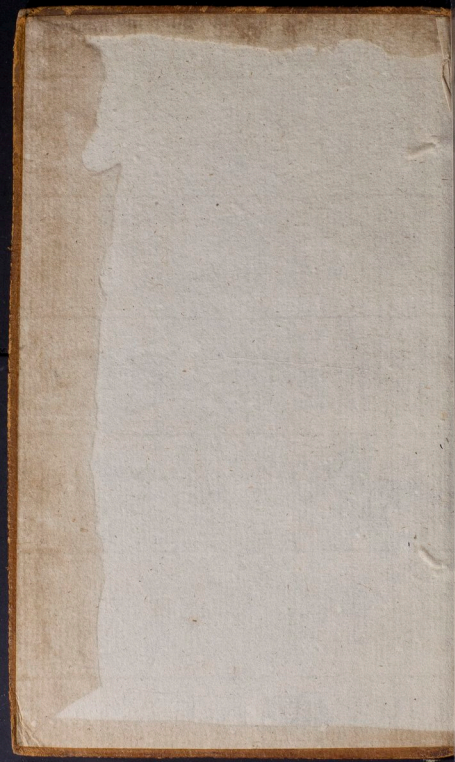


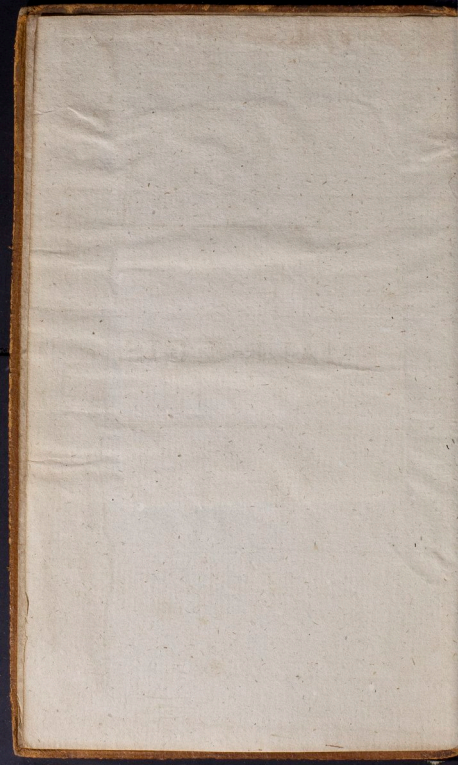
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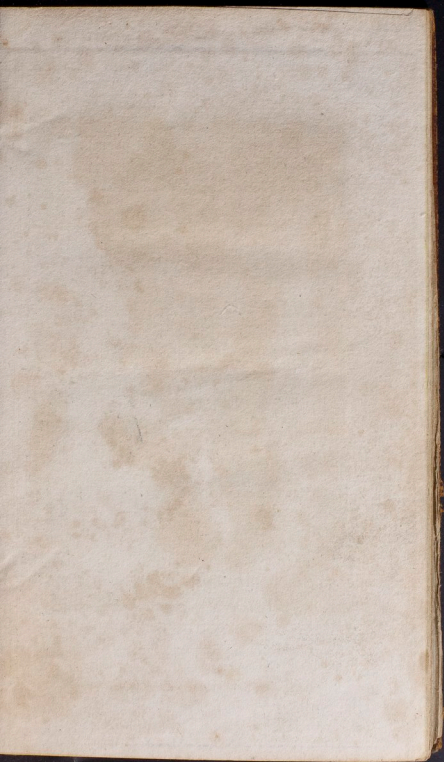
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THE

FEMALE ÆGIS.

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THE
FEMALE ÆGIS;
OR,
THE DUTIES OF WOMEN
FROM
CHILDHOOD TO OLD AGE,
AND IN MOST
SITUATIONS OF LIFE,
EXEMPLIFIED.

EMBELLISHED WITH A FRONTISPIECE.

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THE
FEMALE ÆGIS.

CHAPTER I.

IMPORTANCE OF THE FEMALE CHARACTER BRIEFLY STATED.

MANKIND owe so much to the influence of the female character for the degree of refinement to which we are at this moment arrived, that one would hardly suppose any could be found who question this influence, much less that some are depraved enough to express unqualified contempt towards the whole sex. But those men

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who

who indulge such inconsiderate opinions of the sex, have formed their judgements upon wrong grounds, and are therefore incapable or unworthy of forming any judgement concerning those whom they profess to despise. There is, however, a prejudice in female minds, which it is desirable to remove without delay, because it contributes to extinguish the desire of improvement, and to repress useful exertion. The fact is this: young women endowed with good understandings, but desirous of justifying the mental indolence which they have permitted themselves to indulge, or disappointed at not perceiving a way open by which they, like their brothers, may distinguish themselves and rise to eminence, are occasionally heard to declare their opinion, that the sphere in which women are destined to move, is so humble and so limited, as neither to require nor reward assiduity; and, under this impression, either do not discern, or will not be persuaded to consider, the real and deeply-interesting effects which the conduct of their sex will
always

always have on the interests of society. In attempting to obviate this error, it would be very culpable to flatter the ambitious fondness for distinction, which may, in part at least, have given rise to it. Human happiness is, on the whole, much less affected by great but unfrequent events, whether of prosperity or of adversity, than by small but perpetually recurring incidents of good or evil. The manner in which the influence of the female character is felt, belongs to the latter description. It is not like the periodical inundation of a river, which overspreads once in a year a desert with transient plenty. It is like the dew of Heaven, which descends at all seasons, returns at short intervals, and permanently nourishes every herb of the field.

In three particulars, each of which is of extreme and never-ceasing concern to the welfare of mankind, the effect produced by the influence of the female character is most important.

First. In contributing daily and hourly to the comfort of husbands, of parents, of

brothers and sisters, and of other relations and connections, in the intercourse of domestic life, under every vicissitude of sickness and health, of joy and affliction.

Secondly. In forming and improving the general manners, dispositions, and conduct of the other sex, by society and example.

Thirdly. In modelling the human mind during the early stages of its growth, and fixing, while it is yet ductile, its growing principle of action; children of either sex being, in general, under maternal tuition during their childhood, and girls until they become women.

Having thus briefly stated the grounds of their importance, we proceed higher up, by considering *the features which discriminate the sex.*

CHAPTER II.

PÉCULIAR FEATURES OF THE MIND WHICH
DISCRIMINATE THE SEX.

A WRITER who ventures to hope, that in suggesting observations on the duties incumbent on the female sex, he may be found to have drawn his conclusions from the sources of nature and of truth, should endeavour, in the first place, to ascertain the characteristic impression which the Creator has stamped on the female mind; the leading features, if such there be, by which he has discriminated the talents and dispositions of women from those of men: for it is from these original indications of Providence, taken in conjunction with scriptural proofs, that the course and extent of female duties, and the true value of the female character, are to be estimated.

WOMAN IN AN UNCULTIVATED STATE.

In different countries, and at different periods, female excellence has been estimated by very different standards. At almost every period it has been rated among nations deeply immersed in barbarism, by the scale of servile fear, and capacity for toil. Examine the domestic proceedings of savage tribes in the old world and in the new, and ask among the latter, who is the best daughter and the best wife? The answer is uniform: she who bears with superior perseverance the vicissitudes of seasons, the fervour of the sun, the dews of night; she who, after a march through woods and swamps from morn to eve, is the first to bring on her shoulders a burthen of fuel; she who searches with the greatest activity for roots in the forest, prowls with the most success along the shore for limpets, and dives with unequalled fortitude for sea-eggs in the creek: she, in a word, who is most tolerant of hardship and
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of unkindness. When nations emerge from barbarism, every step which they take towards refinement is marked by a more reasonable treatment of the women, because their influence contributes largely towards that refinement, is felt and acknowledged.

IN CIVILISED SOCIETY.

But we shall be the less inclined to wonder at the perversion of ideas which has been exemplified on this subject, amidst ignorance and necessity, among Hottentots and Indians; when we consider the erroneous opinions on the same topic, which have obtained more or less currency in our own country, and even in modern times. Latterly, however, it has been universally acknowledged, that the intellectual powers of women are not restricted to the arts of the housekeeper and the sempstress. Genius, taste, and learning itself, have appeared in the number of female endowments.

The Power who called the human race into being has, with infinite wisdom, regarded, in the structure of the corporeal frame, the tasks which the different sexes were destined to fulfil. If He has given to man, on whom the more laborious exertions devolve, strength of limb and robustness of constitution, the female form, not commonly doomed to labours more severe than the offices of domestic life, He has cast in a smaller mould, and has amply compensated the defect of muscular vigour, by symmetry and expression, by elegance and grace. He has likewise adopted, with conspicuous wisdom, a corresponding plan of discrimination between the mental powers and dispositions of the two sexes. In the science of legislation, of political economy, the arts of attack and defence, of commerce and of government, man was alone destined to preside: in the inexhaustible depths of philosophy, and the researches of erudition, he ever has excelled. To counterbalance, in some degree, those extensive donations, the Giver of all good,
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in the dispensation of other qualities, more particularly suited to the sphere in which women were intended to move, hath conferred the larger portion of his bounty on those who needed it most. It is accordingly manifest, that in sprightliness and vivacity, in quickness of perception, in fertility of invention, in powers adapted to unbend the brow of the learned, and to diffuse throughout the family circle the enlivening and endearing smile of cheerfulness, the superiority of the female mind is unrivalled. As yet the native worth of the female character has been imperfectly developed. To estimate it fairly, the view must be extended from the shades of intellect to the dispositions and feelings of the heart. Were we called upon to produce examples of the most amiable tendencies and affections implanted in human nature, of modesty, of delicacy, of sympathising sensibility, of prompt and active benevolence, of warmth and tenderness of attachment, whither should we at once turn our eyes? To the sister, to the daughter,

to the wife. These endowments form the glory of the female sex. They shine amidst the darkness of uncultivated barbarism; they give to civilised society its brightest and most attractive lustre.

FORTITUDE—COURAGE.

Does man arrogate to himself the possession of superior fortitude? Fortitude is not to be sought merely on the rampart, on the deck, on the field of battle; its place is no less in the chamber of sickness and pain, in the retirements of anxiety, of grief, and of disappointment. Ask the professors of the medical art what description of the persons whom they attend exhibits the highest patterns of firmness, composure, and resignation, under painful trials, and they name at once their female patients. Even courage, in an eminent degree, is not denied to the female breast; instances are on record of wonderful acts of bravery performed by women in civilised life; and in towns which have sustained

tained a long siege, the descending bomb has been found to excite as little alarm in the female citizens, as among their brothers and husbands.

The sketch traced in the preceding outline is that of the female character under its customary form; we have avoided all those deviations from its usual appearance, which are known sometimes to occur, as subjects upon which, at present, it would be useless to enlarge.

ERRORS.

Some errors and vices which infest human nature, are equally prevalent in the two sexes; but there are failings and temptations to which the female mind is particularly exposed, by its native structure and dispositions. The remains of these treacherous inbred assailants, will be among the circumstances which will exercise, even to the close of life, the most vigilant labours of conscience. It is necessary, therefore, to be explicit on the subject.

QUALITIES OF THE MIND AND OF THE
HEART.

The gay vivacity and quickness of imagination, so conspicuous among the qualities in which the superiority of women is acknowledged, have a tendency to lead to unsteadiness of mind; to fondness of novelty; to habits of frivolousness and trifling employments; to dislike of sober application; to repugnance to graver studies, and a too low estimation of their own worth; to an unreasonable regard for wit, and shining accomplishments; to a thirst for admiration and applause; to vanity and affectation. They contribute likewise, in conjunction with the acute sensibility peculiar to women, to endanger the composure and mildness of the temper, and to render the dispositions fickle through caprice, and uncertain through irritability. Even sensibility itself is liable to excesses; it nurtures unmerited attachment, is occasionally the source of suspicion, fretfulness,
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and groundless discontent; and sometimes this singularly-engaging and amiable quality, degenerates into weakness and pusillanimity.

PERSONAL ATTRACTIONS.

The most important consequences flowing from these causes, will hereafter be the subject of incidental observation. At present it is sufficient to have enumerated the causes themselves: but in this place it is necessary to add, that there remains one source of female errors and temptations which has not yet been noticed, because it springs not from mental peculiarities; namely, the consciousness of being distinguished by personal attractions. The effects of this consciousness on the female character, which, if considered by themselves, are extremely striking, and in many cases are ultimately combined with those which result from the qualities and dispositions already specified, will receive farther notice in the progress of our enquiries.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER III.

FEMALE EDUCATION.

INFANT CULTURE.

WE have hitherto considered women generally, as they are found without cultivation. The materials on which the hand of education is to operate were enumerated, the next object is to consider how they are to be employed. The primary aim of education should be, to train up the pupil in the knowledge and application of those principles of conduct which may tend to happiness in this uncertain state, and lead to a full measure of it in that which is to come. Although the above, as well as several following remarks on the early attainments desirable for one sex, are applicable to the other, yet the culture of the female mind is the point to which they will all be directed. The secondary end is, to
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superadd to the possession of right principles those improving and ornamental acquisitions which, either from their own nature, or from prevailing customs, are in some degree material to the comfort and to the usefulness of the individual. The modes of attaining both objects, and of pursuing the second in due subordination to the first, require to be adjusted according to circumstances; and in female education, that instructor is deficient in a duty of the highest concern, who does not anxiously point out their bearing on the particular weaknesses and errors into which the female sex is in especial danger of being betrayed. Moreover, the chief solicitude of every one who is called to fulfil the duties of tuition ought to be this: to engage the understanding and the affections of the pupil in favour of piety and virtue, by inculcating the obligations of morality, not as ultimately resting on independent principles of their own, but as forming one branch of human duty to God.

OBJECTION ANSWERED.

This opinion is not universally admitted. Some persons maintain the reverse, and guard the young mind against prejudice, in order (say they) that the person, when judgement shall have acquired sufficient strength, may weigh contending errors.— This doctrine is pretty generally exploded by their opponents, who enquire, do they inculcate on their own children no elements of knowledge, no motives of action, no rules of conduct? They answer, and they answer truly, that to train up children without knowledge, lest their opinions on the subject of morals should be biased, would be as absurd, as it would be to prohibit them from walking until years of discretion, that they might then decide, uninfluenced by habit, whether they will walk on two legs, or crawl on four. This remark applied to religion, palls all further controversy.

RELIGION

RELIGION AT SCHOOLS—DEFECTS.

From the result of some enquiries on this subject, it appears that, in the *generality* of public seminaries, this momentous object of religious instruction is by no means pursued either with proper earnestness, or in a judicious manner; and that, in some, the attention which it occupies merits no better appellation than that of form; and to impose on the parents of the children who are placed there. The usual defect of judgement, in the manner of impressing the principles and injunctions of Christianity, appears to consist in these two circumstances: First, they are commonly inculcated in the form of a dry and authoritative lecture, without interesting, by a proper method, the affections of the opening mind. Hence religion is rather dreaded as an austere monitor, at least, than loved as the giver of present and future happiness. Secondly, they are presented to the understanding rather as truths to be implicitly received on the credit of the teacher,

teacher, than as truths resting on the solid basis of fact and argument, and inviting at all times the closest investigation of their certainty, which the mind is capable of bestowing. Hence, when a young woman begins to act for herself on the stage of life, and a growing confidence in her own judgement lessens the estimation in which she once held the opinions of her instructors, it is scarcely possible but that her regard for religion, which, whether greater or less, was in a considerable degree derived from that estimation, must at the same time be impaired.

EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.

It is true, that during a certain period of childhood, no less in the case of religion than of other branches of instruction, the truth and propriety of many things must be received by the pupil on the credit of the instructor, because the mind is not then competent to judge of the proofs by which they are established. As the intellectual
faculties

faculties expand, the more obvious proofs of revealed religion ought to be gradually developed. And, in the concluding years of education, the prescribed studies unquestionably ought to comprehend the leading evidences of Christianity, arranged with simplicity, but in a regular order; conveyed in a familiar, but not uninteresting language; comprised within a moderate compass; and divested of learned references and critical disquisitions.

EARLY ATTAINMENTS.

