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REV. MR. STEARNS' DISCOURSE

ON

FEMALE INFLUENCE,

AND THE

TRUE CHRISTIAN MODE OF ITS EXERCISE.

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ITS EXERCISE.

A

DISCOURSE

DELIVERED IN THE

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

IN

NEWBURYPORT,

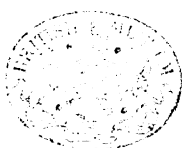
July 30, 1837.

BY J. F. STEARNS, PASTOR.

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THIS discourse was prepared in the common course of official duty, without the remotest view to its publication ; nor has the author the vanity to suppose himself called upon to enlighten the public on the important subject of which it treats. But as some of the hearers appear to have misapprehended its sentiments, and others have expressed a desire to possess it in a more permanent form, he trusts it will not be deemed a violation of modesty to allow it to be printed.

To the Ladies of the First Presbyterian Church and Society, whose influence no one more highly appreciates than himself, this discourse is respectfully inscribed,

BY THEIR SINCERE FRIEND AND PASTOR.

DISCOURSE.

PROVERBS xxxi. 31.

Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates.

THIS passage has not been selected with a design to deliver a eulogium on the female character ; much less, to attempt any thing like flattery, with any portion of this audience. The position has too long been assumed, that whoever would gain the attention of females, must approach their understanding through the medium of their vanity. A poor compliment indeed, both to their intellects and their hearts !

In depicting the character of woman, enthusiasm has been considered a virtue. Poetry has exhausted its raptures, and romance its descriptive powers. She has been held up to admiration, not always indeed as endowed with every human excellence, but often with charms and accomplishments, such as we, in our ignorance of more suitable terms, are sometimes pleased to denominate heavenly and angelic.

But in whatever extravagances youth and a warm imagination may on some occasions be indulged, it certainly becomes the pulpit and the sacred ministry to take more sober and practical views of the subject; and, guided by reason and revelation, rather than fancy and chivalrous feeling, to exhibit the true station and duties for which, in the economy of Divine Providence, she is designed.

It may be thought, by some, out of place and ill-timed to introduce this subject at all, among the sacred exercises of the pulpit and the Sabbath. To give *any* specific directions, intended for one sex alone, may appear uncalled for and invidious. The gospel, it may be said, came alike to the whole human family. Its subject is the character and condition of common humanity. It neither requires nor allows distinctions of sex, for in Christ Jesus, says an apostle, there is neither male nor female; ye are all one in Christ. In regard to the leading principles of the gospel this is true. The good news of salvation belong to all the children of Adam. The Saviour is the same, the terms are the same, the threatenings and promises the same.

But the attentive peruser of the Bible will perceive, nevertheless, that there are some points of religious duty on which we are not all promiscuously addressed. In regard to our relative duties, of which religion takes cognizance,—in regard to our conduct towards each other, and the obligations we owe as members of society and the great family of man, the precepts of the gospel are often very specific and discriminating. Thus, the parent and the child, the aged and the young, the ruler and the

subject, the master and the servant, though all alike invited to the privileges of the gospel, and all, if Christians, destined, through grace, to the same eternal reward, are yet specifically addressed in the Bible, and directed to different duties. In this manner the Scriptures have made an obvious distinction between the sexes; and it therefore becomes the duty of the minister of Christ, who would not shun to declare the whole counsel of God, to bring forth, at proper seasons, to the attention of his people, the peculiar duties and responsibilities of each.

I trust, then, I shall need no apology for selecting a passage from the words of the wise man, on this occasion, as the theme of a few observations on *female influence, and the true christian manner of its exercise.*

The wise man appears to have held female excellence in high estimation. He says of the virtuous woman—"Her price is far above rubies." Such females, it is true, appear to have been rare in his day; for he asks, as if in despair—"Who can find such an one?" and complains that, while *one man* among a thousand might be found, a *woman* among the whole multitude could *not* be. But no wonder, when we consider the great degradation of the sex at that time, and the few privileges and advantages to which, in general, they had access.

