Heaven's breath is kissing flower and tree ;
The blue sky bursts through yonder cloud :
There's hope, poor soul, for thee.

NOW THE NAME OF THE MAN WAS NABAL; AND THE NAME OF HIS WIFE ABIGAIL; AND SHE WAS A WOMAN OF GOOD UNDERSTANDING, AND OF A BEAUTIFUL COUNTENANCE, BUT THE MAN WAS CHURLISH AND EVIL IN HIS DOINGS; AND HE WAS OF THE HOUSE OF CALEB. — 1 *Sam.* 25 : 3.

THERE is one class of women that makes irresistible demands upon our sympathies. It is a class that has always been numerous in the world, and will continue to be numerous, until the woes of intemperance shall be done away. That class is composed of the great array of drunkards' (148)

wives, of which Abigail is a fair representative. It is indeed a sad sight to see a lovely, intelligent, refined, and gifted woman bound for life to a rough, coarse, brutal husband, who devotes his time to dissipation and violence. We have some gauge of the feelings of a man who, under the laws of ancient Rome, found himself chained to a dead corpse, which every day became more offensive; but we have no gauge of the sorrow of her who is bound by marriage vows for life to a living mass of drunkenness, a vice which includes every thing vile and repulsive, and which, like a corpse, becomes every day more offensive and hideous.

Abigail was the wife of Nabal. She was doubtless married to him in very early life, when he was fair to the eye, and pleasant to the ear. The marriage was doubtless one of great joy, and the wealthy bridegroom and the beautiful bride entered upon their new relations with the brightest hopes of a happy life. But ere long, the young wife began to see a change in her husband. Now and then he would return from his journeys in a state of intoxication, and his formerly pleasant, agreeable intercourse with her was changed to coarse brutality. Reproaches, instead of compliments, were heaped upon her, and with woman's meek and quiet spirit, she lived in sorrow and

regret. Too late to remedy the evil, she found she had united herself to a man whose mind was greatly inferior to her own, and with confidence in God, she endeavored to fulfil her contract, though he might be faithless to his.

The circumstances under which Abigail is brought to our view are somewhat peculiar. David, who was arrayed against Saul, was in want; and hearing that Nabal was a man of wealth, he sent to him a kind message, urging him to bestow of his property for the public good. The messengers reached the house of the rich man, and told Nabal how David had guarded his flocks, and from what losses he had saved him, and then, in the name of their master, made their request. The rich man was in a state of mind not remarkably adapted to induce him to comply with the request of David. With the greatest insolence, he said, "Who is David? Who is the son of Jesse, that I should give him of my bread?" With indignant words and angry looks, he sent the messengers back to their master. When David heard all this, he was wroth, and arming himself and his warriors, prepared at once to pour out his vengeance upon the head of the offender. In the mean while, intelligence of the affair came to the ears of Abigail. She was told by a servant what the messenger of David had requested, and the

ground on which his claim had been based. Abigail was a wise woman. She knew something about David, and was well aware that he would not bear meekly the treatment of her husband. She expected he would soon be on his way to reward her lord according to his deed. To guard against this calamity, she took loaves of bread, corn, wine, and fruit, and with numerous servants hastened to meet David. She had not gone far ere her suspicions were confirmed, for she met David coming against her home. She alighted from the beast on which she rode, and fell down before the young man, and addressed him in the most touching manner, assuring him that Nabal did not mean a wrong, and entreating him to accept the gift she brought. "Upon me, my lord," she said, "upon me let this iniquity be. Let not my lord regard this man of Belial, even Nabal; for as his name is, so is he; Nabal is his name, and folly is with him: but I, thine handmaid, saw not the young men of my lord, whom thou didst send. Now, therefore, my lord, as the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, seeing the Lord hath withholden thee from coming to shed blood, and from avenging thyself with thine own hand, now let thine enemies, and those that seek evil to my lord, be as Nabal. And now this blessing which thine handmaid hath brought unto my lord, let it

be even given unto the young men that follow my lord. I pray thee forgive the trespass of thine handmaid ; for the Lord will certainly make my lord a sure house ; because my lord fighteth the battles of the Lord, and evil hath not been found in thee all thy days. Yet a man is risen to pursue thee, and to seek thy soul : but the soul of my lord shall be bound up in the bundle of life with the Lord thy God ; and the souls of thine enemies, them shall he sling out as from the middle of a sling. And it shall come to pass, when the Lord shall have done to my lord according to all the good that he hath spoken concerning thee, and shall have appointed thee ruler over Israel, that this shall be no grief unto thee, nor offence of heart unto my lord, either that thou hast shed blood causeless, or that my lord hath avenged himself ; but when the Lord shall have dealt well with my lord, then remember thine handmaid."

This whole address was most adroitly made, and Abigail proved herself to be a most successful pleader. The spectacle there in the way is a most touching one, and we cannot help joining in the wonder expressed by a thrilling writer, who says, "The whole of this scene is so vividly described in holy writ, that it is rather remarkable that it should never have been taken as the subject of a picture by some of the many illustrators

of Scripture. A rocky defile of Carmel, winding round the side of a hill, down which the four hundred armed followers of David, in their glittering armor, might be scattered in and out of the rocks, except the few which, close beside their leader and the kneeling Abigail, marked the foreground; the servants and led asses of the wife of Nabal gracefully grouped on the opposite side of the armed men, forming a beautiful contrast, by their peaceful habiliments and alarmed looks, to the fierce and eager countenances of the warriors. The extreme beauty of Abigail; the pleading look and posture of the suppliant blending with the modest dignity of the woman; the superb countenance and form of the still youthful David, varying from indignation to softening admiration, — all might form a combination not unworthy of first rate talent in an artist, more especially when that artist may be found at this very day amid the ranks of Israel.”

David took the gifts and went back, while Abigail returned to her intemperate husband, who died about ten days afterwards. David heard of his death, and soon sent for Abigail to come and be his wife; and she lived with him a long time.

I present Abigail as a specimen of the drunkard's wife; and to that very unfortunate class of our suffering sisters I wish here to call your attention.

Intemperance, though not so common as it was years ago, is yet frequent. Comparing the population of our country with what it was a century since, intemperance is certainly lessened; but though lessened, it has not yet become extinct. In the city of Boston are thousands of places where intoxicating drinks are sold; in other cities are hundreds of places where bodies and souls are ruined; and away out in society are homes desolated, hearts saddened, characters lost, and souls ruined, by this dreadful poison. The drunkard himself is a sorrowful personage, with his bloated face, bloodshot eye, and frenzied heart. He presents us with a fair specimen of a demon let loose from the pit, to make misery among the homes of earth. But he is not the greatest sufferer. His children, half clad, half educated, half fed, half cultivated, and cast out of house and home, suffer more than he. They bear a sorrow of which he knows nothing. But they even, are not the greatest sufferers by his intemperance. They outgrow his violence, and leave the parental roof, and live among strangers; they soon become independent of his control, and find homes of their own. But the pale, shrinking wife is bound to that lump of clay, tied by law to that mass of corruption, unable to outgrow, outlive, or get beyond his pestiferous breath, his baneful influence.

For better or for worse she took him, and it has been all for worse, as, day and night, she has lived with one hope — the hope to die. In speaking upon the case of the drunkard's wife, we will notice, —

1. *Her disappointment.* She did not marry a drunkard; or, if she did, she hoped she could soon reform him. She went to the altar with a bright and glorious hope. The vision of a pleasant home, a kind husband, a long and lovely life, was before her. Not a cloud hovered over her marriage scene. The sun was bright, and the sky was clear. For a while after marriage, the scene of happiness continues; the bride's dream is realized, and she fondly hopes it will always continue. But one night her husband comes home from his store or his counting house in a state of mind for which she cannot account. His breath, not balmy, but hot and sulphureous, tells the whole. She gently chides him, and he promises never to drink again. Soon he comes home again in a worse state than before. His step now staggers, and his voice is unsteady. His mutterings are strange, and his words incoherent. He is met with a flood of tears, amid the fall of which he goes to sleep. A settlement is effected on the morrow, and there is sunshine in that home again. A few nights pass, and a drunken man is brought home to that

house, and he is thrown upon the bed by his boon fellows, who leave him there to curse his weeping wife. This time a reconciliation is not so easy. Indeed, he laughs at his companion, and when she falls upon his neck with tears and remonstrances, he casts her away, and flings her from him. Day by day she hopes it will be better; but it grows worse and worse until her hopes are all blasted, and her fond anticipations are all dead. Tell me, where on earth is a disappointment like this? Where can you find, in all the griefs to which our world is subject, anguish more intense? Once a star of hope hovered over her, but it has disappeared; once music, mirth, and pleasure surrounded her, but all have changed; and she lives, chained by her marriage covenant to a man whose brutal intemperance and whose increasing crimes make him a burden not easily to be borne. You know how sad you feel when disappointed in some trivial pleasure of a single day — what regret a single hour of disappointment sometimes causes. But here is a woman who is disappointed for life; she married a man, and he has changed into a brute; the sunlight on his countenance is gone; the cheerful tones of his voice are gone; the hopes, prospects, blessings which she dreamed of are all gone. Her husband is a drunkard: she is a drunkard's wife.

2. Consider *her degradation*. Woman has to a far greater extent than man a sense of what is fitting and proper. Her senses are all acute on the customs, forms, and habits of civilization. In her home, in her family, and especially in her husband, does she wish to have every thing right. There is an honest pride which every true woman feels in her husband, if he is a good man; and the better he prospers, the happier she feels. She is tender of his reputation, careful of his honor, and watchful of his interest. If there should come some spot upon his fame, it would be to her a greater source of grief than to him, and the iron would sink deeper far into her soul than into his. When a young woman unites herself in marriage to one of the opposite sex, she concludes he will be highly prospered in the world, or at least will maintain a respectable reputation; and if he becomes a drunkard, there is not only the keen disappointment, but the crushing degradation. Wherever that woman goes, she goes as a drunkard's wife. At church, at home, on the street, she bears ever with her the mark of the drunkard's family. It is no sin of hers, and others may forget it all. The great world outside may respect her as much, nay, more, than if she was a good man's wife; but she will not forget it. Wherever she goes, she will remember it, and feel

her degradation. Her blasted hopes, her thin-clad children, her desolated home, her brutal, intoxicated husband, she will compare with the hopes, children, homes, and husbands of others who started with her in the matrimonial race, but who have been more prosperous and fortunate. And this feeling of degradation is heightened by the contrast. Her children go to school in poor and uncomely garb; theirs in well-prepared robes; her children have few books, few attentions at home, few means of improvement; theirs are surrounded with all the little luxuries of childhood. Every year the difference between their firesides and homes becomes greater; intemperance fixes a greater gulf between the sober and the dissipated, and the poor wife and mother feels the load of degradation growing heavier and heavier every year. There may be something of pride in that woman's feelings, but it is an honest, commendable pride. Every true woman will love to see her own family well provided for; and she must be very far lost to all the feelings of a parent, if the intemperance of her husband does not often cause her to wish the earth would open and swallow her up. A woman is not to blame for the intemperance of her husband, but she cannot help feeling it. She may be as sinless in the matter as an angel from heaven, but she cannot help being

crushed by the degradation of her lot. Her dreary home, her squalid children, her bloated husband, her comfortless condition, speak to her daily of her sad fate. The more she thinks, the longer she lives, the more the evil grows, until usually she gives way to her fate, hides from the world, and settles down in calm, uncomplaining despair.

3. Consider the *sufferings* of a drunkard's wife. Disappointment and degradation are not all. The drunkard's wife has a life of suffering and sorrow. You have heard of some women who have suffered at the stake; they rejoiced in the glorious name of martyrs. But the wife of a drunkard is a life-long martyr. Every day she lives, she endures a crucifixion of all the tenderest and gentlest feelings of her nature. There is generally poverty in the drunkard's house. God has coupled poverty and dissipation together, and written every where, "The drunkard shall come to poverty." And this poverty falls most heavily upon the wife. She has most to do with the ragged clothes of the children, with the scanty meal, with the exhausted wood pile, with all the fixtures and conveniences of the house. Her brain is taxed, her frame is wearied, in providing for the household. Work, care, and grief are mingled at her board. To poverty follows cruel treatment. A

drunkard often has the heart of a fiend. He loses his manhood while under the effects of intemperance, and becomes a brute. See how his children are dashed from him; see the blows which fall upon the wounded form of the shrinking wife. Of all the women on earth, there is no one who suffers so much from brutal treatment as she who is bound to a drunkard. And yet how often is it that the wife, uncomplaining, will follow that husband long after he has deserted her and cast her off—follow him, to render him all the assistance in her power, and save him, if possible, from complete destruction! If others blame him, she pleads for him; if others cast him off, she gives him her last cent; if others cast him into prison, she kneels at the feet of mercy, to pray for his liberation. Her cheeks are furrowed with tears; her very heart is wrinkled with grief; the hair on her head is gray prematurely; and yet she still clings to the poor creature who has so shamefully deceived her, and so cruelly cast her off.