Both in schools and in private families essential improvements have recently taken place in the cultivation of the female understanding, by drawing forth the reasoning powers of girls into action. The foundation is laid by correcting the grammatical blunders which used to disgrace the conversation and epistles of women even in the higher ranks of society. Geography, natural history, portions of general history, and popular facts in astronomy, and in
other

other sciences, are often familiar to the daughter in a degree which, while it delights the parent, reminds her in how small a degree she was informed on all those subjects. Of the books, also, which have been published within the last twenty years, though there are some exceptions, a considerable number possesses great merit. Some improvement too, though certainly not so much as is desirable, appears to have taken place in the choice of French books used at schools, and in domestic education*; and learners of that language are perhaps called upon less frequently than was heretofore the case, to convert the exercises of religion into French lessons.

COMPLIANCE.

In carrying on every branch of education, there is no practical rule more entitled by

* The unprincipled tales of *Le Sage* are now generally decried the use of schools.—The Book of Exercises, by M. Hamel, is remarkable for the selection of apt moral sentences with which he illustrates the French language.

its importance to steadfast attention than this: That the pupil should be impressed with a conviction, that whenever she is directed to pursue a particular course of study, the direction is reasonable. When the understanding is not ripe enough to comprehend the utility of the attainment, the *obligation* of compliance should be shewn to rest on the *submission* due to parents, and of those who stand in the place of parents; and the *duty* of submission be clearly traced to that standard of rectitude to which the mind ought to be habituated from the days of childhood constantly to refer—the revealed word of God. As the faculties open, the advantages to be expected from the acquisition of the knowledge in question should in the next place be proportionably unfolded. When the diligence of the teacher has stamped these fundamental principles of rectitude on the breast of the scholar, then let those to whom incitement is necessary, and to whom it may be addressed without danger, be exhorted to compare their
own

own remissness with the diligence of their more industrious companions.

ORNAMENTAL ACQUISITIONS.

To impart to the youthful scholar those acquisitions which are desired either considerably or entirely on the score of ornament, constitutes, as was stated above, the second branch of education. This branch is by no means undervalued or neglected in our own country. But it remains to be decided, first, whether it is valued and cultivated too much? secondly, whether the prevailing modes of cultivating it are judicious? that is to say, whether it is kept subordinate, and sufficiently subordinate, to the *primary* object of instruction, the inculcation of those *radical* principles on which present and future happiness depends? The answer which must be given to these questions, generally, is not the reply which it were highly to be wished that truth would have permitted to be returned. Ornamental accomplishments too
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frequently occupy the rank and estimation which ought to have been assigned to objects of infinitely higher importance.

NECESSITY OF OCCUPATION.

The pupil, whatever may be the subject in which she is instructed, should be led distinctly to understand the general reasons for which she should attain that particular qualification, and the general purposes to which, when attained, it is to be applied. The ornamental acquisitions, and other similar accomplishments included within the plan of female education, fall precisely within this rule. Let the pupil, then, be thoroughly impressed with a conviction of the real end and use of all such attainments; namely, that they are designed, in the first place, to supply her hours of leisure with innocent and amusing occupations; and to enable her to communicate a kindred pleasure, with all its beneficial effects, to her family and friends, to all with whom she is now, or may hereafter, be connected. If
just

just conceptions respecting the end of these and all similar acquisitions are not sedulously implanted in the breast of the scholar, ideas of a very different nature will prevail; and when a young woman steps forth into active life, graced with splendid accomplishments, and possessed with an opinion that she is to employ them in outshining her associates and competitors, her proficiency may fitly be, to those who are truly concerned for her welfare, a matter for sorrow rather than of congratulation.

PERSONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

The mistaken opinion respecting the proper end of personal accomplishments, and the extravagant opinions of their worth, which either the inculcation of wrong principles on the subject, or the neglect of impressing those which are just, establishes in the youthful mind, extend their influence to all matters similar in their nature to such accomplishments, and
capable

capable of being united with them in promoting one common purpose. Hence that fondness for the arts of dress and exterior decoration, to which the female sex, anxious to call in every adventitious aid to heighten its native elegance and beauty, feels itself inclined by an inherent bias, is stimulated and encouraged in the years of childhood; and instead of being sedulously taught to restrict itself within the bounds which reason and Christian moderation prescribe, is trained up to fill whatever measure of excess shall be dictated by pride, vanity, or passion.

DRESS.

There are well-intentioned mothers who urge the necessity of taking pains to encourage in their daughters a certain degree of attachment to dress, of solicitude respecting the form and texture of their habiliments, lest they should afterwards degenerate into flatterns. An ancient philosopher defined woman to be "an animal

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"fond of dress." And the additional experience of two thousand years does not appear greatly to have invalidated his conclusion. It should seem, therefore, that with respect to this point, parental anxiety might repose its confidence on the unassisted energies of Nature: but farther, there is no rule of conduct in principle more objectionable, no method of proceeding in practice more unwise, than to guard against one evil by encouraging its opposite.

The danger which you fear, is it that your daughter may prove a flattern? Impress her with the advantages, the duty of neatness: train her in corresponding habits: teach her by precept, and whenever occasion offers itself, by example, the disgusting effects of deviating from them. Attach her thus to the proprieties without tempting her to the vanities of dress; secure the decencies of her person without ensnaring her mind.

BEAUTY.

Beauty is a possession so grateful to every woman, and yet so productive of hazards and temptations, that if a young person is thrown into life with her original wishes and opinions on that subject uncorrected, her instructors will have been negligent of their charge in a very important point. To remind her from time to time of the transitory and precarious duration of personal attractions; to remind her, that elegance of form and brilliancy of complexion are accidental gifts of Nature, bestowed without regard to intrinsic excellence in the possessor; to teach her, that they who are admired chiefly on those accounts are either unworthy of being valued for better reasons, or are admired only by persons whose approbation is no praise; that good sense and virtue are the only qualifications which ensure or deserve lasting esteem; and that a countenance, lighted up with intelligence and the virtuous feelings of

the heart, will kindle emotions which mere regularity of features could never have excited; this is not the language of austerity and moroseness, but of truth, of prudence, and of Christian duty.

PRE-EMINENCE IN RANK

Is likewise a topic which calls for especial admonitions, even in the season of youth. Let the pupil, who finds herself in this respect elevated above her companions, be led clearly to apprehend, and practically to remember, that the distinctions of rank in society are instituted not for the advantage or gratification of any individual, but for the benefit of the whole. Let her be taught that superiority, considered with a reference to the individual who chances to possess it, is accompanied with proportionate duties and temptations; that to possess it implies no merit; to be without it no unworthiness; and that the only important distinctions are those which involve excellence of character, and forebode

bode permanent effects, the distinctions of vice and virtue.

Among children assembled in large bodies at seminaries of education, many are found who regulate their deportment to their school-fellows, partly according to the degrees of wealth, but especially of gentility, which they conceive to belong to their respective families. When the parent or relation of any of the scholars drives up to the door, they crowd into the windows with other emotions besides that of simple curiosity; and, as the equipage is more or less shewy than that in which their own friends are wont to make their appearance, envy or exult. They pry, by ingenious interrogatories, into the internal proceedings of each other's home; and triumph or repine according to the answers which they receive concerning the number of servants kept in the house, the magnificence of their liveries, the number of courses habitually served up at table, the number of routs given at the town residence in winter, the extent of the gardens

and of the park at the family mansion in the country, the intercourse maintained with nobility and people of fashion, and the connection subsisting with the sordid occupations and degrading profits of trade. When daughters are educated at home, the same passions reveal themselves; but being encountered by the superior attention which may there be paid to a girl's dispositions, and wanting the encouragement which they would have derived in the school from example, and from the exercise afforded to them by a continual supply of fresh materials to work upon, they are more easily subdued. Both in public and in private education let them meet with that vigilant and determined opposition, without which they will enslave the heart, and render the character a detestable compound of haughtiness, malevolence, and insensibility.

CARE OF HEALTH.

In treating of Education, I have not yet adverted to the care of health. In the case of children who do not labour under any particular weakness of frame, the concern which education has with health consists not so much in positive endeavours to promote, as in cautiously forbearing to injure it; not so much in devising means to assist Nature in establishing a strong constitution, as in securing full scope for the benefit of her spontaneous exertions. So intimate is the connection, so general the sympathy, between the body and the mind, that the vigour of the former seems not only to remove obstacles to the operations of the latter, but even to communicate to its powers an accession of strength. Wholesome food, early hours, pure air, and bodily exercise, are instruments not of health only, but of knowledge. Of these four indispensable requisites in every place and mode of education, the two first are seldom

overlooked; in schools the two which remain frequently do not awaken the solicitude which they deserve. It is not necessary that girls should contend in the hardy amusements which befit the youth of the other sex. But if you wish that they should possess, when women, a healthful constitution, steady spirits, and a strong and alert mind, let active exercise in the open air be one of their daily recreations, one of their daily duties.

*CHAPTER IV.*ON THE MODE OF INTRODUCING YOUNG
WOMEN INTO SOCIETY.

WHEN the business of education, whether conducted at home or at a public seminary, draws towards a conclusion, the next object that occupies the attention of the parent is what she terms the introduction of her daughter into the world. Emancipated from the shackles of instruction, the young woman is now to be brought forward to act her part on the public stage of life. Pains are taken, as it were, to contrive, that when the dazzled stranger shall step from the nursery and the lecture-room, she shall plunge at once into a flood of vanity and dissipation. Mewed up from every prying gaze, taught to believe that her first appearance is the subject of universal expectation, tutored to beware above all things of tarnishing the lustre of her attractions

tractions by *mauvaise honte*, stimulated with desire to outshine her equals in age and rank, she burns with impatience for the hour of displaying her perfections: till at length, intoxicated beforehand with anticipated flatteries, she is launched, in the pride of ornament, on some occasion of festivity; and from that time forward thinks by day and dreams by night of amusements, and of dress, of compliments, and of admirers.

To accustom the mind by degrees to the trials which it must learn to withstand, yet to shelter it from insidious temptations, while it is unable to discern and to shun the snare, is the first rule which wisdom suggests with regard to all trials and temptations whatever. To this rule too much attention cannot be paid in the mode of introducing a young woman into the common habits of social intercourse. Let her not be distracted in the years by nature particularly designed for the cultivation of the understanding and the acquisition of knowledge, by the turbulence and glare of polite amusements.

amusements. Let her not be suffered to taste the draught which the world offers to her, till she has learned that, if there is sweetness on the surface, there is venom deeper in the cup; and is fortified with those principles of temperance and rectitude, which may guard her against unsafe indulgence. Let vanity, and other unwarrantable springs of action, prompt, at all times, to exert their influence on the female character, and at no time likely to exert an influence more dangerous than when a young woman first steps into public life, be curtailed, as far as may be safely practicable, of the powerful assistance of novelty. Altogether to preclude that assistance is impossible. But it may be disarmed of much of its force by gradual familiarity. Let that gradual familiarity take place under the superintendence of parents and near relations, and of friends of approved sobriety and discretion. Let not the young woman be consigned to some fashionable instructress, who, professing at once to add the last polish to education,

and to introduce the pupil into the best company, will probably dismiss her thirsting for admiration; inflamed with ambition; devoted to dress and amusements; initiated in the science and the habit of gaming; and prepared to deem every thing right and indispensable, which is or shall be recommended by modish example. Let her not be abandoned in her outset in life to the giddiness and mistaken kindness of fashionable acquaintance in the metropolis; nor forwarded under their convoy to public places, there to be whirled, far from maternal care and admonition, in the circle of levity and folly. Let parental vigilance and love gently point out to the daughter, on every convenient occasion, what is proper or improper in the conduct of the persons of her own age, with whom she is in any degree conversant, and also the grounds of the approbation or disapprobation expressed. Let parental counsel and authority be prudently exercised in regulating the choice of her associates. And at the same time that she is habituated to regard

regard distinctions of wealth and rank, as circumstances wholly unconnected with personal worth, let her companions be in general neither much above her own level, nor much below it: lest she should be led to ape the opinions, the follies, and the expensiveness of persons in a station higher than her own; or, in her intercourse with those of humbler condition, to assume airs of contemptuous and domineering superiority. Solicitude on the part of parents, to consult the welfare of their child in these points, will probably be attended with a further consequence of no small benefit to themselves; when it persuades them to an increased degree of circumspection as to the visitors whom they encourage at home, and the society which they frequent abroad.

CHAPTER V.

FEMALE CONVERSATION, AND EPISTOLARY CORRESPONDENCE.

CONVERSATION

Is an index to the mind. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh*." If it be admitted, conformably to general opinion, that female fluency in discourse is greater and more persevering than that of the other sex; it behoves women the more steadily to remember, that the fountain will be estimated according to the stream. If the rill runs babbling along, shallow and frothy, the stream will be deemed incapable of supplying an ampler current.

CONVERSATION OF MEN.

But there exists another cause in addition to the defects in female education:

* Matthew, ch. xii. ver. 34.

the style and kind of conversation in which men very generally indulge themselves towards women, both married and unmarried, and towards neither so much as those who have been recently introduced into public, are such as would lead an indifferent auditor to conclude, either that their own intellectual powers were very slender; or, that they regarded the persons, to whom they were directing their discourse, as nearly devoid of understanding. The effects of such treatment and intercourse on young women are deeply and permanently mischievous. She who is already vain, frivolous, and affected, instead of deriving from the behaviour which she experiences from the other sex motives and encouragements to improvement, is confirmed in her faults more and more; and learns to continue from principle what, perhaps, originated in thoughtlessness. And she who at present is not tinctured with these failings, is in constant hazard either of being ensnared by the familiarity of example, and by the comparative disregard

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shewn to those excellences with which she is endowed; or of contracting a disposition equally remote from feminine diffidence and Christian humility, namely, a propensity to admire her own acquisitions; to rest with proud confidence in her own judgement of persons and things; and to reprehend with censoriousness, or expose with sarcastic ridicule, the manners and the characters of her acquaintance.

While, on the one hand, we allow to young women the full benefit of every apology that can be derived from the improper behaviour and example of the other sex in the points under consideration; truth requires us, on the other hand, to observe, that puerile and mere complimentary conversation on the part of men, is frequently called forth and encouraged by the favourable reception which it is soon to attain. Beauty delights to hear its own praise. Or, if personal attractions have been sparingly bestowed, the love of compliment has yet other sources of gratification. Shewy accomplishments become the
ground

ground on which the tribute of panegyric is claimed ; and the tribute, once evidently claimed, will be regularly paid by conviction or by politeness. Is it wonderful then, that the wish prevalent in most men, and especially in young men, to render themselves acceptable in social intercourse to the female sex, should betray them into a mode of behaviour which they perceive to be so generally welcome ? Is it wonderful that he who discovers trifling to be the way to please, should become a trifler ; that he who by the casual introduction of a subject, which seemed to call upon the reason to exert itself, has brought an ominous yawn over the countenance of his fair auditor, should guard against a repetition of the offence ? But it is not only to women of moderate capacity, that hours of trifling and flippant conversation are found acceptable. To those of superior talents they are not unfrequently known to give a degree of entertainment, greater than on slight consideration we might have expected.

MIXED DISCOURSE.

From the remarks which have been made on the frivolousness of language and sentiment which often appears agreeable to women; and even to women who are qualified both to communicate and to enjoy the highest pleasures of conversation which can flow from cultivated minds; let it not be inferred, that the mixed discourse either of female society, or of young persons of the two sexes, is to resemble the discussions of a board of philosophers; and that ease and gaiety, and laughter and wit, are to be proscribed as inveterate enemies of sobriety and good sense. Let ease exempt from affectation, gaiety prompted by innocence, laughter the effusion of ingenuous delight, and wit unstained with any tincture of malevolence, enliven the hours of social converse. But let it not be thought that their enlivening influence is unreasonably curtailed, if good sense be empowered at all times to superintend their proceedings; and

and if sobriety be authoris'd sometimes to interpose topics, which may exercise and improve the faculties of the understanding.

EPISTOLARY CORRESPONDENCE.

At the close of these remarks on female conversation, it may be allowable to subjoin a few words on a kindred subject, epistolary correspondence. Letters which pass between men commonly relate, in a greater or a less degree, to actual business. Even young men, on whom the cares of life are not yet devolved in their full weight, will frequently be led to enlarge to their absent friends on topics not only of an interesting nature, but also of a serious cast: on the studies which they are respectively pursuing; on the advantages and disadvantages of the profession to which the one or the other is destined; on the circumstances which appear likely to forward or to impede the success of each in the world. The seriousness of the subject, therefore, has a tendency, though a tendency

dency which, I admit, is not always successful, to guard the writer from an affected and artificial style. Young women, whose minds are comparatively unoccupied by such concerns, are sometimes found to want in their correspondence, a counterpoise, if not to the desire of shining, yet to the quickness of imagination, and occasionally, to the quickness of feeling, natural to their sex. Hence they are exposed to peculiar danger, a danger aggravated by the nature of some of the fashionable topics which will proceed from engrossing conversation to employ the pen, of learning to clothe their thoughts in studied phrases; and even of losing simplicity both of thought and expression in florid, refined, and sentimental parade, for the sake of writing, as the phrase is, *good* letters.