The description of a virtuous woman, which this accurate and acute observer of human character has given us, is worthy of study. The attentive reader will perceive, I apprehend, the traces of true wisdom in his sentiments, not merely as applied to the peculiar state of the world in those times, but in relation to all ages and states of society. In our text and the verse which precedes it, he

expresses his strong sense of her value, and at the same time conveys a tacit allusion to the sphere in which her graces and accomplishments should shine. "A woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates."

From the sentiment contained in these words I deduce the two following propositions, under which my remarks on this occasion will be mainly comprised, viz.:

I. *The blessings conferred upon the world by the good deeds of a virtuous woman, furnish the highest encomium that can be bestowed upon her merits.*

II. *The woman who possesses that character should not seek for herself a conspicuous station, but shrinking from public exposure, be content to let her own works praise her.*

I. The blessings conferred upon the world by the good deeds of a virtuous woman, furnish the highest encomium that can be bestowed upon her merits.

Were it only for her services in the ordinary duties of domestic life, the order, neatness and comfort which she, and she only, throws round the family scene,—did she merely aspire to the merit of a frugal, discreet and industrious housewife, confining her exertions strictly to that narrow sphere,—still the best interest of the world would be greatly promoted, its harmony and happiness would owe very much to her efforts; and such is the intimate connection between the external world and the soul, such the influence of habits of life over character, that the power of her exertions would be felt likewise in

the *spiritual* destinies of her family; and even in regard to ETERNITY, her labors would not be in vain.

But these certainly are among the narrowest and humblest of her useful offices. In the natural and social relations, her *direct influence* on the *minds* of those around her is powerful and wide. It shapes the character of the young, and modifies the rugged nature of the mature and the old. It gives to the sapling its direction, and by silent and unobserved action, gradually sways and alters even the trunk of the gnarled oak.

Who has not felt the power of a mother's earliest lessons? In the bustle of the world, in the scramble for wealth, fame, power, and whatever else man most covets, even when the master passion has been strongest, and the soul most completely absorbed in the pursuit of its object, how often has the proud man been humbled, the rash man checked, the cruel man softened, and the bold, reckless daring of an unholy purpose quelled and subdued, by the remembrance of a mother's early counsels and a mother's fervent prayers. Man may throw off the fear of eternity, he may spurn the restraints of virtue, he may grow deaf to the cry of humanity, and trample under his feet the authority of man, and yet the law of his mother, like a silken cord, soft, pliant, but strong, shall still hold him, as by a spell, from which he cannot break loose.

And who can estimate the influence of a sister—a meek, tender and devoted sister? What youth, who has been blest with such a treasure, has not felt himself strengthened in his virtuous principles, and elevated and refined in all the better feelings of his soul, by her

society; or if ever tempted to wander from purity and rectitude, has not found the holy charm of her influence strong upon him, in the most reckless moments of youthful waywardness? There is an indescribable power in that *sympathy*, which binds the brother and sister to each other. They who have been least addicted to womanly tenderness, have confessed its strength, in the sternest and most unyielding seasons of life. It is a holy influence, which the virtuous and *pious* sister diffuses over the fraternal circle. Wayward passion is awed by it, and the demon of vice and dissipation hides his head, and is ashamed, in its presence.

I might speak of the same kind of influence in the filial relation, where the stern and deep seated habits of a wicked father, have been gradually undermined and subdued, by the affectionate assiduities of a humble, uncomplaining child. Indeed, few monsters are so hardened, that the idea of an amiable and affectionate daughter, yearning with all her youthful solicitude, over the happiness and reputation of a parent, will not bring them to at least a momentary pause, and perhaps lead to repentance and amendment of life.

I might speak, too, of its power in the conjugal relation, where it often has wrought almost miracles of reformation, transforming the lion into the lamb, the proud infidel into the meek and teachable disciple of the cross.

