

# WOMAN AND HER NEEDS.

BY

MRS. E. OAKES SMITH,

AUTHOR OF SINLESS CHILD, LOST ANGEL, ETC., ETC.

The soul is the essence of a man; and you cannot have the true man without  
his inclination.

SIR WALTER RALEIGH.

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THE AUTHOR.

## PREFACE.

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THE following pages were first presented to the public in a series of articles, through the New York Tribune. The writer had thought much and earnestly upon these and kindred subjects; and it had been her design to leave a work to be published after her death, in which the Great Contract, or Marriage, should be fully considered. This plan is probably superseded by the present work, and perhaps it is in better harmony with a courageous and frank character of mind, to present itself to the world while "in the flesh," and thus abide the issue, giving the public a tangible object upon which to expend its blows, rather than leaving it the discomfort of feeling its strength wasted in "thin air."

If the present volume is level with public opinion, it will probably sail on the full tide of success, prosperous in the immediate, to be forgotten in the future; if in oppo-

PREFACE.

sition thereto, whether justly or unjustly, it will be met with abuse; if below it, a silent Lethean current will float it tranquilly to oblivion. The writer has the subject much at heart, and in any or either of the above contingencies, dreads only the last.

September 15th, 1851.

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## WOMAN AND HER NEEDS.

## Chapter First.

Those who feel the pressure of evils are morally bound to seek redress—Our intuitions are to be trusted—Our institutions of a kind to challenge an intimate search into human rights on the part of women—Conventions—Woman an intelligent, distinct individual—The woman view.

"They who seek nothing but their own just liberty, *have always right to win it and to keep it*, whenever they have power, be the voices never so numerous that oppose it.—MILTON.

FROM the moment that an individual or a class of individuals, in any community, have become conscious of a series of grievances demanding redress, from that moment they are morally bound to make that conviction vital in action, and to do what in them lies to correct such abuse. Our nature is not such a tissue of lies, our intuitions are not so deceptive, that we need distrust the truth thus forced upon the life. Wherever the pang is felt, a wrong exists—the groan goes not forth from a glad heart, and he or she who has felt the iron of social wrong piercing into the soul, is the one to cast about and demand relief. The saintly patience so often preached is but another mode of protracting the world's misery; we wrong ourselves, and we roll onward the Juggernaut car that is to crush those who succeed us, when we supinely endure those evils which a strong purpose, an energetic will, and an unfaltering trust in the good might help us to redress.



Whatever difference of opinion may exist amongst us as to the *propriety* of the recent Conventions held in our Country, called "Woman's Rights," the fact stands by itself, a handwriting on the wall, proclaiming a sense of wrong, a sense of something demanding redress, and this is fact enough to *justify the movement* to all candid eyes. Indeed enough to render it praiseworthy. For one, I am glad to see that our Republic has produced a class of women, who, feeling the Need of a larger sphere and a better recognition, have that clearness of intellect and strength of purpose by which they go to work resolutely to solve the difficulty. They might stay at home and fret and dawdle; be miserable themselves and make all within their sphere miserable likewise; but instead of this, they meet and talk the matter over, devise plans, explain difficulties, rehearse social oppressions and political disabilities, in the hope of evolving something permanently good.

All this is well, and grows naturally from the progress of institutions like our own, in which opinions are fearlessly discussed, and all thought traced home to its source. It isn't in the nature of things that any class in our midst should be long indifferent to topics of general interest; far less that such should feel the pressure of evils without inquiring into the best means of abatement. When our Fathers planted themselves upon the firm base of human freedom, claimed the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, they might have foreseen that at some day their daughters would sift thoroughly their opinions and their consequences, and daringly challenge the same rights.

For myself, I may not sympathize with a Convention—I may not feel *that* the best mode of arriving at truth to my own mind—I may feel that its singleness of import would be lost to me while standing in the solid phalanx of associated inquiry; but these objections do not apply to the majority of minds, and I reverence their search in their own way, the many converging lights of many minds all bent upon the same point, even although I myself peer about with my solitary lantern.

These Conventions have called forth from the Press one grand jubilee of ridicule "from Dan even unto Beersheba," as if it were the funniest thing in the world for human beings to feel the evils oppressing themselves or others, and to look round for redress. It would seem as if Inquiry must always come under beaver and broadcloth—it must be mustachioed and bearded—and yet the graceful Greek made the quality feminine. Truth, too, is feminine, but then she must have a masculine exponent to the modern ear, or she becomes absurd. I do not exactly see how she should be so changed when needed for our sex, from what she is when performing good offices for the other. But enough of trifling. The state of things thus appearing in our own day is just the state we might have prophesied would take place at some time. We must meet it, recognize it, and help to direct it wisely. It argues great things for Woman, and through her for the world. We have *Needs* becoming more and more tangible and urgent, and now is the time to consider what they are.

There is a large class of our sex so well cared for,



"whom the winds of heaven are not allowed to visit too roughly," who are hemmed in by conventional forms, and by the appliances of wealth, till they can form no estimate of the sufferings of their less fortunate sisters. Perhaps I do wrong to say less fortunate, for suffering to a woman occupies the place of labor to a man, giving a breadth, depth, and fullness, not otherwise attained. Therefore let her who is called to suffer beware how she despises the cross which it implies; rather let her glory that she is accounted worthy to receive this testimony to the capabilities of her soul.

But there is, as I have said, a class unconscious of this bearing; delicate, amiable, lovely even; but limited and superficial. These follow the bent of their masculine friends and admirers, and lisp pretty ridicule about the folly of "Woman's Rights" and "Woman's Movements." These see no need of reform or change of any kind; indeed they are denied that comprehensiveness of thought by which they could hold the several parts of a subject in the mind, and see its bearings. Society is a sort of grown-up mystery which they pretend not to comprehend, supposing it to have gradually developed to its present size and shape from Adam and Eve, by natural gradation, like Church Bishops.

Then there is another class doomed to debasement, vice, labor of body and soul, in all their terrible manifestations. Daughters of suffering without its ennobling influence; too weak in thought, it may be, to discern the best good; or it may be too strong in passion to resist the allurements of the immediate; or it may

be ignorant only, they wake to the sad realities of life too late to find redress for its evils. These are the kind over whom infinite Pity would weep as it were drops of blood. These may scoff at reform, but it is the scoffing of a lost spirit, or that of despair. It is the blind utterance of regions denied the light of infinite love, and condemned to the *Fata Morgana*s of depraved vision.

Then come the class of our sex capable of thought, of impulse, of responsibility—the worthy to be called Woman. Not free from faults any more than the strong of the other sex, but of that full humanity which may sometimes err, but yet which loves and seeks for the true and the good. These include all who are identified with suffering, in whatever shape, and from whatever cause; for these, when suffering proceeds from their own acts even, have that fund of greatness or goodness left that they perceive and acknowledge the opposite of what they are. These are the ones who are victims to the falseness of society, and who see and feel that something may and will be done to redeem it. They are not content to be the creatures of luxury, the toys of the drawing-room, however well they may grace it—they are too true, too earnest in life, to trifle with its realities. They are capable of thinking, it may be far more capable of it than those of their own household who help to sway the destinies of the country through the ballot-box. They are capable of feeling, and analyzing too, the evils that surround themselves and others—they have individuality, resource, and that antagonism which weak men ridicule, because it shames their own imbe-



cility; which makes them obnoxious to those of less earnestness of character, and helps them to an eclectic power, at once their crown of glory.

To say that such beings have no right to a hearing in a world whose destinies they effect, is to reproach the First Cause for having imparted to his creatures a superfluous intelligence—to say they have no interest in the nature of legislation, when its terrible penalties hang like the hair-suspended sword of Damocles over their heads, is a contradiction as weak as it is selfish and cruel.

Heretofore, women have acted singly—they have been content with individual influence, however exercised, and it has often been of the very worst kind; but now, in our country at least, they seem disposed to associate as do our compeers of the other sex, for the purpose of evolving better views, and of confirming some degree of power. There is no reason why they should not do this. They are the mothers and wives and sisters of the Republic, and their interests cannot be separated from those of the fathers and husbands and brothers of the Republic. It is folly to meet them with contempt and ridicule, for the period for such weapons is passing away.

Their movements as yet may not be altogether the best or the wisest—all is as yet new; but their movements truly and solemnly point to a step higher in the scale of influence. There is a holy significance in them—a prophetic power that speaks well for themselves, and, as I before said, well for the world. It cannot be, from the nature of things, that so much of human intelligence can be brought into vivid action

without some great and good result. It has always been so in all subjects that have enlisted thought—men have come from the turmoil of mental action, with new and broader perceptions, a higher and freer humanity, a better identification of the individual with his species, and why should not Woman the same?

I know it is women who sneer most at these movements of each other, and that women oftenest turn their backs upon the sufferings of each other. I do not mean the griefs or physical pains of those in their own rank and circle; far from it; their hearts are rarely at fault there; but to the cry of those ready to perish, to the needs of the erring, the despised, and neglected of their sex, they are deaf and blind. To the long, torturing discords of ill-assorted marriages, to the oppressions of the family circle, the evasions of property and the lengthening catalogue of domestic discomforts growing out of the evils of society, they are *cruel, selfishly indifferent, or remorselessly severe* upon each other.

It is true they have not condemned such to the stake literally; have not roasted them alive; hung, quartered, tortured with thumb-screws, impaled on hooks, confined in dungeons and beheaded on blocks, as men have done, the good, the great, the heroic, "of whom the world is not worthy," of their own sex: for they have been denied the power—men choosing to hold the prerogative of externally inflicted cruelty in their own hands; but they have condemned their suffering sisters to the intangible and manifold tortures which can fall only upon the spirit, and which are ten-fold more cruel than any external wrong, with-



out once attempting to move tongue or finger in their behalf. Indeed, I have sometimes thought that women instinctively avoid each other when suffering from social ills, as if that kind of misery had something allied to a stain attached to it; and so it has in fact; the human instinct is not at fault; a *misplaced* individual is humiliated; he or she feels it in the very soul, and all that is within recoils at the wrong. *Appositeness, freedom, joy, are a part of the beautiful*, and where any or all of these are wanting, harmony is wanting, and dignity also, unless the character be allied to the sublime.

Much of this great movement of our sex argues a better and nobler sympathy for each other, the growth of a loyalty full of promise. We think we see a broader and better spirit awakening within us, a nearer and more wholesome humanity—ill-directed it may be as yet, groping after a hidden, unrevealed good, yet the search has opened, and the good will be grasped.

The world needs the action of Woman thought in its destinies. The indefinite influence springing from the private circle is not enough; this is shaded away into the graceful lights of feminine subserviency and household endearment; blessing the individual husband, or ennobling the one group at the family altar, but the world goes on with its manifold wrongs, and woman has nothing but tears to bestow—the outrages that may wring either her own heart or that of others, are perpetrated before her eyes, and she can only wring helpless hands, or plead with idle remonstrance, while her lord and master tells her these

things are quite beyond her comprehension; she cannot see how unavoidable it is, but it is not the less unavoidable, and she must shut her eyes and ears, and "mind her spinning." Or, if blessed with a large share of manly arrogance, he will tell her, as did the captain of a militia company of a country town, who, in practising in the court of his house those martial evolutions that were to electrify the village upon parade, accidentally stepped down the trap-door of the cellar. His wife rushed out to succor her liege lord, when she was met with, "Go in, woman; what do you know about war?"

Sure enough, what does she? But this directness of sympathy, this promptitude to relieve, makes her fruitful in resource in small matters, and why should it not in large? If an evil comes under her own inspection, she at once casts about for redress, and good comes of it. There is no reason why she should not enlarge her sphere in this way, and no fear of her being the less feminine or endearing by the process.

The majority of women in society are suffering in the absence of wholesome, earnest, invigorating subjects of thought; expending themselves upon trifles, and fretting themselves and others for lack of employment. The routine of housekeeping, the study of the arts, or the management of children, is no more enough to fill their whole lives, than these things to the merchant, the artist, the professional man, who, over and above his business, whatever it may be, finds time to give the more earnest part of his nature "an airing." As occasion comes, he is a man for the ballot-box, the navy, or the public parade. I have not, and do not



say yet, that women should go to these; I have not reached that part of the subject; I only pray that she may be recognized as an intelligence, and not be compelled to dwarf herself lest she should be thought unfeminine.

I wish to show that while she has been created as one part of human intelligence, she has not only a right to be heard and felt in human affairs, not by tolerance merely, but as a welcome and needed element of human thought; and that, when she is thus recognized, the world will be the better for it, and go onward with new power in the progress of disenthralment.

There is a woman view, which women must learn to take; as yet they have made no demonstration that looks like a defined, appropriate perception. The key-note has been struck by the other sex, and women have responded; this response has been strong and significant, but it will evolve nothing, because it indicates no urgent need. It has done good in one respect—it has raised the cry of contempt, the scoffings of ridicule, and this antagonism is needed to make us look deeper into the soul of things. We shall learn to search and see whether we are capable of bringing anything to the stock of human thought worthy of acceptance. If we can, let us bring it; if not, we will learn to hold our peace.

## Chapter Second.

Women limited by in-door labor—Denied a voice in the law—Opinion created for us by men—Religious abuses and monkish denials; the growth of the masculine mind—Woman has stooped from her high place—Her unlikeness not inferiority.

"I know — has always loved her  
So dear in heart, not to deny her that  
A woman of less place might ask by law,  
Scholars allowed freely to argue for her."  
HEN. VIII. Act. ii. Scene 2.

I HAVE said the world needs the admixture of Woman thought in its affairs; a deep, free, woman-souled utterance *is needed*. It is the disseverance of the sexes, the condemning of the one to *in-door* thought only, to the degradation of in-door toil, far more limiting in its nature than that of the out-door kind, beneath the invigorations of air and sky, that has done so much in our country to narrow and paralyze the energies of the sex. Excessive maternity, the cares and the labors consequent upon large families, with inadequate support (when we consider the amount of general intelligence amongst us) have conspired to induce the belief that the most entire domestic seclusion is the only sphere for a woman. Our republic has hitherto developed something akin to a savage lordliness in the other sex, in which he is to usurp all the privileges of freedom, and she is to take as much as she can get, after he is served.

Now, a woman may or may not be adapted to an in-door life exclusively. There is as much difference



in us in that respect as there is in men. The expanse of earth and sky have unquestionably worked enlargement upon the mind of the other sex; and, in our own, have developed from the poor serving girl of the Inn of Domremy, inured to the toils of the stable, the chivalric and enthusiastic Joan of Arc. It is the making woman a creature of luxury—an object of sensuality—a vehicle for reproduction—or a thing of toil, each one, or all of these—that has caused half the miseries of the world. She, as a soul, has never been recognized. As a human being, to sin and to suffer, she has had more than an acknowledgment. As a human being, to obey her God, to think, to enjoy, men have been blind to her utmost needs.

She has been treated always as subservient; and yet all and the most entire responsibility has been exacted of her. She has had no voice in the law, and yet has been subjected to the heaviest penalties of the law. She has been denied the ability to make or enforce public opinion, and yet has been outraged, abandoned, given over to degradation, misery, and the thousand ills worse than a thousand deaths, by its terrible action. Even her affections—those arbitrary endowments imparted by the Most High for her own safeguard, and for the best being of society—have been warped and crushed by the action of masculine thought upon their manifestations, till their unadulterated play is well nigh lost.

Men have written for us, thought for us, legislated for us; and they have constructed from their own consciousness an effigy of a woman, to which we are expected to conform. It is not a Woman that they

see; God forbid that it should be; it is one of those monsters of neither sex, that sometimes outrage the pangs of maternity, but which expire at the birth: whereas the distorted image to which men wish us to conform, lives to bewilder, to mislead, and to cause discord and belittlement where the Creator designed the highest dignity, the most complete harmony. Men have said we should be thus and thus, and we have tried to be in accordance, because we are told it is womanly. They have said we must think in a certain way, and we have tried so to think; they have said that under given circumstances we must act after a particular mode, and we have thus acted—ay! even when the voice of God in our own hearts has called to us “where art thou?” and we have hid ourselves, not daring to reply; for with that cowardice which men tell us is feminine, we dared not face that public opinion which *men* have established—dared not encounter that ridicule which men first start, and weak women follow up—dare not face that isolation which great and true thought brings upon itself in the present pettiness and prejudice of the world.