Not that a lady ought not to write a good letter: but a lady, who makes it her study to write a good letter, commonly produces a composition to which a very different epithet ought to be applied. Those letters only are good, which contain the natural effusions

effusions of the heart, expressed in unaffected language. Tinsel and glitter, and laboured phrases, dismiss the friend and introduce the authoress. From the use of strained and hyperbolical language, it is but a step to advance to that which is insincere.

In justice to the female sex, however, it ought to be added, that when women of improved understandings write with simplicity, and employ their pens in a more rational way than retailing the shapes of head-dresses and gowns, and encouraging each other in vanity, their letters are in some respects particularly pleasing. Being unencumbered with grave disquisitions, they possess a peculiar ease, and shew with singular clearness the delicate features and shades which distinguish the mind of the writer.

CHAPTER VI.

IMITATION IN DRESS.

AT the age when young women are introduced into general society, the character, even of those who have been the best instructed, is in a considerable degree yet unfixed. A propensity to imitation, so natural in the human mind, is attended with effects highly favourable to happiness; and it shews itself with especial strength in the female sex. In youth, when the feelings of the heart are the most lively, and established modes of proceeding are not yet formed, this principle is far more powerful than in the more advanced periods of life. In youth, too, when the love of admiration and the dread of shame are unimpaired, there are few subjects and occasions so likely to produce error and excess,

as

as those in which closeness of imitation is deemed the road to respect and applause; and even small degrees of singularity are supposed to entail considerable disgrace. Let these circumstances be duly recollected, and we shall not greatly wonder that women in general, and especially very young women, feel an extreme repugnance to fall short of their neighbours in compliance with every fashion of the day not palpably criminal: and we shall be less astonished than concerned, that so many are led with open eyes by the attraction of prevailing custom, indiscriminately to copy the pattern set before them by their equals and their superiors; and after following the crowd through unceasing fluctuations of vanity, of folly, of pride, and of extravagance, to attend it, to say the least, to the confines of vice.

CUSTOM.

In things which in themselves are indifferent, custom is generally the proper guide;

guide: and obstinately to resist its authority, with respect to circumstances of that description, is commonly the mark either of weakness or of arrogance. The variations of dress, as in countries highly polished frequent variations will exist, fall within its jurisdiction; and as long as the prevailing modes remain intrinsically different, that is to say, as long as in their form they are not tinged with indelicacy, nor in their costliness are inconsistent with the station or the fortune of the wearer; such a degree of conformity to them, as is sufficient to preclude the appearance of particularity, is reasonable and becoming.

In the next place, it is to be observed, that the principles which recommend such a degree of compliance with established fashions of an unobjectionable nature, as is sufficient to prevent the appearance of particularity, cannot be alleged in defence of those persons who are solicitous to pursue existing modes through their minute ramifications, or who seek to distinguish themselves as the introducers of new modes.

Fickleness,

Fickleness, or vanity, or ambition, is the motive which encourages such desires; desires which afford presumptive evidence of weakness of understanding, though found occasionally to actuate and degrade superior minds. It happens, in the embellishment of the person, as in most other instances, that wayward caprice, and a passion for admiration, deviate into those paths of folly which lead from the objects of pursuit.

————— We have run
Through every change that fancy, at the loom
Exhausted, has had genius to supply;
And studious of mutation still, discard
A real elegance, a little used,
For monstrous novelty, and strange disguise*.

So preposterous and fantastic are the disguises of the human form which modern fashion has exhibited, that her votaries, when brought together in her public haunts, have sometimes been found scarcely able to refrain from gazing with an eye of ridicule and contempt on each other; and

* Cowper's Task, Book 2d.

while individually priding themselves on their elegance and taste, they have very commonly appeared in the eyes of an indifferent spectator to be running a race for the acquisition of deformity.

SPLENDOUR, AND MODERATION.

A very important benefit which results from fixed habits of moderation as to dress, and all points of a similar nature, will be clearly discerned by adverting to the irreparable evils into which young women are sometimes plunged by the contrary practice. The lavish indulgence in which they have learned to seek for happiness, becoming, in their estimation, essential to their comfort, will bias their conduct in every important step. Hence, in forming matrimonial connections, it exercises perhaps a secret, but a very powerful influence. The prospect of wealth and magnificence, of the continuance and of the increase of pleasures supposed to flow from the pomp of dress and equipage, from sumptuous mansions,

mansions, showy furniture, and numerous attendants, dazzles the judgement; imposes on the affections; conceals many defects in moral character, and compensates for others. It frequently proves the decisive circumstance which leads the deluded victim to the altar, there to consign herself to splendid misery for life.

CHAPTER VII.

ON AMUSEMENTS.

CONSCIENTIOUS vigilance to avoid an improper choice of amusements is a duty of great importance, not only because time spent amiss can never be recalled, but particularly because, by the nature of the engagements in which the hours of leisure and relaxation are employed, the manners, the dispositions, and the whole character, are materially affected. Let the volume of any judicious traveller through a foreign country be opened in the part where he delineates the pursuits, the general conduct, the prevailing moral or immoral sentiments of the people. He will there be found to bestow attention on their customary diversions, not only because the account of them adds entertainment to his narrative,

narrative, and is necessary in order to complete the picture of national manners, but also because they form one of the sources to which national opinions, virtues, and vices, may be traced.

Since it is evident, from these and other circumstances, that the character and dispositions cannot fail to be in some measure changed by the amusements habitually pursued; and that alterations of supreme importance have taken place, and may therefore again take place, under their influence; it seems proper to add a few distinct observations on the different classes of public diversions, which are at present frequented in this country by persons in the upper and the middle ranks of life.

MASQUERADES.

The class of amusements which, in consequence of having assumed to itself a sort of pre-eminence in dignity and splendour over other scenes of entertainment, claims to be noticed in the first place, consists of

those in which the parties engaged appear under the disguise of a borrowed character.

Of all the authorised modes of public entertainment now countenanced by persons of credit of either sex, masquerades are, in proportion to their frequency and extent, beyond doubt the most pernicious. Their dangerous tendency arises from a circumstance essential to their nature; from the state of concealment under which the individuals present keep themselves from the knowledge of each other. If invention were to occupy itself in devising situations, situations I mean not incompatible with the forms of public amusement, which should be specifically adapted to encourage and forward the enterprises of vice, to undermine the firmness of innocence, or, if we rate the mischief at the lowest degree, to wear away the delicacy of a young woman, and supply its place by petulant assurance: what scheme could be more obvious or more auspicious than to take away the restraints of openness and
shame;

shame; to give scope for unbounded licence of speech and action, by covering the speakers and actors with obscurity; and under these circumstances to bring together, in one promiscuous assemblage, the inexperienced and the artful, the virtuous and the profligate?

Parents, who on the whole disapprove of these diversions, from a conviction of their pernicious tendency, are sometimes known to be the very persons who introduce their daughter to an acquaintance with them. They profess to introduce her on principle; affirming, that they design merely to let her be present at a masquerade once or twice, in order that she may know what it is. Spontaneously to introduce their daughter into a situation of danger, which there was no necessity that she should ever experience, is, in truth, a singular species of wisdom. Is this the way to inspire her with a persuasion that the amusement in question is one from which it becomes her to abstain? Or is it rather the very method to kindle a fond-

ness for these revels of midnight and concealment; revels, which she never knew until initiated into them by a parent; revels, which, but for that initiation, she might never have known; revels, into whose worst excesses she may hereafter plunge in consequence of that initiation, when the force of parental authority shall be decayed, and a change of circumstances shall leave her at liberty to gratify her desires?

THEATRICAL AMUSEMENTS

Are those which offer themselves to our attention in the next place.

The Stage is an instrument too powerful not to produce visible and extensive effects wherever it is permanently employed. To the sentiments displayed in the tragic or the comic scene, to the examples of conduct afforded by popular characters under interesting circumstances, and to the general tone of manners and morals which pervades dramatic representations, the

the opinions, the dispositions, and the actions of the frequenters of the theatre will acquire some degree of similitude. What is heard with admiration and pleasure, will be remembered: what is seen under those impressions, will be imitated. The impression of the sentiment will be, in some measure, modified by the leading qualities and inclinations of the mind of the hearer: and the fidelity with which the example will be copied, will depend on a variety of circumstances favouring or discouraging closeness of imitation.

The English stage has, for a considerable time, laboured under the heavy imputation of being open to scenes and language of gross indelicacy, which some foreign theatres would have proscribed. This observation is applicable even to our tragedies. The torrent of immorality and profaneness, which in the days of Charles the Second, and for a considerable time afterwards, deluged the theatre, has subsided; or is no longer permitted to roll its polluted and infamous tide across the stage.

The glaring colours of vice, which gave no disgust to our ancestors, would shock, if not the virtue, yet the refinement, of a modern audience. Let the friends of religion, of their country, of private worth and of public happiness, be thankful for the change which has taken place. But we lament that the change has not been complete. For who can affirm, that it exhibits no scenes which give pain to modest eyes, no language grating to modest ears? Nothing which a Christian need be ashamed of writing, of acting, of witnessing? Until we can do this, let us not say aught has been essentially done for the reformation of the stage*.

* This licentiousness is occasionally repressed by the periodical stage-critics; but they fail to produce the desired effect, inasmuch as too many are violently interested. He who combats this tendency with undeviating severity, and most apparent success, is the MONTHLY VISITOR; the theatrical department of which, while guided by an enlightened taste, exposes with remarkable severity those wide breaches in morality, and inroads on public virtue, we otherwise ineffectually lament.

E.

PRIVATE THEATRES.

Added to these objections, the custom of acting plays in private theatres has another tendency: to encourage vanity; to excite a thirst of applause and admiration on account of attainments which, if they are to be thus exhibited, it would commonly have been far better for the individual not to possess; to destroy diffidence, by the unrestrained familiarity with persons of the other sex, which inevitably results from being joined with them in the drama; to create a general fondness for the perusal of plays, of which so many are improper to be read; and for attending dramatic representations, of which so many are unfit to be witnessed.

SUNDAY ENTERTAINMENTS.

The most objectionable of these is the Sunday-evening concert, recently imported from the Continent, and conducted on so

large a scale, and in such a manner, as to preclude any longer the specious pretext of devotion, which at first introduced it to the acquaintance of some who may be supposed no strangers to sentiments of piety, and are professedly solicitous for the external observances of religion. The effects of the best-conducted are, in various ways, likely to be such as will be very far from extending the influence of religion; and such, therefore, as ought not to be aided by the countenance of its friends. And even when music is not the professed object, the practice of opening your house on Sunday evenings to the influx of all your acquaintance who may choose to frequent it as a scene of resort and conversation, a practice by no means unexampled in the polite world, is productive of all the mischiefs which arise from the Sunday concert; and is devoid of the ostensible excuse by which, in the other case, they are palliated.

DANCING.

DANCING.

Another class of public diversions comprehends those meetings in which the professed amusement is dancing: an amusement in itself both innocent and salubrious, and therefore by no means improper, under suitable regulations, to constitute the occasional entertainment of youth. In the ball-room, however, a young woman has more temptations to encounter than she has experienced at the public or at the private concert.

This is deemed the stage for displaying the attractions, by the possession of which a young woman is apt to be most elated: and they are here displayed under circumstances most calculated to call forth the triumph and the animosities of personal competition. This triumph, and these animosities, betray themselves occasionally to the least discerning eye. But were the recesses of the heart laid open, how often
would

would the sight of a stranger, of an acquaintance, even of a friend, superior for the evening in the attractions of dress, or enjoying the supposed advantage of possessing a wealthier, a more lively, a more active, or a more fashionable partner, be found to excite feelings of disgust, and of aversion not always stopping short of malevolence! How often would the passions be seen inflamed, and every nerve agitated, by a thirst for precedence; and invention be observed, labouring to mortify a rival by the affectation of indifference or of contempt? But if a young woman cannot partake of the amusements of a ball-room, except at the expence of benevolence, of friendship, of diffidence, of sincerity, of good humour, at the expence of some Christian disposition, some Christian virtue, she has no business there. The recreation, to others innocent, is, to her, a sin.

An evil which too frequently occurs at those places, is the improper acquaintance she is likely to make among the other sex. Men, improper in a moral point of view,
but

but distinguished by fortune and birth, gay and conciliating manners, often propose themselves as partners, and a lady does not always find it easy to decline the offer. The prudence of friends will, sometimes, prevent her from falling into such hands; at others, their solicitude is used to preserve her from dancing with a person in rank and connections inferior to herself; and having gained that point, are contented. The present custom of changing partners at stated intervals is evidently attended with this bad consequence, that it increases the difficulty of avoiding an objectionable associate.

Women in various occurrences of life are betrayed, by a desire of rendering themselves agreeable, into an indiscreet freedom of manners and conversation with men of whom they perhaps know but little; and still more frequently into a greater degree of freedom with those of whom they have more knowledge, than can fitly be indulged, except towards persons with whom they are connected by particular ties. The
temptation

temptation is in no place more powerful than in a ball-room. Let not indiscriminate familiarity be shewn towards all partners; nor injudicious familiarity towards any.

GAMING.

In particularising the different classes of female amusements now prevailing, it is with deep regret that I perceive the necessity of adding the gaming-table to the number. In high life there are now to be found those who have discarded the restraints of timidity and of shame. Relying on the influence of rank and fashion, they spread their nets without disguise; and exult in seeing the destructive circle thronged with married women and unmarried, old and young, venturing to the very borders of ruin, alike regardless of consequences immediate or remote. In the mean time the artless and inexperienced, dazzled by surrounding example,
drop

drop their scruples and their apprehensions one by one; and are gradually allured forward from the low stake which at first was all that they proposed to hazard, to risk on one card, or one throw of the dice, sums which bear a considerable proportion to the whole property which they possess, and even to the whole amount of their future expectations. It is no exaggeration to affirm that there are recent instances of young women having speedily lost at play their entire fortunes. And situations of pecuniary distress which, though very grievous, fall short of absolute ruin, are continually seen to arise from the same causes. If a school is to be sought where the serenity of the female mind may be supplanted by the most violent and the blackest passions; where the springs of benevolence and charity, of sympathy and friendship may be dried up, and the heart consigned for ever to obdurate selfishness; where the foundations of domestic misery, of angry discontent, of blasted hopes and unavailing sorrows may be laid; where every principle

ple of delicacy, of virtue, of religion may be sapped, and prepared to be offered up on some pressing emergency as a sacrifice to money; let that school be fought at a gaming table, upheld by some person of fashionable estimation. It is extremely to be lamented that women of respectability of character, women attentive on many occasions to the dictates not of prudence only but of conscience, and so deeply convinced of the dreadful evils attendant on gaming as scrupulously and at all times to abstain from play, should yet follow the stream of custom so far as to be visitors and spectators in the rooms in which this system of depredation and iniquity is carrying on. To countenance by their presence an assembly known to be held for a purpose which it is impossible for them to approve, is the height of inconsistency. It is to encourage those nuisances to the community, who dare to stand forward in fashionable life as the institutors and patrons of the Faro Bank and the Hazard Table; whose effrontery, while it yet continues to escape the strong arm.

arm of legal justice which arrests inferior and less pernicious offenders, ought to be encountered with universal contempt, and be constrained to read in every eye the language of detestation.

CARDS.

The apology which is sometimes made for the general introduction of cards, namely, that they prevent conversation from degenerating into slander and themes of scandal, is a vindication which was not to have been expected from the mouth of a person of the female sex, nor from the mouth of any individual accustomed to regard that sex with esteem. It is, perhaps, one of the most pointed sarcasms that could have been directed against those persons in whose behalf it is alleged. Are we to have such an opinion of feminine justice, benevolence, delicacy, and candour, as to conclude that women cannot pass a single evening otherwise than in the indulgence of distraction, unless their thoughts be occupied by

by the card-table: that their tongues, unless charmed to silence by attention to the game, will be incessantly exercised by calumny and malice? She of whom this representation can with truth be given, has no time to throw away upon trifles. Objects of higher moment than visits and amusements claim her undivided care; retirement, reflection, self-knowledge, the acquisition of virtue, the purification of a corrupted heart.