In view of these facts, the community is bound to do two things. 1. To respect the drunkard's wife. She is sometimes treated as if she was responsible for the vileness of her husband. The cold, unfeeling finger of society is sometimes pointed at her in derision; wealth and fashion look down with contempt upon her poverty, and

a double cup of sorrow is put to her lips. Is this just? Is this humane? Every manly principle, every womanly feeling, every Christian sympathy, answers, "No." If on earth is a woman who should be respected, for whom religion should make the most kind provision, upon whom Christian charity should look with the utmost tenderness, whose path through life should be brightened by kind and tender regard, — that woman is the drunkard's wife. Of all others, she has the largest claim upon our regard and esteem, and the very sorrow which she suffers at home should lead us to bless her more sincerely when abroad.

It was this class of women to whom Christ devoted much of his attention while he was on earth; and if we would imitate his example, we shall bestow our sympathy and generous regard on those who have been ruined by intemperate companions.

2. But sympathy will do little good without material aid. And it is not so much money, food, and clothing, that the wife of the drunkard wants. She wants society to throw its arms around her husband, to lead him back from the fatal path of ruin, to take out of his way the dreadful temptation which he has found himself unable to resist, to shut up the dens of crime and infamy which now draw him in — those traps of

death, those mines of hell, where fortunes are lost, bodies destroyed, and souls ruined. The wife of a drunkard, one who has felt and who knows the terrible sorrows of intemperance, while the recently made prohibitory law was pending in the legislature, wrote a letter to one of the members, urging him to do all he could to make a statute which would shut up the dens of intemperance. "Some have endeavored, but vainly, to portray," she says, "to the audience, the feelings of a drunkard's wife. I am not only a drunkard's wife, but the child of a drunkard; and let me tell you from experience, that it is utterly impossible for language to express or convey to the mind of the inexperienced the sorrows of a drunkard's wife. I ask, then, *protection* from the Massachusetts legislature. I speak the voice of thousands of my sex. We say, in the name of Heaven, protect our darling children from the vice that has ruined their fathers, and destroyed the happiness of their mothers. If you had the immortal Webster pleading our cause from Monday morning until Saturday night, he could not give you the most faint idea of the sorrows we endure. Ah, no. Neither could you, were your tongues touched with a live coal from off the altar of your God, convey to the heart of one who does not suffer as we suffer the heart-breaking, soul-sicken-
ing feelings we endure. Who, then, have a bet-

ter right to ask protection from the legislature than we ?

“ Four years ago, my husband became a member of a Christian church. For eighteen months he was an exemplary Christian, a reformed man in every sense of the word. Meeting with some slight trouble that affected his mind, the rumseller, ever ready to take advantage of such circumstances, placed the tempter in his way. He took the first glass, and fell ! I wish I could convey the feelings of a drunkard’s wife under circumstances like these. On his knees, in the morning, invoking Heaven’s blessing upon his family — the husband, the father, yea, and the Christian ; at three o’clock, a worse than *beast* — the victim of the rum traffic. In the name of Heaven, who should better claim protection from the state ?

“ We ask the legislature to deliver us, body and soul, from the *charities* of the rumseller, by a stringent prohibitory law. My husband, who has been absent from his home five months, and is endeavoring, with the help of God, to throw off again his associates, and again become a useful member of society, asks for your protection. My two sons and four helpless daughters ask your protection. Father in heaven, hasten the happy time when we shall again be united in the bonds of affection ; when the husband shall have no

temptation placed in his way, and mothers and children weep no more forever over the downfall of the husband and father. We ask, again, *protection* from the commonwealth."

And could he have the heart of a man who should rise up and say that this wife and mother should not have the protection of law? that some man should be licensed to sell him the poison which is to do the work of ruin, and drag him down from his family altar and his domestic joys, again to wallow in the mire, and bite the dust in wretchedness and crime? It is a demonstrated fact, that intemperance cannot be driven from the world by easy means. Moral suasion has been tried, and tried in vain; argument has been used, but used to no purpose. The traffic in intoxicating drinks must be made a crime; the trafficker must be branded as a criminal. While the traffic in rum is treated as the traffic in other articles, the ruin will go on. The time must come, — it will come, — when he who sells must do it at the sacrifice of standing among respectable men; and if the gallows is needed to stop the infernal business, I know of no more honest and wholesome purpose to which that horrid instrument can be put. If a man commits one murder, you hang him; but here are men who sell a chemical compound, the ingredients of which are poisonous to the body

and maddening to the brain, by which they murder hundreds every year, and yet society lets them live, like ulcers on its lungs, like cancers on its breast. There must be prohibition; and when a law can be so framed as to meet all the emergencies of the case, the wife of the drunkard has reason for hope. Speaking of a sister state, Connecticut, and contrasting it with New York, while on a visit to the latter state, his excellency, Governor Dutton, bears this striking testimony to prohibitory law: "Not a grog shop, so called, is to be found in the State of Connecticut since the new law came into force. No matter what the local balance of interest in any town, city, or spot in the state, the law was so framed that it should operate in all and each. I do not mean that there are not a few dark spots, where, by falsehood and secrecy, evasion may be managed; but, in a word, the traffic is suspended. The effects are all that could be wished. I have not seen a drunkard in the streets since the first of August. I was not here ten minutes till I saw a man not able to walk alone. Such is the contrast between a state with and one without a Maine law. The statistics of crime have been materially diminished; the crimes which directly result from rum have fallen away fully half. There are hundreds, I have no doubt, the heads of families,

who in most inclement weather are well supplied with comforts, who, but for our law, would be destitute. Such are the particular effects; the general effect is a sober, calm, quiet air of security pervading the whole community, which is delightful to behold and enjoy."

The world is beginning to speak hopefully to the drunkard's wife; ay, and to the drunkard himself. If these sinks of intemperance on every corner could be shut up, we might hope to welcome in the church, to the communion table, some who are now rolling in sin, and cursing the God who made them. There is hope for Nabal, as well as Abigail; for the degraded drunkard, as well as for his suffering wife. Christian philanthropy may now go to the drunkard, and lift him up, and say to him, —

"There is hope for thee, poor erring heart,
All torn, and bleeding, and unblest;
There are balm leaves t' anoint the part
That festers in thy breast;
There are crutches for thy trembling limbs,
Till they are firm, and strong, and free;
There are holy thoughts and prayerful hymns
Breathed forth, poor heart, for thee."

Would to God we might arouse the church to feel and pray for the drunkard, that we might thus bless his wife and honor God. "There is

hope for thee." That saying will cheer him. We have long been preaching that there is no hope for drunkards — they are lost. Under such doctrine, we have seen father, brothers, and sons hurried down to woe. But there is hope for these. It comes welling from the cross of Christ ; it lingers and plays like sunlight on the pages of the word of God ; it whispers in the prayers of Christians, and entwines around the willing forms of men, a very messenger of life to all.

“ Yes, there is hope for thee, poor soul,
All wild and wayward as thou wast ;
So let thy future moments toll
The death knell of the past.
There are eyes that strain to see thee start,
And bosoms panting like a sea ;
Press onward, then, poor sorrowing heart,
For there is hope for thee.”

CHAPTER IX.

THE UNFAITHFUL WOMAN.

DELILAH.

Poison drops of care and sorrow,
Bitter poison drops are they,
Weaving for the coming morrow
Sad memorials of to-day.

HE LOVED A WOMAN IN THE VALLEY OF SOREK, WHOSE NAME
WAS DELILAH. — *Judges 16 : 4.*

THE history of Samson is a source of interest to all young people. His great strength, his heroic achievements, his peculiar vicissitudes, make his case one of more than ordinary moment among those who read the Bible mostly for its stirring narratives, or for its delineations of character. Though not of the highest religious consequence, it is not entirely destitute of spiritual instruction ; and we may be able to draw from it some useful lessons.

Samson was a Danite. He was born in Zorah, and was the son of Manoah. At the time of his

appearance upon the stage of life, the children of Israel were in captivity. For their sins, God had given them into the hands of the Philistines, who oppressed them. When the young man arrived at mature years, he went to Timnath, and saw a Philistine woman, on whom he set his affections. Unlike the youth of our times, who marry without advice, he went to his parents, who accompanied him to Timnath, where the preliminaries were settled. On the way, as Samson journeyed with his parents, a lion, wild and roaring, came against him. But unaffrighted, the giant seized him by the jaws, and rent him asunder as he would have rent a kid. Some time after, on another journey to Timnath, he found the carcass of the lion filled with honey, a swarm of bees having taken possession of it. After his marriage, he said to the assembly, most of whom were Philistines, "I will give you a riddle, and you shall have seven days to find it out. If you succeed, I will give you thirty sheets and thirty changes of garments; if not, you shall give me the same number of sheets and garments." They accepted the challenge, and took up the bet. The riddle was, "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness." Day after day, the men of Timnath puzzled themselves on this riddle in vain. Finding they were about to

lose, they went to Samson's wife, and threatened to burn her, and her father's house, if she did not coax the secret out of her husband. She yielded to their persuasions, and pleaded with him; and though he had concealed it from all else, he told it to her. So, when the time was up, the Philistines had the key to the riddle, and said to Samson, "What is sweeter than honey, and what is stronger than the lion?" Samson knew at once that they had been at work with his wife, and became enraged; and after slaying thirty men, he went to his own home, leaving his wife with her friends. She was soon married again, the desertion of her husband not seeming to produce any serious impression on her mind. A while after, the heart of Samson relented, and he went for her; but her father refused to give her up, and wished him to take her younger sister, who was more beautiful. This again enraged Samson, who caught three hundred foxes, and tying firebrands to their tails, set them loose among the grain of the Philistines, and the fire, spreading in all directions, produced a general calamity. On his return home, the Philistines went after him, and as his nation was subject to the Philistines, he was surrendered. When the Philistines thought they had secured him, he burst the cords, and seizing a jaw bone, slew a thousand of them. For these

heroic deeds he was made judge, and reigned many years. But his life was not to end peaceably and quietly. Mighty deeds were yet before him, and God's mighty purpose he was yet to perform. It is related of him, that on one occasion he went to Gaza, and the people all turned out to arrest him; but as it was night, they concluded to wait till morning. The city was well guarded, and the escape of the giant was deemed impossible. But in the night, the strong man arose, and unfastening the gates, tore up the posts, and throwing them, bars and all, upon his shoulders, marched up to a high hill, and cast them down there, and went his way.

But treachery was to accomplish what force could not. In the valley of Sorek lived Delilah, a Philistine maiden, to whom Samson became attached, and as many suppose, married her. It is imagined by some that Delilah was a very wicked woman; that her character was vile, and her life shameful. But of this we have no proof, and it is probable that her character was good, and her reputation and connection respectable. Be that as it may, the Philistines selected her as the instrument for the accomplishment of their revenge. They bribed her to find out wherein the great strength of Samson lay, and she accepted the bribe. What her motive was we cannot tell. It

may be that love of country rose above love to her husband, and she sacrificed him to the public good. We can easily imagine that a strong-minded woman could cast off the devotion to her wedded partner, for the sake of serving the nation, for whom she entertained the highest regard. This was to some extent the case with Madame Roland, the strong-hearted woman of the French revolution, who, when the wild wail of her nation was heard, threw off all the restraints and duties of home, trampled on her conjugal relations, and rushed into the din and strife of the period of blood. But many think it more likely that Delilah acted without any such motive. She was not, probably, aware of the extent of the injury she was doing to Samson, for most likely the Philistines informed her that they would not harm him, but would soon restore him. Or she may have been bribed to betray her lover, and for gold have sacrificed him. But whatever her motive was, she proceeded very adroitly. As she lay upon his bosom, she said, "Tell me wherein your great strength lieth, and how it may be taken away." It seems Samson could not trust her. He told her a lie, and she repeated it to his enemies. "If they bind me with seven green withs that have never been dried, I shall become as weak as any other man," said he. So she obtained the green

withs, and while he slept, she bound him fast. When she deemed him perfectly secure, she awoke him with the cry, "The Philistines be upon thee, Samson." He awoke, and tore the withs from him, and cast them away as if they had been a thread of tow, and laughed at Delilah and the discomfited Philistines, who stood by perfectly amazed. Soon the quarrel was settled, and the feud reconciled; and Delilah again besought Samson to tell her wherein his strength consisted. Again he deceived her by saying that, if he was bound with new ropes that had never been used, he should be as weak as other men. So, as he slept, she bound him with new ropes; but when his enemies came, he tore the ropes asunder, and again Delilah was defeated in her purpose.

