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Mrs. Jane N. Baker
Cary Springs
Tenn
Miss Jane N. Baker

A WHISPER

who whispers
it

TO A

NEWLY-MARRIED PAIR,

FROM

A WIDOWED WIFE.

What widow is it

"Hail, wedded love! by gracious Heaven design'd,
At once the source and glory of mankind;
'Tis this can toll, and pain, and grief, assuage;
Secure our youth, and dignify our age;
'Tis this fair fame and guiltless pleasure brings,
And shakes rich plenty from its brooding wings;
Gilds duty's roughest path with friendship's ray,
And strews with roses sweet the narrow way."

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Entered according to the Act of Congress in the year 1832, by
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trict of Pennsylvania.

STEREOTYPED BY J. HOWE.

PREFACE

TO THE

FIRST AMERICAN EDITION.

PERHAPS, since the days of the celebrated Hannah More, no little work has issued from the press, so full of moral truths and the philosophy of connubial felicity, as "The Whispers to a Newly Married Pair."

The authoress studied in the school of experience, so that her salutary advice and suggestions, in which the milk of humanity is mingled with the benignity of the gospel, should be religiously attended by all husbands and wives desirous of securing the permanent enjoyment of the married state, and of illuminating the domestic sphere by the rays of reciprocal affection and conjugal content.

The style of the work is simple but elegant, and its sentiments are expressed with a force and truth that must command the attention of the reader.

The "Whisper" is indeed the sincere warning of one who unjustly suffered under the infliction of matrimonial discord and infidelity. There is a deep moral tone running through the following pages, that cannot fail of awakening reflection, of mending the morals, and of giving energy to the best affections of the heart.

To the American edition is also prefixed a biography of its deceased authoress, by the editor of the Irish Shield.

PREFACE

TO THE

LONDON EDITION.

IN offering the following hints of advice, it must not be supposed that I speak merely to the newly married pair; for in those moments of early love, a husband and wife are to each other generally all that could be wished. No! my admonitions extend to that sober period when novelty has lost its attraction, and the ardor of youthful affection has abated.

Previous to a perusal, a mutual promise should be made, that if the husband reads with attention the whisper addressed to *him*, his wife will read, with equal attention, the whisper addressed to *her*. And each should remember, that of all the pleasures that endear human life, none are more worthy of the pursuit of a rational creature than those which flow from mutual returns of conjugal love. A happy marriage comprehends all the pleasures of friendship, all the enjoyments of sense and reason, and all the sweets of life. "To live without feeling or exciting sympathy," says Dr. Johnson; "to be fortunate without adding to the felicity of others, or afflicted without tasting the balm of pity;—is a state more gloomy than solitude: it is not retreat, but exclusion, from mankind."

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH
OF
MARGARET DERENZY.

THE publishers of the first American edition of the following instructive and interesting work, prefix a biographical sketch of its deceased authoress, by the editor of the IRISH SHIELD.

The memory of the fair and gifted Margaret Derenzy, merits a record from a more brilliant pen than ours, a niche in a more stately biographical temple than that which we now dedicate to it. But let not the humility of the shrine in which we essay to embalm the recollection of her feminine virtues and literary fame, be taken as a criterion of the apathy of our devotion to, or the want of reverence for, departed worth; for if we cannot weave a perennial garland of Parnassian laurels to decorate her tomb, we can, at least, pluck up the rank weeds that hide the tablet on which her epitaph is inscribed, and light a sepulchral lamp before her biographical shrine, to dispel the gloom of obscurity. To us it has ever been a pleasing task to rescue neglected merit from oblivion, a delight to trace the character of female genius, breaking, like the pastoral and pellucid Shannon, from an obscure and little source, until gathering its strength, and accumulating the tributes of vassal streams, it extends to amplitude and magnificence. The lady whose genius has enriched our literature, and whose writings, fraught with exalted feelings and principles of a moral and religious tendency, that derived their inspiration from a philanthropic heart, have added another plume to the chaplet of female talent, was the daughter of ANTHONY GRAVES, Esq. of Thomastown, in the county of Kilkenny, of

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 which beautiful and romantic village his ancestors had been for centuries the respectable residents. The germs of genius sprung out in her mind at a very early season of adolescence, and gave promise of a luxuriant maturity.

Before she had left the nursery, her mother, an accomplished lady, taught her to read and write. In the seventh year of her age, she evinced a passionate propensity to reading poetry, particularly the nursery tales of Miss Hannah More, an eminent authoress, whose chaste and eloquent productions seem to have been revised by the grace of modesty, and adapted, by taste, to illuminate the female mind, to refine the manners and purify the heart. We understand, from a gentleman of this city, who was intimately acquainted with the subject of this memoir, and to whom we are indebted for the materials which we thus weave into our brief biography, that before she had attained her ninth year, she wrote poetic tales of ghosts, fairies, and other legendary heroes, whose oral histories are recorded in the memories of loquacious nurses and traditional story-tellers.

The period intervening from her ninth to her fourteenth year was sedulously devoted to study, and to the acquirement, under the most competent teachers, of those elegant intellectual accomplishments which give woman her most endearing charm, and invest her with a sovereign sway over the heart of man, after the autumnal blasts of age have nipped the rose and blighted the lilies of beauty.

In music and painting, in French and Italian literature, she acquired a superior proficiency. Her stature was elegantly symmetrical, tall and graceful, and possessing that rotundity of outline which is so much admired in the Grecian statues. Few faces, even in Kilkenny, the Iona of lovely women, presented the mingled sweets of the lily and the rose, in such freshness of bloom, as that of Margaret Graves. Her fine black eyes, beaming with intelligence, threw a

halo of intellectual expression over a countenance from which a *Neagle* might depict the carmine face of a youthful Hebe. The snow-like whiteness of her bosom was exquisitely contrasted and set off by the luxuriant profusion of brown hair, that floated over it in graceful and curling festoons. Seldom, indeed, did the mental and personal beauties so harmoniously unite as in the subject of our memoir.

The first effusion of her muse that attracted public attention was an elegy on the death of an intimate friend of her father, the late *Jervis Parker Bushe, Esq.*, the brother, we believe, of the present lord chief justice of Ireland.

On the marriage of her sister with Robert Allen, Esq. of the county of Wexford, she wrote an *epithalamium*, in which her poetic talents shone out in eloquence of language and elevation of sentiment. The lines addressed to her brother, on his departure for this country, breathe at once the sympathy of sisterly affection and felicity of sentiment.

It may naturally be concluded, that a lady like Miss Graves, when in the sixteenth year of her blooming youthfulness, and in the zenith of her mental powers, captivated many hearts, and attracted around her a brilliant circle of suitors. Among those gentlemen who were in competition for her heart and hand, *Major Derenzy* came, recommended to her partiality by the manliness of his person and the fame of his exploits in Spain and Portugal—the sorcery of his conversation, and his high rank in the British service, as well as the fortune and respectability of his family. With these advantages, he soon obtained an ascendancy over the affections of our heroine. They were married, and from the reciprocity of attachment that linked their hearts together, it might be inferred, that the chain of mutual love, wreathed with the roses of conjugal felicity, would be only rent by the hand of death. But perfect happiness rests on a summit of bliss that is perfectly inaccessible to

humanity. Major Derenzy, though passionately fond of his lady, and although conscious that her beauties and her virtues were peculiarly calculated to irradiate the sphere of domestic life, to gild the storms and darkness of fortune with that sympathy which emanates from a union of tender sentiment and solicitous affection, still his inconstant heart, initiated in the school of continental vices, strayed from the only shrine it ought to have worshipped, into the mazes of illicit passion, and the syren grounds of forbidden love.

For some years after their marriage their lives exhibited a living picture of that conjugal happiness which is sweetened and exalted by the communion of congenial minds, by the charms of rural retirement, and the delights of domestic endearments. But the fiends of infidelity stole into the connubial Paradise, and plucked the fruits of the wife's contentment, and withered the flowers of the husband's virtue. The seduction of a young and fashionable lady by the Major, estranged his affections from his amiable consort, and, enslaved by passion, he violated every tie of love and honor, closed his eyes to the beauty of goodness, and eloped with his paramour to Paris. The intelligence of this base desertion of the husband whom she loved to romantic ardor, thrilled, like a shock of electricity, through all her feelings, and sunk her heart in the bitter waters of consuming sorrow. That the man who was the only bright spot in the felicity of her life, the goal of her hopes, and the shrine of her love, should thus abandon her,—her who would willingly share every misery with him, nay, die for him on the burning pile, or under the torturing wheel,—distracted her mind and amazed her thoughts. Those whose affections have been spurned by the object that attracted them, and repulsed from the heart where they had taken sanctuary; those, we say, who, by unkindness and ingratitude, have been pushed down the precipice of

hopeless anguish, can sympathize in the feelings and sensations which must have wrung the delicate sensibilities of a much wronged lady; for how melancholy, to a sensitive heart, is the moment when faithless love suddenly blights the bloom of conjugal happiness, and dissolves those joyful illusions with which the anticipations of beauty and genius illuminate the spring-morning of life!

Though he abandoned her in this heartless manner, in the noon of life, and though his culpable conduct was calculated to rouse the indignation of resentment, and kindle the fires of jealousy in any female bosom, still these crying wrongs and aggravated insults could not throw down his image in her heart, nor efface, until the hour of her death, the ardent affection which she so warmly cherished for him.