Till woman learns to cast out the “bond-woman,” her and her offspring—send them forth into the wilderness of thought—no angel *can* succor her. She must cast herself down amid the aridness of thought—hungry and thirsty for the truth—she may veil her eyes, that she “see not the death of the child,” even the Ishmaels of error, whence shall be born a nation, armed against its kind, even the hoariness of established falsehood, for often will she find Truth revealed in a way she little supposed, and which she trembles



to perceive: but let her not fear—let her trust to those intuitions, better than all the demonstrations of reason—let her think, and feel, and see, and grasp with a courage which is of God, and all will be well.

Let woman learn to take a woman's view of things. Let her feel the need of a woman's thought. Let her search into her own needs—say, not what has the world hitherto thought in regard to this or that, but what is the *true* view of it from the nature of things. Let her not say, what does my husband, my brother, my father think—wise and good and trustworthy though they be—but let her evolve her own thoughts, recognize her own needs, and judge of her own acts by the best lights of her own mind.

Let her feel and understand that there is a difference in the soul as in the bodies of the sexes—a difference designed to produce the most beautiful harmony. But let her not, in admitting this, admit of inferiority. While the *form* of a man is as it were more arbitrary, more of a fact in creation, more distinct and uniform, a sort of completeness of the material, and his mind also more of a fixture, better adapted to the exactitudes of science, and those protracted labors needful to the hardier developments of the understanding, let her bear in mind that this fixedness, this patience of labor, this steadiness of the understanding, are in conformity with his position as *Lord of the material Universe*, to which God has appointed him; whereas she was an after-creation, with something nearer allied to the heavenly. In her shape there is a flexibility, a variety, more graceful, ethereal, and beautiful, appealing more intimately to that some-

thing within the soul of man, that goes onward to the future and eternal—a softening down of the material to the illusions of the unseen—her mind, also, when unstinted and unadulterated, has in it more of aspiration, more of the subtle and intuitive character, that links it to the spiritual; she is impatient of labor, because her wings are nearly freed from the shell of the chrysalis, and prompt to a better element; she cares less for the deductions of reason, because she has an element in herself nearer to the truth than reason can ever reach, by which she *feels* the approaches of the true and the beautiful, without the manly wrestlings all night of the Patriarch to which the other sex are subjected. She does not need the ladder of Bethel, the step by step of the slow logician, because her feet are already upon the first rung of that mystic pass-way; this is why she is bid by the arrogance of apostolic injunction to veil her head in public, "because of the Angels." She is a step nearer them than her *material* lord and master. The angels recognize her as of nearer affinity.

Let it not be thought I say this lightly. Would that women would receive it as a solemn truth—that they would, out of their own souls, reject the hardness of materialism which the masculine mind engenders from its own elements, and receive cordially and meekly the truth as it is witnessed in their own souls. It was this pure, ready reciprocity, this "let it be to thy handmaid as seemeth to thee good," that distinguished the Maid of Judah above all others of her sex, and enabled her to receive without questioning the Divine Birth. Overshadowed by the Holy Ghost, the



mystery of Truth was born of her, and new light through her came into the world. Had we spirits like hers, perpetual youth of soul might be ours, and new and miraculous revelations of better thought, and higher beauty of life, might redeem the world again and again.

Would that women would learn to recognize their own individuality—their own singleness of thought. Let them not feel disparaged at the difference which I have recognized; it is a difference that crowns them with a new glory. We give the material Universe to men, and to those of our own sex who, from whatever cause, approximate to their standard; to such let us yield ungrudgingly the way; but it is no less certain that there is a woman-thought, a woman-perception, a woman-intuition, altogether distinct from the same things in the other sex; and to learn what these are, and to act from these, is what women must learn, and when they have so learned, and impressed themselves thus through these upon the world, it will be regenerated and disenthralled.

Look at the long catalogue of monstrous evils and errors that have disgraced the annals of our race, and then judge if woman had been allowed her proper share in the formation of opinion, in the making up of human judgments, would these things have been? Take, for instance, the least reprehensible of these errors, where the masculine mind has belittled, besotted, and bewildered itself under the aspect of sanctity; where, under the priestly garb, the monkish cowl, it has busied itself with the absurd subtleties of the schoolmen, and wasted itself under the vicious ten-

dencies of the casuist, seeking not for the best good, but searching for intricate apologies for the worst evils. Let us consider a race of men shut up in cloisters, passing their lives in vigil and prayer, idling themselves in the contemplation of beatific dreams, or scourging their bodies for real or imaginary crimes, and that, too, while the world was groaning under the vices and cruelties of their kind. Could Woman have done this? It is true women followed in their career—immured themselves in convents, outraging their humanity by monkish denials, hypocritical pretences, or secret and monstrous indulgences; but the system did not originate with them; the whole vile theory of that species of life was the growth of the masculine intellect.

No, there is a directness, a utilitarianism, in the affections and thoughts of the woman-mind, that of itself would never have misled her; there is a tangibility in her religious impulses that leads her at once to prayer—a reality in her affections that involves the best devotedness of human love; and a solidness in her benevolence, inciting at once to good works. She has a natural going out of herself, a readiness of sympathy that prompts to relieve; while a certain buoyancy of her physique makes action more pleasurable to her than to the other sex. If she has lent herself to the evils that have outraged the world, it is because she has been cast into the background by man, and then has followed him like a slave; if she has been his aid in the cruelties that have shamed the world, it is because she has closed her own eyes and looked through his; if she has been his companion in



luxuries and vices at which the pure woman blushes, it is because he has driven her to the resources of the weak in the lower orders of creation, and she has become crafty, that she might obtain power—longing for companionship, she has stepped from the rung of the ladder where she stood nearest heaven, and plunged into sensuality with him, the Lord of the material; then she, who had been his superior in the elements that most harmonize life, looking up from her debasement to the face of her companion, begged for tolerance where she before had a right to homage—pleaded her weakness as a motive for protection, because she had laid aside her own distinctive powers, and become imbecile and subservient.

Women must recognize their unlikeness, and then understanding what needs grow out of this unlikeness, some great truth must be evolved. Now they busy themselves with methods of thought, springing, it is true, from their own sense of something needed, but suggested altogether by the masculine intellect. Let us first shake ourselves from this pupilage of mind by which our faculties are dwarfed, and courageously judge for ourselves. In doing this, I see no need of Amazonian strides or disfigurements, or a stentorian lungs. The more deeply and earnestly a woman feels the laws of her own existence, the more solemn, reverent, and harmonious is her bearing. She sees what nature designed in her creation, and her whole being falls gracefully into its allotted sphere. If she be a simple, genial, household divinity, she will bind garlands around the altar of the Penates, and worship in content. If more largely endowed, I

see no reason why she should not be received cordially into the school of Arts, or Science, or Politics, or Theology, in the same manner as the individual capacities of the other sex are recognized. They do not all square themselves to one standard, and why should we? They have a very large number engaged in sewing, cooking, spinning, and writing very small articles for very small works, designed for very small minds.

The majority are far from being Platos, or Bayards, or Napoleons. When so very large a portion of the other sex are engaged in what is regarded as unmanly, I see no reason why those of ours who have a fancy to tinker a constitution, canvass a county, or preach the Gospel, should not be permitted to do so, provided they feel this to be the best use of their faculties. I do not say this is the best thing for them to do; but I see no reason, if their best intelligence finds its best expression in any such channel, why they should not be indulged.

Our right to individuality is what I would most assert. Men seem resolved to have but one type in our sex. They recognize the prerogative of the matter-of-fact Biddy to raise a great clamor, quite to the annoyance of a neighborhood, but where's the use of the Nightingale? The laws of stubborn utilitarianism must govern us, while they may be as fantastic as they please. They tell much about a "woman's sphere"—can they define this? As the phrase is used, I confess it has a most shallow and indefinite sense. The most I can gather from it is, the consciousness of the speaker, which means something like the philosophy



of Mr. Murdstone's firmness; it is a sphere by which every woman creature, of whatever age, appending to himself, shall circle very much within his own—see and hear through his senses, and believe according to his dogmas, with a sort of general proviso, that if need be for his growth, glorification, or well-being, in any way, they will instantly and uncompromisingly become extinct.

There is a Woman's sphere—harmonious, holy, soul-imparting; it has its grades, its laws from the nature of things, and these we must seek out. The pursuits of men vary with their capacities—are higher or lower, according to age; why should not those of women vary in the same way? The highest offices of legislation are filled by men of mature age, whose judgments are supposed to be consolidated by years. Among the Mohawks, a woman, who had so trained a boy that he became *elected* to the office of Chief—for this honor was not hereditary—was received into the Councils of the Nation. The Spartan women emulated the men in the terseness of their language and the hardihood of their patriotism. Often and often do we see the attributes of the sexes reversed; the woman becoming the protector and, in fact, the *bond* of the house, without a shadow of infringement upon the appropriateness or beauty of her womanhood. It is late in the day to be thrown upon the defensive. I see no way in which harmony can result in the world without entire recognition of differences, for surely nothing is gained upon either side by antagonism merely. Women cannot be so very ridiculous and absurd in their honest, hearty truth-searchings; for such are the

Mothers of the Republic; and he who casts contempt upon them, endorses his own shame. If the members of his own household are exempt from solemn truth-askings, he should beware how he exults over such evidence of common-place dullness or frivolity.



## Chapter Third.

Women are accused of a love of notoriety—The safety of a womanly recognition—  
Women must receive their happiness according to received opinion; not as a bounty  
from God, but tolerated by man—They are made artful by oppression—If liberty be  
safe to men, it is so also to women.

*Gru.* What say you to a neat's foot?

*Kath.* 'Tis passing good; I pray thee let me have it.

*Gru.* I fear it is too choleric a meat;

How say you to a fat tripe, finely boiled?

*Kath.* I like it well, good Grumio; fetch it me.

*Gru.* I cannot tell; I fear 'tis choleric.

What say you to a piece of beef and mustard?

*Kath.* A dish that I do love to feed upon.

*Gru.* Ay! but the mustard is too hot a little.

SHAKESPEARE.

I AM glad this peculiar stirring of womanly thought upon womanly requirements originated in our own country. There is something peculiarly appropriate in this. Men may scoff; but it is a hand-writing upon the wall, whose import needs no Daniel to interpret. They may ridicule; but would it not be better to consider the subject dispassionately? I have heard men, not deficient in sense, remark, "It is a foolish love of notoriety that incites these movements—an unfeminine ambition. Home and the drawing-room is the place for women." Yet these very men will see their wives and daughters expend weeks and weeks in making preparations for a summer campaign at Newport or Saratoga; expending their hundreds, if not thousands, upon dress and ornament, with the express design of making themselves conspicuous—

we should say notorious; they will pay for, or award such attentions to reporters of newspapers, as will insure the insertion of their names in the public prints as "the beautiful, accomplished, or magnificently attired Mrs. or Miss" So-or-so; they will countenance this meanest of all vanities—this most contemptible and most demoralizing of all ambitions—will sustain this coarsest of all loves of notoriety; and then, when a woman, out of the needs of her own soul, out of the wrongs that may have half maddened her, or out of the abundance of God's great endowments, ventures to speak in behalf of human good, to plead for a higher and nobler humanity, she is to be branded as ambitious, vain, and a seeker of applause, from debased motives.

Can these men, ay, and these women, be able to fathom the shallowness of their cavillings? Are they able to see how narrow, how external their minds must be, and how very inconsequential their logic? On the score of delicacy, even, the woman who meets in convention to discuss points of social improvement, is infinitely beyond the woman who goes demi-clad into a ball room, for the express purpose of challenging the admiration of coxcombs, and to be notorious for her dress or beauty. I am not declaiming against those who find their highest life in the ball room; far from it, I am only comparing one thing with another as analogous, and I find the thinker superior to the dancer, though I do not see why she should not do both, provided either be done from a motive of truth or beauty, not for mere gladiatorial show.

If it be safe for a woman to dance, and feminine



also, it is safe and feminine for her to think also. If she have that ideal cast of mind by which she would see herself and others aim at the best good, she is as the good God has been pleased to create her, for noble and divine purposes, and she should "prove her worthiness" and live up to its requirements. Let us consider further the distinctive attributes of woman, the needs of her being, and the *safety* of admitting these. I must speak of woman as being in relation to man, as wife, sister or child, for we rarely find her alone, or recognized individually.

It was a beautiful saying of old that, "The best form of government was that where an injury done to the meanest subject was a wrong to the whole community." Now the injury here presupposed was one inflicted upon a man, not a woman, who could not, at that time, nor hardly since, be supposed to have any *rights* that could be wronged. Her claims have been admitted by sufferance only. If one of the sex, more fortunate than her sisters, fell into the hands of a lord and master capable of understanding the sacredness of a human soul, able to see the Divine hand in the creation of a being little lower than the angels, with the instinctive purity, the manifold graces, and the true majesty of womanhood diffusing themselves into the very air she breathed; if such an one lived an almost ideal life, the ninety-nine less favored; might turn their bewildered and blinded eyes in vain for the light—and at length sink down into the utter darkness, with no other relief than the false assurance that God made them to be thus blind, thus dwarfed, thus held in bondage, for the light was *unsafe*—full-

ness of life to them being coarse and masculine, and dependence feminine.

Woman must receive happiness not as the gift of her Maker, careful for the well-being of the creature he had made, but as a boon from Man—who had the *right* to make her miserable, but forebore the exercise of his prerogative. I have had the secret experience of many hundreds of women confided to my keeping, and have become cognizant in this way of a mass of petty oppression and domestic disorder most painful to a reflective or benevolent mind. There are evils which cannot be reached by the law, which can only be eradicated by a reformed public opinion, and I hail with delight a movement that will help to promote this object. To me it is one of the saddest things that I hear said, and not by any means an infrequent one, the remark of women in regard to husbands—he is very good to me, he treats me well, &c., as though this were a merit—as though a man deserved praise for treating well a creature utterly in his power, whom the law consigns to his jurisdiction, body and soul, and whom society will regard with suspicion if she show the least discomfort under what may be in secret the most odious and galling bondage.

I do not mean to say that men are habitually cruel or selfish, though Heaven knows it would be near the truth if I did; but they are ignorantly so, and having the power all in their own hands, having always had it there, it would be miraculous indeed if they did not abuse it. Human governments have been subverted because men could not be entrusted with unrestricted power over each other; and can the case be any better



when the power is unlimited over our own sex? It is not enough to say that thousands are content under this state of things; there are tens of thousands who are not—who are degraded, oppressed, and miserable under it, and these should be heard.

I admit that under the highest state of society the two sexes would so harmonize that an injury done to one would be an injury to both; that so complete will be the *unity* that the name of sex will be unheard, and a long catalogue of words implying *disseverance* will disappear from the human vocabulary; they will be one in heart and soul—"they will no more hurt nor destroy in all the holy mountain;" veiled in the holiness of true dignity, they will walk hand in hand in a new Eden, hearing the voice of God and not afraid, for injustice and cruelty and wrong are forgotten things; but we are far, very far, from this beautiful state, and till this time arrive, women need the protection of law and men need its checks.

Let us pray for the good time coming, most fervently, but in the meanwhile provide for the bad time existent. The world was held under the thunders of Sinai, the threatenings of interdict, the penalties of the violation of "do not," till the advent of the divine principle of Love—the "do thou" of the new testimony. Now, till this new law be thoroughly recognized, let our sex have the benefit of prohibitory law and the aid of public opinion, and in this way the new covenant will soonest be brought into exercise. Emancipate from external bondage, and the internal law written upon every human heart makes itself audible. Thus the most free are the most bound.

Take one of the other sex, surround him with restrictions, fetter him with petty chains, hold his intellect in abeyance because knowledge is power; compress his movements, condemn him to ungenial companionship; force him to paternity, and make the labor of his body and the action of his mind all subservient to a routine, and he is false, crafty, petty, sullen, degraded, and irresponsible. The case is analogous. Make a woman nobly free, and she is the companion of Sages and Philosophers, a help-meet for man; confine and dwarf her, and she is subtle and dangerous, both to herself and others. The worst crime is the betrayal of trust; and now as the world is, this instinctive loyalty must either die out of a woman's soul as a useless manifestation of the divine element, or it is violated, overwhelming her with remorse, and throwing her whole being into discord. She must use mean weapons because the nobler are denied her; she cannot assert her distinctive individuality, and she resorts to cunning, and this cunning takes the form of cajolery, deception, or antagonism in its many shapes, each and all as humiliating to herself as it is unjust to man.