The influence of woman in forming the character of her relatives, gentle and unobserved as it is, is one which can never be adequately appreciated, till the great day of revelation shall disclose the secret springs of human

action and feeling. We all know, by experience, what a charm there is in the word HOME, and how powerful are the influences of domestic life upon the character. It is the province of woman to make home, *whatever it is*. If she makes that delightful and salutary—the abode of order and purity, though she may never herself step beyond the threshold, she may yet send forth from her humble dwelling, a power that will be felt round the globe. She may at least save some souls that are dear to her from disgrace and punishment, present some precious ornaments to her country and the church, and polish some jewels, to shine brightly in the Saviour's crown. At home, the first seeds of the character are sown. There they are sheltered, there they are nurtured, there they receive their first tendencies. This is the mint where the soul is stamped for immortality. And is her office a slight one, on whose conduct it depends mainly, under God, whether the soul, undying as it is, unchanging as it soon must be, shall receive, in its most yielding state, the mark of the beast or the image of Jesus and of God?

But the influence of woman is not limited to the domestic circle. *Society* is her empire, which she governs almost at will. Its nameless charms and accomplishments are chiefly the fruit of her cultivation. She is the arbitress of taste and of manners. It is her province to *adorn* social life, to throw a *charm* over the intercourse of the world, and thus to cement the bond of human fellowship, by making it lovely and attractive, pure and improving.

Nor is it only as an ornament that her value is felt in

society. Those silent and all pervading influences which act upon the character at all times, and in all places, and most powerfully, at those seasons when we are least conscious of their presence, receive their form and direction chiefly from her hand. The whole community feel them ; and their effect is *lasting* and *deep*.

Would you estimate the power of these influences, observe their effect upon children. Compare the slow but certain operation of refined and virtuous society upon the forming mind, with the effect produced upon the same class of persons by the influence of heathen manners, or the rude intercourse of life among semi-barbarians. The missionary feels the wide difference, and the christian mother would rather forego the privilege of caressing and training her little ones, than to have them brought up even under her own eye, surrounded by the influences of heathenism.

Now to form the character of society, and give it a healthy tone, woman not only contributes, but is, as it were, the mainspring. . The order and decency, the courtesy and mutual respect, which prevail in all civilized society, and distinguish it from the barbarous state, are mainly the result of her influence. Remove this, and these would soon disappear. Cherish this, and increase it, let it be *fully developed* and *rightly directed*, and scarcely one vice or evil habit would find a place in the community. This, if *any thing earthly*, must purify society, and fit it to subserve the great ends of its formation.

The cause of benevolence is peculiarly indebted to the agency of woman. She is fitted by nature to cheer the afflicted, elevate the depressed, minister to the wants of

the feeble and diseased, and lighten the burden of human misery, in all its varieties and trying forms. God has endowed her with qualities peculiarly adapted to these offices; and the history of benevolence will testify how well she has fulfilled her trust. The friendless orphan blesses her. The homeless sailor, the wandering exile, the child of affliction, and even the penitent outcast, find in her a patroness and friend.

But the highest merit of all is yet to be mentioned. *Religion* seems almost to have been entrusted by its author to her particular custody. It can hardly be denied by a reader of history and careful observer of the world, that in this department of benevolence she has ever stood foremost. It is the standing sneer of the infidel, and his last resort when arguments fail, that the religion of Christ is chiefly prevalent among women, and chiefly indebted to them for its spread. And that the assertion, though extravagant, has some foundation in fact, no friend of religion will be disposed to deny. It was observable in the days of the Saviour, when pious women ministered to the despised Nazarene of their substance. It was so in the time of the apostles, when Lydia received them into her house; and among the trophies of divine grace were "honorable women not a few."