Two years prior to her death she bade adieu to her former residence, in the county of Kilkenny, where every object reminded her of past felicity and present grief, and retired to the elegant, but sequestered mansion of her brother William, in the vicinity New Ross, county of Wexford, where, in the bosom of its woodland solitudes, she at once indulged her muse and her melancholy. Here she wrote a novel, entitled *The Old Irish Knight*, which is full of graphic descriptions of the Irish manners and customs that prevailed in the last century, and of vivid paintings of characters and scenery. This "novel," which is very interesting, as well as her volume of "poems," "*A Whisper to a Newly Married Pair*," and a "*Parnassian Geography*," written in verse, for the instruction of young ladies, were published by E. Houlston and Son, London, in 1828, and noticed, with commendatory critiques, by two or three of the principal periodicals of the British capital.

In the latter end of 1828 her consumptive malady assumed an alarming character, with which she struggled with the resignation and fortitude of a

Christian, until March, 1829, when death terminated her sorrows and her sufferings. It might be said that she literally died of a broken heart; that the desertion and infidelity of an ingrate husband hurried her, in the summer of life and the spring of genius, to the tomb. Her poetry is imbued with the most touching pathos, and warmed with the vestal flame of genius. Her prose style is correct, without being tame, and couched in language of elegant simplicity.

Her manners had that affability of politeness which accommodates itself to all grades of her social circle. She never made a parade of her talents or learning with a view of shining at the expense of her female acquaintances. Pedantry and pretension she always denounced as the most insipid species of female affectation; and Hannah More herself could not be more inimical to fashionable frivolity than she. But in her endeavor to divert the attention of her young friends from such pursuits, she admonished them in the gentlest terms of that agreeable amenity which wins the admiration of those to whom it is addressed.

Frequent balls and nightly parties she pronounced to have a baleful influence over the intellect of young females; for, said she, "these factitious amusements rob them of the relish for simple joys, and the unbought delights of innocence. To suffer such a corrupting influence to vitiate the minds of girls in the season of youthfulness, is like blotting out spring from the physical year." All her acquaintances had the most affectionate regard for her, as she was uniformly more solicitous to acquire than communicate information. In her conversation there was nothing of that austere and proud superiority which some blue-stocking ladies assume, to overshadow the private sphere of society, and to awe and intimidate young females. Easy, cheerful, and agreeable in her behavior in company, her constant endeavor was to raise to a level with herself those whose timidity would have placed below it.

A WHISPER

TO THE HUSBAND.

"Art thou my wife?—is this kind Heaven's decree?
Then let me prize what Heaven design'd for me!"

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

ONE of the most brilliant traits that can adorn the character of man, is the quality which composes a good husband: and he who deserves a contrary appellation, proclaims, in the strongest terms, his want of religion, his want of feeling, and his want of understanding. He cannot be a *good* man; because he violates one of the most sacred commands of God. He cannot be a *brave* man; because a brave man scorns to use with tyranny the power with which he is invested. And he cannot be a *feeling* man: Oh, no! a man of feeling will never draw tears from those eyes which look to him for comfort, or voluntarily pain a heart that has given up so much for his sake!

Remember, your wife has left her home, her parents, and her friends, to follow you and your fortunes through the world. She has unreservedly committed her happiness to your keeping; and in your hands has she placed her future comfort. Prize the sacred trust; and never give her cause to repent the confidence she has reposed in you.

In contemplating her character, recollect the materials human nature is composed of, and do not expect perfection. Do justice to her merits, and point out her faults; for I do not ask you to treat her *errors*

with indulgence: *by no means!* but then endeavor to amend them with wisdom, with gentleness, and with love.

Allow me here to introduce a few lines taken from an admired little book, *The Economy of Human Life*:—"Take unto thyself a wife, but examine with care, and fix not suddenly: on thy present choice depends the future happiness of thee and thy posterity. If much of her time is destroyed in dress and adornments; if she is enamored with her own beauty, and delighted with her own praise; if she laugheth much, and talketh loud; if her foot abideth not in her father's house, and her eyes with boldness rove on the faces of men; though her beauty were as the sun in the firmament of heaven, turn thy face from her charms, turn thy feet from her paths, and suffer not thy soul to be ensnared by the allurements of thy imagination." "But when thou findest sensibility of heart joined with softness of manners, an accomplished mind with a form agreeable to thy fancy; take her home to thy house, she is worthy to be thy friend and companion." "Reprove her faults with gentleness; exact not her obedience with rigor; trust thy secrets in her heart, her counsels are sincere, thou shalt not be deceived." "She is the wife of thy bosom, treat her with love; she is the mistress of thy house, treat her with respect; she is the mother of thy children, be faithful to her bed."

CHAPTER II.

ON THE FEMALE CHARACTER.

If your wife is an amiable woman, *if*, as the wise man says, *there be kindness, meekness, and comfort in her tongue, then is not her husband like other men.*

(Eclus. xxxvi. 23.) Prize therefore her worth; understand her value: for great indeed is the treasure you possess. Speaking of woman, a late writer says, "I consider a religious, sensible, well-bred woman, one of the noblest objects in creation: her conduct is so consistent and well regulated; her friendship so steady; her feelings so warm and gentle; her heart so replete with pity and tenderness." Nowhere does she appear to so much advantage as in the chamber of the sick; administering to the wants of the sufferer, sympathizing in his pain, and pointing the way to his heavenly rest: as our great Scottish bard says,—

"When pain and anguish wring the brow,
A ministering angel thou!"

"O! how much more lovely and interesting to the heart does she appear in such scenes, than in all the blaze of beauty, armed for conquest, and decorated for the brilliant exhibition of a ball-room!"

Among the many amiable qualities of woman, I cannot help noticing two with which she appears gifted in a peculiar degree—resignation and fortitude. I remember hearing an eminent physician* say, that he has been constantly struck with the superior quietness and resignation with which women supported bodily pain and suffering, as well as all the other evils of human life! When I speak thus, I of course allude to the sensible and superior part of the sex. Let not, therefore, the military or naval hero suppose that fortitude is confined to his own profession; that it could only be met with on the plains of Waterloo, the waves of the ocean, or the burning deserts of Egypt! No: it may also be sought and found in the gentle breast of woman. It accompanies her to the retired and silent chamber; it supports her under pain and sickness, sorrow and disappointment; it teaches her to sympathize with her husband and all

* Dr. James Graves.

around her, and to inspire them with patience by her words and example. And while she seeks no notice, no reward, but the regard and approbation of her heavenly Father, she meekly acquiesces in his divine will, and says, under every trial, "*Father, not MY will, but THINE be done!*"

Has it never been remarked, how very superior, in point of discretion, woman is to man? Now, reader, do not mistake me. I mean not to say she possesses more *sense* than man: in this particular, man claims, and we allow him, the prerogative; though, certainly, it is not *every* instance that proves its truth. But, in the quality of *discretion*, woman is decidedly and undoubtedly his superior. Unless it particularly concerns *himself*, a man seldom looks to the future consequences of what he either says or does; especially in small matters, or common-place occurrences. Now a sensible woman sees at once the *fit* from the *unfit*, attends to the minutiae of things, and looks through existing circumstances to their probable result. In short, a proper definition of the word *discretion* would exactly convey a just idea of my meaning.

Miss H. More says, "There is a large class of excellent female characters, who, on account of that very excellence, are little known; because to be known is not their object. Their ambition has a better taste: they pass through life honored and respected in their own small but not unimportant sphere, and approved by Him, 'whose they are, and whom they serve,' though their faces are hardly known in promiscuous society. If they occasion little sensation abroad, they produce much happiness at home. These are the women who bless, dignify, and truly adorn society. The painter, indeed, does not make his fortune by their sitting to him; the jeweller is neither brought into vogue by furnishing their diamonds, nor undone by not being paid for them; the prosperity of the milliner does not depend on affixing their name to a cap or a color; the poet does

not celebrate them; the novelist does not dedicate to them;—but they possess the affection of their husbands; the attachment of their children; the esteem of the wise and good; and, above all, they possess His favor, 'whom to know is life eternal.'—O! proud lord of the creation! if Heaven, in its great kindness, has blessed you with such a wife, bright indeed rose the sun on your nuptial morn: prize her, love her, honor her, and be it the study of your life to make her happy.

But the sacred volume places the value and importance of domestic virtues in the female character, in a point of view at once more grand and elevated than any modern production, as may be plainly perceived in the following extracts.—*As the sun when it riseth in the high heaven, so is the beauty of a good wife in the ordering of her house. The grace of a wife delighteth her husband, and a silent and loving woman is a gift of the Lord. A shamefaced and faithful woman is a double grace, and her continent mind cannot be valued. Blessed is the man that hath a virtuous wife, for the number of his days shall be double. A virtuous woman rejoiceth her husband, and he shall fulfil the years of his life in peace. (Ecclus. xxvi.) Hast thou a wife after thy mind? forsake her not; and give not thyself to a light woman. (Ecclus. vii. 26.) A good wife is a good portion, which shall be given in the portion of them that fear the Lord. (Ecclus. xxvi. 3.) Well is he that dwelleth with a wife of understanding. (Ecclus. xxv. 8.) A friend and companion never meet amiss: but above both is a wife with her husband. (Ecclus. xl. 23.) He thatgetteth a wife beginneth a possession, a help like unto himself, and a pillar of rest. Where no hedge is, there the possession is spoiled: and he that hath no wife will wander up and down mourning. (Ecclus. xxxvi. 24, 25.) Rejoice with the wife of thy youth; and let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe.*

(Prov. v. 18, 19.) *Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity.* (Eccles. ix. 9.) *Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life. She seeketh wool and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands. She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar. She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens. She considereth a field, and buyeth it; with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard. She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms. She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night. She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff. She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy. She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet. She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple. Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land. She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant. Strength and honor are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come. She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness. She looketh well to the ways of her household, and catcheth not the bread of idleness. Her children arise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her. Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all. Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.* (Prov. xxxi. 10—30.)