FIELD SPORTS.

Though some few individuals of the female sex may be observed to take their places among sportsmen in the field; the fashion, happily, is not so prevalent as to entitle fox-hunting, and similar occupations, to rank among feminine amusements. It is not, perhaps, in common cases self-evident, that diversions which consist in inflicting torture, and shedding blood, are altogether adapted even to persons of the
other

other sex who lay claim to cultivated understandings. But, however that may be, the rude clamour, the boisterous exertions, and the cruel spectacles of field sports, are wholly discordant, when contrasted with the delicacy, the refinement, and the sensibility of a woman.

WASTE OF TIME.

The reflections, which have hitherto been offered on the subject of amusements, have left unnoticed a material circumstance operating more powerfully in the case of some amusements, than in that of others; yet, in a certain measure, common to all. A possession which we have always in our hands, which every person around us appears to have equally with ourselves, is a possession of the value of which we are most likely to be ignorant or regardless. Such a possession is time.

Gay, elegant, and accomplished, but thoughtless, immersed in trifles and hurrying
ing

ing with impatience, never satisfied, from one scene of diversion to another; how many women are seen floating down the stream of life, like bubbles on which the sun paints a thousand gaudy colours; and like bubbles vanishing, sooner or later, one after another, and leaving no trace of usefulness behind! The scriptural censure of those who are "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God*," a censure, the proper force of which may be estimated by attending to the other characters included in the same catalogue by the Apostle, pertains not to those persons only who indulge themselves in gratifications in their own nature criminal. It belongs in due proportion to all who sacrifice duty to pleasure; to all who elevate amusements above the rank which they ought to hold in the mind of a Christian; to all who addict themselves to the pursuit of entertainment with an ardour, or to an extent, which so intrudes

* 2 Tim. iii. 4.—See also some of the preceding and of the subsequent verses.

on their attention and their time, as to prevent them from improving their understandings, cultivating holiness and benevolence of heart, and discharging the relative duties of life, with diligence and fidelity; to all, in short, who, whatever may be the nature of their amusements, follow them, or any one of them, to excess.

TOWN AMUSEMENTS.

So various are the scenes of public diversion, so various the parties of private entertainment, which London affords in the evening; so numerous are the spectacles and exhibitions of wonders in nature or in art, and the attractive occupations properly to be classed under the head of amusement, which obtrude on the leisure of morning in the capital and its environs; so magnetic is the example of wealth, and rank, and fashion, that she who approaches the stream with a mind unsteadied by those principles of moderation and sobriety which are essential

tial to the Christian character, will probably be sucked into the vortex, and whirled, day after day, and year after year, in a never-ending round of giddiness and dissipation.

WATERING PLACES.

If the metropolis be the spot in which the danger of becoming absorbed in amusements is most formidable; the scenes of resort, whether inland or on the sea-coast, which are distinguished by the general denomination of Public Places, exhibit it in a degree but little inferior. Of such places, the predominant spirit is thoughtlessness. And thoughtlessness, ever weary of its own vacuity, flies with restless ardour from diversion to diversion; and stimulates the inherent love of entertainment, which, in most persons, requires rather to be curbed than to be inflamed. The contagion spreads, in the first place, among those whose presence is owing to other causes than sickness:

ness: but, in a short time, it extends to many persons who are come in quest of health; and often affects them so powerfully, that the hurry of the evening more than counterbalances the salubrious influence of air and of waters. Let it be remembered, however, that there is no place which affords an exemption from the obligation of rational pursuits and mental improvement; nor any place which does not afford opportunities for rational pursuits and mental improvement to those who are inclined to make use of them.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE EMPLOYMENT OF TIME:

HAVING said a few words on the "waste of time," under the head of amusements, we will next consider how it may be employed to the most advantage. To prescribe to a young person of the female sex the precise occupations to which she should devote her time, is impossible. Differences in point of health, of intellect, of taste, and a thousand nameless particularities of family occurrences and local situation, claim, in each individual case, to be taken into the account. If young and well-bred women are not accustomed, in their single state, regularly to assign a large proportion of their hours to serious and instructive occupations; what prospect, what hope is there, that, when married, they

they will assume habits to which they have ever been strangers, and exchange idleness and volatility for steadiness and exertion?

READING.

To every woman, whether single or married, the habit of regularly allotting to improving books a portion of each day, and, as far as may be practicable, at stated hours, cannot be too strongly recommended.—With the time allotted to the regular perusal of the word of God, and of performances which enforce and illustrate the rules of Christian duty, no other kind of reading ought to be permitted to interfere. At other parts of the day let history, biography, poetry, or some of the various branches of elegant and profitable knowledge, pay their tribute of instruction and amusement. Let whatever she peruses in her most private hours be such as she needs not to be ashamed of reading aloud to those, whose good opinion she is most anxious to deserve.

NOVELS AND ROMANCES.

There is one species of writings which obtains from a considerable proportion of the female sex a reception much more favourable than is accorded to other kinds of composition more worthy of encouragement. It is scarcely necessary to add the name of romances. Works of this nature not unfrequently deserve the praise of ingenuity of plan and contrivance, of accurate and well-supported discrimination of character, and of force and elegance of language. Some of them have professedly been composed with a design to favour the interests of morality. Poor, indeed, are the services rendered to virtue by a writer, however he may boast that the object of his performance is to exhibit the vicious as infamous and unhappy, who, in tracing the progress of vice to infamy and unhappiness, introduces the reader to scenes and language adapted to wear away the quick feelings of modesty, which form at once the ornament

and the safeguard of innocence; and like the bloom upon a plum, if once effaced, commonly disappear for ever. To indulge in a practice of reading novels is, in several other particulars, liable to produce mischievous effects. The palate is soon vitiated or made dull. The produce of the book-club, and the contents of the circulating library, are devoured with indiscriminate and insatiable avidity. Hence the mind is secretly corrupted. There is yet another consequence too important to be overlooked. The catastrophe and the incidents of these fictitious narratives commonly turn on the vicissitudes and effects of a passion the most powerful of all those which agitate the human heart. Hence the study of them frequently creates a susceptibility of impression and a premature warmth of tender emotions, which, not to speak of other possible effects, have been known to betray young women into a sudden attachment to persons unworthy of their affection, and thus to hurry them into marriages terminating in unhappiness.

POETRY.

In addition to the regular habit of useful reading, the custom of committing to the memory select and ample portions of poetic compositions, not for the purpose of ostentatiously quoting them in mixed company, but for the sake of private improvement, deserves, in consequence of its beneficial tendency, to be mentioned with a very high degree of praise. The mind is thus stored with a lasting treasure of sentiments and ideas, combined by writers of transcendent genius and vigorous imagination; clothed in appropriate, nervous, and glowing language; and impressed by the powers of cadence and harmony. Let the poetry, however, be well chosen. Let it be such as elevates the heart with the ardour of devotion; adds energy and grace to precepts of morality; kindles benevolence by pathetic narrative and reflection; enters with natural and lively description into the varieties of character; or presents vivid
pictures

pictures of what is grand or beautiful in the scenery of nature. Such are in general the works of Milton, of Thomson, of Gray, of Mason, and of Cowper.

RELATIVE DUTIES.

But it is not from books alone that a considerate young woman is to seek her gratifications. The discharge of relative duties, and the exercise of benevolence, form additional sources of activity and enjoyment. To give delight in the affectionate intercourse of domestic society; to relieve a parent in the superintendence of family affairs; to smooth the bed of sickness, and cheer the decline of age; to examine into the wants and distresses of the female inhabitants of the neighbourhood; to promote useful institutions for the comfort of mothers, and for the instruction of children; and to give to those institutions that degree of attention, which, without requiring either much time or much personal

trouble, will facilitate their establishment and extend their usefulness: these are employments congenial to female sympathy; employments in the precise line of female duty; employments which diffuse genuine and lasting consolation among those whom they are designed to benefit, and never fail to improve the heart of her who is engaged in them.

But though books obtain their reasonable portion of the day, though health has been consulted, the demands of duty fulfilled, and the dictates of benevolence obeyed, there will yet be hours remaining unoccupied; hours for which no specific employment has yet been provided. For such hours it is not the intention of these pages to prescribe any specific employment. What if some space be assigned to the useful and elegant arts of female industry? But is industry to possess them all? Let the innocent amusements which home furnishes, claim their share. It is a claim which shall cheerfully be allowed. Do amusements abroad offer their pretensions? Neither shall

shall they, on proper occasions, be unheard. A well-regulated life will never know a vacuum sufficient to require an immoderate share of public amusements to fill it.

CHAPTER IX.

CONSIDERATIONS ANTECEDENT TO
MARRIAGE.

OBEDIENCE.

WHETHER marriage establishes between the husband and the wife a perfect equality of rights, or conveys to the former a certain degree of superiority over the latter, is a point not left to Christians to be decided by speculative arguments. The intimation of the divine will, communicated to the first woman immediately after the fall, is corroborated by various injunctions delivered in the New Testament. The obedience, however, which is there enjoined, is not unlimited obedience. Were a husband presumptuously to require his wife to infringe the property or other rights of a third person, or to transgress any of the
divine

divine laws, she would be bound to obey God rather than man. A branch of duty, in its nature so important and extensive, ought to be considered antecedently to marriage with religious scrupulousness. And while the obligation is acknowledged, let not the ends for which it is imposed be misconceived. You admit that it was desirable to prevent or to lessen the bickerings, the conflicts, the pertinacious contrariety of plans and projects, which, in a state imperfect as human nature is, would perpetually arise and involve families in unceasing confusion, were each party free from any obligation to acquiesce in the decision of the other. By what method then, were we to consult the dictates of unbiaſſed judgement, should we deem the object most likely to be attained? Undoubtedly by the method which Providence has adopted; by assigning to one of the partners in marriage a fixed pre-eminence over the other. It seems to be an appointment both reasonable in its nature and most conducive to the happiness, not only of the man himself,

but of his wife, of his children, and of all his connections, that he should be the person to whom the superiority should be committed. But in this dispensation Heaven has not left the wife destitute or neglected. For if the Scriptures are on the one hand express in enjoining obedience to the wife; they are no less explicit on the other in reminding the husband of the mildness, the conciliating forbearance, the lively and never-failing tenderness of affection, which every branch of his behaviour towards his partner ought to display; and of the readiness with which he ought to make large sacrifices of personal inclination, ease, and interest, when essential to her permanent welfare. If a woman marries a person without having sufficient reason to be satisfied, from actual knowledge of his character, that the commands of the Scriptures will decide his general conduct, the fault surely is her own.

HUSBAND'S MORAL CHARACTER.

The foundation of the greater portion of the unhappiness which clouds matrimonial life, is to be sought in the unconcern so prevalent in the world, as to those radical principles on which character and the permanence of character depend—the principles of religion. Popular language indicates the state of popular opinion. If an union about to take place, or recently contracted, between two young persons, is mentioned in conversation; the first question which we hear asked concerning it is, whether it be *a good match*? The very countenance and voice of the inquirer, and of the answerer, the terms of the answer returned, and the observations, whether expressive of satisfaction or of regret, which fall from the lips of the company present in the circle, all concur to shew what, in common estimation, is meant by being well married. If a young woman be described as thus married, the terms imply, that she

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is united to a man whose rank and fortune are such, when compared with her own or those of her parents, that in point of precedence, in point of command of finery and of money, she is, more or less, a gainer by the bargain. They imply, that she will now possess the enviable advantages of taking place of other ladies in the neighbourhood; of decking herself out with jewels and lace; of inhabiting splendid apartments; rolling in handsome carriages; gazing on numerous servants in gaudy liveries; and of going to London, and other fashionable scenes of resort, all in a degree somewhat higher than that in which a calculating broker, after poring on her pedigree, summing up her property in hand, and computing, at the market price, what is contingent or in reversion, would have pronounced her entitled to them. But what do the terms imply as to the character of the man selected to be her husband? Probably nothing. His character is a matter which seldom enters into the consideration of the persons who use them, unless

less it, at length, appears in the shape of an after-thought, or is awkwardly hitched into their remarks for the sake of decorum. If the terms imply any thing, they mean no more than that he is not scandalously and notoriously addicted to vice. He may be proud, he may be ambitious, he may be malignant, he may be devoid of Christian principles, practice, and belief; or, to say the very least, it may be totally unknown whether he does not fall, in every particular, under this description; and yet, in the language and in the opinion of the generality of both sexes, the match is excellent. In like manner, a small diminution in the supposed advantages already enumerated, though counterpoised by the acquisition of a companion eminent for his virtues, is supposed to constitute a bad match; and is universally lamented in polite meetings with real or affected concern. The good or bad fortune of a young man in the choice of a wife is estimated according to the same rules.

CHOICE OF A HUSBAND.

A woman who receives for her husband a person of whose moral and religious character she knows no more than that it is outwardly decent, stakes her welfare upon a very hazardous experiment. She who marries a man not entitled even to that humble praise, in the hope of reclaiming him, stakes it on an experiment in which there is scarcely a probability of her success.

At the conclusion of almost every comedy produced in the last age, the hero of the piece, signalised throughout its progress by qualities and conduct radically incompatible with the existence of matrimonial happiness, was introduced upon the stage as having experienced a sudden change of heart, and become a convert, as by a miracle, to the ways of religion and virtue. The same preposterous reformation occasionally finds a place among the absurd and mischievous compositions of modern

modern date. But let the female sex be assured, that whenever on the stage of real life an irreligious and immoral young man is suddenly found, on the eve of matrimony, to change his external conduct, and to recommend himself by professions of a determination to amend; the probability that the change is adopted, as in the theatre, for the sake of form and convenience, and that it will not be durable after the purposes of form and convenience shall have been answered by it, is one of those which approach the nearest to certainty.

The truths which have been inculcated as furnishing the only foundation for rational hopes of happiness in marriage, are such as ought to be established in the mind, while the affections are yet unengaged. When the heart has received an impression, reason acts feebly or treacherously. Should the scene appear in prospect gloomy or ambiguous, let her be wise, let her exert herself, before it be too late. It is better to encounter present anxiety, than to avoid it.

it at the expence of greater and durable evils. And even if affection has already acquired such force, as not to be repressed without very painful struggles; let her be consoled and animated by the consciousness that the sacrifice is to prevent, while prevention is yet in her power, years of danger and of misery; that it is an act not only of ultimate kindness to herself, but of duty to God; and that every act of humble and persevering duty may hope to receive, in a better world, a reward proportioned to the severity of the trial.

There remains yet another caution relating to the present subject, which appears worthy of being suggested. A young woman, unbiaſſed by any interested motives, is sometimes led to contract a matrimonial engagement without suspecting that she perhaps does not entertain for her intended husband the warm and rooted affection necessary for the conservation of connubial happiness. She beholds him with general approbation: she is conscious that there is no other person whom she prefers to him:
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she receives lively pleasure from his attentions: and she imagines that she loves him with tenderness and ardour. Yet it is very possible that she may be unacquainted with the real state of her heart. Thoughtless inexperience, gentleness of disposition, the quick susceptibility of early youth, and chiefly perhaps the complacency which all persons, whose affections are not pre-occupied, feel towards those who distinguish them by particular proofs of regard, may have excited an indistinct partiality which she mistakes for rivetted attachment. Many an unhappy wife has discovered the mistake too late.

CHAPTER X.

THE DUTIES OF MATRIMONIAL LIFE.

AMONG the most important of the duties peculiar to the situation of a married woman, are to be placed those arising from the influence which she will naturally possess over the conduct and character of her husband. If it be scarcely possible for two persons connected by the ties of common friendship, to live constantly together, or even habitually to pass much time in the society of each other, without gradually approaching nearer and nearer in their sentiments and habits; still less probable is it, that from the closest and most attractive of all bands of union a similar effect should not be the result. The effect will be experienced by both parties, and perhaps in an equal degree. But if it be felt by one in a
greater

greater degree than by the other, it is likely to be thus felt by the husband. In female manners inspired by affection, and bearing at once the stamp of modesty and of good sense, example operates with a captivating force which few bosoms can resist. When the heart is won, the judgement is easily persuaded. It waits not for the slow process of argument to prove that to be right, which it already thinks too amiable to be wrong.

But whatever be the influence which the amiable virtues of a wife may obtain over her husband, let not the consciousness of it ever lead her to seek opportunities of displaying it, nor to cherish a wish to intrude into those departments which belong not to her jurisdiction. Content with the province which reason and revelation have assigned to her, and sedulous to fulfil, with cheerful alacrity, the duties which they prescribe, let her equally guard against desiring to possess undue weight over her husband's conduct, and against exercising amiss that which properly belongs to her.