But she was not discouraged. The love or the hate of a woman never tires. She pleaded with the man again, and again he lied to her, by saying that if his hair was braided and pinned, he should become weak. Delilah braided and pinned his hair, but his giant strength remained. It would seem that by this time Samson might have learned a lesson of experience from his alliance with "the charmer;" but love is blind, and cannot often see what is before it. So he reconciled matters with Delilah, took her again to his bosom, committed himself to her keeping, and cradled her traitorous

head upon his manly breast. One day, as thus she reposed, she said, "Now, Samson, how canst thou say that thou dost love me, when three times thou hast deceived me? I have asked a question, and thou hast answered it falsely." So she pressed him; promised, probably, as women and men sometimes do, never to tell of it; urged him by his love to her to tell wherein his strength consisted. Overcome, deceived, and cheated by her, he told her all; and we soon find him a fettered captive in the prison house of Gaza, shorn of his strength, and robbed of his power. What the feelings of Delilah were, when she saw the results of her duplicity, we are not told; but if she had a human heart, she must have regretted her villainess and trickery. Milton sketches her going to the prison of Samson, "bedecked, ornate, and gay," and saying, —

"With doubtful feet and wavering resolutions,
I come, still dreading thy displeasure, Samson,
Which to have merited, without excuse,
I cannot but acknowledge; * * *
* * * But conjugal affection,
Prevailing over fear and timorous doubt,
Hath led me on, desirous to behold
Once more thy face."

To which Samson replies, —

“ Out, out, hyena : these are thy wonted arts,
And arts of every woman false like thee,
To break all faith, deceive, betray,
Then, as repentant, to submit, beseech,
And reconciliation move, with feigned remorse.”

Thus Delilah at the prison pleads, and thus
Samson answers, until she retires, saying, —

“ I see thou art implacable ; more deaf
To prayers than winds and seas ; yet winds and seas
Are reconciled at length, and sea to shore ;
Thy anger, unappeasable, still rages,
Eternal tempest, never to be calmed.”

Then she breaks forth into triumph, declares that she will no longer stand suing at his dungeon, but she will go to Gath and Ekron, where her name shall be recorded among the famous women of the times, and “ sung at solemn festivals,” as one who, to “ save her country from a fierce destroyer,” rose above “ the faith of wedlock bonds.” For this fidelity to country, at the expense of infidelity to her husband, she would thus receive a tomb

“ With odors visited and annual flowers.”

Samson finds her gone without regret, and as he turns into the loneliness of his prison, he exclaims, —

“So let her go ; God sent her to deceive me,
And aggravate my folly, who committed
To such a viper his most sacred trust
Of secrecy, my safety and my life.”

This narrative, over which we are obliged to pass hastily, teaches us several things which we ought to learn early in life. And the first thing is, the influence which an irreligious husband or wife may have upon the religious partner of wedded life. I am not prepared to take the ground that in no case a Christian should wed one who has no hope in Christ ; nor am I prepared to affirm that husbands and wives who are separated by religious differences do not often live happily together. But while it is true that conjugal happiness is found in families where meet the wide extremes of infidelity and piety, it is also true that much domestic unhappiness often comes from variance on religious topics. Samson belonged to a nation that loved and served God ; a nation that, from the days of Sarah and Rebekah, had boasted of its female beauty ; a nation elevated in a social scale far above the Philistine tribes. He might have married well among his own people, and have been happy with a maiden of his own kin. But he chose a woman who worshipped Dagon ; whose natural sympathies were with another nation and another religion ; whose whole soul rose

up against the faith of the Hebrew prophets and priests. The result was, a life of sorrow, and a death of violence. Nor is the case of Samson a solitary one. For centuries, the evils of intermarriages between Protestants and Catholics have been apparent in Europe. Misery and wretchedness have followed all such connections, and the Inquisition has shed rivers of blood as a consequence. In Papal countries, the confessional is used for extorting from wives the secrets of their husbands, and many a woman has delivered up her husband to the most dreadful death at the behests of a cruel priest. All other things being equal, parties about entering the marriage relation should select those with whom they can agree in religious opinions; but when once the relation has been formed between parties thus differing, the greatest care should be used lest the stronger deny the religious rights of the weaker, and thus an irreparable injury be done to the consciences of both.

We have also in this narrative a conflict of duties; we see patriotism struggling with conjugal affection. In every person's life there will often be seeming, not real, conflicts of duty. Delilah was the wife of Samson, i. e., we have no evidence to the contrary. She was bound to sympathize with him in his sorrows, to share his griefs, to

minister to his wants, and be to him a kind and constant helper. She was also a woman of Philistia, and loved her nation. She was a patriotic woman, and had often gone out to battle with the warriors of Ekron and Gath. She had duties to her husband, and she also had duties to her nation. But how could she act? Her husband was the enemy of her nation, and she must betray one or the other. Here the claims of her nation and the claims of her husband came in conflict. We universally condemn Delilah, but are we right in so doing? We condemn her as a vile woman, who trampled on all the dictates of nature, and deserted a husband who was true and kind. But is this a just view? Let us suppose a case. In the early history of our nation, in the midst of her struggle for freedom, a man high in office proved traitor, and meditated an act which, if carried into effect, would have severely injured the cause of America, and perhaps imperilled all the interests of a great and free people. Now, suppose the wife of Benedict Arnold had some day found papers in her house which unfolded to her the part her husband was to act, and the wrong he meditated; suppose she had become fully convinced that he was an infamous traitor, and knew that unless his plans were known and thwarted, the rebel army would be cut to pieces

by the royal forces, and the great cause itself be lost, through rash treason: suppose she had risen above the tie which bound her to her husband, and disregarding all the links which endeared her to her false and wicked partner, had gone on foot many a weary mile, through summer's heat or winter's cold, and laid at the feet of Washington the evidences of treason which she had discovered, and with tears of grief given evidence which would have convicted the traitor; what would posterity have said of her? Why, a monument high as the clouds would be erected to her memory; a grateful nation would cover the shaft with votive offerings; the world would point to it as the memento of one of the noblest women of the world, and poetry and praise, eloquence and song, would make her deed immortal.

Well, here was Delilah. She had married Samson, but we do not suppose her conjugal love had destroyed her patriotism. Samson became the enemy of her nation, and endeavored to destroy it; the people he had slain by thousands; the noblest and bravest had fallen by his hand. He had caught foxes, and tied firebrands to their tails, and set them loose in the fields of the Philistines, consuming their grain and harvests. And shall she be judged harshly, if she threw off her devotion to her husband in her love of country? She

is not the first nor the last woman who has sacrificed family and friends to native land.

But while these conflicts of duty may not arise in our case, other conflicts may. It is not seldom that conjugal love crosses the track of duty to God. The wife is required to give up the just and sacred exercise of her religious rights, to please the prejudices and passions of a wicked, unbelieving husband. It is a woman's duty to obey her husband; she is not a good wife who does not fully recognize this principle, which lies at the basis of all domestic felicity. It is also her duty to obey her God; and where the command of God and the command of her husband come into collision, we hesitate not to counsel disobedience to man, and obedience to God. In all matters of conscience, the woman has a right to her own opinions, and she should never relinquish the privilege of worshipping God according to the dictates of her own heart, and the demands of her Maker. The woman is bound to assist her husband in every laudable undertaking, but she is not bound to assist him in doing wrong; she is not bound to assist him in stealing, in cheating, in forging, in selling rum, or doing any other wicked thing. In all the arrangements of the household, in all the domestic minutiae, in every thing which she can do, and not violate her duty

to God, she is bound to do as he commands. This is the statute law of God, and cannot be disregarded without peril. But when he touches her duty to God, when he crushes her conscience, she is bound to disobey. A man has a right to say that his wife shall not leave her family, neglect her duties, to attend public religious service, but he has no right to say she shall not worship God ; he has a right to order the arrangement of his household, but he has no right to interfere with the full and free exercise of her religious emotions. The command of God rises above his, and if submission to both is incompatible, she must disobey him, and obey God.

We have also in this case a remarkable illustration of the influence of woman. This Delilah deceived Samson over and over again. She gave him full proof of her infidelity, but when her soft arms were about his neck, and her musical voice was falling on his ear, he could not resist her, but told her all. And every woman will have more or less influence for good or evil over her husband. They may both be unaware of it, but if her course is right, she will be able to move him as she will. Few men like to be driven, but few there are who cannot be drawn, by a true and devoted wife, to deeds of the highest excellence. It is said that, not long since, General Samuel Houston, the hero

of San Jacinto, was in one of our Atlantic cities, and having an evening when he was not specially engaged, he was invited to attend a popular place of amusement. He politely declined. Upon being pressed for the cause of his refusing to accompany his friend, he replied, in substance, as follows : “ You are doubtless aware that a portion of my life was clouded by an intense devotion to most of the customs and fashions of society, and that, in consequence, I became degraded, and shunned by the wise and the good. My humiliation was the greater, because I had formerly stood well in the esteem of my fellow-citizens. My downfall was owing to the evil ways of society, but still it was my own fault. In this condition, she who is now my wife, awoke a desire for reform ; she inspired me, she guided me, she aided me, and to her kind and unwearied efforts is due my redemption from the thralldom of evil habits, and my restoration to the respect of mankind. Yes, sir, humanly speaking, I owe to her all I am, or that I hope to be, in time and eternity. She is a praying woman, a member of a Christian church. Some time ago, I resolved, by the help of God, never to perform an act having any moral bearing which would not be approved by my good wife. I know she disapproves of this species of amusement, and would wish me not to attend, because

its tendencies are evil, and it is unnecessary ; and I agree with her in opinion. You will, therefore, I trust, allow that I have reasons, which should have weight with any true man, for not accepting your invitation."

It is woman's mission to be true and faithful, kind and loving ; and herein she gains her noblest power over her male companion. Ledyard, who travelled much, and who saw much of human nature in its varied shapes, remarks, " Women do not hesitate, like men, to perform a hospitable or generous action ; not haughty, nor arrogant, nor supercilious, but full of courtesy, and fond of society ; industrious, economical, ingenious, more liable in general to err than man, but in general also more virtuous, and performing more good actions than he. I never addressed myself in the language of decency and friendship to a woman, whether civilized or savage, without receiving a friendly answer. With man, it has often been otherwise. In wandering over the barren plains of inhospitable Denmark, through honest Sweden, frozen Lapland, rude and churlish Finland, unprincipled Russia, and the wide-spread regions of the wandering Tartar, hungry, dry, cold, wet, or sick, woman has ever been friendly to me, and uniformly so ; and to add to this virtue, so worthy of the appellation of benevolence, these actions have

been performed in so free and kind a manner, that, if I was dry, I drank the sweet draught, and if hungry, I ate the coarse morsel, with a double relish."

And she should be careful of this influence. If a wife loses the affection of her husband, and with it her influence over him, she has made a shipwreck of home. The influence of woman should be used to make home happy. How vivid, and how true to life, is that picture which some one has drawn of the fashionable woman of our times! "Look," he says, "at that fine mansion where she dwells; thousands have been lavished on these imposing walls, long colonnades, and high, arched windows; and now and then you obtain a glimpse of costly hangings, rich carpets, and tall mirrors, which dazzle with their magnificence. Often you pause a moment, and look wistfully in through the half-closed blinds, and murmur to yourself, as you pass on, 'I should think the possessor of all this might enjoy life.'

"But you are sadly mistaken. The angel of peace never folds her white wings by that fireside; the gentle spirit of content never sheds her holy influence there. The master of the mansion, though yet in his prime, seems prematurely old; there is an expression of habitual suffering around

his firmly-compressed lips, and his broad brow bears many a trace of care. Ah, there is a vulture at his heart, which, like the hero of the olden story, he would fain conceal. Ten years ago, he married a beautiful girl, with a thousand pleasant visions of domestic quietude and bliss. But his dreams have faded; the rosy hue of romance is lost in the cold, gray dawn of his bitter reality.

“His wife presides over his household with surpassing gracefulness; she is the idol of society, and a leader of fashion. She goes and comes through those spacious halls, dressed in garments that might befit a queen; she gives brilliant dinners, where she shines the brightest star, and parties, which every body pronounces charming. But she is never the kind, devoted companion, the loving, trusting helpmate, sharing every joy and sorrow, cheering him when he desponds, and counselling in trials and perplexities with winning grace and tenderness. In short, she never makes home happy.”

“Ask,” continues the same writer, “ask the peevish, complaining wife if she has ever thought seriously of this matter. What a neat, cosy little cottage hers is! How many comforts she has! Her two noble-looking boys and their fair sister are as beautiful a trio of children as ever graced

a household ; her husband is kind and indulgent ; but her fretful disposition will not allow her a moment's tranquillity. She is in perpetual anxiety ; sometimes it is one thing, and again another, that causes her inquietude, but she is never at rest. The children yearn for the sunshine which they see in the homes of their playmates, and invent all kinds of excuses to get away from troubles that haunt their mother. They have already learned that pleasure cannot be found under their own roof tree, and the gambling hall, the theatre, and the club room hold out temptations which they can scarcely resist. Ay, think of these solemn considerations, and be wise."