CHAPTER III.

ON GENERAL CONDUCT.

EARNESTLY endeavor to obtain among your acquaintance the character of a *good husband*; and abhor that *would-be* wit, which I have sometimes seen practised among men of the world—a kind of coarse jesting on the bondage of the *married* state, and a laugh at the shackles which a *wife* imposes. On the contrary, be it your pride to exhibit to the world that sight on which the wise man passes such an encomium: *Beautiful before God and men are a man and his wife that agree together.* (Ecclus. xxv. 1.)

Make it an established rule to consult your wife on all occasions. *Your* interest is *hers*: and undertake no plan contrary to her advice and approbation. Independent of better motives, what a responsibility does it free you from! for, if the affair turn out ill, you are spared reproaches both from her and from your own feelings. But the fact is, she who ought to have most influence on her husband's mind, is often precisely the person who has least; and a man will frequently take the advice of a stranger who cares not for him nor his interest, in preference to the cordial and sensible opinion of his wife. A due consideration of the domestic evils such a line of conduct is calculated to produce, might, one would think, of itself be sufficient to prevent its adoption; but, independent of these, policy should influence you; for there is in woman an intuitive quickness, a sagacity, a penetration, and a foresight into the probable consequences of an event, that make her peculiarly calculated to give her opinion and advice.—“If I was making up a plan of consequences,” said the great Lord Bolingbroke, “I should like first to consult with a sensible woman.”

Have you any male acquaintance, whom, on reasonable grounds, your wife wishes you to resign? Why should you hesitate? Of what consequence can be the

civilities, or even the friendship, of any one, compared with the wishes of her with whom you have to spend your life—whose comfort you have sworn to attend to; and who has a right to demand, not only such a trifling compliance, but great sacrifices, if necessary!

Never witness a tear from your wife with apathy or indifference. Words, looks, actions—all may be artificial; but a *tear* is unequivocal; it comes direct from the *heart*, and speaks at once the language of truth, nature, and sincerity! Be assured, when you see a tear on her cheek, her heart is touched; and do not, I again repeat it, do not behold it with coldness or insensibility!

It is very unnecessary to say that contradiction is to be avoided at all times: but when in the presence of others, be most particularly watchful. A look, or word, that perhaps, in *reality*, conveys no angry meaning, may at once lead people to think that their presence alone restrains the eruption of a discord, which probably has no existence whatsoever.

Some men, who are married to women of inferior fortune or connexion, will frequently have the meanness to upbraid them with the disparity. My good sir, allow me to ask what was your motive in marrying? Was it to oblige or please *your wife*? No, truly; it was to oblige and please *yourself*, your own dear self. Had she refused to marry you, you would have been (in lover's phrase) a very miserable man. Did you never tell her so? Therefore, really, instead of upbraiding her, you should be very grateful to her for rescuing you from such an unhappy fate.

It is particularly painful to a woman, whenever her husband is unkind enough to say a lessening or harsh word of any member of her family: invectives against herself are not half so wounding.

Should illness, or suffering of any kind, assail your wife, your tenderness and attention are then peculiarly called for; and if she be a woman of sensibility, believe me, a look of love, a word of pity or sympathy,

will, at times, have a better effect than the prescriptions of her physicians.

Perhaps some calamity, peculiarly her own, may befall her. She may weep over the death of some dear relative or friend; or her spirits and feelings may be affected by various circumstances. Remember that your sympathy, tenderness, and attention, on such occasions, are particularly required.

A man would not, on any account, take up a whip, or a stick, and beat his wife; but he will, without remorse, use to her language which strikes much deeper to her heart than the lash of any whip he could make use of. "He would not, for the world," says an ingenious writer, "cut her with a *knife*, but he will, without the least hesitation, cut her with his *tongue*."

I have known some unfeeling husbands, who have treated their luckless wives with unvaried and unremitting unkindness, till perhaps the arrival of their last illness, and who then became all assiduity and attention. But when that period approaches, their remorse, like the remorse of a murderer, is felt too late; the die is cast; and kindness or unkindness, can be of little consequence to the poor victim, who only waits to have her eyes closed in the long sleep of death!

Perhaps your wife may be destitute of youth and beauty, or other superficial attractions which distinguish many of her sex: should this be the case, remember many a plain face conceals a heart of exquisite sensibility and merit; and her consciousness of the defect makes her peculiarly awake to the slightest attention or inattention from you: and just for a moment reflect—

"What is the blooming tincture of the skin,
To peace of mind and harmony within?
What the bright sparkling of the finest eye,
To the soft soothing of the finest eye,
Can loveliness of form, or look, or air,
With loveliness of words or deeds compare?
No: those at first the unwary heart may gain;
But these, these only, can the heart retain."

Your wife, though a gentle, amiable creature, may be deficient in mental endowments, and destitute of fancy or sentiment; and you, perhaps a man of taste and talents, are inclined to think lightly of her. This is unjust, unkind, and unwise. It is not, believe me, the woman most gifted by nature, or most stored with literary knowledge, who always makes the most comfortable wife; by no means: *your* gentle, amiable helpmate may contribute much more to your happiness, more to the regularity, economy, and discipline of your house, and may make your children a much better mother, than many a brilliant dame who could trace, with Moore, Scott, and Byron, every line on the map of taste and sentiment, and descant on the merits and demerits of poetry, as if she had just arrived fresh from the neighborhood of Parnassus.

Should your wife be a woman of sense, worth, and cultivation, yet not very expert at cutting out a shirt, or making paste, pies, and puddings, (though I would not by any means undervalue this necessary part of female knowledge, or tolerate ignorance in my sex respecting them,) yet pray, my good sir, do not, on this account *only*, show discontent and ill-humor towards her. If she is qualified to be your bosom friend, to advise, to comfort, and to soothe you;—if she can instruct your children, enliven your fire-side by her conversation, and receive and entertain your friends in a manner which pleases and gratifies you;—be satisfied: we cannot expect to meet in a wife, or indeed in any one, exactly all we could wish. “I can easily,” says a sensible friend of mine, “hire a woman to make my linen and dress my dinner, but I cannot so readily procure a *friend* and *companion* for myself, and a preceptress for my children.” The remark was called forth by his mentioning that he had heard a gentleman, the day before, finding fault with his wife, an amiable, sensible, well-informed woman, because she was not clever at pies, puddings, and needle-work! On the other hand, should she be sensible, affec-

tionate, amiable, domestic, yet prevented by circumstances in early life from obtaining much knowledge of books, or mental cultivation, do not therefore think lightly of her; still remember she is your companion, the friend in whom you may confide at all times, and from whom you may obtain counsel and comfort.

CHAPTER IV.

ON CONSTANCY AND FIDELITY.

THE manner and conduct which in a *bachelor* was perhaps appropriate and pleasing, is in a *married man* unbecoming and reprehensible: and he who, among a party of females, as a young man, was admired for his graceful gaiety, will, most probably, be set down by the wise as a very flirting, careless husband, if he appears to prefer the company of every trifling, foolish girl, to the society of his wife. And be assured, however good sense and pride may conceal her feeling, this levity of manner never fails to give her pain and a poor return, indeed, is the smile of a silly chit, for calling forth any unpleasant sensations in the breast of a sensible and amiable woman.

When in the presence of others, let her laudable pride be indulged, by your showing you think her an object of importance and preference. The most trivial word, or act, of attention and love from you, gratifies her feelings: and a man never appears to more advantage, than by proving to the world his affection and preference for his wife. I knew a gentleman, (though he had been married for years,) who would always on going out, perhaps for only a day, step up to his wife, and affectionately kiss her; nor was there a person present at the moment who did not think more highly of him. In truth, there is scarcely a character which

the world seems to value more than a good and tender husband.

I do not think that wives in general (though quite divested, in other respects, of envy or jealousy) feel any very great pleasure at hearing their husbands run on in enthusiastic encomiums on other women. I knew a gentleman who was constantly in the habit of saying, "O dear, such a charming woman!—such beautiful eyes! such a fine-turned shape! such elegant manners!" &c. And I have, at the same moment, glanced at his wife, and observed a degree of awkwardness on her countenance, struggling with an effort to look pleased. And yet, had any one but her husband been the panegyrist, she would have listened most probably with pleasure, and heartily concurred in the encomium. You call this jealousy! No: in truth, I call it a *natural* feeling, which can be better felt than described.

When I quote a few words from the Bible, on a certain subject, is it possible any further comment can be necessary!—*A man that breaketh wedlock, saying thus in his heart, Who seeth me? I am compassed about with darkness, the walls cover me, and nobody seeth me; what need I to fear? the Most High will not remember my sins: such a man only feareth the eyes of men, and knoweth not that the eyes of the Lord are ten thousand times brighter than the sun, beholding all the ways of men, and considering the most secret parts.* (Ecclus. xxiii. 18, 19.)—And again, *The Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. And did not he make one? Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.* (Mal. ii. 14, 15.) Proud lords of the creation! let me entreat your attention to the above, and also to the following verses.—*Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not de-*

ceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. (1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.) *But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.* (Rev. xxi. 8.) *For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.* (Eph. v. 5.) *Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.* (Gal. v. 19—21.) *Whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul.* (Prov. vi. 32.) Surely, if these solemn denunciations from the Word of God fail to have an effect, I cannot suppose that any language from *my* feeble pen can be successful! Certainly not. Go on then, thou unhallowed man! go on, thou forsaken of God! Lost to feeling, lost to virtue, lost to heaven, go on in thy vile pursuits: and when the Almighty tells you, the adulterer shall not inherit his kingdom, mock at the threat, and, for the sake of this horrible crime, welcome hell! welcome flames! welcome devils!