Let

Let her remember too that the just regard, which has been acquired by artless attractions, may be lost by unwarrantable and teasing competition.

DOMESTIC HAPPINESS.

The love of power, congenial to the human breast, reveals itself in the two sexes under different forms, but with equal force. Hence have arisen the open endeavours sometimes discernible on the part of wives of turbulent passions, and the oblique machinations visible among others of a cunning turn of mind, to carry favourite points against the will of their husbands. If we may give credit to the writers of comedy, and to the weekly or diurnal editors of periodical papers, at the end of the last century and early in the present, for accurate observation and just description of the manners of their contemporaries; the grand resource, at that period, of a lady whose husband was cruel enough to deny her any thing on which she had set her heart, from

a London journey to a piece of brocade, was to fall into an hyſteric. The reign of fits and vapours ſeems now to be cloſed. Let not the diſpoſitions, by which it was introduced and upheld, be found to ſurvive its fall. Let it ever be remembered, that ſhe who by teazing, by wheedling, by fineſſe under any ſhape whatever, ſeeks to weary or to deceive her huſband into conſent or acquieſcence, acts no leſs plainly in oppoſition to her duty of ſcriptural obedience, than ſhe would have done had ſhe driven him into compliance by the menaces and weapons of an Amazon.

To preſerve unimpaired the affections of her aſſociate, to convince him, that in his judgement of her character formed antecedently to marriage, he was neither blinded by partiality, nor deluded by artifice, will be the uniform ſtudy of every woman who conſults her own happineſs and the rules of Chriſtian duty. The ſtrongest attachment will decline, if it ſuſpects that it is received with diminished warmth. And the ſuſpicion will preſent itſelf to the mind of a
huſband

husband who sees not in the behaviour of his wife a continuance of that solicitude to render herself pleasing to him, which he had experienced at the commencement of their union. The advice which has been publickly and seriously given, that a married woman should ever conceal with care from her husband the extent of her affection for him, is happily too absurd to gain many converts among women who really love those to whom they are united; and too difficult to be frequently put in practice by wives of that description, should they blindly desire to follow it.

Next to the attractions of virtue, the qualification which contributes, perhaps, more than any other to cherish the tender feelings of regard, and to establish connubial happiness, is good temper. It is indeed itself a virtue. But if they on whom Providence, varying the sources of moral probation in different individuals has bestowed sweetness of temper with a sparing hand, are not strenuous and unremitting in their efforts to improve under the divine blessing,

sing, the scanty stock; if, instead of considering a native failing as an intimation respecting the quarter on which it is their especial duty to be on their guard, they convert it into an apology for captiousness, peevishness, and violence; what but domestic misery can be expected? A fretful woman is her own tormenter; but she is also a torment to every one around her, and to none so much as to her husband. No day, no hour is secure. No incident is so trifling, but it may be wrought up into a family disturbance. The Apostle's exclamation, "Behold, how great a matter "a little fire kindleth*," is in that house fully and continually exemplified.

DISCRETION

Is a quality which the Scriptures, as forboding the frequent neglect of it, and the miserable consequences of that neglect, have not overlooked. St. Paul,

* James, iii. 5.

in his Epistle to Titus, after having directed that young women should be instructed "to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children," enjoins further, that they should be taught "to be discreet *." It is to the mind what the every-day clothing is to the body, requisite under every vicissitude to health, and propriety, and comfort. Its sphere embraces every season and every incident of life. At home and abroad, in the city and in the country, with intimates and with strangers, in business and in leisure, it is vigilant and active, and unwearied. It is worthy of being inculcated with the more earnestness on married women, because they appear in several respects to be in greater danger than the single of being led by custom, or hurried by inadvertence, to disregard it.

POSSESSION OF ABILITIES.

By writers, who have suggested many excellent rules of duty, and many useful

* Titus, ii. 5.

admonitions

admonitions to the female sex, it has been recommended to women studiously to refrain from discovering to their partners in marriage the full extent of their abilities and attainments, as a probable method of inducing the husband to give the wife credit for greater talents and knowledge than she possesses. This is not discretion, but art. It is dissimulation, it is deliberate imposition. It is a fraud, however, to which happily there is no great encouragement. It could scarcely be practised long without detection, And it could not be detected without exciting in the breast of the deluded party, such a degree of disgust at the deceitfulness of his associate, as would overwhelm her, if she retained a spark of ingenuousness, virtue, or affection, with shame, with remorse, and with anguish. There is yet another motive on which the same advice has been founded. Men, it is said, are not partial to women of strong understandings. Jealous of that pre-eminence which they claim in depth of research and solidity of judgement, they bear not in

any female, and least of all in a wife, the most distant appearance of rivalry. Admit for a moment the observation to be well-founded. Is folly to be pretended, because sense may displease? Because a man is absurd, is a woman to be a hypocrite? The observation, however, taken in the unqualified acceptance in which it is commonly alleged, is by no means well founded. That it may be practicable to shew occasional instances of men, who are themselves so deficient, either in understanding or in rational consideration, as to feel mortified by those proofs of unaffected intelligence in a wife, which ought to have placed her higher in their esteem, I acknowledge. For there is not, perhaps, any species of weakness, of thoughtlessness, or of pride, of which an example may not be discovered. But in general it is not the sense that offends. It is some quality or some disposition by which the sense is accompanied. It is some quality or disposition which has no natural connection with
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that sense. It is one which that sense ought to be employed in eradicating. It is one, which, if it continues to adhere to that sense, adheres by the fault of the individual herself. If, conformably to the example heretofore exhibited in polite life at Paris, a real or supposed eminence in intellectual endowments were generally to inflame a lady with a propensity to erect herself into an idol for the votaries of science and taste to worship: were it to fill her with ambition to give audience to a levee of deistical philosophers; to see her toilet surrounded with wits and witlings; to pronounce to the listening circle her decision on a manuscript sonnet; and to appreciate the versification and the point of the last new epigram which aspired to divert the town; it would neither have been denied nor regretted that a female so qualified would, in this country, be deemed one of the least eligible of wives. Such females, however, are phænomena rarely seen in the meridian of Great Britain.

Further; if strength of understanding in a woman is the source of pride and self-sufficiency; if it renders her manners overbearing, her temper irritable, her prejudices obstinate; we are not to wonder that its effects are formidable to the other sex, and especially to him by whom they are with most frequency to be endured. But is arrogance, is impatience of contradiction, is reluctance to discern and acknowledge error, the natural or the usual fruit of strong sense in the female mind? Undoubtedly not. In the mind where that fruit is thus produced, something far more valuable than a powerful understanding is wanting. Let talents be graced with simplicity, with good feminine modesty, and there is scarcely an husband's heart which they will not warm with delight.

WIT, KNOWLEDGE, LEARNING.

If a fund of good sense, larger than is commonly the lot of an individual, be allowed not to be unacceptable in a wife; yet

yet wit, we are told, is a qualification which almost every husband disapproves in his partner. It is not to be concealed, that among women, no less than in the other sex, there are individuals who deem themselves possessed of this attraction, when, in fact, they have it not. If what a wife conceives to be wit ought to bear the name of flippancy and of pertness; her husband may be pardoned, though it should not fill him with rapture. If the dread of her breaking forth, in company, into a rattle of nonsense and affectation keeps him perpetually sitting on thorns; he may be pardoned, though he should wish that his wife had limited her desire of mental attainments to the region of common sense.

While the heart is yet unoccupied, Caution, looking to the sphere of domestic economy, draws a formidable picture of a learned and philosophic wife. It represents her as one from whom due attention to household affairs will be expected in vain. It pictures her as immersed in her closet, and secluded in abstraction; or

fallying forth from her books only to engage in literary disquisitions, and to stun her wearied mate with sonorous periods, and cumbrous terms of science. But if we speak of intelligent and well-informed women in general, of women, who, without becoming absorbed in the depths of erudition, and losing all esteem and all relish for social duties, are distinguished by a cultivated understanding, a polished taste, and a memory stored with useful and elegant information; there appears no reason to dread, from the possession of these endowments, a neglect of the duties of the mistress of a family.

DOMESTIC ECONOMY.

Are you the mistress of a family? Fulfil the charge for which you are responsible. Attempt not to transfer your proper occupation to a favourite maid, however tried may be her fidelity and her skill. Servants know not the amount of your husband's income, nor of his debts, nor of his other incumbrances;

cumbrances; nor, if they knew all these things, could they judge what part of his revenue may reasonably be expended in the departments with which they are concerned. Be frugal without parsimony; save, that you may distribute. Study the comfort of all under your roof, even of the humblest inhabitant of the kitchen. Pinch not the inferior part of the family, to provide against the cost of a day of splendour. Consider the welfare of the servants of your own sex as particularly committed to you. Encourage them in religion, and be active in furnishing them with the means of instruction. Let not one tyrannise over another. In hearing complaints, be patient; in inquiring into faults, be candid; in reproof, be temperate and unruffled. Let not your kindness to the meritorious terminate when they leave your house; but reward good conduct in them, and encourage it in others, by subsequent acts of benevolence adapted to their circumstances. Let it be your resolution, when called upon to describe the characters of servants who

have quitted your family, to act conscientiously towards all the parties interested, neither aggravating nor disguising the truth. And never let any one of those whose qualifications are to be mentioned, nor of those who apply for the account, find you seduced from your purpose by partiality or by resentment.

DOMESTIC EXPENCES.

In all domestic expences, which are wholly, or in part, regulated by your opinion, beware that, while you pay a decent regard to your husband's rank in society, you are not hurried into ostentation and prodigality by vanity lurking in your breast. To this end, examine well your own motives to the bottom. Instead of squandering, in extravagance and parade, that property which ought partly to have been reserved in store for the future benefit of your offspring, and partly to have been liberally bestowed for the present advantage of those whom relationship or personal merit,

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rit, or the general claims which distress has upon such as are capable of removing it, entitle to your bounty; let it be your constant aim to obey the scriptural precepts of sobriety and moderation; let it be your delight to fulfil every office of unaffected benevolence. Picture to yourself the difficulties, the calamities, the final ruin, in which tradesmen, with their wives and children, are frequently involved, even by the delay of payments due to them from families to which they have not dared to refuse credit. Subject not yourself in the sight of God to the charge of being accessory to such miseries. Guard by every fit method of representation and persuasion, if circumstances should make them necessary, the man to whom you are united from contributing to such miseries either by profusion or by inadvertence.

TITLES AND ELEVATION.

Women, who have been raised by marriage to the possession of rank and opulence

unknown to them before, are frequently the most ostentatious in their proceedings. Yet a moderate share of penetration might have taught them to read, in the example of others, the ill success of their own schemes to gain respect by displaying their elevation. All such attempts sharpen the discernment and quicken the researches of envy; and draw from obscurity into public notice the circumstances which pride and pomp are labouring to bury in oblivion.

Let your behaviour to all your acquaintance be the result of modesty united with benevolence. If one of your neighbours, one who in a drawing-room was accustomed to be ranged below you, is suddenly raised, in consequence of a title being conferred on her family, to pre-eminence in her turn; envy her not, love her not the less, pant not for similar advancement. You already enjoy a decoration, or, if you do not, the fault is your own, superior to all the glories of the Peerage, "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit." If your husband

husband should happen to receive some accession of dignity, let it not excite in your mind one arrogant emotion, nor change your demeanour to your friends and neighbours.

Beware, lest the acquisition of honour should create a desire of distinction, which previously did not exist in your breast. She who, as long as her husband was a commoner, was contented in her station, has often been seen, when a peeress, to be inflamed with tormenting eagerness to ascend higher in the scale of nobility.

FAMILY FEUDS.

The remark has been made, and perhaps with justice, that if attention be directed to the character and conduct of the different parts of families resident in the vicinity of each other, it will commonly be found, that less cordiality prevails between the ladies than between their husbands. It is certain, that neighbouring gentlemen are continually set at variance by very unwarrantable causes:

causes: by petty offences unworthy of consideration; by diversities of opinion concerning points, of which each individual is entitled to judge for himself; by contending claims which ought to have been settled by amicable arbitration, or by an amicable reference to the decision of law. Trespasses, real or supposed, on manerial rights; transgressions against the sublime code of fox-hunting jurisprudence; differences of sentiment as to the measures of those who guide the helm of Government, or as to the nomination of a candidate to represent some adjoining borough at an election: these are circumstances frequently sufficient openly to embroil half the gentlemen of the district with their neighbours; or at least to produce, while the semblance of friendship is upheld, the lurking malevolence of enmity. By some of these causes of disagreement even the female bosom is capable of being actuated. And the ill-will produced by any one of them in the breast of the master of the family will generally diffuse itself through the house. In addition

to the shyneſſes and diſſenſions between ladies in the ſame vicinity, which originate from theſe ſources, there are others ſpringing from that irritability reſpecting circumſtances of perſonal attention which, in the female ſex, is ſingularly conſpicuous. In all caſes where contempt and neglect are to be apprehended, women are far more quick-ſighted than men. And their anxiety on the ſubject miſleads them, on a variety of occaſions, into ſuſpicions for which there is no foundation. When the mind is in this ſtate, if a viſit be not returned at the cuſtomary time, the delay (ſhould no ſtrong reaſon for it preſent itſelf at once to the expecting party) is attributed to faſtidioſneſs and pride. If an invitation is not given at the time, or to the extent, which was ſecretly deſired, ſimilar motives are aſſigned. An obſcure or ambiguous expreſſion, uſed inadvertently, is twiſted into an injurious or a diſdainful meaning. Silence, or ſeriouſneſs of manner, proceeding from accidental thoughtfulness, or from ſome caſual viciffitude of health, is conſtrued

strued into premeditated coolness. Common attentions of civility shewn towards a third person, are indignantly beheld as tokens of deliberate preference. Hence arise prejudices and antipathies, which years may not be able to eradicate. Or silly affronts are taken on points of precedence. Because a lady is ushered into a room, or led forth to dance a minuet, before another who deemed herself superior; the company is thrown into confusion, and lasting hostilities take place between the parties. Yet the preference was perhaps given, where, according to the rules of etiquette, it was deserved. Or the merits of the case, though determined erroneously, might be so nearly balanced, that the whole assembled college of heralds would have been perplexed to decide the question. Where then is the spirit inculcated by the Apostle? "Let nothing be done through
" strife or vain-glory; but in lowliness of
" mind let each esteem others better than
" themselves*."

* Philipp. i. 3.

TRAVELLING.

The commodiousness which now attends travelling, has rendered distant expeditions and long absences from home far more frequent than they were in the days of our ancestors. I do not speak of the expence with which they are usually attended; though it is in many cases a burden which presses heavily on private fortunes, and cripples the exertions and extinguishes the ardour of benevolence. Nor shall I enlarge on the interruption of domestic habits and occupations, nor on the acquisition of an unsettled, a tattling, and a meddling spirit: evils which spring from the custom of "wandering" from place to place, no less than from that of "wandering from house to house;" and often display themselves in the former case on a wider scale, and in stronger characters, than in the latter. But the loss of the power and opportunity of doing good, and the positive effects of a pernicious example, are points which must
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not be overlooked. Home is the centre round which the influence of every married woman is principally accumulated. It is there that she will naturally be known and respected the most; it is there, at least, that she may be more known and more respected than she can be in any other place. Home too is the place where she will possess peculiar means of doing good among the humbler classes of society. All the favourable circumstances already mentioned, which surround her there, add singular efficacy to her persuasions, to her recommendations, to her advice. Her habitual insight into local events and local necessities, and her acquaintance with the characters and the situations of individuals, enable her to adapt the relief which she affords to the merit and to the distress of the person assisted. They who are frequently absent from home, without an adequate cause, spontaneously abandon all these especial means of benefiting their equals, their inferiors, possibly even their superiors; means which Providence has committed

committed to them, in order that each might be thus employed; means for the due employment of which they will be deemed responsible hereafter. Continually on the wing from one scene to another, they are like trees transplanted so often, that they take firm root no where. They appear covered with showy verdure; but they bear little fruit. The ties of connection between them and the vicinity are broken. With the upper ranks, their intercourse is that of form and hurry; to the lower, they are become distant, cold, and estranged.

MUTUAL FAULTS.

