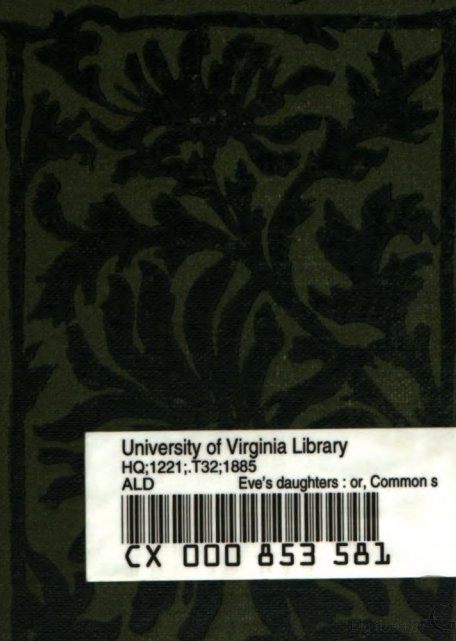


EVES
DAUGHTERS

BY
MARION
KARLAND



OR COMMON
SENSE FOR
MAID WIFE
AND MOTHER

University of Virginia Library

HQ:1221;.T32;1885

ALD

Eve's daughters : or, Common s

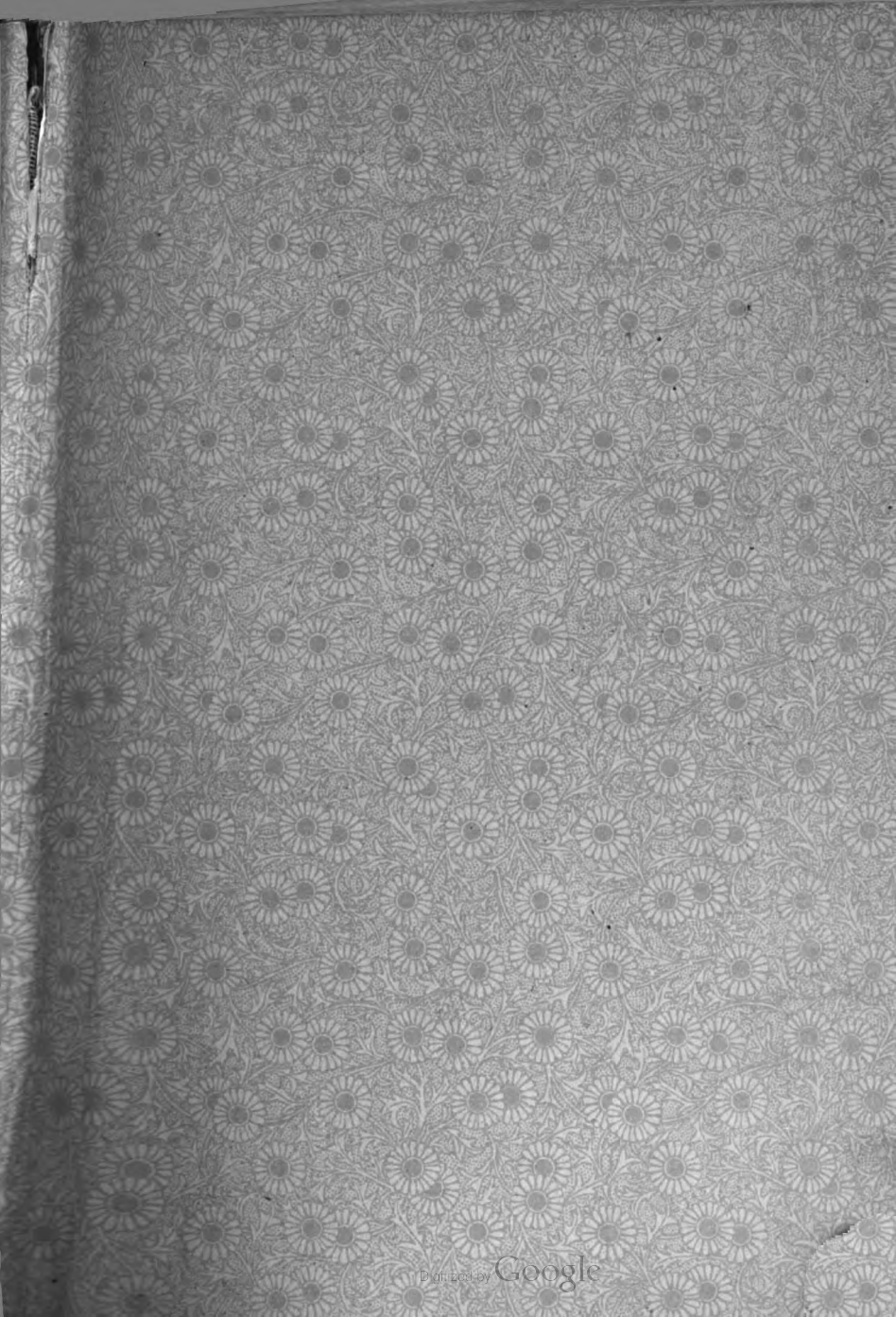


CX 000 853 581

**LIBRARY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA**



**FROM THE BOOKS
OF
EMMA HARLAN**



Ms. O. G. Stacy. —
Arlington, ^{Ms.} July 5th 1888

MARION HARLAND'S WORKS.

THE COTTAGE KITCHEN,	1 00
COMMON SENSE IN THE HOUSEHOLD,	1 75
BREAKFAST, LUNCHEON, AND TEA,	1 75
THE DINNER YEAR-BOOK,	1 75
LOITERINGS IN PLEASANT PATHS,	1 75
HANDICAPPED,	1 50
ALONE,	1 50
HIDDEN PATH,	1 50
MOSS SIDE,	1 50
NEMESIS,	1 50
AT LAST,	1 50
HELEN GARDNER,	1 50
TRUE AS STEEL,	1 50
SUNNYBANK,	1 50
HUSBANDS AND HOMES,	1 50
RUBY'S HUSBAND,	1 50
PHEMIE'S TEMPTATION,	1 50
THE EMPTY HEART,	1 50
JESSAMINE,	1 50
FROM MY YOUTH UP,	1 50
MY LITTLE LOVE,	1 50

Any of the above volumes will be sent post-paid on receipt of the price by

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS,

743-745 BROADWAY, NEW YORK.

EVE'S DAUGHTERS

OR

*COMMON SENSE FOR MAID,
WIFE, AND MOTHER*

BY

MARION HARLAND *in pencil.*

AUTHOR OF "COMMON SENSE IN THE HOUSEHOLD," ETC., ETC.

Mary Virginia H. Terhune

*Mrs E. G. Stacy. 1209 McCall St
Baltimore, Md.*

"It is not too much to say of the women of a Nation, that they are the molds in which the souls of its men are set."—EMILY PFRIFFR.



NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

1885

Gil 1
OCT 4 '51

Virginia

HQ
1 R 21
.T 3 R
1885
526076

COPYRIGHT, 1881, BY
JOHN R. ANDERSON AND HENRY S. ALLEN

COPYRIGHT, 1884, BY
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS,

U V

TROW'S
PRINTING AND BOOKBINDING COMPANY
NEW YORK.

TO MY SISTERS,
THE
WIVES, MOTHERS, AND DAUGHTERS OF AMERICA,
This Volume
IS AFFECTIONATELY AND EARNESTLY
DEDICATED.



INTRODUCTION.

WHEN, almost two years ago, I was importuned to write a series of popular articles upon the "Physical and Mental Education of Woman," I re-read carefully Dr. Clarke's "Sex in Education," and said in effect, if not in words, "They have Moses and the prophets. Let them hear them."

Still, the proposition had awakened my attention to the real or imaginary need for such a work. It was one from which my taste recoiled, nor had I—it was easy to persuade myself—time or strength for the undertaking. But, once admitted, the thought would not down. Once opened, my eyes saw more and farther than ever before into the needs, the failures, and the capabilities of my sex.

I saw a mighty class of human beings ignorant of the things pertaining to their physical peace; accounting the holiest mysteries of their natures an unclean thing;

holding carelessly the sublimest possibilities of their kind; never giving a thought to the awful truth that they control the fate of the coming race.

I saw Man,—owning Woman as his mate with but one, and that the least noble side of his dual nature;—the conscious oppression of her by the coarse and sensual, the repression of her intellectual strivings by the arrogant who brook not even the shadow of a partner on the throne of Self. With pain and surprise I saw the unconscious tyranny of the refined and chivalrous. The velvet glove needs no iron hand within to keep Woman—the flattered Angel of Home and Queen of Hearts—in her place. To the boor, she is a kitchen pipkin, valued according to the amount of hard usage she will endure, the quantity of work to be gotten out of her. To the boor's superior in sense and breeding, she is delicate faience, to be treasured in a windowed cabinet, very precious, very expensive, and, for the practical business of life, very useless.

I saw that the influence of traditions,—some mouldy and unsavory, others sweet as the breath from the Indian jars our grandmothers kept filled with spiced rose-leaves,—held all these wrongs to their work. Public sentiment has decreed what shall be whispered in secret and what proclaimed from the market-tower. Old-wives' fables and prejudices outrank with the majority of women the testimony of enlightened physiologists.

The girl walks blindfolded between plowshares, hotter and closer together than Queen Emma's, and can hardly—unless by a miracle of mercy—fail to sear her tender feet.

Yet, brave men and braver women had already spoken. It was meet that these latter should be heard. Women can say things to women which we would not bear from men,—things which men do not *know*. There is with us a Guild of Sentiment with which a stranger may not intermeddle, as there is a Guild of Suffering known in its fullness of bitterness only to the initiated. The drawback to a woman's advocacy of any cause is that her idealistic, sympathetic, *maternal* nature makes her a partisan. Her subject becomes her bantling. She is restive in argument. Her "*can't* you see it?" anticipates logical deduction. Woman is an instinctive diagnosian. Man is patient and systematic in following the clue leading to the source of a malady, and in adopting the successive stages that promise cure. He, in his turn, is irritated by the inconsequence of readers of the other sex; tenacious of technicalities dear to the scientific soul, and loses strength of style when he tries to simplify his treatise to their comprehension.

I have not the vanity to believe that I can convince the educated reason which Clarke and Greg, Napheys and Mitchell, Frances Power Cobbe and Mary Putnam Jacobi have not moved.

And yet, my book is written! After the first page I could not stay heart or pen. I send it forth to homes where other "Familiar Talks" from the same source have found, first indulgent, then loving auditors. I have aimed to avoid abstruseness on one hand, and baldness on the other. I hope there is not a sentence which mother and daughter may not read together. I know there is not a line which has not been dictated by a sincere desire to be helpful to both.

One word of acknowledgment, where many are due, to the authors from whose works I have drawn freely in support and illustration of the views advanced in this volume. My debt to them is personal, no less than professional, yet is outweighed by the richer blessing of being permitted to distribute so much of the wealth thus gained to those who may not have enjoyed the privilege of access to the store-houses.

MARION HARLAND.



CONTENTS.

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION, - - - - -	5
CHAPTER I.	
BIRTH—NOT-BEGINNING, - - - - -	11
CHAPTER II.	
INFANTS' FOOD, - - - - -	22
CHAPTER III.	
"STARTING EVEN," - - - - -	41
CHAPTER IV.	
HANDICAPPED, - - - - -	57
CHAPTER V.	
REVERENCE OF SEX, - - - - -	76
CHAPTER VI.	
THE FIRST STARTING-POINT, - - - - -	97
CHAPTER VII.	
GIRLHOOD, - - - - -	118
CHAPTER VIII.	
BRAIN-WORK AND BRAIN-FOOD, - - - - -	136

CHAPTER IX.	
WHAT SHALL OUR GIRL STUDY? - - -	154
CHAPTER X.	
FACE TO FACE WITH OUR GIRL, - - -	173
CHAPTER XI.	
HOW SHALL OUR GIRL STUDY? - - -	194
CHAPTER XII.	
THE RHYTHMIC CHECK, - - - -	214
CHAPTER XIII.	
AMERICAN WORRY, - - - -	226
CHAPTER XIV.	
WHAT THEN? - - - -	247
CHAPTER XV.	
CALLED, - - - -	267
CHAPTER XVI.	
WHAT SHALL BE DONE WITH THE MOTHERS? -	290
CHAPTER XVII.	
INDIAN SUMMER, - - - -	303
CHAPTER XVIII.	
HOUSEKEEPING AND HOME-MAKING, - - -	319
CHAPTER XIX.	
DRESS, - - - -	339

Contents.

ix

CHAPTER XX.

GOSSIP, - - - - - 363

CHAPTER XXI.

PRINCE CHARMING, - - - - - 384

CHAPTER XXII.

MARRIED, - - - - - 402

CHAPTER XXIII.

SHALL BABY BE? - - - - - 419

CHAPTER XXIV.

COMING, - - - - - 432



EVE'S DAUGHTERS.

CHAPTER I.

BIRTH—NOT BEGINNING.

“Man is physically, as well as metaphysically, a thing of shreds and patches, borrowed unequally from good and bad ancestors, and a misfit from the start.”—EMERSON.



THE baby-girl is born. There are yet homes where the announcement of her sex excites discontent.

“The father of ten sons is rich. The father of ten daughters may as well engage rooms in the poor-house at once,” says the old proverb.

Nor is this all idle talk for talk's sake; the prating of an obsolete prejudice. I shall not soon forget the real repugnance expressed in the face of a little girl whom I congratulated awhile ago upon the advent of the month-old baby lying on the mother's knees. The mite of an elder sister, but two-and-a-half years of age,

looked at the new-comer as if it had been a toad or a snail.

"It's nuffin but a girl-baby! It ought to be *drowned!*" she uttered, slowly and disgustfully.

"Her father teaches her to say it!" interposed the mother, a blush tinging her pale face, a sigh mingling with her laugh. "I wish he wouldn't, for the child takes it all in earnest. It is natural, you know, for men to want sons."

"Yet it is the daughter who makes the home!" was all I dared say.

Poor little girl-baby! Conjugated from the beginning in the passive voice! To be supported, to be protected, to be dowered—at the best, to be loved. The coarse realism of the Chinese father only accentuates the petulant jest of the American and presumably Christian husband, into the finale—"To be drowned."

We—as the essential condition of the continuation of our subject—will give our new-born daughter the advantage at the outset of assuming that she is tolerated and passably welcome in the home into whose warm snugness she has fallen. Perhaps, by reason of a precession of several living sons, her advent is hailed with pleasure. She is "a perfect child," too, and pronounced a "remarkably fine infant" by doctor and nurse.

The conscientious quiet that hedges about "a comfortable confinement" is peculiarly conducive to day-

dreaming. The painless rest would, of itself, be almost compensation to the whilom busy woman for months of suffering overpast, had the mother won nothing besides her own life by the already-forgotten anguish.

“Baby is a world of company to me,” she says, when condoled with upon enforced solitude and inaction. “The time passes fast and delightfully. She knows and understands me already.”

She must indeed be hopelessly prosaic and inane who does not bring out from the calm, white tent of that still month a juster appreciation of the dignity of maternity; patience and resolve for the performance of Life's duties, and a deeper thankfulness for home-loves and happiness. Baby, meanwhile, has offered many practical suggestions for the consideration of her companion. It is not singular—muses the mother—that she should already display certain tendencies, entirely selfish, which are usually regarded as inseparable from human and animal nature. But that she should, in the short space of four weeks, have contracted *habits*, is a puzzle that has in it the elements of alarm. The monthly nurse whose dominion in the household is adjudged by Civilization and so-called Luxury, to be altogether indispensable in the “circumstances”—call her seton, blister, leech, or what you will—has done her professional best to keep herself comfortable and spoil her helpless

charge, during her brief autocracy. She has walked and rocked her to sleep in her arms secretly, if not allowed to do it openly; fed her at all sorts of irregular intervals; pinned the swaddling-bands as tightly as her sinewy fingers could draw them; administered catnip, Dewees' Mixture, Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup, and other invaluables that mother and child (with no thought of the disinterested Gamp) might have a good night's sleep,—until the tiny morsel that has survived the gall-moon immediately succeeding birth is hardly the same gift which was laid, in the first hour of conscious existence, in the mother's arms.

Gamp feeds Baby with the fussy assiduity of a child filling the ever-wide mouth of a callow robin, and with little more judgment. She pours down sweet oil thick with sugar as a provisional purgative; toast-water, likewise syrupy to prevent bowel-complaint; "cambric tea"—still sweet;—barley-water, patent "Infants' Food,"—all to keep the poor little dear from starving until Mamma's milk comes. Surfeited nature in robin and in Baby revolts. The bird generally dies. Baby's survival depends upon the strength and activity of the diaphragm which casts out the rubbish almost as industriously as it is tossed down.

It is hardly just, reasons the natural guardian when her property is really, as well as nominally made over to her, that her first official act must be to undo the

effects of mismanagement. But she goes valiantly to work. Baby is no longer cuddled to sleep upon the fat warmth of "Aunty's" bosom, nor trotted on the knee, nor carried up and down the room until motion and monotony act beneficially upon nerves ungedared by "drops" and overfeeding. She is taught, after divers battles, to go to sleep in a quiet crib in a darkened room; is put to bed at stated hours, and given to understand that she is one under wise authority.

"There is nothing like beginning aright!" decides Mamma, triumphant in the victory over Self even more than over the recalcitrant subject of her severity.

"Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying," is the stern counsel of the Wise Man, whose Rehoboam was an unfortunate result, if the father's practice matched his preaching. Our mother's soul *has* spared, has melted into weak tears times without number while the crying was like a knife in her heart. It was the will, backed by sound sense, that held fast to resolve and act. She is repaid by the conviction that she has eradicated the rootlets of evil set by Mrs. Gamp in virgin soil. Or she likens her darling's mind and disposition to waxen tablets that will harden into marble with passing years. It has cost her more trouble than her worst fears had anticipated, to smooth out the impressions made by selfish ignorance. She must see to it that the graving done

henceforward is of an order she would not wish to obliterate.

She grows very serious in pondering these things. New light from her lately-lit lamp of experience falls upon the old story of the peasant Mother's eager "laying up in her heart" the hints dropped by inspired lips touching the character and destiny of her Firstborn. She begins—and her soul grows as she does this—to enter into the meaning of the phrase, heard a thousand times from older and wiser people,—as often in mincing cant from parrot-brained women, drilled by much iteration into what sounds sage,—"*Responsibilities of Mothers.*"

"There are people," remarks Dr. Holmes, "who think that everything may be done if the doer, be he educator or physician, be only called 'in season.' No doubt,—but *in season* would often be a hundred or two years before the child was born, and people never send so early as that."

"I always scouted the doctrine of original sin until I had children of my own to rear," said a matron, at a Mothers' Conference meeting. "Now, I am on the highway to a belief in total depravity."

That bulwark of orthodoxy — "The Assembly's Shorter Catechism," cuts with a broad-axe the knotted cord at which modern students of human nature and expounders of theology pick with subtle pliers and

dainty finger-tips. There is the full-bodied essence of strong meat for men in the annexed "answer."

"The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin: the want of original righteousness and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called Original Sin, together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it."

This, then, is Baby's inheritance. From Adam downward, the curious and most interesting law known to scientists as "*atavism*"—the ancestral bequest of physical, mental and spiritual traits to succeeding generations—has been at work. Of direct inheritance from father and mother it is not my design to speak at length just here. It is easy of comprehension and readily received, that the fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge. But the clear sense of the spiritual chemists composing the Westminster Assembly, recognizing the existence of deadly elements in the purest strain of human blood, reckoned their way back, without waste of words or time, to the First Sin for the origin of the virus and included the indefinite series of transmissions of stain and infusion from line to line under one comprehensive head—"all actual transgressions which proceed from it."

From this foul stream vomited from a foul fountain, arise the miasmatic vapors that blast the sweetest earthly hopes.

“Lord! who did sin—this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” queried the gainsayers, believers, all, in the law of heredity, but forgetting the pregnant clause—“*Unto the third and fourth generation.*”

No other hypothesis solves the terrible enigma of the deaths of apparently healthy infants, born of parents seemingly as sound, and who, in the management of their children obey intelligently wise hygienic rules. Rachel, weeping for those who are not, cries out in reasonless remorse that this was done which cost her baby its life, or that left undone which might have saved it. Who can persuade her that the child was fatally injured before its mother was born?

“To speak roundly,” says Joseph Cook,—“the great law of hereditary descent is that *like breeds like.*”

Again, a simple law,—so simple that it is axiomatic. That we do not appreciate it in its extended and tremendous bearing is our fault, or mistake. Baby looked more like her grandmother than like her own mother until she was a week old. Most infants come into the world stamped with this significant seal to the truth of the principle just stated. And Baby's grandmother probably looked as much like hers, and so on all the way back until imagination loses itself in the dim windings of the ages. Nature is an Ariadne who has never parted with her clue. We—short of sight and of memory—allude to the continuity as phenomenal,

when, in such families as have preserved the record of former generations, a remote scion of a progenitor renowned for learning or virtue, or of infamous repute, repeats history or tradition, and reminds the “magnificent constituency of mediocrities of which the world is made up”—according to Dr. Holmes—“the people without biographies, whose lives have made a clear solution in the fluid menstruum of Time,”—that others of their name once formed “a precipitate in the opaque sediment of History.”

We tell, as a pleasant anecdote, of the Mendelssohn who used to lament that in his youth he was known as the son, and in his old age as the father of “The Great Mendelssohn.”

We read of Isaac, a minor at forty years of age, walking in the field to meditate in the eventide that divided the period of his subjection to his hot-tempered mother from uxorious thralldom to Laban’s sister,—nor ask ourselves why we drop him, with Amram and Jesse, as loose links in reckoning the princes of Israel—Abraham, Jacob, Moses, and David. Might, for good or for evil, is not to be put down even under the feet of Time and Death. While obeying the reactionary law that holds it back for a season (that may be a century), it reasserts its rights once and again, following the channel known to our Westminster polemics as “descent by ordinary generation.”

Our young mother's heart may well be full and her face grave as she watches Baby's development, and computes to the best of her poor ability, the known and unknown quantities of the sum set for her to master; the pros and cons of death and life, of healthful luxuriance, of stunted or distorted growth in the vine set in her nursery.

That she may work rationally and with fair prospect of success, it is requisite, if only as the means to higher ends, to establish a healthy habit of all bodily functions. By the blessed economy of Nature that sends but one rain-drop at a time, there can be no conflict of duties as to date, space, or importance. If we are twitched a dozen different ways at once, the fault is in our own impotence or blindness, in that we do not read aright the label on each assigned task.

John Newton says quaintly enough that man's duties are like a fagot, one stick of which GOD designs for each day's burden. The weight of a single billet may easily be borne, by the help of GOD'S grace. The trouble is that men will persist in adding to-morrow's and yesterday's and next week's sticks to to-day's, so that it is no marvel when they sink beneath the accumulation.

I would if I could, rivet that paragraph—a Silent Comforter—upon the heart and conscience of every mother. It would be tonic, salve, and sedative combined.

For the present, your rain-drop or billet, or whatever prefigures the daily duty, is to secure your child's physical health—a matter of double import, *as she is a girl*. I hope to make the emphasized section clearer as we go on.

Hinging directly upon this desideratum, comes the question of DIET.





CHAPTER II.

INFANTS' FOOD.

“Out of 100 children suckled by their mothers, only 18.2 died during the first year. Of those nursed by wet-nurses, 29.33 died. Of those artificially fed, 60 died. Of those brought up in institutions, 80 died. But all mothers can not yield the necessary food for their offspring, and the weakness which underlies this incapacity is far more likely than not to be transmitted to most of the little ones, however carefully fed otherwise, who slip away into premature graves.”—*Reported from* DR. G. F. KOLB.

“The sad mortality of children was the theme of the opening address of Dr. B. W. Richardson, the President of the British Health Congress, at its meeting in December. He could not have chosen a more urgent topic. He classified the causes under four heads—the inherited, the accidental, the inflicted, and the acquired. Under the first head he referred to the influence of hereditary diseases; under the second the diseases of an epidemic character, and which occur from exposure to one or other of the communicable poisons, were considered; under the third head the injuries arising from bad nursing, excessive competition in education, and improper feeding were brought under notice; and under the fourth head the evils incident to early resort to smoking, the use of stimulants, late hours, and irregular meals were made subjects of comment. What he urged especially was the responsibility of parents for the failure in health of children.”



LF possible, nurse your infant yourself. Let the “possible” be as stringent as conscience can make it. The vital importance of the injunction is not a matter of old-fashioned prejudice or old wives’ fables. The most advanced schools of

physiology set before us an array of facts bearing directly upon, and cognate to the subject of Heredity, that should force serious thought upon frivolity itself, oblige even the obstinacy of ignorance to yield credence to the result of enlightened research.

It can not be denied that much inconvenience to the mother, loss of natural rest, and, for a season, of strength, are the usual attendants upon the habit of nourishing her child from her own bosom.

“It is *slavery!*” cries one, passionately; “and a degrading bondage, a reduction of a refined, intellectual being to the rank of a mammal female.”

Another said to the physician who congratulated her upon the bountiful supply furnished by Nature for her first-born :

“You can not expect me to injure my figure, ruin my complexion, and spoil the fit of my dresses by nursing my baby as a common washerwoman might !”

“Madam !” he returned ; “the most beautiful sight upon GOD’S earth is that of a mother nourishing her young from her own breast !”

Apart from the facilities afforded by the fulfillment of this duty for the study of your child’s constitutional peculiarities, the pleasure to the little one and to yourself of so many hours of affectionate intercourse, and the inevitable strengthening, through these means, of your mutual attachment, there are substantial advan-

tages in the habit which are not to be lightly passed over, or disregarded entirely.

“Like breeds like.” Mother and child are as homogeneous as trunk and twig. The sap—which we characterize in these circumstances lacteal fluid—is assimilated naturally and nourishfully. The tender digestive organs recognize it at once; seldom, and that only under abnormal influences, quarrel with it. The reflex influence upon the mother comes in, also, as a matter of course.

Without heeding the preposterous notions of dieting that obtain with the foolishly-superstitious, she will soon learn that the best food for herself is also best for her nursling; that what agrees with her stomach, being readily and painlessly digested, suits Baby, and *vice versa*. She discovers, furthermore, that the most useful milk-producing ingredients are not slops, but juicy meats, good broths, milk, really excellent ale, oatmeal porridge and cream, fresh ripe fruits, and a score of other palatable things that, after supplying Baby's wants, leave in her own system rich reserves for the replenishment of wasted tissues and thinned blood.

The intelligent woman will bear in mind that the watery serum distending the lacteal glands after she has imbibed countless bowls of tea and goblets of water to quench a constant thirst, while it will, in turn, fill and unreasonably enlarge Baby's stomach and deposit

adipose matter between bones and skin, can do little else. Phosphates for bone and brain, strong-meat essence for blood; vegetable nervines that shall act directly upon spinal marrow and nerve-centers—all these are chemically interfused and adjusted for their appointed agencies in the patient, faithful retort of the mother's bosom. In the partial appreciation of this beautiful law of demand and supply, the old women and "women's doctors" of our foremothers' times physicked the mother when the unweaned child writhed with colic, and needed purgatives or astringents. Still groping after this truth, their unwritten nursery code prohibited her use of fish, pickles, salads, acid fruits, cabbage, onions, and so on; drenched her with caudle and posset; stayed the craving stomach upon panado, until the obedient patient became thin, anemic, and hysterical, her suckling pale and puffy. Water-gruel by the quart and unlimited tea and coffee were the most approved regimen, and the term of nursing was a penitential pilgrimage graveward. Babies pulled mothers down to hollow-eyed skeletons, and the mother sacrificed beauty, health, and life to keep alive a bloated, dyspeptic leech that fretted continually and yelled its inarticulate, "Give! give!" by day and by night.

You, Mother of To-day, have to undo and to mend, to tear down, no less than to build. In no stress of uncharitableness do you anathematize the mistakes and

follies of your predecessors as "actual transgressions" against you and yours. You do not modify your judgment as there comes to you in some startling experience, or by degrees of observation, the conviction that the supreme fact of Heredity has to do with the higher part of your child's being. Upon that the graving-tool of "ordinary generation" has wrought as industriously and as deeply as upon her physical nature. The most obvious manifestation of this truth and its practical enforcement are in the circumstance that your moods and tenses affect her comfort. Your distress, anxiety, and petulance are reflected in her fitful slumbers, convulsive twitchings, "cross-fits."

"The dear lamb's teeth!" says the nurse. "The mother's temper" would be nearer the truth.

While she lies at the breast rising and falling with the throbbing heart, you have leisure, *and use it*, for the indulgence of the passion or despondency of the hour. There is pith in the old Scotch saying: "It is sair luck to cry over a sucking bairn." The farmer flogs the boy who "races the cows home," not only, he explains to him, because it lessens the flow of milk, but that fright and irritation injure the quality of it. But when Baby wails by the hour, "for nothing"—being, so far as nurse and parents can discern, perfectly well, and free from pin-pricks—who blames Mamma on that account for the fretful humor that has possessed

her all day? Who remembers, with any consciousness of the bearing of one incident upon the other, that, when she came in, at noon, hot and jaded from a long walk, the full head of milk pressing hard upon muscles and veins, she could not wait to get her bonnet off before catching up the child and putting its eager lips to the brimming fountain?

She laughed in mingled relief and amusement when the hungry little thing choked and gurgled and coughed itself purple under the rush down its throat into the empty stomach. Yet she knows that a bottle is best filled slowly, with judicious respect to the escape of air, if she gives no thought to the probable effect of heat and weariness upon the food administered thus hastily.

I could cite a hundred well-authenticated examples of the evils of what most mothers never think of classing among indiscretions—what they would shudder to hear described as sins. Let two suffice:

A celebrated New York physician, Dr. Seguin, in a treatise upon "Idiocy," relates: "Mrs. — came out from a ball-room, and gave the breast to her baby, three months old. He was taken with spasms, two hours after, and since is a confirmed idiot and epileptic."

The second story is familiar to many. A German soldier's wife, seeing her husband attacked by a comrade,

rushed in between them, wrested the sword from the assailant, broke it in two, and in a frenzy of anger, stamped upon the fragments. While still trembling and speechless in the reaction of the paroxysm, she took her healthy infant, six months old, from the cradle and put him to the breast. In ten minutes he was a corpse.

Boerhaave, philanthropist and physician, in an exhaustive article upon Epilepsy, sets down a case of this malady induced by suckling while the nurse was in a furious rage.

While it is undoubtedly true that the failure of American women to nurse their offspring is largely due to indisposition on their part to consider the act as a duty, or to perform it when they are convinced against inclination that it is obligatory upon the parent; while they acquiesce all too readily in the dictum of the fashionable nurse that "there is no manner of use in trying to force milk when there is none there, or so little that it would do the child no good"; it is also beyond question that the quantity secreted in the bosoms of some mothers is very small. The deficiency may be the result of disease—fever, pulmonary weakness, or general or constitutional debility. The treatment of such cases should vary according to the character of the cause of the trouble. When the fever has passed, every gentle means should be employed—such as intelligent feeding, mild ale, exercise in the open air, and

frequent application of the child to the breast—to coax back the milk to the dry ducts. Pulmonary disease—confirmed and hereditary—should prohibit nursing, as it ought marriage and child-birth. Where the milkless fount is the consequence of general weakness, the plain regimen is to build up the constitution of the mother by tonics, nourishing diet, and, above all, change of air, meanwhile intermitting no appliance that might induce a secretion of the lacteal fluid without drawing too heavily upon the woman's forces.

The attempt to dry up, by artificial means, what is a perfectly natural and healthful outgo, is, as might be predicated with respect to violent dealing with all normal bodily secretions, often followed by disastrous effects. Consumption, apoplexy, insanity—are among the graver consequences of obedience to the decree of indolence, expediency, or fashionable custom. The more common are hysteria, early and excessive return of the menstrual period, headache, and general good-for-nothingness.

It is worth while for the sake of your own health and comfort, to sit, a patient and persevering learner, at Nature's feet, during the seasons she defines by unmistakable indications. If, when you have done your best to follow her promptings, the desired result is not gained, you have freed your soul from the responsibility of the failure to carry out her designs.

And, what then? Clearly, in this case, to give Baby

the best substitute for its natural food that can be procured. Not until the limit of your "possible" is reached, resort to wet-nurse, or cow's or goat's milk, still less to the thousand-and-one variations of "Infants' Food" advertised as "Better than Mother's Milk." The Creator never makes such gross mistakes as these poor imitators would imply.

All that we have said of the influence of diet, temper, etc., upon the reservoir in the maternal keeping, applies, with tenfold pertinence, to the hired nurse who serves for wages, and not through the sweet compulsion of Love.

Scrofula, a love of intoxicating liquors, and a coarse, obese habit of body have, again and again, been positively traced back to the foster-mother. Cutaneous eruptions, fever, and indigestion are more readily and frequently transmitted. The occult influences by which the very expression of countenance, even the mold of feature, are given by the nurse, rather than by the parents, form an interesting and curious subject to the physiological student.

I have in my mind a striking illustration of the secret and powerful effect of these in the history of a young girl whom I knew, many years since. Her dissimilarity to the other members of a remarkably handsome family was conspicuous, and, to herself, a source of deep mortification. Her rough skin, corpulent frame, harsh voice,

and loud laugh were unconquerable peculiarities that were yet a degree less distressing to her refined kinspeople than certain vulgar tastes, such as a liking for tobacco and spirits, and a relish for broad wit and low company. The origin of the evil—whispered in shuddering breaths by her blood-kindred, talked of freely by her acquaintances—was that she had, when an infant, been put to nurse to a fat Irish woman. In consequence of a long illness succeeding the child's birth, the mother's milk was dried up. The baby was delicate; the woman was healthy, willing, and close at hand. Under her nourishing, the puny girl soon became a wonder of size and strength. The foster-mother smoked habitually while the little creature drew sustenance from her breast, and although never really drunk, was, most of the time, slightly under the effect of the whisky, without which, she would declare, she "couldn't kape up her own stringth, let alone the dear babby's." Her boisterous good-humor and coarse jokes, while oddly at variance with the general tone of the household, were overlooked as the "harmless ways" of a privileged servant. Had a disagreeable temper been one of her failings, it would probably have been excused on account of her devotion to her nursling. She gave up sleep, recreation, all other companionship, to be with and watch over her whom her Celtic heart had accepted in the place of her own dead child. The baby slept in

her bed and arms by night, never quitted her sight for an hour at a time during the day, for twenty months. The mother regained strength but slowly, and there were other children to be looked after. "Baby was safe, well, and happy with Margaret."

Margaret Maguire was as stalwart of will as of body, a "character" in the neighborhood, where, to tell the truth, her reputation for modesty and sobriety was at a discount. She stamped herself with such distinctness upon the memories of those who knew her at this date, that there was no difficulty, in after years, in recognizing her traits in the development of the girl whom she never saw after the latter was two years old.

It is absurdly worse than useless to affect disbelief in, or contempt of, the might of the mysterious tie uniting a woman to the one for whose sustenance she has, for months, drawn upon the hidden stores of her own life. If the mental disorder of the nurse can blight a child with idiocy, or smite with death, who shall pretend to define the nature and extent of the moral and intellectual bias imparted and acquired by this relation? The nursling becomes blood of her blood, nerve of her nerve, life of her life. Why not also, soul of her soul?

Said an acquaintance in my hearing: "My little boy has a new wet-nurse, the third in six months. One drank, the other discharged herself from my service in a fit of rage that was frightful to behold. She actually

threw a knife at the coachman. I have now a healthy, stolid German, whom I hope to keep. She is very stupid and good-tempered, and consumes a great deal of lager-bier. I hesitated somewhat about engaging her when I learned that she was not married. It seemed not quite the thing, you know. But our family physician says, 'A fig for her morality! All that you need care to know is whether she is sound of body!'

I leave mother, physician, and anecdote to point their moral.

A wet-nurse who is an honest woman, clean in body and in life, is beyond price when the calamity—I write it deliberately—the *calamity* of dry breasts overtakes the mother, or when, in the candid opinion of a doctor who understands human nature and his business, and respects both too truly to sink to the level of a "woman's medical man," she would peril her own health and that of her offspring in fulfilling this most gracious of maternal tasks. But this substitute is always an expensive necessity, often altogether beyond the reach of people of moderate means. In some places and some times, such an one is not to be had on any terms.

Man is an omnivorous animal. Most other mammals are by nature either graminivorous or carnivorous. Your dog may be trained into toleration of bread and vegetables as a part of his diet, and if he is very docile or mean-spirited, into a fondness for sweets. At

heart, he prefers meat, as did his forest progenitors, and raw, to cooked flesh. But no dog, however tame domesticated, will eat grass, like the ox, in these ante-millennial days. Nor would the hungry or mad ox devour flesh as an article of food. Man—as we are opening our eyes to see—must eat meat to enrich his blood (“which is the life”). He should likewise temper blood-heats with fruits and other esculents; strengthen brain-tissue and muscle with the phosphates of fish and crude cereals. A cunning distillation of all these elements is the human mother’s milk. He who created woman and knows what is in her, ordained this for the nourishment and upbuilding of the human infant.

But while the milk yielded by the graminivorous cow can not furnish all the elements of growth which your baby requires, a very fair imitation of her proper aliment may be prepared by mixing fresh cow’s milk with one-third the quantity of boiling water and sweetening it *slightly*. Thousands of children are reared yearly upon this diet, and with results apparently so satisfactory that many mothers do not hesitate to express a preference for this mode of treatment above that suggested by Nature and Providence. Should Baby keep well, the defects of the system may not be manifest to the casual observer. That she may keep well, the “bottle-baby” must be tended with especial care and intelligence. You, the defrauded mother, should make

regular and frequent inspection of the contents of the flask and the condition of the elastic tube which poorly represent to your child the warmth and refreshment, the "comfort" and the "cuddling" of her lawful resting-place and sustenance.

I shall never forget a peep I once had into the nursery in the house of an opulent family where twin-babies lay feet to feet in a double cradle under a pink mosquito-net. One was pulling vigorously, the other drowsily, at snake-like tubes leading into two bottles lying beside them.

"But,"—ventured I, horror mastering politeness,—
"the milk is curdled! See the clots!"

The calm mother bent to make sure of the fact.

"Yes!" she drawled. "That often happens in this very warm weather. I give them their bottles when I go to bed, at night, and usually hear no more of them until near morning. Then, I find that the little left in each bottle is 'loppered' into a firm curd. I suppose it must be wholesome, for they seem to be none the worse for it."

Both babies had a stormy infancy. What with teething, convulsions, cholera-infantum, and in the case of one, epileptic fits, the poor mother lost sleep, patience and heart times without number. She "supposed that twins were always hard to rear."

Perhaps their diet had nothing to do with these dis-

comforts and mishaps. Nature is a brave old mother, better than any of us deserve, and the Father has compassion beyond bound or imagination for the multitude of helpless ones who "can not discern between their right hand and their left hand."

As we have said, while Baby remains passably healthy, continuing to enjoy and digest her milk without pain or other unpleasant symptom that all is not right within, the imitation article serves the desired purpose fairly well. But as mothers and nurses know, there are indications that the system of the "bottle-baby" rejects as innutritious, and therefore worthless, a much larger proportion of the food administered than does that of the nursling. Also, by reason of the inordinate quantity of liquid it is compelled to swallow in order to secure a certain quantum of nourishment, the abdomen is gradually enlarged in a disproportionate degree. These are temporary inconveniences. The danger begins with the battle with the disorders incident to the dreaded teething-period. When the heat from the swollen gums pervades the whole body, and the irritable stomach and relaxed bowels will endure but little food of any description, it is of imminent importance that the little should be exactly adapted to the needs of disturbed and over-taxed Nature. In such circumstances it happens so often as to be quoted as a rule, that no substitute for the milk of mother or wet-nurse is assimilated by the digestive organs.

Such statistics of comparative mortality among infants fed from the breast and those "brought up," like poor Pip, "by hand," as we have collected from Dr. Kolb's report on this subject, settle the question—if there be any—beyond the possibility of doubt or cavil.

In the exigency of disordered Nature remedial Science comes to her help—not so much to cure disease as to brace the constitution to repel it. Rice—boiled to a jelly in plenty of water very lightly salted, strained through coarse muslin and slightly sweetened; arrow-root dissolved in a little cold water, then cooked in milk to the smoothness and consistency of starch; pure cream, scalded and sweetened; barley, boiled long and slowly, salted a little and strained; beef-tea, freed from every float of fat, and administered by the teaspoonful, to restore the lost tone to the stomach;—these are some of the accessories by which life may be supported until the system recovers its equilibrium. As soon as the need of them has passed, return to the staple—Milk—more or less diluted with boiling water. In health, and especially in sickness, be wary of experiments upon the tender stomach. The time for variety of diet has not come yet. In Baby's clean flask, each day scalded and aired, carefully rinsed with warm water before each replenishment with sweet milk, lie safety and satisfaction.

Another cardinal principle in the feeding of your infant is regularity as to time and quantity. Begin by

giving her the breast or bottle every hour, and gradually widen the interval between her meals until at three months of age, this settles into a fixed period of three hours. Before this rule has been established a fortnight, you will observe that the delicate mechanism of appetite and digestion has accepted the regulation of intelligent power, and adjusted itself most amiably to the arrangement. The advantages of the system are almost as signal to mother as to child. She can absent herself from the nursery and house for three hours—a quarter of the working-day—with great comfort of mind and body. Baby will not grow hungry while she is away, nor will the lacteal vessels fill painfully until the nursing-season is at hand. The little one will play contentedly in the parent's sight without teasing for food in the many ways that try the temper and nerves of both, and when out of her presence, the happy child forgets that she has a mother. The weak obstinacy of women who make their boast of the soft hearts that will not let them deny the darlings anything, would be less reprehensible if it acted hurtfully only upon themselves. They tell you, with a sickly smile meant for motherly-sweetness, that they can not fall in with latter-day innovations upon natural affection, that they nurse their babes (that style of parent is apt to say, "babe" and "lamb")—whenever they ask to be fed, without regard to times and seasons. They "have not

the knack of putting aside the claims of their offspring as is the manner of strong-minded women." Their folly is abundantly illustrated, one would think, by their chalky cheeks and hollow chests, without requiring the outspoken denunciation of sensible observers.

It would be a waste of our time and strength to endeavor to persuade these complacent martyrs that they injure their children even more than themselves.

Dr. C. E. Page in a treatise upon the management of infants, comments severely and justly upon such blind indulgence.

"The only wonder is that any infant lives sixty days from birth. Fed before birth but three times a day, he is after birth subjected to ten or twenty meals in the twenty-four hours, until chronic dyspepsia, or some other acute disease interferes."

"Subjected" is a good word in this connection. Baby is stuffed—drenched—with no option of her own. When the still-active stomach rejects the surfeit, Mamma is not dismayed. "All healthy babies throw up their milk." If it comes up curdled, it is accepted as a sign that she "got the nourishment out of it" before rejecting it. If she cries before feeding she is hungry; if afterward, she has colic. That the sides of the surcharged stomach ache from the cruel pressure of the liquid does not present itself as a probability.

Before closing this chapter, let me state positively

and distinctly, that the nursing-period of a moderately-healthy mother, is no more a state of invalidism, *per se*, than is pregnancy, or what is known as the "change of life." In all three conditions, certain simple laws should govern your management of yourself. Irregular habits are then more than "shiftlessness." They are a sin against yourself, and those dependent for comfort and happiness upon your health. In laying the soothing unction to her vanity, that she is sacrificing her own for her child's good, she who in becoming a mother, ceases to be anything else, shows herself to be as ignorant as she is silly. She serves her kind in keeping herself fresh and sound. Every refreshing bath, every hour of wholesome exercise in the open air, every season of deep, healthful sleep,—all reasonable recreation and the continual feast of a merry heart, tell surely, if not visibly, upon her baby.

The harvest for mother and offspring,—of which this is the seed-time—is in the coming years.





CHAPTER III.

STARTING EVEN.

“We repeat with our girls the experience of Caspar Hauser. We surround them from birth by conditions that so stunt their growth that they early cease to crave a freedom which their weak frames would find burdensome. The foundations of future invalidism are solidly laid before they are ten years old. They have, by that time, been so trained to physical passivity, so imbued with the idea of the unbecomingness of activity and the desirability of being ornamental, that they are thenceforth, unconscious co-operators in the work. . . .

“The arrangements of the nursery and the school reflect this fatal disbelief, and make it a reality.”—EMILY BLACKWELL.



ONE who has won for herself an honorable place in the American world of letters, writes thus to me:—

“Thanks to my delicate constitution—(the local doctors informed my parents that I was born without any)—I was not confined so closely in the school-room during my childhood as were some of my companions. I early developed a love for wanderings a-field and for woodland sports that sorely puzzled and mortified my mother. Sitting still with my best frock on, and a sash bound smoothly about my waist,

brought on pain in the side. Sewing on patchwork and knitting garters gave me a sick headache. To the great scandal of the prim misses who visited my elder sisters, I cared nothing for the dolls they dressed for me, less than nothing for paying and receiving visits. To dress—as my contemporaries remind me, to this day—I was indifferent, provided my clothes were whole, clean, and stout enough to bear the tugs of briery hedge and scrubby brake. I spent my afternoon and Saturday holidays in the outer air. If I must study, I took my books with me, and coned my tasks, perched in the boughs of orchard or forest, or lying prone and half-buried in grass or clover. I fished, climbed, waded, rode bare-backed horses, raced and whooped with my young brothers, until, at the age of twelve, I was the tom-boy of the neighborhood,—sun-burned, lithe of limb, well, and approved of by nobody except “the boys,” and (secretly) by my father. I have since had reason to believe that it was my mother’s discovery of his flagitious conduct in teaching me how to carry, load, and fire his fowling-piece, that led, at length, to her energetic measure of “taking me up from grass,” buckling on bit and bridle, and putting me into the break-wagon of a boarding-school.

“By this time, I was willing—because fit to study. In five years I was graduated with distinction, by the highly respectable institution to which I owe my scho-

lastic training. I was a pale, slim girl, who turned to the country and to indolence with the instinct of an uncaged animal. When other *débutantes* were plotting and busying with the season's conquests at watering-places and sea-shore, I deliberately and invariably preferred rustication in a farm-house where I could spend most of the day out-of-doors; could live upon fruit, vegetables, and milk; go to bed in the twilight and sleep ten hours every night like a tired baby.

"I laughed when thrifty housewives called me 'lazy,' and they and their notable daughters thanked their restless stars that their bodies and minds were cast in a different mold. I simply did not care a rush for their strictures or for their praise. It is the sickly or the morbidly-sensitive who are hurt by idle gossip.

"At twenty, I stopped growing; my figure rounded; color came to my sallow cheeks; a great bound of physical and mental energy to my whole being. At twenty-two, I published my first book. I had written it because I had something to say, and it found more readers than I had dared dream of addressing. I was twenty-four when I married the man of my free and happy choice. I have borne five healthy children; been the mistress of a large house, and, my husband's position requiring me to go much into society at home and abroad, have enjoyed the duties of hospitality and of social intercourse, with an extensive circle of friends

and acquaintances. In all this time I have been steadily engaged in literary pursuits. My faithful pen has brushed aside many a teasing annoyance, kept *ennui* at bay, and prevented the rust and mold from settling upon my mental acquisitions.

“I am fifty years old to-day,—hale and plump, as young in feeling and as buoyant in hope as I was thirty years ago. GOD willing, I shall in the next decade, do the best work of my life. My sisters are, one and all, ‘delicate’ married women, meagre, sad-eyed, with faded complexions and dragging step. They eye me curiously and agree in the opinion that my zest in work and pleasure, my healthy appetite and unimpaired digestion, my stirring habits and ambitious schemes are ‘phenomenal in a person of my age.’ I attribute the difference between us to the blind trustfulness with which I, without knowing what I was doing, or why, committed myself in the growing season to the guidance of Nature. Drugs and tonics were early decided to be valueless in the case of a constitutionless girl. Had I been an only child, nursing and pampering would have sent me to an early grave. Being one of eight, with three older and four younger than myself, I was allowed to run wild. A diseased child might have died under what was to me a wholesome and saving letting-alone. Happily it was exactly what I needed. Providentially, I found the catholicon.”

I transcribe the letter as it comes to me, and at full length, because the narrative is instructive, and will, I believe, interest others as it has interested me, even although the writer's name is, by request, withheld. Her epistle has furnished the text of more than one chapter in this work.

Dr. Clarke, in discussing the question of the "Identical Co-education of the Sexes," has this passage:—

"To make boys half-girls and girls half-boys can never be the legitimate function of any college."

Without staying to quibble upon the declaration as applied to the collegiate training of young men and young women, let us, in the light of the true story we have just given, inquire seriously whether a process similar to that deprecated by our learned physician as unwise for adult pupils, may not be safe and judicious treatment *for children*.

For twelve years after your daughter begins to run alone and to be conscious of her individuality, she is—physically—untrammelled by the accident of her sex. It is not true, as some rashly and others sentimentally affirm, that girls are from the beginning, frailer than their brothers. If I may be pardoned for the personal allusion, I will state that in my own home-band, this rule is emphatically reversed. My two boys, although healthy infants, were from the beginning of their lives, more slender of figure and limb; more nervous in tem-

perament and in stomach, more sensitive than were their robust sisters. They took cold oftener and under less exposure, and the degree of fatigue or excitement that made the girls sleep soundly, cost them tossing and feverish nights.

My surprise at the establishment of these idiosyncrasies as facts led me to look keenly and far for like refutations of the theory of innate delicacy on the part of girls, by reason of their sex. The result of the investigation has confirmed me in the belief that, other things being equal, *our sons and daughters start even.*

Wet-footed Willie, stealing up the back-stairs to the nursery at the closing-in of an afternoon's play by forbidden pond or in the snow, is as liable to pay the penalty of disobedience by an attack of croup or pneumonia as is ruddy-cheeked Mamie who has shared the fun and helps him keep the secret of their soaked shoes and stockings for fear of a present scolding or penitential fare for supper. Green apples disagree as surely with one as the other, and the same kind and amount of hard play have the like sequence of fatigue. The chances are that, with her brother's comrades, the merry, active, brave-hearted little girl passes for a "better fellow" than Willie himself. Unspoiled by sentimental saws of the shrinking feebleness of the weaker vessel, the boys do her powers justice, acknowledge her as their equal in prowess and endurance.

Dr. Clarke is explicit and admirable here :—

“No scalpel has disclosed any difference between a man’s and a woman’s liver. No analysis or dynameter has discovered or measured any chemical action or nerve-force that stamps either of these systems”—(*i. e.*, the nutritive and nervous)—“as male or female. From these anatomical and physiological data alone the inference is legitimate that intellectual power, the correlation and measure of cerebral structure and metamorphosis, is capable of equal development in both sexes.”

Bone, muscle and blood are of like and the same substance in both, and to this assertion we may add Dr. Clarke’s *sequitur*, as given above—“capable of equal development.”

Having admitted as much, we are yet hardly prepared for a foot-note a few pages further on in our valuable “Sex in Education.”

“According to the authority of MM. Queletet and Smits, the mortality of the sexes is equal in childhood, *or that of the male is greater.*” Not—so we learn from further investigation of this interesting fact—because the bold, adventurous spirit of the boy leads him into perils the girl escapes by her sheltered life, but that the ordinary diseases of infancy bear more severely upon him than upon her. Without being superstitious or fatalistic, we who have lived to middle-age sometimes confess to an uncomfortable impression, drawn from

observation, that the only son in a family of daughters is more likely to be stricken down than any one of the others. Sometimes, it is true, the very sun and heart of the household are taken away in the untimely death of the precious only girl. But the testimony of scientific compilation of statistics goes to prove that the balance of vital energy is less firm in the boy than in his sister up to ten or twelve years of age,—in cold climates, up to fourteen.

By such research and kindred conclusions a problem is set fairly and squarely before us:—

Can the uncompromising common sense of the mother, emulating the true child of Nature who has told us her story—so far fortify the constitution of her girl during this golden period, when the scale of strength and weakness is evenly balanced, or, if it wavers, trembles in her favor—that it may endure, without harm, the shock of the first stage in the thirty years' pilgrimage appointed unto women?

“Boys will be boys!” we say, stroking Willie's cropped hair, and kissing his bronzed or freckled face. “He is laying up strength for the Battle of Life.”

That he may do this to better advantage, we equip him in corduroy or “drilling” breeches, blue flannel shirt and wide-brimmed hat, shoe him with cowskin boots impervious to mud and thorns, and turn him loose in his vacation. For two months we joy to know

that the future voter,—legislator,—president—is as free from care and full of fun as is the rough colt he seizes by the mane in the pasture for “a jolly ride.” It is Mamie’s vacation too, but she must practice at least two hours a day, and there is the piece of fancy-work she has set her heart upon finishing this summer. If Mamma is one of the “old-fashioned sort,” she insists, moreover, that her girl shall know something about plain sewing and learn to darn stockings, if not to knit them. Besides these hindrances to her participation in Willie’s sports there is—most formidable and paramount to all other considerations—that due to Complexion and Clothes. Mamie is a brunette, and tans. Jennie is a blonde, and freckles. And not to be “dressed” in the afternoon would be a lapse into barbarism, at thought of which every decorous establishment shudders in all its parts and members.

“We pass three months of every year in the country—the real, out-of-door-and-window country, where there are hills and woods and water and berry-pastures,” said a mother, when congratulated upon the health of her children. “During that time, ‘full dress’ means to my little girls, the exchange of a soiled calico or Holland frock for a clean one. On cool, or rainy days, there is always the invaluable blue flannel.”

Her girls grew into young women with exquisite complexions, clear white and softly-shaded rose-pink.

They had sound digestions, clear heads, light hearts and no backs—to *speak of*.

It is well for mothers to know and to teach their daughters the simple truth that one can be trimly and becomingly arrayed in linen or gingham morning and walking-gowns, and that on summer afternoons in the country, a wash-lawn or cambric is more suitable, because more comfortable, than silk or grenadine. A child puts on self-consciousness—that bane to human comfort and grace—with clothes that must be thought of and cared for at every turn.

I have naught to say against embroidery and plain sewing. Of a fair practical knowledge of the latter I am a staunch advocate. Girls in every station should be instructed in the use of the needle. Sewing-machines and ready-made *lingerie* do not obviate the need of neat mending—the setting, in the right place and way, the timely stitch that saves the nine. A knowledge of the rudiments of needle-work should be as much a matter of course as to know the alphabet.

I believe in dolls, too, and dolls' wardrobes and tea-parties, most of all, when play-house and banquet-hall are in garden or grove. The bit of fancy-work is to Mamie what Willie's chest of tools or turning-lathe or scroll-saw is to him—recreation and practice in dexterous manipulation. Some men and a few women never learn to use their fingers. When any one of these

pastimes degenerates into a task, it ought not to be imposed upon the child in vacation. At the mention of the conventional and obligatory "practicing" we may well make a long halt.

The world and women are coming to their senses on this head. It cheers the souls of rational thinkers to believe that in the next generation the grievous exercise of strumming automatically for one, two, or five hours *per diem* upon a black-and-white key-board will be, at least in the case of legal infants, an unknown imposition. In our talk about the education of young women we shall look further and narrowly into the principle, and criticise the custom of teaching music indiscriminately. My present plea is for your little girl, to whom the drudgery of "one, two, three, four," is penance without a gleam of mitigation or hope of compensation.

"I put my daughters to the piano so soon as they can reach an octave," said the mother of five daughters, with virtuous stolidity that left me nothing to say. "Each of them spends two hours a day at the instrument."

I comprehended then, as by revelation, why, in such well-officered families, there is but one "instrument." The suggestion of torture is natural and inevitable.

Mamie's fingers will be supple enough at twelve, or even at fourteen, to accomplish runs and shakes, should

she by then, discover a decided taste and love for the long-abused art. Do not—in the absence of indications of the divine thirst and longing for musical expression which is genius—sacrifice, diurnally, two hours of sunshine and sweet airs and such affluence of innocent delight in the mere fact of being *alive*, as only childhood ever knows this side of the Land of Eternal Youth, to the ignoble ambition to have your baby “accomplished.” The Battle of Life you anticipate for her brother will be a holiday skirmish in comparison with the tedious struggle that may so probably be hers. Heaven help her and you!

Should she inherit from parents or from a more remote ancestry, constitutional infirmity or liability—a score of unpaid forfeits to injured Nature—be quick to discern and specify these, and let your guard be the more wise and vigilant. Study her peculiarities of digestion, motion, speech, likings, and antipathies, and adapt your measures of precaution, correction, and guidance to her needs. Give, as the house-mother and caterer, much attention to Dietetics. I am never more nearly in despair of the physical reformation of my kind than when I witness the culpable ignorance of mothers and housekeepers in this respect. Bear with a few illustrations of my meaning from the vast number that crowd upon my memory.

Some years ago, while summering in the country, I

saw from my window, one morning, while dressing, a little urchin, the son of a fellow-boarder, standing ankle-deep in the dewy grass of the orchard, shaking down and devouring unripe pears. Knowing that he had not been well for several days, I took the liberty, after breakfast, of mentioning the scene to his mother. I rarely interfere with my neighbors' family government, but I loved the boy, and knew the mother intimately. She looked up pleasantly from her book.

"Ah, yes! he spends much of his time there, I fancy. My experience with children convinces me that little is gained by watching and prohibition, and no lasting harm done by letting them eat and drink what they please. All of mine have a hereditary predisposition to weakness of the stomach and bowels, which I trust they will outgrow in time. I never physic them unless to ease great pain. An attack of cholera morbus usually sets all right again if the indulgence is carried too far."

It was none of my business to regulate the family digestion, and accepting the fact, I let the matter drop. Sadder thoughts visited me when, ten years thereafter, her eldest son, a promising lad, died at boarding-school of peritonitis induced by a midnight supper of crabs, Welsh rare-bit, pickles, and peanuts. Joe, the little pear-gatherer, is a tall, slight young man, who will never be strong, having, his wife laments, "a chronic

trouble." Another boy's college course has been broken up three times by serious illnesses that have left him pallid and nervous. Two pretty young daughters, fragile, even for American girls, are already, at seventeen and nineteen, hopeless dyspeptics.

"Actual transgression" did not cease with our grandfathers' eating of sour grapes. This mother loved, and believed that she served her children faithfully. For all that, she stands convicted at the bar of Common Sense, of infant-slaughter.

In grateful relief to this story, let me cite that of two brothers, whose constitutional peculiarities were utterly unlike, the one to the other. One fair-haired, blue-eyed boy was born with an inherited proclivity to weakness of digestion and laxity of the bowels. The mother began, when he was not two months old, her measures for counteracting these tendencies. He took nothing except the nourishment provided for him by Nature until his gradual weaning, at nine months of age, began. The mother had her naturally quick temper in excellent control, yet I remember seeing her indignant to wrath one day, when her baby was brought home by the nurse from a visit to a neighbor, his hands full of candy and cookies.

"How *dared* you let him have that poison? You knew better!" cried the mistress, snatching the sweets from the fingers that clutched them tightly, and throwing them into the fire.

“I said so, ma’am!” said the girl, eagerly. “I told Mrs. — that you never allowed him to eat such things. And she told me to say to you, ma’am, that she has raised ten children of her own, and ’twasn’t for young folks to set themselves up to be wiser nor their elders.”

The mother quieted down instantly.

“This is *my* child!” was all she said.

It was a recognition of responsibility from which no advice nor impertinence could absolve her.

In pursuance of her hygienic system, she alternated his nursing-times with cautious administration of fresh cow’s milk, scalded slightly, and diluted with one-fourth as much boiling water. Rice boiled soft, or rice-flour, sometimes thickened it. When his carnivorous teeth appeared, he had beef-tea, rare beefsteak chopped fine, tender chicken and lamb, also minced, and strengthening greaseless broths. Ice-water, unripe and stale fruits, cake, pastry, hot bread and griddle-cakes, pork and veal in all their varieties, were prohibited articles of food even when he was a healthy lad, with no sign, to the general view, of lurking disease.

The younger son was dark of hair and skin,—a bold, beautiful fellow, of a nervous-bilious temperament. As with his brother, the evil that threatened him appeared almost on the threshold of his life. It was constipation so stubborn that love and determination, backed

by an intelligent appreciation of the danger of neglect, rallied promptly to combat it. As diligently as the mother had sought out wholesome astringents, she now used laxative food. Indian and oatmeal gruels, baked and stewed and raw apples, ripe peaches, grapes from which the seeds were rejected with the skins, milk warm from the cow, a glass of cold water drunk each night at bed-time, an orange eaten daily by the youth as the first course of his breakfast—Graham and corn-bread, hominy and wheaten “grits”—were some of the correctives applied to lessen the infirmity. In both instances, her skill wrought successfully to a complete cure. In neither did the subjects of the regimen, as infants or lads, rebel against her will. “Mother thinks it is not good for me,” answered every temptation. Her sons had learned through her instrumentality priceless lessons of self-control, faith and obedience, more useful, if that could be, than the hard-won blessing of health which was the mother’s gift.