CHAPTER V

ON DOMESTIC HABITS.

A CLEVER writer says, "If a man, after the business and fatigues of the day, could return to his house where his wife was engaged with domestic cares and an attention to her offspring, he must be a monster of savageness and stupidity, if he did not strongly feel the influence of her virtues, and if they did not convey a soft rapture to his heart."

I never knew a man who studied his wife's comfort, in truth I never knew any amiable or domestic man, fond of frequenting clubs or taverns; and however a wife may conceal her displeasure, it must be always a matter of pain to her. It is such an useless expense, (not to say a word of its *sinfulness*,) such a worthless waste of time, such a sottish, gluttonous thing! A man leaves his comfortable fire-side, an amiable wife, and smiling babies, perhaps neglects business of consequence, he does what is contrary to the Word of God and annoying to his wife, throws himself into the way of drinking, gambling, and a variety of temptations, squanders away money which most probably is wanted at home;—and all for what? Just to pass an hour or two with a set of *bon-vivants*; and then, with his head inebriated, his pockets lightened, and his heart certainly not benefited by the company he has been in, he comes home: the foundation for discord, at all events for coldness, is laid; for however his wife may have gentleness and good sense enough to avoid clamor and scolding, she certainly cannot feel much love or estimation for a man who seems to care so very little what she likes or dislikes.

But I will not suppose you addicted to drinking. This habit has become such an ungentlemanly vice, that what morality had failed to do, fashion has nearly effected. In respectable life, a drunkard now-a-days is nearly a phenomenon; and happy it is for the female world that such is the case! for the woman who

has the misery to be chained to a drunken husband, in the emphatical language of Scripture, *has no joy*.

Much to be condemned, is a married man, constantly rambling and wandering from his home for the purpose of passing away time. I really cannot understand what a husband, a father, and master of a house, can mean by the words "passing away time." Surely if he wants employment, his house and grounds will amply furnish him with it; and if he wishes for society, he will find in his wife, children, and books, the best society in the world. Such a man may be at a loss for *company*, but certainly not for *society*.

There are some men who will sit an entire day with their wives, and a word scarcely escape their lips. Their social cup of tea comes on; and instead of enlivening the hour by kind and familiar chat, a pompous "Yes," or "No," is perhaps all that is uttered by the grand and sullen lord. Is this a mode of treating the companion of your bosom?—a companion with whom you might fearlessly "think aloud;" into whose faithful breast you might pour forth your thoughts, your plans, your intentions, your opinions of *every thing and every one*? And is this companion, (perhaps the only one in the world who would not betray you,) is she to be treated with sullen silence and cold reserve? *The heart of her husband may safely trust in her*, (Prov. xxxi. 11,) says the inspired writer; and yet, this safe and faithful confidant is slighted, and her proud lord turns from her to bestow his frankness and loquacity on some one or other, who just hearkens to him, and then hies away, perhaps to betray him to the next listener.

I own I love to see man and wife enjoying the pleasure of a little social walk; and when the tête-à-tête is sweetened by confidential and affectionate conversation, it is, as the wise man observes, *a sight beautiful before God and man*. But, in general, how reversed is the picture! He saunters out with her, careless, cold, and uninterested; scarcely, during the walk,

uttering a word, or, when he does speak, so cold, so inanimate, are his brief remarks! And if her health is too delicate, (as is often the case,) to admit her to walk, instead of actively preparing the horses and vehicle to drive her out each day, "she may sit, and sigh, and fade away;" and her once sparkling eyes may look languid, and her once brilliant cheek may grow pale, for want of exercise: still he makes no exertion; something is the matter with the horses, or the carriage, or the jaunting-car!—and thus day after day is allowed to pass over.

Sometimes, if husband and wife happen to spend the day, or evening, from home, scarcely does his lordship address a word to her during the time; scarcely does he go near her; and at night, when a little attention would be really necessary in muffling and preparing her to go out, *he* do such an unfashionable thing? No, truly. She may wrap round her mantle, or tie down her bonnet, herself; and coughs and colds, "with all their train of rheumatic ills," may await her; but *he* will pay her no such attention. Admirable character!

Other men there are, all cheerfulness, gaiety, and good-humor, while in the houses of their neighbors; who, as they return home, and knock at their own hall door, appear to turn round, and say to their harmonious attendants, cheerfulness and good-humor, "My good friends, I am now about entering my *own* doors, where I shall probably remain, for a few days, totally destitute of all society but that of *my wife and family*. Of course, it will be quite unnecessary for me to trouble you again till Monday next, when I am to dine at my friend, Mr. B.'s, with a large party: I know I may be certain of your attendance on that day; till then, good-bye!—shake hands!—good-bye, my two worthy friends;—good-bye!" Then, entering the hall, he hangs up his violin (as some one or other remarks) behind the door, and, proceeding, he arrives in the parlor. "O dear, such a fire!—Just five o'clock,

and no sign of dinner!—Well! what an irregular house!" His wife then pulls the bell, and up comes dinner.—"Why, I thought this beef was to have been roasted? You know I detest boiled beef!—Oh, really, those fowls are quite underdone!"—"Why, surely, you might yourself have given some directions!" "Oh! ay, an excuse! Excuses never fail when there is occasion for them!" Such is the language of this fine *manly* man; his ill-humor and loud speaking rising in proportion to the silence and gentleness of his wife. Admirable character, again say I! a mausoleum should be erected to your memory!

There are a few other characters in the world, (and happy is it for that world the number is but *few*,) whom I really dislike to stain my pages by mentioning;—men, or rather monsters, who beat their wives!—men, or rather monsters, who *publicly* cohabit with strange women, or perhaps are criminal with the female servants of their own house!—men, or rather monsters, who are intoxicated* every day! &c. &c. But let me dismiss the hateful subject, and leave such beings to that God whose laws they are so awfully violating.

CHAPTER VI.

ON ABSENCE.

Few women are insensible of tender treatment; and I believe the number of those is small indeed who would not recompense it with the most grateful returns. They are naturally frank and affectionate; and, in general, there is nothing but austerity of look

* Perhaps my reader may think me severe in classing drunkenness with adultery; however, if he takes the trouble of looking for the fifth of Galatians, he will see that St. Paul not only places it with adultery, but with murder.—ver. 19—22.

and distance of behavior, that can prevent those amiable qualities from being evinced on every occasion. There are, probably, but few men, who have not experienced, during the intervals of leisure and reflection, a conviction of this truth. In the hour of absence and of solitude, who has not felt his heart cleaving to the wife of his bosom? who has not been, at some seasons, deeply impressed with a sense of her amiable disposition and demeanor, of her unwearied endeavors to promote and perpetuate his happiness, and of its being his indispensable duty to show, by the most unequivocal expressions of attachment and of tenderness, his full approbation of her assiduity and faithfulness? But lives not he that has often returned to his habitation fully determined to requite the kindness he has constantly experienced, yet, notwithstanding, has beheld the woman of his heart joyful at his approach without even attempting to execute his purpose?—who has still withheld the rewards of esteem and affection; and, from some motive, the cause of which I never could develop, shrunk from the task of duty, and repressed those soft emotions which might have gladdened the breast of her that was ever anxious to please, always prompt to anticipate his desires, and eager to contribute every thing that affection could suggest, or diligence perform, in order to promote and perpetuate his felicity?

When absent, let your letters to your wife be warm and affectionate. A woman's heart is peculiarly formed for tenderness; and every expression of endearment from the man she loves is flattering and pleasing to her. With pride and pleasure does she dwell on each assurance of his affection: and, surely, it is a cold, unmanly thing, to deprive her virtuous heart of such a cheap and easy mode of gratifying it. But, really, a man should endeavor not only for an affectionate, but an agreeable manner of writing to his wife. I remember hearing a lady say, "When my husband writes to me, if he can at all glean out any

little piece of good news, or pleasing intelligence, he is sure to mention it." Another lady used to remark, "My husband does not intend to give me pain, or to say any thing unpleasant when he writes; and yet, I don't know how it is, but I never received a letter from him, that I did not, when I finished it, feel comfortless and dissatisfied."

I really think a husband, whenever he goes from home, should always endeavor, if possible, to bring back some little present to his wife. If ever so trifling or valueless, still the attention gratifies her; and to call forth a smile of good-humor should be always a matter of importance.

Every one who knows any thing of the human mind, agrees in acknowledging the power of *trifles*, in imparting either pain or pleasure. One of our best writers, speaking on this subject, introduces the following sweet lines:

"Since trifles make the sum of human things,
And half our misery from those trifles springs,
O! let the ungentle spirit learn from thence,
A small unkindness is a great offence.
To give rich gifts perhaps we wish in vain,
But all may shun the guilt of giving pain."

CHAPTER VII.

ON EXPENDITURE.

In pecuniary matters, do not be penurious, or too particular. Your wife has an equal right with yourself to all your worldly possessions. "With all my worldly goods I thee endow," was one of the most solemn vows that ever escaped your lips; and if she be a woman of prudence, she will in all her expenses be reasonable and economical: what more can you desire?—Besides, really, a woman has innumerable

trifling demands on her purse, innumerable little wants, which it is not necessary for a man to be informed of, and which, if he even went to the trouble of investigating, he would hardly understand.

You give your wife a certain sum of money. If she be a woman of prudence, if your table be comfortably kept, and your household managed with economy and regularity, I really cannot see the necessity of obliging her to account to you for the *exact* manner in which she has laid out each penny in the pound. Pray, do allow her the power of buying a yard of muslin, or a few pennyworth of pins, without consulting the august tribunal of *your* judgment whether they shall be quaker-pins or minikins.