But enough. Delilah was not the worst woman that ever lived. She had a peculiar history, and brought her husband to a terrible end. Good may be taken from her case, like honey from the rock, and every woman may learn from her a useful lesson. Did time allow, we might trace in Delilah the evil effects of curiosity, which draws out secrets which should not be known, and the fatal consequences which sometimes follow what is deemed the most innocent tattling ; but we leave her portrait for the mind of each to study and improve. She was a link in the chain of divine providences which stretch along our world, bind-

ing feeble, finite, erring man to the unerring, infallible, and glorious God. She has her place in that system, which works on, to consummate at last the perfection of human character, and the supreme felicity of human destiny.

CHAPTER IX.

PROPRIETIES OF MARRIED LIFE.

SARAI AND HAGAR.

As some fair violet, loveliest of the glade,
Sheds its mild fragrance on the lonely shade,
Withdraws its modest head from public sight,
Nor courts the sun, nor seeks the glare of light,
Should some rude hand profanely dare intrude,
And bear its beauties from its native wood,
Exposed abroad its languid colors fly,
Its form decays, and all its odors die ;
So woman, born to dignify retreat,
Unknown to flourish, and unseen be great ;
To give domestic life its sweetest charm,
With softness polish, and with virtue warm ;
Fearful of fame, unwilling to be known, —
Should seek but Heaven's applauses and her own.

AND SARAI, ABRAHAM'S WIFE, TOOK HAGAR, HER MAID, THE EGYPTIAN, AFTER ABRAHAM HAD DWELT TEN YEARS IN THE LAND OF CANAAN, AND GAVE HER TO HER HUSBAND ABRAHAM, TO BE HIS WIFE. — *Gen.* 16 : 3.

It is almost impossible for us, with our notions of life, and our well-regulated governments, to appreciate the position of the men and women

who lived in patriarchal ages. The customs of society are so changed, the world has so wonderfully increased in numbers and knowledge, that an unbridged chasm separates us from the years beyond the Christian era. We are unable to account for the follies, or put a proper estimate upon the virtues, of the early inhabitants of the world. And yet a knowledge of patriarchal life would go far to disabuse our minds of false impressions, and relieve us of distressing doubts, which we often cherish.

In the early ages of the world, before civil governments were instituted, or constitutions were written, the father was sole law maker and judge. His children, his servants, all his dependants, looked to him for law, and his word was life or death. Human society was in its simplest state, and the head of the family exercised all the control of an absolute monarch. If he did wrong, there was no power on earth to call him to an account. He held his authority direct from God, to whom alone he was accountable, and who alone was able to punish him. His dependants were abject slaves. They came to him for protection, and banded with his family against the robbers of the wilderness. He held their lives and fortunes, and rewarded or punished them according to his pleasure. This patriarchal life Abraham was

living at the time he was first introduced to our notice. He was the head of a large household, consisting of servants, and herdsmen, and other dependants who had clustered about him. His absolute reign was approved of God, who gave him direction as to his course of conduct and his line of duty.

Sarai was his wife. She was his half sister, the daughter of his father. In those early days, God had as yet given no instruction as to the marriage relation ; and as marriage is arbitrary, it was no sin for Abraham to take for his companion so near a relative. There was no law but that of preference, and that he obeyed. Sarai was a native of Uz, a city of the Chaldees, in Mesopotamia. Her name signifies a princess of royal lineage, and she was probably accomplished and engaging. The people of Uz were fire worshippers, and from her youth Sarai had witnessed the devotions in the temple of the sun. But in the absence of positive proof, we have some reason to believe that Sarai was a worshipper of God. Her soul rose above the gross and sensual mass which bowed in bondage to a bonfire at night, or the sun by day. It may be that this religious superiority made Abraham select her from all the beautiful women to whom he had access, and who would have been flattered by the attentions of a man so wealthy and powerful.

Sarai first appears to us making a noble sacrifice for the good of her husband. The first positive information we have concerning her presents her in a noble and endearing light. God commanded her husband to depart from his own country, from his kindred, and from his father's house, into a distant land. Where this land was he was not informed; how long it would take to find it he knew not; what dangers would beset him in the way were not told him. Sarai, like a true wife, determined to accompany him. She loved her home, and many fond ties bound her to her kindred and her clime. But her husband's business and welfare required him to depart, and she was willing to leave all, and go with him. We must consider, in estimating the conduct of Sarai, that she was about encountering the greatest hardships. There were no levelled turnpikes, no cushioned rail cars, no modern improvements and facilities for travelling in those days. It was a weary march which they were to commence. The love of home and the entreaties of friends united against what must at first have appeared to her as a Quixotic movement. But she went. There was no murmuring on her part. Where her husband was she wished to be, to share his joys and mitigate his sorrows. And this will be the spirit of every true wife. Her pleasures will

all bend to her husband's business. If duty requires him to leave the crowded city, and go away to some new region, she will not deem it a hardship; nor, when there, will she sigh for the comforts of her former home. A cottage with her husband will be better than a palace without him; and if his circumstances so demand, she will with her own hand be willing to prepare her frugal meal, without the dainties of her more favored sisters.

It seems that Sarai was a beautiful woman; so, when, after wandering about, they reached Egypt, Abraham commanded Sarai to call him "brother," and then deceive the people as to their real relationship. It was true that she was his sister, and she was also his wife. He was afraid that the Egyptians would kill him for his wife, on account of her beauty. But falsehood never prospers, and Abraham barely escaped the loss of his wife on account of his deception. She was at this time sixty-five years of age, and, as an elegant female writer remarks, "We are wont to imagine that the charms of sixty-five could not be very remarkable; but reckoning according to the age to which mortals then lived, she was not older than a woman of thirty or five and thirty would be now, — consequently in her prime; endowed, as her history gives us authority to suppose, with a quiet, retir-

ing dignity, which greatly enhanced her beauty, and rendered it yet more interesting than that of girlhood."

When we read of the old patriarchs living hundreds of years, we are very apt to associate with their age infirmity and feebleness. But we must remember that the very reason that made men live so long, made that old age green and youthful. We inherit a physical constitution not fresh from the hand of God, but broken by the crushing weight of the diseases, vices, and irregularities of a race six thousand years old. Each age makes it worse, and the errors of dress, of food, of personal cleanliness, are adding to the calamities of each generation, and gradually deteriorating and destroying the race. It is probable that the women mentioned in the early Bible history were more vigorous and elastic, graceful in person, and beautiful in features, at one hundred years of age, than the present race of females is at thirty years of age.

Following Sarai along, we come to the circumstances which are best calculated to signalize her history. God had promised Abraham a numerous posterity; and if there was one desire of his heart more intense than another, it was that he might have a son to inherit his fortunes, and bear his race down to succeeding ages. But this boon

from heaven God denied him; old age was advancing, and the hopes of his life, like a faded flower, were fast withering. Sarai shared with him all the sorrow of his heart from this cause, and often together went they to the throne of grace, to plead with Heaven for its merciful intercession. When the last hope had died out, and all reasonable prospect of the blessing was extinguished, Sarai suggested to her husband that he should wed Hagar, her beautiful Egyptian slave. Polygamy was common in those days, and was allowed by God. It is not a sin *per se*, but is a sin by divine statute. Theft is a sin *per se*; falsehood is a sin *per se*. God himself cannot make wrong right; he cannot make a lie the truth; but if he had chosen for man a plurality of wives, he could have so ordained it at his pleasure. He allowed polygamy in the early stages of the world's history, that the inhabitants thereof might increase rapidly; and when the purpose was accomplished, he restricted the number, and hedged in the single pair with the plainest moral and physical enactments. "In fact," as one says, "society in the mass has been very much like the individual; things are permitted or overlooked in childhood which are neither permitted nor overlooked in maturer years; and it is quite plain from reading, which gives us the biography of humanity, as

a whole, that arrangements were tolerated, if not applauded, in the earliest stages of society, which were not so in its riper and its maturer years. In this matter of Abraham's marriage to two wives, it was God who tolerated it. It is the law of God that makes it sin now ; and when the great Legislator speaks, all dispute or doubt about the morality or immorality of an action is put an end to."

The suggestion of Sarai pleased Abraham, and he wedded Hagar. The whole affair was an open one, and Sarai could blame no one but herself. The fruit of this union, some time afterwards, was the birth of Ishmael, a proud and wayward son, who was, from his entry into the world, a source of trouble to his patriarchal sire. As might be expected, trouble arose in this family, even before the birth of Ishmael. Hagar, elevated at once from the condition of a slave to the station of a wife and mother, became arrogant and overbearing. Her prosperity caused her to assume towards Sarai conduct the most unbecoming and ungrateful. Sarai, on her part, grew jealous and fretful, and the home of the patriarch changed from the abode of love to a scene of wrangling and bitterness. And so would it be in all cases, were polygamy allowed by God. No man has affections deep enough to supply two streams, and no house is large enough for two

wives. Sarai and Hagar — the one peevish and discontented, the other arrogant and proud — are pictures of what every home would be, under a system which allows a plurality of wives. The wisdom of God is clearly shown in the arrangement under which we live, and out of any other will grow innumerable woes and miseries. A man may have his friends, male and female; he may love the society of many, but there is a throne which one alone can occupy; an altar at which one alone can minister; a retreat which one alone can fill.

When Sarai saw that she was despised by her former bondswoman, she went to Abraham with her complaints. The clear mind of the patriarch saw at once the position in which he was placed. He was called to decide between his two wives; he was convinced that one or the other must submit, and it did not take long for him to choose. He loved Hagar for the hope he had of her future child; for the heir she would give him, and whom he expected to love with all a father's affection. But he loved Sarai for herself; for the noble traits of character she possessed; for the excellences of her disposition, almost spoiled by the unnatural alliance he had made with the bondswoman. He remembered when, in his youth's young dawn, he had wedded her, a gay, cheerful,

loving girl, with not a trace of care on her marble brow, and not a shade of sorrow on that calm countenance. His heart went back beyond all his desires for posterity, beyond his interviews with Hagar, beyond his love of the bondwoman; and as he folded Sarai to his heart again, he said, "Behold, Hagar is in your hands; do with her as you will." Then began Sarai to play the tyrant. All woman's tact was brought into requisition to perplex and vex Hagar; all her skill was employed to make her situation unpleasant. There is no revenge so cool and keen as that of a woman towards her rival. Man, in his darkest moods, does not begin to hate with half the fury of woman, when between her and the object of her affections passes the form of her rival. It is a crime she never forgives, a wrong she never forgets.

Under the cruel treatment of Sarai, Hagar fled; but an angel met her, and drove her back. She was Abraham's wife; she had entered into compact with him, and had no right to leave his tent. She was received again; but on the birth of Ishmael, new troubles arose, which increased until they became insupportable. In the mean while, Sarai was informed by God that she should have a son, who would become the father of many nations. She was ninety years of age, and Abra-

ham was one hundred years old. In due time Isaac was born. The dissensions between the rival wives now became so intense, that a division of the family was inevitable. Sarai had all along looked upon Ishmael with unfriendly feelings, and the pent-up fountains of her soul now gushed out. "The son of this bondwoman will take the property which ought to belong to my son," she reasoned with herself. "He will want the herds and flocks, and my son will be defrauded of his portion." Full of her purpose, she goes to Abraham, and he kindly remonstrates, for he loves Ishmael, and does not wish to part with him. But Sarai settled the question, as women are apt to do, by saying, decidedly, "The son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son; cast her out." God also sanctioned this course. He saw that Sarai and Hagar could not dwell together; so Hagar was driven out. She took her child, and commenced her wanderings. Sad and hard was her lot; at one time, fainting and weak, her child dying for want of water; while Sarai, in the tent of her lord, reposed on soft pillows, and had every blessing. Here we have the bitter fruits of polygamy — fruits that such a system will be sure to bear under the most favorable circumstances. God never designed a plurality of wives, but wisely ordained that man should be the hus-

band of one wife, the sharer of one heart, and the head of one family. Introduce any other system, as the ancient patriarchs did, — as that strange people, the Mormons, by the shores of the Great Salt Lake, are now doing, — and you introduce confusion and disorder throughout all social life.

In reviewing the conduct and character of these rival wives, we are struck with the respect of Sarai for her husband. She addressed him always by the most respectful titles, and did not condescend to apply to him any of the common expressions of the times. She respected him, and treated him with the greatest courtesy. Where there is no respect for a husband, there can hardly exist any affection; and the unbecoming familiarity which often exists between married parties, the nicknames they give each other, and the absence of that courteous respect which is essential to all dignified and well-ordered society, are fast making inroads upon the most happy households, and producing wretchedness in happy circles. If a woman sees nothing in her husband to respect, as well as love, she should not unite herself with him. Affection cannot live where there is no mental or moral worth to sustain it. It becomes a lean shadow, and soon dies out. The wife owes a respectful deference to the opinions of her husband; and when she ceases to render it, one of the

strongest holds she can have upon him has been broken. The habit which prevails among married parties of treating each other without any of the restraints of public courtesy, is the source of much of the unhappiness which exists in the domestic circle. When Sarai addressed her husband, she called him "my lord;" when he spoke, she listened with womanly deference to his opinions; and when he commanded, she obeyed. Thus she retained her influence, and was enabled to move her companion to whatever she chose. The cases of Vashti and Esther contain a striking illustration of the idea which I am endeavoring to enforce. Vashti was commanded by the king, her husband, to come to his banquet. It was an unusual thing; somewhat unjust, yet not greatly so. She threw herself upon her dignity, her rights, and sent back a haughty message. The result was her debasement and banishment. Queen Esther wished a favor which it would be hard to grant. To accomplish her purpose, she invited the king to her banquet, plied him with honeyed words, threw around him the arms of her affection, until he offered to sacrifice one half of his kingdom for her pleasure.