Nor is it strange that such should be the fact. In thus devoting her heart to the cause of christianity, she does but attempt to requite, in some humble measure, the peculiar benefits she herself has received from this religion. If to any portion of the world it proclaims "liberty to the captive," and "the opening of prison

doors to them that are bound," it does this in a pre-eminent manner to females. When we consider what woman was in classic Greece, and what she still is, in barbarous and savage lands, darkened and degraded, without knowledge, without influence, without honor, the mere drudge of society, or still worse, the miserable slave of sensual passion; and contrast with this dark picture, the happier scenes which christianity presents, where she stands forth in her true dignity, as the *companion* and *equal* of man, his helper on earth, and co-heir of immortal felicity, we cannot wonder that *she* should exhibit peculiar attachment to a faith which has bestowed upon her such blessings.

The religion of Christ has, if possible, superior claims upon females; and as in times past it has received so largely their attachment and co-operation, so in future, its support and promulgation will depend, in no small degree, on their fidelity and efforts. Indeed, in this department of benevolence, the appropriate sphere of their exertion is every day becoming wider and wider. As society advances, as christian effort becomes more and more regular and systematic, as new paths of religious benevolence are opened, the true sphere of female usefulness will be constantly expanding, and the call for their efforts becoming stronger and stronger. Thank Heaven, the past is an assurance that the cry of a "world lying in wickedness" will not come to *them* in vain.

And now, who can wonder at, who can gainsay the encomium pronounced by the wise man upon the virtuous woman—"Her price is far above rubies." It is decidedly among the most encouraging features in the

aspect of the world at this time, the happiest omen of the future uninterrupted progress of civilization and virtue, the fairest blossom on the hopes of the church, that woman is now held in so high estimation, her faculties so highly cultivated, and the operation of her influence so extensive and free. For that influence, as we have seen, when rightly developed, is *powerful*. Though its touch may appear slight, it touches the very *springs* of character and action, and the effect cannot fail to be felt. It is *extensive*; for like the air and the light, it is every where diffused, and silently penetrates every corner of society. And, thank God, it is *salutary*. Whatever may be said of the evils which have come upon the world through female influence, it can hardly be denied, that the influence of the *virtuous* and *pious* female, in her own proper sphere, is conducive to the best interests of humanity, both for time and eternity. Scarcely less can it be denied, that the proportion of such females, to those of the same character in our sex, ever *has* been, since the dawn of christianity, and we have reason to believe may continue to be, *large*.

II. I proceed then, to show secondly, that a woman of such character should not seek for herself a conspicuous station, but shrinking from public exposure, should be content to "let her own works praise her."

Much dispute has arisen in modern times in regard to the comparative intellectual ability of the sexes. On the one hand it has been confidently maintained, that God and nature have established a *perfect equality*; and that it is only the circumstances of habit and education

which have occasioned the difference which we see. On the other, it has been asserted as confidently, that man is, by the very structure of his mind, immensely the superior, and that no change of circumstances and advantages could ever, as a general thing, render it otherwise.

Now the whole debate, as it seems to me, proceeds from a mistake. The truth is, there is a natural *difference*, in the mental as well as physical constitution of the two classes—a difference which implies not *inferiority* on the one part, but only *adaptation to a different sphere*. Cultivate as highly as you will the mind of a female, and you do not deprive it of its distinguishing peculiarities. On the other hand, deprive man of his advantages, keep him in ignorance and intellectual depression, and you make him a kind of *brute beast*, but you do not approximate his character to the character of woman. Indeed, the greatest similarity, the nearest approach to an actual sameness of mental character, is to be found, not in the higher walks of life, where both sexes have enjoyed the highest degree of cultivation, but in those scenes of degradation and ignorance, where the peculiar characteristics of neither have had opportunity to be developed. The whole dispute, then, is absurd. You cannot institute a comparison in terms of greater and less, without doing injustice to both. You might as well ask whether the fragrance of the lily were as sweet as the taste of a honey-comb.