I have often with wonder remarked the indifference with which some men regard the amiable and superior qualities of their wives! I by no means intend to say, that every wife possesses those qualities: I only speak of a description of females who are, in truth, an ornament to their sex—women who would go the world over with the husband they love, and endure, without shrinking, every hardship that world could inflict. Is his income stinted? With what cleverness will a wife of this description act, and economize, and endeavor to abridge her expenses; sitting down with such cheerfulness to her scanty meal, suffering privations that probably she never was accustomed to, concealing their poverty from the world, and endeavoring to gild it over with a genteel and respectable appearance; nursing and educating her children, and assuming, perhaps in the same day, the varied character of gentlewoman, preceptress, and housewife; and yet insensibility to her merit, oft-times unkind language, is perhaps the return she receives from her unworthy husband.

How often is a woman grieved by the foolish extravagance of her husband! Among other absurdities, will he not sometimes give for a horse, or a dog, or spend at a tavern or a club, a sum of money absolutely

wanted for the necessary comforts of his family; thus squandering, in a moment of simple folly, what perhaps has cost his wife many a hard effort to save.

When once a man has entered the marriage state, he should look on his property as *belonging to his family*, and act and economize accordingly. I remember being acquainted with a gentleman who was constantly saying, "It is true, my property is large; but then it belongs not to myself alone, but also to my children: and I must act as a frugal agent for them. To my wife, as well as those children, I feel accountable either for economy or extravagance." Another gentleman of my acquaintance, who was in stinted circumstances, was constantly debarring himself of a thousand little comforts, even a glass of wine after dinner, sooner than infringe on what he used to call *his children's birth-right*.

The three following remarks, from the pen of the excellent Mrs. Taylor, are well worth attention.—"To what sufferings are those wives exposed, who are not allowed a sufficiency to defray the expenses of their establishment, and who never obtain even their scanty allowance, but at the price of peace! A man who act in this way often defeat their own intention and by constant opposition render their wivesлав and improvident, who would be quite the reverse were they treated in a more liberal manner. Wherever it is adopted, it is utterly destructive of conjugal confidence, and often compels women to shelter themselves under mean contrivances and low arts."—You complain that your wife uses manoeuvres and efforts to get money from you: be generous to her, treat her as a wife ought to be treated, and I venture to affirm you shall have no further cause of complaint.—"A man who supplies unavoidable and necessary expenses with a parsimonious hand, will rarely be attentive to the extra calls of sickness, or endeavor to alleviate, by his kindness, the sufferings of a constitution perhaps wearing out in his service.—It was observed, upon the subject of

cruelty to animals, that many, because they would not drown, burn, or scourge a poor animal to death, think themselves sufficiently humane, though they suffer them to famish with hunger: and does not the conduct of many husbands suggest a similar idea? They imagine, that if they provide carefully for the maintenance of their families; if their conduct is moral; if they neither beat, starve, nor imprison their families; they are all that is requisite to constitute good husbands, and they pass for such among the crowd: but as their domestic virtues are chiefly of the negative kind, the happiness of her whose lot it is to be united to such an one for life, must be of the same description. Even the large allowance, 'Have what you like,' is insufficient to satisfy the feelings of many a woman, who would be more gratified by the presentation of a flower, accompanied with expressions of tenderness, than by the most costly indulgence they could procure for themselves."

CHAPTER VIII.

ON INCREASE OF FAMILY.

Is there a prospect of your wife becoming a mother? Then, indeed, has Providence placed her in the most interesting of all female situations; and strong is her claim on your tenderness. The circumstance is a silent, though powerful, appeal to your feelings; and he must truly have an unfeeling, I might almost say an unprincipled, disposition, who does not find himself irresistibly drawn by the new and tender tie which now exists.

It may, however, be the will of the Almighty, to withhold offspring from you; and any thing said either by husband or wife that could give the other pain on

this subject, is more than reprehensible; it is contemptible. A woman is scarcely ever so unamiable as to do it: and should her husband be unfeeling enough to betray even a word which could hurt the feelings of his wife on the occasion; he may talk and sophisticate the matter as he pleases, but in truth he can have but little pretension to religion, to sentiment, or to feeling. How unlike the noble-minded Elkanah, when, with sentiments at once manly and tender, he thus addresses his weeping wife—*Hannah, why weepest thou? and why eatest thou not? and why is thy heart grieved? am not I better to thee than ten sons?* (1 Sam. i. 8.)

CHAPTER IX.

CONCLUSION.

AND now, proud lord! farewell: my whisper nearly ended; and I am very certain my silence will not grieve you. But ere we finally part, allow me call to your recollection that most important period of your life, when, at the altar of your God, and in the presence of your fellow-creatures, you solemnly vowed, *to love your wife, to comfort her, to honor and keep her, in sickness and in health, for better for worse, in poverty and in riches, and, forsaking all others, to keep thee only unto her, as long as you both should live!* Let me ask, have you kept this solemn vow? Commune with your own heart, ask your conscience and your feelings; and tremble before an offended God if you have dared to break it.

How impressive, on all occasions, are the words of St. Paul; and in what a sweet and tender point of view does he appear when he says, *Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.* (Col. iii.

19.) And again, *Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife, loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth it and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.* (Eph. v. 25, 28, 29, 31.) Wherefore, says our blessed Savior, *they are no more twain, but one flesh.* What, therefore, God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. (Matt. xix. 6.)

In the second chapter of Genesis, this subject is mentioned with peculiar simplicity and beauty.—*And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.* (ver. 7.) *And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and he took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.* (ver. 8, and 15.) *And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and brought them unto Adam; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam (evidently struck with delight by the lovely being produced from his side—the very side next his heart) affectionately says, *This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man.* And then, as if impressed with the importance and sacredness of the union, what an observation is the following!—*Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave**

unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. (ver. 18—24.)

I hope I shall not trespass on my reader's patience, if I introduce what Milton so beautifully says on this subject. He first speaks of Adam, as placed among all the exquisite beauties of Paradise:

"Surrounded by fragrance and by joy,
By hill and dale, and shady woods, and sunny plains,
With birds on branches warbling;
And liquid lapse of murmuring streams,
And banks profuse with flowers!"

Still he is dissatisfied: an aching void, a want of what he could scarcely define or explain, weighs down his spirits, and deprives his heart of all enjoyment. At length, he begins to understand the nature of his feelings, and thus addresses the Almighty—

"—— Author of this Universe,
And all this good to man! for whose well-being
So amply, and with hands so liberal,
Thou hast provided all things!—
But with me, I see not who partakes. In solitude
What happiness? Who can enjoy alone?
Or, all enjoying, what contentment find?"

Though perfectly anticipating Adam's wishes, quite conscious "it was not good for man to be alone" still does the Almighty seem desirous to put his feelings to the test, and points out the innumerable beauties and pleasures which surround him in this "garden of bliss," mentioning the various birds and fishes and beasts he has brought him for his use, and asks what more he can desire? But Adam, still discontented, says he wants something like himself—

"Something fit to participate all rational delight:
Surely the brute cannot be human consort?"

At length, the Almighty condescendingly answers:

"Thus far to try thee, Adam, I was pleas'd;
Good reason was, thou freely shouldst dislike,
And be so minded still.—I, ere thou speakest,
Knew it not good for man to be alone:
What next I bring shall please thee, be assur'd!—
Thy likeness, thy fit help, thy other self,
Thy wish exactly to thy heart's desire!"

Adam relates the above to the angel Raphael, and thus goes on :

"He ended, or I heard no more, for now
Mine eyes he clos'd, but open left the cell
Of fancy; by which,
Abstract, as in a trance, methought I saw
Th' Almighty; who, stooping, open'd my left side, and took
From thence a rib, with cordial spirits warm,
And life-blood streaming fresh. Wide was the wound,
But suddenly with flesh fill'd up, and heal'd!
The rib he form'd and fashion'd with his hands :
Under his forming hands, a creature grew,
So lovely fair.—
That what seem'd fair in all the world, seem'd now
Mean, or in her summ'd up, in her contain'd,
And in her looks, which from that time infus'd
Sweetness into my heart, unfehl before!
She disappear'd, and left me dark!—I wak'd
To find her, or for ever to deplore
Her loss, and other pleasures all abjure;
When out of hope, behold her, not far off,
Such as I saw her in my dream, adorn'd
With what all earth or heaven could bestow
To make her amiable ;
Grace was in all her steps, heaven in her eye,
In every gesture dignity and love!
I, overjoy'd, could not forbear aloud,
' This turn hath made amends; thou hast fulfill'd
Thy words, Creator, bounteous and benign,
Giver of all things fair, but fairest this
Of all thy gifts! I now see
Bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh, myself
Before me!—Woman is her name, of man
Extracted: for this cause he shall forego
Father and mother, and to his wife adhere
And they shall be one flesh, one heart, one soul!

MY WIFE.

In chill affliction's dreary hour,
When fortune frowns and tempests lower,
Who soothes me with her gentle power?
My wife.

When various cares disturb my rest,
By sickness or by pain oppress'd,
Who lulls to peace my troubled breast?
My wife.

When absent long and far away,
Who thinks of me the live-long day?
And who for me to Heaven doth pray?
My wife.

And when, in all her matron charms,
My safe return her bosom warms,
Who flies to clasp me in her arms?
My wife.

Who gilds my children's infant day
With cultivation's dawning ray?
And points to heaven, and leads the way?
My wife.

And when, perhaps, by grief oppress'd,
Some childish want disturbs their rest,
Who lulls them on her snowy breast?
My wife.