In Sarai we have also an admirable instance of devotion to the welfare of her husband. What was Abraham's interest she made hers. There

was no captiousness about staying at home with his friends in Uz; tent life was as good as any, if her husband's interest required it; and when God called him to become a pilgrim, she took her staff and followed him. There was no talk about how much she had sacrificed to become his wife; what kind friends she had left in the home of her youth; what privileges she once enjoyed, of which she was now deprived; what toils she now endured, to which she had previously been a stranger. The desert or the city was her home, if her husband was true. She took him for better or for worse.

We see in this beautiful history of the rival wives something of the character of the slavery of the ancients. Such as it was, it has been made an excuse to cover such slavery as we see now. But we find it a mere servitude, growing out of the nature of primitive society, in which the holder sustained the patriarchal relation to certain dependants. Hagar was a slave; but she fled when she chose, and returned when she chose. She was free to go, and only when she was there she was bound by obedience to her master and mistress. How different the slavery of our times! How differently it treats woman, man's equal, made so by God, and a divine birthright! Under the slavery, or rather servitude, of patriarchal

life, woman was protected; but woman has no protection under the slavery of our age and land. Women whiter than yourselves, and fairer too, perchance, are sold at auction to the highest bidder. A few days ago, some one gave in the public journals an account of a visit he made to a slave auction in the South. "I already heard," he says, "the loud, deep voice of the slave auctioneer, as he appraised his chattels, and rattled out, 'Six hundred and fifty — no more than six hundred and fifty for this likely negro fellow; fifty-six; six hundred and sixty;' &c., &c. This was early on Monday morning. Scarcely had the echoes of the high anthem that pealed from the Episcopal organ and choir a few hours before yet died away; hardly had the swell of the sweet tune that rose from Dr. Palmer's Presbyterian church yet murmured to the stars; and the unartistic, but loud and clear psalm-shout that ascended from the throats of a thousand Baptist negroes the preceding Sabbath eve, had as yet hardly had time, (if time it takes,) to mingle with the triumphal and eternal chorus of the harps of heaven. Having so lately heard all these, with what harsh and grating discord did the horrid voice of the man-seller shake the heavens, and strike upon my ear!

‘Is it, O man, with such discordant noises,
With such accurséd instruments as these,
Thou drownest Nature’s sweet and kindly voices,
And jarrest the celestial harmonies?’ ”

After describing the place, the auctioneer, and the crowd, and after giving a description of one or two sales, he proceeds as follows: “A middle-aged woman then mounted for her turn. She had a vacant, careless, stupid look, and as the auctioneer praised up her high qualities, a chaotic grin would now and then flit across her countenance. He declaimed about her, and continued repeating her praises, as, ‘This splendid seamstress and cutter, Lucretia. She is a splendid seamstress and cutter. As a sewer and cutter, I am told Lucretia has no equal, besides being valuable as a housekeeper,’ &c. She was knocked down to a man who I learned is going to keep a tavern. The next that came upon the steps was the last to be sold. She was a young woman who, her owners and the auctioneer said, was just eighteen years of age. She was of a dark olive color, not near so swarthy as the others had been; she had a very fine forehead, pleasing countenance, and mild, lustrous eyes. The auctioneer took off her hood, to show her countenance, and, when she replaced it, again took it off; and, in appraising her, by word and action appealed to

the lowest and basest passions of the assembled crowd. She clasped to her bosom a light-colored, blue-eyed, curly, silken-haired child, only ten weeks old, and who, young as it was, seemed to cast a terrified look on auctioneer and bidders.

“ ‘The next is the girl Adeline. Gentlemen, did you ever see such a face, and head, and form as that? (Taking off her hood.) She is only eighteen years old, and already has a child, a male child, ten weeks old; will consequently make a valuable piece of property for some one. She is a splendid housekeeper and seamstress.’

“The big tear stood glittering in the poor girl's eye, and at every licentious allusion, she cast a look of pity and woe at the auctioneer and at the crowd, which was responded to only by a loud, unfeeling, and brutal laugh. She was knocked down to, I know not whom, for my eyes were too dim to discern. She descended from the court house steps, looked at her new master, looked at the audience, looked fondly into her sweet child's face, pressed it warmly to her bosom, with the auctioneer's hard-hearted remark ringing in her ear, that ‘*that* child wouldn't trouble her purchaser long.’”

This is the slavery of our land, which men attempt to justify by the slavery of Hagar and her son. This is the slavery which even doctors of

divinity declare that the Bible and the Almighty (God forgive the blasphemy) sanction. Well may a man from such a scene exclaim, with our own New England poet, —

“There is a poor, blind Samson in this land,
Shorn of his strength, and bound in bonds of steel,
Who may, in some grim revel, raise his hand,
And shake the pillars of this Commonweal.”

In tracing down the line of this history, we also have a beautiful fulfilment of prophecy. Isaac was to be the father of nations — the great progenitor of the Saviour of the world. The glorious transmission there commenced, and the royal history of the Jews, the advent of Christ, the salvation of the world, are the glorious fulfilment. Of Ishmael, the son of Hagar, God promised that he should be the father of a great nation, but that he should be a wild man, whose hand should be against every man, and every man's hand should be against him. His descendants were to be like him, wild, fierce, and untamable. The descendants of Ishmael, the Arabs, are the exact fulfilment of this prophecy. They cannot be tamed; three thousand years of civilization have been lost upon them, and they are Ishmaelites still. “They have occupied,” says one writer, “the same country, and followed the same mode of life, from the

days of their great ancestor down to the present times, and range the wide extent of burning sands which separate them from all surrounding nations, as rude, and savage, and untractable as the wild ass himself. Claiming the barren plains of Arabia as the patrimonial domain assigned by God to the founder of their nation, they consider themselves entitled to seize and appropriate to their own use whatever they can find there. Impatient of restraint, and jealous of their liberty, they form no connection with the neighboring states; they admit of little or no friendly intercourse, but live in a state of continual hostility with the rest of the world. The tent is their dwelling, and the circular camp their city; the spontaneous produce of the soil, to which they sometimes add a little patch of corn, furnishes them with means of subsistence amply sufficient for their moderate desires; and the liberty of ranging at pleasure their interminable wilds fully compensates, in their opinion, for the want of all other accommodations. Mounted on their favorite horses, they scour the waste in search of plunder, with a velocity surpassed only by the wild ass. They levy contributions on every person that happens to fall in their way, and frequently rob their own countrymen with as little ceremony as they do a stranger or an enemy; their hand is still against every man, and every man's hand against them."

I have only space to refer to the end of these rival wives. Hagar wandered forth, and her death is not mentioned. Some suppose that she returned to Abraham after the death of Sarai, and fulfilled the duties of a wife and mother; but of this we have not sufficient proof. Sarai died in Kirjath Arba; her husband bought a tomb for her remains, and, with Isaac, wept over it. She was one hundred and twenty-seven years old when she was called home from earth. She died with an immortal hope, and entered on immortal life.

O, it is a solemn thing to see a mother die; a Sarai departing from earth to heaven; from Kirjath Arba, which is "Hebron in the land of Canaan," to the New Jerusalem, the paradise of God. "Children," said the mother of John Wesley, the last thing she uttered — "children, as soon as I am released, sing a psalm of praise to God;" and some one with poetic soul has added to her dying language, "Music sounds best after sunset. It is no time to mourn here, while angels clap their wings, and the whole family above cry, Welcome home! Who would keep his tears for coronation day?" Sweet, melancholy, touching, tender, is the history; elevating, ennobling, and divine are the lessons to be learned from the Scripture narrative of the "rival wives."

CHAPTER XI.

THE SISTER OF CHARITY.

DORCAS.

Good sisters,
How they toiled from day to day,
Till many weeks had rolled their weary way ;
Each one in crowded marts of business stood,
And plead for means as hunger pleads for food.

'Twas woman's plea ;
But how it won its way !
For hearts o'er purses e'en can hold the sway ;
The crowd of business fled before their face,
And sternest men gave audience to their grace.

Each day
The merchant stood behind the shelf ;
They entered in ; he gently bowed himself ;
He thought their custom his, till calmly told
They sought not silks, but sought his well-earned gold.

His hopes were dashed ;
And bows, he'd none to make ;
Excuse he made, but that they did not take ;
Their pleas unite, and on his heart prevail, —
Their object gained, again they set their sail.

And so they went,
 Through city wide and long,
 Weak in their sex, but in their errand strong.
 The work was done; the needed sum was raised;
 Long may they live, and longer still be praised!

Life done,
 And better than the pastor's lay
 Shall they receive who worked to win the day.
 "Well done!" their Father echoes from above,
 "Come, bask forever in a heaven of love!"

NOW THERE WAS AT JOPPA A CERTAIN DISCIPLE NAMED TABITHA, WHICH BY INTERPRETATION IS CALLED DORCAS: THIS WOMAN WAS FULL OF GOOD WORKS AND ALMS DEEDS WHICH SHE DID. AND IT CAME TO PASS IN THOSE DAYS, THAT SHE WAS SICK, AND DIED; WHOM WHEN THEY HAD WASHED, THEY LAID HER IN AN UPPER CHAMBER. * * * THEN PETER AROSE, AND WENT WITH THEM. WHEN HE WAS COME, THEY BROUGHT HIM INTO THE UPPER CHAMBER: AND ALL THE WIDOWS STOOD BY HIM, WEEPING, AND SHOWING THE COATS AND GARMENTS WHICH DORCAS MADE WHILE SHE WAS WITH THEM. — *Acts 9: 36, 37, 39.*

DORCAS was a Christian woman, who abode at Joppa, who was very benevolent to the poor, and who spent much of her time in useful employments for the good of others. She was a sister of charity, whose case has deserved a record in the word of God. She sickened and died, and was raised to life by the prayers of Peter, who knew her well, and who had often experienced her bounty. She was a working Christian, who delighted far more to secure the good of others

than to seek her own ease and gratification, and who endeared herself to all who loved the Lord in those days.

Without dwelling on the case of Dorcas, we take her as an illustration of a large class of noble women who are found in the world, who are making great sacrifices for the glory of God and the souls of the lost. They are often humble in life, sad at heart, and despised by the world. They live unknown to fame, for their deeds are quiet, and their course is often obscure.

The Romish church has its Sisters of Charity. They are women whom disappointment or sin has driven from the world, and they have devoted their lives to retirement, solitude, and charity. Though convent life doubtless leads to the foulest wrongs, there are many of the Romish Sisters of Charity whose hearts are alive to the highest impulses of goodness, and whose deeds are worthy to be recorded in the annals of the church. The Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul are known all over the world for their humble, unostentatious goodness and charity. Their lives are pure, their deportment gentle, and their deeds heavenly.

But there is a larger class, a purer body of women, sisters of charity, who live in the world, and strive to save it—mothers and daughters, wives and sisters, who love God, and the suffering

poor. The Protestant sister of charity has no pharisaic title, no sounding name ; she wears no nunnish habit, nor do the cross, and beads, and skull, dangle from her waist ; but she goes forth alone, weeping for the woes of the living throng, saying to those who ask her of her dead, —

“ Better that those for whom I weep
Were lying in their graves asleep !
O, no ! I weep not for *the dead* ;
My tears are for *the living* shed ! ”

HARRIET NEWELL and ANN H. JUDSON represent one class of these sisters of charity — the missionary sisterhood. Long ere the calls of the world had awakened the slumbering church, those gentle women resolved to forsake home, and friends, and native land, to go out amid untold and undêscribed dangers, to do all they could to save the heathen world from death. It was not romance that led them ; it was not a love of novelty that inspired them. They went forth with high, pure motives, and sublime conceptions of what is duty. One soon fell a victim to her noble heroism, and found a grave on heathen soil ; the other lived long, to suffer and labor for the lost ; but both are noble in their lives and deaths. Mrs. Judson, in her voluminous correspondence, gives us glimpses into the beauty and self-sacrifice of

her spirit. Before her *real* sorrows began, she wrote to her friends at home, "Not more refreshing to the thirsty lips of the sons of Afric is the cooling stream, not more luxurious to the meagre, half-starved, native Andaman is a morsel of food, than your letters to our weary and almost famished social feelings. Two long years and a half had elapsed since we left our native country, without our hearing one word from any of our American friends. Thirteen months of this have been spent in the cruel, avaricious, benighted country of Burmah, without a single Christian friend, or female companion of any kind."