CHAPTER IV.

H A N D I C A P P E D .

“Three generations of wholesome life might suffice to eliminate the ancestral poison, for the *vis medicatrix naturæ* has wonderful efficacy when allowed free play.”—W. R. GREG, “*Enigmas of Life.*”

CONSTITUTIONAL weaknesses are not to be laid at the door of our common mother, Nature. Custom and ignorance have been meddling so long with her legitimate operations that she may well decline to recognize in the modern product more than a pitiable burlesque of the model.

In the full comprehension of this truth, the sensible, GOD-fearing mother sees cause for anxiety and care,—never for despondency. To return to Dr. Holmes’s witty observation relative to the unavoidable tardiness attendant upon the beginning to set human nature to rights—you, to whom this girl is committed, are building, not for this, or the next generation, but for the century—or two—to come. Nobody except a selfish

fool echoes the ne'er-do-well, who, on being reminded of his obligations to the future, blurted out :—

“Hang Posterity! I owe it nothing! What will it ever do for me, I should like to know!”

The Mother is the true representative of Radical Reform, the “doctor” who “ought to have been called in a hundred years or so, ago!”

What was the need of such summons then, let Mrs. Delany, the nurse and beloved prodigy of the court of George III., tell us. In her “Life and Letters,” we read of sovereign specifics for whooping-cough and other infantile maladies compounded of saffron, rosemary and slugs. Earthworms were highly esteemed as a medication, also wood-grubs, and wine in which vipers had been put while alive, and left to steep, was drunk by consumptives. The court-physicians bled fainting women to relieve “breathlessness.” Skilled nurses did up babies as tightly as they could be rolled, in yards of swaddling linen; fed royal nurslings, a month old, on barley water with currants boiled in it, and called subsequent—we would write boldly, “consequent”—convulsions, the mysterious visitation of the Almighty. It is well to sight such shore-marks once in a while, that we may really credit the blessed fact of Human Progress. Since we have learned so much and practiced so ably upon our knowledge since the year of our Lord 1750, let us not fear to set our standard well forward.

Some of the finest women, physically and mentally, whom I have ever seen, were famous romps in their youth—the “half-boys” of Dr. Clarke’s disquisition. All of them during the tom-boy stage lamented secretly or loudly that they were not their own brothers; regrets which were heartily seconded by much-enduring mothers and disappointed fathers.

I have now before me the picture of myself at ten years of age, looking up from the back of my pony into my father’s face, as, in the course of the morning ride we daily enjoyed together, he was led by my questions into an exposition of the policy of the old line Whig Party, so clear and strong, that a duller-witted child could not have failed to comprehend it. My comments called up a smile and a sigh.

“Ah, my daughter! if you had been born a boy you would be invaluable to me!”

I hung my head, mute and crushed by a calamity past human remedy or prevention. There is a pain at my heart in the telling that renews the real grief of the moment.

Your girl wants to help *her* father and to be of use in the world. Make her feel that a woman’s life is worth living, and that she has begun it. Do not brand her from the cradle, “*Exempt from field duty on account of physical disability.*”

Fifty years ago “legs” was almost a tabooed word

in polite society, and, if Captain Marryatt's evidence is worth anything, women in the United States did up the lower limbs of their pianos in frilled mufflers.

Forty years ago, when I came wailing into the nursery to show a knee rasped and bleeding from a fall on the gravel walk, I was hushed up with, "Fie! what a word! Little ladies haven't knees; their feet are pinned to the bottom of their pantalettes!"

Thirty years ago, young girls in describing the antics of "tipping tables," told how "the thing actually lifted up its—*toe*—and tapped on the floor."

Only twenty years since, a wife of ten years' standing, in writing to another woman the account of her sister's illness and death, mentioned that, three days before her decease, "her *limb* became very painful and began to swell rapidly."

Your Mamie, more fortunate than these adherents to a mock-modest fashion, is permitted the ownership of as steady a pair of legs as her brother can boast, unveiled by pantalettes; her stockings gartered, the mother does not blush to say, above the knees, or held up by an elastic ribbon attached to the waistband. See to it that she is taught their use as early and as thoroughly as she acquires the command of her arms and hands.

It is strange that even fashionists and purists should overlook the importance of developing at this period the muscles of a girl's hips, thighs, and vertebræ, as

the portions of her frame upon which coming seasons will lay most weight and strain. We have backboards, braces, dumb-bells, and calisthenic drills for making shoulders straight, arms strong, and chests deep. But it is esteemed hoydenish to *run*, not to speak of the danger of making the feet large. The latter objection obtains to stout walking-shoes with broad toes and low heels, and preference is given to the narrow French boot, the tapering heel of which is far enough forward to leave a "lovely" small track in mud or dust. Jumping, racing, and climbing, if not prohibited, are never encouraged, by those who are bent upon the cultivation of a "graceful carriage" in their young daughters.

If your ambition in this regard is subordinate to your desire that Mamie shall be healthy, and comely, with the free graces of youthful vigor, insist that she shall walk, winter and summer, and in all weathers, stepping out as do Willie and Jack instead of mincing along, pigeon-wise, or tottering above the fashionable fulcrum set beneath her instep. Let her hold her shoulders back and head up, and not feel obliged by decorum to cross or join her hands on the pit of her stomach and keep them there, skewered by Fashion as inexorably as the wings of a trussed fowl to its plump sides.

How many scores of times have you heard school-

girls—and older women—beg, “Give me something to hold. I never know what to do with my hands in the street”?

Parasol, fan, a green spray, *à la* Madame de Stäel, even an empty envelope is a relief to the *gaucherie* of those who never suspect the trouble to be, not with the hands, but with what our mothers would have designated as the “lower limbs.” They can sit, stand, dance, but not one in forty knows how to walk. The gliding step borrowed from the minuet, the tip-toe, the Grecian bend, are, as Beau Brummel’s valet said of the crumpled cravats—“some of our failures.” Our streets are full of slouching women, tripping women, sliding and skipping women, and—most frequent as most ungraceful among stout, middle-aged matrons—with waddling women, these carrying their feet so near together that—to borrow a veterinary phrase—they “interfere” at every step. Ask your husband or brother what proportion of the ladies whom he escorts on promenade and picnic fall naturally and easily into step with him; how many can accomplish a sharp run for train or boat, or emulate swift Camilla in scouring the plain in chase of tennis, or croquet-ball.

“It doesn’t hurt little girls to run up and downstairs,” says Grandma, at Mamie’s twentieth expedition to the second story. “They are so light upon their feet.”

Grandma has grazed one edge of the truth. Mamie’s

feet—and legs—were made for much and lively use, as nobody knows better than their owner. Sitting still makes her “fidgetty,” at least, until she has become used to the unnatural state of inaction. Blood, muscle, and the ceaseless play of electric currents from vein to nerve which we name “animal spirits,” chafe and rebel into hot mutiny. Mother, aunts and elder sisters “wonder if it is a physical impossibility for that child to keep her feet still.” It is,—or ought to be. Kinder and wiser Nature incites her continually to run off restlessness in road or field, achieving, meantime, ends far higher than present gratification. The boy’s inability to keep still for one moment, unless when sick or asleep, is an acknowledged, well-nigh respected fact. Little girls are checked, reproved, tutored and trained until only the tenuous wire of Damascus steel, familiarly known as feminine will, preserves them from utter loss of individuality.

Mamie has feet. Do not pinch them at the toe or raise the heel too high. Continuing the subject, do not impede circulation or paralyze muscle by tight buttoning at the ankle or too close ligatures above or below the knee. The clothing about the hips should be loose and light, the waist uncorseted until it takes on, of itself, the curves of womanly shapeliness. And let her play with her brothers, if she has any. If not, with the best-mannered little boys she knows.

I am not ignorant of the disgraceful truth that some

brothers are not fit playmates for their own, or "other fellows" sisters. They have "ugly ways," regret mother and nurse. That is, they have unseemly tricks of language and action, such as no "little lady" should hear and see, much less imitate. They abjure all forms of courteous address; are rude to brutality in their games and their speech is replete with slang, profanity and *filth*. A half, or even quarter-likeness to this type of nascent manhood is, of all things, least desirable for our girl-child. For her sake, then, if for no other reason, would it not be a shrewd measure to make our little lads—if not "half-girls"—yet enough like them in gentleness of demeanor to one another, and in cleanliness of tongue to become their sisters' companions in sport and talk?

The dissociation of the sexes, by the time school-life begins, is pregnant with hurtful influences to both. "As coarse and rough as a boy" is the girl's condemnation of an over-lively mate, while the boy insults the schoolfellow less adventurous than himself by declaring him to be "as lily-livered as a girl." I would have our boys pure and modest, our girls brave. If the early practical effect of the system of sisterly or neighborly intercourse is to make Willie ashamed of his dirty hands and frowzled hair, and Jack's freckled face to color beet-red when the oath or ribald word nearly escapes his tongue, it is a promising experiment. To Mamie it will open a new world of interest and delight.

She is safer, and assuredly happier, paddling with bared feet in the sun-warmed brook, or sitting on the bank catching minnows, or tramping the meadows in quest of partridge-nests, or building forts,—stone in summer, snow in winter,—or taking her part in the sham-fights before and behind the redoubt, than when closeted with her bosom-friend, to exchange thrilling confidences about costumes and gowns *in esse* and *in posse*; the last squabble with the soul-sister's immediate predecessor, and the "nice fellows" who are reported to have pronounced the palpitating pair to be "just perfectly lovely."

We *sin* in allowing the fears, hopes and flutters of nubility to obtrude, even in imagination, upon this most susceptible stage of the formative period. There is vulgar violence in the excitation of coy tremors and coquettish projects in the mind of one who is as yet incapable of comprehending the meaning or tendency of the novel emotions. It is not merely shaking the dew from the rose-bud, but tearing the delicate involutions apart to let in the sunshine upon the guarded, immature heart. Premature bloom is imperfection, too often deformity. Forced fruits lack the flavor of the summer's prime, the beauty and richness of *seasonableness*.

"I was merry, I was merry,
When my little lovers came,
With a lily or a cherry,
Or some new-invented game."

So, we who were girls thirty years since, used to sing.

With such sinless offerings let our boys invite their girl-chums to frolic and fun, unalloyed by dreams of growth or change. No tone in Nature's music is sweeter than a child's laugh,—the gush of a stream that gurgles because it has no depths, no sullen pools, or foaming rapids. It is an offence to taste and feeling, when, like a dam built within the bed of the brook, our child begins to long for a woman's name and triumphs. Grace and naturalness take flight hand in hand. Frankness is exchanged for slyness; the pure straightforwardness of the look for side-long glances; the musical laugh for a simper. The unripe peach begins to blush outwardly and to toughen within. Our girl grows suddenly diplomatic; lays plans for varying her walk to school that she may, accidentally, on purpose, meet the boys on their way to the Academy; names apple-seeds, and tosses the rind into fortuitous hieroglyphics; counts a hundred white horses in the street, sticks "merry thoughts" above the front door, and puts bits of wedding-cake under her pillow—

"Hoping in dreams my true love to see,—
The color of his hair, the clothes he may wear,
And if he be true to me."

The simplest way of delaying the desecration is the surest.

“If I do not give my children innocent pleasures at home, they will seek objectionable amusements abroad,” said a sagacious parent when censured for allowing dancing and billiard-playing in his own house.

Invite the boys frankly to “come and play with my little girls,” and encourage such forms of diversion as they can enjoy together. Contrive tea-parties, charades, reading-circles, and the like pretty imitations of the amusements of their elders, that shall mingle both sexes, without exciting sheepishness on one side or coquetry on the other. As for the words, “courtship and marriage,” “let them be not so much as named among them.”

Content is best taught to average human beings by making them as happy as season and circumstance will permit. Too many good people—even parents—consider their duty done in this line when they have assured their children several hundred times that the happiest season is *their* (the children’s) Now. That years will bring responsibilities, trials, losses, affliction,—a black catalogue that luckily does not daunt the ignorant little infidels into dread of the Future which they are sure must be an improvement upon their present condition. Contrary reasoning is without avail. It is better to render their daily lives and lot so pleasant that they will not care to look forward eagerly to untried scenes, unproved duties.

As one method of avoiding *ennui* now, and a still more valuable means of securing for your daughter comfort and usefulness in the years to come, begin early to teach her that time is precious to herself and to others. Assign to her stated duties, and appoint certain hours for the performance of these. The happy-go-lucky customs of many households reputed to be well-regulated, have laid broad the foundations of the proverbially unbusiness-like habits of women. Work, which may be done at any time, and diligently or leisurely at will, is not apt to command a respectable market-price.

A house-mother in easy circumstances complained to me:—

“I never find time to read a book, or to make a visit. I am busy all day, and tired at night. Yet I never accomplish anything worth considering. A woman’s is an aimless, useless existence.”

“You sew a great deal, probably?” said I sympathizingly.

“I never take a needle in my hand. My seamstress even darns the children’s stockings and mine.”

“You give much personal attention to cookery, then?” I suggested another solution of the puzzle.

“On the contrary, I have no taste for it; and, after the morning visit of inspection, seldom enter the kitchen during the twenty-four hours. Yet I am not

idle, and certainly allow myself no time for rest. As the country people would say, I just *potter around*."

Do not let Mamie learn to "potter" or dawdle. If her morning task be nothing more arduous than the dusting of her bed-room furniture and the care of her wash-stand, see that all is done promptly and deftly. She should dust each chair-round and door-panel, as if serious issues depended upon the accomplishment of the business within a given time. Of course, being a child, she will be tempted to dally about her work; to drop down into the chair to chat, or to read, or to dream for "just one second." She will think it of "no consequence" whether the towels hang straight or crooked upon the rack, and four mornings out of seven she will neglect to wash the soap-cup. (If when on a visit you have a curiosity to know whether your hostess superintended in person the preparation of your bed-chamber, consult the soap-cup. The best hireling is prone to overlook it.)

Mamie will gird under supervision and schooling in the "tiresome routine" that soon loses the spice of novelty. Be patient with murmurs and sour looks. Women of five times her age and ten times her knowledge of life, cry aloud and spare not husbands and neighbors under the pressure of "belittling cares"; sigh that they were made for something better and higher, if they do not finally abandon the house to fate

and servants; close their eyes to dusty tables, buttonless coats, and widening rifts in tiny garments, while "improving their minds" or "getting some pleasure out of a hum-drum life."

There is but one antidote for this insidious poison of indifferentism and procrastination. Housework, sewing, baking, and brewing—all that is included in the common acceptance of "domestic cares" should be looked upon and executed as *Business*.

Mrs. Garfield, the true and worthy wife of one of the grandest heroes who ever conquered circumstance,—even the death which was but the slow march to his apotheosis,—wrote thus to her husband ten years before his Inauguration-Day:

"I am glad to tell that out of all the toil and disappointments of the Summer just ended, I have risen up to a victory; that silence of thought since you have been away has won for my spirit a triumph. I read something like this the other day: 'There is no healthy thought without labor, and thought makes the labor happy.' Perhaps this is the way I have been able to climb up higher. It came to me one morning when I was making bread. I said to myself, 'Here I am compelled by an inevitable necessity to make our bread this summer. Why not consider it a pleasant occupation, and make it so trying to see what perfect bread I can make?' It seemed like an inspiration, and the whole of life grew brighter. The very sunshine seemed flowing down through my spirit into the white loaves, and now I believe my table is furnished with better bread than ever before; and this truth, old as creation, seems just now to have become fully mine—that I need not be the shrinking slave of toil, but its regal master, making whatever I do yield

me its best fruits. You have been king of your work so long that may be you will laugh at me for having lived so long without my crown, but I am too glad to have found it at all to be entirely disconcerted even by your merriment. Now, I wonder if right here does not lie the 'terrible wrong,' or at least some of it, of which the woman suffragists complain. The wrongly educated woman thinks her duties a disgrace, and frets under them or shirks them if she can. She sees man triumphantly pursuing his vocations, and thinks it is the kind of work he does which makes him grand and regnant; whereas it is not the kind of work at all, but the way in which and the spirit with which he does it."

Mamie, however quick-witted, is, at eight or ten years of age, quite able to enter into the spirit of this extract. She may, also, take in something of the inspiration of the idea that if she makes Work noble, Work will ennoble her. To dignify the "trivial round, the common task" is an easier undertaking now than when woman's work was hard and monotonous toil. Neatness and beauty, elegance and economy are readily persuaded to dwell in cottage-homes. Mamie must be encouraged to make her room first clean, then pretty, as a natural following of plan and improvement. Wild-flowers are no longer weeds; birds' nests, moss, and gnarled boughs are æsthetic ornaments. A few yards of cheap, sheer muslin, draping the frame of her looking-glass, cushions covered with Turkey red on chairs and floor, Christmas-cards, clever wood-cuts from illustrated weeklies and photographs, tacked on doors and walls, with Mamie's own books on hanging-shelves or other

neat case—make a possessed Paradise to the occupant of the chamber, a goodly show to other eyes. Make over the domain to her, to have and to hold, as completely as the rest of the house belongs to you. So long as it is clean and orderly, neither housemaid nor elder sister should interfere with her sovereignty.

Am I dignifying above measure the commonplace details, the very plain prose of every-day housekeeping? It is my steadfast belief that if there is any ground for the popular opinion of woman's general incapacity for "business," including the control of her own and her children's money, it arises from her inexperience in ownership of any kind whatsoever. From her birth to her marriage-day an irresponsible, penniless pet, she is likely—with intentions that would honor an angel—to hamper, perhaps to ruin, her husband.

Jack raises chickens and sells the eggs and "broilers" to Mamma. Willy splits kindling-wood for the kitchen-fire and draws his lawful wages from Papa as would any other laborer. Mamie comes down to breakfast, as gay as the morning, her hair bound with a blue ribbon that matches her eyes, waltzes up to Papa, in a gale of affectionate glee, throws her arms around his neck and begs for a kiss. She gets two and a gold dollar, fished up from the vest-pocket nearest the paternal heart—"because she looks so pretty to-day." Being no dullard,

a few repetitions, with variations, of this scene, fix several things in her plastic mind.

First, she is glad that she is pretty, not only because it pleases people to look at her, but because beauty is clearly a marketable commodity. Mamie, like her thrifty brothers (and the rest of mankind), finds money a mighty convenience in this world of barter and sale.

Next, she will be very careful to preserve her good looks—to heighten them by every available means, as any wise dealer tries to increase his capital.

Lastly, money earned so easily may as well be soon spent. There is plenty more where that came from. Papa's pocket is the bank, her prettiness a draft payable at sight. Spasmodic supply is the mother of extravagance. Money that comes in surely, but not fast, in return for regular labor, does not, as a rule, find a wasteful outlet. Jack and Willy are pretty certain to have savings-banks on the mantel of their bedroom, or hidden away at the back of the top-shelf of their clothes-closet, where the sight of them will not be a constant temptation to expend the contents. Have you ever given a passing thought to the dissimilarity of your girls' habits in this particular? Ever asked yourself or them why they elect to carry their money in a pocket-book or purse, and seldom go out of the house without it?

The whole system of the different education of boys and girls with respect to making, keeping, and spending

money is pernicious, yet fearfully consistent in all its sections, from the cradle to the tomb of her whom the laws of most of our States hold as a minor in perpetuity.

Set a reasonable value, then, on Mamie's work and let her have what she earns. Pay her for picking berries, hemming towels, shelling peas, and dozens of other small tasks, stipulating that they must be done well and "on time." As her ability and industry increase, advance her wages. Give her practical lessons in the righteousness of fair and honest transactions by your own equitable dealing. Let her make out her bills, keep her own accounts, and never impress her with the belief that she is a dependent upon you for aught save love and care. There is no more effectual way of teaching her to play the interested toady, to truckle to you or to her father, in servile covetousness when she wants money.

Multitudes of women hold, with Becky Sharp—envious of the prosperity of the Pitt Crawleys—that they could be very good on five thousand pounds a year. The probability is that they would be more upright in thought and conduct if their supply of pin-money were not contingent upon the convenience, which often means caprice, of their legal masters. Every woman and every girl has a right to be, in a certain sense and degree, independent; at any rate, to the extent of holding her little all in her own name and hands.

The way to learn *how* to work is to work. In order to understand how to manage funds one must have funds to manage.

It is domestic bribery and corruption to recompense your girl in money for being pretty or well-behaved or sweet-tempered. She should early be made to feel that the price of spiritual graces is not to be told in dollars and cents, and to be modestly grateful to the Giver of all good for what share of personal charms has fallen to her lot. She begins to sink toward the level of the *demi-monde* in learning to regard these last as a source of selfish gains, to calculate and traffic upon her attractions.

She can not be instructed too soon in the great truth that care of her body—of its purity, health, and strength—is a duty she owes to herself, to her kind, and to GOD.





CHAPTER V.

REVERENCE OF SEX.

“Let her first lesson be, with sweet Susan Winstanley, to reverence her sex.”—CHARLES LAMB.



It is an uncommon event to meet a woman, who, if put into the confessional of conscience, would not own that at some period of her life, she had wished she had been born a boy. But an immense majority of the best thinkers and workers of our sex would aver more freely that they would not exchange places with their brothers.

So far from being ashamed of their place in the world, they are too sensible of the responsibility laid by it upon them to crave another field of action which is, after all, really no wider or higher.

Still, the healthy, frolicsome little girl treated of in our last chapter, finds out of, and for herself, the force of Gaylord Clarke's matter-of-fact man's reply to the

strong-minded lecturer upon woman's right to ascend the tree of knowledge :

"Wimmen is bad climbers. Mostly on account of they clothes."

Mamie "hates" to wear gloves and wide-brimmed hats and to be reminded continually that it is not "lady-like" to swing on gates and ride horses to water, or to shout, jump, and run races. She dotes on marbles and tops and foot-ball, and when shamed and pulled out of ring and play-ground by her brothers, testifies to her femininity by a passionate flood of tears and an outcry against the tyranny of gender. To every mother, wise or simple, the sight of this discontent, which is apt to ripen into open rebellion, must suggest serious misgivings.

"If these things be done in a green tree, what shall be done in a dry?"

The sooner and more thoroughly your child's mind is disabused of the low-caste contempt of her womanhood, the happier for her, the more promising for the next generation. Begin, by the time she can understand stories of heroic and valorous deeds, to tell her what Woman has done for humanity and what she may do in the future. Forecasting the inevitable night of tare-sowing and the up-springing of the noxious weeds of evil fancies and false shame, teach her, in a thousand ingenious ways, the significance of the inspired words : "The Temple of the Body."

I thanked GOD and took courage when I saw that in the Revised Version of the New Testament the term "vile body" is rendered "body of our humiliation," the phrase being antithetical to "the body of His glory."

It is a disgrace to our civilization that, whereas woman's need of physiological knowledge is pre-eminent—(essential—the unprejudiced thinker and observer would declare)—the practical study of the laws of anatomy and hygiene has been, until recently, confined to medical schools. Even now, as in generations past, the chief foes to the acquisition of such information are women themselves. It will not be nice work, but before going further, let us scrape bare the roots of this rank offense against ourselves and our race.

It begins very far down and back. Three-year-old Mamie, full of excited questionings as to "where baby-brother came from," is told that the doctor brought him in his pocket; that he was dug up out of the parsley-bed; that a stork flew in at the window with him in his mouth; that he was picked up from the doorstep, or a dozen other lies that quiet natural curiosity for awhile. Two or three years later she detects her mother in the furtive preparation of tiny frocks and embroidered flannels, and asks, "for whom?"

"For the poor babies at the orphan asylum," answers Christian Mamma, without a twinge, except re-

gret at her own carelessness that has so nearly betrayed the secret.

One morning Mamie is summoned to the nursery to welcome a new occupant of the crib from which "little brother" was transferred last week to a "real bed." The plump, downy nestling is clad in a slip and double-gown which his sister recognizes directly. She raises rebuking, innocent eyes :

"Mamma! *you didn't tell me the truth!*"

The mother may laugh off the reproof, or offer other ingenious falsehoods in extenuation of the first. Most probably she says then what is sure to come, sooner or later—"Little girls must not talk of such things. It is not proper. Never let me hear of your doing it again!"

At ten, Mamie persecutes parent and discreet nurse no longer. At thirteen, she evades knowingly such shy queries as the mother—whose hand set the first stone of the division-wall between them, now more than breast-high—feels it her duty to put about Mamie's own aches and odd feelings. Servants and school-mates have initiated her into the mysteries of her, as yet, undeveloped being, and by their manner of doing it, made a foul secret of that which is, in truth, her dower, bearing the seal of the Divine Father. The mother has been recreant to her trust, through false delicacy or cowardice. If she could bear the consequences

alone, our pity and reprobation would be less deep. But instead of eliminating she has planted evil; has made her child's load heavier in place of lifting it.

The like criminal reserve prevails on the subject of the general functions of the body. The child never thinks of reporting irregularities of the digestive and kindred organs, or of attaching consequence to these in her own mind. The chances are ten to one if she so much as knows that she has kidneys and liver,—ten thousand against one that she is ignorant of their position and offices. "Stomach" is her generic name for the abdominal region in its depth and breadth; "back" for the entire length of the spinal column. Heart, lungs and bronchial tubes are interchangeable terms when she attempts to define the position of any disorder in the cavity above the diaphragm, and she does not know her hips from her thighs. Still more misty are her ideas of the cause of the divers bodily inconveniences she endures. She is terrified by a sharp stitch in "the heart," which proves to be an attack of colic; mistakes dumb nausea for a threatening swoon; can not find the pulse in her own wrist, and would resent as "perfectly horrid" the intimation that the queer swimming in her brain, occasioned, she imagines, by excessive study, bears the same relation to constipation that the stagnation of waters at the head of a sewer does to the obstruction at its mouth.

I have known girls, and matrons old enough to be grandmothers, who pushed ignorant complacency to the fatuity of boasting that the calls of Nature upon them averaged but one or two demands per week. They found it "a great convenience and sustained no real injury from the infrequency of the habit."

Mamie's breath is bad, Mamma remarks, sometimes, and sends the child to brush her teeth with charcoal paste and wash her mouth thoroughly with myrrh-and-water, instead of questioning narrowly with what stuff she has been outraging her stomach, and whether in the matter of drain-pipes the exquisitely-delicate machine is in perfect working order. Nature scorns the use of patent gas-traps; yet kindness blends with justice in her exposure of wrong-doing, the flagrant defiance of her governmental ordinances.

I am amazed many times a year, at the crass ignorance of otherwise intelligent people, of the body, its operations, maladies and the methods of regulating these. One of my children was once taken suddenly ill at a country hotel where we were passing the summer. It was late at night; we were far from town and the doctor, and my husband was absent. I consulted the landlady, a "smart" motherly body, who told me she had "doctored" in her own family for twenty years, and with success. The little one was in a high fever; his breath was quick and distressingly broken

by acute pain in the right lung—"like a knife," he sobbed, "right under the shoulder." He had no headache and no nausea. His sister reported that he had sat down, that afternoon, on the grass, while heated with play. There had been a mountain shower at mid-day and the turf was wet.

"He's eaten something that's disagreed with him," pronounced the worthy hostess. "That's generally what ails children. I'll just fetch up the fennel brandy. That'll bring him around all right."

While we discussed the symptoms, an elderly gentleman, who had been all around the world and used his eyes and ears rationally, knocked at the door to offer a bottle of cholera medicine, compounded according to a prescription he had obtained in Bombay. The next visitor to the sick-room was a pretty mother from the city, who "always gave paregoric whatever was the matter with her three babies." A Bostonian had like faith in a cloth wet with Pond's Extract of Witch Hazel and bound over the affected part. One and all looked doubtful when I, persisting in the belief that the patient was threatened with pleurisy, called for a hot foot-bath with a handful of mustard stirred in, and applied an Indian-meal-and-pepper poultice to the seat of the knife-like pain.

A physician was sent for, but did not arrive until nine o'clock next morning. By that time fever and

suffering had passed off in gentle perspiration, the child had slept quietly for several hours and awakened convalescent.

“All the better for the regular practitioner,” said the man of healing, when I quoted the diagnoses and advice with which I had been favored. “When mothers understand their children’s ailments, and how to remove them, three-fourths of our occupation will be gone.”

I honor the regular profession from the depths of a grateful heart. All the same I was thankful for the very little knowledge that held me back from heightening my boy’s fever by administering brandy and astringents and confounding the pleura with the abdomen.

The pseudo delicacy that drives the pure-hearted child away from the one who should be her confidante and teacher, to the prurient whisperings of the school-fellow who stays all night with her almost every week, or the vulgar gossiping of servant-girls, is no new idiosyncrasy of well-meaning mothers. Scruples and habit have come down to them (again) “by ordinary generation.” They bear date of the artless shepherdess and Laura-Matilda age. My maternal grandmother (rest her sweet soul!) set down her only daughter at fourteen to read aloud to her the entrancing histories of *Clarissa* and *Pamela*, pages sown thick with seduc-

tion and abduction, while the listener composedly netted cobweb laces and tamboured bed-hangings preserved unto this day as marvels of dainty handiwork. Yet this true and loving gentlewoman never lisped to the growing girl a word relative to the perils incident to her sex and age, and when the crisis arrived, alluded to it distantly, as "one of the things which, as Holy Writ informs us, are not convenient to be spoken of."

Hundreds of girls were killed every year by their frantic resort to cold baths and cognate appliances, in the height of their terror and mortification at the appearance of the detested yet unknown enemy of their personal comfort. Thousands lingered through lives which were "nothing but a continual death," to transmit to their children the infirmities fixed upon themselves by neglect and mistaken modesty. These are not experiences of which women like to talk even to intimate friends of their own sex. Yet I could verify each of the assertions I have just made, by stories of agony, more or less heroically borne; of bodies warped by torture; of shattered intellects; of blighted hopes;—a record that ought to make men wonder and women blush at the unwitting barbarity of tender mothers, the persecution with sneer and scoff, of shrinking, tender girls, shamed and baited by those of their own sex.

The wrong was horrible—monstrous! Those who are now middle-aged women reaped the reward of their

parents' mistake in a harvest of "peculiar" maladies that terrified sufferers and observers into a spasm of common sense. The Representative American woman of the period comprised between '45 and '75, should be painted with her hand on the lumbar region, eyes hollow and complexion chlorotic. *Prolapsus uteri* became almost as common as toothache, and the fearful disease was not confined to married women. Science, aroused and unwilling to admit itself at a loss to account for the prevailing evil, assailed existing follies of dress, sedentary habits, late hours, excessive dancing, as the cumulative causes of the mischief. The women of the day were held responsible for their own sufferings. It was assumed that each had begun her existence with a flawless constitution, and that patient, long-suffering and ever-recuperative Nature had been outraged and alienated by the diseased woman's individual iniquity. To point the moral of feminine decadence, writers and speakers invoked the ghosts of our hale, busy grandmothers. These being dead, told no tales, and the wan-faced sisterhood held on their painful pilgrimage, convicted, if not convinced. As Eve's Daughters, multiplication of sorrow was their heritage;—thus ran the general reasoning. If one escaped the doom, it was by accident.

Few were clear-eyed or cool enough to see and to declare that the degeneration was not the work of one or

two cycles, or to lament, with our shrewd Autocrat, that the right man was not sent for in the seventeenth century.

I, for one, am weary to disgust, of the prating of superficial scientist and conceited ignoramus of the deeds and ways of our sound grandmothers. The average of woman's life is longer now than it was a century ago. Our girls would be more healthy than were their grandmothers or great-grandmothers of Mrs. Delany's time, were it not for the legacy of proclivities and well-developed maladies bequeathed by those worthies. Else the march of medical science is a myth, the bustling array of surgical instruments, the parade of preventives and curatives sadly familiar to us all, a mere show of "Quaker guns" in the face of the enemy.

It is necessary, in your survey of Mamie's chances of health and longevity, that you should review this dark history. It may be—which, may Heaven forbid!—that you, my sister, can read the story much more distinctly than can I, because you scan it in the electric light of experience. You may find in your own body the witness that these things are true. If so, there is the more reason why you should lose no time in correcting the marred work which is but too likely to show itself in your offspring.

One rule should be absolute in every home. The mother should keep her daughter with, and near her,

until the turning-point between childhood and girlhood is safely passed and regularity of habits is established. When Mamie approaches you with the inevitable—and, I submit, perfectly natural and proper—questionings about the Unknown Country peopled by unborn infants, tell her that GOD sends them to the earth in charge of His holy angels; that since babies must have fathers to work for them abroad, and mothers to tend them at home, He waits until after marriage before He gives them. Say it so simply and solemnly as to calm curiosity. As seriously and frankly take her into your confidence before the advent that occurs when she is from six to ten years of age.

A modest, sensible woman once told me how she satisfied her little girl's inquiry, "How do you know that GOD is going to give us another baby?"

"I told her," said the wise mother, "that since the wee darling must be fed with proper food so soon as it is born, our Heavenly Father prepares in advance the bosom of the mother to furnish it. She, becoming conscious of this provision, knows of the blessing in store for her, and makes ready the clothing that will be required."

A child who is accustomed to be treated as a rational being will receive this truthful—if partial—statement in good faith, and be the more ready to obey your oft-urged injunction that she shall come to you with all

such questions and perplexities, instead of discussing them with ignorant servants who can not instruct her properly, or with wicked school-children who will practice upon her credulity and make her imagination as foul as are theirs. Prepare the way, meanwhile, for further and fuller knowledge, by teaching her the sanctity and value of her own body in all its parts. Give nursery lectures to extremely select audiences, talking easily and plainly of the offices of the various organs and secretions. Your daughters will soon understand that to eat indigestible food is sinful for other reasons than because you have forbidden the indulgence and that constipation is unclean; that the bath is a means of grace in keeping the pores from getting clogged with impure exudations, which, if turned in upon the system, breed ill-health and ill-temper; that exercise in the open air sets the blood in lively circulation, and plenty of sleep renews the cellular tissues rapidly expended by growing children. Lead on thus in wisdom and purity through the alphabet of physiology. Be tactful in all that you impart, squeamish in nothing.

In a word, tell her "why." As she gains in years and intelligence, go further into the mystery of Life. Get some good familiar treatise upon Botany,—I know of none better than Gray's "How Plants Grow,"—and read with her of the beautiful laws of fructification and reproduction. Her mind thus prepared will adopt,

without shock to belief or modesty, the analogy between plant-growth and human propagation, will recognize in the influence of the fallen pollen, or prolific powder, upon the stigma of the flower, resemblance to the effect wrought by such affectionate intimacy of the sexes, the living and loving together in one home, the heart-garden,—as is exhibited in the continual companionship of husband and wife. The thoughtful student of vegetable life needs no elaborate French treatise—a tissue fine-drawn into fanciful tenuity—upon the “Loves of Flowers,” to teach him the beautiful truth that they do thus woo, and love, and enjoy.

As a successive step in your physiological and botanical analogies, and a firm platform for your feet, impress upon your pupil the force of this one of Dr. Clarke’s axioms:—

“No organ or function in plant, animal, or human kind, can be properly regarded as a disability or source of weakness. Through ignorance or misdirection it may limit or enfeeble the animal or being that misguides it; but rightly guided and developed, it is either in itself a source of power and grace to its parent stock, or a necessary stage in the development of larger grace and power.”

Bidding your girl hold fast to this cardinal truth, say to her that GOD in the beginning created man male and female. If you can not easily obtain a few ana-

tomical plates showing the shape and relative position of the principal organs of the woman's body, explain these as clearly as you can in words. Tell her that on either side of a small sac, which is the womb, is an oval gland known to anatomists as an "ovary." That each of these two glands holds a certain number of minute vesicles, which, in the due and regular course of a healthy girl's life—usually about the age of fourteen in temperate climates—are matured and separated from the ovary, one every four or five weeks. That the result of this (always natural) ripening and separation is a periodical flow, called the *menses*. Do not be afraid to say to her when you have thus trained and prepared her to receive the communication, that these vesicles are *ova*,—eggs in the animal, seed in the plant,—and that from these, by some mysterious law of the loving oneness of the married state, are evolved the germs of living human beings. That thus children *become* in a wedlock blessed and honored by GOD.

This is the plain truth—and all of it!

What a thing of purity is it beside the trickeries of ribald-mongers, the meretricious maunderings of sensational fiction; the phantoms created in the imaginations of timid school-children by hints and *double-entendre*, and midnight confabulation upon themes which any girl who cherishes a spark of moral decency would blush to speak of by daylight!

Bring your daughter face to face with the serious dignity of the revelation, and you need not fear lest she will ever make it the theme of unseemly jests. The knowledge thus imparted will become to her a sacred trust.

I quote, with pleasure, in this connection, a strong, pertinent paragraph from one of our leading journals*:

“The — — regards with ‘feelings akin to horror,’ the proposal made in *Scribner’s Monthly* that girls should be taught physiology complete at schools, instead of being educated in ignorance of knowledge necessary to the health and well-being of every woman living in an artificial civilized society. Plainly, the fools are not all dead yet.

“Knowledge never yet destroyed delicacy; ignorance does and much else—health, life, and character.”

There is the quintessence of a powerful moral and physiological treatise in the two concluding lines. As I transcribe them, memory supplies a pictured commentary dated thirty years ago—a time very close to the threshold of the good old days of our hale and honest grandmothers. Physiology—even *incomplete*—was a novelty in schools then, and an innovation at which most parents and guardians looked askance. In one Young Ladies’ Seminary a teacher of

* *Springfield Republican*, March 6, 1881.

advanced views effected a bold departure from ancient customs by the introduction of an expurgated textbook on the important topic. That it was *very* expurgated I gathered from glancing over the volume while waiting for an audience with the teacher in the recitation-room one morning, the class being in session. There were ten young ladies in line of recitation, their ages varying from fifteen to eighteen. They were summoned as the "Senior Class in Physiology." The examination was prosy for a while, consisting of pointed questions, requiring set replies, these being correct, but listless. Then to a girl of sixteen, sitting midway down the row of pupils, came a test example. A chalk sketch of a skeleton was upon the blackboard, and this young lady was told to designate and name the various parts of the human frame. She stepped forward, a light stick in hand, and touching each part in naming it, began at the cranium with "*os frontis*," "*os occiput*," supplying English and Latin terms fluently and intelligently. The teacher listened complacently, interrupting her at intervals with the request that she would mention the specific office of this or that organ. As the pupil neared the lower ribs, I detected a covert and disagreeable smile on the least intellectual countenance before me. The owner nudged her neighbors at the right and left, and the meaning grin spread. The slender rod came

on steadily down, until, as the unconscious girl pronounced "*the pelvis*," a titter, suppressed only to explode in a laugh, drew her attention to the scene behind her. Every one of her fellows was smiling or giggling, some under cover of books opened to hide their blushes, some overtly in malicious amusement. The teacher rapped on her desk and cried "Order!" The pupil essayed to proceed; reiterated the unlucky word, voice trembling, cheeks burning, and eyes full of indignant tears. There was a second and more offensive titter. She dropped the rod, threw both hands before her face, and rushed from the room.

Within a decade I have had a report of a lecture delivered by the fifty-year-old spinster professor of Physiology in a Woman's College, in which the members of the class were informed that should any one of them wish to retire before the discussion of the next subject in order, opportunity would be afforded in which she could make her escape. The teacher regretted—sincerely deplored—the necessity laid upon herself to allude, however distantly, to a topic fraught with peculiar delicacy. She could not blame any young lady who might shun the lesson of the hour. It was very, very disagreeable. The subject was that treated of in this work under the title, "The Rhythmic Check."

Scruples and scenes such as these are the product of the *quasi*-modesty—which we, in our honest wrath, brand

as lewd squeamishness—of an era scourged by diseases that were the direct outcome of “ignorance of knowledge necessary to the health and well-being of every woman living in an artificial civilized society.” An age that held the *summum bonum* of woman’s purity to be the complacent contemplation of herself as an ultra-cherubic creation—all head, shoulders, arms, hands, and feet, with a sublimated indication of “figure”—was quite sure to bequeath to the generation following such forms of what the author of “Enigmas of Life” writes down “*damnosa hereditas*,” as should keep daughters and grand-daughters humble and mindful of every section of their misfitted frames.

Seize the opportunity, while your better-instructed girl is intent upon the study of this new leaf in self-acquaintanceship, to awaken in her the sense of personal accountability to her sex and to those who shall stand alive upon the earth in later days than yours or hers. When Tupper, at the date when expurgated works upon Physiology were a trifle strong for the taste of educated young ladies, advised Cœlebs, in his choice of a wife, to be mindful of “them whom the Lord shall give thee of her,” there was a shuddering shriek of deprecation from decorous mothers and marriageable daughters at the “horrid indelicacy” of the suggestion. If the testimony of these is to be received, the faith of Abraham, who, when he was called, went

out, not knowing whither he went, was a will-o'-the-wisp by contrast with the bright shining trust of the young girl who is led, by way of the marriage altar, to "that new world which is the old." In every instance this is childish farrago. In many cases the husband finds the unsophisticated angel, whose imagination he believed to be unsmirched as new-fallen snow, as well-versed in the lore and phraseology of "inconvenient things," as is he who does not affect to deny the ownership of garners bursting with harvested wild oats.

Since your girl will and must ponder and lay up in her heart what she has learned, direct her thoughts into the right channel. Set before her a pure ambition instead of leaving her to worse than idle dreams.

Mrs. Lelia G. Bedell, of Chicago, an eminent physician and writer upon the subtlest of physiological mysteries, has this striking passage in one of her letters to me :

"Pre-natal influences (or what are generally implied by this expression) are of vital importance, but are vastly surpassed by the value of proper influences of habit and environment all the way from the *cradles* of the boy and girl babies until they have ceased their functions as parents.

"The *fœtus in utero* is not more susceptible to influences than the separate cells of which it is formed in

the separate generative glands of both parents throughout their entire lives.

“Herein is *True Heredity*.”

The imagination hesitates to grasp the full import of this saying. Yet what does it teach us that we did not know already—at least, in part? That none of us liveth unto himself and none of us dieth unto himself. That your child, in the neglect of her commonest duty, risks the comfort of others. That the invisible, but potential moral and spiritual “sphere” of influence is not a mystic’s dream. That in moulding ourselves we are building for Time and for Eternity. The inspired prophecy touching the “idle word” takes an intenser meaning when read by this lamp—as does the thought that projects the word.

The destinies of the races who shall people the globe in the year of Our Lord 1950 are held by the boys and girls of To-Day—pre-eminently by the latter.

“I care not who makes the laws of a country if I may write the songs,” said one who had studied Nature and Man to good purpose.

You the mother of a living child, may take up the boast in spirit, if not in word :

“I care not who may deposit the ballots at the polls if I may but bear and rear the voters, may train the voters’ wives and mothers !”



CHAPTER VI.

THE FIRST TURNING-POINT.

“Pepper helps a man on his horse, but a woman into her grave.”
—*German Folk-Saying.*



ALL climacterics are attended with more or less peril. The transition period in religion, government, or individual, is one which calls for wisest care and vigilance.

If there are dormant seeds of disease in your daughter's constitution, they will probably spring up under the conditions that bring about the first budding of womanhood. For some months prior to the positive appearance of signs which indicate that she has reached the first turning-point in her physical life, your watchful eye recognizes the heralds of the change. Nervous disorders to which she is a stranger, terrify her and make you uneasy. Her grandmother's headaches—a tradition of dread in the family—have leaped a generation to fall, an unexpected curse, upon the descendant

whose resemblance to that honored woman has, until now, been your pride. Mamie has morbid cravings of appetite, and suffers after eating things that never disagreed with her before. She is hysterical upon insufficient provocation. Her father and brothers are impatient with her babyish tears and attacks of "temperache"; laugh at her lackadaisical ways. The boys protest loudly that she is "no fellow at all, since she has taken to moaning and moping." If her tastes are literary, she composes low-spirited verses on the back-porch in moonlight promenades or while roaming the fields at sunset, and writes them out on tear-blistered pages, when she ought to be in bed. However sensible she may be naturally, she inclines now to sentimentality and the belief that she is not "appreciated." Or, she systematically depreciates herself—a more occult phase of vanity. She was "put into the world to fill up a chink," she laments to her dearest friend, and may be heard crooning to herself at night-fall such stuff as

"Now when the stream of tears is wide,
My willowed harp to this is strung,
Oh! how I wish that I had died
When mind was pure and form was young!"

If no sympathetic confidante is accessible she writes out what she denominates her "cries of the heart," in the journal kept secreted at the bottom of her bureau-drawer, under an innocent-looking pile of underclothes.

It is an excellent safety-valve for these unwholesome gases for her to keep such a diary. She will burn the blotted book with shame and laughter, five years from this time, but it hurts nobody now, and she feels better for having had her cry—and her say.

In the surgical phrase with which we have grown grievously conversant since our national *dies iræ*, July 2, 1881, such expression is a pus-channel by which morbid and gangrenous humors may be drained away.

The girl's whole system is in a ferment under the stealthy advance of the consciousness of sex. To her inexperience her physical inconvenience is not referable to a common origin with her unsettled flurries of mood, her spiritual *malaise*. It is for you, her mother, to hold steady the poise of your own judgment, to bear and to forbear with the "trying child." Time, with the ally of your good sense, will clarify the wine of her life unless there be at the bottom of the shaken cup the poison of a constitutional malady. For this you must be alert, ready to meet symptom with palliative, and, if practicable, disease with remedy.

The nicest discrimination should be exercised in the duty of being considerate with real suffering without fostering whims into confirmed foibles. If sympathy with fancied woes is injudicious, ridicule is cruel. Hearken lovingly always, even when you withhold approval. Encourage by precept and example, cheerful-

ness and active simplicity of daily habits. Keep the girl as much in the open air as may be; let her exercise regularly, but not violently; give especial attention to her diet and see to it that she gets enough sleep. With these precautions there is little reason to fear any abnormal conditions in the primary indications that "the change" has actually begun.

Dr. Napheys, who should know what he is saying, affirms,—“More or less pain, more or less prostration and general disturbance at these epochs are universal and inevitable.”*

Admitting this, and granting to our girl the tender regard which has been hers in every distress and pain since her birthwail, do not let her pet her indisposition, or fall into the easily-contracted habit of skulking behind it as a sufficient excuse for fretfulness or indolence. She must be made to understand that it is cowardly to cringe or lament under her share of woman's appointed lot, or to shirk her given lesson in the practice of womanly fortitude. And, after all, intelligent management may and will reduce the suffering to a mere inconvenience, the discomfort to a *minimum*. To compass this, secure the girl's co-operation, or the difficulties of your task will be multiplied a hundred-fold. Establish in your mind the truth that her child-

* Napheys' "Physical Life of Woman," p. 25.

hood is virtually over. You can drive her back into the nursery with, "Do this," and "I forbid that," and enforce the old penalties of disobedience, but you weaken your future influence by such arbitrary rule. It is an exercise of mental muscle that will avail little when the subject's character acquires strength equal to yours.

I know a devoted mother who attempts to carry out with her four girls—all of whom are over fourteen—the espionage and regimen of childish days. The most apparent result of her tactics is to fill her own life with uneasiness, that of her daughters with mortification, and the souls of her friends with alternate pity and amusement. She will cover her twenty-year-old young lady with chagrin and confusion by persisting in feeling the soles of her shoes on her return from an evening stroll along dry pavements in care of a trustworthy escort; forbids a sister of seventeen, in audible tones across the table, to touch the mince-pie laid upon her plate by the hostess with whom they are dining, and breaks off the youngest's fun at a school-girl party, exactly at half-past eight—"the proper bed-time for growing children," she announces, magisterially.

Promises and pledges pass with her for nothing. She will see for herself that her mandates are obeyed to the letter. Parental responsibility is not to be evaded by any quip of sophistry or twist of personal

conscience. It would be extraordinary were she invariably or frequently obeyed cheerfully, and yet more remarkable if her charges yielded her affectionate respect.

We may as well assume, without useless argument, that it is the nature of crude growth to be unreasonable and of youthful ignorance to be rash, and order our counsels diplomatically. Remember that the novel trammel fits tightly upon shoulders and back, and ease the galling whenever you can. The very training that has carried Mamie safely over the first stage of the divergent route, predisposes her to restiveness under unusual restraints, and needful precaution. Seek to establish perfect confidence between yourself and your child, if you have never done this until now. She *must* trust you and you must omit no means that may prove you worthy of this faith. Cement the alliance by showing that you can help her in adjusting mind and body to the new order of obligation and discipline. As you have made life easy and light heretofore, render it comfortable at this juncture.

As we shall see, some chapters further on, few girls need to deviate from the ordinary routine of duty and pleasure for a longer time than two days at most. Thus early in the race, every peculiarity of the season must be noted and remembered. Severe cramps in the abdomen and intense aching in the small of the back

are generally to be considered as indices of local weakness, or as the effect of cold or imprudence. Ginger tea, as hot as it can be swallowed, should be administered when the pain is great. The sufferer should be put to bed and a bottle of hot water applied to her feet. Should the cramping twinges continue, try strong gin and water, very hot; and lay warmed, dry flannel over the affected region. For the aching back—should it be slow in recovering its normal strength—an Allcock's porous plaster is an excellent comforter, combining the sensation of the sustained pressure of a strong warm hand with certain tonic qualities developed in the wearing. It should be kept over the seat of the uneasiness for several days,—in obstinate cases, for perhaps a fortnight. The practice of giving elixir of opium, laudanum, or paregoric to lull the pain of the periodical indisposition, should never be resorted to without the advice of a physician. Scores of women have thus laid the foundation of habits that wrecked health, happiness, and life.

As prevention is better than cure, build up your girl's constitution to resist these stated assaults upon strength and patience without permanent injury or more than trifling discomfort. While hesitating to subscribe in full to Dr. Napheys' declaration that "Nature is no tender mother, but a stern step-mother, who punishes us for disregarding her laws," we agree cor-

dially in the sense of the concluding words of the paragraph:

“Soft couches, indolent ease, highly-spiced food, warm rooms, weak muscles—these are the infractions of her rules which she revenges with rigorous, aye, merciless severity.”

So soon as the periodical ordeal, or inconvenience (whichever it may be, our girl votes it “a nuisance”) has passed for the month, she should resume her active pursuits—the diurnal plunge or sponge-bath; her walks, rides, and housework. Should the recent infliction have been unusually heavy, she must be especially conscientious in keeping up gentle exercise in the fresh air, lengthening her walks and drives as she regains vigor. The flaccid muscles need keying up—a process performed by steady, sustained effort, not severe exertion.

A young friend of mine came home in mid-session from one of our women’s colleges in a deplorable state of health. The periodical functions of which we have been speaking had been intermitted for five months; she was bloated in figure, and in color livid; and excruciating headaches forbade study or even reading. The family physician had too much real business on hand to care to work up “a case,” and wasted neither technicalities nor medicine upon her.

“Set her to doing housework,” was his prescription.

“Work, mind you!—not play. Sweeping, dusting, making beds, washing dishes, and all the running of errands in-doors and out that you would demand of waitress or chambermaid.”

In less than six weeks, regularity, and with it health, were restored.

This obligation to active employment is a cord that works two pulleys at once. The best corrective to morbidness of body, it also shakes dust and cobwebs and mildew out of brain and heart; stirring the blood into healthy circulation; giving tone to that marvelous reticulation of sensitive gossamer which so involves and contains the vitality of the American woman that she thinks it no shame to be called, and to know herself as “all nerve”; and, in fine, supplying that prime need of a human being—something to do.

I think it is a Turkish proverb which tells us—“Dreaming goes afoot, but who can think on horse-back?”

A houseworker, too, must have all her wits within easy call, and the expediency of this begets the practice of “minding what she is about,” at all events, while her hands are thus actively engaged. Longings for fullness of intellectual sympathy; heart-cries for appreciation and reciprocation of nameless yearnings; bemoanings over “unkissed kisses” and the wasted shower upon broken reeds—are deferred, perforce, un-

til the more convenient season that can not come until "things are set to rights." A comprehensive term, this, the scope of which the busy maiden does not surmise then nor ever, perhaps, until as a sensible matron she sets her romantic daughters in the groove that "took the nonsense out" of herself.

Great attention must be paid, not only at this epoch, but in directly ensuing years, to the care of the skin. I do not mean of the complexion, although it will tell its tale in time, of duty done, or of neglect. The growing girl, whether her habit be full or spare, will, in the process of maturing, throw off, in perspiration, sensible or invisible, gross and pestilent humors that would else result in pyæmia, or cutaneous eruptions.

The late Dr. W. W. Hall, the editor of *Hall's Journal of Health*, and the pioneer of Common Sense in Medicine, said aptly that it is time for the acknowledgment of the truth that human beings are not aquatic fowls. He condemned "the continual and unseasonable dabbling and dipping in vogue among intelligent people—particularly hurtful when the immersion is in cold water." His recommendation, in lieu of this wholesale "dabbling," was a daily sponge-bath quickly and lightly performed, and thorough ablution of the upper part of the body with soap and water, every morning.

I believe that the penitential plunge into the chilling

bath, untempered by so much as a teacupful of warm water, executed by hundreds with more pious regularity than are their devotions, sends many yearly to untimely graves. It is undoubtedly injurious in all cases when the reactionary glow does not ensue by the time the skin is rubbed perfectly dry. As a method of cleansing the body, it is, in every way, inferior to the work done with a sponge, or coarse linen cloth and a quart of hot water. The pores contract instantly under the dash of the cold liquid, shutting in effete matter with dust gathered from without, and do not expand until the friction, which is the saving clause in the operation, brings the blood, with restored warmth, to the surface. The puckering of the skin vulgarly termed "goose-flesh," caused by a sudden chill and which roughens the entire surface of the shivering bather, is temporary congestion of the pores. They do no work while this continues.

Dr. F. L. Oswald, in an interesting series of papers upon "Physical Education," published in the *Popular Science Monthly*, says of the bath:—

"A bucketful of tepid water will do for ordinary purposes. Daily cold shower-baths in winter-time are as preposterous as hot drinks in the dog-days. Russian baths and ice-water cures owe their repute to the same popular delusion that ascribes miraculous virtues to nauseating drugs,—the mistrust of our natural in-

stincts, culminating in the idea that all natural things must be injurious to man, and that the efficacy of a remedy depends on the degree of its repulsiveness."

Every girl and every woman should wash thoroughly, down to the waist, at least once a day with soft water,—in winter with tepid,—and plenty of soap, and sponge the whole person, especially in warm weather. Should she perspire freely,—and this rule should be absolute when the exudations tinge her linen yellow—she must make free use of *hot* water, with a few drops of ammonia added, sponging this off by copious dashes of cold water. This practice must be followed by her in all seasons, and with redoubled care in cases where after fatigue or excitement, a disagreeable odor is emitted by the perspiring skin. The unfortunate peculiarity just mentioned,—less uncommon than we are willing to allow ourselves to remember, and never hinted by tongues polite to those who are the subjects thereof,—is usually classified among incurable idiosyncrasies, along with foetid breath and more repugnant still, to refined senses—ill-smelling feet. It is so offensive to others, so humiliating to the one thus affected, so nauseating when blended with the perfumes to which the victims often resort in the futile hope of overpowering the effluvia, that I may be excused for the bluntness of speech prompted by a desire to supply a practical palliative of the evil. Abatement of the

plague that is almost remedial, is found in the regimen I have described. The arm-pits, and all creases and folds of flesh and skin, ought, in such instances, to be cleansed twice a day,—oftener in summer—with water as hot as can be borne, and with old soap,—Castile is best. Shun cologne-water and perfumed essences. If you use volatile liquids in bathing, alcohol is better than anything that professes to be fragrant. In the second water, which must also be hot, mix ten drops of aqua ammonia, and, lastly, sponge freely with cold water. Frequent changes of linen are also indispensable, and night-dress and bed-clothes should be aired so soon as the bed is left in the morning.

There are seasons when, as every old woman knows, the cold bath must be omitted. These are also the times when the warm or tepid should be most sedulously applied. The feet should never be plunged into very cold water. Grave evils have been known to follow such an act.

The teeth ought to be brushed twice a day, the mouth washed out with clean water after each meal, and a good dentist consulted twice a year at least. If when these rules are carefully observed the child's breath is foul, the trouble is with the stomach. A half-teaspoonful of powdered willow-charcoal is a harmless and in most cases an effectual corrective. Mixed with water, or taken into the mouth dry, it is not unpleasant,

and serves the desired end much better than drastic medicines.

So much for what may be denominated surface-drainage. Of greater moment, because evil and cure are more radical and permanent, is the sewerage of the body. This subject was regarded by our fore-mothers as perhaps a degree and a half less disgusting than the lunar periods. With multitudes of the present generation it is safe to assume that they never give irregularities of this kind a minute's thought in a year, until forced into the contemplation of the miseries that ensue from habitual neglect. Physicians have sometimes beguiled women into decent regard of this matter by convincing them that their complexions are endangered by the suppression or excessive flow of excretions. To confirmed bad habits of retention and to choked pores, filled with dust or condensed perspiration, is referable the plentiful crop of pimples banding the school-girl's forehead. Unsuspecting of this fact, she hides the unsightly clusters by "banging" her hair, and covers the larger pustules with artful dots of black court-plaster, supposed to enhance the whiteness of her skin, or to redeem, by contrast, the muddied complexion which is unclarifiable by cosmetics. To the same hidden cause is due—should the dentist have been faithful to his duty, and dyspepsia be a stranger—the impure breath which is a secret to nobody but to her who exhales it.

I have already declared constipation to be an uncleanness. I may add that it is one that betrays itself sooner and more surely than any other crime against physical laws, unless it be gluttony of unwholesome food. The putrescent refuse of the system, unnaturally detained in the draught-vessels, infects blood, skin, and respiration. The shame is *here*—in the careless or willful bearing about with one, the body of this death and flaunting the fact of the loathed presence in the faces of acquaintances and friends—*not* in the modest observance of such regulations as, rightly obeyed, would keep the breath sweet, the brain and color clear.

It is to be regretted that when attention to the quality and quantity of your girl's diet is of such consequence as at this formative period, she should be most prone to vitiated cravings and finical likings. It is a circumstance at once fortunate and notable, if she does not take the notion into her pulpy brain that a healthy appetite for good, substantial food is "not a bit nice," "quite too awfully vulgar, you know." She would be disgraced in her own opinion and lose caste with her refined mates, were she to "eat like a plough-boy." This delicacy of taste is altogether compatible with a relish for chalk, magnesia, slate-pencils, and sulphuric-acid pickles.

In the number of *The Spectator*, issued on "Tuesday, July 15, 1712," we have a letter from a young woman

who had passed through a varied experience of such depraved pointings of appetite, and nearly perished by gratifying each and all of them. Upon her reformation, she writes to the social censor of the day an account of her follies, winding up with :

“Now, Mr. Spectator, I desire you would find out some name for these craving damsels, whether dignified under some or all of the following denominations (to wit) : *Trash-eaters, oatmeal-chewers, pipe-champers, chalk-lickers, wax-nibblers, coal-scranchers, wall-peelers, or gravel-diggers*, and, good sir, do your utmost endeavor to prevent, by exposing, this unaccountable folly, so prevailing among the young ones of our sex.”

This “unaccountable folly,” still prevalent after the *exposé* of 170 years ago, consists to a charm with a “perfect passion” for alba-terra confectionery.

When we were young, sister mine, it was safe to eat candy—in moderation. We had lollypops and barley-sticks, and clear lemon-bars and squares of faintly-flavored rose, and melting lengths of “cream” candy, all of which we consumed fearlessly, parents and guardians looking on in smiling envy of the simple ecstasy that could never again be theirs. An ounce of these “goodies”—to English children, “sweeties”—went further on the road to gratification than does a pound of the pernicious adulteration, painted and perfumed, which is the modern school-girl’s delight. In the consideration

of the morbid frenzy of desire for deleterious comestibles conspicuous "among the young ones of our sex," who can forbear a thought of "ordinary generation" and our Great First Mother's hankering after the one prohibited dainty of Eden?

Convince Mamie that the lovely emerald of the pistache-drop is arsenical: that there is Prussian-blue in another and softer shade of green, and red-lead in the rose-color. Talk of chemical analyses, and of revolting revelations that have come about by providential and retributive fires, of hogsheads of alba-terra side by side with barrels of white sugar in the vaults of candy-makers. She shudders out that it is "perfectly horrid," and keeps on munching. Another touch of nearer heredity! Do not we remember the delicious thrill of horror with which, on being cautioned against eating loaf-sugar, "because it was clarified with bullock's blood," we applied the test commended and held a lump at the candle-flame until a brownish bubble seethed out of the heated side—then, ate the sugar!