In the progress of matrimonial life it is scarcely possible but that the wife and the husband will discover faults in each other, which they had not previously expected. The discovery is by no means a proof, in many cases it is not even a presumption, that deceit had originally been practised. The stream may have derived a debasing tincture from the region through which it
has

has lately flowed. But the fault, whether it did or did not exist while the parties were single, by the solicitude of one of them, is now discerned. Whether perceived by the husband in the wife, or by the wife in the husband, to contribute by every becoming method to its removal, is an act of duty strictly incumbent on the discoverer. Let her beware of discouraging him, by irritability of temper, or by inconsiderate proneness to misconstruction, from communicating to her his opinion, when he believes that she has fallen, or is in danger of falling, into error. To point out failings in the spirit of kindness, is one of the clearest indications of friendship. It is, however, one of those delicate offices from which friendship may the most easily be deterred. If a husband finds his endeavours to discharge it frequently misconceived; if he sees them usually producing perturbations difficult to be allayed, and extending far and wide beyond the original subject of discussion; he may learn to think it wiser to let an evil exist in silence, than to attempt
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to obviate it at the hazard of a greater. Let him not be thought partial and unwarrantably strict, if he should chance to observe, and to observe with some indications of disquietude, a failing, when exemplified by his wife, which in other women he had scarcely regarded. Is it surprising that he should be alive to circumstances in the conduct of the person most intimately connected with him, which affected him little or not at all in a more distant relation, in an acquaintance, in a stranger? It sometimes happens, when a married woman has not been led to attend to considerations such as those which have now been suggested, that advice which, if given by the husband, would not have met with a favourable acceptance, is thankfully received from others. To know that this state of things is possible should be a lesson to the husband against misconduct and imprudence; for to them its existence may be owing. But let it also be to the wife an admonition against captiousness and prejudice; for had she

she been free from them, it could not have existed.

VISITING.

There seems at present to be an opinion gaining ground in high life, that in visiting, no less than in amusements, it is necessary that all polite ladies should go every whither; an opinion among the most pernicious of those which pervade the modern system of fashionable manners. Hence it arises that women of the most amiable and excellent character are often seen to frequent routs, and other similar meetings, in houses, the mistresses of which they hold in merited contempt and abhorrence. This consequence alone might be sufficient to manifest the mischievous tendency of the opinion from which it flows. But the same erroneous persuasion contributes also to confirm many women in their practice of hurrying, evening after evening, from company to company, from

from diversion to diversion; deprive them of all desire and all opportunity of reflection on the tempers and dispositions of their own hearts; and incapacitates them for tranquil recreations and rational employments.

CHAPTER XI.

DUTIES OF MATRIMONIAL LIFE, WITH
A VIEW TO SITUATIONS AND
CIRCUMSTANCES.

THE reflections which have hitherto been made on the duties of married women, have had little reference to particularities of rank or situation. London and the country, elevated rank and a middle station, differ so widely from each other, that some good may result from enforcing the obligations severally resulting from each of them.

A LONDON RESIDENCE—HIGH LIFE.

London is the centre to which almost all the individuals who fill the upper and middle ranks of society are successively attracted. Hence a large and widely dispersed
and

and a continually encreasing acquaintance is the natural consequence of a residence in town. If a married lady suffers herself to be drawn into the system of proceeding, to which such an acquaintance is likely to lead; useful occupations and improving pursuits are either at an end, or are carried on with extreme disadvantages, multiplied interruptions, declining activity, ardour, and satisfaction. Invitation succeeds invitation; engagement presses on engagement: etiquette offers, form accepts, and indifference assumes the air of gratitude and rapture. Thus a continual progress is made in the looks, the language, and the feelings of insincerity. It may, indeed, be generally stated, that in the capital, the thirst of admiration and the love of eminence are there roused by incitements far more powerful than any other place could supply. Hence, whatever be the object to which female ambition is directed; whether it aspires to be conspicuous as the leader of fashion and the oracle of politeness; or as the stately associate of rank and dignity, to

outshine all its competitors in the display of magnificence; or to anticipate them in the knowledge of political transactions, and drive them from the field in every struggle for the acquisition of political favours; it is in the metropolis that it hurries its votary to unparalleled extremes of folly, of pride, of envy, of extravagance. The estimation in which the Scriptures hold such passions and such conduct, or, to speak with more propriety, the judgements there denounced against them cannot be mistaken. Let us for once attend to advice from the mouth of a Pagan, addressed to the ladies of the most polite city of antient times. "Be
 " ambitious of attaining those virtues which
 " are the principal ornaments of your sex.
 " Cherish your instructive modesty; and
 " look upon it as your highest commenda-
 " tion not to be the subject of public dis-
 " course*."

* Speech of Pericles to the Athenian women. Thucydides, Book ii.

VICES OF THE METROPOLIS.

One of the duties which require to be expressly stated as incumbent on ladies who pass a large portion of the year in the metropolis, and especially on ladies of rank and influence, is the following; to endeavour to improve the general tone of social intercourse, and particularly in the article of amusements. Let them exchange the vast and promiscuous assemblages, which now crowd their suite of rooms from evening almost to day-break, for small and select parties, to which a virtuous character shall be a necessary introduction, and in which virtuous friendship and rational entertainment may be enjoyed. Let them discountenance the prevailing system of late hours, which undermine the constitution, and entail languor and idleness on that period of the day, which they who have not adopted the modern and destructive custom of late-rising know to be the most delightful and the most useful. Let them set up a

standard against play, fashionable follies, and ensnaring customs; and unite the innocent pleasures of improving and entertaining society with the smallest possible expence of time, money, and domestic order. The benefits which might accrue to the youth of both sexes, from the amelioration of the general state of meetings for purposes of conversation and amusement in polite circles, are incalculable. The prospect of a happy settlement in life for individuals, their domestic conduct, their domestic comfort, the manners and habits of various classes of the community prone to imbibe the opinions and to copy the example of their immediate superiors; all these are circumstances which that amelioration would contribute to improve.

MORALS OF SERVANTS.

In the metropolis, the morals of servants are exposed to extraordinary dangers. By common temptations they are there beset more powerfully than in the country; and
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have also to contend with others peculiar to the capital. Yet it is, perhaps, in London that they receive the least attention from masters and mistresses of families. The proper inference to be drawn from these facts is obvious. Act conformably to it in all points. Let not your domestics of either sex be suffered to depend for a part of their emoluments on the perquisites of gaming. Let them be guarded to the utmost of your power against the irreparable mischiefs, which attend the practice of insuring in state lotteries*.

LOSS OF MODESTY.

To enumerate all the evils of the metropolis would, perhaps, be as irksome to relate as it is to read. But we cannot pass over the loss of that instinctive modesty, so deserving of being cherished, impercepti-

* For some account of those mischiefs, see the "Treatise on the Police of the Metropolis," 2d Edit. p. 163—169.

bly worn away by the shamelessness with which vice, confident in its numbers, there shews its face abroad; as well as by the softening appellations which fashion, enlisted in the service of profligacy, has devised for the most flagrant breaches of the laws of God and man. It ought to be added, that men of worth are, in numberless cases, highly censurable for the little regard which they evince to female delicacy even in their own families, by the subjects of conversation which they introduce or pursue.

A LONDON RESIDENCE—THE CITY.

Ladies who, being united to men occupied in the transactions of trade and business, find themselves resident in the city, often shew themselves extremely dissatisfied with their situation. Accumulating riches repay them not for the apprehension of imputed vulgarity. Each wearies her husband with importunate earnestness that he would renounce the degrading profits of the
counting-

counting-house and the shop, which he is now wealthy enough to despise; and exchange the ungenteel dulness of Lombard-street for the modish vicinity of the Court. Affecting to look down on the polite world, deriding the barren rent-rolls of encumbered estates, apparent to their imaginations through the veil of superficial splendour; they are eager to ape the follies and to crowd into the society of the gilded swarm which they would seem to hold in contempt. Ladies of fashion in the mean time are exulting, at the other end of the town, that the hands of their husbands were never contaminated with the filthy gains of commerce; and delight in turning into ridicule the awkward efforts of the citizen's wife to rival the rout and the public breakfast of the Peerefs, by expence void of propriety, and pomp destitute of taste. It is thus that pride and envy, displaying themselves under opposite forms, are equally conspicuous in both parties.

COLDNESS OF BEHAVIOUR.

The habits of life which prevail in the metropolis, and particularly in fashionable families, are, in several respects, totally repugnant to the cultivation of affection and connubial happiness. The husband and the wife are systematically kept asunder. If they find themselves brought together in mixed company, to be mutually cold, inattentive, and forbidding, is politeness. But those persons who are solicitous to preserve affection, will do well to cherish the outward manifestations of regard. Be it admitted, on the one hand, that it is possible to disgust by an ill-timed display of the familiarity of fondness. But let it be remembered, on the other, that to disguise the natural feelings of the heart under the systematic restraints of assumed coldness, is offensive to every rational observer; at variance with simplicity and ingenuousness of character; and ultimately subversive of the tenderness of affection both in the party
which

which practises the disguise, and in the person towards whom it is practised.

WIVES OF PROFESSIONAL MEN.

The influence of fashion, which of late has unhappily contributed in the metropolis to separate the husband and the wife, would have flowed in a more beneficial channel, had it been applied to draw closer the bands of domestic society. The wives of lawyers, of physicians, and of several other descriptions of men, are seldom allowed a large share of the company of their husbands. While the latter are occupied abroad by professional business, the former are left exposed to the temptations of a dissipated capital, temptations which borrow strength from the weariness of a solitude at home. Hence the duty of the wife to render home, by the winning charms of her behaviour, attractive and delightful to her husband, derives additional force. Let her consider the numberless temptations to vice, to profusion,

fusion, to idle amusement, with which he is encompassed.

COUNTRY RESIDENCE.

A lady, when she leaves London, ought to be careful not to corrupt the country by the introduction of foolish and culpable fashions. Her example, whichever way it turns, is likely to have considerable weight. If she imports a cargo of modish follies and modish vices, they will soon be diffused throughout the district in which she resides. If she neither introduces them herself, nor adopts them though they should be introduced into the vicinity; her friends and her acquaintance, those who see her and those who hear of her, will then dare not to give into them.

CENSORIOUSNESS.

Among persons of the female sex who reside constantly in the country, and at the

same

same time possess few opportunities of mixing with polished and intelligent society, errors and failings originate, no less than among men, from the want of enlarged sentiments and a greater knowledge of the world. The conduct of others, especially of those who move in a higher circle, is judged with acrimony. Little allowance is made for unseen motives and unknown circumstances. In small towns, and in their immediate neighbourhood, the spirit of detraction ever appears with singular vehemence. Here the smallness of the circle renders all who move in it universally known to each other. The objects on which Curiosity can exercise her talents are so few, that she never withdraws her eye from any of them long: and she already knows so much respecting each, that she cannot rest until she has learned every thing. Nor is this all. Among the females who are acting their parts on so narrow a stage, clashings, and competitions, and dissensions, will have been frequent; and grudges of antient date are revived to

supply food for present malevolence and scandal.

ABSURD DRESS.

A propensity to push fashions in dress to absurd extremes is also very frequent in country towns. Ladies who have been conversant with the polite world know that, however generally a particular mode may be prevalent, much latitude is still left to inclination and taste; and that a moderate degree of conformity is always sufficient to ward off the charge of singularity. But they who have seen less, or have been less observant, are in common so little aware either of this truth, or of the precise limits within which the existing mode is circumscribed, that in their zeal to outvie each other, and their dread of falling short of the pattern exhibited in high life, they push their attempts at imitation to a preposterous excess. And while they are exulting in the thought that their head-dress is constructed, and their gown cut out and trimmed,

med, precisely according to the latest model exhibited at court ; they would find, if they could transplant themselves into a public room in the metropolis, their appearance an extravagant caricature of the decorations of which they had conceived it to be an accurate resemblance.

Some of the duties and temptations severally pertaining to different married women, in consequence of professional differences in the situations of their husbands, remain to be considered.

WIVES OF CLERGYMEN.

It may be proper to direct our attention, in the first place, to the wives of clergymen. Not that any one of the virtues, which ought to ornament the wife of a clergyman, is not also required of every woman. But, if he whose office it is to guide others from the follies and corruptions of the world into the way of salvation, to “let his light so shine before men, that they may see his good works and glorify,” by imitating them,

them, "his Father who is in heaven*," forgets that branch of his sacred function; if he indulges, I will not say in gross vices, but in those lighter instances of misconduct, which are yet sufficient to evince that religion holds not an undisputed predominance in his heart; the dullest understanding is quick-sighted enough to discern his faults, and to avail itself of the pretences which they may be represented as affording for criminal indulgences in others. This observation may be extended in a certain degree to the example displayed by his family, more especially to that exhibited by his wife. Is she aspiring, vain, giddy, calumnious, avaricious, or unforgiving? She transgresses the laws of her Saviour, and disregards the spirit of the Gospel, with strong circumstances of aggravation; and contributes not a little to lessen the general effect of her husband's instructions from the pulpit. On the other hand, if religion has its genuine effect on her manners and dispositions; if

Matthew, v. 16.

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it renders her humble and mild, benevolent and candid, sedate, modest, and devout; if it withdraws her inclinations from fashionable foibles and fashionable expences; if it leads her to activity in searching out and alleviating the wants of the neighbouring poor; and in promoting, according to her situation and ability, schools and other institutions for the advancement of religion, and the encouragement of industry among the children in the diocese or the parish committed to her husband; she is a "fellow-labourer" with him "in the Gospel." She prepares the hearts of all who listen to his instructions and exhortations to receive them without prejudice; and attracts others to the spirit of Christianity by the amiable lustre which it diffuses round herself.

OFFICERS' WIVES.

The wife of an officer in the naval or in the military service is, in several respects, exposed to moral trials of considerable magnitude.

nitude. In time of war she is left to endure the anxieties of a long separation from her husband, while he is toiling on the ocean, or contending in a distant quarter of the globe with the bullets of the enemy, and the maladies of the climate. When the husband is fighting the battles of his country, the whole management of the domestic economy of his family devolves upon his wife. In her whole demeanour, let her guard against every symptom of levity, every trace of inadvertence, which might give rise to the misconceptions of ignorance, or awaken the censorious tongue of malice. Let it be her constant object that, if it shall please the divine Providence to restore her husband, she may present herself before him at least as worthy of his esteem and love as she was when he left her. The wife of the military officer has sometimes to encounter new and peculiar temptations, at times when she is not separated from her husband. Various circumstances frequently concur to lead her through the vicissitudes of a wandering life,
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in accompanying him successively from one country town where he is quartered to another; and occasionally fix her during the time of war in the vicinity of the camp where his regiment is posted. Feminine reserve, delicacy of manners, and even delicacy of sentiment, are in extreme danger of being worn away by living in habits of familiar intercourse with a crowd of officers; among whom it is to be expected that there will be some who are absolutely improper, and more who are very undesirable associates. Duty and affection may in certain cases render it necessary, that a married lady should stand the brunt of these temptations. But the consequent danger should excite her to unwearied and universal circumspection; and warn her to cultivate with unremitting vigilance those habits of privacy, and of useful and methodical employment, without which female diffidence, purity of heart, and a capacity for the enjoyment and the communication of domestic happiness, will scarcely be found to survive.

THE WIFE OF A MANUFACTURER, OF a person engaged in any branch of trade productive of considerable gain, is likewise subjected by her own situation and that of her husband to moral duties and trials, which require to be briefly noticed. If her husband has raised himself by success in his business to a state of affluence and credit, she becomes ambitious to display her newly-acquired wealth in the parade of dress, in costly furniture, in luxurious entertainments. But if from the operation of absurd and arrogant prejudices, which, though far less prevalent in modern times than heretofore, are not yet wholly extinguished, she is occasionally treated by ladies of superior rank and fortune with the supercilious airs reserved to be exhibited towards those who have recently emerged into opulence; instead of proving by her conduct the justice of the Scriptural admonition, that "before
"honour is humility *," she fails not to convince them that her pride is equal to

* Proverbs, xv. 33.

their own. The disgracefulness and the guilt of these unchristian tempers appear in the deepest colours of deformity, when contrasted with the behaviour of those women who are seen to retain, after the largest accessions of riches and consequence, the unassuming manners, the meekness of disposition, the same principles, the same attachments, by which they were originally distinguished.

When a large manufactory draws a concourse of poor families into its immediate vicinity, let the wife of the owner continually bear in mind that to their toil her opulence is owing. Let her remember that the obligations between the labourer and his employer are reciprocal. With cordial activity let her unite with her husband, in all ways compatible with the offices of her sex, to promote the comfort and welfare of his dependents by liberal charity adapted to their respective wants, and by all other means which personal inspection and inquiry may indicate as conducive to the preservation

tion of their health, and the improvement of their moral and religious character.