And ere long, on her poor, defenceless head fell the bitter storm of persecution; but she did not falter, or turn back. She followed her husband to prison and torture, speaking all the way the words of life to the heathen crowds. When urged to remain in this country, to which she once returned, to regain her health, she replied, —

"The sultry climes of India I still choose;
There would I toil, and sinners' bonds unloose;
There would I live, and spend my latest breath,
And in my Jesus' service meet a stingless death."

ELIZABETH, wife of John Bunyan, is the representative of another class of noble women. She

appeared in open court as her husband's advocate, and beautifully vindicated his course. We are told, "that although Elizabeth stands alone among her sex as an advocate, yet there never was offered a more eloquent and unsophisticated defence than that which she made on behalf of her husband. She first of all had the courage to appear before the House of Lords, to ask the Supreme Court of Appeals to relax the rigors of a persecuting law. Their lordships, it is said, rudely told her to go to the judges of the assize who had condemned her husband; and without fail she did so."

The particulars of her spirited defence of her husband, are thus given to us: At the assize court Sir Matthew Hale presided, and he was accompanied by Mr. Justice Twisden, a magistrate of ferocious temperament, whose countenance and demeanor strangely contrasted with the mildness and placidity of the lord chief justice. We are indebted to John Bunyan himself for a description of the conduct of Judge Twisden on this memorable occasion. He says, "Judge Twisden snapped at my poor wife, Elizabeth, and angrily told her that her husband was a convicted person, and could not be released unless he would promise to preach no more."

But Elizabeth, however, much as she loved her

husband, was more enamoured of the gospel ; and she gave the court to understand that her husband could not purchase freedom at the expense of keeping silence about the mercy and compassion of God.

“ It is false,” continued Elizabeth, “ to say that he has done wrong ; for at the meetings where they preached, they had God’s presence with them.”

“ Will he leave off preaching ?” roared Twisden.

“ My lord,” said Elizabeth, “ he dares not leave off preaching as long as he can speak. But, my lords,” she proceeded, with tears in her eyes, “ just consider that we have four small children, one of them blind, and all of them have nothing to live upon, while the father is in prison, but the charity of Christian people. O my lords, I myself *’smayed* at the news, when my husband was apprehended, and being but young, and unaccustomed to such things, I fell in labor, and was delivered of a dead child.”

This was too much for Sir Matthew Hale, who now interposed, with the ejaculation, “ Alas, poor woman !” He then inquired what was her husband’s calling.

“ A tinker, please you, my lord,” said his wife ; “ and because he is a tinker, and a poor man, he

is despised, and cannot have justice." Law is stronger than tears, and the lord chief justice told her that her husband had broken it; he told her that there was only one person in the realm who could pardon her husband, and that person was the king. But how was the broken-hearted wife of a tinker to find her way to the footstool of a monarch? "Alas, poor woman!" he said, "I am sorry for your pitiable case."

"Elizabeth now became convinced how vain it was to expect justice and mercy from an earthly tribunal, and with an heroic glory which only can be found in the annals of the Christian faith, she pointed to her tears as she departed, and uttered words which never should die as long as the English language exists.

" 'See these tears,' said she; 'but I do not weep for myself. I weep for you, when I think what an account such poor creatures as you will have to give at the coming of the Lord.'

"This scene took place, we will add, not only before John Bunyan was known as the author of a book, but before he had even conceived the outline of his 'Pilgrim's Progress.' He was kept in jail in order that he might not preach; but by this persecution he was enabled to write a book in his prison cell, which has preached to England for many generations, and which will edify and enlighten the world to the remotest posterity."

MARGARET WINTHROP, wife of the first governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, is the representative of another class of sisters of charity — that class whose labors lie at home, and who endeavor to make home lovely. There is heroism sometimes in keeping from the world, in shunning society, and devoting one's self to the great work of making others happy there. Such a heroine was the wife of John Winthrop, who found amid the cares of state a meek, pious helper in his wife. She went on no mission to the heathen; she appeared as no advocate at the bar; but she was a sweet, gentle sister of charity. She wrote to her husband thus: "It is your love that conceives the best, and makes all things seem better than they are. I wish that I might always please thee, and that those comforts which we have in each other may be daily increased, as far as they be pleasing to God. I will use the speech to thee that Abigail did to David: 'I will be a servant to wash the feet of my lord.' I will do any service wherein I may please my good husband. I confess I cannot do enough for thee; but thou art pleased to accept the will for the deed, and rest contented.

"I have many reasons to make me love thee; wherefore I will name two: first, because thou lovest God; and secondly, because thou lovest

me. If these two were wanting, all the rest would be eclipsed. But I must leave this discourse, and go about my household affairs. I am a bad housewife to be so long from them ; but I must needs borrow a little time to talk with thee, my sweetheart." Ah, the great world pays its homage to the sisters of charity who visit prisons, who go to India, who appear as reformers, and publicly do good ; but the "home angels" who care to bless them? And yet they often show nobler traits of character, and develop higher excellences, than are ever demanded on the part of public actors.

We have recently read of a woman who exhibited heroism worthy of any cause. The story is this: "A worldly man was with some friends in a coffee house. Wine had inflamed the heads and loosened the tongues of the guests. Each sketched the character of his wife, and enumerated her defects, as well as her good qualities. 'As to mine,' said our worldling, 'all that I could say in her praise would fall far below the truth. My wife unites all the virtues, all the amiable qualities, which I can desire. She would be perfect, if she were not a Methodist. But her piety gives her no ill humor. Nothing disturbs her equanimity ; nothing irritates her, nor renders her impatient. I might go with you, gentlemen,

at midnight, and ask her to get up and serve us with a supper, and she would not show the least discontent. She would do the honors of the table with as much assiduity as if I had brought loved and long-expected guests.'

" 'Well, then, let us put your wife to the proof,' said some of the company.

" A considerable bet was made. The husband agreed to the proposal, and our wine drinkers, forgetting all propriety, went, in the middle of the night, to invade with their noisy mirth the peaceful dwelling of the humble Christian.

" 'Where is my wife?' asked the master of the house, of the servant who opened the door.

" 'Sir, she is asleep long ago.'

" 'Go wake her, and tell her to prepare supper for me and my friends.'

" The wife, obedient to the call of her husband, quickly made her toilet, met the strangers, and received them in the most gracious manner. 'Fortunately,' said she, 'I have some provisions in my house, and in a few minutes supper will be ready.'

" The table was spread, and the repast served. The pious lady did the honors of the table with perfect good will, and constantly bestowed upon her guests the most polite attention.

" This was too much for our drinkers. They

could not help admiring such extraordinary equanimity. One of them (the soberest in the company) spoke, when the dessert was brought in, and said, 'Madam, your politeness amazes us. Our sudden appearance in your house at so unseasonable an hour is owing to a wager. We have lost it, and we do not complain. But tell us, how is it possible that you, a pious person, should treat with so much kindness persons whose conduct you cannot approve?'

" 'Gentlemen,' she replied, 'when we were married, my husband and myself, we both lived in dissipation. Since that time, it has pleased the Lord to convert me to himself. My husband, on the contrary, continues to go on in the ways of worldliness. I tremble for his future state. If he should die now, he would need to be pitied. As it is not possible for me to save him from that punishment which awaits him in the world to come, if he is not converted, I must apply myself at least to render his present life as agreeable as possible.' "

It requires more grace to do a deed like this, than it does to go out and distribute tracts from night to morn; and such a woman is worthy of exalted praise.

BETTINA, the child-poet of Goethe's dreams, is the representative of still another class of women,

who strive to make the world better, and thus become sisters of charity. Trained in the school of sorrow, endowed with a large soul, and brought into correspondence with wise men, poets, artists, and philosophers, Bettina commenced her love-mission when only sixteen years of age; and so earnest were her early pleas for the poor and the oppressed, that her patrons feared to recognize her, and alone she called on princes to ameliorate the condition of their subjects. Goethe early learned to love the simple child for the truth and beauty of her character.

That woman must be indeed a sister of charity who can find her way to the heart of such a genius as Goethe, enter it as into a temple, and arrange the altar service to suit her own will, and bow upon the bosom of her sublime resolve, the priest of poetry and reason, until he acknowledges her supremacy over him. Goethe writes to her in all the fervor of his soul, and each sentence shows how much she has secured influence over him: "Thou art a sweet-minded child; I read thy dear letters with inward pleasure, and shall surely always read them again with the same enjoyment. Thy pictures of what has happened to thee, with all inward feelings of tenderness, and what thy witty demon inspires thee with, are real original sketches, which, in the

midst of more serious occupations, cannot be denied their high interest; take it, therefore, as a hearty truth, when I thank thee for them. Preserve thy confidence in me, and let it, if possible, increase. Thou wilt always be and remain to me what thou now art. How can one requite thee, except by being willing to be enriched with all thy good gifts? Thou thyself knowest how much thou art to my mother; her letters overflow with praise and love. Continue to dedicate lovely monuments of remembrance to the fleeting moments of thy good fortune. I cannot promise thee that I will not presume to work out themes so high-gifted and full of life, if they still speak as truly and warmly to the heart."

And Bettina replies to Goethe in the same pure, ethereal strain, tinged, perhaps, with the transcendental hues of the times and scenes, but a true heroine every where, making a good and great man better and greater, from her guileless lispings: "Talent strikes conviction, but genius does not convince; to whom it is imparted, it gives forebodings of the immeasurable and infinite, while talent sets certain limits, and so, because it is understood, is also maintained.

"The infinite in the finite — genius in every art is music. In itself it is the soul, when it touches tenderly; but when it masters this affection, then

it is spirit which warms, nourishes, bears, and reproduces the own soul — and, therefore, we perceive music ; otherwise the sensual ear would not hear it, but only the spiritual ; and thus every art is the body of music, which is the soul of every art ; and so is music, too, the soul of love, which also answers not for its working ; for it is the contact of divine with human. Love expresses nothing through itself, but that it is sunk in harmony. Love is fluid ; it flows in its own element, and that element is harmony.

* * * * *

“The moon is shining high above the hills, the clouds drive over like herds. I have already stood a while at the windows, and looked at the chasing and driving above. Dear Goethe, good Goethe, I am alone ; it has raised me out of myself, up to thee ! Like a new-born babe, must I nurse this love between us ; beautiful butterflies balance themselves upon the flowers which I have planted about its cradle ; golden fables adorn its dreams ; I joke and play with it ; I try every stratagem in its favor. But you rule it without trouble, by the noble harmony of your mind ; with you there is no need of tender expressions or protestations. While I take care of each moment of the present, a power of blessing goes forth from you, which reaches beyond all sense, and above all the world.”

LUCRETIA MOTT represents another class of sisters of charity. Some may doubt the propriety of her appearance as a public lecturer, but none can withhold the admiration we always feel for an estimable character. Educated as a Quaker, Mrs. Mott has arrived at an advanced age, an earnest pleader in many a noble cause. Her pen and her voice have been devoted, with woman's holy ardor, to the benefit of others. "My sympathy," she says, "was early enlisted for the poor slave, by the reading books in our schools depicting his wrongs and sufferings, and the pictures and representations by Thomas Clarkson, exhibiting the slave ship, the middle passage, &c. The ministry of Elias Hicks and others on this subject, as well as their example in refusing the products of the unrequited bondman's labor, awakened a strong feeling in my heart."

She saw and felt the necessity of a change in the condition of her own sex, and remarks, "The unequal condition of woman with man also early impressed my mind. Learning, while at school, that the charge for the education of girls was the same as that for boys, and that, when they became teachers, women received only half as much as men for their services, the injustice of this distinction was so apparent, that I resolved to claim for my sex all that an impartial Creator had be-

stowed, which, by custom and a perverted application of the Scriptures, had been wrested from woman."

Nor, with all our scruples as to the duty of a woman to preach, can we do otherwise than respect the sincere conviction that she should lift up her voice for the truth and the life. "At twenty-five years of age," she says, "surrounded with a little family and many cares, I still felt called to a more public life of devotion to duty, and engaged in the ministry in our society. I received every encouragement from those in authority until the event of a separation among us, in 1827, when my convictions led me to adhere to the sufficiency of the *light within*, resting on 'truth as authority,' rather than 'taking authority for truth.' I searched the Scriptures daily, and often found the text would bear a wholly different construction from that which was pressed upon our acceptance. Being a nonconformist to the ordinances and rituals of the professed church, duty led me to hold up the insufficiency of all these, including Sabbath day observance, as the proper test of the Christian character, and that only 'he that *doeth* righteousness is righteous.' The practical life, then, being the highest evidence of a sound faith, I have felt a far greater interest in the moral movements of our age than in any theological discussion."