Crusades against candy and pickles avail little while the stomach demands with the avidity of youthful desire, acids and sweets to assist the action of the gastric juice. See if it will not accept fruit instead. I doubt if a well person who likes apples and peaches—and what well person does not?—could eat enough of them

to hurt her, provided always that the fruits are sound and ripe. Decay in any shape is unwholesome. Children fatten like pigs—their skins grow smooth and clear in the peach-season. The family that substitutes fruit, even when it is most expensive, for desserts of pies, puddings, and preserves, will find a clear money-gain at the end of the year, and interest, generous and compound, in health and peace of mind.

If Mamie has not a rational appetite, create a digestive conscience that may serve her instead. Prescribe for her as in any other sickness. Give her wholesome bread and butter, juicy meats—boiled, broiled, roast—never fried; vegetables properly cooked; cream, milk, and eggs.

Watch—as for her health and happiness—that she does not fall into the, to girls, easily-besetting fault of stimulating lagging desire by seasoning her food immoderately, even with condiments esteemed as harmless as are salt and pepper. Salt is a sovereign styptic, that, if taken in large quantities, dries up the blood and other natural juices of the body. Black pepper is highly inflammatory—more heating than cayenne, although it has not the constipative properties of the latter—the *capsicum* of medicine. Cancers have been formed in the coat of the stomach by lavish and continued use of black pepper.

To quote again from Dr. Oswald:—"A slice of a

peppered and allspiced vinegar pickle will blister your skin as quickly as a plaster of Spanish flies."

Yet our girl will blacken the contents of her plate with this blistering powder, and aver that she can not without it eat the "insipid stuff" offered for her consumption and nutriment. She soon grows, or degenerates, into a fondness for high seasoning of all kinds; affects curries and peppery salads and spiced *entremets*. The sour to please her must be very tart, the sweet very sweet. Her brother at eighteen is more easily contented with plain fare, provided there is enough of it. If he indulges then in his first cigar, it is rather because the "other fellows do it," and from mannish ambition than in obedience to the promptings of appetite. Mamie would drink strong tea and coffee of her own accord, and thinks a glass of old sherry would give her a relish for the dinner she does not care to taste. Instead of frowning down her confessions as "fast talk," add the desire they express to the craving for slate-dust, lime and lemons, and include all under symptomatic irregularities. Her physical and mental composition is in a ferment, her ebullitions of opinion and temper are but breaking bubbles. She will not be quiet and cool of herself, and it is your duty to keep her at as even a temperature as you can bring about.

I assume that, as a child, she has not been allowed to use tea and coffee as daily beverages. Resolutely with-

hold these now, except when the tea is given as medicine for a headache, or in an illness where warm drinks are professionally prescribed. While I am a believer for myself in the "comforting" properties of a cup of good mixed tea, and freely offer the same to persons of mature age and fixed habits, I would not let girls under eighteen drink it or coffee every day or even frequently. Apart from the inconvenience attendant upon the habit of using, therefore needing a tonic at stated intervals, and the suffering entailed by occasional unavoidable privations of the same, the present effect upon stomach and nerve is detrimental to the tone of both. At best these drinks can do no good. They may do much harm,—tea by intensifying the strain of a nervous-sanguine temperament, coffee by augmenting the secretion of bile in a system predisposed to the bilious-lymphatic. Mamie's nerves may be naturally weak and uncertain, but tea will not strengthen them. Jennie's bilious sick-headache may be lifted for a day by a cup of black coffee. The next attack will come the sooner, and be the worse for the accession of bile extracted from the delicious poison. Poison it is to her, as would be wines, spirits of all kinds,—spices,—whatever heats the turbid blood that will run healthfully and evenly by and by, if we can but tide over this crisis.

"I would rather strike matches all day on a powder-cask than marry a woman with such a temper," re-

marked a young man to me, in commenting upon a beautiful virago.

The boyish outburst recurs to me when I witness the temerity with which mothers suffer to be carried among the easily-disturbed forces of their daughters' health such dangerous appliances as stimulating food and drinks, sensational fiction and questionable associations. The mischief done by these to a boy's harder nature may be temporary—a superficial stain that may be removed by time and friction. Just now your girl's whole system is, as it were, composed of sensitive nerve-tips, as the surface of the tongue is said to be. Impressions are taken—transmitted—and incorporated with fearful facility, made up into the transitional being which is soon to be herself and a woman.

“*Temperance and Patience*” should be our motto at this epoch, if never again in her life.





CHAPTER VII.

GIRLHOOD.

“Standing with reluctant feet,
Where the brook and river meet
Womanhood and childhood fleet.”

—LONGFELLOW, “*Maidenhood.*”



THE poet—being an American—makes no mention of the still waters on which the shallop of girlhood may float; the pleasant pastures that have become, in our rushing times, a Debatable Ground narrower with each year and cut up by much trespassing.

Yet it is patent to physiologists, no less than to the student of psychology, that as a class, neither misses of fourteen, nor more shapely school-girls of seventeen, are women. “Childhood fleet” has swept past our daughter, as insensibly as swiftly. Her present life and being are new and untried. The lithe David must, whether he will or not, bear armor which he has not proved, but he moves awkwardly, and by constraint. The graceful child becomes shy, because ill at ease, as

her arms lengthen and her feet get into one another's way. She is oddly—you say, "perversely"—inclined to stoop in walking, and to hitch her shoulders nervously when spoken to unexpectedly. Unaccountable angles have taken the place of curves, and jerky wires of pliable muscles. You love her none the less, but you are less proud of her than you were awhile since; fret your conscientious soul with doubts of the judiciousness of the training that has produced this result.

If you are to be pitied, do not forget that there is a greater sufferer than the girl's mother—even Mamie herself. She would be very angry were any one to suggest a resemblance between her state and that of a pollywog, but very far down in her humbled consciousness she has thought of it herself, and wonders, rebelliously, just where in the world or in the scale of humanity she belongs. No one part of her seems to match the other, and in her agony of bashfulness she imagines that everybody is as conscious of the misfit as is she who hardly recognizes her own individuality while the rubbing and grinding and creaking of re-organization are going on. It is a grave, a perilous era with her, the more interesting to the intelligent observer because it is not comely in its external manifestations.

We leave so little margin, in this age, for girlhood, that Mamie has scanty and slippery standing-room on

the delta made by the junction of the brook and river. She would indignantly repudiate the assertion that she has "grown-up notions," yet that this is true is the source of a large proportion of her discomfort. To be a young lady is a hope the realization of which appears to her excited fancy almost within her grasp. To shake off awkwardness, homeliness, rawness,—all that makes her miserable now; to be admired, and not tutored; courted, and not shunned, to be a gauzy-winged moth and not a scaly beetle,—these are some of the brilliant possibilities that feed reverie and dream. Who can marvel at or chide her? The realm in which Penelope, who is just "out," swims and soars and shines, an adored Psyche, is to Mamie Fairy Land, and the boundary-lines are delightfully undetermined. She likes to hear how her own great-grandmother married at fifteen, and cherishes the recollection of an old-fashioned novel of very ephemeral character she read once in the garret of a country-house, the heroine of which—Lady Lucy Cunningham—was a "witching creature who had not yet numbered sixteen summers of mortal existence," yet who drove all beholders of the masculine gender crazy by her beauty and wit.

Mamie wishes that Mamma was not so unreasonably obstinate in her objections to long dresses and crimped hair, and girds ungratefully at the formula of introduction uttered by the gentle voice;—"This is my

little daughter." Nothing flatters her more immensely than to be mistaken for "nineteen, at least," a weakness which every one who cares to minister to such small vanities remembers when bidden "to guess her age." Penelope is "presented" to new acquaintances who exchange stately bows with the belle, but after Mamma's obnoxious speech shake hands familiarly with poor "little" Mamie. She echoes bitterly the Scriptural saying that a man's foes (and deductively a woman's) are of his own household. She knows that *her* whole family is leagued in the effort to relegate her to the ranks of doll-tending misses. Papa offers his hand instead of his arm,—which she could easily reach! when he takes her out walking; her eldest brother says indignantly, "That *Infant!*" when an old friend, who was the best man at her parents' wedding, accosts her deferentially as, "Miss Mary." The very servants pay no attention to her orders and laugh insolently at the painfully-rehearsed displays of dignity she airs for their benefit. One and all, they conspire to describe her age as fourteen when it sounds so much better to emulate her example of saying, "in my fifteenth year." She is ready to believe that they actually *hate* her—they take such pains to thwart and mortify her at every turn. In short, as she—our typical girl—surveys it, the Debatable Ground is a highway of discontent whereupon no one abides who can get away.

Mamie is dear to my motherly, and to my authorly soul, yet regard for her best interests conjoins with truth, urging me to reiterate the asseveration that—her great-grandmother and Lady Lucy Cunningham notwithstanding—Mamie is not a woman yet, by several degrees of growth and ripeness. She ought, as a sensible creature, to be grateful for the interregnum of girlhood, but, as I have intimated, we need not be surprised that she is not. She is “but a lassie yet,”—a “green girl,”—*i.e.*, crude, not of necessity acerb. If rightly viewed and enjoyed, the estate of girlhood bears to Penelope’s full-fledged young ladyism the relation that the dawn, soft with tenderest rose-gray, and sweet with dewy odors, does to the glare of midsummer noon.

It is a safe and sheltered season when nobody thinks of demanding much from the immaturity of which she is ashamed, or judges harshly the inexperience she disclaims. All humane well-wishers—and she has no enemies—look kindly upon the folded bud. This serenity she ruffles, and shakes away the dew in the fierce attempt to blossom before her time. The ridicule of brothers, and the petulant expostulations of girls older than herself who are intolerant of “the folly of the pert little minx,” exasperate, but do not alter, her feelings or her behavior. She even salves the scratches inflicted upon self-conceit by the conviction that the “mean

things only want to keep her back" because they dread a probable or certain rival.

As the value of implicit obedience in family government is most clearly shown in exigencies, as when a sick, hurt, or frightened child would but for previous training be unmanageable and so destroy its only chance of safety—so now the mother who has never let go her daughter's hand, never tempted her by indifference, real or apparent, to seek a more sympathizing counsellor, finds in the influence she has established over affection and will an invaluable power for good. Talk, as is your wont, lovingly and patiently with the perturbed creature. Coax and reason down (still patiently) the tumult of morbid vanity and senseless aspirations that have changed the free carelessness of your child into unrest and pain. The girl is at war with everything—most of all, and none the less truly because she does not suspect it, with herself. She wants to be beautiful, accomplished, popular, and *grown* all at once. Imagination, under the heat of the fermentation described in our last chapter, outruns possibility and exhorts her to be satisfied with nothing short of instant fruition. Her mirror and the aforementioned brothers and elder friends set for the rising of tempers and falling of pride in her beleaguered soul, oppose to this vision of perfection unformed features, a complexion too red or too sallow, limbs of disproportionate length or

thickness, and a figure that drives her to despair, being, as she complains, "worse than none at all." If she is thin, it is with a slab-like leanness that defies the dressmaker's arts. If plump, she berates herself as a criminal against refinement and æsthetic taste; and prays, in good or bad earnest, for a spell of illness to pull her down.

As a standpoint from which to conduct future operations, try to persuade her that very few outside of her own family ever trouble themselves to think of her looks, so long as she is neat and behaves with propriety. The smart to her vanity will be salutary, if severe. Next, set before her the infinite value of the accumulative period, and congratulate her upon the blessing of living within it. Immaturity, let her observe, is not deformity, but a state of growth with such advantages of superb development as those who are her seniors by ten years have not—to obtain which they would sacrifice all the privileges accruing to them from mere superiority of age.

And, while inculcating these wholesome truths, bind them firmly about your own heart and hold them there.

Weak mothers, fond mothers, ambitious mothers, do much to lower the standard of womanhood, besides injuring and dwarfing their offspring—body, soul, and intellect—by abetting the ill-judged impatience of girls

of this age to assume the position for which they are utterly unfit. The modest, "pretty-behaved" little maid in her simple "frock" seldom blesses our eyes nowadays in house, church, or street. The almost-young-lady meets us with a simper or a stare, and, if she thinks it worth her while to talk with us, alternately pains and provokes us by shallow chatter, herself leading the conversation as by right. She has unlimited silk dresses per annum, selects her own dress-maker, and takes the matter of apparel and fashion's variations far more *au sérieux* than does Penelope, whose belleship is an established verity. Already she adores round dances, and votes it "slow" to waltz with girls. "They can't hold her up properly" (I am afraid she says, "worth a cent"), "and their skirts are awfully in the way."

Papa applauds her pertness as wit, as indiscriminately as he laughed at her gambols before she could talk, and as injudiciously as he gave her a dollar for looking pretty. To the wisest fathers daughters are forever children, without responsibilities and futureless. Mamma likes to see Mamie happy, and contrives diversions and delights without end for her. If exceptionally amiable, Mamie tolerates both parents; and, while snubbing Mamma when it must be done in the cause of Young American progress in civilization and the fine-arts, apologizes for her "antiquated ideas."

Ah! Dame Partlet on the brink of the pool, who can not help admiring the adventurous spirit of her ducklings, while frightened out of her dull wits for their fate in the element that would be death to her, is no bad type of many a well-meaning and very human mother. We do well to take ourselves to task, sift our own weaknesses, before arraigning the girls who are "getting to be too much for us."

I insert as altogether *apropos* to this section of our subject two pregnant paragraphs from "Duties of Women" by Frances Power Cobbe.

"The woman who thinks herself quite equal to the duties of motherhood almost betrays by that fact that she has only the meanest notions of their nature and extent.

"Have you ever reflected that, in the awful love of GOD for His poor children of clay, there must be mingled at once infinite tenderness and pity, and, at the same time, a severity which never shrinks from any suffering needed to recall us from sin, or purify, or sanctify us?"

If Mamie has not yet "been put into the Physiology Class" at school, her mother ought to have studied natural laws with sufficient diligence to lead her to the comprehension of the progressive mechanism enclosed in the tasteful garments that take up so much of her time and thought.

"I feel like an engineer who has set in motion works he does not comprehend," lamented an honest mother to me.

In the recollection of her and of thousands of right-meaning parents, consumed by regrets and distracted by doubts, I ask you to be patient with me while you read the pages immediately succeeding this, if what they contain is already known—it can never be trite—to you.

I have used the term "cellular tissue" once or twice. In order to make clear the numerous references to this which will hereafter occur in this volume, I take the liberty of copying Dr. Clarke's lucid explanation of the technicality:

"The mysterious process which physiologists call 'metamorphosis' of tissue, or interstitial change, deserves attention in connection with our subject. * * * *

"It is the means by which, in the human system, force is developed, and growth and decay rendered possible. The process in itself is one of the simplest. It is merely the replacing of one microscopic cell by another; and yet upon this simple process hang the issues of life and death, of thought and power.

"Growth, health, and disease are cellular manifestations. With every act of life, the movement of a finger, the pulsation of a heart, the uttering of a word, the coining of a thought, the thrill of an emotion, there is

the destruction of a certain number of cells. Their destruction evolves, or sets free, the force that we recognize as movement, speech, thought, and emotion. The number of cells destroyed depends upon the intensity and duration of the effort that correlates their destruction.

“From birth to adult age the cells of muscle, organ, and brain that are spent in the activities of life, such as digesting, growing, studying, playing, working, and the like, are replaced by others of better quality and larger number.

“At least, such is the case where metamorphosis is permitted to go on normally.”

(I use italics in the transcription of the last sentence to emphasize my homelier continuation of the interesting theme.)

To return to Dr. Clarke:

“Infants must have sleep for repair and rapid growth ; children, for repair and moderate growth ; middle-aged folk, for repair without growth, and old people only, for the minimum of repair. Girls, between the ages of fourteen and eighteen, must have sleep, not only for repair and growth, like boys, but for the additional task of constructing, or, more properly speaking, of developing and perfecting then a reproductive system—the engine within an engine.”

That child, or young girl, who does not consider the

family rule of "early-to-bed" as reasonless tyranny, is usually one of the goody-goody school, or spiritless from weak health. That our Mamie should rebel against it is not a sin, or even a fault.

"One has such good times after dark!" she murmurs, and with truth. The merry chat and games about the fire and lamp in winter, when papa and the boys are at home; the dropping in of agreeable acquaintances, the occasional lecture, or concert, or party, the walks and talks in the summer twilight; surely we have known too well the charm of these in our youthful prime to be irritated because our daughter owns it in her turn. Before she can be quite amenable to a law curtailing these indulgences she must have some apprehension of the motive underlying the command; comprehend her "make-up" better than do the majority of her class and clique. Penelope may—if she be a very stalwart Penelope—dance until two or three o'clock three nights out of seven, and for two or more seasons sustain no appreciable damage in looks and strength. Being blessed with a fine constitution of her own, she can successfully emulate the example of her classic namesake, and, for a term of years, "pull out by night that which she wove by day." Penelope is a made woman. Mamie is in making. In the one, cells and tissues are defined and firm, muscles elastic, every function regularly established, and each organ perfect.

There is no longer upon the system the mysterious draught of "growing"—the leech that saps energy and impoverishes the blood; sends sickening aches into legs and back, and stitches into side and chest.

"Only growing pains!" say wiseacres, carelessly.

As if the "only" made them the easier to bear! The act of growth, then, pulls so heavily and incessantly upon the magazine of vital force—christened within our century, "cellular tissues"—that a quantum of sleep equal to that which suffices to restore Penelope's roses, does not more than repair Mamie's losses from this one cause. If she is growing fast—"running away from her strength," is the apt phrase in the mouths of the unlettered for the debility occasioned by her shooting up tall in a short time—there is need of other safeguards to these same tissues.

Dancing parties, late suppers, indigestible food at any season, violent exercise, such as jumping the rope long at a time, running until exhaustion and faintness ensue, overheats and sudden chills, hysterical laughter and tears, fits of temper and spleen—whatever bodily or mental agitation is succeeded by reactionary prostration—are direct enemies of health and what may, at her age, appeal more forcibly to our girl's reason—to personal comeliness. Each is a waste-tap upon the main reservoir. Nature will do her best, pitying, faithful worker that she is, but Nature can not work without

material. *When her stores are exhausted, she can not create.*

This is a stubborn fact, an awful truth when we look at the consequences attendant upon practical infidelity in the principle. It is a trivial matter to us, in the discussion of it, whether living tissues are the result of chemical combinations, or the direct production of the Maker's hand. There is but partial consolation in the reflection that there are untold myriads of them, formed and embryotic. There is a limit—somewhere, and when we know not—to their reproduction, none to their waste until the store is exhausted. Call it by what name we will—amorphous, bioplasmic, germinal matter—it is the LIFE, and beyond the supply lies DEATH.

The unformed girl may borrow from the reserves designed to meet the wants of the woman, the woman at twenty-five draw upon the supplies she ought not to touch until she is forty; each age may push on the evil day or hour of bankruptcy, subsisting upon slender and still more meagre supplies of daily bread, but come it will, and if not by her own conscience, yet in a Higher Record the spendthrift will be written down "Defaulter." When shall we see Health as it is?—a Duty! and violation of physical laws as a Sin?

I was cheered as by the finding of a treasure, the other day, at overhearing a young girl say scornfully to a school-fellow :

"I should be ashamed to be sickly! No! I won't call it 'delicate.' It is very *in*-delicate to my way of thinking. I say the word out plainly—'sickly.' It is as much my duty to keep well as to keep clean. Of course, accidents will happen in spite of precautions, but nobody is proud of having fallen into the mud!"

The brave, clear-sighted woman-child laid her hatchet smartly at the root of as rotten a stump as disgraces our civilization. Thousands of women, not deficient in intelligence otherwise, base their claims to respectful consideration as human individuals upon their "delicate health." That their parents or they have sinned or stumbled and brought upon them the chastening of pain and disease, should commend them to the compassion and prayers of the well; but by what curious moral and mental twist they have come to look upon their position as honorable, themselves as interesting, the recital of their symptoms as one of the decencies of polite society, is one of the pitiable problems of our femininity. Each of my readers has upon her visiting list one—she is more lucky than the writer if she has not ten or twenty—who would be offended if congratulated upon the possession of excellent health. It is no provincial figure of speech when their rural friends assert innocently that "they enjoy bad health." They do as thoroughly as did Mrs. Pullet, whose chief regret in imagining her condition as a widow is thus worded:

"I should be poorly off if *he* was to have a stroke, for he always remembers when I've got to take my doctor's stuff—and I'm taking three sorts now. . . . Pullet keeps all my physic bottles. He won't have one sold. They fill two of the long store-room shelves a'ready. I may go before I have made up the dozen of these last sizes. The pill-boxes are in the closet in my room, but there's nothing to show for the boluses, if it isn't the bills."

The range of thought with these professional valetudinarians is among the tuneless, frayed strings of their abused organizations. Their aches, irregularities and failures are the staple (such poor stuff!) of their conversation. Themselves being witnesses, such expenditure of time, labor and medical skill is required to keep the works of their bodies in tolerable order that we read with wicked satisfaction Mr. Darwin's snarl which once shocked our finer sensibilities:

"We civilized men do our utmost to check the progress of civilization; we build asylums for the imbecile, the maimed, and the sick; we institute poor-laws; and our medical men exert their greatest skill to save the life of every one to the last moment. There is reason to believe that vaccination has preserved thousands, who, from a weak constitution would formerly have succumbed to small-pox. Thus the weak members of civilized societies propagate their kind. No one who

has attended to the breeding of domestic animals will doubt that this must be highly injurious to the race."

Heaven and humanity forbid that we should deal roughly, even in thought, with the feeble and stricken ones who, from shattered earthly tabernacles oftentimes see farther into the world that sets this right, and into the counsels of its Ruler than do our fleshly eyes! It would be equally cruel and also ungrateful were we to overlook the work done for the Master and His creatures by invalids like Richard Baxter, John Calvin and Elizabeth Barrett Browning. But we plead with you, mothers—with society—and with our daughters themselves, that they may not be handicapped for the course just begun. Bodily health is never pertinently termed "rude." It is not coarse to eat heartily, sleep well and to *feel* the life throbbing joyously in heart and limb.

"I do not call myself at my best unless I feel, on rising in the morning as if I could put my shoulder against the world and turn it over," said a woman of forty, who had borne six children, and done in every one of twenty years three hundred days' work,—and who, in her summing up of daily mercies, never failed to begin, "We thank Thee, O Lord, for *health*."

If a sound mind in a sound body is a glorious thing in Man, it is in Woman sublime.

Our Mamie would be patient with her nonage, cease to despise her youth, could she arrive now by your help

at a fair appreciation of the worth of the wealth she may amass during the years that are to her shod with lead. To teach her honesty of purpose and practice, call things by their right names. Show no charity to the faded frippery of sentiment that prates over romantic sickliness. Inculcate a fine scorn for the desire to exchange her present excellent health for the estate of the pale, drooping, human-flower damsel; the taste that covets the "fascination" of lingering consumption; the "sensation" of early decease induced by the rupture of a blood-vessel over a laced handkerchief held firmly to her lily mouth by agonized parent or distracted lover. All this is bathos and vulgarity, undeserving the dignity of rebuke, were it not sinful to the verge of sacrilege, when the ruin thus sentimentally anticipated is that of the temple of the body—the holy building committed to your child's keeping. Bid her leave such balderdash to the pretender to ladyhood, the low-minded *parvenu*, who, because foibles are more readily imitated than virtues, and tricks than graces, copies the mistakes of her superiors in breeding and sense, and is persuaded that she has learned "how to do it."





CHAPTER VIII.

BRAIN-WORK AND BRAIN-FOOD.

“Much of our education builds an arc, and not the whole circumference of culture. Only whole wheels will roll. Wherever we leave out an arc in our culture, there is likely, as the wheel rolls, to be a halt some day.”—JOSEPH COOK, “*Heredity*.”



R. HOLMES, whose professional astuteness rises to the altitude of genius, has interwoven pearls of physiological truth among the arabesques of weird fancy, that make “*Elsie Venner*” a marvelous book. The strange, sad story has its mission as truly as has “*Nicholas Nickleby*,” but the lesson is of a finer strain; scalpel and probe move skillfully among more delicate and occult agencies.

The physician, and not the novelist, speaks in such passages as these:

“Silas Peckham was a thorough Yankee, born on a windy part of the coast, and reared chiefly on salt fish. Everybody knows the type of Yankee produced by this climate and diet;—thin, as if he had been split and dried; with an ashen kind of complexion like the tint of the food he is made of, and about as sharp tough,

juiceless, and biting to deal with as the other is to the taste.

“Mrs. Peckham was from the West, raised on Indian corn and pork, which give a fuller outline and a more humid temperament, but may perhaps be thought to render people a little coarse-fibered. . . .

“All feeding-establishments have something odious about them,—from the wretched county-houses where paupers are farmed out to the lowest bidder, up to the commons-table at colleges, and even the fashionable boarding-house. A person’s appetite should be at war with no other purse than his own. Young people, especially, who have a bone-factory at work in them, and have to feed the living looms of innumerable growing tissues, should be provided for, if possible, by those who love them like their own flesh and blood.”

Here is the link that binds these fragments into a chain suitable for our present purpose:—

“Silas Peckham kept a young ladies’ school exactly as he would have kept a hundred head of cattle,—for the simple unadorned purpose of making just as much money in just as few years as could be safely done.”

It is easy to explain why the mother whose home is in the country, remote from all except the common district-school, should, however reluctantly, yield to the impetus of necessity and her own desire to give her bright daughter “the advantages of a liberal edu-

cation," and send her at twelve or fourteen years of age to a city seminary, or celebrated institute located in a "salubrious and beautiful country neighborhood." Her practical common-sense may apprehend the disadvantages of the "feeding-establishment" for mind and body as thoroughly as Dr. Holmes does; but, acting upon the principle of the next best thing, she takes the step, very much as she provides her family in winter with canned vegetables, as better than none.

The city mother, with a dozen seminaries of excellent repute within half an hour's walk of her door, is more independent in thought and action than her neighbors, if she does not consider it expedient to "finish off" her girls at a collegiate institute a hundred miles away. She and the girls are fortunate if they are not sent from home to school while still in short dresses. The usual excuse for the last-named barbarity is intensely American. The child will *not* study at home, the parent avers without a shade of mortification, and she *will* go out to so many parties and "frolics" of divers sorts that regular habits are an impossibility. The mother has always done her best to maintain discipline, but without success. Her temper and her daughter's education are in like danger of ruin. In fine, the child she has borne is, at thirteen, beyond parental control, and must be subjected to the impartial discipline of an establishment. Once entered, with

due form and payments, as a fractional part of a whole, she must come under the laws regulating the patent machinery—be one cog of a wheel, a section of a screw—
—or—

The mother, who is convinced in her own mind that she is too tender-hearted to restrain her darling's natural preference of amusement above work, to arouse her from her indolence, and stimulate her nobler desires, would be startled were she to think out the significance of that "or."

The disposition to save herself pain and annoyance, the wearing care of seeing rebellious looks and tears, of rebuking disrespect and disobedience—is easily mistaken for unselfish anxiety for her daughter's real good. She does not, in the computation of *pros* and *cons*, set the sufferings of the home-sick child, her perils at the hands of hasty or stern teachers and uncongenial mates, the chances of nerve-strain and moral contamination, and physical neglect, against the felt ills of home education, and deliberately resolve to take the risks. It is not easy to judge soberly and independently in her individual case, with Fashion and friends on one side, the single aim of real and lasting benefit, even to a beloved object, on the other. In order that she may weigh evidence dispassionately and evenly, the mother must be able to think, no less than to feel, and it is not every respectable married woman, model housekeeper, and

devoted parent who knows how to think. Educational "advantages" of a certain grade are required to drill one's mind in this exercise.

There is no lack of warning-signals to those who are inclined, for any or all of the reasons we have reviewed, or impelled by other and better ones, to place girls of tender years in boarding-schools.

From VASSAR, comes:

"Applicants for admission to the College must be at least sixteen years of age, of good health," etc.

WELLESLEY sounds the same note, and yet more decidedly:

"Students of sixteen years of age are received, *but it is better that none enter the Freshman Class until they are seventeen or eighteen.*"

(The italics are mine).

And SMITH:

"Candidates for admission must be, at least, sixteen years of age."

MOUNT HOLYOKE—Mary Lyon's bequest to her grateful countrywomen, the Nursing-Mother of missionaries' wives—with the shrewd sense and wise economy that characterize all its departments, is, perhaps, most explicit of all our principal women's colleges on this point:

"While candidates are admitted to the Junior (lowest) Class at sixteen years of age, it is desirable that

they should be seventeen or eighteen years of age. None should enter the Senior Class under twenty."

What is the plain meaning of all this, except that those who have made the instruction of girls a study, and reduced to a science which is their profession, the risks, possibilities, and certainties involved in the question of a Higher Education for Women, will not—*dare* not assume the responsibility which the mother manifests her willingness to shirk?

"We refuse"—so might the language of the catalogues be rendered—"to sanction the removal of would-be pupils from their homes until the constitutions jarred by the transition from childhood to girlhood have settled into normal health; the regularity of the delicate functions of the newly-indicated Third Part of the girl's physical being been established and verified by, at least, twenty-four months of time."

Abstract science is more sage and more humane than the loving mother who, without a thought of revoking the edict of exile, sheds furtive tears over the boarding-school outfit of her fourteen-year-old girl, and wonders, with an aching near akin to genuine heart-break, "how she can ever live without the child!"

We talked, in a former chapter, of the propriety of creating a stomachic conscience that should choose the good and eschew the evil in dietetics. That this is rarely accomplished, even with healthy, hungry girls, at four-

teen or sixteen, let the unofficial and unwritten records of boarding-school life reveal. The reproach of bread-and-butter-missishness does not appertain to American girls, whatever may be said of English. Those of us who have sickened yearly at the made-to-order fare of summer watering-places, who recall the pretentious tastelessness of foreign hotels and *pensions*, may pardon her whose "bone factory and living loom of innumerable growing tissues" demand a change from the provisions bought at a low figure by the product of "three or four generations raised upon east winds, salt fish, and large, white-bellied, pickled cucumbers," and cooked by his Hoosier wife.

"We had apple-sauce, *sour*! ten times in one week, by actual count!" says a lively voice at my elbow. "And awfully stale, sawdusty bread every day, except Saturdays, when there were warm biscuits for tea. We were allowed but two apiece—they were not bigger than my watch! Mademoiselle announced, hebdomadally, that no young lady, *bien-élevée*, would think of eating three. I was hungry for weeks at a time, having pledged my word to mamma that I would not buy cakes, nuts, and candy, which would have taken off the edge of appetite. The day scholars used to share their luncheons with us, and, when allowed to go shopping, I bought surreptitious buns and crackers. It was against the one-thousand-and-first rule to keep eatables in our

rooms, but we were deadly tired of the everlasting round of miscellaneous hash, fibrous beef and superannuated mutton. Everything tasted like everything else after the first month, having been brewed by contract, and all in the same vat."

Our girl has a disagreeable sense upon her all the while, that *she* is being "run" by contract, body and mind, out of school hours as well as in. The beat of machinery is never intermitted, and her free spirit revolts as at the common vat from which is drawn her breakfast, dinner and supper. It can not be otherwise if she is an average healthy, natural, laughter-loving pupil, fed, up to the hour of her enrolment at the Institute, upon food convenient for her, excellent in quality, in quantity abundant, and in such agreeable variety that the stomach could not, with unerring certainty, forecast each day its daily fare. If she is an ambitious student, indifferent as to what she eats, and averse to exercise, her case is yet worse. In default of the wholesome dainties with which mamma was wont to tempt her slender appetite, she partakes, conscientiously, of what is set before her, as Nicholas Nickleby "distended his stomach with a bowl of porridge for much the same reason which induces some savages to swallow earth—lest they should be inconveniently hungry when there is nothing to eat." Food eaten hastily

and carelessly while the mind is absorbed by other and weighty thoughts, is seldom perfectly assimilated.

Mrs. Mary Putnam-Jacobi, in a thoughtful essay upon "Mental Action and Physical Health," asserts that "the capacity for independence increases with every rise in the hierarchical scale of vertebrates, until it culminates in Man—able to think and talk over his dinner; to manufacture heat in his limbs while drawing blood to his cerebral hemispheres; to sustain, in complete unconsciousness, innumerable delicate and complicated chemical metamorphoses in all the tissues of his body, while concentrating every conscious effort of his mind upon equally delicate processes of thought and will."

The accomplished physiologist would, nevertheless, modify her declaration so far as to exclude from table-thoughts and talk, subjects so exacting or abstruse as to engage the full powers of the mind and to stimulate the brain into liveliest activity.

She draws an eloquent comparison between the "digestive torpor of the savage, analogous to that of ruminating animals," and "the unconscious digestion of healthy men of temperate habits and marked intellectual and physical activity, to whom all hours of the day are nearly equally suitable for exertion."

Again: "The process of digestion occupies from

three to five hours, but an hour's repose after dinner is generally sufficient to avert discomfort."

Our school girl—hungry or appetiteless—is a growing animal, with whom, too, as with most of her sex, the actively-intellectual is likewise the actively-emotional. With perhaps one exception, that part of her body most despised by the eager-eyed aspirant for class honors, is her stomach. Every mother knows, and every teacher ought to remember that, at her age, a thorough indifference as to what and when she eats, is a symptom of abnormal torpidity of the ganglionic nerves—those which carry on the work of digestion, blood circulation and respiration—or of abnormal excitement of the cerebro-spinal system. What Mamie does not taste consciously, she will hardly digest unconsciously. Upon this truism is based the protest of our most intelligent physicians against the American early dinner for men of active business habits. Fifteen minutes of the hour's "nooning" is consumed by the rapid run homeward—half an hour at most to deglutition (mastication ranking among the lost arts)—and the laden stomach is heated into mutiny by the breathless flight back to work. Such a feeder will tell you that he does not know, three-quarters of the time, what kind of food is set before him. Table-talk is almost abolished, or carried on without assistance or interruption from the head of the house, who brought the counting-

house or office atmosphere up-town with him, and clothes his soul in it as with a garment. On this head I shall have more to say by and by.

"The oatmeal porridge at Wellesley kept up my supply of phosphates," said a graduate to me.

"Good!" I returned. "The hardest intellectual work I have ever done was upon a breakfast diet of oatmeal and cream. It is almost a necessity of my existence. But I know people who can not abide it, to whom the very odor is offensive. Clearly, they must draw their phosphates from something else."

Those of us who were novel-readers thirty-odd years since, will recollect how we laughed over the dinner with the Fairbairns in Miss Ferrier's "Inheritance." "Mrs. Fairbairn was one of those ladies who, from the time she became a mother, ceased to be anything else."

"The children of this happy family always dined at table, and their food and manner of eating were the only subjects of conversation. Alexander did not like mashed potatoes—and Andrew Waddell could not eat broth—and Eliza could live upon fish—and William Pitt took too much small beer—and Henry ate as much meat as his papa—and all these peculiarities had descended to them from some one or other of their ancestors."

The judicious mother, without making herself overwhelmingly maternal to her bored visitors, can yet be

observant of the gastronomic idiosyncrasies of her brood. In consulting these in the arrangement of the family *menu*, she need not pamper individual taste into whims. While she inculcates the Christian social duty of being able to eat anything served by civilized hosts, she does not demand or expect that that which is dust and ashes in the mouth shall become kindly chyle in the stomach. When the girl comes in from school, heated or exhausted by the labor of the forenoon, brain throbbing and pulse high with feverish unrest, or languid to her finger-tips in the reaction of spent forces, the watchful guardian gives her cheerful quiet, and when these and a cool bath of hands and face have reduced temperature and pulse, sets before her for lunch some wholesome delicacy "that the child likes."

"Do you always eat so little?" asked I, once, of a beautiful girl, who had been my *vis-a-vis* at a dinner-party.

"Seldom more, I think; I am fresh from boarding-school, you know. Most girls get out of the habit of eating at such places."

"You dined to-day, on three spoonfuls of soup, half a cracker, an olive and a bunch of raisins," pursued I, surveying the rounded cheeks and brilliant bloom. She was very dear to me, and I could not forbear the remonstrance. "My child! do you know that such fare will injure the coat of your stomach?"

"The stomach is what Carlyle calls it—a diabolical

machine," she returned lightly. "If I could lose mine entirely, in addition to ruining it, I should be happy to renounce it and all its works. It and its appurtenances are a vile clog upon human happiness and human progress. A regular "meal," comprising soup, fish, meat, vegetables and dessert—invariably gives me a headache and flushes my face painfully. I am never hungry, and thrive excellently well without eating."

At twenty-five, when she should be in the prime of womanly beauty and vigor, she is a prey to chronic neuralgia and frequent carbuncles—the sure indices of poverty of blood. Her bloom has gone and her buoyant spirits are depressed by the dread of permanent invalidism. She is, also, a confirmed dyspeptic,—“a mysterious dispensation,”—she remarks with a ghostly show of her former gayety,—“to one who never ate heartily in her life.”

I might multiply this illustration, with unimportant variations, by scores,—all based upon the neglect of the nutritive organs. I am the more urgent in calling attention to this matter because even such wise philanthropists as Drs. Clarke and Jacobi,—writing upon the subject of girls' education from different standpoints, both arguing ably, both urging conclusions that command our reverence for the keen insight and patient research that have led them to conviction—bestow but a passing word upon a defect so serious.

It is not Michelet alone, with the intolerable compassion of his—“*La Femme est une malade*” and his portraiture of the supersensitive *Fille, Femme, Mère*,—cradled in gossamer, fed upon honey-dew, fainting under a frown, and dying with delight on the meeting lips of her lover—who, in exalting one division of Woman’s Tripartite Nature, leaves the other two in comparative shadow.

Mrs. Putnam-Jacobi’s essay has one italicized passage that deserves, instead, to be printed in golden characters.

“Unless the brain and spinal cord *had been already exhausted, or on the point of exhaustion previous to the menstrual crisis*, this, alone, would be insufficient to exhaust them.”

A few pages earlier, we happen upon an incidental observation to the effect that, “a slighter disturbance of normal conditions is needed to render digestion painful than to cause painful ovulation.”

Painful digestion argues derangement of the vital functions that replenish the waste of blood, adipose matter, phosphates, nerve-force—even act upon the “mysterious” circumvolutions of grey matter on the surface of the cerebral hemispheres. Disorder and disease here are to be avoided as sedulously as is that class of evils which, from the pre-eminence given it by illiterate as by learned men and women, is known by the generic term of “Irregularity.”

The fable of the "Belly and the Members" needs repetition and enforcement in the hearing, not of Silas Peckham, but of the parents who consign tender girls, with unformed habits and wayward fancies, to such as he and his "coarse-fibered" partner. Fable and physiological application should be pressed home upon the consciences of the ardent students who think to deify Intellect by "keeping the body under."

It is a duty to eat, and to eat nourishing food. To effect this end let mothers, first—the keepers of feeding-establishments, second,—study what is wholesome and what innutritious, and order their tables by the knowledge thus gained.

For example, salt fish, corned and smoked meats are less digestible and less juicy than fresh, and therefore less healthful. Salted herrings, mackerel, and ham, as breakfast-dishes, may stimulate appetite, but could not carry the stomach comfortably over the gap that intervenes before dinner or lunch unless by help of the liquid imbibed to quench the thirst they create. There is no nourishment worth mentioning as such in water, and little in tea and coffee beyond that found in the sugar and cream mixed in the cup. By filling the stomach—distending it, after the manner of Dotheboys Hall porridge—they do prevent or postpone the contraction of muscles which produces the sensation of hunger and faintness. This sop (slop?) thrown to

Cerberus contributes nothing toward the general good. Nature is not mocked, in the sense of deceived, by the trick, any more than she is propitiated by the blunting of a healthy appetite by sweets. She will have—not her pound—but her many pounds of flesh. She resents, if slowly, yet surely, the continual borrowings of “tissues,” the neglect of her appeals for bone-and-blood material.

Never, unless forced to it, eat when “tired to death.” Avoid, as you would the chance of a sprained wrist or ankle, the deadly faintness of extreme hunger. If the nutritive machine is fed regularly, it will be regularly ready for more food.

Mrs. Gaskell gives us this note from Charlotte Brontë, written to her Yorkshire home from London, where she was visiting her publisher.

“As to being happy, I am under scenes and circumstances of excitement; but I suffer acute pain sometimes—mental pain, I mean. At the moment Mr. Thackeray presented himself, I was thoroughly faint from inanition, having eaten nothing since a very slight breakfast, and it was then seven o'clock in the evening. Excitement and exhaustion made savage work of me that evening. What he thought of me, I can not tell.”

Mrs. Gaskell explains that the poor girl—who, with all her critical acumen of human motive, was yet ignorant enough of her bodily composition to mistake the

consequences of inanition for "mental pain"—had "been out for the greater part of the morning and missed the luncheon-hour at her friend's house. This brought on a severe and depressing headache."

A sandwich, or a bun bought and eaten at a pastry-cook's in the course of the morning's round, would have spared the country girl "the savage work" of the evening and the mortification of the retrospect.

More of "American dyspepsia" proceeds from violation of the two plain rules I have stated, to wit—never to eat heartily when very tired, and never to fast to exhaustion—than from climate and ill-cooked victuals. Reading "solid" books, or studying at meal-times, is almost as injurious. Heated discussions and quarrels, fretfulness and sullen taciturnity while eating, are as unwholesome as they are unchristian. Oblige both boys and girls to masticate well, and to swallow slowly. This is especially advisable with her whose "constitutional" is by now a walk, instead of a run, and who passes less than one-third of the time in the open air that her brothers do. That a school or college-boy is "hollow down to the heels," is a proverb the truth of which no mother will gainsay. Nor would she alter the fact thus expressed had she the power to do it. Even the Billickins of a college-town is disquieted if her lodger has what she would call a "peaking appetite." She may have no other human interest in his

welfare than the natural desire that he may so far prosper in worldly affairs as to be able to pay her weekly bill, but loss of relish for food portends illness, and she has no time to waste in nursing sick boys. The kindest matron who presides over the table of the "Young Ladies' Institute" is neither surprised nor uneasy when "the boarders" play with, or reject, their food. Nor has she the presumptive right to insist that the scanty modicum of provisions they do accept and condescend to swallow, shall not be raisins, pies, and pickles. The girl who openly enjoys bread-and-butter, milk, beefsteak, and potatoes, and thrives thereby, is the object of many a covert sneer, or overt jest, even in these sensible days and among sensible people.

She who brings up the tone of her nerves by a cup of coffee, and sustains the organ of which she is ashamed by a morsel of toast, lifted to listless lips by a dainty thumb and forefinger, and barely nibbles a strip of boiled ham; who carries a bon-bon box in her pocket into the school-room, and has a private bottle of olives in her desk, "to relieve faintness," is "interesting" in the eyes of her little court—a soulful creature who looks as if she fed on air. Whatever her elders may think, the popular sentiment of her congeners encourages her in the cultivation of the fragility which is our national curse, and should be her own and her parents' sorrow.



CHAPTER IX.

WHAT SHALL OUR GIRL STUDY?

“The great duty of the Educator is to place his wheel so that the stream will fill its buckets *evenly*.”—EDNA D. CHENEY.



OUR girl, being “at least sixteen, and in good health,”—what shall she study?

An arrow-flight of catalogues, a bombardment of private letters answers the question.

FRESHMAN YEAR.

GREEK. Merry’s Homer’s *Odyssey*. *Three hours a week.*

LATIN. Lincoln’s *Livy*. *Three hours a week.*

MATHEMATICS. Loomis’s *Algebra*. *Three hours a week.*

BIBLICAL STUDY. *One hour a week for the last six weeks.*

LECTURES ON THE IDEA OF A COLLEGE. *One hour a week for first eight weeks.*

ELOCUTION, LECTURES AND EXERCISES. *One hour a week.*

ELECTIVES.

PUNCTUATION AND ORTHOEPY.

ENGLISH LITERATURE. *From Chaucer through the Elizabethan Dramatists.*

GREEK. Merry's Homer's Odyssey. *The Phœacian Episode.*

LATIN. Selections from Livy.
Courses in Art and Music.

OR—

FRESHMAN YEAR.

First Semester.

LATIN. Cicero. *De Amicitia* or *de Senectute*, and *Select Letters.*

MATHEMATICS. Olney's University Algebra. Chauvenet's Geometry.

EXERCISES IN ENGLISH COMPOSITION. *Elements of Drawing.*

With Electives of German and French.

OR—(again)

FRESHMAN YEAR.

MATHEMATICS. Olney's Solid Geometry. Olney's Plane Trigonometry. Olney's University Algebra, Pt. 2.

FRENCH. *Littérature Française Contemporaine*, *Dictees*, *Compositions et Exercices Grammaticaux.*

GERMAN. Schiller. *Jungfrau von Orleans*. *Wilhelm Tell*. *Die Piccolomini*. *Schiller's Leben*. *Essays in German*, and *German Prose Composition.*

CHEMISTRY, with Laboratory Practice.

HISTORY. ENGLISH LITERATURE. ESSAY WRITING.

DRAWING. *Freehand, Mathematical and Perspective.*

OR—(still again)

FIRST YEAR.

Cicero de Senectute.

Arnold's Latin Prose Composition.

Olney's Algebra.

Ancient History.

Dalton's Physiology.

Nichols' Introduction to History of the Bible.

Gray's Botany.

Hart's Rhetoric.

Bible: Genesis, Exodus, The Gospels.

English Composition.

We have profound respect for Mary (Mamie no longer) in transcribing the list. We are even conscious of an elevation of self-respect when we have written it. As Dick Steele said of Lady Hastings that "to love her was a liberal education," we seem, in some abstruse mode—absorption through the mental pores, perhaps—to have grown wiser in handling the materials and utensils by which Mary is to be cultivated. By a ludicrous perversity of associated ideas to which women are subject at the most inconvenient seasons, we recall in the

re-perusal of the page, the aptly-named Mr. Meek's thrill of awe upon seeing the announcement in *The Times*: "BIRTHS—Mrs. Meek, of a son."

"I had put it in myself, and paid for it, but it looked so noble that it overpowered me. As soon as I could compose my feelings, I took the paper up to Mrs. Meek's bedside.

"'Maria Jane,' said I, 'you are now a public character!'

"We read the review of our child, several times, with feelings of the strongest emotion."

Constance Cary Harrison, in "Woman's Handiwork in Modern Homes," introduces a charmingly-absurd dialogue between a nothing-if-not-artistic pair over a "newly-acquired six-mark tea-pot."

"Is it not consummate?" asks the masculine Postlethwaitian.

"It is indeed! Oh, Algernon! do let us try to live up to it!"

As a mother, and as a family, you feel the compulsion upon your souls to live up to the girl who can enter a college, the outermost court of which is guarded by such a *chevaux de frise* of "Examinations insisted upon in all work, required or elective."

Mary's home preparation for her new sphere has been, we will take for granted, judiciously conducted. You have not needed the drily significant paragraph in the Wellesley circular:

“Girls are often allowed to make the dangerous mistake of overworking in order to fit in a short time. This is as injurious to scholarship as it is to health. All cramming preparation is worthless.”

There is no expediency—you say it thankfully—in your dwelling doubtfully or sadly upon a sentence or two on the next page of the circular catalogue :

“Students in delicate health will not be received. The College will not be responsible for invalids. If the collegiate education of girls be an experiment, it must not be tried upon those who are broken down by violation of the laws of Nature. Such a trial would be useless and failure inevitable.”

Candid and sensible, if stern ! Wellesley is also Wellingtonian in spirit and utterance.

Mary, then, is well, sound, and strong, and a passable scholar for her years. Not—or it would be unfair to select her as a type—remarkable for quickness of apprehension or close application. She is as little of a prodigy as of an ignoramus. But she has a good mind and an earnest desire to make the best of herself. Were she Humphrey Davy, John Stuart Mill, or an archangel, she could have no higher aim. To score another point in her favor (excuse the technicality !) she is beginning to enjoy Work for Work's sake. Difficulties are becoming a stimulus instead of a discouragement. She revels in the grapple and wrestle with a tough task, and is

sanguine of victory. In short, the healthy mind in a healthy, well-fed, and well-kept body is growing symmetrically, "without hurry, without worry." She is growing, moreover, in spiritual insight, and in sagacious calculation of means and ends, of expenditure and result. In a year—perhaps in less—she will put questions to, and hold arguments with you, that you will do well to prepare yourself to meet. Just now, her motto is that of youth: "Large profits and quick returns." She likes to stand well in her class because it is the business of the day and hour; because she has caught the excitement of competition from others striving at her side and beyond her, and there is real, positive pleasure in "knowing things." She runs well, with no signs of distress or discontent.

But you, if you have never until now gone deeply into the study of the problem of Woman's Education, are tempted into gravity of meditation and profound speculation which hold your eyes waking by night, plunge you into day-reveries that leave a deepening stratum of solicitude. You are prudent and far-sighted if you have answered for yourself and to your satisfaction the query with which your daughter at length approaches you, her most trustworthy confidante.

She has had, we will assume further, if not class honors, the sincere respect of preceptors and fellow-students. The triumph of having passed the prelimi-

nary tests and being a college student in very truth, the thrill and strain of the race, even the ecstasy of excelling in this or that contest, have lost their novelty. If success does not pall upon her, she is used to it, and can look beyond the radiant area with eyes whose range is lengthened by practice and which have become accustomed to the light. The subsoil plowing of her mind tells in her present state of perplexity and longing. She has her studies so well in hand as not to be daunted in the prospect of the formidable curriculum of the next semester. She believes, she states, modestly, that she will be able to hold her own throughout the course.

“That is, I can learn the lessons and pass the examinations. But when I have been graduated I shall be, at the best, only well smattered. Look for yourself, and judge if in four years’ time I can be anything more. There are not enough days and hours in the forty working months of that time (there are no more, leaving out the vacations), in which to become proficient in German, French, Latin, Greek, the higher Mathematics—think of Analytical Geometry and the Differential Calculus, Chemistry, Astronomy, Botany, all English Literature and the cream of the literature of other tongues—and Music! The utmost I can hope for is a specious veneer—perhaps only a high overglaze of the surface. And I do want to be *thorough!*”

“Or, if we look further, when I leave school it will not be possible for me to keep up all these studies as I am doing now. It follows that even the important knowledge I am gaining of some of them is only acquired for the sake of losing it. Will not the dropped stitches show in the finished web? If not, where is the use of knitting them in the first place? A wise builder does not construct for the sake of pulling down. Assuming that it were possible for me to devote ten hours a day for the rest of my existence to keeping what I have acquired—and the range is so wide that I could hardly do more—what then?

“Don’t call me absurd when I confess that I am haunted continually by the comical dilemma of the gushing young thing in Hood’s ‘Fudge Papers’ who breaks off in her irregular ode at—

“‘Bring me from Hecla’s iced abode
Young fires——’

and complains to her friend Kitty—

“‘I had got, dear, thus far in my ODE,
Intending to fill the whole page to the bottom,
But having invoked such a lot of fine things,
Flowers, billows and thunderbolts, rainbows and wings,
Didn’t know *what* to do with ‘em when I had got ‘em.’”

“Mamma!” laughing and blushing, while the eyes

do not lose their troubled look, "am I to be Miss Fanny Fudge forever?"

You do not deserve to be this young creature's natural parent if you are inclined, for one moment, to deal with this honest, wholesome *cui bono?* as with girlish farrago. Mental restlessness, when it takes this turn, is progress. Your girl meets you now with level gaze; proves herself, perhaps for the first time, to be your equal and comrade. Her life is no longer an offshoot of yours. It has taken root for itself.

Disabuse her mind in the beginning of your reply of the idea so easily conceived at her age, that hers is a peculiar state of feeling and that her difficulties are exceptional. Commend her courage in looking them full in the face, and explain of what her uneasiness is the symptom. Then, talk with her, as teachers seldom have time to talk with their pupils, of the specific effect of the study of worthy subjects upon the intellect. If you do not say as did a learned Professor in one of our Theological Seminaries, that a man can plow nearer to a stump without grazing it for having had a collegiate education, you may yet borrow one part of his figure, and show that all of cultivation is not sowing seed which will yield a harvest in kind. The plowshare and hoe that open the soil to the beneficence of air, sun, dew and rain; expose virgin elements to be chemically changed by these into sustenance for what shall here-

after be cast into the mellowing earth; the fertilizers scattered liberally upon the ground and dug patiently into it—the raking and harrowing, even the burning out of weedy growth—what would agriculture be without a wise comprehension and application of these methods? Mary may not “keep up” her Latin after she leaves school, and her German may, from the same date, become to her as truly a dead language. But she will write and speak her mother tongue the better for having learned the one; the breadth and grasp of her mind be improved by the study of the other.

It is very possible—altogether probable—that in her future experience she will have little use for any branch of Mathematics higher than the Four Rules of Arithmetic, with a semi-occasional need of Fractions, and a demi-semi-occasional reference to the Rule of Three. But she will bear the daily vexations, as well as the great trials of life more bravely for the firm grain of thought, the habit of patience, the impartial weighing of evidence, the submission to the sustained verdict of the quotient, without which there can be no success in mathematical study. That the husbands and children of educated women are ignorant of their obligations to the Differential Calculus, is no more an argument against a knowledge of it than the indifference of the epicure, who enjoys his breakfast rolls without a thought of the manifold labor wrought into

their production, proves the inutility of agricultural arts.

The discipline of the school is invaluable in a country where the status of the Home is so often altered by the changing tides of fortune, the fluctuations of Mamma's health, and servants' humors and defections. If your girl brings away nothing from her college after her graduation, beyond what is usually ranked as a good common school education, you have not paid too dearly for the benefit to her of systematic lines of thought traced over and over again until they are grooves not easily choked up, or worn away; for the familiarity with the best works of master minds; the breathing upon the heights, unconsciously though it may be, of purer, more bracing airs than ever reach the lungs of the bustling herds upon the plain.

This much, and all too little, for the indirect influences of scholastic training.

While freely conceding that the graduate from any one of the eminently respectable institutions from whose catalogues I have quoted, is likely, we will say in eight cases out of every ten, to be, as Mary puts it, "merely well-smattered," I submit that the popular objection to the curriculum as unpractical, applies with equal pertinence to Boys' Colleges and Universities for Young Men. I dare assert also, that the majority of girls, whose standard of scholarship at Wellesley, Smith, or

Vassar is creditable, will compare favorably upon graduation-day with a like number of average graduates at Princeton or Bowdoin, so far as familiarity with textbooks and the general principles of what has been taught in the regular course goes. As to Mary's lament over the dropped stitches and the stock jeremiads that women do not keep up their acquaintanceship with languages and the exact sciences after quitting school, I would inquire what proportion of college-bred men—unless led to do so by the current demands of their professions—continue their classical and scientific studies, *con amore*, when Commencement and cramming for the final "Ex" are things of the past. The lawyer's Latinity is perverted by the jargon of the courts; the physician is limited to a few phrases in *Materia Medica*, scribbled on prescriptions for the mystification of the patient and the convenience of the druggist, whose gallipots are similarly labeled; and the clergyman's reading, in whatever tongue, is too apt to be confined to works that have a direct bearing upon the practice of his calling. As for the graduates who embark upon the hurrying tide of American business life, what remains at the end of ten years to show that they are entitled to write "A. B." behind their names except a nameless Something—which is not altogether propriety of diction, nor certain intonations that betray the elocutionist's drill, nor yet a liking for the society of the

learned and refined, and answering appreciation on the part of the latter—a Something, as potent as indefinable, into which all these constituents enter and are harmonized? Ridicule and analyze “culture” (in Boston “cultchah”) as we may, we can not do away with the fact of this indescribable subtle presence that is the spirit of the Free-Masonic Order of Gentlehood the world around.

Clouded by poverty, crushed by disgrace, dwelling in forms that have little other likeness to the universal brotherhood of Grace and Beauty, it yet manifests itself to the answering spirit by evidence not to be gainsaid, declares its rights and its powers unequivocally and everywhere, having for seal and watchword the legend: “The Kingdom of Heaven is *within* you.”

This is not saying that a college course for man or woman will secure fellowship in this privileged Order, or that the lack of a generous education will be an absolute disqualification for membership. But in our country, at least, a thorough, many-sided, intellectual training, with the tastes it inspires and nourishes, and the associations it secures during the term of acquisition, is the “Open Sesame” to this and to so many other doors behind which is treasure, as to justify the value attached to Education, and dignify the sacrifices made to secure it—or its semblance—by those who are incapable of esteeming it aright because of its intrinsic

value. Of its higher uses, the altogether-loveliness of the realm, to which the delightful labor of learning is the way and gate, it is not now my business to write at length. When, in the fast-coming years, laden with fruit, as now with bud and flower, your girl shall have gauged the depth of meaning in George Herbert's rapturous boast:—

“My mind to me a Kingdom is!”

her “*Cui bono?*” of the Sophomore year will seem to her the chatter of a witless child. For this you can afford to wait with the calm patience of the husbandman who, having committed precious seed to prepared soil, expects the gracious latter rain that is to complete upon the swelling furrows the work begun by spring showers.

Music and Painting should always be classed among the “Electives” of the school or college-course. If Mary really *loves* music—(mere liking will not do!) has a fine ear and, it may be, a good voice, do not hesitate to cultivate the talent to the extent of your opportunities and pecuniary ability. That she should gird at the drudgery of practicing scales and exercises is as natural as her impatience with the slow complications of French verbs, or the arbitrary committal to memory of the Multiplication-table. Take care that she is not flattered into the innumerable company of

young women who mistake a knack for manipulation, and a happy "catch" of ear for musical genius. Thanks to the besom of Common Sense, plied unsparingly of late years by critic and instructor, this plague of singing locusts has measurably abated within our generation, but it is still an active nuisance, notably in provincial districts. It is not likely that Mary will ever be more than a fair parlor-performer unless her love for music rises into a passion, with the conquest of the rudiments of the art. Most intelligent children become fond of reading after mastering alphabet and speller. The born bibliophile is even more rare than the skillful littérateur.

But—and the same may be said of the taste for drawing and coloring—intelligent appreciation of science and execution is best learned by study of both. The practical amateur—I coin the phrase that I may have a contradistinctive to "professional" and to "dilettante,"—the practical amateur, in becoming the connoisseur, creates the popular sentiment with regard to artistic performances, for the very simple reason that he knows that whereof he speaks. A circumstance that can not be predicated of all art-censors whose fulminations are received as the combined sentiments of all the Graces and a genteel majority of the Muses. A just and pure taste in Music, Sculpture and Painting, in Architecture and in Home Decoration, is not

only a source of exquisite delight to the possessor, but the means of pleasure and profit to others. When mothers and daughters are educated up to this point, the standard of artistic conception and execution will be raised into excellence far transcending the most sanguine anticipations of the votaries of the Beautiful.

Without natural bias, or aptitude for any one of the Fine Arts, she who is forced to spend a given number of hours *per diem* in the study of it, is oppressed, and has just grounds for protest against the tyranny of custom. Without the inner sense of harmony, there is nothing more refining to the learner in the metrical manipulation of the key-board of a grand piano than in the purposeless tapping of the same fingers on a tin pan. If your boy longs to understand the theory and undertake the practice of music, he is defrauded should the opportunity be withheld from him. The same rule obtains with your girl, with neither more nor less stringency. You can not manufacture taste and talent to order for either. The pencil and the brush also belong to him as much as to her, whether as a serious pursuit or pleasing recreation. This is very plain common sense and bare justice. The active violation of the principle will turn out mechanical art-students, as like genuine disciples as are the split and flattened flowers and fruits of the conventional school to the grace of outline and rich coloring of Nature.

The prominence given to "accomplishments" in the education and thoughts of women is unquestionably one of the reasons, if not the chief, why the attempt to make them equal in intellectual culture to men, so often results in meretricious veneer and glaze. So much time, so much nerve-power, so many "cells,"—all consumed in compassing one end and that a trivial one, must draw proportionably upon the amount requisite to gain other and far more important results.

Mary E. Beedy, in a paper upon "*Girls and Women in England and America*," makes a "telling" point of this.

"So long as girls require from one hour and a half to three hours a day to be, or to develop themselves into the conventional girl, and boys require only about one-third of that time to get themselves up into the conventional pattern for a boy, girls must either be superior to boys to begin with, or they must economize their power better if they are able to do as much school-work in a year as boys. That is, if girls must consume power in all the ways that constitute the approved specialties of girls, they can not do the whole work of boys without doing much more than boys do."

In another part of the same essay she gives a hint that is worth considering. She is assuming the operation of a system of co-education.

"It would be well, too, to give more credit to the

•

specialties of girls in the schools. I can think of nothing else that would conduce so much to the thorough and satisfactory study of music as to give it an optional place in our school-curriculums."

A friend, a woman of vigorous intellect and marked individuality, hands me a curious calculation *apropos* to this matter of misdirected energy.