When various frailties intrude,
Who strives to quell my passions rude,
And sweetly tempts me to be good?
My wife.

42
A WHISPER TO THE HUSBAND.

With sense my errors to descry,
Those errors causing many a sigh,
Who grieves, conceal'd from every eye?
My wife.

And when the gay and thoughtless roam
To pleasure's captivating dome,
Who, sweetly wise, prefers her home?
My wife.

When time shall silver o'er my hair,
The work, perhaps, of many a year,
Still to thy bosom I'll be dear,
My faithful wife.

And shall I, man so proud and vain,
Some foolish light caprice to gain,
E'er give this noble creature pain?
Forbid it, Heaven!

A WHISPER

TO THE WIFE.

"Think not, the husband gain'd, that all is done,
The prize of happiness must still be won."

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

GENTLE lady, my whisper to your husband is ended. From *you* a moment's attention is now claimed by a *widowed wife*, whose bridal morning rose as bright as yours; whose youthful heart loved "with all a woman's love;" and who anxiously wishes to secure for her interesting sisters, that first and most important of all a wife's pursuits—the confidence and affection of her husband.

You are now become a wife; and sacred and important are the duties you have to fulfil. Your husband has bestowed on you the most flattering distinction: he has selected you from the world; and the chain he has put on can be broken *only* by death! Be it your care never to let him feel this chain, and by your kindness and gentleness make him even forget he wears it.

A bride, wherever she appears, is ever considered an object of importance and a subject for remark. "Have you seen the bride?" is the eager and general question: and what she does, what she says, what she wears, and how she looks, swell the insignificant chat of every gossip's visit. Let the notice which you thus excite make you particularly observant of your manner and conduct; and give the busy whisperer no

food for a new sarcasm in the next importation of tittle-tattle.

A bride is generally (indeed I think always) proud of the new character she has entered on; and, unless she is a woman of sense, fond of *exhibiting* the love she has inspired. Pursue a different course; let your manner to your husband be kind and good-humored; but sacred to the hours of retirement be those expressions and that display of endearment, which, used in public, argue, in loud terms, a want of *true* delicacy, and are ever particularly disagreeable to the spectator.

The first inquiry of a woman after marriage should be, "How shall I continue the love I have inspired?—how shall I preserve the heart I have won?" Gentle lady, at the present moment your husband thinks you the loveliest, the gentlest of beings. Destroy not the illusion: be lovely still; be gentle still. The long and dreary road that lies through the wilderness of life is stretched before you; and by a chain, the links of which no human power can break, you are bound to a companion with whom, hand in hand, you must walk through this long, long road. For the sake then of peace, for the sake of happiness, for the sake of *self*, (that most powerful feeling,) brighten the way by endeavoring to make yourself amiable and pleasing to him.

The great Dr. Johnson, with his usual strength of expression, laments, in the following words, the contrasted manner which frequently occurs *before* and *after* marriage.—"One would think, the whole endeavor of both parties during the time of courtship is to hinder themselves from being known—to disguise their natural temper and real desires in hypocritical imitation, studied compliance, and continued affectation. From the time that their love is avowed, neither sees the other but in a mask; and the cheat is often managed on both sides with so much art, and discovered afterwards with so much abruptness, that each has reason to suspect that some transformation has

happened on the wedding-night, and that by a strange imposture, as in the case of Jacob, one has been courted and another married."

"However discreet your choice has been, time and circumstances alone can sufficiently develop your husband's character: by degrees the discovery will be made that you have married a mortal, and that the object of your affections is not entirely free from the infirmities of human nature. Then it is, that by an impartial survey of your own character, your disappointment may be moderated; and your love, so far from declining, may acquire additional tenderness, from the consciousness that there is room for mutual forbearance."

CHAPTER II.

ON CONNUBIAL HAPPINESS.

AFTER marriage, a man generally takes his wife to his home, perhaps to the seat of his ancestors, where every object is endeared to him by local attachment and interesting remembrances. With pride and pleasure does he walk out with his fair bride, to exhibit to her the beauties of his domain and the scenes of his youth. "Look," says he, "at that noble view down the river; see that boat, how softly it glides, and that little temple on the hill, where on a fine evening I used to sit with my excellent mother, and say my tasks by her side: she was, in truth, my Emily, an *excellent* mother; several years have elapsed since I lost her, and yet I cannot think of her but with the strongest feelings of affection and regret." Endeavor, gentle lady, to enter into his feelings, and to admire, and to feel pleased with every thing with which he is pleased. In those bridal moments, your smiles and approbation are delightful to him: and although alter-

ations and improvements may occur to you, let him see it is for the sake of those improvements, not for the sake of finding fault, you point out the defect.

Study your husband's temper and character; and be it your pride and pleasure to conform to his wishes. Check *at once* the *first* advances to contradiction, even of the most *trivial* nature. I repeat the word *trivial*, for it is really inconceivable the power which the *veriest trifles* have, *at times*, over the mind, either in *irritating* or *pleasing*. And the woman who after a few years are gone by can say, "My husband and I have never yet had a loud or angry debate," is, in my opinion, better entitled to a chaplet of laurels, than the hero who has fought on the plains of Waterloo.

"There is one simple direction, which, if carefully regarded, will long preserve the tranquillity of the married life, and insure no inconsiderable portion of connubial happiness to the observers of it: it is, to *beware of the first dispute.*"

An admired writer says, "Let it never be forgotten, that, during the whole of life, beauty must suffer no diminution from inelegance, but every charm must contribute to keep the heart which it has won. Whatever would have been concealed as a defect from the lover, must, with greater diligence, be concealed from the husband. The most intimate and tender familiarity cannot surely be supposed to exclude decorum; and there is naturally a delicacy in every mind, which is disgusted at the breach of it, though every mind is not sufficiently attentive to avoid at all times that mode of conduct which it has often itself found offensive. That unwearied solicitude to please, which was once the effect of choice, is now become a duty, and should be considered as a pleasure.

"E'en in the happiest choice, where favoring Heaven
Has equal love and easy fortune given,
Think not, the husband gain'd, that all is done,
The prize of happiness must still be won."

When once you enter the matrimonial state, gentle

lady, prepare for the various trials of temper which each day will produce.—Your husband perhaps does, or says, something provoking; your servants do, or say, something provoking;—or some valuable article is injured by their negligence;—a handsome piece of China or glass is broken;—a tiresome visitor comes in at a most *mal-apropos* moment, and breaks in on some matter of consequence;—&c. &c. But remember the great Solomon's words:—*He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.* (Prov. xvi. 32.) By the expression *ruleth his spirit*, the inspired writer's views on the subject are evidently wide and extensive. He alludes to those infirmities of temper and disposition which so often corrode our peace, and make us unamiable and uncomfortable to ourselves and those around us. When the risings of discontent, peevishness, envy, anger, resentment, or any evil passion, disturb or threaten to take possession of our hearts, *then* is the man *that ruleth his spirit* superior in the eyes of the eastern monarch to the hero returning from the battle or the siege, crowned with laurel and covered with glory! I cannot dismiss this subject without remarking, the very sweet and engaging point of view in which persons appear to me when I see them pliantly yielding their own will to the will of another. A late writer makes the following excellent remark—"Great actions are so often performed from little motives of vanity, self-complacency, and the like, that I am apt to think more highly of the person whom I observe checking a reply to a petulant speech, or even submitting to the judgment of another *in stirring the fire*, than of one who gives away thousands!"

Let your husband be dearer and of more consequence to you than any other human being; and have no hesitation in confessing those feelings to him. Leave father and mother, and brother and sister, and cleave only to him. It is expressly the will of God; for of course the command applies to woman in the

same degree as to man. What is any one to you in comparison of your husband? Whom have you a *legal* claim on, gentle lady?—Your husband only. Who has sworn by the laws of God and man to support and protect you?—Your husband only. Whose *home* have you a *lawful* right to?—whose purse have you a *lawful* claim on?—Your husband's only. In whose house do you feel the sweets of independence? and in whose house can you proudly look round you, and say, "I reign as *mistress* here?"—Your husband's, and your husband's only. Turn then, gentle lady, to your husband: let his interest, his comforts, his wishes, all be yours; and without hesitation give up for his sake all the world besides. There is an old Irish saying, and, like the generality of Irish sayings, expressive and true, the translation of which is as follows: "He must be a very good-for-nothing, indifferent husband, whose bosom is not the best pillow a woman ever laid her head on."

Endeavor to make your husband's habitation alluring and delightful to him. Let it be to him a sanctuary to which his heart may always turn from the ills and anxieties of life. Make it a repose from his cares, a shelter from the *world*, a *home* not for his person only, but for his *heart*. He may meet with *pleasure* in other houses, but let him find *happiness* in his *own*. Should he be dejected, soothe him; should he be silent and thoughtful, or even peevish, make allowances for the defects of human nature, and, by your sweetness, gentleness, and good-humor, urge him continually to *think*, though he may not *say* it. "This woman is indeed a comfort to me. I cannot but love her, and requite such gentleness and affection as they deserve."

I know not two female attractions so captivating to men as delicacy and modesty. Let not the familiar intercourse which marriage produces, banish such powerful charms. On the contrary, this very familiarity should be your strongest excitement in endeavoring to preserve them; and, believe me, the modesty

so pleasing in the *bride*, may always, in a great degree, be supported by the *wife*.