Men ridicule every indication of disaffection on a woman's part, as if it must spring from an ill-organized mind or a diseased temper. We are a sort of puppet, to be placed, like Tom Thumb, upon a giant's palm, and act our fantastic part, either of smiles or tears, and they are to regard us with the same kind of tolerating, half-amused indulgence. Reformers are afraid to recognize our needs; they are afraid to allow human beings the free exercise of the faculties imparted by the Deity; they are afraid they might be abused;



therefore they dole out bits of freedom to us as they would atoms of food to half-starved wretches. Can they not, will they never learn that the Good Father is wise in the bestowal of his gifts; that he does not impart a superfluous intelligence; that he does not create a need without its appropriate, safe, and harmonizing medium of gratification? To recognize this is their own first and inalienable right; in their constitutions they plant the foot upon the self-evident truth, that every human being has a right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—a God-guaranteed charter, which no created being may infringe; yet, when a woman dare lift her eyes reverently to this sacred and ennobling truth, she is spurned with ridicule and contempt.

They have struggled slowly through torture and bloodshed up to this sublime position; they feel it is a safe, a secure position, for they have that within the elements of their own mind by which they feel its need and its power; why not, then, go a step further and ask if we have not like elements in our minds? Has not God also written there great truths, which, when we shall read with a clear vision, we shall not tremble, with the impious Belshazzar, the pillars of empire crumbling about our heads, but shall fill the world with new harmonies and put a new song into human lips.

No man or woman was ever made better by restriction merely. We may coerce, withhold, and suppress; we may cover error with the hoariness of time and the verdure of the fast-clinging ivy, but it is error still and has its limits. We may plant the mountain-

side with the vine, the olive, and almond, but if the volcanic element be compressed beneath, it will upheave and bury the false covering in ruin. Give the Woman's soul its legitimate healthy action, and all is safe and well, for God has provided its own checks; oppress, stultify, and render servile, and the evil is either moral death, stagnation of body and spirit, or the upspringing of an outraged humanity. If Liberty is the great God-need to Man, it is so to Woman—if Liberty is safe to Man it is no less so to her. Grant that it might be abused—is it never so by men? Is not the great contest of the world the struggle for the Truth which is to make it free? Why should not we cast in our element—pour the calm of our voice over the troubled waters; share in the labor and the glory of disenthralment: *The few lead* the world less than formerly—the “*wise minority*” has become subjected to the aggregate many; the large instinctive throbbing of the great human heart is now felt and heard, and the world stands in awe. Is our element in this mighty movement nothing? God forbid—we are and must be heard; we say it reverently, hopefully, and with a strong sense of what is due to the best truth and best dignity of our souls.



## Chapter Fourth.

The standard of womanhood to be taken from the noblest types of the sex—Girls trained in reference to marriage—Men and women often unadapted to marriage—Property confers dignity.

—“She has a leathern hand,  
A freestone colored hand; I verily did think  
That her old gloves were on, but 'twas her hands;  
She has a housewife's hand; *but that's no matter.*”

SHAKESPEARE.

HERETOFORE in the discussion of our subject I have assumed the antagonistic ground, because I wished to assert the individuality of Woman; I wished to regard her as a being, entire, with her own laws, her own rights, stamped and guaranteed by the hand of the Eternal Father. I wished to show that she could not be harmonious in her sphere till these were acknowledged, and till men learned to regard them with the same reverence which they profess in the abstract for the rights of each other. We do not derive them from the sufferance of men, but from the hand of God—they are not to be secured by the blandishments and cajoleries of the weak, and being weak, vicious of our sex, but by the free-will of beings capable of reverencing the sanctity of human rights and human needs. I wished the average standard of our sex to be judged not by the puppets of fashion, the sickly sentimentalists of our magazines, or the large class of the weak, degraded, and blind who swell the dregs of society. Men do not average themselves by the cox

combs of either fashion or literature—nor by the profligate, the vicious, or the refuse of pauperism. They point proudly to the God-like, of whatever creed or condition—the Heroes, Martyrs, Patriots and Poets of the earth. And why should not we do the same—we who are not a whit behind them in our soul-stirring chronicles? It would be trite to enumerate these:—Women who have suffered and died for a great truth or a great love, and in suffering and dying have asserted the individual woman soul, for their experience was true to their womanhood, and glorious in its womanhood.

I wished the standard to start from the earnest, true-hearted, and noble of our sex—the “sewing women,” if you please—yes, the laborers if you will, for there is nothing in itself “vulgar” but the spirit that makes it so: the woman who exercises the talents which have been given her to secure an honest livelihood, incited it may be by a God-like aspiration, is as noble in herself as any one of the other sex who toils with a singleness of aim for position or creed—and I know of nothing more holy, more God-serving, ay, and more beautiful, than the steady, self-denying labor of the large class of women in the middle ranks of life, who, with woman-like dignity and solid sense, pursue a calling humble and pains-taking to earn an honest subsistence for their families. The lives of these women are often truly heroic, are silent, beautiful epics, breathing the best aspirations of poetry and romance, and in the scale of being they are infinitely superior to the very women who employ them, who waste their



lives in petty rivalries, unworthy competitions, and meager, puerile avocations.

I have taken the antagonistic ground, not that it is the true one, but because society has made it the necessary one. We were obliged to look at the subject from the nature of things, and now we must meet the sexes in relation, the only true and harmonious ground. It is folly to talk of men and women as isolated beings, designed to always stand in isolation; like the twin-stars of the heavens, held in perfect and harmonious balance, they were designed to move side by side, helping and ennobling each the other. They are each endowed with perceptions, affections, sentiments, and intellects, finding their highest action in companionship. The man has a severe, sturdy passiveness, a courageous boldness of mind and limb, adapting him for the harder and more external duties of life; while to woman belongs that preponderance of tenderness, that intuitive buoyancy of spirit and half-retiringness of nerve, that make her, in her truest life, seek seclusion and dependence. While I say this, I admit the infinitude of shades in either sex by which they blend into each other; and those great occasions in life which may transform a woman into a Medea, and the American savage even into a nursing mother to his bereaved child.\* I only claim that the right to these individual differences be recognized in our sex as well as the other; that the woman who has an intellect to study a profession, be entitled to the same respect as the man who directs a spinning jenny;

\* Vide Schoolcraft.

—the woman who, like Portia, is disposed to plead a law case, may meet with the same tolerance as the man who breeds silk-worms and Canaries; the woman who teaches navigation, or holds forth in an anatomical or theological lecture, be no more anomalous than the man who sells bonnets and ribbons. And this brings us to to the right of property.

At the very starting point of life, the difference of education indicates the difference of aim in regard to the sexes. While the boy is steadily and severely taxed to qualify him to earn an honorable position, a suitable maintenance for *himself* in life, the girl is at once trained in reference to marriage. The boy is placed in all the best positions to develop his whole being, morally, intellectually, and physically—a thousand aberrations are pardoned him as being a part of the masculine nature; he is joyous, free, with vague expectations of manhood, renown, and Arcadias of happiness as his legitimate prerogative. The girl, on the contrary, is met at the threshold of life with infinite checks and restrictions—she is to conform to a pattern, by which (the lions having written the books,) a true woman is a being, helpless, dependent, luxurious, petty, inefficient in body and soul, and yet to be the presiding genius of a household, and the guide and teacher of her children. She is to be early and untiringly moulded into the feminine shape by interminable teachings, ceaseless checks, and the denial of all trains of thinking which might aid her to regard herself as a being of innate dignity, of earnest aspiration, choiceful affection, or elective passion. She is made to consider herself as a necessary appendage,



not as a distinctive and rightful creation. She is not allowed to grow and blossom under the sweet dews of divine guardianship; to develop into holy and truthful womanhood, under the careful promptings of laws, inherent in her own marvelous, complicated, and most beautiful organism, but the one great object, supposed to be the end and aim of womanhood, marriage, is forced upon her at every step of life. She is not joyous, nor aspiring, nor truly noble, because all and everything in her history is made subservient to this end. She is taught to use the sweet, holy graces of her angel-verging nature, designed to exalt and beautify the best affections, to the purposes of craft and fascination, in order to marriage. She is defrauded of her girlhood by premature marriage, and taught to feel a triumph in what in a true state of society would be a degradation; for surely there is something painfully sad, to say nothing of humiliating, in the sight of these baby wives to men old enough to be guides and fathers to them, and girl mothers, hardly escaped from pantalets.

Thus, while boys are properly taught the dignity of labor in its manifold shapes of thought, invention, or manual effort, girls are expected always to be dependent, and gain a position by *marriage*, or have none. If the inheritors of property, the books are full of the beauty of trust, and they are trained to regard a wise forethought as mean and suspicious; therefore they must not regard the disposal of this property as a matter of moment, and a man who does not scruple to marry her because she has property, all the wealth of her woman-soul thrown in as so much chaff in the

balance, would feel himself at once aggrieved if she had the forethought to talk of security—"the romance would be gone—the beautiful trust of a woman is what most charms him, her utter abandon?" and thus all the instinctive conservation of her nature is to be sacrificed to the pettiness and selfishness of a man, who yields her a doubtful protection, and gives her his name, which may or may not confer an honor upon her. I know legislation has done much to protect a woman in her rights of property, but public opinion is still against her, and while education continues as it is, there will be little but these accumulating evils.

Give a girl her fair chance of development as a being, and she would be very other than she now is. Thousands and thousands, both of men and women, are constitutionally indifferent to the relations of sex—the man is consigned to bachelorism with whimsical approvings and a long life of entertainments, and tolerations, and half-pettings; while the woman who remains an "unplucked bud on the ancestral tree" is consigned to snubbings, shrugs, dependence, and solitude. I admit, both seem to depart from the instructions of nature; but I really see not why the one should be treated with honor, and the other with contempt, except this universal expectation, written up, and educated up, that every woman must marry if she can—must give up the name so dear and sweet to her girlhood—must merge her being, be absorbed and annihilated in marriage—be an extinct world, a gone-out soul, in the chaos of a household; or, if she does not do this, it is proof positive that she could not, that there never was a coxcomb or a flat who could suc-



cumb to her charms; that in default of leading one ape here, she must be doomed to lead them "down below." *Heu lachrymans!* Unhappy womanhood!

Property confers dignity and a certain position on the other sex, and there is nothing in the nature of things why it should not upon ours. Men become absorbed in science or literature, and make wretched husbands and fathers. Women have the same ambition—a kindred power of abstraction—and they make anything but comfortable wives. I know it is the fashion for magazine writers to talk sweetly about the tenderness and notability of women of genius. It may be so where their companionship is true and genial, but it is not the less true that the woman or the man who marries a genius does so at a peril, and one must be content to be merged in the other; or, if both are alike great, the intensity and sensitiveness of two such natures would be far from healthful.

Now, were girls from childhood up educated not in reference to marriage, but in reference to the entire unfolding of a creation which, I admit, in its healthiest and most harmonious manifestation would result in the relations of sex, these relations would take place under circumstances of true dignity, and not as now, under a necessity, a mistaken opinion that they must take place, that a woman is nothing without them. Marriage would have then a holy and beautiful significance—a solemn and sweet import—a sanctity of relation that could no more be violated than the great and immutable laws that hold the eternal spheres in their joyous and never-failing harmony. But I am anticipating.

I do not know that I am prepared to say, as has been said, that women have a right to our halls of legislation, our courts of justice, our military posts, and each and all spheres where men "most do congregate;" for in that pure state of society of which human aspiration is so prophetic, which poets and philosophers have seen in Divine vision, and for which blood has been shed even to the agonies of Gethsemane and Calvary, I believe many of these needs will pass away; men will waste their godlike energies less upon these grounds, and woman will learn her holy and true nature, that of a link to the spiritual world. But, till "the good time coming" arrive, let her be free to her own intuitions—let her cast her mite into the treasury of reform that shall redeem the world. Let the avenues of wealth and distinction be open to her as freely as to the other sex. Let her not be trained for a life which, in fact, may be made demoralizing and humiliating in the absence of a soul-stirring need, a life-giving sentiment; and taught the exercise of the faculties, God-imparted faculties, which should raise her to the dignity of the Miriams and Deborahs of old, to say nothing of the great army of women who, since their day, have honorably achieved a distinctive existence, whether married or otherwise, and are numbered among the nobler spirits of the world.

Every true woman should assert her right to pecuniary independence—to a position secured independent of the affections; and these holiest attributes of her nature should be a free-will offering, no more to be bartered in marriage than in any other way. She



should shudder at the bare thought of such desecration. Before the great era of her life, when these shall become a well-spring of happiness to her, she should have been taught to look upon herself as filling a distinctive position in society, secured by her talents or industry; or, if a competence has been awarded by inheritance, it should be used with that forethought and discretion which belongs to her construction of mind in a higher degree than in the other sex.

If she has been accustomed to this before marriage, she will find no difficulty in the proper ordering of her household afterward. Another reason why a woman should be trained in this way, is, that she will escape the pettiness too common in the other sex in the marriage relation. One fruitful source of discord between husband and wife arises from the penuriousness of the former. Wives, without doubt, are extravagant. Held in blindness and pupilage as they are, this is to be expected. But I have heard hundreds of women say they would rather go without money than ask for it; they feel mean and childish to have it doled out to them in little sums, and then be obliged to render an account of expenditure. Others, again, have not breadth of feeling enough for this, and they resort to all the artillery of coaxings and endearments, true or false—in the one case an outrage, in the other a humiliation—and thus obtain the coveted sum. Others, again, having neither dignity nor tenderness, are petulant and crafty, vixenish and turbulent, according to the strength of the lower passions, but each and all inconsistent and unworthy of the high and

holy relation which God designed man and woman should occupy in relation to each other.

It may be thought that, in claiming the right and the dignity of labor for my sex, I am departing from the order of Nature—that the curse and the blessing of womanhood were to come through her affections, and the curse and the blessing of man were to come through the sweat of his brow. But the curse was at the exile from Eden, and the new blessing is to spring from the new law, the divine testimony of the new Christ Jesus—even the law of love, whose emblem is not the thunderings of Sinai, but the descent of the dove; and this new order cannot be received into the world till the whole abominations of degraded womanhood and bartered affections are obliterated in the race. Woman must be accepted as a creation, and if society is so organized that the recognition of her as such must come through the medium of labor, the holding of property, then let her be no less a woman; nay, let her be what she is not now, a true woman—disdaining to be received by the being most dear to her as an exchange, an appendage, but as a divine revelation of a great and beautiful need, accepted reverently, and fostered with manly protectiveness and heart-inspiring tenderness.

There is an inherent dignity in the woman who steadily pursues an avocation of emolument or reputation; weak men may call it masculine and unfeminine, but the great voice of God within the soul extorts from them an instinctive homage, and when the sex shall have asserted their full rights to any and all positions for which their faculties are best adapted,



refusing to barter their womanhood for wealth or position—choosing labor as a good, by which they earn the right to independence, individuality, and respect, one great step will have been taken in the movement of reform. Men will then retire from behind counters, and leave a vast field of light occupation for the gentler sex—they will betake themselves to the plough and the machine-shop, and leave the world of taste to women.

## Chapter Fifth.

Woman occupies a false position—She would be dissociated from labor in a true state of society—At present her affections are a barter for rank or property—The great Contract, or Marriage.

"We should be justified in taking for granted that this reciprocal act of free will must not be any inconsiderate or extorted assent, or one induced by other interested feeling or consideration; so is this expressly asserted by the fact that, according to the spirit of these holy laws of matrimony, *this union must be founded on mutual affection, and regarded as an indissoluble bond of souls, and not as a mere civil contract or deed of sale and transfer of rank and property.*"

*Schlegel's Philosophy of Life.*

It may be thought, in claiming the right of productive labor for women, the right to hold and accumulate property, and the right in its privileges, dignities, immunities from coercion and pettiness, I wish to remove her from that sphere of grace and beauty in which it is evident from her organization, both of mind and body, it was the design of God she should walk.

Far from it: we find her in a false position; we find her treated in law as a child and an idiot; we find public opinion, leading and led by the law, regarding her very much in this light; we find her looking for a position in life, not through her own intrinsic worthiness, her own beauty or genius, God's great patent for consideration, but through marriage, by which she becomes a reflex of the glory of another, or a recipient of all his meanness, debasement, and disgrace. Were she train-



ed to the exercise of that forecast and judgment required for the proper ordering of business arrangements, she would look to marriage as the most holy and beautiful climax of her existence, and not as to a settlement in life by which she was to secure position. Her affections would be a sacred deposit, offerings without blemish upon a pure altar. Love is its own great lawgiver, holding its charter from the source of its own being—it learns nothing from interest, nothing from conventionalism; it is, or it is not; and were women allowed to separate this part of their nature from all motives of calculation, there would be infinitely less disorder in the world.