These views, I apprehend, deserve great consideration, in their bearing on the subject of female education. If correct, they demand for the two sexes appropriate systems of training. The female department can never

be brought to perfection, till the distinguishing characteristics of the feminine mind shall be well understood, its peculiar weaknesses strengthened, its peculiar faults guarded against, and its peculiar native endowments cultivated and developed.

They have also an important bearing on the subject of our present inquiry, viz., the appropriate station and manner of female effort. Hitherto it has been generally agreed, that the true sphere of female influence is private; that there is that in the character of woman which flourishes best in the shelter of private life, and suffers injury and loss by rude exposure. Whether this is correct, or whether it is one of the absurd and oppressive dogmas of ignorance and prejudice, deserves careful consideration, in this day of inquiry and reform.

Let us turn to the Bible for a moment, and see what we can gather from the teachings of inspiration. The principles and precepts of the Bible, be it remembered, first released woman from her thralldom, and gave her that elevated rank in society which she is now beginning to hold. Let us see how the same sacred document would define and regulate the exercise of her privilege. I will quote a few passages, some of which contain general principles, and others, specific directions and positive commands.

In the first Epistle to the Corinthians, 11th chapter, the apostle enjoins upon females to be covered, when they engage in the public exercises of religion. Not that he would depreciate their worth, for he adds—"Nevertheless, neither is the man without the woman, nor the woman without the man in the Lord. For as the

woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman ; but all things of God." And then he proceeds—"Judge in yourselves ; is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered ? Doth not even nature herself teach, that if a man have *long hair* it is a shame unto him ; but if a *woman* have long hair it is a glory to her, for her hair is given her for a covering." In the Epistle to Titus, he directs a young minister what principles he should teach on this subject—"That the aged women be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things. That they may 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." In the first Epistle to the Corinthians, 14th chapter, the apostle enters at large into the subject of order and propriety in the public assemblies of christians, for mutual instruction and devotion. In this chapter he has given a variety of specific directions, ending with those memorable words—"Let all things be done decently and in order." Among other precepts are the following—"Let your women keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted unto them to speak, but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands, (*their own men*, it is in the original,) at home ; for it is a shame for women to speak in the church." And again, in the second chapter of his first Epistle to Timothy, he says—"I will also that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety, not with broidered hair, or

gold, or pearls, or costly array, but, as becometh women professing godliness, with good works. Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence."

The apostle speaks in these passages in a tone of authority, as it was proper he should do, in his office, as commissioned ambassador of Christ. And his precepts, did they stand unsupported by any perceptible reasons, would doubtless be sufficient to command the conduct of christians. But I apprehend it will not appear difficult, to one who duly considers the nature of the case, as well as the history of the world, to see *reasons* sufficient to establish the wisdom of these precepts, independent of apostolic authority. I am confident no virtuous and delicate female, who rightly appreciates the design of her being, and desires to sustain her own influence and that of her sex, and fulfil the high destiny for which she is formed, would desire to abate one jot or tittle from the seeming restrictions imposed upon her conduct in these and the like passages. They are designed, not to *degrade*, but to *elevate* her character,—not to cramp, but to afford a *salutary* freedom, and give a useful direction to the energies of the feminine mind. A prominent object of the apostle seems to have been, to protect those peculiar traits of character, which are the chief source of woman's influence over society, from the injury they are likely to sustain from rude exposure in public life. Let woman throw off her feminine character, and her power to benefit society is *lost*; her loveliness, her dignity, her own chief protection is *lost*.

I have met in an old Grecian author with a sentiment like this :—" Nature has given to all classes of creatures their appropriate defences. She has given horns to the bullock, hoofs to the horses, swiftness to the hares, fins to the fishes, wings to the birds. For woman she had none of these ; and instead of them, gave her *beauty*, which was to her in place of shields and spears."