"For ten years I took—or there were given to me—two music-lessons a week, at an average cost of one dollar per lesson. We will set that down in round numbers, as one thousand dollars in all. For the same time I practiced conscientiously, winter and summer, two hours a day. Leaving out Sundays and almost a fortnight per annum for sickness and other hindrances, we have six hundred hours of musical work for each year—an aggregate of six thousand for the ten. That is two hundred and fifty days of twenty-four hours each of solid toil without mitigation or solace. I ground out exercises and sonatas as a blind horse turns a treadmill, with the added torture of feeling all the while that it was unladylike and almost unchristian not to love music. The varied harmonious numbers others profess to enjoy were no more to me than the rattle of the grains in the hopper, or the crunch of the clay under the wheel is to the sightless brute.

"When I became a free agent—*i. e.*, when I married a man who does not know one tune from another, and

is not ashamed to confess it, I turned my back forever upon the piano-forte, which had been to me from my ninth year, *peine forte et dure*. I wish I could have brought my unmusical husband the thousand dollars wasted upon my misery. I wish more earnestly that I had something worthy to show for eight months of the hardest work I ever did in my life."

When the full head of the stream is directed into one bucket, others must whirl empty in the grand round, and the balance of the wheel itself be destroyed.





CHAPTER X.

FACE TO FACE WITH OUR GIRL.

“As to direct physical care of themselves, American girls between fourteen and twenty-one are to be ruled only through their own convictions on the side of prudence, for they will not blindly obey what seem to them arbitrary rules, as the girls of some other nations can be easily made to do.”—ANNA C. BRACKETT.

MISS BRACKETT is a successful teacher, and a woman of wide culture. She observes carefully, thinks deeply, and has the enviable talent of imparting the product of observation and thoughts to others. Accepting, as I do, the above extract as true in all its sections, it behooves me in continuing my familiar talk with my countrywomen to address myself directly to the girls themselves.

This is a grateful necessity. My heart warms and my eyes grow moist as in imagination I seat Mary in the chair opposite mine, and while trying to set forth to her that it is a sacred duty from which no quibble can absolve her, to be merciful to herself, just to her

sex, and gracious to her generation, hearken willingly to her reasoning and her excuses for objecting to such blind obedience as infants—or French demoiselles—may yield to arbitrary rules. There is no more engaging creature on the Father's earth than a young girl who loves purity and seeks after truth. I doubt if there exists a finite being who means better than do you, my child. Nor are there many who so frequently disappoint themselves in the practical results of their excellent intentions. The woman's intuitive appreciation of a desirable end; the womanly impatience of the slow sequence of logical steps, by the use of which this will become a legitimate prize,—without which it will be held upon sufferance, if indeed it ever becomes your implied possession,—these are, in you, intensified by youthful ardor and inexperience. You would have learned to read without acquiring the alphabet, if you had had your way, and have a despotic fashion of over-leaping preliminaries of all kinds; of seeking out and pursuing royal roads to success. Where the intellect and energies masculine may be controlled by a snaffle-rein and perhaps require the whip, you need a curb, and a firm, yet kindly hand upon the ribbons. It is entirely consistent, quite unavoidable, that this inconsequent impetuosity should prevail in the conduct of your studies at a period when study is the business of your life. It is not less natural that being a woman—

and a very young woman—you should be intolerant of human imperfection, contemptuous of human failures, disdainful, with an imperial scorn, of your own weaknesses and shortcomings. Your hopes and expectations of Life may be likened to the sensations of the dreamer, who finds the act of flying or floating through the air a foot or two above the earth so easy and delightful, that he wonders—still sleeping—why he has ever walked, and that all his fellow-mortals do not float.

“All the secret is in making up one’s mind to do it,” he thinks. “Once determined and dared, it is done. In future my feet shall rarely touch the ground.”

Presently he awakes. So will you. Let us hope it will be gradually.

To come back to Miss Brackett’s remark, underlying which we fancy that we may detect causticity or compliment, as we may consider filial obedience or independent thought the higher virtue. Your mother has fewer more difficult tasks than to convince you of the real nature and value of the kingdom over which you claim the right to rule. If she holds fast to the sceptre, it is as if she lifted a dangerous toy out of the reach of your baby-hands, as too heavy or sharp for your management. One of the saddest Inevitables among the discoveries of our middle-age is the impracticability of making over to our daughters the advantages of our

own experience, bought with whatever outlay of tears and heart's blood, of throes and patient toil.

"If thou hadst known, even thou, the things that belonged to thy peace!" the mother apostrophizes her own wayward youth, while her soul yearns over the bright repetition of that heyday, embodied in yourself.

If the bitterness of the review of her errors and their penalty tinges her admonitions, gives asperity to her warnings, be patient, and, at least, *reasonably* docile. The perfection of lung-health is never to *feel* that you have lungs. If your incredulity on the subject of physical ills proceeds from like blessed immunity from infirmity, there is the greater propriety in making intelligent preservation of corporeal sanity a tenet of practical piety. As a girder to my hope of inducing you to care rationally, because prudently, for the earthen vessel which the dear Lord has not deemed unfit to be the receptacle and custodian of your mind and soul, read with me some helpful words from another woman whose aims are pure, and who clothes thought nobly.

Frances Power Cobbe writes :

"A great living teacher once made to me the curious observation that he had noticed that when a woman was persuaded that anything was right or true, she generally tried to shape her conduct and creed accordingly.

"But" (he added with comic despair), "when I have,

as I think, entirely convinced a *man* in the same way, and expect to see some results of his conviction, behold! he goes on precisely as he did before, and as if nothing had happened."

If the latter clause is slanderous to our brothers, one of their own sex is responsible for the statement and the "comic despair."

What interests us more nearly is Miss Cobbe's summing-up:

"Now, will you not take heart of grace, and thus act up *woman-like* to any convictions which I have been happy enough to bring to you, and evermore, henceforth, bear in mind that you are not, first, Women, and then, perhaps, rational creatures, but, first of all, *human beings*, and then, secondly, women—human beings of the Mother-Sex?"

The battle of the books and the rostrum, the papers and the pulpit, over the education of American girls, identical co-education; women's colleges and university-annexes; the mental equality of the sexes; whether women want the ballot, and if they do, whether they ought to have it—has raged so hotly for a decade past, that we have almost forgotten the existence of such irrelevant subjects as illiterate Americans, "of the mother-sex." In collating the statistics of the comparative death-rates of the Alumnae and Alumni of Oberlin; counting the sufferers from "amenorrhœa,

menorrhagia, dysmenorrhæa, hysteria, anemia, chorea, and the like," among the graduates of Vassar, Smith, and Wellesley, the coolest of the contestants have practically overlooked the vast commonalty who were never graduated anywhere, or consciously encouraged the growth of their minds. Is it not fair to give them a hearing before we jump at the conclusion that there is "No Sex in Education," or that, such is the number of "permanently disabled graduates," that "if these causes should continue for the next half-century, and increase in the same ratio as they have for the last fifty years, it requires no prophet to foretell that the wives who are to be mothers in our Republic must be drawn from trans-atlantic homes?

"The sons of the New World," continues the eloquent pessimist we are quoting, "will have to re-act on a magnificent scale, the old story of unwived Rome and the Sabines." *

It would be a sad slur upon our civilization if, when we leave out of the question under consideration, the unfavorable effects of climate, national cookery, and the fever-heat of our body-politic, commercial and social, it should still appear that the health of the poverty-stricken is superior to that of the well-to-do classes. That the unlearned are physically better men and bet-

* "Sex in Education," p. 63.

ter women than those to whom sanitary laws, including dietetics, are a living principle instead of an unknown and, therefore, a dead letter. With all our respect for Dr. Clarke, we, who are mothers and mistresses of families, see much in a quarter-century of housekeeping, of city, district-visiting, and country-boarding, to make us demur at his declaration that "Jane in the factory can work more steadily with the loom than Jane in the college with the dictionary; the girl who makes the beds can safely work more steadily the whole year through than her little mistress of sixteen who goes to school."

The farmers' wives of New England—the New England, where, as Dr. Mitchell tells us,* "the wicked forcing-system"—educational—"is at its wicked worst for both sexes"—the farmers' wives of New England furnish from their ranks more patients to the insane asylums than do the fashionable, "super-æsthetical" ladies of our gayest cities. Instead of the ruddy, portly dames that rock and swing up the aisles of the English parish church in the wake of yeoman-husbands, what is the show of our country "meeting-houses"?

"Your vimmen are all too *white*," said Frederica Bremer, in America. "Are *none* of them vell?"

We are all too familiar with the physique of the

* "Wear and Tear," by S. Weir Mitchell, M.D., p. 36.

representative American rural housewife. On Sundays her week-day haggardness is not relieved by so much as the smoothing out of a crow's track, or the flushing of the hollow cheek. The uniform tallowy tint of the complexion, the sunken eyes, the bony frame, more gaunt in the Sabbatical finery bought with butter-money, than in her working dress of dark calico—who does not recognize the delightless picture? The rosy children, whose vitality has not yet succumbed to pork and pies, emphasize, and are a mournful satire upon her sallow angularity. She is "tired to death" all the time, as subject to sick and nervous headaches as if she had packed a four-years' college course into every twelvemonth since her marriage, and a chronic dyspeptic. Moreover, she is as conversant with "peculiar complaints" as are her city sisters, often more cruelly tried by them, for much lifting of heavy pots and tubs, and overmuch "standing on her feet" (so she puts it), and the general inaneness of country life when unrelieved by intellectual resources, add to strain and weariness, depression of spirit and body, all working out together the conditions of uterine and spinal diseases.

Whittier saw her in the transformed Maud Muller:

"She wedded a man, unlearned and poor,
And many children played round her door.

“But care and sorrow, and childbirth pain
Left their traces on heart and brain.”

You may behold her in as many stages of droop and decadence by calling for a drink of water at a dozen farm-house kitchens in the most prosperous districts of our highly-favored land. And, should you be sufficiently zealous in the pursuit of truth to risk the impertinence of spoken inquiry, the chances are that you will find, if the sphere of search is New England, that every third woman interrogated is not her husband's first wife. As a provision of political and domestic economy, it is well that there is an overplus of dying human worms of the mother-sex in the Land of the Pilgrims, while Death and Insanity are in close attendance to pick up those who, from weakness, stagger out of the marching column.

The same tale, in effect, is told of the corresponding rank of mechanics' wives, and the daughters of these are generally about as healthy as the average Maud Muller. Both—I write it without hesitation—are pale and meagre, by comparison with the opulent citizen's daughter, whose mother has sent her to bed early throughout her childhood, fed her judiciously, and obliged her to take regular exercise in the open air. She studies hard all winter, wins a prize or two in the third week of June, and goes off in July to the country for a vacation. She takes flannel and linen dresses for

morning and picnic wear, and wash muslins for afternoons and Sundays, wears thick boots, and sports what Maud Muller privately condemns as "a horrid fright" of a broad-brimmed hat. She lives out-of-doors, gets the good of breezes and sunshine, all the freshness and sweet, bounteous roominess of meadow and mountain-top.

"It is a wonder what she finds to amuse her, all day long, in the woods and fields," comments Maud, who is as *blasè* with her monotonous existence as a belle of a dozen seasons with balls and receptions.

If *she* could live in town, she would never care to see the country. It is the goody tale of "Eyes and No Eyes" modernized. Maud sees one field overrun with red sorrel and wild carrots; in the next, stately cornrows nodding and gleaming under the August sunshine, and never thinks of tracing the instructive analogy. In her thoughts and speech "culture" is always prefixed by "agri—."

Unless I am greatly mistaken, a majority of my fellow-housekeepers will indorse my affirmation that the "girl who makes the beds" can no longer, at any rate, in this our day, be accepted as an example of health and strength. In reviewing my experience in regard to her and her co-laborers, during a period of more than twenty-five years of active housewifery, I am positively appalled at the result of the investigation. In this

time my household force has consisted of never less than two servants. Sometimes, and for several successive years, four have been employed in the various departments of domestic labor. Among all these, I recall but two who deserved to be designated as really "healthy girls." When this circumstance was forced upon my attention some months since, I made a careful list of those who had remained in my service long enough to afford me the opportunity of judging of their general health. The record lies before me now. There are twenty names in all. Eight were Americans (five of these were colored), one Scotch, the rest Irish. Two of these were inmates of my house for eight years, one for six, four for three. But three whom I have registered lived with me for a shorter period than twelve months. All were steady, sober, and industrious to an uncommon degree—as American domestics go—keeping regular hours, and addicted to no stronger beverage than unlimited tea.

Here let me say, and with gratitude, that I believe my experience with servants has been, and is exceptionally pleasant, if all I hear from others of insubordination, dishonesty, and evil habits be true. I have tried always to guard the health of the women employed by me, as I have my own and that of my daughters, and it is no less an act of justice to a much-enduring class than an expression of personal good-will, to record my

testimony to the affectionate attention bestowed in return upon me and mine when the hour of trial overtook us. I digress yet further from our main topic to remark to the discouraged or disgusted housekeeper that the acknowledged faults of the class do not absolve us from the discharge of our duties to them as their superiors in moral and mental training.

It may help us in the examination of the causes of the reported invalidism of educated women to look somewhat minutely into a few of the cases of these comparatively illiterate ones. In humble, unprofessional imitation of Dr. Clarke's "Part III.," I have written down the details that follow this. The reader will please accept in extenuation of what may bore her the maxim borrowed from the head of this division of our esteemed physician's work:

"Facts given in evidence are premises from which a conclusion is to be drawn. The first step in the exercise of this duty is to acquire a belief of the truth of the facts."

A—, born in the north of Ireland, came to Canada at three years of age, married at nineteen, and had one child. Her husband died before its birth, and A— went out to service as a wet-nurse. Her child was three years old when the mother came to me to take care of an infant and do light chamber-work. In less than four months she fell violently ill. Symptoms,

terrible pain in the head, delirium, spasmodic twitchings of limbs. The physician's visit revealed the fact that she had been "irregular" for more than a year. Sometimes there had been total suppression for several months. She recovered after several weeks' illness so far as to resume her duties in the household, but was never really well. Her headaches and fainting-turns were a source of continual uneasiness to me, and although she was a faithful, excellent servant, I should not have felt it to be right to retain her in my nursery, but for the knowledge that she could not have earned her living elsewhere on account of her ill-health. It was a great relief to me when, at the end of the third year, she married again and went to a home of her own. She had four children after this second marriage, dying at the birth of the last. During each pregnancy she was partially insane.

B—, Irish by birth. She had been fifteen years in America when I engaged her as cook and assistant laundress. She was then twenty-five, a confirmed dyspeptic, and subject every month to excessive "flow." After each period she was anemic and tremulous, and would have been hysterical but for her strong will. A more honest, upright, willing girl never carried a diseased frame about her daily tasks. She would work uncomplainingly, when nineteen out of twenty women would have been in bed. She, too, married, in the

fourth year of her residence with me, and sought a home in the far West. In a little over a year I heard of her death.

C—, of Irish parentage, but born in America. She was short, stout, with blue eyes and light hair, and looked more like a German than an Irish girl. She could read and write well, was quick of apprehension and brisk in movement. At twenty-eight she came to me as waitress and parlor-maid, remaining with me in this capacity for a year. In this time she had three epileptic fits—all at night, after days of unusual excitement or fatigue. The nature of the first seizure she concealed from me, but after the second, confessed that she had had many such attacks since the first time she was “unwell,” which happened in her fourteenth year. She had also frequent sick headaches and turns of distressing nausea. Finally she broke down utterly, and left service altogether.

D— was a smiling, red-cheeked Irish girl, “ten years in the country,” and twenty-one years old. She was B—’s immediate successor in my kitchen, and a thorough contrast to her physically. She had strong black hair, blue eyes, large limbs, and high color; was easy of temper, obliging, and “not afraid of work,” but careful and troubled about nothing. Her merry laugh, if a trifle louder than suited the taste of one used to a quiet kitchen, was yet irrepressibly contagious. She

was with me two and a half years prior to her marriage. In this time she had two attacks of illness, each lasting for more than a fortnight, and both the consequences of obstinate "irregularity." The second was rendered dangerous by the menace of suffusion of the brain. So imminent was the peril, that our family physician resorted to the lancet. The blood flowed sluggishly at first, drop by drop, and was thick and dark—a repulsive sight. After this sickness she was never the same woman. She became fitful in temper, lost color and strength, and was, to my eye, steadily declining into invalidism, if not on the verge of consumption, when she married. In less than a year she miscarried with twins. In four years she was dead.

E—, a brisk colored girl, aged thirty—a full-blooded negress, strongly and well-made. She did well the work of waitress and parlor-maid, but evidently at the cost of much suffering to herself. Like most of her race, she took cold easily, being as susceptible to falling temperature as a quail. She had a cough and pain in the chest from November to April; had once had bleeding of the lungs, but now considered herself cured and "well." She suffered greatly every month from pain, increasing into cramps now and then. I have seen her wait at table until she grew as grey as ashes, and her face was drawn and pinched from inward torture, yet resisting my entreaties that she

would give up and go to bed until the paroxysms had passed. Her back was always weak, and she would, her room-mate told me, "cry all night, she could not tell why, only that she was so low-spirited," while the "seasons" were upon her. She could "work steadily the year through," but invariably stayed out-of-place three or four months when the term was over, to get her strength back before returning to her old home, or taking a new one.

F—, Irish by birth, lived with me eight years, from nineteen to her marriage, as child's nurse and seamstress. She "could do anything," and assured me when I engaged her that she had "never been sick a day in her life, and came from good old Irish stock." She had filled the place to my satisfaction two years, when I gathered from a talk with her that she was not "unwell" above once in three months, and then slightly. But she was "never a bit the worse for it. Most of her acquaintances were onregular in one way or another. The whole matter was a turrible setback to working gurrils."

Dr. Clarke admits that "female operatives are as regardless of any pressure upon them of a peculiar function as are their fashionable sisters in the polite world. All unite in pushing the hateful thing out of sight and out of mind; and all are punished by similar weakness, degeneration, and disease."

Had this poor servant-girl, who could not write her own name, been, instead, a disciple of "the New Gospel of female development," she could not have been more scornful of the mechanism and functions peculiar to her sex. She spoke of these with bashful reluctance, and only in reply to my catechism as to the cause of the headaches that began to trouble her. Two years after her entrance upon her duties in my family, she was prostrated by uterine hemorrhage that threatened her life. Then she grew dyspeptic, hysterical, uncertain in mood and temper, a victim to what, in a fine lady, would be dignified as "vapors" or "nervous depression." She continued to be "onregular," and remained incredulous to the physician's declaration, that the root of the evil lay *there*. Her flesh was no longer firm, nor her cheeks rosy, and one winter she was disabled for a month by a tumor on the knee that narrowly escaped development into the everywhere-and-always-dreaded "white swelling." After her marriage, and the birth of her first child, she collapsed as completely as a permanently-disabled graduate could have done, and is now a peevish, sickly, prematurely-old woman, with six puny children pulling at her slatternly skirts.

"One or other of the young ones is always ailin'!" she says, in a cracked whine. "It's quare the bad luck some people have!"

These are not attractive "subjects" for diagnosis, and

I will not augment the disgust of my patrician reader by subjoining a catalogue of the physical ailments and miseries of "Jane in the factory."

It was my privilege and honor to be, for seven years, the presiding officer of a society of practically-benevolent women, whose chief business, as managers and members of the organization, was to provide good, comfortable homes and honest employment for the working-women of a large manufacturing city. In the discharge of the duties of my position, I met yearly hundreds of shop-girls, factory-girls, seamstresses milliners, and others who earned their living by manual labor. Nothing that I saw and learned through my association with this class impressed me more painfully than what Dr. Clarke describes in graphic technicalities, as "the numberless pale, weak, neuralgic, dyspeptic, hysterical, menorrhagic, dysmenorrhic girls and women re-enacting the labors of Nehemiah's builders upon the city-walls with a difference; fighting disease with one hand, while the other defended the door of their miserable lodgings from the wolf of want, the hyena of shame."

While there are obvious causes for the failure in health of those who sleep and eat in crowded tenement-houses, and spend their days amid the reek of machine-oil and the flying fibers of cotton and wool; who are poisoned by the exhalations of the paper-mill, and hasten the arrival of their own hearses with the foot

that drives the treadle of the sewing-machine ten hours a day—the conditions that surround the domestics in a commodious modern house, managed by a humane mistress, are totally different from those above given, and should work out a different end. The comfort, the healthful employment, the gentle demands upon the higher powers of the intellect, approximate so nearly the works and ways of our sainted, and when in the flesh, “hale grandmothers,” that the spectacle of kitchen Jane’s affluent bodily sanity should tempt college Jane to forswear the Dictionary, her little Latin, and less Greek, and take to scrubbing, cooking, and bed-making as the one hope of physical salvation and restoration of the mysterious gray flakes that stand with us for mental health. Whereas, when we come to the examination of our “facts,” the truth transpires that college Jane and select-school Mary, cognizant of the jars and grating of household wheels, because Bridget, or Dinah, or Hannah “is not well to-day,” have studied Baconian induction to little purpose if they do not settle for themselves the fact that whatever may be the prime cause of the general invalidism of their sex, it is *not* undue mental application.

Being blessed—thanks to Education! with ears as well as eyes,—in hearkening to Mamma’s talk with another district-visitor of the health-status of sewing-girls and the inhumanity of employers who coop them

up in fetid rooms for sixteen out of twenty-four hours, the sisters reach another logical conclusion. We will adopt Mrs. Putnam-Jacobi's wording of it:

"It is in fact, a matter of common observation, that hysterical and anemic women in whom disordered menstruation is most frequently observed, are conspicuously destitute of habits implying either cerebral or spinal activity,—that is, they neither think much, nor take much physical exercise."

I had written thus far when opening at random a new book brought by the morning's mail, my eye was caught by these happily-coincident words:

"This improvement in the *physique* of the Americans of the most favored classes during the last quarter of a century is a fact more and more compelling the inspection both of the physician and the sociologist. . . . It could not, in fact, be different, for we have better homes, more suitable clothing, less anxiety, greater ease, and more variety of healthful activity than even the best-situated of our immediate ancestors. So inevitable was this result that had it been otherwise, one might well suspect that the law of causation had been suspended.

"The first signs of ascension, as of declension, in nations are seen in women. As the foliage of delicate plants first shows the early warmth of Spring, and the earliest frosts of Autumn, so the impressible, suscep-

tive organization of woman appreciates and exhibits far sooner than that of man the manifestations of natural progress or decay.”*

A deliverance like this from a candid writer, whose tone is not always so optimistic and whose ability is incontestable, is like the chime of a church-bell to fog-lost mariners. It tells of the nearing land and in what direction it lies. It moves me to give you joy, my girl,—to congratulate you that you are not your own grandmother, or even your respected mother; that you belong, in a double sense, to the rising generation. Whatever may have been our losses in the past, you are on the winning side. The knowledge of this, the possibility and the hope of the more excellent way should give you heart of grace for the future laid solemnly by GOD and man within your young hands.

* “American Nervousness,” by George M. Beard, M.D., p. 335.





CHAPTER XI.

HOW SHALL OUR GIRL STUDY?

“There should be imposed no restraint which has not for its object some good greater than the temporary evil of the restraint itself.”—
DR. THOMAS BROWN, “*Lectures on Ethics.*”

TO make a free translation of our motto into French slang,—The game ought to be worth more than the candle.

In “cradling” or “panning” the ore of the last chapter, we may add a few valuable contributions to our store of knowledge.

First.—The prevalence of the same class of physical disorders in so many women of varying antecedents and habits argues a common origin of these maladies, whether structural or functional.

Second.—This would appear, upon the face of the statistics as a collected Whole, to be gross neglect of the important Third Part of her being which is to Woman distinctive and not-to-be-ignored SEX.

Third.—The disorder of this function is, if not di-

rectly induced, measurably aggravated by disobedience to general hygienic laws,—notably those which prescribe fresh air, sleep, regular but not excessive employment; good food, well-cooked; judicious physical exercise, congenial occupation for the intellect and due cultivation of the same, with stated seasons of rest for mind and body, and such wholesome diversion of both as may prepare them for repose.

Fourth.—Work is a *blessing* and beneficial to mind, body and estate. Labor is a *curse* of which variation of employment and timely recreation are palliatives no man or woman can reject with impunity.

Fifth.—The “culture” which tends to maltreatment of the body in overweening care of the intellect is one-sided, and so flagrant a violation of Nature’s intents and purposes that few intelligent people are consciously guilty of it. But, as a rule, those who care nothing for mental growth, are equally negligent of the true good of the body. Their ends are ignoble, their pleasures coarse and few.

Health of mind implies symmetrical growth, continual enlargement of the sphere of intellectual view and action; the power to see clearly, to judge fairly, and to retain what has been acquired.

Health of body implies the normal condition and action of the various functions of the physical being in man and in woman. With the latter, this includes

what we will for the sake of euphony and convenience, term the "rhythmic" return of such operations as are by nature intermittent.

So long as to the average mind nothing is easier than indiscriminate censure, and nothing more difficult (if we except the practice of Christian charity) than a patient hearing of all sides of a question and an impartial verdict—just so long will a bewildered public be pelted with treatises and books from radicals who fight in dust of their own raising in favor of physical reform on the one side, and intellectual training on the other—pessimists prophesying the speedy extinction of the American nation by sheer physical decay already begun in its vitals, and optimists haranguing upon the perfectibility of human nature, chiefly by the agency of American women, as the world's hope of redemption.

We—you and I, my listening girl—will try to rid our eyes of dust and fog; in other words, the theories of pseudo-scientists and blatant radicals, and survey the situation dispassionately as it appears from a common-sense vantage-ground.

We begin with a bit of very direct talk. There is nothing in the history of human folly more egregiously inconsistent than the admixture of vanity and aversion, the loving care and gross neglect manifested by most young women with regard to their bodies. She, whom we saw, awhile ago, disdainfully scouting the prospect of intel-

lectual veneer and varnish, concentrates the attention she bestows upon her *physique* upon the exterior. The hidden works rust and clog and are worn into uselessness by attrition, disregarded by the owner who should also be the kindly keeper. It is true, as you remind me, that the body is, at best, but the vehicle of the higher being, the spiritual and mental, the immortal essence that shall outlive by all eternity to come this crumbling house of our pilgrimage, this urn wherein the soul tarries for a night. So, the train that bears a living freight of a thousand souls from the eastern to the western ocean is but an ingenious combination of mechanical powers. What is your opinion of the engineer who remits his watch of every joint and bar of the locomotive, who lets his fire go down, or the boiler run dry?

The girl who devotes an hour a day for a fortnight to learning how to "do" the fantastic scallops of her fore-top, or to dispose her back-hair in a graceful coil or knot; who discourses seriously of the absolute necessity of spending at least ten minutes each morning in cleaning, trimming, and polishing, by help of a dainty set of utensils, the finger-nails that in consequence of this attention are like pink sea-shells, or curled rose-petals; who studies the effect upon her style and complexion of coiffure, cut, and color as diligently as she cons Xenophon's *Anabasis* or Spherical Trigonometry,

can not, with any show of reason, affect contempt of her corporeal substance.

She does love her body—the outside of it—with idolatrous affection that absorbs and dwarfs many worthier emotions. Her neglect of the exquisite machinery it encases is as puerile as it would be to pass hours in burnishing the outside of a watch she never takes the pains to wind up.

If I return once and again upon this branch of our subject, it is because of my conviction that imperfect appreciation of its value is the main cause of the national invalidism of our sex. The climate has to do with it in so far as extremes of heat and cold, long rain, deep snows, and spring mire hinder outdoor exercise. But if mothers and daughters believed in the need of physical culture with one-half the earnestness they feel in the matter of intellectual improvement, these obstacles would lose their formidableness in less than one generation.

I hold firmly, furthermore, to the opinion that the rapid degeneration of women-foreigners after a short residence in our country is owing chiefly, if not altogether, to their adoption of certain, and those the least desirable, of our modes of life.

Bridget, whose ideas of indoor comfort have been formed upon the smoky interior of a bog-trotter's cabin, warmed by a handful of peat, and lighted by a farthing

rush-candle, soon learns with the prodigality of genuine parvenuism, to fill the range up to the warped, red-hot plate with coal at five dollars a ton. She demands a drop-light upon the kitchen gas-burner, and "wouldn't do a hand's turn in a situation where she had to put her foot out o' doors to draw water or to fetch in kindlin'-wood for the fire." Thin boots take the place of the stout brogans in which she used to tramp four or five miles to market or to church in all weathers. Her walks are now confined to a stroll in her best clothes to church on Sunday, and to the house of an "acquaintance" after dark on week-days. She washes in a steaming hot laundry, and without exchanging her wet slippers for rubbers, or donning shawl or hood, goes into the windy back-yard, perhaps covered with snow, to hang out the clothes. The climate begins to tell on her after a year or two of this sort of work—and what wonder? If these violent variations upon her former self and existence are insufficient to break her down, there are not wanting accessories to the unholy deed in her close bedroom where the windows are never opened in winter unless by her disgusted employer; in the mountainous feather-bed and half-dozen blankets without which she is quick to declare that she "could not get a wink o' slape at night; havin' been used to kapin' warm all her life." Add that she devours meat three times a day with the rapacity of long repressed carniv-

orousness and keeps the tea-pot on the stove from morning until night; that she "could live upon sweets" of the most unwholesome and most expensive varieties, and abhors early breakfasts—and we wax charitable toward our maligned climate.

Dr. Beard says of "American women, even of direct German and English descent": "Subject a part of the year to the tyranny of heat, and a part to the tyranny of cold, they grow unused to leaving the house; to live in-doors is the rule; it is a rarity to go out, as with those of Continental Europe it is to go in."

Bridget and Gretchen are overgrown children, gross and undisciplined. If one of them bruises her head or cuts her finger, she will wail or howl like a yearling baby. Without work they can not have savory victuals or fine clothes; hence they must labor so many hours *per diem*. Thought and planning seldom go further, especially if the settled purpose of catching husbands whose wages will relieve them from the necessity of "living out" be accepted as an extension of their clumsy scheming.

Still, Bridget is an imitative animal, and develops with civilization into a sort of aptness in this respect. She apes "the quality," while affecting to consider herself as good as anybody else. Before she can be reformed, her mistress must regulate her own habits and those of her daughters in accordance with the dictates

of reason and a right knowledge of established hygienic laws. Our domestics—Celtic, Gaelic, Teutonic, American of African descent—being human creatures of habit, copy their employers' language, and, to some extent, their bearing. In some instances the resemblance, unintentional though it may be, is absurdly accurate. The maid models her apparel after that of the young ladies of the house, and grafts upon her brogue or *patois* the intonations of her mistress. These are tokens, and not trivial ones, of the involuntary homage paid by ignorance to knowledge. When Mrs. Lofty and her daughters reckon pure air and abundance of exercise out-of-doors, wholesome food, sound sleep in cold rooms, stout shoes in wet weather, and invariable cleanliness of person, among the necessaries of life and requisites to beauty, when they prohibit feather-beds as unfashionable abominations, and tea-tipping as vulgar, the kitchen cabinet will follow suit, slowly, but inevitably.

Until then, I fear that "the sons of the New World" will be disappointed in the effect upon the next generation of their "magnificent experiment," should their fresh-blooded foreign wives take up their residence in America.

The simple truth is, that the expression, "care of the health," conveys to the average listener the instant thought of *remedial* measures—nothing more, and noth-

ing less. It is unnatural, argues the popular intellect, for a well person to think constantly of preserving bodily soundness, unless it is threatened, or has been recently imperiled. A burnt child dreads the fire. That a child that has never been scorched should habitually keep at a safe distance from the flame is without precedent, if not opposed to rational expectation. Yet the average listener, with the popular intellect, if he is a man, greases the wheels and looks to the linch-pins of his wagon before he sets off on a journey; has the sense to be angry with himself, as well as ashamed, when a worn-out breeching-strap gives way in going down-hill, or the swivel-tree, he "now remembers has been cracked this great while," snaps asunder behind a skittish horse. The dullest household drudge shakes out and removes the ashes and adjusts the dampers before she makes up her morning fires.

We have spoken together, and more than once, of the propriety of creating a stomachic or dietetic conscience. It is every whit as important to cultivate conscientiousness in all respects toward the oft-defrauded, incessantly ill-used body. In your schedule of study and recreation, leave blanks to be filled out generously by the fulfillment of the duties you owe to this co-laborer with soul and mind. Do not be startled when I enjoin that, should the mental duty clash with the physical, it is the former that ought, with a young,

growing girl, to yield to the assertion of the latter. It is folly in a sick girl to study—an error which she should perceive instinctively, however unversed she may be in the details of physiology. In you, who know why the blood pumped through artery and vein thickens, or thins, or falters; why your headaches and dumb nausea throw the cold sweat to the congesting surface—it is SIN.

You have no more right to eat or drink what you know will disagree with your digestion than you have to drop a furtive pinch of arsenic, just enough to sicken her slightly, into your school-fellow's cup of tea. It is as truly your duty to eat regularly and enough of wholesome, strength-giving food, wisely adapted to your needs, as to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." Faith without sensible works does not bring about miracles in our age. There is the same sin in kind, if not in degree, in omitting your "constitutional" walk to study a hard lesson you would like to make sure of for to-morrow, that there is in picking your neighbor's pocket, or cheating her in a bargain. Both are dishonest actions, and in the long, but certain run of justice, both are sure to be punished. Put yourself in thought outside of your body; make an inventory of its capabilities and necessities. It is your soul's nearest neighbor. See to it that the soul loves it as itself.

If your teachers are sagacious and just in apportioning seasons for rest, exercise, and recreation, your duty is the easier. If they are negligent of this in their mistaken zeal for the intellectual advancement of their pupils, be a higher law unto yourself. It is the ignoramus or the shirk who waits to be warned by the ominous creak of the wheel that the oilless axle is heated and a break-down imminent. It may be "plucky" to persist in studying, with a blind headache that would distract a girl of weaker will out of all power of concentration. It is undoubtedly foolhardy.

I have in my mind now a gifted woman who told me in the course of a talk upon the conservation of forces how she had read and made an elaborate digest of a scientific treatise while her head was bound about with ice-cloths to assuage the anguished throbbing of her temples, and her eyes could bear no more light than the one powerful ray admitted between the curtains to fall over her left shoulder directly upon the page.

Another rash adventurer of the same sex, determined to lose no time in her musical education, was propped up in bed during her convalescence from a spell of typhoid fever. Her exercise-book was set up before her on a frame, and she practiced first thirty minutes, then an hour, finally two hours each day, in dumb show upon a key-board penciled on a pillow. She has been in her grave for twenty years now. Her friends were wont to

tell pridefully of the heroic battle with languor and pain I have described, and regret in the same breath that "that fever left her a mere wreck. With strength and health she would doubtless have accomplished much in the musical world."

The heroine of headache and scientific tastes still lives and still fights with bodily ills as with a visible Apollyon. She can not walk across the room without assistance, so abject is the ruin of the nervous system; and in every day she dies a hundred deaths with tic douloureux and sciatica. We may reiterate here, with a different application, Dr. Beard's words:

"So inevitable was this result, that had it been otherwise, one might well suspect that the law of causation had been suspended."

It is then absurd, and as cruel as foolish, to lash on with whip and spur a faithful servitor to whom you owe the liberty to study at all. How unwise and short-sighted is the self-will you vaunt let an abler pen than mine tell you, and in formula instead of illustration. Dr. Anstie, in a treatise upon "Neuralgia"—which I commend to the perusal of all afflicted with that malady—thus writes:

"In the abnormal strain that is being put on the brain in many cases by a forcing plan of education, we shall perceive a source, not merely of exhaustive expenditure of nervous power, but of secondary irritation

of centres like the *medulla oblongata*, that are probably already somewhat lowered in power of vital resistance and proportionably irritable.”

The medulla oblongata is, as your physiological books have taught you, a marrowy, oblong body connecting the spinal cord with the brain. To strain this delicate nerve-centre is to deplete the nervous tissues more rapidly than they can be repaired. In more direct terms, it is to sap the citadel of Reason and of Life. To irritate the medulla oblongata is to risk brain-fever. Excessive mental application without recuperation of mind and body, loss of sleep, stress of excited thought, particularly upon one agitating theme, are both strain and irritation.

You have a fixed income of physical energy. Your “pluck” is mental force. The two together accomplish the finest results of which human kind is capable. The bodily powers are the treasure-house in which Nature has deposited your wealth, the dowry settled upon you as your birth-right, to be controlled by yourself alone, with your parents as trustees during your infancy and childhood. Their judicious management has augmented the original deposit, until you find yourself now in possession of a handsome competency, invested in stocks that will yield fair and ample returns. We will call the will-power or moral force the cheques that draw upon the invested sums. So long as only the

regularly-accruing interest is used up by your daily and yearly expenses you are none the poorer, and the community in which you live is the richer for what you throw into general circulation. From the day in which you begin to draw upon the principal, the interest becomes smaller. The necessity of accumulation obtrudes itself if you would not be gradually impoverished.

This is a figure, but it embodies fact, fixed and relentless. I do not affect to tell you that your chances of prize or diploma are lessened by present drifts upon your vested capital of strength. The probability is that you have enough and more than enough, or can borrow upon easy terms what will be needed to "put you through" this semester, perhaps all that you will require until the Commencement-Day that will round off your course. This frank admission is my key to Dr. Clarke's chapter, entitled "Chiefly Clinical."

Turn, if you have his book—and no woman can afford to leave it unread—to pages 98 and 99, and study with me the case of Miss F——, who "completed her technical education when she was about twenty years old."

We touch a clew to the final catastrophe in the second sentence of the narrative.

"*She inherited a nervous diathesis as well as a large dower of intellectual and æsthetic graces.*"

(The italics are mine).

We read through the record of her scholastic career,—that she was “mistress of several languages and accomplished in many ways,” and come suddenly upon the collapse, a wreck so pitiable that I have not the heart to transcribe it.

Dr. Clarke thus accounts for the tragical close of her school-life :

“While a student she wrought continuously,—just as much during the catamenial week as at other times. As a consequence, in her metamorphosis of tissue, repair did little more than make up waste.”

Sequel of this improvidence and extravagance,—to carry out our figure—Insolvency.

As a woman who was once a hard-worked school-girl ; as a mother of daughters and the mistress of women-servants, I should, without discarding our physician's theory *in toto* or even in part, look backward and narrowly along the line of Miss F.'s life, for the causes of her misfortune. I should inquire, first of all, into her home-training as a child ; then, as to her diet,—whether she ate enough and regularly, or too much and irregularly ; how many hours she slept and how her dormitory was ventilated ; if she had a bedfellow, and if so, who she was ; how much time was given to exercise in the open air in *daylight and sunshine* ; what was the tenor of her reading as child and girl and the tone of

her associates;—finally, whether her inheritance of nervous sensitiveness did not make her an anxious, no less than a faithful student.

The continual attrition of what are commonly styled “secondary causes,” upon the thread of human vitality, prepare it for the break we ascribe to the last and heaviest weight hung upon it.

To apply our principles personally;—if you have sufficient prudence and resolution to intermit lessons entirely, until the actual pain of the headache passes, I am thankful with, and proud of you. But do you ever note, as a matter of any consequence, that your feet and hands grow cold and colder as you become earnest in study? that you have fallen into the habit of often pressing your hands to your face to warm icy fingers and to cool glowing cheeks? that your throat aches and there is an awful “goneness” in the pit of the stomach, when the fate of a problem trembles in the balance? Your feet remain “blocks of ice” far into the night, while your head cools off slowly with the stealing mists of Dream-Land. You lie awake for hours after home or school-rules drive you to your pillow, and use this as an argument (how often I hear it!) against the tyrannical dictum—“early to bed.” It is worse than nonsensical, you contend, to go to bed when one can not sleep; that the uneasy tossings of insomnia tire you more than it would to sit up and read

yourself into drowsiness. Notwithstanding the cogent allegations of a young woman who "knows" logic, mother and teacher and doctor will sustain the proposition that it *is* better for you to lie awake, undressed in an unlighted room, than to sit up awake in your day-attire in the glare of lamp or gas-burner. If you do not secure Sleep's best boon,—nerve-rest,—the tension of muscles, eyes, and skin is relaxed, and all young things grow most healthfully in the darkness. Perhaps you fall asleep soon after going to bed, but to re-enact in dreams, with the superadded distresses of unreined imagination, the events of the day. You foot up endless lines and blocks of figures upon black-boards that stretch out into space as you cipher, and the sums-total must be written within a stated and horribly short time. Or recitation-hour is upon you, and you have neither lesson, nor book. Or you stand publicly disgraced on Examination-Day for failing to recite that which you agonize in nightmare to articulate.

These symptoms, familiar to triteness to every industrious pupil, are so many signals of danger, slight as is the attention bestowed upon them in clinical chapters and by practical educators and learners. Without darkening our common-sense talk with technicalities,—repelling virtuously the temptation to air our knowledge of the cerebro-spinal system, vaso-motor centres, and the menace of vaso-motor paralysis,—we

may refer the discomforts we have enumerated—if we except the hysterical choking and faintness,—to a single specific cause; to wit, an abnormal tendency of blood to the head. Intellectual excitement pumps the blood to the brain; sleep draws it gently away. When it deserts the extremities, it has sought other and unlawful quarters. Restore healthful circulation by rubbing your feet with dry flannel; “toasting” them as hot as you can bear at an open fire, if you have access to that cheery and wholesome appliance to a living-room. Better than either of these is a brisk run in the outer air when the weather will permit. If you can not conveniently take this, you can walk up and down a hall or chamber until you are in a glow. Five minutes “wasted” in this way will send you back to your books easier in body, clearer of thought. When the blood-vessels of throat and head are turgid, there ensue a sensation of fullness and pressure about the top of the cranium, the temples and the eyes; ringing and roaring in the ears; sometimes, a dull ache at the base of the skull; frequently a low nausea, mistaken for dyspepsia, which is sympathy with the oppressed centre of nerve and thought. These indicate incipient *suffusion of the brain*,—one of the deadliest foes of mortal life. Usually they are relieved by a natural rally along the line of the abused physical forces. Sometimes the aid of remedial arts is required to restore equilibrium to the disturbed

system. Now and then, Nature and Art fail singly, and in combination; the blood congests on the surface and in the substance of the brain, and the patient is a corpse in a few minutes. You can not prepare the way to this end more effectually than by the habitual disregard of the premonitions of cerebral discomfort.

Never, if you can avoid it, go to bed very hungry. A single cracker, or a dry crust of bread, will stimulate the stomach so far as to summon the vagrant blood to the coat of that organ, and give it something better to do than provoking ugly dreams. The persistent recurrence of these is an indication that you are drawing too heavily upon your capital; exhausting the cellular tissues faster than nature can repair them. When the mind will no longer obey the helm of will, she needs looking after. A little timely attention may set all right without resorting to the dry-dock of a prolonged vacation. Do not study up to bed-time. Preface the hour of retiring by a walk on the piazza, a merry carpet-dance, a bright, sketchy chat with a favorite friend, a chapter of "Pickwick Papers,"—any pleasant diversion that will lift the machine out of the work-groove and set it in easy motion upon another track, or remove the belting and let the wheel rest.

All this is relevant to our chapter-motto, discursive as it may seem. Restraint of desire *is* a temporary evil. The curb that hinders the onward bound of a mind just

awakening to a sense of its own powers is irksome and distressing. Youth is so full of brilliant possibilities; the young are so sublime in self-confidence; so zealous in unbelief in failure to reach the goal, that we smile and love, while we repress. Ambition to excel in a noble pursuit, to improve to the utmost the season and opportunities granted for academic education is praiseworthy. It is when laudable ambition overleaps the pale of safety; when commendable desire is indulged at the certain risk of health; when the incessant application of one, two, or three semesters is to be succeeded by as many years of inaction and suffering, that the unequal value of game and candle is patent.

“Without haste, without rest,” is a jog-trot maxim run off by many a tongue, and meaning very little that is good or sensible. Haste and rest are not, critically considered, antithetical terms. Labor and rest are. Work done in haste is apt to be slovenly, although this consequence is not a necessity. Haste is also indiscreet because it begets an unhealthy activity of mental and physical forces. Rest is an invariable human need—a sacred personal and religious duty. Evasion of this upon specious pretexts is more than an indiscretion. It is one of the gravest, as it is one of the most common of popular errors.



CHAPTER XII.

THE RHYTHMIC CHECK.

“Is there any other instance in which Nature says in the most distinct and imperious language, ‘Thou shalt not do this?’ and also in language equally imperious, if not equally distinct, ‘If thou dost, thou shalt be punished as in other cases those only are punished who transgress my laws.’”—W. R. GREG, “*Enigmas of Life.*”



LN no other physical habit do individual idiosyncrasies assert themselves more strongly and vary more widely than in the matter of that periodical function of the Third Part of woman's nature, which we shall denominate henceforward the Rhythmic Check upon her ordinary avocations of mind and body. In no other is the law of Heredity accentuated more distinctly.

We have already dwelt, somewhat at length, upon the culpable neglect of this vital function on the part of our hale grandmothers. In the recollection of their blunders and follies, their rigorous treatment of themselves and their growing daughters, we read the accom-

panying extract with bitterness of meaning, conceived by personal pain and born of an ever-rankling consciousness of having carried weight in life from our trial-heat.

“The steps are few and direct from frequent loss of blood, impoverished blood and abnormal brain and nerve metamorphosis to loss of mental force and nerve disease. Ignorance or carelessness leads to anemic blood, and that to an anemic mind. As the blood, so the brain ; as the brain, so the mind.”*

Our feminine progenitors never vexed their selfish or thrifty souls with such calculations of possible culmination of evils implanted by themselves. Dr. Thomas informs us that they had irregularities many, with internal tumors and cancers, and the rest of the sickening list of “incidental” disorders we are prone to believe are indigenous to our land and coincident with this era only. There was good stuff in the matrons of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; indomitable fortitude and patience. They rebelled as stoutly against the inconveniences of their sex as do our Amazonian reformers, but silently, for the most part, because hopelessly. If they submitted in seeming to their manifest humiliation, as weaker vessels, we know from traditional mutterings that have descended to us—here a sigh, and

* “Sex in Education,” p. 96.

there a curse on the day that saw their birth in the form of woman—that the iron they could not withdraw rusted into their souls. In order to be tolerably resigned to their lot, they slurred over the whole matter with the fewest possible thoughts and words. Womanhood was a legacy of shame and woe from the Mother of all the living, reasoned the philosophical and the pious, for once in concert. Since it could not be cast aside, they endured, some sullenly, more in humble hope of another and a sexless existence.

We show ourselves by so much the wiser than our foremothers as we cheerfully accept the fact of our temporary weakness—not as a disgrace—the Lord who made us women forbid! but as a wise and gracious means to an important and beneficent end. There is nothing more mortifying in a woman's need of taking one day's rest in thirty than in a Christian community's rest from ordinary occupations for one day in every seven.

Dr. Clarke's mention of the "catamenial week" has raised such an uproar of opposition from the sex most interested, that we have allowed our attention to be diverted by the clamor from his modification of the sentence.

"Some individuals"—this is his statement—"require at that time a complete intermission from mental and physical effort, for a single day; others, for two

or three days; others require only a remission, and can do half-work safely for two or three days, and their usual work after that."

I confess my inability to understand why the most captious stickler for her right, as an independent feminine entity, to work herself to death as fast as she likes, can take exception to this very mild prohibitory clause. A simpleton must see that it is preposterous to assign any limit to the period of prudent inaction or remission when the degrees of pain and inconvenience endured during the recurrent indisposition are so different in different women.

Generally, it is safe to say that a healthy girl subject to no hereditary peculiarities suffers little, unless in consequence of recent imprudence, such as taking cold, or getting her feet wet. Others have a few hours of sharp pain, only relieved by lying down, keeping the feet warm, and perhaps drinking a cup of hot herb or ginger-tea. With the passing of the acute paroxysms ends all actual suffering. Others, again, and this is by far the largest class, recognize the approach of the season in slight headache, fullness about the brain and a disposition to nausea, with weakness and a sense of weight in the lower part of the back. These symptoms last for a day—sometimes for two. The eyes are affected, more or less, and the mind, for the first twenty-four hours, works neither as freely nor as strongly as

usual. Occasionally the period is preceded by general lowness of spirits, and accompanied by a sort of weak irritability. The girl is easily wrought up to tears and temper, and becomes capricious in appetite.

I am so happy as to count among my acquaintances one teacher of a girls' school, who enjoins upon her boarders and prescribes for day scholars at least one day's cessation of physical and intellectual labor at the beginning of the catamenial period. If the girl suffers from pain she is put to bed or laid upon the lounge for that day. If her only infirmity is general uncomfatableness and peevish debility, she is compelled to remain quietly in the house for the same time, and left to amuse herself, should her eyes allow the indulgence, with light reading or a trifle of fancy-work. The cases are rare in which the pupil is not ready to resume her lessons on the second day. So palpable are the excellent effects of this plan, that those under this lady's care, if slightly restive at first, fall quietly into the habits enjoined after two or three trials of the experiment, and gratefully acknowledge themselves the debtors of her whose punctilios they were once disposed to deride.

Avoid violent exercise through the whole period. Dancing, long walks, horseback rides, gymnastics, jumping from stile or stair, should be as imperatively excluded from the programme of the day as if you were

confined to your bed with illness. Displacement of the uterus, or spinal weakness, so often succeeds indulgence in any of these, that the wonder is how mothers can suffer their daughters to tempt the risk, and that daughters dare take it. It matters not how "comfortable" you feel. An hour of dancing school, two hours in the ball-room, are almost sure to increase the flow that had nearly ceased, and to bring on a slow morbid aching in the small of the back. These declare, in unmistakable language, that harm has been done. You "always come right again in a few hours or days," you aver carelessly. But to every "always" of physical condition and being there comes an end. You bring that bitter by-and-by nearer with each imprudent act. There is an entry on the debit page of Life's ledger. A mark is scored against you that will tell in the balancing of the reckoning. Nature is an exact accountant, who, in posting her books, sets down nothing to profit and loss. She is a law-giver who catalogues imprudence and lapses from the letter and spirit of the commandment alike as "Transgression"—a magistrate whose sentence upon the guilty is as inflexible as that of a New Jersey Judge. In her system of jurisprudence there is no Court of Appeals, and, this side of Heaven, no pardoning power. Of physical wrong it may truly be written that "Every transgression and disobedience receive a just recompense of reward."

While the rhythmic check holds you, try to maintain tranquillity of mind and spirit, no less than of body. One prime cause of the serious disorders of function and structure to which girl-students are liable is, beyond cavil, that they join to the natural wear-and-tear of brain matter excitement of the nervous system, an amount of mental agitation unknown to the average boy. You consume enough cellular tissue in the preparation and recitation of a single lesson to last your brother through half a term. It is like using a steam pile-driver to stick a pin into a bow of ribbon. When the task is over you are "weary of your life." The idle phrase has a flavor of terrible significance, which you are far from divining. A life so new as yours should never be a burden.

We have come, step by step, to a subject so momentous in nature and consequences, and so vast in its scope, that we may well hesitate to do more than skirt the edge of the tract. Most works upon so-called "Nervousness" and the ramifications of diseases gathered for consideration under that head, treat the topic exhaustively in more than one sense. The fascinated reader becomes to his introspective vision, by the time the book is finished, an animate reticulated organism, sensuous, palpitating, tortured out of the power to form a just diagnosis of his own malady, or to judge if he has one. Of my free will, I would never read what is commonly known as a

“doctor’s book,” that is, a thesis upon specific diseases and their treatment. While I do commend to every woman the study of physiological works that describe the body in all its parts, in a *normal* state, the position and office of every organ and the right management of these, I would not allow any one except a medical student free access to a physician’s library. Certainly, never an imaginative girl or an invalid of either sex.

There are volumes, however, which have been carefully prepared by medical men for popular reading, and which that portion of the public that is set in families, can not, ought not to dispense with. Dr. Beard’s work, already alluded to, is curious and interesting reading, rich in suggestions of the Future of our nation. A neat little volume on my desk opens of itself at a passage against which I penciled emphatic approval, months ago. I can not help copying it here entire, supplying italics, also, because I can not help it.

“Looking broadly at the question of the influence of excessive and prolonged use of the brain upon the health of the nervous system, we learn, first, that cases of cerebral exhaustion in people who live wisely are rare. Eat regularly and exercise freely, and there is scarcely a limit to the work you may get out of the thinking organs.

“But if into the life of a man, whose powers are fully taxed, we bring the elements of great anxiety or worry,

the whole machinery begins at once to work, as it were, with a dangerous amount of friction. Add to this constant fatigue of body, such as some forms of business bring about, and you have all the means needed to ruin the man's power of useful labor." *

"Boys!" says the novice in prayer-meeting exhortation in "Cape Cod Folks." "And girls, too," he added, more gently. "And girls, too. Certainly, *I think so,*" he continued. "*I think so!*"

Change the sex of the "Wear and Tear" extract, and we begin to see light through the great darkness that may be felt. You—our girl—work at a disadvantage, because you study in such deadly, such superfluous earnest. It is a well-established physiological law that any active emotion, as of anger, anxiety, grief, or extreme joy, experienced during the period of the catamenial flow, acts swiftly and powerfully upon the organs from which it proceeds. Instances are very numerous where it is induced prematurely by excessive agitation, and quite as frequent where the discharge is suddenly arrested by like causes. If you could train yourself to do "half-work" in a rational manner, it would probably not injure you to study on the crucial day of the rhythmic trial. If it were in you to "take things coolly," as a rule; to prepare your tasks for the intervening three

* "Wear and Tear," p. 18.

weeks with calm assiduity of attention; to finish one thing before darting at another; to keep your work well in hand, with your own inclinations and impulses—in brief, to become acknowledged mistress of yourself—you would accomplish more than all the doctors in the land could effect in the establishment of painless regularity in the recurrence of the “seasons.” The unsettled hurry, the looking away and forward from the business in hand, the untimely speculations as to to-morrow’s probabilities, which are conspicuous phases of American Worry, grow into a physical, as well as a mental habit. A man borrows trouble upon long credit; a woman gives bills payable at sight and lives in daily dread of their presentation. Now, while all your powers are in the formative state, set about learning how to work methodically and temperately, and a more severe task—by the day, instead of by the job. When you find your hand trembling and breath coming irregularly; when your heart throbs audibly and something that beats like a clock in your temples answers, stroke for stroke—stop! Let go thought and book entirely while you raise a window and look into the street, or walk around the house once, or, if you must sit still, shut your eyes and project your fancy—we will say, into a stubble-field. Think of something amusing—or insufferably stupid. Good Mr. Meagles’s counsel to ill-regulated Tattycoram. “Count five-and-twenty before you speak,” is worth

remembering and adopting in the circumstances. If you would count four times five-and-twenty before thinking again, the thought would be better worth having than the forced product of a mind at fever-heat. You may make rebels of your bodily functions; you cannot enslave them. Managed intelligently and kindly, they will serve you well all your days, and your days be longer in the land than were those of your grandmothers.

“Whoso will observe the wonderful providences of GOD, shall have wonderful providences to observe,” remarks a pithy old author. The same may be said of the wonderful machinery inclosed in your mortal frame. The rhythmical response of nerve to fiber, and of tissue to function, is harmonious in the normal perfection of GOD’S making. As you regulate each jarred section in consonance with the design of the Creator, you will grow into delighted appreciation of the fitness and beauty of the structure it is the fashion to decry as a clog upon the immortal soul.

The prophylactic, or health-preserving art, is a more useful, as it is a more graceful study than that of therapeutics—the Sisyphus-labor of health-restoration.

“Women make work so hard!” is a masculine form of reproach, and better-founded than are most slurs upon our works and ways from that source.

We do work harder, faster, less patiently than men.

We marshal the affections into the area of the intellect—idealizing the real, and embodying the ideal into objects to be appropriated and loved.

A boy *likes* his Latin. A girl “just loves it!” He works out a problem thoughtfully and deliberately, staying his hand to whistle a tune under his breath and still meditatively, over an obdurate sticking point.

N. B.—There is a sticking-point in every worthy enterprise. When you do not happen upon one, look sharply to your bearings. It is never easy all the way except down hill.

The boy's pulse is not accelerated one half beat by the difficulties he encounters. He is philosophical over a failure that would “drive you fairly wild.” In five minutes after he has been “marked down” in consequence of the *fiasco*, or been applauded for writing out the solution, he has forgotten lesson-book and preceptor on the play-ground. The equilibrium of gray thought-flakes and regularity of blood-tides are perfectly restored. He is as good as new—and better.

If you can not emulate his equanimity, yet have the fairness and candor to acknowledge the gentle and wholesome ministry of the Rhythmic Check upon your impetuosity; the Sabbatical calming of hot and high life-currents; the breathing-space in the shaded valley before again attempting the heights.



CHAPTER XIII.

AMERICAN WORRY.

“Now, before he had gone far, he entered into a very narrow passage, and, looking very narrowly before him as he went, he espied two lions in the way.

“(The lions were chained, but he saw not the chains.)”—*Pilgrim's Progress.*



It is a popular fallacy, flattering to the objects of it, that women are more patient than men. Morally they are so much braver, and in the endurance of pain exhibit so much more fortitude, it is not strange that they should be accredited with the virtue which Wendell Phillips calls “that passion of noble souls.” It is as natural in the beginning for a boy to untie a knot, as for you who are a girl to tug at it, stamp your foot, and cry out for a pair of scissors. The bovine pertinacity with which your brother digs away at the incomplete task you mastered in one-third of the time he has already spent upon it, irritates you beyond control. You fillip bits of caustic irony at him; allude to him as “His Snailship” and

“Blunderbore,” and thank Heaven audibly in his hearing that you are made of different material from this hulking lad. You criticise your father in terms more respectful, but in the same spirit; wonder Mamma does not stir him up to *do* this and that thing for which she and the daughters petition repeatedly, instead of promising “to see about it.” You know that such supineness and sluggishness would kill you outright, and bite back by strenuous effort the saucy comment upon the prosy ratiocination by which he gains the conclusion you perceived with half an eye.

I read once an ingenious paper upon the “Natural Antagonism of the Sexes,” that contained some capital hits at the mutual intolerance of men and women, boys and girls. In my judgment, quarrels between brothers and sisters, lovers, husbands and wives, have for their sharpest provocative the lack of charity arising from an inability on the side of the man to comprehend why the woman should be so quick, and on that of the woman how even a man *can* be so slow.

You can not “sit on a cushion and sew up a seam,” without assigning to yourself a task—a “stent,” as the old-fashioned folks say—that *must* be finished in a given time. There is no especial propriety in this allotment, but you can not work comfortably without settling what you are to do, and how long you are to be about it. Nor is there any more reason in your de-

termination that the lesson begun at four *shall* be finished at five, beyond your impatience to get it—you probably call it “the old thing”—out of the way. In two days you are sick and tired of a drawing that will occupy all the time you can give to your pencil for ten days, if you would do it justice. You injure the transparency of your colors by laying in a shade which should not be applied until the first coat is dry.

While you “love” your studies, you act nevertheless as if the operation of acquiring knowledge were an enemy, real and personal, while you are engaged in it. You clutch your work with both hands, instead of quietly laying hold of it. Opposition to obstacles, the resolve to master a given point call out, not a calm rally of will and massing of suitable forces, but a bustling press of every available energy that leaves no reserves to hold the camp.

“The physiological principle of doing only one thing at a time if you would do it well, holds as truly of the growth of the organization as it does of the performance of any of its special functions.”

Dr. Clarke's truism has many facets, all reflecting light. That restless brain of yours must be steadied upon the contemplation of “one thing” before you can do it well. To your apprehension the least practicable of Scripture injunctions is, “Be not therefore anxious for to-morrow,” or that other, “Be not anxious for your life.”

It is so much to you—this precious, untried life of yours—“all the life you can ever have in this world!”—you say, piteously. You touch and handle the unproved armor with delight so intense as to trench upon pain. We who have worn ours so long that spiritual muscles and joints are inured to pressure and abrasion, preach vainly of the wisdom of living but one day in twenty-four hours. We tell you,—tenderly, for our hearts are one long moved memory of our own Spring-time,—that while the Father gives us some blessings as He bestows the fruitage of the vine in clusters, He pours out the elixir of life drop by drop, minute by minute, taking away each before the next is granted. It sounds to you like the penurious prating of little souls—so full is your cup, so radiant the glitter from untasted depths. The myth of Cleopatra’s dissolved pearl is apposite to your desires, and, so far as you can fulfill them, to your practice.