Now, in a true state of society, we believe a woman would never be associated either with labor or its result—property; it would be enough for her to be beautiful—to stand as a living grace—a link between man and heaven. She would be to the world that last note of music, so exquisite, touching, and holy, that it dies away in the narrow isthmus between a smile and a sigh—lost to the sensuous, and yet touching a cord in the soul that vibrates in heaven only, having no nerve for its expression here. She would have the passiveness of the Mary of Annunciation, but then so filled with the divine sentiments of chastity, love, and all grace, that the softened rays of the Infinite should tremble through her existence. But as yet she has not entered into this pleasant rest promised to the people of God; as yet she is hardly recognized in the new testimony of Jesus. She is the Martha careful for many things, not the Mary at the

Master's feet; not the Mary who "sat still in the house" till the Divine voice called her forth.

"They also serve who only stand and wait;"

but provident Tabithas, fruitful in household garments, and ministering as best they may to manifold human needs.

So be it in the way to progress. If she must toil, let her do so—nobly, systematically, patiently—for the "bread that perisheth," for a name and an honor amongst men; but in the name of truth, in the name of purity, in God's name, let her not compromise her affections, let her not desecrate that part of her nature which is compounded of God himself, Love, to these unhallowed considerations; in other words, let her not be trained to marry, but trained to live, and to live faithful to the laws of her own inmost being. Let her marry or not marry, according as the voice of her own soul shall dictate, and let it cease to be a part of human history, that women are transferred from the sanctity of paternal tenderness to a new hearthstone, upon the same principle as a farm or an estate is transferred. Let the fact so die out of human records, that a romance writer would no more dare to outrage pure sentiment and sound morals, by delineating an unnatural father or hard guardian as countenancing, far less compelling, marriages of interest. Let the time come when neither man nor woman would have the hardihood to face public sentiment by alliances so coarsely based. Were it comely for a woman's pen, much, very much might be said, most scorchingly said, upon this ground.



Women, could they perceive analogies, did they divest themselves of the apathy of smooth common-placeism, and see how their position, secured by interest, unsanctified by any higher motive, is in *name* only separated from that of the most degraded of the sex; and, more than this, may in the eyes of infinite purity and love be tenfold more culpable and degrading, even as the affluence of affection warranted the forgiveness of a Magdalen; did they see all this fully, truly, and in their inmost souls, they would blush at what now may be a source of pride to them. The law may make that respectable which, seen in an abstract shape, would be quite the reverse. There is a law of God implanted in the human heart, direct and binding, "upright" before the tortuousness of "inventions;" and there is the law of man, growing up from human needs, created by human wrongs; and God be judge which is the more binding. We call Sophocles a heathen, and yet he makes Antigone to say,

"Nor could I ever think  
A mortal law of power or strength sufficient  
To abrogate the unwritten law divine,  
Immutable, eternal; not like those  
Of yesterday, but made ere time began."

*Franklin's Soph.*

Now, she who voluntarily violates any law to which she has yielded her consent, is culpable; and she who knowingly violates the great law of her own being, is doubly so. In saying this, I do not attack existing relations; I protest only against the forming of these upon a false base—the mocking of God with false pre-

tences, the offering of strange fire upon His altar. In other words, I would not have a contract based upon commercial relations placed in the light of a sacrament, as a marriage should be; and I see no way of preventing this, except by putting the sexes upon a platform of equality so far as property is concerned, till the time shall come when human interests shall be better equalized. I would have no mixing and confounding subjects by the gloss of false names and appearances. I would have the affections to stand in their beautiful integrity. I would have a traffic, a barter, stand on its own pedestal—and humanity courageously asserting not only its own individuality in the type whether of man or woman, but courageously truthful in its vocabulary; calling things by their right names, and not to be shammed by pretences. Society is very squeamish in its dictionary, but exceedingly lenient in its facts, so long as conventionalism is left intact. This is well—for a house of glass must be treated gingerly. Is that of the World's Fair a symbol of society, and a hint that the whole world must be careful not to cast stones? We come now to the

#### GREAT CONTRACT.

or MARRIAGE, which, as it involves so much of human comfort and interest, must be regarded by itself. The very idea of a contract presupposes equality—a capacity between the contracting parties to understand the nature of the contract, and fully agreed in regard to its exactions. If it can be proved that compulsion, fear, falsehood, or any species of interested cajolery,



were brought in requisition to influence either party, the contract is null, and the law kindly interposes a protecting shield. For this reason, all contracts with children under age, with wards and idiots, are void in law. They have only to plead infancy, and they "may roar you gently as any sucking dove," perfectly innocuous.

Now this is all well, and shows how delicately, how protectively, society looks after the interests of commercial relations; how vital it is in every part where there is any infringement of these relations, and how the law lifts itself "like quills upon the fretful porcupine," indignant at the offender, indignant at the audacity of the offence. The individual absorption of property is Society's own work; it is a child of its own creation; a baby, first in the hands of the savage with his bow and spear, but nursed into growth till it has become the tyrant of its creator, lording it over him with a sceptre more degrading and more potent than that of any autocrat ever hurled by indignant man from an abused throne. Hence the laws of property are the most stringent of any; for, arising out of finite limitedness, they can be entirely defined and made obvious to the understanding of the most imbecile capacity, the meum and tuum, and whosoever offends against such is punished accordingly.

Not so the laws of God implanted in man. These are the growth of each individual of the race, and the thoroughly just man will no more disregard the rights of a distinctive human soul, be it that of man or woman, than he would violate the laws of his country.

We come now to the conditions under which the

greater part of the Contracts of Marriage are entered into. We will say nothing of the man who marries expressly for money, for we confess women are especially on their guard in a matter involving such an insult to their womanhood; and men, for the most part, *do deal justly*, at least with a woman won upon such terms—it would be a reproach to their manliness otherwise; but the majority of women in our country are without fortune, or at least to so small an extent *with* fortune, and the avenues to emolument are so varied, and so sure to enterprise and skill, that a man is generally the one to secure the wealth, and then to look about him for a help meet.

Now, admitting the exceptions to our rule—that Genius is of no age—is always young—that Apollo struck his lute when the morning stars sang together and the sons of God shouted for joy, and is yet fresh and strong, and breathes into his votaries perpetual youth; admitting that Abelard at forty may be adored by Heloise at eighteen; that Goethe at sixty may be quite enchanting to Bettina at sixteen—such men are rare. For, generally, the man who has passed his life to thirty and upward in accumulating wealth, has become hard, selfish, hackneyed in the world, and utterly blind to the soul-needs of a sensitive girl of half his years. He has learned the world to distrust it; and, ten to one, instead of finding in him a friend, a protector, a guide, she finds only a petty and suspicious tyrant.

Take an example; Mr. A., dealer in the dry goods business, is a little rising of thirty, slightly bald—very respectable—has been a gay man in times past,



but now is grave and entirely correct; indeed, aspires to carrying round the contribution box of a Sunday, at which time he observes Miss B., the daughter of a widow, who lives in a sort of mysterious manner, but very genteel—Mrs. C. thinks Mrs. B. takes in sewing, and that her daughter helps her, and Mrs. C. lives over the way, and keeps a sharp look out upon Mrs. B.; indeed, by the aid of a glass, she once found that Mrs. B. sat three full hours stitching in the back room, and then arose, took a book, and came forward to the window, as if casually, and stood under the curtain quite genteely. Mrs. C. believed the book a pretence, Mr. A. begins to visit at Mrs. B.'s; is quite assiduous to the mother—sends her new patterns from the shop, and a book now and then. At length Mr. A. and Miss B. are seen sitting together under the curtain. Mrs. C. is quite shocked, and rolls her eyes piously. Then there is a stir of carriages—a flutter of white ribbons, and a marriage.

Now, here is a contract. One party is mature in life—experienced not only in the world, but in the nature of his own soul, its needs, its capacities, infirmities and powers. The other party is a child, an infant in law, whose pen to a commercial contract would be worthless; who might indeed be hung for a murder, or imprisoned for theft, but whose name in a contract is nothing; ignorant of the world, ignorant of herself; so immature in judgment, that her opinions are treated with about as much deference as a doll's would be, could it be gifted with speech. Yet this girl, this child, is party to a contract involving the well-being of her whole future life; a contract by

which she is consigned to sickness, care, suffering, coercion, and her individuality entirely and completely suppressed. Is this, can this be justice in the sight of God, whatever it may be in the eyes of man? Can she, who is an infant, an idiot, in a worthless account of dollars and cents, be capable of entering into a contract involving such tremendous interest? Can this child, whose nature has been so outraged even before she can herself understand its laws, be held responsible for after results? Can the man, who thus selfishly avails himself of her inexperience, have any guaranty of faithfulness in such a contract? Half the miseries that arise in the marriage relation, arise from this source alone; they are premature; the woman cannot sanction the unconscious acts of the child, and she recoils from the position.

Now, we would not plead for the extension of divorces—heaven knows they are becoming a disgrace to the country—but we would *insist that the marriage contract be put upon the same base with other contracts.* In other words, there should be equality—the parties should be of age—and no girl should be considered competent to enter into such contract, unless she has reached her majority in law.



## Chapter Sixth.

Sometimes a salary paid for a housekeeper the true position, instead of the taking of a wife—A contract should be secure from violation—Evils that only a reformed public opinion can relieve—Evils arising from premature marriage.

"Marriage is nothing but a civil contract; 'tis true 'tis an ordinance of God, so is every other contract: God commands me to keep it when I have made it."—JOHN SELDEN.

"Shall we say that God hath joined error, fraud, unfitness, wrath, contention, perpetual loneliness, perpetual discord, whatever lust, or wine, or witchery, threat or enticement, avarice or ambition hath joined together; faithful and unfaithful, hate with hate, or hate with love; *shall we say this is God's joining?*"—MILTON.

I HAVE spoken of marriage as the Great Contract. In a true relation, this holy and beautiful mystery of life would be a sacrament, whereas now it stands almost entirely as a civil or commercial copartnership. In New England, even, where it might be supposed that marriage would be less adulterated, it has become very much a household arrangement for thrift or economy, where a woman is selected for her domestic points, in the same manner that a housekeeper is secured. Now, a slight salary for one in the latter capacity, would oftentimes be in better taste than the taking of a wife. I even know of one woman, not by any means low in the scale of position, who proposed to do the labor of one of her servants, provided her penurious husband would pay her, a wife, the price of service, six dollars per month, which he was not

ashamed to do. Now, will any one say that such a woman was a wife in the true sense—one with her lord and master, who paid her as he would pay a menial? Every married man, and every married woman, knows, either from experience or observation, that it is not an unfrequent thing for a man to refuse his wife the supply of money necessary to uphold her position in society, if she *fail to become in all things the subservient creature she is expected to be in the marriage relation*. "Surely we are bought with a price," a woman under such circumstances might quote, in the depths of her humiliation. It requires but little penetration to see that a husband who puts the contract upon so coarse and external a basis, offers himself the strongest temptation for its violation. She is to him a slave, a menial, an appendage, but not a wife; that is, not one with him in soul and life—his inmost self—the completion of his being—the one divine element linking him to the spiritual; the friend, companion, and comforter, with whom he is to take sweet counsel and walk to the house of God in company; yea, into that divine tabernacle, that mansion into which no corrupt element finds a lodgment.

It may be that I claim too much of sanctity for marriage—that the common voice is against me, and therefore content to view it as a commercial relation, or one of social convenience only, and involving no questions of greater moment than those of legitimatizing offspring, and securing the transmission of property. Even in this point of view, it would be well that the *terms of contract should be such as to secure its inviolability, and therefore I claim that there should be equality*



*of character in the contracting parties—legal equality, at the very least.*

There are social and domestic evils, so secret, so petty and annoying, that they can neither be reached by public opinion nor legal enactment; and a right organization of society would aim at the relief of these, as being harder to be borne than others obvious to inspection and comment. I would have the marriage relation so protected that as few of these evils should arise as possible. I would avoid the need of legislation, by securing the liberty of both parties equally, till each shall be fully competent to judge of the nature of the proposed position. I admit that a gentleman, in the true sense—a man of taste, of sentiment, genius, in other words, one capable of feeling a *great sense of human justice*—will not abuse the confidence of a "Child-wife;" he will treat gently and most sacredly the trust of youth, inexperience, and beauty; but I do not write for these, but for those who discern the Truth "as through a glass darkly," who are blind leaders of the blind; wilfully ignorant, selfishly corrupt, or groping for Truth, and uncertain how to recognize her aspect.

It is a trite remark, when difficulties arise in the marriage relation, to say, there is "blame upon both sides;" one of those imbecile, inconsequential speeches, by which humanity is apt to relieve itself of its dullness. Two individuals are or are not adapted to each other; they are "yoke-fellows," or they are the ox and the ass, interdicted by the Jewish lawgiver, and unsuited to the same furrow; they are the diverse seeds prohibited to be sown in the same field. If

there be congeniality of qualities, harmony will be the result; if not, perpetual discontent, inward repinings, or open rebellions, grief, apathy, insanity, and death; or there will arise the long catalogue of petty evils, subterfuges, and evasions, by which a character is lowered in the scale of being, and led on to crime. In the one case, the two walk hand-in-hand, like Bunyan's Pilgrim, to the golden gate, each a help to the other in the divine life; or the one falls from the side of its companion, a disabled angel; or they keep the bad juxtaposition, to grow in aspect and heart like jarring imps from unhallowed regions. This is so much the case, that matrimonial discord has become a theme for jest rather than of sympathy, and one of the surest methods of evolving a laugh either to the wit or dramatist. The whole structure of society is lowered by this tendency, human sentiment distorted by it, and human sympathy carried astray.

We must look to the foundation of social evil very much here—where the issues of life are so much embittered; where children receive discordant elements with their very blood, and imbibe discontent with their milk, and catch

"Their mother's trick of grief,  
And sigh among their playthings."

Now, let marriage be so guarded that a legal disqualification would be a barrier to entering into the relation, and one great step would be reached, and one great source of human suffering dried up. Then the woman who should flaunt her discontent, after assuming a position which must have been not only



voluntary, but one of at least some degree of judgment, would be treated with well-deserved contempt. She should speak at the altar the solemn "Yes" from her heart, and "for ever after hold her peace." If unhappy, she should suffer in silence, for there is no remedy.

To me there is something appalling, when I see a mere girl promising at the altar to love, honor, and obey, "till death." Ten to one she does not know or care whether he will deserve to be honored; and, as to obedience, her own stomach, as was said of Queen Bess, may or may not be too proud to bear any will but her own. Then, what does she know of human emotion, of the depths of her own soul or that of another? For any one, even at mature age, to say this, is, in fact, blasphemous in the eyes of any one capable of realizing the arbitrary nature of human emotions, and how very uncertain they often become, even under the most careful training and the most exact habitude. This being the case—we are mere creatures in the hands of a being who regards us in mockery, or in the hands of one who knoweth our nature, and has established within us laws, which we as yet but imperfectly understand. It will be folly to say that there is no excuse for change; that a man or a woman is bad, who does not love as the laws have bound them to love—that he or she whose thoughts or feelings diverge to-day very far from what they were at any other given period must be in the wrong, for the whole history of the race is full of facts to prove that such things are, and that, too, among those very far from being oblique in principle; romance and poetry

are kept alive by facts of this kind, and many of our laws have an existence only through them. Now, to say these things should not be, (I do not mean the outrages that spring out of them,) is to say that the human mind must be limited to a certain standard of development, and not beyond; that the human character must be enlarged only to a certain degree, and all beyond must necessarily be evil—a doctrine calculated to keep the race in perpetual bondage and pupillage, and which has done its full work in dwarfing the species.

When a man or a woman, however, has the courage to promise this, to love till death, they should be of years to realize the solemn import of the words, and willing to hazard the test. One should not be suffered to go forward and put his hand to the seal, clear in vision, cool in judgment, and responsible in law, while the other is blind, undiscerning, and irresponsible. I would say the contract is too momentous in its character to be lightly assumed; too sacred to be broken, and therefore should be well comprehended.

If my reader has followed me through the preceding chapters, he will perceive that in claiming a woman's right to be individual, and her right to the dignities of property, it was with the view that these might relieve her from the necessity of seeking in marriage that which society ought to award her as her right—that is, position, independent of her relation to one of the other sex; that she should be truly, nobly woman—marry or not marry as her heart or her taste may dictate, and yet be honorable; she should *live* the truth in her own soul, even although



that truth might indispose her to the hackneyed lives of her neighbors, and yet be honorable; that she should relieve the sick, whether as medical adviser or nurse; visit the afflicted, whether as a messenger of the Prince of Peace or a Sister of Charity—and yet be honorable; in all things she should so comport herself that her best and truest womanhood should be developed, and she be honorable, and honored in it; and finally, that if in the maturity of her beauty and the clearness of her intellect she be disposed to carry all this affluence of nature into this divine relation of marriage, she should be still honorable, not as a reflex of another's glory, but as of herself, lending and receiving.