"If possible, let your husband suppose you think him a *good* husband, and it will be a strong stimulus to his being so. As long as he thinks he possesses the character, he will take some pains to deserve it: but when he has once lost the name, he will be very apt to abandon the reality altogether." I remember at one time being acquainted with a lady who was married to a very worthy man. Attentive to all her comforts and wishes, he was just what the world calls a very good husband; and yet his manner to his wife was cold and comfortless, and he was constantly giving her *heart*, though never her *reason*, cause to complain of him. But she was a woman of excellent sense, and never upbraided him. On the contrary, he had every cause for supposing she thought him the best husband in the world; and the consequence was, that instead of the jarring and discord which would have been inevitably produced had she been in the habit of finding fault with him, their lives passed on in uninterrupted peace.

I know not any attraction which renders a wo at all times so agreeable to her husband, as cheerfulness or good-humor. It possesses the powers ascribed to magic: it gives charms where charms are not; and imparts beauty to the plainest face. Men are naturally more thoughtful and more difficult to amuse and please than women. Full of cares and business, what a relaxation to a man is the cheerful countenance and pleasant voice of the gentle mistress of his home! On the contrary, a gloomy, dissatisfied manner is an antidote to affection; and though a man may not seem to notice it, it is chilling and repulsive to his feelings, and he will be very apt to seek elsewhere for those smiles and that cheerfulness which he finds not in his own house.

In the article of dress, study your husband's taste, and endeavor to wear what he thinks becomes you

best. The opinion of others on this subject is of very little consequence, if *he* approves.

Make yourself as useful to him as you can, and let him see you employed as much as possible in *economical* avocations.

At dinner, endeavor to have his favorite dish dressed and served up in the manner he likes best. In observing such trifles as these, believe me, gentle lady, you study your own comfort just as much as his.

Perhaps your husband may occasionally bring home an unexpected guest to dinner. This is not at all times convenient. But beware, gentle lady, beware of frowns. Your fare at dinner may be scanty, but make up for the deficiency by smiles and good-humor. It is an old remark, "Cheerfulness in the *host* is always the surest and most agreeable mode of welcome to the guest."—Perhaps, too, unseasonable visitors may intrude, or some one not particularly welcome may come to spend a few days with you.—Trifling as these circumstances may be, they require a command of feeling and temper: but remember, as you journey on, inclination must be continually sacrificed; and recollect also, that the *true* spirit of hospitality lies, (as an old writer remarks,) not in giving great dinners and sumptuous entertainments, but in receiving with kindness and cheerfulness those who *come* to you, and those who *want* your assistance.

Endeavor to feel pleased with your husband's bachelor friends. It always vexes and disappoints a man when his wife finds fault with his favorites—the favorites and companions of his youth, and probably those to whom he is bound not only by the ties of friendship, but by the cords of gratitude.

Encourage in your husband a desire for reading out at night. When the window-curtains are drawn, the candles lighted, and you are all seated after tea round the fire, how can his time be better employed? *You* have your work to occupy you: *he* has nothing to do but to sit and to think; and perhaps to think too that

this family scene is extremely stupid. Give interest to the monotonous hour, by placing in his hand some entertaining but useful work. The pleasure which you derive from it will encourage him to proceed; while remarks on the pages will afford improving and animating topics for conversation.

Is he fond of music? When an appropriate moment occurs, sit down with cheerfulness to your piano or harp; recollect the airs that are wont to please him most, and indulge him by playing those favorite tunes. Tell me, gentle lady, when was your time at this accomplishment so well devoted? While he was your *lover*, with what readiness, and in your very best manner, would you touch the chords; and on every occasion what pains did you take to captivate! And now that he is become your *husband*, (methinks at this moment I see a blush mantling in your cheek,) now that he is your husband, has pleasing him become a matter of indifference to you?

Particularly shun what the world calls in ridicule, "Curtain lectures." When you both enter your room at night, and shut to your door, endeavor to shut out at the same moment all discord and contention, and look on your chamber as a retreat from the vexations of the world, a shelter sacred to peace and affection.

I cannot say I much approve of man and wife at all times opening each other's letters. There is more, I think, of vulgar familiarity in this than of delicacy or confidence. Besides, a sealed letter is sacred; and every one likes to have the first reading of his or her own letters.

Perhaps your husband may be fond of absenting himself from home, and giving to others that society which you have a right to expect: clubs, taverns, &c. &c. may be his favorite resort. In this case it may perhaps be necessary to have recourse to mild reasoning;—but never—I again repeat—never to clamorous dispute. And the fonder he seems of quitting his

home, the greater should be your effort to make yourself and your fire-side agreeable to him. This may appear a difficult task; but I recommend nothing that I have not myself seen successfully practised.—I once knew a lady who particularly studied her husband's character and disposition; and I have seen her, when ne appeared sullen, fretful, and inclined to go out, invite a friend, or perhaps a few friends, to spend the evening, prepare for him at dinner the dish she knew he liked best, and thus, by her kind, cheerful manner, make him forget the peevishness which had taken possession of him. Believe it from me, and let it take deep root, gentle lady, in your mind, that a good-humored deportment, a comfortable fire-side, and a smiling countenance, will do more towards keeping your husband at home than a week's logic on the subject.

Is he fond of fishing, fowling, &c.? When those amusements do not interfere with business or matters of consequence, what harm can result from them? Strive then to enter into his feelings with regard to the pleasure which they seem to afford him, and endeavor to feel interested in his harmless accounts and chat respecting them. Let *his* favorite dog be your favorite also; and do not with a surly look, as I have seen some wives put on, say, in his hearing, "That Cato, or Rover, or Ranger, is the most troublesome dog and the greatest pest in the world."

If the day he goes out on these rural expeditions be cold or wet, do not omit having his shirt and stockings aired for him at the fire-side. Such little attentions never fail to please; and it is well worth your while to obtain good-humor by such easy efforts.

Should he be obliged to go to some distant place or foreign land, at once and without indecision, if circumstances render it at all practicable, let your determination be made in the beautiful and expressive language of Scripture: *Entreat me not to leave thee, nor to return from following after thee: for whither thou*

goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried; the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me. (Ruth i. 16, 17.) If his lot be comfortless, why not lessen those discomforts by your society? and if pleasure and gaiety await him, why leave him exposed to the temptations which pleasure and gaiety produce? A woman never appears in so respectable a light, never to so much advantage, as when under the protection of her husband.

Even occasional separations between man and wife I am no friend to, when they can be avoided. It is not to your advantage, believe me, gentle lady, to let him see how well he can do without you. You may probably say, "Absence is at times unavoidable." Granted: I only contend such intervals of absence should be short, and occur as seldom as possible.

Perhaps it may be your luckless lot to be united to an unkind husband—a man who cares not whether he pleases or displeases, whether you are happy or unhappy. If this be the case, hard is your fate, gentle lady, very hard! But the die is cast; and you must carefully remember that no neglect of duty on *his* part can give a legitimate sanction to a failure of duty on *yours*. The sacredness of those ties which bind you as a wife remain equally strong and heavy, whatever be the conduct of your husband; and galling as the chain may be, you must only endeavor for resignation to bear it, till the Almighty, by lightening it, pleases to crown your gentleness and efforts with success.

When at the Throne of Grace, (I address you as a religious woman,) be fervent and persevering in your prayers for your husband; and by your example endeavor to allure him to that heaven towards which you are yourself aspiring: that, if your husband *obey not the word*, as the sacred writer says, *he may, with-*

out the word, be won by the conversation (or conduct) of the wife.

Your husband perhaps may be addicted to gambling, horse-racing, drinking, &c. These are serious circumstances; and mild remonstrances must be occasionally used to oppose them; but do not let your argument rise to loud or clamorous disputing. Manage your opponent like a skilful general, and constantly watching the appropriate moment for retreat. To *convince* without *irritating*, is one of the most difficult as well as most desirable points of argument. Perhaps this may not be in your power: at all events, make the attempt, first praying to God for direction, and then leaving to him the result.

Or, gentle lady, you may perhaps be united to a man of a most uncongenial mind, who, though a very good sort of husband, differs from you in every sentiment. What of this!—You must only make the best of it. Look around. Numbers have the same, and infinitely worse complaints to make; and, truly, when we consider what real misery there is in the world, it seems the height of folly fastidiously and foolishly to refine away our happiness, by allowing such worthless trifles to interfere with our comfort.

There are very few husbands so bad as to be destitute of good qualities, and probably very decided ones. Let the wife search out and accustom herself to dwell on those good qualities, and let her treat *her own* errors, not *her husband's*, with severity. I have seldom known a dispute between man and wife in which faults on *both sides* were not conspicuous; and really it is no wonder; for we are so quick-sighted to the imperfections of others, so blind and lenient to our own, that in cases of discord and contention, we throw all the blame on the opposite party, and never think of accusing ourselves. In general, at least, this is the case.

I was lately acquainted with a lady, whose manner to her husband often attracted my admiration. With-

out appearing to do so, she would contrive to lead to those subjects in which he appeared to most advantage. Whenever he spoke, she seemed to listen as if what he was saying was of importance. And if at any time she differed from him in opinion, it was done so gently as scarcely to be perceived even by himself. She was quite as well informed (perhaps more so) and as sensible as himself, and yet she always appeared to think him superior in every point. On all occasions she would refer to him, asking his opinion, and appearing to receive information at the very moment perhaps she was herself imparting it. The consequence was, there never was a happier couple, and I am certain he thought her the most superior woman in the world.

I repeat, it is amazing how trifles—the most insignificant trifles—even a word, even a look,—yes, truly, a look, a glance—completely possess the power, at times, of either pleasing, or displeasing. Let this sink deep into your mind: remember, that to endeavor to keep a husband in constant good-humor is one of the first duties of a wife.