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE is the representative of another class of women. Her praise has gone forth into all the world. And yet there was one, behind her, who is worthy of as much honor. The mother who trains her daughter to a noble life, and who impresses on her young mind the lessons of goodness, is no less a sister of mercy than the daughter who goes forth to Crimean wretchedness, and on plains strewed with death binds up the wounded, and gives water to the dying. We think the secret of the heroic deeds of Florence Nightingale will be found in the fact communicated in the following passage, from the pen of one able to appreciate real greatness: "The world has regarded with admiration the self-sacrificing devotion of this noble-hearted English woman to the sick and wounded soldiers in the Crimea. Facts which have recently appeared, respecting her early history, show that her character was the result of the benevolent training in which she was reared, and furnish great encouragement to parents, who, by precept and example, would bring up their children to lives of usefulness.

"Though reared in the midst of wealth and luxury, she was accustomed, from her earliest childhood, to see the efforts of her parents directed to the relief and education of the poor. Her

early life was passed on the two large estates of her family, in the counties of Hampshire and Derbyshire, in close contact with the peasantry, whom her benevolent parents regarded more than their wealthy acquaintances. It was the daily duty of Florence and her sister to visit the cottages of the poor, carrying comforts and delicacies to the invalids, or a book to read to the old and infirm; and the schools which their father and mother had established in the neighboring villages came under the care of the daughters, as they grew up."

The mother, with whom lies the secret of beautiful deeds, is forgotten; the daughter, the actor, the exponent of a mother's principles, will never be forgotten. And worthy is she of being remembered. "Her deeds of love," as one says, "are among the few redeeming features of the war in the East, and her memory will be preserved and cherished when that of the captains and warriors, whose names are written in blood, is forgotten."

That all women could be what Florence Nightingale is, cannot be affirmed. It requires the utmost nobility of soul, nourished by culture of the holiest order, and the most sacred and absorbing faith. She was a true heroine — how nobly different from Joan of Arc! The story of Flor-

ence is told by one who has seen her; in these few words: " Her attention was turned to the condition of the sick poor in the hospitals, and having heard of the institution for training nurses, at Kaiserswerth, in Prussia, she visited it, and there employed herself in nursing the sick, witnessing and assisting at operations, and going through a course of medical study. Returning to England with the valuable experience thus acquired, she accepted the office of matron of a ladies' hospital in London, which by her unwearied exertions she soon raised from a lingering state to one of efficiency and great usefulness. She was actively engaged in these self-sacrificing toils when the war with Russia broke out, and some members of the government, knowing her capabilities, requested her to take the office of superintendent of the nursing department, which, with little hesitation, she accepted. All are familiar with her self-denying and arduous labors in the hospitals of Scutari, and on the heights of Balaklava, bringing order and comfort out of the chaos of mismanagement she found, and calling forth the gratitude and reverence of the sick soldiers, whose wants she so tenderly alleviated, and whose habits and morals she was so successful in improving.

" Returning to England, she was greeted with

a universal outburst of respect and love ; but she shrinks from all marks of public distinction, preferring even to employ the large sums of money, given as a testimonial of the public appreciation of her services, in founding and supporting an institution for the better training of nurses."

Holy, happy woman ! Worthy to stand with Mary and Martha, who entertained our Lord himself, and fit companion of the noble sisters of mercy, who have loved to do good better than life itself. Such women make us more like our Saviour. They seem to elevate and adorn our nature ; they are God-gifts, and when they die here, will live sweeter and purer on high.

"I thank thee, blessed God, for these rich gifts,
Whereby my spirit unto thee is drawn !
I thank thee that the loveliness of earth
Higher than earth can raise me ! Are not these
But germs of things unperishing, that bloom
Beside th'immortal streams ? Shall I not find
The lily of the field, the Saviour's flower,
In the clear, starry light of angel eyes
A thousand fold more glorious ?"

Florence Nightingale may not be comely in person — of that we know nothing. But all know that she has a *beautiful soul*, which is infinitely better than a beautiful face. That excellent work, which all ladies should read with care, — the *Mother's Journal*, — draws a contrast be-

tween a beautiful *face* and a beautiful *soul*; between a beautiful *woman* and a beautiful *disciple*; one having the beauty of person, and one the beauty of the heart. How true it is, that there are many beautiful women who are deformed in soul, and corrupt or inefficient in principle! How true, how striking, how sad, yet how beautiful, the contrast presented here! "Emily was a beautiful disciple. All who knew her thought so; and all who spoke of her said, 'What an excellent, good girl Emily is! what an agreeable girl! How active she is in the church, for a young disciple! She is a lovely girl.'

"Now, what was it that made Emily a beautiful disciple? No one called her a beautiful girl, though she had a sweet expression of countenance, and her whole appearance was exceedingly agreeable. Nor did she wear beautiful clothing, though she was always well dressed, very neatly, and in good taste. Yet her pastor said, 'Emily is a beautiful young disciple.' And so said the old members of the church; so said the poor, and the sick, and the neglected; so said the superintendent of the Sabbath school, and many of the poor, ragged little children that she had sought out.

"Emily did not wear as rich raiment as many others that worshipped in the same congregation

with her ; nor did she pay as much attention to, or seem to think as much of, what she did wear as many others. But she had paid especial attention to one kind of clothing, and the way of wearing it, which many greatly neglected, but which had so beautified her that all admired and praised her. She had an old book of fashions that she had carefully studied — studied it every day, and clothed herself according to its styles. It was not Godey's, nor Graham's, nor the latest Paris. True, the book was old, and the styles were old, and some young ladies thought them not in good taste ; but all agreed that Emily looked beautiful in them. They were simple and cheap, and still better, they were the same the whole year round.

“ And this was the rule and instruction of Emily's book, on the subject of personal decoration : ‘ Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on 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.’ Now, this was Emily's standard. And it is sad to think that the times and the styles have so changed as to make this fashion of dress and adornment so little valued and practised by society ; especially when it is declared that God so highly esteems and prizes it.

“ Roselle worshipped in the same congregation, and was a member of the same church with Emily. Roselle was a very good girl, and a fine young lady. Roselle was sometimes called beautiful.

“ ‘ What beautiful girl was that came into church just as they were singing the second time, and sat in the middle aisle, about half way up ? ’ asked a stranger, at the close of service. That was Roselle. She was splendidly dressed, had a fine form, and could not fail to attract attention, wherever she went. But did you notice that girl sitting in range of her, back near the door, just under the gallery ? No, of course you would not. She came in before service commenced, and took a seat back. Her dress would attract no attention, except for its plainness. The pastor saw her ; how eagerly she listened to every word of the discourse ; how the smile of faith and hope beamed upon her countenance as he spoke of the rest that remaineth. That was Emily. The stranger that sat in the pulpit also noticed her — noticed them both. Roselle was a beautiful *girl* ; Emily was a beautiful *disciple*.

“ Roselle came into church late, just before the text was named, holding in her hand a rich fan, and, sweeping up the aisle with a queenly step, attracted some envious glances, even in the house

of God ; had it been in the drawing room, or the concert room, in the halls of Newport, or of Saratoga, she would have commanded universal admiration.

“ Emily came in before the first singing, holding in her hand a small Bible and a question book, for she had just come from the Sabbath school. Roselle does not attend the Sabbath school. Emily brought in with her two or three little children from the school, that had no one else to look after them ; and when service was over, she was inquiring of a little girl about her sick mother, and then trying to persuade a larger girl to attend the Bible class.

“ ‘ How much good your sermon did me this morning ! ’ said Emily to her pastor, as he came down the aisle, and extended his hand to her. What a thrill of delight those words sent through his heart ; for that morning he had felt unusually discouraged and depressed, had severely condemned himself, and thought his preaching was doing no good. Roselle said, when she reached home, she thought ‘ our minister was unusually dull this morning. ’ Indeed, she could recollect but very little of the discourse, but seemed to have a very distinct recollection of, and spoke with great earnestness respecting, several new hats and cloaks which she observed at church.

“ Poor old Mrs. Drake was sick — very sick, and very poor. One of the ladies asked alms of Roselle for her, and asked her if she would not call and see Mrs. Drake, and cheer her spirits. Roselle gave the money, for she had really a generous heart. ‘ O my ! ’ she said, ‘ I couldn’t think of going into a sick room. I should be sure to get sick myself ; and I dislike so much to go into sick rooms ! ’ But when the pastor called on old Mrs. Drake, she said, ‘ Miss Emily does comfort me so much ! She comes in almost every day to see me ; and she sews for me, and then she reads the Bible to me, and sings so sweetly, “ Jesus, refuge of my soul.” I enjoy it so much ! And she told me all over your beautiful sermon Sunday morning. It did comfort me so. I wanted to be with you in the sanctuary, but I couldn’t.’ ”

The honored name of DOROTHEA L. DIX may be mentioned among the sisters of charity worthy of enduring praise. Her field of labor, self-chosen, was different from that occupied by the missionary or the mother. She sought the good of others in ways from which many shrink, and into which they never direct their steps. Mrs. Hale tells us that “ Miss Dix prepared a number of books for children, among which were “ Conversations about Common Things,” “ Alice and Ruth,” “ Evening Hours,” and several others. Her name was not given to any of her works,

but we allude to them to show that a refined literary taste and genius are compatible with the most active philanthropy, even when compelled to seek its objects through researches that are both painful and terrible.

“The declining health of Miss Dix made a change necessary; and as, by the decease of her relative, she had been left sufficiently provided for to render her own exertions unnecessary for herself, she gave up her school in 1834, and went to Europe. In Liverpool, she was confined by a long and dangerous illness; but notwithstanding her weak condition, she gained, while abroad, much valuable information, particularly about charitable institutions. In 1837 she returned to Boston, and soon commenced visiting the poor-house and houses of refuge for the unfortunate. She also became interested for the boys in the naval asylum. Then she went to the prisons and lunatic asylums; every where seeking to ameliorate suffering and instruct the ignorant. In this course of benevolence she was encouraged by her particular friend, and, we believe, pastor, the Rev. William E. Channing, of whose two children she had at one time been the governess. For about ten years, or since 1841, Miss Dix has given her thoughts, time, and influence, to ameliorate the condition of poor lunatics, and to persuade the public to furnish suitable asylums; also to im-

prove the moral discipline of prisons and places of confinement for criminals. For this purpose she has visited every state in the Union, except one, this side of the Rocky Mountains, travelling, probably, a number of miles which would three times circle the globe. Every where seeking out intelligent and benevolent men, she has endeavored to infuse into their hearts the enthusiasm that kindled her own. Visiting the poorhouses, the prisons, the places of confinement for the insane, she has learned their condition, pleaded their cause, and materially incited the exertions of individuals and communities." Thus has she been a sister of charity, an angel of mercy.

How noble such a woman appears, going from hovel to hovel, from prison to prison, visiting the poor only to do them good; visiting the rich only to enlist their sympathies, and draw out their aid in behalf of suffering humanity! She was often repulsed, but her heart held steadily, bravely on, realizing that

“There is a flower, when trampled on,
Doth still more richly bloom,
And even to its bitterest foe
Gives forth its sweet perfume.
The rose that's crushed and shattered
Doth on the breeze bestow
A fairer scent, that further goes,
Even for the cruel blow.”

ELIZABETH FRY also has an enduring name among the women who have grown rich in holy deeds. Gifted, beautiful, and beloved, she lived a beautiful life, and left behind her a fragrant memory. Her record is best given in the language of one of those forlorn sisters whom she met at Newgate: the incident will show how beautiful the soul of such a woman must have been, who could produce an impression so soft and true on a heart so hard and obdurate. The record of Mrs. Fry is exceedingly saint-like. The narrative to which we refer is given by a poor, deluded Roman Catholic, whose prejudices were conquered, whose heart was reached, by kindness and sympathy. "We looked upon her," says this poor creature, "with doubt; and this fear on our part made her do less among us than she otherwise would; for, bad as we were, we looked upon it as the last fall to give up our faith. Now, she had a remarkable way about her—a sort of speaking that you could hardly help listening to, whether you would or no; for she was not only good, but downright clever. Well, just to avoid listening when she was speaking or reading, I learned to count twelve backward and onward, so that my mind would be quite taken up; and I actually went on till I could thus count six hundred with great ease. It was a pity we had such

a dread. Well, she had a way of speaking to one of us alone, and I was anxious to shuffle this lecture; the fact was, I expected she would put many questions, and, as I respected her character too much altogether to tell her a lie, I kept from the sermon, as we in derision used to call it. But when she was taking leave of us, she just called me on one side, saying she would like to speak a few words to me. 'So,' says I to myself, 'caught at last!' Well, she came close to me, and, looking at me in a very solemn sort of a way, she laid her hands upon my shoulders, and gave me a pressure that told that she felt for me; her thumbs were set firm and hard on my shoulders, and yet her fingers seemed to have a feeling of kindness for me. But it was no lecture she gave me; all she said was, 'Let not thine eyes covet.' No other words passed her lips; but then her voice was solemn and awful, kind as a mother's, yet just like a judge.