It appears to me we need less of legislation in regard to our sex, than of enlightened public opinion. Whether we wear this or that costume, or go to the polls or stay away, seems of less importance than a radical understanding of our true selves. Let us assert first the reverence due as a portion of the moral and intellectual type, and gradually we shall take that symmetrical position in human affairs which is for the best good of the world—certainly we shall have other and better influence than we now have.

I am aware that the large class of the other sex, enraptured with the sensualities of Moore, and fit only to admire "bread and butter girls," will oppose this theory of Marriage. It is the style to prate of "sweet sixteen," and to talk of the loveliness of girlhood—and most lovely is it, and sacred should it be held; and therefore the woman should not be defrauded of the period; she should not be allowed to step from

the baby-house to the marriage altar. It should be considered not only unwise to do so, but absolutely indelicate. It should affix odium to parents and guardians, if done by their instrumentality; or if by the will of the girl, be regarded as an *evidence of precocious development, as unchaste as it is unwise.*

It is a popular error, that our sex are earlier developed than the other, and therefore soonest adapted to marriage. This, however, is physiological ground, upon which I do not wish to digress; but the assertion that women decay earlier, especially in this country, where early marriages so much prevail, is unfortunately true, and a truth that ought not to apply to us, where the intellect is active at least if not profound. And this decay is unquestionably to be imputed to this source. Girls are married and perplexed with the cares of housekeeping, when the pretty ordering of the "wee things" of the play-house would be in better keeping; they suffer the anxieties and sorrows of maternity at an age pitiful to contemplate, when they should be singing like the lark to Heaven's gate, in the very exuberance of youthful life and the joyousness of innocent emotion. Even admitting that some slight stirrings of the heart should remind her that she has a well-spring of happy affection, it does not follow that she should be put into bondage for the rest of her life to one whom the undeveloped girl may affect, but whom the woman may perhaps despise. A boy has, it may be, a dozen of "undying," "never to be forgotten" experiences of the kind, between the ages of fourteen and twenty-five, and yet shakes them off like "dew from the lion's mane," and looks up,



after each trial, if there is to be any manhood in him, with a better and stronger humanity; but if a lovely, susceptible girl, always kept in ignorance of her own nature, responds in the slightest degree to the promptings of her heart, she must be married, as if her heart were an effervescing wine, good for nothing if a sparkle escape, and not rather a deep and holy fountain of calm waters and healthful springs, making glad the wilderness of life, refreshing the arid desert of hearts worn and hackneyed by the toil and heat of the day in the wayfaring of the world.

That a woman should be past all joy, and beauty, and hopefulness, at a period when the other sex are in the perfection of their powers, is a most lamentable fact, and one utterly at variance with the designs of nature, who did not create her for the one purpose of the family relation, but to share in that freedom of being and joyfulness of life which is his gift to all, and doubly so to one created with such exquisite perfection and affluence of susceptibility as her own organization involves. It is not unusual for girls to be married and become mothers at sixteen, at the expense of health, happiness, and all the appropriateness and dignity of life; and men seem quite proud of these baby-wives, when in truth they should blush at their selfishness, as they too often will repent over their lack of forecast. It is these early marriages that have produced so many crimes and outrages in society. I remember, a few years since, the public was aghast at the cruel murder of a wife and two children, by the husband and father, in the upper part of New York. I do not recollect the name, but the state of

mind which the confessions of the unhappy man implied impressed me greatly. He had been induced, when a boy of twenty or twenty-one, to marry a woman very much his senior, from motives of property; and finding the relation ungenial and repugnant to him, it so wrought upon his mind, year by year, that a species of insanity was undoubtedly the result, and in this state he made the resolve not only to kill her and her children, but also all who were instrumental in bringing about the ill-starred marriage.

The protracted and unwearying grief resulting from ungenial relations, is a fruitful source of insanity; and these ungenial relations will be found in almost all cases to have been those formed when *one* of the parties was too young to fully comprehend the magnitude of interest involved. I remember, when a child, having a confused idea that to be murdered was one of the possible contingencies of marriage; and this impression was created solely by reading in the public prints the many atrocious catalogues of the kind. I remember, too, the story of a refined New England woman, married to a man much older than herself, a hard, uncompromising, respectable man; upright in the eyes of the world, and an exact church member, who, while her husband was desecrating prayer, by pouring out those hackneyed platitudes in which so many indulge, arose suddenly from her knees and laid her hand upon his mouth, saying: "You, hypocrite, how dare you mock God in this way?"

She was shortly after carried to a hospital, in which she still remains a hopeless lunatic. The friends were suitably shocked, and *pitied him for his misfortune*, but



no one saw into the soul of things, where they might have learned of the years of suffering the wife must have endured from his selfishness and intangible falsehood.

Miss Dix must have a mass of material on this ground, and God bless her for her noble mission, one peculiarly adapted to the instinctive and beautiful perceptions of womanhood.\* More than one story of suffering of this kind is fresh in my memory. Not far from Portland, Me., the wife of a wealthy man was for years confined in a small room, built up in the garden, and *chained*—condemned to hopeless solitude, and treated like a caged animal, in the very youth of her existence. I was but a child when I heard her story and had that spot pointed out to me. The relator finished the details by a remark often made, "That the insane always turn against their best friends, and that she could not endure to have her husband approach her; a word from him produced the most frightful paroxysm of her disease."

This was most significant, the fact of the story presenting a key to the whole mass of distress and misery. She had endured till her outraged nature could no longer bear, and the entire structure of her mind gave way like "sweet bells jangled out of tune." Illustrations might be accumulated to prove the evils resulting from these early and disproportioned marriages, but

\* It may not be known to all our readers, that this lady has been for many years engaged in visiting the hospitals for the Insane throughout the country, and inquiring into the condition of those afflicted in this way, but consigned to private management. In this humane and beautiful mission she has helped to relieve a large amount of suffering.

these may suffice to prove not only the folly of them, but the fearful amount of crime, suffering, and insanity to which they so often lead; evils wrought into the whole structure of society, and affecting interests that stretch into remote years.



## Chapter Seventh.

Truth hereafter to be developed in regard to the great law of Love—Marriage should be a sacrament, not a mere civil contract—No Divorce in a true state of society.

By marriage the husband and wife are one person in law; that is, the very being or legal existence of the woman is suspended during the marriage; or at least is incorporated and consolidated into that of her husband —*Blackstone*.

THE above extract, remarkable alike for the force and beauty of its expression, would seem to imply that the philosophy of law is not greatly at variance with the truth, recognizing that unity of life and feeling which our Saviour himself defines to be the true marriage, but which has had less to do in the actualities of life than in the romances of literature, where it figures so conspicuously, one would be led to imagine that the great sum of life was made up of the anxieties and uncertainties of lovers prior to their entering this temple of beatitudes.

"I have many things to say unto you, but hitherto ye were not able to bear them, neither now are ye able," were the words of the Divine Teacher; and assuredly there are many and deep revelations awaiting the reverent searcher into the great law of Love, which time and human progress will develop when the world is able to bear them. Jesus implied that Love was the foundation of the true Church, when he three times asked the impulsive Peter, "Lovest thou

me?" and then commissioned him to feed the lambs with his life-imparting bread. His teachings are full of quaint aphorisms, illustrating the impossibility of any kind of harmony existing where this great law is wanting. "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?"—"A house divided against itself cannot stand," &c. I am verging now upon delicate ground. When Pilate asked what is Truth, no answer was returned, obviously because Truth is not a fixture in this world—is not one fact—to all minds, but a revelation of the *best* to all who will search for it.

We talk much, we write more, we cavil, we speculate, and ask on every side what is Truth, and then every man casts a blank look into his neighbor's face, and encounters one as blank in return—for no one dares receive her as she is—he is afraid of her—he will be perpetually lowering buckets into the well, not for the purpose of a fresh, beautiful, god-like revelation—for of this he is afraid; it might shame his prejudices or imbecilities, therefore he is content to muddy the waters, and fish up a bedabbled image best pleasing to his distorted vision.

I have heretofore urged the importance of denying the marriage rite to those incompetent by the law to enter into other contracts. I might say, but the sarcasm is too severe, that a being held as an infant, a chattel, an idiot in law, *never reaches her majority, and is therefore morally irresponsible even in this*. Men who are delicate of their honor, careful of their names, and desirous to preserve the sanctity of the marriage relation, would do well to raise the legal liabilities of our sex, and by placing us in the same relative position



with themselves, increase not only our sense of loyalty, but of dignity also.

But to my subject. In an earlier and ruder state of society among us, there might be found an apology for early marriages, and in this point of view many of the sayings of Poor Richard even, had a pertinency applicable to the times, but we have survived their use; and yet, like other exploded doctrines, they cling to the minds of the people like a forlorn leaf upon an autumnal tree, shivering and wasted, yet tenacious of its hold. Common sense and common justice cry out against them, and yet they find their advocates, and then, when the natural consequences result, modern society shakes her robe piously, and thanks God she is not like others.

The marriage relation is certainly, at some time in the life of individuals, the natural and harmonious state; but as it now stands, it is a bondage more than a life-giving sacrament. The parties are unequal; the affinities essential to a joyful and peaceful relation are often wanting; the wife is not the help-meet for the man, but the appendage, the housekeeper, the female, of the establishment; I admit these terms are coarse, but the facts are coarse likewise; her very existence is merged in that of her husband; the children of her blood are not hers; her property is not hers; she is legally dead; and in this point of view, I believe, on my soul, she is morally irresponsible to society—not to God, be it remembered; not to the greatness and purity of her own nature; for, thanks to the framer of our spirits, under all these human disabilities come in the majestic laws of the great God,

engraved upon the sacred tablet of the heart in lines of fire, and there we read, and grow calm, and thoughtful, and aspiring.

I would guard the relation of marriage as the most holy sacrament of earth. I would have the family altar for the entertainment of angels not unawares. I would have the festivals of Hestia genial with the sweetest offerings of earth—the Penates crowned with undying garlands—the Penetralia holy, and fresh and beautiful, and unprofaned; and for this purpose no one should be admitted to the Temple without solemn preparation of heart and life. It should, as now, confer dignity upon the parties, but dignity of a higher and purer kind. They should be those joined of God only. Even now, every generous mind respects a genuine, earnest, devoted human attachment, however at variance with conventionalism—but these sad, hopeless manifestations would have no existence in a truly ordered society. Marriage would only take place where the deepest emotions of the heart, the highest affinities of intellect, and the utmost sense of beauty, one or all of these, combine to make it desirable. In this case there could be no disloyalty, no bickerings, no division of interest. *There would be no divorce, for none would be desired.*

That radical wrong exists in the present system of marriage, is evident from the frequency of divorce. The giddy manner in which the marriage vows are now assumed would be pitiful, were not the subsequent evils humiliating. When we see two discordantly joined, wearing out a joyless existence, without companionship, without sympathy, looking to the past



as all wretchedness, and the future as all hopeless, we are apt to say "A divorce should take place"—we are apt to feel, and perhaps justly, that no part of existence should be defrauded of its right to its best means of happiness. We say this world is a state important in the link, and how do we know that the future will not be shorn of its glory by discordant elements like these? How do we know that we shall not look back upon this little ball half in sorrow and half in spite, as the place little entitled to our good will?—and, therefore, these should be freed.

I think not. By divorce we let in a flood-gate of evil incalculable in its amount. The majority of the world admit of easy compromises, are so much the creatures of habit, of circumstance, and opinion, that they can settle into the yoke with little comparative discomfort; and legislation is for the many, not for a few, who are a law to themselves. It would seem that the few, who really suffer, who have that ingrained sense of truth, that integrity of life, that unity of being by which they are made sensibly alive to the touch of falsehood, should be the ones above all others for the law to relieve—but these are the ones who advance the world, who become eyes to the blind, who awaken human truth, and who should be content, like their Great Master, to suffer for the many; who should be willing to suspend the great needs of their own soul, rather than become a rock of offence. They can endure, because their own discontent arises from depths of life unknown to the many; and should they demand the whole law, all that is lawful, but which a human recognition renders inexpedient, thousands,

who are without this internal singleness, would mistake a thousand petty ills and shallow pretences for the deep promptings of truth, and the whole structure of society be broken up.

Let our legislators, or let public opinion, forbid premature marriages, but admit of no divorce. In a right relation crime could not take place; in a false one, entered into in the maturity of judgment, let it be one of the contingencies from which there is no appeal. Let it not be entered into from pecuniary motives by our sex—allow woman the rights of property, open to her the avenues to wealth, permit her not only to hold property, but to enter into commerce, or into the professions, if she is fit for them. In that case she should assuredly take the stand that her fathers took, that taxation without representation is oppressive; and then, from the nature of things, society would grow more harmonious, marriage would be sacred, and divorce pass from the statute-book. With Milton, I believe it should be sooner awarded to ungenial relations than to the commission of crime. In the former there is a sturdy truthfulness of Nature, admitting of nothing short of the highest laws of being; while in the latter case, the readiness of coming promise, in one party or both, argues an instability and shallowness of character, that the best modifications of society would little affect.

The whole subject of Divorce is one to be approached with caution; regarding marriage as holy, divorce is like the hand laid upon the Ark of God, beneath which it shakes mightily. The law may separate two who have stood in relation, but there is the action of



the laws inherent in our being, by which the parties each feel the other can never be a creature wholly indifferent. There is the pleading of the great law of kindness, of considerateness, by which each feels that the well-being of the other may be in his hands—there is the sense of self-respect, which is violated, by feeling that one who has once stood in that relation, is ejected from the altar, bearing with him or her memories which no Lethe wave can efface. Dim, undefined human pleadings bid him be reverent in his dealings, and careful for the sacredness of being. Oh! God's great laws within us are very beautiful, in calming and cheering the life—listened to with feet unshod and head bowed in reverence; the still small voice calls us from the dark cave of prejudice, where the tempest, the fire, and the earthquake filled us with dread, into the clear, tranquillizing light of better truth, which, like the dropping of dew and the stirring of leaves, brings our disjointed being into harmony. We may trust these laws; did we do so more, there would be less of evil in the world—did we courageously assert these, there would be less of misery. Did the word Justice apply, not as now, to commercial relations only, but to the recognition of the whole nature of men, there would be little for our legislative bodies to do; and, till entire justice be established in regard to our sex, little can be hoped for.

A true man or woman must naturally have a sense of shame, when subject to divorce; more than all this, where children exist, a course of evasions, discomforts, and mortifications must ensue, painful to be borne and assuredly shaping the future characters of

such unfortunate beings. They must at length find that the taint of shame stirs in their veins, or, if not this, that their being was compounded amid warring elements, which may result in crime, or disease, or insanity, to themselves. They become the reflex of innumerable ills, and all the discomforts that might perhaps have fallen upon one, through the action of a divorce, are heaped upon many. Their sense of their own responsibility will be lowered, or else a haughty antagonism excited, equally repugnant to the best phase of life. I have in my memory now one illustration of the kind, where the mother, from an uncongenial and *early marriage*, was able to obtain a divorce, upon what legal points I am unable to define, certainly not crime. There was one child, a boy, retained by the father, who at length died, leaving the doubly orphaned boy to the uncertain tenderness of friends. He inherited all his mother's sensitiveness, without her electric impulses. He grew up nearly alone, without companions, without guidance; a taciturn, shy youth, remembering painfully the short period when his mother was all in all to him—she now a wife, with other and fairer children claiming her tenderness. He inherited a small competence; but a weight hung upon his energies, and he died, leaving no vestige but these sad memories. Will any one believe that mother failed to feel her omissions to this child, who thus was more exiled than Ishmael, for Abraham left mother and child to share the exile together?

*I have not known a case of discomfort in the marriage relation, in which the contract did not take place during*



*the girlhood of the woman, when she was so young and immature that she could form no estimate of the importance of the step she took.* Where suffering has arisen from marriages contracted later in life, the origin has been from causes so petty, external, or coarse, that no legislation should be awarded—no legislation could help them. The nature of the parties was such that they might as well be uncomfortable in that relation as any other.