It is natural to reach and commendable to upraise a lofty Ideal. “He who aimeth at the stars shall hit a nobler mark than if he aimed no higher than a tree.” Your aim will be the truer, your chance of success fairer if your pulses are strong and even, your eyes steady. Drill thoughts and nerves into patient attention to the work of one hour, resolutely waiving off the encroaching shadow of the next. Fill your heart and hands full of To-day. To-morrow belongs to GOD. You

have not his permission to overdraw your allowance of daily grace. There is a lulling quality, like the ripple of a brook under the moonlight, or the touch of a cool hand upon the fevered eye-balls, in Longfellow's:

“To-morrow! the mysterious, unknown guest,
Who cries to me; ‘Remember Barmecide,
And tremble to be happy with the rest.’
And I make answer, ‘I am satisfied:
I dare not ask; I know not what is best;
GOD hath already said what shall betide.’”

It is not Work, but impatient solicitude, the fretting, teasing thought and care for the next minute, the next hour, the next day, to which we apply the homely term, “Worry,”—that breaks down our school-girl; that, growing with her growth, and strengthening with her strength, becomes the leading characteristic of the woman. So linked are our associations of this quality with our acquaintanceship with earnest workers,—women of practical philanthropy; women of practical housewifery; women of practical piety; with mothers whose children shall rise up and call them blessed; with Deborahs in the Israel of literature to whom the people come up for judgment,—that we have come to infer indolence and incapacity of her who is “easy-going” in philosophy and action. Yet we all know exceptional women whose quiet, well-directed energies achieve marvels in their peculiar line of work. They run not as one who beateth the air, but run with *patience*.

Next to the faculty of concentrating and guiding thought, I rank in value among soul-powers the ability to control the nerves, to equalize and rightly to distribute the crude forces whose zeal is not according to knowledge, and instruct them by rigid discipline to obey Will rather than Feeling. In more direct language, keep Feeling out of work as much as possible. Make resolution and industry to depend upon conscience. The ability to do this argues excellent mental training, and is not incompatible with a hearty enjoyment of work for its own sake. On the other hand, feeling, heart,—all that is loosely generalized under the head of the emotions,—is too apt, if pressed into a service for which it is not fitted, to lose *morale*, like other injudiciously-applied agencies, and to degenerate into morbid sentimentality. If you would test the truth of this assertion, ask yourself how many of your mates are depressed into misery by the anticipated loss of a place in class, and cry over discouraging lessons; how many older women break down over a vexatious piece of work, or the disarrangement caused by an accident, and weep as for the loss of father or brother. It sounds well to say that “she throws her whole heart into whatever she undertakes, be it a great or a small matter.” In effect, it is senseless trifling with a delicate and precious thing. Except when Royalty goes through the pretty farce of laying the corner-stone of

public buildings, silver trowels are not used for spreading mortar. It is as proper to take up ashes with a gold spoon as to excite feeling to hysterical vehemence in conning a lesson in trigonometry. If you would prove your brain to be sexless, divorce it from the heart. In this respect, at any rate, require it to do a man's work in a man's way. And do not fear that the process will make of your womanly self an "intellectual abstraction." The body is the handmaid of the mind. Never forget that; nor that the mistress toils at a fearful disadvantage who is constantly obliged to make allowances for the weakness, or to supplement the incompetency of her servant. Also, that in a well-balanced household, mistress and maid have, each, her separate task, and that the most obliging subordinate will weary and turn surly if called off too often from her appointed business to "lend a hand" to what her employer has undertaken to perform. She "didn't hire for that kind of work," she informs you. Your nervous system tells you the same thing, and as positively, many times a day, but since the protest is not coupled with a month's or week's notice to quit, you pay no heed to the warning voice.

I have just been re-reading Mrs. Putnam Jacobi's erudite essay upon "Mental Action and Physical Health," and proudly subjoin her evidence to the truth-

fulness of what I have here written of my own views on this subject:—

“The fatigue experienced after excessive emotion, especially if this be of a depressing character, and accompanied by tears (which imply vaso-motor paralysis in the lachrymal glands,) is generalized all over the body, and is, moreover, very much more often followed by headache, or by symptoms of cerebral congestion, or anæmia, than is the act of thinking except in persons morbidly predisposed.

“When nervous exhaustion is observed after prolonged mental effort, one of two other conditions, or both, has nearly always co-existed, namely, *deficiency of physical exercise*, or *presence of active emotion, as ardent ambitions, or harassing anxieties.*”

As usual, I italicize to serve the end I have in view.

Dr. Beard thus diagnoses Worry and defines what Work is:

“Worry is the converse of Work; the one develops force, the other checks its development, and wastes what already exists. Work is growth; Worry is interference with growth. Worry is to Work what the chafing of a plant against the walls of a green-house is to limitless expansion in the free air. In the successful brain-worker Worry is transferred into Work. In the muscle-worker Work too often degrades into Worry. Brain-work is the highest of all antidotes to Worry.”

And on the preceding page we have :

“1. *The inherent and essential healthfulness of brain-work when unaccompanied by worry.* To work is to grow, and growth, except it be forced, is always healthful. It is as much the function of the brain to cerebrate as of the stomach to digest ; and cerebation, like digestion, is normal, physiological, and healthful.”*

Without making this chapter “chiefly clinical,” let me cite a story or two taken from life.

I know a pretty little woman who has neither children nor accomplishments to draw off her attention from the care of her health. She is bright, popular, fashionable, and without having been graduated at any Woman's College, or Annex, is physically wrecked. She has no organic disease, say her physicians; also, that her sick headaches are constitutional and hereditary. She is rich, and has no money-anxieties. Her husband adores her, and she is free from jealousies and the pangs of unrequited affection. She is kind-hearted and charitable in judgment, as in act; wishes well to everybody, and is, therefore, not poisoned by spleen and envy. But her nervous system is in armed revolt; has overrun her, body and soul. Nobody is surprised. Everybody prophesied years ago, that her nerves would master her strength, if not her reason. As a child, she

* “American Nervousness,” pp. 201, 202.

lost appetite, and went into tearful ecstasies at the gift of a new doll. As a slim school-girl, she refused food, and could not sleep at night, if the morrow threatened a difficult recitation. As a young woman in fashionable society, she became as much excited over the choice of a new bonnet, the manufacture of a pin-cushion, or the promise of an evening party, as at the nearing prospect of her marriage to the man she loved.

It was a curious, and then a diverting spectacle to watch the tossing, gurgling waves of her everyday existence. Her best friends laughed, and loved her the better for her impulsive, whole-souled ways. Strangers stared, and new acquaintances criticised her "want of repose of manner." Her friends love her dearly still, but admit, reluctantly, that she tries their nerves by her restlessness, and that she is never altogether at her ease in any circumstances. Impartial critics pronounce her "eccentric." When she sews, the silk whips hissing through the stuff, the needle heats in her fingers. Her air in the street and in the large assemblies is that of a startled bird making ready for flight. The pose of her head is alert, her eyes are eager, her hands never still. Intensely alive to external impressions, fluttering at every word, she conveys to the beholder the idea that her brain-surface is a prepared and highly sensitive photographic plate. She is, all the while, taking "negatives," instead of receiving, as do others, momentary

impressions—dissolving views—flitting before succeeding ones, like reflections from a mirror.

“Things take such fast hold of me!” she laments; and every hold is a bite.

As a girl, her swift darting from one subject to another, her way of flashing abruptly into a quiet, humdrum conversation, with some naïvely-earnest query or comment, were *piquante*, and likened by her admirers to the motions of a humming-bird. She plunges, instead of flitting, now—and hard—bruising herself often, and sometimes, and most unintentionally, other people. “She has lost tone.” Such is her half-mirthful, half-sad report of the verdict of five eminent physicians. To restore tone, she has traveled by land and sea; been screwed up by quassia, gentian, quinine, and porter. She drinks milk and beef-tea, and has relinquished tea and coffee as “rank poison.” Five other doctors of equal eminence recommend sedative measures, because her nerves are too tensely strained. To lower them to concert-pitch, she has swallowed “quarts,” she assures you, of valerian and hyoscyamos; walked herself into exhaustion; gone to bed early every night and regularly laid awake until daybreak. When, by some happy accident she sleeps four hours a night, she is so elated, according to her showing, that she is tempted to send the news to the Associated Press as “An Item of Singular and Interesting Information.” She is not cross;

she is too sweet and sound at heart for that, but she is "worried" to an extent that no language or figure of speech can describe. "She can do nothing by halves," say her affectionate apologists.

It is sadly true. Not even suicide.

A friend found her in tears one day over this passage in "Elsie Venner,"—a passage we marvel at as we read and recollect that it was written by a man:

"She has so many varieties of headaches,—sometimes as if Jael were driving the nail that killed Sisera into her temples,—sometimes letting her work with half her brain, while the other half throbs as if it would go to pieces,—sometimes tightening around the brows as if her cap-band were a ring of iron,—and then her neuralgias and her back-aches, and her fits of depression, in which she thinks she is nothing and less than nothing,—and those paroxysms of which men speak slightly as hysterical,—convulsions, that is all, only not commonly fatal ones,—so many trials which belong to her fine and mobile structure,—that she is always entitled to pity when she is placed in conditions which develop her nervous tendencies."

"I know it all—all!" sobbed the poor rich woman. "If I am not mercifully relieved soon of this wretched life I shall end my days in a lunatic asylum."

It is not headache that makes her nervous, but nervous worry that gives her headache. This is not Wear,

but Waste, and Waste at its wicked worst. For she has nothing to show for the ruinous expenditure of vital force, excepting the burnt-out ashes of a life that might have been rarely blessed. An amount of energy that might have wrought the redemption of a pagan continent has been squandered on the commonest trivialities of a commonplace career. She is impoverished and no one else the richer. With a heart aching with longing to make others happy, she renders those dearest to her miserable.

As a pendant to this portrait, let me give a sketch of one who was the valued associate of my early life; a woman of strong will, shrewd intelligence, and remarkable executive ability. Her husband was a successful city merchant, an amiable gentleman and a fair financier, but one whose talents were particularly adapted to the straight, beaten track of business transactions. Without being dull-witted, he was not ready of expedient; needed timely notice when a change of course was necessary. I may add, to his credit, that he was never slow in awarding to his wife due praise for the assistance she had given him from their marriage-day in the conduct of his affairs. It was a habit of long standing with him to bring home to her every evening a full report of the day's operations, to consult her before embarking in a new enterprise, and trust to her advice when his own judgment was at fault.

They had been married twenty years when the panic of 1857 fell like a black frost upon the country. Up to this date the difference in temperament and method of work between husband and wife had not told obviously upon either. He was easy-tempered, hopeful, quick to rebound from pressure, with a frank laugh and merry word when the day was at the darkest. The wife's was probably the stronger nature of the two, since in all these years the double burden of his mercantile cares and her own duties as housekeeper and mother had not sufficed to wear her out. Her hair had grown quite gray; there were pain-lines between her brows; her lips were thinner and smiled less readily than of old; but her alert carriage and sententious, incisive speech were utterly opposed to the generally received ideal of a broken-down woman. She rallied with prompt energy to meet the exigencies of the "hard times." In her home her economies were ingeniously contrived not to lessen family comfort, yet bore severely upon herself. She cut and made her own and her children's dresses, besides doing all their plain sewing; dismissed the laundress and undertook the fine ironing herself. And while she wrought with her hands, her mind was incessantly intent upon the growing complications of her husband's affairs; her invention racked to devise ways and means of averting threatened ruin.

Each evening the wedded pair held counsel over the library-table littered with business-papers. When the history of the transactions of the day and the liabilities of the morrow was finished, the husband went to bed and slept like an irresponsible hedger or ditcher. The wife sat up late, reckoning and writing, and after she sought her pillow, lay awake for hours, gathering from the throbbing darkness about her inspiration and practical suggestion. While her husband was shaving next morning, she would give him a clear digest of plan and enterprise. His hand never trembled while he listened; his sanguine complexion did not vary by a shade. He had perfect confidence in her as a woman of genius and judgment. After a hearty breakfast he would kiss her "good-morning," toss the baby into the air with a laugh and shout, and go off down-town cool and strong for the conflict of the day. He battled victoriously. His firm escaped disaster, and he brought out of the fight two years later health of body and serenity of mind; was so slightly worsted by the trial as to excite the wondering admiration of his friends. His wife, on the other hand, had lost color, these observed, —was "ageing fast." She was sharp of eye too and of speech. People began to dread her caustic criticisms and repartee, and to call her an uncomfortable woman to deal with. Her servants considered her a "driving mistress"; her children wished that she were "as sym-

pathizing as Papa," and that she "would not make such a serious business of life."

Yet so deep was the respect of the community for her as a high-minded, sterling woman, that it was a grievous shock to all when she dropped dead one morning just as her husband took the youngest child from her knee for the accustomed after-breakfast romp.

"Disease of the heart!" said the certificate of burial. None thought of denying her room in consecrated ground. For all that, she was a suicide.

What is the remedy for the nerve-waste, the abnormal or violent metamorphosis of tissue that comes of Worry;—from the fearful looking-forward of impatient woman-kind?

I answer, first, self-control—learned most easily in youth. Hold imagination in check and compel yourself, while you work, to think only of the business in hand, the appointed tale of bricks for the day. Enjoy, in like singleness of mind, the pleasures belonging to each hour and season. Cultivate an eye for lights rather than for shadows. Do not despise the small fruits of spring-time in longing for peaches and nectarines. That you are alive and moderately comfortable this day is an earnest of sufficient grace for the next, for this is the dreaded to-morrow of yesterday. Make the best of the Present. The poet bids you "Enjoy it. It is thine." It, at least, will never return to be

righted or to be delighted in. That time and care are thrown away that are spent on a Future that may never be.

"S'pose," said one small boy to another, as they stood under a tree, on the upper boughs of which hung a few tempting pippins, "S'pose I was to climb up there, and a limb was to break, or my foot was to slip, or there was a snake in that hollow, or maybe a hornet's nest, or a lizard—"

"*No s'pose!*" shouted his comrade, and went up the tree like a cat.

Nobody doubts who got the fruit.

Some men do borrow trouble habitually. No practice is discontinued with greater difficulty when it has once been formed. But it is the timid or melancholy man who plods the miry lanes leading to the Slough of Despond, and is too much in fear of the lions to go near enough to perceive their chains. Women of all ages and temperaments negotiate for trouble at compound interest, and a majority pay both the bond-money and the pound of flesh.

The catholicon of mortal ills, the specific beyond all other offered remedies for mental excitation, for the chafing and worrying and fearing that are a deadlier drain upon the nerve-centres than any degree of intellectual application, is a calm trust in the wisdom and tenderness of Our Heavenly Father.

One last extract from Dr. Beard. He supports by statistical evidence these propositions:

"1st. That the brain-working classes—clergymen, lawyers, physicians, merchants, scientists, and men of letters—live much longer than muscle-working classes.

"2d. That those who followed occupations that called both muscle and brain into exercise were longer-lived than those who lived in occupations that were purely manual.

"3d. That the greatest and hardest brain-workers of history have lived longer, on the average, than brain-workers of ordinary ability and industry.

"4th. That clergymen are longer-lived than any other great class of brain-workers."

This last remarkable fact he explains after this fashion:

"1. Their calling admits of a wide variety of toil.

"2. Comparative freedom from financial anxiety.

"3. Their superior mental endowments.

"4. Their superior temperance and morality."

These reasons for the longevity of a class of the busiest men in our country he supports with more or less pertinence. Without staying to question any or all of these hypotheses, I would suggest an explanation of the fact, drawn from a somewhat extensive and very intimate acquaintanceship with the profession, at least, in what is styled "the great Presbyterian family," em-

bracing the Presbyterian, Reformed Dutch, and Congregational denominations.

As a rule (the exceptions of which I do not deny), these men trust themselves and the interests dearest to them to a higher and an infinitely wise Power, asking continually to be controlled by a Friend to Whom mistakes are impossible, Whose love is limitless, and His compassion sure. The aching head may well cease to throb when laid upon that softest pillow for human pain, "GOD *knows*." The sleep that falls like heavenly dew to the music of the lullaby, "All things work together for good unto them that love GOD," and, "Fear not! I am with thee," brings strength and renewal of youth with balm for present ills.

Your "shadowy Future," dear child, is definite and distinct to Him. Whatever of seeming disaster it may hold for you, be assured that it is *only* in seeming; that His purposes toward you must, from the necessities of His own nature, be all love and goodness. Be patient, yet hopeful, in awaiting the development of His will.

"Do the duty that lieth nearest thy hand that thou knowest to be a duty. The second duty will already have become clearer," is a sovereign motto at your age.

If "The will of the Lord be done" is a hard saying for young hearts to frame and girlish lips to utter, it is

yet easier for you than for your elders to believe and say: "On THEE do I wait all the day!" You are so used to the care and guidance of superiors that trustfulness is the natural attitude of your heart. You can lean with your whole weight upon the Almighty Arm, if you can not resign or remit the hopes that are your earthly treasure.

Keep, then, your heart steady in its rest upon the GOD of the falling sparrow, and the unfledged ravens, and you need not fear to do *with your might* whatsoever your hand—and your head—find to do.

I write thus plainly of the Christian's faith, because I hold, as to the hope of my soul's salvation, to the belief that, while a man may fight Life's battle with apparent success without religion, trust in an overruling Providence and a world to come is absolutely essential to a woman's happiness and usefulness. It is to her the only key to the mysteries of her nature; the only explanation of the fact that she *is* at all. Her capacity for love and for sorrow; the myriad ills contingent upon possible irregularities in her complex *physique*; the dreamy seclusion of domestic life; the helplessness and hopelessness of unfortunate marriages—all these demand, for the mere present endurance of their weight, something more tender than philosophy, stronger than stoicism. It was not in comparative speech that the

Master said of Mary—gentle and loving, yet with a thirst for the highest and best knowledge—the “real things” of life present and life eternal—that made her oblivious of temporal cares:—

“But one thing is needful. She hath chosen the good part which shall not be taken away from her.”





CHAPTER XIV.

WHAT THEN?

“ ‘It is an admitted principle in all systems of Education,’ said the Professor, plaintively, to his sister, ‘that some concession shall be made to the molds of individuality. In point of fact, all theories cool off in such molds at last.’ ”—ELIZABETH STUART PHELPS, “*Story of Avis.*”

IN the college catalogues which we have examined together, I observe, set down among the studies appointed for each year or semester, a list of “Electives.” You can take up one or more of these or leave all alone, as inclination or convenience may prompt. Your action in either case is regulated by your sense of the expediency of understanding something of this or that branch, as you may foresee the needs of the ordinary life of girl and woman, or by your desire to use it in making for yourself a career somewhat different from that of your fellows.

There is nothing in the letter or spirit of the preced-

ing chapter that condemns the healthy ambition to excel in a special branch, or to win the prize for general excellence of scholarship. These are most safely, if not surely attained by steady, systematic application to the specific work of the hour—that is, by doing well one thing at a time. He who would drive a straight furrow across the field, fixes his eye upon a definite point, and makes for it with hand and foot. Giving to our metaphor a larger meaning, we may add that she who shapes all the study of her scholastic course in accordance with a definite purpose, will achieve something better and stronger than she who lays stones idly, or who alters her plans from day to day. One reason of the want of thoroughness in women's education is, unquestionably, the purposeless way in which it is conducted. The best aim of the best scholar is, usually, to stand well in classes, and in the fullness of time to be graduated with distinction. About once a year you happen upon one who loves study for its own sake; who is avid in accumulation and faithful in keeping all she has gained. The rank and file of the class "don't mind study. In fact they rather like it, and find school great fun" as a whole. But when honest and outspoken under pressure, they would avow that in heart, if not in voice, they echo Christopher Sly's praise of the play:

" An excellent piece of work, Madam Lady!
Would it were done!"

Let us suppose that it is done; the last Examination passed, the honors awarded.

What then?

Your brother and his college-mates tell you that their work has hardly begun with the receipt of diploma and degree. Commencement-Day with them signifies the first step in the real career—the unclosing and flinging wide the gate revealing the highway of Life. They have accomplished little beyond buckling on the harness, getting it fairly adjusted, and testing its suppleness and strength. So far as the confirmed habit and manner of study; the conscience for prescribed tasks and continued acquisition go, you deliberately undo the fastenings of your armor, take it off and toss it into a corner of the lumber-room to gather dust and verdigris for the rest of your life unless an unforeseen reverse of fortune should force you to resume it. The mental discipline of home is so lax by comparison with that of school, that you scarcely feel it. But for the excitement of receiving and paying calls, attending parties, concerts, operas, and other public entertainments, the multitudinous and multifarious engagements known in their collective form as “Society,” you would be bored to extremest *ennui* by a surplusage of unemployed time. For a year or two your new pursuits will not pall upon even an intellectual palate. After perhaps three seasons, you will begin to see things as they are, and your-

II*

self with a life left on your hands, with the problem, "What to Do With It?" staring you in the eyes.

It is pitiable and instructive to busy people, to see the varieties of behavior in women who recognize the reality of this situation and seek to overcome its irksomeness. Their manœuvres are oddly like the whistle of the boy passing over a lonely common in the dusk of evening, who is not certain of his bearings, yet dare not waste time in retracing his steps. Our maturing maidens will not look behind them, for fear of trooping phantoms of dead hopes and joys that perished with the possession. Before lies a misty land of shadows. They are not frightened by the pale grayness of the time; only chilled at heart and anxious to disprove to themselves that they are forlorn and astray.

The majority and the most respectable of them begin to dabble industriously in something, it matters little what it is, so long as time and thoughts are engaged. A catalogue of the hundreds of species of what is known as "fancy-work," to which this century alone has given birth, would show better than fifty formal treatises, the prevalence of this dabbling, and the commercial ingenuity with which the desire has been fed. Crocheting, tatting, wax-work, paper flowers, monochromatics, decalcomanie, panel and plaque-painting in oil, mineral and water-colors, on silk, china and board, Kensington and outline embroidery,—time and mem-

ory would fail me, and patience desert my readers, were I to prolong the inventory. Such, and a thousand other inventions of play which is work, and work which is play, are put forward in a fast succession of cheats to answer our question—"What then?"

"I suppose you've gone on having clubs every winter, just as we did when we were girls?" says the heroine to Coy in Miss Phelps's "Story of Avis."

"Just the same," said Coy, "as we did when you were at home six years ago. You know how it is with people; some take to zoölogy, and some take to religion. That's the way it is with places. It may be the Lancers and it may be prayer-meetings. Once I went to see my grandmother in the country, and everybody had a candy-pull. There were twenty-five candy-pulls and taffy-bakes in that town that winter. John Rose says in the Connecticut Valley where he came from, it was missionary-barrels; and I heard of a place where it was cold coffee. In Harmouth, it's improving your mind.

"The amount I've read these last four years! It positively makes my head swim to think of the titles of the books.

"And so we have the clubs. Sometimes, it's old poets served hot, and sometimes it's plain history cut cold, and it may be a hash of the fine arts, or even a *ragout* of well-spiced science. One winter, it was polit-

ical economy. I had my first gray hairs that winter. But the season we took the positive philosophy, they thought I was going into a decline."

We laugh at the witty summary, but there is more than one nerve ajar while we do it. It is all so aimless and pitiful! For—let it be noted—women do not use their literary and scientific and fine-art clubs as men do theirs, as an evening's relaxation from severe work, but as a means of employing minds that are rusting, and time that is an incubus upon the spirits. Nor do they all really enjoy the farce. Coy tells the truth when she confesses sighingly:—

"It comes hard on me! Improving your mind is as bad as old poetry."

(This in reference to the Chaucer and Spenser Clubs.)

Desultory reading and study—even a diet of well-spiced science—will, at the best, only whet the appetite for regular meals of more substantial food. It is far more likely to solace the intellectual conscience of the many who care little for such pabulum, but covet the semblance of "improving the mind." It is neither natural nor desirable for a whole community of women to have tastes precisely similar. I know an accomplished scientist who never read a dozen pages of Longfellow or Whittier, and a true poet whose mathematical lore would disgrace a public-school lad of twelve. The most sagacious instructors and parents are liable

to overrate the importance of "keeping up" certain branches of technical education. Much of the curriculum of the college answers exactly the same purpose with the mind that the use of salt and alum does in the manufacture of green pickles. Brine and astringent harden and color the texture of the gherkin or citron-rind steeped in an infusion of these substances for a certain time. When firmness and the proper degree of greenness are gained, the housewife sets about soaking out all taste of the salts, that she may impart to the prepared article its specific and agreeable flavor by the means of sugar, vinegar and spices.

This homely illustration expresses the difference between the action of general education in molding the mind and interpenetrating it with an aptitude for the reception of knowledge, and the province of that specialty which the Creator has designed for individual appropriation. At least one-half of the learning of the school ought to be soaked out and thrown away, yet as preliminary and formative, it can not be dispensed with.

Life is no more earnest nor the meaning of your own personal existence more clear on the morning succeeding the club-meeting than before. Except for the occupation of the evening, and a faint sense of satisfaction at having been profitably (?) employed, you might as well have gone to bed at eight o'clock, or danced until

midnight with the same "everlasting set" of partners. Nor do the glittering generalities of benevolence and the development of the Divinity of Humanity content the practical woman who wants work and a sphere. We have in days gone by cast much ridicule upon that last word, and the craving which prompts its use in the mouths of many, in the hidden thoughts of more, women who should be honored, not despised. In this we cruelly and coarsely misinterpret a desire and its expression which is not a characteristic of a commonplace soul.

The women who ask for some specific employment and room in which to ply their vocation are usually those who are fitted by nature and education for something immeasurably better than taffy-bakes and a hash of the fine-arts. Centuries of superficial training have done their work upon the masses of our sex. Thousands find the gratification of every reasonable—I do not say rational—desire in a couple of seasons of belle-ship and a suitable marriage. Almost as many testify to their individuality mainly by *irrational* caprices and the obstinacy which is the stronghold of fools.

I know an excellent clergyman who, without the remotest intention of saying aught offensive to the meanest and lowest of his hearers, has a habit of describing the acme of weakness in argument or absurdity of belief by declaring from a metropolitan pulpit that the

contemned proof or tenet is "only fit for women and children." This, with his wife who is not a simpleton, gazing up with admiring eyes from the pastor's pew.

He may not voice the sentiment of his Guild; nor, were this the case, need we be over-ready to resent a classification our sex has so long and so far authorized. Do we not prove ourselves to be children when we learn lessons set by others, without reflection as to the end to be subserved by study? When we catch our complexion of thought and opinion upon philosophy, religion—even morals—from the man we love, or in default of his existence, from our nearest masculine neighbor? When our tempers are abraded by petty rivalries, our energies exhausted upon puerile pursuits? When the standard of wifely and daughterly perfection is so nearly met by the old nursery couplet,—

"Come when you're called, go when you're bid,
Shut the door after you, and you'll never be chid,"—

that we can not smile, while we feebly protest?

Do not imagine that I, your true well-wisher, would have you indifferent to the claims and delights of Society. It has a right to demand a share in your day and thoughts. The pleasantest—and sometimes an effectual—way of making people better is by making them happier. If you can elevate the tone of your little circle while enlivening it, you need not account the

time misspent which you have given to cheerful converse, or in the amusements you ought to have at your age.

“My dear,” wrote a mother to her daughter who was absent from home on a pleasure-visit, “you may be an angel some day. You can be young but once in a lifetime. Therefore, be as happy as you can.”

It is when recreation degenerates into a task that it loses its efficacy. A task and an onerous one it must become when it is the grand object of daily life. The most useless, and frequently the most pitiable product of modern civilization is the Society Girl, bound to a wheel that whirls through a stated round of calls, receptions, balls, and general show-places for full-dressed men and women—each season changing the place, but keeping the pain, when winter sports are exchanged for summer dissipation. It is inevitable that her spirits should flag, and spontaneous gayety give place to the factitious mannerisms nobody mistakes for the “genuine article.”

In spite of all the sneering flings at the chase for husbands and pulling caps for beaux, in which refined contests satirists would have us believe all actual or would-be belles are engaged while flying on this dizzying circle, sober judges of human nature and women's ways comprehend that no pure-hearted girl has any defined purpose of conquest in her coquettish wiles. She sim-

ply wants to "have a good time," and enjoys it as artlessly as do butterflies a waltz in the sunshine. It is not until the sun has dried the freshness in the morning air, and she is weary of the monotony of frivolity, that she begins to hearken to the talk of match-making dowagers and uncharitable gossips as to the propriety of settling down before she gets to be an old story. She has had her fling, say her seniors. Roses wilt fast in ball-rooms, and she has been "out" five seasons, she is reminded in a friendly way. If she does not leave Society, Society will leave her. No woman can be Somebody in the world's eye for half a dozen years. And the only honorable extinguisher of belleship is Wedlock.

By and by, my bright-eyed girl, I shall, GOD willing, tell you what are my views of the Real Marriage. For the present, suffice it to say that it is *not* to crouch so meekly in the shadow of a husband that even the outlines of your separate personality are swallowed up—obliterated by his magnificent penumbra. Remember the warning quoted a while ago:—

"Bear in mind that you are, first of all, human beings, and then, secondly, women."

To follow Miss Cobbe a step further:

"Laugh at the doctrine that you are a sort of moon, with no *raison d'être* but to go circling round and round a very earthy planet, or a kind of parasite, ivy, or honeysuckle in the forest. You may be, you probably *are*,

less strong, less clever, less rich, and less well-educated than most of the men around you; but you are a rational free agent, a child of GOD, destined to grow nearer to Him and more like Him through the ages of your immortality."

Do you ask me at this point, with the unconquered impatience of our sex: "What is the lesson of To-day, drawn from the foregoing Talk?"

I answer broadly: Choose now a special line of study and of thought, bearing directly upon whatever profession, trade or avocation you may select as the business of your life. Choose Something to Do, *and do it!*

Thirty years back this injunction would have meant to a young woman, reputedly-born and in moderate circumstances, "Prepare yourself to become a governess or the principal of a school." Now—what may it not signify and include? If we would know how times have changed, and we with them, let us survey for a moment the fallen and disintegrating boundary-walls that, forty years ago, were so many moral and social Quebecs in resisting the incursion of women upon the territory deeded by Nature, Providence, Tradition, and Public Opinion (thus were we taught), as a gift in perpetuity to the stronger part of mankind. I can remember when a girl had to defy the censure and ridicule of her schoolfellows and the as certain distrust of "the

gentlemen," if she were bent upon studying Latin. Euclid was banned as likely to give a masculine turn to the mind. Within twenty-five years I have heard a celebrated Doctor of Divinity say that he had never been able to see what use women had for sense, and seen a roomful of refined listeners convulsed with merriment at his description of a visit he had paid to the house of a literary woman, where he was "in mortal dread all the time of getting a syllogism crosswise in his throat, or of swallowing a logarithm with his soup. Hebrew puddings and Greek pies were," he confessed, "not to his taste, nor adapted to his digestion."

All this, while it is the paltriest clap-trap prejudice, showed the direction of popular opinion. Nobody but an imbruted ignoramus now seriously impugns the right of women to round, even development of intellect, as well as of the affections. There is set before you an open door, and no man can shut it. Whether you will enter or not rests with yourself.

Whatever may be the stability of the provision made for daughters, single and married, in other countries, the terrible fluctuation of American fortunes is a continuous object-lesson, enforcing the need of preparedness in the women themselves to meet reverses and override poverty. If the washerwoman's daughter of To-day will ride next week in her carriage, diamonds on the fingers hardly dry from the suds—the millionaire's child,

satin-wadded from her birth to avert the contact of everything common and unclean, may, by one twist of the wheel, be driven to earn her bread by the penny's-worth before she is thirty years of age. The vicissitudes of the happier middle-class, if not as violent, are well-nigh as frequent as the changes that befall those in the higher and lower walks of life. When the small merchant, or farmer, or mechanic is overtaken by the storm of adversity, his boys, as a rule, land on their feet. They have been educated in the expectation of earning their livelihood, and the means—be it brain-culture or manual skill—by which to achieve this have been given to them. The daughters, as a yet more general rule, are, to put it strongly, half-taught to do nothing. They have had a certain number of years' schooling; can strum a few pieces on the piano, write a fair hand, maybe "do" a little in crayons or oils, and dote upon fancy-work. Besides these they have no capabilities beyond those of a common housemaid.

In pursuance of our plan of drawing arguments from facts, and our illustrations from real life, let me give a specimen sketch of the class I have depicted.

A young girl came to me during the term of my managership in a Board of Employment for Women, in search of a situation. She was nineteen; comely, healthy, and talked with modest propriety of language and demeanor. Her story was a sad, but by no means

an uncommon one. Her mother had married a second husband when this girl was six years old. The step-father would not be bothered with the child, and she was adopted by her grandfather. In his farm-house she was a pet and a favorite, received a tolerably good education at the district school, with three years' tuition in piano-music. She helped a maiden aunt with light housework, learned to sew neatly, and to embroider in crewels; went to singing school, and spent all her spare hours in reading—"loving books," as she told me, "better than anything else in the world."

Six weeks before she called on me, her grandfather had died suddenly and intestate. His little property was claimed by his sons and daughters, none of whom had room in house or heart for the granddaughter. The homeless child was returned to her mother. The step-father, a hard, avaricious man, was not bashful in informing her that she was old enough to shift for herself, and must not expect to eat the bread of charity. At the end of a fortnight she must go out into the world.

This was the tale, confirmed by a letter from the pastor of the country church where the old farmer had worshipped for sixty odd years, and in the shadow of which he lay buried. The grandchild related it simply and with no show of resentment at her step-father's unkindness.

"I am willing to do any kind of honest work," she concluded; "I would rather starve than be dependent."

"What can you do?" I inquired.

"I might manage a little school," was the reply. "I am fond of children, and get along nicely with them. I am sure I could teach them, provided they were not too far advanced. I understand arithmetic quite well, up to fractions."

"There is a small school upon every other block in this town," I said, doubtfully; "and most of them are taught by women who have had experience in the business; who can carry scholars very far beyond fractions. You can sew well, you tell me. Can you also cut and fit? Do you know anything about dressmaking? A good dressmaker can always get plenty of work."

"No, ma'am. My aunt used to cut out everything, even my underclothes, for me, and we had a dressmaker in the house every spring and fall."

"I might get you a place as saleswoman in a store," I mused, "if you were quick at figures; or, as apprentice to a milliner or dressmaker; but you would receive nothing for, perhaps, three months, or so small a sum that it would not pay your board. A factory life is hardly what I should choose for you," glancing at the delicate features and the slight figure so lady-like in its cheap mourning, "and would bring you in very little

until you became expert at the work. Then, too, the associations are rough and disagreeable."

"Yes, ma'am! I know," said the girl, meekly.

She was drooping like a cut house-plant in the inclement atmosphere into which she had been thrown. The sleet rattled against the windows in the intervals of our dialogue. My heart bled for her, so young—and the world was so wide and bleak! A happy thought struck me. I offered my ultimatum in a livelier tone:

"You can not do better than to take a place in a family," I proposed. "I know of one where just such a person is needed. The husband is a mechanic, earning excellent wages, and living comfortably in a small house on the outskirts of the city. The young wife applied at our Bureau yesterday for some one who would be willing to assist her in general housework and look after a year-old baby. Her "help" would be treated quite as an equal, and have it in her power to make valuable friends and secure a permanent home. You would be very safe there, and I hope, satisfied."

The child burst into tears.

"Oh, madam! don't ask me to do anything *menial!* I was brought up so differently that the mortification would break my heart."

Yet she was fit for nothing else. Starvation was the alternative of household service.

Did you, my much better educated Mary, ever ask

yourself with what capital you would begin business? In more direct terms, if you were thrown upon your own resources, how could you get your living? The necessity for doing this seldom comes so gradually that, foreseeing it afar off, you will have time to gather up your forces and deploy them for action in the field. Financial disasters in our country are earthquakes of volcanic origin, bringing upheaval with overthrow; not the gradual settling of insecure foundations in which the advance of ruin is marked by cracked walls and sinking floors, signs that warn the wise to flee from the doomed dwelling. Like my unfortunate country girl, you would not be ashamed to work, but you must first know what to do, and how to set about it. Apprentices are not self-supporting, nor is apprenticeship easy when the habit of learning has fallen into desuetude. The busy can always get business to do. He who is independent of others' assistance will find that others depend upon him. It is a shrewd saying that nothing else is so successful as success. So nothing else is more impotent than impotency. The attractive power fails with the lack of cohesion, the one implying the other. There is a natural gravitation of work, which is power, into strong and *able* hands.

Youth is emphatically the time for acquisition, for the "learning how." Memory is unjaded, energies sanguine. Four decades must elapse before you bethink

yourself of fear of that which is high. Now, height is temptation and difficulty a spur. You are contemptuous of the brother who completes his senior year without deciding upon a profession; ask intolerantly how he knows what tools to select and how to use them unless he is certain in what walk of life his path will lie and what will be his pursuit. To your ardent imagination that word "pursuit" is expressive. His "walk" would be with you, a run—if you were pressed or distanced, a race. You suspect indolence or a want of balance in one who "has not thought very much about the matter," and opines, ten days before Commencement, that "there is no especial need for haste in making up a fellow's mind."

Your career is mapped out for you by Sex and Circumstance, you suppose, when *you* take your future into thoughtful consideration. For two, maybe three, possibly four years—you *do* hope it will not be five or six! you will live at home, and be happy all day long, with Mamma as matron, chaperone and confidante, and Papa as banker. Then—Prince Charming will settle the remaining twenty or forty years of your temporal existence as suits his royal will. Trusting him in advance, you doubt not that he will combine the best dispositions and deeds of father and mother. You will love him very dearly, and he will suffer you to want for nothing. If Common Sense hints that even princes and

predestined husbands have died and left widows weighted by helpless orphans; and suggesting this seriously reminds you that putting off the answer to my "What Then?" ten or a dozen years does not get the query out of the way, the gay confidence of your age comes to your aid. All the "other girls" live as you are doing. If you and they are laying up nothing available against a rainy day, your improvidence is sanctioned by custom and truest friends. You will pull through in some way. You have always managed to get along.

That is, others have managed you, and for you.





CHAPTER XV.

CALLED.

"GOD bends from out the deep, and says,
'I gave thee the great gift of Life ;
Wast thou not called in many ways ?
Are not my earth and heaven at strife ?
I gave thee of my seed to sow,
Bringest thou me my hundredfold ?'
Can I look up with face aglow,
And answer, 'Father, here is gold ?'"

—JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.



WE have brought forward and discussed but one, and that, perhaps, the least worthy of the considerations that urge the choice of a specific calling for you at this juncture of your academic course—viz, the propriety of casting an anchor to windward in the rough waters of life, in the shape of a provision for your temporal needs. I propose in this chapter to treat of other and nobler aspects of the same duty; of occasions and obligations that are immutable and in no wise contingent upon change of place and fortune.

Just as surely as not one of the million leaves in the forest is an exact duplicate of another, as no human face or character is a reproduction of any that GOD has made in all the ages past, or will create in the cycles yet to be born—just so surely and truly have you a work to perform in the world, intended for you to do, and for no one else. You are “called.” You bear the King’s commission, and by the very circumstance of your enrolment among the living, have given bonds for the faithful discharge of the duties assigned you. In this marching host there are no paid substitutes, and desertion is high treason.

It is a favorite among other flippant sayings of those who class women with children in intellectual responsibility, that we can not, as a sex, grasp cardinal principles. That our food—mental and spiritual—must be divided into bits convenient for us and laid, trimmed and seasoned, upon our plates. That we have a habit in discussing a broad general topic, of descending to personalities. That, as logicians, we force conclusions and assume deductions in a style highly confusing and exasperating to the manly mind. It is hardly consistent with belief in these feminine idiosyncrasies that our healthy craving for work of a kind and quantity apportioned to our tastes and energies; the desire to be something better than decimal points in the solemn sum to be cast up at the close of our day, should be

diagnosticated as a fever-whim, and treated with the sedative powders of general utility maxims.

“Be good and you will be happy,” is a draught ready for use at any time; and in all states of the system, it should be well-shaken and taken three times a day.

“Happier, happier far than thou,
With the laurel on thy brow,
She that makes the humblest hearth
Lovely to but one on earth,”

is a patent pill for splenetic affections, mental anæmia, and plethora, lowness of spirits consequent upon personal insignificance and for unwholesome ambitions. No family should be without it.

Mrs. Hemans wrote “Corinne at the Capitol”—unhappy woman! at the very time when she was drawing from the exercise of her poetic talent solace for outraged affection, and substantial support in pounds, shillings and pence for herself and the boys abandoned by the husband and father.

Foreseeing the probability that I shall be misrepresented on this point, I would state here in unequivocal terms, my belief that there is enough in the sphere of wife and mother,—*properly filled*—to satisfy the heart and mind of every reasonable woman. When the pregnant truth of the brace of italicized words is comprehended by all who enter upon these offices, Woman will have come into her Kingdom, and the Kingdom

of Heaven be nigh, even at our doors. To be her husband's "help," she must also be his "mate," strong in counsel as in sympathy, fit to work with and for him as well as to cheer his despondency and salve his bruises. While the mother cherishes, she must lead; must be herself the model for the copyist she directs. To effect these ends she requires the perfection of physical, intellectual and moral sanity.

Therefore—and I beg your attention to this sequence—she who is best qualified to do her duty to herself and her kind, in whom thought and impulse are healthfully disciplined, energies rightly-directed and strengthened by exercise, will fill the responsible post of wife and mother better than she whose spinster-life may be symbolized by the gyrations of a dragon-fly, her conversation by an exclamation-point, and all she has done to elevate or make happier her race, by a cipher. The girl who has no force of character, but is the embodiment of amiability, will degenerate into insipidity or sharpen into vinegary peevishness with time. The best that can be expected of the material is that it may ripen with matronhood into such saccharine flatness as makes the parsnip an unpopular esculent. The most desirable combination for the married woman is also the best for the single,—to wit, the union of a generous temper with marked individuality, a warm heart and thorough conscientiousness.

You are called, then, first, to make the best of yourself, by given means;—secondly, to determine by what path you are to attain this and the good of others, and having discovered it, to walk therein.

There are more reasons for the press of women who are obliged to earn their livelihood, into the profession of teaching than the one usually assigned and accepted,—namely, that it is an eminently respectable occupation and involves little physical drudgery. It is the nature of a being of the mother-sex to gather together and into her-care, to brood over and to instruct creatures younger and feebler than herself. The most satisfactory substitute for a family of her very own, is a school where this instinct can be brought into partial play. She likes the crowding about her knees of childish forms, the touch and clinging of little hands; the echo of her sayings in the thrilling treble of young voices. It is a comfort to the lonely-hearted to know that she is looked up to and believed in, and a pure joy to be asked for that which she has to give. In leading the lambs of the flock, she is herself led by Holy Mother Nature. Furthermore, by virtue of her gentler sympathies, she remembers as men seldom do, the painfulness and exact succession of the steps by which she gained such knowledge as she can boast, and is merciful to the small feet now treading them. She

is assiduous in removing stumbling-stones, lenient as to slips and stumbles.

Admitting these almost universal qualifications of sex for the teacher's work, it yet remains true that a genuine talent for imparting instruction is far more rare than we are disposed to imagine. It is one thing to comprehend a principle or a subject in its entirety; another, to be able to put either or both into intelligent practice,—a third and far more arduous undertaking to convey knowledge and the right use of it to the mind of another person, particularly if that mind is comparatively or wholly untrained. Unless you have this gift,—for a gift it is, and invaluable in its way,—do not select teaching as your calling. Your business must be a *vocation*, or you will be a pretender, most probably a failure, however resolutely you may persist in it, when everybody else has discovered your blunder.

- It is always true to some extent that we are likely to do well that which we like to do, and *vice versa*. When you can yoke and drive Duty and Desire together there is great gain in speed and in ease of progress.

But the field is vast, and the policy of cutting up large plantations into small farms is rapidly growing into favor in other sections and departments of civilization than the South. With the increase in the number of colleges and of those seeking a share in the

advantages of a liberal education, comes the natural division into "specialties."

"The electoral system which"—laments the Professor in "Avis,"—"is in danger of becoming so threatening to our Universities."

Even he recognizes in it "an element of Justice."

Women are no longer merely teachers, or governesses. They are eligible to "chairs" in Institutes and Colleges, and have the right,—one which, by the way, they seldom exercise—of writing themselves down, "Professors." This modification of ancient landmarks heightens the expediency of shaping your electoral course of preparation in the schools in accordance with the original bent of your mind and tastes.

We will assume, for the sake of illustration, that you burrow among the roots of dead languages with the zest of a truffle-dog. That test of the true linguist—born, not made—the disposition to *think* in the tongue he is studying, the incorporation into the structure of his own mind of its spirit and genius,—all this is to you a matter of course. German is a delight, French a pastime, Italian a bagatelle. Yet in arithmetic, like my homeless half-orphan, you could hardly teach up to fractions. To your room-mate, the friend of your adoption, who has had a part of your every thought for two years, chalk, blackboard, and problem are what the sight of the sword was to the disguised Achilles spin-

ning among the maidens. Music is the vital air of one school-fellow, and mephitic vapor to another who covers the fly-leaves and margins of her text-books with caricatures and vignettes; to whom every face is a "study" and curve and color are a living joy. There is one girl in every large class who would willingly write compositions for all the rest; another who is the referee upon whatever pertains to literature, classical or current; and still another, who devours historical tomes until you fancy that she must be suffocated by the dust of the ages.

These varieties and indications of taste are tokens of her "calling" to each of you, to be noted heedfully and consulted before your decision is made. So with the aptitude in knotting ribbons and making up and over bonnets and gowns, the "French touch" that have constituted you the family milliner and dressmaker; the sure and ready ear that would be invaluable in a telegraph operator; the lightning speed of finger-play joined to quick apprehension requisite in the practice of stenography; the correct eye and the "knack" for household arrangement and decoration which might, if cultivated, bring you into fashion and fortune as an architect.

I have enumerated but a few of the avenues by which women can reach the vantage-ground of self-support. With advancing and deepening civilization the number

is augmented. The fostering of artistic tastes creates a demand for products of ingenuity and skill which were unheard of a quarter-century ago. Models for advertising and holiday-cards, and the more dignified etchings for illustrated books and periodicals; patterns for wall-paper, friezes, dados, and carpets,—the catalogue is limitless until the bound of human caprice is reached, the fertility of fashion exhausted.

You may never need to practice any trade or profession for the purpose of earning daily bread for yourself and those dependent upon your exertions. It may—I pray that it will be the lot of every girl who reads these lines—to dwell in a sheltered home, maintained and protected by those who love her and esteem the care of her a privilege. Nevertheless, father and husband will sleep more soundly by night, and think the more calmly of the last deep sleep for the knowledge that daughter and wife will not be pauperized by the death of the one bread-winner of the family.

With all that I have said, I have merely touched upon the externalities of this subject in enlarging upon the prudential measure of preparing for the worst while hoping for the best, and designating some of the means to this end. The subtler, more pervasive, and, in an immense majority of cases, the paramount advantage of selecting and mastering a profession, consist in the effect upon the woman herself.

Paradoxical as it may seem, popular sentiment has decreed from time immemorial that it is at once our business as frail, dependent segments of mankind, to settle ourselves in marriage, and our reproach that we seek, to the utmost of our ability, to compass this purpose of our creation.

“Anxious and aimless,” wrote the humane Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, in recommending Californian emigration to the superfluous seventy thousand women within the bounds of the State.

“Anxious because aimless,” would have been nearer the mark. The liberated school-girl is exceptionally stupid or facile of adaptation to extraneous influences if, after the novelty of her long vacation has subsided, she does not miss the beneficent discipline that has regulated her thought and action for seven, eight, oftentimes ten years past. Accustomed to systematic employment, she becomes discontented and at length pettish and *blasè* without it. The stronger she is in mind and character, the loftier in her range of ideas, the sorer is the *ennui*. Society, the casual resort and diversion of the men she secretly despises as her intellectual inferiors, is adjudged all-sufficient for her,—not entertainment, but mental aliment. She has a good home; a father who gives her all the new gowns she asks for, and a liberal allowance of pocket-money; a mother who never grumbles at a houseful of lively young people;

brothers who escort her with phenomenal courtesy (in brothers) to rout and fête; and a wisely-weeded visiting-list of acquaintances. She is popular,—so long as she carefully masks the truth that she is not the conventional “young lady,” nor quite satisfied with her manner of life. What more can she desire when to these present goods provided by the gods is joined the prospect of marrying well in due season?

At the peril of being considered “eccentric” and the loss of the favor of “the men,” on whose sultanic grace her promotion depends, let her asseverate that she regards the caterpillar nestling in a secluded corner to spin itself out of sight in yards upon yards of golden floss a more worthy creature than the butterfly, that cuts the silk into useless lengths that she may flutter her half day on painted wings in rose-scented sunshine. It is idle to try to dupe ourselves and others into the conviction that, in the change of times and beliefs, the fashion in this particular has varied from that which obtained of yore. The man about town, the typical *élégant*, who is as inevitably a standing adornment of ball and party as are the ices and bouquets, admires sensible women—as such—no more than did the Lovelaces and Clement Willoughbys of Richardson’s and Fanny Burney’s day. The best-dressed girls, the graceful and indefatigable waltzers, the proficient in *persiflage*; the “cool hands” in flirtation, attract the

densest swarm of light-winged and light-brained Society moths. I have heard veteran coquettes acknowledge that the game, when won, was not worth the candle. But they burn it, all the same, down to the lowest snuff.

With all our modern improvements upon popular prejudices, some very sensible people likewise lose patience with a girl who dares think and utter such heresies as I have quoted, or be otherwise than content to do her duty—cut out by Mrs. Grundy, and basted by Custom—in the station wherein she is placed. Thus ordains the catechism of social ethics, with the “Whole Duty of Woman” bound up with it as an authorized Appendix. Her brother would be stigmatized as a fop, a literary trifler, a dilettante, were he, however wealthy in his own right, to settle down to the level of her everyday existence. We have educated our pretty bird in the use of her pinions, and then clipped them, or bound them closely down. Through long and patient years she has learned how to work; to be wretched without work, and now we soothe her flutterings with the placebo—“Do nothing, but be as happy as the day is long.”

In the endeavor to follow the prescription, she falls in love; gets over the brief intoxication, unless she is so unfortunate as to marry while it is upon her, and repeats the experiment with variations of the subject, until she quiets down into wifehood, or becomes too

confirmed an old maid to indulge or to be humored in such follies. In the latter case, however her vanity may have been wounded, her heart seldom retains a scar. Like the moon-struck suitor of Molly Bawn, she played at love-making because she had "nothing else to do." Many a man who complacently views his "jewel of a wife" as the prize awarded to his own attractions, would be enraged at an inkling of the truth that she would never have vouchsafed to him room in fancy or affection had he not happened to cross her orbit when she was in a state of chronic yawn over the emptiness of her life and the universe, and his naïve adoration supplied a new sensation. Had she been a shade less listless, he would not have had a ghost of a chance to woo—certainly not to win her. Many a woman, after wasting years of time and wealth of devotion upon an undeserving object, has died of a broken heart, who would never have loved a worthless man and suffered unto death if she had had regular employment for her thoughts and hands. Occupation, congenial and continuous, is the best panacea for ill-directed fancies of this sort, be the work nothing higher than designing patterns for wall-paper, or painting china to order, or even making up dresses and cloaks for the *modiste's* family connection at prices that enable her to deposit a goodly sum every year toward a fund for foreign travel, or other coveted luxury.

In the delightful "Autobiography and Correspondence of Mrs. Delany," we find her, at the age of fifty-nine, making cornices of shells for the Deanery at Delville; for her "bow-closet, festoons of shell-flowers in their natural colors." "And," continues she, "I have just finished running with mosaic ground in crimson silk, chintz covers for the couches and stools." In the same year she wrote "a moral romance for her own amusement," illustrating it with "drawings tinted in sepia." At the age of *seventy-five* she invented the art of making paper mosaic flowers, and completed in eight years one thousand plants.

"Sir Joseph Banks used to say of these that they were the only imitations of nature he had ever seen from which he could venture to describe botanically any plant without the least fear of committing an error."

Dr. Darwin also praises them as "wonderful in effect and their accuracy less liable to fallacy than drawings."

Busy, contented, happy, and honored to the last day of her eighty-eight years, she has left us a precious commentary upon the beneficial effects of a life filled to the full with various useful and ennobling pursuits. She who fears to work beyond her strength and thus abridge the term of her mortal existence can not consult a more pleasing and suggestive memoir of one who dreaded neither labor nor death.

If, for women modestly endowed with intellectual

gifts and unambitious, there are so many spheres of occupation and possibilities of usefulness, what shall be said of those who might be eloquent with tongue or pen; whose trained touch as nurses would solace the suffering, who, as educated physicians, could bring quiet into sick-rooms where the very appearance of a medical man must, from the nature of patient and malady, excite confusion and alarm?

Rugged old Carlyle—while he was in his way sincerely attached to the wife whose idolatry of him kept her above the depressing influence of what was virtual bondage from their marriage-morning until his stout heart was riven at her grave—was assuredly the reverse of optimistic in his views of woman's talents and destiny. He held, with the pugnacity of a British bull-dog born beyond the Tweed, to St. Paul's unceremonious formula of advice to the Church under the conduct of the young Bishop of Ephesus:

“I desire, therefore, that the younger women”—(the New Version has “*widows—or women*”) “marry, bear children, rule the household, give none occasion to the adversary for reviling; for already some are turned aside after Satan.”

But in response to direct interrogation on the subject of women-physicians, the honest Scot “sends all he has to say, as a friend for the use of friends,” and to this effect:

“It seems furthermore indubitable that if a woman miss this destiny” (marriage), “or have renounced it, she has every right, before GOD and man, to take up whatever honest employment she can find open to her in the world. Probably there are several, or many employments, now exclusively in the hands of men, for which women might be more or less fit—printing, tailoring, weaving, clerking, etc., etc.

“That medicine is intrinsically not unfit for them is proved from the fact that in much more sound and earnest ages than ours, before the medical profession rose into being, they were virtually the physicians and surgeons as well as sick-nurses—all that the world had. Their form of intellect, their sympathy, their wonderful acuteness of observation, etc., seem to indicate in them peculiar qualities for dealing with disease; and evidently in certain departments (that of female diseases), they have quite peculiar opportunities of being useful.”

He appends to this guarded admission his conclusion, “that women—any woman who deliberately so determines—have a right to study medicine; and that it might be profitable and serviceable to have facilities, or, at least, possibilities offered them for so doing.”

Did time and space warrant so extended a narrative, I should like to tell you what some missionary women who are at once physicians and religious teachers have done to mitigate the miseries of their sex in distant

lands, and in the dark places of our own continent. When I read and hear the stories of their work and their success; how the vision of the mystical leaves of healing for the nations has been almost literally fulfilled in the ministrations to afflicted bodies and misshapen souls, on the part of the sisterhood whose long-despised sex is one with that of her who bore the Lord of Life, my heart throbs high with thankfulness. Solemn old words sound through my soul;—the pæans of those who after long conflict, see the turn of the battle in their favor:—

“For your shame ye shall have double, and for confusion they shall rejoice in their portion; therefore in their land they shall possess the double; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads.

“Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed unto the end of the world—Say ye to the daughters of Zion—“Behold thy Salvation cometh!”

Not that you, my child, without vocation for medical study, or the so-called missionary field, are to imitate these heroic women in aught save steadfast purpose and patient zeal in the prosecution of whatever life-task is set for you. But just in proportion as the physician can labor more effectively than the mass of mission-teachers by reason of her mastery of a profession, you can act your part the better, whatever may be your talents and position, for the clear understanding of

what you can do best, and the determination to excel in your calling.

Be just to your mind in bestowing upon it the proper nutriment. Be merciful to it in giving it enough of this to sustain its powers. I wish that I could make you understand now, before you make the experiment on your own account, how the frivolities of the stereotyped girl-life; the hours appropriated to dress and the shams of etiquette; the froth of the chit-chat that passes for conversation; the so much worse than froth of gossip about one's neighbors and friends,—in brief, the refined do-nothingism of Society—lower mental and moral tone and belittle the whole being. Avoid this latter evil,—belittling and narrowing,—almost as sedulously as you would impurity. Stand firmly upon the higher plane won by familiar intercourse with master-minds. Know and maintain for yourself that Life has nobler aims than the fascination, for vanity's sake, of so many gallants per season. Reject the temptation to terminate the unworthy triflings; to curb the waywardness of your fancy; to gratify your prudent well-wishers and essay the novelties of an untried estate by entering upon a marriage which, however eligible in the eyes of others, is not, as you own in your secret soul, what you would have chosen of your unbiased will.

So far from the election and study of professions by

women acting unfavorably upon domestic life, I believe firmly, after a tolerably thorough examination of arguments and examples on both sides of the question, that the highest and purest interests of the Home are promoted by these. She who need not marry unless won to the adoption of the state of wife by pure love for him who seeks her, is likely to make a more deliberate and a wiser choice of a husband than she who has done little since she put off long clothes but dream and long and angle for her other half.

“A-waiting for a part-a-ner!” sings the chubby girl of five in the old-fashioned game of “Oats, Peas, Beans and Barley-o!” At fifteen, she chants it, joyously, with a chorus of sister-spirits. At five-and-twenty, the thinning band still raise the refrain, but with a quaver of uneasiness in their voices. Women who have “made their market” smile pityingly; obdurate men derisively, and gibe at the unwooed maiden’s anxiety to avert a posthumous calamity, the anticipation of which freezes the marrow in the bones of the girl of the period.

“Say what you will of the independence of single women,” said a girl of twenty to me. “I wouldn’t believe one upon oath who told me that she didn’t dread the obloquy of old-maidism. For my part, I hope to marry. I’m not ashamed to acknowledge that I intend to take the first good offer I have. Think of

the disgrace of having one's maiden name inscribed upon her tomb-stone! I am sure I *should never survive the disgrace!* ”

In her earnestness she was unconscious of the bull. At forty-five she is single still. Let us hope charitably that her righteousness sustains her. That is to say, that she expresses some ooze of emollient from the consciousness that, if celibate, it is not her fault. The knowledge of duty faithfully performed should be as Mr. Richard Swiveller said of an umbrella—“something.”

To return to a pleasanter topic:—The discipline of systematic work, with a fixed purpose, induces a patient habit of mind that tells to immense advantage in the discharge of the duties of wife, mother, and house-keeper. She who, to secure time for her “specialty,” has learned to divide and apportion her time judiciously, and to economize, what was once called in my hearing, the “betweenities,” will not be driven into peevishness or despair by the mishaps of days when “everything goes wrong,” and a novice would be deafened by the clash of seemingly antagonistic obligations. He who has built up his fortune by degrees knows the value of each penny better than does the heir to a patrimonial estate, or the speculator who goes to bed poor and rises rich. And she who contrives to save here an hour and there a day for the work upon which

her heart is set, becomes an adept in the art. That day is close-packed beyond precedent during which she can not espy, pick up, and lawfully appropriate some odd scraps of time. Emily Brontë kneaded her German into the batch of family bread, propping the Grammar over against the tray of dough and conning the morning's lesson while she wrought.

The Yorkshire parson's daughter presents to me a fair type of the manner in which most American women must, perforce, acquire the profession each ought to have. The thought of it and the resolve to obtain it must interpenetrate the mind, be worked into and between the mass of other and necessary duties, nerving hand and heart for the more diligent performance of these, that the cherished project which outranks without abrogating them, may be carried steadily forward.

We pause long and meditate dubiously over this one of Dr. Clarke's sayings:—

“The muscles and the brain can not *functionate* in their best way at the same time. One can not meditate a poem and drive a saw simultaneously without dividing his force. He may poetize fairly, and saw poorly; or he may saw fairly, and poetize poorly; or he may both saw and poetize indifferently.”

We who are women—especially those who are, to the best of their natural ability, women after Emily Brontë's kind—take issue with our teacher, so far as the

gentler feminine projects go. Dr. Clarke never knew for himself the delicious dreaminess of knitting-work, and how poetic fancies flow, full and sweet, into the mind of the knitter in the fire-lighted gloaming, as if invoked by the measured click of the gleaming needles. What experimental acquaintanceship has he, or any other man, of the thought-evolving properties of "white work?"

I like the quaint epithet for the long, straight seams of muslin and linen, the hemming and backstitching, and running and felling, that enter into "family-sewing." The textual principles of art can be learned as well over a mending-basket as in the school-room. The course of reading recommended in connection with any branch of science and literature is likely to be better digested if the student takes it in slowly, reviewing each paragraph in substance in the "betweenities" of threading her needle, fastening ends and setting another dozen stitches.

Mary Blake, whose "Twenty-six Hours in a Day" is a capital Mother's Manual, furnishes us with an epigrammatic text here:—

"You have all the time there is. Your mental and moral status is determined by the use you make of it."

Eugene Scribe, in one of his comedies, shows up a bas-bleu, who, blind to the intrigue her married daughter is carrying on under her mother's very eyes, with

her elderly husband's handsome nephew, harangues the company in her *salon* upon the effect of Mathematical studies in controlling the Passions. As we read the moral, however, it does not appear that the lecturer is not in herself an exemplification of the benefits of her vaunted pursuit, but that she has been remiss in the practical application of the principle in her daughter's case.