"Well, when I got to the colony, I went on right enough for a time; but one day I was looking into a work box belonging to my mistress, and the gold thimble tempted me. It was on my finger and in my pocket in an instant; and just as I was going to shut down the box lid, as sure as I am telling you, I felt Mrs. Fry's thumbs on my shoulders—the gentle, pleading touch of her

fingers. I looked about me, threw down the thimble, and trembled with terror to find I was alone in the room. Careless, insolent, and bad enough, I became often in the factory. Well, do you see, at night we used to amuse each other by telling our tricks, urging one another on in vice. Among us we had one uncommon bright girl, a first rate mimic, and she used to make us roar with laughter. Well, this fun had been going on for many weeks; she had gone through most of her characters, from the governor to the turnkey, when she commenced taking off Parson Cowper and Father Therry. Some way it did not take; so she went back to Newgate, and came to Mrs. Fry, to the very life; but it would not do; we did not seem to enjoy it; there was no fun for us. So then she began about the ship's leaving, and our mothers crying, and begging us to turn over a new leaf; and then, in a mimicking, jesting sport, she sobbed, and bade us good by. Well, how it happened I know not, but one after the other we began to cry; and 'Stay, stay! not my mother,' said one. 'Let Mrs. Fry alone. Father Therry must not be brought here, nor Parson Cowper; stay, stay.' Well, she did not stop; but tears were shed the whole of that night. Every thing had been tried with me. Good people had sought in vain to convince me of my evil

ways; but that girl's *ridicule of my mother I could not stand*. Her grief was brought home to me, and not to me alone, but to many. I do believe that night was a great blessing to many. I was so unhappy, that the next day I tried to get out of sight to pray; and when I got a hiding place, I found three girls on their knees. We comforted each other; *and then we spoke of our mothers*. Mine was dead. She left this world believing me past hope; but the picture of her grief made me earnest in search of that peace which endureth forever."

Few women have a nobler monument than is here given of Mrs. Fry, by one who scorned her instructions, and turned a deaf ear to all her warnings. Such a woman belongs to a holy sisterhood, and deserves a high enrolment among the noblest sisters of charity.

The world has yet to learn what true nobility is. It is not found in kingly palaces alone, but true-hearted men and women have shown what real greatness means. Mrs. Fry has a nobler character than the gilded women who have shared imperial thrones. She has a better name and fame than Victoria or Eugenia. Wealth and station do not constitute real greatness. It takes something more to make a man; infinitely more to make a woman.

“What is noble? To inherit
 Wealth, estate, and proud degree?
 There must be some other merit
 Higher yet than these for me.
 Something greater far must enter
 Into life's majestic span,
 Fitted to create and centre
 True nobility in man.

“What is noble? 'Tis the finer
 Portion of our mind and heart;
 Linked to something still diviner
 Than mere language can impart;
 Ever prompting, ever seeing
 Some improvement yet to plan,
 To uplift our fellow-being,
 And, like man, to feel for man.

“What is noble? Is the sabre
 Nobler than the humble spade?
 There's a dignity in labor
 Truer than e'er pomp arrayed.
 He who seeks the mind's improvement
 Aids the world in aiding mind:
 Every great commanding movement
 Serves not one, but all mankind.”

REBECCA EATON is a name that deserves to be widely known and highly honored. It belonged to one who has lately been laid beneath the sod, and whose spirit but recently fled to join the loved ones on high. She chose a different field of Christian labor from any of the women we have mentioned. Her life-work consisted in holy endeavors to raise the fallen women of the New

England metropolis ; and many a poor, friendless girl, deceived and lost, has she found and led back to virtue and to God. It is not our purpose in these sketches to act the part of the biographer ; else many a beautiful deed in the life of Miss Eaton might be described. As the editress of the "Friend of Virtue," and the leader in moral reform movements, she is well known, and many a poor, wretched girl has reformed through her influence and holy endeavors. Her work was with the fallen ones of her own sex, and nobly did she perform it. She went out into the streets of Boston to win the lost.

This work is by many women despised and neglected. If a sister falls, all shrink from her as from a contamination worse than death, and the poor girl, who might have been saved, is driven to madness and despair. O, how many a loved one is wrecked entirely by unkindness ! Deceived, but repentant, guilty, but longing for virtue, she finds none to say kind words, or do for her a kind act. Who has not seen such a person, beautiful even in her guilt and wretchedness ?

"In the crowded street I met her,
Just as twilight veiled the sky,
Never, never to forget her,
And the tear drops in her eye.

“Fair as summer’s fairest blossom,
 Played the curls upon her brow,
 While beneath them heaved a bosom
 Whose deep anguish thrills me now.”

If some friendly hand was outstretched, the lost one might be saved; but priest and Levite pass by on the other side, and ere long a sad story of suicide or utter abandonment to vice. The hearts of parents break as they see the sad wreck of their child, and hail her death with pleasure — a death that is better than such a life.

“Bitter, bitter days they bear it,
 Grief the world may never know,
 Till the bier, with sable o’er it,
 Ease their burden here below.”

The story is told, and the sad case is a warning to those who heed it not, while only here and there is one to stop and ask —

“O, my God, is this a story,
 Or a sight for every day?
 This a part of human glory?
 Let the tongue of ages say!”

Miss Eaton has honorably devoted herself to the work of saving from utter destruction this class of sinning, suffering women; and though almost alone, she has toiled and struggled to

accomplish the object. And how much such missionaries of salvation are needed! The class which she endeavored to save is fearfully large, as we have abundant reason to fear. Multitudes of young women are growing up for vice and degradation. What one says of a great central city is true, to a greater or less degree, of all our cities: "One of the most pitiable and painful sights in this city is the thousand and one bare-footed, filthy, and ragged children, plying old brooms at the street crossings in all stormy weather. Running among the omnibuses and carriages, they perform the better part of what street cleaning is done, — to the shame of our authorities be it said, — and their remuneration consists of the few pennies pedestrians drop in their palms. Hundreds of these young female unfortunates may be counted in New York on any rainy day; for they are chiefly girls, most of them under ten years of age, but many of them twelve, fourteen, and still older. Yet they have boy associates enough to educate them in all the vulgarity and viciousness of their sex; and between their own depravity, ingrained in them by a life almost from infancy in the streets, and that caught from their male companions, they present a picture of debasement which might delight a fiend bent on the annihilation of humanity.

“Low slang, obscenity, and blasphemy of the coarsest kind is their current language from morning till night. Any good citizen, or Christian, passing down Broadway, if he is not in such haste to reach Wall Street that he can neither see nor hear beyond his ruling thought, — money making, — may stop at any hour of a stormy day, and be convinced that we do not exaggerate. When the night comes, these children scatter to their haunts — where? Some to homes as filthy as the streets they have been sweeping, where drunken fathers and mothers eagerly seize the earnings of their children’s sin and shame, to prolong their beastly orgies; but many of them, already reckless of home, seek dens of vice.

“The grand result is a hideous and loathsome humor on the rising generation, which spreads itself far wider and deeper, by contact and example, than appears on the surface. Other children, not yet driven by brutal parents, nor by want or depraved instinct, to herd with the street sweepers, learn to imitate their slang, and are soon led into their grossest vices. There are plenty of full-grown brutes, in the shape of men, who may be found in the haunts resorted to by these girls, and who encourage them by every art in their life of deformity. The details which any missionary might pick up in one day and night would be

too shocking to repeat. Not one in the thousand of our population has the smallest conception of the disgusting scenes enacted by these deformed images of God in this great city.”

And who shall save the lost? In her elevated work, Rebecca Eaton has fallen, as noble a sister of charity as ever made the earth resound with deeds of benevolence; as noble a spirit as that of Dorothea Dix or Florence Nightingale.

We have presented this group of noble women, each the representative of a distinct class, and in each case where it was possible, allowed them to speak for themselves, as the best method of giving a glimpse of the character of each, and presenting in their own language, or that of some one conversant with them, the beautiful moral features for which they were each distinguished.

The virtues of these women still live. Their example has an influence on the world, and as they depart to their reward, one after another, new heroines arise to fill their places. We sometimes bewail the dead, as if goodness and greatness were buried with them. But all that is great and good survives, and has an influence, and we in our turn shall live for others.

" All of the past is living still,
 All that is good and true ;
 The rest hath perished, and it did
 Deserve to perish, too.
 The world rolls ever round and round,
 And time rolls ever by ;
 And the wrong is ever rooted up,
 But the TRUTH *doth never die!*"

Our great duty in this life is to reproduce the good lives and deeds of others in our own lives and deeds ; to make the world better by our having lived in it ; to be reformers where abuses exist and wrongs prevail. The world is an on-moving world, and though some men resist its progress, they are borne along upon its beautiful swell towards a better state. There are enemies of progress ; they see no good in the world's convulsions. A writer in a popular journal, while opposing the introduction of the vaccine inoculation, remarked, " that he was determined to go to church through the same dirty road where his ancestors trudged before him ; that if his ancestors had worshipped Beelzebub, he would have worshipped Beelzebub also ; that he wished to practise physic as he always had practised it ; and that he was a sworn enemy to *innovation in religion, politics, and physic.*"

But such a man is deriving his chief blessings from these innovations ; they minister to his com-

fort, and yield him pleasure. Change has come — change for the better ; and though wrong still lives, and the world is still in darkness, yet the watcher is heard saying, “The morning cometh.”

O, how true it is that the true life-lessons are in many cases yet to be learned ; that even our benevolence is to be purified, and our religion Christianized ! Woman has a mission still, and she will always have a work, till woe shall end and sorrow cease.

But how cold, selfish, and cruel many women seem, when compared with the noble sisters of charity here enumerated ! Buried in Russian sables, or decked in silks and satins, how many a woman turns from the poor with contempt, or allows her selfishness to follow her to the very altar of the church of God ! How characteristic is a circumstance recorded in a city paper recently, and how strikingly does it show how little heart some apparently devout people have ! It is said that “a young man, accompanied by two ladies, visited one of our fashionable churches, to hear a noted divine. Seats were assigned them by the gentlemanly sexton. Scarcely were they seated, when a woman, dressed in the height of fashion, entered the pew, and immediately knelt, joining in the prayer read by the pastor. She appeared to feel very uncomfortable, for some

reason, which afterwards appeared. The prayer being ended, she arose from her kneeling position, and said to the young man, 'If you please, won't you go out? This pew belongs to us.' Thereupon the gentleman and ladies immediately left, in search of a pew large enough to accommodate strangers."

And if a poor, woe-begone person enters the house of God, how few there are to open the pew door, and let him in! Selfishness follows the cold heart to the sanctuary, and locks the door, and bolts out the suffering ones who are starving for the bread of heaven. Nowhere does this selfishness appear so hideous as in church, when, in the presence of God, Dives sits with his foot on the neck of Lazarus. How striking the picture, drawn, it is said, by "one who could produce nothing impure, one who does not pray 'from a gold-clasped book,' but from a heart

' full of song,
And gratitude, upon her very lips' " !

How often is the picture realized in the midst of plenty and ease, and how often is the spirit displayed by those who boast of their good works and benevolent deeds! who have names high enrolled among those who claim to be public benefactors.

- “ A weary beggar, wandering up and down,
Helpless and homeless, worn by years of toil !
The lady turns aside with haughty frown,
Lest his coarse clothes her costly robes should soil.
- “ The lady sits within a cushioned pew,
And worships God with a complacent look,
And reads her prayers, with a selected few,
Not from her heart, but from a gold-clasped book.
- “ She hears the story of the ‘ meek of heart,’
Who walked amid earth’s poor with patient feet,
And bowed his head, for us, to death’s keen dart ;
Yet she forgets the wanderer in the street.
- “ The poor man lifts his toil-worn hand to heaven,
Standing alone and in the open air,
Voicelessly prays his sins may be forgiven ;
And He who sees the heart will heed his prayer.
- “ The God-filled pages of kind nature’s book
Lie open e’er to the unlettered poor ;
And, once revealed to man’s adoring look,
No clasp of gold will ever close them more.
- “ God looks not at the clothing which we wear ;
All must put off their garments at the tomb ;
The same sun shines on all, the same sweet air
Lifteth the beggar’s locks, the lady’s plume !
- “ A monument of costly marble shows
The place where sleeps the lady fair at last ;
But in a nameless grave, in calm repose,
Unknown, unloved, the beggar’s form is cast.
- “ Lone spot ! yet all the lady’s gems and gold
Were vain to buy an epitaph more fair
Than that by God’s own hand each spring unrolled
In flowery language ’bove the sleeper there ! ”

O that all the women of the world were "sisters of charity"! O that selfishness and sin were banished from our hearts, and from the world! that we might realize the true nobility of manhood, and the true beauty, dignity, and glory of womanhood!

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