We need a higher estimate of the sanctities of marriage, not increased facilities for dissolving it. We cannot multiply the latter without increasing existing evils—without lowering not only public taste, but the sense of justice. Were women allowed the exercise of their best faculties, and remunerated equally with the other sex, they might often escape the desire for divorce by a knowledge that the avenues to wealth or distinction were open to them, and thus they might fill up the desert of their life. We might cite many who are now doing this, honorably sustained by the better part of the community, though subject, of course, to the unmeaning sneers of the sticklers for womanly subserviency. We do need a better opinion in regard to woman-labor. We do need to have this sphere enlarged almost infinitely. We need to impress upon the other sex the unmanliness of usurping avocations better adapted to our more delicate organization. We need the resources of labor, broad and remunerative, for those who are too young of years to be admitted into the marriage contract, or disinclined to its responsibilities; and for those who, having made in this relation a great and irretrievable mistake, may find in

it a relief for outraged affections, and from the apathy, or discontent, or pettiness, or oppression which it involves. Their penalty should not be a life-long penalty; their bondage unmitigated bondage. While a true marriage, and the happiness or sorrows of maternity, should unmistakably absolve a woman from labor—a false or external one, becoming painful and oppressive, should open to her its privileges.



## Chapter Eighth.

Men and women often disinclined to marriage—Incompetent to the relation—Superiority in woman regarded with distrust—The same laws cannot belong to every phase of womanhood—A great nature will make itself felt.

What is competency to one man is not enough for another, no more than that which will keep one man warm will keep another man warm.—JOHN SELDEN.

I SUPPOSE no one will be so foolish as to say this remark does not apply to women as well as men, the race only being specified; and what is here put in an external sense, is not the less true in its more internal view.

It is often said, "a woman's world is in her affections, her empire is home." This is only in part true, and true only to a part of the sex. There are thousands of men, and women, too, entirely unfitted for the family relation. Men, so dull and imbecile, where the social affections are concerned, that they can neither minister nor be ministered to in this way, but who are clear, good abstract reasoners, apt at invention, and capable of advancing science—though cold, selfish, and unsympathizing; women, too, dogmatic, ambitious, antagonistic, who would value some intellectual triumph worth a thousand hearts, and dearer than any recognition of the affections. These have nothing in themselves to bring them into harmony with the family relation. Their attempts at tenderness look foolish, and any lapses into coquetry

strike you as a downright attempt at a fraud. You recoil from it as untruthful, if not sinister; while this womanly weapon, in the hands of another, may appear not only becoming, but attractive.

Far be it from me to undervalue the slightest grace of my sex; it is because I recognize individuality, and reverence it, that I will not apply the same laws to all. There may be occasionally a Madam Guyon, whose affections are so nearly spiritualized that she may live irrespective of the world, and whose intellect becomes clear in its prescience from this soul-fountain only. There may be an Elizabeth Fry—calm, gracious, and most beautiful in all the harmonies of life, of whom we might say she was born for the eloquence of the sanctuary, did we not see the fullness and nobleness of the wife, the mother, and friend. And again, we would say, surely this is the whole being, did we not hear the silvery voice uttering its sublime ministrations in the prison and the convict ship, and to the outcast of the wayside. Surely this is all. No, she is the finely toned woman in the halls of legislation and in the palaces of kings. "I have seen a sublime sight," said John Randolph, "Elizabeth Fry at prayer in Newgate."

There may be a Madam de Staël, whose breath was inspiration—whose tongue might have won Plato from the eloquent lips of Aspasia, but whose life was a long sigh for that love which could never find an entire response; yet does any one believe she did not find idolatry such as would amaze the lisping sentimentalist, who, content with the shallow response of some enamored youth, pleases herself with the thought



that intellectual women cannot be loved—are deficient in the graces of womanhood, and sigh in vain for what the most uncouth Audry is likely to realize? surely not. Other types there are—women of ample gifts to hold the most affluently endowed of the other sex in thrall—such as a Cleopatra, a Heloise, and so on from the most celebrated to the most obscure. Now, will any one pretend that the same laws apply to all of these? Where is their world? Can it be narrowed down to the four walls of the saloon or the nursery?

Let us put these aside. Even in a lower scale of being there is a large class to whom the affections hold a very subordinate part—women who find it irksome to sustain the relations of wife and mother, and who would never have assumed them, but because public opinion has made it desirable, and the unequal action of labor, necessary. I even heard of a poor woman who witnessed the inordinate grief of a neighbor over the death of a child, with utter astonishment, and remarked that “she was sure she did not feel so bad when her child died, for she hadn’t had to work near so hard since.” Now, this is pitiful enough, and the naturalness of the expression shows she was entirely deficient in the emotion so predominant in the other.

The lions have written the books, and having persisted in making that part of our character which brings us in relation to themselves the prominent subject of comment, they have ignored our other attributes, till there is a vague feeling engendered that a woman is the worse for large endowments of any kind what-

ever. Iago’s narrow and coarse exposition of her vocation,

“To suckle fools, and chronicle small beer,”

is not far from the popular estimate. Genius and beauty, God’s crowning gifts, are looked upon with distrust, if not with dread. The fear that a woman may deviate the slightest from conventionalism in any way, has become a nervous disease with the public. Indeed, so little is she trusted as a creation, that one would think she were made marvellously beautiful, and endowed with gifts of thought and emotion only for the purpose of endangering her safety—a sort of spiritual locomotive with no check-wheel, a rare piece of porcelain, to be handled gingerly—in fact, a creature with no conservative elements within herself, but left expressly thus, that men might supply them, and lead and guide, and coerce and cajole her, as it pleased him best. She is a blind angel, neither adapted to heaven nor earth in herself, but, if submitting graciously to man’s guidance, capable of filling a narrow, somewhat smoky, and very uncertain nook on this small planet, and possibly to win heaven through the perfection of suffering here.

Let her assert the laws of her being, let her say she is capable of more than this narrow sphere, that she grieves and frets in the cage, and the fault is grievous. She is ill-tempered, ambitious, unwomanly—as though womanhood had but one signification. It is even a reproach for her to have a will of her own. The voice of her own soul within her crying for space and recognition must be suppressed, lest she should be



less subservient as a wife, and less humdrum as a mother; and yet the heroes of their age were not born of your tame women. The fathers of Wesley and Washington and Napoleon were far from being superior men; indeed we should rather call them very orderly, sensible, dull people; while their mothers were each brilliant, individualized, strongly marked characters, with fine health and great personal beauty.

It seems strange that we should need to enter a plea for the faculties that God has given us; but so it is. The persistent use of the obnoxious word *female* in our vocabulary is proof of the light in which we are regarded.

Read but a tithe of the twaddle written by the other sex in regard to our nature, and it will be seen how little we are understood. Take up a common newspaper, which may be regarded as an exponent of the popular voice, and see how we are talked of—as creatures, one would suppose, belonging to a different race. Here is a paragraph from the first paper at hand, in illustration:

WOMAN'S CHARACTER.—No trait of character is more valuable in a *female* than the possession of a sweet temper. Home can never be made happy without it. It is like the flowers that spring up in the pathway, reviving and cheering us. Let a man go home at night wearied and worn by the toils of the day, and how soothing is a word dictated by a good disposition. It is sunshine falling upon his heart. He is happy, and the cares of life are forgotten.

Far be it from me to gainsay the expiring, lackadaisical truth of the sentiment herein expressed. But

would one be quite sure the being spoken of was a woman?—would it not rather seem it might be some dangerous creature shut up in a very dull and somewhat unfurnished chamber—said creature being apt sometimes to exhibit quite the contrary manifestations?

Here is another in a higher and better spirit; and yet the fact that such an appeal should be needed in behalf of a being almost coëval with man, a being created from his own substance, his helpmate, the crowning work of the creation, contains a bitter sarcasm:—

TO HUSBANDS.—The influence of a sensible woman is of no ordinary kind, and happy is the man who is thus favored; not, indeed, that sensible women are more rare than sensible men; but because men are too apt to monopolize the entire sense of the family (in their own opinion,) to desire the woman "to leave the kitchen to them," to treat the women as automata, objects rather of amusement than rational beings, as children or dolls, to be coaxed and made fools of, rather than as equals or friends, bound to one eternity; fellow-sufferers who weep in their misfortunes; as partakers and heighteners of their joys, and as being equally accountable to one God. Others, again, look on women as the mere slaves of their will, a sort of safety-valve for their spleen, by means of which their ill tempers find vent. Both these characters, I trust, will be far from my reader; but, if he should have entertained such erroneous ideas of what woman, in her higher moral capacity, is and ought to be, let me entreat him to try for a short time, (and he will then continue to do so,) by kindness and affection, to draw forth the hidden treasures from the mind and the heart of his wife; if he have treated her as a mere cipher in his family, let him gradually introduce her to trust and responsibility; if he have treated her as a child, incapable of maturity of mind, let him now make her as his confidant, and in the many oppor-



tunities for inference which will then occur, he will soon be aware how much he has lost by past neglect; and, if he have treated her as a tyrant, if he have crushed the but half-uttered sentiment; if he have satirized her tastes and opinions; if, by coldness, he have thrown the oft-springing affections back upon her heart, there to wither and to die, or with the wound to rankle and to become gall, let him try, before it be too late, to restore sufficient confidence to elicit opinion; let him then, by special gentleness, awaken the dormant affection, and, by the warmth of his love, perpetuate its flow. The unadulterated love of woman is the greatest boon Heaven itself can, in this world, bestow on man.

If men do not understand us, and do not describe us as we are, women have not done much better, they having looked abroad to see what others have said, rather than having descended into their own bosoms for light and truth. If Mrs. Ellis is really serious in much of the advice she gives married women, their husbands ought by no means to feel flattered, for they are surely little better than *great babies*, to be humored and got along with, or unruly animals, who, having the power, must be so managed as to be left as little dangerous and troublesome as possible. Away with this flimsy, sickly kind of recognition! It is no wonder the world is so evil, and stupid, and imbecile, while we thus nurse up old follies, and make pets of what ought to be exploded errors. Men and women both need a thousand-fold more courage than they now have, in order to search earnestly for Truth, and recognize her when found.

It is doubtful if our literary women have really done much to advance public sentiment in regard to

us, for many write, not from their own convictions, but evidently to flatter the opinions of men, and thus little has been gained from them. Miss Edgeworth shows the prosy fingering of her father throughout her works. Mrs. Hall says, after a glimpse at the noble ones of our kind, "*still the woman would have been happier had she continued enshrined in the privacy of domestic love and domestic duty, so perfectly is she constituted for the cares, the affections, the duties, the blessed duties of unpublic life.*"

If Mrs. S. C. Hall really thought this—really believed that a human being is happier for holding the greater part of its nature in abeyance, she ought herself never to have written—she should have buried her fine talents, and shut out from her eyes all the freshness and freedom of vision which help to make our life a well-spring of happiness.

Miss Porter says that "Madam de Stael often praised my revered mother for the retired manner in which she maintained her little domestic establishment;" yet it would be preposterous to suppose that the gifted sybil of Coppet had any hankering for this half vitalized existence. There is nothing in the nature of things to prevent a woman, however magnificently endowed with genius, (indeed I believe genius must involve this,) from possessing in the highest degree all the attributes of tenderness supposed to be inherent in her sex, and to exercise them also in the most harmonious manner, provided always, that she is recognized in her individual capacity, and adjudged by the laws that belong to her composition. That is,



if she be a Nightingale, shall be recognized as such and treated as such—if a nice Biddy, exultant over the commonest manifestation, let her be recognized as such—but do not attempt to convert the soulful harmonies of the one into the every-day cackle of the other; do not take the lark from heaven's gate and condemn it to silence and the dim earth. Nature is full of harmonies, and life is full of blessedness when we are able to recognize these. "There is one glory of the sun, another of the moon, and one star differeth from another star in glory." Why should we not with clear vision see the differences that exist in our sex as well as in the other, and frame our judgment in accordance?

If any woman of genius is so untrue to herself as to say she should have been happier as an in-door, pains-taking, fireside woman; careful for the small savings of a household, holding the rod in terrorem over unruly urchins, and up in the morning early, to scold the servants, her nature satisfied with this ordinary manifestation of sex, she is from some cause disqualified for the holding of God's beautiful and abundant gifts in reverent stewardship—she is the Jew, better pleased with the worship of Apis than the sublime mysteries of Jehovah, looking to the flesh-pots of Egypt, and turning from the heavenly manna.

Let it be understood, I do not disparage the home affections, the circle of home duties. God forbid! I only wish to assert that we must not be limited to these; that we must and ought to be true to the talents committed to our keeping. If our circle has

been ordained in a limited sphere, fill it joyously—if in a larger, take up its glorious burdens nobly, and bear them to the throne of the Eternal. Every creature is happy in its own atmosphere. Let us find wherein our great strength lies, and break the withes of custom, if need be, to assert our power; let us arise from the cords of bondage unscathed, lest we find ourselves, from too long slumber, feeble and blind, and covered with scorn, our beautiful fabric of life reeling to its fall.

The woman with but the one talent is praiseworthy for putting it to account—and she with the ten is culpable for their neglect. That word happiness has a most weak and undefined meaning, as ordinarily used—exemption from grief and solicitude is one meaning; and to very many, enough to eat and drink, and "civilly merry" friends, is another; success in trade, "to swing upon a gate all day," irresponsibility, as in the slave, &c., &c. Now, one must be infinitely weak and inconsequential in his reason, to say that any or all of these bring happiness. No, that can have no law, except as it springs from the construction of the being itself. There is something beyond these externals, that imparts it, and *this something lies in the bosom of the Infinite Father, who calls upon us to be like Him, perfect in our being*, and to grow in the grace of all its harmonies. We must and will feel the stirrings of a great nature if it be great, and we are happy only as we obey its monitions. We are not happy in a half life, a half utterance; for the wealth struggles for its power; the smothered fire burns and



consumes till it find room for its healthful glow. A thousand women are ill-natured and miserable, not from positive ills about them, but from compression; they have that within, demanding space and indulgence, and they pine for its freedom—the laws of their life are not comprehended, and they sink to imbecile complaints, only because there is no voice to call them forth to freedom and light. When I say freedom, I do not mean the violation of any one ordering of society. I say, reverence these—but awake to the God-light within you, and follow its guidance. It is his law, even in the external world, to bring all creations into an appropriate sphere—the dew of the mountain even tire of its isolation, and mount upward to the sky, where they rejoice in the rainbow—the seed struggles mightily in the dark earth, for the green leaf and the beautiful blossom lie folded within, calling for the light—the worm sickens at the dust of its dim way, for the wings of the butterfly call for a higher life; and everywhere the great voice of God from within cries “where art thou?” and yet we bide ourselves, and find excuses for our fear and our inaction.

Hereafter, in the progress of events, I see no reason why the influence of woman should not be acknowledged at the ballot-box: indeed, when we consider the disorder and venality prevailing there, it would seem that her voice may be the great element needful to reform. The fact of her dropping a ticket into a receptacle of the kind, does not look hazardous to her femininity; she might seem to do this with little or

no commotion, and return in conscious dignity to her household, and there infuse a braver cheer, and instill into the immature judgments of those committed to her care nobler lessons of life. Shakspeare's Portia is not the less engaging at Bellmont for having plead the cause of her friend with lawyer-like sagacity. In Europe the fashion of Queens has made it not an infrequent thing for a woman to speak in legislative halls, and Victoria's domestic abilities seem not the least impaired by her occasional appearance there. But in our country, where it might be supposed a certain degree of courage would keep hand-in-hand with reform, men appear to think the worst disasters would befall them by even discussing the question. If a woman does so, she is met, not as a thinker—one capable and willing to consider abstractly a question of human good, which can be of no possible advantage to herself, for she will be long in her grave before her views would be acknowledged, if at all—but she is met by unmanly strictures upon her sex, and foolish flings at “*female* politicians.” Pardon the phrase, it is a quotation—I recognize only the appropriate term of woman. But this is aside from my subject.

Our right to a full life—to the exercise of full life—is the foundation of a plea—not that of the nursery and kitchen merely—not that of the luxurious saloon, the haunts of fashion merely—for disguise it as men and women may, this perpetual adulation, this fostering of our pettiness, our vanity, our love of luxury, is but the mode of holding us in the pupilage of sex—recognizing only our relation in one aspect of life,



and ignoring all other claims. I do not undervalue the harmonies of love—every woman owes much of the graces of her life to these—the affections are all holy and beautiful, but the laws of these are as diverse as the mental character of their owners; and while to some they may be all, to others, however strong, they are but the framework, the foundation of a great and harmonious superstructure.

## Chapter Ninth.

The inmost recesses of the soul holy, unless contaminated by an evil life—Public and private scandal—The inmost law.

Though we shall raise a great storm, and though Anti-christ tear away the woman from us, yet *the Virgin must continue with us*, because we are married to her: let every one take his own, and then I shall have that which is mine.—JACOB BREMEN.