Perhaps, on some occasion or other, in the frolic of the moment, without in the least degree intending to annoy you, your husband may toy, and laugh, and flout while in company, with some pretty girl present. This generally makes a wife look foolish; and it would be as well, nay, much better, if he did not do so. But let not a shade of ill-humor cross your brow, nor even by a glance give him, or any one present, reason to think his behavior annoys you. Join in the laugh and chat, and be not outdone in cheerfulness and good-humor by any of the party. But remember, gentle lady, there must be no *acting* in this affair: the effort must extend to your *mind* as well as your *manner*; and a moment's reasoning on the subject will at once restore the banished sun-shine. The incomparable Leighton says, "The human heart is like a reservoir of clear water, at the bottom of which lies a portion of *mud*: stir the mud, and the water gets all sullied. In like

manner does some strong passion or peevish feeling rise in the heart, and stain and darken it as the mud does the water." But should there be a prospect of your husband often meeting with this lady in question, endeavor at once to break off the intimacy by bringing forward some pretext consistent with truth, (for to *truth* every thing must be sacrificed,) such as, You do not like her; The intimacy is not what you would wish; &c. &c. Never, however, avow the *real* reason: it will only produce discord, and make your husband think you prone to jealousy—a suspicion a woman cannot too carefully guard against. And there is often in men an obstinacy which refuses to be conquered of all beings in the world *by a wife*.—A jealous wife (such is the erroneous opinion of the ill-judging world) is generally considered a proper subject for ridicule; and a woman ought assiduously to conceal from her husband, more than from any one else, any feeling of the kind. Besides, after all, gentle lady, your suspicions *may* be totally groundless; and you may possibly be tormenting yourself with a whole train of imaginary evils. As you value your peace then, keep from you, if possible, all such vexatious apprehensions, and remember, a man can very ill bear the idea of being suspected of inconstancy even when *guilty*; but when *innocent*, it is intolerable to him.

I never would recommend a wife to have on a visit with her an attractive girl. Novelty and constant opportunity are so powerful, and the young lady, full of vanity, and wholly divested of care, forms perhaps a very agreeable contrast to the many anxieties and annoyances which may at times cloud the brow of the best-tempered wife in the world. Do not entangle yourself with the *cause*, if it can be avoided; and you will not have to lament its *effects*.

But let me for a moment suppose a circumstance occurs in which your husband's *heart* is entangled, or that there appears a danger of his *affections* being drawn from you. This, in truth, is the bitterest

wound a woman's heart ever received, and none but God can direct her aright. To him, therefore, (if she be under the influence of religion,) she will at once go, and at his foot-stool pour forth every thought of her heart. The comfort she implores she certainly will receive; the guidance she solicits will assuredly be granted. "The wife forsaken and grieved in spirit," is an object of peculiar care to Omnipotence; and her sighs and tears shall not be unnoticed. On this important subject, all I shall say is, Let circumstances, discretion, and good sense be your direction. But, as you value your peace, as you hope to win your husband back again, avoid an *angry* debate. Gentle and wise remonstrance may most probably make him all you wish. Upbraid him, and make his home uncomfortable;—and a hundred to one he is lost to you for ever.

"If husband and wife keep within their proper department, if they confine themselves to the sphere allotted to each by Providence and nature, there need be no disputes about power and superiority, and there will be none. They have no opposite, no separate interests, and therefore there can be no just ground for opposition of conduct."

Let me entreat your particular attention, gentle lady, to the following advice.—Whenever any little discord or coldness takes place between you and your husband, remember that concession is *your* duty rather than *his*, and *never close your eyes in sleep* till you have endeavored to obtain a reconciliation. Tell him the resolution you have formed; and then you may good-humoredly add, that perhaps he would not find you so very forgiving, but really you should dread breaking through your determination. Again let me entreat you to adopt this plan: it may appear trifling and immaterial, but you do not, you cannot, without experience, know the wide-spreading good it may produce, the wide-spreading ill it may prevent.

Many a matrimonial dispute occurs, not so much

from an unwillingness to give up the contested point, as from a dread of being conquered. Beware of the slightest approach to contradiction, and be assured every little dispute between man and wife, even in itself of the most trivial nature, is dangerous. It forces good-humor out of its channel, undermines affection, and insidiously, though perhaps insensibly, wears out, and at last entirely destroys, that cordiality which is the life and soul of matrimonial felicity.

Without intending it, I find I have prolonged my remarks on this subject to an extraordinary length. I will now, therefore, endeavor, in a few words, to sum up the whole matter. Do you wish, gentle lady, to make your husband *good, mild, tender, amiable*; in short, all that he should be? Let me *whisper* to you the secret: Endeavor by prayer and every effort to make him a *religious* man, and the work is accomplished.—And now let me for a moment indulge in the blessed supposition that you are both in the fold of Christ, and heirs together of the grace of life. Then, in truth, happy was the day you were born, happy the day which united you! And O! thrice blessed will be the hour when the everlasting gates shall be lifted up, and you shall both be *presented faultless before the throne of God's glory with exceeding joy!* (Jude 24.)

CHAPTER III.

ON PRUDENCE AND DECORUM.

“Though a woman *before* her marriage may be admired for her gaiety, her dancing, dress, painting, singing, &c. yet *after* it, we expect her character to display something more *substantial*. To a man who must spend all his days in her company, these little superficial decorations would speedily become inspid

and unimportant. Love can be preserved only by the qualities of the heart, and esteem secured by the domestic virtues.”

“A man does not want to be dazzled in his matrimonial connexion, or to possess a partner who seeks the admiration of coxcombs or beaux. He wants a person who will kindly divide and alleviate his cares, and prudently arrange his household. He seeks not a coquette, a fashionist, a flirt; but a comfortable assistant, companion, and friend.”

“On the day of her marriage,” says an admired writer, “a woman’s tour of gaiety should end.” In one of the Gentoo countries, during the wedding-day, a large fire is made, and the bride enters with a little basket in her hand, containing all her ornaments, rude and simple as they are—shells, beads, &c.—and flings them into it; intimating her intention of assuming for the future the dress as well as character of a matron. O! that our British matrons would take a hint from these wild and untutored Indians!

How indecorous, offensive, and sinful, is it to see a woman exercising authority over her husband, and saying, “*I will* have it so. It *shall* be done as *I like!*” But I should hope the number of those who adopt this unbecoming and disgraceful manner, is so small as to render it unnecessary for me to enlarge on the subject.

Never join in any jest or laugh against your husband. He may be a plain and insignificant, even a ridiculous, man: be it so; why did you marry him? You should have known all those defects before marriage. It is now too late: and as a wife, *self* (not to say a word of duty) calls on you to hide his faults; and, whenever you possibly can, to bring him forward and make him of importance.

Assiduously conceal his faults, and speak only of his merits. In the married life, confidants are by no means desirable. You may be listened to with sympathy and interest;—but will this redress your

grievance? By no means. Therefore never complain of him. In the first place, you violate a sacred duty by exposing your husband's faults; and in the next, even a certain degree of female dignity should combine with better motives to prevent it.

I would also strongly recommend a concealment from others of any little discord or disunion which occurs between you. Repeated with additions and aggravations, it only gives food to the busy whisper of the malevolent, and, as the witty Richardson says, "is sure to be remembered long after the honest people have quite forgotten it themselves." Besides, on those occasions, rely on it, the world is much more inclined to be your husband's advocate than yours.

In my opinion, there can hardly be a more despicable object than a married woman receiving the particular attentions of any man but her husband. A *flirting girl* is indeed bad enough; but a *flirting married* woman should be an object of contempt wherever she appears.

Perhaps your husband may be a plain man, or an old man; and though possessing both sense, merit, and feeling, neither cultivated nor captivating. Let this circumstance make you peculiarly circumspect in your conduct. The eye of the world is on you; and though your husband may scorn to betray, even by a look, any expression of jealousy, believe me it gives him no pleasure to see you dancing and chatting away with every young man who approaches you; for, at the moment perhaps when his good sense and manly pride make him smile, and join in the laugh and chat around, his heart may be exceedingly vexed and fretted at what he is ashamed to acknowledge even to himself. To say the truth, I never met with any husband, handsome, ugly, young, or old, who was pleased at seeing his wife's conversation and attraction much engrossed by other men.

Be you ever so conscious of a superiority of judgment or of talent, never let it appear to your husband. "A

wife rules best by seeming to obey." And a man cannot endure the idea of inferiority in intellectual endowments. The very idea of being reflected on makes him infinitely more obstinate, and more wedded to his own opinion, when perhaps a little management and good sense would bring him at once into your plans and wishes.

I cannot express the great dissatisfaction I feel at hearing married women laugh at and ridicule ladies who are advanced in life, and still remain single—females who probably in every respect are decidedly superior to the lady who treats them with contempt, and who perhaps remain single merely because they possess more delicacy of mind, and are not so easily pleased in the choice of a husband. Various are the causes which may occur to keep a woman single: duty, prudence, and, not unfrequently, constancy to a beloved object; while a swarm of misses, strangers to sentiment, to delicacy, and to good sense, merely from their eagerness to become wives, clasp the chain of Hymen, and inconsiderately link themselves in the same moment to matrimony and misery, in the form of some *petit maitre* or antiquated beau.

Some wives, in order to display their own superiority to their husbands, are very fond of lessening and undervaluing the merit of other wives: be above such a paltry artifice; it is both ungenerous and unprincipled.

Should you, gentle lady, be in the decline of life, allow me to bring to your recollection the emphatical address of St. Paul to aged women, where he charges them to *teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.* (Tit. ii. 4, 5).—When the apostle speaks of *keeping at home*, he seems impressed with the calm, unobtrusive retirement of that domestic sphere which Providence and nature have assigned to women. Strongly,