One of the gems of available truth scattered among the dreary sands of *Rasselas*, is Imlac's remark that "Many persons fancy themselves in love, when in reality they are only idle."





CHAPTER XVI.

WHAT SHALL WE DO WITH THE MOTHERS?

“The parent has, in strictest ethical sense, the first of all claims upon the child's *special benevolence*; *i. e.*, on his *will to do good*.”—FRANCES POWER COBBE, “*Duties of Women*.”

THE girls were coming home! Their school-days were ended; their home-life, as young ladies, was about to begin. This was the cause of the upheaval from its foundations, of the usually quiet household. The parlors were to be refurnished, the library fitted up as a music-room, where Aimée, who was musical, might practice, while Eva, who was not, entertained her friends in the apartments on the other side of the hall. Each of the fair graduates in one sphere—the *débutantes* in another—must have her own bed-room. Hence the sewing-room on the second floor, a lightsome corner chamber heretofore devoted to mamma's work, was given up to Eva. The house that had, up to this date, seemed large to

desolateness for four people, had grown suddenly almost too small.

“And where, may I ask, is mamma’s nook in this stirred nest?” I ventured to ask, looking about in vain for the remembered sewing-machine, work-table, and lounging-chair.

A shadow she meant should be a smile passed over the face of my friend and hostess.

“Ah! I must show you what a snuggerly I have in the front basement. It is light and airy and pleasantly retired from the gay bustle that, I foresee, will fill the rest of the house. I shall be cozily comfortable there in the evenings, and during the day it is a manifest convenience to be upon the same floor with the kitchen. It was my plan throughout”—hastening to check the demur she saw hovering on my lips. “The prime object now is the girls’ comfort and happiness.”

“I doubt if they will agree with you. They would rather think, as I do, that the coziest, softest, prettiest place of honor should be for her who, for all these years, has spent and been spent in their service. From their birth giving has been your part. It has been all outgo. When will be the income, if not now that they are able to go alone, are able to appreciate sacrifice and endeavor, and to reward these aright and openly?”

“I ask no reward except the knowledge that they are happy,” responded the true mother, softly.

The troubled smile returned. We have been friends from girlhood, and she spoke out what was in her heart.

“My day is over! As you say, they are able to go alone. Were I to drop out of their lives to-morrow, it would make no difference to them or to their brother, after the first shock was over. It is the natural lot of mothers in our day. I should be content.”

She put her hand on mine impulsively.

“Don't think it blasphemous, but I know how John the Baptist felt when he said, ‘He must increase, but I must decrease.’ Yet he loved the Lord better than he did his own life. Mine are dear, affectionate children. I am thankful that I have been permitted to rear such—very glad and grateful! I used to pray hourly, after my early widowhood, while they were little things about my knees, that God would spare my life until they were grown up. It came to me with a strange thrill, this morning, that I might leave that petition out *now!*”

“How old are you?” I asked abruptly, for my heart was swelling.

“Forty-seven. I was married at twenty-three.”

I was silent, because indignant and impotent. This woman's mother had died at seventy, lamented by all who knew her, missed and mourned most by the sons and daughters whose pride she was. I recalled her

active beneficence in neighborhood and church; her tender ministrations in the families of her children; her wise arbitrament in the affairs they brought to her for counsel and decision. My friend, her daughter, was morally, intellectually, and physically her equal. What had held me back from gainsaying her pathetic "My day is over!"

Should she live to her mother's age, were the twenty-three years that remained to her on earth to be such waiting as that of the husk shriveled upon the stem that bears the ripened fruit?

Ten years ago I tacked above my work-stand a card inscribed with a bit of wisdom evoked from Leslie Goldthwaite's quick, thoughtful brain—"SOMETHING MUST BE CROWDED OUT!" It has helped me over many a press of seemingly equally urgent duties; consoled me for inevitable short-comings; steadied me for the work of my day. My eye fell upon the silent mentor when I returned home, still revolving the problem set for me by the morning call. In the world at large, in the history of families as in the individual life, something must give way in the warfare of "Must-haves" with "May-wants." Was this the solution of what I had just heard and seen? of the multiplying similar instances of "children to the front," "parents to the rear" that vexed my equitable soul? Is there fault, and if so, whose is it, when what has been the hub of the wheel

is relegated to an unimportant place upon the circumference? To the child "mother" is authority, conscience, Bible. He dwells and develops under her shadow until such time as custom demands that he shall be consigned to tutors and governors.

When my youngest born, at five years old, came radiantly in from a walk with papa, arrayed for the first time in jacket and breeches, the faithful woman who had nursed him from his birth electrified us and drew from him a howl of anguish and mortification, by falling upon her knees, clasping him in her arms and sobbing bitterly, "I have lost my baby! I have no baby now!"

The son, setting out blithely upon his journey to college, warehouse, or office, where he is to learn how to earn his bread, the daughter, whose tears drop fast into the trunk packed by "mamma's own hands" for the boarding-school that is to "finish" her, may cry as sadly and more truly, "I have lost my mother!"

Friend and comforter, boy and girl, may find at each visit to the old home "mother"—as infancy and childhood know her—infallible and well-nigh omnipotent—never, never more!

Meanwhile, what of her who has learned from Nature and through years of practice to be "mother," and that alone? The brood that went out from her, callow, chirping piteously for her care and nourishing, return

in such bravery of fledging as half frightens while it fills her with pride. Their note is changed too. She listens bewildered to the talk of the girl of the period and that of the "fellow" who "keeps abreast of the times." The vital necessity of accomplishments unheard of in her day of pupilage, the cant of modern science, literature, art, and progress in general are foreign to her ears, indigestible by her comprehension. If she be very humble she may comfort, even congratulate herself that she has reared a race of demi-deities; may survey their brilliance in a tremor of delight from the obscure corner into which she has crept, as a bat may peer from a rock crevice or hollow tree upon the flight of eaglets in the sunshine. But, human nature being what it is, the chances are in favor of the supposition that the lowliest minded will feel aggrieved at her dethronement, albeit in favor of her natural heirs. Regarding this pang as disloyal, and a weakness, she will try to hide it, and so successfully that her most intimate friend will not divine it. Least of all will the daughter ascribe to her the possession of such wounded sensitiveness as would overcome them were they openly supplanted where they feel they have the right to rule, and their legitimate claims systematically ignored. They love her very dearly, of course, and always. Did she not bear and bring them up? Are they—her own flesh, blood, and bone—destitute of natural affection? Is she not "mother"?

Thinking and saying this, they put her, in more senses than one, upon the same floor with the kitchen, and know neither scruples nor remorse for the classification then or thereafter. For—and here lies their excuse, so well understood as to be seldom clothed in words—she is, in everything, behind the age. When they were “little girls” she dictated what they should wear and how the garments should be made. If they are people of moderate means, her little hoard of trinkets and laces, her stockings, collars, cuffs, shoes, were common property to her and her great growing daughters, from the time they “got to be just my size.” She had a way of complaining of this that amused them without hindering their depredations.

“The mother of such big girls has nothing of her own unless it be her skin and teeth,” she would scold, so plainly elate in the fact that they were old enough to wear her clothes as to encourage the free-bootery. It does not occur to the full-plumed young lady that her parent preferred to be robbed to the conviction pressed upon her by every daily incident that their interests are no longer identical, or even cognate. Their very underclothing is of different texture and fashion from hers. She is satisfied with three-button gloves. She would wear two-button, and save twenty-five cents on each pair, but for their protest. They sport six buttons in walking and visiting apparel, twelve and

twenty on party gloves. Their shoes cost twice, three times as much as hers, and are worn over stockings many degrees finer, with certain prettinesses of "clocking" and embroidery she never thinks of assuming, even when "dressed." This same "dressing" is with them a continual feast—with her a hebdomadal luxury. She can not bear to deny them "what other girls have," and their careless, happy eyes fail to trace any connection between the "We will try to manage it, dear," which answers their petitions, and her growing old-fashionedness. They do not analyze her motive in offering to make over for herself the black silk of which Mary is "tired to death," and to give the girl a robe of the latest and dullest tint dictated by artistic taste. Jenny's last year's street costume is frayed and shabby. Moreover, "everybody knows the old thing." Mamma, "who goes out so little" (naturally) proposes to take it off her hands, giving a new one in exchange. A series of such exchanges is not favorable to the development of "style" in the elder woman's attire, but lends freshness to that of the younger.

Mary and Jenny are bright, clever girls, ready with wit and needle. They "go out" a great deal and must look well. The house, if not refurnished at their *début*, is gradually transformed by their agency until the only unsightly piece of furniture in it is the nominal mistress. She looks out of place—is growing "poky," complain

the juniors. As time passes she is apt to become less lively in speech and expression, and they to wonder petulantly at her backwardness in learning new customs. The very table is set differently from "her way." The late dinners *à la Russe*, ladies' lunches, kettle-drums and high teas are a surprise and a strain to her faculties. The daughters, *au fait* to every improvement upon obsolete usages, are intolerant of what they consider her obstinacy when she hesitates to adopt them. Facile youth with difficulty receives the idea that novelty is oftenest pain to age. The sun, with the young, shines upon the landscape before them. For her who gave them birth it is the track overpast, "in purple distance fair," that draws her backward, longing glances as she walks on into the lengthening gloom of her own shadow. The usages of years, the sanction of "parents passed into the skies" make common things sacred to her.

"I'm not cross! I'm *discouraged!*" piped the little fellow who had been whipped for persistent fretting.

When our girls find mamma's temper uncertain, her mood whimsical, they can apply the anecdote.

It is disheartening, dear girls, let one tell you who has thought herself into a dull, fixed heart-ache on this subject, to be swept aside by inches, or boldly removed from the board where one was, not so very long ago, a figure of consequence. The process of grinding down from somebodies into nobodies, cuts well into nerve and

soul while it may remove the excrescences of vanity and selfishness. When the chipping, and wearing, and rubbing are over, our elderly matron ought to be an angel slightly clothed in human flesh. Whereas, being your fellow-creature, she too frequently evinces little akin to angelhood except the longing to fly away and be at rest beyond the reach of the untimely and, to her notion, unseemly schooling that embitters her present existence. She likes to be consulted, and she does not like to be patronized—especially by the children whose faces she washed and whose untidy tricks she chided—it seems but yesterday! She is already sufficiently conscious of her deficiencies, her ignorance of really valuable things, without being tormented by animadversions, implied or uttered, upon her perverseness in not sitting to learn at your feet of a thousand trivialities, momentous to you, but flint-dust in weight and in irritating properties, to eyes already used to the wider horizon of life that has no appreciable dividing line from eternity.

“O ye poor, have charity toward the rich!” prays Parson Dale in “My Novel.”

We mothers, enriched by the experience of years, grown patient and wise through the discipline of our long probation, beseech you to be charitable to our slowness and merciful to the stiff movement of mental muscles that copy with pain new postures and paces.

“Let us alone! for soon our lips are dumb!” is the silent protest of many a loving parent, set to lesson-learning when she thinks school-days should be over.

“Then,” murmur Mary and Jenny in concert, “if the case of the daughter be thus with the mother, we are to walk forever in the old worn-out path that tries us as sorely as the new can vex her! What, then, becomes of our æsthetic zeal, our skill in domestic art decoration—the house beautiful of our dreams?”

In another chapter I shall have somewhat to say upon this head. Now I lay down but one, and what seems to me a sound principle. Your girlhood's home, as it now stands, has been your mother's kingdom for more years than you have lived in this changing world. That it is neat, home-like and comfortable—that it *is* at all, is due to her thrift and toil abetting her husband's industry in another sphere of action. Her furnishment of her dwelling stands to her as a record of her life. That was the way in which homes were fitted up in “old times.” A new bedroom carpet was an exciting incident; fresh papering and painting an event; re-furnishing the parlors an era which seldom fell twice in one life-time. To accomplish any one of these required long foresight, economy, and self-denial that went toward the making up of the individuality and history of the house-mother.

Whatever may be your rights under your father's roof, while she lives, they are secondary to hers.

Should she choose to assert as much, legal and moral statutes would bear her out in it. She is not likely to do this. You smile incredulously at the suggestion. The danger lies in your selfishness or usurpation, not in her want of magnanimity; in your forgetfulness of the truth that while you may be crown-princesses, she is queen until her death, not in her disregard of your hereditary claims. What she yields to your petitions or dictation is entirely of grace. One day you will come into realms of your own. She will have no kingdom but this on earth.

One word of compassion, not of right. "Mamma" is antiquated in language and dress; in works and in ways non-progressive. Had she chosen to neglect you instead of herself; had she given to her own studies and mental culture the hours devoted to drilling you in early tasks; had she kept pace with society in place of sitting out the long evenings and bright days in the nursery; had the stitches set in small frocks, trousers, and coats gone toward the furbishing of her own wardrobe, you might have had less apparent cause to be ashamed of her. You would undoubtedly, had you survived the process, have now more and just reason to blush for your own defects.

For love's and pity's sake, then, try if this thought will not transfigure gray homeliness into seemliness and shining; if, by setting over against each lack of hers that virtue or accomplishment or physical perfection of yours of which this lack is the price, you may not grow in patient love and gratitude—even if you have not the greatness of soul that should beget, with these, admiration and reverence for the plain, time-worn creature you know now as “Only Mother.”





CHAPTER XVII.

INDIAN SUMMER.

“ Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendor in the grass, of glory in the flower ;
We will grieve not ; rather find
Strength in what remains behind.
In the primal sympathy
Which having been, must ever be ;
In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering.
In the faith that looks through death
In years that bring the philosophic mind.
WORDSWORTH, “ *Intimations of Immortality.*”

“ **T**HE Love that Lived !”

I read it with heart and eyes elsewhere
than on the back of the novel offered me
over the counter as “ something new and
striking.”

Close beside me sat a white-haired woman whose
hands trembled slightly and continually in turning over
a handsome set of books in library binding. Her hus-
band was at her right hand, her daughter—a fine, intel-

lignant-looking girl of perhaps twenty-five—a little in the rear. “Prescott,” “Froude,” “Motley,” I deciphered, by furtive glances, as the back of one volume, then of another, came into view.

“It shall be just as mamma thinks!” pronounced the husband clearly and slowly, stooping slightly that his wife’s duller hearing might take in intonation with words. “If she would like to have the set, and in this binding, we will order them without looking further.”

“By all means!” responded the daughter cheerfully.

“Something quite out of the common run, I assure you!” pursued the polite clerk in attendance upon myself. “Very interesting!” again thrusting “The Love that Lived” under my straying eyes.

“It is!” I said, with all my heart.

I did not eulogize his book, and he knew nothing of the picture worth a thousand fictions that I brought away with me. The white hair was a crown. The tremulous hands yet held the scepter. “Mamma,” at threescore and ten, was still sovereign. “*La Reine le veut!*” must authorize all decisions of the domestic council.

“This is as it should be!”

Then, my good sister plodder with me in the deep dust on the highway of Middle Age, the queen should study how to reign wisely and well. If we as women and mothers would protest against the disposition that

obtains in our day and land to build up the framework of society with green timber, we must prove the superiority of seasoned wood. To drop metaphor, if we would retain the influence over our children acquired during their infancy and adolescence, we must seek to do so by other means than the bald assertion of our natural (and accidental) rights in and over them. The mother who gave over all effort after intellectual growth at the birth of her first baby, must not complain that her grown-up boys and girls have outstripped her in wisdom, while she is still physically in the prime of life.

Of *their* duty to her we have talked in our last chapter. By the memory of her love and fidelity, her patience and her sacrifices for their welfare, they are bound by every principle of gratitude and humanity to show her respectful duty and affection; to defer to her wishes and obey her commands. Nor—since most women do not suspect their own decadence in intelligence and taste until some sudden contrast of themselves with their better-educated offspring throws the fact into unpleasant prominence—should the daughter set down to willful self-neglect her parent's obvious failure to adapt herself to the tone and tenets of the fast-rising generation. I have said before that it is hard to set one's self anew to con tasks when the habit of study has been long lost. I admit fully and freely that it is not only toil but pain to attempt the resumption.

My heart has bled at the sight of such experiments when the mother, spurred to effort by the desire to retain her children's companionship, or to escape their contempt, has tried, at forty, at forty-five, at fifty years of age, to make herself over; to remold demeanor, speech, opinion, even conscience, in conformity with the model set up by them. Sometimes a decent counterfeit is the result. Witness Mrs. Holgate in Mrs. Whitney's rare series of character-studies, "Hitherto."

"A woman who had begun æsthetics rather late in life. They sat, somehow, curiously on the substratum of homely habit and unintrospective common-sense. She had 'settled down.' Very much so, indeed. The settling had taken place a long while ago, and could not easily be disturbed. You would hardly expect new modes of thought or action from her, or a new expression in her face, any more than new ways of doing up her hair."

Yet we do not sympathize with Aunt Ildy's summing up: "Jane Holgate is a good soul, but she is a hypocrite!"

We are mortified with the good soul when she never can remember to say "article" instead of "piece," and sincerely sorry, with no touch of contempt, that she makes "ineffectual movements among her guests" at the conversazione, and insists anxiously upon hearing what Grandon Cope is saying when she catches the

word, "æons." As a metaphysician she is a palpable failure; as a transcendentalist, ridiculous. As the mother who clings, as for life and happiness, to the relaxing fingers that have until now been content to fasten upon her hand for support and guidance, who shapes language and thought and belief with as single an eye to their approval as she compounds the "tender muffins and the melting richness of the lemon-cake" for their high-culture tea, she is heroic and pathetic!

Excuse the long illustration, but I want Mrs. Holgate as a type. The trouble with her, as with a much more numerous and less-to-be-admired class, lies a great way back; namely, in the original "settling down." A man at fifty, if he be tolerably robust in body, and if he have neither overwrought nor wasted his nervous forces, is in the full glory of his maturity. His words carry weight, his decisions are pregnant with thought and experience. He *grows* now as he could not at thirty, evenly, broadly, steadily, needing forcing as little as lopping. His wife—the average matron—acknowledges, sadly perhaps, but without shame, that she is "too old to learn." I heard such an one, the other day, refuse to say "*per-emptory*," although convinced that the pronouncement was supported by the best lexicographers.

"I can't worry my brains over new notions, my child," she averred, plaintively. "I have said *per-emptory* all my life, and shall say it until I die."

Another, for the like excellent reason, will say "neuralgic" and "recognize." Still a third, for the same cause, will drink tea from her saucer, disdains the use of the dainty "individual" butter-plate set at her right hand at her daughter's table, and sickens family and guests by putting her knife in her mouth.

I characterize these and graver instances of the obstinacy these exemplify as worse than childish folly, as absolutely wicked disregard of the comfort and feelings of others. We have no right to "settle down" into selfish induratedness that shall offend or hurt those we love.

There are mothers—I wish I did not know so many of whom this is true!—who declare that they have no time for reading, much less for systematic study. One recurs to my mind with painful distinctness: a woman who, as a girl, was a zealous *belles-lettres* student, a pleasing musician, and eminent among her associates for her clear, sound sense. She has been for twenty-five years the wife of a clergyman. Their position and income are good; her health, with that of her three children, is exceptionally fine; she is not overburdened with charitable and social duties. Yet I have it from her own lips that she "does not read one book a year."

"Married women, who are mothers and housekeepers, have no leisure for literary pursuits," she laments.

She believes that she speaks the truth. I tell her of

a woman who bore eight children, and reared seven to man's and woman's estate; who, before sewing-machines were invented, did the bulk of the family sewing with her own hands—such exquisite needlework that the daughters preserve their christening robes as treasures of delicate stitching; who put up pickles, preserves, and potted meats with zeal and skill Mrs. Rundle might have envied; a woman whom nobody ever called “blue-stocking” or strong-minded, yet who for sixty years read everything she could lay her hands upon, from her own excellent library of Early English Classics down to “Middlemarch” and Matthew Arnold. History, biography, theology, fiction—all took their turn. A book lay ever ready within her mending-basket. I have seen her darn swiftly and beautifully while her eyes rested alternately upon needle and open page. Knitting was a favorite occupation, for she could read almost uninterruptedly. But her best hours for study were while her babies fed at, and fell asleep on, her bosom, “until,” she would say, laughingly, “they became wise enough to pull the book out of my hand.”

My clergyman's wife listens in polite incredulity.

“She must have been an exceptional woman,” she comments calmly.

I am wearied to the extreme of impatient disgust at hearing of “exceptional women” who “keep up their music,” and actually find time to draw, read, and *think*.

What one woman does—unless she be a *lusus naturæ*, and no generation can have *two* uniques—a thousand others can do. If we would elevate our young people's minds and aims, we must begin by raising our own. The help that comes from the down-stretched hand is better sustained and safer than the "push" from below. It is our duty to read, to study, to observe, that the onward rush of thought and events may not sweep our children away from us as we lie stranded, like the proverbial weed upon Lethe's wharf. All our prating of the "good old times," our tears over modern perversions, will not restore the one nor alter the channel of the other. And while nurseries have windows, "mamma," though tied to baby's cradle, need not be ignorant that the world moves.

The crying sin of American society is that it is "too young," therefore crude. Conversation parties are huge games of flirtation, or else stupid to boredom. Our girls can flirt with more grace and safety, dance more airily, dress better, and look prettier than any other young women on this planet. As a rule they can not *talk*. They lack ballast and tone. Even the intelligent daughter, whose eager mind craves food, and whose stored knowledge would be the riper and sweeter for such turning and tossing and winnowing as come from contact with more steady judgments and calmer spirits, gets so little of this at home that she matures unevenly.

You, as her mother, wrong her more than you dream of now—perhaps more than you will ever suspect—by sending her to others for sympathy in the aspirations, the enthusiasms, the despairs that belong to her sex and youth. You sustained a real and personal loss in the moment when she first discovered that her thought was beyond your plane; that her refinement of sensibility and height of aim were things you could not or did not care to appreciate.

Our daughters! It is a mystery beyond my understanding how we, as women, knowing for and of ourselves the unutterable secrets of longing, anguish, and blessedness that enter into the least eventful life of the least sentimental of us all, can err—I had almost written “sin”—in habitually underestimating the vital importance of mutual confidence between mother and girl. It is not enough that we encourage our children to talk freely to us, to confide to our safe and tender keeping feelings and hopes they would blush to divulge to another. We must prove ourselves worthy and able to give counsel no less than sympathy; must not have “settled down” below the level of their requirements. We may preach and write until tongue and pen fail us of “mother’s” superior qualifications as a confidante over the bosom friend of to-day, who may be the bosom serpent of to-morrow. But while the girl on whose full soul is laid the strong necessity of confession can add

to the recital poured into the greedy ear of her chosen intimate, "Mamma can not enter into these emotions, you know, dear. She is so much older than I that she has forgotten how young people feel. Her range of ideas is naturally different from ours," the misplaced confidence will go on.

I need but touch upon this point for my pen to probe many an old but unhealed sore. Who were the friends of our girlhood? To how many of these yet alive upon the earth would we intrust the least weighty of our present trials with assurance of comfort or sound advice? Of how many of the "secrets" made known to them by tongue or letter can we think now without burning cheeks and mortification of spirit? It is a pity if our delicate-minded, loving darlings may not profit in part by the experience we earned so dearly. It is not enough that we sacrifice our self-esteem by recounting our early blunders and reveal how shamefully we came to grief. The story will neither seal your girl's lips to her "dearest friend" nor open her heart to you, unless, with far-reaching prevision, you have kept the probability of this crisis in mind and prepared her and yourself for it.

I fear we are making the same mistake in our home life that some good Christian men and women are prone to commit, and which some pastors of youthful flocks inculcate by precept and example. Our babies and

infant-school bands are trained to sing and say, "I am Jesus' little lamb," "Jesus loves me, this I know," and "He bore the cross for me," until a certain or rather a variable period, known in formularies as the "accountable age." Then the wind that blew softly from "Beulah Land" and "Beautiful Zion" veers to an alarming quarter, even to the Mount that burned, and the children of wrath are admonished to flee for their lives from the mouth of the pit unmasked beneath their feet.

The truth being—in sad sincerity and reverence be it spoken!—that it is the shepherds' fault if the lambs are allowed to wander from the Master's fold. They should have been instructed to draw the nearer to Him, to lay hold more confidently of His strength as years and dangers multiply, and they grow into the sense of His worthiness and their need.

Thus, we mothers, who should never cease to be teachers, and can never demit our office of guardians—we to whose love the dear Father of us all condescends to liken his own—should study with pious craftiness to prevent the straying of our nurslings as they advance in age and knowledge. If they learn more rapidly than we, as is but natural, we have a reserve of garnered wisdom upon which to draw, provided always that we have not become like unto our babes in mental powers while tending them. We can apply to the novel theo-

ries and dazzling paradoxes that fascinate them the test of judgment kept strong and clear by continual exercise; can become and remain the balance-wheels to their impetuosity. I pity girls who lose their mother by the time they are fairly grown, although there remains in her accustomed place one who, wearing her shape and name, is yet but the affectionate nurse and housekeeper who, like Sir Joseph Porter, "means well, but don't know." In justice to "our daughters," let me add that where I have known one mother sue in vain for her rightful position as her child's nearest and dearest friend, I have seen fifty girls chilled and repelled by a want of congeniality of feeling and thought, utter paucity of sympathy with what most interests and moves them.

For their sakes, if not for our own, to avert from them virtual orphanhood and such life-wreck as may come, by gradual but sure sequence, from this bereavement, let us add to our daily prayers petitions for freshness of heart and vigor of intellect, for immunity from formality of belief and moral obstinacy.

One practical hint at this part of our talk, which may be useful to the girl and consolatory to the mother.

Before the golden calm of Indian Summer, come the long, wearying autumnal rains that beat the latest-blooming chrysanthemums into the earth and despoil the trees of their liveries of russet and purple.

A like *change of life* falls upon the woman, one that renews the memory of the unrest, the mental perturbation and physical pains of the transition from childhood to girlhood. With some, the season is like the passage of the Valley of the Shadow of Death. The smouldering embers of hereditary fires, kept under by the overlying crust of a manufactured constitution, break forth now, if ever. The pulmonary weakness, "cured" by a Southern winter or sea voyage the year after the first baby was born, slides a cold hand up to the lung that was "touched" then. The painless lump in the breast—that, after the last child came, revived an uneasy recollection of a story that a forgotten grandmother died of cancer—stirs into life and agony. There is a predisposition to insanity in some branches of the family the woman who has reached the second turning-point remembers, try though she does, to banish the imagination when she succumbs, against will and reason, to causeless depression, and shivers at nameless dreads.

Especially do the forgotten physical iniquities of her youth and middle-age, not recognized then as misdemeanors, accumulate at this epoch into a mountain of transgressions, darkening and chilling her existence. She had no time to take care of her *physique* while at school, and, indeed, would not have "molly-coddled" herself if she had known how to guard against the risks of

fleshly ailments. While the children were small, she never thought of her own health—what mother does? Even after her confinements she prided herself upon the “smartness” that set her upon her feet and about her household tasks before the month was up.

She is likely to have abundance of leisure for the recapitulation of these and other fool-hardy feats. It is the day of reckoning in the which every overdrawn account, every deficit in payment, every cunning attempt to glose over these by false entries or bold denial of the debt, will be dragged pitilessly to the light. Where-soever has been hidden the carcass of slain duty, there will the eagles of discovery be gathered together. Even to her who has labored temperately and dealt justly with her natural forces the period is fraught with discomfort. The blood surges to the head at the slightest provocation, making the eyes dim, and the ears to ring and roar. Without any provocation whatever swift waves of heat flash and throb from feet to crown, and one lives for a gasping minute in a furnace heated seven times hotter than an August noon.

The brain is not always to be depended upon for clearness, nor the memory for fidelity; constitutional headaches redouble in frequency and violence, and—crucial trial of all—“Mother” can not work as steadily as she is accustomed to do without paying the penalty in a day’s or week’s illness. She who never had dys-

pepsia before in her life must now learn to regulate the quality of food according to the dictates of a disturbed stomach, and she who has always "set such store by her sound sleep" watches for the morning with strained eyes and tortured nerves.

If ever you, her daughter, would repay, in some measure, the fostering care that has been yours from your birth-cry, now is your opportunity. Watch over her tenderly, wait upon her patiently, and wait *for* her hopefully. For—and here comes my promised gleam of consolation—her real self will return when the climacteric has passed. With some, and this often occurs with those who have apprehended the approach of the "change" with dread unspeakable, the passage is gentle and gradual, reminding one of what Greatheart says of Mr. Fearing's experience in the terrible Valley, in which "he was ready to die of fear."

"But this I took very great notice of, that this valley was as quiet when we went through it as ever I knew it before or since. I suppose those enemies here had now a special check from our Lord, and a command not to meddle until Mr. Fearing had passed over it."

Once traversed in safety, it is beheld no more. The pitfalls and hobgoblins and lions coming after the pilgrim "with a great padding pace," are left behind forever, and the woman may be said to take out a new lease of existence.

Said a physician to me the other day : "When I want *good* work done, I look about me for a woman over forty-five years of age."

There begins, herè, for "Mother" another and, in some respects, a rounder and stronger life than she has yet known. The renewal of the lease is upon advantageous terms. She ought to be worth more to her family and to the world than at any past date, bringing, as she may and ought to do, the sheaves of Autumn in place of the perishable fruits of Summer.

My honest, homely plea is ended. Again, I pray you, daughters, be charitable to us, mothers! And may GOD grant to each of us, my sisters, though eyes dim and hair whiten, the soul-fountain of perpetual youthfulness that shall attract and refresh all tender, growing things, shall feed, as well as beautify the lives we love!





CHAPTER XVIII.

HOUSEKEEPING AND HOME-MAKING.

“The making of a true home is really our peculiar and inalienable right—a right which no man can take from us;—for a man can no more make a home than a drone can make a hive.”—FRANCES POWER COBBE, “*Duties of Women.*”



ABOUT once in every lustrum the press of the country breaks out in active warfare on the vexed question of woman's work and woman's wages. The paper cannonade is carried on for some time between those who represent the employers, and the larger party who uphold the rights of the employed; a multitude of foolish and some good things being said on both sides;—then mutters itself into silence like any other harmless sort of thunder. Nobody is convinced and nobody hurt, excepting the novices among workwomen who have not yet learned that detonation is not reform, nor, of necessity, germane to it.

Among things worthy of record that grew out of such

a sham-fight about fourteen years since, was a brief, strong reply penned by Madame Demorest, the celebrated modiste and fashionist of New York, to the inquiry why so few women attain to complete mastery of any craft.

“Because,” wrote Madame (I quote from memory), “not one in ten thousand expects to make this or that trade the business of her life. It is something by which she hopes to earn bread and clothes until she gets married. Being perpetually on the outlook for the fortunate chance that is to relieve her from the necessity of paid labor, she is content to learn just as little as will suffice to keep her in her situation. The man, who knows that he is fitting himself for a calling he will relinquish only with existence, makes it a part of himself, and himself a part of it.”

Everybody professed to be satisfied with this solution, which was indubitably true and altogether pertinent, viewing the problem from Madame's standpoint. We understood, or thought we did, why those of our young women who are forced to maintain themselves are content with mediocrity in vocations that are but makeshifts at the best, and why those of us for whom they condescend to work while they are on their promotion consent to accept the results of “journey” labor.

Madame Demorest has, perhaps, accounted for

the fact that there are so few *artistes* in the United States. Who will explain the fact, yet more patent, of the growing neglect of practical housewifery on the part of young women whose hope and expectation are to possess and take care of houses of their own at some—perchance very early—day? That they are thus indifferent is no haphazard assertion.

I do not forget that cookery is taking its place as a fine-art in our land, and is, therefore, patronized by our “best circles.” I have seen the artistically business-like blank books open upon silken laps and rich fur muffs, diamonded fingers flying over them in the eager effort to preserve the directions of Signor Blot and Miss Parloa, during their “fascinating” illustrated lectures. I enjoy—nobody more—the fun of salad-clubs and cooking-circles, especially the “high teas” to which the intimate friends of the fair *cuisinières* are bidden to partake of dishes prepared “exclusively” by themselves.

I recall one which was conducted upon strictly conscientious principles, that began with raw oysters and wound up with confectioner’s ices.

“But indeed we got up everything else!” cried a candid member, when rallied upon the inconsistency. “That is, of course, Mamma’s cook made the coffee and broiled the chops, and the Vienna rolls *had* to be bought, you know!”

We recollect that Marie Antoinette made rolls of

butter on marble shelves from cream skimmed with golden ladles, and smile indulgence of girlish freaks. Playing at cooking is less hurtful than the "German," and less exciting than the whist-table. The graceful game does not blind the watchful student of their "tricks and manners" to "our girls'" general ignorance of domestic economy, their utter inability to enter, with credit to us or to themselves, upon the practical business of housewifery next week or next month.

I believe, fully and sorrowfully, that in this incompetency lies part of the secret of the early fading and invalidism of so many of our young wives. Our grandmothers did their own housework, often including washing, ironing, spinning, and weaving; bore many children, and lived and died in general ignorance of the rules of hygiene and orthography. Then ran like wild-fire over the country the craze of "women's higher education," and piano-forte makers and physicians grew rich. The women who were girls thirty years ago knew little enough of household management when they were married. They have, as a whole, seen to it that their daughters shall know less.

To exemplify the universality of this remissness, take two instances from widely-severed spheres of thought, action, and social position.

"I was the eldest of a large family," said the wife of a millionaire. "My mother was delicate, we were not

wealthy, and much of the responsibility of the care of house and children devolved upon me. I pity myself as I look back upon my burdened girlhood, although I did not then appreciate the injustice done to me. My daughters shall not be prematurely careworn if I can help it."

In pursuance of this humane policy, she has fitted them to become the accomplished wives of men not less affluent than their father, provided they can always secure the services of housekeepers and an able corps of servants to assist them in bearing the responsibility.

The second mother to whom I shall refer is as loving and ruthless for her offspring as the rich man's wife, although only the helpmeet of a small New England farmer. She has two daughters—buxom damsels—fifteen and seventeen years old; yet chancing to have business at the farm a few summers since, I found her pale and tremulous from a spell of fever, churning several gallons of milk, pausing every few minutes to recover breath and strength.

"Surely you are unfit for that!" said I, compassionately. "Can not your girls do it?"

"I don't think such hard labor is good for growing girls," she answered, the poor wan face softening as she went on. "I have had to work so hard all my days that I can't bear to set them at it."

"But if they marry," I suggested.

She sighed. "Ah! then they will be obleeged to come to it. There's all the more reason, you see, ma'am, why I should spare them while I can."

In the half day I spent with her I saw her knead the bread and get the dinner ready, thanking, with gratitude pitiable to behold, one daughter who picked up and brought in a basket of chips, and the other who ungraciously laid by a hat she was trimming for herself, to set the table.

"I'm obleeged to call on the poor children to do so many things that it's a wonder they don't get clean out of patience and run away from home," she observed in their hearing. "My sickness has been an awful cross to them."

The girls' faces said that she had not overstated the case.

The elder spoke out pertly :

"She hasn't been able to fetch in a stick of wood for over a month. Indeed, she's been ailing pretty much all the time since she had the fever first—a year ago in August."

"Yet," I answered, "she has done all the cooking, churning, bread and butter making, the family sewing, cleans windows and paint, makes the beds, sweeps and dusts, and fills up the crannies of leisure left from all this by taking in plain sewing and knitting. I do not think a healthy woman could do more."

The girl bridled at my tone.

“I am sure we just wear ourselves out helping mother!” she retorted. “I’m tired all the time, and half of my own work goes undone.”

I heard an echo of her lament uttered in more refined accents not many days ago.

“I don’t complain of the sacrifice of my time and pursuits,” murmured an affectionate daughter. “I am willing to help mamma in every conceivable way. I devote an hour of every day to dusting the parlors and taking care of my own room, and often make cake and jelly, besides arranging the flowers and fruit whenever we have company. But I don’t think mothers appreciate what their children do for them. I know mine takes all this as her due, and nothing more. She seldom even thanks me for it.”

Here is the source of discontent. Our daughters fit loosely into their places in our homes. What they do there is for us, and of grace, and they are defrauded if due recompense of thanks is not awarded to them for “helping mother.” We are not likely to rebel at this order of things, ours being glad and willing service. The fear of drawing down the suspicion of selfishness upon our singleness of loyalty by assigning a share of domestic cares to them as the work they *must* undertake *for their own sake*, blinds us to their real good.

Where is the mother who has the moral courage to say

to the emancipated school-girl—"You begin now another and important novitiate. Under my tutelage you must study housekeeping in all departments and details. In one year's time you should be competent to take my place if necessary. I expect and shall demand of you a practical knowledge of baking, roasting, boiling, frying, broiling, as well as of mixing. It is not enough for you to understand the art of preparing 'fancy' sweets. You must be versed in the mysteries of soups, gravies and *entrées*. Moreover, you must learn how to market wisely, and to accommodate expenditures to means. All this and much more of the same sort of housewifery will be imperatively needed should you marry. If you remain single it will yet be of incalculable service to you and a wholesome exercise of mind and body."

Yet this is plain common sense, and the sagacity of pure, disinterested affection. We are cowardly, false to ourselves that we do not put it in practice,—false to our trust, and cruel to our darlings in hardening our hands and toughening our muscles in order to keep theirs soft and flaccid.

It is almost inevitable that our young married women should break down under the sudden weight of care and labor. Tempers are frayed at the edges, spines ache and hearts are wrung to anguish. The overtaxed spirit joins in the protest of the feeble flesh against the strain and the torture.

At whose door lies the fault?

In many instances, mother and daughter may justly divide it. One errs after serious and unselfish calculation of the weight of two evils. She can force her child into a delightless routine of labor; be stung and stabbed by the sight of her reluctant performance of detested impositions and the hearing of her mutinous murmurs over the squandering of her precious time on what servants are bound to perform. Or, she can let her bonny nestling flutter free from servile chains, gladdening her home that now is, with chirp and song, with no prevision of future enslavement.

The daughter sins, generally, through ignorance and vainglorious judgment, convinced honestly, that she has argued the whole matter out to a logical conclusion. Her time and strength are worth more than a seamstress's, or chambermaid's or cook's wages. The world teems with seamstresses, chambermaids, and cooks, clamoring for the very work she abhors. On the right hand she sees demand. On the left, supply. Political and social economy say, "Bring the two together," whatever domestic maxims may advise. Before condemning the girl for shortsighted policy, let us see whether the fond father's reasonings do not tend in the same direction. The labor of an educated woman, — especially if that woman is *his* child, and her scholastic education has cost him

thousands of dollars—should, he predicates, command a better market-price than that of an illiterate Celt, whose schooling cost nothing. Else, the aforesaid thousands were a poor investment, and higher education a failure.

If there is a certainty that his accomplished daughter will never be summoned by Love or Duty to the presidency of another home than his; an establishment to be kept in order and provided with things suitable; in which people must sleep, eat and be cared for,—his representations have much weight. It seems a sorry business—a waste of fine material, to break in a blooded colt to the work of a draught-horse. But the blooded horse that can not draw at all in harness will hardly be selected for family use.

To descend to particulars; German, *belles-lettres* and music suffer no serious interruption from the hour or two of stirring exercise that precede the season of study. The fair novice is better in health, and if her conscience is rightly adjusted, more buoyant in spirit for the light housework that falls to her share. There is unfeigned joy in the knowledge that she is helping, if only so much as by the lifting of a finger, to ease the weight her mother has carried, unaided, all these years.

The saddest story written in this country and century is in a book from which I have already drawn one or two extracts. "The Story of Avis" leaves the reader

with an uncured,—perhaps an incurable heart-ache. It appears ungracious to handle professionally, as befits a housewifely matron, heart-fibres so tense and sore as are those of the woman-artist who is the heroine. It seems inhuman, too, after the author's plea:—

“Women upon whom domestic details sit with a natural, or even an acquired grace, will need to cultivate their sympathies with this young recoiling creature.”

In spite of our sober judgment and disapproval of the fallacies of “Avis's” reasoning, our sympathies with her grow fast and warm without cultivation, when we read her life-long protest against these—to her—abhorrent “details.”

“I hate to make my bed; and I hate, hate to sew chemises; and I hate, hate, *hate* to go cooking around the kitchen. It makes a crawling down my back to sew. But the crawling comes from hating; the more I hate, the more I crawl. And mamma never cooked about the kitchen. I think that is a servant's work. I'm very ugly to Aunt Chloe sometimes, Papa. On the whole, Papa,” added the child gravely, “I have so many sorrows in this world that I don't care to live!”

Almost twenty years later, won as we are made to comprehend, against her will and conscience, since she is wedded to Art, we see the betrothed Avis:—

“Across her picture or her poem, looking up a little blindly, she had listened to the household chatter of

women with a kind of gentle indifference, such as one feels about the habits of the Feejeeans. Unbleached cotton, like X in the algebra, represented an unknown quantity of oppressive, but extremely distant facts. How had she brought herself into a world where the fringe upon a towel must become a subject requiring fixed opinions?"

The author of "The Silent Partner," and "Hedged In," could not, consistently with the depths of true, helpful womanliness in her own nature, and her appreciation of the dignity and worth of common things and common lives, do otherwise than paint Avis as an abnormal creation,—a stray bird that had lost herself in a foreign and uncongenial clime. As a child she is to be pitied more than loved. Only the mother who died while she was an infant in years, understood her, even then. The "pretty mother," who was "a thin sweet vision, like a fading sketch to the young girl's heart," when "she recalled with incisive distinctness" that she had been "snatched, kissed and cried over with a gush of incoherent words and scalding tears," after putting the question,—

"Did you never want to run away after you had married Papa? Did you never care about the theater again?"

The wife (she "had beyond doubt, the histrionic gift,"—so said her grave husband) sobbed over the baby

who had but this "glimpse into her mother's heart"—
"Oh, my little woman! Mother's little woman, little woman!" Avis's unrest and her genius were inherited.

As a girl, we wonder at Coy's fondness for one whose affections, with heart and ambitions, are bound up in her art. A wife she ought never to have been at all, and maternal devotion is born slowly out of throes of as deadly anguish as those that brought her children into a home where they were not wanted. Her natural inclination and her subsequent growth are all on one side. She suffers from this excrescent development as from any other deformity. It is not more fair to accept her as a representative woman than to take as the typical American student, a young collegian of whom I have lately heard;—a semi-idiot upon most subjects and utterly deficient in common sense. He can not do an example in simple Addition or Subtraction; in History he is a dunce, and in Geography would be puzzled if asked to define the difference between a continent and an isthmus. But he acquires languages as by intuition, and is the lingual prodigy of his university, writing and speaking Latin, Greek, German and Spanish with equal facility.

Still another man is a walking Encyclopædia of historical and political lore. He can give the date and substance of not only every notable debate in the American

Congress since the establishment of our independent government, but of every Parliamentary battle that has interested the English people for the last hundred years. Burke, Chatham, Fox, North and Canning are as real in their personality to him as Bright and Gladstone. But this phenomenal memory takes hold of nothing beyond historical and parliamentary detail. For all he knows of general literature, and of the practical concerns of life he might be an animated copy of the *Congressional Globe* bound in whole calf.

Few men are great, even in one direction,—and fewer women. This small number of both sexes may plan the work of the world. It is carried into successful operation from age to age by people of evenly-balanced minds and healthful energies. Your one-ideaed man is as truly diseased in perception and in judgment as is the woman who rides her hobby of art, literature, social, religious, or political reform rough-shod over the wreck of domestic comfort and happiness. She who neglects to comb her hair and darn her children's socks while she is painting for posterity, or accepts an invitation to address a Woman's Suffrage Convention that calls her a hundred miles away from home when her baby lies ill with croup, would be as selfish in devotion to her specialty had her choice lighted on Kensington embroidery or preserves. I was once so unfortunate as to talk with a distressed mother who could not see her

way clear to go to her eldest son, dying from injuries received in a railway accident, because she was in the middle of spring house-cleaning.

“And *you* know, the servants wouldn’t half do it, if I were not here to look after them!” she moaned.

The boy died, asking with his last coherent word, “When is mother coming?” She never blamed herself. She was the victim of circumstances over which she had no control. Had she been a literary woman of note, the story would have found its way into the newspapers. Being of a strictly domestic turn, she missed the distinction she merited by singleness of devotion to The Object of her life.

Let us be fair in judgment and in verdict. While we do not shield morbidly-absorbed artists and housekeepers from censure by the excuse that, as women, evenness of development is not to be expected of them, we do not forget the measure of obloquy due to him who forgets wife, children, and his own physical needs in warehouse, office, or *atelier*. His neglect of assumed and sacred duties tells less upon the surface of home and society than would the like dereliction on the part of her who must order dinners and look after the family wardrobe, but it is one and the same sin with hers.

The perfect intellect in either sex is many-sided, rounded, firm in poise, wide in comprehension of the infinite, delicate in perception of the finite.

I remark in passing, that a charming example of the truth just stated is exhibited in a volume lately read in our home circle with such delighted interest as usually waits upon the perusal of an engaging romance. It is entitled, "The Formation of Vegetable Mold through the Action of Worms, with Observations on their Habits." The author is Charles Darwin, LL.D., F.R.S.

It is not then a token of inherent mental or spiritual dignity when the educated daughter refuses initiation into the homely ceremonies of cookery—objects to the troublesome details which are soon comprehended and put into practice by the half-witted Celt or the Scandinavian who can not speak a word of the language of her adopted land. The intellect that recoils from the acquisition of the simple principles of mixing, baking, and boiling, because they disturb the calm balance of thought, must rest upon a very slender pivot. The apprenticeship to unfamiliar and not agreeable work that makes college Jane "crawl," does not rub into her nerves more roughly than the alphabet galls the dull-minded scullion thumbing her "First Reader" every night at the kitchen-table. She has been twitted with her ignorance—"a gurrl grown, and not able to read an' spell!" Literature and all pertaining to letters are quite out of her line. She will probably not read one book a year after preparing herself for the work; but spurred by a single incentive, she drudges on stubbornly.

A servant of my own once begged me to "tache her to write." Her betrothed had told her, with the refined gallantry of his class, that he was "fair ashamed of her because she couldn't so much as read a love-letter, but must take it to the mistress to know what was in it." She had never been to school since her tenth year, and could hardly make out the sense of a printed page, but in three months' time she penned, without my assistance, a note to her absent lover:

"DEAR MIKE,—This is to tel you I am wel and hop-
pin you are enjyin the same blesin thank god. I have
lernerd how to wright an also how to reade wrighting.
now send on yure leters.

"no moøre at present from yure lovin

"MARY O'REILLY."

She taught me many and more valuable lessons than she had from me as she sat each night under the shaded nursery lamp, her coarse stiff fingers cramped upon the pen-barrel, and made straight lines, pot-hooks, and hangers, until the perspiration broke through the pores of her red forehead.

"D'ye think I'll ever be an *author*, ma'am?" she would ask anxiously sometimes, in submitting the exercise to my inspection.

"Yes, Mary," I always answered, with no disposition to amusement at her blunder.

Referring once more to "Avis," we read:—

"The usual little feminine bustle of sewing he (Ostrander) missed without regret. Women fretted him with their eternal nervous stitch, stitching, and fathomless researches into the nature of tatting and crochet. He rather admired his wife for sharing so fully his objection to them. Avis was that rare woman who had never embroidered a tidy."

Again, "It was not much perhaps to set herself now to conquer this little occasion; not much to descend from the sphinx to the drain-pipe at one fell swoop; not much to watch the potatoes while Julia went to market; to answer the door-bell while the jelly was straining; to dress for dinner after her guests were in the parlor; to resolve to engage a table-girl to-morrow because Julia tripped with the gravy; to sit wondering how the ironing was to get done, while her husband talked of Greek sculpture—to bring creation out of chaos, law out of disorder, and a clear head out of wasted nerves. Life is composed of such little strains; and the artistic temperament is only more sensitive to, but can never hope to escape them. It was not much; but let us not forget that it is under the friction of such atoms that women far simpler, and so for that yoke, far stronger than Avis, have yielded their lives as a burden too heavy to be borne."

The summary is painfully realistic. Each of us who

has kept house for a single year subscribes groaningly to the accuracy of the sketch. The question raised by my reason and supported by experience is, whether even to the artistic temperament brier-scratches are ever fatal injuries. Annoyances they are, these atomic particles and points that bury themselves in tender skins. While the smart is new the sufferer is prone to cry out that her senses are deserting her; but when the prickles are withdrawn, brave spirits arise superior to temporary irritation. A woman who had professed her willingness to spend two hundred days "in copying a carrot that hangs twenty feet away from you against the wall" ought to have been not merely brave but patient.

Domestic life has its peculiar trials, but so has every other condition of this, our mortal probation. They who wear thin shoes and step gingerly will feel the pebbles in the path. It is the firm tread of the stout boot that presses them into the earth.

You may pass a long, useful, and contented life without learning how to embroider a tidy. As American homes now are—and there is faint prospect of reconstruction of our domestic system—no American woman, however exalted or assured her social rank, or whatever may be her accomplishments, can afford to remain ignorant of practical housewifery. This is a rule without exception. Disregard of it is unwise and selfish.

Absorption in your chosen art or profession, however worthy it may be in itself, becomes a fault when it ignores the claims of others upon time and consideration. It is *not* enough that your aims are high, your ends noble. The canal leads to the ocean as surely as does the broad beneficent river, but it is only a straight, muddy ditch throughout its length.

To absorb, to retain, to be nourished, to grow—all this is to *receive*. This is Happiness. To give of what you have and are—of *yourself*—that others may be better and happier—this is Blessedness.

By a beautiful provision of Nature, self-denial and work offered in this spirit and for this purpose ennoble instead of dwarf heart and intellect. The antithesis of this proposition is no less true; to wit, that the pursuit of any object to the exclusion from thought and care of all besides, especially when the thing is coveted because the possession of it will contribute to our own enjoyment or advantage, will eventually harden and narrow the character.

To be an excellent housekeeper is in itself one of the lesser aims of life to a woman of culture and refinement. The ministry to her kind by means of an intelligent comprehension of it, and just personal attention to “domestic details,” should be a study and a purpose.



CHAPTER XIX.

DRESS.

"Katherine. I'll have no bigger ! This doth fit the time,
And gentlewomen wear such caps as these.
.
I never saw a better-fashioned gown,
More quaint, more pleasing, more commendable.
"Taming of the Shrew."



STATISTICIAN, curious in such matters, has laid before me a computation to the effect that one-third of the time of the working-force of the average American household is employed in making clean the clothes soiled during the other two-thirds. Furthermore, that at least one-third of the quantity remaining after this subtraction, is consumed in buying, making, and remodeling the garments designed to cover these perishable frames of ours.

"Gallantry forbids me to hint," comments my philosophical friend, "how many immortal beings are, by this order of affairs, converted into galvanized dummies

for the display of 'clothes.' Much less would I dare conjecture how many women become, through such agencies as I have described, variegated husks, gilded swaths enclosing shriveled kernels and dusty hollowness."

All this catches the fancy of cynic and philosopher (I do not use the terms in this connection as interchangeable). Men are so used to declaiming against feminine methods of doing work, and feminine fancies, that they recognize the familiar jargon, accept it and pass it on, unchallenged and unchanged.

Shaking our judgment free from plausible platitudes, let us consider one or two self-evident propositions.

We must—being in a state of "artificial civilization"—wear clothes. Clothes must be clean, whole, decent, and suited in quality and make to the wearer. In the last clause we descry Prince Ahmed's pavilion. The millet-seed, when cracked, reveals the countless involutions of a canopy which unfurls to cover a mighty army.

What is "suitable"?

While the question seems to be clogged with peculiar complications in our democratic country, those who have traveled afar can testify that neither the peasant's garb, usually so picturesque, often so uncomfortable and senseless, nor conventual robes, rid the women who wear them from the pleasing anxieties that roll up

into a burden of care with those who exalt "Wherewithal shall we be clothed?" into the dignity of a Profession. The Quaker maiden, with face modest and fresh as an English daisy, bestows as much thought upon the texture and shade of the dove-colored gown and close bonnet as does Miss McFlimsey upon the gorgeous costume to be ruined in one night's whirl at a "crush" ball. In fact, I doubt if careful examination into the circumstances and mental exercises of the two women would not reveal that she who clothes herself and family neatly, but with painstaking economy, making "auld claithes gar amaist as well as new," expends more time and pains upon ways, means, and effects in dress than does she whose "variegated husk" is putative evidence of "dusty hollowness."

Frown as the utilitarian and ascetic may upon the pretty trifling, the truth can not be set aside that dress has been a fine-art throughout the ages that have groaned themselves away into Eternity Past, since Eve, crouched among the bushes of Eden, hurriedly sewed up the seams of her fig-leaf apron.

Hear stern Isaiah's prophecy against the wanton daughters of Zion:

"In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls and their round tires like the moon; the chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers, the bonnets, and

the ornaments of the legs, and the head-bands, and the tablets, and the earrings, the rings, and the nose-jewels, the changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the cringing-pins, the glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the veils."

We are moved by the glib catalogue to a shrewd surmise that the seer may have copied it from the advertising column of the "*Jerusalem Journal des Modes*," or interviewed a court-milliner.

The world and women are better and more sensible now than in the generation when the fisherman Apostle—himself a married man, with a mother-in-law resident under his roof—recommends the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit to wives, as preferable to "plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel."

An unprejudiced child, in reading a passage that has been quoted into shreds, must perceive that Peter does not prescribe this spiritual adornment as the bodily covering, or prohibit the "putting on of apparel." We have outgrown the idea that sin *per se* lurks in furs, laces, velvets, or even diamonds. The Wesleyan sister who, being in conscience bound to draw the line of demarcation between church and world somewhere, drew it at feathers, wearing flowers instead in her Sunday bonnet, would be laughed at now in her own denomination. Every such distinction is arbitrary, and the condemnation of recusants which is based upon it is un-

christian and irrational. It is such fierce elevation of non-essentials into test-questions of inward graces that has brought scandal upon the professors and teachers of a Faith which is holy, harmless, and undefiled.

Nor is there folly in cultivating a just taste for this Fine Art. A study of becomingness, of harmony of fabrics and colors—a knowledge of the prevailing modes and the ability to adapt these to the wishes and means of wearers—are as reasonable, in their way, as the endeavor to be so far acquainted with the general principles of music and painting as to be competent to discern between the good and bad of each art. Because a worthy thing is abused there is no need of casting wholesale opprobrium upon it. Because a long-haired cockney has nursed his natural liking for music into a tumorous outgrowth that absorbs every other intellectual sense and offends the taste of his neighbors, am I to eschew Mendelssohn and shudder at Wagner? If my acquaintance over the way, in her ambition to become the first woman-artist in America, lets her house go unswept, her youngest-born tumble about the front yard clad in a single brief garment, and his predecessors in age roam the town as wild as Zulus, shall I look coldly upon Raphael and doubt the piety of Fra Angelico?

It would be fatuous to dispute the statement that thousands of women in Christian lands yearly sacrifice virtue and their hopes of heaven to a mad passion for

dress and ornament; or that tens of thousands starve their minds by ultra-devotion to that which treats of the seemly covering of the corporeal part. For such devotees sane people have the same measure of contemptuous pity that they feel for gluttons and drunkards. The "all things richly to enjoy" of Divine gift and permission have been perverted into licentiousness. There is a lust for dress which falls short of downright bestiality only by being in itself trivial and mean. It is the infatuation of small minds, and is, almost unexceptionally, the external sign of excessive vanity and a limited range of ideas. The capital *I* that symbolizes personality, and should, in width, hardly exceed a filament of gossamer, is stretched into a cloak for the envelopment of the whole being. Over the upper edge the wearer sees the outer world by glimpses.

"What *I* shall wear" is, in the circumstances, a consideration of gigantic interest. That so few others care what the result of the lucubrations may be, or note the "effect" that has drawn off the shallow pool of thought to the muddy ooze of the bottom, is so seldom suspected by the egotheist that she hardly needs our pity.

This is one extreme of the arc described by the pendulum, as the other is personal neglect and slovenliness. No woman—or man either, for that matter—can afford to be absolutely indifferent to dress. The obligation laid upon our sex to *make* home by seeing to it

that food is well-cooked and attractively served, and rooms clean, comfortable and pretty, extends to neatness of person and such attention to attire as shall not only avoid offending the eye, but please it and gratify just taste.

This may be denominated the *Æsthetic Morality of Dress*. I earnestly commend the consideration of it to those wives and daughters who imagine—if we are to judge by their practice—that working-clothes must needs be slatternly; the women who make a market for the cheap calico wrappers trimmed with tawdry strips of more gayly-colored chintz, that flap against the door-posts of low-priced stores. They are the class who sit down collarless to breakfast, their hair in crimping-pins, their feet in ragged gaiters, or slippers down at the heel. It is hard for a woman to respect herself in such a garb. Whether she suspects it or not it is yet more difficult for her husband or father to respect her. However busy a man he may be, he would rather wait ten minutes longer for his morning meal when his wife or daughter is the cook, in order that she may slip on a decent dress, with a line of white at the throat—that indispensable insignia of ladyhood.

“The absence of a collar will impart a cast of vulgarity to the finest face,” wrote Miss Leslie in the first quarter of this century.

It is a rule that holds good in this, the last.

• There is a mixture of parsimony and ostentation in reserving one's best clothes, sometimes the only passable ones, for the delectation of "company" at home and abroad. The habit is apt to extend to other things; to beget a fashion of dishonest reckoning and sharp practice in word and behavior, if it does not finally confirm itself into the principle of putting money, strength, talent, courtesy, even religion where they will show to most advantage and bring in the largest returns of personal benefit. It is scarcely possible to overestimate the influence of these minor points of ethics upon character and conduct. Prevarication in action is as culpable as utter falsehood. She who wears ragged underclothes beneath a velvet coat and spreads her children's beds with coarse, unbleached sheeting, that she may drape the state couch in the guest-chamber with fine linen, is seldom honest and thorough in other respects. The father or husband who pays for fine clothes has surely the right to see more of them than the visitor of an hour or a day.

It is not practicable to lay down any general directions, much less specific rules, for the guidance of those who would dress tastefully "if they only knew how." In this regard fashion-plates are a nuisance and Jennie June a snare to such as have not the root of the matter in them. A suggestion or two, however, may suffice for the correction of glaring abuses of the liberty of

construction and action which obtains with some of the uninitiated.

Unless you have money in abundance and irrefragable taste, do not essay striking costumes. A bonnet of "leonine" yellow, crossed by a lily-white plume, may become a beautiful brunette at a fashionable reception. With a promenade suit it is vulgar; in church it approximates profanation. She who can afford but one best dress for street, visiting, and Sunday, should choose black or sober colors, and shun the, to some people, easily-besetting sin of gaudy trimmings. Wear what you will in the way of light and fanciful raiment in-doors for afternoons and evenings, if a florid taste craves expression. In public places they are a solecism.

Study consistency of attire everywhere and always. A silk cloak and a common stuff dress are, in Mr. Weller's phrase, "unekal." When you air your second-best suit abroad, let the second-best bonnet keep it in countenance. A dress hat and a cheap gown remind one versed in the etiquette of apparel of a cactus in full bloom above the ungainly stem and abortive leafage.

Hygienic reformers themselves being judges, there has never been a costume—national, provincial, or individual—which met the requisitions of health and good sense. Eve's fig-leaves had the merit of simplicity, economy, and comfort in the climate of Para-

dise. Her daughters have seldom compassed so much with one hundred times the labor. The practical mind has little pleasure in fighting unreformable abuses. It is, moreover, possible that this question of modern appareling is a red rag which has sent the blood in blinding surges to the assailants' heads. There is a tremendous weight of evidence in support of the assertion that women dress more comfortably and more in conformity to the laws of decency and health now than did their mothers, grandmothers, and very-far-back-indeed ancestresses. We have Isaiah and ancient sculpture in corroborative evidence of this audacious assertion.

We wear flannel next the skin ; plenty of loose, warm undergarments in winter, thick shoes and fur coats, few skirts, and those short enough to allow us to walk with ease, and educated women no longer lace tightly.

Dr. Thomas, in his elaborate work "On the Diseases of Women," writes :—

"Chapter upon chapter has been written against tight lacing in so vehement a style that the reader, if she did not reflect, might suppose that to this abuse could be traced the whole catalogue of feminine ills. If perchance, however, she inspected the unyielding stays which once compressed the sturdy form of Alice Bradford, and which are now preserved in Pilgrim Hall in Plymouth, she would at once see that the indictment was not a valid one ; and similar objections might be

raised against all the other causes which I have advanced, viewed as isolated influences."