THERE is always in every human breast this uncontaminated essence, wedded to the soul I would believe, its pure, fresh, undefiled element, more or less powerful in its assertion; a mere germ in some, in others a full vital existence, casting an ethereal veil over the whole being, and presenting that mimosa sensitiveness by which it shrinks from obtrusion. Reverencing its own sanctity, it admits and justifies also all that is hallowed in the relations of another. This entireness of being is a thing that all should assert, whether as man or woman; and hence, much that I have said in urging the needs of womanhood, may apply equally well to the other sex; "let each claim his own, and then I shall have that which is mine."

Men have as yet reached only a tithe of their rights—they are but partially acquainted either with their own needs or the true dignities of manhood. How very few of them dare to stand up in the face of God and each other, and assert, in the language of the great Apostle, "all things are lawful unto me, but all things



are not expedient"—feeling and knowing the vastness of the thought involved, and having that great and generous nature by which the *whole* that its laws of being demand, is all that the fullest humanity is capable of receiving; yet acknowledging this, is careful for the narrower laws of others, who might be injured through his freedom!

Yes, it is most true that the other sex need a broader and more courageous self-exertion, and when they shall reach this, their sense of justice will be deepened, and they will aid us in the sacredness of our being. They accuse us, and justly too, of a love of gossip, of petty detraction, and mean curiosity; but do these charges hold good in our case only? Look at our newspapers, each one the reflex of the narrow prejudices and foolish private opinions of its editors—as far removed from the truth, and of as little consequence in a thorough and universal standard, as it is possible to conceive; bearing about the same proportion to the whole as a mouse-hole in the staircase of St. Peter's bears to its entire vast and harmonious architecture. Examine our newspaper columns—see how readily they absorb the current gossip of the day; how greedily they seize upon a divorce, and luxuriate in its painful details; how the many crimes of poor, oppressed, outraged and blinded humanity find a ready credence and circulation; how the meanest and most loathsome curiosity is ministered to, and then judge between us and them, and say whether our peccadilloes in this way be not harmless compared with those of the other sex. It is not enough to say "It sells; the public like this, and will have it;" for

this not only makes the case stronger, but spreads the evil.

Take, for instance, one case in hand—the revolting and unmanly curiosity in regard to the details of a divorce. I take this in preference to any other, because it involves the interests of my sex. Now, any one with a mind delicately constituted I will not say, but in the least broad-cast, in the least just, shrinks from such knowledge. It is not an external or commercial wrong involved, one that can be met upon open and acknowledged grounds; but every one, no matter how obtuse in nature, feels instinctively that laws and questions, internal as well as of external import, are involved, that flit before the anatomical knife of public opinion. He feels an instinctive and shuddering recoil as these things are flouted before the public eye, unless he is degraded by a coarse, vulgar life, requiring this aliment, or cursed with a morbid and unmanly curiosity. Deny it as we will, the relation between the sexes, bringing the souls of two of God's creatures into companionship, is in all cases most sacred to a pure eye. God himself, the framer of their spirits, and the parties concerned, are to be judge. (I am talking abstractly now; I am not on the ground of marriage or any of its contingencies.) They enter the symbolic holy of holies, and he or she who would remove the veil, profanes the temple of God; and if evils are involved, that soul must have lost much of its pureness of modesty that can willingly make these a subject for gossip, either in a newspaper or elsewhere; and to say that our sex do this exclusively, when the other has the hardihood to put it in



print and aid in vitiating public taste by the details, is a most unjust and cruel aspersion. That a morbid curiosity exists in regard to these subjects, I will not deny, and in yielding the point, I do so with sorrowful regrets at the blindness which it involves. It seems to me that a mind capable of reverence must draw the veil between his own soul and that of another, where any circumstance may have revealed to him the sacredness of the candle of the Lord burning before the altar, or, in less figurative words, its internal life, that state nearest to God and farthest removed from the eyes of the world.

Yet the contrary, I admit, is the case; men, who talk so much about the deference due to our sex, who would seem to raise us to the seventh heaven of folly and imbecility, by their adulation and blandishments, no sooner find one of the number incapable of bearing this foolish exposure, grown giddy by this false estimation, than they turn round, and in the social circle and public prints blazon the sad story till the cheek burns with shame, and the heart aches for very pity. And women, weak and imitative women, join in the fell pursuit, or aid in the diabolical mirth, till angels might weep over their perverted nature. Talk as we will, sigh and exclaim as we will, and say, alas! poor human nature! it is not human—it is fiendish, impish, brutal. God never made his creatures to rejoice over these mistakes in life. Our humanity recoils from these things, and a great and beautiful voice cries to us from the bottom of our hearts, to love one another out of a pure love, and to be kind-hearted one toward another. It is not human to drag the soul's history

thus out to profane eyes, and make it the jest, the by-word and mockery of the base and the unlearned in life's heavy and mysterious experiences. Our best nature is shocked, and the wings of our spirit veil our coarser vision. The contrary is akin to that perversion found among the lower creations—that insane propensity by which the wild beast, finding one of its fellows disabled by disease or wounds, falls upon it and tears it in pieces—not that it designs cruelty, but suffering is an element foreign to its nature—it is the voice of something beyond its comprehension. Its own nature is freedom and joy, and exultant vitality; but here is a brother gifted with a new experience—his eyes looking forth, lighted with a strange and unknown fire—it bewilders, it maddens him—his instincts are outraged—it has no faculties to comprehend, and, in the wildness of its perverted curiosity, it falls upon the victim and it perishes in the struggle. Thus Jesus died by the blind zeal of those who thought to do God service, who, out of devotion to the latter, crucified the incarnate Truth of our humanity. If thus he perished who was without fault, his followers, though following him afar off, can expect nothing better.

There may be great discrepancy of views, in the world, but who shall say that this or that man is not obedient to the laws of his being? What is it to me that my neighbor's views are not in accordance with mine in any one aspect of life? I trust in God he is in harmony with himself, and so long as he violates none of my rights and none of those appertaining to society, he is a sacred person to me. If, by any inad-



vertency, a loop-hole of a curtain might reveal to me his whole interior economy, I would close my eyes from the view. I wish to learn nothing, not that I am indifferent to his well-being, but because I reverence his humanity, and its peculiar laws do not concern me.

"Fools rush in where angels fear to tread."

In return, I ask what every human being has a right to claim of another—the same kind of tolerance, and where this is allowed, infinitely less evil will exist. I should be ashamed to care whether my neighbor ate beefsteak and onions, or beefsteak alone, unless, indeed, he were to bring the odor into my room, to share the freshness of my roses and geraniums. Then I would say, "Eat the onions, if so be they are needful to you, but I am not in affinity therewith, and do not bring them to me." And with this exception, I would leave him to his beefsteak and onions, with the same indulgence as I might claim for my orange and dry biscuit, my rose and geranium, my singing bird, or uncouth terrapin.\* Now, while all admit that a curiosity that finds its aliment through this low and petty channel, is to the last degree contemptible; still the man and woman who will sit and gravely discuss the question whether Mr. and Mrs. A. are harmonious in their marriage relation, and whether such parties have made themselves amenable to scandal, are not only tolerated, but even welcomed in society,

\* I trust the reader will pardon this allusion to the idiosyncracies of the writer, who must confess to a fondness for pets, even keeping a terrapin to crawl about the carpet, this lowest grade of life having a charm for its oddity.

just in proportion as they can give piquancy to their contemptible disclosures, whether by conversation or public journals.

On this ground, if no other, women should assert their claim to emancipation from their present circumscribed sphere, that they may nobly sustain each other, and learn that loyalty which now scarcely exists among us, but to the honor of men is a sentiment of vital import with them. It is for the interest of the other sex to foster the imbecilities of ours; they lead the way in heaping contempt upon the more nobly endowed of ours; they are not ashamed to contribute their arts to lower the life of one of our number, to plunge her into shame and misery, but they are the first to insist that their wives and daughters shall be foremost in affixing the stigma upon her; they are not above advocating one set of opinions at home, and going abroad and acting from a far different theory; they will take a newspaper for themselves, and gloat over its infamous disclosures, and provide their wives and daughters with one of a different stamp (as they should do—God forbid that they should help to corrupt the well-springs of life at the family altar;) but this other paper is often so utterly weak and twaddling, that it affords no just scope to thought, and is patronized only because it is safe. Look into our Family papers, as they are called, and see the mere draining of material that is thought sufficient for the sex—how utterly mean and vapid they are! and see if the evil they do by narrowing be not greater than their supposed conservativeness.

It certainly is better and nobler that a human being



should be allowed the full power that God has imparted, than to hold it like a Chinese foot in swaddling bands, lest by some possibility it might go astray, for that power will fret and press its bonds till space be afforded it, either for good or evil. It is the compression that does the injury. The most free are the most bound—bound by the laws of the great God, who knoweth what manner of spirits we are of. He who made us, who imparted to us our mysterious life, gave to every passion its conservative check, and over and above all, while a joy was infused into every faculty in its healthful play, gave also the pang to wait upon the violation of its laws. Justice, then, to *ourselves* is what we ask, and in asking this a deeper and holier justice awaits the world. Neither man nor woman is made so that it is well to be alone; and when mutual justice becomes the great law of being, then, and then only, harmony will be the result. Then the lion will lie down with the lamb, and the sting shall be taken from whatever is noxious, and the dragon of restrictive and retributive law loosen its folds upon human society.

Women are ridiculed for asserting the rights which belong to them as God's creatures. To me it seems that she who fails to do this is false to her trust; she is

"The base Judean, who threw  
A pearl away worth more than all his throne."

She who sits down in passive discontent, who is willing to be servile only because she is garlanded with flowers, who sees a great good before her and fails to

take it up, lest its burden should be heavy, deserves our contempt; but she who hears the voice of God in her own soul, and hearing, obeys, is the anointed of the Lord to a beautiful mission, revered in the heart of humanity, however scorned by the passing voice. In all this assertion of individual rights, I cannot, for the life of me, see how one single beautiful shade of womanhood is to disappear. I do not see how the voice is to be less gentle and Cordelia-like; I do not see how the lovely ministrations of mother, sister, wife, daughter, are to be any less tender and engaging: on the contrary, it does seem to me, that each and all would become invested with a breadth, and sacredness, and harmony, now scarcely dreamed of, because each would be the free-will offering of a spirit in harmony with itself, whose whole needs were justly recognized, and who would thence see clearly the needs of another; who, reverencing its own nature, relies upon it, trusting in its truth and fullness, and would thence be better able to appreciate every aspect of another's, and deal most sacredly and justly by it.

I fear, in my great solicitude upon this point, I may have overlaid my subject, and therefore have weakened its force; for so truly noble, so God-like and beautiful, does the creation of God in ourselves seem to me, that I plead anxiously for its integrity—I would help remove the odium cast upon humanity from the pulpit and the press. I long to see my own sex side by side with men in every great work, and free to see the light, when his vision is dimmed with the dust of his chariot-wheels in the mighty race in which he is engaged.



## Chapter Tenth.

The new testimony—Man has been blindly and ignorantly oppressive—Entire freedom the right of humanity.

“Were I the chooser, a drachm of well doing should be preferred before many times as much the forcible hinderance of evil doing.”—MILTON.

IN my former chapters I have insisted, perhaps, at too much length, upon the recognition of the entire individuality of woman, her claims as a creation distinct, and one; not as a half—a supernumerary—an appendage—a mere luxury for the delectation of man. According to the Mosaic myth, man was created and placed in a garden provided for his existence, with all the beatitudes of sense amply cared for. Woman was the birth of Paradise; created amid its harmonies, a last, glowing, and bountiful demonstration of God's good will to his creature. Adapted the one to the other, they were yet distinct in being, and each types of a great revelation. Woman being the last, is undoubtedly the one through which the ultimate good to the world is to be achieved; in this way the worship of the Virgin in the Catholic Church is an instinctive acknowledgment of the symbol. Man was for a period alone in Paradise—till he slept—weighed by the latent energies of a great nature struggling for

a realization. So in the world. Hitherto his career has been that of brute force—he has mastered the world and named all things according to his will—now he tires of the turmoil, the dust and heat of the contest; he is sated with blood and war and oppression, and longs for the divine companionship of purer and gentler elements, and the ministration of woman comes in to gladden the world, needing her gentleness, her singleness of perception, her holiness of love, and her protective tenderness. As she has been the formative element in the material world, so is she to produce the new heavens and the new earth of the moral world; hers is to be the great birth of a purer humanity, that of peace and love and good will; the embodied new testimony of love, when the law shall not lie in the prohibition, but in the enactment; when it shall no more be said, “do not,” but do thou, even the whole law of love. There are natures even now, who belong to the new testimony only, who feel that the external prohibition is an insult to the greater law inscribed in their own souls, whose lives are peaceful, harmonious, and very joyful, for the Lord is in his Holy Temple, even that of the heart, and nothing can make them afraid.

Shall we say that, in the long past ages, man has wilfully oppressed and degraded his companion? Far from it. Age after age he has done little but cast aside usages that have survived their needs; grasping at one time a good, he enforces it by a law, till that in time becomes a bondage, and he at length finds himself a Samson bound by his own locks, or a Gulliver struggling on the earth by the combined pegs of the



Lilliputs—till the whole structure of society, with its multitudinous laws, presents man as a struggling Laocoon, writhing under the fold upon fold of restrictive law, which towers above the true man, and leaves him helpless or goaded to desperation; the very prohibition maddens him to the desire of infringement; the Law has become master—Man the slave; reversing the assurance of the Great Teacher, that "the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath."

In all this, woman, always in the background, has been swayed back and forth, often protected by the strong arm of her companion from blows which he met upon his unarmed breast; sometimes his slave, his wanton, his idol; never his free, joyous, god-like companion. There is too much talk of woman and her master. I remember a distinguished literary woman, who, in speaking of her own movements, would say, in bitter jest, "I don't know what I shall do; that depends upon the man that owns me." Our question is not now as to individual injustice and oppression, mighty as these isolated cases become in the aggregate, but of the progress in the race itself, where I see that man, after so many centuries of enlightenment, has achieved comparatively little; and, of course, woman, recognized as she has hitherto been, only in sex, must necessarily more than share in the disabilities of her companion. He has been treading the wine-press alone, sweating, as it were, great drops of blood; he has not yet escaped the agony of disenthralment; he has had no time to study her rare and delicate organization as a whole—his broad, massive, stirring hardi-

hood could not, like Hercules at the distaff, feel the attenuated threads that compassed her being; he has been too busy in war and toil and legislation, in bloodshed and persecution and sensuality, to look into the soul of things; and but for the poets of our kind, who have kept human tenderness and aspiration alive, we should have been lost in darkness and brutality.

It is weak and foolish to suppose that man thus wilfully desired to enslave us. If done at all, it was done in blindness and in ignorance. The instinctive arrogance of sex may have led him to tyranny, as it undoubtedly has; and where, in emergencies, either party must yield in life, the physically strongest will, of course, prevail. If either must be in the background, the one least able to withstand brute force must be the one; but this has grown out of the imperfection of the race, not from deliberate intent. Beauty and genius are easily emancipated, and hence we find in all ages beautiful and gifted women casting a halo over the dark features of an age, and misleading us into the belief that others were equally free; and these, affluent in homage, intoxicated with adulation, have unconsciously helped to deaden the cry of the many—the bitter cry of the ignorant and the oppressed, whose glory was turned to shame, and whose light had become darkness. It is cruel selfishness to fold our hands in idle contempt for the needs of others, because the Good Father has cast our lines in pleasant places.

I confess there is something humiliating in this cry of Woman's Rights. I am ashamed that man should have ever made it needful, and feel a sad pity over



his blindness and meanness. It seems charging home unmanliness, pettiness, and ignorance, and acknowledging, on our part, to imbecility and all the odious vices that grow out of a feeble and oppressed creation. To confess to the injury mars the beauty and the dignity of the life, and I would rather our sex would enact some magnanimous tragedy, even, than utter the mawkish cry of oppression. The "proud stomach" of the manish Bess had something to command respect, at least; and unless we can do, as well as talk, it were better to be silent. God forbid I should encourage a race of vixens; it is because I desire to see woman nobly beyond these poor, mean tendencies, that I urge her to the full demand of her being. It is because she is compressed that she is mawkish, and treacherous, and petulant, and meager. I do solemnly believe the race is physically dwarfed by the disabilities of woman—that beauty, and magnanimity, and God's worship, are all hindered by this lack of true recognition. Sickness, and wrinkles, and distortion, are not her inheritance, but grow upon the race from the evils inflicted upon her. Look at the pale faces, the feeble step, the uncertain and disaffected faces of half the married women that you see, and contrast them with the firm, upward, joyous look of the few, whether married or single, whose whole being has been recognized, and then say which realizes best the intents of the Creator.