A similar obligation rests on the WIVES OF TRADESMEN IN GENERAL, in proportion to the ability and the opportunities which they possess of benefiting, in any of the methods which have been pointed out, the families of the workmen employed by their husbands. If a woman has herself the superintendence and management of the shop, let industry, punctuality, accuracy in keeping accounts, the scrupulousness of honesty shewing itself in a steady abhorrence of every manœuvre to impose on the customer, and all other virtues of a commercial character which are reducible to practice in her situation, distinguish her conduct. If her occupation be such as to occasion young women to be placed under her roof as assistants in her business, or for the purpose of acquiring the knowledge of it; let her behave to them with the kindness of a friend, and watch over their principles and moral behaviour with the solicitude of a mother.

CHAPTER XII

PARENTAL DUTIES.

OF all the duties incumbent on mankind, there are none which recommend themselves more powerfully to natural reason than those of the parent. And the first of those which nature points out to the mother is to be herself the nurse of her own offspring. In some instances, however, the discharge of it would be attended with a risk to her own health greater than she ought to encounter when it can be avoided. In every such case the general obligation ceases. But spontaneously to transfer to a stranger, as modern example dictates, the office of nurturing your child, when your health and strength are adequate to the undertaking; to transfer it that your indolence may not be disturbed,

or

or that your passion for amusement may not be crippled in its exertions; is to evince a most shameful degree of selfishness and unnatural insensibility.

INFANT TUITION.

When the dawning intellect begins to unfold itself, the office of parental instruction commences. The dispositions of a child are susceptible of very early culture: and much trouble and much unhappiness may be prevented by nipping in the bud the first shoots of caprice, obstinacy, and passion.

By degrees the young pupil acquires the capacity of understanding the general reasons of the parents' commands, denials, commendations, and reproofs: and they should be communicated in most cases in which they can be comprehended. Perfect freedom from irritability and capriciousness, patience not weary of attending to minute objects and minute opportunities,
and

and steadiness never to be won by mere entreaty, or teased by importunity, from its original right determination, are among the qualifications at all periods, and especially at the period of which we now speak, essential to the parent.

As childhood advances, the opening faculties are employed under maternal direction on the rudiments of knowledge. The parent in these days possesses, in the variety of elementary tracts of modern date, advantages of which, when she herself was a child, her preceptress was destitute. The first principles of religion are inculcated in a mode adapted to interest attention; and information on many other subjects is couched under the form of dialogue and narrative suited to the comprehension and amusing to the imagination of the pupil. A proper selection from the multitude of little publications, differing materially as to intrinsic worth, requires no large portion of time and trouble. Where caution is easy, negligence is in the same proportion reprehensible.

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The time now arrives, when the regular business of education, in all its branches, is to begin; and the great question, whether it shall be conducted at home or abroad, is to be decided. The grounds on which that point is to be determined, have been sufficiently discussed already*. The chapter alluded to, although it pertains exclusively to the education of girls, yet the general principles there illustrated may be applied to the case of boys. The superior acquaintance which the husband possesses with the habits and pursuits of active life, will entitle his judgement to the same preponderance in determining the scheme of their education, as, for similar reasons, he will commonly do well to give to the opinion of his wife with respect to the mode of bringing up his daughters.

* Chap. III.

EDUCATION OF DAUGHTERS.

If domestic circumstances be such, that the girls are to be sent to a boarding-school, let not the mother be influenced in her choice by the example of high life and fashion. Let her remember what are the objects of prime importance in education, and give the preference to the seminary where they are most likely to be thoroughly attained. Her child's happiness in this world and in futurity is to be deemed at stake. The secondary objects of education may in a competent degree be obtained in almost every place. Let the opportunities which vacations furnish be watchfully employed in supplying what is defective, in correcting what is erroneous, in strengthening what is valuable, in the instruction conveyed and the sentiments inculcated at the school. And let the instructors be encouraged to general exertion, and to the greatest exertion in points of the highest concern, by perceiving that the progress of

the pupil in the various branches of improvement is observed with a steady and a discriminating eye.

It can scarcely be necessary to observe that if a daughter is educated at home, and recourse is had to the assistance of a governess, much care is requisite in the choice. To meet with a person tolerably qualified, as to mental accomplishments, is sometimes not an easy task. But to find the needful accomplishments united with ductility, with a placid temper, and with active principles of religion, is a task of no small labour; and a task deserving of the labour which it requires. Let the assistant be ever treated with friendly kindness. But let her be kept attentive to the duties of her office by the superintending vigilance of the parent. And let the parent, now that she is relieved from much of the business of the school-room, be the more assiduous in those maternal occupations, in which the governess will probably afford her less substantial aid, the regulation of the daughter's dispositions,

dispositions, and the improvement of her heart.

In the GOVERNMENT OF CHILDREN, the principle of fear as well as that of love is to be employed. There are parents, especially mothers, who, from an amiable but extreme apprehension of damping filial attachment by the appearance of severity, are desirous of excluding the operation of the former. But the imperfections of mortality must be put off, before we can arrive at that state, in which "perfect love" "casteth out fear." In like manner, as reason unfolds itself, and Christian views open to the mind, the child will stand less and less in need of positive control, and will be more powerfully actuated by an affectionate earnestness to gratify the parent's desire. But as long as the rights of parental authority subsist, the impression of awe, originally stamped on the bosom of the offspring, is not to be considered as useless. Children are distinguished from

* 1 John iv. 18.

each other by striking differences in the bent of their inclinations, and in the strength of their passions. Fear, therefore, is an instrument more frequently needful in the management of some than in that of others. But it ought never to be employed by itself. Whenever reproof, restraint, or any mode of punishment is requisite, still let affection be visible. Let it be shewn not only by calmness of manner and benevolence of expression, proofs which may appear not very conclusive to the child at the time when it is experiencing the effects of parental displeasure; but also by studying to convince the understanding of the pupil, both that the censure and the infliction are deserved, and that they are intended solely for the ultimate good of the offender.

PARTIALITY.

Let not maternal love degenerate into partiality. Children are in no respect more quicksighted than in discovering preferences in the behaviour of their parents. It

is not partiality in a mother to feel a temporary preference in a case where merit demands it. Nor is it in all cases wrong to avow the preference, for the purpose of exciting the less deserving to progressive industry and virtue. For that very purpose, and also to preclude misconception, it ought to be avowed whenever you perceive the existence of it to be suspected. But beware of teaching your children to vie with each other; for it is to teach them envy and malevolence. Point out, at fit opportunities, to those who have not done their duty, the proper conduct of those who have performed it; but proceed no farther. Urge no comparison; provoke no competition. An eminent moral writer*, adverting to two opposite but unnecessary evils in the system of education, has pointedly observed; "I would rather have the
"rod to be the general terror to all to
"make them learn, than tell a child, if you

* Dr. Johnson—See Boswell's Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides, 2d edit. p. 103.

“do thus or thus, you will be more esteemed
“than your brothers or sisters. By ex-
“citing emulation and comparisons of su-
“periority, you lay the foundation of last-
“ing mischief. You make brothers and
“sisters hate each other.”

ARTFUL DISPOSITION.

If I were required to single out from the failings, which invade the bosom of childhood, that which from the facility with which it is acquired and nurtured, and from its insidious, extensive, and durable effects on the character which it taints, calls for the most watchful attention from parental solicitude; that to which in my apprehension the distinction would be due, is Art. Other faults usually disclose themselves by indications visible to common eyes. This is frequently found capable of eluding even the glance of penetration; and of concealing not only itself, but almost every other defect of heart and conduct with which it is associated. In the
dawn

dawn of life it is often encouraged by the lessons instilled by servants, who teach children to disguise from their parents by indirect falsehood petty acts of misconduct and disobedience.

Openness in acknowledging improper behaviour of any kind, is a disposition to which a child ought from infancy to be led by the principles both of duty and of affection. To accept spontaneous confession as a satisfaction for every fault would not be to cherish virtue, but to foster guilt by teaching it a ready way to impunity. But an immediate and full avowal ought ever to be admitted as a strong circumstance of palliation; and the refusal or neglect of it to be noticed as the addition of a second and a heavy fault to the former.

ERRORS TO BE COUNTERACTED.

During the years when both the body and the mind are to acquire the firmness which will be essential to each in the struggles and temptations of life, let not your

offspring be enfeebled and corrupted by habits of effeminate indulgence. Let them be accustomed to plain food, simple clothing, early and regular hours; to abundant exercise in the open air; and to as little regard of the vicissitudes of seasons as is consistent with reasonable attention to health. Let them be guarded against indulging timidity; and more especially against affected apprehensions, to which girls are frequently prone. Let humanity and mildness be among the principles impressed most early on their hearts. Let not the impression be permitted to grow faint: and in common with all just and amiable impressions, let it be traced up to the hand of religion. Teach them to abhor the detestable sports derived from the sufferings of animals. They who are inured in their childhood to persecute the bird or torture the insect, will have hearts, in maturer years, prepared for barbarity to their fellow-creatures. Allow not your rising family to contract pernicious intimacies with servants. But exact in their behaviour to your domestics a deportment

deportment invariably gentle and unassuming. Point out the impending hour, when all distinctions of rank will be at an end; when the important question to each individual will not be, What station in life have you occupied? but, How have you discharged the duties of that which you were appointed to fill?

MODE OF INTRODUCING DAUGHTERS.

Though time and judgement have sobered the excess of warmth and of sensibility by which your feelings, when you began first to be introduced into the world, were, like those of other young people, characterised; let it however be apparent to your children, when at the period of life now under consideration, that you have not forgotten what they were. To the welfare of your daughters in particular this is a point of the highest concern. Unless it be evident that you understand and frankly enter into the emotions, which new scenes and new temptations excite in their

minds; it will be impracticable for you to correct the misconceptions, dispel the delusions, and unravel the artifices, by which the fervour and inexperience of youth are ensnared. If you encounter errors occasioned or increased by sensibility, with austere coldness, with vehement chidings, or with unbending authority that disdains to assign reasons, your disapprobation is ascribed to prejudice, to temper, to deadness of feeling. You are obeyed; but it is with inward reluctance, and with an augmented proneness to the step which you have forbidden. But to preserve the confidence of a friend, point them out with affectionate benignity, mindful of the hazards to which you were yourself exposed under similar circumstances, at a similar period of youth. It is thus that you may hope effectually to guard your daughter from modish folly and dissipation, from indiscreet intimacies and dangerous connections. It is thus that you may engage her to avail herself of the advantage of your experience; and render to her, by
your

your counsel, the most signal benefits both in the general intercourse of society, and particularly when she meditates on any prospect which may be opened to her of settling in connubial life.

ATTACHMENTS—FRIENDSHIPS.

There is a medium which is not always easy to be observed, with respect to daughters being allowed to accept invitations to pass some time in other families. Such intercourse on proper occasions is improving as well as pleasant. But if the parent would guard her daughters from all propensity to unsettled habits, let her aid the sobriety of disposition and sedateness of character, already instilled into them, by the charms of never-failing and affectionate good humour on her own part, which are essential to the comfort of domestic life, and particularly attractive in the eye of youth. There are fashionable mothers who, at the same time that they introduce their daughters into a general and free acquaintance

ance with others of their age, sex, and station, carefully instil into them the prudential maxim, to contract friendship with none. The scheme either fails to succeed, or breeds up a character of determined selfishness. Let the parent encourage her daughters in friendly attachment to young women, in whom amiable manners and virtuous principles are exemplified. With the society of such friends let her willingly gratify them; sometimes abroad, more frequently under her own roof. Let her not be flattered by the solicitations, imprudent, however well intended, of ladies of superior rank, desirous to introduce her daughters into circles in which, according to their present place in the scale of society, they are not destined to move. If ambition be once kindled by introduction into a higher sphere, is it likely that it will descend contentedly from its elevation? Is it likely that the modest retirement of private life will remain as engaging as before?

MARRIAGE OF DAUGHTERS.

There is scarcely any circumstance by which the sober judgement and the fixed principles of parents are so frequently perverted, as by a scheming eagerness respecting the settlement of their daughters in marriage. A mother, who has personally experienced how slight the connection is between connubial happiness and the worldly advantages of wealth and grandeur, is yet seen training her children in the very paths which she has found rugged and strewn with thorns. The opinions, the passions, which, having smothered, she imagined that she had extinguished, shew themselves to be alive. She takes pains to deceive herself, to devise apologies to her own conscience for indulging in the case of her children the spirit of vanity and the anxiety for pre-eminence, which on every other occasion she has long and loudly condemned. She magnifies the advantages of an additional thousand pounds in the rent roll,

roll, and enhances the value of a title, while she diminishes, in the same proportion, the temptations and drawbacks with which they they are accompanied. Satisfied with this explanation, she studies the means of throwing her daughter into the way of young men of station more or less superior to her own. Public places now present themselves to her mind as the scenes where her wishes may have the fairest prospect of being realised. She enlarges to her husband on the propriety of doing justice to their daughter's attractions, and giving her the same chance which other ladies of her age enjoy of making a respectable conquest; dwells on the wonderful effect of sudden impressions; recounts various examples in which wealthy baronets and the eldest sons of peers have been captivated by the irresistible power of female elegance in a ball-room, and forgets or passes over the wretchedness by which the marriage was in most instances succeeded; and drags him, unconvinced, from London to Bath, from Tunbridge to Weymouth, that the young
woman

woman may be corrupted into dissipation, folly, and misconduct, and exposed, as in a public market, to the inspection of bachelors of fashion. It would scarcely be practicable to invent a system more indelicate to the feelings of the person for whose benefit it is professedly carried on; nor one whose effect, considered in a matrimonial point of view, would have a greater tendency to betray her into a hasty engagement, and the unhappiness which a hasty engagement frequently forebodes. But in this plan, as in others, cunning not seldom overreaches itself. The jealousy of other mothers suspects the scheme; the quicksightedness of young men discerns it. When once it is discerned, its consequences are wholly opposite to those which it was intended to produce. The destined captive recoils from the net. The odium of the plot, instead of being confined, as justice commonly requires, to the mother, is extended to the daughter, and pursues her whithersoever she goes. In the intercourse of private families in the country, where similar schemes

schemes are not unfrequent, though conducted on a smaller scale; the forward advances and studied attentions of the mother to young men of fortune whom she wishes to call her sons-in-law, are often in the highest degree distressing to her daughters, as well as offensive to the other parties; and in many cases actually prevent attachments, which would otherwise have taken place.

OBLIGATIONS OF PARENT AND CHILD.

When matrimonial alliances introduce a mother to new sons and new daughters, let her study to conduct herself towards them in a manner befitting the ties of affinity, by which she is now united to them. If she harbours prejudices against them, if pride, jealousy, caprice, or any other unwarrantable emotion marks her behaviour towards them; the injustice of her conduct to the individuals themselves has this farther accession of criminality, that it
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also wounds in the tenderest point the feelings of her own children.

The peculiar obligations of parent and child are not wholly cancelled but by the stroke which separates the bands of mortality. When years have put a period to authority and submission; parental solicitude, filial reverence, and mutual affection survive. Let the mother exert herself during her life to draw closer and closer the links of benevolence and kindness. Let her counsel, never obtrusely offered or pressed, be at all times ready when it will be beneficial and acceptable. But let her not be dissatisfied, though the proceedings which she recommends should not appear the most advisable to her children, who are now free agents. Let her share in their joy, and sympathise with their afflictions; "Rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep*." She may then justly hope that their love will never forget what she

* Romans, xii. 15.

has done, and what she has suffered for them; and that the hand of filial gratitude will delight to smoothe the path of her latter days.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DUTIES OF THE MIDDLE PERIOD OF
LIFE.

AMONG the duties appertaining to the female sex in the middle period of life, those which are peculiar to the wife and to the mother hold the principal rank, and form the larger proportion. They have already been discussed at sufficient length. It may not, however, be unprofitable to subjoin some farther remarks, partly referring to the conduct of married women during that period, and partly to the situation of individuals, who have remained single.