Tight lacing makes one intensely uncomfortable to begin with, and long persistence in the foolish practice reddens the nose irremediably and as certainly as tight shoes produce sick headache. Volumes of physiological argument would not abolish the fashion of wasp-like waists as speedily and effectually as the announcement made above. The outraged blood, forced out of its legitimate channel, retreats vengefully to a point where its settlement must ever remain a source of keenest mortification. I have heard of a woman who would have been beautiful but for this blemish, and, in desperation, applied leeches repeatedly to the inside of the nostrils to abate the nuisance. The experiment was unsuccessful; the sullen red held the fort obstinately. Nor have I ever known a case where lungs and heart were subjected to long-continued compression, in which in due time the violence done to the vitals was not proclaimed by a "crimson-tipped" nose as fiery as a dram-drinker's—that is, unless the author of the deed died of consumption, apoplexy, or *angina pectoris* before the height of bloom was perfected.

The fact of the desuetude of the suicidal custom,—to the unborn offspring of the offenders often a murderous one,—is proved by unmistakable signs. Where fifty women padded their busts thirty years ago, per-

haps one exceptionally flat-breasted one does now. Most of our girls need no such appliance, being broad of shoulder and deep of chest, and our elderly matrons show a growing propensity to copy their English sisters in a gain of plumpness with advancing years. To be thin is no longer the acme of feminine desire, especially when a kindly coating of flesh is needed to fill out sinking cheeks and defacing wrinkles.

The young girl should be *fitted* with some one of the numerous excellent bodices or corsets now in vogue, by the time she is thirteen or fourteen. These, we may remark, are totally unlike Alice Bradford's "unyielding stays," or those with which our own mothers girt them about,—machines as straight and well-nigh as stiff as tree-boxes. They were drawn as tightly about the soft upper parts of the abdomen as silken and hempen strings could pull them. Many had not the strength to lace their corsets *properly*. I have a vivid recollection of standing by, an open-eyed and commiserating witness of the mysteries of the dressing-room, when as a child I was permitted to see grown-up young lady visitors prepare for dinner or dance. Each, in turn, commanded the services of a stout serving-maid who corded her with a power of muscle that would have insured a Saratoga trunk against the most energetic baggage-smasher. Upon ordinary occasions the lady, if she were of an independent turn, laced herself up,

tussling valiantly to insure her bondage. A common custom was to cast a loop of the lace about the bed-post, as a convenient belaying-pin, and strain upon this with the whole weight of body and muscle until the creaking construction of buckram and bone closely banded the waist as in a vise. The breasts were forced up to the collar-bone; the ribs gradually compressed until they overlapped one another. Women fainted in crowded assemblies then, for want of breath, which would never have had room to re-enter the collapsed lungs had not the instant expedient in all cases been to cut the corset-strings. Boarding-school girls often slept without loosening the lacings that would require half-an-hour's work in the morning to make fast again. We of this generation are paying, in life-blood and tears, for this unholy work.

Our girl's corset is pliable and carefully-adjusted to the figure. It is the mother's fault if the child purchases a "nineteen inch," when she should wear nothing smaller than "twenty-two." Unless this blunder is made, it is not possible for such a corset as, for example, "*La Reine*," to press hurtfully upon any part of the frame. The hips are protected, as is the abdomen, by their covering, the spine gently braced and kept straight, and the swell of the breast encouraged by the amplitude of the curves enclosing it. One recommendation of such a bodice is that it will not continue to fit

if tightly laced. The thin whalebones bend viciously—then break, and prick the sides of the transgressor. The finely-tempered steel fronts guarding chest and stomach snap and the garment must be thrown aside, ruined through ill-usage. Another time the foolish wearer will know better than to attempt to defy Nature and the Rational Corset-maker.

I make a place gratefully here for part of an article on "Dress Reform," which I clip from the Newark (N. J.) *Daily Advertiser*. It is a "leader," from the pen of the scholarly and practical editor, Dr. S. B. Hunt.

I have an object in drawing freely from prominent journals pertinent comments upon the subject of this work. It is interesting and edifying to note in these the drift of the best minds, the conclusions reached by the most acute perceptions in a profession that holds in its working ranks some of the ablest men of our times. The Press is not an instructor alone nor yet the minute recorder of passing events, nor again only the Physician that counts pulse, respiration, degrees of temperature in the system of the mighty Public it has in ward. It is the Seer of the Century, chronicling the coming of wind and storm and pestilence and the majesty of fair weather, when air and sky are to the common observer without presage.

I insert extracts from periodicals and from books,—as well-written and as much to the point under con-

sideration as Dr. Hunt's,—in the body of our volume, in preference to using them as foot-notes, for two reasons.

I would avail myself to the full of the apt quotation, borrowing for my opinions all the aid the endorsement can give. And, secondly, I would insure for the extract a reading more careful than the casual glance that scarcely lingers longer on the starred foot-note than while the page is somewhat leisurely turned.

The testimony of so intelligent a professional man and writer upon physiology and hygiene is not to be carelessly dismissed, even by the radical unused to seeing over, or around, his hobby.

“Men are supposed to dress with simple reference to comfort. Women, for some inscrutable reason, are equally supposed to torture themselves for the sake of shape, and there has been no end of foolish talk on the subject of tight lacing and small waists, all resulting in absurd and inartistic exaggerations of the female form. The humbugs in ladies' dress are plain enough, and any observer, even the most charitable, detects the padding of the too voluminous form, interrupted by a closely girded and slender waist. How many volumes have been written on the subject of tight lacing can never be told. It has been howled about from platforms and in all the virtuous magazines. But the fact is that a woman who affects loose garments is lazy and violates

the laws of her formation. The present style of dress, close-fitting and clinging to the form, is unmanly, but it is very womanly.

“The wiser anatomists and physiologists say that a man breathes with his abdomen. There is a regular increase in the expansion of his chest down to the line of the midriff or diaphragm. The lower ribs are freely movable, widen out with every inspiration, and crawl in with every expiration, while the muscles of the abdominal walls supply the exhaust and the expulsive force of the lungs above. That constitutes the manly form. It is a true part of his machinery. But it is not womanly, and only a lazy, or, to use a phrase as descriptive as it is coarse, a ‘sozzling’ woman will habitually wear a loose gown and neglect what physiologists regard as the proper support of the female form when engaged in the industries of life, in walking or in the upright position. The universal sense of women, so far as regards decorum in appearance, is to be ‘well set-up,’ like a soldier going on guard-mount, who is expected to be clean throughout, closely-buttoned, and steadily erect. When we speak of a man who is ‘soldierly,’ we mean a fellow with high shoulders, full and capacious waist, and thin flanks, with rather light weight in the quarters. When we consult the female graces—which fully expressed mean the highest and noblest health of woman—we mean precisely the opposite conditions.

'A low forehead is an excellent thing in woman,' and with that go the drooping shoulder, the diminishing waist, and the full lower form which it is a disgrace for any man to carry around. The Greek sculptors had this idea exactly, and it is charmingly expressed in the 'Three Graces,' a work which is as pure as it is beautiful.

"There is another point in this which we do not think involves any other indelicacy than such as pertains to all anatomical facts. When a woman breathes, or it may be a little untrained and ill-cared-for girl, she breathes with her upper ribs and lifts her collar bones. No healthy man ever breathes in that direction. When we see a man puffing up his upper chest the immediate suggestion is that consumption is his doom. With a woman the same lung motion is an evidence of sweet and glorious health. The bottom fact is, that the nearer a woman approaches the masculine form the more unsexed she becomes. The reason of the female form, the scanty waist, the strong but narrow diaphragm, are a part of the diplomacy of nature, and mean the resistance of our occasional growing force, which, with a man's natural form, would obstruct the action of the heart and impede the respiration. The anatomists, who have seen thousands of skeletons of savage or civilized training, find always the diminishing waist in women, and they know why.

“After all the lecturing on tight lacing, the truth is that Nature demands by her most imperative laws that women should have small waists, and that the misery and harm undoubtedly inflicted by the over-use of corsets is only a blind and ignorant obedience to an instinct which, properly directed, is graceful and natural. Still, there are competent gentlemen who think that their wives and daughters should have the same form of chest as themselves, and there are doctrinarians who reason that instead of breathing with the thorax, as women always do, they should breathe with the abdomen, as men always do. God ordered otherwise.”

We may further congratulate our sex upon the abolition of the terrible custom of wearing upon hips and stomach such an immoderate number of skirts as were essential to the peace of mind of the fashionist who flourished in our mothers' time, or in our school-days. It was not an exaggeration when the satiric cartoons of illustrated weeklies portrayed the full-dressed belle wedged in a door of regulation width, or filling the whole interior of a coach, her escort riding upon the roof. Over the wide dispread cage of wire or crinoline that gave the balloon-shape to the outer casings, she sported twelve or fifteen petticoats, most of them heavy with starch and tuckings. On the top of all floated a gown-skirt ten yards in circumference, and often flounced at the bottom.

I well recollect the horrified expression of a physician who, on being aroused at midnight by the sudden illness of his daughter, picked up from a chair her clothing, *minus* the dress proper, as she had cast it aside at retiring, and bore it off to the store-room to be weighed. There were *twenty pounds* of it. Just at that era of Fashion's history, corsets went entirely "out." This girl, whose seizure was neuralgia of the stomach, had carried this incubus, bound by tapes, about a waist defended from their pressure by one thin garment of cotton cloth or linen. It was not unusual, on laying off the clothing at night, to discover that the strings had cut a raw line in skin and flesh.

Our dear Mrs. Delany thus describes the court-dress (date of January 23, 1738) of Lady Huntingdon—Whitfield's Lady Huntingdon—the warm advocate ten years thereafter of the principles of the "Calvinistic Methodists:"

"Her petticoat was black velvet, embroidered with chenille; the pattern, a large stone vase filled with ramping flowers that spread almost over a breadth of the petticoat from the bottom to the top. Between each vase of flowers was a pattern of gold shells, and foliage embossed and most heavily rich. The gown was white satin, embroidered also with chenille, mixt with gold ornaments. No vases on the sleeve, but two or three on the tail. It was a most labored piece of

finery, the pattern much properer for a stucco staircase than the apparel of a lady—a mere shadow *that tottered under every step that she took under the load.*”

In 1760 she commends a “*neglige*” for her grand-niece, with a “stomacher made to pin on,” so as not to drag the shoulders of the growing girl forward, and subjoins most sensibly:—

“The *vanity* and *impertinence* of dress is always to be avoided, but a decent compliance with the fashion is less affected than any remarkable negligence of it.”

It is refreshing to reflect that we no longer endanger our lives by walking through slush and upon damp pavements in thin slippers, or load spine and diaphragm with external applications of “vanity” and vexation of spirit no less than of body, or wear pyramidal helmets a foot high of puff and powder, or short waists that bring the stricture of skirt-bindings and gown-belts directly upon the tender breasts and most vulnerable portion of the lungs. Our costume has still enough uncured follies encrusting it, but they are not enormities.

Now for the homelier, but not less important details of the toilette. And if the intelligent reader is amused and provoked at the circumstantiality with which simple directions are given,—“the things which everybody knows!”—I beg her to believe the assertion that everybody does not obey in these respects what seem to her

the dictates of common decency and such knowledge of health-laws as the poorest and meanest Christian in this country should possess. Everybody does *not* know—or knowing, does not live up to her belief—that exhalations from the body are dirt, and that dirt of all kinds, if we except dry earth, is malodorous.

The night-dress should be warm in winter, cool in summer, and always loose in every part, that the blood may recede naturally from the brain, and the slackened play of heart and lungs go on evenly and healthfully. Whatever has been worn in the day must be shaken hard when taken off, and each piece hung or laid out separately upon nail or chair. The like precaution ought to be observed in removing the night-gown in the morning. The clinging humors thrown off by the pores, sleeping and waking, may be dislodged in part while still warm. If suffered to soak in cooling into the fabric, they become offensive to sight and smell, and the fruitful source of disease. In plain language, they may be described as effete animal matter that decomposes rapidly, and with putrefaction, emits a sickening odor.

Immediately upon rising, the bed-coverings should be removed, shaken, and spread out over foot-board or chairs, and the mattress be left exposed to the air admitted from open windows. The practice of making up a bed while still warm from the heat of the human

body is unclean, and, like most uncleanness, unwholesome. The body actually *loses weight* during the hours of sleep, as has been demonstrated by repeated experiments. The escaping effluvia (the term is just, however impolite) hang, a viewless vapor in the air, steep linen, and reek in blankets. You can smell them on re-entering your closed bedroom after you have been in the outer air for a few minutes. If they were never so faintly colored, the day would break dimly upon your waking eyes. Were it possible to eliminate them from the air and condense them, you would behold a pound of corrupt matter from which you would shrink with loathing unutterable. Yet you swallow and inhale this with every word and breath while you remain in an unventilated sleeping-chamber.

Much of this liberated vapor is carbonic-acid gas, and deadly to all animal life. The bad taste in your mouth before you brush your teeth, the "tight" feeling about your head, the slight giddiness and nausea that pass away in the bath—all are symptoms of one disorder. You are *poisoned!* Your bedroom, however elegant in its appointments, has been all night a *grotto del cane*. Unaired and undeodorized clothes upon bed or body are as truly empoisoned as was the shirt of Nessus; albeit usually more slow in operation. Pile on clean blankets, shaken and cooled every morning, if you "sleep cold," and set a screen between you and direct

draughts; but secure, by means of lowered or raised sashes, a bounteous current of pure air to replenish the lung-supply and to sweep out noisome exudations.

It is often objected, when frequent changes of body-linen are recommended and positively enjoined in warm weather, that the family-wash is thereby made too heavy. Without staying to inquire what may be the truer economy in such cases, to pay laundress or druggist, I would suggest that the difficulty may be obviated in some measure by judicious management on the part of each wearer. Two changes per week will generally suffice, even in summer, *provided* every undergarment is shaken and aired thoroughly—when practicable, sunned—before it is resumed. Thus the linen worn in the forenoon may be removed when one dresses for the afternoon, and hung where the air can blow freely over it until next morning. The set for afternoon has in turn the same opportunity of disinfectment. A garment assumed while still damp with perspiration is sure to become offensive. This rule premises that aired raiment shall be put upon newly-washed bodies. The bath-room is the best preventive of excessive labor in the laundry. Body-linen that has been yellowed in the wearing has to be rubbed so hard that it soon wears out.

“Why?” asks Corinna Holgate in her study of Grecian Myths, preparatory to a “High Culture” tea—

“*why* was Venus fabled to have arisen from the foam of the sea?”

Aunt Ildy “shot back the answer, quick as a flash, an irony of common sense, out of a swift, frowning cloud of contempt” :—

“Because you must be clean before you can be beautiful!”





CHAPTER XX.

GOSSIP.

“But the man did neither look up, nor regard, but raked to himself the straws, the small sticks, and dust of the floor.”—*Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress.*

“People will talk. ‘*Ciascun lo dice*’ is a tune that is played oftener than the national air of this country, or any other.”—*Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

“I remember that Abbie Ann once put out her washing, and this fact kept the whole social element of Cedar Swamp on the *qui vive* for a number of days.”—*Cape Cod Folks.*

DR. HOLLAND has told us that “the cure for gossip is culture.”

The prescription is excellent—as far as it goes. But weeds spring faster and flourish more rankly in a plowed and enriched field than in the hard soil of a common. It was into the swept and garnished house that the seven unclean spirits followed their host.

To the culture—intellectual—that sharpens perceptive faculties and disposes the whole mind to activity,

must be added worthy and regular occupation, and just moral sense, integrity of purpose and speech, and Christian charity in construction of others' actions and motives, if we would save our educated young women from the favorite pastime of their inferiors—gossiping.

Among the woful perversions of terms in our language, the inside-out twist which the good old Saxon word "gossip" has sustained may claim a bad eminence.

"Godsibb—a relation by a religious obligation. From GOD, and *sib*, an alliance."

Thus Webster—and in close connection—"One who runs from house to house, telling news; an idle tattler."

A pretty word, little used, is "gossipry." It has a quaint crispness about it to which tongue and ear take kindly. It signifies "idle talk, gossip," or—anomalous association!—"Spiritual relationship or affinity."

It is evident to the non-philological reader, as to the verbalist, that we sorely need substantive and verb to express what we all have reason to know so well; that which, with many women, fills up the gaps left in thoughts and lives by the absence of a specific object. One that would so absorb into itself the wandering energies, so possess the mind that everything small—using the word as a synonym of unworthy—would be crowded out. Without this, the runners that should be trained into use and fruitfulness, trail wildly hither and yon, and like the muck-rake, take up straws, and sticks,

and dust. How intricate and unsightly is the mat thus formed, let the history of every neighborhood, the unwritten stories of blasted reputations, thwarted lives, and broken hearts testify.

Where is the first false step? At what juncture of the girl's experience does it begin to become pleasanter to believe the tale which casts a shadow than that which illumines; easier to credit disparagement of an acquaintance than to receive gladly a narrative which is honorable to the subject and to human nature? When—following the deflected line—do even the amiable and refined acquire a positive relish for tainted meats—in culinary parlance, *high game*? Is there a biting spice of truth in the pessimistic *jeu d'esprit*—"There is something pleasant to us in the misfortunes of even our best friends?"

Am *I* uncharitable? hasty to judge and to condemn thoughtless speech? May it not be that righteous indignation at the unchecked growth of a popular evil takes on the vision and expression of personal rancor? The experience and observation that lead an individual teacher to a certain conclusion may be unfortunate and exceptional.

Test my declaration for yourself, my clean-hearted Mary, glowing with the novelty of the home-coming; eager to ply in the field which is the world, the craft learned in the garden-plot of the school. Relate to a

lively circle of your compeers in social station and education, a story of human heroism, of virtue that was proof against temptation, of self-denial and sorrow borne meekly that others might not suffer, of patient toil for noble ends. Use all the eloquence of feeling and forcible diction to send the lesson home to each heart. You are heard with attention, because the tale is cleverly wrought up. All combine to pronounce it "interesting," perhaps "beautiful and touching." One optimist boldly affirms that it is "gratifying to the finest feelings of the heart." Here and there an eye kindles or softens under a mist of unshed tears. But people, as a mass, are coy in the display of their "finest feelings." There is danger, where some are concerned, of mistaking the casket in which these treasures are stored for a lumber-chest. The main current of talk bears swiftly away from the topic introduced by you. The optimist may roll the sweet morsel under his tongue, but he does it after the manner of ruminating animals, in silence. There is little to provoke discussion in what you have related. It is too smooth and round, by half, for enterprising wits. To all it is commonplace. To some it is vapid.

Do not *you* supply an antipodal theme that the experiment may be fairly tried. The probability is that you will not have to wait long before a cynical slur upon truth, goodness, faith—something that comes

under the head of Paul's "whatsoever things are honorable, just, pure, lovely, of good report"—excites general mirth, tempered by weak disclaimer. Or an adventurous spirit, ambitious of repute as a judge of character, a "knowing" critic, tells his tale of adroit hypocrisy or bare-faced iniquity. What I have long ago named in my own mind, "the blue-bottle-fly instinct," awakens at the dexterous touch, the scent of decay. The story is caught up; tossed from an earnest listener to a laughing questioner, pulled to pieces that the juices and marrow may be sucked and the revelers fatten upon the extracted richness. Even the few who do not share in the feast are less disgusted than they think or would admit to others. They retain what they have not relished. The limed twig does not hold them, but they carry away befouled feet.

The *gamin* who would not hearken to a story of a good little boy, unless he might afterward be treated to one about *two* bad little boys—"uncommon rum uns, you know"—was honest in the expression of this instinct. At heart he was a nascent vulture, and in his simplicity, revealed the hankering after carrion.

The deduction from these and kindred examples is humiliating, as tending to prove that the taste for "high" game is inborn, and that we possess it in common with vermin and the lower orders of birds of prey. It lurks, embryonic, in that recess of unimaginable hor-

rors, the human heart, awaiting the process which is to warm it into active life, or cast it forth a wretched abortion. When allowed to survive, it grows very fast, as do all larvæ bred in corruption, and feeding upon the same. The tittle-tattle of idle moments becomes the tattle of hours that ought to be busy, and tattle, when it has conceived, brings forth scandal. Witness against a neighbor, however light its import, passes almost inevitably, by insensible gradations, into *false* witness.

The girl retails with mischievous glee her cleverness in discovering the truth that a schoolmate's winter hat, which all the girls think "awfully stylish," was made by the wearer's eldest sister.

"Queer—isn't it? when their father is so rich. It must be sheer stinginess that leads them to do such things. Indeed the family *have* the reputation of being parsimonious. Or, it may be that they are not so well off as the world says. Their handsome carriage and horses, fine furniture, and lofty ways generally, may be but a hollow show. It is surprising—unaccountable—*wicked* in people to strain and struggle as some do to keep up appearances. Why can't they be honest, through and through?

"Haven't I heard something about the low origin of the family?" ventures an auditor, musingly, her ambition and imagination aroused by the narrative and tempting conjectures. "For aught we know, the mother

may have been a milliner, and the taste for dabbling in bonnet-making may be hereditary. Such things do happen, you know, in what is called our best society."

"I can believe anything now!" The author of the gossip is always the first to believe in its authenticity. "I can never trust Carry Smith again as I did before I found out that about her hat. Why, she let us praise it, over and over, without once intimating that it did not come from a milliner's. Straws show which way the wind blows."

By now the hum and sting of the "maybes" from the hive on which she began tapping "for fun," have angered her. Mirth has given place to wrath.

"If there is one trait which I *hate* above all others, it is deception! I can not endure anything in the least underhanded!"

From this time henceforward she and her clique will watch Carry Smith; keep her at the focused-point of a moral microscope. By such easy descent is gained the plane of the slanderer. Without being consciously malicious, the bias of her belief is in the direction of detraction. It is safe—so runs her knowing reckoning—to parody the dreary old hymn and

"Suspect some danger near
Where others see delight."

The gossip prides herself, by and by—and alarmingly

soon—upon not being hoodwinked by devices of amiable seeming that impose upon the ordinary observer. No action is motiveless, and when the motive appears upon the surface, it is presumably a specious pretense. The professional detective dives below it for sinister designs; turns the bull's eye of Diogenes's lantern into the complications of moral machinery for indications of dishonest purpose, the wheel within a wheel. In her natural philosophy there is no such thing as a simple mechanical power. It must come to pass that she will invent motive and inner wheel rather than be disappointed in her quest.

A woman who may be twenty-five years of age, but who, in face and manner, might be nineteen, a limpid-eyed, velvet-voiced *ingènuë*, laughed in my face last week when I firmly declined to believe that a man whom she professed to like, and whom I had thought good and honorable, was a masked *roué*.

"My dear madam," said the soft voice, "you always amuse me excessively. You are *so* refreshingly unsophisticated! My theory is that it is best to doubt whatever looks fair. Men are all alike, you know—and women, for that matter!" with a ripple of sweet laughter. "Only we dissemble more gracefully!"

I, who am old enough to be the married belle's mother, eyed her in dumb admiration as a perfect specimen of her kind. The sheen of her draperies,

the brilliant eyes, the dreamy legato of her speech, the deliberate delight of her regalement upon the thing she had tainted indicated beyond the shadow of misgiving the carrion fly (*Musca Cæsar*).*

Yet she is not a misanthrope in the usual acceptation of the word. She enjoys life, its bustle, variety, and chatter, and dearly loves her work. She gloats over a temptingly-foul morsel of scandal with the tantalizing vivacity of the big blue abomination that buzzes patience and senses out of you on "muggy" August afternoons, and awakens within you fresh access of compassion for the much-bevapored Mariana in whose tortured ear,

"The blue fly sang i' the pane."

Nine chances out of ten our *Musca Cæsar* establishes to her own satisfaction some claims to the title of wit. The showiest fun at the lowest rates is to be had by turning the peculiarities and foibles of acquaintances into ridicule. A mimicking grimace that would damage the self-respect of a dissolute monkey brings the performer into the admiring notice of a whole company when the tide of entertainment is at the ebb. He has raised a laugh and "showed up" a fellow-creature. Therefore the party is grateful, and repays the effort in applause as cheap as the wit that elicits it.

* An allied species is the *Musca Vomitoria*.

“Pshaw!” cries Lady Sneerwell in the “School for Scandal,”—“there’s no possibility of being witty without a little ill-nature. The malice of a good thing is the barb that makes it stick.”

How easily the accomplishment of mimicry is acquired, and its popularity, we see illustrated in the early success of Lady Teazle with Sir Benjamin Backbite’s clique. The country-girl lately wedded by Sir Peter thus describes to her husband the “curious life” she led as “the daughter of a plain country squire”:

“My daily occupation was to inspect the dairy, superintend the poultry, make extracts from the family receipt-book, and comb my Aunt Deborah’s lap-dog. And then, you know my evening amusements! To draw patterns for ruffles which I had not materials to make up, to play Pope Joan with the curate; to read a sermon to my aunt, or to be stuck down to an old spinet to strum my father to sleep after a fox-chase.”

Into the emptiness of this life fall a rich husband and a career as beauty and wit, Lady Sneerwell’s set supplying the latter.

“When I say an ill-natured thing, ’tis out of pure good humor,” she protests

Here is a sample of this sort of good humor:

“When she is neither speaking nor laughing (which very seldom happens), she never absolutely shuts her

mouth, but leaves it always on ajar, as it were—thus: (*Shows her teeth*).

“I allow even that’s better than the pains Mrs. Prim takes to conceal her losses in front. She draws her mouth till it positively resembles the aperture of a poor’s-box, and all her words appear to slide out edge-wise, as it were—thus: ‘*How do you do, madam? Yes, madam!*’” (*Mimics*).

This is coarse, but so is all scandal. From the very character of the entertainment refinement can not be a constituent element. It costs less and goes further than any other social diversion, but it is a caviare to which “the general”—viz., the majority—decidedly incline.

Gossipry—to employ the term we like—is not, *per se*, scandal, nor is scandal necessarily slander. These sustain the same relation to false-witness-bearing that regular moderate-drinking does to confirmed inebriety. The most innocent “tippling” is a dangerous indulgence in an age when the taste for stimulants develops with terrible facility into passion.

I should stultify myself and insult your good sense were I to intimate that unfavorable criticism of acquaintances and comment upon conduct is always unfriendly and ill-bred. There is a radical dissimilarity between fair adverse judgment temperately stated and abuse zestfully uttered. It is occasionally a duty to

Speak openly of faults that mar some characters we would fain admire. If you are constrained by your knowledge of these to withhold esteem, or shun associations approved by others, it may not be only proper, but in certain circumstances obligatory upon you, to state why you act thus. It is a duty to shield yourself from the imputation of causeless prejudice and to protect others from the risk of misplaced confidence. This, however—do not forget!—is duty and disagreeable; not pastime or pleasant. When you are conscious of a thrill of excitement that is not dread nerveing you to the performance of the obligation, pause for severe examination of motives and spirit. Charitable Christians do not bring to such an *exposé* elation or even cheerful resignation.

So well understood is this principle, that the professional scandal-monger lards her piquant dishes with protestations of reluctance. Even those who listen and credit, smile slyly in recognizing preamble and peroration. She would not be unfair for a hemisphere nor unkind for the world. She calls heaven to witness to the purity of her intentions, angels and men to “overhaul” her heart and “make a note” of the unfeigned grief with which she industriously sows dragons’ teeth in her neighbor’s grounds. She would not act as unlicensed victualer of the region, hawking “high” meats from door to door, if the duty were not

laid upon her by fate and strapped upon her groaning shoulders by conscience. The sight of such an one becomes microscopic with the practice of her profession. If furnished with a telescope she would instinctively reverse it to look through the bigger end. Her specialty and craze are for belittling and demeaning, not for broadening, never for elevating.

The cure of this plague of tongues in individuals and in communities begins, as do most effectual cures, at home. No better municipal regulation for cleansing thoroughfares has yet been enforced than the law requiring every dweller in Jerusalem to keep clean the street in front of his own door.

Set before you steadily a few leading facts and the deductions drawn from these and frame your conduct upon them, let your neighbors do as they will. First, that four-fifths of the fault-finding and would-be setting-to-rights done in this life of ours is altogether gratuitous—in inception and execution a work of supererogation. “Nobody’s business” is best left undone when Everybody has his hands more than full of his own—or ought to have.

Next, that your time and powers are too costly to be wasted in the consideration of what your neighbors eat, drink, wear, say and do. In this sense, assuredly, you are not your brother’s or sister’s keeper. He who can build wisely and well, desecrates his talents and squan-

ders his strength when he sets about pulling down walls and sorting rubbish.

Thirdly, that all the intermeddling of the busiest gossips in town and country will not do the work you, in your proper and single personality, were sent into the world to perform, or release you from the responsibilities of that position. Your account is to be rendered to the Master, not to man.

“There are gods many, and lords many; yet to us there is but One GOD, the Father, of whom are all things *and we unto Him.*”

It helps the soul perplexed by a multitude of officious counsels to look away from friend and foe, to this one infallible Refuge and Strength. Do your best as unto God, and leave the result to Him. This is the one invariable rule of life. Naught can absolve you from the sin of neglecting it. The peace that ensues upon obedience to it bears the spirit on eagles' wings into the sunshine that abides continually above the clouds which press earthward.

Lastly, that, according to your view of time's value and brevity, the average term of human existence is not long enough in which to execute that which you ought, by now, to have made up your mind to do. It is a divine impatience that makes you intolerant of the loss of hours and breath in the discussion of “They-says” —the filing of the fine gold under careless or wanton

hands. You do well to be angry at such prodigality of another's wealth.

To change the figure; if the gossip must make mince-meat—seasoned with the malice without which it would be insipid—of her neighbors' characters, teach her by firm but polite measures that you will lend neither tray, chopping-knife, nor condiments. You can not repress her zeal in the prosecution of her trade. You *can* prevent her from using your clean rooms as shambles or kitchen.

Where varieties of the *Musca Cæsar*, or her cousin, the *Musca Vomitoria*, do much abound, prudent house-keepers will put up "fly-doors," and keep their meats out of the way.

Judged by such reasoning and examples, tattling in its least harmful form sinks to its right place—that of a vulgar vice. For the truth of this statement I appeal confidently to your knowledge of the sense of self-degradation with which you recall, in the solitude of your chamber, the talk of an evening, during which the foibles and private histories of people, and not "the real things," have kept tongues busily at work and been the food of thought. You are disgusted at your own folly, vexed with those who have led you into dirty lanes and across bogs, instead of over sunny spaces and up to breezy heights. It is a yet graver question how often this experience may be repeated without blunting

your moral and intellectual tastes; how soon toleration will be followed by perversion. Regard as a wholesome symptom the shame that impels you to avoid looking in the detractor's face as the story of another's blemishes is rehearsed. Bashfulness in the hearing is virtue; awkwardness in replying is grace.

"'Tis safest in matrimony to begin with a little aversion," is a Malapropish bull. In gossipry it is safe and sensible to begin with a great deal for the subject, and sagacious to be on your guard against the retailer of the scandal.

The harpies tainted in touching their food. The slanderer who loves her craft has abundant internal evidence of her descent from a renowned and ancient, if somewhat disreputable, line. Being carnivorous and insatiable, you may not hope to escape her talons when your turn comes. It is not enough that you are confident in the sense of stainless rectitude. Fair and unpolluted flesh becomes a loathsome mass when she has had the handling of it, and the M. Cæsar brood bloat upon her leavings.

If my metaphors offend nice taste, please remember that the theme is one not suited to the employment of delicate epithets. The despicable filthiness of the thing can not be exaggerated in the telling of it. I would, if I could, make the commerce in characters, mildly called "backbiting," as odious as that plied by the vilest of

women; would organize our girls into crusading leagues—total-abstinence bands for the suppression of this scourge of social circles and Christian churches. And why not? Whose hand wrote "*Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor*" upon the same tablet and in direct proximity with—

"*Thou shalt not kill,*

"*Thou shalt not commit adultery,* and

"*Thou shalt not steal*"?

Do I strain the truth in declaring that the slanderer is thief, panderer and assassin all in one—an accursed trinity of death and woe? It is time that decent Christians and philanthropists awoke to the real nature of this sin. The weight of public opinion, if not churchly discipline, should crush the traffickers in rumors that grow into lies with the passage from one lip to another.

"Repeat nothing that you do not yourself believe," is a principle the practice of which would put an embargo upon three-fourths of the infamous business. Should more stringent means be needed—"Give with the tale the name of the responsible author." The enforcement of this brace of decrees would, in a month's time, cause a precipitate and a settlement in the foul river that would leave the current clear.

I forewarn you that your avoidance of the disposition and habit you are so ready to condemn will be a thorny undertaking. Your talk of books and what they teach

will be stigmatized as pedantic; the discussion of Nature and of Art as arrant affectation. Strangest of all, your defense of the assailed will be resented by the benevolent disciple of the Backbite school, who would not knowingly do injustice to her worst enemy—if she had one. Heaven knows that *she* hates nobody! You may be sure that your attempt at vindication of the slandered person, your civil endeavor to correct a “misunderstanding, natural perhaps, but deplorable,” will be ascribed to the least commendable motive her invention is capable of supplying. More could hardly be said for the ingenuity of malignity *pur et simple*. I have but to append that you must take your choice of the two evils.

No! “Culture” of the mind and taste is *not* a cure for gossip in its milder features, or even for coarser and downright scandal. If it were, this chapter would never have been penned. Nor is it true that one who has clean hands and a pure heart can defy the Sneerwells and Snakes of the politest society in the most refined city of the most virtuous commonwealth of our Union.

I pass several times a week through a fashionable quarter of a handsome town, and by an elegant house, the residence of an amiable and opulent gentleman. At a certain window of this mansion Mrs. Arachne Webb sits behind a cleverly-adjusted blind for hours of the daylight and the darkness. She is not old, nor yet silly.

In her youth she was a belle, and still "makes up" well in the evening. She has all that wealth and social standing and an indulgent husband can give her. The world has treated her well from her cradle. What moves her to watch, in her lace-draped corner, for the passage of possible victims of fang and line? Heaven has been propitious to her, and even bitter fruits sweeten with sunshine. Yet she is ready to cry out in a rage of disappointment, of days in which fly-trapping has been dull, and of evening watches when no senseless moths have been abroad :—

"Let that day be darkness, neither let the light shine upon it. As for that night, let darkness seize upon it."

Diligence in business has wrought as a sequel fervor of spirit. This is the rational answer to the oft-repeated query—"Why should So-and-So care to mend the reputation of Such-an-One who has done her no harm? No act is motiveless."

Neither are our gossip's daily works and ways. By degrees, she has learned the love of work for work's sake. Spying, tattling, and detraction are the object of her life. She hunts her preserves with the keen nose and ardent temper of your pointer when you take him a-field. Scentless stubble is her aversion.

Covert as is her watch ; and her presence betrayed to the passer-by only in the accidental stir of a curtain, or the flash of the diamonds on the finger inserted to

widen the peep-hole between the blinds, Mrs. Arachne Webb's post and occupation are as much a matter of general understanding as was the existent fact of the garment, allusion to which made Mrs. Wilfer blush for pert Lavvy, and elicited Mr. George Sampson's agreeable smile, and—"After all, ma'am, we know it's there!"

Everybody in town knows that Mrs. Arachne is "there." Saucy youths, in passing her door, hum, *sotto voce*

"Will you walk into my parlor?
Said the spider to the fly."

Filmy threads of her spinning tangle in our eyelashes, tickle our noses; even trip up the unwary and the weak.

"She is a dangerous woman!" we say, warningly, to our young people. "Be careful what you say to her."

Yet we all smile upon her in society, and call upon her at decorous intervals. Not quite certain whether she is more dangerous as foe or as friend, we feel intuitively that it is safer not to offend her. She is in delicate health—so she gives out—suffering excruciatingly at times from enlargement of the spleen. Whereat nobody marvels and some smile bitterly in their sleeves. In company, she affects sofa-corners and shadowy, cozy nooks, "not being strong"—say those who know no better. Those who do, shun the gleaming eyes of the still figure, and give the be-webbed retreat a wide berth,

For she spins most cunningly in such circumstances. Butterflies on diaphanous wings float before her by the dozen, giddy grasshoppers and droning bees, and she selects her prey at her leisure.

“But,” reason the incredulous, “a scandal-monger so notorious can do no harm. Who, among sensible people, will believe her tales?”

Sensible Christians, by the score, do receive them in full faith. Some pass them on without other contradiction than by attaching her name. Some, for the mere love of sensation, omit this precaution. The scandal that comes smartly to the jaded palate of the epicure in gossipry is generally accepted without demur.

“I don’t believe it, you know,” thus the accomplice drugs conscience. “But it is such a rich tid-bit that I can not keep it to myself.”

The next repetition will be without the qualifying clause.

There is at once virile and conceptive power in scandal. Nothing but the expulsive force of will and conscience can rid the mind of it.

The Psalmist prescribed heroic treatment in his day:—

“Whoso privily slandereth his neighbor will I cut off!”

“What shall be given unto thee? or what shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue?”

“Sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper!”

That is:—excision and the moxa.



CHAPTER XXI.

PRINCE CHARMING.

“My Belovéd spake and said unto me—‘ Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone ; the flowers appear on the earth ; the time of the singing of birds is come.”

“Awake, O North Wind, and come, thou South ! Blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my Belovéd come into his garden and eat his pleasant fruits.”—*Song of Solomon.*

IT is only in fairy tales that Prince Charming has to awaken a Sleeping Beauty. Far oftener the unmated maiden climbs, with Sister Anne, to the watch-tower and gazes horizonward for signs of the Coming Man—not for love of Fatima, but on her own extremely individual account. Sometimes the cloud of sun-gilt dust is all that rewards her eyes from daydawn to twilight. Sometimes it is a flock of scary sheep which she has mistaken for a throng of woovers. Usually, however, if she is not over nice in

the choice of him who is to deliver her from the fears of eternal spinsterhood, Somebody appears, ready to attempt the emprise.

This watch, and the varieties in the manner thereof, have been the theme of more satires and diatribes than any other human failing, even among feminine foibles, since the evening when "weak-eyed" Leah connived at the paternal manœuvres that gave her sister's intended husband to her, as the elder daughter. Poets have idealized it tenderly; cynics sneered viciously, and utilitarians baldly dissected it as a wise provision of Nature. "Marriage is an incident to Man; to Woman an EVENT," is graven, an irrefutable verity among the world's maxims. It is one of the decreasing store of apophthegms that prove the unity of the human race. If the definite article were substituted for the indefinite before the last word of the axiom, the universal belief on this topic would be more fitly expressed.

It is not my purpose to depart so far from the ingenuous tone I have preserved throughout this volume as to deny the justice of the world's verdict. The purest, sweetest happiness which women can know this side of heaven, flows from a harmonious marriage. I have, not admitted, but freely averred elsewhere in these pages, that husband, home, and children offer a sphere with which the most ambitious of our sex may well be thankfully content.

With this preamble, I make way for a man's thoughts on this head. Among the many extracts gratefully compiled for my use and the reader's profit, I insert few more apposite and trenchant than an editorial that appeared in the *Springfield Republican*, August 28, 1881, under the caption—" *Uses for Women.*"

" 'The best use to which a woman can be put is to be made the honest wife of some good man and the judicious mother of healthy children. All the art and learning that she can compass are not of so much value to the world as the example of a life passed quietly in the exercise of domestic duties and social righteousness, in the gift to the country of children who shall carry on the national tradition of courage and generosity, of unselfishness and virtue.' —*London Truth.*

" This excellent suggestion is not new, but does it never occur to the *London Truth* that if married life is to be held up to woman as her true profession, man ought to give her the social right of proposing marriage to the other sex? We submit that nothing can be meaner in man than to assure woman kindly, calmly, and profoundly that her true place is to be a wife and then coolly, but firmly, bid her wait for that opportunity till some man condescends to ask her. Suppose nobody ever asks her. Suppose a cruel fate has denied her personal charms or a dowry. Suppose, instead of 'some good man' presenting himself, she has a succession of

offers from men who, each and all, have such defects of character that even no man would care to enter into partnership with them. Must she take the risk—now with a profligate, now with a brute, or a selfish pig, now with a spendthrift, now with an incapable who can not earn living for one, much less for two, now with an old man blasé and invalid? *Truth's* article, which begins with the above-quoted sentences, has for its title 'man-traps'; how about the 'woman-traps'? Who takes the greatest risk in marriage and is most likely to appear as a complainant in the divorce court? Or suppose that the *London Truth's* 'good man' should turn up, and the woman did not, would not, and could not love him, or finally, that on some general principle of feminine obstinacy she didn't want to marry at all? There are men who do not choose to marry—can not women also honorably choose not to marry?

“And in any of these contingencies, some of them highly probable, what is woman to do but earn her living in the world by industries to which God has fitted her just as peculiarly as He has man, and from which nothing excludes her but the mean prejudice and contemptible patronizing philosophy of those who would shut women up to domestic life with men not worthy of them?

“Of course, abstractly what the *London Truth* says about the 'best use' of woman is true, but it is no truer

of her than it is of man. The best use to which a man can be put is being a good husband and raising good children. To raise a perfect generation is the whole end of civilization. But the *Truth* would not accept the same sauce for goose and gander. Its view of marriage is that it constitutes the profession of one sex, but not of the other. This is degrading to both. It raises monstrosities of complacent selfishness among men who regard that woman as deficient in womanliness who does not look upon a life-long partnership with 'some good man' as a sweet boon and the end of her being. The class is larger in England than here who regard woman as made for man, but not man for woman, and who feel that the only way to insure the superiority of one sex to the other is to distrust equality of opportunities and of educational advantages. This is the effect upon men; upon women, it is different. It impresses girls with the idea that marriage is necessary, and they fall into a foolish panic lest they should 'get left.' These are the ones who get so indecent in their struggle for matrimony that they set the traps of which *Truth* complains. The prevailing notion of society, which is that of the *London Truth*, puts girls at a certain age in a pitiful frame of mind, which is shared by their mothers. It is less so now than formerly, and girls now spend in educating themselves for self-support some of the years which were formerly spent in ang'ing for husbands and

worrying for fear they should not get a bite. But many ill-starred marriages are contracted now, in the face of great risks in the character of the man, which would be saved if the young woman were assured of independent position and was free to reject or to accept. Nothing has done so much to cultivate domestic happiness in America as the elevation of woman to an equality with man in educational advantages and attainments and her consequent advantage as a contracting party in matrimony. It elevates equally the single woman whose social position was once deemed inferior to her married sister's. It raises the standard of the home, because it teaches that the perfect home is no less the concern of man than of woman, and helps to correct the conceit that man has outside of it any purpose in life nobler or more important."

I congratulate my reader and myself upon the perusal of an article which adds another to the many proofs that wise, thoughtful men—men with hearts and brains—are not our natural enemies. This sentence is not an absurdity in view of the publication in one of our most popular journals, of an elaborate essay upon "The Natural Antagonism of the Sexes"—a paper to which I have before referred. It has been extensively copied, and as generally indorsed by the press, besides being largely quoted in public and private speech.

According to this theory the Great Brotherhood of

Humanity would exclude the sisters. From our childhood we are the sheep, they the wolves. During the age of "Pamela" and "Amanda Fitz-Allan" the legend "Eternal vigilance is the price of purity" should have been inscribed upon the baby-girl's pap-cup and bound, phylactery-wise, about the forehead and wrist of the damsel. In a very curious relic of that time, much conned by our grandmothers—"A Father's Legacy to his Daughters; By. Dr. Gregory"—we happen upon numerous indices of this peculiar state of social ethics:—

"If you love him (*i.e.*, the suitor), let me advise you never to discover to him the extent of your love; no, not although you marry him. . . .

"This is an unpleasant truth, but it is my duty to let you know it—violent love can not subsist, at least can not be expressed for any time together, on both sides. Nature, in this case, has laid the reserve on you."

The good Father, with "Allah-il-Allah" resignation, suggests no practical cure for the evil stated below:—

"From the period of leaving school until her marriage, the life of a female is generally little more than a blank. She leaves school with expanded faculties, high hopes, beating expectations, and ardor of application, but not a suitable object upon which to expend them. Thus she wastes lofty thoughts, and brilliant purposes, and surprising powers on the dull earth or the deaf air.

She seems like some glorious temple, beautiful in architecture, costly in ornaments, rich in splendor, and radiant in light, but wanting a shrine upon which to burn incense, and a GOD to adore."

Dr. Gregory and the London *Truth* man would fraternize lovingly, had the birth of the former been delayed a hundred and fifty years. But Jeremiah or Calvin might laugh at the imagination of the didactic doctor's devout horror were Frances Power Cobbe to enunciate to his face her proposition, "First, human beings, then women"; or the audacious writer in the "*Republican*" to offer his query, "If marriage is to be held up to woman as her true profession, ought not man to give her the social right of proposing marriage?"

Note, please! that our authors of To-day do not call us "females." Also, that Dr. Gregory habitually, and altogether innocently, *does*. This dissimilarity in the use of terms tells the story of a century of progress. Men are our brothers, and of our kind; not enemies or even aliens.

"Indisputably," says Charlotte Brontë's finest woman, "Shirley," "a great, good, handsome *man* is the first of created things."

Higher education for Woman does not unsex her, provided the cultivation of heart keeps pace with that of mind. The habit of, and capacity for fine analysis of instinct and emotion, her insight of psychological and

physiological laws, ought to instruct her in juster appreciation of the meaning of Sex, the true and noble relations of Man and Woman. She should comprehend that, in proportion to the development of the best characteristics of each, it becomes the counterpart of the other, the accordant Whole as GOD made it, "MAN—in the image of GOD created He him. Male and female created He *them*."

It is the figure of the broken coin, treasured by parted lovers. If it be sacredly kept and carefully handled, the severed edges unite without gap or ridged line after years of separation.

I would have you the more thorough in your womanliness for having been true to yourself. The firm, stately poise of your character need not detract from the tenderness of your heart, the liveliness of your sympathies. It is right, also, that in these later years the silent side of your being should be growing and perfecting. You will cultivate the gentler graces of patience and unselfishness the more assiduously for the thought that you are forming and keeping yourself for another. I would never tear from the girl's dreams and the woman's hopes the Ideal Prince. Instead, I would encourage her to bring herself up to the level of his excellence; would have her keep herself for him in all sanctity and entirety. I have called this consecration of the Innermost your "silent side." Guard it

from rude and heedless intrusion. The badinage of mixed companies on this theme, the bandying of jest and equivoque based upon Love, Courtship, and Marriage, are sacrilegious handling of holy vessels not far removed from the impiety of Belshazzar's Feast.

Have a jealous care of the purity of your Ideal lest you should be too ready to identify it with a very commonplace Reality. Impatience, which we have confessed is an essentially feminine trait; imagination, and the longing for affection that, oftener than any other feeling, absorbs every emotion into itself, press the girl on to this catastrophe. With the zeal and ingenuity of the fossil-hunter, who constructs a *megatherium* or *Elephas primigenus* from a single vertebral joint, she, upon the discovery in the acquaintance of a day of one characteristic of the Prince, hastens to invest him with all lovable-nesses and virtues pertaining to the "bright particular" of her dreams. In a tremor of ecstasy she arranges drapery and mask so adroitly as to deceive herself—never anybody else—and falls down to worship the image she has made. The annals of human error may be challenged to produce a like number of cases of equal and humiliating infatuation with those of this kind that we witness about us daily.

"What *possessed* her to marry that fellow?" is a singularly expressive form of the familiar inquiry.

Seen through the roseate haze of an undisciplined

fancy, the weaver is princely, "a sweet-faced man, a proper man as one shall see in a summer's day, a most lovely, gentlemanlike man." In the white light of the high noon of Marriage, Bottom's snout and ears loom up to a height that shades the future into worse than the blackness of death.

As a prime measure for averting this irremediable evil, I strongly commend the frank and courteous association, at home and in general society, of young men and young women. It is the girl who has known but few men, and received scanty attention from those few, who jumps at her first offer. The old, old story, however clumsily told, is, in the novices' ears, what Bottom's semi-human bray was to Titania in her awakening after the juice of the "little Western flower" had been squeezed upon her eyelids.

"What angel wakes me from my flowery bed?"

sighs the elfin queen.

Our girl mistakes the tumult of gratified vanity for a worthier emotion. The delusion passes almost as swiftly as did Titania's, but the disenchantment is life-long sorrow.

Miss Phelps has this exquisite touch of natural and most feminine feeling in Avis's reverie, while other girls, with "shy expectant faces," talked in her presence of love and lovers :—

“It was pleasant to remember that she was not unlovely or unlovable. Sometimes, when she sat before her easel forecasting her fair future, she felt suddenly glad, with a downright womanish thrill, that she was so sure of the beauty and patience of her purpose; that she was not to live a solitary life because no other had been open to her. *Perhaps the woman does not live for whom the kingdoms of earth and the glory of them could blunt the tooth of that one little poisoned thought.*”

It is the man who has held aloof from manœuvering mammas and over-willing daughters, priding himself upon his sagacity and invulnerability, that, in an unguarded hour, falls a dupe to the cheapest and coarsest scheming.

Scorn—with disdain born of genuine self-respect and modesty—to look upon that man as a possible husband whose attentions to you have never passed the limit of common courtesy. Should he manifest a decided preference for your companionship, keep heart whole and head steady by the reflection that it is altogether possible that he may like and admire as a friend a woman he has never thought of marrying. I wish I could impress you with a just idea of the comfort and profit such a friendship would bring to you; what a help and delight you might be to the man who, not having been born your brother, yet feels for you as for a sister. It is not derogatory to you in any respect that he does not

love you with that utterly different sentiment which he should have for the woman he woos for wifehood. You attract and hold one set of his affections, she another. The fact does not argue inferiority in either of you.

I am often asked—"Do you believe in the possibility of the existence of pure, disinterested friendship between a young man and a young woman, neither of whom is married or betrothed to another person?"

As in my own existence! I believe, likewise, that this is oftener unmixed by alloy such as the clashing interests of two women are apt to introduce into their intimacy than we, as women, are willing to acknowledge. There is, on the part of the man, an element of protecting gallantry; on the girl's, of physical dependence, which harmonize delightfully, giving to their association the charm of romance without its dangers. One of the parties to the compact is mellowed and refined in character and deportment by the association, the other made stronger and usually wiser.

"How, then, shall I know the Prince?" I hear in various accents of perplexity.

Leave the watch-tower and set about the duties already appointed for head, heart, and hands. Banish dreaming by doing until, in the fullness of time, the Prince knocks, of his own free will, at your door, and announces himself in his proper character. Do not

force Love's fruitage into insipid maturity. Still less suffer every chance comer to handle the ripening peach to see if it will suit his royal fancy, until the down is all gone before the rightful claimant appears. So far as in you lies, meet all men who deserve your courtesy upon the same plane of gracious civility. Keep yourself heart-free long enough to weigh well the recommendations of competing suitors and—a harder task—keep yourself fancy-free until calm reason assures you that he who asks for your best treasure merits it upon other grounds than the accident of his discovery of your superiority to the rest of your sex.

It is no sign that you ought to marry a man that he wants to marry you.

He pays you a compliment by the application, and this you should recognize gently and gravely, if you decline the offer. Make him comprehend that it gives you pain to reject an honest love, and, having definitely dismissed the suit, keep *his* secret. It is never yours unless he first reveals it to others. Many women retain as faithful friends those who once sought them vainly in marriage.

It is vulgar and shameful that hosts of people, even in refined society, are utterly incapable of imagining that a woman can smile brightly and fearlessly in the face of a man she likes heartily as a friend, but whom she has never dreamed of as a possible suitor,—whom

she would never marry under the strongest importunity. The plums that fall when the branches are slightly jarred are not the soundest ones. New Jersey fruit-growers spread cloths on the grass to catch these, and gathering them up, throw them into the fire to destroy the curculio eggs and larvæ. The ripe, rich, sweet fruit with the bloom on is picked by hand, and gingerly, not to mar beauty and flavor.

Better, dear girls—oh, how much better—to keep the unclaimed heart sound and true, rounded and freshened by the quiet loves of home and humanity, making of your single life all that GOD means it to be, when He in infinite wisdom withholds that which you fancy would, if granted, have filled your cup of happiness to overflowing, than to take your fate into your own presumptuous hands. A pitiable creature is she who lets youth and its opportunities for good and for gladness glide away while she leans a strained ear against the door, hearkening to footsteps that pass her threshold without halting. Most pitiable is she who does violence to common sense, nature, purity, virtue—by marrying one she would never have elected to the highest office in the gift of womanhood, but for the fear that if she let slip this “chance” she might never marry.

“Chance!” How I loathe the accepted phrase! There is *no* chance in the Universe ruled by GOD. If the word signifies room, time, occasion for work for

Him and His children, your hands may be worthily filled without outraging your womanhood by selling yourself in the shambles.

Choose as the partner of your heart, your home, your life a good, sound, clean-hearted man, who loves you and wins your love by the development of tastes congenial with yours; a man whom, as a friend, you could esteem and admire were he the husband of another. *That* is a test that would shake a mere fancy into thin air. Be slow to believe yourself "in love." The reality is a beautiful, yet an awful thing. It is putting your life out of your own keeping. Marriage, even to one you love deeply and sincerely, is the risk of all that time can give you of bliss, maybe of heaven's hopes as well, upon the utterance of a dozen sentences—a speech not two minutes in length.

There are men and women who, without fault of their own, are morally inhibited from matrimony. A transparent American affectation finds expression in the remark of mothers and friends:—

"Of course, girls and young men in marrying think of nothing beyond the happiness of the present. It never occurs to them that there may be a generation following this," etc., etc.

If this squeamish fiction had been less popular a century ago, we of *this* generation would have a better "chance" of long and useful lives. Girls and the men

who woo them are silly and selfish if they do not think of the possibilities of inconvenience and discomfort in the household consequent upon the ill-health of wife or husband; the prospect of early bereavement to one or the other; the more serious probability of transmitting disease to children yet unborn.

Almost forty years since I hearkened while playing with my doll to a conversation between several ladies who had attended a wedding the previous evening. The bride was beautiful and amiable, the groom a fine young fellow and very much in love. The alliance was highly eligible, the "occasion" gratifying.

"I am afraid she is very delicate," ventured one voice. "Her father and mother both died of consumption, you know."

The observation was like a chip tossed upon the current of general approbation. The waves sucked it under and out of sight the next second. Last week, walking in a city cemetery, I found it again—a fulfilled prophecy, emphasized by eight tomb-stones like glaring exclamation-points. Of nine children born to the happy couple, seven sleep with the mother under the daisies. She lived to see her forty-sixth year. All of the seven daughters grew to woman's estate. Six died between the ages of twenty and twenty-five of consumption.

The progeny of consumptives, or scrofulous or can-

cerous parents, of a succession of intermarriages of first cousins, of insane persons when lunacy has been already transmitted from more than a single generation or branch of the same family, have no right to make wretched other and innocent lives. Let the curse die out in their unwedded persons.

In the firm resolve that this shall be so; in the prayerful desire to eliminate so far as in them lies that much of evil from the creation already groaning and travailing together in pain; in the cheerful obedience through lonely years to the Divine beckonings to duty and toil unsolaced by the dearest of human loves,—herein is heroism which the righteous Judge of all will not fail to reward.

It is Christlikeness; a true following of the Homeless One who “pleased not Himself.”





CHAPTER XXII.

MARRIED.

"I never go to a bridal that it does not almost break my heart."—
N. P. WILLIS.

"To repress a harsh answer ; to confess a fault ; to stop, *right or wrong*, in the midst of self-defense in gentle submission, sometimes require a struggle like life and death, but these three efforts are the golden threads with which domestic happiness is woven."—CAROLINE GILMAN.



THE old-fashioned novel always ended with marriage. So strong is the influence of habit upon us that we satirize now the sensational fiction that begins with the wedding-day and enters, at the door-sill of Love-in-a-Cottage, upon a series of misunderstandings, jealousies, and despairs.

The pessimist philosopher affects to see grave significance in this change of literary fashions. The Woman Question, he broadly affirms, has wrought upon the feminine mind until the wife is no longer content to merge her individuality in that of her lord. She looks

upon marriage as one of a flight of steps by which she is to aggrandize herself; as a stage in evolution, not the perfected condition. In the grandly-simple old times, she was the weak left hand—thus proceeds the illustration—delicate in shape and color, by reason of comparative disuse, glorified by the wedding-ring that typified its nearness to the heart. Shielded by the strong, sinewy right hand that did life's work and dealt life's blows, the feebler member was something to be loved and cherished. A beneficent Creator never intended that the Whole Man, formed by the union of complementary parts, should be ambidextrous. In this degenerating epoch, Woman—to alter the figure—having struggled to her feet, fights, like an unruly child, against him who would bear her in his arms.

With the brief and, I hope, pertinent suggestion that He who made hands and feet perhaps knew their uses better than do His interpreters, we will settle ourselves to a quiet practical talk about your new state, its trials, its responsibilities, and its helpfulness in lifting you to a higher plane of thought and feeling.

Allow me to assume, if you please, that you love your husband with affection which, from the moment you laid your hand in his at the altar, shut out the possibility of ever feeling the same, while he lives, for any other man. A loveless marriage is an unchaste union. This is a hard saying in some ears, but it is as true as

that there walk our streets thousands of women who live by the *illegal* violation of the seventh commandment. She who shrinks in positive physical repugnance from the lover's kiss; who feels no drawing toward him beyond the cordial liking she experiences for several others; who sickens at the imagination of the constant companionship of wedded life—may remain, while single, his warm, affectionate friend. If she marries him in defiance of maidenly instinct, she becomes mistress, not wife. No considerations of worldly policy, no amount of parental influence, not all the blessings of stoléd priest and the applause of those who commend the "excellent match," can change the character of the sin. The connection is unnatural, impure, and unsafe. The chained heart, the outraged instincts are ever liable to break into open rebellion. These are the wives who have platonic adorers and devoted *cicisbei*. Into the secret of their loathings and their loves pray that your soul may never enter.

"Before marriage," we read in the *Spectator*, "we can not be too inquisitive and discerning in the faults of the person beloved, nor after it, too dim-sighted and superficial."

The usually witty-wise essayist might apply the concluding brace of adjectives to his own adage. People with sound eyes must, of necessity, discover faults upon nearer inspection which had been hidden up to that

time, more by the comely usages of etiquette than through a deliberate desire to deceive. The husband may, with the incurable *naïveté* of his sex, be the first to indicate that he is disenchanted. The wife, if reasonably quick-witted, *feels* it first, however well she may conceal her suspicions, and then her conviction. If very youthful, very passionate, or very silly, she resents, secretly or outwardly, the intermission of the worship that has throughout the courtship idealized her into forgetfulness of her identity with the girl she was before love became her life.

It is a shock to her—to you, my lately-wedded auditor—to see your bridegroom put on his every-day coat on the morning after your return from the bridal tour, and whistle himself down-stairs to breakfast “just as if he were not a married man!” It is an affront that he buries himself for as much as ten minutes behind the newspaper, although he may preface the deed by an apology, and “only wants to glance at the telegraphic column, or the stock-list,” or the something else that is sure to be there, a grinning imp of discord that defies you from the damp sheet. He will never know—he never *ought* to guess, how many tears you shed in the first quarter of the first year during which you bear his name. You wonder if he really loves you—if he ever loved you, when he can take such lively interest in a world that is all changed to you. You dread lest you

are losing your hold on his affections when he unluckily forgets the commission entrusted to him with the "Good-bye" kiss at the morning leave-taking. And when at a party to which you could not accompany him—say, a club-supper—he overstays the hour set for his return, because he "fell into talk of old times—or politics—with some of the fellows and really never suspected how time was passing," you walk the floor in an agony of desolation and compose your own epitaph in bitterness of spirit, dwelling especially upon the clause—"FIRST WIFE OF JOHN—"

Men make very merry over these episodes of early married life. I can not—any more than I can amuse myself with the real but baseless terrors of a weeping child. Marriage is such a momentous affair, such a portentous All to us that we tremble at the remotest menace of peril which may wreck hope and heart. The folly of your fears consists in exaggeration of their cause. The wine of your husband's happiness settles sooner upon its lees than does yours. Accustomed to contemplate the actualities of Life, with critical note of their value; to keep the emotional part of his nature out of the sight of the associates of business-hours,—in adjusting the machinery of the day into the old running order, he fashions his demeanor accordingly, with never a dream that you object to the resumption of his former routine. If he does not spend hours in swear-

ing how dearly he loves you and how willingly he would die for you, he proves both on that mighty "silent side" of his nature by redoubled diligence in the calling that is to bring comfort and beauty into your sheltered nest,—to make that shelter sure. Do not be guilty of the frightful mistake of being jealous of his devotion to business; the business for which you care so little, but which stands with him for respectability, honor, wealth,—the happiness of wife and children. Regard it, instead, as the "chance" the Father has given him to do a man's work in the world, and help him to do it to the utmost of your ability.