It seems to me the very spirit of many of our laws is humiliating, and helps to lower public opinion—they are a living witness to the ignorance and one-sided views of men; and while we see him who styles

himself the head of creation thus benighted, we cannot expect entire justice from him—but we can, by a noble exertion of our own true dignities, make him ashamed to enforce laws which carry with them a reproach to himself. It seems to me that a man who goes into a court of law to claim a divorce—for instance, upon the ordinary grounds, confesses to his own disgrace, and his own lack of true manliness of character; so in regard to property, and many crimes even, where it may be said we suffer the penalties of a state of things which we had no voice in creating, and ought of right to be exempt from, and there is an intrinsic meanness in exposing us to the conditions. There is a certain conventional code, often unjust and oppressive, which women recognize in their intercourse with each other, and the tenacity with which they insist upon its observance argues a strong ability in them to keep all laws which they may be instrumental in making.

There is something in the spirit of the age inviting to action, not thinking merely—and often do we hear women say, "I feel a desire to do something beyond my present sphere—to act—I am tired of endurance merely." To such we would say solemnly, tenderly—Up and do—it is the voice of God, it may be calling you to a divine work. She that feels a latent power within her calling her to action, is culpable for her neglect to obey the voice. Mistakes, failures, must and will ensue—what then? it is something to have attempted great things—if the motive be pure, it is godlike, and good will come of it. Vanity, pretension, soon find their level, but the great and holy aim



is in God's keeping, and must go onward conquering and to conquer. I care not that a woman sometimes fails in her attempts, as thousands of the other sex do,—it will not injure her, provided there is any magnitude in her nature: but I reverence the sentiment in her soul that dictated the movement. I feel there must have been deep need within her which she was bound to recognize, and that the mantle that perhaps slipped from her too delicate shoulders may be broadcast upon others more nobly proportioned.

We have passed the era of civilization when a woman was condemned solely to the productive and laborious part of the domestic arrangement. True, in England she may yet be harnessed to a cart for the conveyance of coal, and she may be in many parts of the world burdened and tasked beyond measure—but these are evils growing out of the general enormities of society, through which the race must work its emancipation: they are evils aside from the general object of these articles.

The woman of the Chivalrous Ages would not content the woman of the Nineteenth Century. Modern mechanism has superseded the necessity of her cares of embroidery, and the breaking up of old forms has made her duty of distributing alms, and ordering her band of retainers, unnecessary—nor would she be content to lean from her balcony watching the first gleam of her lover's plume returning from his seven years' warfare; or to sit in solemn state the Queen of Beauty and homage; or to listen to the songs of bearded Troubadour. The day for the worship of beauty, solely, is long since passed, and the woman

of Thought usurps her place. These foregone types were but the preludes to this—beautiful in their day—or tolerated as the best the world afforded. Something more noble, more full, is required now. Now the true full woman must be more enlarged—more reflective, contemplative, and more loving even. Her tenderness has a broader field, even as her thoughts have; she is capable of more; she feels the stirring of more within her self, and feels a stirring to action too—for all power is vital, and wherever it may be lodged, it will out at some time.

Such being the case, it is useless to talk of restricting women in the action of their faculties. In our age, unless the woman of intellect—for the type is maturing itself to that development which is highest and most beautiful—unless she is allowed the free exercise of her talents, is far more lonely and wretched than her poor sister of a bygone age, who toiled because her soul as well as body was in bondage, or the handsome Dame, who moved the Queen of Beauty, listening with proud grace to the songs of her admirers. These were content, for the day-star of better things had not risen upon them; but the woman of our day is not content, because she sees a newer and better light, and she reads the handwriting upon the wall, which says: "Thou art weighed in the balance and found wanting," and therefore she is ready to cast her whole being, her thought, her aspiration, all into the scale of public good, and in being true to herself, become true to the world's destinies.



## Chapter Eleventh.

The popular estimate of the conjugal relation—Falseness and subterfuge inculcated by many who affect to lead opinion.

MY object is not to write rules for the various positions in life, but to suggest thought in regard to many; yet it may be well to meet the common voice in relation to the duties of husband and wife; and in doing this I shall be brief, and draw my illustrations from the sources most likely to comport with the public mind, for the newspaper does more to form opinion, and is a more certain expression of it, than all the books of our libraries.

**GOLDEN RULES FOR BRIDES.**—Resolve every morning to be cheerful that day; and should anything occur to break your resolution, suffer it not to put you out of temper with your husband. Dispute not with him, be the occasion what it may; but much rather deny yourself the satisfaction of having your own will, or gaining the better of an argument, than risk a quarrel or create a heart-burning which it is impossible to see the end of. Implicit submission in a man to his wife is ever disgraceful to both; but implicit submission in a wife to the just will of her husband is what she promises at the altar—what the good will revere her for—and what is in fact the greatest honor she can receive. Be assured, a woman's power, as well as her happiness, has no other foundation than her husband's esteem and love, which it is her interest by all possible means to preserve and increase. Her duty is to share and soothe his cares, and, with the utmost assiduity, conceal his errors.

The above is taken from the columns of a newspaper—I do not know its origin. On the surface it has an unction of godliness; but look into the soul of the thing, and it is an expression at once coarse and shallow, recognizing the position of a bride as not that of the true wife, but only so in conventionality. They are not one in soul and sentiment, knowing no contrariety except the natural infirmities of humanity, which a great love veils as with a mantle, and renders innocuous. "It is her *interest* to preserve and increase the esteem and love of her husband." Now true love never stands knocking at the door of *interest*. It opens by the crystal gates of pure translucent sympathy, which if imperfect nothing can retrieve. Every wise man or woman will give heed to his or her heart, for out of it are the issues of life; but to expect a woman to go about with a half-suppressed breath, and an eye vigilantly watching the face of her liege lord, lest she should err in her duty, is transforming her into a coward or a slave. "Perfect love casteth out fear," and those whose souls are in harmony need no such careful guarding.

We are sure the extract was written by some petty tyrant of a man, or some subservient woman, not out of the heart of truth, whose words admit of justice to man and woman. The individuality of each is a great law of God, and a woman is better when she acts out of her own spontaneity, tenfold, than when she attempts to conform to any theory. "Her duty is to share and soothe his cares," &c. Duty! why it is the spontaneous, the natural action and privilege of her soul, not her cold duty; she, the true wife,



does not say "it is my duty;" the law of God in her heart teaches a nicer view than this, a more intimate and sacred relation.

Here is another, we know not from whom extracted; it may have been penned by Socrates himself, for aught we know, who might have felt himself justified in the most stringent laws to govern the conduct of his Xantippe; it may have been penned by some shrewd thinker, who regarded a wife as an adjective, or appendage to conventionality; but certainly no man or woman, capable of looking into the truth, would ever write in this wise. It is an insult to the understanding of every honest-minded wife, and a covert reproach to her womanhood, unless, indeed, the writer designed only a piece of well-concealed irony.

"THE GOOD WIFE commandeth her husband in any equal matter, by constantly obeying him. It was always observed that what the English gained of the French in battle, by valor, the French regained of the English, by cunning, in treaties. So, if the husband should chance by his power, in his passion, to prejudice his wife's right, she wisely knoweth, by compounding and complying, to rectify it again."

This certainly must be designed as a sarcasm; no man in his right senses would recommend the practice of cunning, subterfuge, and craft, in the sanctuary of home. Surely this is the laying of the halt and the maimed upon God's altar, and the man who would countenance his own imbecility by desiring to be met in such a double-handed manner, deserves the worst consequences of his folly. Again:

She never crosseth her husband in the spring-time of his au-

ger, but stays till it be ebbing water. And then mildly she argues the matter, not so much to condemn him, as to acquit herself.

She keeps home, if she have not her husband's company or leave for her patent to go abroad. For the house is the woman's centre.

Surely, one would suppose this were advice to a servant, or mercenary housekeeper, so entirely devoid is it of all noble trust, and buoyant heart-yielding. "The house is the woman's centre;" that must depend upon her capacity, and the relation she occupies in the house; she may or may not centre there; much depends upon the kind of yoke-fellow appointed her.

Her clothes are rather comely than costly, and she makes plain cloth to be velvet, by her handsome wearing it. She is none of our dainty dames, who love to appear in variety of suits every day new, as if a good gown, like a stratagem in war, were to be used but once.

The first clause of the above is beautiful and true, allowing the full force of nature to a fine woman, whose unartificial bearing is a better exhibition of grace and dignity, than the most studied adornment can ever produce.

Her husband's secrets she will not divulge. Especially she is careful to conceal his infirmities. If he be none of the wisest, she so orders it that he appears on the public stage but seldom, and then he hath conned his part so well that he comes off with great applause.

In her husband's sickness she feels more grief than she shows; partly that she may not dishearten him, and partly because she is not at leisure to seem so sorrowful, that she may be the more serviceable.



The heaviest work of her servants she maketh light by orderly and seasonably enjoying it. Wherefore her service is accounted a preferment, and her teaching better than her wages.

Here the writer breaks from the mistiness of prejudice, and speaks with the wisdom of Ulysses—that “if he be none of the wisest,” hath a quaint honesty touching to the heart. The wisdom and forecasting of the wife is well-recognized, and placed upon a right base—for every true wife is anxious that her husband should acquit himself well with his fellows, be a man amongst men, and is even ready to veil her own superiority in order that he may do his devoir in the world worthily—nor is this consciousness inconsistent with the most wife-like tenderness and devotion. We admire an intellect, but that never wins our love; we respect integrity, but that does not insure affection, although it is a noble base for the structure—it is easier to say *what does not*, than *what does win* the love of a woman—genuineness goes far, with a genuine character, but where a woman is not herself truthful, art goes further with her than genuineness, and she is won by address, when truth would be insufficient—a certain manliness, a dash; or even effeminacy in the case of masculine women; or, to the parties, “*Je ne sais quoi*,” will attach often apparent contrarities.

## Conclusion.

God is the searcher of hearts, as a revealer—He did not impart faculties merely to tempt and delude, but for obedient and enlightened use.

I write down what I know at present for a memorial to myself, yet God knows well what he willed in it, which in some measure is hid from myself.—JACOB BERKEN.

THIS acknowledgment of the old Mystic is both modest and pleasing, and presents the true key to inspiration. Did men follow this fine example of writing for a memorial, as thoughts flow into the mind, rather than as they now do, casting about to see what sect, or dogma, will be affected by the utterance, we should have clearer exponents of truth. But the time must come when people will feel ashamed to write except from the deepest urgencies of the soul, and then only as reverent advocates for the revelation of what must be true from the nature of things. When the world shall exact this fidelity of spirit, we shall advance infinitely faster in the scale of being, and realize that period when “there is nothing hidden that shall not be revealed.” That this is to be literally understood there can be no question, but in admitting this, we must examine upon what the assertion is based. There is that in the very nature of our spiritual essence, by which we desire freedom, frankness, exemption from all that deceit, secrecy and



darkness, which characterize a tortuous path. These things limit and impede its movements, therefore the strong, healthful, and pure spirit rejects them. It follows then that this passage recognizes this nature of the spirit of man—but in recognizing him thus it does not come to him in the shape of a scourge to terrify him into a more cowardly life, as if it said “be careful! whatever you do will at some time be known; you may steal into corners, and hide yourself in darkness, but God will find you out, and proclaim your actions upon the housetops, for men and angels to hear, and to overwhelm you with shame.”

I will none of this faith. When God created me, I will not believe he bestowed a single power which he did not design me legitimately to use. I do not believe he imparted a single emotion except for good. I do not believe he meant I should dwarf or starve any or all of these by a denial of their appropriate aliment. I do not believe he designed that my affections should wither in selfish inaction, my sentiments die out by the indulgence of sensuality, or my reason become belittled by busying itself at the loop-holes of science. I believe he designed all these several departments of his gifts to me should be used reverently, gratefully, joyously—that I should enter fearlessly into the broad, beautiful domain thus presented; blessing him for his gifts, and using them, not abusing them. I do not believe, when he placed the faculty of self-love midway between earth and heaven, looking forward to what is high and beautiful in the world of thought, and upward into the true and ennobling in sentiment, fortifying it with firmness to

stand to its dictates, flanking it with conscientiousness, by which I am not told what to do, but prompted to what seems just and good. This selfhood looking backward upon the affections, all lying in the rearward of human eyes; blind children calling for light and liberty, hidden from reason, but following in her van; when I see that the very base of my organization is upon *Love*, which works its way up through the whole structure, struggling, vitalizing, and ascending; when I see this, not only philosophically but phrenologically, and that in the centre of all, crowning the apex of this soul-of-man pyramid, is a faculty that leads me to worship, invites me to the recognition of an Eternal, All-powerful, Infinite—I see in all this a harmony, a beauty, that fills me with wonder. Then, seeing this, I will not so misinterpret, I will not so belittle the vast idea of a Godhead, by supposing that these very qualities that make up the sum of my being are designed as so many traps to surprise me—pit-falls into which I may stumble, and then be drawn forth and held up for the contempt or abhorrence of men and angels.

No, rather I believe the Infinite Father meant assuredly what he said—“Ye may eat of the fruits of the garden,” and the prohibition was to the undue gratification of any or all. The tree of knowledge stood midway; a step beyond drives us into the understood wilderness of doubt and darkness. In our certain wilderness of doubt and darkness. In our Integrity we stand poised in our own Unity, a Law, a Life. There is no disorder; we find ourselves compounded of elements, mental, moral, physical, each with appropriate laws, and it is for us to know



them and obey them. We are in the midst of beings endowed as we ourselves are endowed, and the great laws of our own being demand justice to ourselves and justice to our neighbors. We cannot infringe either law without disorder and pain, and I must and will believe that the Infinite Creator looks benignly upon his creature who thus obeys the laws of his own nature, and reverences those appertaining to every other. I will not believe he is groping in corners to ensnare him; rather has he made the spirit itself to be joyful in light and freedom; and we may suppress, coerce, and debase it, yet will it cry mightily for space.

The soul was compounded by Eternal Truth, and it will seek to its origin; it searches restlessly for the right way, and it will be revealed, even as from the housetops; there is nothing that shall be hidden from it. Its own elements demand a clear, transparent atmosphere; it denies the darkness—it rejects the evil—it pines in the grief—it languishes in disorder; but light and joy, harmony and beauty, open its wings heavenward; crown it with peace, and fill it from unfailing wells of life and beauty.

We drag down the idea of a God when we make him careful of the petty details of our existence—for hairs may be numbered, and a sparrow may not fall to the ground without his notice, but that notice is not one of keen and petty cavilling—he loves the earnest and the true, even if its robes are soiled in the conflict of evolution; he loves the vitalized creature, who returns to his bosom, even with a short patrimony, for his return shows “he has come to himself;”

that is, to the laws of his being, and therefore into nearer relation to God. The man who gathers up his robe, and scarcely dares touch the highway lest his garments be soiled, is little likely to win a noble race; while he who presses on, although a fold or two of his robes may trail in the dust, will, at length, reach the goal strong and triumphant, with enough of unstained goodness about him to compensate for the slight disorder—for he is a live man,—true and steadfast, and courageous.

There is a pettiness in our code of morals not to be found in the teachings of Jesus or the Prophets. Their denunciations were not uttered against any one honest, hearty human manifestation, but against injustice in every shape; against pride of wealth or place, and hypocrisy in all its many garbs. Men might mistake the way, they might be guilty of excesses, but while these were the errors of ignorance, of oppression, or passion, he might pity, but not condemn. These were the dead which the life-giving Gospel was to raise to the true life—the sick which the compassion of Jesus, diffused in health-imparting virtue even to the hem of his garments, was to heal—the blind restored to sight—the deaf made sentient to world-wide harmonies—the lame made to leap like the hart, and to bound like the roe upon the hill-tops of freedom and truth. To these his language was not that of a condemning judge, but of kindly care that they “sinned no more;” made not the light he had given, become darkness, by violating laws newly revealed to them. Yes, the sin about which so much is vaguely preached, is the violation of this great light within us. It is the



putting out of the light in God's temple, that we may not see the requirements of his laws, all violations of which shall be revealed, as from the house-tops of our being. We must look within to learn these laws, and go forth in holy obedience. Hidden in our inmost being are they, yet they shall be revealed. They have each a still small voice to be heard reverently, and to be obeyed joyfully. "Know thyself" was the inscription upon an ancient temple—and to know ourselves is to learn God's will and way.

THE END.