So engaging are the attractions, so impressive is the force of beauty, that women, distinguished by personal charms, are not permitted long to continue unconscious of being

being the objects of general attention. Admired and flattered, pursued with assiduities, singled out from their associates at every scene of public resort, they perceive themselves universally treated with marked and peculiar preference. To those in whom harmony of form and brilliancy of complexion are not conspicuous, youth itself, graced with unaffected simplicity, or at least rendered interesting by sprightliness and animation, is capable of ensuring no inconsiderable portion of regard. As youth and beauty wear away, the homage which had been paid to them is gradually withdrawn. They who had heretofore been treated as the idols of public and private circles, and had forgotten to anticipate the termination of their empire, are suddenly awakened from their dream, and constrained to rest satisfied with the common notice shewn to their station, and the respect which they may have acquired by their virtues. To descend from eminence is painful; and to many minds not the less painful, when the eminence itself had no real

real value, and the foundation, on which it rested, no durable solidity. Yet, scarcely any spectacle is more common in the haunts of polite life, than to behold a woman in the wane of beauty courting with unremitting perseverance the honours which she can no longer command; exercising her ingenuity in laying traps for compliment and encomium; shutting her eyes against those alterations in countenance and figure which are visible to every other person on the slightest glance; supplying by numberless artifices, and expedients perpetually changing, the odious depredations of time; swelling with envious indignation at the sight of her juniors enjoying in their day the notice once paid to herself; unwilling to permit her daughters to accompany her into public, lest their native bloom should expose by contrast the purchased complexion of their mother, or their very stature betray that she can no longer be young; and disgracing herself, and disgusting even those who deem it civility to flatter and deceive her, by affecting the
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slippancy of manners, for which youth itself would have been a most inadequate apology.

The first obligation incumbent on every individual is habitually to act aright in the sphere of personal duty: the next, to encourage, and in proportion to existing ability and opportunity, to instruct others to do the same. The obligation of imparting instruction to young women presses on those who are farther advanced in life with the greater force and urgency in proportion to the closeness of the ties, whether of consanguinity or of friendship, by which the latter are connected with the former; and also to the circumstances of disposition, of time and place, and various other particulars, which may give to the admonition a more or less favourable prospect of success. Let it not however be imagined that it binds you to consult the improvement of your daughter only and your niece, or of some individual thrown by peculiar events under your immediate superintendence. It binds you to consult the improvement

improvement of all whom it is in your power to improve, whether connected with you more or less; whether your superiors, your equals, or your inferiors; whether likely to derive a higher or a lower degree of advantage from your endeavours. It binds you to consult their improvement by deliberate advice, by incidental reflection, by silent example; studiously selecting, varying, and combining the means which you employ according to the character and situation of the person whom you desire to benefit. It binds you to do all with earnestness and prudence; with sincerity and benevolence. It binds you to beware, lest by negligence you lose opportunities which you might with propriety have embraced; or through inadvertence and mistaken politeness contribute to strengthen sentiments and practices, to which, if you are at the time unable to oppose them with effect, you ought, at least, not to have given the apparent sanction of your authority.

UNMARRIED LADIES.

The good sense and the refinement of the present age have abated much of the contempt, with which it was heretofore the practice to regard women, who had attained or past the middle period of life without having entered into the bands of marriage. The contempt was unjust, and it was ungenerous. If from a wise and delicate reluctance to accept offers made, perhaps, by persons of objectionable or of ambiguous character; or from unwillingness to leave the abode of a desolate parent, struggling with difficulties, or declining towards the grave; or from a repugnance to marriage produced by affection surviving the loss of a beloved object prematurely snatched away by death; if in consequence of any of these or of similar causes a woman continues single, is she to be despised? Be it admitted that certain peculiarities of deportment, certain faults of disposition, are proverbially frequent in women,

women, who have long remained single. Let it then also be remembered that every situation of life has a tendency to encourage some particular errors and failings; that the defects of women, who, by choice, or by necessity, are in a situation extremely different from that in which the generality of their sex is placed, will always attract more than their proportional share of attention; and that whenever attention is directed towards them, it is no more than common justice at the same time to render signal praise to the individuals, who are free from the faults in manners and temper, which many under similar circumstances have contracted. Moreover, they are persons cut off from a state of life usually regarded as the most desirable. They are frequently unprovided with friends, on whose advice or assistance they can thoroughly confide. Sometimes they are destitute of a settled home, and compelled by a scanty income to depend on the protection, and bear the humours, of supercilious relations. Sometimes in obscure re-

treats, solitary, and among strangers, they wear away the hours of sickness and of age, unfurnished with the means of procuring the assistance and the comforts which sinking health demands. Let not unfeeling derision be added to the difficulties which it has perhaps been impossible to avoid, or virtue not to decline.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE DUTIES OF THE DECLINE OF LIFE.

ITS CLAIMS ON YOUTH.

WE come now to the period when gray hairs and augmenting infirmities forebode with louder and louder admonition the common termination of mortality. The spring and summer of life are past; autumn is far advanced; the frown of winter is already felt. Age has its privileges and its honours. It claims exemption from the more arduous offices of society, to which its strength is no longer equal; and immunity from some at least of the exertions, the fruit of which it cannot enjoy. Deprived of many active pleasures, it claims an equivalent of ease and repose. Forced to contract the sphere of its utility, it claims a grateful remembrance of former services.

From the child and the near relation, it claims duty and love: from all, tenderness and respect. Its claims are just, acceptable, and sacred. Reason approves them; sympathy welcomes them; Revelation sanctions them. "Let children requite their parents*." "Despise not thy mother when she is old†." "Intreat the elder women as mothers‡." "Ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder§." "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head||." But if age would be regarded with affection and reverence, it must shew itself invested with the qualities by which those feelings are to be conciliated. It must be useful according to its ability, by example, if not by exertion. If unable to continue the full exercise of active virtues, it must display the excellence of those which are passive. It must resist the temptations by which it is beset, and guard itself against indulging faults on the

* 1 Tim. v. 4.

† Prov. xxiii. 22.

‡ 1 Tim. v. 1, 2.

§ 1 Peter. v. 5.

|| Levit. xix. 32.

plea of infirmity. In a word, if the "hoary head" is to be "a crown of glory," it must be "found in the way of righteousness *."

GAY AMUSEMENTS.

Of all the methods by which a woman arrived at old age may preclude herself from enjoying the respect to which by her years alone she would have been entitled, an attachment to the gay amusements of youth is perhaps the least uncertain. To behold one whose countenance, whose figure, whose every gesture proclaims that the last sands of life are running out, clinging to the levities of a world which she is about to leave for ever; haunting with tottering steps the scene of public entertainment; and labouring with sickly efforts, to win attention by the affectation of juvenile sprightliness and ease; to behold gray hairs thus spontaneously degraded and debased, is not only one of the most disgust-

* Prov. xvi. 31.

ing, but one of the most melancholy spectacles which can be surveyed.

AVARICE is one of the vices of age, which is more frequently exemplified among men than in the female sex. A reasonable desire of providing fortunes for their younger children, without leaving an immoderate burthen on the patrimonial inheritance, commonly disposes them to study at least, if not to accomplish, plans of annual saving. From these cares and occupations women, whether married or unmarried, are comparatively free. In the next place, their native stock of benevolence and liberality is often less impaired than that of the other sex, accustomed in the active business of life to the continual sight and knowledge of fraud, selfishness, and demerit. Hence, when advancing years bring in their train timidity, suspicion, an high opinion of the power of wealth to command respect, or any other feeling or persuasion which is adapted to excite or to confirm a propensity to avarice; that propensity finds in the antecedent pursuits
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and habits, and sentiments of men, encouragements and supports which, among individuals of the female sex, it experiences in a less degree, or not at all. Among the aged, however, of the female sex, there are examples of covetousness sufficient to authorise a deliberate admonition against it.

AFFECTIONATE TENDENCIES in the bosoms of the old proceed, in some instances, to an extreme; and require, though not to be checked, yet to be regulated. Fondness attaches itself with pernicious eagerness to one of the children of the family; rests not without the presence of the favourite object; destroys its health by pampering it with dainties; and stimulates and strengthens its passions by immoderate and indiscriminate gratification. Many a child, whom parental discipline would have trained in the paths of knowledge and virtue, has been nursed up in ignorance and prepared for vice by the blind indulgence of the grandmother and the aunt. Unwillingness to thwart the wishes of old age, curtailed of many enjoyments, and impatient

tient of contradiction, frequently restrains the parent from timely and effectual interference. Were this obvious circumstance considered beforehand, and with due seriousness, by women advanced in years, they would less frequently reduce those with whom they live to the embarrassing dilemma of performing a very irksome duty, or of acquiescing in the danger and detriment, perhaps in the ruin, of their offspring.

QUERULOUSNESS.

Among the defects of old age querulousness is esteemed one of the most prominent. Complaint is the natural voice of suffering; and to suffer is the common lot of declining years. Even in the earlier periods of life, women of weak health and irritable spirits not seldom contract a habit of complaining; and though when called to severe trials, they disclose exemplary patience, yet they indulge in common life a frequent recurrence of the tones
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and language of queruloufness. The inward trouble seems ever on the watch for opportunities of revealing itself; and any little mark of regard, any expreffion of tendernefs, from a husband or a brother, immediately calls forth the intimation of an ailment. In age, when the affection of children and near relations is rightly diftinguifhed by particular affiduity and folitude; when, if the hand of Providence withholds acutenefs of pain, fome degree of infirmity and fuffering is mercifully allowed to give almoft conftant admonitions of an event which cannot be remote; when garrulity, no longer employed on the variety of fubjects which once interefted the mind, dwells with augmented eagernefs on prefent objects and prefent fenfations; it is not furprifing that a difpofition to complaint fhould gather ftrength. But let all who fuffer remember, that it is not by continual lamentation that the largeft meafure of compaffion is to be obtained. Reiterated impreffions lofe their force. The ear becomes dull to founds to which it is habituated. A part

of the uneasinesses described by the sufferer is attributed to imagination; and the mind of the hearer, instead of estimating the amount of the remainder, wonders and regrets that they are not borne better. Among the strongest supports of pity is the involuntary reverence commanded by silent resignation.

PEEVISHNESS.

Another of the unfavourable characteristics by which age is sometimes distinguished, is a peevish and dissatisfied temper. To those who are conversant with a narrow circle of objects, trifles swell into importance. Small disappointments are permitted to assume the form of serious evils; inadvertence and unintentional omissions are construed into positive unkindness. Novelties of every sort disgust; and every little variation is a novelty. All things appear to have changed, and to have changed for the worse. Manners are no longer simple, as they were once; fashions

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are not rational and elegant, as heretofore: youth is become noisy, petulant, and irreverent to its seniors: rank and station are no longer treated with respect. Moral virtue has diminished: tradesmen have lost their honesty, servants their ready and punctual obedience. Even in personal appearance the rising generation is far inferior to the last. To tolerate, to pity this waywardness is the office of the young; to guard against indulging it is the duty of the aged. Let the former anticipate the hour in which they too, should they survive, will be tempted blindly to attribute to every surrounding object the decay which has taken place in their own faculties alone. Let the latter recal to mind the sensations with which they themselves, in the prime of life, witnessed similar misconceptions, and listened to similar complaints.

CONSOLATIONS OF AGE.

If age has its peculiar burthens, it has also its peculiar consolations. The fervid passions which agitated the breast of youth have subsided: the vanities which dazzled its gaze have ceased to delude. Cheerful hours, enlivened by the society of descendants, of relations, perhaps of some coeval friend endeared by the recollection of long established regard, still remain. If maladies press heavily on the functions of life, if pain embitters the remnant of your satisfactions, yet the duration of your sufferings cannot be long. If the day is far spent, the hour of rest must necessarily be at hand. Whether your waning years be loaded with affliction, or glide away placid and serene; have you not still in your possession the chief of earthly blessings, the promises of the Gospel, the prospect of immortality? If those promises, that prospect, be not adapted to give you comfort, lay not your disquiet to the charge of age;

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charge it on your past life, on your own folly, on your own sin. But if you have so lived as to have an interest in the glorious hopes of Christianity, how peculiarly strong must be your delight in looking forward to rewards, from which you are separated by so brief an interval!

Endear then yourself to all around you by cheerful good humour, by benevolence, by affectionate kindness, by patience, and resignation. By seasonable exhortation, by uniform example, endear to them that piety which is your support. Engage them to a continual remembrance of the hour, when they shall be as you are. So shall your memory speak the language of instruction and of comfort, when you are silent in the grave.

CONCLUSION.

In youth and in age, in single and in matrimonial life, in all circumstances and under all relations, to live stedfastly and habitually under the guidance of those principles

ples which they who are now lying on the bed of death are rejoicing that they have obeyed, or mourning that they have disregarded, is the sum of human wisdom and human happiness. "The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*." "God loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins†"—"whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood‡." "The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding§". "He that will love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile. Let him eschew evil, and do good: let him seek peace and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil||." "The righteous shall be recom-

* 2 Peter, iii. 9.

† 1 John, iv. 10.

‡ Rom. iii. 25.

§ Job, xxviii. 28.

|| 1 Peter, iii. 10.—12.

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“pensed in the earth—the righteous hath
 “hope in his death*.” “If thou wilt en-
 “ter into life, keep the commandments†.”
 “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and
 “thou shalt be saved‡.” You may disbe-
 lieve Christianity: but its truth is not on
 that account impaired. You may slight
 the impending day of retribution: but its
 approach is not on that account retarded.
 “The Lord hath purposed; and who shall
 “disannul it?” “I am God, declaring the
 “end from the beginning, and from antient
 “times the things that are not yet done;
 “saying, My Counsel shall stand§.” What
 if Christianity had commanded you wholly
 to refrain even from reasonable pleasures
 and moderate indulgences, would you
 have murmured at temporary forbearance
 when compared with an eternal reward?
 Christianity however imposes no such re-
 striction. Its “yoke is easy,” and its “bur-

* Prov. xi. 31.—xiv. 32. † Matt. xix. 17.

‡ Acts, xvi. 31.

§ Isaiah, xiv. 27.—xlvi.
 9, 10.

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"then is light;" easy and light to all who are disposed to fulfil what they perceive to be their duty. It prohibits you from no pleasures except those which, had Christianity never been revealed, your own reason, if unbiaſſed, would have condemned. It reſtrains you from no innocent gratifications, except when they would be unſeaſonable or exceſſive; when, by preventing you from diſcharging ſome preſent duty, or rendering you leſs qualified for the diſcharge of duty at a future period, they would diminifh your everlaſting recompenſe. If your days are crowned with worldly bleſſings, if you have competence and health, if you are happy in your parents, your connections, your children; what ſolid delight could you feel in the contemplation of your felicity, did you know no more than that every object whence it is derived is together with yourſelf deſcending with ceafeleſs rapidity to the abyſs of death? How would you have borne to ſtand on the brink of the gulph, gazing acroſs in vain for an oppoſite ſhore,
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and looking down into unfathomable vacuity; if Religion had not unfolded to you the secrets of another world, and instructed you how to attain its never-ending glories? But your comforts perhaps are undermined by sickness or misfortune, and your prospects darkened by grief. Religion can blunt the arrows of pain, and brighten the gloom of calamity and sorrow. It teaches you the moral and sanctifying purposes for which affliction and chastisement are mercifully sent. It teaches you that "by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better*." Are your parents unnatural; or are they no more? It tells you that you have an Almighty and all-bounteous Father in Heaven. Is your husband unkind? It teaches you to win him by your modest virtues; and gives you a solemn assurance that patience shall not lose its reward. Are you deprived by death of a beloved partner in marriage? It represents to you the Ruler of the Universe,

* Eccl. vii. 3.

as the especial protector of the widow and the orphan. Are your children taken from you in their early childhood? It tells you that "of such is the kingdom of God*." Are they snatched away in riper years? It reminds you that they are removed from trials which they might not have withstood. Were their talents more than usually promising? It tells you that those talents might have proved the sources of ruinous temptations. Whether you have lost parent, husband, or child, it tells you that "them which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him †." It tells you that the means of securing to yourself a participation of the unchangeable happiness, destined for those who have been faithful servants of Christ, are offered to you by the grace of God, are placed within your reach, are pressed upon your notice and acceptance. Religion at times speaks to you the language of terror. It speaks the language of terror to lead you to repentance. It de-

* Mark, x. 14.

† 1 Thess. iv. 14.

nounces judgements that, under the guidance and blessing of God, you may escape them. But, remember, that it speaks no terrors, it denounces no judgements, which shall not be executed on all who persevere in disobedience. If you are not among those who hear the final sentence, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;" you will be of the number of them to whom it is said, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels."*

* Matthew, xxv. 34. 41.

THE END.