Study his profession or craft in general principle and in detail, until you can converse intelligently with him of the schemes that engage his brain and hands. Encourage him to "talk out" his cares and worries before you try to soothe them. Extract the splinter before applying the salve. When the heart of your husband can safely trust in you in this sense no less than in the keeping of his honor, you have bound him to you by ties that will outlast beauty and sprightliness. *Better lose his affection than his respect.*

I want you to re-read that sentence and study its meaning. If more wives acted upon the pregnant lesson it conveys we should have fewer careless husbands,—careless in talk of women and in the practice of domestic virtues.

As you are your husband's standard of wifely fidelity, be also his criterion of purity of language and thought. Elevate, not commonize, his estimate of womanhood. Show, by silent gravity, that whatever approximates ribald talk distresses you. In becoming your mate in the nearest and tenderest relation of the human species, he should be more, not less, the gentleman than when as a gallant, he was the pink of courtesy. From the day your Lares and Penates are installed, let the gospel of conventionalities be established likewise as the rule of your household. Dress, talk and keep the house for him as carefully and tactfully as for a stranger. Do not make him boorish or awkward by reserving the gentler forms of address, the fine linen and best china for visitors. Unless he is exceptionally *au fait* to traditional by-laws of social usage, you are better informed on such subjects than he. Initiate him into these minor graces of polite society gradually and ingeniously, with no appearance of schooling or dictation. This is an undertaking requiring much wisdom, or rather *finesse*. If John has not been reared in the house with his mother and sisters, he will be rough in seeming to your finer perceptions. He will probably have "ways."

I knew of an else irreproachable spouse who, having been born and reared up to the date of his entering college, upon a farm, would, after he became a successful

lawyer and a city householder, insist upon washing his hands at the kitchen sink when he came home to lunch each noon. Servants stared and tossed contemptuous heads; his wife kindly expostulated and good-humoredly ridiculed the practice. He "liked to be free-and-easy in his own house," and each day marched straight from the front door through the handsome hall, into the back entry, and so into the kitchen. There he washed face and head under the cold water faucet, scrubbed his hands with yellow soap, wiped them on the roller-towel, consulted the thermometer in the rear hall, and presented a smiling, satisfied countenance in the dining-room. The wife writhed in secret and pondered long. A woman's house is her kingdom, its decencies and proprieties as precious in her sight as national integrity to an upright ruler. The behavior of the master was a palpable misdemeanor, yet he would neither acknowledge nor abate the nuisance.

Finally, during his absence from town, she had a stationary wash-stand, with hot and cold water pipes, set up under the window in the back entry; a roller-towel rack screwed upon the wall at one side, and hung a new large combination of barometer and thermometer on the other. The arrangement was "a great convenience for the children when they came in from school" she showed her lord on his return. It was called, "the children's wash-stand," but in less than a month their

father, uninvited, halted there habitually to "look at the thermometer," and in an absent-minded way, washed his hands in the convenient bowl.

Nevertheless, do not "manage" your husband when fair and open means will serve your end. The sweetest-tempered man will revolt at the suspicion of wheedling and strategy. He may admire your cleverness, but he will not love and trust you the more when he detects your wiles. Above all, never play upon his tenderness for you in order to accomplish a given purpose. State your wishes frankly and pleasantly; urge them by a show of your reasons for expressing them, and, if denied, bear the disappointment bravely.

Never *nag!* The inability of women to let sleeping dogs lie is only surpassed by the teasing tenacity with which they will twit a man with some trifling sin of omission, and bore him by begging for a coveted good he can not supply if he would, would not if he could, and should not grant if he would and could.

The solemn dignity of Holy Writ is never degraded by sarcastic comment from those who held the pen. Yet we wonder how—being men of like passions with our husbands, they refrained from marginal annotations against such passages as these:—

"And she wept before him the seven days while the feast lasted, and it came to pass on the seventh day, that he told her, because she lay sore upon him."

And again, in the same narrative:—

“And it came to pass when she pressed him daily with her words and urged him so that his soul was vexed unto death, that he told her all his heart.”

Poor, soft-hearted, big-limbed giant! How could he help it?

Be too proud and too honorable to owe to tedious rasping with a file that which you can not get at with honest keys. When you can not win your husband's acquiescence in your schemes by a fair exposition of your views, yield gracefully and *let him alone!*

I speak here of affairs that do not involve moral or religious principle. No human being has the right—no human law can endue him with the authority to legislate for another's conscience, when in opposition to his decree, that other can plead—“Thus saith the LORD!” You may not sin in word or deed, or temporize with sacred duties, even at your husband's behest. You belonged to GOD before you belonged to him. Our reference is to the numerous subjects of discussion brought to the surface by the ordinary course of family life;—the ordering of household machinery, personal expenses, social obligations and the like. Define your desires on these points, and if these are combated, calmly and courteously explain what you consider are your rights. After this,—I repeat—if one or the other *must* give up, let it be yourself.

The masculine idea of mutual concession is aptly given in the anecdote of the man who, in urging the wisdom of conciliatory measures in the married state, told of his first and only open quarrel with his wife.

“When we were furnishing our house she wanted crimson furniture, and I, blue. We wrangled pretty hotly for a while, but at last, we *compromised on the blue*. Since then, we have gotten along swimmingly together.”

The rule I have reiterated is a safe one. I do not say there is justice in it, but to suffer wrong meekly is preferable to continual bickerings and heart-festers. Magnanimity becomes a noble soul better than selfish triumph. When inclined to be severely critical of your spouse's defects, let me—speaking out of the depths of personal experience—recommend as palliative, if not cure of your uncharitableness, a judicious course of introspection. Examine yourself for an hour with his eyes,—judge your foibles by a man's tests—and forgive him!

All these are petty troubles; at their worst but wrinkles in the lining of the shoes so lately fitted to your feet. You will get used to them, or time will wear them flat and smooth if you will be patient. You will ignore them when you reflect upon what are the actual sorrows of wedded life. Perhaps it would be more strictly correct to drop the plural here.

True, some husbands are drunken and dishonest and

brutal. But so are some fathers, and their daughters suffer as keenly in and for them as wives do on account of their partners' disgrace and cruelty. The law interferes in the extremity of either case. Marital infidelity is a sin and a woe, *sui generis*. The anguish of the woman who is conscious that she has been thus sinned against may well appeal in the exceeding sorrowfulness of the cry:—

“Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow which is done unto me?”

Women live through it, and their most intimate friends hear nothing of it? Yes! because they must! It has driven more to madness, to suicide, to desperate destruction of their own souls than all other goads combined. I wish I could assure you with truth, loving young wife, that the crime is rare. I would exchange years of my own life if I could, to regain the faith in the general practice of the virtues of constancy and continence which was mine at your age. Having been reared in a quiet GOD-fearing community where married flirts were not considered respectable, and known violations of marriage-vows were banned as criminal, I have sustained a long series of disagreeable shocks at the sight of the growing tolerance, or apathy with respect to these that has almost reduced transgressions to peccadilloes.

Two truths are incontrovertible. The undivided allegiance of your affections and life is due to him to whom your nuptial-vow was plighted, "until Death do you part." And if ever a rule should work both ways, this ought. It is the ordinance of GOD and your heart adds, "Amen!"

Do not be easily or hastily persuaded that your husband is untrue to you, however appearances may assert this. The felt need of recreation is more manifest in man than in woman, probably because his studies are severer, his seasons of consecutive labor more arduous. Our work, if "never done," has little breaks here and there. We can slip in half an hour's chat, an hour's walk, dip for five minutes into a restful book, and catch ten minutes' doze in the "betweenities." When office and warehouse are shut at evening, the workman and his employer are masters of their time until next morning. The weight is lifted entirely, and the rebound of a healthy nature is strong. The released toiler wants amusement, and of a more decided flavor than the mild refreshment which satisfies you. So in the vacations, of which you know experimentally little after your graduation. You may not comprehend the relish for boating, fishing, hunting, billiards, traveling, or whatever other form his hobby may assume. If you are a sensible woman, you will tolerate it to the full. If a loving wife, you should simulate the sympathy

you do not feel—not only because John is the happier for the harmless diversion, but because he will work better and live longer for it. I have seen many a man soured into moroseness, many a good fellow spoiled into a machine for money-making, because the presiding genius of his home derided his sporting fancies, frowned on his post-prandial cigar, criticised and snubbed the friends of his bachelorhood, and put her foot down—metaphorically, at least—upon riding-horse and pointer. “Love me, love my dog,” is undoubtedly a masculine dictum.

Have charity, moreover, for John’s enjoyment in the company of a bright girl. That he jests with her, seeks her in public assemblies, discusses books and current events with her in a serious corner, that he wants you to become the friend of “one of the most charming women he has met in an age”—so far from being *prima facie* evidence of his disaffection to you, is almost positive proof that the whole affair is as innocuous as a glass of iced soda-water. He might know and meet her weekly for fifty years without endangering your place in his affections. He may boldly protest that he is “very fond of her,” and mean all he says, and love you the more truly for liking one who ministers to his innocent pleasure. Illicit love does not assume this guise so often as to be recognized by such signs as I have described.

Should you unhappily discover that your husband visits clandestinely and frequently one whom he seldom names to you, and then carelessly or slightingly; that letters pass regularly between the two which are kept out of your sight; that the stolen glances and shy avoidance of the semblance of intimacy in public are like the manœuvres of a pair of secretly-betrothed lovers—you have the right to know what it means. As the best friend of the indiscreet or erring man, it is your duty to speak openly of your fears and warn him of the danger to your happiness and his reputation arising from his imprudence. That you may perform this duty aright, summon the aid of philosophy, good sense, and religion to support you in the ordeal. Restrain so far as you can the exhibition of violent jealousy. Plead earnestly and lovingly, not angrily. In losing command of your temper you put yourself in the wrong forthwith, and lose by so much the weight of a just cause. Should your remonstrance be ineffectual, take up the heavy cross appointed for you to carry, and ask of the tender pity of the Father daily grace to live. Do not descend to espionage and adroit snares for the detection of the guilty parties. As I have said, better lose love than respect. Moreover, a wife thus situated can do nothing to arrest the evil. The utmost she can accomplish is to teach her sinning lord superior cunning in the prosecution of his *liaison*, while widening the gulf

between her and himself, or precipitate the day of discovery in the which her name as linked with his will be tarnished.

Some of the grandest women I have ever seen have grown in depth of feeling and mind into heroines—in Christian graces into saintliness, under this crucial discipline. It brings out the best as the worst of a wife. It is a received article of belief with *roués* that she who doubts her husband's faithfulness to her, is already half won by another. The women of whom this may be predicted are vastly outnumbered by the noble army of martyrs who, for the sake of their children and of society, through the might of a love that can not be wholly withdrawn from the unworthy object, live in their husbands' homes loyal wives and dumb victims, and, by the sublimity of their devotion, silence scandal itself—almost redeem the names they bear from the disgrace of others' misdeeds.

Of whom the world is not worthy! My spirit bows in unspoken homage in the presence of a wronged wife who yet makes no open sign of her desolation.

I said as much the other day to a good man, a gallant Christian, who loves and honors the wife of his choice. I added, furthermore:—

“I hold fast to the old-fashioned belief in the oneness, the absoluteness of the marriage-tie—the love and

fidelity of one man toward one woman, and that woman his wife."

He shook his head doubtfully:

"Ah! that is because you are a woman!"

So be it!





CHAPTER XXIII.

SHALL BABY BE?

“There is a steady check in an old civilization on the fertility of the abler classes. The improvident and unambitious are those who chiefly keep up the breed. So the race gradually degenerates, becoming with each successive generation less fitted for a high civilization, although it retains the external appearance of one.”—FRANCIS DALTON, “*Hereditary Genius*.”

“The startling differences between the America of Washington and the America of Andrew Johnson, may be greatly traced to the immigration of old days consisting of Cavaliers and Pilgrim Fathers, and the recent immigration being made up of Irish cottiers and German boors, and loose or criminal fugitives from everywhere.”—W. R. GREG, “*Enigmas of Life*.”



IF the American nation—as such—is to maintain a continued and vigorous existence, it is by and through the birth of American infants. These must be borne by American women. Upon the bodily, moral and intellectual health of the parents of this generation depends the quality of that which is to follow it in close succession.

These are principles of political economy formulated

in varying terms by prominent sociologists and physiologists of our times, but generally commended by them to the consideration of the sterner sex,—perhaps upon the supposition that every good citizen is master in his own house. This course may have had a reasonable excuse at a date when women, particularly wives and mothers, declared their indifference to politics and were vain of their ignorance of the difference between “polity” and “policy,” and the leading questions of the most exciting Presidential canvass. Now, when the cry for women’s suffrage is waxing loud and yet more loud;—when the gentlest belle has “opinions,” and thrifty housewives declaim against taxation without representation, it is absurd for us to feign irresponsibility.

Sweeping aside dust and cobwebs with one stroke of our Common Sense besom,—ridding the vexed question of sophistry, special pleading and the vituperation which passes with untrained minds for argument, let us take up boldly what slang calls “a bottom fact.”

Is it not that women want to vote, but are not willing to make voters? That with an impatience that shortens sight and dizzies judgment they account a seat on the throne where they can be seen and heard more honorable than the power behind it? That policy is not only short-sighted, but ignoble which sacrifices the great and prospective good of the many to the present

aggrandizement of the one,—be the individual man or woman.

“ I shall be able to have my own way during my lifetime,” said Louis XV., vicious and imbecile. “ But I pity my grandson ! ”

The painted harridan at his side was ready with the *bon mot* that has won infamous notoriety :

“ *Après nous, le déluge !* ”

The “ strong-minded ” woman accepting the social vantage-ground of wifhood, but protesting positively against the incumbrance of a family that would clog her efforts in behalf of the emancipation of her sisters and the elevation of humanity, echoes with all the mute force of example the sentiment of La Pompadour. She and her guild are toiling in the blocked-up doorways of the Augean stables with reformatory spade and rake and broom, in place of doing their best to conduct against the massed filth a stream of power, stronger humanity that would make clean work of the premises in a single generation. When in every American household is growing up a troop of brave boys, robust in body and clean of heart,—of girls as brave, as sensible and as sound, getting ready to take their places in the land soon to be vacated by those whose faces are already turned toward the sun-setting,—we may hear, without a fearsome thrill, the tale that through one port alone, there is debouched daily upon our land a flood of fifteen

hundred foreigners. This incoming tide is composed, according to our English writer, "of Irish cottiers, German boors, and loose or criminal fugitives from everywhere."

The same Great Heart says elsewhere:—"I am not prepared to give up this life as a 'bad job' and to look for reward, compensation, virtue and happiness solely to another. I distinctly refuse to believe in *inevitable* evils. I recognize in the rectification of existing wrong and the remedy of prevailing wretchedness the work which is given us to do. For this we are to toil and not to toil in vain."

Our grandmothers bore many children. Not—fairness obliges me to say—in obedience to the lofty sense of duty I would inculcate as the lesson of this chapter, but because they could not help themselves, and had an impression, based upon some unwritten moral law, that it would not be right to prevent it if they could. The pains and penalties of fertility were no lighter for them than for their granddaughters. In fact, they were far heavier. The advance of medical science in the branch of obstetrics has been vast during the past century. The "sacred primal curse" of their sex was reckoned a very curse, and endured with shame and loathing. But—"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands," stood out in threatening relief upon the Statute Book, and as rendered by them was not to

be evaded. "Another!" groaned gossips in concert, when a tenth or eleventh olive-shoot was added to a neighbor's responsibilities. And—"She ought to be thankful, poor thing!" when an infant came, still-born, into a world where it was not wanted.

But the little ones continued to make their appearance upon a mundane stage, too fast in many homes for their own good and the mother's strength, and by a merciful law of Divine husbandry, the weaker plants were often transplanted to a Nursery where neglect and mistakes are impossible. These were mourned in all sincerity. It was a saying then as now that the "little things bring their love with them." Mothers reared the survivors wisely—according to their lights; enjoyed their youth, and in their own old age were comforted by their dutiful offices. With the march of other reforms, "Women's Rights" fell into line.

"We are men's equals and will be owned by them as such," was the first platform.

When this was granted—with a few reasonable limitations—by the major part of masculine humanity, came, "In all things save cultivated brute force we are your superiors. We claim your homage."

The easy-tempered among those whom we—not they—assume are our opponents, shrug their shoulders, and let the case go by default.

"Give them their own way, and they will live the

longer," is their motto. And they make light of it, going *their* ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise.

The pugnacious make a stand, harking back to St. Paul, and even to Abraham and Sarah—"Whose daughters ye are so long as ye do well and are not afraid with any amazement."

(The New Version has it, "not put in fear by any terror.")

Weak men who can not hold their own with their proper sex, and unballasted radicals train with the band of seditious women; accept offices in their societies, add bass voices to the shrill clamor for "uncontrolled enfranchisement."

This hubbub is folly and beneath the dignity of genuine womanhood. We are not rebellious serfs, and it may be safely affirmed that whenever we have proved ourselves capable of filling any position with honor to it and to us, there have not been wanting true, magnanimous men, ready with their meed of praise to encourage us in the venture. It is when the feet of clay appear beneath sacerdotal or queenly vestments that they sneer—as they should. We do not usurp the functions of men when we develop and employ to the best advantage the intellectual faculties we enjoy in common with them. We do attempt this asinine feat by feigning ourselves to be sexless beings fitted by

their deformity to do the work appointed to the entire race, and eager to undertake it. Always excepting that part of it which men *can not* perform, to wit, the bearing, the nursing, and the rearing of those who are to carry on the work of the species in years to come.

Is this bald—unwomanly—is it non-progressive talk? To what other delusion shall we then attribute the rapid and steady decline in the number of children born of American parents, and the equally notorious fact that this is most marked in what are known as our “better classes”? Are we, after all our boast of superior physical culture, feebler and more cowardly than those who gave birth to our parents, or than our parents themselves? Are we Malthusian converts who fear to swell the population of our half-peopled continent beyond the capacity of the land to furnish subsistence for the teeming multitudes? Or, are we so intensely and secretly conscious of our mental and moral defects that we dare not perpetuate them in our offspring?

Bear with me while we come to closer quarters in this disquisition.

Briefly and directly, we may refer the objections of young married couples to the birth of children to themselves to certain causes:—

First (and most respectable of all) the dread of transmitting organic diseases to the next generation. The like scruple should have kept the afflicted person

single. He or she has no right to write another "childless"; to force upon that one an unmerited burden. If, however, this wrong has been done, the second wrong will not make it right. The further evil of diseased progeny should be avoided by periodical continence.

Second. Doubt as to the ability of the parents to maintain reputably more children than they already have, or indeed, any at all.

Quarles, a quaint old prosaic poet, who had thirteen children of his own, is indignant with the faithless father who can not trust the Lord for the board and clothes of those He sends. He is nearer the truth than the very-far-seeing ones who rival "Clever Alice" of German folk-lore in their prevision of possible calamity. It is to be regretted that the seers, while celibate, had not included children among the contingents of matrimony, and shirked the risk. It is a greater pity that, peering into the dim recesses of the far future, they had not espied the miseries of a desolate old age in the which the riches they have pawned their soul to obtain will mock their loneliness and be a tempting lure to swarms of greedy time-servers, impatient for their decease and the accruing legacies.

This excuse is the cover for other and meaner scruples than the apprehension of want or privation on the part of the dear little improbables. Childless people get

rich faster—*ceteris paribus*—than those who have more mouths to feed, more backs to clothe. It is customary with these long-headed philanthropists to limit their contributions to the world's population to one, or, at most, two specimens of their kind, who usually carry out the law of heredity by growing up into selfish and narrow men and women. There is no better educator of the affections and generous graces than a large family. He who loves worldly substance so fondly that he can not endure the prospect of lessening his hoard by dividing it with his babes, is not likely to beget a large-souled heir, or to rear him in the practice of the nobler virtues.

Third. People "hate to be troubled with children." The husband of this class would "hate" the annoyance of an ailing wife. The wife would account an invalid husband a nuisance, and is not ashamed to avow that her weak nature recoils with horror inconceivable from the inconveniences of pregnancy and child-birth pain. Each is essentially selfish—a lover of fleshly ease, and so incapable of appreciating the privilege of paternity, the sweet dignity of motherhood, that remonstrance would be ineffectual even did we not recognize the beautiful fitness of letting theirs remain, in the blunt phrase of England's virago queen, "a barren stock."

A sketch in an illustrated paper—*Harper's Weekly*, I think—showed up a wife of this kind most graphically

a while ago. She sat, bare-armed and bare-necked, in her opera box, toying with a lorgnette, while a mustached exquisite whispered in her ear. In the background hovered an angel offering an infant to the wedded pair. The husband's gesture besought the wife's notice and her acceptance of the proffered blessing. Her unoccupied hand waved it away disgustfully. Underneath was written, "*Suffer not little children to come unto Me!*"

There is something awry in the sensibilities, or off the balance in the brain of the wedded woman who, although moderately healthy and not actually poor, deliberately elects never to be a mother. So firm is my conviction of this, so deep my abhorrence of the "preventives" commonly resorted to in order to escape the menaced danger, that I would fain ascribe the sins of young wives in this regard to ignorance, to thoughtlessness, or to the influence of bad counsels. They have not been educated up to the appreciation either of their duty or the exceeding great reward that will attend the performance of it. They do not know (how should they, never having been taught?) that the husband will be the dearer, home the richer, the world wider and more full; their own souls be renewed in growth by their consent to fulfill this one of the Father's appointments.

The word "consent" is used advisedly.

Dr. Napheys thus cites the remark of "a genial physician in the Massachusetts Medical Society"—

"If a woman has a right to decide on any question, it certainly is as to how many children she shall bear."

Upon another page of the same chapter, Dr. Napheys issues this significant caution:—

"Let women be warned in the most emphatic manner against the employment of the secret methods which quacks in the newspapers are constantly offering. Such means are the almost certain causes of painful uterine diseases and of shortened life. They are productive of more misery by far than over-production."

"None of these clumsy expedients is more frequent than the use of injections; none is more hurtful. It is almost certain to bring on inflammation and ulceration."

"We are prepared to assert," says the editor of an ably-conducted medical journal in the West, "that fully *three-fourths* of the cases we have met of the various forms and effects of inflammation of the uterus and its appendages in married women are directly traceable to this method of preventing pregnancy."

If ever husband and wife should be agreed upon any subject, it is upon this. The veriest tyro in the laws governing reproduction now understands that the propitious period of fecundity is the fortnight immediately

succeeding what we have denominated "The Rhythmic Check." Also that the opinion of the wisest physiologists leans decidedly to the belief that should conception take place during the first half of this time the product will probably be a girl; if later, a boy.

These are not prurient details, but useful facts, with which every married pair should be acquainted.

("Prurient" and "prude" I interject, *en passant*, have other points of resemblance and more striking than in the sound of the first syllable.)

The purest joys of wedlock are those of mutual affection, consonance of tastes, oneness in heart, mind and purpose. The "walk together" should be in perfect step and time. The divinest possibilities of our race are in the hands of our best men and best women thus joined. To approximate these, the production of offspring should be by consent, and not a matter of chance or unmanly persecution.

We leave this vitally important subject with a last and strong quotation from Greg's "Enigmas of Life." In the paper entitled "Malthus Notwithstanding," we have this optimistic prediction (conditional):

"In addition to the positive and preventive checks to over-population notified by him (Malthus), *there exist physiological checks which escaped his search, and which will prove adequate for the work they have to do.* If we were wise and virtuous, the positive check would

entirely disappear (with the exception of death, in the fullness of time), and the prudential check be only called upon to operate to that degree which is needed to elevate and purify and regulate the animal instinct, and which is quite reconcilable with, and conducive to virtue, happiness, and health;—in fine, Providence will be vindicated from our premature misgivings when we discover that there exist natural laws, *whose operation is to modify and diminish human fecundity in proportion as mankind advances in real civilization*, in moral and intellectual development; and that these laws will (unless we thwart them) have ample time and space wherein to produce their effect long before that ultimate crisis shall arrive which the Malthusian theory taught us so to dread.”





CHAPTER XXIV.

COMING.

“The pulse first caught its tiny stroke,
The blood its crimson hue from *mine*,
The life which I have dared invoke,
Henceforth is parallel with *THINE*.”

—EMILY C. JUDSON.

“*From the moment of conception a new life commences, a new individual exists, another child is added to the family. The mother who deliberately sets about to destroy this life, either by want of care, or by taking drugs, or using instruments, commits as great a crime, is just as guilty as if she strangled her new-born infant, or as if she snatched from her own breast her six-months' darling and dashed out its brains against the wall.*”—NAPHEYS, “*Physical Life of Woman.*”

THIS is the fearless deliverance of “one who knows.” Henry Ward Beecher said in a lecture on the “Burdens of Society,” delivered in *antebellum* times, that if “every letter of the word” SLAVERY “were a Mount Sinai, it could not express too strongly his sense of the enormity of the iniquity.” Now that the “Institution” he objurgated,

in season and out of season, has become a question of the Past, we may borrow the wholesale denunciation for application to the crime against which the above sentence is launched. The stress upon the italicised words is laid by the medical judge, not by me.

Ignorant women are apt to believe that the child does not live until the life is felt by the mother; that all attempts to destroy and dislodge the loathed intruder prior to that time are sinless—indeed, quite justifiable. Every physician in fair (or unfair) practice will testify to the universality of this opinion among the unlearned; the frequency with which he is consulted by women of high social standing and intellectual accomplishments upon the safest means of effecting the same purpose.

A clergyman's wife thus inveighed against the family doctor upon his refusal to lend himself to the project of destroying a three months' fœtus:

“And you, who call yourself a humane man, sworn to do your utmost to alleviate the miseries of the human race, condemn me to months of suffering, to the perils of accouchement and subsequent loss of valuable time rather than crush a contemptible *animalcule*?”

Another woman, a prominent “Higher Life” exhorter, entreated, even with tears, a physician of her own sex to relieve her of “an incubus that would prevent her from saving souls.” Her pious work must go

on if the murder of her unseen, but *living* child were necessary to clear the way!

Sharp and severe measures are imperatively indicated for consciences thus diseased and twisted.

These were administered by an eminent surgeon to whom the wife of a wealthy citizen applied in similar circumstances:

“I can not—*will* not have this child, doctor!” she stated. “I am going abroad with my family the coming summer to be absent for a year. The discovery of my condition threatens to upset all my plans. I am willing to pay any sum for your assistance at this juncture.”

“Madam!” replied the upright Galen, “you are just the woman for whom I have been looking for many months. It is time that this sin of infanticide should be checked by a notable example. I shall keep my eye on you, and if you do *not* have this child—a living child—at the proper season, I shall demand an investigation of the case in the name of the law. I mean what I say, and I shall keep my word.”

I might multiply these cases, *ad nauseam*, from examples that have fallen under my own observation, had I the heart to chronicle, or you to read them. The evil is deadly, and the feeling that prompts to the commission of the crime, widespread.

Again—as concerning the use of the filthy and injuri-

ous "preventives" referred to in our preceding chapter, I am constrained, in sickness of soul, to take up Peter's soothing words to those who had "killed the Prince of Life," and say, "I wot that through ignorance ye did it." The germ of the misdeed is the failure to value aright our mission as the mother-sex.

The trust consigned to us by Him who formed us Tripartite beings—His commission to us as Women, who, through the loves He has also ordained, have become wives—can not be misread without peril and sin. Next to Him—in reverence I write it—we stand recognized as the makers, as moulders of the race. One *man* in a million leaves his mark on his generation. The humblest mother—"thinking GOD'S thoughts after Him"—may leave her impress of these upon living epistles that are to transmit them to the eternities.

The next mistake is the non-appreciation of the physiological truth plainly set forth in the quotation from Dr. Napheys at the head of this chapter; a misapprehension of the character of the act by which the terrified woman would ward off pain, inconvenience and danger.

Acquitting you, my patient, and now my dear reader, of all disposition to shirk the sacred obligations implied by the very words "Wife" and "Husband," I pass with pleasure to a matter that does concern, and very nearly, you and your embryonic treasure. As

you have kept yourself sound and clean in body and in spirit from your youth up because sanity and purity are Christian duties, be doubly watchful of health and serenity in behalf of the helpless creature lying so close to your heart. You will discover now, if never before, the advantages of holding imagination within bounds and impulse in check. Discipline tells upon your own comfort, tenfold more upon the formation of the growing Thing you would have perfect in life and in limb, vigorous in mind, and free from degrading tendencies. You should be at your best when the latent germ receives that which develops it into life and growth. The stock-raiser who could not spell the word "propagation" and would stare stupidly at talk of the "survival of the fittest," yet comprehends the law I have hinted at. The arboriculturist takes his buds from thrifty boughs and engrafts them upon stocks as healthy. A weak, vicious breed ought *not* to be kept up.

Quietly and delicately adopt that regimen which will forward all the ends you would gain. Beyond your husband and your mother—or should she not be near you, some discreet matron-friend—let not the knowledge of your sweet secret extend for a few months at least. As with the dawn of Love's Young Dream, be jealous of sharing the happy news with those who, by coarse jest or unwise pity, or officious counsels, would offend

or alarm you. GOD has given you something to expect and to live for; has laid a tiny shoot of immortality in the hollow of your hand, and bidden you nurse it into healthful growth and beauty. Thank Him hourly for the gift; pray without ceasing that you may be worthy of the trust.

If the manner of your outward life has been judicious as respects exercise and occupation, do not alter it now. A safe rule is, when the new burden can be borne safely and in even tolerable comfort, to act as much as possible as if you were unconscious of it. *Walk regularly, out-of-doors*, and as far as has been your habit heretofore, unless the promenade is succeeded by unpleasant symptoms such as your friend and physician warn you call for especial caution. Fresh air and cheerful exercise, the panacea for so many fleshly ills, are never more truly a catholicon than to you, as now situated. Walking, evenly and comfortably on level ground, keeps firm, yet pliant, muscles that have more to bear than ever before, which will be taxed yet more heavily in the fullness of time. If you allow these to become flaccid or strengthless by disuse, the weight upon hips and back will grow less endurable from day to day until the pressure upon the lower abdomen and the underlying region will be cruelly painful. In walking, hold your shoulders in their normal position, neither stooping nor yet throwing back your body ungracefully. If all goes on natu-

rally, you will be able to keep up your daily walks until the expiration of the tedious "carriage" of three-quarters of a year. It is essential to a "comfortable" *accouchement* that you should do this.

Standing long in one position is disagreeable and hurtful; far more trying and dangerous than walking, because the weight settles hard upon one set of muscles and drags upon the spine. Reaching up both arms to arrange hangings, pictures, etc., should be especially avoided, with lifting heavy weights, jumping from a stair or stile, or carriage. Serious consequences often ensue from carelessness in these respects.

Be merciful to yourself in the matter of rest and leisureful recreation. Lie down for half an hour when you come in from your "constitutional," and have a pleasant book within reach of your hand when weary or "blue." That you will often be dispirited and depressed, without as often as with known reason, is more than likely. Some exceptionally happy women "never feel so well at any other time," never so light-hearted, so ready for work as when "carrying" their children. Blesséd are they among their sisters! It is a common exclamation with those less favored that these exceptions "ought to bear babies for the whole community of women." There is always a hope that you may enjoy a like immunity from suffering. Should you not, there remains the consolation that the coming blessing

will be worth double what you pay for it, let the price be what it may. Stay your heart upon the knowledge of this, however you may *feel*. Do not allow your imagination to wander off into dreary forebodings of disaster and death. The probabilities that you will pass safely through the crisis, bearing your infant in the arms of the love the Gracious Father likens to His own, as far outnumber the possibilities that you will not, as the sunny days outnumber the stormy; as smiles are more abundant than tears. By a cheerful, active habit of life, by looking resolutely away from the gloomy to the bright side of the future, by bringing to the endurance of bodily discomfort resolution, hope, and faith, you can further a happy consummation of present trials more ably than could the combined medical skill of a continent.

Without depreciating this same medical skill, let me counsel you against the too-common weakness of consulting even your family physician upon every new discomfort incident to your condition. Without seconding Miss Cobbe's declaration that "the old dangers implied in the words 'priests, women, and families,' were less than the perils of the newer triad—'doctors, women, and families'"—I have as little patience as this celibate Protestant Englishwoman with the class known as "women's doctors."

"They," she says, "have much to answer for in the

way of demoralizing weak and impressionable women,—in some cases, by ordering them stimulants in excessive quantities, and in others, by leading them to a deadly concentration of their thoughts upon disorders and weaknesses of their frames, of which the less any one thinks, the better for soul and body.”

The disorders, many and annoying, which are symptomatic of your state are more easily controlled by diet and care than by drugs or stimulants. Not one woman in ten thousand thinks of submitting herself to an “examination” to verify the fact of pregnancy, or when this is admitted, to account for her “odd sensations.” Not one in fifty thousand—I might say with truth, not one in one hundred thousand,—has valid cause for doing this, or for consulting a professional physician at all.

“We give drugs to amuse the patient while Nature performs the cure,” said caustic Abernethy.

The bland practitioner who listens with compassionate interest to the tale of your extraordinary affections and rankling solitudes, knows, if he is ever candid even in thought, that there has no strange thing happened unto you. *He* has no apprehension as to the result, and less anxiety on the score of your “alarming” symptoms, however well he may dissemble his sentiments under the assurance that you have done well in sending for him; that there are indications which ought not to be neglected for a single day; that grave

results frequently follow inattention to such and such symptoms, etc., etc., etc., et cetera.

Instead of swelling his bills, and boring or amusing him by weekly consultations, give heed to a few practical motherly and nursely observations that may assist you in the conduct of your own case.

Pregnancy is no more a disease than is the ripening of a peach, the "running to seed" of a lily. It is a perfectly natural process, for the perfection of which the Creator has prepared a set of organs, delicate in structure and easily deranged, but in all respects exactly adapted for the work appointed unto them. All that your will and care can do—all that the knowledge of "the faculty" could effect, would be to remove whatever obstructs the operations of Nature. If there is no malformation (deformity, which does not appear once in a million cases), the misnamed "diseases of pregnancy" are a transient trouble. Every day is one less, when time is journeying toward a fixed date, and every pang or inconvenience borne strikes off one from the number to be suffered.

Among the disorders incident to this period we will mention a few of the most frequent—those common to all women in the circumstances,—for which you need *not* call in the doctor.

Morning sickness manifests itself generally, about the time when the interrupted menses would, but for the

existing state of affairs, have made their appearance— or about four weeks after conception. As soon as the head is lifted from the pillow after awaking, the diaphragm rises in dumb revolt. Dumb, because there is nothing to throw off from the disturbed surface. Have upon a table at your bedside a bit of crust or toasted bread—the drier the better,—and munch it quietly before you offer to rise. After swallowing the last crumb lie still for five minutes, and then get up gently and slowly, not to irritate the sensitive organ. Should the nausea return, provoke it deliberately and with malice prepense, to the rejection of the slight contents of the stomach; lie down for a minute; bathe your face and wrists in cold water or cold water and vinegar,—arise resolutely and go down at once to breakfast, or have a slice of dry toast and cup of *hot* tea brought to your bedroom. Force yourself to eat whether you want the food or loathe the sight of it. Force yourself, moreover, to think of something besides your qualms. The meal disposed of safely, sit in the fresh air for ten minutes or more, should the weather allow this. If the day is cold, wrap up warmly and stand at an open window, or saunter very gently on a sunny piazza.

After a few weeks' faithful observance of this regimen, the system will probably adapt itself to your will. Should the sickness recur during the day, take ten drops of Horsford's Acid Phosphate in a tablespoonful

of cold water, and repeat this twice at intervals of half an hour. This simple prescription is often singularly efficacious. An excellent rule is *never to let yourself get hungry* during the three months beyond which morning nausea seldom continues. Emptiness of stomach is the provoking cause of this affection. Eat lightly—dry bread or biscuit, Graham crackers—anything that is easy of digestion, and not sweet,—but eat often. Lemon-juice is, with some, a specific for this affection. Acid fruits of all kinds are craved, and usually highly beneficial in quelling the uprising of the stomach. In time, by the aid of any or all of these appliances, and your own good sense, you will get the seditious organ in hand, and the distressing affection gradually cease to annoy you. Inanition and exhaustion, sudden fright or anxiety, are, nevertheless, apt to induce it at any stage of gestation. It is wise to prevent these mishaps by all available means.

Heartburn is not confined to any special period of the nine months' pilgrimage. It proceeds from acidity of the stomach, and is best removed by a teaspoonful of citrate of kali stirred into a glass of clear water, a tumbler of what the druggists sell as "plain soda," or a bit of block magnesia dissolved in the mouth and swallowed slowly. A lady told me once that she ate a few sweet almonds chewed very fine when thus troubled, and always found relief in the use of the pleasant corrective.

Should the burning become constant and intense, abjure pastries, gravies, and sweets, as tending to generate acid and bile, and subsist upon brown bread (stale), rare beefsteak and roast beef, juicy mutton, poultry, fresh fruits and vegetables until you are better.

Constipation is a more serious ailment than any of the two I have already mentioned. Sick headache, biliousness, and—when it is very stubborn and prolonged—convulsions, follow in its train. Correct it, if possible, by diet. Cracked wheat, corn bread, Indian meal gruel, mush and milk, apples (stewed, baked, and raw), Graham bread, and fruit in abundance—particularly peaches, oranges and lemons, are more agreeable curatives and alteratives than blue mass, rhubarb, and seidlitz powders. A glass of Hathorn or Vichy water drunk before breakfast is often effectual, or an orange eaten at bed-time. Simple enemata are useful in obstinate cases, but they should not be resorted to except as a final measure for removing that which other means have failed to cure. One soon becomes entirely dependent upon them.

Torpidity of the bowels is not infrequently succeeded by the reverse of *troublesome laxity*. Unless this is excessive to the obvious weakening of the system, it is not alarming, particularly if the gestation be far advanced. It is Nature's method of clearing the system of whatever would militate against her design of a

birth that shall imperil neither mother nor child. The strength must be kept up by suitable food, drives may be substituted for long walks, and—most salutary of all expedients—change of place, air, and diet for a few days or weeks be tried for the cure or mitigation of the disorder.

Rice, boiled milk (ice-cold or as hot as it can be safely swallowed), arrow-root jelly and gruel, boiled mutton and chicken, corn-starch, hasty pudding, thickened milk, well-cooked dry toast unbuttered, are among the articles suitable for your food while the diarrhœa continues.

Cramps—generally in the calves of the legs—are a common annoyance, increasing in severity during the eighth and ninth months. To check the paroxysm which usually comes on while you are in bed, stretch your foot straight out, bringing the heel into exact perpendicular with the ball, and hold it in this position for some seconds. The relief will be almost immediate and entire.

For *pain in the back* wear an Allcock's porous plaster constantly, renewing as it wears off. This is an invaluable support when the weight on the small of the back becomes heavy and the aching incessant.

To prepare the breasts for their novel office, wear a bit of very coarse flannel next them for two months, and bathe the nipples with a solution of alum and brandy. A homœopathic medicine—*calendula*—diluted

with water, is excellent for this purpose, used as a fomentation twice a day.

For such graver affections as *bloating of the whole body* and *varicose veins*, consult without delay an experienced physician. If you have maintained your active habits and the functional regularity of the digestive organs, you will not be likely to bloat, and the vein-swelling will probably be comparatively slight.

Whatever measure of pain and languor may be your portion, do not despond. The wild flutter of the unseen infant when you give way to hysterical emotion is a token of the close sympathy existing between its life and yours. Put from you philosophically and firmly, not only distressful anticipations, but melancholy reveries on any subject. Distrust moods, and, when these are capricious, question the conclusions formed while they are in possession. If tormented by persistent and unhealthy fancies, seek merry companies, social amusements, bits of engrossing fancy-work, "funny" books. Overwork is as perilous as sadness—perhaps more hurtful to the health of the mother and the physical formation of the child.

I could fill pages with piteous stories of the wholesale baby-slaughter done by New England housewives of the generations closely preceding this. They reared large families, but the two or three leaves devoted to "BIRTHS" in the family Bible were crowded with en-

tries and the "DEATHS" columns usually showed at least half as many. My great-grandmother bore twelve children, six of whom did not live two months. A death-drain like this needed a patriarchal supply.

Madame du Châtelet—the most accomplished pupil of Maupertius, the intimate companion for fifteen years of Voltaire—writes thus May 20, 1749:—

"Do you know the life I have led since the departure of the King? I rise at nine, sometimes at eight. I work until three, then I take my coffee. I resume work at four. At ten I stop to eat a morsel alone. I talk until midnight with M. de Voltaire, who comes to sup with me, and at midnight I go to work again and keep on till five in the morning."

Her biographer takes up the terrible tale:—

"She attempted to do for Newton's 'Principia' what Mrs. Somerville afterward accomplished for the Astronomy of Laplace. She translated the Latin into French, and amplified the demonstrations so as to bring the work within the grasp of advanced French students of Mathematics."

Elsewhere he says:—

"Nature will not be cheated in a matter of supreme importance. She bore much from this ill-regulated Du Chatelet, but turned upon her at last to wreak a sudden and horrible vengeance."*

* Parton's "Life of Voltaire," p. 547.

Her child was born September 4, 1749. In four days she and it were dead.

The misogynist, Frederick of Prussia, who hated her for the influence she exerted upon Voltaire, made himself merry over the fatal occurrence in an epitaph:—

“Here lies one who lost her life from the double *accouchement* of a ‘Treatise of Philosophy’ and of an unfortunate infant.”

Occupation is not necessarily toil, nor are seasons of restfulness, indolence. A wise alternation of the two is your present need.

Before, and above all else, hold fast to your belief in the tender mercy and loving-kindness of Him whose

“Greatness
Flows around our incompleteness,”

the Infinite Fatherhood that has called you to the holy estate of prospective maternity. Read and apply to your case what blessed old Bunyan writes of the Valley of Humiliation when you are tempted to murmur at your long journey amid the shadows of the encompassing heights:—

“It is the best and most fruitful piece of ground in all these parts. Behold how green this valley is; also, how beautiful with lilies. Some also have wished that the next way to their Father’s house were here, that they might be troubled no more with either hills or mountains to go over.

“But the way *is* the way, and there is an end!”

INDEX.

CHAPTER I.—BIRTH, NOT BEGINNING.

- The baby-girl—Conjugated in the passive voice—Mrs. Gamp—The mother's discovery—Original sin and actual transgressions—Law of heredity—The burden of to-day. 11

CHAPTER II.—INFANTS' FOOD.

- Mother's milk—Milk-producing food—Old wives' fables—Effect of the mother's moods and habits upon the nursing child—Illustrations—Foster-mothers—Margaret Maguire—Man an omnivorous animal—Substitute for mother's milk—Bottle-babies—Importance of regular hours in feeding. 22

CHAPTER III.—STARTING EVEN.

- Story of a child of Nature—Our sons and daughters start even—Twelve years of boyhood for each sex—Mortality of sexes equal in childhood—Complexion and clothes—Outdoor life—Dietetics better than drugs—Illustrations from life. 41

CHAPTER IV.—HANDICAPPED.

- Nature not responsible for constitutional weaknesses—The mother the true representative of radical reform—Fashionists and purists—Why few women can walk—Half-girls, half-boys—Premature bloom, imperfection—Sinful desecration—Formation of business habits in the girl—"Pottering 'round"—Mrs. Garfield's bread-making—Dignity of commonplace life—From birth to the marriage-day an irresponsible, penniless pet—Why boys have savings' banks and girls do not—Domestic bribery and corruption 57

CHAPTER V.—REVERENCE OF SEX.

- The temple of the body—Practical study of anatomy and hygiene—Childish questionings and maternal lies—False delicacy, criminal reserve—Popular ignorance and pseudo modesty—Sins of our grandmothers—Consequences to this generation—Frank and serious confidence between mother and girl-child—Tell her "Why?"—How to begin—The plain truth, and all of it—"Knowledge never yet de-

stroyed delicacy"—The study of physiology in schools—Illustrations—What are "inconvenient things"?—True heredity—The mother builds for time and for eternity.... 76

CHAPTER VI.—THE FIRST TURNING-POINT.

Perils of climacterics—Stealthy advance of the consciousness of sex—Cure for morbid uneasiness—A fidgetty mother—Crude growth unreasonable—How to meet peculiarities of turning-point—Active employment for mind and body—Care of the skin—Sponge and plunge baths merely surface drainage—Proper sewerage of the body—Morbid and diseased appetites—Creation of a digestive conscience—Evils of spiced food and stimulants—"Temperance and Patience"..... 97

CHAPTER VII.—GIRLHOOD.

Girls not women—Longings for young ladyhood—A safe and sheltered season—The value of the accumulative period—Immaturity not deformity—The mother's duty at this juncture—Dr. Clarke on metamorphosis of tissue—The made-woman and the woman-in-making—Nature can supply, not create—"Enjoying bad health"—Health is a duty—"Romantic sickliness is bathos and vulgarity".... 118

CHAPTER VIII.—BRAIN-WORK AND BRAIN-FOOD.

Silas Peckham and salty fish—Mrs. Peckham, Indian corn, and pork—Feeding-establishments and boarding-schools—Why girls are sent from home to school—Age at which the girl should enter college—Warning-signals from Vassar, Wellesley, Smith, and Mount Holyoke—Fed by contract—Mrs. Putnam-Jacobi on mental action and physical health—Indifference to food ominous—Illustrations—The student's body must be built up, not kept under—What to eat, when and how to eat—Charlotte Brontë—A college boy's appetite and that of a college girl..... 136

CHAPTER IX.—WHAT SHALL OUR GIRL STUDY?

College catalogues—Our girl's new sphere—The average girl-student—*Cui bono?*—The young life takes root for itself—Specific effect of the study of worthy subjects—Benefit of school discipline in after-life—Comparison between college-bred men and college-bred women—Freemasonic order of gentleness—"My mind to me a kingdom is"—Music and painting as electives—Advantages of practical amateurship in the fine arts—Cruelty of compulsory mu-

sical education—Accomplishments veneer and glaze—The conventional girl and the conventional pattern for a boy—Waste of time, money, and misdirected energy—Illustrated—Filling buckets evenly..... 154

CHAPTER X.—FACE TO FACE WITH OUR GIRL.

Womanly impatience—Impracticability of transmitting individual experience—Frances Power Cobbe's appeal to women as human beings of the mother sex—Health of uneducated women—Dr. Clarke on "Jane in the factory," and "Jane in the college"—Insanity and disease of farmers' wives—Maud Muller and the college girl—Health of American domestics—Illustrations drawn from a house-keeper's experience—Physical ailments and miseries of "Jane in the factory"—Dr. Beard on improvement in physique of better class of Americans—The girl of to-day is on the winning side..... 173

CHAPTER XI.—HOW SHALL OUR GIRL STUDY?

What health of mind implies, and what health of body—Loving care of the body combined with gross neglect of it—Causes of the rapid degeneration of women-foreigners in America—Bridget and Gretchen as imitative animals—Mrs. Lofty and her daughters as reformers—Care of the health not necessarily remedial measures—The body is the soul's nearest neighbor—Strain upon the medulla oblongata—Overwork a dishonest draft upon physical energy and mental force—Sequel of this improvidence and extravagance—Studying with headache and cold feet—Causes of insomnia and troubled dreams—Incipient suffusion of the brain—A few practical suggestions—Rest an invariable human need..... 194

CHAPTER XII.—THE RHYTHMIC CHECK.

Heredity accentuated in the Third Part of woman's nature—Anæmic blood leads to an anæmic mind—What our grandmothers thought of the Rhythmic Check—A wise and gracious means to an important and beneficent end—Dr. Clarke's mild prohibitory clause—One day's rest in thirty—A few safe and easy regulations—How girls study and think, and how boys—Dr. Mitchell on "Wear and Tear"—What is "a dangerous amount of friction"?—Working in deadly, superfluous earnest—Effect of mental agitation upon the periodical function—How to become mistress of yourself—Stop!—Working with, not against,

Nature—Equilibrium of thought-flakes and regularity of blood-tides—The Sabbatical calm..... 214

CHAPTER XIII.—AMERICAN WORRY.

Women braver, but not more patient, than men—Doing only one thing at a time—It is not work, but worry, that kills—Will, not feeling, should rule—Taking up ashes with a gold spoon—To prove the brain sexless, divorce it from the heart—Comparison between excessive emotion and excessive study—Inherent and essential healthfulness of brain-work *per se*—Degradation of work into worry—Illustrations—The specific for mental excitation—Longevity of clergymen—Woman's need of something more tender than philosophy, stronger than stoicism—The Better Part..... 226

CHAPTER XIV.—WHAT THEN?

Graduated—Home-life, and "What to do with it"—Fancy-work, candy-pulls, missionary-barrels, and clubs—Desultory reading and study—College curriculum and green pickles—Specific employment a need—The society girl—Open doors for the woman of To-day—Half taught to do nothing—Illustration—Youth the time for the "learning how"—a look ahead..... 247

CHAPTER XV.—CALLED.

The King's commission—Patent prescriptions for feminine aspirations—Woman's kingdom—How to make the best of one's self—Why women become teachers—Diversity of gifts—An anchor to windward—Effect of a vocation upon the woman herself—Anxious because aimless—Why the average woman "falls in love"—Mrs. Delany's versatility of employment and industry—Carlyle on women's right to study medicine—Missionary women physicians—Fivialities of the stereotyped girl-life—Best interests of the home promoted by the election and study of professions by women—Obloquy of old-maidism—Wise economy of time and forces in student, wife, mother, and housekeeper—Emily Brontë's German and bread-making—Knitting-work and poetic fancies—The "betweenities"..... 267

CHAPTER XVI.—WHAT SHALL WE DO WITH THE MOTHERS?

The girl's home-coming—Must the mother be crowded out?—Outgrown—Upon the same floor with the kitchen—Un-

considered sacrifices—Grinding down from somebody to nobody—A sound principle—The mother's only earthly kingdom—"Only mother"..... 290

CHAPTER XVII.—INDIAN SUMMER.

"The Love that Lived"—The highway of middle age—The forgotten habit of learning—Mrs. Holgate's failures—Settling down—"Exceptional women"—American society "too young"—The mother the girl's chosen as well as lawful confidante—An office never to be demitted—The "change of life": its symptoms, its compensations, and its hopes..... 303

CHAPTER XVIII.—HOUSEKEEPING AND HOME-MAKING.

Mme. Demorest on woman's work—Cooking-lectures and salad-clubs—Why girls are not taught practical housewifery—Illustrations—Need of moral courage in the mother—The father's reasonings—"The Story of Avis"—Excescent development in man and in woman—Illustrations—The perfect intellect in either sex—Mary O'Reilly's love-letter—Peculiar trials of domestic life—A rule without exception—Happiness and blessedness..... 319

CHAPTER XIX.—DRESS.

Curious statistics concerning cleanliness and dress—Dress a Fine Art in all ages—The world and women better and more sensible now than in St. Peter's time—Just taste in this Fine Art *versus* a lust for dress—Æsthetic morality of dress—Practical suggestions—Hygiene in dress—Dr. Thomas on the dress of the Pilgrim mothers—Our grandmothers' tight-lacing—What we have paid for it—Our girl's corset—Dr. S. B. Hunt on dress-reform—Modern improvements upon ancient usages in dress—Lady Huntington's court-costume—Night-dress and bed clothes—Carbonic acid gas and effete animal matter—"Aunt Ildy" on cleanliness and beauty..... 339

CHAPTER XX.—GOSSIP.

Is culture a cure for gossip?—A biting spice of truth—The beginning of the end—Illustration—The blue-bottle fly instinct—The Sneerwell school—From gossipry to slander—Where the cure must begin—Three cardinal rules—The *Musca Cesar* and fly doors—Which is the chief commandment?—"Culture" *not* a cure for gossip—Mrs. Arachne Webb—Heroic treatment..... 363

CHAPTER XXI.—PRINCE CHARMING.

Sister Anne and the watch-tower—The abundant sphere—*Springfield Republican* and *London Truth* on "Uses for Women"—Men not our natural enemies—Dr. Gregory's "Legacy to his Daughters"—The accordant Whole—The silent side—Idealism of woman's love—Titania and Bottom—An exquisite touch of nature—Friendship between young men and young women—How to identify the Prince—No chance in the Universe—Marriage the risk of all that time can give—A squeamish fiction—People who should not marry..... 384

CHAPTER XXII.—MARRIED.

The old-fashioned novel and the modern—Loveless marriage an unchaste union—Coming down to every-day life—Wifely jealousy of business—"Management" of a husband—Illustration—Samson's first wife—Essentials and non-essentials—Masculine compromise—A sin and a woe *sui generis*—Two incontrovertible truths—Toleration of foibles and fancies—What is innocent and what hurtful—Better lose love than respect—Wifely heroism—Absoluteness of the marriage-tie..... 402

CHAPTER XXIII.—"SHALL BABY BE?"

What must build up the American nation, as such?—Voting or making voters—The Augean Stables—Our grandmothers' many children—What are "Women's Rights"?—We are not rebellious serfs—Three leading objections—"Suffer *not* little children to come unto me"—Dr. Napheys' significant caution—Prurient and prude—Gregg's optimistic prediction..... 419

CHAPTER XXIV.—COMING.

A solemn warning—A too common crime—Sin and peril of preventives—"Thinking God's thoughts after Him"—Dawn of the Second Life—A few safe rules—Mercy to yourself—Probabilities—"Doctors, women, and families"—Pregnancy not a disease—Disorders incident to this period—Illustrations—Wholesale baby-slaughter of preceding generations—Death drain and patriarchal supply—Mme. du Châtelet—"How beautiful with lilies!"—"The Way *is* the Way and there is an End"..... 432

A NEW BOOK BY MARION HARLAND.

Loiterings in Pleasant Paths.

One volume, 12mo, - - - - - \$1.75

Books of travel have multiplied of late years almost in a direct ratio to the increased facilities for journeying, and it may be said that the quality has also proportionately improved. We have works profusely adorned with superb illustrations, and others without pictorial embellishments, relying for their attractiveness on the charm of a skilled pen and the freshness of first impressions. Such a book is LOITERINGS IN PLEASANT PATHS, by "Marion Harland," whose *Common Sense* books have made her name a household word in every part of the land.

"These 'familiar talks from afar' are no fancy sketches, but actual experiences and impressions of a shrewd observer, whose mind was enriched and fully prepared to observe accurately and write intelligently and profitably. Marion Harland always writes books with a purpose, and the present volume is no exception to her rule."—*Chicago Inter-Ocean*.

"The observations of so clever a woman, who carries her head with her upon her travels and ventures to make use of all her faculties, are worth writing about and reading about, and this particular traveller has the good gift of so writing about them that the reading is a constant and unfailing source of pleasure."—*Evangelist*.

"Those who are going abroad will find this volume a delightful companion by the way; while those who are compelled to stay at home will find it the best possible substitute for the pleasure of foreign travel, as proved by actual experience."—*N. Y. Evening Post*.

** For sale by all booksellers, or sent post-paid upon receipt of price, by

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS,

743 AND 745 BROADWAY, NEW YORK.

"The very best, the most sensible, the most practical, the most honest book on this matter of getting up good dinners, and living in a decent, Christian way, that has yet found its way in our household."—WATCHMAN AND REFLECTOR.

COMMON SENSE

IN THE HOUSEHOLD.

A MANUAL OF PRACTICAL HOUSEWIFERY.

By **MARION HARLAND.**

New Edition. One volume, 12mo, cloth, . . . Price, \$1.75

KITCHEN EDITION, IN OIL-CLOTH COVERS, AT SAME PRICE.

This edition is printed from new electrotype plates and bound in a new pattern cloth binding, and also in the favorite "Kitchen Edition" style.

The popularity of this book has increased steadily for the last ten years, and the sale has reached the extraordinary number of

Over 100,000 Copies.

Many housekeepers will gladly welcome their old friend in a new dress, and renew their copies worn by constant use; or, as the author herself expresses it, "I hope my fellow-workers will find their old kitchen companion in fresh dress, yet more serviceable than before, and that their daughters may, at the close of a second decade, demand new stereotype plates for still another and like this a progressive edition."

With the new edition of "*Common Sense*," the Publishers will issue, in uniform style:

THE DINNER YEAR BOOK.

One volume, 12mo, 720 pp., cloth, or "Kitchen Edition," without colored plates.....\$1.75.

BREAKFAST, LUNCHEON, AND TEA.

One volume, 12mo. Cloth, or "Kitchen Edition,".....\$1.75.

Note.—The Dinner Year Book, with six colored plates, illustrating twenty-eight subjects, handsomely bound in cloth, will be continued in print at the regular price, \$2.25.

*** For sale by all booksellers, or sent, post-paid, upon receipt of price, by*

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS, PUBLISHERS,

743 AND 745 BROADWAY, NEW YORK.

A NEW EDITION

Uniform with the re-issue of "Common Sense in the Household"

THE DINNER YEAR-BOOK.

By MARION HARLAND,

AUTHOR OF "COMMON SENSE IN THE HOUSEHOLD," "BREAKFAST,
LUNCHEON, AND TEA," etc., etc.

One vol., 12mo, 720 pages, Price, \$1.75

KITCHEN EDITION IN OIL-CLOTH COVERS AT SAME PRICE.

THE DINNER YEAR-BOOK is, in its name, happily descriptive of its purposes and character. It occupies a place which, amid all the publications upon cookery—and their name is Legion—has never yet been occupied.

The author truly says that there have been *dinner-giving* books published, that is books of *menus* for company dinings, "Little Dinners," for especial occasions, etc., etc.; but that she has never yet met with a **practical directory** of this important meal for every day in the year. In this volume she has furnished the programme in all its details, and has superintended the preparation of each dish, proceeding even to the proper manner of serving it at the table. **The book has been prepared for the family, for the home of ordinary means, and it has hit the happy line where elegance and economy meet.**

The most numerous testimonials to the value of Marion Harland's "Common Sense" books, which the publishers have received, both in newspaper notices and in private communications, are to the effect—always expressed with some astonishment—that **the directions of these receipts, actually followed, produce the promised result.** We can prophesy the same for the new volume.

The purchaser will find that he has bought what the name purports—*The Dinner Year-Book*—a practical guide for the purchase of the material and preparation, serving, etc., of the ordinary home dinner for every day of the year. To these are added **twelve company dinners**, one for each month, from which a selection can be made—according to the time of the year—equal to any occasion which will be presented to the housekeeper.

This book, however, is not valuable merely as a directory for dinners appropriate to various seasons. It contains **the largest number of receipts** for soups, fish, meat, vegetables, entrees of all descriptions, and desserts, **ever offered to the American public.** The material for this work has been collected with great care, both at home and abroad, representing the diligent labor of many months.

Note.—The original Edition of *The Dinner Year Book*, with six colored plates, illustrating twenty-eight subjects, handsomely bound in cloth, will be continued in print at the regular price, \$2.25.

. For sale by all booksellers, or will be sent, post or express charges paid, upon receipt of the price, by

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS, PUBLISHERS,

743 AND 745 BROADWAY, NEW YORK.

Friar Anselmo and Other Poems.

By JULIA C. R. DORR.

1 vol., square 12mo., - - - - - \$1.25.

A rare grace and tenderness of feeling, characteristics of whatever Mrs. Dorr writes, mark this book everywhere. It will make its author more definitely known among those in whose memories many of her verses have lingered; and with those who have already given her high critical recognition, it will place her position beyond a doubt.

CRITICAL NOTICES.

"Mrs. JULIA DORR has won an enviable place among the friendly household poets of the land by her exquisite purity of sentiment, her genuine poetical feeling, the beauty of her fancies, and the sweetness of her diction, combined with a profound love of nature and the tender sympathies of domestic life."—*New York Tribune.*

"Mrs. DORR has a firm and confident touch, and she possesses that mastery of metrical expression, the lack of which leads so many writers whose poetic gifts are unquestionable into involved constructions and other literary limpings. The directness and simplicity of her utterance are charms not to be despised, and her grace of expression would go far to secure the success of work poetically less excellent than hers is."

—*Evening Post.*

"Refinement of taste, delicacy of thought, fluent diction, harmonious versification, and a true poetic ring are the invariable attractions of Mrs. DORR's verse. It is not ambitious in character, but within its range it is wholly good, always pure in tone and sweet in sentiment. The book is published by Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons in a style thoroughly in keeping with the dainty nature of its contents."—*Boston Sat. Eve. Gazette.*

"In Mrs. DORR's verse purity of thought and a quiet but intense affection are beautifully blended."—*Literary World.*

"Often her strains have a spirit and ring which is exhilarating, and the nobility of their sentiment rises at times into true christian devotion."—*Congregationalist.*

*** For sale by all booksellers, or will be sent, post-paid, upon receipt of price

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS,
Nos. 743 AND 745 BROADWAY, NEW YORK

PLEASE RETURN TO
ALDERMAN LIBRARY

DUE

DUE

1/11/55

1-23-90

4-29

3/2/2001

CX 000 853 581