The sentiment was worthy of a heathen poet. Let us christianize it and adopt it as our own. For *beauty* let us substitute *delicacy*—CHRISTIAN DELICACY. This is woman's defence and her glory. This is the chief source of her power. Let her lay aside delicacy, and her influence over our sex is gone ; all the benefits she is now so peculiarly fitted to confer on the church and the world are sacrificed, and her own honor and safety exposed to the greatest danger.

And for what object should she make such sacrifices ? That she may do good more extensively ? Then she sadly mistakes her vocation. But why then ? That she may see her name blazoned on the rolls of fame, and hear the shouts of delighted assemblies, applauding her eloquence ? That she may place her own sex on a fancied equality with men, obtain the satisfaction of calling herself *independent*, and occupy a station in life which she can never adorn ? For *this* would she sacrifice the almost magic power, which, in her own proper sphere, she now wields over the destinies of the world ? Surely *such privileges*, obtained at *such cost*, are unworthy of a wise and virtuous woman's ambition.

When I see ladies of talent, and learning, and refinement,—ladies whose accomplishments and virtues would

have fitted them to stand in the first rank among their own sex, stepping out of their sphere, to enter upon stations and offices which have heretofore been regarded as appropriate to men, it forcibly reminds me of the parable of Jotham contained in the ninth chapter of Judges—"The trees of the wood went forth on a time to anoint a king over them. And they said unto the olive tree, Reign thou over us. But the olive tree said unto them, Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honor God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees? And the trees said unto the fig tree, Come thou and reign over us. But the fig tree said unto them, Should I forsake my sweetness and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees? Then said the trees unto the vine, Come thou and reign over us. And the vine said unto them, Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees? Then said all the trees unto the *bramble*, Come thou and reign over us. And the bramble said unto the trees, If in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow."

Let the ladies of this assembly decide which example is most worthy of their imitation. Shall they *condescend* to leave a station, which they may cheer and adorn, and forego an influence which has been, ever since the dawn of christianity gave scope to it, so powerful and salutary, that they may enter the sphere and imitate the conduct of men, and attempt to convince the world that there is no distinction of character?

That there are ladies who are capable of public debate, who could make their voices heard from end to end of

the church and the senate house,—that there are those who might bear a favorable comparison with others as eloquent orators, and who might speak to better edification than most of those on whom the office has hitherto devolved, I am not disposed to deny. The question is not in regard to *ability*, but to *decency*, to order, to christian *propriety*. Of one thing I am certain, they would find it hard to convince most of those whom they would emulate, that the course was either amiable or becoming. For if an effeminate man is always despised, no less so, as nature herself teaches, must be a masculine woman.

My hearers must pardon me for speaking thus explicitly. The advocates of such principles and measures have, in times past, been confined principally to the ranks of unbelievers, whom no pious and respectable female would desire to encourage. But when popular female writers, and women professing godliness, begin to take the same ground, it is time for the pulpit as well as the press to speak plainly. I verily believe, that should the practice I have censured become *prevalent*, and the consequent change in the treatment of females, already anticipated by some of its advocates, take place in the community, the influence of ladies, now so important to the cause of philanthropy and piety, would very speedily be crushed, and religion, morality and good order, suffer a wound from which they would not soon nor easily recover.

Far be it from me to insinuate that any ladies in this assembly, would transcend the bounds of christian modesty and propriety. I trust they have not so learned the teachings of Christ and his apostles. Nay, your own

sense of delicacy, which none are able to impeach, I am confident will be a sufficient guard against any such temptation. Nor can I doubt that the main principles at least of the foregoing discourse, will commend themselves at once to your undivided approbation. Surely, she who is to society the *teacher* of delicacy and of all its kindred virtues, should desire to preserve her own unsullied and entire.

In conclusion, let me earnestly invite your attention to both branches of the subject now presented. To the mothers and daughters of this community, permit me, in behalf of my country and the church, to make an earnest appeal. On you, ladies, depends chiefly the character of the next generation. The young, especially, are subject to your forming hand; and if faithful to your trust, the condition of the world will bear witness to your fidelity, when your own heads shall be silvered with age, or be gathered with honor to the great congregation of the dead.

One danger, which at present most imminently besets us, is neglect of *domestic instruction*. Neglect this and the nation is ruined, the hopes of religion are crushed. Now the office of family instruction must, of course, from the very structure of society, and the very provisions of nature, devolve chiefly upon you. Fulfil this, and you need not step out of your sphere to do good. The mother who gave to her country a Washington, accomplished more for the world than many heroes, and statesmen, and eloquent orators. And the sister, whose quiet piety saves a brother from ruin, and inspires him with a holy spirit of self-sacrifice in the Master's cause—the sister to whom the church is indebted for one faithful

missionary, sent forth by her prayers and efforts from the paternal roof, need not complain that her influence is lost to the world.

Your influence, be assured, is not less because it is obscure. The broad river takes its waters from the little rills that supply it. It possesses the same qualities with the drops that trickle from the fountain. And woman stands at the *fountain* of moral action and feeling. It is her province to watch over the first gushings of the spring, to determine the first course of the rill that gurgles from the hill-side, and thus to be, though unseen, the presiding genius of the stream.

For some offices of benevolence you possess peculiar advantages. Your feminine character is a passport to some circles of influence which would not be open to us. There is a kind of sanctity thrown around you, which protects you from insult and opposition. Men will listen to you in your own sphere of action, when they would not give ear to us for a moment. I might cite for illustration the case of the gifted Mrs. More, who in a time of great danger and degeneracy was heard with attention pleading the cause of evangelical religion, in the most proud and fashionable circles, and by the popularity of her writings among the lower classes of people, did more than many orators and statesmen could have effected, to protect England from the poisonous and seductive principles of the French revolution. Your persuasions are a power which man cannot easily breast himself against. The fierce north wind in the fable made the traveller wrap his cloak more closely about him, while the mild beams of the sun soon compelled him to lay it aside.

So the degenerate spirit of man may repel the rebukes and counsels of men; but the still influence of woman disarms him, and he is charmed to submission before he is prepared to resist.

Beware, then, how you forfeit your peculiar advantages. Beware how you do any thing to diminish that delicate and chivalrous respect, which the feminine character now commands from all who are not lost to every principle of honor. The refined and high minded woman, while she never presumes upon her privilege as an apology for selfishness and wrong, will rejoice to avail herself of every just advantage it affords her, in the cause of truth, benevolence and piety.

On you, ladies, depends, in a most important degree, the destiny of our country. In this day of disorder and turmoil, when the foundations of the great deep seem fast breaking up, and the flood of desolation threatening to roll over the whole face of society, it peculiarly devolves upon you to say what shall be the result. Yours it is to determine, whether the beautiful order of society, a system of many members in one body, and all the members not having the same office, shall continue as it has been, to be the source of blessings to the world; or whether, despising all forms and distinctions, all boundaries and rules, society shall break up and become a chaos of disjointed and unsightly elements. Yours it is to decide, under God, whether we shall be a nation of refined and high minded christians, or whether, rejecting the civilities of life, and throwing off the restraints of morality and piety, we shall become a fierce race of semi-barbarians, before whom neither order, nor honor, nor chastity can stand.

L. J. C.

And be assured, ladies, if the hedges and borders of the social garden should be broken up, the lovely vine, which now twines itself so gracefully upon the trellis, and bears such rich clusters, will be the first to fall and be trodden under foot.

Be faithful then to your trust, and may God richly reward you. May the power of religion be *felt* in your own hearts, and *exemplified* always in your lives. May the image of Jesus be formed in you, and may you at last stand before him clad in the garments of salvation, adorned with the beauties of holiness, shining in the graces of the Spirit, and in the upper temple of God, be as corner stones polished after the similitude of a palace.

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